

This new heading will be used in future issues to group together certain proposals of which we are informed and which we believe merit a wider audience. The criteria for inclusion or exclusion of proposals will be refined as our experience in evaluating them increases. At this point we recognize that it is **not** useful to include :

- (a) proposals which are basically similar to others already implemented;
- (b) proposals without multiplier effects, whose relevance is basically limited to a particular context, whether geographical or otherwise;
- (c) proposals whose implementation is unlikely in the light of any of the **Limits to Human Potential** identified in earlier issues of this periodical (1976, 10, pp. 444-446; 1977, 4, pp. 147-151);
- (d) proposals which are impractical, utopian, or for which resources are not available for reasons we believe to be valid.

We will « bend » these exclusion criteria whenever necessary to include proposals which we believe to be exceptionally interesting, even if they are somewhat speculative or simply highly amusing (for such creative flights of fantasy may stimulate more realistic proposals). The latter will only be described briefly however.

Readers are encouraged to send us documents containing proposals, or to submit such proposals in writing. The source of the proposal will be indicated or not as appropriate.

This section reflects the concern of the Union of International Associations, Mankind 2000, and the International Foundation for Social Innovation to provide a channel for a positive response to the issues raised by the **Yearbook of World Problems and Human Potential** and the **Limits to Human Potential** (mentioned above).

## 1: Facilitating group formation

*Although this proposal for a large-scale small-group development process does not deal directly with transnational associations, it does suggest a process which would result in a considerable increase in group and association activity at the local, city or national level. Given that such activity could be stimulated in different countries, there would clearly be an « overflow » into transnational activity and the formation of transnational groups. Another reason for including this proposal is that there is a widespread tendency to assume that associations exist to conduct programmes of one kind or another and that therein lies their significance, if any. But it is also possible to perceive group formation as an integral feature of social development, irrespective of the activities which such groups undertake. In this respect the existence of associations and the formation of groups are social phenomena worthy of consideration in their own right, whether or not they are « recognized » as being « of public utility » in terms of particular legislation, and whether or not they are evaluated as being « effective » or as having « political impact » by political scientists, specialists in international relations, or the governmental agencies whose thinking they may influence.*

### Introduction

It will be assumed that the readers of this proposal have information enabling them to accept the following points without substantiating arguments :

1. Individuals in society are increasingly isolated in terms of meaningful inter-personal interaction despite the extensive development of communications of every kind.  
It is therefore appropriate to consider processes whereby such interaction could be facilitated or catalyzed.
2. The manner in which individuals are isolated in society is such that they tend to form links amongst people with similar backgrounds, situations or goals thus depriving themselves of meaningful exposure to individuals with different world-views with whom interaction may be mutually beneficial and richer in other ways.  
It is therefore appropriate to consider processes whereby adequate mixing (randomization) could occur but balanced by some measure of selectivity.
3. Society is so structured that new inter-personal interaction may well be perceived as a threat to existing relationships between people.  
It is therefore appropriate to consider processes which provide some measure of protection for existing relationships whilst allowing new relationships to develop.

4. Small groups (of approximately 7-15 people) tend to provide the context within which new degrees of inter-personal interaction are explored.

It is therefore appropriate to consider processes which increase awareness on the part of group participants of the dynamics and structure of the group.

5. The increasing complexity of society demands of individuals an increased ability to respond appropriately to that complexity rather than closing themselves off from it.

It is therefore appropriate to consider processes which help people to increase their ability to handle social complexity, particularly within and with the support of a group.

6. In the face of the wide range of social problems each individual feels increasingly unable to undertake any remedial or compensatory action of any significance — particularly when the experts disagree on the course of action which should be taken and when political or governmental action appears to be of questionable value.

It is therefore appropriate to consider processes which facilitate the emergence of groups whose own dynamics lead, if appropriate and desired, to the formulation of goals and to the implementation of projects — namely to the emergence of self-motivated and self-aware groups progressively better able to evaluate the utility and value of their own activities.

7. Whilst it is possible to develop and implement small scale (laboratory) experiments to respond to the conditions identified above, the value of such exercises is limited unless they have built-in characteristics which make it possible to use them on a large scale.

It is therefore appropriate to consider processes which are largely self-energizing, which do not require a large investment, and which are desired by, rather than imposed upon, those for whom they are conceived. They should have widespread appeal (with a built in « snow-ball » effect) in order to be of significance at this time.

