

Editorial

Systems

Associate Editor: Gillian Ragsdell

The Editors are pleased to offer this opportunity for the associate editor for Systems to outline her domain, and seek contributions from potential authors.

As we strive to cope with the increasing complexity of life it is not too surprising that systems thinking is being utilised more. That may mean we are thinking and acting systemically in an overt and explicit way and/or in an intuitive and implicit manner. Whatever the case may be, the value of using 'joined up thinking' and thinking in 'wholes' rather than in 'parts' is being recognised.

While there is much to be written about theoretical & philosophical underpinnings of systems thinking the main focus of interest for OR Insight is in systems *practice*. From my modest position in the systems movement, I know that systems thinking is being practised in a whole range of contexts -- from agriculture to business, community projects to developing countries, from education to finance. There is literally an A-Z list of systems practice!

But it is not only the diverse range of contexts in which systems thinking is practised that is inspiring. The various aspects that systems practice is tackling within those contexts is equally inspiring - from environmental management, project management and organisational development, through to healing and spirituality, information systems and knowledge management.

One does not have to look too hard to encounter case studies such as the employment of Total Systems Intervention with the North Yorkshire Police, the following of Soft Systems Methodology to assist in the evaluation of a Council for Voluntary Services Development Team and the use of Interactive Planning to transform a public utility sector organisation as it moved to a private company.

Of course, the danger is that those of us that are 'doing' systems practice are often unable to take time out from practice to share our accounts with fellow systems thinkers. This reduces the learning that can be generated amongst the systems community and can slow down the growth and development of the body of knowledge associated with systems practice. This invitation aims to dispel that danger.

I would like to invite you to submit papers based on your experience of systems practice to OR Insight. Whether you are using systems concepts or systems methodologies, whether your project is of a local, national or international nature, I would welcome your contribution. Papers that draw out lessons for systems practitioners will be particularly welcome.

When submitting your paper, remember to address the general aims of OR Insight, which can be found on the back page, together with formatting instructions.

If you would like to receive some feedback on papers in preparation or on ideas for papers, then I am happy to do that. In addition please send any electronic papers on Systems to Gillian Ragsdell via

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I look forward to receiving your contributions.