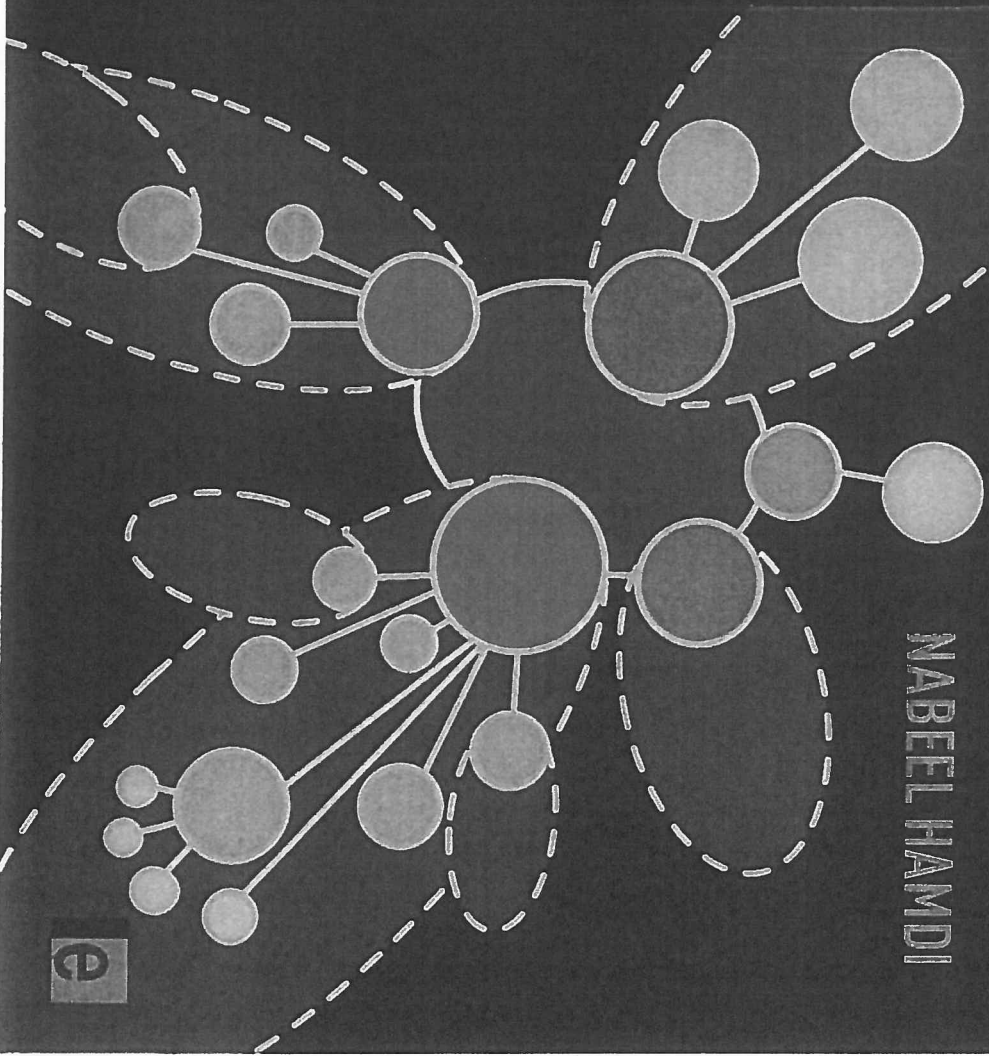


THE PLACEMAKER'S GUIDE

TO BUILDING
COMMUNITY

NABEEL HAMDI

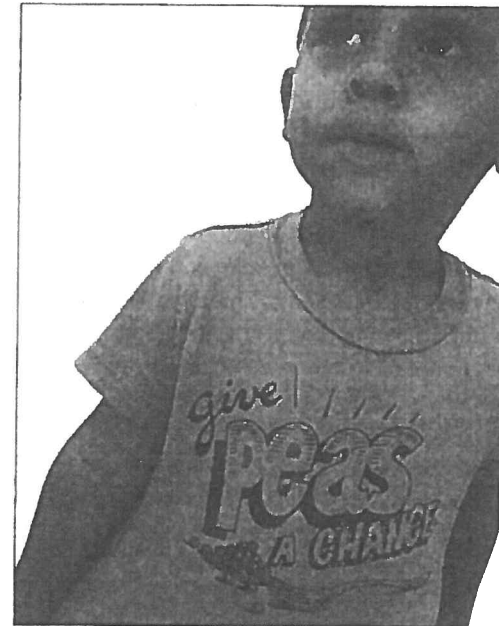


PART III

PLACEMAKERS:
RESPONSIBLE PRACTICE
AND THE QUESTION OF SCALE

The way of strategy lies in turning small things into big things. It is to have one thing and be able to do ten thousand things. It is like making a giant Buddha out of a one foot model. I cannot really explain how it is done.

Miyamoto Musaski
(16th-century Japanese strategist)



REFLECTION: THE INVISIBLE STAKEHOLDER

We were doing street work for a community engagement project in the UK. The aim was to regenerate a busy high street to make it safer, less congested and a better environment for the community. Our task was to make sure the people living in the area had a say in the planning process and that their views and knowledge about the area were communicated effectively to the planners and engineers designing the scheme.

The tools and techniques of community participation we were using had been forged mostly in less developed countries. The planners and engineers raised eyebrows when we asked them to take part in think and listen sessions with community leaders, and ask schoolchildren to draw their ideas on maps of the area. We managed to convince the professionals that people in community have often some of the best ideas about what needs to happen to make a scheme successful.

We had taken over a disused shop in the area we were working in and had set it up as a drop in place for people to find out about the project. There was a window display of what we had done so far and the idea was people would come inside and take part in our participation events. The shop window worked well. It is worth remembering that you are up against a lot if you are trying to get people's attention to engage in your process.

One day I was outside the shop handing out fliers advertizing what we were doing, when a street person came up to me. It was cold that day, nearly Christmas. We were offering free tea, coffee and mince pies. He asked if he could come in for some tea and to get warm. I said yes, and suggested he might like to do some of our mapping activities too, which he did.

He stayed for a bit and had a look at what we were doing. He asked if there was anything he could do to help. I said he could

hand out some fliers on the street. He willingly took on the task and before we knew it there were a good number of street people coming inside making their way to mince pies and hot drinks. All had been told, in no uncertain terms by our doorman, that yes they could come in and they would get free drinks and pies, but they had to take part in our information gathering activities, which they did. And we got fantastic information from a hard to reach group of rough sleepers in the community who we had identified as stakeholders, but had no idea about how we could engage with them.

