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EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION

Samar Island, Philippines
Photo: Brian Bonnell
**Rethinking the Participatory Approach – Engaging Youth in an Effective Way**

Research has shown that participatory practices could be effective when used genuinely. Participatory approaches, however subtly, have the capability of structurally dislocating local institutions as well as their existing political, social and economic functions. It may be the case that because participatory approaches focus all too often on Eurocentric notions of result management, existing socio-political practices as well as historical circumstances in the south stifle the well meaning intentions of development organisations from the north. This assumption and its “tyrannical” results have been the bane of participatory development discourse in recent times (Cooke and Kothari, 2001). As participatory development discourse emerges from this impasse there is a clear need to engage youth in the participatory process in a way that eliminates this bias. The unique advantage of engaging youth at this time is that the effects of globalization to a large extent have in many spheres integrated the ontological outlook of many in younger generations. While older generations hold very traditional, distinct cultural views, some in younger generations display more sympathetic attitudes towards cosmopolitanism. Young people these days, by virtue of increasing education, have a better and broader understanding of the world than their parents. This is not to say that youth do not rebel against what some have termed the ‘westernisation’ of the world’s cultures (Fantu, 2002); it is, however, obvious that a large number of youth are more involved and are (generally speaking) more willingly to engage with people from other cultures, question ineffective traditional practices and participate in global affairs.

**Is the participatory approach essentially Eurocentric?**

It is important to outline the complexities of the participatory approach, seen by some as structurally embedded in Eurocentric ideology and thus a new way of perpetuating old systems of engagement in development work. The change in language and/or style does not reflect the participatory methods or assumptions the approach upholds in theory (Lavan, 2005). Though cultural norms and attitudes have been shaped and reshaped by the interaction between peoples and events for centuries, following the Industrial Revolution and the Age of Enlightenment – events that fuelled the development of scientific and economic thought in modern society – certain Eurocentric ideas have been paraded as “international”, liberal, feasible and objective. Richard Falk (2002: p20-23) argues that “Westphalian Citizenship” has become a resilient reality in contemporary society; he points out that it is impossible to deny the centrality of the concept of Nation State for example and its power and influence in world politics, trade and cultural recognition. This is true even in “non-western cultures”; for example, Sub-Saharan Africa where “Westphalian structures” have broken down under the pressure of weak or failed states. John Gray (1999: p2) also asserts that enlightenment thinkers never doubted that the future for every nation was to accept some version of Western values and their accompanying institutions. This notion makes it difficult for young people in non-western cultures to develop conceptual frameworks (based on their own analysis and cultural understanding) for socio-political and economic participation in today’s world. Many cultures around the world are already making

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procrustean adjustments in view of the gripping effects of modernisation. However, this change in language from Governments and Non Governmental Organisations in the south may be due in part to their perceived subservient position in the international political sphere. Such change therefore does not reflect practice or amount to much in transformational depth.

Jack Donnelly suggests that the increasing modernisation of non-Western peoples is an effective foundation for the development of universal principles and values. Western concepts are being embraced the world over and people are rapidly adopting and adapting to new ways of life; abandoning “outdated” cultural beliefs. What Donnelly observes as shifts towards a universal culture (implicitly “Westernisation”), others call “social hybridising”. Awoniyi (1975: p364) explains that these superficial tendencies towards modernisation in Yoruba land, for example, create mere social hybrids; people whose values juxtapose their cultural beliefs and the demands of western thought processes. Recent ideological clashes resulting from the victory of Hamas in Palestinian elections or the Danish newspaper reports depicting Prophet Mohammed of Islam further illustrate this tension. The youth seem to be at the centre of the ideological backlash. However, they also possess the resources, energy and enthusiasm to underpin structural change.

Engaging youth in the South
If Africa in fact, where African philosophy has been described as pre-rational and pre-logical (Gbadegesin, 1990) because traditional beliefs tend to not to stand the test of rigorous scientific scrutiny, youth tend to investigate and, in some cases, adopt western principles. Yet, African youth still adhere to cultural practices and belief in spite of adopting western style clothes, music or cuisine. Kola Abimbola (2001: p2) argues, “what distinguishes African ethics from Western ethics is the role of religion in African thought”. Consequently, Africans do not only take profound interests in their interpersonal relationships but also in their relationships with supernatural beings. The ethical concept of many African societies thus expands beyond the contemporary to the realm of the inanimate and the cosmos itself. It is also largely accepted that African traditions, cultures and religions have deep roots and perpetual ties with their philosophical positions. The “ubuntu” framework, which more or less underpins African community life, seeks to promote a form of cultural socialism. Participatory processes undermine such socio-political considerations all too often. The concept of one humanity, shared belonging and impending nemesis for those who oppose constituted moral ideology is diametrically opposed to individualistic capitalist structures. Unfortunately, it may appear that a certain philosophical anthropology of individualistic humanism justifies participatory methods. However, I think that at the heart of the participatory approach is an epistemological notion that resonates well with the spirit of ubuntu. The participatory approach was meant to investigate needs, facilitate and support development, and discontinue the top-down approach that was obviously ineffective.

It must be said that because African society is constantly being fragmented along generational lines (as well as gender, class, ethnic and religious) a truly representational participatory process would be at best challenging. We need to rethink participation for young generations (of Africans) in ways that:

- Enable them to engage in the discussion in terms that they are comfortable with; a discussion that encompasses the conceptual notions of (local) traditional religious thought and (“foreign”) western thought processes.
- Provide the opportunity to articulate what they consider to be transformable development given their ontological perceptions.
- Would allow them, if it were possible, to connect with their independent assessments of the kind of world they would love to create for themselves. This assessment would be free from the demands of their ancestral prejudices and at the same time free of the demands of Eurocentrism.

Participatory practices may well need to be restructured; moving away from the
rigorous result-based mind-set. Human beings and human behaviour are too complex to package in idealistic result-based terms alone. In other words, input should be clearly distinguished from output. It is clear that the processes that require transformational change cannot be so easily measured. The perceived quality of a project would differ from person to person. If, for instance, a project’s goal is to take a horse to the river, a desired outcome may have been for the horse to enjoy a drink from the river. The horse however, may enjoy the walk and refuse the drink. The input in this instance was beneficial to the recipient though in a totally different way than the desired outcome of the donor. In the long run no method will work for long without the right mindset, and with the right mindset, methods are mere mechanisms that flexibly work for the people. They should be barely noticeable, though ruthlessly important.

I particularly feel that rethinking participation in these terms would be useful for youth in the south. On the one hand youth are by nature willing to take the desired risks. Plans, expectations, change and disappointments are organic aspects of their everyday experience. They must, however, be able to judge for themselves what they have gained from an experience, project or program. Secondly, youth can be encouraged to ‘try again’ in a way that mature people would be unwillingly to.

The emphasis on results and the uneven balance of political and economic power have resulted in genuine and perhaps unfair criticism of the participatory approach. However, ongoing research and mounting evidence points to the fact that a more disciplined and honest use of the participatory process would produce pragmatic outcomes.

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**References**


Young People, Performance and Possibility
A Case Study of Two Performances Programs

Abstract
Among the varied perspectives on human development, those that view development as a social-cultural phenomenon are most consistent with innovative youth development practices. Among these practices there is an emerging view of development that is related to human beings capacity to perform. In this view, performance (the activity of simultaneously being who we are and who we are becoming), can reinitiate young people’s collective capacity to become culture and community makers. Performance-based programs recognize that human beings are always performing and that the capacity to perform on and off the stage is an important tool for youth development. This article also highlights the importance of developing young people’s capacity to see themselves as “performers for change” in any situation in their lives instead of being related to as the objects of change. Two examples of youth development programs developed by the All Stars Project Inc. that put this approach into practice in US inner cities will be discussed.

Introduction
Among the varied perspectives on human development, those that view development as a social-cultural phenomenon are most consistent with innovative youth development practices (Vygotsky, 1978; Rogoff, 2003; John-Steiner, 2000). Among those who advance a socio-cultural view, Holzman and Newman posit the centrality of performance (in the theatrical sense) to human development. Their understanding of performance has influenced the development of a variety of practices and programs, two of which will be discussed in this paper.

The word performance is often reserved for the activity that people do on a theatre stage. Actors get up on a stage and perform as someone else. The theatre stage creates an environment in which people can be themselves and other than themselves at the same time. For example, no one questions whether Liz Taylor was actually Cleopatra. On the theatre stage Liz Taylor has the freedom to be other than herself (Cleopatra). At the same time, the audience realizes that Liz Taylor is still Liz Taylor. The two programs this article discusses have been influenced by the above perspective on performance and development. They have been developed by the All Stars Project Inc. (ASP) located in New York City. The All Stars Project is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting human development through the use of a performance-based model. The two programs; the All Stars Talent Show Network (ASTSN) and Youth Onstage! (YO!) serve thousands of young people annually. Each program works, in different ways, to foster emotional and social development through performance, both on and off the stage (Friedman, 2005).

The human capacity to perform is evident in children from the very beginning of their lives. To Lev Vygotsky, the pioneer of socio-cultural theory, young children learn and develop because they are engaged in joint activity with their caretakers, doing things they could not do “alone”. Newman and Holzman (1993) advanced Vygotsky’s work by describing this joint activity as a performatory environment in which very young children perform as speakers of a language. Children babble and their parents respond as if they were speaking. Toddlers perform as speakers before they know that such a thing as “speaking” exists. Their parents support them to perform in this way. No one tells a young toddler not to babble because she isn’t saying words exactly right. Parents don’t insist that the baby speak as competently as an adult, yet they still relate to the child as a speaker. Parents and children create an environment together in which children can perform beyond themselves. In the process of performing as speakers (and many other things) they become speakers. Performance, understood in this way, is developmental because it is about becoming.

