Area of Concentration Paper

Co-Creating Meaning-Full Dialogue: NPO 000 Global Univer-City Visioning and Action Planning Process

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Meaning shapes being. We make sense of our behaviors through our worldviews, which in turn shape of behaviors. David Bohm and other similar thinkers believe dialogues offer a means for humankind to collectively work to create a future society (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005). The word dialogue derives from two Greek roots, *dia* (meaning "through" or "with each other") and *logos* (meaning "the word"). Bohm (1996) explains it as "meaning flowing through." Through dialogue, people find meaning and discover others' uniqueness and commonality. I believe promoting dialogue or creating opportunities for people to communicate with others, which allows us to construct meaning, is one of the roles that a community planner should play. An advocate of transformative community planning, Marie Kennedy asserts "genuine community developments necessarily involve increasing a community's capacity for taking control of its own development, building within the community critical thinking and planning abilities" (1996). Through a participatory process of constructing meaning, people take ownership over that which they construct and implement it as their own projects.

In Japan, there has been a noticeable rise of formalized civil society with the passing of NPO (Non-Profit Organization) law in 1998. Through these voluntary associations, people are identifying social problems closely related to their daily lives and attempting to resolve these problems on their own. For example, a young mother living in a city in Japan, who felt inconvenient and isolated because the city didn't have a park or infrastructure for a mother to walk with baby stroller, established a young mothers' network on a nonprofit basis. The network promotes gathering and communication among young mothers, providing a mutual support network. It also created maps for young mothers, indicating which restaurants welcome babies and which restrooms offer baby beds and so on. As such, people are acting to better their lives rather than solely relying on the government to instigate public work.

I chose to work with a non-profit organization in Japan because I acknowledged the importance of the roles NPOs play as legally recognized agencies in Japan. My decision is also based on the belief that NPOs are currently the easiest venues through which to create space and opportunities for dialogue, as compared to schools or government agencies, which have rigid bureaucratic constraints. In this paper, I document the process of co-creating dialogue among staff of NPO 000 Global Univer-City. The word "co-creation" is used to denote my role in the process

of design and dialogue together "with" the staff rather than as a designer or facilitator working "for" them.

Furthermore, as a person of Japanese origin who has studied in Hawai`i for six years, I have had precious opportunities to look at Japan from an outside perspective. Among many things rediscovered, I found culture, though perhaps a generalization, has an intriguing impact on one's understanding and meaning. Connecting this thought to the idea of dialogue, this paper also documents the importance of the cultural translation of an idea while using Western theories and practices. Most of all, in Hawai`i, my culture was welcomed and honored with other co-existing diverse cultures and ethnic background; thus, I would like to begin this paper with anecdotal experiences and reflections.

1.2 Research Questions

Drawing upon the above notions, major research questions sought in this paper are:

> "What kinds of dialogue processes create environments that initiate appreciation, meaningful dialogue and experiences in a Japanese cultural context?"

The question is broken down into three smaller questions, to which I will respond throughout this paper.

- How to shift the conversation from unproductive discussion to meaningful dialogue?
- What are useful tools and components for facilitating meaningful dialogue?
- What needs to be considered in transferring Western practices to Japanese contexts?

1.3 Research Methodology

This paper utilizes an approach of participatory action research. Kennedy (1996) notes the link between transformative planning and participatory action research in terms of possession of knowledge, which is the basis of power and control. Wilson (1997) describes that participatory action research "respects and works with people's own capability to produce knowledge" (752). Respect is reciprocal. Honesty and genuine appreciation are two values that I bear in mind while working together with staff of an NPO. Organizational learning is a subset of participatory action research, which is applied to the dynamics of the group or organization itself. Carried out through dialogue and reflection aimed at mutual learning from action (Argyris and Schön, 1974, 1978

cited in Wilson, 1997:753), it can have a transformative effect on the participants, generating a renewed commitment to the group and a sense of direction (Forester, 1989: 195 cited in Wilson, 1997:753). Accounting for constraints of the Japanese non-profit sector, Nishizutumi, Rilington, and Handy (2003:156) suggests that organizational learning theory is the most relevant and applicable to Japanese non-profit organizations for organizational capacity building. According to Peter Senge et al (1994) learning organizations are:

> Organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together.

Thus, I conceive of the NPO as a learning organization, which aims to improve its organizational capacity. It is also important to note that I as a researcher was also in the loop of organizational learning. I was reminded of this fact at the beginning of the process. Thus, although I initiated the process, designing and dialogue were together co-created with the NPO staff.

I engaged a Japanese non-profit organization, 000 Global Univer-City because I have a close relationship with the founder and organizer, who appointed me as a director in July 2007. With a structural change of organization in July, there was the need for visioning and operational planning. In January 2008, I initiated the planning of three-day retreat. Initial design of the process was conceptualized through a literature review. Final process design was refined through conversation with the organizer and one of more experienced staff. The actual implementation of the visioning process was implemented as organizational learning through dialogue and reflection. The process of dialogue was kept genuine, residing in a "living mutual relation" that enabled all participants to share a common space, a community of creative possibilities (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005: 6). Verbal reflection was engaged after the visioning process. Written reflections were submitted by research participants and are included in the paper. The final report of this paper will be given back to the organization, and hopefully used as a model of genuine dialogue process for other venues or organizations in Japan and elsewhere.

1.4 Paper Overview

The paper documents the design and process of visioning and operational planning through dialogue and reflection. This paper reflects a pathway of my learning journey to seek ways for humans and other beings on the Earth to live in a harmonious, co-creative society. It focuses on the process of yielding genuine dialogue to bring out people's potential. It documents the lessons from the visioning process of a learning organization and consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the paper and explains the approach taken. Chapter 2 explains the conceptual framework in designing and developing the process of organizational learning in a specific cultural context. Chapter 3 documents the process of NPO 000 Global Univer-City's 3-day retreat on January 4-6, 2008. Chapter 4 analyzes the process and identifies essential components, which led to meaningful dialogue and practical outcomes. Chapter 5 synthesizes and concludes the paper.

Chapter 2: Conceptual Framework

2.1 Background of Japanese Family and Community

In order to construct a conceptual framework for the paper, I would like to first present an overview current Japanese society in terms of its individual relationship to a whole. Here, I conceptualize the three concentric circles diagram (Diagram 1). Although, the focus of this paper is organizational learning through dialogue, emphasis is placed on individual self-realization and family support, which are vital in realizing organizational learning. It is important to note that the diagram is not drawn in a pyramid but in a circle. This implies that individual learning, family learning, and organizational learning can occur concurrently as a learner always experiences and refers backs through the lens of her/his worldview. As families and organizations are formed with other people, learners learn from each other and it affects her/his worldview.

Diagram 1: Concepts of Individual and Community Relationship

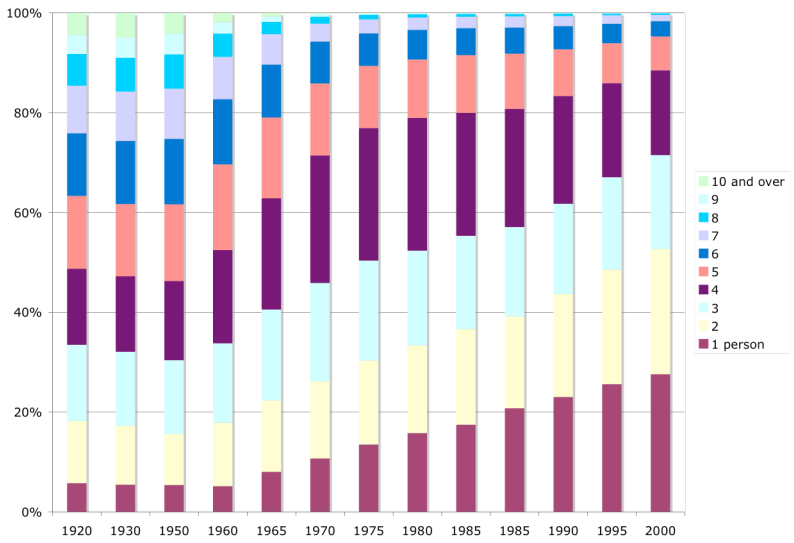
In the following section, I briefly review the socioeconomic background of the family and community of Japan. The aim is to understand how individuals conceive of relationships and communication with others in contemporary Japanese society.

2.1.1 Families in Japan

The forms of human relationships have changed to reflect socioeconomic shifts. The formation of a group dependence culture in Japan is largely influenced by the agricultural network of community, which necessitated effort and cooperation at the level of family units, as

five-sixth of Japan's population was involved in rice cultivation practice until the nineteenth century (Barnes, 2006: 46). With changes in the mode of economy, the structure of the family also changes. Industrialization and urbanization of the country led to rapid economic growth in from the 1950s to the 1970s. As the country prioritized industrial economic growth, men worked vigorously for companies outside of their own household. Urbanization accelerated as young people moved into cities to seek job opportunities. More women have been educated and are advancing into the workforce. Consequently, the size of the average household is becoming smaller. The average members per household in Japan were 2.55 persons in 2005, evidencing a decreasing trend from 2.82 persons in 1995. In 2005, the increase rate of one-person households and two-person household was 12.0% and 10.9% respectively, whereas, four plus person households had decreased (Statistic Bureau). Diagram 2 shows an increasing trend of one-person and two-person households and a decreasing trend for more than five-person households since 1920 to 2000. Most significantly, since 1965, one-person households are rapidly increasing from 3.4% to 25.6%, the greatest increase of all private households (Statistic Bureau).

Diagram 2: Average Size of Household from 1920 to 2000



(Source: Statistic Bureau)

The decreasing size of households means that, at home, an individual is interacting with fewer people. Highlife Research Institution (2004) concisely describes Japanese families over the decades:

> In the 1950s, there were many large extended families and self-employed business owners. The connection between neighbors was strong then. In the 1960s, apartment complexes were built and a nuclear family style with an employed father and housewife became common. From the 1970s to the 1990s, individual rooms and a living room became common for house room arrangements, with fewer children and late marriages. The trend is to focus on the individual, resulting in disperse family relationships. (Translated by author)

The traditional extended family structure in which the father held an authoritarian role has changed into a nuclear family as a result of socioeconomic changes and the rise of baby boomers. The typical family structure of the baby boomers (born in 1947-1949), "salary man husband, housewife, and two children," is disappearing (Highlife Research Institute, 2005). Today's family is individualized and smaller as each family member has various activities on her/his own. For example, a mother may work part-time or full-time. A child attends academy or some extracurricular lessons after schools. A father prioritizes work over family. Claiming a lack of time that a father spends with his child (ren), Keizo Takemi, Senior Vice Minister for Health, Labor, and Welfare, comments "one in four Japanese men in their early 30s, when their children are likely to be small, work more than 60 hours a week on average, leaving them little time to spend with the kids" (Kitazume, 2006). Needless to say, the configuration of the father-figure has changed as he now spends less time at home. Japanese fathers lost their place in the house. Society places middle-aged men in rather vulnerable positions. *Oyaji gari,* literally meaning "middle-aged men hunting," is a common term among delinquent youth, in which youth forming a group attack middle-aged men and force him to give them money, sometimes by violence. Middle-aged men are not the only target; elders are even more vulnerable. Elders in urban areas often live alone or as old couples by themselves. The criminals are targeting those lonely elders by deceiving them as if they were their grandsons. Known as *ore ore sagi* (meaning "me me fraud"), criminals calls old people's homes and beg them compensation money as if they were their grandsons who got into car accidents. Criminals are coming up with new ideas, and they pretend to be granddaughters, policemen, and lawyers. In any case, targets are older people, who are taken advantage because of the fact that they live apart from their grandsons so that they are glad to help them in need. In 2007 alone, 6490 incidents, amounting to approximately 145 million dollar (about 14.5 billion yen) were reported as *ore ore sagi* (NPA, 2008).

As such, there are rising social concerns about loss of morals among youth to respect older generations, which was an important teaching of Confucius. The way of life has changed. Change in a lifestyle at the family level affects how a child develops relationships with others, and thus affects her/his communication skills. The lack of meaningful communication in contemporary Japanese families may well be illustrated by the number of murderers occurring among family members. The National Police Agency reported that among 1077 cases of murder or attempted murder, 495 cases occurred among families in 2006 (NPA, 2006). Etsuko Sato Vosburg discusses social withdrawal or *hikikomori:* "Since 1960, the number of youngsters withdrawing from society has steadily increased. They withdraw from self, family, friends, and from becoming self-supporting. Parents feel disappointed and angry, but mostly guilty. Not knowing how to deal with these youngsters, the parents keep on overprotecting or underprotecting them. Consequently, meaningful communication in family disappears" (Vosburg, 2004). I include the issue of *hikikomori* in this paper because some members of NPO 000 Global Univer-City were labeled as such. One member of the core staff chose not to attend high school because he could not find meaning in going to school. His mother was dismayed and sought help from various sources in finding solutions. She read a book written by the founder of the NPO. Since then the son has been an active member and is now part of the core staff. His learning has inspired his sister, who also chose not to attend school since 7th grade. From them, the family mutually learns about the meaning of life.

