

Citizen-Participated Program Planning Systems at the Lifelong Learning Facilities in Japan

Katsumi AKAO

1. Three cases of citizen-participated program planning committee

In Japan, recently in several cities, citizen-participated program planning systems have been adopted. Especially, since national council of lifelong learning declared the importance of learning about contemporary issues as human right, environmental issues, social welfare, international understanding, health care in 1992, several lifelong learning facilities tried to adopt citizen participation system for program planning. In this system, the ability of citizens of planning attractive program was expected.

In this paper, at the first section, I show open enrolment type of citizen-participated program planning systems and problems of this type. I made field works in three official lifelong learning facilities, namely two Kominkans (community centers) and one Gender Equality Center, in 2003 intensively.

1-1. Case 1: The case of Gender Equality Center in Toyonaka city

The first case is Gender Equality Center in Toyonaka city in Osaka prefecture. In 2003, the theme of the program was decided to be "human relationship and gender" by the center. Six people volunteered for citizen planners and all of them were appointed. The construction of citizen-participated planning committee was as follows. A (male) B (female) C (female) D (male) E (female) F (female). And two municipal staff, G (female) and H (male) also participated in the planning committee. (I was also included in the committee.) The committee meeting was held 13 times from April to November in 2003.

The key persons in the committee were member A, F and G. I can say that the program was planned practically by these three people. Especially member G's leadership could be highlighted. G supervised other members and lead the discussions well in every meeting. Member A, as a male, participated in this committee to develop a gender-related community program in order to construct a new society, because he felt various difficulties in his family life as well as in his workplace. Member F had rich experience in participating in many programs concerning Gender Studies, and could bring many pamphlets and leaflets to the committee.

The program was decided as follows. The number of participants was as follows.

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| 1. Sept.16. How to treat regressive persons? : from the supporters' viewpoint. | 45 |
| 2. Oct.6. Why regressive persons are male than female?: from the person concerned. | 44 |
| 3. Oct.30. What is Family Care? | 22 |
| 4. Dec.5. Let's change workplace of Medical Service. | 15 |

1 – 2 . Case 2: The case of Community Center (Kominkan) in Itami city

The second case is Community Center in Itami city in Hyogo prefecture. Because the environmental regulation in Itami city would be introduced in November 2003, the theme of the program was decided to be “environmental issues” by the center. Seven citizens applied for citizen planners. The planning members were as follows. A (female), B (male), C (male), D (male), E (female), F (male) G (male). Adding to them, the municipal staff H (male) participated in the committee. As F were absent from all the meetings, there were practically seven members. Six meeting were held from June to August in 2003.

In this committee, the key persons were B, C and H. B had rich knowledge about environmental issues, and contributed to the committee with proper opinions. He was also a member of NPO network “Global Village” and had ample personal network; he knew many lecturer candidates. C retired from a company, but he had an experience in planning career training programs in the company. He proposed learning methodology as field work and open discussion etc..

The staff H wrote the agenda of meeting on the blackboard before every meeting. By doing so, H made the planning committee “Learning Organization”, because their discussions were visually accumulated. H tried to listen to each citizen planners’ opinions and facilitated their discussion thoroughly. But when it became financial agenda, H consulted with the director of the center, and he forced the citizen planners to accept his idea. This shows that program planning can not be accomplished only by citizen planners: the municipal staff member sometimes exercises power to the citizen planners.

The program and the number of participants are follows.

Theme: Let’s think about the future of global environment.

1 . Nov.1 Public lecture: Let’s be considerate of the Earth.	19
2 . Nov.8 Itami city’s effort to protect environment: Itami city basic regulation for environment.	10
3 . Nov.14 Waste treatment in Itami city: field work in cleaning factory.	9
4 . Nov.22 Waste treatment in foreign countries: Germany and Denmark.	14
5 . Nov.29 Let’s start environmental accounts from now!	7
6 . Des.6 Ultraviolet rays and our life.	6
7 . Dec.13 Open discussion: for ecological life.	11

1 – 3 . Case 3: The case of Community Center (Kominkan) in Toyonaka city.

The program theme was decided to be “consumer’s issues” by the center formerly. Only one person (female A) applied for the citizen planner position. The staff asked a woman (E), who frequently uses the community center, to be the committee member along with her acquaintances, B (female) C (female) and D (female). After the application deadline, one person (male) applied for the citizen planner. And the staff (male) participated in the committee. In total, eight were the committee members. The planning committee meetings were held five times from November to December in 2003.

But in general, this committee was inactive. While A had good opinions, B C D and E were reluctant

to plan the program. Especially, E was misfit, because she took much time for meaningless chat yet wanted to dominate the committee meeting.

And this planning committee was not a learning organization, because leadership of the staff H was missing. There is not also a resource person to provide lecturer candidates. Each planner could not develop constructive discussions. While I watched the staffs use the white or black board to note the important points in the discussion in Case 1 and 2, in this case, the staff H did not use the blackboard. The chat continued long time in every session.