The lesson I took away from that day was simple: be aware there are people out there you may not see, who are invisible as much to me as I to them. I might not know how to deal with them, or they might not be part of an identified stakeholder group, or they might cause conflict, or threaten me, or maybe hate me for what I am trying to do. I need to be flexible and aware enough to see an opportunity when it presents itself. One of my core practices in participation work, therefore, is to ask myself every day whether or not I am slipping back into my comfort zone, to check whether I am engaging with the whole community, not just talking to people I get along with, only the ones I find interesting, or who will give me answers I want to hear.

Charles Parrack

It was one of those 'break-out' sessions – break out, that is, from the captive and sometimes tedious drone of conference routine, following a presentation I had made on Community Action Planning. I was providing as examples some of the projects and programmes in which I have been involved, in India, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Peru and elsewhere. I was making my presentation to an audience of young professionals, in an attempt to demonstrate how process and product in participatory work, if done well, can liberate rather than confine the resourcefulness of people. In this sense, process can deliver both goods and services, and moral and social value as well.

'All well and good', someone said, 'but what does it all add up to in the longer term? Community Action Plans lack that bigger

vision of city plans. They had failed to add up much, it seemed, in the context of the scale it all demands to engage with pressing global issues of poverty, rights and entitlements, the inequities of market protectionism and trade, of gender inequality, climate change, welfare aid and all the dependency it brings.' It was, indeed, a passionate plea from young professionals to find ways of getting engaged, of making a difference, in a world that had lost touch with its grass roots.

In the old days, one might have suggested we take to the streets with banners and loud speakers, or join some worthy cause to make our voices heard. But times have changed and so have tactics. My fellow break-outers were searching for ways to maintain a commitment to careers and the rigours of their disciplines, but in ways that would engage them as agents of change.