Creativity and Development
Performance programs recognize that the type of creative,
The ASTSN is now over 20 years old and is well known throughout New York’s inner city communities (Fulani, 2000; Gilden, 2003; Gordon, 2003; Holzman, 1997). Involving thousands of young people a year from the ages of 5 to 25, the program gives them the opportunity to produce and perform in talent shows in high schools throughout their neighborhoods.

The process is as follows: All Stars staff and adult and youth volunteers go out into an inner city community and do outreach to inform the neighborhood that All Stars auditions will be held. A high school has already been selected and the neighborhood is familiar with the literature and outreach. Auditions are announced. There are usually from 50 to 90 groups and acts that appear for the auditions. A few weeks after the audition, the workshop takes place. Then there is the dress rehearsal and the final show. At one workshop I attended the director, Pam Lewis, told the 400 young people in the audience, “if you can perform on the stage you can perform in your life”. She explained that this meant that young people can make decisions about their performance in their lives even in the face of situations in which their initial response doesn’t appear to offer too many possibilities. Performance is a choice. The All Stars recognizes that particular kinds of environments are necessary in order to support young people in this way. The following are some of the ways these environments are created.

Inclusiveness
Central to the ASTSN philosophy is “radical inclusiveness” (Gilden, 2003). This is not a program only for talented young people. Everyone who auditions for a show is accepted (Fulani, 2000; Gilden, 2003). Young people can decide to perform on the stage or they can perform off the stage as part of the production team – doing lights, sound, equipment, back stage work, selling tickets etc. In the process they learn the skills of doing this work. All participants are required to attend the workshop. The workshops are led by former All Stars youth who have volunteered to work with the program. In the workshop, participants work in groups from different neighborhoods and create improvisational poetry and skits.

At the final show, all participants receive some kind of trophy. In contrast to the competitive environment of most talent shows, the All Stars stresses the importance of the support of the ensemble. At briefings and trainings for the performers young people are taught how to perform as a supportive audience. For example, some participants perform booing, and the audience practices drowning them out.

The All Stars Talent Show Network (ASTSN)

The Scene

It’s 11 AM on a Saturday in a New York City High School. Young people and their groups are arriving to prepare for the big show. Excitement is high. Smaller children have family accompanying them. Teenagers are starting to practice their moves. Everyone has performance jitters. At 2:35 PM, the street and lobby is crowded with parents, children, families and friends. Volunteers of every age, color and ethnicity wearing red All Star jackets are everywhere. The young volunteers are interspersed with the adults. Some are on security, some are ushers, some are taking tickets some are selling tickets. The auditorium is packed with young people and their families – over 1200 people. (Observation notes)

The ASTSN is now over 20 years old and is well
Respect for every performance and every performer is emphasized (Gilden, 2003).

**Bridge Building**

One of the key conceptions of the All Stars Talent Show Network is to help young people build relationships with supportive adults and with adult donors to the program who are very different then they are (Friedman, 2005). In contrast to traditional charitable institutions where money is the sole connector, the ASTSN goal is to build personal bridges between the young people and the sometimes wealthy, often white people who donate to the program (Gordon, 2003). The All Stars project developed the “Back to School” program to address this issue. Back to School brings the donors to the inner city high schools where the workshop and the final performance take place. Just as many of the young people have never seen where donors live, many of the donors have never been to an inner city high school (Gilden, 2003). The donors who participate in the workshops create skits and poems with the young people who will be performing in the show.

Everything the young people do at the All Stars is related to performance. Young people perform onstage and offstage, they work with experts in the field and with adult volunteers. In this bridge building and community building environment, young people can create new performances of themselves as they work to build with adults who are different than themselves.

**Youth Onstage!**

*The Scene*

The play is called Crown Heights. It is a re-exploration of the riots in 1991 between the Black and Jewish community in Brooklyn. There are 22 Black and Jewish actors from 14 to 24 on the stage. The Black actors are singing a Jewish prayer for the dead. The Jewish actors are performing as Black young people in Crown Heights. They are furious at the “Jews” because a Jewish ambulance did not pick up a dying black child after a car accident involving a Rabbi. After the rehearsal the young people talk about their reactions to the script, there is some friendly horseplay and several of them go out together to take in a movie. (Observation notes)

Youth Onstage! (YO!) and the Youth Onstage Community Performance School are two of the All Stars Projects newer programs developed in 2003. YO! provides performance and theatre courses free of charge to a student body of inner city youth. Courses such as voice, movement, character development, improvisation, stage management and theatre history are taught by professional theatre artists who volunteer their time. The program also produces shows, plays and experimental theatre. YO!’s future plans involve not only producing politically engaged plays with young casts, but also to produce plays written, directed and designed by young artists (Friedman, 2005).

One of the interesting things about YO!’s first production, “Crown Heights”, was that the Black, Hispanic and Jewish teen-agers who were involved in the process re-organized their own relationships by virtue of their participation, making the process a model of what the play was talking about. Few of the African American and Jewish young people knew each other before the process and they became extremely close by the end of the 10 week run.

The productions that YO! mounts are not “plays for young people”. They are plays with adult content and concerns that also relate to young people. Racism, classism, sexism, violence, community and culture affect everyone. The content of the plays are examples of the Youth Onstage! philosophy of relating to young people ‘becoming’. They have to stretch to perform in these plays.

**A Demanding Environment**

One of the volunteer directors of YO! notes that putting professional demands on inner city kids of color is an important part of the school’s work.

“It impacts that we are taking them seriously. They are expected to get here on time, to have things ready, and there are consequences when they don’t… Getting here on time, taking those long train trips (from the outer Boroughs), planning all this around their school schedules, is very hard to do. They get a lot out of doing that, putting in that effort.” (Freidman 2005)

The program is set up so that young people must take responsibility from the beginning. Dan Friedman, the Director of the program says, “The young people have to want to be there. We make this explicit: they are not recipients of charity here, the program is free but they have to build the YO! community. And we relate to them as developing theatre artists. The professional theatre is a very demanding environ-
ment. It takes discipline and it’s not always “cool”. So the young people have to struggle with that” (2005 interview).

According to Dan Friedman (2005), Youth Onstage! is a number of things simultaneously. It is a supplementary education program that uses performance methodology to help young people develop, it expands the experiential, social and cultural horizons of the young people, it is a political youth theatre that produces politically engaged theatre designed to engage, provoke and create new cross-cultural conversations. It is a community building project, whose interest is in creating new kinds of community and sense of community.

Conclusion
The two programs discussed are examples of youth development practice in which performance is put to use in developing young people. Performance is developmental because of its focus on ‘becoming’. The performance approach helps young people, particularly in poor communities, relate to themselves as having the capacity to creatively develop. Learning to see themselves as ‘performers’ gives young people what they need to take ownership, build bridges, and build with who they are. In All Stars programs young people learn that performance is not just for the stage. Performance is a choice on and off the stage.

The challenges of implementing youth development work require that we see and understand development in new ways. The performance approach offers one way to understand development that can contribute to the ongoing dialogue in the field of youth development.

Endnotes
1. The ASP sponsors other programs including the Development School for Youth, the Castillo Theatre, Five Points Productions and the Production of Youth By Youth – see www.allstars.org

Check out PD Forum’s On-Line Discussion Board

PD Forum has recently launched an On-line Discussion Board. Come and check out the current topics under discussion. The aim of the Discussion Board is to share, debate and discuss theories, methodologies, methods, tools and practices on participation to deepen our understanding of and strengthen the global movement on participation.

You can also start your own discussion thread in the General Discussion section. It is recommended that you begin by preparing a short introduction to the topic you wish to discuss.

Periodically, each topic will be summarized by the moderator, initiator or a volunteer. The discussion will continue as long as there is interest.

In the Networking and Market Place section, you can post events, jobs, queries, links and any other information that you want to share or are looking for help on from the network.

In order to post messages, you must first register. This applies to all sections of the Discussion Board. To register, a user name and password are required (you have to create your own – click on the Register Icon).

As of today, PD Forum has 750 members. Imagine if each one of us raised one question or posted one idea, how much (new) knowledge we can collectively generate and how dynamic and lively the On-line Discussion Board can become – a knowledge bank that everyone can use. Visit the Discussion Board regularly at pdforum.org

Let us give it a try. Together we can make it work.
There is a great need for participation opportunities and mechanisms for young people in Turkey. There are very few public or private services that might facilitate participation and there is a serious gap in research on young people’s participation. This is particularly serious once the size of the young population is considered. More than 50% of the population are under 25. Those under 18, legally considered children, constitute about 40% of the population.

This large population is very marginalized in modern Turkey. No matter what their age might be, young people are not able to act both for their own benefit and for the public interest. There are chronic barriers to youth participation in civic life. Turkey is undergoing rapid change, particularly in terms of technology, which should make it easier for youth to participate in civic life but there are few mechanisms that support such participation. The traditional ageism that discriminates against the young persists and so does the belief that a good child/adolescent is a passive one. In short, modern Turkey is not a very welcoming place for youth. The persistent message for youth is “wait until we ask you to talk”. This is closely related with the long-standing absence of civic participation and social engagement across the country. This is a vicious cycle: Children and adolescents who are socialized to be passive or submissive do not become participating citizens – either at the community level or in any political sense. The rather unique history of modern Turkey makes motivating the youth extremely difficult: There is deep mistrust in the existing political structures and the traditional structures have largely disappeared due to massive migration to cities where there is little chance of integration. Large numbers of youth are marginalized and in the absence of constructive alternatives, juvenile delinquency is rising, violent movements are influencing and recruiting among the marginalized youth. Among the more advantaged youth, aimlessness is common and many are too immersed in the popular culture to care about others or to engage in public life.

