Designing Impact
User Participation in the Design Process as a Means for Welfare of Society

Jana Engblom

Master's Thesis
Aalto University
School of Art, Design and Architecture
Department of Design
Master's Programme in Product and Spatial Design
2018
Designing Impact

User Participation in the Design Process as a Means for Welfare of Society

Jana Engblom

Master's Thesis
Aalto University
School of Art, Design and Architecture
Department of Design
Master's Programme in Product and Spatial Design
2018

Advisor: Elina Aalto
Supervisor: Pentti Kareoja
Abstract

Author: Jana Engblom


Department: Department of Design
Degree programme: Master's Programme in Product and Spatial Design

Year: 2018
Number of pages: 52
Language: English

With every decision made follows impact. In design, to plan for the impact to be positive, I propose that the user is to participate in the design process. A product or service is the end-result of a design process, and I suggest that its impact has less to do with the outcome of the process than it has to do with what happens during the dealings that make the product or service come about. There may be considerable possibilities in the design process to plan for the impact to be positive. Hence, it may be possible to use the design process as a tool for having a greater fundamental impact in terms of social value come about than any finished product or service in itself may ever accomplish. In this thesis, I suggest that the impact starts to form not when the product or service is finished, but at the very ignition of an idea.

It is generally understood that the system that governs society holds the power to decide on matters that affect society. They also hold the power to decide who to share that power with. I want to suggest that people are underestimated in what they are capable of not only by people in power but also by the people themselves. There may be a latent power in society that is not being adequately tapped in to, that is, the power of people's interest and potential. Every individual has interests which can be developed into abilities. If the user is encouraged to participate in the design process, it is their individual ability that they are being prompted to exert and develop to do so. This prospect may ignite a fundamental shift in the behavior of users in society towards caring for their own and the society's social development.

In this thesis, I aim to contribute to the prospect that participation ignite, and suggest tools for putting philosophical values such as equality and concern for each other into practice. In the first part of the thesis, I go in to principles that show changes that can be accomplished by user participation in design. The first part of the thesis is conducted in the sphere of society to be able to find and study the origins and process of participation and see the dynamics of its impact, as well as to find the opposite, the consequences of not having participation ignited. In the second part of the thesis, I design guidelines for a workshop based on the findings in the first part. The second part focus on a smaller scale to contribute to where the impact is first ignited. The workshop guidelines are the finished design of the thesis and are not in themselves applied to any project. They are designed as a tool that, if implemented by designers, might make possible achieving the philosophical objectives of the thesis, in real world.

In this approach, the design and its process are facilitators for having a collaboration between designer and user come about. The outcome of the cooperation is of secondary importance to the collaboration itself. The constructive and sustainable impact is suggested not to be ignited by the product that a designer and user create together, but by that they create together. The design might always change, but it may be our ability to work together that could be the decisive element in the sustainability of a society.

Keywords: Participation, Sustainability, Society
Sammandrag

Författare: Jana Engblom


Avdelning: Department of Design
Examens program: Master’s Programme in Product and Spatial Design

År: 2018
Antal sidor: 52
Språk: Engelska

Varje beslut har följder. I design, för att planera för att inverkan ska vara positiv, föreslår jag att användaren ska delta i designprocessen. En produkt eller tjänst är slutresultatet av en designprocess och jag föreslår att dess inverkan har mindre att göra med resultatet av processen än med vad som händer under de affärer som gör att produkten eller tjänsten tillkommer. Det kan finnas stora möjligheter i designprocessen att planera för att inverkan ska vara positiv. Därför kan det vara möjligt att använda designprocessen som ett verktyg för att möjliggöra en större grundläggande inverkan när det gäller socialt värde än någon färdig produkt eller tjänst i sig kan möjliggöra någonsin åstadkomma. I denna avhandling föreslår jag att inverkan börjar bildas inte när en produkt eller tjänst är färdig, men genast vid upptäckten av en idé.

Det är allmänt förstått att det system som styr samhället har befogenhet att besluta om frågor som påverkar samhället. De har också befogenhet att bestämma vem de delar den makten med. Jag vill föreslå att människor underskattas i vad de är kapabla till, inte bara av personer i makt utan också av folket själva. Det kan finnas en länt kraft i samhället som inte utvins tillräckligt, det vill säga kraften i människors intresse och potential. Varje individ har intressen som kan utvecklas till förmågor. Om användaren uppmuntras att delta i designprocessen är det deras individuella förmåga som de uppmanas att utöva och utveckla för att göra det. Denna utsikt kan införa en grundläggande förändring i användarnas beteende i samhället till att ta hand om sin egen och samhällets sociala utveckling.

I denna avhandling strävar jag efter att bidra till utsikten som deltagande inför och föreslå verktyg för att sätta filosofiska värderingar som jämlikhet och omsorg om varandra i praktik. I den första delen av avhandlingen går jag in på principer som visar förändringar som kan uppnås genom användardeltagande i design. Den första delen av avhandlingen utfors inom samhällssfären för att kunna hitta och studera ursprung och process av deltagande och se dynamiken i dess inverkan, lika så att hitta motsatsen, konsekvenserna av att inte ha deltagande infört. I den andra delen av avhandlingen formerar jag riktlinjer för en workshop baserad på resultaten i första delen. Den andra delen fokuserar på mindre skala för att bidra till var inverkan först bildas. Workshop riktlinjerna är den färdiga design delen av avhandlingen och är inte i sig tillämpade i något projekt. De är utformade som ett verktyg som, om det implementeras av formgivare, skulle möjliggöra det möjligt att uppnå de filosofiska målen av avhandlingen, i realiteten.

I detta tillvägagångssätt är design och dess processer till hjälp för att ett samarbete mellan formgivare och användare ska uppstå. Resultatet av samarbetet är av sekundär betydelse till samarbetet självt. Den konstruktiva och hållbara inverkan föreslås bli införd inte av den produkt som en formgivare och användare skapar tillsammans, men av att de skapar tillsammans. Designen kan alltid förändras, men det kan vara vår förmåga till samarbete som kan vara avgörande för hållbarheten i ett samhälle.

Nyckelord: Deltagande, Hållbarhet, Samhälle
# Table of contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 Introduction</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Background</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Objectives</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Methods</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2 Why user participation in design?</strong></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Participation origins and ethics</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 Encouraging a positive direction</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 Building the society</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Participation examples</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3 Process of participation</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Pre-work</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Practice of a workshop</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Case making</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 Answer to case</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Post workshop follow-up</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4 Discussion</strong></td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afterword</strong></td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Acknowledgements</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>References</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

It is generally understood that the system that governs society holds the power to decide on matters that affect society. They also hold the power to decide who to share that power with. I want to suggest that people are underestimated in what they are capable of not only by people in power but also by the people themselves. If the power to influence decisions is shared more evenly between people in power and users, the latter are encouraged to tap into and develop their potentials (Kretzmann and McKnight 1997). As a society is made up of many individuals, it may be the society that lives up to its potential.

The importance of user-participation is more than that the designer will be helped in the design process by knowing the user's desires. It is of an importance on a fundamental level in the continued behavior of the user. User participation in design is for the user in more ways than one. Firstly, the user will get a design that fits them better. Secondly, the user is activated as an agent for growth and given an opportunity to participate in building society. Hereewith, the user is included in decision making and is thus directly tied to having control of their faith. This prospect ideally makes a fundamental constructive shift in the user's behavior. Hereewith, the user may be more inclined to care for their own and the society's social development.

The design and its process are in this approach facilitators for having a collaboration between designer and user come about. The outcome of the cooperation is of secondary importance to the collaboration itself. The constructive and sustainable impact is suggested not to have been ignited by the product that a designer and user create together, but by that they create together. The design might always change, but it could be our ability to work together that may be the decisive element in the sustainability of a society.

In design, the planning process can incorporate a collaboration between designer and user. This prospect may aid to even out the imbalance of power, and thus, may have a constructive impact on society. The user is encouraged to work towards becoming self-sustaining, and as a society is a reflection of many individuals, it is the society that may become self-sustaining. Ideally, people in power and users may become closer to equal in power and exchange individual expertise to cooperate in building society. Participation is a tool for putting philosophical values such as equality and concern for each other into practice.
Primary target group: designers

Secondary target group: users

Personal interpretation of the thesis keywords

Participation signifies when a user is activated in a design process to contribute with their personal assets to the creation and maintenance of the design.

Sustainability achieved through participation is that people look to themselves when wanting something or needing help and feeling willing and able, through own work and development, to respond to their own needs.

