LET’S EXPERIENCE “BA”

COME AND FIND YOUR WINGS IN PORTLAND

POWER: THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From the Editor</td>
<td>Alette Vonk</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference News</td>
<td>Join us at IODA’s 30th World Conference Suzanne Zaldivar</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are You Ready to Meet the World in Portland? An invitation Peter Kalmar and Lori Blander</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meet Portland</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Community Consulting Project in Portland Alette Vonk</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A letter from the OD Association in Japan Ken Nishikawa</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Conference Song (Kyoto 2014) Frank Rambaek</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participating in the IODA OD Conference in Kyoto Roshanga Wickramasinghe</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members Forum</td>
<td>President's Words Peter Kalmar</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Richard Beckhard Award Winner 2014 Interview with Marc Silvermann</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IODA Social Media Site iodacommunity.org</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In Memory of Pat Novak, Spark and Nurture the Passion Rob Barnett</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Platform</td>
<td>What does OD do in the World, what is the Reason for its Expansion Jose Campoverde Ayres</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Circumnavigators all? Virginia Mullin</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar on Spiritual Leadership in Colombia Marc Silvermann</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feature</td>
<td>Power: The Elephant in the Room Rho Sandberg</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newsletter Team</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
he disappearance of the manager, the vanishing consultant: the trend seems that employees know best what is good for the customer and how to organize it. Fascinating examples are shown in a documentary on Dutch television. A building contractor who, once a builder himself, has a company where administrators do all the contracting and planning; where builders, masons and electricians tune their work independently. The owner says, almost pitifully, “I go fishing a lot.”

Another successful example is the Ministry of Social Security in Belgium. The workers select their own manager, they are in control of their own planning, activities and results and can walk in and out of the office whenever they please. “Frankly, I don’t know how many hours I make, I just do what needs to be done,” an employee reacts.

One of the most exciting examples is the Dutch police. You’d expect hierarchy to be the dominant feature, but the cops have organized themselves and ask for more self-regulation. Some teams have negotiated to select their own superiors. This is the real revolution: the fact that policemen can actually veto the selection of the chief. “Of course there’s situations where we need a clear line of command,” one of the district agents explains, “but those situations are clear to everyone.”

In all examples, the support from the top is prominent and the courage of the leaders to let go is of extreme importance. The team is in charge and the boss becomes a coach. The malleability of reality from either the top or from external consultants is put overboard.

Also the employees need to be of a special sort. “This is a very nice thought and a feel-good fuzzy idea. And would turn into Lord of the Flies in most offices within a week,” somebody reacts to a similar article in New York magazine. Indeed the culture needs to be one where employees ask themselves what they can contribute instead of posing the question what’s in it for them.

Pushing consultants aside touches us in the heart of our profession. I happened to see a familiar consultant face during the documentary, just in a blink of the eye, proving there were consultants that kept themselves wisely in the background (see the ‘Rhineland way’ feature article of IODA News July 2011). But Lenette Schuijt argues on Management Site that if consultants continue to follow trends without a scientific ground and without clear links to the value delivery to the customer, they will no longer be of much use. Shaffer and Thomson talk of ‘ritual rain dances’, when managers and consultants execute yet another new change management tool.

We would need to rethink our work, Schuijt argues. Yet it is the unbeatable change optimist with soul, the partner with endless energy to co-create and inspire, that will always be needed.

And that’s exactly what we’ll strive for, in this IODA News and in the exciting new conference in Portland. The theme says it all: “Our field, our world, our impact”!

Alette Vonk, Editor in Chief
Pioneer Square, Portland - a 30 min walk from the conference hotel
Join us at IODA’s 30th World Conference
by Suzanne Zaldivar

Oct. 17-20, 2015 in Portland, Oregon, USA

Energy is already building for the 2nd OD World Summit which we are co-hosting with OD Network. Many in the IODA community are already making plans to be there – delegations are coming from various parts of the world. We look forward to your presence as well! Word is that it will be epic!

Planning for the summit got off to a great start following the annual OD Network Conference in Philadelphia last October where OD Network celebrated its 50th anniversary. Peter Kalmar is the co-chair of the summit in 2015 along with the wonderful Lori Blander from OD Network. Our initial planning meeting was warm, energetic and both organizations are aligned in their vision of providing a dynamic, celebratory space to explore the themes of our Field, our World and our Impact.

Péter, standing, and Lori, seated in a striped sweater, announce the co-hosted OD World Summit for 2015 during ODN’s Annual Conference recently in Philadelphia. Their playful photos in the slide behind are from a photo booth provided during the conference.
We’ve received over 230 proposals for pre-conference and concurrent sessions from around the world which were reviewed by an international task force of 15 volunteers. The final schedule will be released in the next few weeks. The exciting list of inspirational speakers is now available. Check out here.

As a complement to this wonderful collaboration between OD Network and IODA, the OD Network is planning to issue a call for papers for a Special Issue of the OD Practitioner in 2016 which will focus on the global practice of OD. Stay tuned for details on www.iodanet.org.

And see you in Portland!

**OD Network’s 2014 Conference**

The ODN conference in Philadelphia was enlightening and stimulating. We heard from Warner Burke, (the founding ED of the OD Network in 1964 and still teaching at Columbia University), Frederick Miller, Billie Alban, our own Karen Davis, Brenda Jones, Barbara Bunker, Marv Weisbord and Sandra Janoff (of the Future Search Network), Peter Sorensen, Therese Yaeger, Mila Baker, Dick and Emily Axelrod, Peter Norlin, June Delano, Barry Oshry (purveyor of The Power Lab), David Sibbet, and many more.

One of the powerful sessions involved creating timelines to explore the events over the past few decades of history as well as key moments in the evolution of the field of organization development. Discussion groups were created that mixed generations of practitioners and led to lively dialogue and stories.

We are delighted to share the good news that our own Peter Norlin, along with Matt Minahan, won Outstanding Article in the OD Practitioner for their article “Edging Toward the Center: An Opportunity to Align our Values, our Practices and the Purpose of our Work”. You can find this article in Vol. 45, No. 4, 2013. Congratulations Peter and Matt!

**Suzanne Zaldivar,**
IODA Membership Chairperson &
OD World Summit Program Committee Member
Mount Hood, Oregon - a short 80 minute drive from the city center.
Are You Ready to Meet the World in Portland?

*Invitation by Lori Blander and Péter Kalmár*

We are excited to announce that this year’s IODA Conference from the 17-20th of October in Portland, Oregon will be co-hosted by IODA (www.iodanet.org) and OD Network (www.odnetwork.org), two of the most prestigious international organizations of our field. This strategic co-operation and Our Open Invitation to all organizations, networks, schools and communities practicing OD in the World clearly marks the beginning of a new era of IODA reaching out to fulfill its mission of “Co-creating a Global OD Community”. Hereby we invite you and your colleagues from the US and All Corners of the World to come together in Portland for the:

2015 OD NETWORK | IODA ANNUAL CONFERENCE & 2ND OD WORLD SUMMIT

The 2015 Program Committee is already working hard and has lots of fun in creating an outstanding program and a meaningful, memorable experience for all of us. We - Lori Blander and Peter Kalmar, your Co-chairs, Karen Davis, Suzanne Zaldivar and Peter Norlin, your representatives on the Communications Program Committee, Kitti Szoboszlai, Celina Ryan and Diana Jager, leaders of our 2015 OD World Summit Communication Task Force, Silke Haebold, our wonderful Operations Manager, and naturally the whole IODA Executive Committee plus our Newsletter Team - are just thrilled to do our very best to bring the World of OD together in the Pacific Northwest of the US, for this epic milestone event of our profession.