2.1.2 Communities and Non-Profit Sector in Japan

Considering the impact individual learning can have on a family for mutual learning, I would like to discuss the bigger sphere of influence an individual can have: community.

In Japan, neighborhood associations (*chonaikai* or *jichikai*) have constituted the traditional form of community, in which households were divided into districts that formed associations. In order to maintain law and order, the totalitarian Japanese government utilized this system to control local affairs during the war years (Masland, 1946). Due to its function of imposing central policies, the neighborhood governing system was dissolved during Japan's post-war occupation. However, since the late 1950s, with rapid economic development, neighborhood associations have started to form voluntarily and by the 1970s, they became active in almost all parts of the nation (Kikuchi, 2002). Now the functions of neighborhood associations are mainly social, cultural, and sometimes political.

As the formation of civil associations became widespread, due to emergent issues arising from urbanization and industrial pollutions, voluntary associations, not bounded by geography, have also increased since the 1970s (UNU, 2005; Imada, 2003). A rise in voluntary activities began to be seen in the late 1980s. Initially, civil society was unwelcomed in the political climate of Japan. However, the importance of voluntary associations could no longer be denied when many victims of the 1995 Hanshin Awaji Earthquake were rescued and cared for by neighborhood resident and volunteers from all over Japan (Imada, 2003). This tragic disaster provided an opportunity for Japan to open its doorway to the institutionalization of civil society. In 1998, the national government finally enacted the Law to Promote Specified Non Profit Activities (NPO law). This was the result of the first interactive dialogue among citizen's lobbying groups, political parties, and the government (Imada, 2003). This law enabled small- and medium-sized voluntary organizations to obtain legal status without requiring a large endowment or complicated procedures. However, the conservative party disliking the civic and social movement, passed the law with the condition that the word "civic" be eliminated in the wording (Ishizuka, 2002). Today, NPOs are widely recognized in Japanese society as a formal legal entity, and society as a whole recognizes NPOs as useful tools of mobilization of civic empowerment in social institutions (Ishizuka, 2002). The number of certified NPOs is more than 35,000 as of February 29, 2008 (NPO, 2008).

Social political and cultural factors largely define the role of non-profit sectors or civil society in a country. It is said that unlike the United State, which prefers small states and minimum intervention into private sectors, the Japanese non-profit sector gains credibility by working together with the state (Ohsugi, 2007). Japanese non-profit organizations differ in size and role from their counterparts in the United States. In North America, non-profit organization may have an educational, political, religious, ethnicity-related, or charitable agenda. Whereas, Japanese non-profit organizations predominantly focus on charitable activities because the government is intolerant of organizations that criticize it, or mobilize to oppose it (Nishizutumi, Rilington, and Handy, 2003). In North America, individuals can deduct donations on their tax returns. However, in Japan, people working for corporations do not generally file a personal tax return. Due to limited financial opportunities for the non-profit organizations in Japan, they heavily depend on volunteers. The breakdown of income source for Japanese non-profit organizations is described in Table 1. For 000 Global Univer-City, approximately 85 % of its income comes from membership fees and the rest is from individual donations.

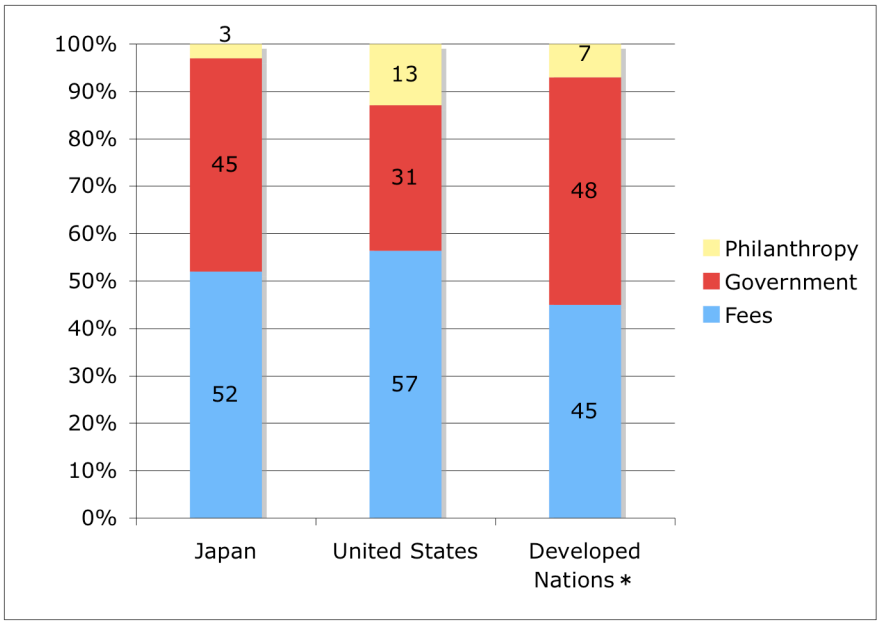
Table 1: Japanese NPO Income Source

Fees	Government	Project Income	Contract	Others
34.3%	17.1%	10.2%	5.7%	32.7%

(Source: Cabinet Office White Paper, 2004)

Diagram 3 shows a comparison of NPO income sources between Japan, the United States, and an average of developed nations.

Diagram 3: Comparison of NPO income sources



(Source: Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project)

*Developed Nations include: Japan, US, UK France Germany, Italy, Hungary

According to the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (CNSP), in 1996 the nonprofit sector in Japan had operating expenditures with added value of nearly 2.3 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). When converted from yen at JPY 100 = US $1, this amounts to $11.4 billion. In contrast, the nonprofit sector in the United States was $346.4 billion, or 6.3% of GDP (Yamauchi, 1994: 4, 190). However, these estimates do not reflect the financial situation of certified NPOs in Japan. The Japanese nonprofit sector consists of two different types of organizations. The first set includes organizations over which central and local governments exert strong discretionary power, such as nonprofit public benefit, medical, private

school, and social welfare corporations (Salamon et al., 1999: 249). The second set includes grassroots groups certified under the NPO law since 1999. The CNSP definition merges both sets of nonprofit organizations, whose political and economic natures are considerably different. Thus, the financial situation of certified NPOs, whose revenue structure is quite fragile, is difficult to ascertain (249). Nevertheless, the project suggests that philanthropic activities are limited in Japan.

Academic discourse around the impact of volunteer activities in solving social problems is rather skeptical. In her book "Community Volunteers in Japan", Nakano (2005) says " volunteers lifted spirits, created relationships and helped people in moments of need, but they could not solve social problems such as inequality and lack of care for children and the sick (165)." Accounting for limited funding in the non-profit sector in Japan, Nishizutumi, Rilington, and Handy, (2003) argue that the Japanese non-profit sector has a limited capacity for its activities. Reasons for limited funding may be multiple: lack of willingness or incentive for private donations, lack of tax policy to promote donations, and lack of grants and funding sources. Ohsugi (2007) claims that the non-profit sector is unlikely to replace the role of government in solving social problems due to the Japanese social characteristic of "village society". Japanese tend to form social relationships as insider and outsider. Japanese invest a great deal into reciprocal relationships inside their circle; however, involvement is much shallower toward people outside the circle. This amounts to less social responsibility outside of one's village or network, implying an inability to affect greater problems other than the problems at hand (Ohsugi, 2007).

On a positive note, Hirata (2004) asserts that the vibrant civil society is increasing and turning over the notion of dysfunctional democracy, noting rising numbers of NGOs working for developing countries. This shifts the notion of "village society" in Japan. The number of NPOs is increasing and its role and impact on society are acknowledged by conservative governments (Ishizuka, 2002). At this rising moment of civil society, I believe it is important to include genuine voices of the people in determining the direction of the future.

The organizational structure of non-profit organizations is usually network based, as opposed to a hierarchical traditionally corporate organization. Unlike regular corporations, people in NPOs gather voluntarily in pursuit of a mission. The motivation is not for profit, but rather a commitment to the mission of the organization. In this paper, rather than focusing the discourse on the possibility of non-profit organizations to change policies or solve social issues, I would like to pursue this paper in an optimistic way. The paper unfolds based on the idea that

small is viable. The words of Margaret Meade inspire me: "Never doubt the power of small groups of committed people to change the world. Indeed, nothing else ever has." (Ellinor and Genard, 1998: 255). Individuals can make a difference in small ways by inspiring and initiating tipping points that lead to systemic change.

2.2 Learning and Capacity Building

Learning is at the heart of the capacity building process (Kirk and Shutte, 2004). Learning and capacity building imply similar goals in that both aim to increase ability and potential to think and act in a multitude of ways. The world today has many and complex issues. Whether looking at the individual, family, or community level, we are increasingly required to be creative in thinking of ways to solve these issues and evolve harmoniously. Senge et al (1994: 6-7) describes the five disciplines of learning organization as:

1. Personal Mastery:

   Learning to expand our personal capacity to create the results we most desire, and creating an organizational environment which encourages all its members to develop themselves toward the goals and purposes they choose;

2. Mental Models:

   Reflecting upon, continually clarifying, and improving our internal pictures of the world, and seeing how they shape our actions and decisions;

3. Shared Vision:

   Building a sense of commitment in a group, by developing shared images of the future we seek to create, and the principles and guiding practices by which we hope to get there;

4. Team Leaning:

   Transforming conversational and collective thinking skills, so that groups of people can reliably develop intelligence and ability greater than the sum of individual members' talents;

5. Systems Thinking:

   A way of thinking about and a language for describing and understanding, the forces and interrelationships that shape the behavior of systems. This discipline helps us see how to

change systems more effectively, and to act more in tune with the larger processes of the natural and economic world.

These disciplines integrate individual learning and organizational learning. Organizational capacity is built on individual capacity. It is hard for an organization to really build a shared vision unless each individual has personal will and vision for their actions. Nurturing personal mastery and mental models are two essential components of learning organizations at individual level. Thus, an organizational attitude to nurture, recognize and honor an individual as a unique contributor who possesses the disciplines of personal mastery and mental models is vital to the organizational capacity. Through team learning, individuals in organizations come to see themselves and their situations in different ways. In other words, in order to learn together and build a shared vision, members of an organization should acknowledge and welcome the different characteristics, assets and skills of each member as diverse gifts for the organization.

As to the notion of learning, the quality of education needs to be examined once again. The English word "education" originated from the Latin word "educatus" (lead out potential) (Unabridged Genius English-Japanese Dictionary). This implies potential is already in individuals and education is a tool to lead out that potential. Thus, if we were to have a true learning environment, it must be a safe and comfortable environment for individual capacity and potential to prosper through the process of genuine dialogue. In other words, education needs to be empowering for students. In the discourse of community development, Kennedy (1996) talks about how real community development should have empowerment in mind. Manning Marable, the author of Crisis of Color and Democracy, provides a concise definition of empowerment:

> Empowerment is essentially a capacity to define clearly one's interests, and to develop a strategy to achieve those interests. It's the ability to create a plan or program to change one's reality in order to obtain those objectives or interests. Power is not a "thing", it's a process. In other words, you shouldn't say that a group has power, but that, through its conscious activity, a group can empower itself by increasing its ability to achieve its own interests (Kennedy, 1996).

Whether in the field of education or community planning, the role of teachers or planners is better understood as facilitators who enable individuals to empower themselves. The same is true

for private corporations. Leaders are required to bring out the best in people rather than managing people (Kramm, 2008). In the world of the creative age (Florida, 2002), a leader, teacher, or manager needs to learn how to best lead out the potential in people. This involves respecting followers, students, and workers regardless of their age, status, ethnicity or class.

2.3 Connecting Ideas with Planning Theories

The discourse of planning theories has evolved and transformed into multiple perspectives. The worldview of planning theorists has shifted as society changes. With the reemergence of civil society, planners are no longer linked directly to the actions of the states, but working increasingly for agents of civil society (Friedmann, 1996). The process of mutual learning between planners and clients, which Friedmann (1973) called the transactive style of planning, was characterized as the life of dialogue. This concept emphasizes human worth and reciprocity in contrast to the traditionally arrogant and aloof stance of the professional (Sandercock, 1998). Beginning with the same notion that planning is an interactive communicative activity, a group of scholars, such as John Forester, Patsy Healey and Judith Innes, coalesced in the late 1980s around the study of planning as a communicative practice (Sandercock, 1998). These practitioners were inspired by the work of Jurgen Habermas (1984), who coined the term "communicative action" to describe the joint undertakings of people who share common understandings and views (Novek, 1999). Communicative action is a form of learning that rests on equal access to information and consensus building through dialogue rather than power relationships (Innes, 1995:187). In this worldview, planning theories are the accumulative knowledge of practitioners, and planning practice is defined as an interactive, communicative activity.