A society is made up of people who do not necessarily interact but who share a common interest. A society can be of any size, from a small group of people to a global phenomena.

1.1 Background

Drives in people

People have a drive to participate in decisions that will affect them (Deasy 1974, 28). If the user is involved in the planning process it may ignite in the user a sense of ownership in the project, and hence, they may be more concerned for its welfare. This could imply that they might adapt the welfare of a project as personal responsibility.

One of the most prominent drives in people may be that of individualism and to be able to influence the turnout of matters that will affect them. If power to influence decisions is unevenly shared amongst people in power and users, the drive may be thwarted in the dealings of how society is shaped. This may be detrimental to a society as the drive to influence when thwarted may turn into conflict. In this prospect people may feel as if they have little control of what their future will be. Wants and needs of people, which may stem from a feeling that they are not being included in processes of making society, may become scaled up. Thus, proposedly, what is
seen, people's wants and needs, may be the facade of the problem and may be different from the problem entirely.

Drives versus needs

If a society does not have user participation ignited, people may need services and may feel like their needs are being met in receiving the services they ask for. However, excessive services may turn detrimental to people and in turn to society. To the individual the services may become an involuntary addiction, and to society they may burden the economy. For the user it may turn into an addiction because as a receiver of services, people are not encouraged to exert their abilities to become self-sufficient, but see asking for more services as the only option.

Contradictory answer to a problem

If people are given a venue to ask for services, they may voice everything they think is wrong and receive solutions that fit their needs. However, receiving services according to needs may not answer to people's more fundamental needs. Giving people what they say they want may not resolve the real issue. In fact, it may work in a contradictory way.

Receiving services does not meet people's drive to control the outcome of their prospects. If people are solely given what they say they need and want, the more fundamental need of being in control over the turnout of prospects that will affect them is not met. The fundamental need of feeling able to sustain their ideal prospect and to update it with own ability and work is not met.

Guiding the user

If a designer wishes to meet the fundamental needs of people, the designer may want to include the user in the decision-making process and share the power to influence decisions with the user. The designer may wish to guide the user to approach problems closer to the way that the designer approaches problems, that is, ideally, from the view of feeling able to change a prospect with own abilities and resources. The goal is that with successive participation, the user learns self-sustainability and may continue the process after the designer has left the scene.
If people in power wish to keep themselves in power, they may not have much difficulty in doing so. Hence, if the user wishes to have more power to influence decisions and if the people in power are not willing to be open to the user and cooperate, it may turn into conflict. Thus, people in power hold much of the responsibility for having participation come about.

Igniting user-participation may aid development of the individual to overcome adversities and to see and take advantage of opportunities. It means members of a society bringing their specific knowledge to the table through participation. It may aid a society to grow stronger through exchange of values between people. This premise of cooperation may lead towards a strong society, which can grow through adversities.

The importance of focusing on assets

There may be a latent power in society that is not being adequately tapped in to, that is, the power of people's interest and potential. Every individual has interests which can be developed into abilities. If the user is encouraged to participate it is their individual ability that they are being prompted to exert and develop to do so. This prospect may build peoples feeling of being able, and many people who feel able make an able society. Kretzmann and McKnight (2007) takes up the subject of starting participation from assets, which I open up below.

People in not well-functioning societies are no different from people in well-functioning societies. Only the people in the former one may not have had their interests developed and mobilized. It may be a lack of awareness of problems, and that assets need to be developed. If a user is to overcome adversities and take advantage of opportunities they may need to feel able to do so. Thus, for user-participation to be successful pre-work may be needed. People may need to work to start to feel able to solve their own problems with their own abilities and resources.

For these reasons, participation can be started from a positive standpoint. If participation is started from calculating up the shortages of people and not the assets it may be counterproductive. Measuring up shortages may make it seem like doing so is a concern for people's needs. People's needs are to be taken into account but often most if too much attention is placed on needs, the assets of people,
which lead to building a sustainable society, are put aside and needs and deficiencies are regarded as the important part of the individuals of the society.

A prospect like this leads to create a society that survives in making itself seem as deficient as possible to receive services from other sources than themselves. Assets and capabilities are not used, as using them would make the society more self-sufficient which is the opposite of people’s learned behavior. The sustainability of a society may have less to do with actual resources than with the behavior of the people of the society, and them feeling themselves as resources.

1.2 Objectives

Research question

What possibilities can design have for igniting and maintaining positive change in society?

The research question encompasses the following three questions.

Can a design process be used as a tool to foster development of the individual?

Can a design process be used to solve conflict peacefully?

Can a design process be used as a tool for encouraging people to care more for the welfare of society?

Personal objectives

I aim to make a contribution and a suggestion of an agenda for making people feel able. I aim to combat the cause of weakness in societies that may be in part stemming from an unbalance of power to influence decisions. I also aim to find causes behind why the ini-
iative of the user may be weak, and make suggestions for practical implementation to help make it stronger.

These objectives come from my interest for designing the impact of my work as a designer.

Goals

The benefits of user participation are of a multitude. The following are aspirations of user participation which will be gone into throughout the thesis and which may be achieved by having user participation ignited. The possible goals of user participation include but are not limited to the following.

Feeling able

People have interests that may with individual work become abilities. Self-sufficiency is come by from first learning and adding to one’s skills and abilities that which one learns. Afterwards, working with one’s abilities and using what one has learnt toward becoming self-sufficient. Participation speaks for generating ability. It is what makes participation possible and it is also one of the goals of participation. The interests developed by pre-work into abilities are what people can contribute to have the society come together and into being self-sufficient.

Becoming a producer

Once the pre-work has ignited a bigger sense of ability in the user, practicing and learning may start to become producing. Learning goes hand in hand with producing. Going from being a user to a producer is one of the goals of participation. Once continuous producing and learning in interchange has been achieved, self-sufficiency grows. To encourage a society to go from being a receiver of services to a producer of services is one of the goals of participation. The aim is that in the end the user will to a larger extent be able to take care of themselves with own abilities and thus feel less of a need for help from people in power to be able to sustain themselves.
Going from problem formulation to goal formulation

The aim of participation is to improve the welfare of a society whilst aiming towards making a society self-sustainable. Herewith, the aim of self-sustainability is a goal towards which actions are directed, it nonetheless does not need to be achieved in its entirety for benefits to be gained. When resources received are applied to a project that produces more resource, it may be beneficial for the growth of the society in terms of self-sustainability. The user may feel more able to work toward betterment without getting discouraged, and thus, problem formulation and shortage may turn into goal formulation and thriving.

1.3 Methods

I look at society from the view of being a design. Thus, the same principles that adhere to a design project on a smaller scale are the same principles that adhere to designing society.

In the first part of the thesis, I go in to principles that speak for participation in design. The first part of the thesis is conducted in the sphere of society to be able to find the impact that participation may influence and see it in large scale. In this way is seen the development of the decisions made by single individuals that ignite the impact.

The second part, the design part of the thesis focus on the small scale to contribute to where the decisions with their impact are first ignited. In the second part of the thesis, I design guidelines for a workshop based on the findings in the first part. The workshop is not implemented, it is designed as a tool that may enable the achievement of the philosophical objectives of the thesis, in real world. The workshop is designed to be universal and for designers to implement for incorporating the user in the planning process of any project in small or large scale.
Why user participation in design?

This chapter aims to suggest the principles that make participation a subject that can be considered on broad scale. Participation is about encouraging users to care for their own, and their society’s social development. Sanoff (2000, 12) captures this as “Participation reduces the feeling of anonymity and communicating to the user a greater degree of concern on the part of management and administration. With it residents are actively involved in the development process, hence, there will be a better maintained environment, greater public spirit, more user satisfaction and significant financial changes.” and summarizes benefits of participation into four points:

1. Participation is inherently good.
2. It is a source of wisdom and information about local conditions, needs, and attitudes, and thus improves the effectiveness of decision making.
3. It is an inclusive and pluralistic approach by which fundamental human needs are fulfilled and user values reflected.
4. It is a means of defending the interests of groups and people and of individuals, and a tool for satisfying their needs that are often ignored and dominated by large organizations, institutions, and their inflated bureaucracies.”

Understanding peoples drives and principles behind user centered design

In searching for a paradigm for the preferences of a user, one may find that people can act in unexpected ways and that what they need and want may change with the people as they grow or the opposite. Nonetheless, if people’s needs and wants are traced back, there can be found certain drives. These drives may be from which stem most of people’s behavior they exert to fulfill themselves. It may also be from which many of people’s needs and wants may be born. The drives may be traced back to individuality and unity (Deasy 1974, 27), which I go into as follows.