In Our Vision this year’s summit will be yet another fantastic global gathering that brings all continents and walks of life together, connected through a passion for OD. The conference - as usual in all our IODA Conferences - will be a dynamic international event, facilitating sharing, learning and change at organizational, community and societal level, building on and cherishing the very best of both IODA’s and ODN’s traditions.
Meet the World in Portland! - October 17-20. 2015

Theme and Concept

OUR FIELD. OUR WORLD. OUR IMPACT.
Meet the World in Portland! - October 17-20. 2015

Program

Day 1 - Our Field
We will focus on our roots in Organization Development. Where do we come from, how have we arrived at where we are today and where are we going as a field? What are some of the important, relevant, pressing questions and dilemmas we are facing as a colorful and vibrant international Community of Practice?

Day 2 - Our World
We will explore the changes in our environment both locally and globally, as we look at what we as OD practitioners do in state of the art projects around the globe. What does OD mean in different parts of the World, how is it practiced, and what do we, what can we offer today both locally and globally?

Day 3 - Our Impact
Based on the insights and inspirations from the previous days, we will share examples of impactful interventions and initiatives to create new ones collectively. How can we individually, in our networks and by joining forces make a difference in our organizations, local environments and globally in the World?

Prior to Day 1
We will have a full day of Pre-conference Programs & Learning Opportunities. These optional and fee-based programs will range from on-site learning workshops, to community events, company visits and city tours. The pre-conference day will embrace learning, building community and reaching out to Portland, while getting us in the mood, allowing us to leave a foot-print and enriching the overall conference experience.
As your Co-chairs & Program Committee, we look forward to leading the way, and we could not be more excited to - after the first “ODWS” in 2010 in Budapest - bring the 2nd OD World Summit, this grand event to Portland, providing all of us a unique experience that helps us to grow, inspires, creates new opportunities, strengthens networks and builds strong, lasting bonds:

“Connecting communities, flourishing together!”

So if you want to join your 400+ colleagues from 30+ countries, if you want to represent your organization, city, country, region and continent, if you want to expand your horizon, learn, share and co-create with some of the most prominent figureheads of our field, or if you simply miss the IODA Feeling, then surprise yourself with the gift of enrichment, enlightenment and excitement both in your work and private life, put the dates into your calendar, start planning, and join us in:

“Portland - Our Passageway to the World!”

We look forward to meeting you all in October, best regards on behalf of the 2015 Program Committee:

Lori Blander - Conference Co-Chair ODN

&

Péter Kalmár - Conference Co-Chair IODA
Meet the World in Portland! - October 17-20. 2015
Where? When? How much?

THE HOSTS: This year’s conference will be co-hosted by IODA and OD Network, two of the most prestigious organizations in the world, working on co-creating a Global OD Community. Thus this historic, milestone event will embrace the mission of “Bringing the World of OD together”. After Budapest in 2010 this year Portland will host and celebrate the 2nd OD World Summit, bringing IODA back to the United States after 16 years.

DATE & TIME: On Saturday, the 17th of October, a number of pre-conference Master classes and visits to local companies, communities and sites of interest will be offered. The conference program will start on Sunday, the 18th of October and it will finish on Tuesday, the 20th in the late afternoon.

LOCATION: Portland, Oregon – USA
Hilton Portland and Executive Tower
921 SW Sixth Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97204
Access: Portland International Airport [PDX] - 20 minute drive to hotel

REGISTRATION: As a first step register as an IODA Member for 2015 here and then access the Conference Registration Page through here. This way you will be entitled for the Members’ Discount specified on the Registration Page. Note that Early Bird Rates and Registration are already open at www.odnetwork.org. Once you have confirmed, renewed or signed up for IODA membership, please make it very clear on the ODWS Registration Form that you are an IODA member.

SCHOLARSHIPS: As usual, IODA will offer 10 IODA Scholarships to all those who would like to participate and need our support in making it happen. These IODA Scholarships will allow the selected participants to attend the conference free of charge. Scholarship will not cover travel costs and/or accommodation. Read more here. The application form is available as download. If you are interested and/or would like to apply, please send your application to Silke Haebold.
ACCOMMODATION: Participants will have to make their own reservation at the conference hotel [here](#). Please refer to the IODA/ODN conference and reserve early to make sure you get a room at the discounted IODA/ODN Rate. FYI room rates apply to double rooms irrespective if you look for single occupancy or are sharing a room with someone. Furthermore, the hotel has a couple of rooms/apartments that can accommodate three or four guests, at a small extra charge. So if you are ready for that, accommodation can become economical.

A limited number of overnight stays in private homes in Portland will be offered for IODA Scholarship Recipients and for participants who apply for it. If you are interested in this option, please contact Susan O’Leary [here](#).

WHO TO CONTACT? IODA Operations Manager: [Silke Haebold](#)

2015 Conference Co-chairs: [Lori Blander & Péter Kalmár](#)

IODA Program Committee Members: [Karen Davis, Suzanne Zaldivar, Kitti Szoboszlai and Peter Norlin](#)

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Stay tuned for more information at

[www.iodanet.org](http://www.iodanet.org)

and/or at

[www.odnetwork.org](http://www.odnetwork.org)

Plus check your mail box regularly

and/or

visit our social media sites:

[IODA on Facebook](#)

[IODA on LinkedIn](#)

[IODA on Twitter @OrgDevWorld](#)

[www.iodacommunity.org](http://www.iodacommunity.org) (for members only)
PORTLAND, OR
PORTLAND FACTS

“Meet Oregon. She Flies With Her Own Wings. As far as mottos go, I can attest that this is one of the more truthful ones. She does fly with her own wings, and she’s beautiful like no other state. To live in Oregon is to be free. A little weird, but really, really free.”

- Portland has been referred to as one of the most environmentally friendly or green cities in the world.
- Portland is known for its large number of microbreweries and micro-distilleries, as well as its coffee enthusiasm.
- The city is home to Portland Community College, Portland State University, Oregon Health & Science University, University of Portland, Reed College, and Lewis & Clark College.
- It is also the home of the Trail Blazers of the NBA and the Timbers MLS team.
- Washington Park, in the West Hills, is where some of Portland's most popular recreational sites are located, including the Oregon Zoo, the Portland Japanese Garden, the World Forestry Center and the Hoyt Arboretum.
- The Portland Art Museum owns the city's largest art collection presenting a variety of touring exhibitions each year.
The Community Consulting Project in Portland

by Alette Vonk

The Community Consulting Project (CCP) in Portland has surely affected the Portland community in a positive manner. It is a project of the Oregon OD Network; and in the ten years of its existence, it has executed around 70 projects. “We’re supporting non-profits in our own community on a pro bono basis,” mentions Dan Vetter, Portland-based performance consultant, and volunteer leader of this program, while we meet over a Skype meeting. “And, we’re not only making our community stronger, but at the same time we’re honing our skills and we’re teaching and mentoring new consultants.”

With enthusiasm Dan talks about some of the non-profits that have been assisted in recent times. A group of Native Americans, insuring a healthy identity for their children; the Mother and Child education centre that assists unwed mothers. There’s the project with the interesting name ‘Kitchen Commons’, where people are brought together around food, cooking and eating. Other past client organizations include animal shelters, schools, churches and even an organization that promotes chess playing with children. A recent project assisted SCRAP, and organization that seeks to divert “junk” from landfills by repurposing reusable ‘scrap’ materials for art. CCP helped them deal with generational and leadership issues in order to position the organization to franchise itself across the USA. To mention just a few of this large and diverse group of organizations.

The original model for CCP sprang from a National ODN conference held in Seattle in the late 1990’s. Small groups of consultants did some OD work within the communities during this conference and a similar program is still operating there. The Oregon ODN CCP began in 2004. Every year the program has two rounds, one in fall and one in spring. Non-profits submit written applications followed by a second round of screening interviews. During a retreat, the CCP consultants pick the projects they want to work on. All non-profits need to be well established before they are accepted into the program and each project is led by a senior consultant and usually includes 1-5 additional junior consultants.

