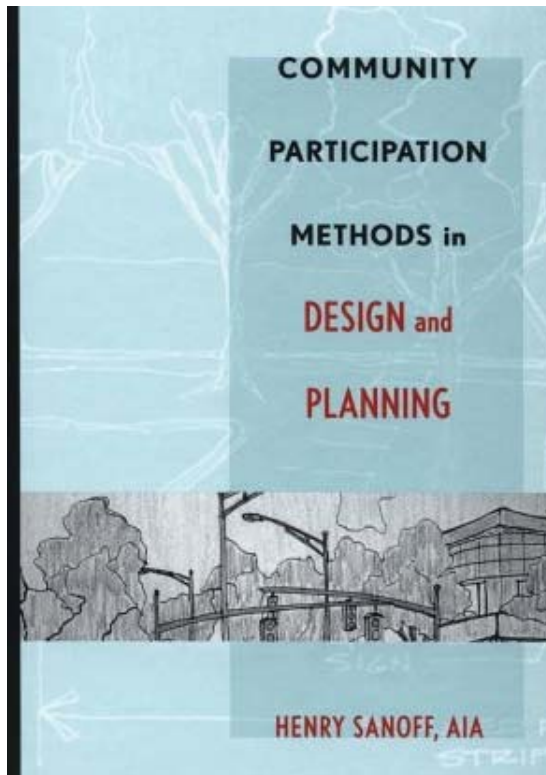


Book Review: COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION METHODS IN DESIGN AND PLANNING by HENRY SANOFF

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This is yet another excellent resource book on community participation methods that has over 200 citations in academic research work. In his Book Community Participation methods in Design and Planning Henry Sanoff presents a ground breaking guide to community design and participation, a discipline under increasing demand from all sides and all those concerned with design and planning each for his/her own purpose and in fact in his/her own stipulations. Sanoff draws upon his leading international experience and those of his colleagues and previous students worldwide to provide indisputable tools and techniques for bringing community members into the design process constructively.

Sanoff's Community Participation methods in Design and Planning addresses the fact that all over the world there is increasing demand from all sides for more local involvement in the planning and management of the environment. He argues that it is widely recognised that this is the only way that people will get the surroundings they want, and if they do get it they will know how to sustain it. Sanoff employs methods and techniques of users participation

that he believes is now seen as the best way of ensuring that communities become safer, stronger, wealthier and more sustainable.

Sanoff affirms that community participation lies right at the heart of sustainable development. Sustainable communities will take different forms from place to place, but one thing that none of them will be able to do without is a broad and deep level of community participation. On the other hand he asserts community participation as a vehicle through which we can hope to re-engage people with their community and with society to create healthier and safer places for the people to live in.

Starting by defining participation on different levels Sanoff explains clearly its categories, principles, rewards, values and consequences. In the first chapter he considers the other side of this argument and states 'there is a danger that the entire process turns out to reflect the aphorism that a camel is a horse designed by committee. Everything is likely to end up with a compromise.' He then frankly take up the fact that people can be reasonable, in light of the information presented to them in a way that help them see how the overall scheme fits into their own vision. One should note his criticism when he then states, "In fact, the camel is an apt metaphor, as it is a unique animal capable of accommodating severe climatic conditions as a result of its unique design."

He follows these arguments by answering questions like how should it be done? How can local people – wherever they live – best involve themselves in the complexities of architecture, planning and urban design? How can professional's best build on local knowledge and resources? In his book he presents a wide

range of methods that has been pioneered in different countries. The case studies presented include new ways of people interacting, new types of event, new types of organisation, new services, participatory games and new support frameworks.

Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning is divided into five chapters that features: * Fifteen case studies chronicling community design projects around the world * Coverage of educational facilities, housing, and urban and rural environments * Design Games-a proven, culture-neutral approach to educating participants in their design options and the consequences of their choices * Proven techniques for fostering community participation in the design process * Checklists, worksheets, questionnaires, and other valuable tools. The chapters from 3 to 5 depict examples based on Sanoff's experience as an architectural design consultant to the Adam Group Architects, as a consultant to public agencies and volunteer group in Japan and Australia, and for three decades as Director of the Community Development Group (CDG) at the School of Design, North Carolina State University.

Chapter 1, 'Participation Purposes', examines community participation from a historical perspective and discusses differing viewpoints. It asserts who should participate and on what basis does participation takes place, the stages and categories of participation, and the values and consequences of participation. Chapter 2, 'Participation Methods', avows that participation in community issues lay serious demands and responsibilities on participants, and requires skilled professional assistance. The chapter discusses the strategic planning,

goal setting and visioning processes that needs to take place during participation processes. It examines and analyzes processes and techniques drawn from the experiences of a variety of professional designers, planners and researchers. It examines some successful models drawn in the United States and abroad.