Individuality

Expressing oneself in terms of becoming able to sustain oneself through one’s work is one of the ultimate goals of individuality. People are not the same and even the most consistent and homogenous group has to recognize individual differences between its members if it hopes to keep them together. Hence, to facilitate a peaceful
co-existence people would need to see each other as individuals, and acknowledge opinions, wants and needs different from their own.

People have a drive to participate in decisions that will affect them (Deasy 1974, 28). If the user is involved in the planning process it may ignite in the user a sense of ownership in the project, and hence, they may be more concerned for the welfare of a project. This would imply that they may adapt the welfare of a project as personal responsibility. They may arrange and rearrange their prospects towards a solution, and as such continue to be involved in the welfare of their society (Sanoff 2000, 9-10). Thinking and emotional investment may be what makes up a choice, and someone who has made a choice may want to defend it and invest a larger amount of energy into making it work (Deasy 1974, 29).

The premise of participation may furthermore concern how readily someone will adapt to a design. If a design is not to the user's satisfaction, but the user has invested their energy into participating in making the design come about, they may adapt to it more easily. They may be invested in changing it or making it work if it is a design in which they have been involved in the decision making of. If a design that is not to the user's satisfaction, on the other hand, has been merely given to them, they cannot own up to it or grow from it.

Hence, from this view the end-product has secondary importance to the participation process, as it is the participation process which holds the decision making for betterment and maintenance. The end-product is not the goal. The goal is balance in distribution of power to influence the end-product. When the user has been involved in the design process and has felt seen and heard, the goal of balance is accomplished. (Sanoff 2000, 12)

Unity

The concept of unity is one of the pillars of successful participation. The concept of unity is when people feel that they can voice their opinions and not be afraid of opposition. It is that people choose the attitude of hearing each other and voicing own opinions in interchange. To the individual it means not being opposed to opinions different from one's own, but instead seeing them as possibilities for finding solutions that fit most of everybody. It is a way of solving differences in a peaceful atmosphere.

The drive to connect with others can be seen in the propensity for people to group together in urban complexes. Conforming to the
standards and fashions of peers can be traced back to a drive of belonging as a member of a definite group. (Deasy 1974, 32) The concept of unity may bring the view that it would be a meeting without conflict, but it is a choice to engage in solving conflict without becoming defensive. Individuality and unity go together in the sense that unity is not merely about being together, it is about being received by each other as individuals. Brody (1982, 67-69) takes up the concept of unity which I open up below.

A chosen attitude

Being united is not more important than individualism. Recognizing each other as individuals does not mean agreeing or succumbing to each other’s different opinions. Doing so would again defeat the purpose of oneself being an individual. Recognizing each other as individuals means being united in one’s differences. Being united in one’s differences may need diplomatic measures which the concept of unity aims to express.

Unity takes place when members of a group have started to trust each other and can thereafter resolve issues and search for solutions in a peaceful atmosphere. Herewith, different opinions can be seen as natural occurrences when different personalities are to get along. In trusting each other, people may cooperate better and may not see each other as opponents, but as a team searching for the best solution. Unity is when a balance is found between becoming too conformed as a group and becoming too encouraging of differing opinions. If opinions are voiced too strongly it may become hard to find solutions agreed upon by all. One of the goals of unity is balance between people having their voice heard and also listening to others. (Brody 1982, 69)

A complete unity is not always possible and as such people can learn to work with their differences. Unity does not mean that everyone thinks and feel the same. Unity means that everyone’s opinion is taken into consideration and that when searching for the best solution, everyone’s input is considered. The main point is that everyone’s opinion is heard, so that they can feel that they have ownership together with the group. This prospect is what will ensure that no one is against a solution. If these premises are followed to form a solution, everyone in the group may not have had their will come through in totality, but they may be more inclined to adapt to the solution. Furthermore, if the user is involved in the decision making
and the end-product is not what was wanted, the user may not seek to blame anyone. The foundation of growth and sustainability in a society may be for each individual to participate and grow through participation individually and through groupwork together. This make strong individuals who cooperate to make a strong society (Sanoff 2000, 3).

Whether the solution ultimately agreed upon will match everybody’s opinion is secondary to the purpose of unity. It is an agreement from all upon voicing own opinions and receiving other’s opinions equally. When the user has been involved in the design process, and has felt seen and heard, the goal is accomplished in terms of a change in the society’s community spirit (Sanoff 2000, 3, 12).

Achieved unity

Unity is a goal and it is also what helps make groundwork for making decisions possible. Unity may be achieved with the aid of a workshop and several workshops can aid to develop unity further, hence, it is a goal and also a foundation for more decision making and unity. If a workshop is held more than once unity can be developed and maintained. If workshops are not held more than once there may still be a better design coming out of it and a better community spirit.

Unity is not what produces solutions but a foundation upon which cooperation can take place which in turn leads to inclusion of all members and their wants and needs in the decision-making process. Agreeing upon things together is what develops unity, and unity is the foundation of agreeing upon things together. This can be practiced as one fuels the other. The practice is to be always directed toward unity, meaning continuously directing actions toward unity.

The process of unity allows for the iterative dialogue of idea generation and debate toward decision making. The importance of unity regarding an issue is that it leads to a clearly defined problem statement agreed upon by all members, which in turn makes it easier to make decisions. At the end there should be clearly defined decisions. (Sanoff 2000, 15-16) People can become unified in a problem, and afterwards discuss solutions. Herewith, the problem unifies the members and through solving it together they grow together in a group. The trust born from this cooperation, which should be equal giving and taking between all members, is what gives birth to a strong community spirit.
Unity means unification in a problem. Therefore, conflict solved in unity will unify members more. Before any solutions are agreed upon, unity has already taken place. Unity is ongoing, and a place from which solutions are born continuously. Thus, solutions are products of unity.

2.1 Participation origins and ethics

A movement in which people who are not politicians aim for power in a society commonly named as grass-roots participation was initiated to a noticeable degree during the 1950s and 1960s. Sanoff (2000, 1) has studied Wormsley's (1967) work and found that the framework for development advocated participation and valued priority of the less fortunate members of a society.

In history can be found examples of grass-roots participation. Looking at the strive of African-Americans for equality in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s, one leading stance is about an African-American woman named Rosa Parks. Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man. This example influenced the strive. It all the more inspired African-Americans to break down barricades not only in terms of politics but also for becoming equals with all people. (CRMVet 2005) (Rosa Parks n.d.)

How did we get to where we are now?

If we think about a guiding principle, the concept of a moral compass may come to mind. We are taken to be free to follow this compass or the opposite, to go against what we feel to be morally right. If we look at the preceding chapter 2.1 from a moral standpoint it can be translated into ethics being about accommodating the drives of all people, including oneself.
User versus designer

If someone holds an opinion and is hindered from sharing it, a revolt against what is hindering them may be ignited. Moreover, if solutions have been decided on without incorporating the opinions of the user, the user may grow to rebel against what has been forced upon them, and against who forced it upon them (Sanoff 2000, 3; Brody 1982, 68). This principle may be the cause of conflict. From a kindergarten to a workplace to a society, the principle of conflict may be the same.

Hence, people’s need to have their voice heard and participate in decisions that will affect them may work against and turn into destruction of a society if not listened to. Thereafter, measures to ease conflict can be taken, but as long as the cause of conflict remains, the conflict may continue. In a conflict like this, it may look like it is the person holding the opinion that is the villain, as it is they who are causing an uproar. However, referring to that ethics is about accommodating the drives of all people, the truth is that it is the people in power who do not open their prospect to cooperation, that are the villains.

Someone who has gained expertise in a subject can exert that expertise as power over others. If the people in power aim to keep themselves in power, they may not have much difficulty in doing so. This stance may be what poses a threat to peace. Hence, it is the people in power that must ignite participation from their side.

Up until now

Grass-roots participation has up until now been somewhat associated with rebellion. The principle of conflict may be why participation used to be on a rebelling note. In the example with Rosa Parks, by her side of the conflict, she became honored as someone who made a stance in the strife for equality, from the opposing side she was seen as a delinquent.

It seems the people in power have softened up to the user’s side and the prospect, through the user’s work of getting their voice heard and the people in power starting to receive the user, has gradually shifted from rebellion towards cooperation. Sanoff (2000, 3) states about the change in prospect accomplished by participation that “The consensus organizing model, on the other hand, seeks to es-
tablish partnerships between private and public-sector leaders and community groups by providing effective ways for individuals to use and develop their own skills and creativity on behalf of their community.”

