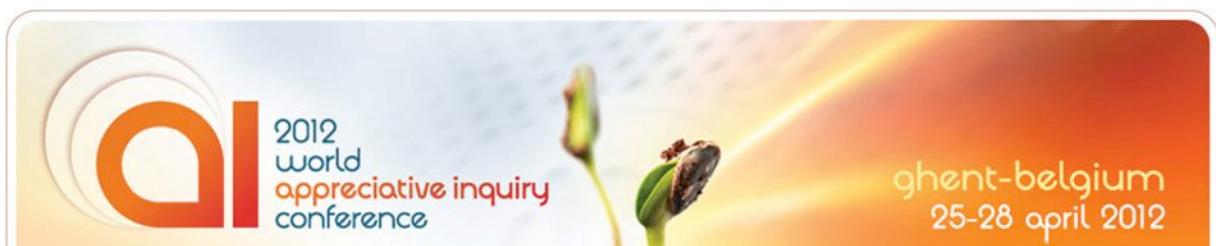


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Appreciative Inquiry at Leaf Turnhout

By Piet Vandenbroucke. Written for the WAIC 2012 , Ghent, Belgium.

Contextual situation

One can describe the leaf Turnhout case as a textbook AI case. And this can be seen in several ways.

First, the Leaf Turnhout plant was an organisation where change was required. It is a factory, producing candy which had shown deterioration in results (safety, quality, customer service, cost) and was lacking any confidence, nor any sign of improvement. In one of the triggering articles, we read “the fastest way to create change in an organisation is to connect everybody to a positive core.”D. Cooperrider. We did just that. Bring the management team in a self-confident, humble and positive state. And then connect everybody (although I had serious doubts about the feasibility at first).

Second, the AI practitioners literally worked from the textbook (“the AI handbook”, when initiating the change. It proves the simplicity and applicability. Later, after initial results were visible, deepening was sought with consultants in order to facilitate the Dream Summit (see their view further in this report and we were visited by Suzanne Verdonshot who was interested in our story for her project on identifying Innovation on the Work Floor ¹). My boss introduced the term “liberating discipline” which means that we expect the organisation to implement designed policies rather than starting to discuss them and comment them the moment they are issued. She states that you have the right to speak and improve after you have several months of implementation experience. I guess we applied “liberating discipline” on our AI project.

Thirdly, although the practitioners believe the underlying philosophy to be more important than the method, the 4 steps method was followed. A good match and integration was found with the Lean improvement program which is a key program in the group. We ended up finding a third way where AI and Lean reinforce each other. Both initiatives reinforce and accelerate each other. We did not have the intention to mention AI to anybody outside management team since we wanted to avoid the confusion with Lean and AI. ²

What did we do and how did we do it ?

We were advised (and we loved the advice) that the interest of the reader of this document would not be on the execution steps, but on the meta level of our experience. You will find in what follows, what we feel are important drivers of our experience. We believe though that the reality is far more complex than we can imagine (³). We do not believe that any solution can be copied. When we write this, we have been asked to extend our scope to include another factory. The approach we take is at the same time exactly the same and totally different (sounds like yin and yang, doesn't it ?) . It is the same because we apply the same beliefs, it is totally different because the plans and the actions are based on what happens now and not on the experience and solutions we found in Turnhout. I believe management in general (is it human ?) are far too automatically drawn to believe that solutions can be copied. I could call this the “method trap”. It is a trap that solutions come from copying blindly ways of working or processes, or even technical solutions.

¹ Suzanne is making Radio here on the World Appreciative Inquiry Conference. She is a passionate person and I advise that you talk to her if you can. Her material is not covered in this paper , but is available on request.

² In the mean time our confidence has grown such that we have past that point. We now openly talk about AI (still avoiding the “method trap”) . We recently were asked to present and the leadership conference and used AI in the title.

³ S. Kauffman “At Home in the Universe: The Search for the Laws of Self-Organization and Complexity [Paperback]” Margaret Wheatly “a simpler way”

So what patterns did we observe on the Meta level ?(sorted along the time axe when they occurred / total time since our start is 15 months)

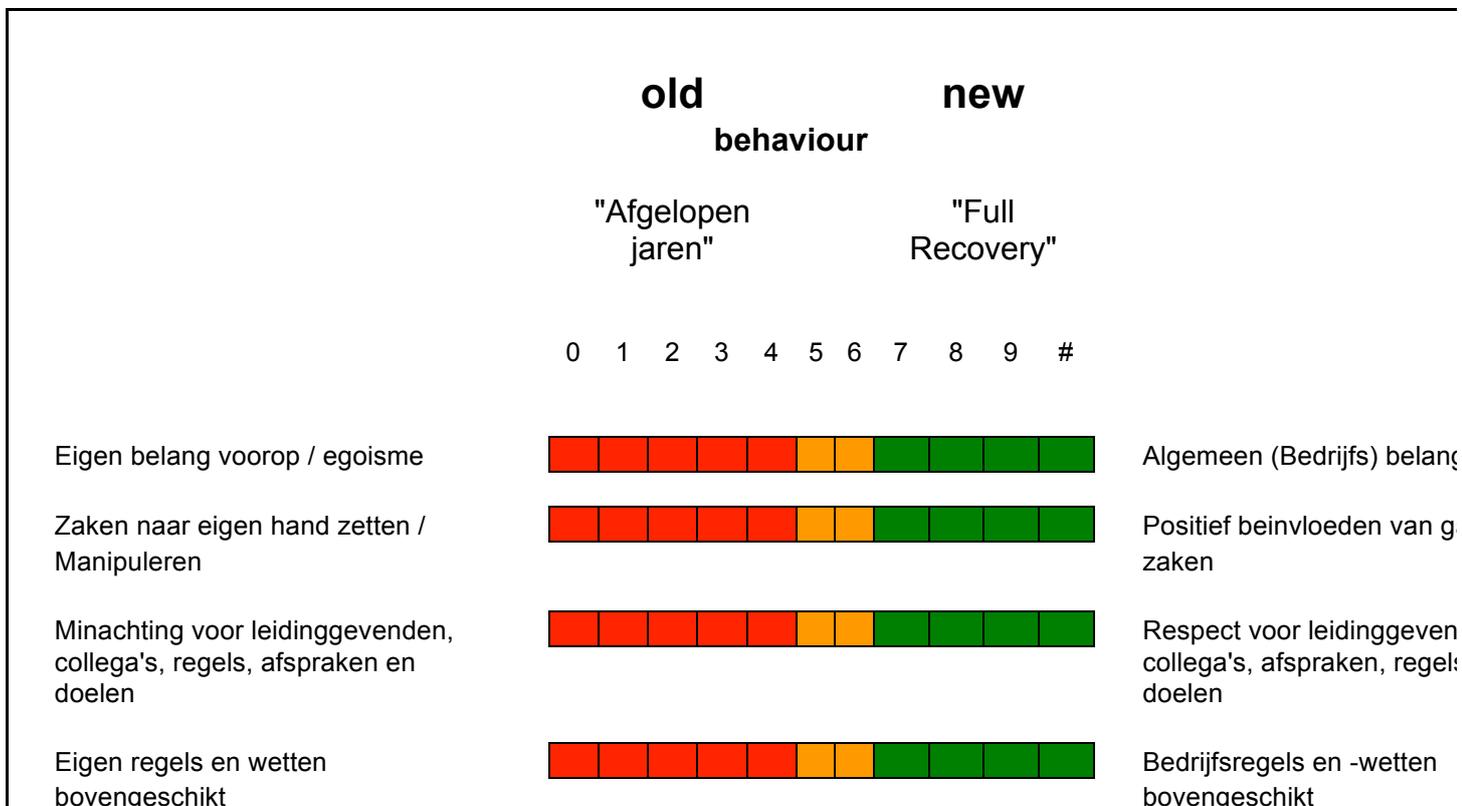
1. First people on the bus (⁴) (month 0)

The management and shareholder of the company had taken the strategy to create a new management prior to any other decision (investment program and change consultancy). When I arrived, the team was almost complete and was hired with the task and clarity about the change requirement. I believe this clarity was novel (and originally negatively positioned, see paragraph 4). There cannot be any doubt that the state of mind of those individuals affects the speed and impact one can achieve during a change program.

2. Working on behaviour from the start. The power of Solution Oriented Thinking. (as from start)

(⁵)

Story 1 One of the existing strengths ,albeit somewhat “fear”oriented was a behaviour sheet indicating old and new behaviour. We decided to keep it going since we felt it was a connector to what was happening before.



⁴ “from Good to Great” Collins.

⁵ “solution oriented thinking”, with a specific reference to AI in the last chapter.

Heimelijke bedoelingen hebben		Met open vizier zaken aan
Ellebogenwerk		Evenwaardige verhouding
Emoties en mening leidend		Feiten leidend
Insinueren en ergens omheen draaien		Recht door zee / To the po
Basseren op macht		Kwetsbaar en open opstell
Weinig gevoel en begrip voor ander		Hoog begrip en medelever
Kwetsen		Eerlijke feedback geven
Wantrouwen		Samenwerken en elkaar v
Elkaar niet helpen		Elkaar helpen
Onbetrouwbaar zijn		Betrouwbaar zijn
Unfaire omgangsvormen		Faire omgangsvormen
De boel op zijn beloop laten		Actief meedenken / anticip
Denken in problemen		Denken in mogelijkheden
Acties uitstellen / geen initiatief		Direkt actie nemen / initiati
Gelaten		Resultaat gericht

Updat

Table : Behaviour sheet indicating old and new behaviours. (eg/ thinking in problems versus thinking is solutions, or procrastinating versus taking initiative, focusing on next action)

3. Discovering strengths, telling stories. It's trainable. Strengths appear when you look for it (increased as from month 2 and still getting stronger)

My predecessor, when launching the change program used fear to create the burning platform. One colleague told me :

Story 2 in the first version of the change program , "fear" was consciously used. "we will make the people feel the fear , and than they will finally be willing to change" .A while before I took over, a fear presentation was given to all the people in the factory (one bullet even stated "people are incompetent" . I still get stomach ache when I think about it). After that presentation , everybody was asked to go back , discuss it at home and come into the plant managers office to say "yes I am in". When I arrived at the plant , I decided to use this 'burning platform' as a strength. I copied the questionnaire out of the AI manual (liberating discipline , remember ?) adjusted a little bit . I decided to keep the process of inviting people into my office , but used the questionnaire when people came to se me. What happened was also for me flabbergasting. When asking "tell me about when you received a compliment" one person answered with his eyes downward "I work here 25 years , sir, I have never received a compliment" . I wanted to hug the

man. Another answered excited “yes ! I remember very well, it felt very good. I received a compliment about cleaning up my work place on June 17th, 1975 ! “. When we recently had colleagues from another plant visiting, and I started the meeting by asking everybody to tell a story which gave them energy, the colleagues from Turnhout each told a story that was no longer than 48 hours old, whereas the colleagues from the visiting factory struggled more and came up with stories, which were several years old.

Meta patterns :

- Telling stories which give energy improves by training. I regularly encounter people who are unable at first to tell the “story” . They conceptualise (“I get energy when teams work together”, does not count as a ‘story’ “Last year in feb, we had a meeting with mr x and mrs y and ...”). Something different happens in the group when a real story is told. It goes to the heart, instead of to the head. That was quite an astonishing discovery for me. The ability and age of the story can be used as a Key Performance Indicator : when the stories that are told are recent, they mean the organisation is focusing on strengths (the average is found originally was over 5 years old stories, nowadays we notice stories are less than 48 hours old).
- I believe in order to accelerate change, that visibility of “facing the brutal facts “(Collins) is necessary . It is the burning platform (but I believe more and more that this should be presented Fearless). It doesn’t matter too much how it is burning. Although it was fear based, we transformed it and saw it as a strength. We used the mobilised energy present , yet redirected it towards the solution.
- Me, myself used to be a negative, black thinker ten years ago. In my personality tests, I still come out as “seeing all consequences, which can be worrying “ . Although lately I score always above 3 on B. Fredricksons positivity test (www.positivityratio.com).⁽⁷⁾ Also the management team scores close to a 3 ratio (not yet fully there). Being learning and applying chaos management concepts for over 10 years, I am excited to learn that there is a proven tipping point , also in Barbara’s research. From what we have experienced , we have been (and still are) in the zone above 3 .

4. getting rid of problems (month 1)

“What you give attention grows” An expression I learned from Erik Minne⁽⁸⁾. In the very early days the biggest issue at the plant was a problem called “the cordon sanitaire”. It was stated that the people were incompetent and that they were so close together that they excluded and worked against management. A “rotten apple “list was established by the previous plant manager. There were lawyers identified to work on these cases. Management had identified that there was an invisible roof between operators and management. They felt that they were friendly in their faces, but behind their back refused and consciously were working against them. That operators were working together to get them out.

The original planned solution was to hire a change consultant to deal with the cordon sanitaire.

Our solution was to stop paying attention to this problem and stopped using the description “cordon sanitaire”. A few weeks later, it was gone completely. We do need to add that at that time, two people had left, which could have had a wake up call effect to others. In any case, not given the negative any attention, produced an amazing and fast resolution at no cost.

5. Tapping into history (month 1 and 2)

⁶ “positivity”, B. Fredrickson. Fredrickson suggests a test which indicates your own positivity score. Interesting and intriguing !

⁷ “positivity”, B. Fredrickson. Fredrickson suggests a test which indicates your own positivity score. Interesting and intriguing !

⁸ Erik Minne and Karel Bouchout were contacted to support, help design and facilitate the dream day. See paragraph xx.

Story 3 My office is close to the visitors entrance. I have taken the habit of going to meet visitors and ask why they are visiting. I asked always in the early months : “ Do you come here often, and what do you think the strengths are of this site “(strange question because everybody was moaning all over). One engineer answered strongly “it was great here 7 years ago when mr x was plant manager”. I decided to track this plant manager down and went to interview him at his Coca Cola plant where he is director now. I had told him that people were still impressed with him and that I wanted to learn about why. That question in itself turned out for for him to be remarkable. He was very apologetic that it was a long time ago , that he was not sure what he had done right. He had meticulously prepared an overview (I guess it is an engineer ☺). He talked warmly , driven, appreciative about the people. He mentioned a few of the strong people at that time (which I in turn contacted to interview). One of them is now working again for us !

- a. The original time expectation of fully recovering the plant was 2 to 3 years. The plant was performing at level after 3 months and 3 months after running steadily, management decided to close formally the recovery project. It is since than a normal plant (and ended in the benchmarking with sister plant in the top 3). It had been with the bottom 2 for more than 5 years. I believe the speed of change is related to the organisational memory of times when the plant did go well .By accepting and being open to that history, we believe the organisation improved faster by “remembering”.

6. Just Be Leaf. A beautiful week. Spring cleaning at Christmas (month 1)

Early in the program , we decided to create a factory wide initiative. Volumes were low and we decided to continue producing full blown, and be able to start the x-mas shut down earlier. This would enable us to to a joint clean out.

Story 4 The story of the radio's is a famous one in our plant. When preparing the “week 51”initiative , which happened in our normal style (with a cross functional team consisting of several people from several layers) , facilitated by Ine , our training coordinator (who also has mind mapping skills) , the statement was captured that people had asked already years to have some music during their work. Production management just said “good idea, just do it”. Small units were purchased and issued at the start of the ‘week 51’ program. Every single operator asked, when they should bring them back. It was clearly stated that they were here to stay. Big was out surprise to find all the radio's back in the secure zone at the end of the first day. None of the operators could actually believe they could keep them. Allowing the radio's seems to be one of the major tipping points for people to increase trust in the management team . total investment : 10 x 50eur...



7. Thank god it's Friday (TGIF) (as from month 3)

The Lean way⁹ of working together with AI started early this year full steam ahead. Every Friday we stopped half of the lines to work on continuous improvement in multidisciplinary teams. At all points and in every step the new team stressed out the importance of looking solution oriented combined with building on people's strengths.

This program was started in parallel with AI, although one could argue that AI's Discover and Dream should come first. Lean fits very well in Destiny since it focuses on continuously improving, discovering improvement potential and bringing cross functional team together to realise the improvement. The innovation on the work floor researchers that came to visit us, wondered about this connection. They seem to perceive Lean as inflexible and methodology driven. My view on Lean is not the inflexible one. But the one where you create an environment where creativity, initiative and "facing the brutal facts" is embedded in the culture. I was charmed by an article about AI which stated "the area where things go wrong is a very interesting area where a lot can be learned". That is a strong connection to Lean.

The program managed to launch multiple improvement teams (10 times more than the average plant). That in itself is not so very lean ☺, indeed Lean has a certain slowness in it. Going too fast does not deliver sustainable results. My answer to that is that speed is relative. Sitting in a fast train at 300km/hr does not feel like fast. Secondly when exiting the motorway when you have driven an hour at 120 km / hour. How does 70km / hour feel? And how does the same 70km/hour feel when you accelerate from 0 to 70 in 10 seconds? indeed, totally different feeling. Inside the several teams, since they were coached by an internal improvement team leader, there was no pressure. We have not focused on the financial results

⁹ Lean is a concept developed by Toyota focussing on continuous improvement. One of those buzz words and methods. At our company it is the heart of our improvement program. The author combines his plant managers role with the groups Director responsibility for Lean. Remember what I stated: solutions cannot be just copied. They can be tools, techniques but they always need connecting to the local situation and people. It only really works sustainable when it is connected to their hearts

"Verdraaid het werkt" Wilma van 't Kruis, 2010, Scriptum

nor goals. The aim was at first to “learn to improve “. All the teams delivered, albeit small, financial measurable results.

- Dealing with the brutal facts is the place where real improvement can happen. The ability to deal with reality in a solution oriented , non-blaming, way is crucial to create a continuous improvement mentality. Fear does not deliver sustainable results. Negativity and blaming is in itself Muda (the Lean Japanese for waste ⁽¹⁰⁾) and we focused on reducing it (see paragraph on “solution oriented behaviour”) .
- “Scalability” (fractals) another concept out of chaos theory can be applied to accelerate. In each small unit, the feeling can be of control. By creating more units, one can accelerate. One accelerator was the creation and training of improvement team leaders. An additional role that was given to people with coaching skills and knowledge of lean.

8. The dream summit (month 7)

There were in the team many non believers (including me , who doubted seriously about the feasibility of organising a dream summit with all 120 people) at first and these people really frowned their eyebrows when we talked about organizing a Dream Summit. This we did on June 17th (very low budget using a party tent next to the factory installed for the annual staff party the day after). And without bragging, the roof went off on this Summit, it was awesome. And we have some HD footage to prove it☺!

Footnote: our HR Manager became HR Manager of the year 2011 in the Region (Kempen) telling the story of change and AI.

Meta patterns :

- Connecting everybody is not so difficult as it seems.

A few comments by colleagues:

“2011 is already long ago... At first, I was sceptical toward the enthusiasm of Piet, i was careful. But when it became clear that it was authentic enthusiasm, it felt really good to see and to start spreading it myself. This openness was necessary after an area of fear. “

“my most beautiful experience was that 2 Management team members came personally to ask whether I could take some more challenging tasks, I would not have experienced this question a year ago as a positive challenge. Everybody get valued as a person and not according to her or his function.”

Ps. The dream day was the moment when most of us realised that the changes really were going to happen”

“it was charming to see the plant manager play the guitar with a team leader who was singing a self made song. It shows people in a different context. The dream day was an absolute high since it proves that people are a priority again”

9. Fealy (month 10)

One of the images emerging from the Dream summit was that in the future where everything is ok , the pieces of the jigsaw fit together. We had 10 teams developing a creative way to express their dream . One team choose a flash mob type set up , using “I gotta Fealing” song by the Black Eyed Peas. Since we had our yearly party the day after, the song become the theme of the plant. We used the text in our thank you message the day after (just get of the sofa an do it , do it / see the elephant dancing / ...) . I was told recently that a lot of people came and asked for the text later. Our HR manager had good experiences with developing a communication mascotte. Since we are a candy producer , we decided to make a winegum

¹⁰ Lean identifies 7 Muda’s (some recent versions 8). Like over –production, inventory, waiting time,

type , jigsaw mascotte called “the FEALY” (LEAF .. got em ?) . In this way , we connect our communication now permanently to the dream summit. We used it in our strategy representation (see next point)

10. Applying Soar to strategy (month 5 and 6)

One of the Management Team goals was to design a five year strategy. We did that using the Mckinsey 7S model as used and developed by Vlerick School Of Management (¹¹). This strategy

Story 5 The author is a mind map practitioner since 20 years and the team was motivated to learn. Mindmapping is a noting technique that enables fast creation of results in a group. We organised an afternoon training session with B. Lernout (¹²). He combined concepts of AI with mind mapping (using mind manager). The day after, we set out to use the tool (brainwave) which he thought us. First individual mindmap about the Turnhout strategy. Than sharing those mind maps with 2 team members. Than move to 4 (each time combining the mind maps) to finally end up with one final mind map combining , discussing reviewing.. It gave us a completed strategy in significant detail which we than used to summarize into one page. At that moment , we had to resolve how to connect the strategy with the results of the dream day. We used the jigsaw concept to place the dream summit and the company values results in the centre (the hart, what matters most) and the 4 building blocks of of strategy (1. Value proposition, 2. Who do we serve, 3. What do we produce, 4. How do we do it) .