'Participation in Educational Facilities' Chapter 3 starts with a conspicuous quote for 'Sir Denys Lasdun, "Process of Continual Cooperation", the Times (London), June 1961.' This chapter presents six different case studies with different valuable participation processes and techniques varying between charrette processes, self assessment, focus groups, game simulation, group interaction and others. The chapter concludes with the value of Design Games, namely School Participatory games, and how it helps in establishing a dialogue between teachers, students, parents, administrators, and designers in the process of creating a new school or renovating an existing one. Chapter 4, 'Participation in Housing', emphasises the crucial role participation plays in housing projects, and addresses the issue that when people are in control over decisions of their housing, the process and product will enhance their social well being. The chapter examines participatory housing examples from all over the world, and ends with a very interesting part on Housing games and model making in house games.

'Participation in Urban and Rural Environments', Chapter 5 the last chapter of this book which is full of wealthy examples and case studies from all over the world of participation in urban and rural environments. Sanoff draws upon examples from America and abroad that have

demonstrated that it is possible to build housing that people want to live in, to give people a sense of pride and reinforce their identity with their local community, to build needed social facilities, and to develop neighbourhoods and small towns that enrich people's lives by being responsive to their needs and aspirations. The chapter commences with the fact that traditional approaches to urban and neighbourhood development were based on the master planning model, whereby policies and action strategies were linked to physical information, such as land use and building condition. This was recently replaced by a goal placed planning model, in which policies and actions are derived from social as well as physical information (e.g., client-user goals, census data, and demographic factors). I very much agree with this approach and do hope that today designers and planners all over the world assents this approach. In this chapter Sanoff compares planning of big cities to small towns and the large differences between the two approaches. He relates the current interest in small towns to be associated with a concern for what are believed to be more manageable scales of human activity. He then discusses the SWOT Analysis- strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats- within a community, and identifies the information needed in a neighbourhood or small town planning process to be categorized as physical, social or economic. He takes it from there to examining some of the successful participation housing projects in America, Australia and abroad. Sanoff come to a closing stage of this chapter and his very useful, worthy of note book with some significant urban participatory games.

The only thing that can be taken against this

book is the quality of the images which are sometimes too small to be readable or to easily identify its texts. Though, this deficiency has not hindered the fact that it is still an excellent guide that provides a solid ground for community design and participation.

This book provides an overview of new methods of community participation and planning. It is aimed at everyone concerned with the built environment. Jargon is avoided and material is well analysed and presented in a universally applicable, how-to-do-it style. Whether you are a resident wanting to improve the place where you live, a policy maker interested in improving general practice, or a designer, development professional working on a specific project, you should quickly be able to find what you need.

Undoubtedly, the methods of community participation described in the book can each be effective in their own right. But it is when they are combined together creatively that community planning becomes a truly powerful force for positive and sustainable change. Community Design is a design and planning management theory whereby the community or client is actively involved and brought into the design process. This book examines community participation, providing case studies that illustrate how each principle and method is applied and executed. *Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning* by Henry Sanoff is an indispensable working resource for urban designers and planners, architects, and landscape architects. It is also an excellent resource for policy makers or students of those disciplines.

Henry Sanoff

*Henry Sanoff received a Bachelor of Architecture in 1957 and a Master of Architecture in 1962 from Pratt Institute, New York. He came to the College of Design, North Carolina State University in 1966 from the University of California, Berkeley, where he was an Assistant Professor from 1963. A member of the Academy of Outstanding Teachers, award winner as Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor, and a recipient of the Alexander Quarles Holladay Medal of Excellence, Sanoff has been a visiting professor at more than 85 institutions in the USA and abroad including Australia, Egypt, Brazil, South Africa, Denmark and Mexico. He won many awards including the Statue of Victory World Culture Prize for Letters, Arts, and Science; awards from Progressive Architecture Design Awards Program; and the Award of Honor, and Distinguished Service Award from the Environmental Design Research Association. He received the Sigma Iota Rho Award for Distinguished International Service and the NCSU Outstanding Extension Service Award. Sanoff is the USA editor of the International Journal of Design Studies, a member of the Editorial Board of the Journal of Architecture and Planning Research, and the Istanbul Technical University, Journal of Architecture, Planning and Design. Sanoff is widely published and well known for his many books—including *Community Participation in Design and Planning* (Wiley, 2000) and *Creating Environments for Young Children* (NEA, 1995) among others. Many of his works have been translated into Korean, Japanese, Spanish, Polish and Portuguese languages. He is the principal founder of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA). He can be contacted at hsanoff@bellsouth.net*