These questions sparked a wider discussion on how practical work can be scaled up in impact and made more strategic, and what kind of expert you have to be to do it all. Why do so many well-intentioned, even well-devised, projects and programmes fail to achieve a lasting impact in dealing with problems, and at a scale that counts? Why is it so difficult to sustain all the effort, to keep it all going long enough so that it can transform the lives and livelihoods of people and the fairness and safety of cities? What or who gets in our way and why?

In our continued discussions, critique from all those present was levelled in various ways: that scaling it all up demands the kind of money, institutional capacity and political good will that we rarely have; that the kind of change it all demands, in doing and thinking, in our relationships to people, are often threatening politically and professionally; that there is rarely coincidence between the social value of work and the economic demands of careers; that there is not enough learning as we go and, even when there is, it doesn't easily find its way back into practice to change the way we think and do; that corruption and greed take precedence over moral values, nearly always, so it seems; that we continue to tackle the symptoms of problems, leaving the longer-term systemic or primary causes for someone else to sort out – if at all, because we have timetables to stick to and fees to collect; and that, often, the solutions we devise

to deal with problems that are often based on outsiders' priorities or agency mandates, induce partly other problems – the expulsion of people from urban land in favour of civic projects or Olympic villages in which we, the architects, planners and everyone else, are complicit.

Examples are plenty: '...the shift in funding focus from helping Kosovo Albanians just after the NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] bombing, to supporting the return of Kosovo Serbs (in order to achieve the international objectives of a multi-ethnic society) increased inter-group animosity ... Their external agendas often set up perverse incentives. As one person said, "We asked for help for poor families that were not displaced, but we were told that this was not possible. We said, well what do we have to do to get assistance, leave Kosovo and come back again?" ...'¹

In another example, a worthy intent to promote ethnic inclusion and target multi-ethnic communities, exactly the opposite was achieved. 'To get aid', said one person, 'not only does your community have to have many ethnic groups, but they have to have problems with each other too!' In another community, people explained that they had a school, a health clinic and an electrical grid in their village, noting, 'We got all this aid because the village was multi-ethnic. The NGOs were fulfilling their own conditions. We heard this on TV.'²

And when we do attempt to deal with the underlying causes of problems, but when the going gets tricky for whatever reason, as it always does, we – the development practitioners – revert to generous but short-term tactics that we can measure or count to satisfy sponsors and our own need to achieve. We provide as much as we can that enables very little in the longer term – mosquito nets to fight malaria, houses to tackle housing, food parcels to tackle food security. None of these things builds assets in the long term. We revert, in other words, to palliative measures, 'Where the basic needs of the poor are taken care of, while the rest of the world gets on with its business.'³

In our examples at Thawra we saw how practical, basic needs interventions, if well placed and monitored, can start a process, which can deliver long-term value. We saw how small interventions

can change the nature of place, cultivate community and, with it, the livelihoods and sense of belonging that comes with ownership. We saw how these processes can deliver all kinds of assets, locally and city-wide. Everywhere '...the contribution of millions of daily small actions by every individual, such as separating waste, thus brings about a great improvement in social productivity'.⁴

From these and all the other interventions designed as catalysts in the effort to get things going, and from my discussions with break-outers everywhere, I have begun to reflect more specifically on how the strategic value of small interventions can become more integral to Community Action Plans, rather than left somewhat to chance, while not ignoring that chance has a big role to play in planning ahead. From these discussions, I have begun to articulate, with friends and colleagues everywhere, what a Strategic Action Plan (SAP) looks like – what kinds of processes it implies, what kind of practices it demands and what kind of expert.

Two crosscutting themes recur in our search for method. The first is change – change in the way in which we reason practice and in the nature of professional conduct and responsibility. 'Change (however) only sticks when we have understood why it happened.'⁵ Continuous change is, therefore, contingent on progressive learning.

Then there is change in place, the constant and progressive adaptations we make to our physical, social and economic environment, in order to maintain good fit and stability over time. This after all is the purpose of development. The capacity for this kind of change needs to be cultivated through design and good organization. It will demand a more flexible approach to the conventions of the project cycle (see Figure 9.2, Chapter 9) and to the standards and regulations, which get in the way. These kinds of change, in practice, in place and in the capacity of place to sustain change, are continuous and transformative.