Therefore, up until now, the change in prospect is not an accomplishment of the people in power but an accomplishment of the users. The prospect leading up to unity shows that rebellion has been necessary to have the change come about and may not have been possible without it. The people in power may only in hindsight understand that the users are not a threat to them and that the way to peace may be through cooperation. (Sanoff 2000, 3)

An example of the principles of conflict can be found in the work of Nobel Peace laureate and former president of Finland, Martti Ahtisaari. He is a renowned peace mediator working to resolve crises. He believes that all conflicts can be resolved, and that the means for resolving them boils down to will and skill. In his view, violence cannot achieve peace and he advocates peaceful dialogue and mediations as means for resolving conflicts. (CMI 2016)

An example of Ahtisaari stance and work can be seen in working to resolve the violent faith of Yemen. It is an example of when people’s need to make their voice heard has been thwarted. The war in Yemen has lasted over three years. El-Krekshi (2018) states that the war might have been avoided if the right measures had been taken before the war started. According to him, the peace process preceding the war, The National Dialogue Conference, was flawed and some groups that the decisions would affect were not represented at the negotiations. (Untitled n.d.)

According to El-Krekshi’s (2018) conclusions, having conflict not happen may be to include everyone the negotiations will affect when there are decisions to be made. CMI (2016) states that as groups affected by the decisions not being included in the negotiations is partially the cause of the war, it is then essential that all groups con-
cerned will be included in the peace negotiations. Hence, if everyone the decisions would affect were not included from the beginning, any time the choice can be made to include them. Thus, by these means it may be possible to gradually retract a conflict that has erupted if the cause of conflict is exclusion.

Maintaining collaboration

Peace is the prerequisite for growth and Ahtisaari, upon receiving a Nobel Laureate, shares his view in his Nobel lecture that it is the parties’ work, not the agents’ work, that achieves peace. He sees that peace is not constructed from outside the society, but from the inside. Furthermore, he states that for peace to be lasting it needs constant maintenance of the people of the society. Ahtisaari sees that social and economic reforms can only progress if negotiating parties and the people themselves are committed to the process. He sees that the process needs to be protected, sustained and improved with the goal being social and economic growth (Nobel lecture by Martti Ahtisaari 2008). For peace to be continuously upkept unity needs to be sustained through all matters that affect a society. Without peace, growth of a society may be hampered. (CMI 2016)

What participation is and is not

Participation can be molded differently for different cases, but two distinct levels can be found. Sanoff (2000, 8-9) has studied White, Nair and Ashcroft’s (1994) and Deshler and Sock’s (1985) work and found that the distinction between forms of participation is important. The type of participation colors the communication throughout the process and these types need to be distinguished to ensure that the right type is engaged. I go through the levels below.

There are two levels of participation, one being pseudo participation and the second level being genuine participation. The former one includes two types of participation which are informing, therapy and manipulation, and placation and consultation. The second level, genuine participation, includes partnership and delegation of power, and empowerment. Hence, when people do not have a say in decisions that will affect them but are instead merely informed about what will be and is decided for them, it is not participation. When the power to influence decisions is shared between designers and users, it is participation. Hence, participation is to involve people not only in an informative way but in the decision-making of a project.
Another drift from participation is if one of the negotiating sides is thrown over by the other one. If it up until now has been the designers who have had the power and the users get the upper hand, it can be tempting for the users to hamster the power and overthrow the designers. This would only have shifted the power to the side of the users who would now be in power dominating the designers. A case like this is also not participation. In a case like this, the users won over the designers, but lost the collaboration.

Anyone can claim victory and become the upper hand, but that is not participation. Participation does not mean that the users will have full custody of what the design will be, it means that they will be in more or less equal power with the designers and that the two can benefit from each other’s expertise. It can be beneficial for the side in disadvantage to aim to get through to the opposing side, as opposed to winning over it. In a conflict one party can always claim victory, but for peace all sides must be involved (Nobel lecture by Martti Ahtisaari 2008).

The consequences of pseudo participation or not having participation ignited are wide-ranging. If a design is merely given to the user, the user cannot own the process, and can solely give positive or negative feedback to that which is given (Sanoff 2000, 12). Hence, the opposite of user participation may be that if the user is not included in the planning process and thus not given the opportunity to partake in decisions that will affect them, they may feel less of an ownership. The consequences may be a poorer continued partake action or a reluctance to care that the solutions decided on by the people in power are sustained. This is degenerative not only to the design, but to the individual themselves.
2.1.1 Encouraging a positive direction

Participation may be able to accomplish shifting a society towards self-sustainability. In the following chapter I go through the benefits of participation for the individual and for the society.

With the individual at the heart of the process

An individual is at the heart of a society and a society is made up of many individuals. This chapter aims to explain why a participation process needs to be started from the single individual before aiming to tackle issues of a society. This is since before people start to tackle problems, they need to feel able. An individual who has worked to feel able is ready to further the society towards thriving through their own abilities. One point to start from when organizing participation can be pinpointing assets and aspirations of a society. Also, strengths and weaknesses can be studied. Kretzmann and McKnight (1997, 12-27) are of the stance that participation can be started from a positive standpoint, the reasons for which I go through as follows.

Every person has individual interest. If they work to develop their interests, they will have abilities. Abilities can be counted as assets for a society. Thus, an asset is a person’s genuine interest or talent developed into an ability. Herewith, interest is the beginning of but is not yet an asset. An interest needs to be developed to become an ability. Thus, it may be beneficial if participation is started with pre-work to develop people’s interest into ability.

One crucial point is that an asset is not what a person can do in terms of labor. The work for starting to feel able must be connected to a person’s genuine interest or talent. For example, a person who is interested in expressing themselves musically should be encouraged to do so. This does not build the economy short-range, but it develops abilities which will aid a person to become self-sufficient. The currency to aim for building can be shifted from money to ability in the manner that it is economically possible.

Working from assets

More important than change is maintaining what already is positive, and from there building towards more positivity. This is ac-
complished when focus is on assets. Seeing people’s assets may help to get participation started from a constructive standpoint. Seeing people’s problems as the place to start on the other hand may degenerate the people. There are people who already see themselves as assets, there are also people for which the opposite is true. There are many truths about a person and the one chosen to look at is the one which defines a person for the one looking.

There are people that focus attention on their deficiencies. Perhaps of more importance than developing the abilities of people who already see themselves as assets, is developing the abilities of people who do not yet see themselves as assets. These people are to be drawn into the society and helped to apply their assets. If these people are chosen to be seen as assets and communicated with, they can be activated as part of the society. When focus is placed on these people’s assets their incapability will be lessened and they may feel more powerful and the society is more powerful through their acts.

Activating people’s assets can bring about a strong constitution for building the society. Participation serves to make people active and able. This will make people see themselves not as deficient but as resourceful members of a society. This will reverse the seeing of themselves as deficient and make people know that they are not deficient, and this in turn may change the way they act. The people who had thought of themselves as deficient will now feel powerful and are now part in making the society powerful through themselves in terms of their work and their abilities.

**Feeling able**

To see a problem and not get discouraged, one needs to feel able to tackle it to at least some degree. When one feels able, problems may turn into opportunities and thus, seeing them become something to strive for. Self-sufficiency is come by from first learning and adding to one’s skills and abilities that which one learns. Afterwards, one is to work with one’s abilities and use what one has learnt towards becoming self-sufficient. Participation speaks for generating ability. It is what makes participation possible and it is also one of the goals of participation.

Thus, encouraging work that makes people feel able is the utmost and first step in participation, and problems and deficiencies are to be measured up only after people feel able to tackle them. Without
this, if people do not yet feel able and starts to measure up problems, they may get discouraged. It may make participation seem too frightening a process, and problems and deficiencies may discourage people’s strive for betterment.

Example

This premise of growing ability can be paralleled to the strife of African-Americans for equality in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s. During this time there was a literacy test added to the right to vote. African-Americans arranged underground schools to unofficially teach illiterate people to become literate and gain access to the right to vote. People who learned to read and write were able to vote, but the benefits of being literate did not stop there. With the added ability to read and write, the African-Americans were now able to fill out money orders and use a bank account. (CRMVet 2005) With the added ability people now felt more able and it in turn made people look for and see more possibilities.

The African-Americans needed to learn an ability to participate. Hence, work to grow abilities is a necessary part of the pre-work of participation. Thus, the first and paramount step in participation is for people to work toward feeling able. This step, while being the most important, may sometimes be overlooked. It may be overlooked since people who feel able see obstacles differently than people who do not yet feel able. The former may see a problem as a nuisance while the latter may see the same problem as enormous and discouraging.

