

## **Cultural Learning Organizations: A Model**

© Eva Moraga, Madrid, 2006

### **III. 3 The 'learning organization' infrastructure**

#### **III. 3. 3 Participative decision-making**

Reflection without the possibility of participation in decision processes creates frustration and disappointment. Making decisions and implementing them is a necessary part in organizational learning. Reflection without action blocks the learning cycle. That is why organization members must have the possibility to propose suggestions at every organization level and to make decisions about next actions (Dixon, 1994). That is why some authors have emphasized not only participation in lower organization levels (related to implementation and execution) but also policy making and strategy levels (Pedler, 2006) and planning (De Geus, 1988). This is, however, the most difficult pillar to implement because it requires a shift of mentality in traditional management, used to top down decisions (Soonhee, 2002); and although democracy and participation are fashionable buzzwords in management literature nowadays, they are also highly criticized (Coopey, 2000; Graham, 2003) because of their utopian and unrealistic approach to organization reality. However, some research about LO implementation in companies shows that LO implementation in companies fails when they try to apply the model introducing LO values without putting into practice organizational structures for real participation and action (Elkjaer, 2001). Thus, management must abandon a part of the control that inhibits and blocks employees from inquiring and proposing, promoting participation structures that make reflecting on the organization valuable for employees.