The second crosscutting theme is scale – scale in numbers to meet demand and scale in impact of interventions. Going to scale is principally about mainstreaming – quantitatively in programme size, logistics, money; functionally in the way in which programmes are integrated with other programmes or in the way in which

organizations are federated city-wide, nationwide. Functionally also in partnership with private, government and non-government organizations, strengthening government and voluntary institutions; politically, in alternative forms of governance, more participation and the mediation of power relations; organizationally in leadership, in the capacity to scale up, in management capacity and in the skills and knowledge and institutional learning within organizations.

Change and scale are both explored in different ways in the following key components of Strategic Action Planning:

- in the conduct and responsibility of experts through what I have called PEAS;
- in the reasoning, and rationale of practice;
- in the management of constraints, to rights and entitlements for example and also programme constraints that inhibit innovation;
- learning and communication, about the growth and sharing of knowledge and experience and the importance of continuous reflection and feedback into practice; and in the dissemination of lessons learnt and the legibility of language and the media that we use;
- dependency and ownership – ownership of processes and of problems as well as solutions;
- sustaining livelihoods and reducing vulnerability – accumulating assets as a key objective of all interventions.

Too much forward reasoning, ignorance or the inability to manage constraints, an interruption to learning, poor communication, dependency-inducing behaviour or technologies, poverty and vulnerability, are all primary causes of problems we face in fieldwork cutting across housing, health, services and utilities. All are, therefore, integral to the planning of SAP.

PEAS AND THE SOCIABLE SIDE OF PRACTICE

First, we need to consider again the roles, responsibilities and obligations of experts and those whose duty of care extends beyond charity and into equitable and efficient design, city planning and urban management. When we reflect on the narrative and examples in Part II of this book and on other examples of CAP and participatory work worldwide, we begin to recognize (if not accept or assimilate) four integrally related sets of action vital to good development practice: Providing, Enabling, the capacity to be Adaptive, the capacity to Sustain (PEAS). Together, these define the ideals and activities of responsible practice.

PROVIDING

The first, providing, is easy to justify. It is what we as experts do best and what we were taught to do – to provide goods and services according to our expert skills and knowledge. When providing, however, is seen as an end objective and pursued as a discrete professional routine, then two things follow: either we retrench and slip back into top-down thinking and routine – we succumb to bad practice habits, and become antisocial; or we revert to charity.

In the first case, providing on its own imposes routines on practice, the kind that confine rather than liberate, creative work and the intelligence of place, when what we do and how we do it gets in the way of what we need to achieve.

At the heart of the dilemma is our own notion of what it takes to succeed as an expert – to be original, to defend your ground, to be rigorous, to be in control. We are driven by single solution thinking, by an obsession with excellence in search of definitive answers – getting it all ‘generically right’ in the interests of best practice, so that it can be replicated, and in pursuit of careers.¹ Our approach to problem seeking and to problem solving is linear and predictable: diagnose the problem, search out for opportunities, assess your risks, assemble the team, sort out budgets, draw up plans, design a response and deliver whatever. We relegate any participation we may be required to do into consultation at best, tokenism at worst.

We focus attention on ‘things’ and on making places, rather than on people, because people, we have decided, delay progress and clutter up the process. People, in any case, for most experts in the built environment at least, are someone else’s problem. As a consequence, we impose a false divide between people and place. In so doing, we deny the role of place to mediate social and economic productivity. We deny the social equity principles of sustainable development, which demand an ‘effective interlinked approach along social, environmental and economic domains at all spatial tiers of governance’.² We reinforce the strict boundaries that in the old days defined and protected professional domains. We compartmentalize problems to suit disciplinary skills, the way we were taught in schools, and place disciplinary skills into professional silos ‘where planners operate in one sphere with their principles and maps, economists think about models, architects compete for design distinction – even while the challenges of today’s cities cry out for collaborative approaches’.³ Access to things (housing, schools, shops, playgrounds, toilets) takes precedence over access to opportunity. Our standards and planning laws, our housing estates and town plans confine and regulate more than liberate life chances.

And then we divide it all up again between those who make projects and those who devise policy, between both and yet others, the researchers and academics, the ‘think tanks’ and working groups whose job is to make sense of it all and sort things out.

