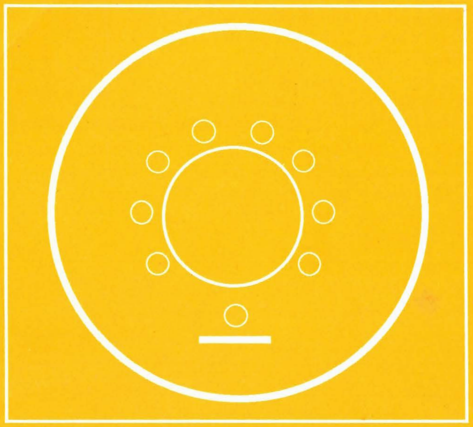

IMAGE

AN ACTION RESEARCH JOURNAL
ON
PERSONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS and LENS INTERNATIONAL

IMAGE

AN ACTION RESEARCH JOURNAL ON PERSONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

The Action Research Journal is written to communicate designs, formats and ideas of transformational processes which promote the human factor in private and public sectors. It is published by the Corporate Services Division of The Institute of Cultural Affairs: India for distribution through the Asia Network of ICA and LENS International organisations. These include ICA: India (Bombay, Panvel and Pune), LENS Services Pvt. Ltd. (New Delhi), LENS International Malaysia Sdn. Bhd., ICA: Australia, ICA: Philippines, ICA: Taiwan, ICA Associates (Hong Kong) and LENS International Japan.

The Action Research Journal draws on a variety of sources including other ICA world-wide offices and affiliated professional consulting organisations to provide a spectrum of practical tools and constructs that facilitate individual and organisational transformation. We welcome comments and articles from our readers.

ISSUE NINETEEN DECEMBER 1993

"FACILITATION"

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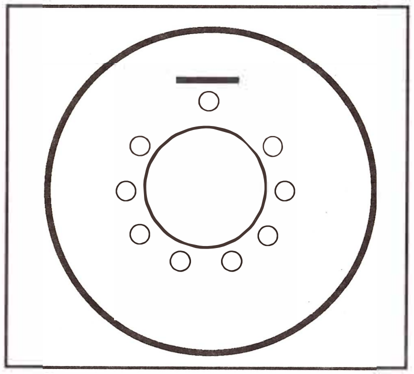
JOURNAL OVERVIEW



Facilitation: The process of making something easy, to promote, to help forward.

Facilitation is a term that is often used these days to describe the role a person plays in enabling group decision making. There are many situations and a variety of styles that a facilitator can find him/herself in. Under a larger category of consultant, a facilitator usually acts more like a catalyst than an expert in the field of discussion. For the sake of this issue of the Image, we will be focusing on those dimensions of facilitation that are most commonly used for organisational transformation. More specifically, it will cover those dimensions of facilitation that are used and taught by the Institute of Cultural Affairs in its programmes. But the techniques, methods and procedures are generic and can be applied to almost all types of facilitation.

Acquiring the skill of a facilitator is not easy. Although the basic skill of following procedures may be relatively easy to grasp, the advanced facilitator is conscious that many different skills need to be combined to be really effective. One must master skills in group process, listening, asking the right question, right-brain activation, data handling, consensus and timing. All of this needs to be combined with the unique style of the facilitator in such a way that the group feels guided and not controlled or manipulated.

Becoming a skilled facilitator requires both practice and reflection. I remember when I first began facilitating the LENS process (Leadership Effectiveness and New Strategies - a major three day programme of the ICA). In this process, data generated in teams is written on cards and in a plenary session these cards are combined on a board or on the wall in front of the group to reveal a larger picture of the discussion. I always seemed amazed that the master facilitator I was working with seemed to be able to work 'magic' with the cards and their relationships. I asked him, "How do you do that?" He said, "It's not a procedure, it's a 'feel'. After you have led this session for 12-15 times you will see what I mean." He was right. There comes a time in which you move beyond procedures and into a state of relaxed trust. At that point, the data begins to "talk" to you in a different way.

Besides practice, constant reflection is needed for the growth journey. It is one of the main reasons we of the ICA use team facilitation. Getting feedback from a colleague on how you did and asking why you did certain things allows for more depth to come into your facilitation practice. Too often I have seen facilitators who know process and procedures well, but there is something missing in their work. They have taken the "objectivity" stance necessary for a facilitator and made it into a robot-like performance.

I have learned that my ability to listen and hear what is behind data or comments comes from a sense that the data is "passing through" me, rather than "beside" me. Not that I add or interpret it, it is the act of empathising with what is written or said. Often I take a piece of data written on a card and will try and say in my own words what the card means to me. This allows me to be inside each piece of data, and then you begin to compose the data, almost like a musical score.

It's difficult to judge the level of a facilitator. When he or she is very good, the group feels that they made the decisions and own the results. I have found that there are three levels of facilitation in general. In the first level, or stage, one is mastering the basic skills. The emphasis is on getting the procedures right and getting done on time. During these early experiences, one is learning the nuances of group dynamics. You learn to deal with those who dominate, with those that are negative and those that are quiet. The facilitator struggles with balancing the need to control and keep the pace moving while honoring all the data and getting full participation.

The second stage emerges as one has had enough experience to feel comfortable in any situation. You begin to experiment with questions, getting the group to think in new ways. Your own personality becomes an asset to the process. Your body language, eye contact and voice inflection become tools in the process of facilitation. It is at this stage that the gift of one's personality becomes apparent.

The ultimate stage, what I call a master facilitator, is rare. It takes years of practice and more. It is hard to describe, but the nearest description is that you sense you are an instrument of a creative process. The tempo of the process is smooth and usually there is an "Aha" experience for the participants. It doesn't happen every time, but when it does, you know that you have participated with something beyond you or the group. It is magic.

Finally, let me say that even after more than 20 years of facilitation, I still learn something every time I am before a group. And that is what makes this such a wonderful vocation.

This Issue

I am pleased that this issue has several articles from one contributor other than myself! **Charles Jago**, NSW Australia, has written a fine paper called the *Foundations of Facilitation.* I received a draft of this paper and found it to be amazingly comprehensive in its coverage of the topic of facilitation. We are publishing three edited sections of the paper.

The first article by Charles is his description of **Three Types of Facilitation**. The three types are team alignment, team building and issues resolution. Each of these facilitations will involve the basic skills of group processes. But each one demands a different style and role for the facilitator.

The second article is also from Charles' paper called **Facilitating Dialogue**. In Peter Senge's book The Fifth Discipline, he points out that the key to the Team Learning discipline is dialogue, which he describes as suspending judgment and allowing a creative interchange to take place amongst participants. Charles gets us inside that facilitation task.

Facilitating dialogue can happen with many communities. The ICA: West in the United States has done extensive **Facilitation with Native American** tribes. This article is by **Kim Alire Epley**, an associate of ICA: West. One fine method of dialogue adapted from Native American culture is the Native American talking stick. This method is one which is used in their councils for discussions. We have used this method in our Transformational Leadership Lab and have found that the participants appreciate the ability to get to depth dimensions of the topic being discussed. These methods were compiled by **Charles Kiefer** of Innovative Associates, Inc. and were reproduced by **Roger Harrison** in his paper, *Towards the Learning Organisation.*

Many people who engage in facilitation do not understand fully the need to be conscious of the style required. In the third part of Charles' paper he outlines some of the fundamental dimensions of **Charismatic Facilitation** and how unhelpful it is to build your style on charisma.

In our first issue of the Image Journal, we published a description of the **Stance of a Facilitator**. Many have reprinted it as a guideline for teaching good facilitation practices. Written by **Richard West**, now in Taiwan, we are reprinting it for this issue.

There are numerous techniques that a facilitator uses to enhance participation and creativity in a group. Jack Gilles shares some of these in his article **Ten Tips for ToPs.**

A book just published by Miles River Press of Arlington, Virginia USA, is called Participation Works: Business Cases From Around the World, edited by James Troxel of the Institute of Cultural Affairs. It is a series of case studies in which the reader will find how the Technology of Participation (ToP) methods have been successfully applied in a variety of business situations worldwide. This book is available through your local ICA office. We are reprinting a slightly edited copy of one of the overview chapters called **A Time for Participation,** by **John Burbidge**, an ICA associate from Seattle, USA.

In the last article, **Pat Tuecke**, an ICA associate from San Francisco, USA shares some thoughts on the universality of these ToP methods **From Village to Boardroom.**

Throughout this issue we refer to the methods of the ICA called ToPs. Although most of the readership of the Image Journal have experienced these methods in programmes facilitated by the ICA, not everyone is familiar with the content and techniques of the methods. You can learn these basic techniques in a programme offered by the ICA called FM-1 (Facilitation Methods -1). In this programme participants learn the theory and practice of the Basic Discussion method, the Workshop method and the Strategic Planning method. In addition to this programme, we would highly recommend that you obtain the basic text and foundation of the methods through the book, Winning Through Participation, by **Laura Spencer**. Your local ICA office can obtain copies for you.

I hope you will find these articles helpful to you in your facilitation journey.

Jack Gilles
Editor

THREE TYPES OF FACILITATION - C. Jago

In my experience, there are three different types of facilitation which can be used with groups of people. The three types are team alignment; team building; and issues resolution. These types are not intended as descriptions of what should necessarily be done for any situation, but simply meant as an overview of actual practice. Some techniques could perhaps be used in different ways within all three facilitation types.

This typology divides the currently understood area of "team building" into two areas - team building and team alignment. Although current team building literature uses the concept of alignment, it is extended here beyond its current usage. In this paper, team alignment reflects a culturally-based understanding of the team environment. From this perspective, an organisation's structure and corporate culture transcend the motivations and explanations of particular group members. Consequently, the perceptions of individuals within that group are understood to rest on socially constructed understandings of the nature of the team, the organisational environment it works in, and external factors to which it responds.

In contrast, this paper treats team building as being more concerned with identifying the network of interacting personal relationships among the group members, and reviewing their assumptions and behaviour regarding those relationships.

I. Team Alignment

Integration of various elements of vision, stories, ideas, problems, strategies, approaches and activities into a larger framework.