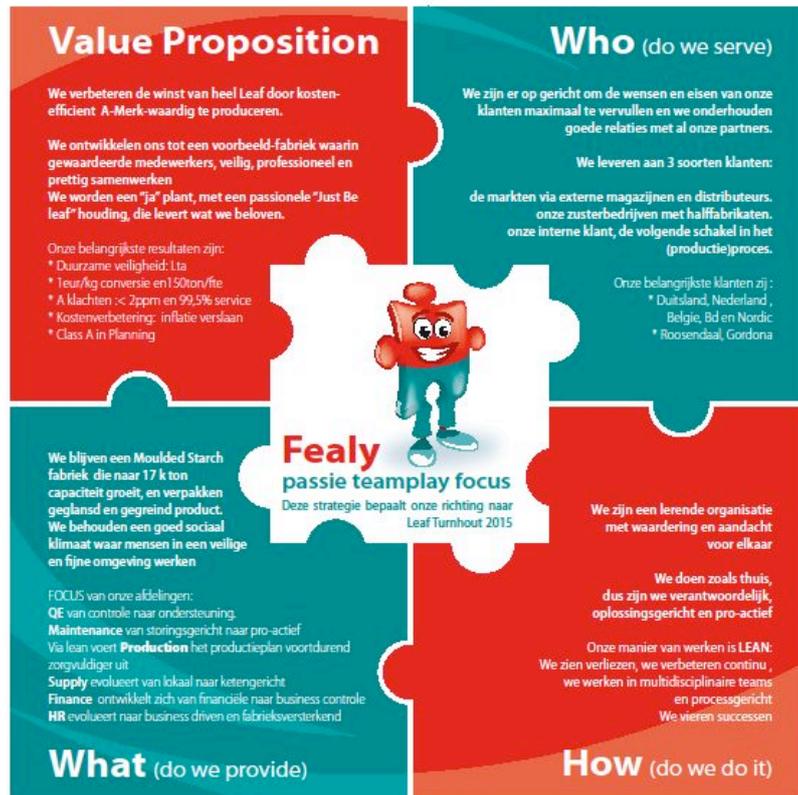
- a. In our case, Soar or Swot felt like the same. Although I tried passionately to apply “liberating discipline” on soar, I noticed in reality people were thinking Swot, yet the result was strong and constructive since the going in position was focused on strengths. Therefore, my reading is that it did not matter that much. Indeed , If people have the state of mind which allows to accept weaknesses as improvement options, there is less of an issue with SWOT as a tool (¹³)
- b. Although I introduced the concept of SOAR , I noticed that SWOT is so strong that it did not seem to have an impact. The audience did not engage and the outcome does not seem to be different.
- c. We used the company values as a strength. Passion , Teamplay ,Focus were the underlying theme of the dreamsummit. Also here, we used the existing values as strengths. In this way, we avoided conflict of interest between the dream summit and the company values (which have their own roll-out program) . Indeed, the dream summit could have been seen as contradictory or different to the already established values). In fact, this is looking for “the third way” (¹⁴).

¹¹ material thought on Vlerick’s MBA programm. Not published.

¹² “Bernard is the author of the book (Dutch) where I discovered AI: “Het Leonardo Kompas”, 2010, Witsand Uitgevers Belgium. He is also the trainer who thought me to mindmap 20 years ago.”

¹³ “Stillpower”, Garteth Kramer

¹⁴ “the third way”, steven covey



Figuur 1

“the one page strategy with the Fealy indicating the dream summit results”. As the dream summit results are songs, flashmob, cardboard, pictures, etc. we did not try to put the vision/mission in words but we use the image instead.

11. Design. Connecting Dream through strategy with Destiny (Lean)

Started as a separate strategic initiative, we went through an exercise to define the plant 5 year strategy. Consistently with what we stated earlier, we tried the text book AI alternative to SWOT, namely SOAR. We used it in combination with the 7S model of McKinsey. We did not identify much energy difference with this change. It was perceived a bit strange, since SWOT is so commonly accepted. We never tried to focus too heavily on method, so also here we stayed focused on the overall goal. We organised a brainwave day (after educating and training on mindmapping for all the management team members), where we started by individually mapping the strategy, then grouping by two, then by four to than group and come out with one agreed mindmap containing our strategy. Energising result and – although not intended, I guess – connected to methods in AI. The trainer, Bernard Lernout, was my trigger to discovering AI in his beautiful Dutch book “het Leonardo Kompas” (Witsand, 2010). This initiative was running in parallel to the dream day and we struggled a while to find a way to connect the two. The dream day, had delivered a visual creative representation of the vision and mission. We decided on suggestion of the COO to summarize the mindmap in a one pager and to put the dream day, behaviour focus in the center of it. One of the results of the dream day was that “all the pieces of the jigsaw start fitting together when it goes well. We created a candy jigsaw mascotte (Fealy) which we now use for our further communication.

12. And what story do experts tell about us ?

Talking about my experiences in the plant after a football game in the shower, a friend told me that his school was also involved in Appreciative Inquiry. He said that with such a twinkle in his eyes that I got into contact with Erik and Karel . We got along immediately and I asked them to facilitate our Dream Summit. Here is there story (from the eyes of experienced people).

Introduction

In the light of the World Appreciative Inquiry Conference in Ghent, we searched for an inspiring way of describing our reflections and impressions of our work together with the management of Leaf Turnhout in order to give the article more substantiation. We quickly arrived at the inquisitive question: "What makes the change process at Leaf so successful?". This question is the central "topic" of this article and will help us discover what "works". In keeping with the poetic principle of appreciative inquiry, we chose a narrative form, which hovers between anecdotes and more theoretical views from the domain of Positive Psychology.

We have gathered after a busy but energizing day and look back on the process we were allowed to guide at Leaf Turnhout. It was a process that started in the spring of 2011 until the summer of the same year. We were introduced to Leaf when the company had already started to find itself again for several months. They were in the process of reinventing themselves. The new management team had committed itself to the challenge of transforming the negativity from the past into a company culture that is open to passion, positive collaboration, fun and attention to what is necessary; into a company where people are not punished for their errors, but where errors give rise to discovering new options and where things that go well are valued.

"It has been a while that we helped Leaf realizing their dream day. When I look back on it, it remains one of the highlights of my career. The energy between us both, the enthusiasm of Leaf's management team, the wow moments on the dream day itself....I get goose bumps all over again when I watch the video the Leaf made of their dream day. Those moments make me proud and happy. How was it for you?"

"Everything that you have said I feel too, and particularly the way in which we established contact with Leaf from the beginning. We were inspired by their story and the story-tellers. We were sucked in, as it were. Do you remember the first conversations with Piet, the CEO, and Peter, the HR Director, and the other management team members? We were sharing ideas, images about how things could be almost from the get-go. When AI mentions social constructionism, that was the real starting point."

"I agree. We may be Consultants who are inclined to look from the outside to the inside at organisations, but the people at Leaf have included us into their reality in some way or another. Every moment we were together with Piet and Peter and the wider management team was a moment of discovery. We have openly listened to their stories, and discovered elements that are typical of Leaf in them, their culture, their way of looking at things in the past and present, their creativity, their ambitions, their emotions... By being busy with having stories told and asking questions to want to learn and understand, we have managed to get a clear view of the goal of the dream day, the topic choice.

"Quite right. "Our future is sweet" We have used a lot of imaginative and metaphorical words: "we have leaf-t off, we be-leaf, no one is leaft behind, every Leaf counts, our future is sweet...". Somehow we connected with the people at Leaf. It was a real connection and it resulted in us developing our own vocabulary with meaningful imagery.

"Words create worlds!" Social constructionism concerns language and imagination. Which philosopher said that reality in itself does not exist? No, what counts is to create a reality that is meaningful to all people involved and that gives. It happens spontaneously when there is a connection. When the quality of the relationship is high. When positive emotions are allowed to be there. It's all about the relationship!"

"I feel the energy and emotions of our period at Leaf again. One thing that springs to my mind right now is the book by Barbara L. Frederickson, *Positivity*. Maybe the success of the process at Leaf is due to the fact that all ten positive emotions are present and valued. Let's try...

The first emotion that Barbara describes is joy, I think: "Joy is like a clear and light feeling. Colours seem more vivid. You have a spring in your step. And your face lights up with a smile and an inner glow. You want to take everything in. You feel playful: you want to jump in and join in the racket. "

"I think that we felt that from the start. The way in which Piet and Peter gave an outline of Leaf. Where they were from, where they were at now, and what their hopes were. We immediately sensed that something was afoot there. And we were enticed to join them! "

"And did we ever jump and join in the fun! A lot of gratitude ensued from that. At the end of the dream day different members of staff approached us to say thanks. Spontaneously, not because they wanted to be polite. After the dream day we were invited by the Leaf management team to a dinner party during their two-day strategic meeting. They had a surprise for us. They showed us the video that was made during the dream day in a meeting room. Fantastic! Shivers went up and down my spine. Reviewing and reliving with the feeling of gratitude the people at Leaf had given us. The first thing I did when got home the next day was show it to my children!"

"So, pride too! That could be sensed all around! And our own pride that we were able to contribute to their growth. According to Barbara Frederickson, pride grows in the wake of an accomplishment in your name. You invested in time, skills and talent and you succeeded. The realization that you have meant something to another person by helping, doing a favour or giving advice. "

"I think that pride mainly comes from your relationship with others who acknowledge and value your achievement. In other words, when we sense deep inside that our actions are appreciated by others. When I heard Piet say that the Director of Human Resources of the group, who was present at the dream day, called the CEO that same day to say "you should have been there" and "this was the best day in my long career as an HR man", I sensed his pride and that made me incredible proud at the same time that I was able to contribute to that. A feeling of warmth and lightness that gives confidence to talk about it and that awakens dreams of more and bigger achievements in similar terrains! It is closely related to the emotion of "Respect". The man must have sensed it. The feeling that he witnessed something overwhelming, something big. He may even have been rooted to the spot. "

"I also saw the respect, pride and thereby the appreciation of others at so many other moments. Do you remember one Friday afternoon (TGI Friday) when we were listening to the different presentations of the quality teams about how they brought progress into their quality issues? I have witnessed a lot, but the authenticity of with which this happened touched me. Often, you notice the formal atmosphere at companies in actual practice. "We report because the policy requires us to, so we have to deliver something." But the Thank God It's Friday moment exuded emotional authenticity. Employees showed their pride and were appreciated with applause from their colleagues and the management team. And they were questioned by the management team from a learning, inquisitive attitude. This reminds me of the book by Marilee G. Adams, *Change your questions change your life*. In it she describes two types of questioning attitudes: the "judger mode" and the "learning mode". In the first case, people search by asking questions (themselves and others) where the error lies, who is responsible and who is to blame. In the "learning mode" people ask from a sincere inquisitiveness in order to understand, and be open to new possibilities and to appreciate what is there. The times that I have experienced a truly tangible appreciation from a board or his team are rare. Leaf pays attention to the best of their people and appreciates them for their efforts and energy to turn Leaf into the best in its kind. I have felt pride and also a lot of fun!"

“Fun is also a positive emotion that counts towards to the positivity ratio of Barbara Frederickson. That happens at moments that are often unexpected and surprising. Somebody makes a smart remark, somebody tells a joke, and somebody does something crazy, which puts a smile on your face. Scientists call these circumstances “not serious social congruence”. They go on to explain that fun is mostly a social phenomenon. Laughing is contagious, like yawning. But spontaneous and surprising fun also occurs in a safe context. Not if there are tensions, which make people hide behind their wall of defence due to doubt and fear. “

“And how much did we have throughout the process! Especially the dream day was filled with fun and pleasant moments! We heard people laughing; there was singing and dancing! The different presentations of the work groups about how they saw the future, via their dream images and their designs were convincing and lasting in their own right. It spontaneously brought smiles to people’s faces! It was also the first time in my career that I heard a HR Director and a CEO singing and motivating people to dance: “I got a feeling that tonight’s gonna be a good night!” A wonderful closing to a successful dream day”!

“I thought that the interaction between Piet en Peter was terrific! Even amusing at times! Almost stand-up comedy between two outspoken personalities. Piet as the creative scatterbrain and Peter the down to earth comic. Very complementary. When Piet went sky-high with his out of the box thinking, Peter always managed to bring him back to planet Earth with a witty but remark that put things into perspective. It was beautiful to see how people balanced the best in themselves by making a connection with each other based on trust, nearness, and respect. Luk Dewulf discusses this in his book “Ik kies voor mijn talent” (“I choose for my talent”). Everybody has a talent, something that is so strongly linked to who you are and that gives you drive and energy at the moments you use your that talent. When we succeed in activating our talent, we are happy people, capable of great things, full of creativity, entrepreneurship, decisiveness. It gives us the feeling that we can fly! But to many, it is a challenge to not only know your own talent, but to activate it too. Since they function in the wrong environment with people who spend too much time to where their talents not lie. Luk describes this reality beautifully. He says it as follows: “Everybody has a talent. When you are lucky enough to be in a high social position, for instance you are a respected artist or successful director, everybody will accept that. But when you do not have a clear-cut position, you will be often confronted with the things you cannot do or in which you differ. Your manager will work with you to eliminate your shortcomings via a personal development plan; your teacher will point out to you that you have bad handwriting skills; your wife will point out to you that you are sloppy and chaotic. Dragging and pulling things you do not have by nature may bring about improvements, but from bad to no longer bad. That does not make people really happy and energetic.

Luk Dewulf means to say here that you should not take responsibility for things you are not good at. But his solution strategies are different. Make sure you learn to choose your environment that will appeal to your talent; actively approach people and ask them to help you with the things you are not good at; find out if the things you are not good at may be a leverage for improving your talent.

“I think that Piet and Peter, but also others of the management team, have wonderfully succeeded in using their talents to manage Leaf. But the members of the management team also accept each other’s weak points. They laugh about it and when tasks are divided, they select people based on their strong points. No weaknesses. This creates a safe work context, dynamics, and innovation. Very inspiring!”

“The meetings with the management team were not the only moments that inspired me. I experienced inspiration throughout the process! That is rightfully one of the ten positive emotions named by Frederickson in her book. She writes: “Excellent human performances may inspire and stimulate you. (...) Inspiration focuses your attention, warms your heart and sweeps you along. Inspiration not only feels good, you also want to express the good and to do good yourself. It stimulates you to do your best, so that you can reach a higher level. It is a form of positivity that takes us out of our self-absorption.”

“I thought that the way in which the Leaf employees presented their ideas about the future wonderful! So creative, so surprising! I saw workers that do not like speaking in front of a group of people according to others, but who presented their ideas in an inspiring manner. There was a safe atmosphere on the dream day. All together in the same room, connected, all with one voice! Really “every leaf counts”!”

“The atmosphere was not only safe but also full of interest and hope. The management team and we had properly prepared the dream day (for instance, the number of hours we spent thinking of the topic) and together we have managed to create a moment of interest, focus, and fascination at the dream day.

According to Frederickson, the emotion interest pulls your attention to options or the mystery. You are completely fascinated and that is when hope arises. You want to research and immerse yourself in what you are discovering right now. Since those emotions were present in the room, people really discovered, designed and delivered. This reminds me of the fact that Appreciative Inquiry can only be successful when positive emotions can play a part in the design of the AI process. AI is much more than just a technique to inspire people to change! It is a philosophy of positivity by relational connections, by really appreciating each other and to feel each other! People move in the direction of what they have designed together. When these images are fascinating, inspiring, maybe even a bit mysterious, the desire to take steps forward grows. Anticipate what may be and what will be! And in the emotion hope lies the belief that things can change. However unsure things may be, they can always turn out for the better. You see new possibilities and it motivates you to use your full inventiveness to make things better!”

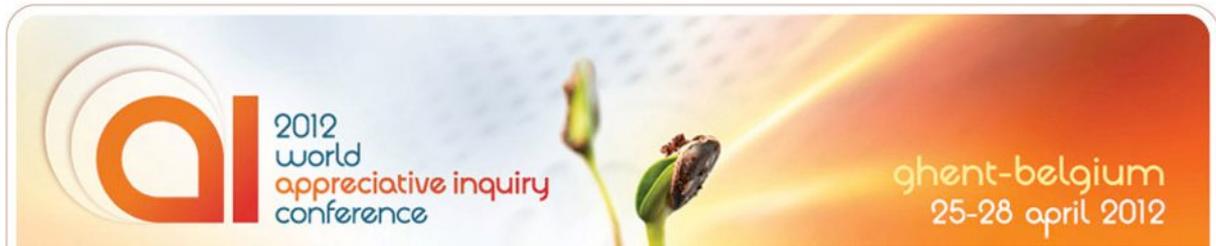
Now and again, there is a moment of silence in our conversation. A meaningful silence. We stare into the distance dreaming away. A subtle smile on our face cannot hide our sense of inner peace. Leaning back and thinking how good it was and is. The after-glow emotion according to Frederickson. Serenity. A very conscious state of mind that inspires to enjoy the best of what was and is.

“Have we covered all ten emotions?” We have discussed interest, serenity, gratitude, joy, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe and hope. I only count nine. “

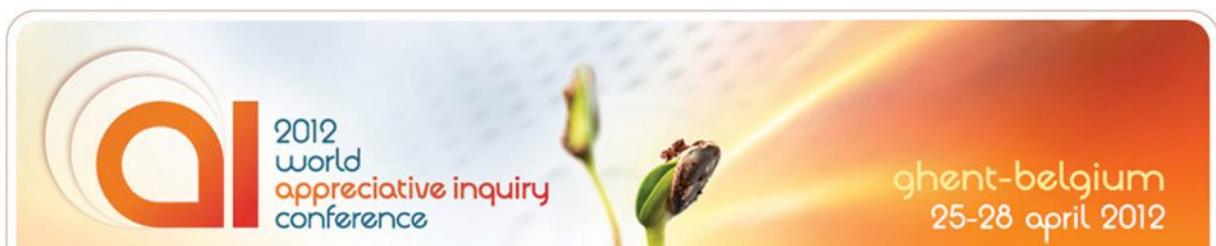
“We have saved the best for last. Love! Love contains all positive emotions. When we experience positive emotions in safe, high-quality relationships with others, we feel love. This reminds me of something that happened a couple of years ago. At the time, I followed a long-term path in supporting change processes in groups and organisations. I am thinking of a moment when we were in Cleveland together to be immersed in Appreciative Inquiry. In addition to meetings with Ron Fry and David Cooperrider, a company visit had also been planned, presided by the CEO of a large multinational. We were in an impressive business centre in an over-the-top luxury meeting room. I remember the overwhelming feeling very well. Since I was in awe of the fact that the CEO, a man who belonged to the absolute top of the business community, had made time to tell us how he thought about change management. After an inspiring presentation full of numbers and tables, he ended with a slide that I will never forget: “IT’S ALL ABOUT LOVE!”. At that moment, I was dumbfounded and warm inside at the same time. Because it all made sense to me all of a sudden! Maybe I sensed that during all our meetings and our work at Leaf. Piet really likes his employees and does his job with love and passion.”

Karel Van Bouchaute and Erik Minne are both affiliated with the KH Kempen. In addition to teaching students of Social Work, they are involved in supporting organisations in their development in the field of cooperation, leadership, coaching and change processes. They both have the “Certificate in positive business and society change” from Case Western Reserve University. Both have more than 8 years of experience in applying Appreciative Inquiry to growth and development in individual and collective processes.

Piet Vandenbroucke (Manufacturing Director Tht Rsd, Lean and Safety). AI Practitioner since one year. Six sigma and lean experience. Involved in change management for 20years (but I wonder who is not ☺). Feels about AI like “hey! That’s me”.

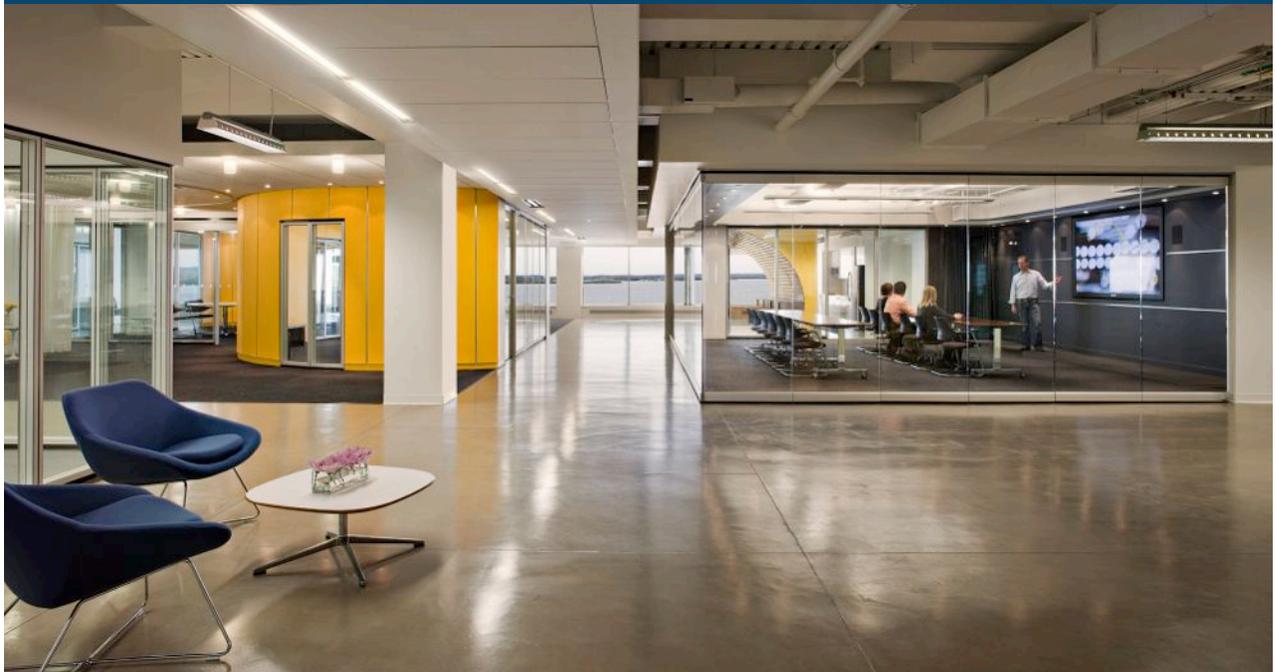


**BINDER PAPER SUBMISSIONS 2012 WAIC
MAY 2012**



**Appreciative Inquiry Workshop
at the Venture Development Center**

**The VDC Vision 2012:
“Our Future begins with
Our Strengths”**



VENTURE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

Participant Workbook
Design by Ana Carolina Gómez



Welcome to the Appreciative Inquiry Workshop at the Venture Development Center, and thank you for participating with us! It is an exciting time to be an employee, a partner and a stakeholder at the Venture Development Center! The past two years have been remarkable for the VDC. We have become a distinguished department within the UMass community by participating in the development of innovative products and services with our partners, moving towards financial sustainability, placing UMass students in paid internships with top-tier startups, and supporting the Entrepreneurship Center at the College of Management. We should be very proud of our accomplishments!

