

15th Session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA)

18 to 22 April 2016

Written Statement from The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA)

Developing transformative leadership through authentic, diverse participation

This paper was submitted today as a formal statement to the 15th session of the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA) to be held on 18-22 April at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. ICA International has held Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN ECOSOC) since 1985. Former ICAI President Nelson Stover of Emerging Ecology led a small team in drafting this statement, with feedback and input from the wider ICAI membership, in response to an open call from the ECOSOC Division for Public Administration and Development Management to NGOs with ECOSOC Consultative Status.

The main item of discussion for CEPA this year is “Moving from commitments to results: transforming public institutions to facilitate inclusive policy formulation and integration in the implementation and monitoring of the sustainable development goals”, with sub-items:

1. Ensuring prioritization and decision-making that is fair, responsive, inclusive, participatory and accountable at all levels;
2. Improving engagement and communication between Governments and stakeholders, including through access to information, open government and electronic and mobile solutions;
3. Ensuring effective and innovative implementation, monitoring and impact evaluation of the policies identified in support of the sustainable development goals;
4. Strengthening the confidence of citizens in the effectiveness, validity and integrity of public administration through enhanced, targeted efforts to use good governance to prevent, expose and deal with corruption;
5. Developing transformative leadership and enhancing relevant competencies of public servants.

The paper addresses item 5. in particular. We are grateful to all who contributed to it.

Developing transformative leadership and enhancing relevant competencies of public servants Through Authentic, Diverse Participation

The Institute of Cultural Affairs developed a *Technology of Participation (ToP)*® in order to provide a reliable, replicable and transferable method for promoting authentic, diverse participation within the context of the modern era.

This response to Item 5 covers five matters. The first section outlines the needs for participatory methods. Second, the five foundational values of the Technology of Participation are summarized to indicate how this set of methods and principles meets the contemporary needs for allowing communities and organizations to envision their common future and then build workable plans for achieving their objectives. The third part of the

paper provides a brief overview of the Institute of Cultural Affairs' more than 40-year history in developing and testing this process in every time zone and at virtually all socio-economic levels. The fourth section provides one current on-going example of the Technology of Participation in action. Finally, around the globe training and consultation in the Technology of Participation are available from Institute of Cultural Affairs offices, and affiliated organizations.

The Institute of Cultural Affairs has a deeply held conviction that the people who are best placed to develop their future are those most affected by that future. Community people are best placed to solve the challenges faced by their own communities. This conviction is not only based on over forty years of experience in community development around the globe but has been stated by various academics. The Institute of Cultural Affairs has found that traditional methods of participation have left out women, youth, people with different ideas and in so doing have stifled the creativity of the community. Once leaders understand how they can involve people in the development of their community or city, they welcome the participation of diverse people. J. E. McNaughton, the former Mayor of Newcastle, an Australian regional city, is a great advocate for the Technology of Participation. He experienced the engagement of large numbers of diverse peoples through these methods over a nine-year period. As he wrote in a letter of endorsement to the Australian Quality Skills Authority in 2014, "I served as Lord Mayor of Newcastle from 1986 to 1995. In this time, we were able to achieve many advances for the City, ... (he lists six) ... There are many other examples. What these examples have in common is that they were achieved through using facilitation and facilitators which allowed all interested citizens to engage fully in the development of these projects."

The Institute of Cultural Affairs developed methods for providing elected officials, community leaders, every-day citizens and business leaders with methods for tapping the wisdom lying within the group itself. While any one person will not have the final answer, by listening to one another the intuitive wisdom of the group can be discerned. Elected officials and responsible community leaders can learn this style of facilitative leadership. The foundational values of the Technology of Participation as follows.

The first foundational value of the Technology of Participation centers on the need for insuring inclusive participation of all sections of the community that will be affected by the actions and decisions under consideration. The Technology of Participation recognizes the importance of each member of the group and understands each member holds an important piece of the puzzle and that each person's insights help to create a whole picture. By designing inclusive participation into the decision-making process itself, the need for rehashing conversations and adjusting decisions can be reduced.