Aim of Team Alignment:

To recreate and align the collective cognitive map of possibilities and solutions facing a group of people - as perceived by them.

How Team Alignment works:

- Formal processes are used to allow a group to explicitly articulate their implicit expectations, values and concerns. Although ostensibly aimed at group issues, these areas always overlap into individual expectations, values and concerns as well. Usually this process requires an overt agenda which provides a means of accessing material relevant to the underlying issues the group will deal with. Such material may take a purely planning format, or may combine a variety of planning and other material.
- Facilitators draw out content which clarifies implicit understandings and assumptions, in a setting of the group where much of the interactive nature of this material has originated or can be questioned. These are interactive because individuals' perceptions of another person or group are often based on their implicit beliefs about what others think of them, and/or various issues important to them. Most of these beliefs are in fact very hard to check, and will be significantly inaccurate in a variety of ways.
- In order to allow the significant differences within the group to be reconciled, the perspective of the group - its history, role, and possibility - must be expanded in very practical terms. This particularly includes developing a more powerful story (past, present and future) for the group. Such a story - which integrates disparate elements of group experience - leads to the reinterpretation of the issues faced by the group.
- Areas which are directly or indirectly affected include:
  - expectations about reality - what is going on; what are we really dealing with here?
  - images of what the group is and/or should be about.
  - images of self and others.

The non-formal aspects of leading the group can be as important as the formal process. The facilitator must present a style of facilitation which elicits trust and encourages participation.

Assumptions of Team Alignment:

The basic data is already available.

- Most of the skills required are in the room, or are accessible and conceptually understood.
- Focus on issues as a way of dealing with both issues and people and their interaction i.e. the most effective way to deal with divisions in a group is to focus the group on their task.
- The group needs a process through which it can "make sense" of its history, current situation and prospects, which are influenced by social trends and events.
- The group is open to change if the process is pursued in a relatively open way. The process will generally put interpersonal tensions and differences in the agendas of various individuals into perspective, as long as relationships have not broken down. However, it will not usually provide an effective means to address significant personality problems of individuals, or repair personality feuds.
- Symbolic issues are intertwined with practical issues and plans. Changing either one usually requires coordinated attention to both.

Origin of Team Alignment methodology/compatible disciplines:

- Gestalt psychology; existentialism; social constructionism; also "reframing" from Milton Erickson and others (also emphasised by NLP).

Examples of Team Alignment:

ToP, LENS process, ORID. Most "change programs" are aimed at this type of intervention.

II. Team Building

Leading a group through structured activities to enable them to work together better. Team building differs from team alignment in that it uses a more reduced model of both the individual and the group; team building focuses on group members' and their environment as separate realities, without acknowledging how group members values, feelings and concerns - and their views of others - actually operate in complex interaction.

Aim of Team Building:

To focus on people as a way of dealing with people issues, and also other strategic issues.

How Team Building Works:

- A group is brought together over some kind of common activity, or a sequence of exercises. Through working together, with a planned approach to the interaction, the group is enabled to be more effective in appreciating all the members of the group.

Assumptions of Team Building:

- Problems affecting groups usually have their source primarily within individuals, and/or can be treated as if they are.
- People have relatively stable motivational patterns which need to be tackled directly to change/improve their behaviour.
- The group leader and others are able to interpret the motivation of individuals and groups from aspects of observed behaviour.
- Focus on people is a way of dealing with either issues or people or both.

Origins of Team Building methodology/compatible disciplines:

- Most approaches to social psychology, especially American approaches;
- behaviourism;
- insight therapy - Freud, Erickson, etc. This is a broad category, including many things - one particular example would be psychodrama;
- "group dynamics";
- Neuro-Linguistic Programming.

Examples of Team Building:

Adventure training, most experiential training, lots of other situations . . . Used both for "groups" that have never met each other before (e.g. a group of people who join a quit smoking course) and groups who regularly work together (e.g. managers from a company who need to resolve issues about the way they work together). Team building is not necessarily the best approach in all these cases, but - like that old standby, "survival in the desert" - is used because that is what most group leaders are familiar with.

III. Issues Resolution

Helping people to solve practical issues, without necessarily any regard for their individual motivations in the case.

Aim of Issues Resolution:

To develop solutions to problems. Ideally, solutions that meet the needs of all parties through collective decision-making, using the necessary degree of participation.

How Issues Resolution Works:

- A facilitator provides structural objectivity to one or more parties which are dealing with a particular issue. By focusing on process, the facilitator can ensure that issues are dealt with effectively, and communication is maintained. Often when multiple issues are involved, antagonistic parties are unable to separate and deal with the various issues involved. The facilitator can use a variety of techniques to maintain better relationships and to deal with particular issues in turn.
- In less difficult cases, the same methods are often used by participants without a facilitator.

Assumptions of Issues Resolution:

- The basic data is already available
- The emphasis is on resolving short-term, clearly defined issues which are more of less understood as needing attention.
- Most of the skills required are in the room, or are accessible and conceptually understood.
- Practical issues and plans are perceived through a cognitive screen. Negotiation on substantive issues is likely to run into problems unless participants are ready to question the assumptions built into their perceptions of their own needs and others supposed needs and motivation.

Origin of Issues Resolution methodology/compatible disciplines:

- conflict resolution, management, law, Roberts Rules of Order (rules for chairing meetings)

Examples of Issues Resolution:

- Use of whiteboard to list issues and deal with each in turn;
- "one text" method of conflict resolution- Fisher and Ury;
- flow-charting organisational procedures;
- case-study method in management training
- use of Ishikawa (or "fishbone") diagrams from TQM

Choosing a facilitation method:

Strengths/Purpose of each type:

Choose the type of facilitation according to the need of the situation. Team alignment for clarifying a complex range of issues and possibilities facing a group. Team building when significant personality

(Continued on page 23)

FACILITATING DIALOGUE - Charles Jago

The opening up of an environment of genuine trust lays the foundation for the emergence of a new level of communication. Such open-ended communication - dialogue - relies on the realisation that no individual or group holds a complete picture of any situation. Dialogue enables a broad, relative picture to be created from the multiple perspectives present in the group.

Some may see these many perspectives as a problem. Naturally, the potential for conflict exists. Yet differences between individuals are necessary to enable depth and comprehensiveness of skills and perspective. All the data in a group process is therefore important. Not that all data will necessarily be correct, but rather that by honouring all contributions and perspectives in the group, a more comprehensively valid outcome will result. Further, all participants are then likely to be more committed to that outcome. This process thus holds the key to real motivation - self-motivation.

When a useful exchange begins, the facilitator supports communication between the perspectives presented. These may reflect the ideas or attitudes of particular groups or individuals, or may arise from the group's wider environment. For example, a powerful supporting art-form, such as a video or painting, may provide a challenging perspective for the group. Alternatively, a walk in a forest, a cityscape, or some other relevant environment may provide imagery to enable group reflection and discussion. A wide variety of representations of the natural, human or built environment may be useful in stimulating new insights and perspectives.

Many techniques can be drawn upon to support open interaction between parties with different interests or perspectives. Ultimately, the task in this process amounts to developing a concise procedure to directly inter-relate the differences in an open futuric way. Three poles of focus can be identified here: the **participants**, representing a variety of viewpoints, emotions, and cliques; a **representation** of the discussion representing its evolution in response to the range of material put forward by various people; and the **facilitator**, who manages the group discussion and the representation of the discussion. The interaction of these three poles can be termed a "trialogue".

A representation may be a formal visual structure, such as lists of issues and plans, or it may simply be the ongoing verbal responses of the facilitator in rehearsing the way in which various contributions by various parties have added to the outcome of the session. Clearly, managing a complex interaction requires imaginative use of methodology and structure to allow contributions to add to each other, rather than subtract.

Effective group interaction follows dialectical process - with individuals and groups passing over into a context different to their own, and coming back with a broader perception of the world. Such a dialectical process can enable the release of fresh new possibility (and may in turn result from it). The group - beginning with individuals within the group - follows a process of grasping such different viewpoints, and from them developing new, broader understandings to encompass the differences experienced.

The complexity and challenge of such dialogue can present a profoundly awesome prospect. Stepping out of one's secure environment of safe assumptions can represent an enormous challenge. Some individuals or groups may experience the challenge of dialogue as a great threat. So much so, that not all people faced with such possibility will willingly face it.

Adjudicating the ebb and flow of discussion in such circumstances will not be a Pollyanna exercise. It requires a commitment to protecting the integrity of the interaction when angry, frightened individuals or cliques project their fears and frustrations onto other parties, including the facilitator. Defending the integrity of the dialogue process means ensuring - to the greatest possible extent - that no individuals or perspectives are devalued.

Of course, dialogue has its dark side - not all new insights can be expected to be welcomed by all participants. Sometimes, people may offer a negative perspective. The facilitator must take the lead in discerning effective procedures (offering a range of options, if possible and required) to allow the group to respond to difficulties that emerge. However, no guarantee can be given that facilitation will be able to resolve the issues revealed by the group. The facilitator sets the scene and selects a methodology (where appropriate, in conjunction with participants) expected to be conducive to initiating a creative exchange. However, no amount of facilitation can create a predetermined result. In fact, facilitators should beware of any approach which assumes that dialogue will enable a group to reach some predetermined dimension or view of experience. Dialogue, by its nature, holds the potential to take new directions and to reveal undiscovered insights.

The assumption is that nobody holds a mortgage on the truth, but rather that the truth is best served by an open process of dialogue. The facilitator trusts that such a dialogue will be the most effective check on the validity of content posited by the group, and certainly more effective than the facilitator imposing his or her own views on the group. Participants or facilitators may worry that any false information or opinion should immediately be challenged. However, where genuine dialogue is for the most part taking place, distortions and delimited viewpoints tend to drop out.

This is not to suggest that a facilitator cannot raise questions about any story of a group which he or she believes to be limited, inaccurate, or misdirected, and which the group has failed to overcome. All groups, at one time or another, produce suggestions which are inappropriate, cliched, self-centered, uncaring, or short-sighted. In this context, questioning or reviewing such suggestions can be both appropriate and necessary. The problem is not in raising issues, but rather the tendency to present prepackaged articulations which represent the experience and agenda of the facilitator rather than the group.

