

# **World-wide Open Space**

Proceedings

**November 17, 1998**

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On November 17, the day after OSONOS VI, a small group convened to discuss the Open Space Institutes around the world. There were people from Australia, Canada, Germany, the US and England.

We declared that World-wide Open Space was formed.

## **TOPIC #1: Berlin Report**

**CONVENOR:** Michael M Pannwitz

**PARTICIPANTS:** Barry, Birgit, Leon, Brian, Diana, Larry, Michael and other distinguished human beings in person and/or spirit as I write this a double rainbow forms over the Pacific, everybody rushes up to stand in wonder

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

About 20 people met November 7, 1998 in Berlin after the os-training that had taken place from November 3 through 7 to take stock on the os-network and to discuss how it could be improved. It was also agreed upon to send a message to the colleagues from around the planet at the international open space meeting in Monterey on November 17, 1998. Here is the message:

1. We will establish a german-language os-list that will probably have the name [openspace-list-deutschsprachig@.....](mailto:openspace-list-deutschsprachig@.....)
2. There will be a web page for the GOE (OD association of Berlin/Brandenburg) with links to everything relevant to open space
3. There should be a central fund to accumulate money to help with international projects such as scholarships for participants at training events. OS projects that make money pay into this fund.
4. To support the os-community, Frank Rambaek will coordinate overnight and meeting opportunities for os-colleagues passing through Berlin. His email [frambaek@t-online.de](mailto:frambaek@t-online.de)
5. Felicia Schulz, trained os-facilitator, is looking for an opportunity to take part in an open space in Canada or USA in which she would contribute dance in exchange for being able to attend free of charge. (Her phone in Berlin: +49 – 30 782 8870).

## **TOPIC #2: Purpose of world wide open space**

**CONVENOR:** Sheila Isakson

**PARTICIPANTS:** Peg, Diana, Roy, Larry, Leon, & Chandra

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

1. In the macro sense: Proposed purpose is to hold space for Open Space world wide
  - Holding space requires intention and purpose
  - Facilitator role of OSI “Somebody (leader) takes the risk to do it”
  - Essence-nuances in the language emerges
2. Proposed values that guide world wide OS:
  - Inclusive invitation
  - Generosity of spirit-focus on giving and service
  - Acknowledge the “Dead Moose”
  - Focus on heart and meaning
  - Transparency- visibility about information
  - Understanding that learning is reciprocal
  - Respect for diversity
  - Embracing the “Four Fold Way”
3. Time out to view the rainbow
4. Assumptions:
  - Some people use Open Space for the wrong purpose
  - There are intentional strategies for dealing with people who use Open Space for wrong purposes
  - OSI-Canada held an Open Space to determine what to do as an institute
  - OSI-US interview half the members to ask what was needed/wanted from the institute
  - There are stories to support: stories reduce sense of risk
  - Electronic communication plays an important part in sustaining the network; however there are multiple forms of communication to hold the space
  - What the institutes do is a different question from how to “do” the work of the institute

### **Topic #3: How I feel about accusation of “inner circle”**

**CONVENOR:** Birgitt Bolton

#### **PARTICIPANTS:**

Joelle Lyons-Everett, Sheila Isakson, Michael Pannwitz, Brian Bainbridge, Katrina Petri, Paul Ash, Roy Mayhugh, Barry Owen

#### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

Birgitt expressed surprise that anyone had joined her for this discussion and that she wanted to address her upset at the accusation during OSONOS that there was an inner circle in the world of Open Space practitioners. She said that in her opinion there was not an inner circle and that as soon as this accusation and the comments that followed it were made, there was now in the minds of the collective consciousness an inner circle, whether one really existed or not. She said that in the world of OS what she did was follow what she had passion for and had responsibility for, which did not a member of an inner circle make.

Conversation included the following:

- ❖ Accusation of an “inner circle” is a great way of disempowering people from “doing”
- ❖ Best strategy is to determine that there is an inner circle and that anyone can join it if they are committed to action on behalf of Open Space
- ❖ If a person has made a decision to be an outsider, there is nothing anyone but the person can do
- ❖ Outsiders who choose to be outsiders don’t deserve much energy
- ❖ As a newcomer some people may need a little assist to be taken around and introduced. In this instance we recognized that there are two definitions of newcomers. Newcomers who know something about OS but have never been to OSONOS before and newcomers who haven’t a clue but have come to be “sponges” for a quick version of OS training.
- ❖ When a group comes together, many assume that many there already know each other—when in fact this assumption may not be true
- ❖ A technique would be differently coloured name tags for seasoned members and newcomers
- ❖ This began a huge discussion about what is OSONOS anyway and an agreement that we needed to be clearer in our invitation that this is about a place for practitioners to do ongoing development and that newcomers should be in the category of those who are doing or have experienced Open Space and were just newcomers to OSONOS
- ❖ If OSONOS is about recruiting new members to become Open Space practitioners, then the idea of coloured name tags would not be good
- ❖ A roster should be sent out of intended participants some weeks before OSONOS so that we have a sense of who will be attending
- ❖ If we continue with a mix of those who know something about OS and total newcomers, especially if the proportion of newcomers is out of balance as it is this year, how do we simultaneously make them welcome and preserve the creativity we desire?

