



71st Annual Meeting
SAN★ANTONIO
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Professional Development Workshop

“Adapting Organization Development and Change to Tackle Complex [West-East] Social Issues”

Organised by ODC Division

Date : Saturday, 13th August 2011

Time : 12-18 hours

Venue : Grand Hyatt Conference Facility

Abstract

This PDW examines how organization development and change (OD&C) theories and practices provide adequate guidance to solve problems that are of large scale (beyond single organization focus) and are culturally complex. We broadly focus on West-East concerns by engaging in critical discussion and evaluation with applied scholars working in China, Lebanon, Turkey, Switzerland, and the Nordic region. We ask and answer based on direct experience the following and other questions within each systemic cultural domain: Which OD&C theories are sufficiently robust to adequately manage complex cultural problems? Which OD&C methodologies effectively and appropriately promote and involve participation by stakeholders? How can one create conditions which invite others to participate? Which OD&C methodologies are authentically and culturally collaborative? How does one avoid manipulation inadvertently or deliberately resulting from collaborative methods? What are the ethical issues to be mindful of and what ethical strategies can be applied when culturally-dependent ethical issues emerge? What OD&C theories and practices are most appropriate to support a change in the mindset from concern for action to concern for connection, and from organizational design for users to design by users?



Adapting Organization Development and Change to Tackle Complex [West-East] Social Issues

The metaphor, “culture eats strategy for breakfast” is actually an understatement of the power and influence of culture in all its forms - including but not limited to geographic, ethnic, societal, organizational social, technological, and discipline based – over efforts to direct or manage organization change in our globally diverse and rapidly changing organizations and communities. Despite studying and addressing organization culture for decades, organization development and change (OD&C) academic programs, professional communities, and consultants (internal and external) are often challenged to provide appropriate theories, models and effective practices for large-scale social change particularly in non-Western organizations and communities undergoing development and change because most existing theories focus on Western organizations and commonly Western corporate culture. This has coproduced several challenges including a gap in basic understanding among those in the West about the nature of the challenges for managing development and change in the much of the developing and non-Western/European world.

Within the academic community of more than 500 MBA programs, particularly those located outside North America, many offer global or international management studies courses, concentrations and degrees. Student and faculty exchanges are often

encouraged between cities/countries which allows some degree of immersion and improved understanding of cultural differences affecting development and change.

Unfortunately, there are fewer OD&C graduate programs, perhaps less than 60 worldwide, and few outside North America. Most OD&C programs are small and housed across several different academic disciplines (e.g., Schools of Business, Education, Public Policy, Arts and Sciences, etc.). Few have formal international student or faculty exchanges and there is little organized information sharing.

Journal of Applied Behavioral Science (JABS) in 2007 proposed a special volume co-edited by Jean E. Neumann (UK), Chung-Ming Lau (China), and Christopher Worley (US) concerning the emerging field of international OD&C by inviting papers “focused on how organizational development and change is managed in international contexts.” The call for papers specifically sought those that “(a) show how OD&C principles and practices proved readily applicable in international contexts or (b) uphold the idea that application without modification proved unethical or otherwise problematic outside of U.S. or European cultures.”

When the JABS special edition was published in 2009, the editors provided the following description of their preexisting assumptions and opinions:

We considered that there wasn't an accepted definition for international OD&C, that the theory had not been codified, that standards for practice in the field needed development, and so on. Much extant research tended to neglect the international context per se in reporting such projects. It seemed that little research actually helped practitioners to engage in international OD&C in any substantial way; most were left to make it up as they went along, perhaps drawing on international business literatures.

Unfortunately, the outcomes were less than hoped for. The editors reported that only 18 papers were received of which 15 were by authors located in the US, Europe or

Australia, and 12 were by academics rather than scholar practitioners. While some papers were about organization development, others were about business strategy change with some concern paid to the performance or interests of people. The special edition contained only 6 papers.

