

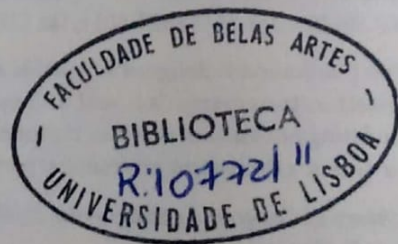
**COMMUNITY
PARTICIPATION
METHODS in
DESIGN and
PLANNING**



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Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning

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Preface

Community design is an umbrella term that also embraces *community planning, community architecture, social architecture, community development, and community participation*. Community design, as a movement, emerged from a growing realization that mismanagement of the physical environment is a major factor contributing to the social and economic ills of the world and that there are better ways of going about design and planning. Advocates for this viewpoint come from the professions of architecture, landscape architecture, and planning. A parallel movement in organizational development, referred to as facility management, includes a number of similarly minded design professionals.

Almost three decades ago, Robert Goodman (1971) attacked architecture and planning and pointed to the ugliness, squalor, congestion, pollution, vandalism, stress, and the destruction of communities that characterize the modern urban movement in America, as well as many other parts of the world. Conventional architecture and planning approaches, rooted in the paternalistic creation and management of the environment by experts, have not been successful in achieving their ideals and visions. A particularly notable vision responding to the urban crisis of the time was that of setting densely packed large buildings in park areas to overcome the congestion of cities. Yet the resulting large public housing and redevelopment projects representing this concept acted as barriers between neighborhoods, and their large open spaces tended to isolate people from one another.

Within the past two decades, however, pioneering development projects in America and abroad have demonstrated that it is possible to build housing that

people want to live in, to give people a sense of pride and reinforce their identity with their local community, to build needed social facilities, and to develop neighborhoods and small towns that enrich people's lives by being responsive to their needs and aspirations. The core principle of community design applies to housing, workplaces, parks, social facilities, neighborhoods, and towns.

How to make it possible for people to be involved in shaping and managing their environment is what the community design movement has been exploring over the past few decades. Starting with designers and planners working with, instead of against, community groups, it has grown rapidly to include a new breed of professional in a variety of partnership programs involving the public sector with developers and financial institutions and working closely with the volunteer sector.

In *The Scope of Social Architecture* (1984), Hatch describes an international movement based on the conviction that participation is crucial to the redirection of architecture and the city it creates. Social architecture is viewed as an instrument for transforming both the environment and the people who live in it.

Community design, or social architecture, is an attitude about a force for change in the creation and management of environments for people. Its strength lies in being a movement that cuts across traditional professional boundaries. The activity of community design is based on the principle that the environment works better if the people affected by its changes are actively involved in its creation and management instead of being treated as passive consumers. Community participation, however, is neither a panacea nor a total solution for social change. It must be studied through theory and practice in order for it to become an integral aspect of democracy. Recently, many public figures have made references to democratic participation with words like *community* and *citizenship* and endorsed concepts like *community building*. New organizations such as the International Association for Public Participation and the Civic Practices Network have identified representative communities and examples of cutting-edge practices in community participation.

Yet at times participation has been distorted to mean that everything has to be checked with everyone before any decision is made. Juan Diaz Bordenave (1994) describes this as a disease called *participationitis*. Participation has also come to mean attendance at ongoing public hearings and constant meetings or donating money to a popular campaign. In my view, participation means the collaboration of people pursuing objectives that they themselves have defined.

This book, then, is intended to assist the development of community participation in design and planning by identifying the most salient principles and techniques for those professionally involved. Individuals who may find this book useful include practitioners and educators in architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, community design, and community psychology, as well as policy planners, city managers, and community volunteers. Because community design is a worldwide movement, this book is written in such a way as to be useful to readers everywhere. Although the examples are mainly from the United States, with

some from Australia and Japan, the processes and techniques are relevant to people living in other parts of the developed or developing world. The technique often referred to as "design games" is a universal language, embracing different cultures and evoking similar responses. In addition to their use in the case studies reported in this book, a number of these techniques have been applied to projects in many countries, including Brazil, Denmark, Egypt, England, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Israel, Korea, Mexico, Poland, Slovenia, South Africa, and Turkey.