As we move into the future, it will be increasingly important to sustain our success and continue creating a value for customers, employees, and the university community by appreciating our valued past and aligning our signature strengths across the VDC's purpose and principles, including daily operations and services. The VDC team articulated a strategically important theme for today's workshop as follows, "The VDC Vision 2012: Our Future begins with Our Strengths."

We have 12 people participating in this workshop today, including the VDC team, customers, and university stakeholders. We recognize that we need the various perspectives, experiences, ideas, and best thinking from the entire VDC community. Our goals are to leave this workshop with specific actions that will be applied in our daily operations and collectively design a slogan that incorporates the VDC's spirit. We know that what we are working on here is too important for the future to just have a nice conversation and generate momentum. We need your perspective on how to execute the agreed upon actions efficiently and effectively when we leave here! We will do that by following the lessons we have learned and the values and guiding principles that have made us successful. Chief among them is creating value for our customers, employees, students, faculty, and UMass community as a whole by developing and executing solutions that enhance people's lives. Ideas without execution are just dreams.

At the Venture Development Center, we play to win and we are accountable. That's the spirit I know we will see at this workshop. Thank you in advance for your best thinking and full engagement. This is an opportunity for everyone to lead, and I look forward to the amazing outcomes we will create!

Sincerely,
William J. Brah

Executive Director

Workshop Objectives

1. Discover the VDC's core strengths and valued past – the positive core – we want to keep and build upon as we create a sustainable future that delivers value for customers, employees, and the university community.
2. Dream and envision the shared future we want to create that is built upon our signature strengths.
3. Design sustainable development into the VDC's purpose and principles, including daily operations and services.
4. Deploy set of actions that support value-creating initiatives to actively move us in the direction of our shared aspirations and commitments.

Workshop Deliverable

A VDC SLOGAN that incorporates the VDC's spirit that is built upon our strengths.

Workshop Agenda

<p>WELCOME</p> <p>2:00 – 2:30</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The VDC – Current State • Goals of the Workshop • Overview of Appreciative Inquiry
<p>DISCOVERY and DREAM PHASES</p> <p>2:30 – 2:55</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciative Inquiry Interviews: high point experiences, strengths and future visioning • Partner stories • Roundtable discussion and short presentations
<p>BREAK</p> <p>2:55 – 3:05</p>	
<p>STAKEHOLDER GROUP DISCUSSIONS</p> <p>3:05 – 3:45</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussions and skit creation • Short presentations
<p>DESIGN and DEPLOYMENT PHASES</p> <p>3:45 – 4:20</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussions and skit creation • Short presentations
<p>BREAK</p> <p>4:20 – 4:30</p>	
<p>THE VDC SLOGAN</p> <p>4:30 – 5:05</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussions • Short presentations • Individual voting for the slogan
<p>CLOSING</p> <p>5:05 – 5:15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final thoughts • Recommendations

What is an Appreciative Inquiry Workshop?

The **WHOLE SYSTEM** participates—a cross-section of stakeholders — people and groups that have a stake in the VDC’s future. This means more diversity and less hierarchy than is usual in a working meeting, and a chance for each person and stakeholder group to be heard and to learn other ways of looking at the task at hand.

TASK FOCUSED — A workshop is task-focused, not simply an educational event or a conference. We are here to leverage all the strengths and talents that exist within our organization in order to build our vision and plan of action for accomplishing our workshop’s task— identifying the VDC’s positive core. We want to keep and build upon this core as we create a sustainable future that delivers value for customers, employees, and the university community.

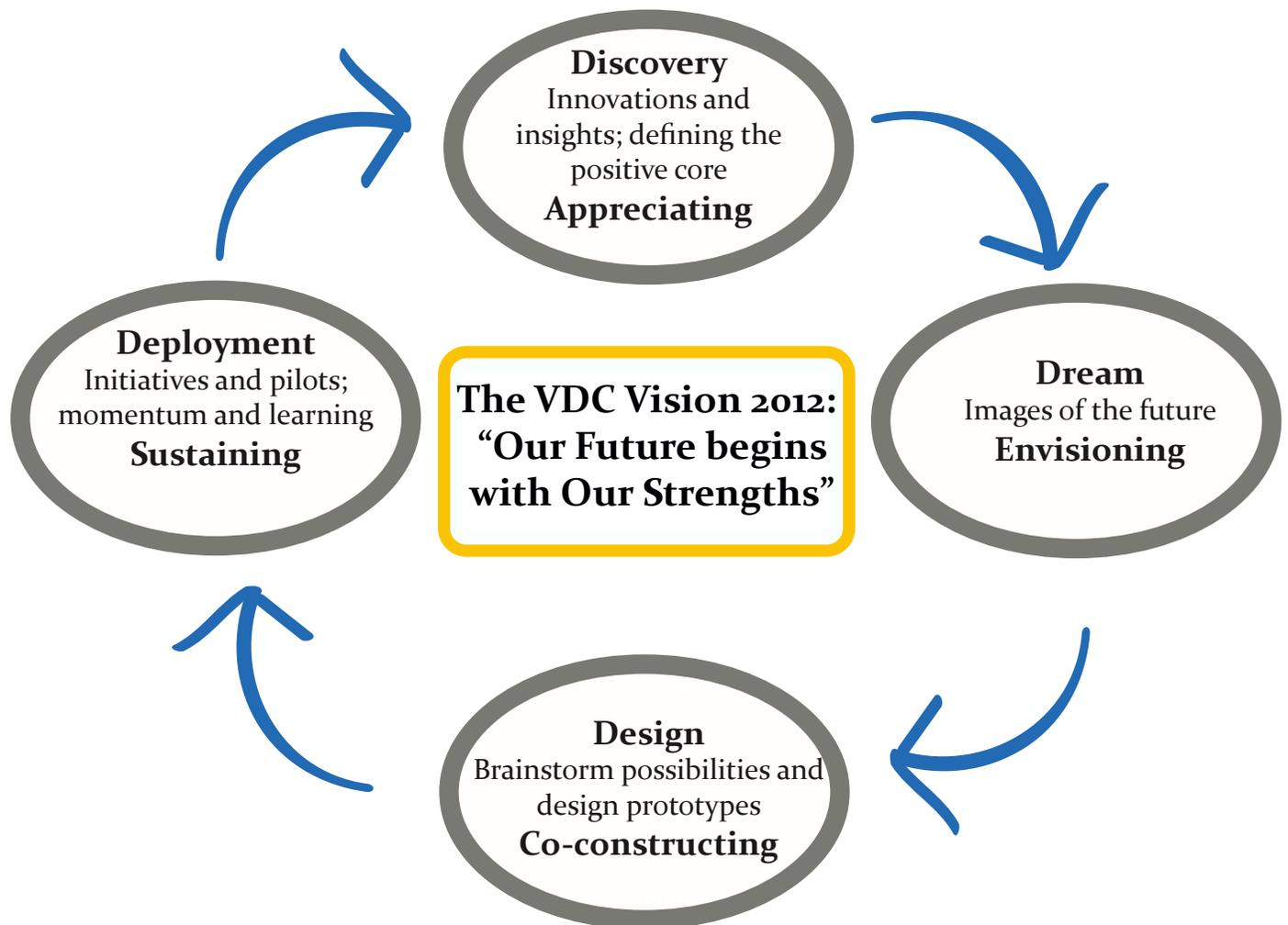
People **SELF-MANAGE** their work, and use **DIALOGUE** and **INQUIRY**—not “problem-solving”—as the main tool. That means helping each other do the tasks and taking responsibility for our perceptions and actions.

COMMON GROUND rather than “conflict management” is the frame of reference. That means honoring our differences and then discovering areas for action where we have strong common ground.

COMMITMENT TO ACTION — Because the “whole system” is involved, it is easier to make rapid decisions, and to make commitments to action in an open way that everyone can support.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (“AI”) - To *appreciate* means to value, to understand those things worth valuing. To *inquire* means to study, to ask questions, to search. AI is, therefore, a collaborative search to identify and understand an organization’s strengths, the greatest opportunities, and people’s aspirations and hopes for the future.

The Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Cycle



Discovery

Mapping the Positive Core of our Strengths and Unexpected Opportunities

Purpose:

To appreciate and welcome each other, and to learn about the special experiences, commitments, capabilities and resources we each bring. To discover the best of “what is” in order to co-create the future that we envision.

Activity:

Introduce your interview partner to your table. Share a couple of highlights from your interview - things from your partner’s stories or visions that stood out most for you.

A interviews B - 10 minutes

B interviews A - 10 minutes

A presents B to the table – 2.5 min

B presents A to the table – 2.5 min

Total: 25 min

Question 1: High-Point Experience

A. Think about a time in your overall career that stands out to you as a high point – a time when you felt most energized and passionate about your work, when you were really proud to be a part of the exciting initiative or work with the VDC, and be part of the UMass community.

- What made it a high-point experience?
- Who was involved?
- What actions did you and others take?
- What were the “root causes” and drivers of the success? What specific personal and organizational strengths were leveraged?
- In what ways were you empowered to impact the actions and success?

B. Based on this story, if we now had a conversation with people that know you the very best and asked them to share: what are the best 3 qualities they see in you, the best capabilities or qualities you bring to the VDC, or your organization– what would they say?

Notes

BBREAK

10 minutes

After the break please take a seat at the table indicated
in the card that will be given to you.

Dream 2014

Dreaming the Future We Want to Create

Purpose:

To imagine and define the future we want to work toward.

Group Discussions:

Next, go deeper into one of the interview questions assigned to your table. Everyone shares their stories and observations. As a group, listen for patterns and themes that emerge.

Time

Discussion: 20 min

Presentations: 20 min

Group A

Please choose a group leader who will record the notes on the flip chart, keep the time, make sure that each person who wants to speak is heard within the available time.

Activity:

As a group please brainstorm on the following questions:

1. What do you think are the signature strengths of the VDC, and what strengths should the VDC keep as it moves into the future?
2. Can you please share one example of the strength in action?
3. How can we leverage the VDC's key strategic assets or strengths across the organization to drive efficiency, effectiveness and execution to the next level?

Time

Discussion: 20 min

Presentation: 5 min

Creative Presentations

Based on your discussion, choose a creative way to present the envisioned future of the VDC. Present a 5-minute "portrayal" as if it existed now – all team members of your group must have a role in the presentation. Below are some examples of creative presentation formats:

- Skit
- TV or radio commercial
- TV or radio special
- Magazine cover story
- Exclusive live news interview
- Day in the life
- Work of art
- Poem
- Song
- Panel presentation

Notes

Group B

Please choose a group leader who will record the notes on the flip chart, keep the time, make sure that each person who wants to speak is heard within the available time.

Activity:

As a group please brainstorm on the following questions:

1. Put yourself 4 years into the future. It's 2015. The VDC is an organization you imagined. Be bold. You get a tour of the whole organization. What does it look like?
2. What's new different, changed, better?
3. If you were reading a newspaper, what would be an exciting headline for the VDC? Please list some of the key elements of the story.

Time

Discussion: 20 min

Presentation: 5 min

Creative Presentations

Based on your discussion, choose a creative way to present the envisioned future of the VDC. Present a 5-minute "portrayal" as if it existed now – all team members of your group must have a role in the presentation. Below are some examples of creative presentation formats:

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- Magazine cover story
- Exclusive live news interview
- Day in the life
- Work of art
- Poem
- Song
- Panel presentation

Notes

Group C

Please choose a group leader who will record the notes on the flip chart, keep the time, and make sure that each person who wants to speak is heard within the available time.

Activity:

As a group please brainstorm on the following questions:

1. What were you able to achieve by being part of the VDC?
2. Please share an example of the exceptional customer service you experienced at the VDC?
3. What key support would you need in the nearest future as your organization grows and develops?
4. What do we want to keep in our relationship as we move forward? List 3 things to keep - the strongest strengths that contribute to success.

Time

Discussion: 20 min

Presentation: 5 min

Creative Presentations

Based on your discussion, choose a creative way to present the envisioned future of the VDC. Present a 5-minute “portrayal” as if it existed now – all team members of your group must have a role in the presentation. Below are some examples of creative presentation formats:

- Skit
- TV or radio commercial
- TV or radio special
- Magazine cover story
- Exclusive live news interview
- Day in the life
- Work of art
- Poem
- Song
- Panel presentation

Notes

Group D

Please choose a group leader who will record the notes on the flip chart, keep the time, and make sure that each person who wants to speak is heard within the available time.

Activity:

As a group please brainstorm on the following questions:

1. Think about the role or meaning of the VDC within the university community. What would it be?
2. Can you please share an example of that role or meaning in action?
3. How do you see the future of the VDC being part of the UMASS Boston? Be bold.
4. What do we want to keep in our relationship as we move forward? List 3 things to keep - the strongest strengths that contribute to success.

Time

Discussion: 20 min

Presentation: 5 min

Creative Presentations

Based on your discussion, choose a creative way to present the envisioned future of the VDC. Present a 5-minute “portrayal” as if it existed now – all team members of your group must have a role in the presentation. Below are some examples of creative presentation formats:

- Skit
- TV or radio commercial
- TV or radio special
- Magazine cover story
- Exclusive live news interview
- Day in the life
- Work of art
- Poem
- Song
- Panel presentation

Notes

Design

Co-creating the Future and Rapid Prototyping

Purpose:

Brainstorm as many ideas as possible related to your group's opportunity area—ideas that can move the VDC in the direction of our future visions and dreams.

The key question:

Assuming anything imaginable is possible in relation to your opportunity area....“How might we...”?

Group Discussions

As a group please brainstorm on the following questions:

1. Now based on everything that was presented, what are three of the smallest things that could come out of this workshop that might have the largest impact on our aim to become the organization we dream about?
2. What are three bolder projects that could come out of the workshop- things that could be game changers for the VDC, our partners, and the UMass community?
3. Create the prototype or model and make it visual, for example:
 - A drawing
 - A storyboard
 - A skit
 - A business proposal format

Be prepared to do a 3-5 minute presentation of the prototype to the whole group. After your demonstration, we'll ask you to name the discrete design elements or big ideas you included. Be ready to make the case—the empowerment and business case for the initiative you are prototyping.

Time

Discussion: 15 min

Presentations: 5 min

Notes

BBREAK

10 minutes

After the break please take a seat at the table indicated in the card that will be given to you.

Deployment

To emphasize the importance of the deployment process, the VDC is committed to deploy a set of actions based on the outcomes of this workshop into its strategic planning and daily operations. As a start of the deployment process, we would like to collectively brainstorm on the VDC Signature Slogan. We will also keep you informed on how we will utilize the outcomes of this workshop on a monthly basis.

Purpose:

Collectively develop the VDC slogan that will capture the VDC's spirit and strengths

Group Discussions

As a group please brainstorm on the following question:

1. Based on everything that was presented, please come up with the slogan you think will reflect what the VDC represents, its spirit and strengths.
2. After you listened to all group presentations, please vote for the slogan you liked and think is the most appropriate to the VDC. Pass your vote to Carolina.

Time

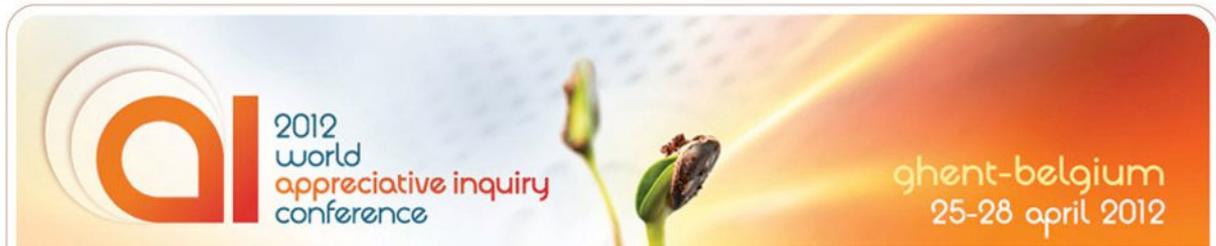
Discussion: 15 min

Presentation: 5 min

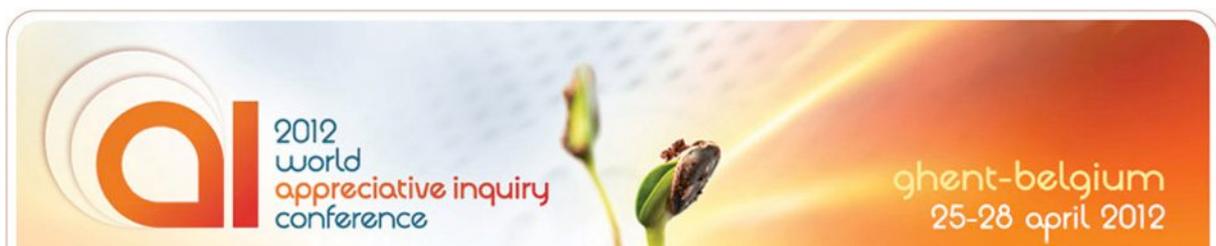
Voting: 5 min

Notes

Notes



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Appreciative Problem Solving

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Abstract

Many industrial production work systems have increased in complexity, and their new business models compete on innovation, rather than low cost. At a medical device production facility committed to Lean Production, a research project was carried out to use Appreciative Inquiry to better engage employee strengths in continuous improvements of the work system. The research question was: "How can Lean problem solving and Appreciative Inquiry be combined for optimized work system innovation?"

The research project was carried out as a co-creation process with close cooperation between researcher and participants and was documented by qualitative methods.

This paper presents an academic literature review on Appreciative Inquiry and problem solving for continuous improvements that did not reveal successful attempts in combining the two. Both the literature and the empirical study showed one of the main challenges to be to connect the two different thinking modes in the daily practice. The empirical study found both approaches useful for creating continuous improvements of the work system and identified different practices of combining them. From the empirical study, the paper identifies three approaches to work system innovation and discusses how Appreciative Inquiry, Problem Solving, and the combination 'Appreciative Problem Solving' can be used to optimize continuous work system innovation. These findings add to the theoretical foundation of the emerging field of Strength-based Lean.

Keywords: Appreciative Problem Solving, Appreciative Inquiry, Problem Solving, Strength-based Lean, Work System Innovation, Success Expansion.

The Emergence of Strength-based Lean Production

Industrial production work systems have been increasing in complexity for a long time (Wiendahl & Scholtissek, 1994), mainly due to increasing automation, need for specialized knowledge, and change frequency to fit new product development. In order to compete, some production facilities are using new business models that focus on their ability to create innovation rather than low cost for mass production (Johansen & Riis, 2005).

This study was initiated at the production facility Novo Nordisk Device Manufacturing and Sourcing that were 'ramping up' new production for medical devices. The business plan is based on the ability to create new work processes and get new equipment to operate while producing efficiently. This business plan implies a lot of technical problems and improvement challenges in the daily work. Novo Nordisk, which the facility is a part of has committed to Lean Production (Womack & Jones, 2003; Liker, 2004) and has worked intensely with this approach since 2003.

In 2005 the facility experienced a very high employee absence and low productivity. After being prompted by the surprising question “if your facility is an ultimate success in two years, how does it look?”, the managers realized the problems were due to the employees’ expectations and fear. They expected a closing down of the facility after phasing out their current product. The facility management then decided to initiate a project to create change by using an Appreciative Inquiry approach to engage the entire system in addressing the problem by turning it into a burning dream instead of a burning platform. They used a variant of the Appreciative Inquiry Summit (Ludema et al., 2003) to engage the whole facility in creating the dream of being ‘most wanted as facility and employees’ and starting up initiatives to achieve this dream. By using a strength-based approach they managed to turn around the situation and lower the absence with 50 %, raising productivity with 44 %, and cutting costs pr. product by 17 %. The ultimate success was realized when they succeeded in attracting a new product for production ramp up two years later (Kongsbak, 2010).

After having experienced Appreciative Inquiry successfully at the strategic level with the whole system, the factory management had a desire to make this approach useful in their daily operational work. The challenge was to combine it with Lean, which the company was committed to. The question was therefore: “How can strength-based approaches such as Appreciative Inquiry be integrated in the daily work processes in a company committed to the Lean production system?” This question led to a multi-year research project on Strength-based Lean in collaboration between Novo Nordisk, the involved consultancy Resonans A/S, and the Technical University of Denmark.

The purpose of the project can be illustrated by a quote from the production director: “When technical problem solving for process improvement is in the core of our work processes it is easy to fall back to a deficit-focused mindset that does not foster effective collaboration.” They wanted to create the collaborative engagement and creativity that they had experienced Appreciative Inquiry could create. At the same time, the Lean problem solving approach with root cause analysis was experienced as very valuable. They needed systematic problem solving to create the continuous improvements that were the foundation for the new product ramp up business plan at the facility. Systematic problem solving was a core strength they wanted to build on. The solution was therefore not to substitute it with Appreciative Inquiry but to find out how to incorporate both thinking ways into the daily work with problem solving and continuous improvements. This is where this research story begins.

A Desire to Bridge Two Paradigms

The challenge was that Appreciative Inquiry and Lean have quite different thinking processes, languages, and assumptions. But a look into their basic principles reveal that they are not contradictory, but rather address different things: The Appreciative Inquiry principles are change principles describing how to create positive change and the Lean principles are operation principles describing how an effective and efficient Lean work system should operate. The basic principles are summarized in table 1 (Cooperrider et al., 2008; Womack & Jones, 2003).

