

# The Sandstone Foundation for Community Systems Research, Inc.



## Project Synergy

An Outline and Abstract

By:

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**Project Synergy** is an intentional, multi-dimensional program that focuses human resources into a concrete, unique organization with a purpose and end product of critical relevance to all segments of society. In form, the project somewhat resembles a small, modern community purposely isolated from the larger society yet retaining ready access to transportation, industrial, educational and recreational facilities. In physical terms, the community differs considerably from convention, and design is such as to best promote and support human needs in areas such as space, privacy, mutual interaction, esthetics, and variety of experience. In large part, the physical design, location and environmental relationships of project Synergy are subordinate to its social and psychological requirements.

The most important aspect of Project Synergy is the human population which will stabilize in size at approximately one hundred adults, male and female, with established pair bond relationships. The number of children involved remains a variable and is subject to initial selection processes as well as changing community attitudes and mores. The selection screen for Project Synergy is quite involved, but in essence require a broad range of individuals with skills and knowledge in the physical, social, and behavioral sciences coupled with flexible creativity, a high order of motivation, and sound personality structure.

The concept and organization structure of Project Synergy is teleocratic, which might best be described by contrasting it first to hierarchal organizations of an autocratic or bureaucratic nature. Certain critical operational characteristics of these two forms of organizations are more or less identical in that the structure of each is predetermined and highly rigid. Internal functions rapidly transform into pre-assigned roles which are then carefully defined explicitly and implicitly throughout the organization in accordance with assumed needs which are seemingly implied by the organization's purpose. Authority functions are assigned to role only, not stratified by level, are linear in line, flow apex to base, and are predominately uni-directional. Individuals are selected to fill the various hierarchal roles by a number of mechanisms, but only two of those are pertinent in this reference.

**Apex roles** are usually filled by individuals who are intensely motivated to acquire the social or interpersonal perquisites associated with the role. To this end they develop or project appropriate appearances, attitudes and abilities as required. A great deal of internal energy is expended both in reaching the apex roles and later defending them against others of similar motivation. It is only during the relatively safe period following the new filling of a role that an individual's energy is fully available for actual implementation of the role function.

**Base roles** of the hierarchies are generally filled by individuals lacking sufficient motivation to effect changes in themselves. Although they ordinarily aspire to the same basic social values as the apex role fillers, they give higher priority to security needs and allow the role to circumscribe their potential growth or already existing attributes. Little of their internal energy is devoted to role implementation since the role itself does not provide them with any particular reinforcing satisfaction. Middle hierarchy role fillers are in an especially frustrating position in that a large part of their internal energy is absorbed in an inner struggle between security and growth needs. Again, very little energy remains for actual role function.

Thus, without further elaboration, a primary weakness of current hierarchal organizations is apparent. When the structure is made rigid, roles are necessarily generated, fixed, and become the dominant building blocks of the organization. In the tense interplay between people and roles, a vast amount of energy is wasted which otherwise would be available to the organization to accomplish its purpose. There are, of course, many other weaknesses in rigid hierarchal organizations.

Communication, for instance, rarely exists at all in the full sense of the term. When the channels of communication are narrow or circuitous between elements of an organization, viable interdependent response is proportionately limited. Role to role communication, in particular, is narrowed and distorted by formalism as well as by the elaborate defenses of the role itself. As one-way information flow increases within the organization structure, feedback diminishes in direct proportion. At the extreme point of complete uni-directionality, communication, as defined by feedback processes, simply ceases to exist. If the organization survives at all, it is able to function only at the blind, ineffective level of conditioned reflex.

If a significant difference between autocratic and bureaucratic organizations must be discerned for sake of reference, it is that the bureaucratic structure is a composite, interlocking assembly of smaller autocratic hierarchies. No particular functional advantage is served by this arrangement. It is however, possible to amass more of the same inefficient energy for larger tasks and to absorb larger quantities of role fillers. *Cohesion is more or less maintained through quasi-integration of roles at equivalent levels of the smaller hierarchies by assigning roles to unit hierarchies and arranging these super-roles into a super-hierarchy.* Rigidity, however, with its unavoidable inefficiency, role differentiation and poor communication remains or even intensifies.