The book is organized into several chapters, beginning with the purpose of participation and the underlying supportive theories. Chapter 1 examines community participation from a historical perspective and discusses different and changing viewpoints. It describes the stages of participation, who should participate, and the consequences of participation. "Participation Methods," Chapter 2, examines processes and techniques drawn from the experiences of a variety of professional designers, planners, and researchers. It explains different models applied in the United States and abroad. The remaining Chapters, 3, 4, and 5, consist of building, neighborhood, and small town projects that incorporate participatory processes and techniques. The purpose of these chapters is to emphasize the participatory process and the specific techniques applied to each project. The intent of this book is not to be unduly instructive in the description of processes, inasmuch as most professionals will have to shape approaches appropriate to various situations. However, particular techniques, proven from experience to be effective, are fully described and suggested as a format for adaptation.

The projects described in Chapters 3 through 5 represent my experiences as an architectural design consultant to The Adams Group Architects, as a consultant to public agencies and volunteer groups in Japan and Australia, and for three decades as Director of the Community Development Group (CDG) at the School of Design, North Carolina State University.

Henry Sanoff
September 1999

CHAPTER

1

Participation Purposes

Although the idea of participation in building and planning can be traced to pre-literate societies, community participation is of more recent origin. It is commonly associated with the idea of involving local people in social development. The most important influences derive from the third world community development movement of the 1950s and 1960s, Western social work, and community radicalism (Midgley, 1986). The plans of many developing countries emphasized cooperative and communitarian forms of social and economic organization, stressing the values of self-help and self-sufficiency (Worsley, 1967), advocating that the poor and the oppressed should be mobilized to promote social and economic progress. Current community participation theory suggests that politicians and bureaucrats have exploited ordinary people and that such people have been excluded from the community development process. Leading proponents are found in international agencies such as the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). The emergence of community participation theory as an approach to social development is an outgrowth of the United Nations' popular participation programs that required the creation of opportunities for all people to be politically involved and share in the development process.

Although social work is primarily concerned with the problems of needy individuals and their families, it has also, since its inception in the late nineteenth

century, focused on communities seeking to organize people to improve social services. Community organization has thus become an accepted method of social work, incorporating such notions as social planning. Conventional methods of community work were transformed into a more radical approach, urging people to take direct political action to demand changes and improvements.

The beginnings of a grass-roots democracy in America were linked to the community-based struggles of the 1960s that took place in the context of the civil rights movement, the rise of women's liberation, the anti-war movement, and the challenges of alternative cultures, all of which represented an upheaval of civil society (Castells, 1983). The revolts that occurred in American inner cities throughout that time rarely identified themselves as "urban movements." They tended to see themselves as expressions of black power, of welfare rights, of tenants' interests, or of the needs of the poor, triggered by the disruptive efforts of urban renewal. Legitimacy of this social movement was achieved by programs of social reform known as the "War on Poverty." The Community Action Program, funded by the federal Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) provided institutional support and political legitimacy for the formation of urban grass-roots organizations in support of the demands of poor neighborhoods. Thousands of organizations arose in inner-city areas, laying the groundwork for a major neighborhood movement in America. The failure, however, of these social struggles to achieve substantial change was due to the diversity of issues related to the community organization movement and the lack of common goals. On the other hand, the Alinsky model of community organization tried to organize urban protest, improve the living conditions of the poor, empower the grass roots, and achieve greater democracy and social justice (Castells, 1983).

An advocate of Jeffersonian democracy, Alinsky (1972) believed in pluralism, government accountability, local autonomy, and widespread citizen participation. He held that the main problem with the system was the insensitivity of political institutions to the people, who were excluded because of bureaucratization, centralization, and manipulation of information.

As a community organizer, Alinsky believed that people could not be mobilized around models but could be rallied in defense of their immediate interests. Thus, his tactics were to organize people around a sensible issue and identify a clear opponent. He believed that when people achieve a victory, they feel the effort has been worthwhile. In a sense, the main outcome of the organization is the organization itself, its influence, its representativeness, and its internal democracy. Once this grass-roots empowerment has been achieved, the democratic institutions start working in their favor and economic interests become balanced.

Alinsky maintained that any organizer had to be called in by a community and had to leave the community as soon as an organization was established and led by its own elected leaders. The organizer must be paid by the community, through funds raised by the community, and must never become part of the movement. He believed that the organizer was a facilitator and educator in what was essentially a self-help effort. Most of Alinsky's experiences, however, were initiated by a single

institution: the churches, which, because they represented the grass-roots expression of voluntary organizations, have traditionally been the natural form of popular organization throughout American history.