To give young people a chance to have a say and be heard, I formed a team of three and started a campaign in December 2000 with the slogan “I, too, have a voice – hear my voice”. The idea was simple and direct: We asked children (ages 6-11) and adolescents (ages up to 18) to write messages to the prime minister and say whatever they had in mind. The prime minister is the highest government officer and should consider every citizen’s opinion, including those of the young citizens. The very act of writing to the prime minister, we believed, was an act of engagement and an opportunity to make a significant impact.

The messages were sent via web site, e-mail, and conventional mail. Some handwritten messages were received in handmade envelopes, indicating how much children wanted to participate. Once it became clear that a printed form could be useful for an entire classroom of children to participate, these forms were mailed to teachers, parents or other adults interested in helping the campaign.

This campaign was very successful: We received about 3000 messages in about six months from all over Turkey. Each message was carefully examined and any information identifying the author was removed to preserve anonymity. Grammatical errors were corrected only if the error altered the meaning of the sentence. Children’s messages were presented to the prime minister and made available at the campaign web site on Children’s Day, on April 23, 2001. Adolescents’ messages were presented to the prime minister and made available at the web site to the public on May 19, Youth and Sports Day. The campaign received extraordinary media coverage, many quotes or messages appeared in different publication outlets and the campaign team was interviewed multiple times. This novel effort proved to be an important tool of advocacy through action.

The messages indicated that children and young people had their own agenda: They wanted recreational areas and opportunities, better schools, better teachers, attentive parents, and their rights. The messages almost fully anticipated journalists’ questions: Yes, young people were aware of and sensitive to what was happening around them. They wanted a better government, criticized the prime minister and the president for their well-publicised quarrel that led the fragile financial market into mayhem, wondered why the economy was faltering and asked why the price of gasoline was always increasing and the price of milk farmers can get was falling. Depending on where they lived, the young people wanted cleaner and safer environments. Common were demands for protection of the environment, peace on earth and a just world for all.

The plan was to make all messages available to the public at the campaign website and also publish children’s and adolescents messages separately in two books. The intention was to further empower the young participants by compiling a book of genuine young voices and helping them feel they are part of a large group of active, energetic and thoughtful individuals. Each participant was going to receive a copy. However, we ran into financial difficulties. Four years later, I finally managed to get a selection of the messages published in a book titled, “Hear My Voice: I, too, have a voice” (Sesimi Duyun: Benim de Sesimi Var) which contains young people’s unfiltered voices, rather than a lot of intellectualized material, long sentences, and jargon.

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PATHWAYS TO PEACE: Participation in Multicultural and Conflict-prone Settings

The Many Lenses of Mindanao

Mindanao, Philippines has been described in many ways as a region of contradictions, land of promise, breeding ground of terrorists, haven of tourists and other such nomenclature depending on what lens one is using. Those of us who work for peacebuilding know the importance of harnessing the varied interpretations and views into a respectful (rather than common as this might not be possible to achieve) understanding of the situation of conflict so that a peace agenda can be crafted. The process of achieving such a level of understanding is equally important.

To describe the peace and conflict situation in Mindanao, three groups make it to the landscape as major stakeholders – the Moros, the indigenous people and the settlers.

The Moros are the Islamized people and the native inhabitants of what they refer to as the Moroland whose population has diminished from majority to minority as a consequence of the colonization of the Philippines to which Mindanao was illegally annexed according to the claim of the Bangsmoro. From its pre-Hispanic constituency of the entire region, there are now only five (Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, and Basilan) of the twenty-three Mindanao provinces with a Muslim majority. Violent conflict has historically marked their struggle to reclaim their sovereignty over the slowly diminishing Muslim population and their own form of government – the Sultanates of Sulu (1450) and Maguindanao (1619) and the Pat Pangampon of Lanao.

The more dominant population is composed of settlers mostly coming from central Philippines or the Visayas whose farmers, in the early 1950s, were lured to resettle in Mindanao with assurance of vast tract of lands and the promise of “giant corn” harvests. Government programs, in response to the then emerging and still resurgent secessionist movements (from the Mindanao Independence Movement (MIM), to the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF)) has caused a radical shift in the demography which saw the population of indigenous peoples (IP) and the Moros being eased out by the migrant settlers. These assimilation and migration policies have resulted to the prevailing prejudices between the IP/Muslim groups on one hand and the predominant Christian migrants on the other. Most of the current political leaders govern on the basis of the interest of class and ethnicity which they share with other leaders from the major language-based groups such as the Tagalog, Visayans and Ilocanos.

Indigenous peoples refer to the non-Islamized tribes comprising of 18 ethno-linguistic groups in Mindanao which have staked their claim to ancestral land as integral to their life and culture. Their continuing struggle for land has been consistently challenged even with an acclaimed enactment of the IP Rights Act in 1999. IPRA suffers from loopholes and inconsistent policies in land use which afflict the Philippine system dating back to the Regalian doctrine of the Spanish era. IP networks and support groups are currently embroiled in heated conflict (both legal and extra-legal) with the government whose recent signing into law of the Mining Act is seen as an effort to strengthen business interests to prop up an investment-intensive mode of economic development.

At first glance, the conflict of interest is visible in the development paradigms which have been historically pushed by dominant interests (mainly business) which counteract the life system of the indigenous and Moro population. Looking further, we can find a pandora’s box of voices and interests wanting to be heard. Conflict has in fact been complicated with the many layers of identities that even the major groups have taken on.

Participation as an Issue and a Response

Disenfranchised from their lands and cut out from their lifestyles, the IPs and Moros were not present at all when decisions were signed in the Spanish Treaty of Paris annexing Mindanao to the Philippine Islands, when the colonial government promoted a resettlement program to solve the Mindanao unrest in the early 50s, and when several violent wars were waged against the Moro resistance movements consistent with the military approach of government.

At best, government has worked with elite Moro leaders as they tried to craft a solution to the Mindanao problem through electoral politics and governance, economic development and also the signing of the peace agreement with the MNLF in 1996. Still, with all the multi-donor program funds that poured into the region in line with the mini-Marshall Plan package attached to the peace agreement, an intra-group conflict as well as structural violence has festered up to the present time.

Madett Virola-Gardiola is an independent development educator and trainer. She has worked among the Muslim communities in Central Mindanao for the past 6 years. She has worked with peasants, urban poor and women on community organizing and mobilization for social transformation. She is also a member of PD Forum Board of Directors. Madett hopes to find time in the next couple of years to reflect and write about lessons from the 22 years of involvement in community development as a direct organizer, trainer, program manager and resource development associate for several Philippine NGOs and as a networker for a regional NGO networks and consortia.
As an alternative, the growing peace movement in the Philippines has crafted strategies for peace on the need to build a strong peace constituency which is able to articulate common goals and interests among the major stakeholders mentioned earlier. Professor Rudy Rodil, a historian and member of both the GRP-MNLF/GRP-MILF Negotiation Panel, posits thus: “In order to establish new relationships among the tri-people of Mindanao, we need to see each other in a new light, look more closely at what we have in common and learn to live with our diversity…..We can only have peace if the peace of one is the peace of all, the lumads, Muslims and Christian settlers, when the vision of one is the vision of all.”

In this context, participation figures as a very essential principle and methodology which NGOs need to factor into their strategies and approaches in peacebuilding.

The CO Multiversity Experience
The CO Multiversity is one among many NGOs working for peace in Mindanao since 1999. “Empowered sustainable communities engaged in civil society initiatives towards peace and social transformation” is the vision which has united community organizers who shared a common history rooted in the past 30-year tradition of community organizing (CO) training in the Philippines. The CO Multiversity directs its energies towards building the capacities of community organizers and development workers for of urban housing rights, children’s rights, gender equality, environmental protection and peacebuilding. In Mindanao, it works with communities who seek to build a culture of peace through organizing of peace zones, education and multi-stakeholders partnership and capacity development.

In its peacebuilding framework, CO Multiversity articulates its belief that peace is an issue of power which is defined as the capacity of communities to participate effectively in processes that shape their lives. Personal Power is the individual capacity to act from one's sense of dignity and truth (from culture of silence and apathy to a culture of participation). Community Power is the integrative ability of groups to transform structures which perpetuate violent ways of resolving conflict (from culture of war to culture of peace).

### Community-based Peacebuilding Processes

The basic processes involved in community-based peacebuilding include:

1. **Understanding Conflict**
   - Understanding **CULTURE** and how it affects the dynamics of a community
   - Analyzing **ISSUES** (economic, political and cultural) which people feel strongly about and can unite the various groups in the community
   - Identifying **POWER** relations which affect the flow of decision making and access to resources which can address community issues
   - Working through history, connections and personal biases to facilitate rebuilding of **RELATIONSHIPS**

2. **Establishing Group Unity**

3. **Establishing Links with the other Group**

4. **Arriving at a Mutually Agreed Solution**

5. **Implementing and Monitoring the Agreement**

6. **Healing and Reconciliation**

### Strategies Undertaken

1. **Issue-based Community Organizing which is undertaken through the following steps:**
   - Integration
   - Social Investigation
   - Issue Identification and Analysis
   - Groundworking
   - Facilitating Community Meetings
   - Roleplay
   - Mobilization
   - Evaluation
   - Reflection
   - Formation of People's Organization

2. **Peace Education for a Culture of Peace focusing on:**
   - Seminars on the Six Paths to Peace
   - Capacity Building on Peace Zone Building and Advocacy
   - Peace and Conflict Impact Assessment of Community-Managed Projects
   - Conflict Management through Interest-based Negotiation and Mediation
   - Partnership with Local Government
   - Inter-Area Alliance Strengthening
4.1 Trends in good governance and participatory democracy or The right to Vote for Nothing

Since the mid 1980s and particularly throughout the 1990s, “good governance”, “democratization” and “civil society strengthening” came into vogue as fundamental ingredients of contemporary development and modernization recipes. As such, “empowerment”, in modern day development-speak, has been conveniently couched in these terms. In fact, as Bendaña (2004) argues, within the dominant development discourse is identified as the missing link between successful growth (which is erroneously equated with development) and economic reform. It goes without saying that the holy grail of economic growth and reform, highlighted as key pillars to the reaching of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), are effectively more neoliberal structural adjustment, only this time, with civil society buy-in. That is why power brokers such as the Bretton Woods institutions (essentially the World Bank and the UNDP) have created a consensus and reigning institutional orthodoxy about governance in neoliberal terms. The result being that good governance is simply and astutely amended on to the classic modernization paradigm: it is the political modernization that walks hand in hand with the economic modernization (i.e. neoliberal structural reform). In continuing to consider economic growth as synonymous with development, the dominant governance agenda places the State and society at the service of the market through institutional reform directed at engendering more efficient and market-friendly political administration of economic policies (ibid.).

