

5.3 Large Group Intervention

I. What is large group intervention?

“Large group interventions are methods for involving the whole system, a critical mass of people who are affected by change, both inside the organization (employees and management) and outside it (suppliers, partners and customers).” Bunker and Alban (1997:xvi)

II. Get them together to do what?

- To understand the need for change
- To analyze the current reality and decide what needs to change
- To generate ideas about how to change existing conditions
- To work out how best to implement and support the change to ensure it will work.

III. Why do we need to use such large-scale methods?

- **VALID DATA:** OD believes that data exist in all organization strata, wisdom does not reside only among those in the top of the hierarchy; wisdom and valid data exist among those who would be affected by the change issues. It is a firm OD belief that people who are closest to the problem or change issue being discussed often have critical information that enriches the change strategy. However, because they are also often at the lower levels of the organization, a traditional small group or top down change strategy may not solicit their input. Missing their perspective will hamper the validity of the change plan.
- **SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION:** The OD approach to change is always to work from the “end game” up. Successful implementation (end game) of any change requires sufficient ownership among those key groups/individuals upon whom the successful implementation is critically dependent. So from the beginning, these individuals/groups need to be invited to participate in understanding the logic for change, the change direction, and how to embark the change (as indicated in the 4 key activities exist in any whole system methodologies).
- **SPEED IN IMPLEMENTATION:** Speed is a crucial factor, especially during the implementation period. When everyone who needs to support the implementation is involved in the decision-making process, carrying it out happens faster and with less resistance. When everyone gets on board with the change through these large group methods, less time is needed for implementation, and the implementation is

