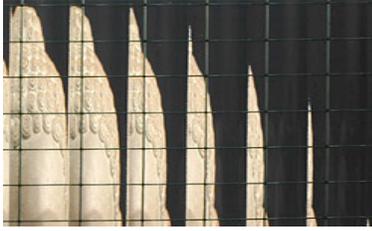


Dematerialization (18)



The production and consumption of products is destructive to the environment and is a contributing factor to poverty and hunger around the world. Dematerialization defines the reduction of material used per unit quality of life, that is, using fewer natural resources in products, using more recycled resources, and extending the life of products. Through industrial ecology we can determine best outcomes using a wider, more global outlook of the affects of our activities on the environment. Dematerialization may involve making a product smaller and lighter, replacing a material product with an immaterial substitute. One common example of this that we currently practice is the replacement of postal mail with E-mail. The growing role of knowledge, information, and culture should also make it possible to displace materials and energy with human intelligence and ingenuity. This would allow us to satisfy more basic human needs with far fewer resources. It would ostensibly also allow us to fit human economic activities within natural processes without disrupting them. Dematerialization is the future of an ecologically and economically balanced world.

Written by Burl Humana

Transforming Institutions (19)



Most social institutions are positioned to deliver services from their operation center out to the region and the masses. Often, these institutions, leaders and corporate models protect and maintain their existence without regard for those they were intended to serve. The exploitation and destruction of the environment, the people and rural communities is the long term result. Institutions should (1) develop innovative and sustainable relationships with remote and rural communities that are built upon the principles of trust, sharing, respect and strength to ensure an equitable and fair existence for all to support a sustainable, transformative institutional model; (2) establish transformative change within their environments to engage as well as effectively communicate and share with the region their products and resources as a model for cooperative and collaborative development; (3) Create flexible institutional management models that can adjust to the changing and evolving needs of people so everyone has the opportunity to become engaged in these transformative efforts.

Written by Brian Beaton

Participatory Design (36)



Many artifacts that we use are ill designed and do not appropriately address the needs of the people for whom they are designed and produced. The problems include the inconvenient and the dangerous. And in the design of policy or any systems that facilitate group interaction, developers can create systems that embed users in a system like cogs in a machine in situations where a more human-centered approach that encouraged our humanity could also be developed.

John Dewey has written that "The very fact of exclusion from participation is a subtle form of suppression." This can be avoided if the users of any designed system (software, information and communication systems, administrative services and processes, art, city plans, architecture, education, governance, and others) are brought into its design process in an open, authentic, and uncoerced fashion. Participatory design is the philosophical and practical approach to design in which people who will use designed result and those who will be affected by it should be included in the process of creating it.

Written by Douglas Schuler

Self-Designed Development (106)



Development initiatives are often designed and implemented by outside professionals, politicians and wealthy elites. Neither community empowerment nor fundamental sustainability plays a central role in many of these interventionist projects. Before would-be developers attempt to define the nature of development for a particular community or region. Peoples must proactively assert their own paradigm as a challenge to the problems that have come from vertically planned development schemes often engender. The professional development community should not always assume that a community wishes to be or needs to be developed. Rather, support to communities should be pursued based on invitation. For the communities this is an opportunity to empower themselves and to project the ways in which they wish to interact and be defined in the process of modernization. It is an opportunity to exert their own sense of identity and influence their livelihoods as best and most effectively as possible in the face of outside forces that are seeking to define their collective futures.

Written by Justin Smith