The process of deciding together is vital for community planning. Reflective and deliberative practice is important for both process and outcome as "learning, deciding, and acting cannot be distinguished" (Innes, 1995). It not only gives opportunities for members to participate in decision making and making people own the outcome, but also, through the process, members learn the dynamics of both the group and of each individual's thought, voice, and way of thinking and acting. Moreover, deliberation encourages and fosters a sense of community. The growing body of literature on social capital makes it clear that involving people in the decisions that affect their lives is not only good civic business but a critical way to build trust, relationships, and networks among citizens (Morse, 1998). The linear, stepwise process, assumed by the model of

instrumental rationality, in which policymakers set goals and ask questions, and experts and planners answer them, simply does not apply (Innes, 1990 cited in Innes, 1995).

Moreover, much of the important knowledge includes stories, myths, and the implicit understandings shared in a community (de Neufville and Barton, 1987; Mandelbaum, 1991 cited in Innes, 1995). Thus, the approach and pace of process is specific and contextual. For a planner to be told those stories and myths in communities, time and relationship building are vital processes because the role of a planner is to turn that information into meaningful knowledge and that knowledge into action (Innes, 1995).

Here, the distinction has to be made between communication process among the internal meeting of an organization and public meetings. Internal meetings of an organization involve people with a shared organizational culture and mission, a history of interaction, and a certain amount of interdependence. Lowry, Adler, and Milner (1997) suggest the discussion of private and public meeting vary in their contexts and stakes. The focus of this paper is the internal meeting of an organization, which I was privileged to initiate through established relationships with members of the organization.

2.4 Dialogue as a Means

Physicist David Bohm suggested that " a form of free dialogue may well be one of the most effective ways of investigating the crisis which faces society, and indeed the whole of human nature and consciousness today (Banathy and Jenlink, 2005). " Language is one of the greatest tools humans possess, unlike other beings on Earth. To use this tool to its fullest potential or not depends on the will of humans. Dialogue helps to promote organizational learning as it helps to develop new ways of understanding others in conversation. In an organization, organizational meaning and action are derived from the conversations of people connected with the organization (Kirk and Shutte, 2004). The importance of engaging in dialogue is well documented by Ellinor and Genard (1998). Dialogue generates these three assets:

1) Greater levels of authenticity
2) Better decisions
3) Improved morale and alignment forming around shared work

(Ellinor and Gerard, 1998: 18).

It is important to distinguish different types of conversation so as to be aware of what makes productive dialogue. Ellinor and Gerard (1998: 21) describe comparative characteristics of dialogue and discussion/debate.

Table 2: Conversation Continuum

Dialogue	Discussion/Debate
Seeing the whole among the parts	Breaking issues/problems into parts
Seeing the connections between the parts	Seeking distinctions between the parts
Inquiring into assumptions	Justifying/defending assumptions
Learning through inquiry and disclosure	Persuading, selling, telling
Creating shared meaning among many	Gaining agreement on one meaning

In dialogue, people try to learn from each other and ask questions seeking clarification and meaning behind words. As a result of dialogue, new understandings of words transcending different perspectives are generated, which is constructed based on collective contribution.

Genuine dialogue may be difficult to achieve. However, it is possible to do with people who want to have genuine dialogue. Thus, the endeavor for genuine dialogue may start by convening people who want to have genuine dialogue.

2.5 Appreciative Inquiry

A condition or environment that allows a free flow of dialogue to explore meaning is essential to have meaningful and genuine dialogue. In the field of participatory planning, there is a widely recognized understanding that approach should be asset-based rather than need-based (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993). Rather than creating a premise for scarcity-based mindset with a top-down approach, participatory community development planning requires seeing community's assets and taking into account the nature of that community as a complex living system whose elements are individual human beings (Spruill et al, 2001). The need to shift the perspective from the deficiency to the capacity of a community is also recognized as valuable in the theory of organizational development. As the development of community planning theories and organizational development theories run somewhat parallels in both fields, there is now widespread understanding that collaborative participation of committed individuals in planning or organization change is vital (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993; Kirk and Shutte, 2004).

One prominent theory and practice arising in the field of organizational development is Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Introduced in 1987 by David Cooperrider and Suresh Srivastva, the "appreciative" approach caused a powerful and creative stir within the field. It was seen as part of a larger shift in Western thinking, influenced by an Eastern concept that the mind has the power to heal the body (Mohr and Watkins). Five principles AI incorporates are:

1. The Constructionist Principle:
   We create the world that we call "real" through our words. Thus, altering the everyday vocabulary in a social system has potentially powerful consequences.
2. Principle of Simultaneity:
   Change begins the moment we ask questions.
3. The Poetic Principle:
   Just as poets have no constraints on what they can write about, we have no boundaries on what we can inquire and learn from.
4. Anticipatory Principle:
   Our behavior in the present is influenced by the future we anticipate.
5. Positive Principle:
   The more positive the questions used to guide a change process, the more long-lasting effect that process will have.

Overall, AI conceptualizes a holistic approach that asserts consciousness or mind of self affect our behavior. AI consists of four stages, often called the 4-D stages:

Discovery: discover the best of what is.
Dream: imagine what might be.
Design: dialogue what should be.
Destiny: create what will be.

(Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005)

The premise of AI is based on its approach toward appreciation, and its four-stage process hinted at framing the process. In fact, underlying the process of AI is the assumption that dialogue is inherent in change practices (Gergen et al, 2004).

2.6 Transforming Western Theories into Japanese Practices

Building upon collective knowledge, a question arises: how to apply these theories in the specific cultural context of a Japanese nonprofit organization. In this globalizing world, the information influx from West to East is enormous. In Japan, concepts such as "facilitation" and "collaboration" were introduced from western countries and slowly spread in for-profit as well as non-profit sectors. Facilitation is used in some foreign invested companies in Japan and innovative community development projects (NPOFAJ). There are dozens of books written on facilitation skills in Japan. What I have noticed in going through their titles and contents are that many vocabularies and words are written in *katakana*, a type of Japanese writing style, which uses loan words from Western countries. Looking through the titles of books while searching on Amzon.co.jp, with "facilitation" as a keyword, reveals that many theories and methods developed in the United States have been introduced in Japan. Among 32 hits, loan words used in titles include "open space technology," "positive change," "critical chain," "leadership," "project," "approach," "world café" and "synchronicity." Moreover, there is a consulting company called "Appreciative Inquiry Consulting Japan" which conducts seminar consultations for corporations. The AICJ executive director graduated from Case Western Reserve University studying under David Cooperider; she has a certificate in AI facilitator (AICJ, 2005). It seems from their website that they use 4D steps for 2 day seminars.

In researching planning theories taught in Japanese universities, many Western theories were introduced and then supplemented with Japanese theorists. The trend is also seen in Japanese government research, especially the work of Robert Putnam on social capital, which seems to have an influence in the policy making of the government sector. The Cabinet Office, Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) conducted research on "community regeneration and social capital" in 2004. In the report, it describes four reasons to promote the idea of social capital:

1. With diversification of lifestyle, life value has become individualized and leading to decline of community.
2. Limit of industrial economic policy as many manufacturing sectors are moving overseas.
3. Undeveloped method to regenerate newly defined community, which is now of function rather than location.

4. The number of NPOs is growing (more than 20,000 as of 2005) since the enactment of the NPO law in 1998. However, in looking at successful cases, these activities tend to rely on individual effort rather than being the act of versatile communities.

The government promotes social capital to be nurtured in society in the hopes of regenerating community because the virtue of trust, norms, and network implies the importance of human relationships, which leads to resolving various regional issues and community-based development. Social capital is an essential component to building a framework and developing tools to revitalize urban and regional areas of Japan (ESRI, 2004). To nurture social capital, the report recommends civil activities that:

- Promote horizontal and open operation
- Develop activity to nurture bridging social capital
- Form reciprocal trust relationship with outside individuals and organizations

(ESRI, 2004).

These claims are very similar to what is discussed in the United States. It can be said that as the world becomes smaller and more similar, countries increasing share similar social problems. Thus, it is logical to share theories and practices as collective knowledge from which to learn together. Here, I am not going to talk about whether social capital is the right concept we should follow (Florida, 2002). However, it is suffice to say that Japan, the United States and probably many other nations are loosing the traditional human and social networks.

Countries share common social issues, but also it is necessary to acknowledge differences that underlying culture and social norms affect. Confucianism is believed to provide underlying cultural values and patterns for Japanese behaviors, in which self-fulfillment is achieved in a harmonious but hierarchical social context, through the practice of proper behavior, moral and cultural self-development and the exercise of administrative responsibility on the bases of merit (Bond and Hwang, 1986 cited in Ikeda, 2004). Contemporary Japanese culture is largely influenced by Western countries. Younger generations tend to be more flexible with new and different ideas than older generations were. However, rigid social structure and conservative social norms still prevail with the expectation that different is not good. Many Koreans and

Chinese living in Japan hide their identities and choose to use Japanese name. Within hierarchical social relationships, younger people use differential language when speaking to older people, and the language itself makes people non-assertive and very indirect, thus not allowing young people to express their thinking easily. Moreover, political and social culture in Japan prevails positing that one should not confront authority. Self-determination or self-actualization may be hard in this rigid society. Therefore, an approach to restore social capital in Japan is probably different from that of the United States. A country may be too large to determine a specific approach; it has to be contextualized in a specific region and community flavor.

The first recommendation by ESRI for civic activities, to "promote horizontal and open operation" to nurture social capital, is relevant to this paper. Considering Japanese culture, a process needs to be culturally appropriate, especially for intergenerational relationship building. It is not a matter of right or wrong to import English words and theories to other countries. In this globalized world, it is necessary to learn from other regions of the world. An important consideration is whether people using the concepts feel right in doing so. This thought reflects a paradigm shift in planning theories. Rather than the planner knowing what should be done, it is the people or the community who should decide how to proceed. Thus, when using a new idea, a planner or facilitator needs to consult with the community or participants to understand whether they feel right in proceeding. In the case of 000 Global Univer-City staff, they did not feel right in using the AI approach. AICJ targets their market to corporations, whereas the participants I worked with were NPO staff. Age varies widely among staff. Some feel uncomfortable with English loan words which are harder to grasp meaning for than Chinese loan words because of the difference in writing style. I will explain more fully in the section *3.2.1 Transforming of AI approach to the Organizational Culture*. Finally, before proceeding to the next chapter, I would like to explain the context of Japanese culture that affects people's communication style.

2.7 Japanese Culture and Communication Style

"Children in Japan are taught not to call attention to themselves or take initiative verbally. Rather, they are taught to foster *enryo,* ritualized verbal self-depreciation used to maintain group harmony" (Gudykunst and Nishida, 1994: 29). It is important to note the underlying cultural norm that affects people's behavior and ways of thinking in order to plan in culturally appropriate ways. Hofstede and Hofstede (2005) describe five characteristics of culture and rank 74 countries accordingly. Below is the rank of Japan for each index.

1. Confucianism 4-5 out of 39 countries (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005: 211)

Japanese social structure is influenced by Confucius ideology (211). In Confucian teaching, family is the prototype of all social organization (209). However, due to economic growth and urban development, the structure of traditional family solidarity has changed from the extended family to the nuclear family, especially in urban areas.

2. Power distance 49-50 out of 74 countries (43)

Confucian cultural inheritance has higher power distance, but as countries get richer, they associate with lower power distance (68). In Japan, vertical relations provide the basis for group cohesion, and the major factors on which vertical relations are formed include gender, age, position, experience, and knowledge.

3. Masculinity 2 out of 74 countries (120)

Members of cultures high in masculinity value things, power and assertiveness, emphasizing differences in sex role and performance (Gudykunst and Nishida, 1994: 35).

4. Uncertainty avoidance 11-13 out of 74 countries (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005: 168)

The view of people in high uncertainty avoidance cultures is "what is different is dangerous" (176). Uncertainty avoiding cultures look for a structure in their organizations, institutions, and relationships that makes events clearly interpretable and predictable (172). There is a strong desire for consensus in cultures high in uncertainty avoidance, and therefore deviant behavior is not acceptable (Gudykunst and Nishida, 1994: 30). In Japan, one gains virtue by following the rules and is lost by failing to do so (32).

5. Collectivism 3-35 out of 74 countries (Hofstede and Hofstede, 2005: 78)

There is a link between modernization and shift toward individualism (110). Countries having achieved fast economic development have experienced a shift toward individualism from collectivism. The Japanese press regularly publishes stories of breaches of traditional family solidarity. Care for the aged in the past was considered a task for the Japanese family, but provisions by the state have become necessary for cases in which the family stops fulfilling its traditional duties (114). Yet, Japan has retained the virtue of collectivism in spite of industrialization (110).