Choice

A society’s spree to become self-sustaining may be hard to start if self-sufficiency is a new concept to the society. Although, when started it may be easier to upkeep as the people of the society learn the principles. Starting a society’s self-sufficiency process and maintenance of its betterment are made up of the same principles. Adhering to the principles constantly through all acts and choices, will serve to maintain the growth of a society. The state of a society is what is constantly being built through the choices and actions the individuals in it make.
Detrimental choices can be made, or inactiveness, inactivity being also a choice. For a society to thrive, its people need to make constant well thought-through choices. A society is constantly in process and as such is to be constantly maintained, as inactivity will make it deteriorate. The better a society is able to maintain the state of itself, the better the wellbeing of the society. Maintaining the state of a society by constantly doing the same actions will also further a society towards betterment. The more effort is put into the actions that maintain and further the society the better the state of it will be. Maintenance when put to maintaining a growth cannot help but further a process.

The work at the start of user participation

Having been backed up by numerous successes of working with own abilities may make one feel able to tackle all the more demanding issues. The user is now able to work toward betterment without getting discouraged. Problems may be received in a more positive stance and may be seen as opportunities. This may make people want to tackle problems and not hide from them. After people feel able in their abilities to overcome adversities with their own effort and resources, the society can start to measure up problems and deficiencies. It may be beneficial if a society measures up their deficiencies as a means for knowing where effort, energy and resource can be directed. Problems and deficiencies are measured up through awareness.

Awareness

Problems need to be seen to be solved. The process of seeing problems requires awareness. (Sanoff 2000, 10) Awareness shows the level of self-sufficiency, and it shows the opposite, it reveals the debt and the inability. It is to see the weakness in a person. As a society is made up of many people, it is also to see the weakness in a society. Awareness can be a challenging quest for it searches for the truth. The truth can be painful or frightening to see. However, for a society to build itself it has to be honest about the state it is in.

Seeing problems is seeing where energy, effort and resources are to be directed. Therefore, the state of a society needs to be acknowledged. The state of a society is a foundation from which growth is possible. If it is not acknowledged, it is difficult to know how to pro-
ceed with the betterment process. Problems are not to be shunned away from, as they can be received as opportunities for growth. A society’s state already has assets and problems. The state of the society has the building blocks towards betterment, self-sustainability, and being able to thrive with own resources.

**Awareness of a wish for betterment**

After people successfully succeed in tackling problems, problems may start to be received as opportunities. Hence, awareness of problems will become awareness of opportunities. Thus, the process will have turned to a positive one. The awareness of problems can take the form of seeing what interest the society has and what opportunities it has to develop it.

**Reasons for unawareness**

People in disadvantage may not be aware of the problems that can be helped. It can be because they do not see a direction. This may not be because of neglect or indifference, it may be a truth of un-awareness. Their prospect may be the only option they know and thus, they may not see other possible options.

Other reasons why people may not see problems may be because they do not feel able to tackle them, but it may also be an illusion of safety. Society members may feel like they are being taken care of by the society, and it may breed the feeling that things will sort themselves out of their own accord. This may be hampering to the growth of a society as it is blinding people to problems and may, thus, also make them not take advantage of opportunities. The same thing goes for if a society is taken care of by resources received from other societies, which I go into next.
2.1.2 Building the society

Expressing oneself in terms of becoming able to sustain oneself through one’s work is one of the ultimate goals of individuality. Excessive outside support may serve to hamper an individual’s spree to become self-sustaining. (Kretzmann and McKnight 1997) This prospect sized up to a society brings the following chapter.

A society is to be self-sustainable to thrive. However, the saying that no man is an island goes for a society as well, and relations to other societies are important. How the relations to other societies and the resources that may be received from them in turn may affect a society is to be taken into consideration. Not only would resources imposed upon a society without a plan to sustain itself be wasted, but they may also serve to make people not recognize their own potential. Hence, aid imposed upon a society may be contraindicative.

Resources from other societies may be needed, but if resources are given to a society which has not yet learned to sustain itself, the resources may be used to a short-term aid. Ensured should be that resources received from other societies are used in a way that support and not degenerate the society. Kretzmann and McKnight (1997) have studied how resources received from other societies may add to the growth of a society or the opposite, be detrimental to it. Herewith, the difference lies in to what means the resources are used and I go through them as follows.

Changing the relation to shortage and resource

Referring to chapter 2.3.1, a person may see themselves as deficient or able, and as a society is made up of many people, a society may see itself as deficient or able. An example of how resources can be detrimental to a society can be seen in societies that see themselves as deficient. If the current trend in a society is that people see themselves as deficient, the people of the society may measure up their deficiency and problems and then ask for resources from other societies. Herewith, people have not practiced to produce the resources they need themselves. Thus, outside resources may become detrimental to the growth and self-sustainability for a society, and it may come to look like how an addiction is formed. When someone receives resources and uses them to compensate for a deficiency, it becomes a short-term solution and more resources are needed when the last ones run out.
Herewith, the people’s attention is on how they will get more resources from other societies and the mistake in this may be that deficiency becomes to them a condition for survival. The people of the society might continue to sum up their deficiencies as being deficient becomes the way to receive resources and moreover survive. With their focus on deficiencies, people survive on making themselves seem as deficient as possible to receive resources to sustain themselves. This prospect and behavior lead to more deficiency and to a society addicted to receiving resources from other societies. In this scenario, people do not have to exert their abilities for resources, they are given them by someone else. Hence, the individual, and the society, does not grow nor learn to depend upon oneself, and neither use own abilities to produce resources. The society will be a user of resources and not a producer of resources.

If a society has user participation ignited in terms of having the people of the society activated, and the society has learned to sustain itself, resources received from other societies can help to build the society from within. If outside resources are distributed to add to the development of the society and its projects, it can be supportive rather than detrimental to the growth of a society. Thus, when resources are received from other societies, and the society is self-sustainable, people may choose to use them for further development of the society. The resources may in this case add to the long-term sustainability of the society.

**Transition**

People need time to develop their talents and interest into abilities. During this time, it is essential that possible resources received from other societies are used for the growth of the society, and not short-term aid. The need for resources received from outside of the society may become less, and the growth of a society’s own resources increased. If people of the society use resources for development, they can develop themselves and better the society this way.

The process of becoming independent can be frightening if people have been previously receiving resources rather than producing it themselves. If energy that has been directed to applying for resources from other societies is now directed inside the society, resources from other societies may cease to be given. If people are not yet able to produce resources with their own talents and abilities, there may be a vacuum of resources during the switch to start directing
energy inside of the society. The people of the society may use more resources than they are able to produce, and there may be a shortage of resources for sustenance. This prospect may seem like a downfall of the society until it is held up again by the people’s abilities and talents. At first, it may seem like a difficult switch, however, it can set a society free to sustain itself on own resources and bring power to its people, which is one of the goals of participation.

Going over from being a deficient society to being an able one is a process which may make people feel uneasy as their term for survival is changing to the total opposite. If being deficient has been the term for survival, igniting the opposite of working to become able may make people feel as if they are going against what they have learned, their instincts, i.e., their nature. A change in nature takes a complete approach, and people may feel uneasy until they have gotten on their feet and see that they are sustaining themselves.

Changing the relation to shortages

A change in prospect may also change how people see shortages. They can choose to see a shortage as a deficiency or they can choose to see a shortage as an opportunity to practice becoming self-sustaining. Starting to see shortage in a positive light is already a shift towards self-sustainability. Rather than seeing shortage as a deficiency that needs help to fill, it can be received as an opportunity to practice principles that make a society able to look after itself.

Self-sustainability of a society

If people start seeing themselves as resources, it may benefit the society. The society may become more self-sufficient and when faced with problems, people may look inside the society for solutions and activate themselves toward a solution. This prospect makes an upward spiral in people activating themselves and the society to solve problems and grow from it and at the same time create resources for the society. (Kretzmann and McKnight 1997; Sanoff 2000)

Mutual-beneficial sharing between societies

When the resource received is applied to projects that produce more resource, it is beneficial for the growth of the society in self-sustain-
ability. The act that produces resource and makes more resources from resource is one of the goals of user-participation. The act aids to make a society self-sustainable, and it is what is missing in deficient societies. If people work to become able to start to produce more resources than they use, there will not be any shortage of resources.