It goes without saying that the ascendancy of governance discourse in the development industry rarely if ever considers capital and capitalist social relations as something which might create mal-governance and mal-development in Third World societies.

As for participation, the dominant governance and development discourse tends to consider it as an appendix which, when added on to Western-liberal representative democratic models (the predominant model in the Americas with the exception of Cuba and Venezuela), democracy is automatically deepened. The current nomenclature to describe this process is “democratization”.

Participation, in this context, is said to create greater transparency for the electoral process and a sort of “citizen vigilance” of governance structures and institutions. Today, all sorts of neoliberal authorities Western governments, the World Bank, the IMF and most development agencies included share the current mantra: “A strong civil society is good for democracy.” Of course, that is as long as that democracy does not stray from the road to neoliberal capitalist development, as Venezuela began to do 1998.

To what is owed the shift towards governance by the dominant global institutions? Much like ‘participation’ and ‘sustainability’, ‘governance’ is a concept engendered by neoliberalism. The State “modernization” schemes fundamental to neoliberal structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s were designed then as they continue to be today to place the State and society at the service of the market. The SAPs have been executed under the ideological presumption that more market and less State would engender economic growth and that growth automatically leads to development. The failure of the SAPs to create the promised stability and steady economic growth, and their ‘success’ in creating more poverty and mal-governance, the leading global institutions like the World Bank sought to “put a human face” on neoliberal modernization. First with ascendency of ‘sustainability’ in the mid 1980s, the global power brokers created an ‘environmentally-friendly’ version of neoliberalism and later, with the ascendency of ‘participatory development’ in the late 1980s, they created an ‘empowerment-
The over two decades of structural reforms and systematic attacks on the welfare State had created optimum conditions for the State to be re-engineered in the image of the market. The World Bank would take the lead in realigning the governance discourse: “bad governance” would be the market-unfriendly Keynesian welfare State and “good governance” would be the market-friendly, private-sector promoting neoliberal State. In the World Bank’s 1992 document Governance and Development, governance would be couched in a seemingly vague definition: as the “manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development” (World Bank, 1992:3). This “development” would, of course, be capitalist development, which, by 1992 when the report was published, was neoliberal capitalist development. A decade after the first report on governance, the World Bank would quickly eliminate any and all ambiguities about its conception of governance with the 2002 World Development Report titled, Building Institutions for Markets? Now, it was made very clear that public institutions were to be subservient to the market and not the other way around.

These institutionalized views of participatory democracy regard participation as a complement to the mechanisms of electoral politics and, thus, the competitive struggle among political parties (Dalh, 1992). The State, in this logic, creates opportunities for the participation of groups and civil associations and the process of political inclusion of civil society thus tends towards the formation of corporative groups that would advocate for specific demands by pressuring the State for policy changes or for access to public resources (Navarro, 2000). This approach to participatory governance is dependant upon a series of institutional reforms that would concede civil associations formal spaces for extra-electoral political participation. Most commonly, these reforms are intrinsically linked to processes of government decentralization whereby administrative functions and budgets are “released down” to the municipal level. In this system, municipalities are considered to possess a “general competence” over local affairs and can thus act with relative autonomy vis a vis superior levels of government (state/province, national) (Esteva, 1997). The civil associations that are constituted within this institutional context tend to be structurally dependant insomuch as they are dependant upon external resources in order to cover the costs that are derived from their collective action (Navarro, 2000).

This mode of administrative decentralization is most common in the European Community and Latin America and has historically come about – at least in the latter – as part of the process of neoliberal State reform. As Bosier (2002) states, “we can observe the logical association between neoliberalism (the Washington Consensus) and decentralization”, which has been intrinsically linked to privatization. Decentralization has been an effective mechanism for reducing government expenditures, a key feature of the SAPs since the 1980s. It is no coincidence that decentralization became so popular precisely during the inauguration of the neoliberal model. Furthermore, according to Esteva (1997) decentralization was the mechanism employed by the centralist State in order to impose itself on the independent exercise of local liberties by handing more power over to the municipal authorities. In this way, decentralization is reduced to “giving the dog a longer leash” (ibid.) or, as Neuse and Ryan (2000) put it, in neoliberal societies, people are granted “the right to vote for nothing”.

These conceptions of participatory democracy, Esteva and Prakash (1998) argue, reduce the exercise of the people’s power “to the addition of initiative, referendum, recall and other political tools; ensuring that they are conceived and applied in a manner compatible with representative government.”

The prevailing Western view of participatory governance widely promoted by governments and aid agencies – aims mostly at “including” civil society in the dominant governance structures. It does not aim to change or transform those structures but rather have more people involved in them.

4.2 On the dominant form of democratic governance

Representative democracy has arisen historically as the dominant option for governance in the face of the perceived impossibility of self-governance by the people, who are conceived as individuals with conflicting interests. Liberal notions of the people’s inherent competitiveness in the economic sphere vis a vis Hobbes and Smith – would filter into the political world and the exercise of democracy would be reduced to the periodic competitive phenomena we know as elections. Joseph Schumpeter (1975) summed it up quite precisely in his famous treatise, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy: “The democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote”. This way, formal democracy reduces politics to the question of who should govern, and, in consequence, who should concentrate political power. Popular power is reduced to electoral power; what Esteva and Prakash (1998) so astutely refer to as “the ritualized circus of votes and election years” or what Sartori (1988) referred to as “electoral poliarchy.”

Liberalism, in practice, places emphasis on economic freedom in the sense that all other freedoms are derived from it. Economic freedom in capitalist society, however, is predicated on the possession of private property, something which only the
elite of European society possessed at the time liberalism was borne. The construction of equality in deeply stratified societies would lead to J.J. Rousseau’s (1762) famous contention: “private property is the source of all inequalities.” Notwithstanding Rousseau’s caveat, the conceived inherent articulation between economic freedom and personal freedom would help to create a second overriding myth of democracy in these neoliberal times: a free market leads to a free society. This of course, is one of the central axioms of contemporary capitalist society and has set the stage to ideologically consolidate the marriage between wealth and the right to exercise political power.

The ruling classes’ preoccupation with private property would lead them to construct State and governance structures whose essential role was to protect that property from being violated by the masses.” It was this elitist fear of the power of the masses that inspired conservative liberals like Tocqueville (1835) to warn of the infamous tyranny of the majority as an argument against universal suffrage (Bobbio, 1985; Esteva, 1998). These would be the postulates would help create a persistent myth made famous with Georg Hegel’s (1820) apothegm: “the people are in no condition to govern themselves.”

This has never been more true that in our current times of transnational capitalism where the grotesque concentration of wealth has been accompanied by the grotesque concentration of mass communications and media. As Chomsky and Herman (1994) would say, big capital has the power to “manufacture consent” and thus, manipulate the people’s will in the competitive struggle for the popular vote.

Today, within neoliberal regimes, political parties from the various ideological inclinations differentiate themselves only cosmetically but all generally share a neoliberal essence since this is a requisite for gaining access to power. This is particularly true in Latin-American nations for, as Lechner (1999) explains, there is a tendency to restrict electoral democracy while concomitantly strengthening executive powers in order to freely impose the imperatives of economic modernization. The most obvious result of this trend, according to the research of Neuse and Ryan (2000), is a significant decline in voter and other forms of formal political participation which is a direct result of the monopolization (hegemony) of neoliberal policy alternatives. This virtual democracy of neoliberalism is what Eduardo Galeano (1998) refers to when he describes elections as the exercise of choosing the sauce with which we will be eaten.

Thus, the historic marriage between the capitalist mode of production and formal liberal democracy would result in the vertical concentration of political power whereby a privileged minority would “represent” the wishes and aspirations of citizenry and exercise power in their name, although not always in their interests. As was discussed above, national capitalism would slowly give way a form of de-nationalized capitalism, or neoliberalism. With this new form of accumulation, the liberal rhetoric would also fall back into the shadows. Thus global civil society and Third World civil society, in particular is faced with a virtual disappearance of “liberal” freedoms and their replacement by the dictatorship of capital, where some are free to become scandalously wealthy and others “free” to starve or die of curable illness or violent conflict.

Finally, the de-democratization of society is but another manifestation of the political economy of global exclusion and marginalization to which we are all witness. It is the essence of political disempowerment which walks hand in hand with economic disempowerment and it is within this context that we are being called to engage as participatory activists, researchers and professionals. Put in other terms, how best can participatory action and learning serve to catalyze the transformative potential of the disenfranchised masses, the “human surplus”? This is the fundamental challenge that we are faced with.