Alinsky believed in *participatory democracy* and utilized various methods to make it a reality rather than a trite phrase. In emphasizing the importance of citizen action, particularly at the neighborhood level, he stimulated the movement toward decentralization, local control, and consumer power. Criticisms of Alinsky focus on his antagonism and confrontational attitude toward the establishment.

Traditional community organizers operated from the premise that people and institutions with power will never surrender it voluntarily. Consequently, conflict organizers employed events such as rallies and picketing, involving large numbers of people, because they believed that numbers were the primary source of a community's strength. The measure of people participating in such events had simply to be counted.

The consensus organizing model, on the other hand, seeks to establish partnerships between private and public sector leaders and community groups by providing effective ways for individuals to use and develop their own skills and creativity on behalf of their community. This model emphasizes strategy, pragmatism, and relationship building. Consensus organizing in a community starts with the identification and involvement of a local institution to provide financial resources to support the organizing process.

The community organizing process begins with an assessment of community and downtown interests. An assessment of the culture of community involvement includes an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of community groups, as well as the linkages already existing between social service and government agencies and local banks and foundations. The aim of the process is to build community organizations that allow for resident involvement and leadership development, in which every segment of the community has representation.

According to an extensive survey of community organizations initiated by Alinsky, Joan Lancourt (1979) concludes that in regard to issues of housing, schools, business, employment, welfare, and city services, the community organizations were not able to reverse the trend toward deterioration. Community control was not achieved in some instances because the organizations were not multiethnic. When they were, ethnic components fought each other. Often, organizations did not achieve community control but were instead co-opted and absorbed into the management of the programs they were supposed to control. Yet, other organizations were successfully formed on a territorial basis and were able to represent the diversity of the neighborhood's interests. The most successful experiences to emerge from the Alinsky ideology occurred in the 1970s when the new middle class, struck by economic crisis, was affected by the rapid decay of the quality of urban life. The organizations that developed were truly multiethnic and sometimes citywide, based on a broad array of issues of economic policy, ranging from taxes to nuclear power, from health services to electricity rates.

Citizen movements, such as those occurring in the inner cities in the 1960s, are reactions against centralized authority and intractable bureaucracies. This form of grass-roots democracy represents an important link in a representative democracy's becoming a true participatory democracy. In the mid-1960s, Paul Davidoff, a planner and lawyer, challenged planners to promote participatory democracy and positive social change, to overcome poverty and racism, and to reduce disparities between rich and poor. Davidoff challenged planners to become advocates for what they deemed proper. He viewed advocacy as a way of enabling all groups in society, particularly organizations representing low-income families. His article "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning" (1965) presented a new model to the field of planning. Davidoff was instrumental in amending the American Institute of Planners code of ethics to state, "A planner shall seek to expand choice and opportunity for all persons, recognizing a social responsibility to plan for the needs of disadvantaged groups and persons, and shall urge the alteration of policies, institutions, and decisions which militate against such objectives" (Checkoway, 1994).

Community Design Centers

Influenced by Davidoff's advocacy model of planning, many design and planning professionals rejected traditional practice. Instead, they fought against urban redevelopment, advocated for the rights of poor citizens, and developed methods of citizen participation. Community design centers (CDCs) became the staging ground for professionals to represent the interests of disenfranchised community groups (Comerio, 1984). The social momentum of the Civil Rights Act (1957) and the innovations of the Ford Foundation's Gray Areas Program initiated in 1960 were rapidly building a framework for change throughout the nation. The experiences provided by the Economic Opportunity Act in community action agencies followed the Act's passage in 1964, and the stimulus of the Office of Neighborhood Development (part of the Department of Housing and Urban Development—HUD) strategically enhanced the economic development role of grass-roots organizations and the usefulness of professional advocacy networks such as the Association for Community Design. Organized in 1963, the Architectural Renewal Committee in Harlem (ARCH) fought a proposed freeway in Upper Manhattan. In Cleveland, Architecture-Research-Construction (ARC) remodeled hospital wards, community-based treatment centers, and group homes, working with patients, staff, and administrators in a participatory design process. In Tucson, the design center removed more than 100 pit privies from barrio homes and replaced them with prefabricated bathroom units. Founded in 1973, the Asian Neighborhood Design has a long history of work on issues in San Francisco's Chinatown. Today it is a full-service professional planning and architectural service, dedicated to housing and community development throughout the region, with an annual

operating budget of about \$4 million. In Salt Lake City, ASSIST, Inc. continues to provide accessibility design services, seeing more than 100 projects through construction each year. Architects, landscape architects, and planners, working as volunteers in the country's community design centers, complete hundreds of similar projects annually.