## **TOPIC #4: Share OSI(US) Survey Findings and Projects**

**CONVENOR:** Peg Holman

**PARTICIPANTS:** Katrina Petri, Leon De King, and Linda Olsen

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

The OSI(US) Board contacted about half of its current or previous members (i.e., people who have donated to OSI(US)). We asked two questions:

1. What attracted you to join OSI-US?
2. What will keep you as a member, i.e., influence you to join again?

The people we talked with told us three things:

- 1) Make sure information about Open Space Technology is easy to get.
- 2) Make sure there are ways to connect with the Open Space community.
- 3) Gather and report the Open Space stories and supporting research.

This led to the following plans for OSI(US) in 1999. Many of these plans will be best served with world-wide participation. As they are pursued, we will ask our colleagues in other countries to work with us.

A) Improve the OSI **web sites**. Barry Owen is taking the lead in creating a world-wide OS presence.

Prior to OsonOS, the following priorities were identified for the web site. During OsonOS, Barry gathered additional feedback that he will integrate with these tasks.

- simplify the entry and use of our OSI web sites (make it easy for newcomers to find out basics about training and events);
- create and operate Open Space "chat rooms" (virtual, perpetual, Open Space events);
- enhance the site(s) content searching capabilities (e.g., "what stories do we have on OS in education?"); and
- enhance the web site(s) people searching capabilities (e.g., "who is in the Chicago area?" "who has experience with OS and healthcare?")...

Other needs:

- A more descriptive domain name ( e.g., [www.openspaceinstitute.org](http://www.openspaceinstitute.org))
- Secure credit card handling

B) Create an OSI on-line **Newsletter**

C) Continue OS **Community gatherings**

- a) OsonOS VII (11/99 Sheila Isakson & Michael Herman will host)
- b) E-mail List (Murli Nagasundaram <[rismurli@cobfac.idbsu.edu](mailto:rismurli@cobfac.idbsu.edu)>)
- c) Publicize OST Community events on web (Katrina Petri volunteered herself and Michael Pannwitz to identify events in Germany).

D) Pursue OS related **Research** Projects

- 1) Leon's NSF proposal
- 2) Peg's Research proposal
- 3) Publish list of completed, on-going and proposed OS research (Larry Peterson indicated in a previous session that he was working on this)
- 4) Identify OS practitioners who have affiliations with research institutes and what support they might be able to provide to people interested in research (Peggy volunteered to do this at an earlier session.)
- 5) Katrina Petri mentioned work she is involved with on tools to measure culture that she will share.

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Leon R. De King,  
Acting Recorder

## **TOPIC #5: Opportunity: World wide Open Space with possibility of becoming an NGO of the United Nations**

**CONVENORS:** Birgitt Bolton and Barry Owen

(Birgitt had posted the topic as above. Barry had posted the topic of Global Open Space. They decided to combine topics)

### **PARTICIPANTS:**

Paul Ash, Brian Bainbridge, Birgitt Bolton, Chandra Christian, Leon Deking, Diana Griesshammer, Peggy Holman, Sheila Isakson, Joelle Lyons-Everett, Roy Mayhugh, Linda Olson, Barry Owen, Michael Pannwitz, Katrina Petri, Larry Peterson

### **DISCUSSION/SUMMARY**

Just moments before this discussion began, we had all been dazzled by a wonderful double rainbow right outside our window, over the ocean.

Birgitt presented her desire for a world wide presence of Open Space. Her belief is that if enough groups use Open Space throughout the world, that we will have peace on earth. She also presented information from a meeting that she had had with Bruce Erickson the evening before. Bruce suggested that if world wide open space was to be, that for added credibility and contacts, that World Wide Open Space become an NGO (non-government organization) of the United Nations. He said that he could facilitate this as a former staff of the World Health Organization in Geneva and that he could arrange for one of the three critical conditions to be met---a letter of support for World Wide Open Space from a member of the United Nations. He could and would also supply us with the necessary paperwork. The discussion followed along the following lines:

- ❖ The words “world wide” are preferable to “global” or “international”. Each of the other words has particular meanings in other countries
- ❖ We agreed that we met one of the three criteria for United Nations NGO status in that we were represented by people from at least three countries. There were four countries represented in this discussion
- ❖ As OS practitioners that gather together, we gather as a place to meet, spread the idea of Open Space, we do not gather for profit to any one of us
- ❖ Association is a better word for us to be using than Institute
- ❖ If the Association has us all as practitioners rather than as members, it clearly clarifies that we are not here for our own profit
- ❖ An Association under British Law is thought as a network for greater good. In the US the concept of association is different in the non-profit sector ie: Blue Cross which is really a large money maker
- ❖ If we move forward with intention as a United Nations NGO, there will be many legalities we will have to deal with, the setting up of a bank account, etc.
- ❖ The mailing address of the Association should not be in the US

