Title: Behavioural Dimensions of Participation: Envisioning Institutional

Sustainable Development

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Abstract

The power of institutional cohesion is often underestimated. When stakeholder's come together to collaboratively take action a new type of organisational sustainability may arise. From a group of individuals there can emerge a functioning team with a strong dynamic that enables them to take action to facilitate Sustainable Development objectives.

This paper explores the way that the group dynamics of institutional engagement provides a backdrop from which new concepts of participation may be investigated and where practices consistent with Sustainable Development could unfold.

The effectiveness of participation is explicitly dependent upon a number of implicit factors which form group dynamics. If group dynamics are ineffectual, it is unlikely that stakeholders will be able to effectively participate in attaining sustainable development objectives.   Thus the key to attaining organizational sustainability lies through a strong group dynamic which allows participation of stakeholders to take place.

Key words: **Sustainable Development, Participation, Group dynamics**

Introduction

Sustainable development (SD) has often been defined as follows:

"development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."
WCED (1987)

While the definition sets out what needs to be achieved it does not specify who should be responsible for putting this vision into practice. The answer to this question can be simply put as 'everyone'; individuals, households, companies, communities, governments and so on. However, in most contemporary situations SD is implemented through a project or programme (a collection of related projects) where timescales, resources and desired outputs are defined in advance (this process for achieving SD via projects has been defined and explored in terms of the 'Projectified World Order' and set out in Bell and Morse, 2005). Institutions have an important role to play in the implementation of SD. At one level they may be charged with funding , researching or implementing SD projects (Davies *et al.,* 2000), or perhaps they may act as pressure groups bringing influence to bear on other institutions (Halme *et al*, 2009). There are also issues of scale at play here. What an institution attempts to achieve at local scales can be influenced by and will also influence agenda's that exist at larger scales. As Dovers (2002) eloquently puts it:

"In one small council — let's call it Buggerup Shire (not related to any similarly named Western Australian council) — the building inspector goes about his daily tasks. Those small tasks connect absolutely to that big global agenda of sustainable development, through climate change and energy use, and through the tortuous negotiations under the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the associated Kyoto Protocol which Australia will not ratify. Meanwhile the Buggerup shire engineer has her daily tasks as well, concerning drains, sewers and swamps. These small tasks connect to the Ramsar Convention on wetlands, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and to a raft of state and national policy and law in Australia. What matters in Buggerup matters in Canberra, in small Pacific islands, Europe, the UN, everywhere. Hence Local Agenda 21."
(Dovers, 2002, pp 1)

Specific institutions have a functional role within sustainability and are also concerned with their own survival, as they must be able to sustain themselves (Doppelt, 2003). In effect there is an inevitable trade-off between ensuring the sustainability of the institution and the activities that the institution is engaged in. These roles are not necessarily compatible (Pregernig *et al.,* 2005). An institution can make itself sustainable (i.e. increase its chances of survival) by doing things which will not help facilitate sustainability in the wider community. For example, an institution running a credit scheme may naturally wish to lend to those in society who are best able to repay loans and thereby avoid lending to riskier yet poorer clients, even if the latter are those most in need (Yunus *et al.,* 2003; Coulson, 2009; Mersland *et al.,*2008; Spangenberg, 2004; Syad, 2009). Indeed there are dangers to sustainability inherent within such a narrowness of focus and this is a well-trodden path by the private sector and has helped spawn the philosophy of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) (Fink *et al.*, 2006; Ralston *et al.,* 2002; Laszlo, 2008). CSR aims to embed companies within the societies where they are active and make positive contributions beyond their obvious and

immediate role of employer. CSR could be described as avoiding 'sustainability in a cup'. All too often we look after the sustainability of the contents of the cup (such as maintaining profits), but give scant if any concern to the myriad of factors and forces which exist outside the fragile world of the cup (Toffel *et al.,* 2009). .

Thinking outside the cup, institutions may attempt to take actions through a number of media e.g. interaction or lobbying of local government groups, setting up local groups which advise local authorities or through implementing projects to attain goals (Cusworth *et al.* 2003) in order to achieve SD objectives. Included here could be the mobilization of stakeholders, those with an interest in what is to be achieved and how best to achieve it. Stakeholders may be involved (participate) in various ways, some more embedded within institutions than are others. Each of these actions is an attempt to improve their cohabitate environment via subsuming action through collaboration. In this respect, stakeholder participation becomes a goal in itself in order to operationalise SD.

At the centre of these decentralized attempts to improve cohabited environments are the principles of equality and democracy. Participation of localised members is essential, to attaining the equilibrium that is associated with these principles and objectives that lead to their implementing SD (Morris *et al.,* 2001; Devkota, 2005; May, 2008). Approached from this perspective, participation can be seen as a means to empower constituents to participate in the effective, efficient and equitable co-provision and co-production of public goods and services that are required to guarantee the sustainability of institutions and their development via mechanisms such as, social marketing (Smith *et al.,* 2006). This is important because without the knowledge of these actors action taken may be superfluous or even detrimental.

In structural terms SD may be seen from a number of perspectives within organisations; from individual, organisational and systemic (Clarke *et al.,* 2009; Newig *et al.,* 2009). Each of these 'views' constitutes a working environment in which individuals, groups and teams work in social and organistaional space (Klein, 2005; Armstrong, 2005), and they can be contradictory. Individuals within an organization will have to work in teams that can be semi-permanent or transitory, and individuals may not necessarily agree with all that the team of which they are a part decides and implements. Coalitions of interests may come and go, even within a relatively small organization (Seabrook *et al.,* 2009; Barnett *et al.,* 1999; Borras *et al.,* 2009: Timmermans, 2006). The systemic or constitutional choices configure a space within which collective choices are made, which will in turn have an impact at an organisational level and shape how individuals (or group) actions are implemented (Boyatzis, 2009; Kiser *et al.,* 1982; Hirschhorn, 1988) (Fig.1). Individuals function within teams which in turn interact at a systems level.