CDCs (see Sachner, 1983) are dedicated to the provision of planning, architecture, and development services unavailable to emerging civic organizations or established community-based development corporations (CBDOs). Design center organizational structures range from architect-led nonprofit corporations to university service-learning programs, to private practices and American Institute of Architects (AIA)/community-sponsored volunteer programs. Support for design centers is provided by Community Development Block Grants and other sources of funding to facilitate volunteerism. Services provided by most CDCs include the following:

- Comprehensive, participatory, and strategic planning
- Technical assistance in the selection and financing of development projects
- Advocacy and support for the acquisition and management of housing and community facilities

Over the last 30 years CDCs have been effective in providing a broad range of services in economically distressed communities (Curry, 1998). For the design and planning professions, community design centers have been the equivalent of what health clinics are to medicine and what legal aid is to law. People are served through pro bono professional assistance, but often after the injury has occurred. Long-term community-based planning and visioning processes require linkages between design centers and community organizations, with a full-time commitment to relieving distresses in urban and rural environments.

Many of the major nonprofit community development corporations in the United States began as civic groups resisting development. This community economic development movement has now moved from grass-roots activities to serving as a significant community building and development practice.

In response to the economic and political pressures of the 1980s some community design centers remained project based. Such a center is generally organized as a nonprofit corporation by an administrator through a local AIA chapter, and supported by Community Development Block Grants and other sources of funding to facilitate volunteerism. Other, more comprehensive community design practice is carried out by centers that promote community-based control of local projects with related community improvement activities. Because these centers concentrate on providing a variety of services, they help to generate projects for which architectural services will eventually be required. Community design centers look to organizers, neighborhood planning groups, individual low-income clients, community service committees, and nonprofit boards of directors for leadership in building communities.

Grass-Roots Participation

Although community design centers were the initial advocates of grass-roots participation, local citizens groups are now organizing and demonstrating their capability to acquire power to effect neighborhood change. Today in the South Bronx citizens practice a form of radical decentralized planning as they engage in a 300-acre revitalization project designated by the Bronx borough president. When city planning officials proposed the clearing of a 30-square-block area, neighborhood forums to discuss revitalization resulted in a protest staged by the residents. Long-term residents were outraged at the idea of being pushed out by an urban renewal plan after having remained in the neighborhood to keep it livable.

A neighborhood group was formed, calling itself "We Stay/Nos Quedamos." It started with block-by-block canvassing to explain the stakes and invite people to what would become 168 planning meetings in a single year. Meetings held twice a week allowed 6,000 residents of the neighborhood to take part.

The open meetings attracted citizens, urbanists, and environmentalists to debate neighborhood layout, community facilities, and the need to find environmentally friendly construction materials. Staff from local housing and transportation agencies were sensitized to neighborhood issues as a result of participating in the discussions with the residents and walking the streets of Melrose Commons.

A radically revised plan emerged that retained 60 percent of the existing buildings instead of effecting wholesale clearance. The residents asked for higher densities at several locations and a pedestrian mews with off-street buildings and small courtyards. They rejected a 4-acre park proposed by city planners and reduced it to 1 acre for better security and visibility. The residents also wanted a meeting center with open space for concerts for the community.

In the end, the city approved the plan as the residents designed it. The most difficult part of the whole process, reported Nos Quedamos, was to convince members of this heavily Central American and black community that they could fight city hall. The achievement of this grass-roots effort was not only to gain acceptance of a neighborhood plan, but to do so through a civic process that enhanced the dignity of people who had felt powerless.

Community Building

Federal programs of the 1960s, such as the Community Action Program and Model Cities, emphasized resident participation in improvement programs, in which outside professionals were making key decisions, controlling the budgets, and taking the risks. Today's community building, in contrast, sees resident groups playing a more central role in both planning and implementation. A term used to reflect this trend is *community driven* (Kingsley, McNeely, and Gibson, 1997), rather than the nondefining term *community participation* or the more inward-looking term *community controlled*.

Community building is a holistic approach that focuses its efforts on people. It is dedicated to the idea that residents must take control of their destiny and that of their communities. Community building grows from a vision of how communities function normally, where community members create community institutions that help to achieve their aspirations as well as strengthen community fabric.

Building social capital is the primary objective achieved by residents playing a central role in decision making and believing that they "own" the process as they move away from being dependent. Many case experiences suggest that resident-driven initiatives have a greater chance of success because residents are more aware of the realities of their own environments than outside professionals. They have a sense of what will work and what will not work.