When it comes to scaling it all up, for providers, this means building big and building more; and building faster means building all at once and in the shortest period of time. Timetables take precedence over life processes. Practice is simplified and reduced to a few safe and well-tried routines, so that it can be replicable. Everything is designed according to the ideals set by our profession and in search, forever, for perfection. All this in the interests of ensuring efficiency of systems and organization, and to justify interventions. ‘If it were possible for bacteria to argue with each other, they would be able to say that of course their chief justification was the advancement of medical science!’⁴

The result: a false sense of quality in the exactness of plans and a bureaucratic dreamland of place and community. Worse still, a false sense of achievement among experts, a false sense of excellence. This ‘relentless pursuit of excellence is the expert’s badge of distinction’⁵ and the trademark of providers. It is how we build our reputations and earn our status professionally. It is, however, an antisocial and self-deluding kind of expertise, because it breeds a false sense of self and, also, inequality between experts and non-experts. It alienates ordinary people and makes them feel stupid.

‘I am convinced’, says Ladislau Dowbor about the ways in which we organize and govern ourselves and the perfection and certainty we try to achieve, ‘that today, the best approach [to getting relevant] is not another simplified certainty, but an open-minded approach of frank questioning, political creativity, tolerance and understanding. It is essential to keep the communication channels open between the various social sciences, between different types of institutions and between the range of organizing social players.’⁶

In cities everywhere, we have come to understand how intricate and complex formal and informal alliances and partnerships develop for building houses, managing waste, exchanging commodities, exerting rights and political advantages, securing employment, negotiating services and more. We have seen in time how people build their social networks and a substantial amount of knowledge, skills and experience about how best to build, to profit or dodge the authorities, despite all the constraints. When things go wrong, no one needs step in with elaborate explanations. People will visually

have the know-how, if not the means or legitimacy to put it right. They will invent ways of working as they go, not always safely and not always fairly, but tailor-made to needs, income and sometimes even to aspirations. In all these respects, disciplinary silos, over-standardization and over-generalization denies the intelligence of informality and all the discretion it entails, because it threatens professional status and the perceived pursuits of excellence. Informality looks untidy and disorganized. The exactness of plans, whether for schools, housing or settlements, displaces the creativity of disorder in favour of places, which are easy to regulate and to manage by those who provide and others whose duty it is to implement policy. 'Nowhere in this view is serious thought given to how to capitalize on discretion as a device for improving the reliability and effectiveness of policies at the street level.'⁷

Over-regulation and over-standardization quickly become prescriptive and serve as a substitute for competence. They disturb the balance between design and emergence and with it the very people and organizations we now know are vital to the health and resilience of community. The opportunity of chance is denied, to be spontaneous, to improvise and to adapt in order to build and grow at a pace suitable to needs and capacities. 'Adaptation (of overly regulated plans) consist either of subversive, extra-legal behaviour, or a complex procedure of hierarchical clearance. There is little or no room for the exercise of special skills or judgement, not to mention deliberate intervention and experimentation.'⁸

The result is that people become dependent on having everything provided for them as commodity, including knowledge. 'The production of knowledge (when seen as a function of providing as a discrete routine) is inherently associated with current relations of power ... Knowledge serves the interests of control better than the needs of liberation. As such, knowledge itself becomes a repressive social force',⁹ in particular when applied to the reasoning of exactness.

This reasoning when applied to placemaking and human development 'serves as a shield against exposure to others ... It is a borderline personality disorder arousing self-hate in ourselves as experts, because nothing is good enough, and humiliation and

resentment in others.'¹⁰ This antisocial expertise 'shames others and embattles or isolates experts'. You become your own critic forever searching for precedents of excellence devised by others, whether now or in history – a 'prisoner of envy'.¹¹ It doesn't take long to acknowledge your inability to be effective and subsequently to lose your self-respect.

What we get is a 'paralysis of the moral and political imagination'¹² because creativity and perfection become the mandate of the elite and gifted. The expert comes to be seen as a special kind of person, rather than that every person is a special kind of expert. Power relations are reinforced. All of which reflects in the behaviour and relationships to people who become beneficiaries rather than partners to our work.