These characteristics of cultural factors are generalized and may not accurately represent the dynamic culture of a country. However, they do provide an overview and assumptions about appropriate communication style. Collectivism and individualism are related to high-context and low-context culture, terms coined by Edward Hall (Ishikawa and Yamazaki, 2005). Japan falls

toward the high-context end of the continuum. High-context cultures make greater distinctions between insiders and outsiders than low-context cultures do. When talking about something that they have on their minds, a high-context individual will expect his interlocutor to know what is bothering him, so that he does not have to be specific. In Japan, prevailing cultural assumptions of group harmony or conformity require less direct confrontation and prefer the use of ambiguous words. In order to avoid leaving an assertive impression, qualifiers such as "maybe," "perhaps," "probably," or "somewhat" are often used. Since Japanese syntax does not require the use of a subject in a sentence, the qualifier-predicate is a predominate form of sentence construction (Gudykunst and Nishida, 1994: 29). Thus, Japanese may refrain from expressing opinions that go against the majority. It has been suggested that Japanese people tend to place lower value on direct verbal expression of one's ideas or feelings, while expecting these to be understood in the process of interpersonal communication even without explicit verbalization (Nagano, 1996 cited in Ishikawa and Yamazaki, 2005:89). Further, people may sidestep choices when they are offered. This extends to declining to state what is convenient or even desired when asked. It is a product of the suppression of individuality under the pressure of group solidarity and conformity, empathetic considerations for others' convenience or comfort, concern to prevent embarrassment, and the wish to maintain freedom by avoiding social involvement without hurting others (Gudykunst and Nishida, 1994: 25-26).

2.8 Summary of Conceptual Framework

The loss of traditional family and community structures may be similar social problems faced by economically developed countries. The rise of civil society seen in Japan since 1998 has encouraged a shift in the approach to community planning and therefore has provided the opportunity to build individual and organizational capacity. Dialogue and appreciative inquiry were two intriguing approaches applied to visioning and action planning for the 000 Global Univer-City retreat. The approaches necessarily required transformation to be culturally appropriate, and this occurred through consultation with participants. In designing the process, the intergenerational communication and non-assertive communication styles as well as organizational culture were taken into consideration. In the following chapter, a detailed explanation, narratives of process, and specific tools as well as ways that transformation was made are all described.

Chapter 3: 000 Global Univer-City Visioning and Action Planning Retreat

3.1 Background

3.1.1 Description of the Organization

000 Global Univer-City was founded 11 years ago in Japan as a living life-learning organization and received non-profit operation status in 2000. The organization was founded by one of the pioneers working in the field of accelerated learning in Japan in the 1990s. It was a time when the role of a highly competitive education system was beginning to be questioned. The name "Univer-City" represents an education system not seen in a conventional university but rather one that recognizes a city as essentially a field of refined intelligence, sensibility, and sacredness which are qualities embodied in living nature, and thus the city is where the field of learning and practical actions naturally occur (Jingu, 2007). Its mission states that "With the recognition that the foundation that forms culture lies in the consciousness and volition of Planet Earth herself and of each inhabitant, PAF Global Univer-City NPO was founded for the purpose of co-creating a planetary playground for the children of the universe where they can realize a Love-filled Society based on the principles of joy, abundance and peace." In April 2007, the organization restructured itself. The former leader appointed three directors. New leaders with new ideas and energy were brought into the organization, with the former head director and secretary as organizer and auditor, respectively, to mentor the next generation of leaders.

The organization has four types of membership (peace room, project, corporation, and individual). 54 members reside all over Japan. The organization's financial source is its registration fee (10,000 yen) and annual membership fee (5,000 yen) with occasional donations. All staff are volunteers, and the secretary's office, which also stores equipment and materials, was located in an individual house. This was the main source and concern of ineffective office work.

One of the physical assets of the organization are the peace rooms, in which members share a room or house for a meeting and the gathering of members of the organization. Communication to members is mainly done through either email or letter. A website was recently reconstructed. Members have projects based on their locality and everyday life. The organization provides a network for those members whose potential may have not been tapped into. It holds two annual festivals for members to mingle, and it hosts activities to achieve its mission. Recent events include Kaho'olawe environment restoration program and Aichi expo in 2005.

3.1.2 Restructuring of the Organization

In the past, the organization was led by a woman with charismatic ideas and vision. Staff were appointed and asked to help operate the organization. Although the organizational structure was loose, and there was not a strong hierarchy as in the case of traditional Japanese corporations, there was a tendency to depend on the leader for instruction and direction. Therefore, after the change of leadership in April 2007, it was obvious that the organization's culture needed to be renewed as well. In October 2007, members were asked to self-nominate to become core staff of the renewed organization. The definition of core staff is "a committed individual who takes a task of organizational operation based on the mission." 10 people nominated themselves as core staff. This fact that core staff was self-nominated showed their commitment to the organization's mission. Also, this creates a whole new energy and attitude towards work. Rather than being appointed and assigned to work, now they are the decision makers of their own role and tasks.

After restructuring, the organization thought it was important to clarify the roles of each staff member and purposes. Many things were ambiguous, and it needed concrete and clear common understanding of organizational vision and projects. In July 2007, the organization had time to discuss their purpose and role. However, it was hard to reach consensus. Many people thought deeply and silently that they could not have a productive meeting. Therefore, in order to have a productive meeting and decision-making, a three-day retreat process for intensive meeting and interaction was planned.

3.1.3 Role of the Author

My position for this process was multiple. I acted as the designer of the process, consulting with an organizer (the former leader) and one of more experienced core staff. I convened the meeting, and the house used was my mother's house. I also implemented the process as a facilitator, using knowledge I learned from school. All of these roles were possible because I was appointed as the head director of the organization in April 2007 for the restructuring of the organization with the expectation that young generation should lead the organization. Two other directors were appointed as they also have experience living oversees and have potential and skills to lead the renewed organization. Although there was some concern from members that I am too young to be a director, the organization was ready to pass leadership onto a younger generation as younger members are ready and passionate to take

practical roles to operate the nonprofit. Among ten self-nominated core staff, five of them are in 20s or 30s. Three directors and ten core staff formed a new team and needed to make a series of decisions for the operation. Moreover, the transition of leadership was smooth as the former leader was my mother.

I wore many hats as director, facilitator, designer, and daughter. The roles could be differentiated thanks to the organization's nature. Because within the organization, some people are family or friends, we were able to shift roles depending on circumstances by using different names and language. To reflect my various capacities, I modified my language through communication strategies. For example, I was called "director" when I was in the role of director and used a different form and tone of language.

3.2 Process Design

3.2.1 Transforming of AI approach to the Organizational Culture

In designing the process I initially based my ideas on literature on AI and introduced the 4D stage of Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny to the organizer and one of core staff in a preliminary meeting on Maui in December 2007. The feedback they gave was negative, commenting, "If it is necessary to use these models for your school work, we should use it." This is very indirect, but it means they did not think AI would be appropriate for their retreat in January. Although AI's framework gives a creative approach to yield meaningful dialogue, its focus on inquiry and analysis of past successes does not match this particular case study. Since its goal is decision making for organizational structure change to avoid becoming a dysfunctional organization, some steps of AI were deemed inappropriate for this case study. Moreover, understanding mind-body-spirit as of a whole oneness (Mohr and Watkins) is not a new concept in Japanese culture. In fact, 000 Global Univer-City as an organization is based on this recognition that human consciousness is what allows for our situation in society. Therefore, AI is acknowledged as an innovative approach for organizational change in Western cultures, yet adopting this concept for an Eastern organization which acknowledges this concept as a principle is awkward. Thus, "appreciation" was thought of as premise and embedded in the organizational culture rather than something to be nurtured through inquiry. Therefore, the 4-D stage constructionist-based approach needed to be transformed to fit organizational culture.

3.2.2 000 Global Univer-City Organizational Culture

At the meeting on Maui, I was re-introduced to the PLENUM Calendar, which the organization uses. Based on the Mayan Calendar, the PLENUM Calendar is designed to align human beings to nature's rhythm of 13-20-28. The calendar is used as a daily reference for members. The features of the calendar are its four stages based on *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* and color according to each stage. *Ki-sho-ten-ketsu* is a way of constructing ideas in Japanese/Chinese traditional culture. Let me explain how the PLENUM Calendar was developed by the founder of the organization.

Since she was young, the director has been contemplating and working toward world peace. Now she is in her 50s. What she has realized through interacting and meeting so many people striving for world peace is that human consciousness is that which disrupts the world now. In this world, people are different in skin color, religion, language, customs, and so many other things. From so many decades of facing these differences which lead to different ways of expression and understanding, she believes using numbers and colors, which are universal and common for all the people, is simple and easy to understand. The choice of four colors in the *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* model is originally derived from the Mayan calendar. In the Maya sense of time, the universe was conceived by a system of seven world-directions, comprising the four cardinal points, plus the center, zenith, and nadir (Coe and Stone, 2005: 123). Each cardinal point along with the center was associated with a color:

North: white
West: black
South: yellow
East: red (Coe and Stone, 2005: 123).

Each color of each cardinal point is identified with meaning. For example, red is the rising sun. In the center of the four directions is the Cosmic Tree (Longhena, 2000:70). The color in the center is green and blue, treated by the Maya as one color. Like the ancient Chinese, the Maya believed that green was closely linked to water, a life-giving, purifying element that made maize and all other plants grow (Longhena, 2000: 71). Drawing on this ancient wisdom of nature and cardinal directions, the organization adapted it into a Japanese cultural context with slight changes. With

the appreciation of Japanese/Chinese *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* structural order, the theme colors were assigned as follows:

Ki (initiation, arise): Red

Sho (development, elaborative receiving): White

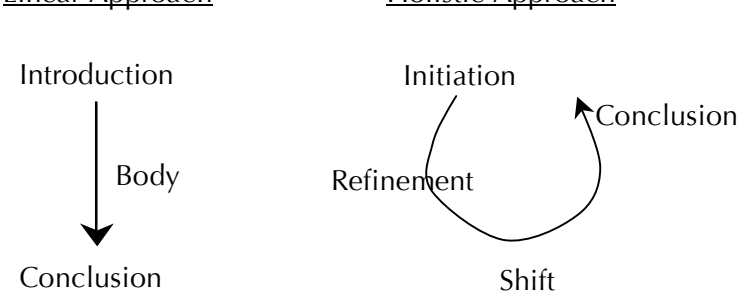
Ten (turn, shift): Blue

Ketsu (fruition, conclusion): Yellow

Black was changed to blue as *ten* is transformation as in the form of water or sky. The center color is green, which represents Earth.

From this acknowledgement of the organizational culture, four stages of process were turned into a Japanese/Chinese traditional order of construction or cultural thought patterns: *Ki* (initiation), *Sho* (development/refinement), *Ten* (shift, turn), and *Ketsu* (conclusion) along with respective colors. Linguists consider and often talk about these concepts because East Asian students write differently due to this particular style of writing. In other words, their way of thinking may be different. This *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* logical order is described as spiral as opposed to English's "Introduction, Body, Conclusion" straight pattern (Chill, p.171). If the turn is perceived as providing a systematic viewpoint, it can be considered to provide a holistic twist to the logical order. This holistic approach seemed more applicable to the organizational culture and its change.

Diagram 4: Comparing Linear and Holistic Approach



Professor Yoshimasa Ono, who teaches scientific and technical English writing at the University of Tokyo is concerned with the inability of Japanese students and company clerks and engineers to write in English. He urges Japanese writers to "forget *ki-sho-ten-ketsu*. While translating into English, first change Japanese writing format into structure of Introduction-Body-Conclusion and then translate the language itself (Asahi Weekly, 2006)."

3.2.3 Consideration to Japanese Communication Approach for Facilitator

Other than modifying the structure of stages, the Japanese communication style characterized by less assertiveness and directness needs to be taken into consideration. Previously, the organization had a workshop with two social designers from San Francisco. One of the comments they made was, "The most difficult thing about doing a workshop in San Francisco is to stop people talking, whereas in Japan, the most difficult thing is to get people talking." As described in detail in the previous chapter, section *2.7 Underlying Cultural and Social Factors in Japan*, Japanese culture is high-context, which prefers indirectness and ambiguity: "Where Americans emphasize the verbal code, what is said, the Japanese place their trust in the nonverbal code, what is left unsaid. If intellect is an instrument of understanding for Americans, it is intuition that is valued among the Japanese" (Barnlund, 1989: 32). There is an expression in Japanese, "read air," meaning communicators should understand the atmosphere and mood. Despite equally pragmatic goals, decisions in Japan tend to be based on "mood" whereas in the United States on "arguments" (Barnlund, 1989: 32). Thus, a facilitator needs to read the "air" of a group and understand that not talking doesn't mean they are not participating or not interested in the subject. Rather, communicators, especially in meeting format, are more selective of their statements and may think well before making statements. Some think speaking in a meeting format has responsibility attached. The role of a facilitator is to activate both verbal and non-verbal communication. In the decision-making process, reading non-verbal behaviors is important; however, unless verbal interchange of thoughts prosper in a meeting, it is hard to say that the process is truly participatory. Thus, a challenge of facilitation in a Japanese cultural context is to make people's thoughts verbal and visual.