Secondly, the Technology of Participation assumes that teamwork and collaboration are necessary to get a task done in the most effective, efficient and economical way. Groups using these methods experience a deep sense of collegiality among their members. When ways are provided for people with diverse perspectives and intellectual capacities to share their perspectives and to coalesce their ideas, the wisdom of the entire group comes to the surface.

Thirdly, use of the Technology of Participation brings out the best of each person's rational and intuitive capacities. By encouraging a dialogue between head and heart, people experience the magic of group creativity breaking loose.

Next, when everyone feels that their contributions have been honored and they have contributed both their practical suggestions and the personal passion, the group becomes empowered to take action on decisions owned and supported by members of the group. Group ownership of decisions moves them toward a commitment to action.

The fifth core value of the Technology of Participation holds that individual and group resolve emerges when participants fully appreciate of the value and importance of consensus and collective action. By fostering in-depth reflection within the context of group decision-making, users of the Technology of Participation allow learning and transformation to occur in ways that sustain the group as it moves forward.

For more than forty years, the Institute of Cultural Affairs has been involved in working with villages, neighborhoods and community organizations. These experiences have clarified the need for helping communities become vibrant and self-sufficient in ways that instill responsibility for building their own creative future. Often time, leaders attempt to try to find ways to convince communities to accept one set of solutions or another. At other times, experts try to put their own perspectives and interpretations on comments and complaints generated by citizens. The Institute of Cultural Affairs has found that higher levels of community involvement arise when the future directions are evoked from within the community itself and when the people responsible for implementing actions are included in the decision-making process.

The research work and practical testing of the Technology of Participation began on the west side of Chicago Illinois in the late 1960's and continues internationally to the present day. In the Fifth City community of Chicago, workshops and planning activities were held with the diverse citizenry in ways that produced visible changes and motivated wide-spread involvement. During the 1970's, similar community development projects were begun around the globe – at least one project in every time zone. These demonstration community projects provided a diverse environment for honing the effectivity of the Technology of Participation and allowed most cultural biases to be minimized. In the last two decades of the 20th Century, the Technology of Participation was used at all levels in governmental organizations and for-profit corporations which included both small-scale businesses and multi-national corporations. In recent years, the Institute of Cultural Affairs International, which has had Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council since 1985, has served as a coordinating network for the national Institute of Cultural Affairs organizations and other associated member organizations. Working together, these groups have continued to refine the Technology of Participation and have developed accessible systems for training community and government leaders in their application.

Numerous global examples of the affectivity of these methods are available however, for the efficiency of space we include one current example of the Institute's approach which can be found in the Indian State of Maharashtra not far from Pune. This cluster of villages provides a glimpse of authentic, diverse participation at the grassroots level. The current director of this project was trained in the Institute of Cultural Affairs' training program for village leadership in 1978. By 2000, the Institute opened an Environmental Education Centre in Talegaon where training programs were conducted for village leaders from surrounding areas. Now, in the cluster of villages around Khambole in the Mulshi Taluka, the farmers hold meetings to plan for and expand their production through irrigation, women's groups plan and initiate small scale industries and community leaders take active responsibility for all aspects of their future. The growth and development of this cluster of villages has been

accomplished without massive financial inputs but rather was facilitated through application of tested methods which allowed authentic and diverse participation from the community and thereby fostered their active and creative involvement in the process.

Finally, as indicated above, the Technology of Participation is now available to citizens and leaders of communities and organizations around the globe. Through its member organizations, the Institute of Cultural Affairs International can provide training in using the Technology of Participation for in-depth conversations and planning workshops. The conversations allow groups to review and discuss documents and presentations outlining proposed actions in ways that promote honest feedback and review. The participatory planning workshops coalesce diverse perspectives into concerted results that honor all participants' wisdom and foster commitment to implementing the resultant plan. A cohort of trained facilitators is also available for customizing programs and events which utilize the Technology of Participation to meet specific needs of community groups and government agencies.

In these ways, the Institute's Technology of Participation provides a readily available, and globally common, approach to eliciting participation from the diverse citizenry found in groups and communities in ways that allow concerted action and foster active commitment. This approach streamlines the path from visioning to planning and implementation.