Fig 1. A Systemic Perspective of Institutional Sustainability
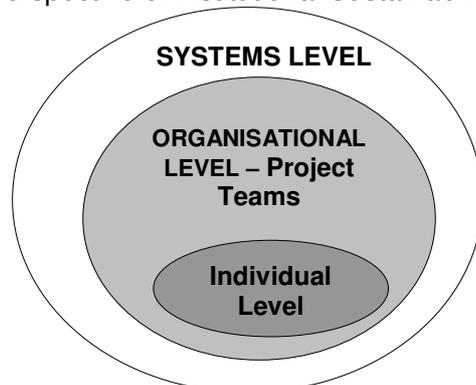
Within each of the spaces depicted in Figure 1, institutions can be considered the products of design, or the emergent, contingent result of ongoing social interaction (Halford, 2008). Actor-networks are potentially transient, existing in a constant iteration of reformation (Callon, 1986: Latour, 2005), relations need to be repeatedly 'performed' or the network will dissolve, as networks of relations are not intrinsically coherent, and may indeed contain conflict (Latour, 2005). Therefore, institutions may be formally constituted or informally constructed through the interaction of social groups or networks (Leonardi, 2009: Whitehead, 2008); or on an individual level, where accepted norms of behaviour are formulated. Subjects of an institution may or may not be aware of the influences on their decision-making capacity (Klein, 2005; Senge 2006). Theoretically, these principles may be applied to SD initiatives, which are implemented via these institutions, especially as SD is so value-laden.

Within each of these SD initiatives, differing spaces are constituted in a number of variable environments in which individuals and the groups of which they are members attempt to operationalise their SD goals. The groups that operate within these environments have varying behaviours as these spaces evolve. This affects the dynamics of these groups (an observation supported by Lewin, as long ago as 1948) and, thus provides an interesting backdrop to investigate the potential impact of the changing dynamics upon the attainment of SD goals in varying institutional settings.

From this perspective, it can be seen that individuals operating within different teams or organisational environments are embedded in multiple systems. These may jointly constrain or enable SD projects within these variable contexts, as these evolve in planned, accidental or even idiosyncratic ways. They are distinctive temporary systems embedded within unique environments. Simultaneously, they rely upon routines or norms to function within an emergent environment (De Board, 1978; Goleman, 1998). It can be hypothesized that these routines or norms vary between institutions because each is attempting to attain different goals within embryonic contexts with varying motivations (Boyatzis, 2009). Simplifying to make the point: private companies (for example), will tend to seek to enhance profit (increase revenue and /or reduce costs) while public sector institutions will tend to try to meet performance targets set by government. While the motive of maximizing profit remains as a fixed point for the private sector, even if the commercial environment changes, a public sector organization can find itself having to meet many separate and transient targets some of which may be contradictory.

Projects embarked upon under the guise of taking action for SD, where undertaken by private or public sector institutions, may have a tendency to focus upon accomplishing socially based objectives. In this sense evolving environment is often closely linked to stakeholder's emotive personal objectives or beliefs and this is often coupled with their 'needs' and long-term objectives (Davies, 2009). The attainment of technical objectives may not be central to these projects, though technological feasibility may be a consideration. Comparatively within other institutions, actors might be focused on attaining goals to produce certain products, services or project outcomes to ensure profitability or accountability.

The familiar rationale for contemporary project work is as follows: projects that need to realise certain objectives are guided by desired outcomes which are achieved through the implementation of a series of tasks. This is underlain, by the need to meet time and cost constraints. Stakeholder's working practices are influenced by the way their

products or services need to be delivered with decision making taken at a systemic or organisational level. In order to meet customer requirements, projects consist of the delivery of discrete 'bits' of costed and time-lined activity delivered to an agreed specification. This affects the ways in which individuals work within these differing environments (Clarke *et al.,* 2009). A team may be constructed specifically for the life of a project, and there can be some fluctuation in membership with individuals being drafted in at certain points while others may leave.

However, while it is acknowledged that teams engaged in SD projects may be complex entities it can be hypothesized that patterns in their functioning can be identified. Examining project related Institutional Contexts – ICs - (from socially-orientated at one end of the spectrum to businesses at the other) from a group dynamics perspective gives rise to a plethora of proposed differences at the systemic, organisational and individual level. It should be possible to observe the differing norms, routines and objectives within these different ICs. For example, in social sector ICs such as community group's one might expect to see teams comprised of smaller emotive groups that are less structured and more intimate (tightly bound) because in these contexts individuals invest time and emotion into causes that they strongly believe in (again, see Lewin, 1948; Stewart *et al.,* 2007). In contrast, in a corporate institution (ICs in the private sector) groups might consist of a larger number of stakeholders, possibly with less time, who implements activities through a series of tasks combined with rational discussion. Relationships could be less intimate as individuals are drafted in and out of the team and the focus is upon organisational outputs and efficiency in use of time and resources (Stewart *et al.,* 2007). Following on from this analysis Table 1 outlines some of the anticipated extremes between the private sector and community groups; each characteristic can be assumed to have an impact upon the dynamics of teams and impacts upon their ability to achieve their desired outputs.

Table 1.Hypothesised differences between two types of institution: Private Sector Company and a community group, leading to behavioural differences

Characteristic	Private	Community
Time considerations	High	Medium/Low
Cost considerations	High	Medium/low
Human Resource Constraints	High	Medium/Low
Managerial control over work outputs	High	Low
Measurable outputs/achievements	High	Low
Resource Planning	High	Medium/Low
Clear goals set out as a blueprint in advance	High	Low
Need for democracy	Low	High
Need for control	High	Low
Perceived need to engage internal stakeholders	High	Medium/Low
Perceived need to engage external stakeholders	Low	High
Emotional Investment in work outputs	Low	High
Emotional importance of work	Medium/Low	High
Remuneration	Salaried (bonuses)	Voluntary

Table 1 is a simplified representation intended to show hypothesized extremes and is based upon anticipated outcomes arising from the literature. Each of these extremes

would be expected to have an impact upon the group dynamics of teams working within these environments. For example, in the Private Sector ICs we assume that in a general sense work tasks are planned with constraints such as, time, cost and human resources which managers must control. We further assume that actors are often assigned to complete these tasks within these constraints with little emotional investment required from themselves as this is their 'job', as such the meaning or completion of the task may not be important to the individual other than the need to show that it has been done in accord with criteria specified at the start. Logically following from this the completion of the task for their 'job' is more important than the individual's willingness to emotionally invest time to complete it. This in turn impacts upon the way in which the actor interacts with others in their team and their ability or dedication to complete their allocated tasks (Boyatzis, 2009). Comparatively, with the community group IC, we assume that individuals invest their time to achieve tasks that have more of a personal meaning to them. They can be assumed to appear to be willing to invest time and emotion into completing the task impacts upon their work outputs. As the individual is implementing work that has a meaning for them this changes their attitudes and behaviours and thus their working relationships with others and keenness to reach their goals.