- ❖ We agreed that the NGO status ought to be explored so as to achieve it. Agreed that Birgitt would research this, and supply notes to others in this group who would help as needed to move this forward
- ❖ World Wide Open Space (Association) would mean that we would transcend boundaries caused by countries
- ❖ Don't disband the local institutes, in fact there should be more in as many countries as possible
- ❖ This world wide presence is not to be a controlling body. Rather more like an amoeba
- ❖ There was great value from the beginning that the two initial Open Space Institutes were birthed almost simultaneously, taking care of the fact that there never was one controlling body
- ❖ Lets use verb rather than noun "institute"
- ❖ Lets use World Wide Open Space rather than adding on any word such as institute. However agreed that if an added on word is to be used, that the word be "association" rather than "insitute"
- ❖ Larry Peterson then took the initiative of saying that rather than continuing the conversation about whether or not we had a global intention

#### **WE HAVE NOW FORMED WORLD WIDE OPEN SPACE**

- ❖ The institutes all agreed to support World Wide Open Space, to develop a world wide consciousness through things like stating so on our correspondence, letterhead, looking for people who can multiply awareness of the existence of Open Space such as business clubs, do speaking engagements when possible, do Open Space events when possible (have to experience it to really understand it)
- ❖ Conversation continued regarding having WORLD WIDE OPEN SPACE as an NGO of United Nations
- ❖ Larry would contact Linda Stardob (sp?) who works for the United Nations Development Program to see what she could offer by way of information/help
- ❖ Peggy said that when paperwork needed to be filled out, could reference the paperwork the US filled out to achieve their 501C3
- ❖ All agreed that whatever legalities and structure needed to be set up in order to meet the criteria for the World Wide Open Space (Association) to become an NGO of United Nations, that the group will was for this to be kept to the minimum that we could get away with. We do not want unnecessary imposed structure.

**WE AGREED THAT REGISTRATION AS AN NGO OF THE UNITED NATIONS WOULD GIVE US ESTABLISHED CREDIBILITY ON A WORLD WIDE LEVEL AND WE WOULD PROCEED WITH EXPLORING THIS WITH A DESIRE FOR A POSITIVE OUTCOME**

## TOPIC #6: Distinctions Between OSI & OSONOS

**CONVENOR:** Sheila T. Isakson

**PARTICIPANTS:** Joelle, Larry, Peg, Birgitt, Brian, Linda, Michael, Roy

### DISCUSSION/SUMMARY

1. Framing the issue: OSI is an entity & OSONOS is an event.
2. History:
  - Harrison's first OSONOS was offered as a "connection to Harrison" in order to support people who use OST rather than an opportunity to discover what Open Space is.
  - OSONOS IV introduced OSI-Canada and OSI-US as sponsors of OSONOS and Harrison was a participant.
  - OSI's alternate sponsorship, i.e., 1997 OSONOS in Toronto and 1998 in Monterey
3. Invitation to OSONOS:
  - Who is the target audience? The hope is that OSONOS serves both experienced users and newcomers.
  - There is risk in limiting only to users because new blood is vital.
  - Discussed the examples of Socio-Technical Systems Group & Milwaukee group of professional practitioners—senior practitioners by invitation only.
4. Prompted the question: What would get senior practitioners here? One response: Identification of the target market.  
From Joelle—Good marketing is when people come who you want to have come and they get what they thought they came for.
5. One thing that was learned from 1998 is "Don't put OSONOS and Training together"
  - One result was newcomers chose to come to OSONOS to learn about Open Space rather than the more expensive training
  - Next year make sure that there is no conflict with the ODN weekend
  - Provide an introduction to OST for any newcomers prior to OSONOS
6. Theme of OSONOS is always about Open Space and this reinforces the notion of learning about OST even though we acknowledge different levels of experience:
  - Extensive experience as a participant and a facilitator
  - Some experience either as a participant or a facilitator
  - No prior experience
7. The OSONOS invitation for 1999 must address the issue of the % of users vs. newcomers, i.e. The invitation for the 1999 OSONOS should include a description of who should come, i.e. there is a pre-requisite that the registrant would have attended at least one Open Space. Note: I have read the book, does that count. User means participation and registrations will be handled individually.
8. We need to pay attention to affordability so that we get attendance for World Wide Open Space, i.e. World Wide OSONOS is an invitation to further the existing institutes and grow new ones.
9. Direction we are heading is toward a mixture of face-face-exchanges along with electronic exchanges from many places on the planet.

10. We ended by reviewing the purpose and values: purpose is to hold the space for open space world wide. Values will be edited by Joelle.