A teleocratic organization, on the other hand, stands out clearly as being non-rigid when examined from a hierarchal point of view. In fact, during periods of optimal function, there is no apparent structure at all but an active, fluid condition of equilibrium. During times of decision-making or crisis, a sharp, well-defined hierarchy or cluster of hierarchies form. Functions are drawn from the organizational pool of competence as needed and ranked and related in authority structure according to the momentary requirements of the organization as a whole. In this fashion, the organization adapts itself to best fulfill its total function at all times. Whether a new discovery occurs within the organization or a new or altered demand is made of it, adaptation occurs quickly and effectively.

Some functions within the teleocratic organization are reformed continuously from a general pool of ever increasing competence and are not unrealistically pre-assigned, role formation is minimized. With few fixed roles to conform to, individuals within the organization waste very little energy, and relate to others as peers on a need transaction basis. Creative growth, or healing temporary regression, takes place within individuals without stress or blocking by role restrictions. Aggression against others, a vital but destructive element in the life of an 'apex role filler,' is transformed into useful pro-active energy. Despair, or aggression against the self, so common to the 'base role filler,' is transformed into hope and growth. The peculiar frustration of the 'middle hierarchy role filler,' is eliminated and his energy freed. Thus, without the role

problem associated with rigid hierarchies, a great deal more energy is directly available to the organization and its function.

Communication within the teleocratic organization is remarkably enhanced. In the absence of roles, peer relationships form and the communication channels under these conditions are considerably broadened and suffer far less distortion than in the role to role situation. One-way information flow is minimized because the differences of authority associated with roles is minimized.

When compared operationally to autocracies or bureaucracies, the teleocratic organization displays a significantly higher level of useful intrinsic communication. Additionally important, it is more sensitive and responsive to the real human needs and limitations of its members. In terms of organization function, it is much more “alive”, capable, and efficient. It is more competent to respond to an environment characterized by an ever increasing rate of change. By its nature, the teleocratic organization is fairly immune to “surprise,” and operates more in a framework of reality than in one of projected expectations.

Despite the great potential advantages of teleocratic organization and the long-term knowledge of these advantages, it has been all but impossible to simply create an organization of this type with or without a functional purpose. The reasons for this difficulty have been very elusive. It seems now that a major problem was intellectual, in that science and religion have come to more or less shape perception and reason. Science was originally based mostly on isolated two-body relationships which created a general conceptual emphasis on form, function, force and dependency. Religion tended to project causality into the realm of “faith.” Teleocratic concepts, however, derive from thinking in terms of process, energy, communication, and interdependency.

The overview of Project Synergy considers man as an autonomous but interdependent part of a vast, functional system beginning with the self-organizing properties of matter and extending well beyond man’s hazy penetration of his immediate universe. It is the prime function of Project Synergy to clarify this penetration within the context of human needs.

Within this system oriented world view lies the central fact that man has obviously failed to achieve a viable balance of autonomy, social integration, ecology, and awareness of function. This speaks not so much of simple ignorance as it does of poor quality feedback both within and between people. An inability, so to speak, to either acknowledge or appropriately respond to the imperatives of a transcendental whole. The capacity of man to realize his unique individual potential and functional status unquestionably exists. The key, however, to developing an awareness and consolidation of this vital dimension into the larger fabric of human affairs is still obscure.

Project Synergy draws its impetus as well as its means for achievement from several areas of recent impact. General systems and Communication theory provide a rational, objective framework from which to observe, assess, and in many ways predict the systemic behavior of man both as an individual organism and as a social component. These theoretical foundations generate an increasingly unified view of man and his environment which contrasts strongly with the narrow, fragmented, and dehumanized concepts currently offered by sciences grounded primarily in mechanical determinism.

General Systems Theory, in effect, includes and gives weight to man's conscious, subjective, and emotional experience within his total environment. Being admmissive of all observed phenomena and open to the undiscovered, it thus serves as a transcendental function of overwhelming import. In as much as it deals with dynamic properties and self-organizing processes in precise, rational language it is relatively immune to the projected or self-serving distortions and limitation of other world views.

Communications theory, with its emphasis on interdependent transaction, lends radical new insight into the nature of causality. It essentially frees man from the confining and inappropriate derivatives of Newtonian thinking which treat him as an isolated object capable of little more than reacting to externally imposed forces. It gives much needed sense of continuum and allows detailed exploration into human processes which have always been considered as impenetrable or perhaps non-existent. With General System concepts as a guide, Communication theory, already responsible for major breakthroughs in technology, promises to become a paramount factor in the conscious definition and restructuring of man's future.