5.0 Development, Participation and Politics

It is in the current context of the global political economy of de-democratization that participatory action and learning (PAL) assumes a renewed importance and impetus for creating social change. However, for PAL to fulfill its historic task, we must begin by recognizing two basic assumptions: First, that capitalist social relations at the very least play a role in the reproduction of power relations in our society. Thus, empowerment strategies such as participatory action – must factor in capital as part of their methodological and philosophical proposal. Second, if we agree upon the first point, we must logically proceed to accept that participatory action is an inherently ideological enterprise. This, of course, is nothing new, since the pioneers of action research and popular and emancipatory education, such as Freire (1971), Fals Borda (1986) and Rahman (1991, 1993). As Paulo Freire (1971, cited in Hall, 2005: 3) himself stated in Tanzania in 1971:

“[…] It is necessary to perceive in a very clear way the ideological background which determines the very methodology. It is impossible for me to think about neutral education, neutral methodology, neutral science or even a neutral God.”

However, the significance of this second point forces us to pose the question: What exactly do we wish to participate in? Can we continue to accept that participation simply be added on to any social project, i.e., neoliberal modernization and development? Development depoliticizes social action in order to avoid entering into conflict with the dominant political and economic order. Participation creates an alibi for development by transferring ownership to the poor in the name of empowerment. As Williams (2004: 1) has unequivocally stated:

“If development is indeed an ‘anti-politics machine, […] participation provides a remarkably efficient means of greasing its wheels.”
Paradoxically enough, it has been through mainstream development discourse and practice that participation gained such notable transcendence within the social sciences, social engineering and government programmes. As we well know, this was made possible thanks to the transformation of participatory action into a depoliticized methodological package used for the implementation of development projects and government programmes. Dominant development practice led by aid agencies, NGOs and international financial institutions quite adeptly sanitized participatory action through a concerted process of “de-politicization” of what was created, essentially, as a political proposal (Rahnema, 1990; White, 1996; Tandon, 1996; Kothari, 1996). This process of depoliticization has been well documented in a series of critiques, culminating with Cooke and Kothari’s (2001) edited compilation of lucid critique of participation as the new tyranny. Among the most significant critiques of Cooke and Kothari’s collection was of the tendency among development actors to focus on the local and methodological aspects of participatory intervention and to ignore the structural elements which serve to reproduce alienation, social injustice and disempowerment.

Notwithstanding the above, the argument that participation has been depoliticized is only true in part since, either tacitly or overtly, participation either reproduces the dominant social order or defies it. The depoliticized versions of participatory action (participatory development, PRA, etc.), “liberated” from their transformative elements, are still, in fact, political since they inevitably serve to justify, legitimize and perpetuate current neoliberal hegemony. As such, by having been detached of its radical nature, participatory action was consequently repoliticized in the service of the conservative neoliberal agenda.

It is manifest that development not only was borne as an ideological project of the post WW II period, but has remained so ever since. It is an integral part of that civilizational project that sprung from Western modernity and projected itself throughout the globe as the universal promise of Western modernization: the industrial society of mass consumption. And this society would necessarily be a capitalist one since there is no development institution, programme or project that is not capitalist because all development is capitalist development.

Development has suffered its criticisms and crises, no doubt. Its simple inability to deliver on the promise of progress and consumption for all is at the root of its greatest criticism. But its tendency to destroy ecosystems and its undemocratic nature has also given rise to other attacks. These critiques have been placated, at least temporarily, through a parade of development adjectives and prefixes: basic human needs development, sustainable development, engendered development and, of course, participatory development.

Paradoxically enough, the ascendancy of participation within the development industry was quite directly related to the social crisis brought about in the Third World by the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) as a way to put a “human face” on SAPs and thus legitimize the neoliberal agenda (Jolly, 1991; Leal and Opp, 1999).

5.1 Radical Participatory Action Revisited

The context of the political economy of capitalist power relations places new responsibility on participatory activists and practitioners to reconstruct PAL as an instrument for promoting social transformation. The recovery of the emancipatory meaning of PAL implies re-grounding in the radical roots of liberatory/popular education and participatory action research, not as nostalgic journey to the golden days of participation but as an effort to re-situate the transformative proposal in the 21st century capitalist world order.

Let us briefly review, then the history of radical participation. Participatory action and action-research movement appeared in the 1970s as a politically-motivated approach designed to facilitate bottom-up mobilization for social transformation and emancipation of the most marginalized classes within Third World societies. This approach would reject positivist science and its premise of neutrality and seek to build knowledge with disenfranchised communities by combining social investigation, education and political action (Budd Hall, 1995). Budd Hall (ibid.) traces its origins back to the work Engels carried out with the working classes in Manchester and Marx’s “Worker’s Surveys” in Paris. Whatever the case, the end result was the innovation of a philosophical approach to transformative grassroots organizing that rejected the dominant “vanguard” ideology. This vanguard conception, which was characteristic of orthodox Marxism of the time, posits that a revolutionary organization (political party or guerrilla organization), would lead the masses towards the monolithic project of a new society, i.e. the socialist state. The political vanguard was thus the “owner of the truth” about the cause and consequence of the relations of exploitation and oppression and how to become liberated from them. The masses were, consequently, ignorant. As Freire would argue in the Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1971), this vanguard approach to revolutionary struggle would inevitably serve to reproduce domination-subordination relationship between the liberators and those they sought to liberate.

Contrary to vanguardism, the participatory action-research (PAR) movement proposed that poor and marginalized people themselves, through collective reflection and action, could and should identify the historic roots of their marginalization and exploitation. Consequently, the disenfranchised would trace their own path to social, political and economic emancipation.

While vanguardism stressed poor people’s ignorance, PAR stressed their innate knowledge. That is to say, literate or not, all poor people perceived and understood, in their own vernacular forms, the underlying nature of their reality. They also possessed the capacity to analyze, theorize, plan and execute concrete actions directed at undoing the unequal power relations which maintained them in poverty. Quite in contrast,
the vanguard party, which saw itself as the historic change agent, stressed the need for the political action of the masses to be directed by an "enlightened" leaders since they (the masses) could not effectively direct themselves, paradoxically reproducing the Liberal myth of people's inherent inability to self-govern.

To this aim, PAR activists developed original pedagogical methods and techniques for catalyzing and facilitating the collective action-reflection cycle. As Rahman (1991) put it “the basic ideology of PAR is that a self-conscious people, those who are currently poor and oppressed, will progressively transform their environment by their own praxis.”

In this sense, PAR would diverge once again from orthodox Marxism with another postulate: power rested not only in the hands of the owners of the means of material production (the capitalist class), but also in the hands of the owners of knowledge production (dominant science, commonly at the service of the dominant capitalist class). This would be an important contribution to Left politics of the time and would lead to the coining of the term "knowledge monopolies" (Hall, 1974, Fals Borda and Rahman, 1991). Thus, the central task would be to make the poor and marginalized into “active subjects of knowledge and action.” (Goulet, 1989). Becoming active subjects of knowledge and action is nothing less than the praxis of creating counter-veiling political power, a people's power belonging to the oppressed and exploited classes that would “enable them to advance towards shared goals of social change within a participatory political system” (Fals-Borda, 1991).

Empowerment, thus, refers to poor people seizing and constructing popular power through their own political action. It is not handed down from the powerful to the powerless, as institutional development has conveniently chosen to interpret the concept. Those who give power, condition it, for, as Paulo Freire (1971) best put it himself: “Freedom is acquired by conquest, not by gift.” That is the great lesson of history.

Authors such as Hickey and Mohan (2003) have warned of the perils of wanting to return to the so-called “radical golden age” of participation, citing the internal deficiencies of the approach. These warnings are well heeded since all social practice is historically contextual and must be adapted to the existing socio-political conditions of the time. Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the fact that the underlying principle of those approaches to participation was the struggle for deep social transformation which is something quite different from institutional reform, or development.

Consequently, there is an imperative need for participatory activists and practitioners to re-politicize their practice which, in turn, obligates them (us) to return to the emancipatory principles that were so instrumental to participatory pioneers such as Freire, Rahman and Fals Borda. This necessarily means ‘relocating’ participatory action in broader political struggles for social transformation, specifically stemming from leftist political parties with a strong social movement base (Gaventa, 2003; Hickey and Mohan, 2003). Thus, rather than hoping to return to a golden past, the hope is for the rescue of the foundational principles and politics of participation in order to construct a new and better future.

6.0 The Struggle for Popular Power and Self-governance

If empowerment is the exercise of popular power, what is the exercise of popular power if not popular self-governance? And popular self governance is nothing other than exercise of radical participatory democracy.

The struggle to construct participatory societies in the context of 21st century capitalism implies that power relations must be reconfigured from the bottom upwards. From this perspective, we can begin to understand the construction of popular power as reversing (but not inverting) the relations of domination-subordination characteristic of contemporary capitalist society. An immediate task, in this regard, is to strengthen and promote existing locally-based expressions of popular power and facilitate the creation of new ones. However, this is not without risk since locally-centered processes tend to focus people's attention excessively on micro issues, while ignoring the macro-structural issues that surround and often define local problems and conflicts.

This is quite the opposite of the mistake committed by the more orthodox revolutionary vanguards of the 1960s and 1970s which focused exclusively on the macro-structural issues: imperialism, neo-colonialism, capitalism, class struggle, etc.

Since then we have learned that, although it remains true that power is an historically defined social structural condition, the relations of domination-subordination reproduce themselves at all levels of society, from imperialism (as it is classically understood in Leninist terms) all the way down to the community and even the family. This is because capitalist social relations set root in the local, everyday spaces of people's lives in order to reproduce themselves. Just as the roots of the tree feed it, the local are the roots which feed global capitalism.