We wind up diagnosing people and their condition of poverty, as if it were some kind of avoidable malignancy. (What you need to do is...) We contradict others who may not share our view of right or wrong, good or bad. We judge or stereotype those whose views and habits we find odd, but which may be entrenched in cultural norms and practices about which we may have, at best, a partial understanding. We will often label as troublemakers the loud or the pushy in community and so exclude the very people who can get things done. And because we are the experts, we wind up lecturing rather than dialoguing. When dialogue becomes monologue, we seed the beginnings of all kinds of social injustice.

We also become defensive. Our skills of defensiveness and manipulation have been developed over years of getting our own way, arguing our case in school project critiques or boardrooms – which are, in any case, confirmed by our international status. And when we can't get our own way, we wind up threatening and, in so doing, alienating again the very people and stakeholders whom we know we will need as partners, with whom we are purportedly participating. In all these respects, we are not good listeners because talking, not listening, is how you prove yourself – how you silence the opposition. It then follows, because we are not good listeners, we cannot be good learners – that sociable side of 'knowledge transfer rather than knowledge hoarding'.¹³

I started this chapter by suggesting that a second consequence of providing as a discrete routine is that it often becomes 'giving'. It becomes charity, driven by good intentions rather than informed priorities and often winds up 'more for the benefit of the giver than for the good of the recipient'.¹⁴ D.H. Lawrence called this 'the greed of giving'. While charity at times of crisis is vital, it is nevertheless momentary, in particular when de-linked from PEAS. Providing as charity often embedded in relief aid, empowers celebrities 'who have become the face of Aid in Africa'.¹⁵ The sentiment and guilt that often go with it all induce dependency and corrupt the moral high ground of good governance.

Governments come to rely on outsiders to deal with health, education, poverty and crises, while they pursue other goals, however legitimate. Charitable interventions are mostly piecemeal and rarely sustainable. And when they are tied to conditionality, governments become responsible to donors and celebrities rather than their own people. When de-linked to each of the other components of PEAS, providing as charity induces a moral superiority among providers. 'It can become an important drive and even a sickness in which they (the providers) urgently need the continuing contact with recipients to give added meaning to their lives. Helping becomes a drug ... We need to protect others and ourselves from the consequences of good intentions ... When good intentions are entangled with feelings of moral superiority, it can be twice as dangerous. This mixture can encourage the recipient to feel worthless and third rate; seeing us as "good" and himself as "bad". It is so much harder to struggle against the pressing attentions of someone who is intent on undermining you by doing good.'¹⁶

ENABLING

Those by now, who know the limitations of providing, have sought to reposition themselves as enablers. This either-or distinction is neither helpful nor accurate. I have come to believe that in order to be an effective enabler, you have to be a prudent provider. The value of providing in this case is partly measured in its own right

(the buffalo, the mobile unit, micro finance, the house, the water tap) in the practical way in which it meets the needs of now and, significantly, in the way in which it enables others to provide for themselves, to build assets now or soon and later.

I take enablement to mean the ability or willingness to provide the means with which to open doors and create opportunities in order to build livelihoods, reduce vulnerability and sustain development. As such, and despite the wrath of neo-liberal labelling, enablement, as we have seen it practised in our examples, cuts across all three of Burgess' distinctions.¹⁷ With community enablement, the focus is clearly on people and on building their capacity to be recognized as the mainstream, rather than a social or economic liability; political enablement is the strategic task of all Development Practice – to influence policy, change standards, remove discrimination, promote rights and open doors. And market enablement because opening up markets for small-scale social enterprise both in terms of skill, produce and products is a part of sustaining community. It is integral to our definition of good governance. And rather than deny the state its role, it realigns the state and the formal market in partnership with civil society.

Critique and debate over the advantages and consequences of enablement are well analysed by Burgess, Carmona and Kolstee. In practice and for the development practitioner, however, with enablement comes a very different set of values, tools, skills, methods and relationships to partners and project work. It gets us involved in products and activities we may not conventionally see as part of our disciplinary work, certainly not as providers – as we have witnessed in our case examples. Building organizations, for example, conflict resolution negotiation skills, innovating with partnerships. It demands entrepreneurship and all the spontaneity of spotting and building on opportunities, as you go. Then there are all the training and capacity building activities, the participatory tools of role play and gaming. When it comes to outputs, we find ourselves designing games for groups to play in order to inform and to socialize – board games, or planning kits, or card packs. Our models of houses or schools or playgrounds are interactive rather than representational, again to inform and promote discovery of different ways to lay out a

plan or use a building. Then there may be handbooks and manuals to guide the design implementation or management of projects and programmes, to explore alternatives that capture local wisdom and local knowledge. Many of these emerge during project work. In other words, the people involved contribute to and sometimes lead in the design of these tools.