With the emergence of a still largely undeveloped but reasonably adequate conceptual framework and powerful analytic tools, previously hidden or difficult problems connected with initiating an intentional teleocratic organization become apparent. The three most prominent problems relate to and are a function of communication processes which occur in an ascending and closely interdependent order:

The base problem is readily apparent within the individual person and can be loosely referred to as the "mind-body" dichotomy. This particular dichotomy, of course, takes on many familiar forms and one respect of it or another has occupied the imagination and sapped the energies of mankind for many centuries. When all the evidence is in, however, it appears that it can be accounted for by inadequate or poorly developed feedback mechanisms within the individual. It also appears that this is a problem area especially sensitive to cultural reinforcement. In any event, recent developments in the behavioral sciences, such as the holistic and experiential therapies, indicate that internal feedback between emotive – behavior and cognitive – rational elements of an individual can be immensely improved with no great difficulty. Other areas of research such as psychobiology and biofeedback also show great promise toward more efficient and permanent solutions.

The next problem is at the interpersonal level where group interchange rarely exceeds five percent of potentially available feedback or communication channel capacity. Though much intense effort has been applied in this area by corporate management and others concerned with improving group communication, the work has been primarily confined to enhancing a relatively small, fixed portion of the available communication band. That this situation exists seems mostly a matter of cultural conditioning. Research undertaken by this organization and others suggests some very effective ways of increasing group communication by perhaps an order of magnitude. At this point it may be said that a small teleocratic organization can be initiated and sustained in so far as minimum required communication efficiency can be achieved. To give the organization a functional purpose, however, without disruption of its internal processes, requires a resolution and implementation in the problem area of third level feedback.

Third level feedback, in the context of this reference, means continuous information flow from the organizational entity, as a whole, to the component elements. Two kinds of information must

be provided by this feedback path: what the organization is doing relative to its function, and the state of its wellbeing.

The first level of information involves continuous measure of deviation from the organizational “goal,” which in itself includes a probability of change. In servo-mechanism language, the teleocratic organization must not only “point” to its “goal,” but must also “track” it. This is not to draw an analogy with, say a target seeking missile which is concerned with optimum closure and ultimate contact with its target. The “goal” of a teleocratic organization is more like a continually shifting vector within an infinite continuum. That the vector itself is a partial function of the organization “tracking” it, may at first appear to add insanity to what is already confusion. What it really amounts to is that a teleocratic organization tends to define its own “goal” as that which it is most qualified, and therefore likely, to achieve. In the way, a final “goal” is never achieved, but quantities of neat, appropriate to problems “blocking the path” of the organization are delivered as a by-product of its “movement” toward the ever receding “goal.”

The other element of third level feedback involves a continuous measurement of deviation from optimum internal function. This is an easier concept to grasp but is more difficult in its execution than the one prior. The critical variables in Project Synergy at least, are interpersonal communication efficiency, gross energy available, and net energy applied to organizational function.

A general solution to the third level feedback problem has simply not been available until very recently. The form of the solution is a unique new computer process called Casyndekan which, in itself, was dependent on the development of exotic hardware systems. The core of Casyndekan lies in its ability to store extremely large amounts of information as totality in a three-dimensional, variable structure of concepts. The content of the conceptual file can then be examined, related, projected and otherwise operated upon in an endless variety of ways. The net benefit, in so far as Project Synergy is concerned, is two-fold:

First, a complete dynamic model of the teleocratic organization will be built up from existing data and current concepts. The model will then be exercised back And forth through empirical and historical checkpoints, and modified in all necessary dimensions until a reality match can be made with a good level of confidence. From this modeling exercise, existing concepts will be validated, modified or rejected. New ones will be developed as indicated. The same basic procedure will be applied to variables and other factors intrinsic to the teleocratic organization.

Secondly, and most important, the refined teleocratic model will be stored, made conditionally dynamic, and used as a reference “point.” A replica of the actual on-going teleocratic organization, from its inception, will be stored point by point in Casyndekan, tracked, and compared continuously against the “ideal” model. This process yields the aforementioned deviation from optimum internal function.