So the planning committee was not productive. In this case, it was clear that both the staff and citizen planners had insufficient planning capacity. I think that the chance to study consumer's issues should have been given to the committee members, so that the committee might function as "learning organization". I realized that it is impossible for any citizen planner to plan program without learning. They need a certain amount of background knowledge about the theme of the program.

The program and the number of participants were as follows. The former two courses are distinguished to the latter two in contents.

Theme: Cooling-Off system and Food Validity

1 . Feb.13. We should refuse inappropriate goods calmly.	24
2 . Feb.20. Let's try to use Cooling-Off system.	19
3 . Feb.27. The validity of relish and consumption of food.	14
4 . Mar.5. Correct labeling of original area of products.	15

I think that the citizen participation system in program planning is very important for democratization of society. But such democratic planning systems have several weak points as follows.

- 1 . Municipal papers tried to gather several planning citizen into the program planning committee, but not so many citizens tried to apply to the committee.
- 2 . The ability of planning program of the citizens was not verified. In above cases, citizens were not selected at all. So citizens who didn't have enough program planning ability were also adopted.
- 3 . The citizens participated in the facilities as volunteer. So they have no incentive for money, however many participants gather the program.

2 . Other systems of Citizen Participated Program Planning

I have continued field works in other lifelong learning facilities since 2004. So I found other types of citizen participation in program planning as follows.

2-1 . Proposal sheets

In Mino city in Osaka prefecture, several citizens pose the proposal sheet of program which they want to realize at the lifelong learning facilities—two lifelong learning centers and one community center (Kominkan)—every year. The staffs of the facilities accept the proposal sheets and pose to the staff

meeting, and then consult with the members of Mino management council of lifelong learning center and community center. The management council is consists of 10 persons. (I had been principal of the council from 1996 to 2000) In the council, the members negotiate which program can be adopted and how to modify the original program in order to carry out. This type has a merit in which the staff can think over various ideas of the programs. So the staffs can learn various contents of the programs which they don't know well. But, in turn, the ability of the staffs is watched by the citizens who apply original program. The staffs are asked to make accountability why a certain original program is adopted or not. There is tensional relationship between the staff and the citizens.

2-2. Proposal from stakeholder persons

Actually in Itami city, the citizen-participated program planning committee as we saw above was abolished. Since 2004, the system in which several stakeholder persons of the community center gather and propose ideas has been adopted. The stakeholder persons are selected among citizens who constantly use and learn in the center by the staff. About three times in every year, all the stakeholder persons and the staffs gather and propose the ideas of programs. In detail of planning programs, each stakeholder person and the staff negotiate about original idea of program and modify it in order to carry out. In this system, we can not watch the negotiation process between the stakeholder person and the staff. So it becomes invisible and closed system from outside. We can see the decline of open negotiation which is necessary to the democracy.

3. Recent trends of citizen participated program planning: recession of open negotiation

The first case is introducing NPO and second case is introducing a certain company to plan the program in the lifelong learning facilities. These trends have relation with economic recession in local administration. Now many local administrations suffer the economic recession and try to decrease using money from official budget in Japan.

3-1. Introducing NPO

In Itami city, NPO was introduced in North Lifelong Learning Center (Kirara Hole) in 2004. In this facility, NPO plans learning program and offers these to the citizens. But in this facility, few programs about contemporary issues are planned. Instead of contemporary issues, more familiar programs—cooking for children, health care, personal computer—are offered to the citizens in the center. In Sumida ward, Tokyo metropolis, Sumida Learning Garden has been established since 2000. This Garden is managed by NPO in Sumida ward lifelong learning center. The learning contents which are planned and offered by several volunteers based on the proposal sheets from citizens relate to practical courses as computer, cooking and familiar courses of hobby mainly.

3-2. Introducing designated operator system

This system has been introduced to the lifelong learning facilities since the Local Autonomy Law was amended in 2003 in Japan. According to the law amendment, a certain company which is selected and appointed by local authority can manage lifelong learning facility. In Nagaokakyo city, Kyoto prefecture, Osaka Gas Service Company as a designated operator has managed Central Lifelong Learning Center since 2005. This center offers room and space for rent by hour, and plans and offers several courses to the citizens. There is a community center (Kominkan) outside of the center. The learning contents which are offered are distinguished between two centers. The former relates to art, hobby and parenting meeting, the latter relates to contemporary issues as environmental issues, international relation, human rights and peace education.

In both cases, the learning contents about contemporary issues are diminished. Because these centers earn more money than community center from the participants, the contents about hobby, culture and sports tend to be offered for self-help. I will continue field works in the lifelong learning facilities in order to study the changing contents which will be offered in the era of citizen participation. Probably, as citizen participation systems to the lifelong learning facilities such as citizen-participated program planning committee, proposal sheets, NPO and a designated operators system are increased, the learning contents which are offered to citizens are more consumers-oriented and conservative. I believe that the political economy study of lifelong learning policy toward citizen participation will be important.

(付記)

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なお、当日使用したパワーポイントのスライドは省略した。