Table 1: Basic principles of Appreciative Inquiry and Lean.

Change principles	Operation principles
The constructionist principle	Create value for the customer
The simultaneity principle	Visualize the value stream
The poetic principle	Create flow in the value-creation
The anticipatory principle	Use pull from the customer
The positive principle	Seek perfection by continuous improvements

The challenge of combining the two is thereby not their basic principles, but rather the different assumptions and basic approaches. Examples of some differences are summarized in table 2 (inspired by Hansen & Shaked, 2012).

Table 2: Typical approaches in Appreciative Inquiry and Lean.

Approach to create...	Lean	Appreciative Inquiry
value for customer	Eliminate waste	Look for and grow value
efficiency and flow	Remove bottlenecks	Identify and expand best practice
effectiveness and quality	Reduce defects	Study and learn from perfection for the customer
continuous improvements	Identify problems, analyze root causes, and fix them	Identify best practices, explore success factors, and dream & design to improve

An example of the typical built-in assumptions in Lean is illustrated by Staats & Upton (2011) in a project of introducing Lean to knowledge work. After identifying a potential for improvements due to unproductive employees, the authors stated that the remedy for improvement was asking why-questions: *“Instead of assuming that the approach used for a process is right, assume that it’s wrong. [...] Why am I attending this meeting? Why am I filling out this report? Why am I standing at the printer?”* (Staats & Upton, 2011)

The example shows the typical implicit assumption in Lean behind improvement: To improve, you need to look for what is wrong, and then fix it. In Appreciative Inquiry the corresponding assumption would be: The first questions asked begin the change, so inquire into the best of what already is instead of analyzing causes of unwanted action, then, identify a positive vision to guide the improvement.

These, and other explicit and implicit assumptions that differ between Lean and Appreciative Inquiry makes it hard to identify how to approach the daily work when having a desire to use both thinking ways. Their approaches are different, but both can be effective in creating improvements and transformation (Bushe, 2005; Liker, 2004).

The field of Strength-based Lean is emerging from the potential in bridging the two paradigms, not just substituting one with the other. Since both approaches are based on creating change and learning, the topic for this study was chosen to be continuous

improvements (Barrett, 1995; Liker, 2004). While this topic represents difference in approaches, it could be a good opportunity to create a bridge at the conceptual level. Liker (2004) describes continuous improvement and learning by problem solving as one of four central themes in Lean. The research question was then formulated: “How can Lean problem solving and Appreciative Inquiry be combined and used for continuous improvements?”

The goal of the study was to understand how to combine the two in practice to give applicable advice to the production facility.

Two Different Improvement Approaches

The practical problem solving process in Lean is visualized by Liker (2004, pp. 256) as shown in figure 1. As the model shows, the approach is based on cause and effect investigation. The process can be simplified to three stages: Understand the concern (steps 1-3), investigate the root cause (step 4), and implement the countermeasure (steps 5-7). The visualization and metaphor for problem solving is a funnel of gradually narrowing the focus until the ‘correct’ cause is found, and then investigated by using why-questions. As step 7 states, a solution is not in place until it is standardized and confirmed by evaluation.

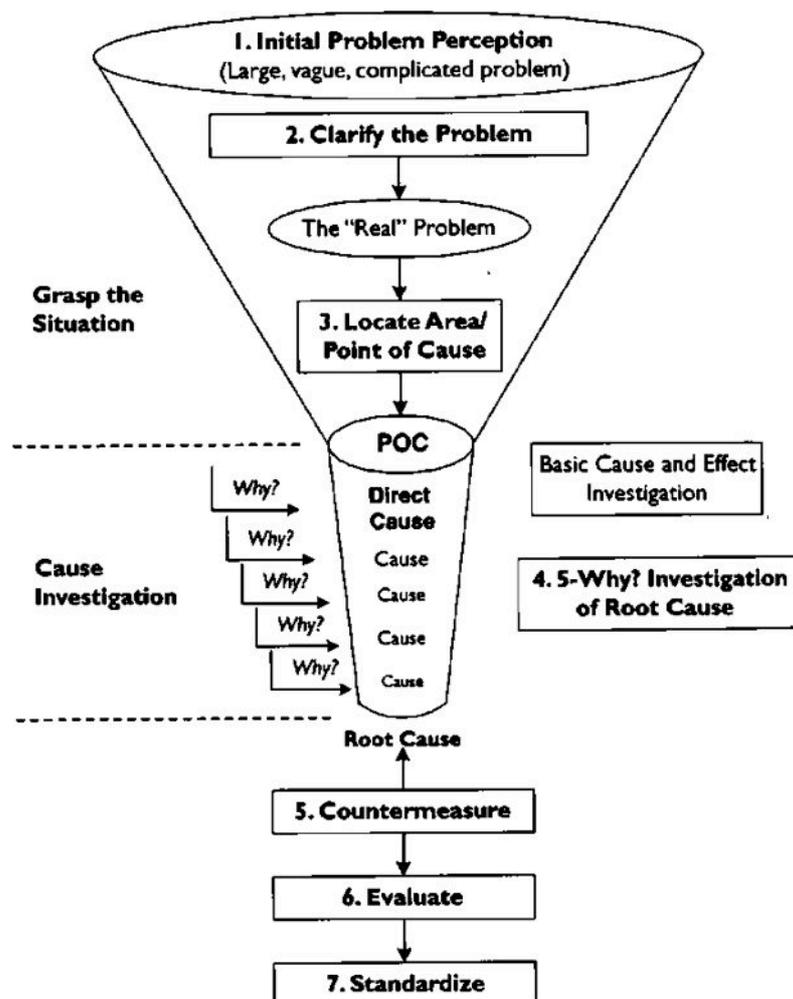


Figure 1: Lean practical problem solving process (Liker, 2004 pp. 256).

Continuous improvement is called *Kaizen* in the Japanese Lean terminology, and is either performed in Kaizen event workshops or directly at the shopfloor where daily problems are identified and problem solving used to create continuous improvements. In the Lean literature continuous improvement should create learning, both individual learning by self-reflection and organizational learning by involving stakeholders and building consensus during the process (Womack & Jones, 2003). Three central Lean keywords for problem solving are (Liker 2004):

- *Genchi Genbutsu*: Go and see the real thing in action to understand and act.
- *Nemawashi*: Make decisions slowly with consensus by involving stakeholders in considering options and rapid implementation.
- *Hansei*: Self-reflection on actions, spirit and attitude.

The concept of Japanese Hansei is described as a process where “*when you do something wrong, at first you must feel really, really sad. Then you must create a future plan to solve that problem and you must sincerely believe you will never make this type of mistake again.*” (Liker 2004, pp. 257). Lean problem solving is based on removing problems by rational investigating of the root cause, and in Japanese culture, sadness may be a necessary step for creating improvement and learning.

The process for creating change in Appreciative Inquiry is taking a different approach. It is based on the following five principles briefly introduced here (Cooperrider et al. 2005):

- **The constructionist principle** states that reality is socially constructed by multiple perceptions and inquiry into imagination is necessary to create change.
- **The simultaneity principle** states that the questions asked begins the change and inquiry cannot be isolated from implementation.
- **The poetic principle** states that organizations are continuously re-interpreted and re-constructed by the narratives told and what is given focus grows.
- **The anticipatory principle** states that actions are guided by images of the future.
- **The positive principle** states that positive thinking provides energy for creating change.

The Appreciative Inquiry approach to change is based on creating a momentum from the best of what already is and gives life, and by creating positive future images to move toward. The simultaneity principle implies that it may be more rewarding to ask for strengths in the system to build on instead of investigating root-causes of undesired action. The poetic principle argues that a chosen focus grow with the re-interpretation of the organization and it may therefore be more rewarding to re-interpret and strengthen the situations where the system is most alive instead of where it is least effective. The anticipatory principle states that guiding future state imaging are important in order to create effective action and change. These principles are conceptualized in the 4D model, a widely used process, as shown in figure 2 (Cooperrider, 2005, pp. 30). In some versions it includes a fifth D: Definition of an affirmative topic choice.

Appreciative Inquiry change is based on growing strengths by positive future images in a positive environment in order to create transformational change, and a positive environment is considered necessary.

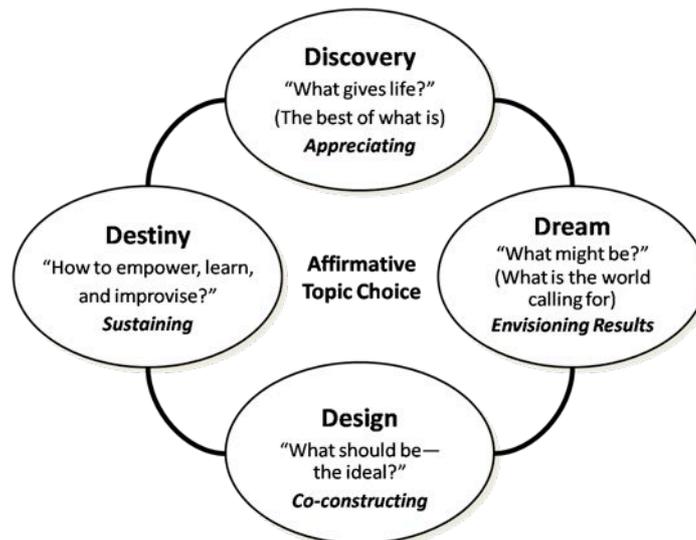


Figure 2: The 4D model of Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider, 2005 pp. 30).

Asking the Literature: How to Combine Lean Problem Solving and Appreciative Inquiry?

An academic literature review was then carried out to get input on how to combine the two approaches for continuous improvement by searching EBSCO Host Academic Search & Business Source Premier, and Thomson Reuters Web of Knowledge for conference proceedings and journal papers. The result is summarized in table 3. There were no hits on “Appreciative Inquiry” AND “Lean”, “Operations Management” or “Production”. Note that the literature review did not include books or practitioner journals, which could also have contained relevant material, but this was chosen in order to identify a research gap to address.

Table 3: Summary of Literature Search on Appreciative Inquiry and Lean Problem Solving.

Search Term	Total hits in the database	Papers concerned with discussion	Papers concerned with combining
“Appreciative Inquiry” AND “Lean”	0 hits	0 hits	0 hits
“Appreciative Inquiry” AND “Process Improvement”	10 hits	0 hits	3 hits
“Appreciative Inquiry” AND “Continuous Improvement”	4 hits	1 hits	2 hits
“Appreciative Inquiry” AND “Engineering”	6 hits	1 hits	1 hit
“Appreciative Inquiry” AND “Problem Solving”	31 hits	5 hits	0 hits
Total hits (no replicates):	42 hits	6 hits	4 hits

The majority of the papers that discussed the two approaches were critical towards problem solving and highlighted the strengths of Appreciative Inquiry, emphasizing that a problem

solving approach could lead to defensive posturing that discourage action and creative thinking (Barrett, 1995; Neilsen, 2005; Shendell-Falik et al., 2007), as well as inhibit knowledge generation in collaborative work (Phlypo, 2008). Appreciative Inquiry creates opportunities for innovation of processes and ways of working together as well as to create enthusiasm and commitment to the organization, while problem solving does not foster excitement, enthusiasm or generate innovation beyond the defined problem's parameters (Shendell-Falik et al., 2007). The latter is due to the nature of problem solving that starts from a defined problem space set by constraints and boundaries with the solution coming from within the alternatives of these limitations (Avital, 2005). Barrett (1995, pp. 37) adds: *"accepting the constraints that generated the problem rarely leads to a permanent solution; instead, it often leads to patterns of coping."* In contrast, Appreciative Inquiry uses affirmative reflection and positive affect to lift up the search for ideal possibilities where the most desired solution is picked (Avital, 2005).

Neilsen (2005) introduces another view; that there is nothing wrong with the problem solving approach per se. When at best, both approaches makes the participants experience themselves at their best while achieving the highest levels of collaboration. He argues that that change requires secure organizational attachment that is often not established with problem solving approaches. It is therefore not the process of doing Appreciative Inquiry but the initial interventions of creating mutual trust that is the key to successful change.

Barrett (1995) introduces how a learning perspective can illustrate the effect of Appreciative Inquiry, e.g. that groups using selective self-monitoring focusing on successful outcomes have higher performance. Barrett (1995) stresses the importance of generative learning and thinking outside the accepted limitations, and argues that Appreciative Inquiry creates better learning systems that possess affirmative competence (being able to appreciate positive possibilities and strengths), expansive competence (challenging old habits with higher ideals that inspire to action), and collaborative competence (ongoing dialogue with diverse perspectives).

This summarizes to three types of arguments of the value of Appreciative Inquiry in relation to problem solving:

- More enthusiasm and commitment to change.
- More generative learning systems.
- More creative thinking and a wider solution space.

The papers that were concerned with combining the two approaches were all arguing how to incorporate Appreciative Inquiry into an existing process or method. Ncube & Wasburn (2008) combines Appreciative Inquiry and a Needs Analysis Model in order to increase proactivity of continuous improvement. They state that the combination avoids an overly positive focus at the expense of shortcomings and underlying organizational problems. They argue about the necessity of understanding problem causes, but their case did not incorporate it into their combined concept. Cuyvers (2010) argues how Appreciative Inquiry could support continuous improvement of quality development by changing focus from control to development. He argues about the necessity for still using measurements and structured methods but does not share insights on how to integrate the suggestions into established processes such as the Deming cycle and problem solving. Baaz et al. (2010) describes the

combination of Appreciative Inquiry principles with an evaluation method of learning from both excellence and challenges. They show how optimal learning is normally inhibited by an over-focus on the challenges. But, by teaching strength-based principles and incorporating Appreciative Inquiry into the method, they could create workshops with better learning and broader suggestions for improvements. Their combined concept involved cause and effect analysis for both excellences and challenges, and they recommend keeping a balanced focus between the two. For example by letting participants recognize problems and discuss causes but encourage suggestions for improvements and by showing problem-oriented individuals their views will also be considered. Holmberg et al. (2009) describe the use of Appreciative Inquiry for software process improvement and show the difference in underlying assumptions behind improvement and learning compared to problem solving based process improvement such as the DMAIC and IDEAL models. They report difficulties in introducing an Appreciative Inquiry mindset to engineers who appreciate the challenge of solving problems, and found that engineers struggled with expressing themselves in appreciative terms and with exploring hopes and dreams collectively. They were less enthusiastic in the dream and design phases, and they usually easily enjoy the challenge of identifying and solving problems. Holmberg et al. (2009) conclude that the satisfaction of problem solving may impede the use of Appreciative Inquiry in similar environments, and they recommend acknowledging the strengths of problem solving before demonstrating the potential of using Appreciative Inquiry. These papers also highlight enthusiasm, learning, and a wider solution space as the most important contributions from Appreciative Inquiry.

While the papers contribute with recommendations and experience, they do not answer the question of how to combine Appreciative Inquiry with problem solving. This knowledge gap needed to be addressed in the research project. The research question should be answered by developing a combined concept. Because of active engagement from the people at the production facility, a co-creation process was undertaken. By engaging the participants as much as possible in conceptual discussions and by engaging the researcher as much as possible in practical participation, it was hoped that the concept would get the best input from both theory and practice. This also meant using an abductive research approach.

Identifying the Potential of Appreciative Problem Solving

Before the development of an appreciative problem solving concept was initiated, an inquiry into the possible potential and attributes was carried out to identify its focus. The research question had emerged from a desire at the facility, and that initial attraction was used as the foundation for a workshop to identify the potential of incorporating Appreciative Inquiry into Lean problem solving practices. A condensate of the answers is summarized in table 3.

They show that the concept could potentially address different levels of problem solving:

- The input and environment: Engage more strengths at work & engagement in goals.
- The process itself: More mental energy & better solution process.
- The outcomes: More learning & drive of the desired culture.

This corresponds quite well with to the three categories found in the literature review of enthusiasm, learning and wider solution space.

Table 3: Identifying the potential of introducing Appreciative Inquiry to Lean problem solving.

Category	Potential stated at the workshop
Engage strengths better at the work place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage people’s strengths to bring more competencies into the work place • More life and energy • Better match between competencies and goals
Create more mental energy & resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get people more engaged • Improve trust and cooperation (social capital) • By creating a space for playfulness • Turns short term result focus into long term result focus • Fun to do what you are good at • By more appreciation of what works well
More learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn from positive deviations & success • People improve more when they have fun • Better understanding by systematic learning of what already works • Enables learning instead of blame and defensiveness
Better solution process to create improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More creativity and a larger solution space • Synergy between people in the problem solving • More people get engaged in the process • More proactive solutions • Enables a focus on attractive quality not just ‘need to have’
Engage in the goal, not the task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure for more empowerment • By visionary leadership • Meaningful goals create more engagement • Makes people bring their ideas and solutions • People stretch more when they want to reach goals
Drives the desired culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use different questions to drive culture and a new focus • Drive a more engaged and cooperative culture

The identified potential in combining Appreciative Inquiry and problem solving is visualized in figure 3. The identified potential shows that there could be different focus areas to choose to expand for the development of a combined concept.

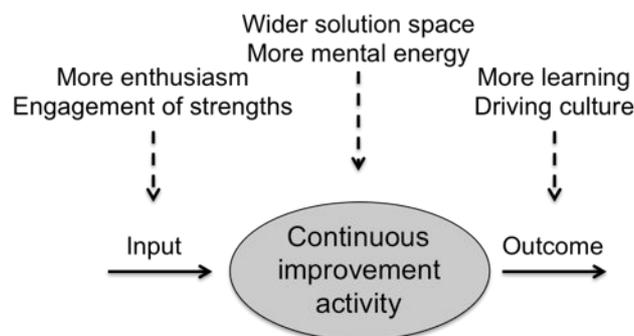


Figure 3: Identified potential of combining Appreciative Inquiry and problem solving.

In order to get insights that could contribute to the bridging, it was decided to get into the core difference between Lean problem solving and Appreciative Inquiry, namely the process and approach to improvement itself, with their different problem and solution spaces.

A continuous improvement activity can result in two types of learning. The first is adaptive learning of response and coping with environmental demands in order to make incremental improvements (Barrett, 1995), similar to what Argyris (2002) calls single loop learning. The second is generative learning that involves thinking outside the limitations of the problem and going beyond the framework that created the current conditions (Barrett, 1995). Argyris (2002) describes this as double loop learning, and he explains that it occurs when improvements are carried out by changing organizations' governing values, and then the actions. He stresses that this requires a shift from organizational defensiveness routines to organizational learning routines.

The improvements are not limited to technical improvements but could address the entire work system, such as its participants, technology, management, organization, work processes, and culture (inspired by Smith & Sainfort, 1989; Carayon & Smith, 2000; Kleiner, 2006). And at a systems level it could also address 'invisible' and intangible factors, such as the organizational social capital (Hasle & Møller, 2007) and relational coordination (Gittell, 2000). When a work system is improved through generative double loop learning, the practice can be called work system innovation.

The new business models for production are based on work system innovation rather than adaptive learning. Therefore, optimization of work system innovation was chosen as the goal for the concept in this case. The task to proceed with was therefore to combine Appreciative Inquiry and problem solving into a concept for optimized work system innovation by addressing their different processes for improvements.

Appreciative Genchi Genbutsu: Co-creation at the Shop Floor

The chosen approach to generate input for the concept could be called *Appreciative Genchi Genbutsu*: Go and see the real thing in action, when it works best, to understand and expand it. This approach was carried out at the production shop floor to identify practice and experiments with combining Appreciative Inquiry and problem solving. The study took place together with a 14-week Lean implementation commissioned from the central Lean office that had focus on creating structures and introducing tools for systematic problem solving. In the following, three exemplars will be described.

Can Appreciative Inquiry be used for proactive problem solving? An operation station at a large automated assembly line had always had a very inconsistent performance with up to 200 stops pr. day. The project manager who was trained in both problem solving and Appreciative Inquiry chose to use the latter to improve the station's performance. She inquired into the situations where the process was at its best, when the station had the fewest stops and the best quality. She found out that at certain times it only had 1-3 stops pr. hour. By identifying the factors that were used when the station worked at its best she found a way to reproduce the better performance and ended up creating a much more consistent performance with only 20-30 stops pr. day, reducing down time with 90 %.

The approach of inquiring into the better performance, learning about factors for success, and expanding them in daily operations is one way to use Appreciative Inquiry for proactive technical problem solving by targeting a process and systematically understand and expand success factors. By being proactive and using generative questions during the process, such as inquiring into 'what could be' after understanding 'the best of what is', it could enable double loop learning of being engaged in whole system change instead of just solving a current problem within its predefined boundaries.

Can a problem solving method be used to learn from success? After Appreciative Inquiry had been introduced in the factory, they were more focused on learning from success but had no systematic way of doing it in practice. Daily performance boards were still only focused on actions when Key Performance Indicators were below target, 'green' meant ignore and 'red' meant take action.

One team had attempted to incorporate 'the daily success' into their performance meetings to learn from success. Without methods to identify, inquire into, and learn from the situations, the agenda point often created no discussion at all, and when it did it was focused on celebration rather than learning and elevating success factors. Effective learning from success requires identification of occasions, a method for inquiry, and formal structure for capturing and sharing the knowledge (Phlypo, 2008).

Another team experienced a useful method after a successful cross-functional project of introducing a new piece of equipment. The team used a problem solving approach with new questions to look for the root causes of success to initiate improvement. The facilitated investigation created some quite surprising success root causes that were shared with peers and captured for incorporation in future projects. The surprise was not the identified causes but rather that the team shared and highlighted causes that a lean coach later revealed he had tried to introduce earlier without success. Only after experiencing them in practice and systematically investigate them did the team acknowledge their validity. This practice of learning from success therefore contributes with two factors for improving the work system: It creates and captures new knowledge, and it creates an opportunity for knowledge sharing with peers from story telling. The story also highlights how a structured process could be used and that it was found useful to incorporate with a method that people were comfortable and familiar with, in this case a *success expansion* version of the well-known A3 template.

