

Propositions that Underlie Social Systems Design

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These propositions help me to organize my thinking about social systems design. They (should) comprise an internally consistent and integrated system. The system is open. I want to continue to create it.

- It is the basic right of individuals, groups and communities to be involved in making decisions that affect them.
- They can reclaim and exercise this right and forge their destiny only if they develop competence that empowers them to take part directly and authentically in the design of the systems and communities in which they live and work.
- It is unethical to design social systems for someone else. In social systems people who live in the system are the experts.
- The role of the design professional is to develop resources and create arrangements and opportunities by which a designing community can learn how to engage in the design of their system.
- A designing community is comprised of people who serve the system, who are served by it, and who are affected by it. They collectively are the designers and users of their design: they own the design. They are user designers.
- Designers of social systems are trustees for future generations. They must constantly ask: How will the system we design affect the unborn?
- Collective design capability empowers us to practice authentic, truly participative democracy. It enables us to guide the activities that enrich the quality of our lives, add value to the systems in which we live, and organize our lives in the service of the common good.