The principles of community building are as follows (Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997):

- Involve residents in setting goals and strategies.
- Identify a community's assets as well as its problems.
- Work in communities of manageable size.
- Develop unique strategies for each neighborhood.
- Reinforce community values while building human and social capital.
- Develop creative partnerships with institutions in the city.

Community building integrates traditional top-down approaches with bottom-up, resident-driven initiatives to create a network of partnerships between residents, management, and community organizations. Through participation in setting goals and developing implementation strategies, residents assume ownership of the process. Residents involved in community building spend their time jointly working on productive activities that address the problems they have identified. This collaborative involvement builds social capital—developing friendships and mutual trust, sharing and strengthening common values. Building social capital is a means of building human capital, strengthening the capacities of individuals and families to overcome adversities and take advantage of opportunities. Utilizing local youth to conduct surveys or mobilizing residents to get involved in construction and cleanup projects helps to develop human capital.

It is important for community building to take place at the neighborhood level, because this allows for frequent face-to-face interaction and the ability for people to get to know each other in order to establish mutual trust. In American cities, neighborhoods of about 6,000 people are quite different from one another, which suggests the need for considerable variation in strategy. Because individual neighborhoods may be too small to address certain environmental problems, larger resident-driven organizations can facilitate collaboration between neighborhoods while allowing each to maintain its identity.

Residents need to develop a vision of what they want their neighborhood to become and how to get there. To start the process, a positive tone can be set by taking an inventory of community assets and then finding ways to take advantage of them in creating action programs. John Kretzman and John McKnight (1993)

have said that a community's taking initiatives from the perspective of solving problems casts a negative tone on what should be a positive capacity-building process. They argue that community building should start by identifying neighborhood assets and finding ways to build on them, still recognizing that serious problems may exist in certain neighborhoods. The community-building orientation should be positive and constructive.

Kretzman and McKnight suggest that identifying assets in a neighborhood or community can dramatically alter the planning process inasmuch as assets occur at different levels, which can relate to their priority in developing programs. Assets within the neighborhood, such as resident's experience, neighborhood businesses, and citizens and business associations, should be acted on first, and assets controlled by outsiders, such as public institutions, can become assets, which requires the community to devise appropriate enabling strategies.

Current Views of Community Participation

A new pragmatic approach to participation has emerged, one that no longer views participation as defined by Arnstein's (1969) categorical term for "citizen power." The purposes of participation have been more modestly defined to include information exchange, resolving conflicts, and supplementing design and planning. "[Participation] reduces the feeling of anonymity and communicates to the user a greater degree of concern on the part of the management of administration. [With] it, residents are actively involved in the development process, there will be a better maintained physical environment, greater public spirit, more user satisfaction and significant financial changes" (Becker, 1977). Community participation, however, has a different meaning for different people and even a different meaning for the same people according to the situation; different users prefer to participate in different ways according to the situation too. Numerous definitions of participation can be found in the literature. Participation is contextual, so participation varies in type, level of intensity, extent, and frequency. In a review of participation literature, Deshler and Sock (1985) identified the following two levels of participation:

Pseudoparticipation was categorized as

- *Domestication*—This involves informing, therapy, and manipulation.
- *Assistencialism*—This includes placation and consultation.

Genuine participation was categorized as

- *Cooperation*—This refers to partnership and delegation of power.
- *Citizen control*—Which means empowerment.

People's participation wherein control of a project rests with administrators is pseudoparticipation. Here the level of participation is that of people being present to listen to what is being planned for them. This is definitely *nonparticipatory*. Genuine

- (PP) 11. Conduct surveys to broaden participation of the general public. Convey results to group leaders.
- (CR) 12. Convene meetings to integrate the views of interest group leaders, the interested public, and the general public. Convey results to all public groups involved in the process.

This process relies on effective public information to allow people to make informed decisions. Too many information campaigns have failed because people were not prepared to receive information that did not support their worldview. Consequently, opening people's mind to change is a crucial initial step. DeBono (1985) suggests that people need to think in a design mode. Rather than determining blame for present situations, where argument, negotiation, and analysis tend to look back, people need to look forward at what may be created. Equally significant is the need for mediation expertise to create effective working relationships between special interest groups, technical consultants, and elected officials.