CCP teams address a large variety of issues but Dan summarizes the themes in three broad categories. There are requests for strategic planning, where the non-profit clarifies for itself where it wants to go and how to go about it. Secondly they come across tension or even conflict, between the director and the board, for instance, or challenges among staff. They also see some generational conflict issues, between the old school leaders and young energetic new comers.
“Since we’re dealing with non-profits we often encounter people with true passion. This passion is a big pro but can present challenges as well.” Thirdly, Dan mentioned that some non-profits struggle with measuring (and sharing) their results in quantifiable ways that speak to the community and to donors. In that case key measures are being identified. “Whatever the client situation, we unravel the story, uncover the real issue and seek to facilitate the discovery of solid solutions.”

CCP projects typically last four months. The intervention is intensive and fast. Every 2 to 3 weeks a coaching call for the consultants is facilitated by ODN senior consultant (and current chapter President) Robert McCarthy. We also meet face to face at mid-round to check-in on each team’s progress and to discuss what we are learning.

Some 48 ODN members actually participate in the CCP, which is about half of the total membership of ODN Oregon. The recently reorganized board has made the strategic decision to position CCP as the key focus of the organization over the coming year. McCarthy said: “CCP is a central element of Oregon ODN. It meets several goals of our organization by providing opportunities to learn, build community, and serve.” Dan simply sums it up this way: “CCP is the best thing we have as a chapter.”

Find more information here: http://www.odnoregon.org/ccp/ccp.php
A letter from OD Association in Japan
by Ken Nishikawa

ARIGATO GOZAIMASITA

“Arigato Gozaimasita” means thank you so much, in Japanese language. It might be a familiar phrase for the guests that came over for the OD World Conference in Kyoto Japan 2014. Almost all Japanese say it with a bow. Although many Japanese restaurants and retail shops in the world say the same phrase, we suppose you realize Japanese actually say it while you are a customer in any shop.

The host team and its chair are willing to follow our tradition in order to show you our sincere appreciation.

“Arigato Gozaimasita”

PHYSICAL STRUCTURE AND BA

Time moves so fast, and never moves backwards. The physical structure of the conference was gone right after our closing ceremony. It may be similar to seasons revolving in the northern hemisphere. Coloured foliage with golden glow falls down on the ground, and then, snow covers around. It is certain that everything is changing, the same as water runs through the ground. In short, the physical world only goes in one direction: to the future.

However, I believe something is still lingering in our minds since then, even though we have left the hard facts in the past. That is why we, the host team and I as its chair, believe all of the participants in the conference took something away from it, beyond its outcome.

It may not be the facts of the conference but the experiences in the space that we shared with you. In Japan, we customarily call the space “Ba.” It means that mutual and spontaneous actions among people, people that hosted and people that convened, touch something unknown as the outcome of mutual dialogue. It may be the unknown side of inner self, relational-self, and meaning of our behaviour. In short, it encourages us to keep going in two directions: both the future and the past. The hard facts tell us the event in the physical world. We had over 140 participants including two keynote speakers, full-participants, one-day participants, their spouses, the host team members, a volunteer translator and 2 professional translators. We spent over $64,000 for the event from scratch to end. That is all we had done for three days. A lens through “Ba” show us a different meaning.

>>>
The theme of the conference was the inquiry of OD Values: Appreciating your reality and co-creating our world. Having followed the theme to run the conference, the whole activity ended up to give us a meaning.

First, under this conference theme, what we respected was the following:

- A safe environment to speak out is important, so anyone can be treated as an equal participant taking ownership of the place.
- Being able to learn from mistakes is also important, because only experiments change your habits and since learning and being true to yourself might make us aware of what we don’t know.
- Full appreciation of you is also important because the appreciative spirit enables us to identify good qualities in you.

PRICELESS EXPERIENCE

At the end of the conference, what we noticed is the following:

I own this place as “Ba” and the place as “Ba” owns me because participants as learners are not takers but givers for other learners, as co-creative learners.1

What we are endowed from the conference is an idea of relational wealth because it is not artefacts and facilities but wisdom, transcending knowledge throughout dialogue among us.

As time goes by, psychological defence is getting low, cosy feelings are getting high, and the range of the psychological threshold is getting wide and open to the honest feedback.

In short, repetitive action in our mind and among participants as well as the hard fact timeline gives us something that can never be reduced again. That is something lingering in my mind. The very first international and collaborative OD conference in Japan started at the venue of Kyoto Hotel Okura on 26 and ended on 28 in August 2014.

Energetic conversation among participants was popping up around the venue and outside the hotel. Hugging with each other and crystal tears running down the faces of the host team staff were the sign of the end of our conference. It is the most beautiful moment that I have seen so far.

Much later, on the way back home from my family cemetery in Kyoto city, I dropped by and went to the second floor of the hotel. Nobody could see me there, since it was the day before the end of the year 2014.

Memory flashed back into my mind as if I was there. Bustling but forward-looking communication with hugging and shaking hands strongly seemed to come alive again. After a second, I came to my senses and could only see vacant rooms, a hallway. I realized it was one of those priceless experiences.

A NEW TARGET

A new target has already appeared on the clear timeline; crisp actions toward it have started too. Certainly all the efforts for a genuine conference between IODA and ODN are going to form a swift stream very soon.

I believe such dedication definitely will produce a great amount of fruit from the upcoming conference. It will probably not show immediately. However, the fact that we do it ourselves must forge a strong foundation of the OD Community in the history of OD field, like a “Ba”.

I have recently read a book named “Marshmallow Test,” which is written by Walter Mischel. There is much copious insight for me because the book has a lot of research reviews and opinions relevant to the OD field. One striking opinion, based on thorough research reviews, has to do with self-control in different contexts. That is, “Behavior is strongly context dependent. Highly developed self-control skills may be exercised in some situations and with some temptations, but not in others, as the stories of fallen public figures regularly remind us…”

The author tells us that everyone is able to recognize this effective skill, that of self-control in a given situation, and should put much effort to expand the skill. Just like children that need to execute effective distractive strategies to avoid eating the marshmallow until it’s actually time to eat it. If I were to apply this idea to OD community, a simple proposition comes to my mind.

Many OD practitioners and researchers that have been struggling with the dynamics of change processes in groups and organizations are always aware of who we are.

We are successful in being OD consultants in some situations, whereas in other situations we can feel that we wish we do more. I think such regrets, and attritions from abrasive situations during the consulting process, are out there.

If you feel so, you may be looking for a community to help refresh you. If the community holds OD values as the figure of self-control of OD consultants, I would say, our OD community must be one of the best places to make sure of OD values, even in the global OD fields. It is because relentless business and societal situations pressure us to make difficult decisions, whether right or wrong. The only thing that we can do is to stay wise throughout as an OD community, as IODA, ODN, AODN, and the whole rest of the world.

SMALL MOVIE CLIP

If you have some time and want to see what was going on, please click HERE. We hope you enjoy the movie clip of the conference. It is a fantastic movie produced by Kenta Fujii (little Ken) and supported by Tomoatsu Horibe (Tom Tom).

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Welcome to IODA, 2014
You are all here now, just look around.
Women and men, building connectedness,
To learn from each other, open minds are here.

Isn’t that organismic, here in Kyoto Japan,
enjoying ourselves, thinking alike and differently.

Our colleagues here in Japan, have prepared the OD-ground,
A conference to support you, to realize what you already know.
Appreciative approach to differences dialogic space,
Here appears the basis, of our common OD action floor.

Inquiry of OD-Values, appreciating complex reality,
Co-creating our world, step-wise, owned as owners.

Open door to dialogue, key note, space for synergy,
Cultural workshops from calligraphy / to kimono,
This is a fun way to understand/ Japanese tradition,
enjoy then the temples, with a short lecture there.