8. It is a characteristic of the times that any such process is immediately suspect, and therefore of questionable value, if it is perceived as constituting an imposition upon those involved, or as a form of « programming ».

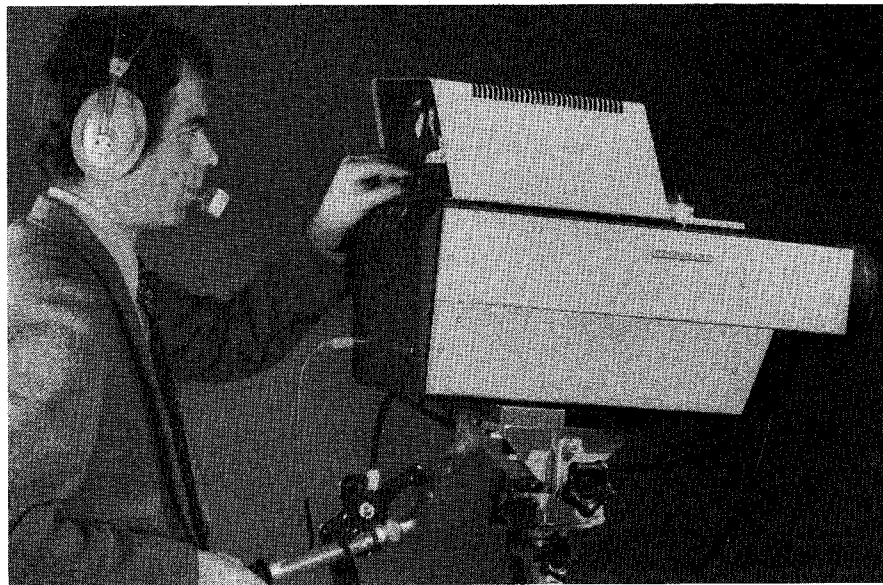
It is therefore appropriate to consider processes in which what must necessarily be imposed (for there to be the minimal structure for the organization of the process) should have the characteristics of the rules or regulations of a new social game. The content of that game is what emerges from the interactions in which the individuals engage.

Meanwhile, the entire conference was being recorded on video-tape and the committees were being recorded on sound-tape gavel to gavel for rebroadcasting and for archival purposes. Throughout the main conference areas there were monitors on which everything was projected live. In one special building, the Media Centre, it was possible to watch the proceedings of the official and the non-governmental conference (some miles distant) on large screens and to choose between several languages. Every single site used by the conference in Vancouver was fitted with monitors on which the official information channel was displayed; this provided in alphanumeric and animated form non-stop news on what was happening where — again, in three languages. Urgent messages from delegates could be fed into the information channel and relayed to other delegates throughout the city.

One of the city's permanent cable channels was turned over to the conference and designated Habitat Channel. It started at dawn and ran throughout the day and delegates, press and all citizens of Vancouver and the surrounding areas could watch it on their own TV sets. On it, a team of professional TV journalists provided day-long coverage and analysis of the proceedings of both conferences, with bulletins, extracts from debates, interviews and discussions. The Habitat Channel also provided the invaluable service of presenting for a few hours very early every morning all the full-length films submitted by the delegations as their principal « projects ». In addition, in a large hall behind the main plenary, all these full-length films were shown end to end in a vast Film Festival with publicly announced schedules, which as in itself a very considerable feat of organisation (since films were continuing to arrive in delegates' baggage, up to three months after the final « deadline »).

The most important facility, and the most remarkable, was known as the Project Presentation Centre. This was situated in a ballroom of one of the main Vancouver hotels which was also housing one of the conference's three main committees. It consisted of thirty small booths or small viewing theatres. Any delegate or pressman could go to a desk at the entrance and ask to see a film, quoting its number from the conference catalogue, together with the language of his choice (six, including Chinese). Within two minutes the film would be running on a small TV screen in the chosen booth. Altogether there was the possibility of choosing from 2,500 cassettes.

In fact, during the conference there was the possibility of no fewer than 12,000 separate showings of individual full-length films. Any delegate could choose up to three cassettes at a time. In practice, this facility was used at slightly less than half its full capacity. As the conference wore on, delegates



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became inevitably involved in the procedural wrangles which beset the conference at the diplomatic level, and little time could be spared for developing individual interests in the « solutions » of other countries.