As discussed in the previous example, this could also lead to double loop learning by incorporating generative questions.

Can Appreciative Inquiry be used to solve technical problems efficiently? In this third example, an interesting discussion arose after experiencing a traditional problem solving activity. A plastic moulding machine had just broken down as the team leader initiated systematic problem solving (cf. figure 1). In the beginning of understanding the problem they did not get any useful information from the involved technicians. It took a while before a colleague gave a clue: The incident was caused by an operator closing the machine too early, but he was too embarrassed to tell. The team leader had learned that problem solving was a 'no blame game' so he investigated on and found that the direct cause to the problem was caused by closure of the machine before heating it up. In his root cause analysis he asked why

the machine was possible to close before being heated up, which led to the solution of re-programming the machine to avoid the problem again.

After this, a thought experiment was carried out: Could Appreciative Inquiry have been used instead to solve the problem? The conclusion of the discussion was as follows. After walking through the standard 4D model and asking for 'the best of what is', when it worked better, if something could be learned from other more successful machines, what was wanted instead, etc., the conclusion was that without a root cause analysis for identifying the problem, it would be luck if the Appreciative Inquiry approach would solve the problem as efficiently as problem solving did. As opposed to within a social system, a useful reaction when a problem arises with one machine is rarely to focus on two other machines that perform well and try to expand their success; it was necessary to focus on understanding and solving the problem.

New questions emerged. What had happened, if the technician had not been embarrassed but was instead engaged in creating improvement? What if no colleague gave information about the cause? It became clear that technical problem solving process is a social process that depends on collecting information from people and engaging strengths in the team. What could have happened if the process had continued with the generative question 'what could be' instead of stopping at the first apparent root cause? Could some of these elements from Appreciative Inquiry maybe be combined with problem solving? This will be touched later.

In the next section the learnings from the shop floor study about ways of combining and approaching work system improvement are presented.

Three improvement lenses: Problem solving, success expansion, proactive development

As a result of the observations at the shop floor, three approaches to continuous work system improvement were defined. Within each of the approaches different methods could be used. Three methods from either Appreciative Inquiry or problem solving were observed: Root cause analysis, discovery of success factors, and dream of the future state. Figure 4 shows an overview of the three approaches and the methods observed during the study.

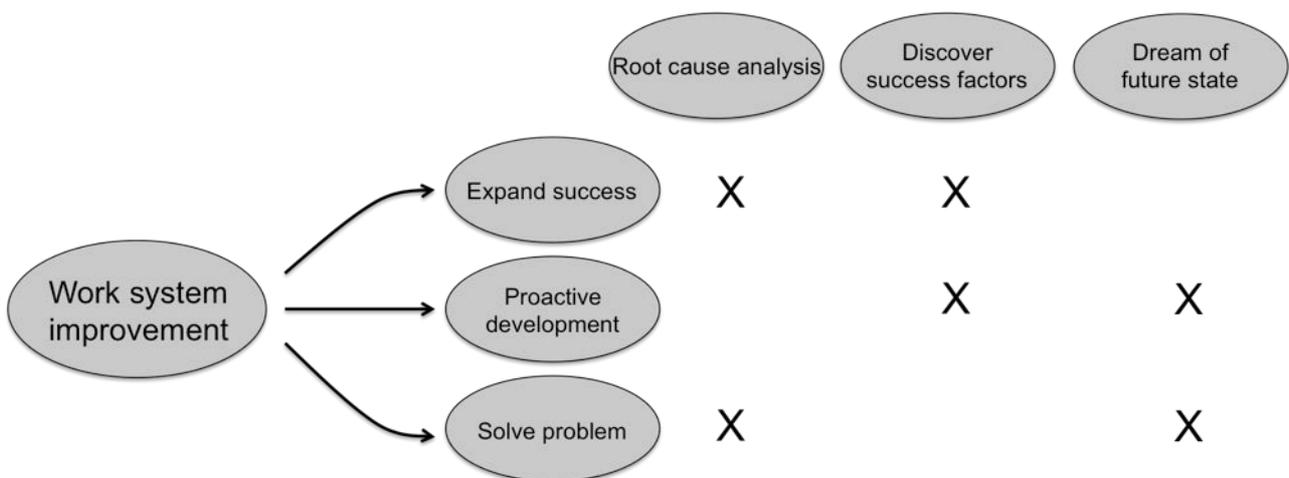


Figure 4: Three approaches to work system improvement, and an overview of methods observed.

Success expansion: Improvement initiated by a positive deviance or success that is inquired into in order to learn and expand the success.

In the study, success expansion was carried out by structured root cause analysis as well as discovery methods from Appreciative Inquiry for expanding success factors, such as interviews and structured dialogue processes.

Proactive development: Proactive improvement that is initiated by an idea or opportunity for improvement.

In the study, proactive development was observed carried out by discovery and expansion of success factors and by a future state dream process.

Problem solving: Improvement initiated by a negative deviance that is addressed in order to solve and improve the situation.

Problem solving was carried out by using root cause analysis and by using a future state dream process.

The use of all these three approaches can expand the opportunities for continuous work system innovation. Most traditional problem solving approaches only focus on reactive problem solving, and miss the opportunities in proactive development and success expansion. Traditional Lean is concerned with both proactive (e.g. Kaizen events with future state mapping, Liker, 2004) and reactive problem solving, but is often most focused on reactive problem solving while gradually raising targets to be able to identify and respond reactively to new problems. Processes based on benchmarking or best practice are focused on success expansion, but they are not used for continuous improvement. Appreciative Inquiry processes are most often proactive and focus on expanding success factors toward a future dream, but are not concerned with reactive continuous improvements from identified problems or success.

These three approaches are ways to initiate continuous improvement of the work system. Each was found able to create both adaptive learning and generative double loop learning. More research is necessary to understand if any of the approaches are better than others at creating work system innovation. An observation was that future-oriented questions often initiated more generative learning than past-oriented questions, and that the biggest difference for work system innovation was whether a generative and future-oriented process was initiated or if the process only was focused on eliminating causes. A deeper understanding was acquired by looking into the differences in the process.

Appreciative Problem Solving

The discussion about Appreciative Inquiry in problem solving cases was initiated during the shop floor study. A conclusion from the study was that the employees found root cause analysis inevitable for many cases of problem solving. At the same time, the process of Appreciative Inquiry was also found useful for solving some problems in a technical context, and could even contribute with engagement of the social system in creating improvements.

A deeper look into the two different processes revealed how they could be combined. Figure 5 shows a schematic illustration of the basics in a root cause based problem solving process.

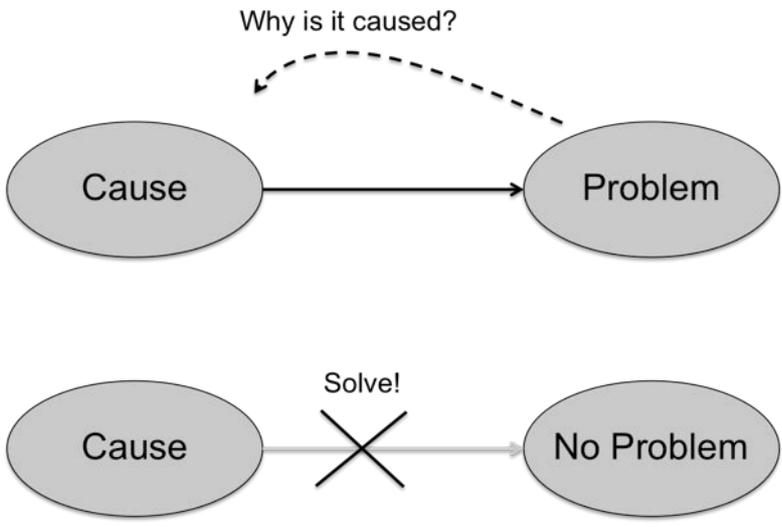


Figure 5: A schematic illustration of the basics in a root cause based problem solving process.

By targeting the direct cause and then the root cause (cf. figure 1), this process works well for many technical problems and is often very efficient because of its direct approach of understanding the system and the problem. The result is often limited to single loop learning because the root cause analysis is based on the existing boundaries of the problem, and execution of the process is often not very engaging.

Figure 6 shows a corresponding illustration of a simplified Appreciative Inquiry based problem solving process.

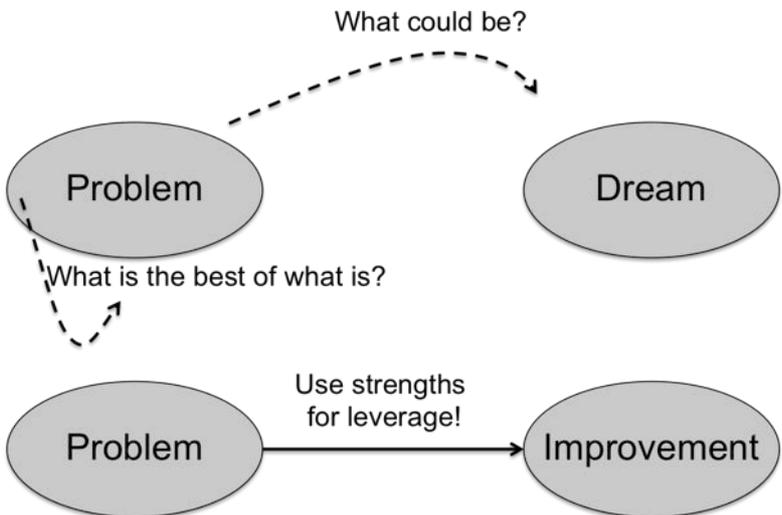


Figure 6: A schematic illustration of the basics in an Appreciative Inquiry problem solving process.

This process is initiated by inquiring into the system when it is most alive and effective, and then it creates change initiated by a future state dream without having to identify the root cause of the problem. This process has the advantage of engaging the social system and of asking generative questions that can optimize double loop learning. In a technical context, it can have the pitfall of not addressing a direct way of solving the problem.

As described, both processes are usable for improvement. In the Appreciative Inquiry literature, problem solving is often regarded as being more useful for technical problems and Appreciative Inquiry for social and more complex issues (Holmberg, 2009). This view is supported by the observations and discussions during the shop floor study.

What if the system is both social and technical? Could the two processes then be combined in order to get the best from each? This was done by a synthesis of the two process representations, and called Appreciative Problem Solving as shown in figure 7.

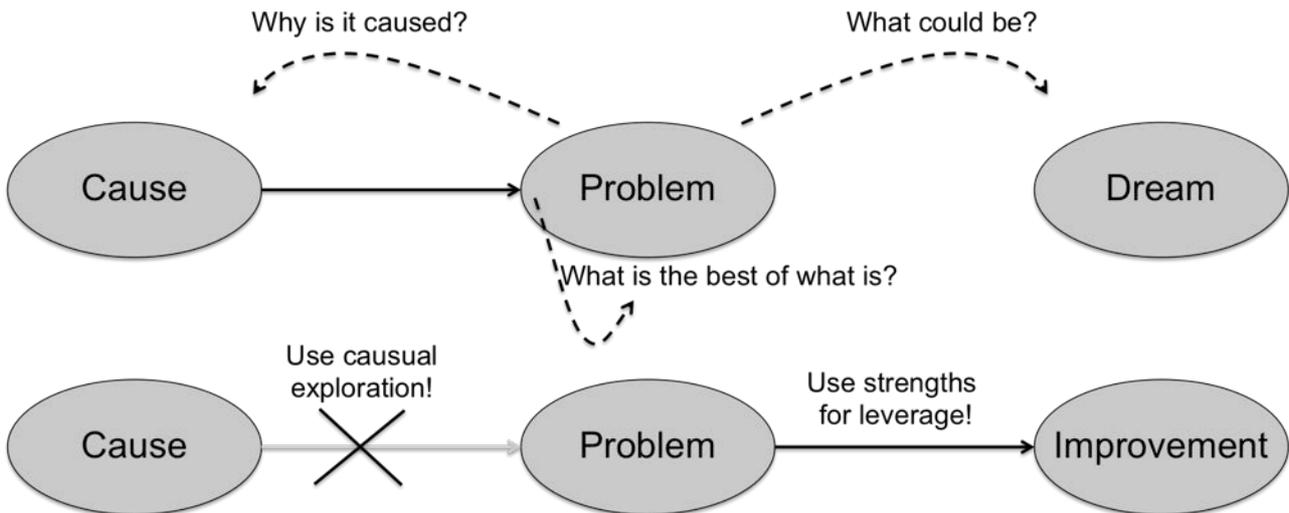


Figure 7: A schematic illustration of the basics in Appreciative Problem Solving.

Appreciative Problem Solving is combining the inquiry of ‘the best of what is’ with a root cause analysis to understand the system, and then it used the ‘what could be’ future state dream to generate improvements aimed at double loop learning. Seen from a process oriented perspective it incorporates the best of the two approaches to optimize generative learning. Furthermore, it would allow for the use of applying the Appreciative Inquiry principles to increase learning and enthusiasm in the activity. It is therefore one answer to the question of how to combine Appreciative Inquiry and problem solving for optimized work system innovation.

The model is currently tested empirically at the production facility in order to further explore the combination of Appreciative Inquiry and Lean problem solving in practice.

Conclusion

This paper identified the state of the art within the academic literature, and concluded that no studies had previously described the combination of Appreciative Inquiry and Lean or any other problem solving approach for continuous improvement.

The potential for introducing Appreciative Inquiry to improving problem solving was found to be more enthusiasm, learning, and a wider solution space.

The question of how to combine Appreciative Inquiry and Lean problem solving for optimized work system innovation was answered in two ways:

- By introducing three approaches to continuous improvements that combined the approaches used in Appreciative Inquiry and problem solving.
- By introducing a framework for Appreciative Problem Solving that combines the basic processes within Appreciative Inquiry and problem solving.

Further studies are necessary to add knowledge to the emerging concept of Strength-based Lean and to investigate the practical use of the presented ideas.

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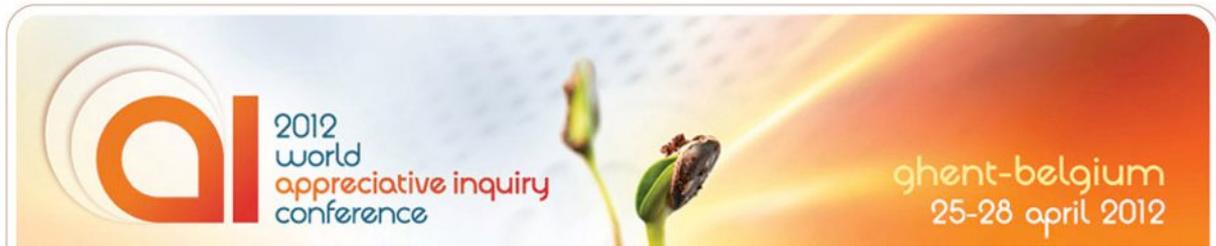
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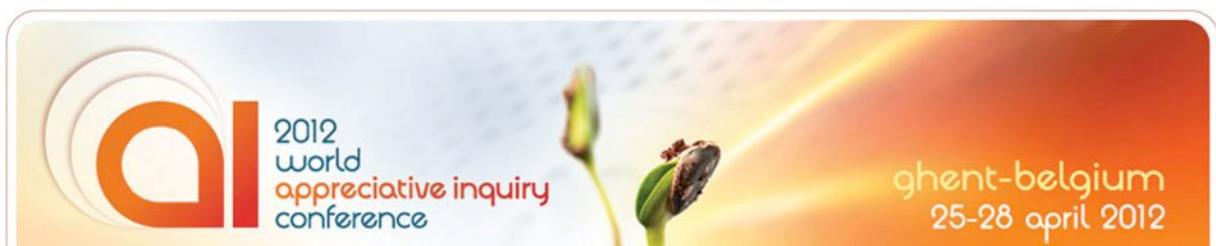
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ACTIONING AUTHENTICITY BY MEANS OF AN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

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ABSTRACT

In 2008, a video was released on the Internet that was subsequently condemned worldwide. The video showed four white male students from a men's residence at the University of the Free State (UFS), in South Africa, humiliating five black workers, of whom four were women. Juxtaposed against this sad incident, which led to riots and racial tension on the university's campus, this paper will present the case of an Appreciative Inquiry facilitated in a women's residence elsewhere on campus, and which had exceptionally positive outcomes.

This Appreciative Inquiry is the result of a unique leadership development programme designed for both academic and non-academic staff members of the UFS. A general rationale for and an overview of the programme, with its focus on authentic leadership, will be presented and in particular the Appreciative Inquiry part of the programme (process and outcomes) will be highlighted.

Key words: appreciative inquiry, authentic leadership, leadership learning community, University of the Free State

INTRODUCTION

The Free State is a province in central South Africa, with its university's main campus located in the city of Bloemfontein, the judicial capital of the country. The University of the Free State (UFS) is one of South Africa's oldest institutions of higher learning. Four years ago it was shaken by a disturbing incident related to social transformation.

Soon after the start of the university's academic year in 2008, a video, shot by four students from a men's residence, found its way onto the Internet. The video, made in protest of the university's integration policies, depicted a mock initiation into the residence's activities, humiliating five black staff members of whom four were females. Apart from evoking a national and international outcry, it plunged the university into racial turmoil. These students, clearly, had lost their moral compass.

LEADERSHIP LEARNING COMMUNITY PROGRAMME

It is therefore significant that when the university's Division: Performance Management and Staff Development decided to implement a year-long Leadership Learning Community

programme (LLC) for academic and support staff, its developers opted for the work of George (2007), on authentic leadership, as the most appropriate for meaningful capacity building. George conceived the concept of *True North* as a metaphor for authentic leadership, where true north serves as an internal compass that guides a person successfully through life. The True North concept is related to authenticity as it is a representation of one's inner core, what the "I" would consider to be the "real" me. This kind of leadership is not about positional power.

LLC applicants were accepted once they and their respective supervisors had formally agreed to commit to the programme. A financial incentive was promised to those who successfully completed the programme by delivering an output, either in the form of a research paper, or the design and implementation of a project.

The programme started in February 2009 with a two-day retreat at a country lodge where, by means of a workbook, participants were introduced to authentic leadership theory and participated in related exercises and activities. This was followed up with three more workshops where the participants continued to immerse themselves in authentic leadership theory and practice, of which the third included an equine-assisted activity.

An analysis of responses to a questionnaire and reflections on the participants' subjective experiences of the first half of the programme indicated that they were able to value and develop their capacity for authenticity in general and authentic leadership in particular. Nevertheless, how does one 'action' authenticity? The developers of the LLC programme were of the opinion that Appreciative Inquiry (AI) (cf. Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008), as a form of positive action research (Cummings & Worley, 2001), provided the answer to this question.

The AI component of the LLC programme started with a two-day retreat on a guest farm. There, participants were introduced to the historical development of AI, as well as its underlying principles and practices. It was emphasised that AI differs from the classical approach to development and change which is problem focused, mechanistic, and therefore analytical and reductionistic by nature. AI is more contextual by nature (Crous, 2005) and as such is synthetic (generative). This provides for novel and unique actions and pattern formation in a multitude of contexts. The participants were challenged to consider AI not only as a form of positive action research, but as a research framework (Reed, 2007). They were subsequently introduced to several scholarly articles for which AI was used as the research method.

After the orientation the participants took part in an AI based on the "4-D" cycle of *Discovery* (appreciating the best of "what gives life"), *Dream* (envisioning "what might be"), *Design* (co-constructing "how it can be") and *Destiny* (innovating "what will be") (Cooperrider et al., 2008). The affirmative topic chosen for introducing the AI process framed research as a life-giving endeavour. For the Discovery phase, unconditional positive questions were crafted in such a way that the participants were able to share their stories of positive past experiences related to research they conducted; research done by others whom they admire; what they value about their respective disciplines, the university, their colleagues, themselves, their students; and what "gives life" to their institution. They

shared their hopes and wishes regarding research relevance and excellence. From these stories they elicited positive, strong themes after which they voted for the six themes that they regarded as being the positive core (True North?) of research.

In a deviation from AI's participative approach, the Dream phase was facilitated as an individual exercise. Each participant was requested to consider the outcome of the Discovery phase (the positive core of research, constructed collectively) and their personal "True North", for coming up with a unique topic/theme which they wanted to explore by means of the AI method. In addition, they were requested to craft positive questions (both generic and topic-specific).

During the Design phase participants presented their proposals to the larger group, thus providing an opportunity for constructive feedback. The cycle was concluded with a session where each participant committed to facilitate positive change by means of their respective AIs, after which each delegate was given an opportunity to request assistance with the execution of their AIs and to offer assistance in response to the requests made (cf. Watkins, Mohr & Kelly, 2011). The AI retreat ended with a valuation (as opposed to an evaluation) (Watkins et al., 2001).

OUTCOMES

The participants spent the rest of the semester refining their AI designs and their execution. AIs were done in respect of topics such as the establishment of a conducive academic culture, the positive impact of legislation on the ethical behaviour of financial planners, the pedagogic attributes of an exemplary teacher, involvement in e-learning, the creation of new learning pathways for the digital age, establishing the UFS as the university of choice for students with disabilities, and first-year experiences of university life. Elsie Danhauser's AI, however, serves as a high-impact case.

Elsie, the manager of the Emily Hobhouse women's residence, was a committed and engaged participant. It therefore came as a surprise when, at the onset of the AI Dream phase, Elsie spoke up: "Sorry, I'm not sure that I will be able to continue, because I don't have a dream." Elsie went on to explain that hardship and trauma in her personal life had undermined her capacity to dream. In the spirit of True North and AI the other participants rallied around, comforting her.