Deviation from “goal” feedback is derived from a more complex operation of the Casyndekan. A great amount of data from environmental realities is involved which will be weighted and combined with “solutions in process” of the teleocratic organization and then incrementally projected in time by temporarily disconnecting the organization replica from real-time and allowing it to “grow” rapidly. In effect, then, this information from the “future” serves to correct

unknown mistakes in the “present” on-going activity before they become seriously magnified. In terms of concept, this is not a particularly new idea. But for certain reasons given in this reference and a number of others not discussed, this kind of feedback only works for an intentional teleocratic organization.

The Kasyndekan process, then, is the final key to Project Synergy with respect to the dimension of feedback communication. A side benefit, of course, is the entire history of the project will be stored in its entirety. A continuous, longitudinal study of change, including the process variables, of any organization, would be of immense value to those concerned with such things. The value of such a study of the next generation of organization, now, cannot be guessed at in today’s troubled times.

With the major systemic considerations in hand, so to speak, the remaining problems of initiating and maintaining the intentional teleocratic organization are reduced to more or less practical matters within the realm of applied knowledge. Though of no less importance, these problem areas are easily narrowed and suggest their own solution.

Before discussing the need and environmental dimensions of the project, it seems worthwhile to present a collective summary of the four major dimensions involved, and a short descriptive reference of each. It might also be emphasized that these dimensions are critical to any teleocratic organization, and must be maintained in correct interrelationship and balance.

**TRANSCENDENTAL:** The transcendental dimension has about it a quality of awareness which is characterized by an overall sense of purpose and function, a sort of knowing where it is going and why. The existence and expansion of this dimension owes largely to conceptual derivatives from the field of General Systems theory.

**SYSTEMIC:** The systemic dimension exhibits structural fluidity of organization, a deceptively passive aliveness which reflects a high order of feedback communication. Energy is not wasted in projected roles. This dimension is created by and maintained through insights and techniques supplied by Communication theory, advances in the behavioral sciences, and sophisticated computer systems, as they relate to the central requirements and guidelines of the transcendental dimension.

**NEED:** The need dimension has the quality of internalized fulfillment and is made apparent by interpersonal mutuality and support, a sense of presence and wholeness within the organization. This dimension is realized and made concrete by recent developments in experiential psychology that provide more appropriate organism models than cultural factors have thus far permitted.

**ENVIRONMENTAL:** The environmental dimension is best described as having a quality of facilitation which helps other dimensions grow and flourish. To the transcendental, it is symbolic and in harmony. To the systemic, it allows and enhances. To the need, it contributes and integrates, gives scale and stability. This dimension reflects the broad composite of features prescribed by other dimensions.

In outlining the need dimension of Project Synergy, reference is made to a simplified Maslow model which depicts an arrangement of individual human functions which must be attended if an individual is to realize his potential to himself and others. The functions, or need areas, are

ranked in ascending order. Implicit in this ordering is the imperative that a lower order of need must be fulfilled (in some degree) before energy can be devoted to filling the next higher order.

It can be argued, of course, that an individual normally appears active in all the need areas more or less simultaneously. In one sense this is true since the boundaries between need areas are not fixed or discrete. From the point of view of Project Synergy, however, it can be shown that while the apparently active situation exists, an individual's energy is mostly self-directed and not available to the larger organization in a direct sense. In other words, a person may exercise great creativity in meeting his survival, security and emotional needs, but the product of that creativity doesn't necessarily relate to the growth or well being of others. It may, in fact, be highly destructive. Actually, this particular needs fulfillment process is what has come to be called "normal" to society at large. The extremes are often manifested in various forms of confusion, violence and other somewhat bizarre activities.

Project Synergy is unique in its approach to needs fulfillment in that the intentional teleocratic organization directly provides for collective individual needs through complete support at the base levels, and by facilitating transactional processes at the higher levels. In this way, individual energy is not only freed for the creative level but is effectively channeled into the organizational function. The various need level elements can be roughly delineated as follows:

At the base level of survival, elements such as protection, food, housing, medication, etc. are vital. Project Synergy provides these essentials in a total, non-demanding way. In the traditional bureaucratic systems, these needs must be energetically filled by the individual himself, utilizing his reward for creativity as a means within a large, diffuse environment.

At the level of security, an individual needs, and must perceive, permanence, continuity, involvement, a sense of worth and being needed. In the bureaucratic systems, these needs must again be energetically sought by the individual, and are largely "achieved" through rigid, symbolic means divorced from interpersonal reality. Project Synergy meets these needs by the nature of its function, its close identification with its member individuals, and its internal processes of interpersonal transaction. The involvement of family structures within the intentional teleocratic organization, for one instance, is of considerable importance.