A small team, including the present writer, produced an evaluative report on this novel and technically complex audio-visual experiment. It was obvious that many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people had benefited from the presence of the films, although in many cases the capsules lost their impact within the debate itself through the inability of delegates to make proper use of their material. In many cases, the films had been prepared without adequate liaison between the diplomatic and the cinematic experts concerned. In other cases, the subjects of the films had been chosen months before governments had decided the topics on which their delegates were to make their major spoken contributions. The sheer cost in money terms of the audio-visual displays (perhaps 80 million dollars in all) was perhaps not worth the actual results, although a permanent library of the Habitat materials is now under construction largely at the expense of the Canadian Government.

All the « side effects » and accidental results of the audio-visual component, however, turned out to be highly beneficial. Films were made in countries which had never made films before. Small groups of people in many African and Asian countries had their appetites for film-making whetted by the experience. A Task Force had been set up months before the conference to help dozens of countries organise and make their films, and seminars had been held in three regional centres to perform miracles of « instant training ». The principle criterion of effectiveness must remain whether this enormous audio-visual event succeeded in changing the nature of the diplomatic event; whether Habitat as an international conference was obliged by the existence

of the films to address itself to practical rather than rhetorical ends. The answer to this must, alas, be negative. Many lessons were indeed learned about how films could be used in future diplomatic gatherings. There should be a few extremely good films rather than several hundred of varying quality and these should be publicised in such a way that delegates feel obliged to see them all and therefore share among themselves the special information provided by the audiovisual. There also needs to be more thinking about the after-use of films produced as a result of an enormous expenditure of psychic energy as well as cash. Whose property are they? Where will they be seen? What impact will they have? What activities should be built around them? What rights can be made quickly available to facilitate rebroadcasting by television stations all over the world?

Anyone who tries to construct an audio-visual component within a future international conference should be reminded of one statistic. In the days before Habitat roughly eleven thousand pieces of celluloid — films, negatives, sound tracks, translations, capsules, cassettes — were moving around Vancouver, between airports, hotels, conference sites, to the Film Festival, two conferences, broadcasting installations. These materials had, almost inescapably because of their role within an inter-government conferences to be handled by scores of people with no previous experience of working together or of working with such materials. It requires organisational genius to cope with such problems and it is hardly worth embarking on the project unless there is a very clear felt need for it to take place and to succeed. It is worth dealing with such problems if the rewards are clear; it is simply frustrating if one stumbles into the problem by accident, and there is no clear end in view. ■

(\*) « Television Producer and Writer on Media Affairs ».

## Proposal

A process with the characteristics identified above could be initiated in one or more cities as follows :

1. Establishment of a small secretariat (possibly on a part-time basis not requiring rental of office space) with a post office box address (in the first instance).
2. Use of small (low-cost) advertisements in newspapers and periodicals inviting people to write for further information.
3. Provision to respondents of a minimum of documentation explaining the game process and a specially designed questionnaire.
4. Analysis (by hand or by computer) of responses in order to determine how best to involve the person in the process (in exchange for a fee to cover expenses).

The process envisaged is as follows :

1. Individuals writing in for the first time would be allocated (on the basis of the analysis) to the most appropriate group of 7-15 people.
2. The purpose of the questionnaire analysis is to recommend the most appropriate members for each group (however many groups need to be constituted to accommodate those applying).
3. The purpose of the analysis is only to set up an **initial** membership for the group on the basis of criteria which gradually emerge as useful. (The individual may even specify which criteria he wants to be taken into consideration from none at all through to an attempt at a very selective match.)
4. Once a group membership is determined, members are invited by the secretariat to their initial meeting at some suitable time and in a suitably neutral place (both could be partially determined by the responses to the questionnaire). This could, for example, be a restaurant private room or a hotel small-meeting room. Since the whole process is supposed to be self-energizing and self-controlling, no representative of the secretariat need necessarily be present to receive people (although this may be a preference indicated by the individual).
5. For the people so invited the game process then starts. They may individually decide not to reveal their identities by using pseudonyms. They can engage in any kind of group process that seems appropriate or they can simply chat over drinks, exploring a shared interest.
6. Following such a meeting, the individuals can then privately assess the experience and their willingness to participate in a further meeting. They may anyway decide to do so during their meeting — or at least some may so agree and make appropriate arrangements. This would call for no intervention from the secretariat.
7. Group members can however indicate their assessment on a questionnaire for the secretariat. An individual may thus indicate willingness to participate in a further meeting of the same group :
  - provided one or more identified (by code) individuals continue to participate
  - provided one or more identified (by code) individuals do **not** also participate
  - provided some other time or setting is chosen, etc.Or an individual may indicate the desire to participate in **another** group :
  - starting from scratch
  - provided one or more identified (by code) individuals also participate
  - provided one or more identified (by code) individuals do **not** also participate.
8. The secretariat can then analyze the responses received from all individuals who have participated in meetings of the existing groups using its services (together with individuals applying for the first time) and can invite a new combination of people to the next meeting of each group.