Continuing a long journey, participate appreciate,
Cocreating our world/ in the path of time.

Community’s resilience, moving stories to tell,
Of the earthquake, here in Japan, tears were with you.
Special themes from Guatemala, Myanmar, Mozambique
Cannot name it all, Open Space for much much more.

The streams will flow from outside, and inside Japan
Feel and build up connectedness, simply start right now.
I am a Sri Lankan Management Consultant who does Strategic Planning / OD assignments in the region. I have been a Member of the International Organizational Development Association (IODA) since 2013. As a practicing Organization Development (OD) Consultant it is not always possible to meet fellow OD Practitioners while not on an assignment, to discuss, share and learn from each other’s experiences. So when I got to know that IODA would be holding their 29th World Conference in Kyoto Japan I decided to attend.

As a practitioner from the developing world, I was not able to bare all the cost associated with attending this conference. As such I decided to apply for a conference scholarship. To my surprise the scholarship committee awarded me a scholarship to attend the conference.

The host country organization ODAJ was very helpful, assisting me to obtain a visa, book hotels and providing valuable travel instructions. As part of my scholarship, the host paid for my conference and hotel room.

As for the OD conference, it was attended by a truly international delegation and I made a lot of new friends. In addition, I got to meet a lot of Japanese OD professionals and make friends with them too. The conference was organized in a way that was extremely interactive and the organizers did an excellent job in getting good facilitators to keep the audience engaged through-out the conference.

Even though it was my first interaction with IODA I was made to feel welcome and left the conference feeling a member of this international family.

I recommend that new members, as well as those who have not yet attended an IODA world OD conference, do so and if needed apply for an IODA conference scholarship. I say this as I learned a lot and hope to share my learnings with the other OD professionals I work with.

I hope to see you all in Portland!
President’s words
by Péter Kalmár

Dear IODA Community,

How many of us do we need to lift IODA to new heights? How many of us do we need to become the leading force in “Co-creating a global OD community”? And how many of us do we need to make a difference in the World? The answer is clearly: many. However - I am convinced - this is not about numbers. It is about **having all of us - everybody - on board**, who are deeply committed to inspiring learning and change around the World, all of us who believe in unleashing human potential in organizations and communities. That is our vision.

In IODA every year we travel to another country, in fact to another continent, bringing the best of our knowledge, experience and spirit to a new region, a new corner of the World. And we do this with passion, with love, with open hearts and with the belief that **leaving our foot-print in those countries makes a difference**. And it does. From Thailand to Canada, from Australia to Mexico, from Hungary to Ghana, from Chile to Mozambique, from Japan to the Netherlands, from Peru to India, from Israel to Germany, from the Philippines to South Africa (and I could go on) we just did that.

Now **after 16 years IODA travels back to the United States**, to yet again inspire and get inspired. Our strategic co-operation with OD Network and our Open Invitation to all organizations, networks, schools and communities practicing OD in the World clearly marks the beginning of a new era of IODA reaching out to fulfill its purpose. By joining forces and co-hosting our annual conference in Portland and by inviting all organizations sharing our mission to come along, we are indeed linking communities to flourish together, while keeping and showing the World our uniqueness, our independence and our unparalleled openness and capability to cooperate and contribute.

So, if you haven’t been to an IODA and/or an OD Network Conference before, this is the time to come. Now you can experience the best of both organizations in one go and enjoy the incredible mix of having the wealth of knowledge and experience ODN and our colleagues from the US accumulated in the last 50 years, spiced up with a global perspective and the unique multicultural touch IODA and our participants coming from all parts of the World will add to this. In short don’t miss this opportunity, **be there and be an active part of this epic global gathering in the Pacific Northwest.**
And one more thing: Portland is a great opportunity to grow our IODA community, and Kyoto was instrumental in this too. However we have to keep our community together and keep our conversation(s) flowing in between conferences too. We need everybody who has ever been active in IODA and all those who had meaningful moments and a great time with us in one or more of our conferences to join us, check in, show up and step up again. And we have to reach out to all those potential IODA members too, who are not ready (yet) to join us at our upcoming conference, but who would love to - as a first step – join us virtually on one or more of the social media platforms IODA has created recently:

- On the Internet for everyone to get to know and join us: http://iodanet.org/.
- On Facebook for everybody who wants to hear frequently from us: https://www.facebook.com/iodacommunity.
- On LinkedIn for all those who would like to connect and be in touch with us: https://www.linkedin.com/groups/IODA.
- And on Groupsite for Members only to stay connected, share, learn and act together: http://ioda.groupsite.com.

So, let’s use and share these channels. Let’s invite and welcome all those to IODA who are out there ready to be part of our mission. Let us all make an effort and reach out - if needed one by one - to make sure our “Call to join IODA” gets to everybody, who should be with us as a Member of IODA or a member of our larger IODA Community. We - in the Executive Committee of IODA - are convinced that this is the way forward. In fact this is the only way to go, to stay strong and relevant and to reach out to the young(er) generations.

On behalf of the EC of IODA, all the best till we next connect:

Péter Kalmár,

President of IODA
SHE FLIES WITH HER OWN WINGS

Oregon state motto
Richard Beckhard Award Winner 2014: Marc Silverman

The 2014 Richard Beckhard Award, for outstanding contribution to the field of OD, was won by Marc Silverman from the USA.

Could you tell us what your first thoughts were when you were announced as the recipient of the RBA award for this year?

I was truly surprised and touched by this thought and recognition and I want to thank the committee and IODA for allowing and inspiring so much of my work. I found it interesting to receive an award in the name of someone I knew personally. I remember it as if it was yesterday talking to Dick and asking him to mentor me on a particularly tricky case – which he was quite glad to do. One of the things I loved about Dick was his “down to earth” approach to OD and his understanding that in our role as an OD Consultant we must carry the torch of constant learning and change.

The Award has been given to you because of your outstanding contribution to the field of OD. Do you remember why you chose this profession?

Of course! I still have most of my memory! I would like to share two stories about this.

When I was 9 years old, my parents had a party, which Ken attended and I was eager to get his advice on a problem I had with my third grade teacher whose teaching style I found quite autocratic. In talking with Ken, he said – “I think this is a great question – how could you change this classroom’s culture? And you, you have to learn how to become a Change Agent…”

A second story is when I was a Freshman at college. I was in the hotel school where the focus seemed to be on how to charge customers $6.00 for a phone call and have them like it. This did not look like a great career to me. However I was under significant parental pressure not to drop out. I came up with the idea of staying at the hotel school and pursuing courses in other schools in the university. By pure accident I saw a course titled “Organization Development” meeting in 10 minutes. I went. As I listened to this Professor, I felt a light shining above as I listened to a theory of creating business
organizations that the employees actually co-created, liked and benefitted from. I found a way through my depression and question of how to focus my professional life.

**Who is Marc Silverman, could you tell us something about yourself?**

My wife and I have recently built a vacation home in the mountains of Colombia. Waking up surrounded by the beauty of God, I feel like I am in Paradise. I'm still in awe from my growing up in a little suburban town in Haverhill Massachusetts to having a little paradise in these mountains. I consider myself extremely grateful, lucky and humbled.

I have had the good fortune of always working in careers that I love, am passionate about and hopefully I have contributed to the existential growth of individuals, families, organizations and perhaps cultures.

My goal is to grow and learn each year. I hope to contribute more and more to our beautiful planet making a world of deeper compassion, beauty, democracy and social justice.

**Could you elaborate a bit about your work and career, what were the important moments?**

Oh my goodness – there are way too many. I think to answer that question would require me to write a book! Let me pick out just a few:

1. **Some of My Mentors**

   I had the great privilege of having Ken Benne as the mentor for my master’s degree, Jack Gibb as the mentor for doctorate, and my Dad to help me as a young professional. These “Giants” taught me so much not only about theory and practice of change but about integrity, passion, idealism and learning. Their faith in me and in our profession has kept my direction clear and strong when it was easy to get lost in the pressures of daily life.