But it is all contingent on what we provide, a check on how much we should provide – catalysts rather than projects, starting points not end states. It all depends on what you have got locally in resources, on conditions and circumstances on the ground. In these ways, design and planning become themselves a process of enablement, cultivating place in ways that liberate the resourcefulness of people, always adaptive and transformative.

ADAPTABILITY

Which leads us to the third component of PEAS: adaptability and change. How should we think about change and resilience as integral to planning and design? How should we go about making matters imprecise¹⁸ in order to invite change? We know that the capacity for change is a resource with which to sustain well-being, build community and a sense of belonging and identity. It is a resource for building all kinds of assets, tangible and intangible. But what does it mean for planning and design and for placemaking?

Change is still seen today as a threat to the precision of planning. It is interference to well-rationalized plans, a threat rather than a corrective to the status quo, of professional responsibilities. Change and adaptation invoke a natural and inclusive process of incremental adjustments to ensure good fit over time. John Habraken, in his book *Palladio's Children* recalls about architects: '...In mainstream design, growth and change stimulate little creative thinking or recognition as a source of inspiration leading to a new architecture ... The large-scale project must intrinsically sustain partial or uneven change over time if it is to both shelter and sustain small-scale life ... Our instinct is to defy time and to preserve what we have wrought. The special building – the villa, the palace, the castle, the house of

worship – is intended to be immutable in the steadily transforming field: a stone in running water.'¹⁹

In summary in order to change to fit, then places must be made fit for change. But how should we go about doing this?

In his exploration of an alternative architecture, Colin Ward identified a number of themes, linked by their intent to explore change as a way of disciplining design and planning.²⁰ He refers to the infinite variability of the vernacular of anywhere, both formal and informal, as it adapts to the needs of time and aspiration with minimum waste. He writes of the ecological impulse, with its desire for long-life, low-energy, loose fit – where autonomy and self-sufficiency drive the search for an architecture of good fit, between both the natural and built environment. Then there was his adaptive or 'convivial' alternative – convivial in Illich's terms because it gives a maximum of opportunity for people, not experts, to stamp their own visions and identities on place, rather than 'allow the designer to determine the meaning and expectations of others'. This, he wrote, relegates people to the subservient role of 'caretaker', 'because the greater the expertise, the power and status of a profession, the smaller the opportunity for the citizen to make decisions'. Ward reminds us of his three gurus of modern town planning: Howard, Geddes and Kropotkin. All viewed planning '...not as a profession nor a body of legislation, but as a popular movement, a public enthusiasm, part of the social economy'.

Ward's fifth alternative recalled the writings of Simon Nicholson and his theory of loose parts. 'In any environment, both the degree of inventiveness and creativity, and the possibilities for discovery are directly proportional to the number and kind of variables in it.'²¹ These variables offer both clarity of opportunity and yet an indeterminacy about ends. They offer an acceptable degree of tolerance or variation in meaning, or in value and function.

Ward's themes offer a basis for thinking afresh the placemaker's art. They lead us to think of design and planning not as a process, which necessarily produces an architecture of building. Nor does it produce the conventional site plan with its neat lines, and distinct and colourful depiction of function, circulation patterns and public open spaces. 'It will not seek to designate a discrete "end state" for

the simple reason that there is none; and it will not be based on zoning regulations and density standards, since the aim is to create conditions and not impose restrictions.²² Rather, it represents an architecture of invitation and of opportunity, with some formal modelling, with roads and pathways, parcels and lots, all of which may well be annotated with light, shade, trees, boundaries, barriers, utilities and differential lot sizes and land values.