9. Clearly the members of a given group may have all individually indicated to the secretariat that they wished to meet together again, in which case the secretariat merely schedules a new meeting. The value of the secretariat in such cases is to preserve anonymity where desired and to « save face » where one or more individuals are rejected by the other members of the group. For in the latter case the rejected individuals will not know whether the group met again nor will the group know whether in fact it was not the missing individuals who indicated that they did not wish to meet again with those remaining.
10. A particular group may therefore not have any degree of permanence, if ever, until after the first 3 to 5 meetings. For after each meeting, one or more individuals will decide that they prefer not to meet with the others (or the latter will so decide for them). The « group » present at each such early meeting may therefore split into 2, 3, 4 or more subgroups and never meet again as such. It is the role of the secretariat to attempt to match these « grouplets » with other grouplets and individuals in order to help them to experience other group formations.
11. It is not the function of the secretariat to perform the matching process in terms of its own definition of some desirable goal (e.g. stable groups of a certain size). Rather it is up to the individual, in association with those with whom he links in the game process, to define to the secretariat which strategy he wants to pursue in the game (at any one time). He or she may select strategies such as :
  - allocation to group : on an arbitrary (random) basis
    - on a highly selective (deterministic) basis
    - on some intermediate (organic) basis
  - re-allocation to new group after every meeting (« dillettante » strategy)
  - attempt to form a stable group with certain characteristics such as :
    - particular size (7, 8, 9, etc.)
    - particular combination of characteristics (e.g. mix of introverts and extraverts, or intellectually and emotionally oriented persons)
  - attempt to form a stable group with certain definite goals or activities, such as :
    - social action
    - artistic interest
    - value elaboration
    - collective holidays /travel
    - intellectual interest
    - linguistic interest
    - collective meditation
  - or some combination of such activities (e.g. in a meaningful cycle).The individual may wish to combine several such strategies or possibly to participate in several groups on the basis of different strategies (in order to have an experience more complete than he or she is able to achieve within one group).
12. The secretariat may collect information on different strategies that have been tried and propose them to individuals in any documentation provided about the game process. Examples of strategies are given below.
13. Every individual can thus experiment with the group experience in whatever way he finds meaningful. The game process as a whole carries them through any experience which is a partial failure without rejecting them from the game as a whole. At any time they, and the group with which they are associated can break out of the game process and meet as an independent group — using the services of the secretariat only if and whenever required.

### Example of a game strategy (A)

One game strategy that individuals may wish to adopt is to attempt to develop their own participation within a particular group to the point of being able to respond to all other group members individually and simultaneously.

In a normal group situation an individual usually responds to **one person** whilst treating the others as a collectivity to which he responds as to a single entity. At best this results in an « I-Thou » situation with the other members of the group as a supportive context. The ability to respond may however encompass **two people** whilst still treating the remainder as a collectivity. This is clearly more complex and demands a more sophisticated grasp of the situation. This ability may be developed to encompass the interactions with 3, 4 or more people — but at some point the individual will be able to extend it no further. For some, it is already a problem to respond adequately to one, let alone any greater number. The purpose of the game strategy would be to see whether a group could be developed in which each individual could handle interactions with all the others in the group without « collectivizing » those excluded. This would then be a very mature group since each would be very sensitive to the patterns of interactions and to the synergetic implications.

The secretariat would establish the initial group which after a few meetings would have a permanent core of members. The core membership would have to explore progressively their interactions amongst themselves and with newcomers presented by the game process as others dropped out. The challenge for the group would be to determine how much dissonance they could collectively integrate — given that the more diverse the membership the more powerful and mature the group has the potential of being. On the other hand, in **contrast to therapy groups**, the individuals must evaluate :