2. **Chairing the IODA Conference 1988**

   It was in 1986 in Shoreshe, Israel that a group of us met, deeply unhappy with the OD organization that ran the conference by non-OD principles. It was at this moment that IODA was born. The following year’s conference had already been planned to be held in Poland. I was asked to head this conference committee and although I was scared to death - with great encouragement I accepted. I won’t bore you with too many details, but I knew the importance of this conference in our very young organization and I believe it was one of IODA’s “magic” ones. IODA has had a number of superb conferences over the years – I believe this was one.
3. **OD Intervention in Peru**

Pepe Campoverde wanted to host the IODA conference and create an intervention in the country of Peru to assist the country’s management knowledge and culture with understanding the need and knowledge of OD. With much thought and effort we came up with a bold plan that included:

- Bringing one of the “Masters of OD” – Dick Beckhard to give a one day seminar on the history and scope of OD.
- Bringing a renown futurist to talk about Peru’s future management needs and challenges – Alvin Toffler,
- Coordinating with the University of Lima to develop an award program for those Peruvian companies that were showing leadership from an OD perspective.
- The entire program was planned as an intervention in the country. Quite a project!

4. **A Case**

I could talk about many cases – here is one. In this case the patriarch had alienated himself from most of his children. They had a long history of both generations feeling poorly treated by the other generation. After Dad “fired” me – the children (they were in their 50s and 60s) rehired me to help them become a well functioning team. After a year or so, Dad said to me “Marc, I don’t know what you did, but I’ve never seen my kids so happy and able to work together.” Several years later, the father got into serious business trouble. His failure was deeply embarrassing and he needed millions of dollars to rectify the situation. The kids came to his rescue. What an incredible moment of love and healing as there had been such hostility in the past!

5. **Spiritual Leadership Conference**

Last year for fun I decided to put together a “Think Tank” on Spiritual Leadership in Business. I invited several top business leaders from several countries for a weekend retreat to explore the use and potential uses of a spiritual approach to business leadership. The learning and sharing was amazing – all insisted on coming back next year to further our exploration. For me, a joy to integrate work I had done so many years ago in the spiritual realm with current business and family business interests. A joy AND great learning!

**What do you yourself think is your greatest achievement in the field of OD? What are you particularly proud of?**

In the last twenty years I have focused on the application of Organization Development (and Family Therapy) principles to creating healthy large complex family business systems. I am proud to be part of the pioneering effort in that
endeavour. Working particularly with the ownership side of businesses that often have thousands of employees as well as political influence (included the Presidents of a few countries) has been an amazing opportunity.

**What is or has been your biggest challenge?**

I consider our work in OD to be primarily an art form. Each family and organization I work with gives me the opportunity to further develop my craft. Some of the biggest challenges have been where there are deep wounds that have evolved into deep conflicts between family organizational leaders for decades and helping them to heal and build bridges to the future.

**You were President of IODA between 1988 and 1997, a very long time. Where do you think IODA is going and do you have suggestions?**

I am delighted with the Executive Team and hope they will use this moment to bring the principles and practice of OD much more strongly into the world. I believe IODA can and should be a significant force for the advancement of organizations, culture and learning throughout the world. IODA is deeply needed and can serve professionals, students, non-profit organizations and businesses much more deeply.

I believe IODA should set ambitious goals for memberships (with plans on how to reach them). I would like to see membership increasing at the rate of at least 50% per year. IODA should sponsor educational programs around the
world on such themes as change, social responsibility, creating learning organizations, evolution of democracy, leadership and conflict resolution.

IODA was created in part by outstanding OD practitioners and academicians who fuelled our creating a deeply vibrant learning community that was relevant to helping solve current world issues. I would love to see IODA provide leadership in addressing some of today’s crises in the Middle East and Africa. There are numerous deep needs in the world where IODA could provide leading edge processes and solutions to help the world as well as to deeply expand our learning base and have richer learning conferences. If IODA’s leaders accept this torch they can grow into a deeply vital organization that is a strong force for change and education in alignment with our highest values.

A Word of Thanks
I would like to thank KC Soares, our First President who encouraged me to chair the IODA Conference in 1988 and to run for President of IODA so many years ago. I would like to thank Dick Beckhard and Ken Benne for their inspiration, knowledge, guidance and faith in me. I would like to thank my Dad, a true OD hero. And I would like to thank my wife and family for the blessings of their love and support. Lastly, I would like to thank the IODA Community and its leaders for existing and sustaining our little organization and our torch of ever developing the art and soul of the evolution of change towards democratic and moral principles.

Once again, congratulations Marc and thank You!
IODA successfully launches IODA Community social media site: iodacommunity.org

IODA has launched a wonderful new social media site exclusive to members called IODA Community (iodacommunity.org). It is our own virtual café where members can chat, catch up, prompt thought-provoking dialogue and stay in touch. As of this writing, already 48 members have signed up, launched lively chats and have posted photos. Each member is invited to establish a profile so that others on the site can get to know a little about them, their culture and their life story. Discussions are ongoing about previous and future conferences, the application of OD to world events, the exchange of resources, links to articles, the posting of opportunities to write and teach, etc. We are fortunate to have the most wonderful network of OD practitioners and students in the world – come join the conversation!

Current IODA members are invited to sign on to iodacommunity.org and complete their profile, explore the site, and launch a dialogue. If you have not already done so, this is a great opportunity to renew your membership so that you can join us on this site, and receive a member discount to the 2nd OD World Summit this year.
In memory of Pat Novak
IODA’s most loved long term member passed away last year

“I will always remember Pat; her joyfulness, her optimism, always seeing the bright side of life. On her tour around the world she had less than 24 hours in Israel. I have invited her to give a visiting lecture about her career, as the course was about women’s careers. Pat told about her dreams as a young girl, and the smashing of these dreams because she was a woman and the hardship of life. Her message to the class was of great optimism: never to give up, and to challenge any opportunity that comes a long.

On my first months as IODA president, she was of great help; I could always approach her and ask for an advice or information.

Dear Pat in Hebrew we say: I shall always cherish your memory.”

Rita Aloni, Israel

“It was in Hungary 1997 when I first have met Pat. My first memories are: Pat is carrying a torch and singing songs while walking back to the hotel. She was friendly and inviting. The second picture is from Kenya 1998: The conference opens with a market place for getting to know each other. Groups of three are formed. Everybody stands while communicating – only one group is sitting on the carpet – it’s Pat’s group and she is the lead.

Pat, I love you and I’m sure your soul will rest in peace while already dancing on the next dance floor.”

Ulla Nagel, Germany

“Pat and I first danced at the IODA Conference in Harper's Ferry and I believe we danced at about the next 13 IODA Conferences. What a great spirit she brought. Pat is, of course, with us…”

Marc Silverman, USA

“Dear PAT, Fare well, Fare well, Dear PAT,
I met you the first time In Netherlands
I Will never forget you
You are in our hearts and
We will never forget you.”

Pierre Tchomobe, Cameroon

“Dear, Dear PAT ... These are four orchids’ flowers from my home for YOU. You have been our guest ... a special one at home in the Philippines ... You are most special and remembered IODA Member and friends. CHEERS to you on your second birthday from earth life to eternal life. You are in our hearts in IODA and with your friends. UNTIL THEN. THANK YOU PAT.”

Perla and Osca Razina, Thailand
Spark and Nurture the Passion
by Rob Barnett

IODA relies on the generosity of members to help broaden our international outreach, offer younger members new programs and services, enable participation at IODA conference, and provide additional channels for professional connection.