As a society become a producer of resources, mutual-beneficial sharing and exchange between societies can be ignited. The most supportive relations to other societies and the goal of them is that when the society is self-sufficient it can exchange resources with other societies as mutual beneficial services. It ends the seeing of individuals of the society as people needing aid from other societies and re-empowers the people of the society by looking into itself when needing an answer to their needs. Thus, the needs are answered to from inside of the society. Therefore, assets need to be focused on first and the society is to be built with them. Afterwards, when there is a need, the able society may aim to answer to it from inside. Every time a society is able to tend to their problems themselves and succeed in solving them, the society may grow in self-sufficiency.
2.2 Participation examples

This chapter suggests examples of projects in which participation has been ignited versus in which participation has not been ignited.

Example of a project in which participation may be beneficial

The United Nations has a goal of equipping developing countries with clean water resources. In Sub-Saharan Africa the retrieval of water is a challenge. For this reason, water stations have been implemented. This has answered the problem, however, there has been a challenge to maintain the water stations, and many of them are in need of repair soon after implementation. Stated is that funding exists, but that funding is not necessarily what will ensure the ongoing success and sustainability of a project. (International project leadership academy 2016)

To ensure the continued success of a project it requires post-implemental care. Hence, what is missing in the project-plan may be a participation process to ensure the users initiative to care for the welfare of the project. A participation process may grow the user’s feeling of being able as well as their wellbeing by caring for the welfare of the project. For the user to feel ownership and care for the welfare of a project, the user ought to be included in the processes that leads up to the solution. (International project leadership academy 2016) (Water pump n.d.)
Successful participation example

One of the goals of community participation is to make a community self-sustainable (Kretzmann and McKnight 1997). A community becomes successful when assets are being activated. An example of a project aiding to develop a society and the people of it is Asili. Asili is Swahili for hope and the project was named after the mission, to design hope. The project of Asili is implemented in the city of Kabare situated in the developing Democratic Republic of the Congo. Asili has accomplished to make available, amongst other things, clean water and agricultural services. The people of Kabare are helped to come together to make the project of Asili by, amongst others, the American Refugee Committee. (IDEO n.d; American Refugee Committee 2016)

The project of Asili is run by the people of Kabare. It has helped the people come together and improve the infrastructure of their community. People’s assets are put to work giving the members of the community a sense of ownership and teamwork, which in turn aids to strengthen the community. IDEO (n.d.) states that “Perhaps what’s most important, especially in a landscape of failed international landscape projects, is that Asili was born from, and is run by, the people of Kabare.”

Image showing a local agriculture ecosystem run by people of communities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo facilitated by the project of Asili. (Untitled n.d.)
Process of participation

Based on the findings in the literature research I suggest principles for participation that I aim to translate into executable guidelines for implementing user participation. I aim to do so through designing guidelines for a workshop to be implemented in a way that support the theses suggested in the former chapters. This takes the abstract and philosophical concepts of individuality and unity and puts them to practice (Alinsky 1989, 12). The following chapter suggest guidelines that can be implemented for user participation.

Pre-work

Making people responsive to participation

Pre-work includes having people work to start to feel more able, as suggested in chapter 2.3.2. Without pre-work, any participation process may be challenging. Pre-work applies when there is wished to be a change of a large scale, such as that of a community or society.

The necessity of pre-work is decided upon on how big of an energy the user is wished to put out for the constant welfare of the project.

Information

Individual learning is to be emphasized in the participation process. Communication media such as forums can be utilized to share information. The prospect is to be open and transparent and grow the participants awareness of the aspects of the process for them to be able to respond with their specific input. Benefits to gain from such a transparency include responsiveness to social needs and utilization of resources of a society. Other possible benefits may include a suggestion and feedback possibility amongst the designers and participants. It may also give a possibility to understand the outcome of decisions for the ones who have made them. Another benefit is that it helps the user group to learn about itself through exchange. (Sanoff 2000, 10, 14)
A sensitive process

Change is not only inferring a new paradigm but also changing the norm and is as such a highly sensitive process. People may have adopted their prospect as their own and may see change as intimidating. They may, moreover, see someone coming to change their prospect as an intrusion on their privacy. They may be against change because their prospect is what they know. If change is to come about they must be informed, warmed up and prepared so that an easier transition can take place.

The designer may win on being sensitive to how the process affects the participants. While the designers may see the process as a project, it is the participants prospect that is being affected. The designers must acknowledge that they are working in a sensitive process, and the responsibility for the process is essential. The developing mutual trust between the designers and participants is to be answered with un-erred responsibility for the process.

Overcoming obstacles and encouraging unity

Participants should be encouraged to voice disagreement, (Brody 1982, 68-69) and negativity and conflicts that may arise during workshops can be channeled positively through consciously taking the conflict or disagreement into light and not trying to deny it. Afterwards, the conflict is to be worked through together. One way to resolve a dilemma may be for someone to use what Sanoff (2000, 81) calls the language of acceptance, which is when someone repeats what another person has said. It implicates that one person accepts another for what he or she is and feels, even though they and other people may not agree. Participants can encourage unity by listening to other members even if they don't agree on what others say, as to make the other members feel that they are being heard. Herein, accepting takes the form of acknowledging, which is not akin to agreeing and has different implication altogether.

The agreement of unity suggested in chapter 2.1 can be presented by the designer for the participants at the start of the workshop to encourage the agreement of unity throughout the workshop. The agreement of unity hinders loud speaking persons and encourages less loud speaking persons so that there may be more balance be-
between the participants. If ideation is slow, asking questions can make people feel more encouraged to participate in the workshop, as it may generate a feeling in people that their input is wanted (Sanoff 2000, 81; Brody 1982, 69).

An agreement of unity demand balance between meeting others in their stances and staying true to one’s own. If the agreement of unity is not upheld, conflict may arise in a workshop. People may pretend unanimity to not oppose the group, and peer-pressure may impose on participants to agree on something they are against. The opposite may also be true, if people feel that there is fear of shaking the unity among the group, they may use it to try to gain an advantage over each other. (Brody 1982, 68) In both cases, awareness of mistakes and correction and upholding of balance between individualism and unity is everyone’s responsibility, however, the balance can be facilitated by the design of the workshop.

The negotiations may be organized so that everyone is informed of the subject, and afterwards, the users may individually write their personal opinions and as such have them untainted by other’s opinions. Afterwards the group discussion can begin with having everyone’s opinion out on the table.

Now each user has to stand by their own opinion, and as suggested in chapter 2.1, if something else is agreed upon, the user may feel at peace because they have had their opinion voiced. The final decision may not be to the user’s benefit, but they have had their opinion voiced and that has already strengthened their sense of membership in the society (Brody 1982, 68).

Practice of a workshop

Workshop

A workshop is a planned event which can have an interaction between people sharing a common purpose come about. An important part in the building of a workshop is to see to that the participants understand each other. Sanoff (2000, 80) phrases this as: “Learning is most functional when it grows out of personally involving experiences that require reflecting, developing, and testing of new insights and approaches to problem solving.”
A workshop can give tools for communication that can be used also outside of the workshop. On the same note, skills useful for overcoming adversities may be learned in a participation workshop. Sanoff (2000, 80) states that skills learned in workshops may include “...methods of interpersonal communication, group problem solving, sensory awareness, giving and receiving feedback, and team building.”

This chapter aims to explain methods that can be used to make participation come about in terms of a workshop. In the following chapter I aim to go into the process of a workshop. Any process can be divided into phases, and I have broken up the process into two phases which both consist of three steps. The first phase is case making, which includes awareness, problem formulation and defining the target group. The second phase is answer to case and includes retrieving people’s assets, plan making and ideation. The phases can be made into a workshop and I go in to how a workshop can be constructed in the following chapter.

Image showing the phases of case making of the workshop.

Case making

Case making begins the participation process and it is made up of three phases, awareness, problem-formulation and defining the user-group. The designers are to go through case making twice. The first time they are to go through it on their own, and the second time together with participants in a workshop. Herewith, the first round opens and makes the case and sets the theme of the workshop. Thus, the professionals will know the background to the case and they may know who the project will affect, who will in turn be the people to participate in the workshop. The second time the designer
goes through case making it is executed with the participants to get
the participants input on the case and to collaborate on it.

Herewith, the designer will give to the participants their knowledge
of what is a possible direction for change. The participants may
answer with their input in going through the same steps with the
guidance of the designer. This way, an informative loop concerning
the specific case is formed between the designer and the particip-
ants. Sanoff (2000, 22) sees that “Users have expertise in identi-
fying problems, not necessarily in solving problems. Collaboration
is effective when all participants in the process share their areas of
expertise with one another.” Accomplishing this interchange is one
of the goals when case making is executed together with the partic-
ipants.

When executing the steps together with the participants, it is im-
portant that the designer does not suggest too strongly the direction,
as well as not letting the direction become too swayed. The goal or
the problem sets the direction but does not determine the outcome.