Age difference is also a dominant factor for younger people to be less assertive in intergenerational teams. Confucius teaching embedded in Japanese culture requires the use of a different language tone to elder persons. In the organization, some members are older and others are younger. Finding ways and an environment in which to have effective and productive meetings where young people are not intimidated to speak up and share discussion is one of the aspects I kept in mind. In the traditional corporation structure, young people are unlikely to speak up at meetings unless they are assigned to. At one of the meetings I attended while I was interning at a company, I was surprised to see the president talk for more than half of the meeting time, and other employees only speak in order to provide factual reports. (It was an extra work; we came to the company on Saturday mornings for the meeting. They held this kind of meeting twice a

month.) In the two months I was interning, two young employees, both in their early 20s, quit the company because of emotional stress and not meeting their work expectations. Hierarchical relationships are deemed important to maintaining social order; however, as the mode of economy changes from agricultural society to industrial society to service industry and the rise of a creative class (Florida, 2002) and more people are educated, there is an increasing gap between creative generations and conservative generations. Young people's creativity and energy cannot realize their potential in traditional hierarchical structures. While maintaining respect for elders, younger people need an environment in which they can express their opinions without being seen as impudent. The age difference equates to a power difference, and young people may feel that confronting elder people is fruitless, and they may feel that their opinions do not matter. On the other hand, elder people may think assertive and high self-esteem young people are insolent. Thus, how young generations frame their opinions and how older generations receive those statements is vital to nurturing good intergenerational relationships.

In the face of power differences, a facilitator plays a vital role (Forester, 1989). However, there is a limit to what a facilitator can do in facing these communication style differences. What is most important is the attitude of communicators to respect each other. Without such a premise, communication cannot be fruitful, even with the presence of an experienced facilitator. 000 Global Univer-City is not a conventional organization. Even the core staff is comprised of a mix of different age groups: older staff is more than tolerant and rather want younger staff to take leadership roles in operation. Older core staff believe "with change of society and norms, old unnecessary beliefs need to be removed and refreshed with creative younger vision." It is exactly because of this organizational culture that I was welcomed to become a head director of the organization at the age of 25.

In addition to appreciating such a culture in the organization, a facilitator can add to the good intentions of people to ease a group through the process of making decisions and visioning (Hart, 1999:2-5). Astute participatory decision-making or visioning is not easy task. Yet the deliberative participatory process to reconsider ends and means together, to learn about what we want and what we can do, is transformative and generates networks and new organizational forms (Forester, 1999). Steps considered to lead to astute participatory process are:

- Be clear on goals and objectives of the retreat
- Make sure participants have equal opportunity to attend the retreat

- Respect and build an agenda upon the organization culture
- Be aware of communication style differences and use objects (community ball, index cards, and construction paper) to facilitate dialogue

The following section describes the detail steps I followed as the convener and designer of the three-day retreat that took place January 4-6, 2008.

3.2.4 Convening Retreat

After the self-nomination of 10 core staff in October 2007, there was consensus that operation of the organization needed to be divided between them. Through e-mail, I contacted two other directors and 10 core staff and shared the idea of having a retreat over the winter break in Ohshima Island, Tokyo. Many responded positively about the retreat and the date was decided, matching everyone's schedule. The date and place were decided in November 2007.

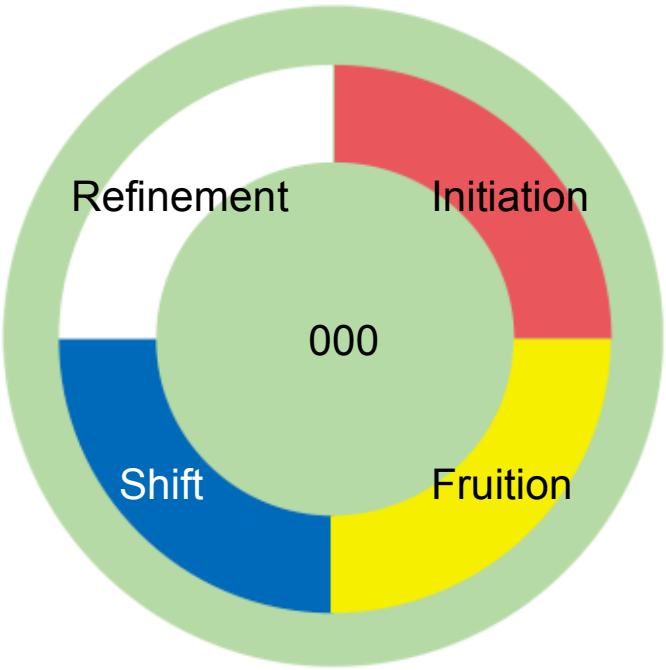
3.2.5 Creating Agenda for Retreat

The most critical factor in facilitating a meeting for this organization was to recognize its organizational culture. 000 embodies the energy of plenty (plenum) as opposed to a vacuum. Thus, besides *ki-sho-ten-ketsu*'s four stages, 000, the numeric expression of the initial energy of the Universe, is thought important to include as a stage. Centering the concept of abundance, participants think to identify uncovering potential rather than focus on deficiencies or lack of skills. In other words, this stage recognizes the abundance of Earth and our lives. Thus, 000 was designed as the stage for before and after the four *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* stages. The color of this stage is green as the Earth. The venue of the retreat, Ohshima PLENUM TIME SPACE is a house designed to have these thematic colors in each room. Thus, we held the meeting in a different colored room according to the thematic color of the stage. In each stage, participants were also asked to wear clothes or some items of that thematic color. This physical and color effect impacted participants to reset in each stage and to have a communal sense by wearing the same color.
The thematic colors and descriptions of each stage are described in following table.

Table 3: Description of Stages

Logic	Stage	Color	Type	Outcome
000	000	Green	Ceremonial	Set Beginning Tone
Ki	Initiation	Red	Conceptual	Shared vision
Sho	Refinement	White	Practical	Role taking
Ten	Shift	Blue	Conceptual	System vision
Ketsu	Fruition	Yellow	Practical	Calendar marking
000	000	Green	Ceremonial	Set Ending Tone

Diagram 5: Meeting Design



The Red and Blue stages are conceptual as their outcomes lead to the conceptual understanding of the organization. The White and Yellow stages are practical as their outcomes lead to the practical operation of the organization. 000 stage is ceremonial because it celebrates and sets the mood and tone of the organization's characteristics.

Each stage has particular objectives. The objectives of each stage are:

000: to set the tone of the organizational meeting

Red: to create a vision statement

White: to identify the role and divide roles among core staff

Blue: to appreciate BE system and review outcomes in the systemic vision

Yellow: to set things in motion and create a schedule calendar for the organization's operation

000: to celebrate accomplishments and adjourn the meeting

The overall goals for the retreat are:

- Create vision statement and decide operational activities for the organization
- Clarify difference between individual and organizational activities
- Build relationship among core staff and directors.

The first goal of visioning and decision-making could take a long time if we were to make it truly participatory. I was conscious that the last meeting in the July prior had been structured in such a way as to not encourage dialogue; thus, the preparation for discussion with a clear understanding of goals and objectives seemed very important. Two weeks prior to the meeting, the agenda was sent out. The participants were asked to think individually about future projects and events and articulate their thoughts in a memo.

The second goal to differentiate individual and organizational activities results from the concerns of some core staff. 000 Global Univer-City was founded to be a model organization which recognizes how human consciousness affects the volition of Earth. In other words, individual ego, irritation, and selfish interests are the causes of malfunction on Earth. Therefore, it is important to differentiate between acting as core staff and as an individual. To acknowledge this difference in consciousness is vital for creating a shared meaning for the organization.

The third goal is especially important as the core staff and directors live far from each other. There are only a couple of times a year that all core staff and directors can meet together. The main communication is done through email and by phone. Thus, the retreat provides a great opportunity to build relationships and create a sense of togetherness.

The agenda which includes these goals, objectives, and stages for the meeting was drafted and revised by the organizer and one of the core staff. Appendix A is the agenda translated in English. Participants for this meeting included 10 core staff and 3 directors.

3.3 Process Description

In the following sections, I describe the process of the retreat held January 4-6, 2008 and my role as a facilitator.

3.3.1 Pre-Meeting Stage

The day before the meeting started on January 5th, the participants drew together a whale which symbolizes a vehicle to carry the dreams of 000 Global Univer-City. This was partly intended to be an ice-breaking exercise and to set a fun-filled momentum for the meetings to follow.

Figure 1: Dream Whale

On the morning of the 5th, together we made a community ball (Jackson: 5). Everyone weaved cotton yarn to make a ball, and whenever they wrapped the yarn around the cardboard stick, they introduced what they thought about the word "PLENUM". This created common ground and made us aware of diverse individual viewpoints.

Figure 2: Making Community Ball

3.3.2 000 / Green Stage

The meeting started at 3pm. The goal of this stage was to set a tone for the meeting with the concept of abundance at the center. Starting with a greeting and appreciation, I went over the goal and agenda of the meeting. Also we circulated the community ball, and each participant introduced her/himself and shared why s/he became core staff and what each one's expectations were for the organization. After going around the circle, participants were asked to write down their prepared vision on a piece of paper and put it on the Dream Whale.

Figure 3: 000 / Green Stage

3.3.3 Initiation / Red Stage

The goal of this stage was to develop a shared vision statement. It was thought vital to create the organization's vision together through a deliberative participatory process. The organization has its mission but no vision statement. Many members acknowledged the need for a common and clear understanding to describe the organization.

At the beginning of this stage, I shared some concerns raised by members who were not able to describe clearly what the organization is about when asked by friends or family. As the organization is not conventional and many terms used in the mission statement are unfamiliar to the general population, this became a source of ambiguity and different understandings toward the mission of the organization. Thus, I clarified with participants that that objective of this stage is to have a statement that all core staff and directors can agree on and that will be used to describe the organization.

Figure 4: Initiation / Red Stage

I asked each staff to write keywords that describe the organization on index cards as an individual brainstorming exercise. As a result, some brainstormed and used many cards, and some wrote only one. Some even only wrote one Chinese character. After everyone completed the process, I asked them to chose the best card from their stack and put it into the middle of the circle. We all glanced at the cards in front of us, and began reading and thinking about what others had written. I initiated questions about the words, and people started to clarify their meaning. Questions and comments followed spontaneously. Dialogue seemed to open up new perspectives, yet the 13 cards still seemed to be individual entities. After a while one person suggested that it might be difficult to create a vision statement from these various cards. Since there were many voices and a communal desire to make a common vision for the organization, this negative comment ignited fire for some members; thus, some members were provoked and made comments like "I think there is possibility to make a statement from this." The visioning process became smooth afterward. We started to connect the key meaning behind the cards, and 13 cards were made into four key words through dialogue: Earth, To be, Essence, and Learning (originally written in Japanese, translated into English by the author). The process was amazingly smooth. Everything seemed synchronic (Ellinor and Genard, 1998). Every comment and perspective seemed to be a part of whole. When we finally composed a sentence out of these four keywords, "To learn the essence of being on Earth," the room was filled with satisfaction and people joyfully applauded. When I looked at my watch, I was surprised that it took less than an hour to make a vision statement. It was a transformational experience; each member started to see each other in another dimension, and their roles toward the organization went from passive to active. Members all aligned around this vision. After everyone was able to see the shared meaning of the organization's existence, the whole dynamic of the meeting itself shifted. In the subsequent stage, the vision statement was understood as a deeply shared purpose of organizational activities. Thus, in the next stage of deciding the organization's structure and operational form, the energy was focused on the shared, common purpose.

3.3.4 Refinement / White stage

After taking a short break, everyone gathered in the white room. In the refinement stage, the focus was to decide the operational form of the organization. Originally, the secretary work, including accounting, government report filing, membership record keeping, website management, and sending letters to members, was all done by one person. There was some sentiment of distrust toward him as sometimes paper work was not done on time and mistakes were not rare. Members did not see how time demanding the secretary job was since he was working behind the scene. Since it is a nonprofit organization, he was not paid, and the office he used was his house. There was a clear recognition that the secretary's workload was overwhelming as he also had a regular job. There were also rising voices from the younger core staff who wished to take some initiative in report filing and accounting. Thus, there was the need for core staff to be clear as to what roles they would take in the new organizational structure.