Radical participatory democracy is not the pursuit for more democratic access to the structures of the State - either at the national or municipal levels; it rather seeks to transcend the structures of the State and aspire to new and alternative social pact (Esteva, 1997). Contrary to the institutionalized version of participatory democracy, the more politically radical versions steer away from liberal representative democracy in favour of popular self-governance. In this scenario, power is horizontally redistributed and exercised in daily life through the systematic analysis of problems and their respective solutions, the collective making of decisions and, of course, collective action.

This, the essential cycle of praxis, is the very exercise of political power from the bottom-up. Authentic participatory governance – the democratic and popular exercise of power – is nothing less than self-governance. Esteva (1996) relates this form of self government to the notion of autonomy.
“Like radical democracy, the notion of autonomy adopts another assumption: the real capacity of people to govern themselves, creating for themselves new political bodies where that self-governance is possible: where they not only have power but also maintain and exercise it by way of their own authorities, such as the indigenous nations, where those who rule, rule by obeying.”

The exercise of local autonomy (local self-governance) is a function of the capacity of local people to analyze their daily life situations, “locate” these situations in the context of national and global relations, make decisions and take actions collectively, thus breaking from traditional clientelist dependency that is so characteristic of Third World societies. It is, in essence, the conquest of the capacity to read or name the world, in Freirian terms. Power, in this sense, is conceived as the daily and permanent exercise of analysis-reflection-action within local people’s life spaces.

Self-governance, understood as a permanent socio-political dynamic, tends to subvert the traditional relations of power within Western capitalist societies whereby local and marginalized people are obliged to negotiate with the dominant power structures on terms that are imposed from above. Those who dominate power (in the service of neo-colonial interests) own the playing field, the referee and the ball. Thus, they define the rules. In contrast, where there is self-governance, the dominant power structures are obliged to negotiate – albeit not exclusively – on poor people’s terms. Dominant power is forced to make considerable concessions to local demands, which creates confidence and greater political capacity within the grassroots for further mobilization.

Most Third World societies are living in times of crisis of governability brought on by armed conflict, neo-colonial control, the corrupt governments created in the service of neo-colonialism and the total willingness of those governments to do the bidding of the international financial institutions. These phenomena have undermined all democratic capacity at the formal institutional level and created a sort of political vacuum. This political vacuum could be interpreted as a strategically favourable situation for building upon local people’s decision-making capacity and grassroots action, for building popular power and self-governance.

However, that first political vacuum is related to a second political vacuum which we can call the absence of spaces and a culture for meaningful participation. In societies with historically paternalistic or authoritarian structures or current de-democratized neoliberal regimes, the spaces for meaningful social and popular participation are constantly reduced. As a consequence, the necessary culture of participation is displaced by the Freirian “culture of silence”. Reconstructing these spaces and culture of participation become a priority for PAL activists and practitioners.

7.0 What is to be Done? Towards a Popular, Diverse and Protagonical Third World Civil Society

A renewed participatory action for the 21st century political economy must aim towards poor and marginalized people making value-based, ideological, ethical and philosophical stands with respect to their own future. Grassroots participatory processes must aim at constructing what Williams (2004) has so aptly named the new political, cultural and economic imaginaries in defiance of neoliberal capitalist hegemony. If indeed capitalism exercises a form of social control over society, then attaining popular self-governance means a recovery of the control of people’s life spaces. In this logic, Orlando Fals Borda (2000: 628), the renowned PAR pioneer, creates the concept of people’s SpaceTimes as the “place” where we, as grassroots practitioners and activists, can initiate our political-pedagogic work:

“[…] people’s SpaceTimes are concrete social configurations where diversity is part of normality, and “where people weave the present into their particular thread of history” (Sachs 1992:112). Local affirmation, collective memory, and traditional practices are fundamental in such SpaceTimes. Here life and cultural identities, mutual aid and cooperative institutions are formed, personality is shaped, and collective rights have priority over individual rights. Hence it is not surprising that many of the mechanisms used in SpaceTimes by the common people to defend themselves are those to which they have had recourse throughout the centuries, mechanisms and practices which they know best for survival in basic struggles such as those for land, power, and culture.”

The struggle to fill people’s TimeSpace is the struggle to counteract the hegemony of global capitalist power. It is thus, the struggle for political power; it is the struggle for cultural recognition or affirmation of alternative constructs of “the good life”; it is the struggle for control over territories, communities and their resources or the defense of the space of material and cultural reproduction (ibid.).

What follows are nine elements that I feel are fundamental to rescuing poor and marginalized peoples’ TimeSpace and creating the necessary countervailing political power from the grassroots of Third World society.

7.1 Rescuing the popular and political character of civil society

The collapse of the Soviet-based socialist project (“real socialism”) brought about triumphant calls from right-wing intellectuals such as Fukuyama with such claims as “the end of history” and the “end of ideology”. The crisis of bureaucratic socialism also brought about a sort of “psychological crisis” of Marxism for many progressive, democratic and revolutionary sectors of both First and Third World societies. Marxism and neomarxism, as analytical and ideological frameworks for understanding the internal logic of capitalist societies is as relevant in the 21st century as ever before. Thus the crisis was
not as an analytical process but due to its association with collapsed regimes of the ex-Soviet block.

One of the consequences of this crisis was the displacement of significant sociological categories “class and popular struggle” in favor of the emerging categories such as civil society. That is not to say the “civil” category is not without merit. Indeed, it has served to add new dimensions to social and collective forms of organization, such as plurality and diversity. But the concept itself, as it is managed by the power brokers of contemporary capitalist society, has been highly de-politicized and stripped of all class-based significance. Civil society as an all-encompassing social category, would, much like the development “stakeholder”, group together different members of society and ignore the differences based on class, ethnicity, gender or political conceptions. Civil society could simultaneously represent right-wing think tanks, chambers of commerce, NGOs and radical grassroots movements, all grouped into one. The result was an artificial homogenization of the interests of these groups; interests which, from an historical perspective, were quite often radically opposed.

One of the fundamental tasks for all civil society movements within the Third World is to recover and rescue the class and popular categories as defining criteria for mobilization: the marginalized, the excluded, the impoverished, the discriminated, the dominated, the colonized and the exploited. We must begin by the recognition that not all “civil” elements of society share the same visions or aspirations, ideologies or values. We can no longer continue to pretend that ideology does not matter when it is clear that it does. The intensification of neoliberal policies all over the Third World landscape is deeply polarizing our world and one of the most significant battle fields is political-ideological.

7.2 Reclaiming the right to utopia

The collapse of the global socialist project and the so-called triumph of capitalism also declared an end to utopia and thus submerged our societies (particularly our Third World societies) in a “crisis of utopias”, as the Chilean economist Manfred MaxNeef (1986) put it. Our societies were told that the best we could do was adapt to the new conditions, that neoliberal globalization was an historical inevitability, and that the ultimate goal was to integrate and the ultimate risk was to be left out. The very idea that people should collectively engage in imagining different and better futures that those deterministically imposed on us by the neoliberal architects is projected as representing a total deficit of common sense.

If ever there was an historical time that demanded the need for utopias, it is this one. Utopia, or the ideal state of affairs as the poor and excluded see it, will always serve as the navigation chart for all future enterprises. Utopia represents the great “Why” and “What for” of all popular activity. It is the essential glue which holds social movements together and helps them to weather the storm. It is the foundation for the planning of any and all actions.

7.3 Decolonization

The collective exercise of creating consensus on what an ideal future looks like is an essentially pedagogical process that involves the decolonization of people’s collective imagination. Decolonization, in this sense, must be understood as a hegemonic, permanent process that imposes meanings and values from a Western-capitalist cultural perspective with the aim of maintaining and reproducing rates and patterns of capitalist accumulation.

This colonization persistently creates a series of “limiting conditions” (Freire, 1971) which are more imagined than real and whose function is to convince people that the best they can do is accept and adapt to present conditions. These limits are also designed to control and predetermine possible futures. For example, for many Third World societies, declaring a complete moratorium on the foreign debt is unthinkable.

As colonized people, we are taught to see the world as the colonizer sees it, to use the colonizers words and to think the colonizers thoughts. That is why so often we find our selves using the very arguments of our enemies.

A decolonization of the collective imagination of Third World people allows them to see beyond those futures imposed by neoliberal architects and recover their own socially just, authentically democratic and ecologically sane futures.

7.4 Capitalism: Cause and consequence

Our Third World societies are situated in a capitalist logic where politics are subordinated to economics and people are subordinated to both. People at the grassroots must enhance their ability to articulate their local problems to a global reality. They must gain the ability to situate themselves within the capitalist world. In this sense, PAL must aim at identifying where and how neo-colonialism reproduces itself in local people’s life spaces, how these unjust power relations create feedback loops into the global domination structures (the New Capitalist World Order) and how all of this maintains the current crisis Third World people are struggling to overcome.

What are the underlying forces at work that seek to restructure Third World social, political and economic landscape in the service of global capitalism? These are questions not to be asked and answered by experts and academics but by local people themselves as they examine the problems in their local reality and articulate the links to the global economic and political phenomena.

It is the understanding of the greater forces at play which maintain cohesion and unity among movements in the long term rather than organizing in the service of “project offers” in the short term.
7.5 Building popular power

Popular power (poder popular) is a Latin American conception that refers to the creation of autonomous civil action and self-government. Local people at the grassroots are seen as the true protagonists of history: they analyze problem situations, decide, plan and implement actions on a permanent basis. This permanent expression of deep and participatory democracy is people ruling themselves and exercising self-governance in their daily life spaces. Creating popular power is a long and difficult process that spans generations because it seeks to create a culture of participation and autonomous decision-making from the bottom up. It reverses the subordinate order of economics – politics – people whereby people themselves are the politics (power and decision-making) and the politics define the economics (the material survival plan for a society) which are all subordinated to people’s cultural and moral compass, their ethical and value constructs.