Organizational Participation

The ability to build collaborative relationships is regarded as the basis for future community, as well as organizational, success. In an era of organizational complexity and change, maintaining organizational health relies on cooperation and collaboration across and within organizations. Participatory empowerment, whereby citizens or employees have decision-making power, is also regarded as a key factor in achieving healthy organizations. This combination of collective decision making with individual responsibility demands an atmosphere of trust. Trust is developed essentially through interpersonal interaction that provides a basis for dealing effectively with change (Ring and Van de Ven, 1994). Face-to-face communication is pivotal in establishing effective interaction and appropriate flows of information, the foundation from which cooperation is possible. Out of this cooperation will develop ideas, decisions, and strategies, all of which rely on the development of consensus. The more group members are involved in a decision-making process, the more likely they will develop feelings of teamwork and cooperation, thereby increasing their motivation, commitment, and contribution to the group.

Pettigrew and Whipp (1993) emphasize the requirement for organizations to understand their environments, pointing to the need for them to become open learning systems in order to deal effectively with the challenges that changing environments produce. Interaction with the environment implies listening, but may also necessitate internal adjustments within the organizational structure. Corporate CEOs are discovering that to implement change they must first know the

organization culture before introducing such techniques as quality circles, a form of teaming and participatory management. Quality circles are different from committees or task forces, because their leaders and members are trained in specific techniques of the circle process, including brainstorming and consensus decision making. The circle itself determines what problems will be analyzed and solved. The quality circle is a participative management tool designed to systematically harness the brainpower of employees to solve an organization's problems of productivity and quality. A quality circle facilitator is similar to a public meeting facilitator (Creighton, 1995).

The elements in an organization that constitute its "culture" include expectations and assumptions about how good members should behave, common language and understanding about the meaning of words and events, major policies, symbolic meaning assigned to the design and use of space, the look and feel of the organization and its members, and commonly held values about what is worth doing and how it should be done (Becker and Steele, 1995). To create an effective design and planning process, professionals must understand how the organization makes decisions, the basis on which those decisions are made, and the role it assigns to the physical environment. Culture is a critical determinant of how well an organization is able to deal with change. It is through culture, largely in terms of attitudes, values, and patterns of behavior, that it can be transformed to better deal with its environment (More, 1998). Organizing this process is referred to as strategic planning, in which its most important product may be the process itself.

Good strategic planning is a participative process in terms of reflecting an organization's vision about how it should operate and the actions needed to prosper in that envisioned environment. Fundamental to this view is the understanding that there are many "stakeholders" in the planning process and that participants have different views about what is, what ought to be, why things are the way they are, and how they can be changed. The core of this approach is that individuals or groups have a stake in what the organization does by being able to affect or being affected by an organization's operations.

Clarifying information and its underlying assumptions becomes a major objective of the strategic planning process. A participative view of the strategic planning process outlined by Mason and Mitroff (1981) involves the following factors:

Participative. Many individuals must be actively involved, because the information they possess is varied.

Adversarial. Opposition must be designed into the planning process to allow doubt to surface and be publicly debated.

Integrative. A coherent plan of action, corresponding to a shared vision of the future, is needed to guide the strategic planning process.

Supportive. Managers must be actively involved in the process so that they understand the rationale for various decisions.

This approach opens the way for people to find and pursue points of communality involving their own interests and those of the organizations for which they work. This approach can also serve to enhance the performance and experience of everyone involved in an organization. People do indeed gain satisfaction from feeling competent, in control, and free to choose for themselves. Personal involvement in shaping their workplace will aid the development of responsibility, cooperation, and self-motivation. Studies in small group behavior produced evidence for the "participation hypothesis." Verba (1961) states that "significant changes in human behavior can be brought about rapidly only if the persons who are expected to change participate in deciding what the change shall be and how it shall be made."

In a classic study reported in the Herman Miller magazine, *Ideas*, Sommer (1979) noted that allowing employees to select their own furniture from sample items assembled in a vacant warehouse resulted in a layout that was decentralized, modest, and personal, with the individual station at its core. The office had an unplanned quality, as the total environment arrangement evolved from the sum of individual decisions. Different employees had different equipment and furnishings and were more satisfied with their work setting than those in a comparable sample of employees who worked in a setting furnished from a single furniture system prescribed by expert space planners. Of particular interest here is that the warehouse building has been denied design awards while the latter has received several. One juror described his denial of an award on the basis of the plan's "residential quality" and "lack of discipline and control of the interiors." In the latter case, visual order and social control becomes the goal, not productivity or user satisfaction.