Much was learned from this effort including that international OD&C seems to have some of the same definition concerns as traditional OD&C in that there was little consensus of the meanings in terms of purpose, practice or focus for the words international, organization development, and change. For example, is international only appropriate if at least two countries or cultures are involved?

The editors concluded that several issues seemed particularly relevant to understanding the dynamics of international OD&C. One is position or orientation: The closer in terms of identity or connectivity to the host country/culture is the person(s) conceptualizing and/or leading the development or change actions and outcomes, the higher the probability that OD&C processes will be adapted to the environment. Second is the level of analysis. When comparisons are between or cross-site rather than within a country or culture, it is easier to understand and see the effects of culture on development and change. Third concerns the type of change and its national, regional and cultural boundaries. Since the frameworks and approaches used during international OD&C activities vary in many dimensions, clearly defining the scope, characteristics, and boundaries is critical in order to appreciate what changes occur, and how they were produced.

At the 2009 AOM annual meeting, a symposium on international OD&C brought together scholar practitioners from Japan, Turkey, and the Netherlands to discuss many of the issues identified in the JABS 2009 special issue. This program was similar to a

recent call for information for a “Multicultural Zone” in the International Organization Development Association website (<http://iodanet.org/scripts/comm.asp?commid=4>). To improve knowledge sharing and principle development, IODA offered a challenge to members (<http://iodanet.org/scripts/GetDoc/onedoc.aspx?commid=4&doc=11793>):

Be the first to start providing information by simply downloading it on your Country Page in the Multicultural Zone of the website. What are your current projects and work issues? Which challenges is your country facing? How do you work together locally in your regional network? Invite people to network. Find out who does similar projects in other parts of the world!

The 2009 symposium examined examples of how OD&C emerged, has changed based on national culture, is practiced in non-Western communities, and is most effectively taught to students were shared. Specifically, the following four questions were addressed:

1. What academic and practice OD&C changes are emerging within the international landscape where you practice and from your perspective?
2. What classical OD&C theories, models, and approaches seem relevant to development and change in your country, and why? Which are less applicable and why?
3. What new OD&C theories, models, and approaches are emerging? Are they unique or blends of the old? To what degree are they being shared and evaluated?
4. What should (graduate) students of OD&C in your country be taught about theories, models and approaches based on your experiences and expectations?

At the 2010 AOM meeting, a caucus was organized to discuss many of these same concerns. The invitation, in part, read:

Most of the OD&C 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 OD&C members to step out and interact more actively with the broader systemic issues of our societies! It is equally about time for OD&C educators to put more emphasis on the international challenges confronting the global commons!

The caucus attracted approximately two dozen scholars and scholar practitioners to discuss the following three topics:

1. To what degree and how can OD&C theory and tools contribute more to the conceptualization and understanding of the change process at the higher system level going beyond the boundary of a single organization, and instead examine the collaborative change/development process taking place between the spaces such as organizations, societies and countries in order to solve issues such as climate change, sustainability, poverty alleviation, water shortages, violence, etc.?
2. To what degree and how can more interest and involvement of the younger generation of OD&C practitioners in this domain of large system application be managed?
3. To what degree and how can we identify works that have already taken place in this domain and give credit to colleagues who work at this higher system level?

The discussion was very fruitful and pointed ways of moving forward in mainstreaming large social system interventions into OD&C curricula in general, and into AOM's OD&C division agenda in particular. Participants agreed that more discussions and meetings are needed amongst OD&C and other division members.

Leaders of the 2009 and 2010 AOM sessions have collaborated to propose for the 2011 AOM meeting a professional development workshop (PDW). We build on what was learned and offer new education that will expand our understanding. The objective is to continue to offer direct case examples of international OD&C which adheres to the advice offered by the editors of the JABS special edition. To this end we have assembled scholar practitioners from China, Turkey, Egypt, Switzerland, and the Nordic region to present research and experience in development and change. The PDW is facilitated by a Canadian.