A popular civil society alternative should seek to create alternative political spaces for popular decision-making and building consensus. This should be envisioned as a permanent process and not as a reaction to specific junctures (elections, etc.). Local and popular parliaments are common forums for independent, autonomous popular grassroots governance which can either serve to complement or defy formal governance structures.

This includes building the cartography of social justice and injustice in Third World societies, whereby local people first identify (or “name”) social injustices, collectively reflect upon and analyze their structural causes and local consequences and, finally, define what should be done to transform the unjust situations.

7.6 Building a permanent organizational and participatory culture

The current social, political and economic crisis created by the intensification of neoliberalism throughout our Third World societies has eroded significantly their social and organizational fabric. As a result, society’s capacity to respond to local and structural problems has been significantly weekend. This current reality presents itself in stark contrast to a previous era some three or four decades ago when our societies were engaged in a constant process of struggle and mobilization.

Our societies need to recover their permanent organizational and participatory dynamic and culture. This is an essential element for the reconstruction of popular power.

However, this has not been an easy goal to reach. Civil society commonly falls into juncture traps; that is to say, groups within civil society tend to come together in response to specific demands or institutional offers. A few common examples of this are the following:

1) Civil society rallies around a specific issue and once it is resolved, the organizational dynamic slowly dissipates. The anti-globalization gatherings around WTO and FTAA meetings are typical of this phenomenon.
2) Civil society organizes in order to access national or international funding. Once the funding has dried up, the organizational dynamic tends to disappear.
3) Another common motivator are electoral politics whereby civil society rallies to ensure fair and transparent elections or in support of specific candidates. Once the electoral period has passed the organizational dynamic fragments and dissipates.
4) The development industry itself has constructed its own vision of civil society as a new mechanism for receiving and administering development aid.

The end result of these dynamics is a reactive civil society that mobilizes around moments and spaces imposed or created by external actors, most of which act as agents of global capitalism one way or another, i.e., WTO, development institutions, presidential elections, etc.

One great challenge for civil society is to define and act in the service of its own moments and spaces, independently of externally imposed circumstances. That is not to say that civil society should ignore significant junctures, but these should not be its defining justification. In this logic, external circumstances can be taken advantage of as mobilizing incentives for civil society but civil society does not exist as a function of external circumstances.

7.7 Recuperating social control over people’s life spaces

The onslaught of a quarter century of neoliberal policies has eroded the social fabric to such an extent that local people’s control over their life spaces has been significantly lost.

What are these life spaces? They are those spaces of collective human interaction that guarantee a people’s capacity to reproduce itself as a society:

1) The productive-economic space: the local, popular and collective economy.
2) The political space: where decisions are made and direct democracy is a permanent practice.
3) The cultural-spiritual space: where identities are (re) constructed and social unity is maintained.
4) The geographic-territorial space: nature, natural resources and community, where material and cultural reproduction takes place.
5) The imaginary space: people’s collective imagination.
their way of thinking and constructing knowledge and meanings, how they educate future generations.

The intensifying logic and forces of capitalist accumulation enters into a direct dispute for people’s life spaces. Civil society movements must seek to strengthen people’s life spaces in order to shift the balance of the dispute in their favor.

### 7.8 Building a popular pedagogy: Recovering the capacity to read and transform reality

An autonomous civil society is one which has recovered the collective ability to read and analyze reality with the aim of transforming it. At least three elements are required for this to take place:

1. The development of technical and political capacities;
2. Learning and creating new knowledge through praxis (action-reflection); and
3. Attitudes and values conducive to the task of social transformation.

All of our societies are being called to the task of re-signifying “the good life” beyond the neoliberal significations imposed from above. These new meanings will define the political-ideological form and content of our projects for society. These meanings do not exist within us nor in the world, but rather in the dynamic relation that is the Freirian notion *living in the world and living with the world* (Freire, 1971).

When poor and marginalized people at the local level “problematize” situations, examining the root causes and consequences of the problems they face, a series of *learning needs* tends to emerge. Learning needs are those things which people do not fully understand about a problem situation and/or its solution either because they lack formal or specialized training on the matter or there simply is not enough known on the subject.

These learning needs should translate into *research needs* which seek to fill the emergent knowledge vacuums in order to *integrally construct a problem situation* including all dimensions and *define alternative political, cultural and economic projects*. Some examples might be:

- What is the role of our community/region/nation in the New World Order?
- What are the impacts of globalization on the local community?
- What kind of democratic model has capitalism in its neoliberal phase imposed?
- What are the local economic alternatives that are being proposed?
- What democratic alternatives exist out in the world and can they be applied to our local context?
- In relation to the previous research question, were there traditional non-western modalities of popular power in the past that can be rescued into the present and future?
- Who are the contemporary social movements, what are their political proposals, what have been their successes and shortcomings? (This work has been termed by some as Social Movement Learning)
- What locally-based development alternatives exist and what lessons do they hold for our communities?

The popular pedagogy would necessarily bring us full circle to a reconsideration of the original problem-posing issue(s), i.e.: one would expect that the scope of people’s consideration about the problem would be broader than before, more multi-causal, less short-term, and more macro-structural. A new pedagogy to be employed must seek to engage the social subjects in the collective labor of imagining and constructing new forms of good life and thus transform the existing and alienating social, political and economic order. A new pedagogy must be employed that allows us, as colonized societies, to *learn to transform and transform to learn*. 
7.9 Scaling up or building national political platforms:
Towards a Common Popular Agenda

Governance from below, in order for it to be a permanent political process and not fall into the juncture trap requires the construction of a congruent and cohesive political platform. It goes without saying that the building of this political process must be done from the bottom up.

This implies applying popular education methods to resolving the unity-in diversity tensions by:

- contextualizing the local problem within the broader macro-structural reality
- building consensus around the minimal unifying criteria for collective action
- making visible diversity and divergences, and
- creating networks of like-minded and like-acting civil groups and organizations.

Political platforms would naturally be constructed at the local level and then built upwards to the zonal, regional and national levels. At least three elements need to be kept in mind in order for this to take place:

1) Defining the concrete “objective” elements: the socio-political or “development” demand, the proposal and Common Popular Agenda that would articulate and unify other social sectors.
2) The building and strengthening of organizational capacity around the Common Popular Agenda
3) Definition of the mechanisms for articulating, negotiating and creating grassroots pressure in order to achieve what the Common Popular Agenda proposes. For example, mobilizations, political education campaigns, forums and workshops, building international civil society alliances, etc.

Essentially, political clarity along with organizational capacity is what is needed for transforming dominant power relations.

Camilo Torres (cited in López y Rivas, 2006), the Colombian revolutionary priest who, 40 years ago died in combat in the mountains of his country, put it this way:

“Our struggle is for a popular organization that begins from the bottom and moves upward; from the village to the town; from the neighbourhood to the city centre, from the countryside to the city.”

Camilo Torres was affirming that true political and social organization is that which people assume as their own and construct through collective and autonomous action, making it a libertarian project and an enemy of bureaucracies.

“The struggle is long. Let us begin.”
– Father Camilo Torres, Colombian revolutionary Priest killed in combat on February 15, 1966

Endnotes

1. Editors Note: Part 1 of this article can be found in the January 2006 issue of Dialogue on Participation.


3. The Brundtland Commission on Environment and Development titled Our Common Future published in 1986 refuted the arguments put forward in 1972 by the Club of Rome’s Limits to Growth which placed economic growth and ecological health in an inherent contradiction. In contrast, Our Common Future would propose that more economic growth (i.e., ‘development’) was not in fact, the problem but the solution to the looming environment catastrophe. Growth and the environment could not only coexist harmoniously but the latter depended on the former.

4. Interestingly enough, Locke’s interpretation on individual freedoms and the right to property cleverly excluded forced labour (slavery) and the expropriation of the lands of the indigenous people of North America. In fact, Locke had amassed a considerable fortune by investing in the slave trade.

5. According to the UNDP Human Development Report (1999), the assets of the top three billionaires are more than the combined GDP of the 48 least developed countries which have a total population of more than 600 million. According to Ignacio Ramonet’s (1999) research, since 1989, over 70 armed conflicts have erupted around the globe, leaving hundreds of thousands of dead and over 17 million refugees. The vast majority of these of these conflicts take place in the global South, which now includes significant parts of the ex-Soviet Union.

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Locke, J. 1680. Two Treatise Concerning Government.  

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Message from Participatory Development (PD) Forum

Although it was in 1999 that PD Forum officially became a not-for-profit organization, this year will mark the 10th anniversary of PD Forum's original formation in 1996. We would like to thank all of PD Forum’s founding members for undertaking such an important initiative based on a vision of participation as a global movement to achieve social justice. We would also like to thank all supporters over the years for helping to realize this vision. As a budding organization, PD Forum has both achieved many successes and encountered many trials and tribulations over these years in its effort to facilitate greater dialogue on participation.

In a short period of ten years, PD Forum, like many other participatory advocates, has witnessed a shift from participation as the central means of driving social movements to “participation” as a simplistic tool for implementing development projects. Analysis of this trend has been advanced by the debate and discussion at PD Forum’s three international conferences (1999, 2002 and 2005). Critics who would like to see participation return to its original vision have rightly exposed the tyrannical practice of participation and demonstrated that certain forms of “participation” have perpetuated the unjust exercise of power.