A number of IODA members and friends have again made generous donations to the work of IODA, for which we are all extremely grateful. This enables IODA to continue to provide service to the OD community and support to individual students and practitioners.

After the passing of Pat Novak, a dear friend and supporter of IODA, her daughter Patti generously collected donations from friends and family to fund IODA scholarships, all together a great amount of $2175. Thank you very much all friends and family of Pat! Patti wrote to us:

“We hope that IODA members may also want to contribute to the fund. Pat was passionate about education and providing experiences that allowed individuals to achieve their full potential. Please use these funds to help spark that passion in the next generation.”

Since this thoughtful gesture by Patti, others have added to the scholarship fund. Please consider adding your financial support to spark this passion in the next generation. You can find an easy way to do this by visiting our website at http://iodanet.org/?page_id=234.
What does OD do in the world, what is the reason for its expansion

by Jose Campoverde Ayres

How was the OD born in the World

The OD has already extended globally as a new knowledge, as a new human language, result of an impact that knew how to do from its birth “in the T Groups”. These were made up by a maximum of 10 participants who attended just out of curiosity, by recommendations, by genuine interest and by knowing more, and they said at the end of the T GROUP, that it had been the best learning of their lives. This first scene of the OD, was the end of the II World War. The OD was sowing a new language in relationships, a change in the way of working and other way of living in the organization.

Scientific management that came from the beginning of 1900 was nourished by the two wars, and a message was left, that the planning, the logistics, the strategies, the surprise over the objectives, were the indicators of the winners. I and II World Wars were won with occupation forces. The War changed. Today, it is not longer necessary to occupy the enemy territory, nor to destroy the cities nor show who produced the more deaths.

The Administration has also changed. It is no longer necessary to go to a lot of effort to have the best Plan, the most complete program of actions, with more alternatives and possibilities of success. In none of them the reality belongs. Today the techniques are descending and the value of imagination of man is going up, because what is fundamental is in how to change a reality that is not desirable and this way other truth arose… the change is the only permanent. In other words, who does not change, cannot be included in the progress.

What do you think of how people are? Responsible or Irresponsible? This question of the OD, was a gigantic step in the advancements of the human relationship. Professor Douglas Mc Gregor result of his long observation, announced: People act according to how they are treated. This reply shook the foundations of the companies, of the first Universities and of the first generation of leaders entrepreneurs, among them Henry Ford. Even now, it has full effect in every society.
The testimonies of the OD expanded, through IODA World Conferences in the five continents. Half of the countries in the world, listen to these testimonies and do the OD practices, texts appear in: USA, Africa, The Philippines, Peru, Venezuela, Holland, Hungary, Germany, Belgium, Argentina, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Denmark, Egypt, France, India, Israel, Japan, Mexico, Mozambique, Poland, Singapore, Russia, Spain, Switzerland and England. It is taught in 500 Universities and the other half of the world, has begun its approach to the OD, beginning with China.

In a World Conference in Chile, I listened to IODA Consultant, John Adams, who said that the exterior part of man has been studied well. Now we must enter to our consciousness to see how we are putting our inner freedom to work. In this inner freedom, the joys and the sorrows are born, the victories and the frustrations, what ought to be, or the regrets. Is it prevailing the how you manage your freedom?

**How the OD is practiced in the world**

What has happened in the 29 IODA World Conferences, in the 65 practicing countries, in the five continents? Countries with different cultures, races, languages, economical realities, histories. We have learnt in these 3 decades that the OD, left behind the uniformity of knowledge to live the diversity of learning. A friend asked me one day, What should I do to practice the OD? I told him to ask himself if he felt satisfied when he looked into his inner life, following the teaching of John Adams.

I also recalled Marc Silverman, who said one day, that Democracy is born in our interior and that our roots are our intentions, that turn into actions and that we should assume the responsibility for our actions. The democracies would be more effective, healthy and responsible then, said Marc.

The OD is a process that means a planned movement, directed by a change, encouraged by a Leader and his team, to transform the present, creating new scenarios for the future years and achieving superior advantages than the present.

When an Organization understands that changes must be done, as changes are required in the process of growth of human being, then the leader understands how healthy the change processes are in the organizations. How awful is to see a 14 years old young man with a mentality of a 4 years old child. What a worry is to see a company of 20 years, with a structure of the first 5 years. It was worth more when it was 5 years.
The OD at a global level, is practiced in various levels: at a personal level, at a team level, at a whole organization level. It is practiced in small and medium companies and corporations. It is practiced responding to needs, that growth requires, in the internal high level successions, in the mergers of companies.

It is practiced in the public sector. We know that in this sector, the laws and the bureaucracies have immobilized the desirable changes, the countries have grown in population, needs are not covered. The economies of the countries go slower than the world economy. The ways of governing are changing.

The Democracies show off new profiles and the States have remained left behind in their modernization with Information Technology. Also the informality has grown at a worldwide level, poverty comes to a standstill, corruption responds more to human behavior, than to political models, that have grown in the world. If the OD did not exist, we would have to invent it.

The drug problem is a world phenomenon that advances with a major speed than the measures of support. To this, we add terrorism, religious wars, the demassification of Political Parties, conflicts among minorities and finally, the deterioration of the environment that affects us all.

In this scene, we ask ourselves, what can the OD do? … From what we are sure of, is that it could do more and it must do more, because many contributions that have been given, are accepted. The OD makes us see that, today, it is more complex to develop societies. The conflicts are increasing, it is seen in every TV screen of the world.

The main Political Parties of the world, have not adapted, have not progressed to the same rhythm as global changes. The Societies ask simultaneously for postponed needs, more accelerated changes. The main contributions that has begun to do the OD, in this scene, is in the approach of leaders entrepreneurs that have made theirs the OD in the last 30 years. They know that this is the new language, a renewed approach of seeing reality and with time, they get close to the power of management of Nations, where they are recommending, for instance, to work with Consultants specialized in the OD. This begins to happen.
Currently the problems of the Societies are mainly the following:

a. Societies require of 2,000, 10,000, 20,000 leaders to be governed with quality, elevated social spirit, according to their sizes. There is a shortage of leaders in all the nations. The task of the OD, is to continue forming leaders.

b. Universities have not prepared visionaries. They got stuck in the theory. It is good that more consultants keep entering Universities to renew the conceptions of Human Development.

c. The world behavior in the Societies have deteriorated. The societies overthrow the elected Presidents democratically. Others take power for more years that democracies propose. Dictatorships fall.

d. The structure of the States is obsolete for modern societies. Many States, obsolete in management, create and increase social poverty.

e. The structure of Governments, keeps being by specialties: justice, education, transportation, work, research, while the problems go, beyond the specialties, requiring more integration of disciplines than individualized political efforts, poor, slow and incomplete, due to a lack of organization abilities and quick decisions.

f. The governments have a structure to manage the medium and long term with the present needs. Most of the Governments are in the present, that only get to extend it without major important changes.

g. The world is asking for important changes and not for extensions of the past.

For these changes new knowledge are needed being the more outstanding these:

a. How to make conscious the Societies, that future changes will not only depend of the 100% of the efforts of governments, having to pass from the individualized to the collective education. From the individual consciousness to the social consciousness that can stop a descending direction.

b. That public offices must be for the more prepared and capable.
c. Elevate the regulations for the existence of the Political Parties, to create healthy organizations, admired, and with only this, there would an important change with big impact over the inherited political cultures.

d. The actions of Governing imply doing social changes, institutional changes, changes of the economical routes. Changes in the Organization for the maintenance of Health, changes to develop new knowledge. All that, and much more, implies new ideas and new ways of governing.

Result of the OD up to 2015

The OD in 65 member countries, every country can have involved 500 organizations under the OD mantle in these 30 years of practice, forging 1000 leaders in every country, representing 32,500 practicing companies, with 65,000 leaders, perfecting their Organizations and improving the life quality of their Societies. This is, what 13 consultants inspired us in 1986 in Israel, under the Leadership of KC Soares, founder of IODA. A non-monetary wealth, from which Alvin Toffler tell us about. A line of action that inspires to our current President, Peter Kalmar. IODA vocation and action.