The argument that employees want everyone treated in a visibly identical fashion does not hold up when employees participate in a procedure that allows them a genuine opportunity to make informed choices. Similarly, the appearance of order is based on the premise that the designed environment is created for users that are more or less identical. Yet we have seen from the results of this and other research that there are many differences between individuals and that these differences should be reflected in the complexity and variation of processes of environmental support applied to them.

A Steelcase/Harris (1987) survey of American office workers has shown that they are permitted much less participation in decisions about their work, and workplace, than they want. Research (Brill, Margulis, and Konar, 1984; Becker, 1988) has indicated that increased employee involvement is associated with greater satisfaction with the work environment and a stronger commitment to decisions made about it.

A poll of the Lloyds of London building, conducted by Becker (1988), revealed that 75 percent of the people working there found the new building less satisfactory than its predecessor, a consequence of not involving occupants in decisions about their workplace. Eighteen months after occupancy major changes were required to one of the most expensive buildings ever built.

In the case of Xerox Corporation, a history of union-management relations had built an organizational culture of trust and cooperation. Although this collaboration reduced the level of conflict, the worker participation program was initially limited to shop floor problems that could be resolved without changing the labor contract or infringing on management decisions. As a result of declining international competitiveness, a cost study team was formed to study machines and work flow, allocations of cost, rethinking jobs and work rules, and increasing worker responsibilities. The team proposed new ways of thinking about problems and new social processes for resolving those problems that led to basic changes in structures and processes of participation—in effect, changes in organizational culture in Xerox manufacturing plants (Whyte, 1991).

There are many ways of involving employees in planning and design decisions. Some companies use surveys; others use structured focus groups to react to schematic design proposals. In some instances employees may actually help design their own workstations by selecting their furniture or laying out their own work areas. The key is to involve employees in decisions they care about and to demonstrate to them that their ideas actually contributed to the final decision. Involving employees in workplace decisions can also save organizations thousands of dollars by reducing the likelihood that money will be allocated to physical design solutions that workers consider unacceptable.

The process begins with the problems currently faced by the people who work in an organization. Instead of beginning in the conventional way with a review of the literature, stating the hypothesis, and finding a target organization to test the method, the process begins by discovering the problems existing in the organization. Working with the members of an organization and diagnosing their problems helps to focus the literature search as well as the previous experience of the researcher/professional. Gustavsen (1985) and Eldin and Levin (1991) describe this notion of the reformation of the workplace as a “democratic dialogue.” Gustavsen goes on to propose nine criteria for evaluating the degree of democracy in a dialogue aimed at democratizing work (Gustavsen, 1985, pp. 474–475):

- The dialogue is a process of exchange between participants.
- All individuals concerned must have the possibility to participate.
- All participants should be active in the discussions.
- All participants in the process are equal.
- Work experience is the basis for participation.
- At least some of the participants’ experiences must be considered legitimate.
- All participants must develop an understanding of the issues at stake.
- Initially, all arguments pertaining to the issue under discussion are legitimate.
- The dialogue must continually generate agreement that leads to investigation and action.

A key component in maintaining a healthy organization in the future is a continuous strategic planning process engaged in daily by all levels of the organi-

zation. Organizations will require a clear organizational vision of how they will do what they will do. Karl Marx longed for the day when workers, through revolution, would own the means of production. Instead, they are the literal owners, because the means of production in most organizations these days reside in the heads and hands of the workers themselves; if they leave, almost nothing remains (Handy, 1997).

CHAPTER

2

Participation Methods

Participation in community issues places serious demands and responsibilities on participants. Although citizens groups voluntarily organize to participate in community projects, the technical complexity of such projects usually requires professional assistance. In addition to the need to address technical complexity, sound design and planning principles must be incorporated in the development process. Without guidance, community groups may respond only to situations of crisis and may not achieve the goals that originally united them. Often community volunteers cannot draw upon personal experiences for solving environmental problems and may arrive at solutions that create unforeseen, serious consequences. Therefore, the management of participatory efforts is important.

People will join if change can and will occur. Participation can function if it is active and directed and if those who become involved experience a sense of achievement. At the same time, a reexamination of traditional design and planning procedures is required to ensure that participation becomes more than confirmation of a professional's original intentions.