Therefore, putting the story together, this research suggested the following hypotheses:

1. ICs which are socially based contain small groups, where interdependencies are strong (Lewin, 1948). Individuals are emotive, affective and fewer tasks orientated.
2. Other IC groups, with corporate aims comprise of decentralized groups. Individuals are task orientated and constricted by their environment.

These hypotheses are interdependent upon a variety of factors such as, group norms, aims, objectives, time spent together or differing environments (Checkland *et al.,* 1981).

Understanding how these groups interact and their dynamics could be important to understanding the difference between their attainment of goals, or institutional functionality in SD. For example, if the hypotheses are true: are social groups which may be embedded within communities better placed to facilitate SD given their intimacy or does that work against them? While the private sector maybe less intimate and more 'target orientated' does that not result in better attainment of SD goals? These are complex questions, yet while they are important issues there is a surprising dearth of literature which has compared such institutions, especially those engaged within the broad field of SD. Examining the group dynamics in each of these environments gives us a way through which to explore institutional sustainability across a range of sectors.

Perception and Performance

A group's shared perception of institutional goals could be a factor with regard to SD project success, as their environment may affect the project team's behaviours and thus their capabilities (Boyatzis, 2006; Huang *et al.,* 2009). Understanding their attitudes and behaviours, at an individual level, how the organisational or systemic environments impact upon these and the way in which they operate on varying scales is a key to understanding participation within the IC. These elements of participation may lead to the success of SD implementation, as influencing a group's perception contributes to the overall institutional or systemic factors that give these individuals a sense of belonging. The sense of purposefulness motivates actors to invest their time and energy into

projects, and so they complete tasks or fulfil emotive ends which ultimately satisfy their need as individuals (Wilhelmenson *et al.,* 2009). An important assumption at this point is that purposefulness is a critical element within the IC helping to bring about SD.

Attaining purposefulness can be achieved via a sense of participation or ownership in the process (Wilhelmenson *et al.,* 2009). SP is assumed to have many advantages for attaining SD such as, achieving real, relevant, or lasting change as the people most intimately connected with projects, policies or programmes are involved in understanding, designing or implementing them. This gives them a sense of ownership and as a result they care about outcomes and work to ensure the benefits last (Slocum *et al.,* 1998). Emotional equity and ownership influences stakeholders to want to implement SD. Changes are likely to last if they emerge from wider understanding and a genuine sense of 'ownership' which engenders purposefulness (Boyatzis, 2006, 2009). This can reduce the risk of subsequent conflict or resistance via exploring resolutions where stakeholders perceive and understand each other's constraints (Druskat *et al.,* 2000). Stakeholders in these groups may comprise of a relatively small number of people all employed by the same organization but can also be an equally small group of people who meet on a regular basis who are not employed by the same organization. This gives us another dimension from which we may see the group membership which correlates to the ideas of Arnstein (Arnstein, 1969).

"The bottom rungs of the ladder are (1) Manipulation and (2) Therapy. These two rungs describe levels of "non-participation" that have been contrived by some to substitute for genuine participation. Their real objective is not to enable people to participate in planning or conducting programs, but to enable powerholders to "educate" or "cure" the participants. Rungs 3 and 4 progress to levels of "tokenism" that allow the have-nots to hear and to have a voice: (3) Informing and (4) Consultation. When they are proffered by powerholders as the total extent of participation, citizens may indeed hear and be heard. But under these conditions they lack the power to insure that their views will be heeded by the powerful. When participation is restricted to these levels, there is no follow-through, no "muscle," hence no assurance of changing the status quo. Rung (5) Placation is simply a higher level tokenism because the ground rules allow have-nots to advise, but retain for the powerholders the continued right to decide.

Further up the ladder are levels of citizen power with increasing degrees of decision-making clout. Citizens can enter into a (6) Partnership that enables them to negotiate and engage in trade-offs with traditional power holders. At the topmost rungs, (7) Delegated Power and (8) Citizen Control, have-not citizens obtain the majority of decision-making seats, or full managerial power."
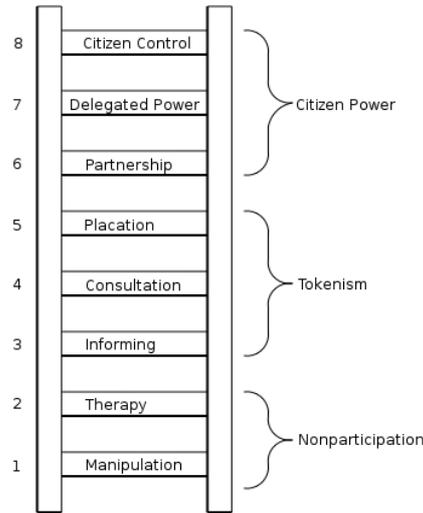
(Arnstein, 1969).

Fig 2 Arnstein's Ladder

Arnstein's ladder of (Arnstein, 1969) remains, implicitly and explicitly, at the core of many approaches to participation (Wilcox, 1994; GLA, 2005) despite being published 40 years ago (Ison *et al.,* 2006). It has been utilised in many academic deliberations about stakeholder participation from business ethics (Cummings, 2001); development studies (Hayward *et al,* 2004); health planning (Longley, 2001; White, 2003); public administration (Yang, 2005; Bishop and Davis, 2002); urban development (Blanc et al., 2005) to child studies (Hart, 1992; Shier, 2001). Taking the ideas of Arnstein, one stage further as others have (for example; Tritter *et al.,* 2006; Ison *et al.*, 2006; Green *et al.*, 2003) we may redefine the levels of individual membership in team whom works in SP. The table below outlines the factors which impact upon an individual's level of involvement and therefore membership within SP. For example, some may be marginalized or be deeply embedded within their institution may have to adopt a certain stance or type of behaviour because of the dependency that they have within their working environment.   In Table 2, each level from 1-7 the higher the factor, the greater the individual is participating in the group and vice versa. This impact upon the level of participation each individual may have in the group and these are factors which are closely correlated to Arnstein's *Ladder of Citizen Participation* (Arnstein, 1969).