José Campoverde Ayres, Consultant Peru
Portland, City of Roses
Circumnavigators all?
by Virginia Mullin

After many years of enjoyment in seeing the world with IODA, it has been an honour to be elected to membership in the Circumnavigators Club of Chicago, a.k.a. The Society of Magellan. I have wondered if my IODA friends know about this organization which is based in New York, with several U.S. chapters and one in London - and also if they may qualify for membership. What does this mean? To circumnavigate is to circle the globe. The club exists for those who have circled the globe, passing through 4 meridians while traveling in the same direction.

In my case, much of my travel requirements were acquired in finding creative routes to and from IODA meetings. For example, for a conference in Bangkok, I flew from Chicago to L.A., to Kuwait, to New Delhi, to Bangkok, to Frankfurt, and back to Chicago - stopping to visit friends and family along the way. In our group, all but one person circumnavigated by air, with one member circling the globe by sailboat - a five-year voyage!

So, aside from the love of travel and frequently visiting interesting places in the world, what do IODA and Circumnavigators have in common? Both have an interest in creating a better world. The Circumnavigator motto is "A desire to leave the world in a better place than we found it."

Members in both groups are interesting and from many walks of life. In Chicago we have religious leaders, educators, medical doctors. Our dynamic president, Dan Peterson, is a highly accomplished international consultant with his own multi-cultural company. In addition, our member Don Parrish holds the distinction of being the world’s most travelled person, according to the documentation criteria of a specific travel group. Don shares his philosophy, which I believe is also that of IODA when he says that the mileage accumulated is not the most important. Rather, it is "the stories and experiences of connecting with others, bridging cultural divides, and gaining glimpses of shared humanity." I think back over the years to the amazing people I have met in IODA, many of them Beckhardt Award winners, such as our dear Perla. Some, such as Imre Lovey and Pat Novak have passed on.
Others, such as our visionary founders Marc Silverman and KC Soares, Ulla Nagel, and our current president, Peter Kalmar, are carrying on the tradition of very much influencing the quality of life around the world. The Circumnavigators Club in New York City each year, like IODA, honours an outstanding member who does just this.

IODA holds international conferences featuring leaders from that particular country and others who demonstrate good work. Circumnavigators hold several local and national meetings each year with a speaker who is doing good work in the world - perhaps conservation, perhaps sociology, health issues, education, and any number of topics.

Both groups have an interest in helping students and in providing resources for students to gain international experience. In our Chicago group, we present a Fellowship to a Northwestern University student each year who demonstrates a desire to help the world. He or she is chosen through a competition of proposals to conduct research, teach, develop programs, etc., in at least 3 different continents in different parts of the world. After the "tour of duty", the student becomes a Circumnavigator and has been given connections and resources with which to develop a meaningful career.

So, now I will close with my expression of gratitude for the many wonderful people I have met in IODA and the learning that has taken place for me. Also, I will suggest to you the goal of "leaving the world a better place" and also with the Circumnavigators farewell, "Luck to you!"

Warmly,

Virginia Mullin, PsyD Chicago
We love to make coffee for the city that loves to drink it.
Seminar on Spiritual Leadership in Colombia
by Marc Silverman

As you know we held the Spiritual Leadership Seminar last year. We were about 12 people from Panama and Colombia – CEOs, Consultants, students, coaches, entrepreneurs, Family Business Leaders in different generations, Spiritual Seekers and Travelers.

As we delved into some of the intricacies of Spiritual Leadership both through theory and case study we found a need to explore our own spirituality much more deeply. Through exercises of Kything, Meditation and Gestalt Presence we explored how to understand our current spirituality and how to move more deeply into it when we choose. We also looked a bit at some of the exciting research being done on Spiritual Leadership and spiritually-based business organizations as well as motivational and leadership needs.

In short, I think it was a great event!

We decided to meet on an annual basis, alternating between Colombia and Panama with possibly one regional meeting each year as well. The group continues to be open but we will keep the size between 12 and 15. The group felt that the site, food and environment enhanced the spiritual experience of the weekend and that in future ones we should have two full days for meeting.

I have attached a few pictures and quotes from the weekend, sharing my happiness and pride in this group, hoping you will enjoy it.
A few of my favourite quotes from the participants:

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin
“To love God requires loving the world as well.”
“Savery - Our challenge in spirituality is to realize how totally integrated we humans are with all of creation and how to best work towards creation’s divinely desired evolutionary fulfilment.”

Martin Buber
“When two people relate to each other authentically and humanly, God is the electricity that surges between them.”
“Every man's foremost task is the actualization of his unique, unprecedented and never-recurring potentialities, and not the repetition of something that another, and be it even the greatest, has already achieved.”

And here are some notes from one of our discussions:

1. Awareness is Step 1
2. Make the Decision to STOP/PAUSE
3. Choose the Path Forward
4. Courage vs. Retreating to Our “Addiction” (safe, material place)
5. Rush to Slow Down
6. Plan time for this
7. I am in my time of being with myself
8. Recognize and Listen to messages that get you back “On Track”
9. May want to use Journaling, Music, Poetry, Yoga, Meditation

Shalom,
Marc Silverman

Marc gets ready to run the 2nd Annual Conference on Spirituality and Leadership - this year will be held in Panama, July 4-5, 2015. For more information contact Marc directly.

Like last year Marc plans to give a donation to the IODA Saul A. Silverman Fund with money collected.
While writing this article, we’ve just come through the December holiday season - a time we’re reminded of what to discuss at the table, and what is better left for private conversations. Families are like organisations in this way. Organisations differ in the level of transparency and self-reflection they can tolerate. In my experience there is one theme that’s consistently sidestepped in organisational (and family) dialogue … and that’s power.

The extent of this taboo was highlighted early in my academic life when I invited a group of executives to discuss their comparative power and its influence on their decision making. There was stunned silence. Never before in the delivery of the intensive year long program had I met such resistance. Suddenly it was as though no one had power. Or if they did they certainly weren’t admitting to it.

Over the years I’ve become more skilled in broaching this topic. Two things continue to strike me. There is still nervousness about speaking of power. Mark Twain’s elephant in the room is met with reluctance. Usually coaching is needed before individuals are ready to acknowledge their power.

Most people identify with those instances in their life where they experienced frustration by constraints or limitations of their power. What is it about possessing power, or more specifically being seen to possess power that makes us so nervous? It’s as if one were in danger of being caught red handed with a rare and precious artefact.

**Power Has a Bad Name**

The abuse of power has given the term a bad reputation. For decades we have been aware of corporate and political rorting in the third world. Recently the Western world has felt the costs of the misuse of power closer to home. The questionable banking practices and greed that resulted in the sub-prime mortgage crisis and GFC led to public outrage. Around the world, institutions find themselves embroiled in public investigations into their failure to protect vulnerable clients and children from abuse. Head of state Berlusconi has found himself unable to outmanoeuvre justice forever. There is a worldwide sentiment that enough is enough!!
Now with the internet and social media providing on-demand information, a company’s track record often shapes consumers’ purchasing decisions. Reputation matters. News of deaths in once distant sweatshops and allegations of harassment spread quickly. There are reasons for leaders to shift uncomfortably in their seats when power is mentioned. I suspect our discomfort is of a personal nature rather than the scandals that erupt when power is abused. Learning to use power well is a complicated process, particularly in an environment which is bereft of its dialogue.

