**Eliminating Poverty through Open Systems Design**

**&**

**Proactive Adaptability (Sustainable Change and Development)**

Given the millions of poor around our planet while wealth and technology have advanced tremendously, it is simply unacceptable to continue business as usual. Hence,  the goal to eradicate poverty is more critical than ever. Its achievement is based upon the commitment of those who can make a difference (e.g., decent human beings, with high moral and ethical values, behind private and public offices). However, a radical new approach is required to achieve it and sustain it. This radical new approach represents a major effort from what the development community has done in the past, namely, a truly participative methodology.

The relationship between good governance and eradicating extreme poverty is obvious. The goal of ending extreme poverty is directly linked to the support and interaction with democratic societies.

For over 60 years Open Systems Design (**OSD)** has been developing a solid and consistent theoretical framework for reliable, practical, and **sustainable** transformation towards truly participative democracies. This process involves going back to the basics of people within societies that are influenced by increasing relevant uncertainties and system discontinuities.

**OSD** explains and deals with the key problems that cause extreme poverty:

1) How to turn unsustainable development efforts into sustainable ones.

2) How to maintain leadership and increase the sustainability index of development projects turning apathetic stakeholders into committed, pro-active and innovative people.

It suffices, however, to address the first problem for the second to be solved by default!

By combining analysis of hard environmental realities with human ideals, **OSD** methods produce systems called ‘**pro-active-adaptive’ (i.e., ideal-seeking)**that can identify weak spots or inefficiencies before these reveal by themselves. These proactive-adaptive systems not only focus on the conditions under which people interact and the ‘why’ rather than the ‘what’ or ‘who’ (Proactive Safety Culture) but also on producing mutually beneficial relationships between system and environment, thus becoming **sustainable**.

OSD Methods

The **Search Conference** (SC) is a flexible method for participative strategic planning, for any type of society. It enables people to plan their most desirable and achievable future with responsibility for the actions they have decided will get them there. Unlike other methods, each SC is uniquely designed by those who have to live with the consequences of their decisions and for their specific purposes.

The **Participative Design Workshop** (PDW) is an effective and efficient method for transforming whole organizations from bureaucratic, error-amplifying structures to pro-actively adaptive, error-reducing systems. It differs from other approaches because it confronts the most fundamental dimension of change which is the location of responsibility for coordination and control, effectively turning**rhetoric on responsibility into positive action**.

*Through the SC & PDW it is possible to create organizations in which individuals can fully utilize their mind, heart and spirit; where their values, expectations and highest ideals are embodied in the structure, mission and vision of their organization and, thus, eradicating extreme poverty.*

**T**he Search Conference & Participative Design Workshop would enable development initiatives to transform and continually reinvent themselves (inside & out), with the active support of senior management, to improve performance via learning processes that produce ongoing proactive-adaptive relationships within the project management and between the project management and its ever changing and uncertain external environment.

JC Wandemberg Ph.D.  
[http://www.sustainablesystemsinternational.Org](http://www.sustainablesystemsinternational.org/)