Table 2 Factors that affect SP in the group

8	Identity in Group	The identity of each individual in the group is a factor which is impacted upon by each element 1-7.	In correlation to Arnstein's Ladder.
7	Inclusion	Inclusion within the group also becomes stronger as one becomes more involved and contributes.	Involvement in group activities (formally/informally)
6	Belonging	A sense of belonging	Relationship with other

		becomes stronger the as involvement and contribution grows.	group members (formal/informal)
5	Involvement	The more a member contributes the more they will wish to become involved. This is impacted upon by elements 1-4.	Type of contact with the group (based on 1-4)
4	Contribution	A member will wish to contribute more if they have a high dependency on the group which forms their identity or less if they are not. This factor will also be impacted upon by	Parameters of employment (voluntary/ paid work)
3	Dependency	Dependency refers to the level at which each member needs to feel a part of the group and how much they need to be involved. This will also be interdependent on 2 and 1.	Frequency of contact with group members, need to complete tasks within group, how embedded in the institution the individual is
2	Working Climate	The climate in which the group work will be impacted upon by their level of comfort at 8, but in addition this will impact upon the dependency they have on the group. They may feel a need to be a part of the group depending upon their position within the working environment.	Defined role at work/ task within group, how marginalized the individual is within their institution
1	Comfort	Depending upon the level of physical and psychological comfort a member become more involved in the group	Agreement with goals/ ethos of the group activities, type of communication with members

The Table 3, maps the correlations between Arnstein's Ladder, Table 2 and Storm Maps. Storm Mapping is a methodology that may be utilized to link the behavioural traits of stakeholders in groups to differing types of participation to ascertain how this impact upon a group achieving their desired outcomes.

Table 3 Correlations across differing methodologies

Arnstein's Ladder	Storm Map	Factors that affect SP in the group	Membership Domain	Examples of membership of Actor/Stakeholder
1- Manipulation	1	1	Authoritarian	Expert/ Bureaucrat
2 - Therapy	1	1	Elitist	Expert/ Bureaucrat
3 – Informing	2,4	2,3	Symbiotic	Expert/ Bureaucrat/NGO
4 - Consultation	2,4	4,5	Consultant	Expert/ Bureaucrat/NGO
5 – Placation	2,4	4, 5	Conciliator	Community Member, NGO Worker, Researcher
6 - Partnership	5	6,7	Affiliate	Community Member, NGO Worker, Researcher
7 – Delegated Power	3	8	Representative	Community Member, NGO Worker, Researcher
8 – Citizen Control	3	8	Integrator	Citizens, NGO's,

There are many approaches that have been developed to facilitate SP and in the space of this paper it is not possible to discuss them all. In this research the approaches are grouped into three main areas; (a) people's organisations and co-operatives (IUCN, 1997; Slocum *et al.,* 1998; Eade, 1997) (b) community development (Bernard, 2009; Smith *et al.,* 2006; Slocum *et al.,* 1998; Wade *et al.,* 2008; Roderick *et al.,* 2008; Selby, 2008) and (c) guided participation in large scale projects (Cusworth *et al.,* 1993; Thomas-Slayter, 1998; Jodha, 2001). The literature surrounding each of these areas differs in focus in (a) there is much focus upon the individual and local empowerment which differs to (b) as this is concerned with the whole community and groups within this and comparatively (c) focuses on the wider environment such as, agricultural systems, countries and broader concerns. Each focuses on different spaces and does not concern it with the spaces between these or indeed how each of these interacts with one another.

Table 4 Synopsis of differences in SP literature

Individual and local empowerment	The whole community and groups	Wider environment such as, agricultural systems, countries and broader concerns
Concentrates on individual efforts and achievements at a local level	Concentrates on project runs by NGO or voluntary groups at a regional level	Concentrates on broad/ systemic issues faced at country level
Text is discourse	Text a timeline of events	Text focuses on broad topics and is rhetorical
Mainly focus' on advise or account of experience	Gives an overview of project	Discussion centers around actions that could or need

		to be, or have been implemented

Stakeholder participation is often employed as a banner within SD but its achievement in practice is replete with difficulties (Oakley, 1991). Humans respond not to events, but to the meaning of experiences linked to sets of circumstances, otherwise known as stimuli-response (Miller *et al.,* 2004; Powers, 1973; Scumacher *et al.,* 2002). SP tends to reduce stakeholders inputs, which are based on their experiences in favour of a single desired outcome (Bell *et al.,* 2006). This decentralizes the dynamics of stakeholder groups via lessening the emotional equity that they are willing to invest as their sense of ownership is reduced. While these emotions may be set aside within a time-bound context such as a 'participatory workshop' or similar event this apparent harmony may not reflect the reality of engagement over longer periods (Beierle *et al.,* 2000; Leech *et al.* 2002). This leads to poorly designed processes with outcomes of little real value or influence. Participants become disillusioned if they are involved in processes which lead to no action, feedback or change, or if they are asked repeatedly for their opinions on similar subjects or on subjects of little relevance or interest. If they are involved they have a sense of ownership (Peterson *et al.,* 2008; Goodijk, 2000). This reduces their willingness to participate as, from their perspective; action has become purposeless rather than purposeful.

Explanations of human behaviour require more than simple causal, deterministic mechanisms (as argued in De Board, 1978). De Board suggested that human behaviour and experience are the consequence of multi-determined factors. Here there is a place in research for interpretative analysis, co-operative inquiry, phenomenological and transpersonal methods because this field has many dimensions that interact with one another. There is often little evaluation of the effectiveness (in terms of the results, benefits and the costs) of stakeholder engagement in SD. Consequently, there is little 'proof' of the effectiveness of these more participatory approaches or the impacts of the underlying group dynamics. It is just assumed the SP must be a 'good thing', but in fact it may not be (Newig *et al.*, 2009).

To examine behaviours in teams and SP which takes place in varying environments, this research is exploring a methodology which has been designed to extricate the internal perspectives of individuals in these groups to examine behaviours versus SD goal attainment. It is expected that in utilizing this approach participation at a grass roots level will be examined, which may result in a fuller analysis of SP, subsuming a systemic approach across organisational boundaries which are unbounded by individuals operational limitations.

A Methodological Progression

The need to understand SP at a deeper level in order to better facilitate the attainment of SD goals is the rationale behind the analysis of participatory groups and processes. Many methodologies have been utilised to implement SP, including Soft Systems Methodology (SSM; Checkland *et al.*, 2006), Imagine (Bell *et al.*, 2005), Planning for Real and Sustainability Appraisal (Minas *et al.,* 2002). While they are share an underlying epistemology of giving power back to people and an implied assumption that participation gives 'better' change, they can nonetheless vary a great deal in terms of how the 'participation' is achieved and how the findings are utilized and by whom. Thus

we have approaches such as citizens' juries, workshops and even the use of diaries and video. Table 5 outlines the different approached of how participation is achieved.