Organizing citizens' efforts can take many forms corresponding to different environmental issues. The goal of participation is to encourage people to learn as a result of becoming aware of a problem. Learning occurs best when the process is clear, communicable, open, and encourages dialogue, debate, and collaboration. As more people learn about environmental issues, their decisions will have positive

effects on the quality of the environment (White, Nair, and Ascroft, 1994). One of the fundamental hindrances to the decision to adopt the participation strategy is that it threatens existing hierarchies. Nevertheless, participation does not imply that there is no longer a role for institutional leaders. It only means that a dialogue is necessary between grass-roots citizenry and government leadership regarding needs and resources to meet needs (White and Patel, 1994).

The professional's role is to facilitate the citizen group's ability to reach decisions about the environment through an easily understood process. Most often this will take the form of making people aware of environmental alternatives. This role also includes helping people develop their resources in ways that will benefit themselves and others. Facilitation is a means of bringing people together to determine what they wish to do and helping them find ways to work together in deciding how to do it. A facilitator should make everyone feel included in what is going on and that what each person has to say is being listened to by the group. Facilitation can also include the use of a variety of techniques whereby people not professionally trained can organize themselves to create a change in the environment. If people are to discover the principle of quality for themselves, they are more likely to do so in small groups. Significant changes in people's behavior will occur if the persons expected to change participate in deciding what the change shall be and how it shall be made.

Good planning for community participation requires careful analysis. Although it is critical to examine goals and objectives in planning for participation, there are various techniques available, each of which performs different functions. In the last several decades there have been numerous efforts to accumulate knowledge about various participation techniques, as well as the function that these techniques perform. Citizen surveys, review boards, advisory boards, task forces, neighborhood and community meetings, public hearings, public information programs, and interactive cable TV have all been used with varying degrees of success, depending on the effectiveness of the participation plan. Because community participation is a complex concept, it requires considerable thought to prepare an effective participation program.

Strategic Planning

Strategic planning is a management technique borrowed from the private sector. Poister and Streib (1989) report that 60 percent of cities with populations of more than 25,000 use some form of strategic planning. Basically, strategic planning is an organized effort to produce decisions and actions that shape and guide what a community is, what it does, and why it does it. Strategy is the act of mobilizing resources toward goals. It includes setting goals and priorities, identifying issues and constituencies, developing an organization, taking actions, and evaluating results (Checkoway, 1986). Strategic planning requires information gathering, an exploration of alternatives, and an emphasis on the future implications of present decisions. It can

facilitate communication and participation, accommodate divergent interests and values, and foster orderly decision making and successful implementation.

A strategic plan is a method of developing strategies and action plans necessary to identify and resolve issues. The challenge in creating a plan is to be specific enough to be able to monitor progress over time. To be usable, a strategic plan should have built-in flexibility to allow for revisions as new opportunities become apparent. Strategic planning is action oriented, considers a range of possible futures, and focuses on the implications of present decisions and actions in relation to that range (Bryson, 1988).

The development of a strategic plan requires the creation of a vision statement to provide suitable guidance and motivation for the ensuing process. The vision should emphasize purposes arrived at through group sessions in order to establish a common reference point for the broad objectives of the community. It outlines the key areas of concern within the community and will help people make decisions that support that vision.

The foundation for a strategic plan, often referred to as environmental assessment, considers needs, priorities, issues, and opportunities. Environmental assessment, or postoccupancy evaluation (POE), is the practice of using methods such as surveys, questionnaires, observations of people's behavior, and focus groups to discover exactly what makes the environment work well for its users. A POE is a procedure that involves users in their own assessment of their everyday physical environment. POEs can be effective in correcting environmental errors by examining urban environments in use, or in preventing potential errors through the use of survey results in a project's programming stage.

Environmental assessments have also helped to persuade clients to choose design alternatives they might otherwise not have considered. Some professional firms carry out their own evaluations in order to measure building performance against the original program, to acquaint the designer with the opinions and attitudes of the client or user, and to provide the designer with useful feedback for the design of similar facilities.

Goal Setting

The results of an environmental assessment can serve as a starting point for the identification of goals. A goal is an end toward which an effort or direction is specified. A goal specifies a direction of intended movement, not a location. In this sense a goal reflects an underlying value that is sought after and is not an object to be achieved (Smith and Hester, 1982). Goal setting can be seen as the guiding process necessary for successful community design.

Goals identify what should be accomplished through the plan. Therefore, it is the participants in the planning process who are responsible for shaping goals over the course of the project. Goals begin as open-ended ideas derived from knowledge of community needs. Whereas a goal is the desired general result, an objective is a desired specific result. Objectives should respond to each goal by