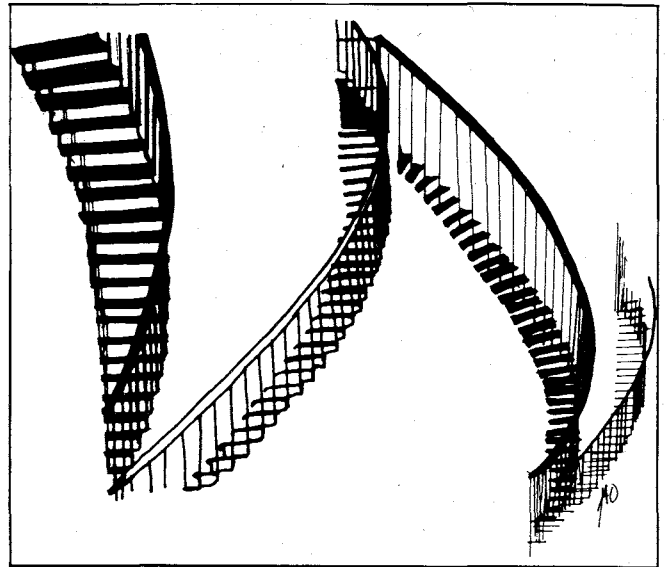
- (i) whether they do not wish to « carry » some people in that group who are apparently holding back the group integration process (in which case the person would be dropped), or
- (ii) whether the group would benefit by engaging in a deliberate therapeutic process to overcome such apparent obstacles to greater integration (if that person's potential contribution seemed important).

This decision process obliges individuals in the group to assess their relationships and functions within the group to work out whether they can work with all existing group members to achieve greater group integration, whether they can only usefully do so if one or more of the others no longer participate, or whether they themselves should opt out of that particular group and request allocation to another group. Groups oriented in this way should be able to develop game processes to test their degree of integration (rather as a juggler may test his proficiency by determining how many balls he can keep moving). Such group games might show up, for example, that one individual could only handle a 2-component relationship, although in working with two others in that group the three of them could manage a 5-component relationship. The challenge would be to explore and play with such possibilities and see what kinds of groups and understandings developed as a result — given that a group could move in any direction it found meaningful.

### Example of a game strategy (B)

Another game strategy with which individuals could experiment is to request allocation to a group on the basis of their personality characteristics in terms of a particular symbol system or classification of personality types with which they are familiar (e.g. the 4 Jungian types, or a 7-type system, or a 12-type system, etc.).

The challenge in such a group would be for each individual to explore (« feel out ») the characteristics of the other members of the group to whom he or she responded (i) positively or negatively, or (ii) sensed some other degree of commonality. Participants could observe the dynamics of the group process in terms of how coalitions formed between representatives of different type on what basis, and how these interacted with other coalitions. They could also observe how representatives of different types contributed to different aspects of the group process.



Using some of the perceptions of the strategy described in the previous example participants could try to move from simple polarity (2-component relationships) to triplicity relationships (3-component), on to quadruplicity relationships (4-component). The challenge would then be to see whether 2, 3 and 4-component relationships could be encompassed and blended within the group in order to interlink all type representatives — and if not, then why not. This challenge is basic to harmony either in small groups or in society at large.

As with the previous strategy, individuals would have to decide (i) whether they could continue to work with all existing group members to achieve integration of all type energies, (ii) whether they could only usefully do so if one or more of the others were replaced, or (iii) whether they themselves should opt out of that particular group and request allocation to another.

Individuals would have to learn to discriminate, in assessing others present, between (i) normal type interactions (e.g. sympathy, antipathy) and (ii) interactions due to the excessive type energy of a particular person probably containable by the group, and (iii) interactions due to the excessive type energy of a particular person probably uncontainable by the group. The group would function as a filtering mechanism to select a range of participants in the greatest degree of harmony. (Whether any such group achieved harmony because strong representatives of a particular range of types had been excluded would be the group's problem and choice. A group might even be constituted of 12 people of the **same** main type but of **different** sub-types in a more developed classification scheme).

Integration problems might be such that, for example, it may be necessary for all those representing types having some aspect in common (e.g. one of the 4 3-groups in a 12-group) to be completely replaced (to achieve a better balance and to give the outgoing grouplet a better setting elsewhere). The game process would facilitate the filtering and matching of such grouplets leading to the progressive refinements of the groups.

The challenge would be to experience participation in an integrated group of 12 people representing very different, but complementary, energies — and to discover what such a group might decide to do, if anything, once it had discovered itself and achieved a measure of group consciousness.

### Miscellaneous

1. Individuals entering the game process may feel more secure if they can have some « personalized evaluation » of a group (e.g. many may not wish to break out of the class of people to which they are accustomed). Equally a well-established but delicately-structured group may feel happier with some such preliminary evaluation (or inter-