Table 5. An example of methods used in to SP

Name of Approach	Methodology Utilized
Grassroots diaries	Using diagrams and simple written and numerical data
Photo and Video	This records a production with stakeholders
Focus Groups	A group of people are asked about their attitude towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea, or packaging. Questions are asked in an interactive group setting where participants are free to talk with other group members
Citizen Juries	Citizens' Juries involve the recruitment of a team of jurors to consider a particular issue. The jury is selected, using a mixture of random and stratified sampling, to be broadly representative of the community. The jury is brought together for a number of days to discuss aspects of the issue as a group. They may seek written and/or verbal submissions from the wider public to assist in their deliberations, and may call on expert advice to clarify specific aspects. At the end of the process, the jury's conclusions are recorded, with the draft signed off by the individual jurors before being submitted to the commissioning authority.
Participationary Appraisal	Participatory Appraisal (PA) enables a wide cross-section of people to share information and opinions about their lives and environment. People who typically have little power are assisted to gain confidence and speak out. Facilitators use a series of methods to facilitate analysis and discussion, including: • institutional analysis diagrams • historical trend diagrams • local livelihoods analysis diagrams • matrix scoring of priorities or criteria. Facilitators must take time, be respectful and open, and not interrupt. They need to

	have confidence that local people, whatever their circumstances are capable of performing their own analysis.
	Policymakers can be included in the PA process. Face-to-face interaction of this kind can be valuable for gaining understanding of issues.
	There are many applications of PA, including:
	• planning and design • identifying indicators • natural resource management • institutional change

The participatory methodology that is presented in this paper is based on SSM. SSM is utilised in the analysis of complex situations where there are divergent views about the definition of the problem – 'soft problems' (Checkland, 2006). In such situations, even the actual problem to be addressed may not be easy to agree upon. To intervene, SSM uses the notion of a "system" as an interrogative device that will enable debate amongst concerned parties. Through discussions and exploration of these the decision makers will arrive at accommodations (or, exceptionally, at consensus) over what changes may be systemically desirable and feasible (Checkland, 2006). However, SSM in itself does not examine behaviours or the dynamics of groups and how these influence the outputs which they arrive at.

The methodology described within this paper, incorporates the ethos of SSM, but examines behaviours and group dynamics as attempts to explain behaviours within groups on a longer term basis rather than within a time-bound event are few. There is a need to employ exploratory approaches to research. It can be rationalized that the dynamics at play could vary depending upon the nature of the group, which, in turn, would be both a reflection of the individuals involved but also the ethos of what the group is trying to achieve. However, little, if anything is known of the ways in which the nature of the group dynamics can be a basis for analysis of participatory stakeholder behaviours from a psychological perspective. This methodology is a process to explore the differing dynamics across ICs, seeking to prove the above hypothesis.

Thus, SD and SP is explored via examining dynamics within groups and ascertaining how these work within differing ICs by:

(i) exploring and making explicit the behaviours/attitudes held by actors within groups across institutional settings and organisational levels;

(ii) developing an awareness as to how achieving SD goals are affected by these behaviours/attitudes;

(iii) building an understanding of cause and effect in relation attitudes/behaviours and

how these impact on team members abilities to perform tasks or organisational functionality

In order to explore this further, the following methodology Storm Maps (behavioural research matrix) has been developed.

Methodological Approach

The methodological process adopted within this research is a soft systems inspired approach, using your assessment matrix, applied in an AR format. To assess the group dynamic, on a regular basis, when the group convenes, members use the matrix (Fig 3.) depicted below to:

1. Discuss their observed behaviours within the group,
2. Categorize these behaviours with the researcher.
3. The researcher records the categorized behaviours in the table.
4. After the meeting, the researcher records their observations in a similar table to provide a comparative record (where they agree/ or disagree and why).

Fig. 3. Storm Map (Behavioural Research Matrix)

Project /Behavourial Attribute	1	2	3	4	5
1. Do members agree on the goals?	No agreement	Dissent	Unison	Assent	Inconsistent
2. Goal Direction.	Overcontrolled	Restrained	Uniform	Obscure	Purposeless
3. Group Tonality	Rational	Flat	Dynamic	Sincere	Affective
4. Energy.	Inhibited	Constricted	Vivifying	Excitable	Delerious
5. Communication	Closed	Inhibited	Open	Candid	Relaxed
6. Tension.	Frail	Delicate	Ordered	Exuberant	Vociferous
7 Effectiveness	Disjointed	Fragmented	Flowing	Logical	Inflexible
8. Balance	Task Orientated	Objective		nious	Emotive
9 Observer Interaction	Ignored	Rejected		with little sion	Accepted with no discussion

Figure. 3. was developed throughout the literature review, building on some work undertaken by Bell/ Morse (Bell, 2008; Bell *et al.,* 2007; Bell *et al.,* 2005) and through working in a number of differing environments. Core pieces of literature such as, Lewin (Lewin, 1948), Moon (Moon,1999) and MacGregor (MacGregor, 1960) amongst others, provided a rationale for why differing behaviours and group dynamics were prevalent in differing environments and how this impacted upon team effectiveness (Pfeffer, 2003; Schein, 2004). The matrix was built upon a number of assumptions from each of these authors and indicative work experience. These were then grouped into a number of observable behavioural categories and then each category was named and placed into a matrix. At one end (1), the group is highly ordered and task orientated and there is no emotional space as members are functioning to complete work tasks in a controlled environment. Comparatively, at the other (5), the group is disorderly and emotionally orientated to complete tasks which are important to them. The matrix is designed to be used by groups to enable them to reach a balanced state between (1) and (5) so that they function as a team and work together with a healthy dynamic.