Emotional level needs of acceptance, giving, care, love, expression, freedom, joy, etc. are characteristic elements of individual well-being. Project Synergy views the on-going fulfillment of these needs as a pro-active state. With due consideration of negative emotions experienced as rage, hate, fear, grief, etc., it treats them not as needs at all but simply reaction to the real, threatened or imaginary loss or absence of lower level or other needs; motivational in some instances, to be sure, but certainly not a necessary state of affairs. Whereas bureaucratic systems tend to treat emotional needs with somewhat the same apprehension as sand in a gearbox, Project Synergy views them as lubrication. Possibly because of such anxious apprehension, and the inability to deal with it, bureaucratic organizations leave emotional need fulfillment strictly up to the individual, and thereby lose a great deal of available energy. Project Synergy fills this need area by allowing, encouraging, and otherwise facilitating real, human contact and emotional interaction throughout its member population. An example in contrast which might be drawn here is that the bureaucratic organization is, by nature, divorced, alienated, and defended from the needs of the family. The energy expended by the individual in attempts to bridge this gap is becoming increasingly destructive to the organization, the individual, and the family. The



intentional teleocratic organization of Project Synergy incorporates the family, gives that incorporation high value, and thus minimizes the gap and inherent waste of energy.

When the lowest level needs of survival, security, and emotional fulfillment are met within individuals by the organization and its processes, the level of creative needs comes into sharp focus and displays several significant facets. First, of course, is that fulfillment of the lower level needs' concentrates more energy into the creative need area. Secondly, since need fulfillment is derived from the organization process itself, the individual identifies much more strongly with the organization than in the case of bureaucratic systems. Because of this close identification, he returns his creative output almost entirely to the organization. Although this increase of creative efficiency alone would justify Project Synergy, a new factor of important magnitude becomes apparent as a result of the unique systemic processes of the intentional teleocratic organization.

An act of creation can be described, in one way, as the emergence of a new conceptual matrix of expression resulting from the fusion and reintegration of two or more older, established, but unrelated matrices. The high order of interpersonal communication maintained in Project Synergy, combined with the high creative energy level, produces, in effect, a sort of organizational "mind" where there is a high probability of fusion of multiple conceptual matrices which normally would remain embedded within separate individuals. The process itself is amply demonstrated by present "think tank" organizations that work, but at a very low level of functional efficiency. It is within this context that Project Synergy holds its greatest promise and potential, serving concurrently as a creative producer of new knowledge as well as a self-refining model for future organizational principles.

Though the environmental dimension of Project Synergy could best express a spatial model, some of the design elements bear elaboration. The location, for instance, of the intentional teleocratic organization demands a natural setting offering certain isolation, recreation of various kinds, quiet, and a general immunity from outside impingement by the larger society. Many reasons account for this choice, but primarily important is the need for encapsulation of the organization into an environment which does not disturb and offers a good deal of natural pleasure with requiring an undue amount of energy expenditure. Another reason for encapsulation of this kind is to reduce some of the dependency on external social elements having different or conflicting value systems than those of the intentional teleocratic organization.

The physical elements of the organization reflect in a cluster concept derived from systemic considerations of communication and sub-group formation. A central core facility provides the best space and arrangement for work, some kinds of social recreation, main dining, conference and other large group activities. The overall design is quite complex, but the intent is simply to provide a focal point and reinforcement for cooperative activities and to insure a large amount of interpersonal contact at many levels of activity. Or, even more simply, to insure that people see and experience one another as real people within a continuum of behavior.

Peripheral to the central core facilities are sub-clusters of individual dwelling units. Again, spatial arrangements serve to encourage interpersonal contact. In these areas, however, an extremely high degree of privacy will be an option always available and greatly respected.

Other peripheral units will provide for the service and maintenance aspect of the organization. Still others will accommodate transient persons either loosely associated with Project Synergy or engaged in study and other matters.

The ultimate size of Project Synergy must be considered as approximately fifteen hundred persons. To this extent, provisions for expansion to this size are included and amount to an extension of the basic cluster concepts. Needless to say, the physical environs of Project Synergy require humanistic, esthetic treatment in all phases of design and execution.

Obviously there are many dimensions and much detail not included in this abstract. That supporting information, however, is best presented in other formats more suitable to its specific content and purpose.