Elsie eventually came to the realisation that although she might not have a dream for herself, she does have a dream for the women's residence which she heads. Emily Hobhouse residence has a rich history, but as an almost exclusive Afrikaans residence it was facing the challenge (issued by the university's new placement policy requirement) that at least 50 per cent of the new intake should consist of black students. She became convinced that AI, with its emphasis on showing appreciation for the past, present and future, would be an appropriate (if not ideal) vehicle for both residential officials and students (black and white) to overcome their resistance to change and collaborate towards positive transformation. Elsie proceeded to facilitate an AI at Emily Hobhouse in such a way that it produced the following positive outcomes (Danhauser, 2010, p. 1):

- The students were excited to have an opportunity to make their voices heard and where they could become part of the decision-making process in their residence.
- A spirit of sisterhood was fostered because the young women shared their best experiences and their own stories. Their unique contributions were valued.
- The students realised they were part of a living, evolving process. An opportunity was created for them to repeat their successes and build on what was good in their residence.
- The process was based on principles of equality of voice – everyone was asked to speak about their vision of the true, the good and the possible.
- The students were part of a positive revolution that could bring about lasting change.
- They could determine their core values.
- They would be accountable for their own future, because they were part of a shared decision-making process.
- The management of Emily Hobhouse received a clear mandate from the students as to what they want more of, in order to transform from the ordinary to the extraordinary.
- In future, managing the residence will be a value-driven undertaking, not based on enforcing sets of rules and regulations.
- The way in which the residence is managed will comply with the University of the Free State's vision of creating a sense of belonging among students of a new integrated generation, so that the residence remains a 'home away from home' for everybody.

The Emily Hobhouse AI inspired similar initiatives where students were given an opportunity to co-create an inclusive and welcoming environment which is conducive to academic excellence (Danhauser, 2011).

In August 2010, Elsie delivered a paper on the AI she had facilitated for Emily Hobhouse at the South African chapter of the Association of Colleges and Universities' Housing Officials International. She won a Best Presenters Award and received a grant to deliver her paper at the association's international conference. Her presentation at the 2011 conference in New Orleans was well received.

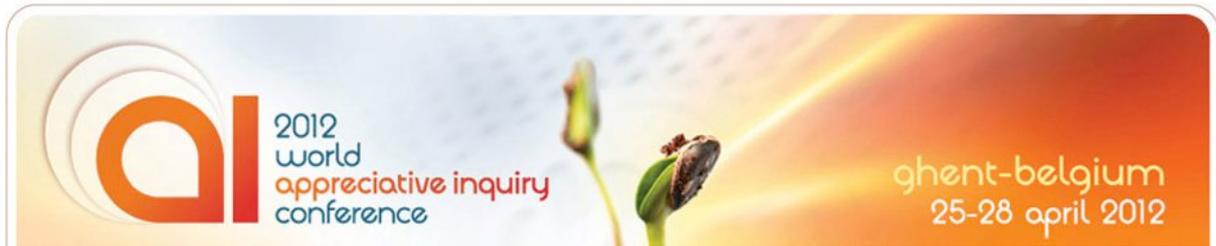
CONCLUSION

By participating in an AI, the LLC-participants were given an opportunity not only to experience the quality and texture of this life-giving process (cf. Cooperrider & Avital, 2004) first hand, but by facilitating their own AIs they were able to 'weave' positivity into the social fabric of the university system, with the possibility of broadening the thinking and action repertoires of its stakeholders and building its resources, enhancing transformation in general and racial harmony in particular on the UFS campus (cf. Frederickson, 2003).

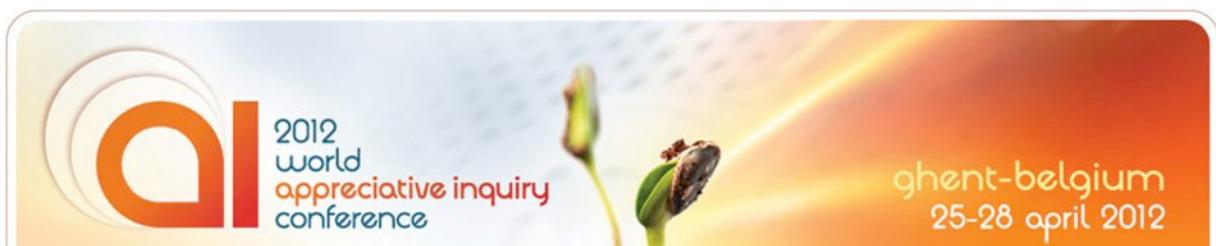
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Utilising Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to Create a Vision for Ethics in the Profession of Industrial Psychology in South Africa

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Freddie Crous**

Abstract

Ethics within professions is typically managed through a compliance-based approach. Compliance with rules and regulations, however, is not necessarily conducive to creating a sustainable ethical culture in a profession. This paper provides a case of how Appreciative Inquiry (AI) was applied as a positive action research method, and as a way to precede and complement compliance-based approaches used to manage ethics within the profession of Industrial Psychology in South Africa.

The AI provided an opportunity for a select group of registered, credible industrial psychologists to view and construct ethics from an appreciative stance. This enabled participants to uncover and embrace the positive dimension of ethics and develop an ethics vision for their profession. Such a vision not only created a basis for further action but could also possibly trigger the establishment of a sustainable ethical culture within the profession of industrial psychology within South Africa.

Keywords

vision, industrial psychology, ethics, profession

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Most professional associations are typically governed by sets of ethical standards that educate members as well as provide guidelines with regards to appropriate or inappropriate behaviour (Landy & Conte, 2007). In South Africa the profession of industrial psychology is statutorily positioned as a specialised field within the broader profession of psychology. Psychologists in industry generally work within organisational contexts. Industrial psychologists may therefore be inclined to align values and ethics with the economic system (private and public sector), and organisational contexts within which they function, over and above the ethics required of them as professionals.

During the past 30 years industrial psychology has evolved as a sufficiently independent profession to the extent that it faces its own relatively unique ethical challenges that need to be identified and addressed. In order to address these ethical challenges, the profession may need to develop and sustain a true ethical identity that needs to be both embraced and actively managed. A potential problem, however, is that the management of ethics in a profession traditionally occurs within a compliance frame of reference whereby unethical behaviour is discouraged and prevented. The compliance-based approach to ethics is prohibitive and reactive in nature and is governed by rules and regulations (Rossouw & van Vuuren, 2010). In many cases this approach to ethics tends to be effective as it stipulates and forbids the types of unethical behaviour that could occur. A major disadvantage associated with this approach is that individuals may not attend to ethics because they want to, but rather because they have to.

A starting point in managing ethics in a profession may be the creation of an ethics vision which could provide the foundation for, and possibly trigger, the establishment of a sustainable ethical culture within the profession. The aim of this paper is to propose Appreciative Inquiry (AI) as an alternative, values-based approach to the traditional, compliance-based approach to ethics. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) will be applied as a positive action research intervention, with the intention to co-create and establish an ethics vision for the profession of industrial psychology within South Africa.

The need for a profession to embrace ethics

For any profession, including industrial psychology, embracing ethics is essential, as behaving unethically might harm the reputation of the profession. Embracing ethics is an essential step in the professionalisation of an occupation (Spiegel & Koocher, 1985). Lefkowitz (2003) stated that "the very essence, then, of being a professional, and not just acting as one, is understanding and committing to the spirit as well as to the letter of the profession's values and ethical prescriptions" (p.281). Every profession, including industrial psychology, should embrace ethics in order to deal with the constantly evolving ethical challenges. Furthermore, within the job descriptions of industrial psychologists, integrity and ethics are two of the most critical competencies (Landy & Conte, 2007). The problem, however, is that ethics within a profession is typically *enforced*. The "spirit" that Lefkowitz (2003) refers to may therefore be negated in favour of merely complying with ethical requirements and rules.

The traditional approach to ethics within a profession

Ethics in a profession is traditionally governed by rules and regulations. These are generally developed and enforced by external committees or stakeholders and examined by representatives of the organisation and the public which the profession serves (Ponton & Duba, 2009). Stakeholders enforce ethics with the intention of protecting their interests by applying pressure on the profession to avoid ethics risks by discouraging unethical practice. Evidently, ethics within a profession typically takes on a compliance-based nature.

Gupta (2006) explained that in the traditional compliance-based approach to ethics, hierarchy and rules assume dominant positions. Furthermore, according to Fennell and Malloy (2007) this approach to managing ethics is reactive and prohibitive in nature in the way that it aims to restrain unethical behaviour. Unethical behaviour is prevented through the threat of sanctions and by making it the duty of individuals to report errant colleagues. Although the approach could be effective, it may have a tendency to create a culture that is characterised by "we must not get caught" and "what is not forbidden is allowed" (van Vuuren & Crous, 2005).

Since the traditional approach to ethics requires external enforcement it does not afford members of the profession the opportunity to co-design the profession's ethical future (cf. van Vuuren & Crous, 2005). As a result, individuals may experience feelings of "we have to do something about the ethics thing". Gupta (2006) explained that this might result in greater cynicism and a lower degree of commitment to

ethics. Since the compliance-based approach requires blind adherence to the rules of conduct, it can disempower individuals from using their own discretion when making ethical decisions (van Vuuren & Crous, 2005).

Should a profession continue to make use of a compliance-based approach to ethics, which is externally enforced by a licensing entity for example, it may result in a profession that is reactive in the way that it circumscribes its ethics focus. Eventually it could also negate the positive dimension of ethics and ignore the fact that ethics can be an opportunity to be embraced. An alternative does exist, however, namely that of embracing the positive dimension (i.e. opportunities) that ethics can be aligned with by using a values-based approach.

Shifting focus away from the traditional approach to managing ethics

As an alternative to the traditional compliance-based approach, a values-based approach whereby ethics is integrated into the purpose, mission and goals of the profession can be utilised (cf. Rossouw & van Vuuren, 2010). In order to achieve this, an ethical identity needs to be established for the profession. To create an ethical identity for a profession, members of the profession need to understand the implications and purpose of ethics as well as become conscious about ethics, and thereafter embrace and practise ethics in their interactions.

There are different ways for institutionalising ethics with the purpose of creating an ethics identity (Rossouw & van Vuuren, 2010). For instance, ethics can be integrated in a profession through training, by making use of communication as a primary intervention, by role-modelling or through promoting ethics talk whereby ethics becomes part of a professionals' daily vocabulary. It may therefore be desirable to create a profession whereby ethics is relational and where a sustainable, values-based ethical culture that is aligned with goodness and human flourishing, can prevail. A starting point may be the creation of an ethics vision that will guide the above actions and could lay the foundation for the establishment of an ethical culture within the profession of industrial psychology within South Africa.

In search of an approach to create an ethics vision

Positive ethics management for a profession will be applied as the philosophy or undertone within this study. It is a positive approach to change that encourages and promotes the highest ethical conduct, that

may afford members of the profession the opportunity to attend to ethics because they want to and not because they have to. To achieve this, AI in the form of positive action research, was applied to facilitate a positive stance towards ethics within a profession.

It is suggested that AI be used as a novel approach to contrast the compliance-based approach that is typically used to manage ethics within professions and embrace the values-based approach to ethics, since it is "a philosophy (a way of thinking) and a process, method, or practice (a way of doing)" (cf. van Vuuren & Crous, 2005: p.403). AI is a relational process of inquiry, grounded in affirmation and appreciation (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2003). Participants, in this case members of the profession, could be encouraged to draw attention to the positive dimension of ethics, rather than concentrate on problems. Since AI is 'contextual' by nature (Crous, 2008), the positive aspects identified could be used to inform an ethics vision for the profession of industrial psychology.

A profession could succeed when people throughout the profession share and work from a common ethics vision. An ethics vision may not only guide members' actions and decisions but also provide a sense of how to proceed in times of change. An ethics vision could possibly excite members of the profession and inspire them to contribute their best as well as to collaborate for the success of the entire profession. When people are aligned with an ethics vision, they may have a clearer idea about the direction in which the profession is going ethically, how being ethical will contribute to the well-being of clients and other primary stakeholders, and what it will take to succeed (for example, creating a sustainable ethics culture and reputational gain). The aim of this research, therefore, was to apply AI as an approach to catalyse and create an ethics vision (from an internal stakeholders' view point) for the profession of industrial psychology within South Africa. AI was selected as a 'reframing' approach as it is positive and strength-based in nature and could provide industrial psychologists with an opportunity to embrace the past successes of their profession, which may then be used to inform an idealistic ethics vision.

METHOD

Research design

In this study two different approaches were utilised as a mixed mode approach (cf. Thorpe & Holt, 2008). The approach comprised of a focus group, which was followed by an AI, which may be

regarded as a valid research method (Reed, 2007), with the objective of reifying the aim of creating an ethics vision for the profession of industrial psychology within South Africa. To this end a one-day workshop consisting of the following broad processes, was conducted in the order as stated below:

- A facilitated *focus group* (duration: one hour)
- A short *presentation* (duration: 20 minutes) on a move away from ethics as a negative risk to ethics as an opportunity. The background to AI and its application was explained, with the purpose of familiarising participants with the AI process.
- A facilitated AI session (duration: 6 hours).

The focus group was conducted with five underlying objectives in mind: a) it was applied as an icebreaker to elicit group participation for the remainder of the day; b) it was used to set the scene and contextualise ethics-related phenomena for participants; c) it was aimed at revealing participants' insights, thoughts, viewpoints and varying perspectives regarding the current state of ethics within the profession of industrial psychology; d) it was used to determine whether participants viewed ethics from a traditional compliance-based approach or from a values-based approach; and e) it was used to inform the first phase of the AI process (i.e. the discovery phase).

Thereafter AI was used as a method to transcend the move from participants' view of the current state/stance of ethics within the profession, as revealed during the focus group, to an ideal state whereby ethics is viewed as an opportunity to be embraced and is associated with gain. In addition, AI provided a process to guide the way forward with the ultimate goal of establishing an ethics vision for the future of the profession of industrial psychology within South Africa.

Participants

Purposive sampling was used to identify a selected group of 40 credible individuals who are members of the profession of industrial psychology. Once these "information rich" individuals had been identified they were invited to participate in the one-day ethics visioning workshop. Selection was based on individuals' experience, qualifications and knowledge of the field. Of the 40 individuals invited, ten were able to attend the workshop.

Each participant was registered as an industrial psychologist and had extensive experience within the field. Due to their experience they were aware of the typical ethical challenges and conflicts that industrial psychologists encounter on a daily basis and how these challenges should be revised with the objective of creating a sustainable ethics culture within the profession. In addition, participants were registered with several professional associations and some participants held leadership positions in the management of the profession.

Research application: Focus group

The focus group session was guided by a series of structured questions with the purpose of guiding the informal group discussion around the topic: *The current state or stance of ethics in the profession of industrial psychology*. The following questions were posed to the group:

- Why is ethics important for the profession of industrial psychology?
- What are the ethical obligations of industrial psychologists?
- To whom do industrial psychologists have an ethical obligation?
- What are the ethics risks in the profession of industrial psychology?
- Which values should drive the profession?

Content analysis (Thorpe, & Holt, 2008) was applied to identify recurring themes in the data. These themes were then systematically identified and grouped together by means of axial coding. To classify the recurring themes, data were recorded in an Excel spreadsheet where first order themes, which highlight the similarities between participants' responses, were identified. After the similarities between the first order themes were identified, these similarities were grouped into second order themes. Once the focus group had been completed, the AI intervention commenced.

Research application: Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

The established 4-D cycle (cf. Cooperrider, Whitney & Stavros, 2008) was selected to conduct the AI process for the purpose of this study. The 4-D process was informed by an *affirmative topic* (i.e. an ethics vision for industrial psychologists within South Africa) and executed in terms of the four stages of *Discovery* (appreciating), *Dream* (envisioning), *Design* (co-constructing the future) and *Destiny* (learning, empowering and improvising to sustain the future) (cf. Cooperrider & Sekerka, 2003). Since AI is a collaborative process, it could provide members of the profession, who have a common interest

of embedding ethics in the culture of the profession of industrial psychology, an opportunity to discover, dream, design and enact an ethics vision that they most value and desire.

RESULTS

Focus group

Participants highlighted the importance of self-development, competence and being scientist-practitioners. It was further evident ethics is viewed as an imperative element of the profession of industrial psychology. Moreover, it was pointed out that members of professions have an ethical obligation to their stakeholders and should ensure that they instil an element of trust in their stakeholders as well as protect their interests. Therefore, members of the profession are accountable for ethics.

Participants expressed the desire for industrial psychology to be branded as an ‘ethical profession’. In order to achieve this, the profession should be guided by a set of ethical values. This is essential, as being ethical may result in numerous opportunities, such as an enhanced reputation and credibility, preservation of the integrity of the profession, protecting the profession and clients from harm, as well as increasing the trust and support of stakeholders. Conversely, being unethical may also create many risks that could ultimately threaten the sustainability of the profession. The participants highlighted that it may prove beneficial to the profession, to be governed by a code of ethics which may assist in preventing unethical behaviour as well as assist in protecting the interests of all stakeholders.

The focus group provided participants with an opportunity to establish an understanding and vocabulary with regard to ethics within the profession. Once a common ethical platform was established, the transcendence from ethics generally being viewed from the typical compliance-based approach, to identifying opportunities for the profession to entrench ethics in their reputation for being a trustworthy entity, was uncovered. Although the focus group did not represent an appreciative stance, the majority of the comments were positive. This made the transition from the focus group to the AI quite seamless as the group was already positively inclined and viewed ethics as an opportunity to be embraced.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI)

The results/products discussed below, were guided by the affirmative topic choice which was a *vision for ethics for the profession of industrial psychology in South Africa*.

Discovery

During this phase, participants had an opportunity to discover the profession's positive core (Cooperrider et al. 2008). In order to uncover and explore the strengths of the profession, which is in essence the life and blood of the profession (c.f. Lewis et al., 2008), the participants conducted one-on-one interviews with one another where they engaged in deep dialogue about past success stories regarding ethics within the profession. A customised interview guide as seen in Table 1, structured around the topic chosen for inquiry, was used to guide the interviews. The aim was to elicit vision generating stories.

Table 1: Customised interview guide

Interview questions
1. Tell me about your beginnings with the profession of industrial psychology. What were your initial hopes and dreams when joining the profession?
2. Now, describe a peak personal ethical experience or high point in your professional career. <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Who was involved in this peak experience?❖ What were the outcomes of this experience?❖ What were the implications of this positive experience?
3. What do you value most about the profession?
4. What is the one life-giving force that embodies the ethical identity of this profession?
5. Tell me about a fellow professional that truly serves/served the profession in an ethical way? Describe why you chose this person.
6. If you had three wishes granted to you immediately to make the profession a more positive force in the world, what would they be?

Once the one-on-one interviews had been conducted, participants formed two groups and shared key stories emanating from the interviews, demonstrating the profession at its best. Key themes were elicited by each group's participants and captured on flip chart paper. Through a process of voting each group presented its six most valued themes to the larger group. Thereafter an open discussion was held with the entire group to discuss each group's themes before inviting participants to vote for the

enduring themes (from both groups) that they considered most important. These themes may be regarded as the positive core of the industrial psychology profession (see Table 2).

Table 2: Positive core themes of the profession

Groups 1 and 2: Positive core themes	No. of votes	Supporting quotes
Ethics = a way of life	12	"Industrial psychology is a profession based on integrity." "Always acting with the good in mind." "I am very aware of my role to promote the greater good."
Ethics may provide a sense of identity, our "beacon".	11	"Living ethics out in the profession may as a result strengthen our identity."
Ethics may enable us to restore dignity in the workplace.	8	"We can help restore workplace dignity by helping organisations believe in what they do so that this translates into performance and workplace effectiveness." "I was deeply touched by my ability to influence the organisation towards more equitable/good behaviour."
Values and integrity lead to sustainability.	12	"Evidence-based practice and values based on integrity may enhance sustainability of the profession." "Ethical ways of operating have positive business outcomes."
Ethics enables industrial psychologists to transcend the individual and his/her credibility.	9	"As industrial psychologists, we must fight for our credibility and reputation."
Ethics may help to ensure the systematic well being of all stakeholders.	12	"Optimising contributions beyond individuals to organisational systems and society." "As industrial psychologists, we should be of service to people and strive to make a difference in people's lives."
Internal professional accountability is embedded in the culture.	8	"A well-known professor who lectured at the major universities in South Africa apologised at a conference for things that he had done in the past." "We as professionals need to stand up for what is right and what is wrong and do something about it."

From Table 2, one may conclude that ethics has been an integral part of the profession's identity, past successes, achievements and values. Moreover, ethics has resulted in many opportunities for the profession. For instance, ethics has restored employee dignity in the workplace by ensuring that members of the profession operate with integrity. It has increased the level of credibility and sustainability of the profession by ensuring that all members of the profession take into consideration the well-being of stakeholders when practicing. Ethics has also enforced the idea that members of the profession should not only behave ethically but they should also be accountable for their actions. This demonstrates the philosophy and applicability of the term *positive ethics management* within professional associations. Furthermore the appreciative interviews ignited curiosity about ethics amongst the participants and brought positive possibilities for the future of ethics for the profession of industrial psychology to life.

Dream

During this phase the stories and insights generated in the previous phase were put into constructive use and images of the future emerged out of grounded examples from the positive past. Moreover, participants were presented with an opportunity to explore their hopes and dreams for the profession by describing actual and potential possibilities and as a result envision a positive ethics future (cf. Cooperrider et al., 2008; Lewis et al., 2008). The question asked to facilitate the discovery of these dreams was: *Think five years down the line. How would you want our stakeholders to describe our profession?*

Participants collaborated in the same two groups as used earlier to uncover an ethics vision/dream for the profession. The two groups then voted on the top themes and 32 positive themes were identified. These themes were then prioritised and converted to the following nine core themes: Industrial psychology should be a profession that strives to make a difference; Members of the profession should be scientist practitioners; The profession should strive to create a balance between the needs and interests of the profession and the needs and interests of all stakeholders; Industrial psychologists should be experts on human behaviour; Industrial psychologists should be concerned about human well-being; Formation of an expert support council to guide the practice of industrial psychology; Industrial psychologists should always strive to provide professional service; The greater good needs to be taken into consideration when practising and ethics should be the foundation of the profession.