Topics and Presenters

We address three interdependent issues within complex large international OD&C initiatives. One is mindset including premises and assumptions for development and change within an organization or community. Across and between cultures we discuss fundamental frameworks such as concern for action, concern for connection, design for users and design with and by users. A second issue is the selection and implementation of OD&C methodology. We specifically examine and compare across cultures the degree of stakeholder participation, particularly authentic collaboration, and how participation affects and is affected by culture. The third issue is strategy for which we examine the ethics and moral assumptions held by leaders, followers and others within each country/culture.

From the Western/European perspective we have selected Raymond Saner who teaches Organization and International Management at Sciences Po (Paris) and the University of Basle (Switzerland). He is director of Diplomacy Dialogue a consulting company in Geneva. As well, Joyce Falkenberg from University of Agder (Kristiansand,

Norway) will join. Joyce is engaged in consulting in Norwegian organizations and communities located domestically and Nordic-directed organizations in other countries.

From the “Middle” East we have Oguz Baburoglu who teaches strategy and organization development at Sabanci School of Management (Istanbul) and is principal of Arama Participatory Management consultancy in Istanbul, Turkey. Joining is Yehia Kamel, an Egyptian national, who teaches management at the School of Business at the American University in Beirut (Lebanon) and does private consulting in organization learning and development, organizational assessment, strategic change management, and culture change.

From the “Far” East our presenter is Lichia Yiu who teaches at the National University of Science & Technology and at the National Changchi University in Taipei, Taiwan. She is also founding partner of Organisational Consultants Ltd established in Hong Kong in 1989.

Introducing the speakers and facilitating the engagement of the speakers with the attendees to the PDW will be Larry Starr who teaches organization development and change, and decision making and problem solving at the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia). Born and educated in Canada, he is also executive director of Organizational Dynamics at Penn collaboration and outreach which manages consulting and educational partnership projects between external organizations and the University of Pennsylvania.

The PDW format begins with introductions and an overview followed by each presenter responding to the first of the three central issues. During each presentation, facilitation will be used for clarification. Upon conclusion of the issue by all presenters,

facilitated discussion among all in the PDW would ensue concerning how differences between classic and international development and change are to be understood and managed. This would be repeated for the other two issues.

Scribes will capture the key discussion points by the presenters and the attendees. Recommended academic literature and practice materials suggested by those in attendance that would be relevant to improved understanding will be identified and noted. Challenges and absences as topics for research and scholarship will emerge.

Format

Our ideal PDW would run all day (with a break for lunch) and would allow the estimated 390 minutes to be used as noted below. We might also be able to do a reduced version in a half-day (240 minutes) realizing less interaction among those attending.

Starr – Facilitation	R. Saner – Switzerland	J. Falkenberg – Norway	O. Baburoglu – Turkey	Y. Kamel – Lebanon	L. Saner-Yiu – China
Introductions 15 min	Background, assumptions, and perspectives	Background, assumptions, and perspectives	Background, assumptions, and perspectives	Background, assumptions, and perspectives	Background, assumptions, and perspectives
Primary Case 15-30 min	System development for advocating pro-job development and poverty reduction strategy in the international community	Norwegian NGO activities in alleviating poverty, and the stakeholder power from both the NGO side as well as the "melon ladies"	Site management plan for the historic peninsula of Istanbul through multi-stakeholder participation to preserve its status on UNESCO's world heritage list	Privatization of large enterprises as a driver of change in the Middle East	Re-engineering Taiwan's labour market

Issue 1: Mindset premises and assumptions 45 – 90 min.					
Issue 2: Selection and implementation of methodology 45 – 90 min.					
Issue 3: Degree of stakeholder participation 45 – 90 min.					
Discussions 60 min.					
Closure 15 min.					
Total time: 240 – 390 min					

References

Neumann, J.E., Lau, C-M, and Worley, C.G. (2009). Ready for Consideration: International Organization Development and Change as an Emerging Field of Practice. JABS, 45(2), 171-185.