As we have seen in our examples in Part II, the plan is not some sacred prototype to be tested in its compliance with preordained rules. Neither was the design process concerned only with problem solving, in the sense that a solution is expected to emerge at the end. Rather, the plan, in its structure and arrangement is an expression of shared aspirations and an expression of creative opportunities. It represents 'a minimum of organization that would serve the benefits of planning, while leaving individuals the greatest possible control over their own lives'. Its aims: '...to sustain as many particularities as possible, in the hope that most people will accept, discover, or devise one that fits'.²³ The plan, with its rules, opportunities and constraints, serves legibly as a chessboard might to a chess player. As Habraken put it:

*The basic exercise gives us the ingredients of a design attitude. We see in the form at hand, the moves available to us. We enter into a dialogue with the form. Our freedom is in choosing the next move; our skill is in choosing what leads us in the general direction we must take to satisfy a demand or a strategy. Our knowledge and experience lie in being able to find many alternative moves. The result of such humble beginnings, if the process is continued, can be very complex and very rich.*²⁴

What we get, as a result and in summary, is a science of the everyday based on the following:

- the capacity or tolerance of place for change;
- the legibility of place – with space for human development and well-being;
- the accommodation of difference – an invitation to differentiate and at the same time to assimilate;

- the indeterminacy of content – and initial ambiguity of meaning that will become purposeful and meaningful during habitation.

SUSTAINABILITY

Some time ago, on one of those looking and listening phases of fieldwork, I became intrigued with shop signage: in particular, signs that define what shop owners provide and also what they aspire for their customers. It was a place that we were visiting with all kinds of beauty parlours, hairdressers and tailors: 'Gloria's Head for Heights'; 'Head Shine and Shoe Shine – we work at both ends'; 'Jackets and Dreams – the tailor of cool' and others. One sign particularly attracted my attention: 'The Sustainable Barber's Shop'.

We went in to talk to the owner to find out what was meant. The barber was a young man in his twenties, a graduate of technical college but who had started his own part-time business, with his father, cutting hair. When we asked for his meaning of sustainability, I had half expected some version of the widely read Brandt Report, or to be impressed with his recycling of grey water, his solar driven razors or all the other gizmos that would save the world. Instead, his own version was more pragmatic. 'When my customers come in', he said, 'I cut enough hair to satisfy their needs and aspirations for now, but not too much, so that they come back sooner rather than later. That way, I keep my business going.'

Sustainability, the fourth component of PEAS, is by now already largely defined, implicit in all of PEAS: the importance of providing catalysts and the many forms this can take, physical, spatial, monetary or indeed in services and capacity building. There are the responsibilities and activities of enablers in promoting community enablement, as well as market and political enablement, all of which sustain progress and multiply opportunity. Then there is the capacity for change that 'after all is only another word for growth, another synonym for learning', that ability to be adaptive socially and spatially, to build resilience and to sustain development. All these define a culture of practice, both practical in its objectives, and strategic in its purpose, with a strong commitment from all 'to

share in the responsibility for the future, which begins now'.²⁵ Being strategic is synonymous with being sustainable. Sustainability both derives from these themes and is a check on their value over time, widening opportunity and promoting a lasting impact. This lasting impact we will see in subsequent chapters is contingent on dealing with the primary causes of problems, as outlined at the start.

First, however, when we provide in order to enable, when we enable to adapt or when we provide, enable and adapt in order to sustain, we invoke a way of reasoning and a rationale for work, which is anti-convention. It demands a change in process, no less than a change in the logic of project work.

9

REASONING TO SCALE

Much of the rationale of Strategic Action Planning (SAP) is already implicit in PEAS. Also implicit is the action science reasoning that underpins all Action Planning, both CAP (Community Action Planning) and SAP.

The objectives of CAP and SAP are illustrated and compared in the figure below. Together, they give purpose to practice beyond just practical work, a commitment to structural and not just remedial change, in the interests of lasting development.

CAP	SAP
Timescale (now, soon)	Timescale (soon, later)
Access to shelter/services/ utilities	Access to resources, removing constraints, power sharing
Problem solving	Rights, entitlements Discrimination
Plans, projects, programmes	Policies, standards legislation, institutional reform, partnerships
Outputs (quantitative) – houses, water, etc	Outcomes (qualitative) – well-being, livelihoods security
Good practice (local)	Good principles (transferable)
Small scale project based	Large scale, urban/national scaling up, quantitatively, functionally, politically, organizationally

Figure 9.1 CAP and SAP: comparative and complementary objectives

Source: Nabeel Hamdi