The two groups were then requested to create a collage that personifies the profession's ethics aspirations, dreams and hopes, using pictures and words cut out off old magazines and newspapers. Each group then presented and explained their collage to the larger group. The tone of both the groups' collages was positive, visionary, creative and healthy. Participants emphasised that they had a dream for the profession to change "ethically" and that there is no better time than now. Participants did acknowledge that this transition would be difficult, but not impossible. Moreover, this transition is essential in terms of building a profession that is sustainable and competitive. This would be achieved by "staying a step ahead of other professions ethically", valuing individual differences and balancing the needs of clients, society and stakeholders with the needs of the profession.

Design

The products (ethics architecture) of the design phase were:

1. The identification of the ethical values needed to fulfil the ethics vision for the profession (see Table 3).

Table 3: Ethical values for the industrial psychology profession

Ethical values needed to fulfill the vision	
1.	Accountability
2.	Diversity
3.	Integrity
4.	Professionalism
5.	Dignity
6.	Competence
7.	Trust
8.	Greater good
9.	Objectivity
10.	Respect

The ethical values presented in Table 4 are the aspects that participants believed to be essential in terms of enhancing the profession ethically. These values should also guide members of the profession when practising in the field.

2. The identification of how ethical values previously identified in Table 4 should be incorporated into a code of ethics and how this code could be structured.

Participants were of the opinion that a code of ethics should be developed with the purpose of creating a sustainable ethical culture within the profession and to inform professionals about their ethical responsibilities. The code may also be used to inform stakeholders about the profession's ethical obligations and serve as a mandate for members to act ethically. In addition, participants suggested that the code of ethics could comprise two documents. Whereas the first document may take the form of a oath/credo, which describes the profession's vision and values, the second document could perhaps provide ethical guidelines that not only promote ethical behaviour (i.e. developmental) but also aim to prevent unethical behaviour (i.e. corrective). Therefore the code can be a combination of rules-based and values-based formats.

It was further suggested that it may be beneficial for the profession to promote a positive and/or developmental outlook on ethics, further validating the philosophy of *positive ethics management*. By moving towards a code that is values-based and views ethics as an opportunity to be embraced and is developed and monitored via internal regulation (i.e. by members of the profession), a positive and/or developmental approach to ethics could be embraced. Lastly, the code could also emphasise "who we are as a profession and where we want to be," hence, the ethics vision for the profession of industrial psychology.

Destiny

In order to ensure action for real change participants were asked the following question: *Reflecting on our positive core, dreams, visual images and ethics architecture, how should we implement this vision?* The following strategies were proposed: (1) providing new industrial psychologists with an oath/credo as a visible symbol; (2) implementing management structures or systems (i.e. an ethics committee, role models, symbols); (3) providing ethics training on both professional and tertiary levels; (4) offering rewards for ethical behaviour, e.g. attendance of professional development initiatives; (5) incorporating a monitoring system; (6) communicating ethics through a help desk and reporting facility whereby industrial psychologists and stakeholders can engage on ethical challenges. Further strategies to institutionalise ethics were produced as (1) developing a sustainable values-based oath/credo; (2) revising and discussing the code annually, and (3) distribution of the code to members of the profession.

THE ETHICS VISION

On completion of the AI session, all data generated were analysed and incorporated into the ethics visions as seen in Figure 1. Participants' requested that the ethics vision be given the title *The art of being ethical – a commitment to ethics by industrial psychologists*. The key values, as identified by participants, namely accountability, diversity, integrity, professionalism, dignity, competence, trust, greater good, objectivity and respect combined with prominent themes informed the ethics vision.

THE ART OF BEING ETHICAL

Our Vision: Balancing organisational prosperity with human flourishing

A commitment to ethics by industrial psychologists

This commitment to ethics is about how we, as members of the unified profession of industrial psychology, strive towards balancing what is good for us with what is good for our primary stakeholders, which includes our clients, our colleagues as well as society. It is important that we value and respect their diversity and engage with them in both a professional and accountable manner with their best interests at heart. As scientist practitioners, we have an ethical obligation to be competent experts on human behaviour within the organisational context. As professionals, we are committed to continuously developing our skills as well as ourselves.

Industrial psychology is a profession whereby ethics is our foundation and the glue of our profession. Everything we do is centred on the greater good and concern for human well-being in the workplace. Ethics is the core of our professional being and it is thus our responsibility and duty to behave ethically. We aim to create a sustainable ethical culture within the profession of industrial psychology and as professionals we strive to be ethical role models.

Our ethical values

- Respect:*** We uphold the dignity of our stakeholders and treat them with respect and empathy.
- Integrity:*** We do the right thing fairly and consistently. We also stand up for what is wrong and do something about it.
- Accountability:*** We take responsibility for our decisions and ownership for our conduct.
- Diversity:*** We value and respect individual differences and encourage diversity within our profession.
- Trust:*** We strive to instill a sense of confidence in our stakeholders by being honest and by providing truthful information and feedback.
- Objectivity:*** We make decisions based on valid, reliable, unbiased information. Practice is evidence-based and we aim to avoid bias. All information is evaluated with a critical eye.

Figure 1: Ethics vision for the industrial psychology profession in South Africa

The vision highlighted industrial psychologist's commitment to the profession, stakeholders, society as well as to fellow colleagues. The tone of the vision is inspirational, healthy and optimistic. *Balancing organisational prosperity with human flourishing* was selected as the primary vision as it was the most dominant theme that emerged from the AI. Within the vision, participants highlighted the importance of not only being ethical and accountable but also the significance of self-development and growth. Participants' stated the need for members of the profession to continually update their knowledge and skills with regards to new developments within the field so that quality service can always be provided to stakeholders. Most importantly, participants highlighted the need to always practise with the greater good in mind and with stakeholders' best interests at heart.

Since industrial psychologists have a responsibility to both internal and external stakeholders as well as society, establishing an ethics vision proved essential. By envisioning a sustained ethics culture that is built and centred on a vision concerned with human need, dignity, respect and betterment of society, it is not only the credibility of the profession that may be enhanced, but potential distrust and ethical ambiguity in the profession could also be eliminated. Ultimately it will encourage trust, enhance the reputation of the profession and, most importantly, promote the highest ethical conduct.

LIMITATIONS

A number of limitations of the study were identified. Firstly, the ethics vision was developed by a small, albeit experienced group of industrial psychologists. It may at a later stage prove beneficial to conduct AI interventions with a larger group of industrial psychologists who may add to the vision. Secondly, newer members of the profession could have been included with the objective of uncovering 'fresh' ethics-related expectations. Thirdly, the ethics expectations of external stakeholders could have been polled.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Several recommendations were also identified. Once a final ethics vision has been established it cannot be used in isolation. The vision may need to be used in conjunction with an ethics code (also policy). Such a code may consist of two documents. The first document could be an ethics vision (also oath/credo) which is positive and inspirational. The second document will contain any ethical values that were identified and not included in the vision as well as ethical guidelines. The tone of this code

could be developmental and corrective. In addition to this code, it may be essential to include resources and references as a separate policy, so that when faced with ethical dilemmas, professionals know who to approach for assistance. Another document highlighting the procedures to follow should a professional witness unethical behavior could also be incorporated. In order to implement and inform other industrial psychologists and stakeholders about this code (also policy), it may be necessary to set up action groups, management structures and communications.

The creation of the ethics vision could be incorporated as a future goal or plan, highlighting where the profession would like to be ethically. This vision could be the platform that triggers such action plans. Another recommendation may be for the profession of industrial psychology in South Africa to incorporate applicable guidelines in future codes of ethics.

Lastly, several future research opportunities were also identified. AI could be used within similar settings as well as within other professions who have a goal of reifying a positive approach to change. A mixed *mode* approach could also be applied in future studies (i.e. incorporating AI with other research approaches within the qualitative paradigm, other than the focus group method, such as interviews and questionnaires). Or perhaps future researches could use a mixed *method* approach whereby AI is combined with an approach from the quantitative paradigm (i.e. surveys). It may also prove beneficial to identify the *effects* of embracing and viewing ethics as opportunity has on the profession of industrial psychology and potentially other professions.

CONCLUSION

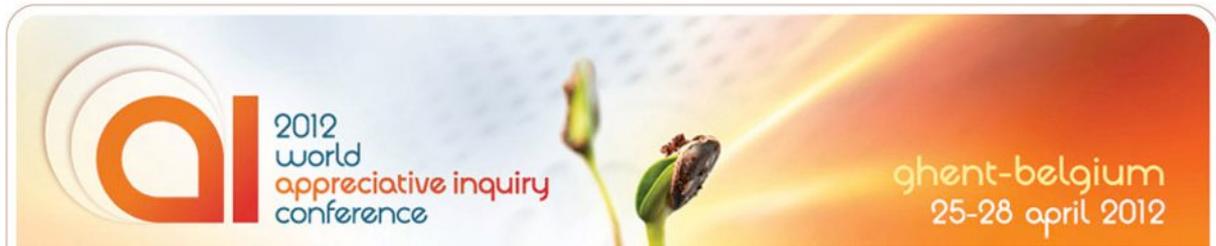
We learnt that AI can be applied as a collaborative, participative process to create an ethics vision for the profession of industrial psychology within South Africa. AI afforded participants an opportunity to share their perspectives and images of professional ethics with each other. By applying AI, it was also shown that an alternative way exists to approach professional ethics without having to view ethics as a negative risk that is typically managed through a compliance-based approach governed by rules and regulations. The alternative identified is an approach that views ethics as an opportunity to be embraced, is values-based, promotes highest ethical conduct, is visionary, inspirational and is developed and monitored via internal regulation. By adopting this alternative and thus focusing on the positive, ethics appeared as an opportunity and as a useful and powerful approach to initiate change.

The outcome of this research was an ethics vision that is positive, generative, inspiring and transformative. Such a vision could be the trigger for the creation of a sustainable ethical culture within the profession of industrial psychology in South Africa. Such an ethics vision might inspire action and cause a ripple effect in promoting the exemplary ethical conduct throughout the profession and its structures. It may also prompt members to behave ethically because they believe in ethics and want to be ethical, and not because ethics is enforced. In addition, a new approach within the positive organisational scholarship domain could be developed, namely *positive ethics management*, which views ethics from an appreciative stance and could thus assist professional associations and/or organisations in creating sustainable ethical cultures.

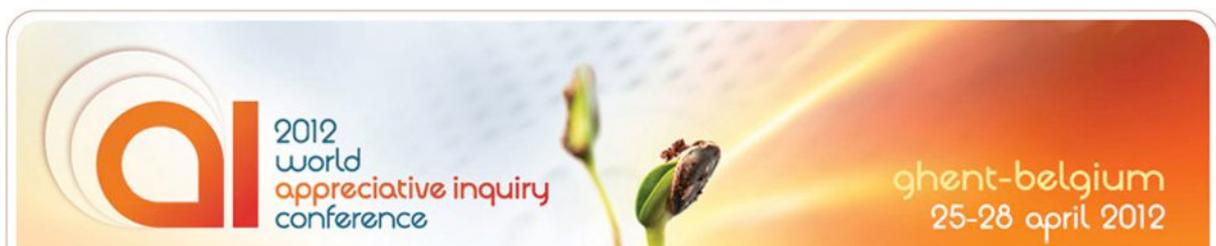
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Title

Scaling up the capacity of the consulting community to practice conversational approaches to development - emerging lessons from work-based appreciative inquiry.

Abstract

The need for the management consulting community to develop a conversational consulting approach is discussed and a definition suggested:

‘Conversational consulting is the practice of enabling contracted helping relationships through which people skilled and knowledgeable in conversation as a change process work with clients to create conversations that make a positive difference to businesses/organisations.’

The author describes and reflects upon the experience of leading a work-based practitioner research project incorporating Appreciative Inquiry which focussed on understanding and practicing conversational consulting in the context of a small group of management consultants in a UK consulting company.

This paper shares some early insights into both the value of the process as a development approach for management consultants and the emerging theory and practice of conversational consulting.

Introduction

As a leadership and organisational development consultant practicing primarily in the UK public services sector over the past 7 years I have observed a number of trends. Firstly, a growing interest on the part of clients in using approaches to change that can be broadly described as conversational in style. These include Appreciative Inquiry (AI), World Café, Open Space methodology and Circle conversations. I am not suggesting that the demand has been overwhelming and people no longer want to employ more traditional methods as a basis for their change programmes but there is willingness, even on the part of the most conservative, change averse clients to consider something different. Those I speak with often express varying levels of anxiety at using approaches that they perceive as relatively unproven. Clients need convincing that using conversational processes will not lead to

'chaos' and unmanageable consequences for the leadership of the organisations. Once taken through the practicalities and principles most clients will, albeit with caution, agree to proceed at least on a relatively small scale.

Secondly, a growing interest by my consulting colleagues in developing the skills and practices associated with what I call conversational consulting and define as 'the practice of enabling contracted helping relationships through which people skilled and knowledgeable in conversation as a change process work with clients to create conversations that make a positive difference to businesses/organisations'. Colleague's interest is often sparked by a client request to facilitate an AI process or a World Café on a particular topic.

There is a third trend that I think reflects subtle shifts in the thinking of Public Sector leaders as they come to recognise for themselves that the more conventional bureaucratic , top-down, leadership styles are neither going to deliver the rapid change they require nor the degree of employee and, particularly importantly for public services, community 'buy-in'. A recent conversation with a CEO of a large UK County Council (11,200 staff serving a population of 450,000) left me in no doubt that he saw shifts to a more conversational style in his own behaviour and that of his staff as vital if new ways of working collaboratively with the community in difficult economic times were to become a reality. He had an appreciation that such a style engenders co-creation of desired outcomes rather than simply the delivery of services that often simply fail to make the beneficial impact professionals imagine they might.

This style of conversational leadership has been described well in a landmark article by Thomas Hurley and Juanita Brown. They define it as 'the leader's intentional use of conversation as a core process to cultivate the collective intelligence needed to create business and social value' (Hurley & Brown, 2009 p.2). I have seen interest expressed in this approach to leadership across my coaching and OD client base as well as in my work with Masters students on a range of programmes. Explicit in this leadership model is the expectation that leaders will have the skills that enable them to, amongst other things, clarify strategic intent, explore critical issues and questions and skilfully use collaborative social technologies (conversational processes).

Now if this is the case and , as I am suggesting, conversational leadership and allied approaches like Appreciative Leadership (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, & Rader, 2010) become more popular , then those of us engaged in leadership development need to consider how best to enable leaders to develop these skills. Furthermore those of us involved in any form of organisational and system consulting will ourselves need the skills and mind-sets to enable conversational processes to become established and fruitful for our clients. This provokes in me a number of questions:

What can I do to develop my own practice as a consultant in a way that will support clients move to a conversational approach in their leadership and organisations?

What role can conversation play in a client-consultant relationship?

What can I and my colleagues do together that will enhance our conversational consulting practice?

It is this latter question that is the focus for this paper and for a sizeable part of my current doctoral research programme. I will outline a context in which a small group of colleagues and I collaboratively inquired into this question and share with you the learning that is emerging about how consulting can shift towards a conversational approach. I will offer some reflections on the methods we used in the process and how these may, in themselves, contribute to personal and collective changes in practice.

Context

Self as a Practitioner Researcher

I have a passion for developing and practicing a new model of consulting that connects with the needs and context of the current time and in particular the challenges facing management consultants to demonstrate both their value and effectiveness.

I have practiced conversational consulting in the context of a small/medium size London based consulting firm since 2005 (OPM: www.opm.co.uk). Alongside my practice I have pursued my inquiry into conversational consulting by engaging in a Professional Studies work based Doctoral Programme facilitated by the Institute of Work-Based Learning at Middlesex University. My research title is:

A multi-method practitioner research project to develop a framework for conversational consulting through personal and collaborative inquiry and practice.

Colleagues as co-researchers

In the late autumn of 2010 I sent out invitations to all consulting staff at OPM (Approximately 60 staff at that time) to join me in what I described as the OPM Co-operative Inquiry Research Group. Nine people expressed an interest and attended a preliminary meeting. Subsequently five became committed to a research process that has lasted until the spring of this year. All but one belonged to the people and organisational development group within the organisation and had consulting experience ranging across leadership, management and organisational development.

When asked what brought them to the inquiry their responses can be categorised as follows:

- Finding a structured space to explore questions arising from practice
- Understanding conversation and the role it can play in organisational life
- Safety amongst peers to express and work through frustrations

- To learn about inquiry
- Engage in reflective practice

Each made a comment about the possibility of creating a space that was not available in the organisation. At least one member talked about the merits of existing arrangements for coaching supervision and how they felt they would benefit from a form of peer supervision which they perceived the group might offer.

I experienced the group as having a positive appreciative spirit with a desire to learn from and with one another. Our meetings were characterised by mutual respect, honesty, openness and also a fair amount of humour.

Researching together as a catalyst for company-wide change

In presenting my original research proposal to the Board of Directors of OPM in early 2009 I suggested that the research also had the potential to be of commercial value to the company.

Specifically I argued that the research offered OPM and its clients:

- Higher levels of innovation in our organisational consulting work when compared with competitors, a number of whom are adopting a range of conversational approaches including Appreciative Inquiry
- New approaches to *how* the way a consultant works rather than *what* knowledge and experience they bring. This modelling of different behaviours will support clients and consultants understand in greater depth the behaviours and skills they need to work conversationally.
- Doctorate level research that underpins the company's consulting practice and methods.

My reflection is that anchoring the research process and potential outcomes in the business concerns of the company was important for a number of reasons:

- I was given formal permission to convene a research group of colleagues.
- Implicit was permission to use some of my time (in reality the companies time!) for that purpose.
- Colleagues felt similarly that they could justify attending research meetings because the company had given permission.
- The Company could see how my research was not a distraction but grounded in real life challenges and that there was the potential for business benefit.
- I also received a full years funding for my university fees on the back of my bid!

In essence the research became something larger than just my own passion and the interests of my colleagues. It had a degree of ownership amongst the wider community of the company in which we were located. There were other people now engaged in the conversation about conversational consulting.

Research paradigms and methods

Given that inquiry and generativity are, from an AI perspective, activities that are inextricably tied together I think it important to explore the choices I made about inquiry methods and tease out how I perceive these made a difference to emerging outcomes.

A researcher is often asked to explain their ontological perspective, which is their view about existence and the nature of things. Essentially I am drawn to a conversational ontological perspective in which I see conversation as fundamental to my and our collective sense of being in this world. I define conversation as:

“A human experience between two or more people which, by the expression of thoughts and feelings, results in the creation of new ideas, perspectives and understandings.”

I think of life as an on-going conversation. I sometimes talk to others about conversation being a metaphor for life itself. As we are in conversation we have a sense of who we are in relation to the world and we also open ourselves up to change our perspectives. I am also convinced of the social constructionist perspective that suggests what we talk about is what we experience. Our reality is co-constructed with one another and I understand conversation as one means by which this happens.

My study therefore of what it means to be human has taken me to conversation as a significant dimension of my personal ontological stance. This in turn influenced the research paradigm I have chosen.

Guba and Lincoln define a paradigm as:

“A set of basic beliefs that deals with ultimates or first principles. It represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the “world” the individuals place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts as, for example cosmologies and theologies do.” (Guba and Lincoln, 1994 p.107)

They go on to helpfully state that an inquiry paradigm defines for inquirers what it is they are about and what falls within and outside of legitimate inquiry.

Given that my stated research topic is a multi-method practitioner research project to develop a framework for conversational consulting through personal and collaborative inquiry and practice I am immediately drawn to their constructivism inquiry paradigm where:

“Realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or group holding the constructions”. (p.110).

Guba et al go on to suggest that the type of methods chosen within this paradigm are likely to enable social constructions to emerge as the researcher and the researched interact together to elicit and refine the constructs.

A blended set of methods-finding a conversational approach

It occurred to me at the outset of my research that not only could I develop a conversational paradigm in which to frame my work but that there would be plenty of opportunities to use methods that relied on conversation as a core research process. So when working with others I deliberately sought out ways in which conversation itself could figure prominently. I was drawn in the first instance to Co-operative Inquiry. This is an approach I first used in my Masters research where I worked with colleagues in a healthcare setting to inquire into the role of conversation in the workplace (Cantore , 2004).

A neat definition is provided by its’ original developer John Heron:

‘Co-operative inquiry involves two or more people researching a topic through their own experience of it, using a series of cycles in which they move between this experience and reflecting together on it. Each person is co-subject in the experience phases and co-researcher in the reflection phases.’ (Heron, 1996 p.1)

Practically there are four phases to a Co-operative Inquiry:

Phase 1

Co-researchers meet to talk about interests and concerns, agree the focus of the inquiry and develop a set of questions to explore. They agree to undertake some action. Procedures are agreed by which they will observe and record their own and each other’s experiences.

Phase 2

The group apply their agree actions to their everyday life and work. They initiate their actions and record the outcomes of their own and each other’s behaviour. They may simply watch to see what happens and develop a better understanding of their experience.

Phase 3

This is described as the “touchstone” of the inquiry method. At this point co-researchers become fully immersed in their experience. They become more open to what is going on and they may begin to see their experience in new ways. They may find themselves exploring new insights and they may become so absorbed that they lose awareness that

they are part of an inquiry group. It is in this phase that new practical skills or understandings may emerge for the researcher.

Phase 4

Co-researchers come together to consider their original questions in the light of their experience. As a result they may change their questions, reject them and pose new ones. They may choose to change the focus of their original inquiry and the group may choose to change its inquiry procedures—the forms of action and ways of gathering data—in the light of experience of the first cycle.

The group then starts and completes a number of cycles. Results are collated and distribution agreed at points in the process agreed by the group.