Before the meeting, the original secretary job was divided into six roles by the directors: membership relation and communication; equipment, material management; PR, homepage, record keeping; government relation, accounting; relation with other NPOs; and project planning and implementation. The new forms of the secretary job were designed to be polycentric rather than unicentric, in which one person takes all the responsibility. Polycentric operation, which is connected by an invisible web of network, allowed smoother flow of shared responsibility.

After these six roles were announced, each staff identified which role they thought they should perform and wrote it down on a sheet of paper. Participants were given five minutes to think individually about the roles and write down their selection on a sheet of paper. Writing on the paper allowed people to be honest and to think without being influenced by others' opinions. Then everyone showed their paper and shared what they wanted to do. After going around in a circle, the list was refined one more time, and finally each role was connected with several staff. As a result of discussion, 6 roles were divided among 10 core staff, and 3 directors also assigned themselves to a role. Below is the polycentric network system derived from this stage.

Figure 5: PLANET / Communication Network

This stage was very practical, yet to identify and mobilize each staff member's capacities comprised another goal. Some already know their capabilities as they are experienced at accounting, graphic design, website management, government paper works, or record keeping. Others do not have much experience. By focusing energy on what is needed for an organization, instead of thinking what individuals cannot do, some staff were willing to learn new skills. This leads to capacity building as staff become willing to learn new skills and build new relationships with other staff as they do actual work. As a result, people become aware of their interdependence on each other and their skills. Moreover, along the process, staff increasingly recognized how overworked the former secretary really was. The distrust toward the former secretary completely transformed into appreciation.

The stage ended around 7:30 pm. After enjoying dinner, each color group gathered respectively and discussed in further detail their roles and responsibilities. The last meeting ended at 2 am.

3.3.5 Shift / Blue Stage

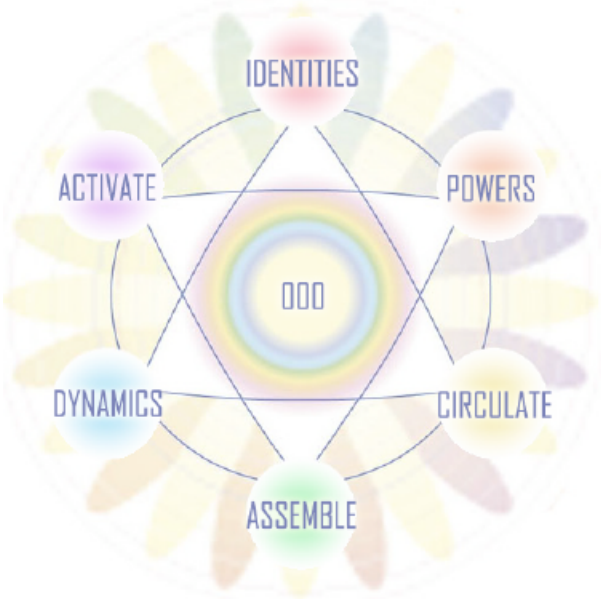
The blue stage meeting started at eight o'clock in the morning of the second day. Firstly, each group reported back what they had discussed after dinner the night before and clarified some responsibilities and ways to communicate with other groups. It seems that as each core staff realized actual responsibilities for organizational operation, clarification was necessary for their roles and expectations.

Figure 6: Shift / Blue Stage

At the second half of this stage, we went over what we had discussed so far and tried to see our ideas from a systematic view and consider in broader perspectives. This stage aimed to shift the perspectives of participants. A systemic view of the organization allowed participants to see interconnected relationships. For 000 Global Univer-City, the system is centered on synchronicity and expanded spatially and temporally. What one does here affects others in this world in different spaces or geography, and my action now is affected by the past and will affect the future. As in the organization's mission statement, which says: "…foundation that forms culture lies in the consciousness and volition of Planet Earth herself and of each inhabitant," clearly the members recognize that our consciousness affects the health of both our society and Earth. These ideas are proven by the work of Emori (2004); He conducted an experiment to crystallize distilled water, which was exposed to words on a piece of paper such as "Love & Thanks" and "Devil" or "You Fool." After creating 100 samples, he observed that the water with positive words produced beautiful crystals and the water with negative words produced no crystals at all (Emori, 2004: 20). Applying this concept to our lives, we can conceptualize how just having positive consciousness can produce beautiful crystals in the human body as well as on Planet Earth, as approximately 60-70 % of both body masses are water.

The organization uses the BE system. This was developed and modified from the Beauty Engine social design system, introduced by two system designers, Scott Levkoff and Polly Whittaker, in San Francisco. The Beauty Engine is "a social design that helps communities identify their resources, improve communication, instigate successful collaboration and accelerate into action" (Levkoff, Whittaker, and Jingu 2006). It has seven fundamental design elements.

Figure 7: Beauty Engine System



(Source: Beauty Engine Guides Handbook, 2006)

1) Identities

Each member of the community can create an identity, which summarizes their role. If they have more than one role, or more than one community, they can create multiple identities.

2) Powers

Within every community there is an abundance of talent, resources and wisdom. Each member is encouraged to state what they hold, and that information can be made openly available.

3) Circulate

Members are clear about what they want to offer, and what their specific needs are, and as a result are far more effective in their collaboration. Talents can be utilized, resources can be put to work, and wisdom can be spread.

4) Assemble

In order for a community to thrive, they should meet together in physical space, not just online. Face to face interaction is essential for building trust, brainstorming ideas, and problem solving.

5) Dynamics

Inter-personal dynamics within a community can be improved by creating 'Dynamics'. These are catchphrases that refer to agreements the community has made about how they operate. These agreements help communities avoid misunderstandings with new members, act as reminders for more experienced members, and help potential members see if they are compatible.

6) Activate

When its time to get things done, 'How To' activities can help communities to get a head start, suggesting things to do and good ways to do them. Once they have gained some experience they can add to and improve on the activities, passing on their wisdom. These activities can be practical, creative, esoteric or fun.

7) 000

The three zeros at the centre represent actualized potential.

The BE system was introduced as an innovative tool to accelerate communication and collective work for NPO 000 Global Univer-City. However, the six elements in above were directly translated into Japanese, using loan words, and some members could not comprehend the concepts. Hearing comments that members are not satisfied using the Beauty Engine system as it was, the organizer transformed the terms into those that were familiar to members of 000 Global Univer-City. Thus, the Beauty Engine system developed in San Francisco was modified into the BE system that is more applicable to the members of 000 Global Univer-City. The six components of the BE systems are WATASHI-AI-PLANET-SHINH-PLENUM-UA NOA. Descriptions of each word were made explicit by the organizer and translated into English by the author (Jingu, 2007):

Figure 8: BE System

1) WATASHI

This is a Japanese word to represent "I". In the case of 000 Global Univer-City, this is the organization itself.

2) AI

"Ai" is a Japanese word that represents "love." Instead of "power" which could imply physical strength, the use of the term "ai" was preferred by members. This represents the resources and potential each "watashi" has. For the organization as a whole, it is a project planned or implemented by the members.

3) PLANET

The word circulation was transformed into "Planet" as this implies the light communication network of the universe. For the organization, this represents the network of each polycentric circle discussed in the white stage.

4) SHINH

The word assemble was transformed into the word "shinh" which has many meanings in Chinese characters (真: truth, 心: heart, 神: god, 森: forest, 深: depth, 慎: humble 親: parent, and many others). In the organization, shinh is written as it is and includes many meanings but one sound. It

implies the assembly of diverse people with different characteristics but with alignment. Thus, this represents the meeting between the board of director and the core staff.

5) PLENUM

The word "dynamics" introduced in the Beauty Engine system was most difficult to conceptualize for Japanese speakers. As this element represents agreements or rules for the group, the word was transformed into PLENUM, meaning that everyone agrees that we are already born and live in richness and abundance of Earth. This basic agreement or premise allows people to work cocreatively to activate plenum energy.

6) UA NOA

This phase means activation. The Hawaiian word "ua noa" (meaning be free, like buds of flowers are opening up) is applied here because this term was born in the moment when the two groups from Japan and Hawai`i applauded together regardless of difference in culture, and new energy was activated. For the 000 Global Univer-City, the meaning of Ua Noa is an overunifying project with diverse culture and civilization.

From the dialogue, it became clear that the vision statement created in the red stage represents WATASHI. The project Yellow group (design/implementation team decided in white stage) set a goal to organize UA NOA in 2009, but in order to do so, members need to learn to co-create with different people. The team has acknowledged that the co-creation with diverse people requires self-understanding and members need to learn "Kokoro" (mind/spirit/heart) communication. This is done through the project AI. PLANET is the network system decided on the white stage. SHINH is the very process that they were engaged in. Plenum activation is the essence of this organization: to appreciate the abundance of Earth Mother and Sky Father. Working with organizations or individuals to achieve this goal is what PLENUM is.

3.3.6 Organizing / Yellow Stage

This stage is to organize the meeting outcomes and mark the calendar. Having a large calendar, which everyone can see is one way of recording, which aligns everyone on the same page for upcoming events. Deciding the date for activities and people in charge for each activity are important practical steps to implement what has been decided in other stages. One of the important things to note was the deadline for filing a government report. In the past, staff relied on one secretary to do all the work, and they were not even aware of when or what should be turned into the government. By being aware of the timeline and who is responsible for what, core staff

can communicate well so that rather than relying on one staff member, everyone can become supportive and considerable for other staff and their roles. The aim of this stage was to have everyone involved in the schedule making and divide tasks of filing the report and sending letters to members as this has to be done in a timely manner. Also this stage allowed us to see things in concrete terms. At this stage, the following actions were included in the calendar and each activity was assigned to responsible core staff and directors.

January 25	Core staff meeting report sent to members
26	The first secretary job takeover
March	Approval of change of statute by Cabinet Office
April	Registration with Cabinet Office, Solicitor Office
	Complete takeover of secretary job, mail account, accounting
April 19-28	Support an event "Time Space Proof"
May	Plan meeting for Summer Solstice event
June 21	Board of directors meeting, core staff meeting
22	Summer Solstice gathering
23	Membership renewal
July 25	Day of PLENUM
October	Autumn Equinox gathering
October 25	Deadline for fiscal report to Cabinet Office

3.3.7 000 / Green Stage

After eating lunch, to conclude and celebrate the accomplishments of the meeting, participants came back to the green stage once again and looked at their dream written at the beginning on the Dream Whale. After re-reading the sentences, some participants changed their sentences. Finally, participants taped each paper on the Dream Whale and made it a resolution until we meet next time on June 22nd at the summer solstice gathering. Finally to end the meeting in full-filled enjoyment, small gifts to take home were given to each participant.

Figure 9: 000 / Green Stage

Chapter 4 Analysis of Process

This chapter analyzes the essential components which allowed the fulfillment of the meeting goals based on written feedback from participants. By deductive analysis, it aims to understand the external and internal components that made the process successful.

4.1 Essential External Component

4.1.1 Food

Figure 10: Heart Cake

During the meeting, participants ate meals together at the big dining table. The LAILA meals were prepared voluntarily by my sister. She has a cooking license and learned to cook in the Future Food style (grain and vegetable based cuisine with no dairy or meat). This was a good opportunity for her to use her skill to make everyone happy. Serving many people not only built up her confidence but also inspired participants to ask her for future catering. Moreover, the ingredients of the meal such as organic vegetables and rice were grown by members of the NPO and delivered to wish everyone a successful meeting. This also made the meal full-filling as participants could sense from eating that the meeting was supported by many people. Almost all of the feedback from participants indicated an appreciation to the volunteer cook, who worked the whole day preparing meals for 13 people. One of the core staff, who is a mother, grandmother, and daughter-in-law of a four-generation family said, "I am so grateful not to worry about preparing food and to be served hand-made meals by someone."

4.1.2 Break Time

Break time is an essential aspect of a fulfilling meeting. In the process, 15-minute breaks were taken between stages of the meeting as one stage lasted between one and two hours. Tea was brought by one of the participants and was served, and snacks brought by many participants from different parts of Japan were served. Sweets gave a relaxed feeling, and everyone enjoyed the diversity of snacks from Japan. Break time was enriched because of the tea and snack participants brought. No one was asked to bring anything, but the gift-giving culture of Japan was present. Sweet enrichment is a vital factor, which also encourages side-talks.

4.1.3 Art

Art was incorporated in the meeting process because it can build common ground regardless of differences of expression. Participants who arrived the day before drew the "Dream Whale" together and made a community ball before the meeting. Creating a tangible thing together is a good exercise as in the process participants started to see each other's characteristics and traits. Moreover, the final product shows the group dynamics, and participants could see how individual pieces fit together to make a whole picture.