The behavioural categories in Fig. 3, demarcate where the group is on a scaled matrix from one to five. Each cell within the table has criteria behind it that indicates the type of behaviour that the researcher observes in relation to the attribute at the beginning. Through discussion with group members, the researcher then marks the cell that is most applicable to the group. For example, do members agree on the goals of the group, at one there is no agreement, at three there is complete agreement and at five there is inconsistent agreement (so some may agree and others may not). This principle is applied to each of the cells in turn until the table is completed with the group. At the end of this process, a Storm Map of the dynamics within the group and how they are operating as a team. From the criteria, the researcher and the group can gain a clear indication of why they may not be achieving their goals. If the group are mainly scoring towards the lower end of the spectrum, within the criteria this indicates that they are over controlled and task orientated and communicating in an ineffective manner. Comparatively, if they scores are towards the upper end, this indicates that they tend to an emotional response and not concentrating on achieving their desired outputs (instrumental). The nominal sense of an 'ideal' response would be for groups to 'move' towards the middle of the table, so that a balance is achieved in-between the emotional and working needs of the group to become a functioning team, more capable of SD.

The approach above follows the principles of an action research study, which has been adopted, as the issues being explored require the inquiry process to remain as open as possible. Action research is reactive; this responsiveness makes it flexible in a way that some research methods are not. Its cyclic nature helps a timely emergent research process to evolve (Dick, 2000) (Fig. 4). In turn, this aids the rigor of the research, as early cycles are used to inform how later ones are undertaken. In later cycles, the interpretations developed in the early cycles can be checked, disputed, or improved.
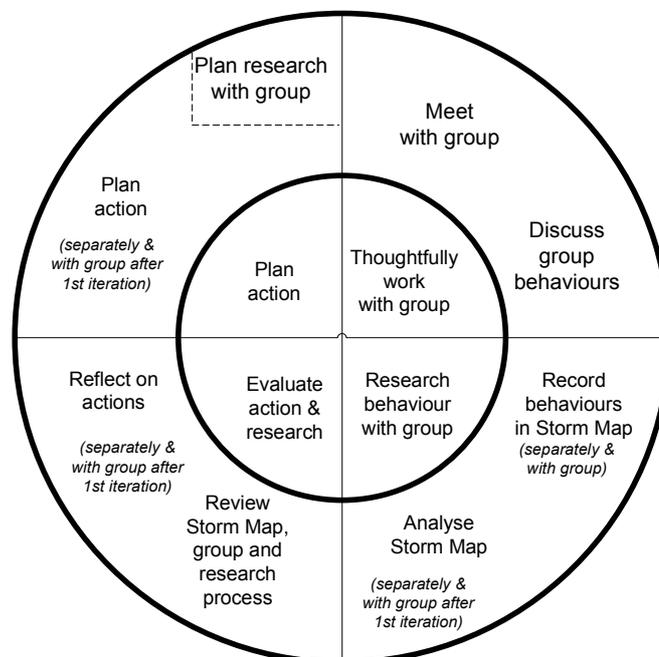

Fig 4. AR group research process with Storm Maps

One important cycle in the action research process consists of critical reflection. The researcher and others involved first recollect and then review what has happened. The understanding that emerges from critical reflection may then be put to use in designing subsequent stages within the research study (Dick, 2000). In turn, triangulation is applied by gathering data that is generated via observers reaching group consensus. This raises confidence in the observations made as they are based on multiple perspectives (Mason, 2002). These agreed data categorisations are reduced to quantitative data sets, which have predefined parameters.

Coupling this with qualitative data collection allows information to be collated flexibly and emergent complex systems to be recorded over time. In conjunction with this, a quantitative approach has been adopted for data categorization as this simplifies data recording and analysis. This aids rigor, by enabling causal relationships to be identified to test hypothesises and enable the complexities of group behaviour to be categorised and compared to the research assumptions. Additionally, quantitative data comparisons have been utilised in order to demonstrate how and why these results may have occurred. This involves undertaking a contrastive analysis between the quantitative categories (with their underlying descriptions) and the qualitative data that has been gathered. Thus, blending qualitative and quantitative methods of research should enable the results of the study to be clearly ascertained.

To provide further triangulation, a reflective matrix has been developed. This documents an emotional response that complements the research. This is used during the research process prior/post to meeting with the groups. Where necessary, it validates quantitative results and ads to the contextual basis of the research.

Case study: Sheerwater Community Forum

To illustrate the above the focus here will be upon a community development group, as a case study. The group was based in an area of Woking, called Sheerwater.

Fig 5. Map of the Woking Area
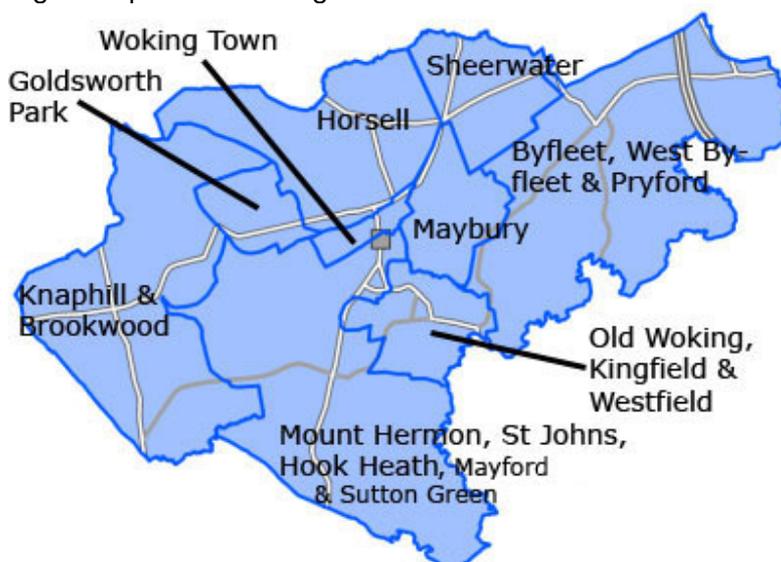
The group named the Sheerwater Community Forum was instigated late in 2008, it was formed as residents were concerned about their neighborhood as they wished to improve services and ensure it was a safe place to reside. The group consists of a number of residents and a Community Development Officer. They exist independently of the local council but engage them as necessary as many buildings in the area are owned or services managed by the borough. Each of the members has volunteered to try to help with the problems in the community and to reach resolutions to these through the community development forum, working with the council when they need to resolve issues. One of the roles of the Community Development Worker is to support the expansion of local organisations and schemes aimed at greater community involvement and to support the forum by acting as an interface between the group and the borough council. The group work in partnership with the council, on Arnstein's Ladder this would be rung 6 (Arnstein, 1969), as they liaise with the council in order to attain their goals when necessary, but otherwise operate independently. Building capacity and confidence in local residents is important in building the capability of the residents to speak for and manage themselves.