In some cases, a facilitator may believe that a group will benefit most by coming to a particular conclusion on their own. In such a situation, the facilitator will need to wait patiently for somebody within the group to develop a new idea, or question apparently unreal suggestions. This does not mean that the facilitator should blithely allow a discussion to go around in circles. Such discussions usually indicate that the group process has insufficient or inappropriate structure. Choosing an appropriate group methodology can enable a group to work through issues in a way that progressively builds on previous input toward useful results.

Sometimes, some indirect (but open) tactics to enable the group to question its own work will produce results. When the group does so, it supports the growth and effectiveness of its own members. If the facilitator does need to openly state an alternative view to that of the group, care should be taken to avoid using emotional pressure, which can stunt the initiative of the group, and undermine the development of group values. In the long term, stating the view in terms of criteria which the group can judge and relate to its own values will be more likely to enable the group to integrate the input into its own ideas and direction.

Two obligations rest with the facilitator. Firstly, to enable the group to be appropriately realistic about its ideas and options. Secondly - and in tension with the first obligation - to maintain the atmosphere of trust such that issues affecting these ideas and options can be pursued, rather than simply being vetoed by intransigent attitudes of the facilitator or individuals in the group.

Given that the role of the facilitator is normally seen as a neutral one, any suggestion from the facilitator to explore some idea or material may be seen as violating that neutrality. However, it is doubtful that any facilitator can guarantee absolute neutrality. Being a facilitator does not actually mean suppressing one's own viewpoint of the situation - after all, the facilitator must have as thorough a grasp of the situation as any participant. While a facilitator will often come to conclusions which he or she holds back until an appropriate time to discuss them, it is unlikely that anybody could - like a good poker player - completely suppress any expression of their views through completely controlling their voice inflexion and body language. After all, the primary role of the facilitator is to maintain an open environment, and to build trust among the participants, not play poker.

In any case, even if the statements and body language of the facilitator were in fact presented in an absolutely neutral way, any individual in the group might nevertheless perceive the position of the facilitator as partisan. Obviously, people under emotional pressure may perceive events as they want to see them, rather than as they really are.

Yet where a group is fully involved in putting forward its concerns, and experiences the facilitator as sensitive and responsive to them, the group will normally listen to any reasonable input from the facilitator. Ultimately, the fundamental issue is not neutrality, but trust. In other words, neutrality is a relative issue, not an absolute one.

Developing a Common Picture of the Situation

The task of the facilitator is to enable the group to develop a coherent, common picture of their situation, using their wide variety of material. Here "situation" includes the group's perception of its past history, its present environment, strengths and weaknesses, and the current issues they face. The facilitator's task also includes enabling the group to work through decisions which arise from their grasp of their environment, and their opportunities as a group and as individuals.

Unless a facilitator can make use of a suitable group methodology to make sense of their feelings, ideas, hopes, and so on, much of their effort will be wasted. Previously developed goodwill may then be threatened. The following discussion on the process of building a common picture in the group draws on the ToP discussion method, which identifies levels in any process of discussion. The levels are: objective, reflective, interpretive and decisional. While they usually follow sequentially, the order can be adapted to the needs of the group members in the flow of their discussion.

Objective Level

For situations not characterised by a high degree of tension, the process usually begins by collecting a set of objective information to provide a common starting point for the group. "Objective" here does not refer to objective data in any empiricist or scientific sense. Rather, it refers to information which the group accepts as the basic ingredients which provide input into the discussion. Such data may in fact be the outcome of previous, extended discussion which has set ground-rules for further work or conversation.

Objective data put forward by individuals who "own" it becomes part of a larger picture. Information or ideas which develop in discussion often cannot be attributed to any particular individual, but build upon a blend of individual contributions. As the group starts to build on the information, discussion develops beyond the original input put forward by individuals, who may need to "let go" of "their" original ideas and positions. Because this is sometimes difficult, group discussion needs a group methodology which effectively supports letting go.

Reflective Level

However, a group process which only expresses objective information can be stifling. In a training situation, restricting comment to the objective level tends to make participants feel like they are back in a primary school classroom. In a situation of resolving conflict, sticking at the objective level will usually make the conflict even more frustrating. Effective resolution will almost certainly involve expression and acknowledgement of intuition and emotional input.

The group discussion process then begins to assemble a range of intuitive, situational and cultural responses from the group. Reflective questions and images can elicit feelings and intuitions about various material and concerns being dealt with by the group. For example, past incidents illustrating various aspects of an issue may be recounted to illustrate new perspectives on problems. Alternatively, innovative solutions to a problem which has been encountered and solved in a different context may be explained. Further, associations or linkages between various ideas may emerge. Different interpretations based on changed perceptions may be suggested and discussed.

Such material will reflect differences in viewpoint, bringing out and honouring the feelings and concerns of participants. Group members then start to build upon and reflect the mood of the group. As the group starts to build a common picture about its situation, members and prospects, group members usually begin to feel more comfortable in the group environment, with the ability to anticipate (at least in part) the concerns and perspectives of other group members.

Facilitators must ensure that not only they themselves, but also the entire group honour all input from all group members. Individuals or cliques within the group who reject contributions of others in favour of their own stereotypes must be challenged.

That is not necessarily to say that the facilitator or others should immediately challenge any beliefs which appear to be prejudiced. Rather, the point is that **nobody can be allowed to interrupt a group process** for reasons of limiting participation of others, while continuing to present their own perspective. In this context, group process methodologies which enable a group to build on apparently contradictory input play a crucial role.

Interpretive Level

Once the material at the object and reflective levels has been dealt with and pulled together by the group, an overview of the situation, issues and possibilities starts to emerge. The group can then begin to deal seriously with the question of developing a common, coherent interpretation of its experience. Such a rational, committed overview is clearly out of place until the objective and emotional input from group members has been acknowledged and pulled together.

Such a common interpretation pulls together a variety of images which enable it to express a clear interpretation of its diverse range of material. The interpretation provides a framework to explain the conclusions which the group has reached: a gestalt which makes sense of the past, the present and the future. It is at this level that real commitment emerges - based on the real concerns of group members, not on pressure upon them to meet external agendas. Then - and only then - can they turn to making clear decisions and plans for action.

Decisional Level

Once a framework has been built to enable interpretation of the group reality, group members then explore the implications for acting on their interpretation. With a backbone of its key ideas in place, conclusions for action can then follow. A range of concepts and actions can then be discussed with a view to meeting the needs of the group and its members.

Group methodologies which encourage actions which ignore or minimise input from some participants will lead to blinkered responses. Similarly, approaches which encourage "shoot from the hip" action without building a common framework of interpretation will lead to "flavor of the month" and band-aid actions.

Articulating the Story of the Group

Input by participants is crucial because the significance of a story lies not only in its content, but also in the process a group undergoes in articulating that story - something cut short by imposition of a story by others. The idea that individuals or groups undergo a journey of discovery independent of changes in their actual circumstances is an ancient one. As expressed in modern form by T.S. Eliot:

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.

Some facilitators let participants talk, then interpret their comments for the group. When necessary, the facilitator must be ready to step into this role. Yet a better approach involves the facilitator encouraging the group to interpret for themselves, usually leading to dialogue among the group, to create their own interpretation.

The underlying issue is that, rather than assisting participants to build such a picture for themselves, too many "facilitators" attempt to impose what they perceive to be an appropriate story or interpretation for the group on their participants. Telling a group what its "real" experience is patronises and demeans them, because it assumes that a group is unable to create an adequate story for themselves. Further - and more importantly - it short-circuits the development of a story based on the input of the participants, in favor of a story based on the facilitator's untested perceptions of the situation and motivational feelings of the group.

This negative practice of imposing a story or explanation is not only manipulative - designed to support an agenda external to the group against its members - but can also create "double-bind" situations which stultify communication and impede personal development. Under such circumstances, group leaders are not practicing process facilitation, but rather asserting the validity of their own content.

Input by participants comprises a wide range of material from a broad set of perspectives - not all of which will be compatible. The facilitator also may not agree with all the ideas of perspectives expressed. Yet it does not necessarily follow that the facilitator should immediately challenge the input.

All kinds of people develop ideas and plans which are based on different values and perspectives. A participative facilitator will often lead it and let it go - openly, but not blindly. a participative facilitator trusts that when a group is genuinely grappling with reality, the facilitator rarely needs to be a policeman over the content put up by the group. If the group gets too far off reality, the facilitator can ask questions to raise an issue for the group about the validity of its direction.

Many facilitators view their primary task as responding to the values and motivations of group participants (as perceived by the facilitator). This concern frequently manifests as a major effort on reviewing the commitment and values of the group, in areas that affect its task and roles. This in itself can be extremely useful - as long as the focus is on assisting participants to build a clear, common picture of the issues, and their own story about them.

Only the effort of creating a clear picture from the ground up and developing a resonant story of what the group is about can allow old assumptions to be challenged. Yet the old assumptions do not need to be fought against. A more useful, accurate and self-motivating story is likely to emerge when serious, constructive dialogue occurs on material relevant to that story. When this happens, the old story falls away. As stated in previous contexts, emotive attacks on the previous images and story of the group are rarely necessary. Like a snake shedding its skin, the new story emerges from the old. With the shedding of old interpretations and assumptions, new ways of perceiving the world are created. And that opens up a whole new world of choices.

New Assumptions Allow New Choices

In effect, the role of the facilitator is to lead the group in digging below the surface of their apparently objective cultural topography, and enable them to reshape their view of their environment and their task. Metaphorically, the task may seem like opening Pandora's box; yet only such an initiative can address the group's most frustrating constraints, and release its greatest passion. Clearly, such a task is not simply a rational or routine procedure, but one requiring significant vision and imagination. The metaphor of a person with a digging stick seems very helpful here, and may help capture the primaeval nature of such a task. Such a metaphor may help us to escape from our sophistry, as we sit around polished tables and reprocess ideas which - not always, but often - represent a superficial shadow of our reality.