4.1.4 Color

The use of color themes for each stage was a vital feature of this process. As describe earlier in the section *3.2.2 000 Global Univer-City Organizational Culture*, this use of color is built on the organizational culture. Popularly known as color therapy, color impacts human consciousness. Red is the color of fire, implying arising. White is the color of purity, implying refinement. Blue is the color of water or sky, implying vastness and changing form. Yellow is the color of fruit, implying ripeness. Use of color is adapted as a universal system in which even children who cannot go school or adults who do not have formal education can understand which stage they are in. Wearing the same color items also encouraged participants to be in the same range of the spectrum.

4.1.5 Tools

Use of index cards, paper, and color pens was essential for the meeting. These tools not only were useful for record keeping, but also facilitated communication for those participants who tend to be less vocal. Writing down thoughts on cards is good for organizing their thoughts as well. At the red stage, brainstorming was done on an individual basis rather than a group basis, and individuals were given index cards to write their keywords. It was done individually because group brainstorming can be intimidating for a shy person. By allowing individuals to first express themselves on the cards and then select the best word, it gave leeway for both assertive people and non-assertive people. For assertive people, they want to write so many words and express their opinions to others; therefore, limiting them to only one word made them more selective after being able to brainstorm so many words. On the other hand, non-assertive people or those who are not familiar with brainstorming methods did not come up with many words and just wrote

one or two cards. For them, practicing this step at an individual level created more space for their voice as everyone had an opportunity to select one word and place it in front of everyone.

Cards were used to make the conversation more objective rather than subjective as the focus is not on the participants' faces but on the cards. From the facilitator's point of view, using cards made it easier to manage the conversation. It also made for a safer environment in which participants could say what was on their minds. In the deliberation process, use of index cards and papers to write down rather than speak up made the difference in communication style less noticeable. It also helped participants to see diverse viewpoints and connections between these ideas.

Cards were also good visuals because of the room setting. The meeting was held in a regular houseroom with no blackboard or flipchart. Also, we sat on the floor rather than sitting at the table. Therefore, sorting cards made it like we were playing a card game. Cards are portable, and they made it feasible to easily bring them to another room and refer back again to group memory.

4.1.6 Space

The meeting was held at a house on the Ohshima (Big Island) off Tokyo, energetically similar to the Big Island, Hawai`i as both islands have similar volcanoes, and are the biggest of their island chains. Moreover, the cities of Hilo and Ohshima are sister cities. The space was designed and created for this type of gathering. The house is three stories and was built with *hinoki* tree. The wallpaper is made of hemp, and no chemicals were used for mold treatment. Other than the dining room and sunroof, each individual room has a thematic color: orange, purple, red, white, blue, yellow, and green. The design and energy of the house were done by an essential artist. According to the principles of *fengsui,* the natural environment impacts the space energy of a built environment and the people living there. Previously, a person with diabetes who has to take a shot of insulin every morning visited the house, and he commented that "surprisingly my body is so well that I don't need the shot of insulin."

4.1.7 Time

The meeting date was decided by asking each core staff for their availability. The meeting was convened January 4-5th, the beginning of the New Year, which is the most important holiday in Japan. Traditionally, January 1-3rd are the time people spend with family and 4th-7th are the

period people visit and greet extended family and neighbors for New Year's greetings. Also, the New Year is a time to make resolutions for the coming year. The biggest concern was transportation costs. As some participants live in Kyusyu or Hokkaido, they must take an airplane to attend this meeting. Moreover, because many participants have family gathering as well, they could not stay in Ohshima for more than one night and two days. For some participants, transportation cost 50,000 yen for the airplane and ferry from Tokyo port to Ohshima. The fact that participants committed to come to the meeting regardless of the financial burden made this meeting so valuable and made me very careful about designing and convening the meeting.

4.2 Essential Internal Components

4.2.1 Preparation Beforehand

The agenda for the retreat was given two weeks prior. Participants were asked to think about their personal vision for the organization before coming to the meeting. To not only think but to write down on a piece of paper made the homework more compelling. One of the participants said she felt the meeting already started as she was thinking about her vision at home.

A clear statement of goals, objectives, and outcomes of each stage in the agenda helped participants to conceive the process and motivate them to think ahead. Participants were also asked to bring some items or clothes, which corresponds with the color of each stage.

4.2.2 Willingness to Engage

Regardless of the circumstances, without the will of participants to engage, the participatory process would not be fruitful. It is unfeasible to nurture one's will by outside persuasion. It has to arise and be nurtured from one's heart. This meeting was not a conventional meeting in that a leader is not doing everything and participants just listening. Participants were expected to shape the dialogue and decide their vision and future together. Therefore, a willingness to engage was essential to the productive process. For this meeting, core staff showed a will to engage ever since they nominated themselves as core staff in October 2007. Moreover, coming all the way to an island off Tokyo during the New Year holiday season required will. The design and agenda of the meeting was well received as it reflected the needs of the organization. The commitment to participate and engagement in the process were already started from preparation.

4.2.3 Commitment to Work Together

This process provided new thinking about how to work together. The organization's members experienced unfruitful discussion at the meeting held in July 2007. Fruits did not bear because every member just shared their ideas and no one took the lead to facilitate the conversation. This experience provided motivation to make this retreat better. Expectations to have meaningful dialogue were high, and people were ready to meet again to fulfill the objectives set forth in the agenda.

Figure 11: Core Staff and Directors

Moreover, the session offered an especially safe environment for younger people to speak up. For example, in the white stage, two older staff said to a young girl staff that she should not take responsibility on fiscal matters because it would be too much burden for her. Their intent was simply to be considerate of her workload. But her face was not happy, and she looked like she wanted to say something. Naturally she was able to say that she felt hurt hearing them underestimate her. Soon after the two older staff apologized to her, and the young staff member took the role of accounting. It was not easy for her to say she was hurt in front of people. This kind of honest voice from younger people is valuable and important for sincerely working together.

4.2.4 Co-creation of Shared Vision

Sharing a common vision created by members through the deliberative process has significantly impacted each member's heart. The visioning process connected members and created a sense of togetherness, which people can continue to feel even when they separate and go home. The joyful momentum continued throughout the rest of the meeting. A shared vision is so vital that it will align members even in the implementation of actions. Being physically apart and each having their jobs and families, communication via e-mail and phone have a different vibrancy now. Many participants commented that the red stage was vital for the success of the retreat. One of the participants said, "The moment when we agreed on the vision statement, a warm feeling was aroused inside me and made me think we can overcome anything." As the shared vision became the core value of the organization, it changed the entire nature of the

relationships within that community (Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers, 1998). Many other scholars note the importance of a meaningful and truly participatory creation of vision (Giesecke & McNeil, 2004).

4.2.5 Deliberative Facilitation

"Deliberative practitioners" work and learn with others (Forester, 1999:1). Dealing with a "difficult" individual may challenge a facilitator to lead a smooth discussion. A difficult situation can range from someone dominating, not talking, or distracting others. These situations require a facilitator to deal with them in a creative way, which requires experiences. I must admit that I do not have much experience in facilitating group dialogue. Perhaps my inexperience helped group members themselves to learn from this kind of difficult situation. The situation was seen as an opportunity to grow and realize how people come from different perspectives and ways of expressing themselves. What is important is to be respectful of others' actions and words and to understand why s/he is talking too much. In the meeting, one person had a tendency to comment a lot and often share her experiences. She was the most talkative but her talk was often personal and not necessarily relevant to the situation. For example, in the red stage when we were trying to create a vision statement from 13 cards, she started to construct sentences on her own and announce it to group. No one responded to her, and it was felt that her behavior was not welcome. Rather than counteracting her behavior, I found what works best is silence and nodding. It is not ignoring. It is a sign of humbly denying. Moreover, a facilitator needs to "read air." I found that facilitation in this process requires a lot of patience and giving enough time for participants to think. Also, for this organization, one of the facilitator's roles was to build a capacity in which participants could raise questions in a safe environment. Prior relationships built among participants and the facilitator made it easier to create a safe and comfortable environment in which all could express their opinions.

Chapter 5: Synthesis and Conclusion

5.1 Recapturing the Importance of Promoting Dialogue and Capacity Building

In Japan, urbanization and economic development have emphasized individuality, consequently dispersing the relationships of family and community. Many sad incidents in Japan, such *as ore ore sagi, oyaji gari,* and *hikikomori* are the unintended consequences of a social path that has prioritized economic prosperity. The rise of civil society in Japan reveals the importance of thinking beyond one size fits all solution or short-term remedy, and imagining small but significant individual changes that people initiate to overcome these challenges.

A new paradigm in planning theory, communicative action planning and other similar concepts have provided a vital focus on the importance of communication or inclusive participation that recognizes stakeholders in the planning process. Community development and organizational learning theories articulate the importance of acknowledging individual potential and building upon that potential. By building upon this collective wisdom, approaches such as organizational learning and appreciative inquiry were theorized and practiced.

In this paper, the visioning and action planning of 000 Global Univer-City was done by recognizing it as the learning organization. An appreciative inquiry approach gave insight towards designing a model which is culturally appropriate for the Japanese organization.

5.2 Disciplines of Leaning Organization

Here, I refer to the five disciplines of learning organization, in reflecting on the process and outcome of the retreat. Personal mastery is "the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing on our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively" (Senge 1990:7). The practice of personal mastery constitutes a continual, life-long endeavor for individuals. Like meditation, it is not something that can be taught, but it has to come from within. In the Global Univer-City, 000 is the ultimate pure and genuine mind-spirit-heart. Members of 000 keep in mind to see the reality without subjective ego, desire, or self-interest, but focuses on what is good for the whole. One of the participants offered feedback, reflecting that the retreat reminded her of the importance of learning in everyday life. Personal mastery is not something that is done in a two-day retreat. Rather it comes from experiences that people encounter in everyday life. Participants know this truth and accept the personal responsibility of seeking learning opportunities in order to move forward in their lives (Giesecke & McNeil, 2004).

A mental model is similar to the self-image which Bohm speaks about. While communicating with others, it is one's mental model or self-image that a person reflects and upon which one bases an opinion. One needs to be aware of assumptions when communicating with others. I thought this discipline could be related to the five principles of AI. The AI principles are the re-manifestation of the fact that mind-spirit-heart affect how we behave. Thus, having a positive image of self and envisioning hopes and dreams enables people to change outcomes. Moreover, 000 Global Univer-City acts under the principle that positive images not only affect one's behavior but impact people within one's community. Thus, learning and the growth of an individual are possible acts that can change surrounding entities.

It was based on this attitude and beliefs about personal mastery and mental model that this retreat was conducted. The other three disciplines were covered during the retreat. Shared vision was built in the red stage. Through dialogue and using cards, we were able to create a vision statement which satisfied all the participants. The breakthrough moment is well conveyed by: "Our great creativity and diversity, our desire for contribution and relationship, blossom when the heart of our community is clear and beckoning" (Wheatley and Kellner-Rogers, 1998).

The discipline of team learning starts with dialogue. Each individual learns and grows from relationships with other members. Sometimes, individuals may not realize their own potential or capacity. Interaction with others may stimulate people to learn and acquire new skills. In the white stage, staff was able to see the possibility of team learning by working in a team of common interest. In System Thinking, one looks at the bigger picture. This was done in the blue stage. Connecting points and seeing the relationship between each point made us aware of the individual relationship to the whole.

Thus, by developing a shared vision and promoting group and individual learning, the organization nurtured staff who are committed to finding mental models and promoting systems of thinking that can help unlock individual creativity, enable staff to move past perceived barriers, and assist everyone in embracing and creating positive change.

5.3 Responses to Research Questions

How to shift the conversation from unproductive discussion to meaningful dialogue?

The process of the retreat was designed in response to unproductive discussion that occurred in the organizational meeting of July 2007. Dialogue, not discussion, was necessary as it generates these assets:

- Greater levels of authenticity
- Better decisions
- Improved morale and alignment forming around shared work

(Ellinor and Gerard, 1998: 18)

In order to have dialogue, setting clear objectives and an agenda were very important so that participants involved in visioning and action planning could have common expectations and be prepared. A series of consultations with participants were held to decide the agenda and process. Thus, the process of creating meaningful dialogue was already initiated prior to the actual retreat. Involvement of participants in the designing stage is a vital step to shift conversation from discussion into dialogue.

During the process, the authenticity of dialogic discourse was aimed for by creating and sustaining a "living mutual relation" that enabled all participants to share a common space or a community of creative possibilities (Jenlink and Banathy, 2005: 6). This is probably easier to achieve within an established organization as members share collective memories and experiences and are gathered around an organizational mission. Nevertheless, the staff had certain expectations and personal visions of what they wanted to see in the organization. Legitimization of personal vision was done prior to making shared vision, without judgment or prioritization. The fact that this was executed in the prior stage and separated from the stage which created a shared vision perhaps increased the space for mutual relations, especially as participants clearly delineated the different stages and knew this one was to create vision collectively rather than emphasizing individual viewpoints.

