OUTSIDE-IN/INSIDE-OUT
Bridging Professional Expertise and Local Knowledge in an Era of Globalization

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ABSTRACT

Professional planners and designers often face the predicament of planning for people and for contexts foreign to their own. They must deal with issues in cross-cultural values and perspectives. They must be able to communicate in languages other than their own. They must live and work in alien environments. In an increasingly globalizing world, this phenomenon is ever more apparent and critical. At the same time, more than ever before, people are traveling to new and alien places seeking recreation, excitement and alternative life experiences. The increasing pace of interaction between the local and the outsider exposes a wide range of issues concerning culture and development. For example, when we speak of local distinctiveness, is it distinctiveness as defined by the local, or is it as seen by the outsider? For the planners, is distinctiveness a conceptual construct applied to the local context, or is it to be discovered from the inside-out? To examine these emerging cross-cultural issues in the field of community planning and design, this panel discusses three separate cases: a sustainable forest management case in Lijiang, China, an eco-tourism development case on Matzu Island, Taiwan, and a case of community design and planning in the multi-cultural community of West Hyattsville, Maryland (USA). In their different socio-cultural settings and program contexts, these projects involve a wide range of local knowledge that local insiders are familiar with, and professional technologies that are introduced by outside experts. Together, the case studies examine the common issues of cross-cultural perspectives in community design that includes:

- How do we (professionals) understand the problems that local people face when they have to deal with unfamiliar and foreign environments?

- How do we (professionals) set goals and objectives when we help people face the above problems?

- How do we (professionals) engage people (participation) in making plans and designs for future environments that will help to resolve problems that people face?

Panel Participants (reversed alphabetical order): Tianxin Zhang (Beijing University, China), Yamamura Takayoshi (Kyoto Saga University Of Arts, Japan), Jonathan London (Youth in Focus, USA), John K.C. Liu (National Taiwan University, Taiwan), Margarita Hill (University of Maryland, USA), Aijun He (Tokyo University, Japan), Shenglin Chang (University of Maryland, USA)