

**Human Resources Available to Service a National Program  
for Improvement in the Quality of Work Life**

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Lists of resource persons and centres, such as the one we have provided, are misleading if they are taken to imply that such resources take years of training and experience to bring into existence.

In the years before we developed the 'Participative design workshop' (i.e. pre-1972), this was certainly the case. Thus, in Norway our program was slowed down while we developed a two year post graduate training course in socio-technical systems. For the same reason, we worked with tertiary educational institutions to establish parallel courses in Holland and Britain. Even so, we were always short of experts and had to switch them from one country to another to meet the most urgent demands. At the time I resigned the chairmanship of the Tavistock's Human Resource Centre, we were so pressed that we were planning to develop our own one-year post graduate course.

I mentioned this facts in order to highlight the significance of the uniquely Australian contribution to the democratization of work, namely the participative design workshops, or as we normally call them, the Development of Human Resources Workshops (DHR's).

Before I explain this development, let me say that I think that there are still some jobs in this field that can benefit from the help of an experienced expert e.g. in the design of a new plant, in the selection of a strategy for change or for post-mortems. However, these requirements in no way compare in magnitude with the human resources needed to change the multitude of existing work places.

Over the past four years, we have conducted more than fifty DHR's workshops, overseas as well as in Australia. These have shown that it needs only a couple of days of concentrated learning for ordinary working people to see organisation of their work place in a new light and come up with workable democratic designs. That is, to design the first level supervisors out of their hair and design themselves into the central role of controlling and coordinating their efforts. Some social science concepts have to be grasped but we find that these are so close to everyone's life experience that this poses no problems, at least as long as the person is analysing his own workplace. Only a few are able, after one workshop, to generalize the concepts so that they can help others work out their problems in a different setting. Still, we are talking about one-in-five or one-in-ten, not one-in-one hundred.

The short length of DHR workshop and the high rate of diffusion (1 in 5 to 1 in 10) give us a growth rate in resources that is radically greater than we could expect for resources that had to go through university or an apprenticeship. If a national program were instituted, there would be some pressure on resources for the first six months, thereafter none. They would not be the resources appearing on today's lists.

We think that even the pressures of the first six months would not be unbearable. The take-off a national program would in any case be largely the 'great debate' that

the Jackson Report advises, not action. In 1975 the C.C.E. decided on a crash program for this year to ensure that there came into being in each of the capitals at least one independent Centre experienced in running DHR's. That program has been completed, except for Darwin. At the same time, there has been a considerable increase in the number of competent persons in company employment who may be acceptable to the unions. And the resources of the Cameron College have not even been touched.

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