Issacs (1999) discusses the importance of authenticity of dialogue in achieving collaboration despite different interests (Innes and Booher, 37). Innes and Booher identified four categories that gauge the immediate results, which authentic dialogue among diverse and interdependent stakeholders can produce: reciprocity, relationships, learning, and creativity (Innes and Booher, 42). Let me reflect on the immediate outcomes of the retreat referring to these four factors:

Reciprocity: As a result of decisions made during the white stage, core staff work in a polycentric network. Each staff started to see a mutual responsibility in their work. Prompt work and

responses were happened among core staff, even though they live apart. In a horizontal network, no one is held responsible or to be depended upon.

Relationships: As a result of the retreat, participants could discover and develop different relationships with others. Rather than being tolerant of a person who is different, people tried to discover a good side to a person. People are different. Irritation is a source of miscommunication and misunderstanding. Change in consciousness requires a slight change of perspective.

Learning: At the heart of dialogue is learning. Learning occurred as participants engaged in visioning and action planning and started to see the commonality and differences between perspectives. Capacity building is also expected as staff are now in an operational team that exchanges ideas and skills to enable specific and concrete operation for the NPO. Organization members continue to learn from their experiences.

Creativity: Creating a vision statement together requires creativity. Work requires staff creativity to make the NPO operation able to accommodate change. For example, the accounting job was made more flexible as one director in Tokyo offered a petty cash, so that staff don't have to wait to be reimbursed, especially since they can sometimes forget to hand in receipts, which delays the process.

What are useful specific tools and components for facilitating meaningful dialogue?

Useful specific tools in this process were index cards, paper, pens, and visual cues that were used in visioning, system thinking, and calendar making. Specific components that were essential to meaningful dialogue were preparation beforehand, willingness to engage, commitment to work together, co-creation of shared vision, and deliberative facilitation. Preparation and planning were essential. In order to do so, the willingness and commitment of participants to engage in the process were vital. Visioning has enormous bonding power among people as it creates shared hope. Finally, the facilitator should keep in mind that the process is done communally and thus she needs to be mindful of her own assumptions and values in preparing and implementing the process.

What needs to be considered in transforming Western practices to Japanese contexts?

The opinions of participants must be reflected on when using unfamiliar concepts in practices. In this case, participants were not comfortable adapting Western practices directly. Thus, creative adaptation was done by respecting what is already available in the Japanese

cultural context. Thus, the idea to use *ki-sho-ten-ketsu* concepts was effective in the meeting, especially as participants were familiar with and clear about what each step represents. It is important to appreciate the virtue of traditional culture. Creativity and flexibility seem vital assets in adapting change and transforming viewpoints.

5.4 Implications to Other Setting

The process described above may be applicable to other settings by using those useful tools and components described above. But every process is different. The design and process of visioning and action planning must be done through careful consultation with participants. In any type of organization or culture, I believe these three points are vital:

1. Commitment of participants to work together to fulfill goals and objectives;

People only change when they want to change not because they are told to change. Without the intention of a participant, it is hard to have meaningful dialogue that fulfills goal and objectives.

2. Preparation beforehand;

Preparation is vital in any type of process. The amount of energy and time spent should amount to more than the actual implementation. Sound preparation and information sharing allows participants to be on the same page and clarify the goals and expected outcomes of the meeting.

3. Relationship between facilitator and participants;

One of consideration for this kind of two-day intensive meeting is that a facilitator needs to be familiar with the protocols and norms of organization. Trust is needed not only among participants but also between a facilitator and participants.

A limitation to the methodology used for this process is that such a retreat requires two days. This can be costly in term of time and money. However, sleeping and eating together are essential to transforming relationships.

Another limitation to the methodology is that it is an ongoing process and evaluation is only meaningful through the lens of individuals. The learning process has no end. The retreat was just a catalyst for the process of organizational learning.

5.5 Cross Cultural Setting

In Japan, after Meiji restoration, the government strove to adapt Western culture. One famous symbol of Westernization in Japan is *rokumeikan* (the western dance hall) built in 1883. The government established it as a way to assert its political status by changing culture (clothes, rituals, and social functions); this act attempted to challenge accusations that Japanese culture was barbaric. This mode of adaptation or assimilation of culture is still occurring. In this globalized world, there is a vast influx of Western concepts and terms into Japan. This is not only the case in Japan. Globalization impacts all corners of the globe. The world has become much smaller, and cities around the globe look more alike than ever before. Accordingly, indigenous cultures tend to change and adapt to the culture of a stronger economy. However, it is possible to think that cultural encounters can result in a creative fusion or hybridization. The bottom line is that culture is never static; it changes through encountering new ideas. Revitalization of traditional culture is vital but it must fit the changes of time. There is no prescription for a balanced solution, but in terms of participatory planning, each one should decide what is appropriate. Having an open mind and broad perspective of the world are important assets to work in cross cultural settings.

Thus, neither preservation of tradition nor complete assimilation of culture is valuable or possible; rather, it is best to work with valuable aspects of both tradition and of new concepts. The process of adaptation will be different depending on the indigenous culture and context of an issue. However, a planner who engages in participatory planning in a cross cultural setting should keep in mind the concept of "cultural translation" (Umemoto, 2002). Whether in one culture or another, there may be similar concepts that are expressed in different ways. Acknowledge emerging issues as opportunities and use language, which fits the culture in which one is working. It is best if a planner knows both cultures, but if not, she should ask someone close to her to be a cultural translator. The field of resonance differs depending on culture. As a cultural translator, a planner can translate new concepts developed in the West into, in this case, Japanese culture.

This meeting was done in a Japanese cultural context. Although participants shared the same language and some customs, people are different. In the feedback, one of the staff noted that, "In order to co-create a vision statement with 13 staff, what is important is to first truly accept the differences. Then, learn how to deal with distortion or resistance in myself, which

becomes clear through interacting with people. It is a challenging endeavor, but I enjoy learning it in everyday life." I think this is what is needed in a cross cultural setting that faces diversity.

When encountering someone from a different culture, we learn from each other and the relationship is reciprocal; it should not be affected by economic or political power differences. Thus, not only a planner, but any person who is working in a cross cultural setting has to respect and acknowledge the vernacular and uniqueness of a culture. The attitude of the cross cultural translator or cultural bridge agent must be nurturing to provide the opportunity for people to broaden their perspectives. Economic and social systems may foster ranking, but at the personal level to promote dialogue, we do not need to judge or criticize. When opposites meet in humble recognition of each other without judgment, it works out so simply.

5.6 Lessons Learned from Visioning Retreat

After the retreat, I was filled with joy and satisfaction. Fresh energy and new relationships were born in the organization. Relationships were deepened and transformed. An exchange of ideas and learning has continued among members. The retreat was a trigger that has encouraged the generative and creative capacities of individuals.

In retrospect, I realize that everything was meaningful. Even difficult situations created momentum for change. The prior meeting in July 2007, although it was not productive, offered me important lessons and was a learning experience. Among the many lessons that I learned, the most important realization was the significance of the consciousness or intention of the convener, designer, or facilitator. The commitment and attitude of the facilitator affects the energy of the meeting. From the conceptualization of this retreat, I imaged a successful and vibrant meeting. I expected everyone to feel satisfaction and say, "I am glad to be here." I think this hope was what motivated me to commit to creating the retreat. The commitment comes from *hara* (guts), the center of the body from where intuition comes. It is important to concentrate energy there and align myself. In doing so, I could be calm and stable without being influenced by negative comments and energy.

From this experience, I have been inspired that vision can create positive energy with which we can work together for the future. My dream is to co-create a visioning process with many communities, especially with people living in communities labeled as *genkai shuraku* (marginal community, where more than 50% of community members are 65 years and older). People in *genkai shuraku* think there is no future for their community because young people are

leaving to cities. I cannot forget when a grandmother in a *genkai shuraku* told me, "Please don't forget about us." By co-creating visioning, we can construct meaning to our being and create the future together.

5.7 Conclusion

In Japan, the rise of non-profit organizations has occurred since they were legitimized in 1998. Under the current social system, a non-profit organization is the easiest and most effective entity to gather committed individuals to engage in dialogue and envision meaningful action to take. Inspiration can be sparked by a small group of people.

Recognizing differences in communication styles between Japan as compared to those in the West, this AOC documented design, process, and reflection. We can learn many new concepts developed elsewhere. Participatory planning is a widely discussed approach in Western planning and political science disciplines. The importance of cultural sensitivity and translation were emphasized in the cross cultural transformation of these concepts in Japan.

Organizational learning cannot be processed without experience. People need to be open to differences and willing to co-create together. Astute deliberative practice (Forester, 1999:1) in which learners gain understanding about what we should do as well as about what we can do is vital for transformative experience that can increase people's capacity.

If dialogue is a means of working together toward the future, visioning is the process of envisioning the future together. Vision gives meaning to being. By visioning our future, we think through the reasons for our actions and motivate ourselves to overcome challenges.

Each core staff continues her/his journey, and when they meet again, they will remember this meeting and may laugh at what they wrote on the Dream Whale. The feedback from participants was positive and inspiring. Members became clearer on what the organization does and who is responsible. Young staff has embraced leadership and taken initiative.

Action follows visioning. Moving forward to the next step, young core staff initiated operations. One of the young core staff took the initiative to create a flier to report to other members in organization (Appendix B). Another staff living in Sendai volunteered to visit the former secretary in Osaka to thank him for the past work and take over the documents and files. Yet another staff started to redesign a website page, and now the homepage is renewed (www.0-000.net/global_u). In March 2008, as a follow up to the core staff meeting, three young core staff and one director came to Hawai`i. The aim of their visit was to learn who they are through

experiences and to interact with people from diverse cultures. True exchange began with Papakolea. The organization continues to dialogue "to learn the essence of being on Earth."

Figure 12: Exchange with Papakolea

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Appendices

Appendix A: Agenda of 000 Global Univer-City Retreat (Core Staff Meeting)

Appendix B: Core Staff Meeting Report

Appendix A:

NPO 000 Global Univer-City Core Staff Meeting

Time: January 4-6, 2008
Place: PLENUM TIME SPACE, Ohshima Island, Tokyo
Participant: 10 core staff and 3 board members

Purpose:

- Create vision statement and decide operational activities for the organization
- Clarify difference between individual and organizational activities
- Build relationship among core staff and directors.

Dimension:
Based on 起承転結 (1. construction and order, 2. the four-part structure of Chinese/Japanese poetry: introduction, development, turn, and conclusion)

- **起: Initiation**
- **承: Refinement**
- **転: Shift**
- **結: Organizing**

Preparation:
Think what is universally sustainable and effective action as the NPO Global Univer-City and write down what you feel from the deep inside in a memo and please bring it with you.

Agenda:

January 4th

Board meeting
Prepare a community ball
Draw Vision Map background

January 5th

GREEN / 000 15:00 – 16:00
Self introduction (ice break)
Create vision map based on what people prepared on their own.

RED / Initiation: 15:00 – 17:00
Create vision statement by brainstorming keywords

WHITE / Refinement 17:30 - 19:00
Identify types of activities organization should perform based on vision statement
Decide responsibility for each core staff

Dinner

January 6th

Breakfast

BLUE / Shift 8:00 – 9:30
Utilize BE system model for organization activities

YELLOW / Organizing 10:00 – 11:00
Plan dates and activities

Lunch

GREEN / 000 13:00 – 14:00
Share thoughts and feedback

Appendix B:

０００地球大学・コア スタッフミーティング

in OHSHIMA PLENUM TIME SPACE

08年1月5~6日に行なわれた
コアスタッフミーティングの様子を
簡単にお伝え致します。

０００プラネットの森早里香さんが
ボランティアで食事作りを協力して
くださいました。おかげさまで、の
びのびと交流することができました。

PLENUM TIME SPACE にて、
左上から田中ひとみ、松川紐子、清水美衣、畑永淳子森由里香、佐藤ひとみ、長田久史
左下から増田紀子、畑永佑奈、三浦裕美子、佐渡真子、田中善、(田中善一)

04 夢のクジラ準備

コアスタッフの決意を載せる、夢のクジラの下準備。
０００地球大学、Yumeの文字を
由里香さんと三浦さんが書いてくれました。

プレナムボールづくり

05

まきまきまきまき・・・
みんなの夢、願いが込められ
一体どんなボールができあがるのか？
・・・おたのしみ！

06

BE モデルの活用

BE モデルを活用しながら、席の日決まった新体制の
活動をデザインしていきました。

０００意識合わせ

プレナムボール登場！

なぜコアスタッフになったんだろう？？？
具体的な話し合いに向けて
意識合わせをしました。

わっしょい！
わっしょい！

夢を載せておよぐクジラ～♪

2009年 UA NOA に向けて
コアスタッフ一同、よろしくおねがいします！