Meetings of the group are undertaken on a monthly basis, as members have other commitments such as, full time work or voluntary work. Each meeting lasts for approximately one hour in a local church hall in central Sheerwater. The members that present are residents from the estate or run businesses and organisations in the local area such as, shops or the community centre. They range from retirees to young person's whom work full-time. The membership fluctuated over time as those members whom worked full time could not always attend meetings.

Table 6 Membership and Typology of Sheerwater Forum

Member	Length of membership (months)	Occupation	No. of times at meeting	Type of Member
A	6	Retired Volunteer	6	Integrator
B	5	Local Shop Owner	4	Affiliate
C	6	Priest	3	Representative
D	6	Neighbourhood Watch	5	Representative
E	6	Neighbourhood Watch	5	Representative
F	5	Children's Day Centre Manager	4	Affiliate
G	6	Retired Resident	4	Affiliate
H	6	Community Development Officer (Woking Borough	6	Conciliator

		Council)		
I	3	Outreach Worker (Surrey Wildlife Trust)	1	Affiliate
J	1	Community Centre Manager (Woking Borough Council)	1	Placation
K	6	Disabled Community Member	1	Affiliate
L	6	Manager of Caring Organization (Voluntary)	3	Representative
M	6	Voluntary Housing Advisor	6	Affiliate
N	6	Retired Resident	6	Affiliate

The forum discusses progress to date on existing projects e.g. the community buggy project. Members are trying to raise money to purchase an electric buggy that will provide transport for vulnerable members of the community that find it difficult to access local services. Additionally, they plan events that may raise money for future projects. In addition, guests are also invited to speak to the members, from a variety of external organisations such as, Surrey Wildlife Trust. Recently, members decided to adopt the Local Community Action Plan, which was put forward by Woking Borough Council and to draft a constitution so that they could become a registered charity. This will mean that they will be able to apply for funding and support from other organizations and have a recognized status so that it will be easier for them to attain their goals. These two decisions give the forum long term goals which they are seeking to attain.

At each forum meeting, each project or activity that is planned is scoped and discussed in detail by members. Each project is aimed at providing better services within the community, for example, the bicycle recycling project will provide young people whom are out of work with an activity so that they can learn new skills and have a constructive focus or the buggy project will improve access to services such as, the shops or doctors for those whom are vulnerable and unable to get to these on a daily basis. Once these discussions have been undertaken the members are invited to reflect upon how they feel they have been working together as a group.

Results and discussion

Early findings of this study are described below. The grey cells in Fig. 6 indicate that the group is at the emotive end of the matrix criteria or near five.

Figs 6 Sheerwater Community Forum, October 08; at the start of the 6 month life span.

Project /Behavourial Attribute	1	2	3	4	5
1. Do members agree on the goals?	No agreement	Dissent	Unison	Assent	Inconsistent
2. Goal Direction.	Overcontrolled	Restrained	Uniform	Obscure	Purposeless
3. Group Tonality	Rational	Flat	Dynamic	Sincere	Affective
4. Energy.	Inhibited	Constricted	Vivifying	Excitable	Delerious
5. Communication	Closed	Inhibited	Open	Candid	Relaxed
6. Tension.	Frail	Delicate	Ordered	Exuberant	Vociferous
7 Effectiveness	Disjointed	Fragmented	Flowing	Logical	Inflexible
8. Balance	Task Orientated	Objective	Meaningful	Harmonious	Emotive
9 Observer Interaction	Ignored	Rejected		with little ...sion	Accepted with no discussion

In accordance, with the assumptions outlined above the data collated demonstrate that the group would not yet be focused upon their goals, as they were too emotive. They do not all agree on shared goals apart from they want the forum to make a difference to the area in which they are living, some member wished to focus on crime and improving neighborhood watch, others wished to focus on improving facilities for the vulnerable (member A, C, G and K) and others were just thinking through what the group could be involved in and how outside organizations could become a part of this. The direction of their goals was obscured as the group was new and members were each focusing on their own concerns and not those of the group or their goals. Each had their own set of ideas that they had come along with there were two members from neighborhood watch whom were focused on attaining more members and inclusion within their activities. Though this would have benefited the community as there is a high crime rate in Sheerwater, it was not why the forum had come together as there were wider issues that needed to be worked through such as, engaging with the police to reduce crime levels or the demise of the local shopping area due to the recession and the lack of action that had been taken by the council to address this. The group did not meet a consensus at this first meeting and were not able to work in a participatory style (Lewin, 1948; McGregor, 1960).

The assumptions and hypotheses that parties start to understand the main goals with a variation in opinions and that they utilise an emotional tone, use emotive language whilst communicating with one another is confirmed by the data. The group's tonality when they communicate with each other is affective, as each individual is focusing on their own concerns, which are also indicative of their emotive mindset. Until, they manage to reach consensus within the group it is unlikely that this will change (Lewin, 1948; Schon, 1983).   Currently, the forum operates a voting system where each member votes and each has equal say. During this process, the energy of the group is constricted as they are learning to work with each other as individuals. Each member focused upon their area of interest which was detrimental to their overall functionality. For example, a newly appointed Community Development Officer, acted in an officious manner which made the group mistrust his motives. Many have worked with representative from the Borough Council before and did not have a high regard for the way in which they had not sought to resolve long standing issues in Sheerwater, such as the high concentration of

vulnerable groups living alongside drug addicts or other high risk groups. This is one of the main reasons why the group came into being to seek to address wider issues to improve their environment. They were cautious about what they said and how they phrased issues that they felt that were pertinent at points, you could observe their frustration through the odd sarcastic comment that was dropped which was clearly directed at the Community Development Officer and indirectly at the Council. For example, as he talks about the council's willingness to work with the group many bring up past experiences and the look on their faces and tone of voice demonstrates their low opinions. Member A points out that the council have always neglected Sheerwater and bypassed the views and opinions of residents, then other members join in citing examples such as, the recent parking charges issues where they were not consulted by the County or the Borough Council. This would be expected, as many issues discussed had not been addressed for a long time and within this newly formed group, each had come with their own expectations and agenda which meant that they had not yet developed their own norms of behaviour. Their communication is candid, as they were unsure of each other sub-groups with the group existed as those from the Neighborhood Watch and church sat together and frequently spoke to one another quietly. They exchanged comments amongst themselves before voicing an opinion back to the main group. Others sat and listened with no real contribution. The group have not yet formed a strong dynamic, as some are unsure of what to say, whilst other shave strong ideas and are not afraid to voice them, whilst others just try to suggest ideas that are acceptable to the wider community. Members are pursuing their own goals and because of this, there is tension in the group. The effectiveness of the group is limited due to the emotive unbalance. Therefore, the tabulated results of the first group meeting reflect the assumptions and hypotheses that we formed prior to the data collection.