As a result of these critiques there has been a renewed drive among participatory advocates to re-transform participation. Through members’ feedback and support, PD Forum is actively engaged in this debate so that we can give participation a better and stronger strategic direction. We are advocating for the equitable distribution of power and the promotion of people’s capacity to influence decisions that affect their livelihoods and their future through informed engagement and involvement on issues that are important to them.

In the coming years PD Forum will be engaged in finding a new direction and creating a new dynamic of participation – one through which meaningful development can arise through people’s struggle for social transformation. We believe that through this process we can help create alternatives to imposed mainstream development. This can be accomplished through collaboration with local networks and communities working for change, through research sharing of experience, and regional encounters, among other means. While there are certainly organizational challenges to achieving these kinds of objectives, PD Forum believes that strong membership support and contributions, and partnership with dedicated organizations and individuals will be crucial in sustaining PD Forum and helping it to realize its objectives. PD Forum itself is dedicated to doing what it takes to play a significant role to help realize this vision.
Introducing the PD Forum Board of Directors

PD Forum has 15 Board Members representing North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, Europe, Asia /Pacific and Ottawa. Five board members are based in Ottawa in order to provide a foundation to oversee funding, programming and staffing. (One seat is currently vacant). The Executive Committee, elected by the Board of Directors and comprised of Coordinator, Vice-Coordinator, Treasurer and Virtual Liaison Officer, works closely with staff to ensure that PD Forum operates efficiently. The Board Members actively participate in decision-making processes and program development through email, face-to-face and virtual meetings, and teleconferencing. All members of the Board are volunteers who donate their time, energy and expertise to a cause in which they strongly believe.

- **Danesi Jafar Abdukadir** (2006-08)
  Lagos, Nigeria
  Danesi is the Executive Director of Centre for Enlightenment and Development Intervention (CEDI). He has also worked with Health Matters Inc. as the project officer for Reproductive Health/HIV/AIDS in Lagos. Danesi has a Master of Science degree from the University of Lagos, Nigeria.

- **Mohammad Waseem Ashraf** (2004-06)
  Lahore, Pakistan
  Waseem has extensive experience in the development field and has worked with a number of NGOs in Pakistan. At present he is working with World Bank on the NWFP program to facilitate and promote the implementation process of decentralisation in Pakistan.

- **Emmanuel Asomba** (2004-06)
  Paris, France
  Emmanuel is a consultant in Change and Institutional Strengthening in the areas of education, health care, gender equity and empowerment. His latest areas of involvement have focused on Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR), through collaboration with the World Bank Institute.

- **Tara Bahadur Basyal** (2004-06)
  Kathmandu, Nepal
  Tara is the Secretary General of Environment Protection and Community Health Development Centre. He has in-depth knowledge of rural development issues in the context of Nepal. Tara holds a Master’s degree from Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu.

- **Brian Bonnell** (2004-06)
  Ottawa, Canada
  Brian works as a Senior Program Officer for the International Model Forest Network Secretariat at the International Development Research Centre focusing on Asia and Latin America. He also spent two years in Nepal as a community development volunteer.

- **Lisa Burley** (2006-08)
  Gatineau, Canada
  Lisa has a Master’s in Environmental Studies and works at the International Development Research Centre as the Project and Partnership Officer. She also worked with the IUCN regional office in Quito, Ecuador. Her interests include indigenous and gender issues, environment and equity.

- **Krishna H. Gautam** (2004-06)
  Ottawa, Canada
  For two decades, Krishna worked on participatory forestry and rural development in Nepal. He currently works as a Policy Analyst for the Canadian Forest Service. He has a PhD from the University of Canterbury, NZ and has completed a Post-doctoral Fellowship in Japan on Indigenous knowledge on natural resource management.

- **Daniel Lavan** (2004-06)
  Ottawa, Canada
  Daniel has taught in public primary schools in Ghana, Nigeria, and Uganda using both schools and homes to implement improvised small-scale basic educational interventions. He has a Master’s degree in Comparative, International, and Development Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

- **Pablo Alejandro Leal** (2006-08)
  Oaxaca City, Mexico
  Pablo is a professor at the Benito Juarez University of Oaxaca State and the National Pedagogical University (Oaxaca campus). His research interests include political economy of grassroots participation and the construction of methodologies that facilitate local people’s collective analysis of capitalist social relations at the micro-community level.

- **Sultan Muhammad Razzak** (2006-08)
  Dhaka, Bangladesh
  Sultan is a UNESCO Fellow and holds Doctorates in Sociology and Cultural Communication in Development, and Mass Media. He also has an Honorary Doctorate for contributions to promotion of peace and the protection of cultural, religious and indigenous peoples rights. He is the founding member of the Graam (people’s) Theater.

- **Anurag Sinha** (2004-06)
  Ottawa, Canada
  Anurag is a policy and research analyst. He holds a Master's degree in International Affairs from Carleton University and is currently working with a consulting firm.

- **Ronnie M. Tapnio** (2006-08)
  Quezon City, Philippines
  Ronnie is a consultant currently working on a World Bank funded project implemented by the Philippine Department of Social Welfare and Development on social inclusion and participation of vulnerable groups in development. He has expertise in local governance, popular education, training, and monitoring and evaluation.

- **Marides "Madett" Virola-Gardiola** (2004-06)
  Davao City, Philippines
  Madett has worked as a community organizer for urban poor, women groups and rural farmers for 22 years. At present, she is actively engaged in peacebuilding and social transformation in conflict affected communities of Mindanao.

- **Lui Kashungnao**
  Lui has worked with other NGOs including Amnesty International Canada, Oxfam Canada, Canadian Council for International Cooperation, New Delhi YMCA and Voluntary Health Association Delhi.

- **Rev. Seni Soewu** (2006-08)
  Lagos, Nigeria
  Seni is the founder and chief trustee of the International Association for Community Development. He is also a governing member and president of Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators of Nigeria.

- **Pablo Alejandro Leal** (2006-08)
  Oaxaca City, Mexico
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Dialogue on participation

PD Forum Ottawa met to discuss Ronald Wright’s 2004 book, “Short History of Progress”. He shows how our modern predicament is as old as civilization – a 10,000 year experiment we unleashed but have seldom controlled. Only by understanding the patterns of progress and disaster that humanity has repeated around the world since the Stone Age can we recognize the experiment’s inherent dangers, and with luck and wisdom, shape its outcome. Check:

http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/massey.html
http://www.anansi.ca/titles.cfm?pub_id=231

In March 2006, the PD Forum Board of Directors began strategic planning to review its vision, scope and programming priorities. The planning process is aimed at moving PD Forum forward so that it can actively engaged in finding a new direction and creating a new dynamic of participation – one through which meaningful development can arise through people’s struggle for social transformation. The Board is in the process of identifying key points for the strategic plan. Members’ feedback will be solicited through the PD Forum On-line Discussion Board and the listserv.

Submission Guidelines for Dialogue on Participation

Dialogue on Participation is a thematic quarterly e-newsletter. Each issue will be based on a theme which will be reflective of the discussion and debate on participation. We hope that this sharing will further deepen our understanding on participation, strengthen north-south and south-south dialogue, and provoke us to work in earnest to make participation more meaningful and more effective in promoting social justice.

The themes for 2006 are:

July 2006 • Innovations in Participatory Practice
October 2006 • Sustainability and Participation

Please consider the following points when submitting an article:

• You can select any topic related to the theme
• What are the leading-edge experiences, methodologies and tools, current issues and emerging trends in participatory development?
• Why, what and how we (grassroots, civil society organizations, policy makers, government, private sector, etc.) can strengthen our actions towards ensuring that empowered citizenship participation becomes an integral political strategy for promoting economic and social justice?
• Key article submissions should not be more than 1250 words.

You are also welcomed to submit an Opinion Piece related to the theme (up to 750 words). Book Reviews are also accepted. The review should not be more than 500 words.
PD Forum Sustainer Member Program

The PD Forum invites you to become a Sustainer Member by making a small donation. With your support PD Forum can continue to work as a leading-edge organization to foster the global movement on participatory development. Your contribution will help maintain the following programs:

- **International Conferences on Participation**: bringing together practitioners from around the world to share ideas and contribute to the global movement of participation
- **Participation Gateway**: sharing best practices and lessons learned in participatory development through the Virtual Resource Centre, Speakers Series and E-views
- **Partnership Building and Public Engagement**: facilitating and strengthening South-North and South-South partnerships, building capacity of Canadian CSOs and promoting public and private sector engagement in participatory development
- **Youth Leadership Development**: training and mentoring the next generation of PD practitioners

As a Sustainer Member you will receive the following services and more!

- **Speakers Bureau**: A web-based data bank for members to post their CVs, synopses of experiences and contact information
- **Members’ Map**: Your name, contact information and area of expertise will be placed on PD Forum Members’ Map
- **Logo on Site and Link to Website**: Your organization’s logo, contact information and areas of expertise will be placed on PD Forum website along with a link to your website
- **Annual Report**: You will receive a hard copy of PD Forum’s annual report

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### PD Forum Sustainer Member Form

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Rates are in Canadian Dollars. Your Sustainer Member contribution can be made by by cheque, money order or bank draft and should be sent to:

**Participatory Development (PD) Forum / Le forum sur le développement participatif**

1404 Scott Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1Y 4M8 Canada

tel: +1-613-792-1006, fax: +1-613-798-0990, pdforum@pdforum.org

☐ **Yes!** I would like to become a PD Forum Sustainer Member to foster the global movement on participatory development.

**Organization / Name:**

**Address:**

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**Province / State:**

**Country:**

**Area / Zip Code:**

**Telephone:**

**Fax:**

**Email:**

**Website:**

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Please make your contribution payable to Participatory Development Forum.