As previously discussed, the process relies on open dialogue to build a clear picture of the common reality facing the group - with an extremely practical focus. When such a group process (or any other event for that matter) addresses people's deepest concerns and hopes, human lives can radically change. Such creative change, in its turn, can support a continuing process of renewal.

FACILITATION WITH NATIVE AMERICANS - Kim Alire Epley

Participation appears "easy enough" in concept, and when you are facilitating a group and using effective participatory methods it may also appear "easy enough" to enable the group's participation. However, there are groups for whom participation is a fundamental group norm, with or without professional facilitation. In Native American communities in North America the understanding of participation stems from deep traditional customs and the common practice of each individual's right to speak and take part in group proceedings.

Over ten years of working in and among tribes, Native American organisations and communities have provided ICA in the southwestern part of the United States with an intimate contact with some of the world's foremost experts in participation - native peoples themselves. It has been in the actual work of facilitating events such as strategic planning, conferences, workshops and doing methods training that a great deal of learning about techniques for enhancing participation has occurred. An example of some of over 40 Native American Tribes and organisations which have received services from ICA include:

- Acoma Pueblo
- Administration for Native Americans
- Blackfeet Tribe
- Chippewa Cree Tribe
- Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
- Jicarilla Apache Tribe
- National Congress of American Indians
- Saginaw Chippewa Tribe
- Southern Ute Tribe
- Taos Pueblo
- Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians
- Ute Mountain Ute Tribe

Premise

There are four fundamental behavioral group norms that are important to focus on in this discussion. These are norms which are very strong in traditional Native American communities. They work together to create a powerful setting for participation among people. They are:

- Establishment of the relationship — integration
- Demonstration — walking your talk
- Acknowledgement — engaging the diversity
- Accountability — creating group ownership

Establishment of the Relationship

Establishment of the relationship stems from each person identifying their specific need and trust of the group. During the course of a meeting on teamwork, for instance, different roles can be assumed by each participant, but the need of the group and trust of its validity are prerequisites to achieving the integration of the participants. In Native American communities, the relationship between individual and group must be established at the start of the group's interactions.

There are several existing techniques to help bring about this integrated relationship; three essential ingredients, however, are common among the majority of methods. They are:

* explicit philosophy -- a statement of need and trust of the group that is built by each participant; this usually happens in the introduction stage of a session.

* integrating language — consistent use of "we" not "you" is made a part of all instructions and declarations.

* confidence in preparation and implementation — knowledge that enables you to structure an interactive setting and dialogue on the groups' "terms". This requires understanding enough about the culture and style of the group to respond appropriately and handle any conflicts that may arise.

Demonstration

The second behavioral group norm - demonstration - brings to life the philosophy of the "talk". It is through this norm that you set the stage for the interaction and participatory involvement of each individual. This is a very subtle but powerful tool for building and mirroring helpful images. The following elements are important in achieving the demonstration:

- technique and method selection
- stylistic approach - (for instance, moving conversation around the group by going in a clockwise direction, in harmony with the flow of the planet.)
- logistics - time, breaks, space
- conduit role - the information and process flow through you rather than coming from you or being designed for you. The conduit role demonstrates your integration into the group.
- reflecting your trust in the group's ability to be creative together; mirroring "radical confidence" perhaps beyond the images of the particular individuals who make up the group.

Acknowledgement

This norm is often overlooked or squelched. Instead of acknowledging the differences of the individuals and some of the unique qualities each one possesses, facilitators often try to form a homogeneous group with everyone getting along and happy to be there. It usually doesn't work that way and that type of process forces the group members against their individual, natural diversity. To acknowledge and welcome the diversity is the more effective way to move the energy of bringing together different elements towards a group result. These are three key elements to acknowledgement to consider:

- recognition of each individual identity and his or her ability to contribute something unique
- affirmation of the differences between individuals as part of the group's integrated strength
- provision of acceptance to use the differences by offering the path of least resistance — the individual will not have anything to run up against.

Accountability

The fourth behavioral norm is accountability. You may be the facilitator but the group must be accountable for its actions and products. The creation of group ownership happens with the creation of the group's ability to self-determine its impact. This comes quite naturally in Native American communities which are historically communal and Tribal. It is important to establish and affirm this norm early in the meeting or the teamwork process. The following elements are essential:

- output of the group — their diverse talents combine in the participation to create an end product beyond their individual capacity.
- objectives — the group needs a purpose that is understood, shared and felt to be worthy of its members.
- energy — each individual takes strength from one another; the group energy can be deliberately developed and utilised.
- structure — the formation of the group roles and responsibilities.
- culture — the distinct spirit of the group that allows for openness between the members and for their support and the simple enjoyment of being part of the creative process together. You hope to be able to create a group culture that allows confidence to be shared, personal difficulties to be worked through and risks to be taken.

The deepening of our understanding of participation through the lessons of Native Americans has provided a means to enhance the use of participatory methods in a degree that is difficult to extrapolate. Those who come from a Tribal context bring a depth historical understanding of participation that spans generations. The challenge to the facilitator is not simply to understand and use techniques which heighten participation, but to assist in the development of participation as a realistic culture that people can live with beyond the confines of the group work.

The Native American Talking Stick Process

"Begin by reminding yourself of your community with all of life. Put yourself in good relation with a living cosmos. Invite in those who have gone before. Feel yourself rooted in a tradition that is older and wiser than your local particular time and space. Feel how old you really are (fifteen to twenty billion years by last estimate). Remind yourself of the authority and intentions that your group has invested in the talking staff."

"Present the topic or question that will serve as center pole for the council. Consider that the fundamental question behind any topic is, "Will you share with yourself, with us, what is in your heart now?"

1) Person with the stick talks for as long as they wish; everyone else listens with no interruptions.
"The one holding the staff is the only one empowered to speak. The rest of the circle is then empowered to listen. At the beginning, you may have to quietly remind yourselves of the commitment to no interruption. Use whatever gesture works. A common exception to this rule is to allow for simple utterings of assent by those who are moved by someone's story, such as, "Ho!", "Amen!", or some other hearty grunt. If the speaker cannot be heard from across the circle, a hand held up to the ear alerts his attention to this."
2) Speak the truth, as deep a truth as you are able. Speak from the heart. 'Quake' before speaking.
"Speakers can speak from a deep place without concern that they will be interrupted, criticized or judged. Thus they can be more truthful, creative and less self-conscious. Listeners may listen free from the need to construct responses, be intelligent, witty or critical. They are available to take information in and not respond, thus relaxing and opening to the full and true content of the speaker's message."

"You are asked to speak from the heart to the issue that is before the council and to trust that you don't have to say it all at once. Your sharing is medicine (that which heals) and endless detail dilutes it. Keep it potent by continually returning to, speaking from, the heart. When you receive the stick or staff allow it to carry you beyond reason - let yourself be surprised by what you have to say. One way to facilitate this is to drop the use of the work "I". Let your story begin, and continue, with "He" or "A man who" or perhaps "There is one in this circle who feels. . ." As you speak you can imagine viewing yourself from the perspective of the Gods describing what lives within that person. Know also that your "story" may be shared in words, in song, in dance, or in silence - whatever is true for you in the moment that you hold the staff."

3. Listen with exquisite awareness of both yourself (your inner voice) and the other (beyond the words of the communication to the deeper experience and meaning). Hear the person's truth; open yourself to it. Give your total, undivided attention to the person talking, rather like a meditation. Listen devoutly with patience. Yield and wait for your heart to speak. All channels open to the other person - to the extent possible without the common polarizing filters we employ.

"The listeners, or witnesses, are essential to the process. The talking staff council allows us to practice presence in listening. You will experience many reflections of the "other-yourself" as you give yourself over to the council - some members of which you may experience creating a safe world for you, others who seem to create an unsafe world for you. The practice here is not to give yourself over to your reactions, but also not to deny your reactions. Rather, you watch them and take responsibility for them. Sometimes sitting as witness in a talking staff council is an extended practice of hauling in one projection after another. You may find someone carrying your brilliance for you. If so, note what you have given him and look for it inside - take it back. You may find others carrying your darkness for you. If so, note that and take the darkness back as yours. The one holding the staff is your guide into the Mystery. Stalk him, let him take you beyond the borders of comfort and knowing. Let his words and images inhabit your body - and just keep listening."

4) Observe your own thoughts. Don't be concerned about formulating a response. Speak towards something not against something. The process is not about agreement or disagreement. Avoid responding or rebutting other's statements or otherwise reacting to another. The process is not about the other person, but rather about the truth.

"The process is not one of making strong arguments for or against something, or convincing one another of right or wrong, but a process of becoming still and quiet, connecting with greater wisdom. When the truth was spoken on some issue it was seen and heard as such - it 'rang true'."
"In the event of conflict or disagreement take a moment to ground yourself, remembering that the earth gives equal authority to everyone in the circle. The staff is passed to you. Allowing yourself to feel the commitment to truth embodied in the staff you gaze across the way to the other voices of yourself present - those in accord, those in disagreement. You reflect on your stance, "To what degree am I now in fear's counsel, armed against 'the enemy'? To what degree am I willing to walk undefended into what fear describes as 'a battleground'?" You see yourself across the circle and speak to him or her, first honoring the unfulfilled need that brings him or her into conflict with life (you) and then you speak what is in your heart."

5) Statements work well; questions often do not, particularly those directed to other members of the circle. The exception is "questions of eternity" - those that may never be answered.

"The questions are as important as the responses. Consider Rilke's counsel "to love the questions and perhaps then we may live into the answers." Return the staff to center after you speak and allow whoever is ready to take up the staff next to continue."

6) Be brief, sparing. Only the core truth, but the whole thing as far as possible.
7) Listen, be silent until there is a thought you haven't thought before. There is a profound difference between restating thought you have already had and thinking - creating new thought. Notice whether others are voicing your thoughts.
8) Feel free never to speak; it doesn't mean that you are not participating. Silence is a critical form of participation. Long natural silences mean the process is working.
"Consider closing the council by honoring the qualities present that helped each bare his or her soul, bear the truth. Honor this truth-saying as medicine. Dedicate this medicine to serve beyond the immediate circle. Give it away."

