MINUTES

AoM meeting 2010 Montréal/Canada, 9TH August, 2010 (Session 706)

PUTTING COMPASSION TO TASK: APPLYING OD IN NON-TRADITIONAL CONTEXT FOR GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

BACKGROUND

This Caucus was organized in response to the 2010 call of the Academy and its vision titled "Dare to Care".

This caucus had three objectives namely:

1. To see how OD theory and tools can contribute more to the conceptualization and understanding of the change process at the higher system level going beyond the boundary of a singular organization, but instead to examine the collaborative change/development process taking place between spaces such as organizations, communities, societies and countries, in order to solve issues such as climate change, sustainability, poverty alleviation, water shortages, violence etc.

2. To interest and involve the younger generation of OD practitioners in this domain of large system OD application.

3. To identify works that have already taken place in this domain and to give credit to colleagues who work at this higher system level.

The initial submission of this session is attached to thes minutes as Annex 1.

PARTICIPANTS

A total number of 17 colleagues participated in the discussion.

The list of participants is enclosed as Annex 1.

HIGHLIGHTS OF DISCUSSION[1] (prepared by Lichia Yiu)

The discussion was very fruitful and pointed to ways of moving forward in mainstreaming large social system interventions into the ODC curriculum in general and into the ODC division agenda in specific.

A summary of the highlights of this discussion is presented below. A more detailed text is being prepared by Steve Cody, pending on his transcription of the tape recorded discussion.

This summary is organized by themes, not necessarily following the chronological order of what was said in the caucus session.

Pathway for engagement in the larger social and development context

- In order to engage the OD community in this domain of work, it is important to find ways to enable people to participate in the larger global issues. Otherwise, issues such as global warming, fight against hunger, alleviation of poverty alleviation and nation building of war torn societies are too large and can easily overwhelm practitioners and novices.

- Examples of enabling approaches could be seen in the Green Movement for sustainable development. The strategies used by the Green Movement involved 1) some one was trusted by the community to act as spokesperson; 2) fostering democratic engagement, and 3) mobilizing resources.

- Global issues are *large, fuzzy, ill defined problems.* It is impossible for the solitary actor to solve large system problems. The challenge is to move a solitary OD approach to collective action in order to overcome the individual's sense of helplessness.

Work needs to be done in adapting the OD field to tackle complex social issues

- In order to develop domain expertise, work needs to be developed/strengthened on three levels: *issues, people, methodologies*

- A few fundamental questions need to be addressed:

    1. What is the role of OD in this domain? How can OD add value?

    2. How can one create conditions which invite others to participate?

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[1] Due to the intensity of exchanges, some of the comments might not be precise nor complete. We encourage colleagues to send in additional points that we might have missed.

3. How to avoid manipulation inadvertently or deliberately resulting from collaborative methods?

4. What are the ethical issues to be mindful when working in this domain?

5. What are the ways to move people so that they got involved? What could be the organizing principles?

6. How to change the mindset from *concern for action* to concern for connection

7. How to organize the informal system where OD know-how is often inaccessible, especially when faced with language and cultural barriers?

8. How does the logic of OD and the logic of politics interact?

- There is a need to redesign and re-configure OD theory – moving from focusing on singular "organization" to a "multi-stakeholders"system. The question that needs to be addressed is whether society would be better served by a large system OD approach?

- It is also urgent to mainstream socially relevant problems into social learning. There is a need to mainstream ODC into other disciplines that deal with global development and change issues.

- The importance of being exposed to "front line"work in large system settings in order to develop adequate and appropriate knowledge and skills.

Existing experiences and knowledge

1. In the classic text book of Chris Worley and Tom Cummings, there is a chapter (Chapter 18) on"OD in other settings". This Chapter could be developed further and stressed more in traditional OD teaching.

2. To learn from the example of the "Heritage Highway" project in Tasmania, Australia.

Development of the future generations of OD professionals in this domain

- In order to engage future generations of the OD practitioners in issues that are larger than the corporate or single organizational concerns, the right context would be at the Master Level in academic programmes.

- U Penn is working in Libya to solve the issues of fragmented health delivery system and to create new possibilities of thinking beyond. Libya has made 40 billion USD available for the

development of the health care system in North Africa. This engagement opens up new possibilities of applying and examining OD theory and tools in this new context of larger social systems.

- The process for motivating OD students could be:

  ■ Starting programme by describing larger contexts right at the beginning

  ■ Developing a vocational expectation early on and breaking the private organization paradigm still prevalent in most established OD programmes.

  ■ Managing the sense of being overwhelmed

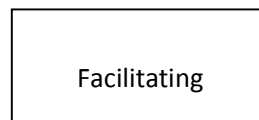 ■ Provide a sense of time – Year end, quarter learning

- There is a need to view OD along the *advocation-vocation polarity*.

- To work on the larger systemic issues, time is essential for the process to unfold. It is a must in building long term commitment.

Redefining the Role of OD
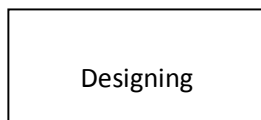
Designing	Facilitating
Defining the issues, Designing the change processes	Convener of the conversation, Facilitating the connections, Building the platforms

- Role of OD practitioner could also be that of a Social Entrepreneurship, working with a social agenda.