The results depicted in Fig. 7 from March, 2009 – 6 months later - show there is a marked difference in how the group is operating.

Fig. 7, Sheerwater Community Forum, March 09.

Project /Behavourial Attribute	1	2	3	4	5
1. Do members agree on the goals?	No agreement	Dissent	Unison	Assent	Inconsistent
2. Goal Direction.	Overcontrolled	Restrained	Uniform	Obscure	Purposeless
3. Group Tonality	Rational	Flat	Dynamic	Sincere	Affective
4. Energy.	Inhibited	Constricted	Vivifying	Excitable	Delerious
5. Communication	Closed	Inhibited	Open	Candid	Relaxed
6. Tension.	Frail	Delicate	Ordered	Exuberant	Vociferous
7 Effectiveness	Disjointed	Fragmented	Flowing	Logical	Inflexible
8. Balance	Task Orientated	Objective	Meaningful	Harmonious	Emotive
9 Observer Interaction	Ignored	Rejected	Considered	Accepted with little discussion	Accepted with no discussion

Six months after working with the methodology, Fig.7 reveals that the group has made substantial progress in a positive move to the middle of the scale where they are more balanced overall. Anticipating that they have reflected on their interactions over the past six months this is where they should be in accordance with the hypothesis they have started to function more as a team and less as a group of individuals.

Members have agreed upon their goals and now they have a clear direction in which to work to achieve them. Within a group situation where the vision of goal attainment is strong, the more likely it is it will be achieved (Lewin, 1948). These hypotheses are verified by the data, as the group has completed projects.

Over the last six months, goals have become highly cherished by individuals within the group, now they are focusing on achieving them (Lewin, 1948).

- They have adopted democratic principles which allow them to achieve their goals and work together via working uniformly. They discuss issues as they arise and then reach a group consensus on the actions that must be taken and whom will take them.
- The same core membership has been maintained from the beginning and as assumed, the individuals have become well grounded working with each other. They are able to make clear decisions and take action (Lewin, 1948).
- The group tone is dynamic as each member bounces ideas off one another interacts through discussion.
- The energy level is vivifying, lively and productive, as they discuss their plans.
- The group is unified in their goals and feels comfortable discussing issues.
- As anticipated, tension is not created within the group as members have a higher-level movement (Lewin, 1948), as individuals are able to communicate openly and share ideas in an excited atmosphere.
- Each group member is involved in the discussion and the conversation flows from one member to another.

These observations are in line with the hypothesis; the emergence of new ideas from situations is understood and catered for (Schon, 1983). The group offers the least resistant to new ideas, making meaning and working with meaning (Moon, 1999) and being inclusive (MacGregor, 1960). At this time, the balance in the group is harmonious.

Early research findings are aligned closely with the hypothesis and assumptions upon which the study is based which is encouraging, as this has started to prove the robustness of the methodology. This methodology could be used by others to enable groups to become teams. By understanding individuals' behaviours and how this impacts upon groups attempting to become teams and their goal attainment

Conclusion

The process to date has been both useful to me and group members as their understanding of the meaning of interaction meaning; they have started to become a functioning team. This has been beneficial to the community development group and they are now able to achieve their SD goals. We have been through the research process and tested the hypothesis below:

(i) exploring and making explicit the behaviours/attitudes held by actors within groups across institutional settings and organizational levels;

(ii) developing an awareness as to how achieving SD goals are affected by these behaviours/attitudes;

(iii) building an understanding of cause and effect in relation attitudes/behaviours and how these impact on team members abilities to perform tasks or organizational functionality.

As a group we have understood each others behaviours and developed an awareness of how these have affected our ability to reach goals over the last six months. The functionality of the group has improved over the course of time as each member has started to become a member of a team which is able to complete tasks to build a better communal environment. Members have grown closer and their goals have become aligned simultaneously.   The group is going to be sustainable in longer term as an institution because of this. This can be seen via the number of projects and growing confidence in their abilities to make a difference. The group profile in the community has also been raised as they now have regular events such as, a cake sale on a monthly basis, which people attend to raise money for the community projects.

Based on this case study, the method advocated here may help to build collaborative working relationships, which may help to improve the group's cohabitate environment. The following conclusions may be drawn:

- The group has formed socially established and shared beliefs of what is generally good. This has been reflected through them aligning their behaviours and goals over the six month period.
- They have a shared norm that they are supported by the community and that they are able to improve their environment. This is reflected in their increasing confidence in engaging with community members and their discussions around what projects would benefit the community.
- These norms are crucial for the group's survival, as without these they would remain inconsistent, aimless and unable to make decisions together. They would remain at 5 on the behavioral matrix.
- These norms regulate the group's behaviours and this can be seen as they have developed over time. In the beginning each member had their own ideas and this impacted upon their behaviours. Now with aligned behaviours, it is much easier to share goals and work together to achieve desirable outcomes. The group consensus is comfortable for members and persuasive so it is much easier to work together.
- The group is small and communication has grown stronger as the dynamic has improved over time. All individual contribute to discussions and there is a heightened sense of ownership and participation, as each member gets the chance to express their opinions.
- The group structure, as depicted in Table 6 has been a contributory factor as most members see each other as equals (affiliates). Those that have tried to take control have thus been put back in check by the others whom are in consensus with one another. So the roles of the individuals within the groups have impacted upon the dynamics.
- The communication network of the group (Fig. 8) has also played a key role in developing the dynamics of the group. Each individual has been able to speak to one another, with the chair taking the lead and coordinating activities outside of meeting. This is reflected in the roles and status of different members of the group as outlined in Table 6.

Each of the above general conclusions may be applied to other groups to be tested. This method may enable other groups to build stronger inter-organizational and inter-associational relationships reinforcing the ideals of participationary practice in their activities. This type of learning may have provided a basis for new norms and behaviours stretching beyond the formal life of any community development project (as members will become more aware of how a team is affected by group dynamics).

Further work shall provide the basis for testing these general conclusions in other environments within the public and private sectors. These shall lead to further generic lessons which may have an impact upon stakeholder participation and the ability to sustain institutions.

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