CHARISMATIC FACILITATION - C. Jago

The personal style or presentation of a group leader can make an enormous difference to the effectiveness of a group process. The skills of group leadership include the ability to build rapport with a group, the ability to present information and ideas clearly, and the ability to conduct interactive group processes. These skills can provide a very persuasive ability to conduct interactive group processes. Individuals who manifest these skills very strongly are often said to have "charismatic" personalities. People who frequently attend meetings, seminars and conferences often routinely judge their impact based on the charismatic skill of those who stand before the group.

Some clarification of the idea of charisma may be useful here. The word derives from ancient Greece, and was used by the Church to mean "gift of grace". In this sense, a truly charismatic person is one who experiences and demonstrates living their life as a powerful and mysterious journey, even in the midst of apparent difficulty. However, the term is more frequently used nowadays to describe somebody who uses emotion and self-presentation to inspire others. Its modern usage is commonly attributed to Max Weber, who contrasted charismatic authority with traditional legal-rational authority.

One common view of charisma focuses on the supposed strength of personality of the group leader, equating charisma with the idea of "forceful" personality. In certain situations, this approach to leadership can be beneficial. In a growth industry - or in a crisis - such charismatic leadership may be exactly what is needed. This kind of leadership style holds the potential to quickly promote dynamic responses by the groups being led, allowing highly focused, motivated action. Such leadership relies on the undoubted gifts of skill, vision and communication of particular individuals, who - with the power of an organisation at their command - can produce great accomplishments.

However, such "forceful leadership" cannot claim to be a solution for all - or even most - situations. This style of leadership, with major advantages and liabilities to any group which the charismatic individual may join, represents a shallow, unbalanced trend in modern organisational thinking. Such a leader sways a group to their own way of thinking, like an evangelist converting a crowd to "get religion". That leader's personality acts as both the stimulus and the limiting factor of the efforts and potential of the group. The strengths and weaknesses of one person, - or, at the very least, a small collection of individuals - ultimately drive the accomplishments of the entire organisation. In this sense, charisma can be seen as a cult.

The approach of forceful leadership relies on the idea that a "strong" personality and interventionist skill by the facilitator allows or justifies a group leader in interrupting and redirecting group processes, supported by energetic persuasiveness as he or she sees necessary to influence the group. More than a few trainers and personal development groups actively promote this view of leadership. Ultimately, the forceful view of leadership puts its hope in the glorification of a few special individuals - typified in modern Western culture by the straight-shooting cowboy and the self-made millionaire.

Yet we live in an age when great leaders have been unable to solve our problems for us. In fact, some of the most "charismatic" of leaders have promoted simplistic ideas which have made many problems far worse. Indeed, in many ways their supposed leadership abilities actually promote passivity among their followers. In psychological terms, forceful leaders protect their distinctiveness by maintaining the passivity of the group. In practical terms, such distinctiveness usually relies on the leader demonstrating his or her own abilities as superior to some other individual or group. All too often, their behavior focuses on always speaking up with the right answer, in a way which depicts others as wrong, weak or untrustworthy. This kind of group leader is more likely to take an active role in "confronting poor attitudes" or "motivating the group", with consequent potential to create problems for the group.

Essentially, an organisation led by such a shallow, individualistic leader lacks the possibility of open, creative dialogue to blend the approaches used by various individuals into something which transcends the individual contributions of them all. To be blunt, the forceful leader frequently constrains and undermines such dialogue. Clearly, this kind of leadership contradicts the real purpose of facilitation, which is to bring forth the insight and active contributions of the group.

Rather, we need to develop approaches to leadership which promote broad-based participation. While not refusing the gifts of talented individuals, **we must develop approaches to leadership which seek to integrate their contributions into a wider organisational and social fabric.** We cannot expect any individual or elite to solve problems without drawing upon a broad base of genuine, active participation. Unless problems to be solved or targets to be achieved are quite simple, no individual alone - no matter how gifted - can ensure the successful outcome of group effort.

THE STANCE OF A FACILITATOR - R. West

The Facilitator loves the organisation for which he/she is facilitating. This means he cares for the future of the organisation, has decided it is worth transforming and that it has possibilities for service to the larger community. Even if he has reservations, he leaves them outside the meeting room as well as his own neuroses about what he likes and dislikes. He resists contempt and cynicism in himself and pushes beyond them in his interchange with participants. He keeps his personal opinions in the background and exerts every means to gain the objective insights of participants.

The Facilitator is a guide, not a participant. She asks open-ended questions designed to elicit the utmost in creativity and insight. She assumes every contribution has an insight behind it, further, that it is her task and that of the group's to gain that insight for the corporate good. She does not give answers, but asks question after question to draw out wisdom, clarify it, build on it with other insights and help the group forge out a concrete consensus to which the whole group can commit itself. She sometimes asks intentionally naive questions, intending to get at the roots of apparent disagreement, thereby revealing a difference in understanding or values and providing a basis for resolution. She assumes that every participant has an important perspective to contribute and draws out naturally quiet people even if that requires asking naturally dominant people to listen more than is their habit. She promotes clarity by enabling participants to contribute their wisdom in short, succinct phrases which convey concise images.

The Facilitator prepares extensively. He then sets a clear context for the task at hand, requesting data from participants on their anticipations regarding desired results from the group's interaction. He has clearly in mind the objective of the interaction, the time allotted to consideration and the needed impact on participants. In many interactions, one experiential objective is for the group to conclude that it already has the power and authority to implement its decisions. He familiarises himself with the organisation's history, current external operating environment and internal working atmosphere.

The Facilitator is concerned both with process and results. She keeps the interaction moving toward a decision. When there is no consensus in a critical arena, she facilitates a decision about the process necessary to produce consensus. Consensus among the group becomes the guiding factor, not presumed right or wrong factions or special interests. She assumes the reality will reveal itself in due time as the group continues its work. She believes that not every issue has to be sorted out at the instant of its being raised.

The Facilitator is a reflective human being. He regularly makes time for the group to reflect on the significance of their work. He demonstrates and elicits humor which releases tension and provides discontinuous relief from intensive work. He facilitates intuitive leaps which utilise right brain capacities and which spark corporate creativity, a highly motivating force which produces commitment. He requires clear conclusions regarding decisions made and ensures objective documentation of the group's work in the hands of every participant, thereby paving the way for implementation.

The above is a collection of facilitation values and beliefs which the ICA has evolved over the years of work with organisations all over the world from sizes ranging from 10 employees to 50,000, from shop floor workers to top executives. It has been and remains our greatest pleasure to train thousands of managers to be facilitators.

TEN TIPS FOR ToPs - Jack Gilles

There is an old adage in computer terminology, "garbage in, garbage out." The same thing is true for facilitation. Unless a facilitator know ways to get people to think in new patterns and in new dimensions, the resulting data can be limited to what I call surface thoughts, or shallow thinking.

ToP is an acronym for Technology of Participation, the ICA's term for methods of facilitation. **ToP** involves, among other things, methods and procedures for leading brainstorming workshops, conversations and strategic planning. What follows are some tips for those following these processes.

1. Generating lots of ideas. Brainstorming in a workshop depends on people generating data in large quantities. But I have seen many people freeze when asked to write down multiple answers to a question, their pencil standing still, unable to get more than one or two answers. The problem is that they are probably evaluating each idea in their head and rejecting those that seem not too good. To break this block, start with a game like, "Name all the uses of a brick (or water glass) you can think of in one minute." Have those that have the most read their list, then ask if anyone has listed uses that are not obvious. Point out the judgment block and repeat with another example. Now get people into pairs and have them brainstorm alternately "25 ways to get to (a nearby place)". People enjoy coming up with crazy ideas. Now substitute the focus question and turn them loose.

2. Priming the pump. Another way to get the brain engaged is to spend a few minutes before brainstorming having a discussion on the topic. Don't get involved answers, instead, get people to talk about "What dimensions does this question cover? How do you personally experience this? or What are some examples that might apply here?" People often have difficulty thinking in concrete images and questions like these will get them started in the right direction.

3. Getting those "good" ideas. In brainstorming, you can be pretty sure that the first round or two of data gathering (getting one idea in turn from each participant) will consist of mostly first thoughts. To get additional ideas, stop the brainstorming and get the group to listen to the list as you read it back to them. Try to remember pertinent comments made when the data was recorded. Then ask the group, "What area have we not considered yet?" Invariably you will get fresh ideas coming forth. In a list of twenty five items that has to be short-listed to, say fifteen, the majority of fresh ideas will come in the second half of the data list.

4. Using kinesthetic brainstorming. Here are two alternate ways to generate proposals for issue resolution. Often people may have ideas for solutions on problems that are assigned to another group. Before dividing into smaller groups, draw up sheets that have the name of the problem at the top of the sheet, one sheet for each problem. Make duplicate sheets so that everyone has a problem before them. Then, giving 30 seconds per round, have them give an idea for that problem. At the end of the 30 second time period ask them to pass the list on to the person on the right and repeat the process. In the space of five minutes you will have a starting list of generated ideas for each team to begin with in their discussions and, in addition, everyone will sense they are part of the total solution.

A second method is to take the problem being considered and write it inside a circle placed in the center of a large sheet of flipchart paper. Then place the paper in the center of the team table. Give each person a pen and have them simultaneously draw arrows with proposals pointing toward the problem. This makes the solution very visual and the work very active. It almost feels like a military maneuver. With 12-15 arrows it becomes easy to select a set of strategies and often allows participants to take tactics (single actions) and broaden them into proposals.

5. Relaxing the brain. Many times people get tired in a day-long session of multiple workshops and discussions. A few techniques which can be used to create a much needed break are: Do a quick game that involves getting up and moving in some way (for instance, have people relocate themselves by birth order around the room!) Take people on a visualisation exercise, for instance, in a vision brainstorm, take them in a balloon ride that gets them high over the earth. Using lots of images of what they can see, have them return in the future and walk around their old (now new) situation asking many questions about what they see.