When it comes to our own use of power, as with many other things in life, we don’t know what we don’t know. Our lack of education and ignorance of power and its workings feeds our uncertainty. While our anxiety is temporarily eased by our avoidance of the issue, ultimately it contributes to our vulnerability. Without frameworks for understanding power, leaders go to work each day with a proverbial black box that can quickly turn into a powder keg. It’s enough to make anyone nervous.

**What It Means To Have Power**

Having power means that we become more isolated. Those with power are spared many of the challenges that individuals with low rank contend with on a daily basis. Power holders may take privileges for granted. Arnold Mindell asserts that having power makes us blind to the experience of others (1995).

As one acquires power, they start to breathe a rarefied air in which feedback is in short supply. This problem was illustrated in a recent discussion I with a client about how individuals appointed to public office learn the ropes. Overnight, farmers, doctors, lawyers and business people can acquire the title Minister. My client, a senior public servant described meetings in which novice Ministers came up with impractical ideas, which would have potentially devastating consequences for those relying on social services. She waited for executives more senior than her to raise concerns but routinely witnessed silent acquiescence. Meanwhile, the new Ministers in search of their authority felt a pressure to provide direction and demonstrate clarity as evidence that they were up for the job.

With positional power, the effect of one’s decisions and actions is amplified. High power creates a vacuum. The absence of robust and meaningful feedback and debate creates conditions which become a set up for failure. Unless we understand and are able to navigate the terrain of power, organisational development practitioners are complicit in the problems that arise. The challenges my client faced in finding her own voice in these situations, will be well known to many of us, who routinely rely on personal, as much as expert power to achieve influence. Over the years my client had become skilled at stating “That’s a very good idea Minister, however ……”

There’s something about being around people who defer to us that can start to feel natural. It feeds the latent narcissism that lurks to a greater or lesser degree in all of us. If we are not vigilant to its effects, our sense of ourselves can start to get inflated. When leaders learn to appreciate how filtered the information that reaches them is, they begin to pay more attention to the subtle cues in others’ communication. They realise that their task is to elicit and encourage debate, rather than assume that no concerns voiced equates to a greenlight for their ideas.
Organisational development practitioners need to be particularly fluent in understanding and engaging organisational power dynamics. Any practitioner mesmerised by organisational hierarchy will be unable to hold the space when their expertise as internal or external consultant is needed most.

**Becoming Power Literate**

Developing literacy around power should be a core element of any leadership and talent development program. We need to understand our own relationship to power as well as its impact on others. We have to be familiar with power and the way it works in societies and organisational life so that we can anticipate it, meet it at each turn, ready to engage with and reflect on our own and others use of it.

In my extensive experience, there are three typical representations of power that need to be understood. They are:

1. Comparative power (high rank)
2. Emerging power
3. Low rank

I’ve already mentioned some of the challenges of having high rank, not least of which is the sense of entitlement it can bring along with isolation. We need to know ourselves well when we are in formal and informal positions of power. We must understand not just our dreams and our skills but also our insecurities. Research suggests that managers are most likely to bully others when their perception of their own competence is challenged.\(^1\) That is, when they most need others around them.

**Channelling Emerging Power**

Anyone who has ever parented teenagers will understand how challenging the emergence of power can be. Not just for the individual who is discovering their wings, but for those around them on occasions. Adults who are discovering their power can encounter similar challenges. As we begin to acquire power and capacity we can be clumsy in the way we exercise it. Being more focused on the path ahead, rather than what we have achieved is not without its problems. It lends itself to focusing on the authority and autonomy we don’t have, while underestimating the impact we hold. A tendency to push too hard can be taxing on working relationships, particularly if those seen as rising talents begin to struggle with those in authority. Ambition can render us ruthless on occasions.

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**The Legacy of Low Rank**

The final experience of power that warrants attention is having low rank. Most of us at some point in time, started out within an organisational hierarchy. We began as a junior intern, wrote drafts, shadowed a more experienced practitioner and looked to others for direction and guidance. Low rank of this kind is transitory, we know we can work our way out of it. It need not be our position for life. For many workers on the factory floor this is not necessarily the case. Their view of their potential in life is coloured by this reality. Research suggests that having low rank also results in changes to marked workers cognitive processes, impacting their capacity to concentrate and differentiate between meaningful and peripheral data for instance. These findings are no surprise to my own executive assistant, who can describe with a clarity that is lost on me (by virtue of my rank) the impact of having to deal with not only the immediate task demands, but anticipating my preferred approach and shifting priorities. Understanding these pressures and the difference that rank makes is important for both of us in working together.

Low rank is also a social phenomenon. Being a member of certain groups in society typically confers lower rank. For example, women enjoy lower levels of representation in government and senior roles in organisations. Certain religious affiliations are treated with suspicion. People of colour continue to experience discrimination. All of these factors reflect the centrality and thereby power that particular groups hold in society.

The struggle to overcome the disadvantage and discrimination some of us experience, builds character and resilience. At times, however, I’ve seen executives who have shattered the glass ceiling yet continue to fight, approaching each interaction as a threat to their status. Unaware of their power, they have devastated those around them. Had they been able to stop and breathe long enough to realise that they had in fact ‘arrived’, that they had earned their positions and were legitimate in their authority, their approach to leadership may have been different. Instead the low rank identity of these individuals had never been updated to reflect the power that they possessed.

Each of us needs to understand our own history of having or not having power and the way it has shaped our confidence, our assumptions and our capacity to engage with people and events. Organisational development consultants are no exception.

**Findings from Social Psychological Research**

We now have the benefit of extensive clinical research into power and its impact on how individuals interact with each other and approach the tasks they’re responsible for. It is now time in our profession to translate these findings into practical organisational knowledge, protocols and practice. Perhaps we have been overly influenced by the words of Lord Acton who famously stated that “power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” If we accept this, it’s not surprising that we’ve had a tendency to avoid working with power.

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Interestingly, there’s now a substantial body of evidence to suggest Acton’s assumptions about power don’t necessarily hold water. Research has shown that the effect of having power differs significantly between individuals.\(^3\) And what’s more that their use of power, once they’re in positions of influence, can be anticipated. In short, individuals who demonstrate an altruistic and others focused orientation to power prior to their appointment tend to use power for the greater good when they acquire it. In contrast, those who seek self-enhancement are more likely to engage in destructive leadership.

**Mobilising Our Knowledge**

Our newspapers are filled with accounts of the damage wrought when leaders make decisions based on self-interest. Is it possible that we as OD practitioners might start to make a dent in this phenomenon? Doing so involves a two-pronged approach.

The first is to become more alert at the time of recruitment for the dormant seeds of unethical behaviour. Narcissism, self-interest and levels of honesty, humility, guilt and responsibility are tendencies we can screen for. The second front we can work on is building an understanding of how power acts on individuals. How it isolates, pressures, protects and reifies us. I’d suggest that OD practitioners can help executives and representatives of high power groups to develop the skills and muscle needed to reach across the power divide, so that they are better informed and less immune to the collateral damage that exercising power so often results in.

As I look around the world, I see an urgent need for change. When I reflect on the legacy of my generation, I’m not proud of what we’re passing on to our children. I know I’m not alone in thinking we’re in a mess.

So my question as we continue the New Year is this: What impact might we make if we as a profession we were to grab hold of our current understanding of power with two hands and address the elephant in the room. What if we were to apply it, paying close attention to the impact? What differences might we start to see within our organisations and society? From where I sit, I don’t think that we have much choice. Anyone interested in joining me?

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We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their support and contribution to this issue.

We are always looking for more IODA News items from members. To make a submission to the Newsletter, please email Alette Vonk or Silke Haebold.

We welcome other individuals interested in working with the newsletter team to make sure that the newsletter content is as representative as possible of the interests and activities of the IODA community. As always, we welcome any feedback that will help us to provide a great newsletter to IODA members and friends.

Sincerely,
The thoroughly international newsletter team

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FIND YOUR WINGS IN PORTLAND

Join us for our next conference in October!