Case-making phase 1/3

Awareness

Awareness of a problem or a wish for betterment can be brought
about by research or having open discussion meetings in which peo-
ple are able to voice their opinions in unity. A case is formed when
there is a problem or a wish for betterment. This can be in any so-
ciety of any size. This can be at the awareness of society members’
or at the designer’s, meaning that the initiative for change can come
from a designer or it can come from the society, or both. When a
designer is to help with the process the following steps can be gone
through.

Assignment 1.

Correlating to chapter 2.3.1, the designer may want to encourage
awareness in themselves and in the participants. The designer’s role
in the phase of awareness is to give to the participants the seeing
of the possibility for betterment or seeing what may be missing in
the participants prospect. It may be easier for an outsider to see
possible ways towards betterment, and to see problems and their connections.

Methods

The designer’s method

It can be beneficial to study the case and its background. The history of the case can give clues on how to change it through showing what has and has not worked and what is and is not working.

The designers’ and participants’ methods together

The designer first presents their view on the case and in response, the participants can give their view of the case. In the phase of awareness, the participants are to bring to the designer’s attention their expertise in their independent fields as well as share their problems, wishes and needs.

Goal

Once awareness is achieved of the background of the case, the process can go over into the next phase which is problem formulation.

Case-making phase 2/3

Problem formulation

Awareness sees all the problems, and problem formulation is when the problems are connected to each other and their origin. In problem formulation the awareness of a problem is crystallized into what it is about, its connections and, as it were, the ground on which to stand when working towards betterment. (Sanoff 2000, 10-11) This phase makes it easier to choose in which order problems can be attended to. Problem formulation has two uses, the first one being people working themselves out of debt and the second one people working to further their assets and thrive with own abilities and resources. In the latter, problem formulation takes on the name of goal formulation.

Assignment 2.

After awareness of a problem, one ought not to jump to solutions but instead define the problem thoroughly. Brody (1982, 17) states that problems can be studied to understand “... the process by which it becomes a community problem, the background of the
problem, and the theoretical perspectives to the problem.” Problems are loaded with information, and thus the problem formulation can be given ample time. The better a problem is defined in its connections and aspects the better fitted a response to the problem may be thought of.

**Methods**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The problem or goal can be identified by asking questions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the desired solution or goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the desired solution or goal connected to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the state of the society now from which to start?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questions may seem simple, yet if they are adopted to a problem they may bring forth a case structure. The direction for a workshop can be set along the case structure. The case structure may also bring forth a theme which can involve participants in the same aim, however, one ought to be sensitive to not determine what the outcome of the workshop should be. (IDEO n.d.) The goals of a workshop may vary and ought to be chosen carefully.

The designer’s role in the phase of problem formulation when doing it on their own is to, based upon their research of the case, choose where more energy can be directed. It can be beneficial to define the problems of the people and define the overall direction the project is wished to take.

When the designer is doing the phase of problem formulation together with the participants, the designer is to work as a recorder and receive people’s stance on the problems. Afterwards, the designer is to take into account the users view and define the desired outcome and direction of the project. The direction of the project is a responsibility of the designer, and it is come by through research, hearing the people’s stance on the case and weighing it on own expertise. Herewith, a balance is to be accomplished in defining the outcome, and keeping it open to alternative directions. Defining it too rigidly may hamper not thought of solutions and having it too open may make it difficult to know how to proceed with the process.

**Wish for betterment**

Goal formulation has the same process as problem formulation, but with the difference that the abilities and resources for achieving the goals already are achieved. This may take place when people have
started to feel able through own work as suggested in chapter 2.3.2. Goals are rarely achieved, but that they state the direction in which energy can be directed (Sanoff 2000, 39).

When problems are being successively solved, and people start to feel able to thrive with own abilities and resources, awareness of problems may become awareness of opportunities for growth and further thriving. People may also start to see more possibilities as they increasingly start feeling able to take care of themselves, as suggested in chapter 2.3.2. Herewith, furthering assets becomes the goal setter. Going from problem formulation to goal formulation is one of the long-term goals of participation.

Goals

When the designer has defined a problem formulation on their own, the process can continue into defining the target group. This step the designer does on their own only. When having defined the problem formulation with the participants the process can skip the next step of defining the target-group and continue to the next chapter on answer to case.

Case making phase 3/3

Defining the target group

Assignment 3.

After the background of the case is studied, and problem formulation has been gone through by the designer on their own, it is time to define the target group. This step the designer goes through on their own only.

Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The target-group can be identified by asking questions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the connections these people have to your design?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who are for it, and who are against it?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be beneficial to decide who are the people that will be affected by the design decisions. Correlating to chapter 2.2, these are the people to be invited to the workshop. Having an idea of the target audience’s needs, contexts, and history will help to design the workshop
in terms of knowing in which direction the workshop is wished to be led as well as what the ways of communication can be.

Goals

Through the case structure it may be able to decipher a theme. This theme can be used for promoting the workshop. Having done this there is now a clear case which can be translated into a theme for a faring out a workshop.

![Phases of Case Making](image)

Image showing phases of the workshop the designer can do first on their own.

Promoting the workshop

The workshop with the theme can be promoted for having community members participate in the workshop. A presentation can be given of what is to be discussed to help people get thoroughly involved in the coming activities. (Sanoff 2000, 80)

![Case Making Process](image)

Image showing phases of answer to case chapter.

Answer to case

In answer to case the problem or goal has been formulated and begins to be mapped out toward a solution. Once the problem or goal have been formulated first by the designer on their own and afterwards with the participants, there is now a case and the process can go into answering to it. When having defined a case, designers and participants may be closer to being on the same page and may as such have an easier time to answer to the case together (Sanoff...
2000, 16). Answer to case has three phases and they can be gone through together with the participants in a workshop.

Answer to case phase 1/3

Retrieving people’s assets

Assignment 1.

In answering to the case, one of the first steps can be to retrieve people’s assets as suggested in chapter 2.3.1. Afterwards, the assets can be used as a response to the problems the case making has found. In retrieving people’s assets, the designer works through interviewing and recording people.

Methods

The participant’s assets can be retrieved through interviewing the people (IDEO n.d.). Assets can be recorded through making a chart (Kretzmann and McKnight 1997, 14).

Goals

When the designer has an inventory of people’s assets, the process can go into the phase of ideation.

Answer to case phase 2/3

Ideation

Ideation is done within the theme of the workshop, and the designer can steer the idea generation accordingly (Brody 1982, 69). Open discussion is facilitated by unity as suggested in chapter 2.1. In the phase of ideation, unity is achieved when group members have let go of ownership of their own ideas and get into the spirit of sharing and building on each other’s ideas. Thus, nobody is individually criticized, but it is the idea at hand that is developed and criticized. This leads to a smoother discussion and more fruitful problem solving. (Sanoff 2000, 16) The phase of ideation has two sub-phases. In the first phase ideas are generated and in the second phase they are evaluated.
Assignment 2.

Idea generation

During the phase of ideation in which ideas are generated no criticism is allowed (IDEO n.d.). Everything is to be considered, and thereafter the ideas relevant to the case are focused upon (Sanoff 2000, 17). Ideas are invaluable, and each idea should be embraced, tested, and felt from different angles and in different context before to be replaced by an upgrade. No idea is to be left without a replacement. If there is no replacement, it is the first idea that is used, and which is actual.

Methods

Idea generation

Following are questions that can steer ideation.

What is a solution to the statement developed in the problem formulation phase?

What is needed in between the state of the society now and the goal formulation?

Idea evaluation

Participants can develop a ranking system from the most desired to the least desired to evaluate their ideas (Sanoff 2000, 17). It may be possible to build on and mold ideas. Big ideas may be tamed down to fit and small ideas may be enlarged.

Goals

When enough of ideas have been generated and all participants have got to have their say, the next phase in the process, plan making, can be begun.

Answer to case phase 3/3

Plan making

Assignment 3.

Having followed through problem formulation and answering to it, the process may arrive at having a thorough solution formulated. In plan making the answer to the case making is concretized into executable work. Here the plan making turns over into dividing the tasks
among the people of the society. The tasks are divided amongst the people of the society according to their assets retrieved in phase 1.

The designer’s role in the phase of plan making is to oversee the process and educate the people to be able to have the process be run by the people themselves without the designer’s input, which is also one of the goals of participation (IDEO n.d.).

Methods

It can be beneficial to make a chart dividing the solution into different tasks starting from bigger agendas going down to smaller tasks that are needed for working the way toward bigger goals.