Play music during a stretch break, carefully selected for the energy or mood you want to generate. Play background music quietly during individual brainstorming time. If you have time, do a coloring exercise, such as coloring a *mandala* or other geometric design, which will give a group a whole new sense of energy and imagination.

6. Moving beyond first responses. Often when trying to solve problems people will tell you the lack of (something) is the problem. Although it may be true, it often is not helpful in getting to the root of the issue. In a sense, they are really giving a solution, not identifying the problem. Instead, ask them, "What is the problem that (say, lack of team work) is the answer to?" That answer is usually closer to the real problem. Additional questions of "Why is this (the situation) existing?" can follow.

7. Engaging the right brain. Most workshops rely heavily on verbal discussions and left brain analytical thinking. If you can get people to activate the right brain they will see brand new relationships and often be much more creative in their responses. One of the best techniques to do this is to have people draw pictures. For instance, in trying to get to the root of a problem, take the generic issue and have people draw individual pictures of the problem. Then, in small groups, have people combine their individual insights into a single picture drawn for each problem. An alternate method is to ask groups to take separate issues and describe them as metaphors. Then, each group selects their best metaphor and draws a picture of that metaphor for discussion. Here, the attempt is to get the group to come to terms with the feeling content of the metaphor and the drawing. This assists in helping to name the issue or contradiction.

A more intricate method that is useful in discerning depth problems in an organisation, is to have people describe the problem in terms of the human body. We call it - discerning the "pain domain". Keep with the metaphor as long as possible. Have people describe the pain, its location and consequences. Again, a visualisation that scans the body enhances this method. Then have the group talk about solutions to that body symptom. Finally, bring it back to the organisation and describe parallel ideas that could be a solution. If you are just getting problems out, have people actually sketch a body on a large piece of paper and locate the problems on the sketch and present it to the larger group. They can even act it out in a skit. All of these techniques allow people to express thoughts, feelings and experiences that they wouldn't think of saying in a more rational analysis.

A very powerful method is to have people draw a picture that represents the personality of the organisation. After presenting the characterisation, have the group ask questions to the picture, as if the picture was a real person, and have those that drew it respond as if they were the drawing. You will find that the discussion can go very deep, very quickly.

8. Moving beyond personal opinions. People get stuck on their own ideas or want to defend their point of view. The technique of writing data on 5 x 8 cards will help people objectify answers and will often remove the identity of the one giving the answer from the collective pool of data. But often a workshop can get bogged down in arguments. One way to deal with this is to stop the discussion and have the person who is arguing, state the opposing opinion in terms satisfactory to the other's point of view. Another "distancing" technique is to ask, "What is our consensus at this point?, or "What is it that is really important here?" This can objectify the situation and cool down heated points of view.

9. Keeping the mind clear. When there are many ideas being brainstormed, often the ideas are not always stated in the clearest terminology; or a long sentence is given as an answer. The discipline of reducing ideas to a three (or four) word phrase sharpens the idea and gets the essence stated. Remember that getting the person who gave the idea to put it into a three word phrase is important. Although others may do it, it will honor the participant more if you give him or her the first opportunity to do so. When writing cards in three word phrases, use large bold letters, clearly and neatly written to empower the idea. Putting a border around cards that are summarising a group of cards will make it stand out as a master item. Finally, using different colored cards for each team is easier to organise than white cards with different colored pens.

10. Reflecting on the results. Not all the work done in workshops is immediately absorbed when the job is finished. Always save some time to have the group step back from the work and reflect on what has happened. Include questions of both the product and the experience. Often it is during this discussion that "buy-in" to the results happens. People get a chance to articulate both personal experiences and how they are in a degree of alignment.

Make the results visible in later sessions of a multi-step workshop programme by creating on large posters, well-drawn charts of each workshop. If this is done, the group will sense the worth and significance of their work. You don't have to discuss them, just having them prominently displayed will keep the spirit of accomplishment very much alive with the group. You will find that participants will individually reflect on the charts during the entire process.

A TIME FOR PARTICIPATION - John Burbidge

Clearly, participation as a mode of doing business is here to stay. And the reason is obvious - it works. and it works in an incredibly diverse array of historical, political, and business cultures. The case studies in this book are living proof of this fact.

In each case, when circumstances were ripe and corporate leadership was ready, participatory approaches to management were introduced into the company and eventually became the lifeblood of its operation. It is as if, below the surface of differences, there is a common water table which, when tapped, rises to the surface and transforms the situation; regardless of the setting in which it occurs.

In his chapter on Russia, U.S. organizational consultant David Dunn touches on this intriguing development. "Whatever the cultural context, there is in the Russian personality a natural affinity for participation and orderly progression of thought to a productive conclusion," he asserts. According to Dunn, the key is eliciting this innate human propensity out of people's consciousness as a "basic and natural way" of being human together.

Two observations should be added to this discussion. First, in today's global business community, there is an international "business culture" that often pervades, and sometimes supplants, indigenous customs. Not surprisingly, in a number of cases cited in the book, those responsible for initiating new modes of participation in their companies are the bright young men and women who left their home countries to earn their MBAs in the leading management schools of Europe or North America. Although products of different historical and cultural systems, these young people have bought into the values of today's global marketplace. One of these emerging values is increased employee participation in decision making.

Second, it seems that participation has been most effective where creative leaders have blended innovative participative methods with traditional cultural patterns. The Indian JK Fibre company is an excellent example. Its training program, Leadership Skills for Participative Culture, involves employees in both modern facilitation skills and in the ancient spirit practices of *pranayama* yoga and *surya namaskar* (greeting the sun). According to the author of the JK case study, Cyprian D'Souza, this "retooling of minds and hearts" combines personal and professional development in ways that are mutually reinforcing rather than divisive.

In the case of the Great Eastern Life Assurance Company of Malaysia and Singapore, participative practices did not eliminate traditional respect for authority. If anything, they may have reinforced it, while at the same time diffusing throughout the organization a sense of responsibility for the whole company. As consultants John and Ann Epps point out in the GE Life Case study, "Participation does not mean that every opinion deserves to be followed. Decisions must be made and designating the responsibility for making them proved important."

The growing acceptance and application of participatory methods around the world is one of the most intriguing aspects of the phenomenon. Indeed, it seems that more and more often, participation is no longer an option but a necessity. In the words of organizational development consultant Frank Powell, "communities and organizations will either aggressively seek to enhance participation or they will see it happen in spite of their efforts to maintain control hierarchically. One way or another, it is happening universally."

Participation, though, is not an isolated phenomenon. It is part of a wider circle of factors that define how human beings relate to one another in our times. It is a key component of the new paradigm of living in the 21st century, and as such, finds allies in other kindred disciplines such as conflict mediation, dispute partnering, and facilitative leadership, to name a few.

Note I said "discipline" in referring to participation and its allies. Many people often mistake participation for something that happens or does not happen, depending on the circumstances or the personalities of those in charge of a situation. But as Laura Spencer underscored in the book, Winning Through Participation, there is much more to the process of participation than first meets the eye:

> Managers who are genuinely interested in participative techniques are no longer looking for a program . . . They now seek a system, even an environment. They have learned, mostly by hard experience, that there are no 'quick fixes' for improving employee motivation and productivity.

She outlines four basic tenets of participation that apply across the board, regardless of the context in which participation happens. She explains that participation is:

- An ongoing, integrated, whole-systems approach;
- An evolving, organic, and dynamic process;
- A structured process involving learnable skills;
- A dynamic requiring a commitment to openness from everyone.

There is one other tenet I would add to this list - participation demands strong leadership. A contradiction in terms, you say? Surprisingly, no. Many who have tried to use participatory methods have discovered this but often too late. As the author and former editor of the *Harvard Business Review*, Rosabeth Moss Kanter, stresses in her foreword to Spencer's book, leadership is essential in making participation work.

"It is almost a paradox," Kanter observes. "Participation requires better leadership than a machine-like bureaucracy. The leadership tasks may be shared or rotated but they must be performed. And one of the leadership roles is to provide a structure for participative planning."

The pivotal role of leadership in enabling participation to happen is underscored in many of the case studies. Time and again, ToP methods have proven effective in transforming the culture of organizations where the leaders of those organizations have been committed to, as well as involved in, the process of change.

Participation: A Corporate Buzzword

Although participation is emerging as a dominant theme in all facets of society today, it is the business community that deserves much of the credit for establishing it as a *modus operandi*. It was in the offices, boardrooms, and production centers of some of the more adventurous global companies that participation first caught a toehold. Drawing on the wisdom of the founding fathers of modern management, including William Edwards Deming, Peter Drucker, and Robert Greenleaf, a new breed of managers began to emerge.

The word soon spread. Fueled by seminars on participatory management, books on organizational excellence, and videos on how to build more effective work teams, participation became a corporate buzzword. From New York to Tokyo, Bombay to Rio de Janeiro, companies began to shift both their corporate philosophies and everyday operations to allow for greatly increased employee participation in all aspects of their businesses.

At different points along the way, particular aspects of participation have taken root. The preoccupation with quality, manifest initially in quality circles and more recently in the total quality management (TQM) concept, is an example of this. At the book display of a conference of the Association for Quality and Participation, I counted no fewer than 25 books with the word "quality" in their titles.

In addressing that same conference, management author, teacher, and consultant Peter Senge noted that this current concern with quality suggests something profoundly amiss with American management systems today. In his analysis, the essence of management is the art of mobilizing the intellectual resources of everyone involved. But as Senge sees it, most American managers still operate out of the premise that "the top thinks and the bottom acts". For him, participation is fundamentally a thinking and learning process.

Others have emphasized different dimensions of participation. Tom Peters, in his book, Liberation Management, highlights the critical role that trust plays in participatory management. Her refers to trust as "the missing x-factor," an essential ingredient in today's business environment, but one so often lacking in many organizations. It is trust that allows conversations to happen, conversations which form the basis of today's knowledge-based company. To underscore his point, he refers to a federal prison where trust has been created between inmates and staff through regular town hall-type meetings and inmate surveys. It's a case of, "If it can happen here, it can happen anywhere."