Ways forward

1. Adopting a country collectively and starting work to improve its systems

2. Convening a meeting to take this caucus forward – possibly by the Fielding Institute

3. Proposing a special issue for the annual book of the RODC

4. Proposing a special issue of JABS

5. Organising a ODC Consortium

6. Mainstreaming social agenda into the Academy's and ODC's Charter

7. Exploring the possibility of a summer school focusing on the international community in Geneva where technology and experiences of ODC can be shared and expose the ODC colleagues to the "frontline" issues of facilitating change in large system change at international level.

8. Members of the Caucus will receive a copy of the summary and build an on-going conversation through virtual means or social networks.

Meeting adjourned.

Annex 1: Initial Caucus Submission

AoM meeting 2010 Montréal/Canada

Dare to Care: Passion and Compassion in Management Practice and Research

CAUCUS THEME: **More AoM-ODC in International Development Cooperation**

PUTTING COMPASSION TO TASK: APPLYING ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT AND CHANGE IN DEVELOPING AND LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES TO HELP REDUCE POVERTY, SUPPORT EMPOYMENT CREATING AND STRENGTHEN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Very few members of the Academy of Management participate in international development activities in developing and least developed countries (Asia, Africa, Latin America). Hence, important contributions to poverty reduction and peace making are domains of activities occupied by representatives of other academic disciplines, for instance for development work (macro-and micro economics); peace, reconstruction and nation building (political science and military studies); reforms of international organizations (fiduciary and public accountants); and international cooperation (diplomacy and international relations).

AoM colleagues typically work in more specialized fields, often at a relatively low micro-level. That includes for instance gender issues, team development, human resource development or prevention of discrimination at work (e.g., linked to Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, illiteracy, and other forms of social and organizational exclusion). Much less, if not completely absent, are participation of ODC and management experts in designing institutional development projects, capacity building programmes at levels of regions, central government, and conceptualizing policies to prevent violence, reduce poverty, increase cross-ethnic cooperation, and foster sustainability of the global system.

Working at larger societal level in developing and least developed countries means applying organizational theory to large-system change settings which are characterized by multi-stakeholder, multi-institutional, and highly international. Such cutting edge work means knowing how to manage the interfaces between government ministries and departments, business organizations, multi-lateral agencies, and Non-government organizations. Complexity theory offers valuable insights to help practitioners working in these large-system projects to deliver much-needed professional help. Applied for instance to nation building and rebuilding in Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, Yemen, and Ethiopia, important development work should not be left to military commanders trained to conduct war but who are arguably inept in reconstructing societies and working with the psychology of human beings.

Leading figures of OD such as Kurt Lewin and other social psychologists at the New School of Social Research in New York City did not narrow their teaching and consulting focus to intra-organizational private sector work as is the case predominantly with AoM members of the ODC division. The founding generation of OD focused on individuals, groups, organizations AND the larger social settings including the embedded political and administrative environment. OD in its current North American form appears too much intra-organizationally oriented as if the exchange with the larger social environment is irrelevant.

Concern for others has been part of the OD profession. This idealism was captured in the *vision* statement published by the OD Network, "OD is a field central to creating effective and healthy human systems in an inclusive world community". This inclusive world community is increasingly finding it overwhelming to tackle the challenges of poverty, disease, violence, disregard of human rights and global warming. However, most of the OD curricula and teaching programmes continue to focus primarily on change management in single organizations and mostly in the private sector of our economies. It is time for the ODC members to step out and interact more actively with the broader systemic issues of our societies! It is equally about time for the ODC educators to put more emphasis on the international challenges confronting the global commons!

Rupert Chisholm (1998) contributed pioneering steps towards an enlarged scope of OD. David L. Brown and Ken Murrell have extensive experience working on such larger scales in developing and least developed countries for NGOs, governments and public sector organizations. Other colleagues have similar experiences including non-American scholars such as Vijay Padaki (2003) or Lichia Yiu (2010) or Raymond Saner (2004) or Stewart Carr (2008) and several other colleagues who will be present to discuss these issues at the Montréal meeting in order to step into the larger realm of development which encompasses an inclusiveness of higher aggregates of human systems and complexity.

Brown, David, L; (1983), <u>Managing Conflict at Organizational Interfaces</u>", Addison Welsley, USA

Chisholm, Rupert F. (1998). Developing Network Organizations: Learning from Practice and Theory. Addison Wesley. USA

Padaki, V. & Vaz, M. (2003). *Institutional Developmentin Social Interventions: Towards interorganizational effectiveness,* Sage Publications, New Delhi & Thousand Oaks, CA.

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Murrell, Kenneth; Duffield, Robert; Management Infrastructure for the Developing World: A Bibliographic Sourcebook , Kumarian Press, USA.

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Malcolm MacLachlan, Stuart C. Carr, & Ishbel McWha, (2008); Interdisciplinary Research for Development:A Workbook on Content and Process Challenges. Global Development Network, New Delhi, 2008

Caucus Leader:

Professor Raymond Saner teaches inter-institutional negotiations, trade and development in the Master of Public Affairs programme of Sciences Po, Paris. Raymond is Reviewer for the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences*, the *Journal of Managerial Psychology* and *Public Organization Review*. He has been Member of the Executive Board of the Organization Development and Change Division in the Academy of Management.

AoM members supporting this Caucus:

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Annex 2

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