A schedule can be written in which preliminary deadlines are marked.

Goals

The plan is done upon the background research, the designer’s expertise, and the user’s input. The plan may change during the course of the process, the main point still being that the plan is thorough. It may be beneficial if the plan has all the elements in it thought through and can be followed from start to finish in the sense that if there are no changes to the plan it will bring the desired solution or goal. Following these steps, the next phase in the process is implementation.

Image showing phases of the workshop to be gone through when executing the workshop together with the participants.
Post-workshop follow-up

During the course of the project and implementation, the designer is to be present with the process. The designer is to monitor the success of the project and its sustainability in terms of aftercare by the participants. The aftercare of the participants is one of the measurements for success. It can be beneficial if the designer monitor the maintenance of the process and ensure ongoing success of the design.

The dialogue between professionals and users is to be ongoing for at least two reasons. A design is to be responsive and forming with the user as the needs and wants of people may change. Moreover, at different times in people’s life they may need and want different things (Deasy 1974, 25). Reflexive follow-up of the plan can show the progress of the group and measure successes against the plan (Brody 1974, 191-195). It can be beneficial with ongoing reference, follow-up and update with the participants to ensure ongoing success of the participation and design. A process is never done, it is what keeps everything working and, therefore, is always to be revised and updated as the project progresses (Brody 1974, 151). An update is not a change, an update is regenerating into a better fit solution for having the process working optimally. Updates to the process may include tasks to be omitted or added, project tasks may need to be speeded up or slowed down, and more resources may be needed to be put to some tasks (Brody 1974, 195).

Maintenance of peace

It can be beneficial to follow through on an ongoing checkup and update of the case making and answer to case. As the prospect is being updated, workshops can be arranged on a regular basis for follow-up on success and update. Succeeding to achieve a resolution or goal does not mark an end to a project. Successes are to be maintained constantly as successes does not mark completion, but milestones, in a process. As suggested in chapter 2.2.1 and 2.4, success is peace and for peace to be lasting it needs constant maintenance of the designers and the people of the society.
Discussion

“When you understand the people you are trying to reach and then design from their perspective, not only will you arrive at unexpected answers, but you will come up with ideas that they will embrace.” (IDEO n.d.)

The research questions will be given suggestions for answers and will guide the below discussion on the thesis findings.

What possibilities can design have for igniting and maintaining positive change in society?

Can a design process be used as a tool to foster development of the individual?

Can a design process be used to solve conflict peacefully?

Can a design process be used as a tool for encouraging people to care more for the welfare of society?

Ethics

If human rights are violated, there will be repercussions. If the chapter 2.1 is viewed from a moral standpoint it translates into that ethics is about accommodating the drives of all people (Alinsky 1989, 12). Alinsky (1989, 12) states about this that “Democracy is not an end but the best means toward achieving these values.” The terms of feeling able and unity can be hard to grasp but they have real paths toward becoming achieved. There are real means to do to develop them in small and large scale. Ongoing success is the path of a society to becoming self-sustaining and thriving on its own merit and abilities.

Unity makes for ongoing success

Unity is the start and also one of the goals of participation. Unity is what to strive for in having continued success come by. Participation speaks for generating ability. It is what makes participation possible and is one of the goals of participation. The goals of participation are to generate a sense of being able in oneself and to include others. Unity incorporates both of these goals. These two goals are the
measurement for success. These two goals are what make participation possible, and they are also gains of participation.

User versus designer

If people’s wish to participate is thwarted, a revolt against what is hindering them may be ignited and their want to have their voice heard turns into conflict (Sanoff 2000, 3; Brody, 68). Herein, it may look like it is the person holding the opinion that is the villain, as it is they who are causing an uproar, but referring back to that ethics is about society accommodating the drives of all people, the truth is that it is the professionals who do not open their prospect to cooperation, that are the villains. This prospect may be the cause of conflict. From the kindergarten to the workplace to a global scale, the principle may be the same.

People who gain expertise in a subject at the same time gain power. They gain decision making power. If they wish to keep themselves in power, they may not have much difficulty in doing so. This stance may be what pose a threat to peace. Someone who gains power also gains responsibility. Thus, it may be beneficial if the professionals take on two responsibilities, the responsibility of the decisions they make, and seeing to it that those who will be affected by the decisions are onboard with the plan. The responsibility that used to be for themselves is now added with the responsibility for the ones they design for. It would be beneficial if they firstly, learn the expertise in a subject and secondly, if they learn how to share the power gained.

Getting one’s voice heard is not as much about getting one’s needs answered to, as it is about being acknowledged as an individual. From the designer’s point of view taking responsibility and acknowledging someone as an individual may mean to answer to the needs of people but also to recognize the people as having gifts. Perhaps sometimes even being willing to insist, maybe even against people’s own insistence, that the people have gifts to be given to the design and, hence, to society. To give people a chance and to search for their interest conjointly. Also to aid people in the process of design to apply their interest to society to benefit, and have people grow in themselves in the process. These prospects boil down to encouraging people to participate.

The prospect of including the user to have them start to feel more able may ignite a domino effect. Someone who feels able may be-
come a producer of resources, and if they are producing more resources than they are using, they work to increase the wellbeing of a society. If people start to produce more than they use there may not be any shortage of resources, as such the resources available will increase and not become deprived. A producer of resources may start to feel able to take care of the society with own abilities and resources and may work the society out of debt towards thriving. Hence, a producer of resources is self-sustainable. As a society is a reflection of many individuals, it is also the society which is self-sustaining. Self-sustainability grows a society and passing through a certain threshold, growth becomes thriving.

Participation may be the path of a society to become self-sustaining and thriving through its own abilities and resources. These concepts of participation, individuality and unity may be further developed to bring more societies together and make them into strong constituents for a strong nation. When people start to feel able and as society become producers of resources and self-sufficient they may start to show up, as it were, on the map as resources. If more and more societies become resources, there may soon not be any weak links and it may make for a strong nation. This prospect may start with the single individual at the heart of the process.
Afterword

Awareness of the outcome of design

What may be taken away from this is that we cannot predict the future, we cannot predict if a war will break loose, but we do know the prospect that leads to war, and we also know the prospect that leads to peace. By consciously taking the right direction in each decision and project we invest our thoughts feelings and efforts in, we can plan for the effects to be positive, as to grow positivity constantly. We can work to solve what we can, and it is our responsibility to go in that direction and it is also our sensitive responsibility to not get discouraged on the way.

This thesis started out with the prospect to design for positive habits in the sense of deciding what behavior is positive and steer the user accordingly by arrangement of the environment. The aim was to encourage the user to be more effective and have an easier time connecting. The thesis had the research question of what can be asked from the user for generating an arsenal to draw upon for designing with the user at the center. The arsenal would give guides in how to make design to be more suitable to the user and encourage the user to behave in way that cares for the welfare of the design and society at large. The solutions of the arsenal would also encourage connectedness and eliminate stress, and also help the user in achieving the goals they have set out for themselves.

However, with research the subject grew significantly in size. The search for an arsenal of user preferences to be drawn upon for encouraging the user, someone put in a receiving position, to behave accordingly was taken further back to where behavior of people may stem from initially. It seems it would be difficult to bring about a reform with the power of one or a couple of chosen few designers. It also seems it would be difficult to ignite an impact that people will be engaged in sustaining with solely the outcome of a design process.

It seems the design process has a larger possibility of incorporating the user and guide the design with everything it is wished to answer to. I found that it is not as much about what questions to be asked as it is about asking the questions in and of itself. The knowledge came that what is needed for fundamental change is not to control
the users, but that the designers and users share the control amongst each other, and control the design together.

Including people in the design process in and of itself may generate a feeling of inclusion that may encourage the continued participation in the welfare of a society. Herewith, on a fundamental level, the user may feel part in the ownership of the processes that creates the design and may as such want to be involved in the welfare of the design. If the same principle is scaled up it may mean that they may want to be involved in the welfare of society at large, if they are included in the processes that leads up to decision-making on matters that affect it.

If people have been incorporated in the design process they may feel ownership, which I suggest may be a key to sustainability, in design and furthermore in society at large. The design will always change but it may be our ability to work together, which produces the design, that may be deciding on the societal spirit. We design our society together, and the society may be an outcome, a reward or a lesson, of our ability to work together.
Acknowledgements

I want to thank my family for their support during this work. I want to thank my advisor Elina Aalto for feedback and ideas, especially on how to tie the research to its origins and actuality. My sincere gratitude to Aalto University for my opportunity for the demanding yet invaluable experience of making this work.
References

Literature references


Web references

Webpages


Images


Videos