For CEO Jack Welch of the General Electric Company, trust is also critical, but for him the key is "boundarylessness," i.e., breaking down the barriers that divide employees and that distance companies from employees and customers. Welch calls for a willingness to listen and debate, then take the best ideas and get on with the job. "Exposing people - without the protection of title or position - to ideas from everywhere, judging ideas on their merits" is his message to the modern manager wanting to survive in the global marketplace.

Eliminating boundaries within the organization is a cry echoed by President and CEO of Levi Strauss and Company, Robert Haas. What he calls "the most rigid boundary of all" - that between worker and managers - must be redefined. Addressing the Commonwealth Club of San Francisco, he posed the questions:

> Why can't some employees set production goals? Why can't they monitor plant efficiency? Why can't they hire and fire new workers on whom they are increasingly dependent? And why can't they benefit directly from their initiatives which result in higher profits?

In Brazil, the machinery manufacturer Semco, S.A. has already gone a long way towards answering these very questions. The Semco experience has been a strong motivator for other Brazilian companies moving toward more participatory management practices, including The Mills Group. Deciding that hierarchy was the single biggest obstacle to participatory management, Semco replaced its cumbersome pyramidical structure with three managerial circles and just four job titles - counselors, partners, associates, and coordinators - which included everyone in the organization. Furthermore, the corporation insists that certain important decisions are made by a company-wide vote.

Such was the case when Semco needed a larger plant for its Marine Division. Initially, it employed real estate agents to search for possible plant sites, but the agents were unsuccessful. So Semco's top managers turned the job over to the employees. In one weekend, they came up with three factory buildings for sale near the existing plant. The company then stopped work for a day and sent everyone to inspect the properties. Next, the employees voted and chose a plant site the counselors did not really want. Willing to trust the workers' wisdom, the company bought the building. Workers designed the layout and hired a top Brazilian artist to paint it. The result? In just four years, the division's productivity per employee increased 160% and its market share jumped from 54% to 62%. Commenting on the experience, Semco President Ricardo Semler said:

> We accepted the employees' decision because we believe that in the long run, letting people participate in the decisions that affect their lives will have a positive effect on employee motivation and morale.

But dismantling unhelpful hierarchical barriers does not imply the absence of organization. Rather, it is the basic organizational unit that has changed, from mammoth departments or divisions to small, self-managing teams. One of the most dramatic examples of the effectiveness of working teams is the Ford Motor Company's Team Taurus. Faced with the challenge of the success of their Japanese competitors, Ford turned over the development of the Taurus to multidisciplinary teams that operated by consensus, without interference from top management. Working with amazing speed, the teams came up with a car which has outsold its competitors while giving a much needed boost to the American automobile industry.

Teamwork, boundarylessness, trust, and bottom-up thinking are but a few of the different faces of participation which are emerging in business today. There are others to add to the list. All are important and each is a doorway to a new participative mode of management, a new paradigm in business. But as Michael Ray, who conducts the New Paradigm Business course at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California, cautions, "New paradigm business is not a static template of criteria that an organization either has or doesn't have. It is a process that is in a constant state of development."

Universality of Participation

While the private sector has played a leading role in introducing participatory concepts and practices, it is by no means alone in this regard. Its experience has been closely paralleled in a number of other fields - government, community development, rural development, education, and more. The universality of participation as part of the very fabric of our lives becomes more apparent by the day.

In the U.S.A., the 1992 Presidential election campaign heralded a new era as participation became a key word in the political vocabulary. Electronic town meetings or TV citizen forums became media tools for airing voter opinion. This type of town meeting bears little resemblance to the original New England variety; it has set a precedent for a whole new style of political leadership in which accessibility and listening are key factors.

Political candidates collecting citizen feedback electronically are not alone in this field. In 1987, a San Francisco nonprofit and nonpartisan media organization, Choosing Our Future, piloted a prime-time electronic town meeting with its local ABC affiliate television station. Designed to obtain instant public feedback on a critical political issue, the program combined a studio audience and panel with a preselected sample of citizens who phoned in their responses to questions which arose during the discussion. Six "votes" were taken during the one-hour show, which was seen by more than 300,000 people in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Director of Choosing Our Future, Duane Elgin, sees this type of citizen participation as an essential ingredient of a healthy democracy:

> Involving citizens through electronic town meetings will not guarantee the right choices will be made, but it will guarantee that citizens feel involved and invested in those choices. Rather than feeling cynical and powerless, citizens will feel engaged and responsible for our society and its future.

Not only has participation come of age in highly industrialized countries. Much pioneering work on participation, both theoretical models and practical implementation, has happened in the so-called Third World. As far back as 1976, a United Nations (UN) conference in Nairobi, Kenya, declared that participation be put at the forefront of development. By 1990, it had climbed to the top of the agenda when the UN held another conference in Arusha, Tanzania, on Popular Participation in the Recovery and Development Process in Africa.

The World Bank, which earned a reputation in earlier years as a purveyor of large-scale, top-down development aid, has picked up on the necessity of participation in development. It has begun channeling funds to a number of non-governmental organizations working with grassroots organizations, and has embarked on a "learning process" regarding participation within its own ranks.

But these acknowledgments of the importance of participation from the development establishment came only after years of experimentation with participatory approaches on the part of development agencies and rural people themselves. In the early

1980s, the ICA co-sponsored a massive international project to define the key factors which had led to successful rural development worldwide. Known as the International Exposition of Rural Development, this three-year, global program documented over 300 projects in 55 countries.

Another large and growing advocacy group for participation has been educators from around the world who cry for more effective, more relevant, and more holistic education. Almost all reform proposals have included some component of increased participation on the part of parents, teachers, administrators, and students in the total education process.

The city of Seattle is a case in point. Facing a growing sea of discontent about the state of its schools, it decided in 1990 to launch an Education Summit to gain input and participation from as broad a cross-section of the community as possible. Over one weekend, more than 2,000 parents, students, teachers, business leaders, neighborhood activists, and elected officials turned out at 32 meetings to express their concerns and give their ideas about improving Seattle's schools. While many of the ideas generated in the summit were not unique in the educational field, the process used to elicit them was. It demanded and achieved inclusive participation from all those affected by the malaise in education.

The foregoing are but a handful of the many illustrations that could be given of participation in today's society. Certainly, the private sector has no monopoly on participation. What it has are the resources, marketing skills, and international connections that have popularized participation and made it accessible to a ready, global audience. At the same time, as Peter Drucker and other management analysts point out, the private sector still has much to learn from the human change institutions of the non-profit world when it comes to participation and other key dimensions of modern management.

One of the unique contributions of the ICA in promoting participation has been its use of participatory methods in all sectors and at all levels of society, across national and cultural boundaries. The success of this multidimensional approach only underscores the fact that there is something essentially human in devising ways to bring people together in an open and inclusive way. Participation builds common solutions to the never-ending challenges people face in their personal, community, and professional lives.

Scholar and management consultant Margaret Wheatley in her book, Leadership and The New Science: Learning about Organization From an Orderly Universe, goes one step further. Drawing on the insights of quantum physics, chaos theory, and molecular biology, she makes a strong case that the universe itself is a participatory phenomenon. As she asserts:

> Nothing is independent of the relationships that occur. I am constantly creating the world - evoking it, not discovering it - as I participate in all its many interactions. Participation, seriously done, is a way out from the uncertainties and ghostly qualities of this non-objective world we live in. We need a broad distribution of information, viewpoints, and interpretations if we are to make sense of the world.

Participation: Today's Axial Principle

Futurologist Daniel Bell once asserted that a dominating idea or axial principle drives every major period of history. In the 18th century, it was equality. In the 19th, with the onset of the industrial revolution, it was rationality. For the post-industrial, information age in which we live, he named it to be science or knowledge. However, as Belgian management specialist Roger Talpaert, in *Management Review* (March 1981), pointed out, the axial principle of our time is not knowledge, but participation. "It is unthinkable today," said Talpaert, "for people to contribute to any form of collective action without being able to influence goals and choices."

Be it in the poorest village or plush company offices, the cry to be part of the solution and not merely a victim of circumstances has become one of the defining characteristics of life in our time. As such, participation is not simply a luxury that only some people can afford. It is much more - a basic right of every citizen of the globe today.

Like any historical phenomenon, though, participation needs its champions. It has found those in many places, but nowhere so prominently as in the international business community. Led by men and women who have seen the end of the old order when authority, control, and power were wielded from above, this movement for change has rapidly gained momentum in recent years. A more inclusive, participatory ethic has taken root and there is no turning back.

At the same time, there is still much to learn about participation, even within the innovative walls of modern companies. One way to accelerate and enrich that learning is to examine situations in which participation has been applied internationally. The case studies cited are living proof that participation is truly enhancing people's capacities to live more fulfilling lives and to contribute to the betterment of their workplaces and communities, as well as to society at large.

FROM VILLAGE TO BOARDROOM - P. Tuecke

What do a Westside Chicago ghetto and a village in India have in common with a Chinese banking corporation in Malaysia, a Taiwan subsidiary of a British chemical corporation, and a U.S. fast food corporation? Each of these organizational environments utilized an approach to planning in which they shaped their own future and became empowered and transformed in the process. Grounded in transcultural human values, the process bridged the cultural differences and the multi-perspectives that so often divide groups. An open, 'contentless' process was used that allowed the group to develop their own plans, drawing on their experience, dreams, needs, issues, strategies, and goals.

This is important in light of current discussion in the OD profession about whether the technologies we use in the western world are appropriate in other cultures. In working with national and multinational corporations in Asia, Europe, and the U.S., and with rural development projects in Third World countries, I found this particular process easily transferable to different settings. It is important to be aware of the differences between the world views, thinking modes, customs, and business styles of nations and cultures. The consequences of ignoring them in cross-cultural situations range from embarrassment and frustration to total ineffectiveness and hostility over unintended insults. The attitude of the consultant toward the people and the situation is always a major part of any intervention. What I want to emphasize here is that we don't have to learn totally new technologies to work with different cultures. Contrary to what many people think, some familiar tools are transferable because they empower people at a basic human level.

The transcultural planning process I use was developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs, an internal research, training, and development institute. The ICA believed that if an effective, self-empowering planning process appropriate for use with any community was designed, millions of communities and groups would not have to sit in hopeless situations waiting in vain for help to 'trickle down.' People would have a process for constructively shaping their own destiny instead of being victimized by their situation.

In the mid 1960s ICA took the first steps in developing this planning process in a collaborative effort of the Institute and citizens of an urban ghetto on the Westside of Chicago. The neighborhood was full of neglected buildings, vacant lots overflowing with junk, unemployment, babies dying of lead poison, and angry youths running in gangs. The ICA asked groups of citizens, "If you could change all this, what would it be like here? What do you need? What's keeping it from happening? What can you do about these problems so that your future will be different?" They began to tell us their hopes and dreams - a safe place to live, jobs, good schools. The Institute staff became catalyst, resource, and partner as decisions about need, direction, and action were made by the people who would be most affected by them. Through this group process, solutions emerged and programs were created that met local needs and reflected authentic cultural style.

The ICA learned that a shared vision is key to lasting and effective community change and development. They discovered that when a community sees the interrelationships of problems standing between their current state and their vision and name the major blockages, it can begin to deal with them. They found that when people in consensus create a plan for themselves, commitment and motivation to actualize the plan comes from within the group.

Human Technologies in Planning

The flow of this process is a very creative, human way to approach change, for individuals and groups. It is the way people think in their daily life. "What is it we want and need in our future? What is blocking us from realizing that? What will it take for us to deal with those blocks, and allow that future to come about? What can we do now to start moving in that direction?" This removes the victim stance and replaces it with an empowered stance: "We are in charge of our own destiny." The four basic parts of the process parallel these questions and utilize some familiar OD interventions.

The VISION is made up of the group's hopes and dreams, a picture of what they see going on in their future. The second part discerns the major problems and issues blocking actualization of the vision. Clusters of related problems are named as the MAJOR BLOCKS that must be dealt with. Then an integrated STRATEGY is designed to deal with these blocks, incorporating proposals that both utilize existing strengths and move in new directions. The final part focuses on TACTICAL PLANS and ACTION steps to implement the strategy.

This planning process works well in diverse settings because it is linked with some familiar dynamics essential in enhancing group creativity, commitment, cohesiveness, and motivation. The process is rooted in basic human realities and has seven characteristics which contribute to its effectiveness in groups with diverse perspectives.

1. Planning is done by the people who will carry it out. This process is not what someone outside the organization or community, often a 'Euro/ American

expert,' or top leadership alone thinks is needed in the situation. However, support of top leadership is crucial if not included in the planning group. This approach assumes the team has the wisdom and experience necessary to decide what is needed in the situation, and gives a systematic way of making those decisions. Real issues and problems are dealt with, authentic solutions are created, and people become motivated and committed to action.

2. The process is structured, yet highly participative, open, and contentless. It assumes each person has a piece of the puzzle, a part of the mosaic the total group is creating. This allows the culture of the group to shape the plan. Various methods used by individuals, small teams and the total group to elicit and share data and make decisions allow all to participate equally in building the consensus of the group. The focus of the discussion is always on the data and the wisdom of the group and does not 'spotlight' the persons with the best ideas, most senior position, or most dominating style.

3. Decisions are made by consensus. Many cultures traditionally use consensus to arrive at decisions; Americans have difficulty with it. Yet it is critical for multi-cultural management teams to reach a common ground on which to base their decisions and actions. Many joint ventures have fallen apart because this did not occur.

4. The planning is practical. It is not a case study or theory. It focuses on a major issue that the group faces and must resolve creatively in order to move forward. The future depends on what the group decides to do for itself, not what it hopes someone else will do. Those involved in the planning must invest their time and energy in implementing it.

5. The process deals with the total system and produces an integrated plan. In today's complex world, a system-wide analysis of key issues and multi-dimensional responses to them are necessary to meet the challenges of rapidly changing situations for any organization or business.

6. The use of both rational and intuitive planning methods allows the process to work regardless of the dominant modes of thought or cultures of the group. The particular methods used with this process strike a balance between different thinking modes (visionary, analytical, strategic, and tactical), left and right brain activities, commentary, discussion, and workshop, which makes it effective in many cultures. There is opportunity to reflect on the values, purpose and meaning of situations and options as well as to build timelines and action plans. These diverse elements keep the approach from being experienced as totally 'western.'

7. The facilitator brings a genuine human concern for the organization and the outcome of the planning as well as expertise in process to the group effort. The facilitator honors the culture(s) s/he is working with, but doesn't 'go native,' keeping a professional (could we say 'global?') objectivity. S/he is sensitive to the different perspectives and cultural nuances as much as possible, and doesn't let the tensions get the planning off track or the discussion become discordant. S/he keeps the group focused on the common vision and goals of the session, helping them build consensus every step of the way.

The Village and the Boardroom

Over the last twenty-five years this approach has been used effectively in thousands of communities around the world. In over 30 nations it has helped people deal with basic human issues of self-sustenance, self-reliance, and self-confidence. Though the basic form used was much the same, the process took on the flavor of the particular culture and locale.

Four hundred years ago the village of Maliwada, India, in the state of Maharashtra, had once been a thriving agricultural centre, producing fruits, vegetables, and wines. In 1975, there was very little water, no sanitation, few crops. Over 1,000 villagers barely eeked out a subsistence living. There were Hindus and Muslims and many different castes living with centuries of mutual distrust. The villagers knew about their prosperous past, but it seemed long gone and hopeless to recreate.

Facilitated discussions began based on two questions: "What would it take to have prosperity exist again in this village? What can you do to make that happen?" Slowly and gradually, as ideas began to pour forth, perspectives began to change. Hindus and Muslims began talking together excitedly about how to clean out the ancient well. Brahmins and Untouchables came to the same meeting and discovered they both despaired at the lack of medical care for their sick children and wanted to create a health clinic in the village. Hope began to creep into voices, eyes. What had seemed totally impossible suddenly seemed doable. People organized and tapped resources they had forgotten they had. They acquired loans from a bank and received government grants. They built a dam, a brick factory, and the clinic. The shared vision of what they wanted for themselves and their community allowed them to go beyond their personal and cultural differences and continued to motivate them. Each success made them stronger, more confident, more self-assured. Today, Maliwada is a prospering village.

When transformation such as this takes place, news travels. Nearby villages wanted to know how they could do this. The ICA project grew to encompass hundreds of villages in the state of Maharashtra. Projects were begun in Kenya, the Philippines, Indonesia, and other nations. This effort evolved into one of the most successful micro socioeconomic development programs in Third World countries.

Corporations, agencies, and other organizations involved with projects asked the institute to do this kind of systematic planning. Would it be possible to take this process out from under the tree in a village plaza into the boardrooms and conference centres of the corporate world? Would it be appropriate? Would it break through the barriers that divide people in organizations as it did in communities? With questions like these, three colleagues and myself began working with a modified version of the process. We discovered that some of the basic human dynamics of communities around the world also existed in the culture of the corporate community.

We successfully used the planning process with corporations in Malaysia, with its India, Malay, and Chinese workforce, and in Indonesia and in African nations with multi-tribal workforces. It was effective in former colonial nations, where many corporations are owned and managed by Euro/Americans. It worked for agencies with huge multi-levels of bureaucracy and pulled together the thinking of diverse groups, departments, and geographic regions. It was effective in creating unity between management and labor.

The focus, decided on by senior management with the consultant, deals with any major issue facing the organization. Sears-Roebuck created strategy for the new export department in the international division. McDonald's designed a national marketing plan with their regional marketing directors. The National Sugar Board in Indonesia created a plan to double sugar production in five years. IBM used the process to design new training curricula for planners. Malaysian banks created strategic plans with both corporate and branch management. ICI subsidiaries in Asia used the process to develop strategic thinking and total company responsibility in their national management teams. Time-Life Publishing created a more cohesive team of Asian distributors.

The process is effective because it gives a way for any group to step back from its immediate work and consider its long range directions, and to step back from its usual modes of operation and consider how it works together. People of any culture experience an approach that honors them and takes their ideas and experience seriously, no matter what their role or level is within the company. It creates an open space where new modes of communication and new patterns of information flow are used. All levels of management are able to discuss in a free and neutral place issues they rarely talk about with people they may have never talked with. They may find themselves teamed with a traditional adversary or rival excitedly planning how to implement a vision they both designed. A common mind is created, a common bond is formed, a new synergy of action infuses the whole management team. A transition time is experienced that bridges the way things were, the no-longer, and what will be, the not-yet. A new perspective on the future emerges.

Challenge for the 90's

The next decade holds major challenges for the planet. As we work with clients involved with transnational programs we have the opportunity to help shape their response to these challenges. It is important to use methods that bridge cultural gaps and tap the diverse wisdom and experience of cross-cultural teams. Developing managers with a global perspective, building consensus with cross-cultural teams, and honoring the diversity of a multi-cultural workforce will enable client to meet the challenges of the 90's effectively and have a positive affect on the future of the planet.

(Three Types of Facilitation - Continued from page 5)

issues are threatening the integrity of an established team. Issues resolution for resolving obvious, clearly-defined issues, especially when no long-term relationship exists between the parties.

Limitations of each type.

Sometimes the assumptions don't hold. For example, if necessary skills or information are not available, then a participative model won't work. In such situations, the group requires an expert consultant rather than a facilitator. This example illustrates that participation isn't everything, and can even be a trap. Similarly, the assumptions of any facilitation event need to be carefully checked to ensure that the desired outcomes can actually be accomplished.

What distinguishes a good facilitator?

- Able to develop rapport with a group
- Able to focus the group on issues which the group has articulated as crucial, and work through those issues. This includes holding the group accountable for its own decisions.
- Able to choose appropriate methodologies and techniques for enabling the group to carry out its tasks.
- Acts as a model for articulate, effective, non-manipulative communication.
- Able to act as a guide - to raise issues and ideas which may affect the effectiveness of the group.

Able to deal with the complexities of likely issues and concerns.