Whilst I confess an attraction to the rationality and sequencing of this, in many respects quite positivistic process, what attracted me even more in the first place are the twin underpinning values that Peter Reason, a collaborator with John Heron, draws attention to namely:

- 'The commitment to offer democratic and emancipatory approaches to inquiry with the aim of helping ordinary regain their capacity to create their own knowledge.
- To contribute to a complete revision of the western mind-set-to add impetus to the movement away from a modernist worldview based on a positivistic philosophy and a value system dominated by crude notions of economic progress towards an emerging postmodern worldview' (Reason, 1999).

For me however, Co-operative Inquiry is not sufficiently radical in its epistemological stance. True, it does incorporate experiential 'knowing' in its method that is 'knowing' through face-face contact with a person, place or thing. That gets closer, but for me not close enough, to the relational or conversational creation of shared meaning espoused by Appreciative Inquiry and its underpinning social constructionist philosophy. Other forms of 'knowing' in Co-operative Inquiry include the Presentational, expressing knowledge through story or drawing etc., the Propositional, knowing expressed in statements about theories and ideas and the Practical, knowing expressed as a demonstration of a skill or competence. All of which have merit but also buy into the notion, which I question, that the individual is ultimately the basis and definer of what is 'knowing' rather than the collective.

I like the way Heron later describes Co-operative Inquiry 'as one approach within a whole family of approaches to inquiry which are participative, experiential, emancipatory and action-oriented (p.223).' Appreciative Inquiry is for me a part of this family and adds an important contribution to a Co-operative Inquiry approach through its focus on the generative capacity of action research like this to bring together theory and practice and focus on what gives us life (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987). At the same time I think AI

begins to empower us to begin to walk away from a modernistic problem orientated research mind-set that has dominated Western culture for generations.

Research Process

My original invitation went out to colleagues in the autumn of 2010. It was explicitly to engage in a Co-operative Inquiry process around the topic of 'Conversational Consulting'. I left it deliberately broad at this stage, both to attract colleagues and also to give scope for all of us to co-design the research topic and process. Six people including myself committed to the research and between February 2011 and February 2012 we met formally six times.

The meetings were held in a room in the company offices. Because of demands of busy consulting schedules it was rarely possible for all of us to meet at the same time. Group size therefore tended to vary between 4 and 5 at each meeting which would generally last two hours with a couple scheduled for three.

People in this group all knew one another through working as part of the same consulting team and from time to time working together on the same projects. The spirit between us was friendly and collegiate. At the start of the process people emphasised their commitment to the development of their consulting practice and to a greater or lesser extent their own personal development. None had previously been involved in a Co-operative Inquiry.

The joy and challenge of Co-operative Inquiry is, for me, found in its emancipatory ethos. My colleagues, all experienced and creative independent thinking consultants, also perceived this immediately and so crafted for themselves a recipe for inquiry that worked for them as individuals and collectively. Heron welcomes this, but only to an extent. He speaks of research decisions about method taking place in the reflection phase as well as the need to pay explicit attention to the 'procedures' to assure validity of the inquiry and the findings (p. 21). These sequential steps reflect some of the more positivistic aspects of the method and needed to be held in creative tension with my overarching conversational paradigm that views the conversations within research as, in themselves, creating the change in practice.

A key research aim was to support the collectively desired shift in consultants' behaviour away from a sequential diagnostic mind-set in consultant/client relationships and towards a more 'in the moment' conversational practice. It was never purely intended to be a research report recommending change for others. It was always about the messy complexity of real-time change. This means that 'knowing' and 'findings' consequently become less important than changed consultant/client relationships. This research can therefore perhaps be legitimately re-framed as a Co-operative or Relational development process using Inquiry (both Co-operative and Appreciative) as the relational space to enable this. That is not to say there are no findings to report. It's a paradox to be held because whilst conversations

change us, the experience of change and inquiry create multiple reflective narratives that we can label 'findings' or perhaps more accurately 'a-ha moments' of insight.

The fact that the inquiry had also become a relational development process could be observed in structure of our meetings. Each one was different although we always began with a 'check-in' opportunity and a final few minutes for 'check-out comments. Even this varied between meetings so sometimes 'check-in' could extend to 45 minutes or simply be a couple of minutes. As initiating researcher I would prepare in advance an outline agenda which could include an AI or Co-operative Inquiry process, pair's conversations, circle reflections on research experiences and findings and time for individual reflection. Re-design of the agenda by co-researchers at each meeting became a familiar pattern!

Participant's perspectives

I conclude that the emancipatory values underpinning both types of Inquiry came into play enabling people to take full ownership of the space for their own benefit.

This is reflected in some of their comments (*with my reflections in brackets*):

'The check-in we do is often as important as the rest of the session even if it takes 45 minutes' (*an opportunity to storytell and share something personal*).

'It's about staying in the body and what am I experiencing right now—right now I feel quite rested but also some anxiety about the avalanche that is awaiting on coming back in—there is a proposal—I can feel the waves of anxiety crashes and just trying to hold my boundary a bit feel it pulsating on the page so how in re-entering into the work here can I stay in that centred place and that whole thing about staying connected...—so that's where I am –it feels very palpable at the moment' (*a space to become personally centred*).

'I sort of feel similar on Sunday when I got the email I was feeling overwhelmed by work and I know you were just coming back from holiday—I was feeling quite actually guilty about whether or not I should come. I don't feel like I am having to leave all the stuff behind because I think what we are going to talk about are going to help me carry some of my work forward' (*The group as a mechanism to support individuals handle the stresses of consulting*).

'I am missing you lot' (*A space that helps satisfies the need for connection and relationship*).

These comments point to the possibility that far from being solely an inquiry process the group offers a relational process. So whilst Heron et al and indeed AI and conversational approaches might want to almost coerce people into inquiry and talking about the apparently significant generative questions what may actually matter to people when they meet in these environments is potentially altogether different.

What if we stopped to ask people what they *really* wanted and if we did that what would happen?

This created significant challenges for me as initiating researcher. I had one primary motivating agenda and colleagues inevitably had theirs.

Emerging insights

The material upon which these observations and reflections are based is largely drawn from verbatim records of group meetings and where indicated, the views of co-inquirers.

Context

- Context matters! In this instance all researchers were drawn from an organisation that sees development of people and organisations as integral to its core purpose. Furthermore it shares with the UK Public Sector a set of values around outcomes, improvement and good use of resources.
- Support from the organisation, albeit very rarely explicitly verbalised, was very helpful in helping people make the decision to join the research group and to continue to spend time in the process. The provision of a quality meeting room and opportunities to talk about our work were valuable in creating a sense that our work mattered and was practically very useful.
- For some researchers the difficult economic and political environment prompted them to use the research space to vent their feelings. I think it also encouraged them to consider how they might improve their impact by adopting new approaches to consulting.
- The concerns of clients and the empathy some researchers felt for them were never far from the inquiry. Examples of their struggles and difficulties were often recounted followed by questions about how the consultant could make a difference.
- For one researcher there were always niggling questions about the legitimacy of spending time in the group. Maybe this was about the worthwhileness of the work but I sense it was more about whether or not colleagues and managers in the organisation perceived it to be a good use of time when time was short and there were pressing commercial reasons why time might be spent in other more immediately 'productive' ways.
- There are people outside of such a research group who have a vested interest in what happens within it. That may be a commercial interest in how it will benefit the order books for the company or, how it might have an impact on their own practice.
- All those in the group had pre-existing cordial relationships and had worked together on consulting projects within the company.

Process

- Co-operative Inquiry I think served its purpose as a starting point for convening a research process. What emerged was the groups own unique process. Given that I, as initiating researcher, am constantly looking through a conversational lens, I perceive the process as having become a conversational one. This reflects my experience in my previous Masters research project on the role of conversation in the work place (Cantore, 2004).
- The identification of research questions for individual researchers was always a struggle.
- Description of events was for the group often as important as reflection and sense making.
- The practice of conversational consulting occupied as much, if not more space in the conversations than any discussion about the theory of conversation or conversational consulting.
- Weaving an AI approach into the group meetings gave the meetings a positive feel and I think the expectation that change, for the client and the consultant, is possible. It also gave a sense of momentum, of moving forward.
- The tension between the role of the initiating researcher, myself and co-researchers never resolved nor was the group happy to give space to working it through. There was always the sense that I was the lead researcher—at least that is how it felt from my perspective.
- The sequential Phases set out by Heron in his description rarely seemed to take place in sequence.
- On reflection I think all those involved whilst having a shared interest in an emerging set of ideas/constructs also had their own reasons for being present. The literature around this type of inquiry tends to imply a whole-hearted and unified spirit amongst co-researchers. That may be an ideal but not a reality in practice. This also has implications for the learning contract that exist for an individual with themselves and then with fellow group members. Contracting for learning and for conversation is an area worth exploring further.

Conversational consulting insights

The following are some participant's insights about their practice of conversational consulting which emerged from a concluding AI group process in February 2012 (*with my reflections*):

- I can be more authentically me, humanist and compassionate etc. *(The approach offers the chance for the consultant to more effectively live out their values with clients).*
- Conscious of encouraging good conversations between people *(personal intention and focus on the quality of conversations).*
- But how do we help people take it to the 'so what' place? *(Uncertainty about the role of conversation in the change process and the consultants own role in that).*
- Taking time to think to frame good questions *(a different pace of consulting with a different focus).*
- I contract with the client in a different way—I'm here to help you explore what you need to explore *(A different quality to the client/consultant relationship).*
- Cc (Conversational consulting) enables facets of me to get engaged—emotions-values-strong sense of being rather than doing. This is about being while the other consulting is doing *(Noticeably higher levels of engagement in specific areas of personality).*
- Cc does not necessarily lead to 'action'—it may be understanding which seems not such a high priority for clients *(Uncertainty about the perceived value of this approach by clients).*
- Cc involves contracting to bring out the barriers to a conversation and conversation is to have an impact on me—opening up myself to the client in this way is new to me—potentially risky—relinquishing control but not becoming an empty vessel—but with some control—there is strong control about the questions and a process—control about inputting your expertise—the wisdom you bring *(Some fear and anxiety about working in this way).*
- Many people want the detail and 'definites' about conversation *(The need to be specific with clients about what Cc will be in practice for them).*
- Cc could be learning consulting --we overlap with people and the powerful question acts as catalyst for learning—conversation is a vehicle for learning. So we can bring something—we can bring our learning energy—the extent to which we nurture our learning energy we can help build the learning energy in others. *(Do consultants understand themselves as learning facilitators and what role might conversation play in the process?).*
- Constant self-awareness and encourage client to have deeper self-awareness—it would take us to a different level personally organisationally and system. We would talk with one another with more care *(How might this happen and what would it look and feel like?).*
- Cc-equality of power. Making some things about what gets in the way of equality overt—being open *(the approach changes, or has the potential to change the perceived power dynamics between consultant and client).*
- To welcome learning and inquiry as a way of life—it is a practice and will create its own energy *(The need for the consultant to consider the way they think about*

their practice and indeed their attitude to life. There is holistic, whole person dimension to Conversational Consulting).

- This space has been qualitative different—a recent pitch we went to was very different from what it might have been before—it is these spaces that build confidence and resolution—there is no other space with the intensity that is here—the learning that goes on between us is not unconnected to what goes on with the client—the reality is that if there is a learning dynamic between us as consultants then that is in the system as we connect with clients—if there is energy going on we are sharing that energy with clients (*The inquiry does not solely impact on those participating in it but connects with clients directly – perhaps consulting as inquiry and learning?*).

What difference, if any, to your practice as a consultant has being part of this inquiry group made? :

“I have found the Co-operative Inquiry group exploring what conversational consulting might mean for enhancing our consultancy practice an immensely enriching experience. It provided an opportunity to engage with the topic of conversational consulting and my practice from where I was and what my questions were about my practice and about conversational consulting, just as it did for others in the group. We were at different places with both reflective practice and understanding of conversational consulting, but united in wanting to explore how we might develop our practice in ways that embraces conversations, deep conversations, which can lead to change and improved effectiveness of individuals, groups and organisations.

I found the experience of working together and with a focus on our individual questions and evolving questions (whilst also holding our group inquiry /question lightly) an incredibly inclusive process as well as a powerful way to learn and contribute to each other’s thinking. Not only are you learning to answer your questions and or asking new ones, you are also as a group seeking deeper collective understanding of the inquiry topic.

More profoundly for me, it has felt like I am finding myself, understanding what values, beliefs, perspectives on subject content and unique contribution I can make to facilitating and holding conversations and in my conversational consulting role. The experience has also made me want to integrate the approach of encouraging others to learn and contribute to topics, inquiries, challenges and problems by identifying what their questions are rather than focussing on finding the solution.

I am committed to trying this methodology in our leadership development work and would also like to see this approach to conversations based on our questions and curiosities adopted in our organisation to help us all make our best contribution and come up with more interesting propositions and solutions.”

Munira, March 2012

- My ability to conduct structured reflection both personally and with others has improved significantly
- My understanding of conversational consulting as a concept and in practice
- My appreciation of other consultants' anxieties and uncertainties has been very helpful at a time when I was questioning my ability as a consultant and uncertain of my skills in helping others learn and develop
- An insight into the ability of the group to deal with the issues in the work place, the sensitivities of hierarchy in a way that equalised the group and made contributions from all valued.

Bob, March 2012

Concluding reflections

What is emerging is a rich picture of learning and development for all participants. The combination of an encouraging organisational context and an emancipatory values based blended research process which apparently resonated with colleagues has led to deep personal and professional insights. Missing from the picture in this paper is my personal development narrative which is no less significant.

Conversational consulting is developing as a multi-dimensional practice and discipline grounded in inquiry and a conversational epistemology. As we converse and inquire with ourselves, our clients, our colleagues and our systems so our collective and individual futures become a reality.

What generative question am I holding at this point in time?

What can I/we learn from the good that has emerged from this research so far that will enable me/us to grow in our practice of conversational consulting into the future?

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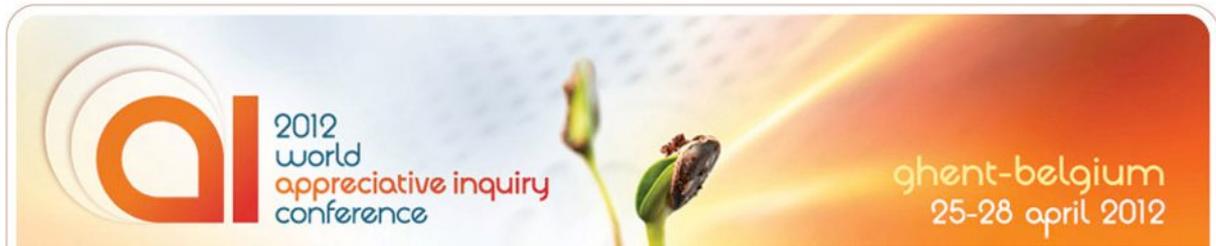
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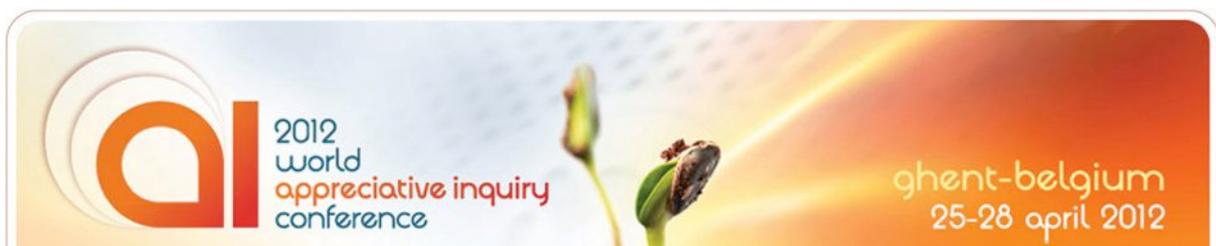
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Stefan Cantore

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Sustainable Change is Being in Relation

Based on the experiences of the *I Believe in You!* process in Suriname 2007-2009

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From 2007 until 2009 I worked as an educational specialist in the Republic of Suriname, South America where I was involved in the design of the new long-term reform program for Primary Education, PROGRESS 2008-2015 (the **PROGR**am for **Effective Schools in Suriname**). During this period I developed the idea that this integrated long term program would be more powerful if we based it on Suriname's own best vision of education. We wanted to create a Surinamese publication in a way people would identify with, and we wanted them to be proud of it. We organized a positive participative change process based on the ideas of Appreciative Inquiry throughout the whole country, from the main city into the interior. In May 2009, two years later, we proudly presented this desirable vision in the book entitled *I Believe in You!* During these two years, our little group of three initiators increased to more than 400 local participants, varying from teachers, students, and school leaders to fifteen key persons in the Surinamese society and 'ordinary people' such as market women, police officers, farmers and village captains. This article briefly outlines the change process and the impact it had on the educational reform processes in Suriname.



We established a process which would involve as many people as possible from all sections of society. So, instead of having views developed by so-called experts and using a detailed plan, we plucked up courage to go on an expedition full of challenges involving the Surinamese people as experts to attain this goal. We did not work from a detailed plan in which every step to be taken had been designed from the beginning to the end. We knew our goals, we had ideas about our approach and we knew the first step, not always knowing what the next steps would be. I experienced this as a wonderful adventure that suited my pioneer spirit.

At one stage in the process, we trained ten facilitators in the ideas of AI. Spread out over the country, they helped to reach into all the corners of Suriname, from the main city to the little jungle villages, as well as into more remote cities along the coastal region. The elements of AI focused on issues such as appreciating every one's voice to contribute to the best outcome; generating participation; envisioning attractive futures; emphasizing and coordinating the strengths, abilities and passions of all participants in this process. These have been important aspects of the *I Believe in You!* process. Our appreciative stance towards each other helped us to

discuss problems and situations in constructive ways.

In the process, I experienced the enormous power of constructing images of our future realities. This possibility shift, of future dreams, invited participants to learn how

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An interesting aspect of this process is that, in the end, all participants became key persons and started to use their own networks to strengthen the process in positive ways.

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better to improvise and imagine new ways of going on together. What happened within the conversations was that, suddenly, people didn't talk about the enormous problems within Suriname education, and this decreased the negativism in meetings. It was as if we had opened a window to fresh air, to breathe again. The mutual goal, to construct together the best future vision for primary education, was an important focus to put people into relation. The positive dream of better education bonded people together. It collectively activated positive feelings and hopeful dreams, for example, when we remembered dreams we all had had in our lives. Sharing this with others was almost like a party. The facilitators of the workshops stimulated dialogical and collaborative practices.

By inviting fifteen key persons from civil society to talk about their dreams and hopes for Suriname's education, we emphasized the local positive values. Again, the AI approach was very in guiding these interviews. The idea was to research local knowledge about positive approaches to students. We wanted to identify those key persons who had already shown positive and constructive contributions to society in their private and working lives. In

Appreciative Inquiry, looking for dreams and positive experiences

The idea was that, in spite of the inadequacies of the Surinamese educational system, everyone has had some positive experiences in their lives. I was convinced that focusing on the positive aspects would energize people to look at their own context in a more positive way. I knew that opting for chances and possibilities would change the usual vocabulary used in the community from one of hopelessness to a hopeful one. It is for this reason that I chose the Appreciative Inquiry philosophy as a leitmotiv for the whole process. We worked simultaneously at all levels within the system.

their stories, we hoped to find positive values which could be useful for our publication. This helped to create a broad base of participation within society. An interesting aspect of this process is that in the end all participants became key persons and started to use their own networks to strengthen the process in positive ways. These expanding positive networks strengthened this change process.

Sustainable Change is Being in Relation

My Ph.D research made clear to me that *being in relation* with the other and the otherness was a leitmotiv and a crucial foundation for establishing sustainable change in this particular process. We see issues as relational responsibility, using existing networks, identifying key persons, co-creation of meaning, relational reflexive critique, participative change work, collaborative and dialogical approaches, ongoing communication, expanding the domain of participation, coordinating multiplicity and so on. They all directed us to important aspects of the change process: *being in relation* and *coordinate joint actions*, to get us there.

The research deepened my understanding of what is meant by *being in relation*. Studying social constructionism has shown me that *being in relation* or *putting people in relation* must be seen from the philosophical stance, which goes to deeper levels than skills or techniques. It is the paradigm shift of going from the individualistic towards the relational orientation. It means becoming fully aware that we are always part of the reality we meet.

It became clear also, from my literature review, that the individualistic orientation has not brought us far enough to establish sustainable successful reform in our schools. The relational dimension in the educational change processes has been missed for many years and it is just recently that we are becoming more aware of this.

Trust, confidence, openness, participation, commitment, pride, new knowledge, meaning and so on are all by-products coming out of this process of *being in relation* in appreciative ways. I am convinced that when we continuously invest, we are able to change in more successful ways.



Appreciation working from the appreciative stance

Building bridges connecting with the other and the otherness, connecting with reality

Collaborative practices working together based on the collaborative stance

Dialogical practices talking together based on the dialogical stance



Change as an unfolding story

Change processes - learning can be seen as a change process - are seen from the constructionist eye to be unpredictable, uncontrollable, and unable to be planned. This is why *the I Believe In You! process* is a good example to illustrate this. The construction of this process must be seen as an unfolding and evolving journey. We need to focus more *within* the process rather than just focusing on the beginning or the end of the process. Improvisational art and flexibility are necessary to guide the process. They will help us to be better aware of what is really going on and to intervene in the moment directly. As a coordinator or leader, it means acting like a chameleon and changing colors where needed. It means that in doing so one can adapt, fine-tune or match actions to the moment. The analysis of the Suriname process shows the richness of the many unexpected, unforeseen moments when participants came in with their ideas and unexpected knowledge - giving space for this strengthened the process a lot and made the process a little bit easier.

The I Believe In You! process could follow its natural path by being in the moment and letting the process of change unfold. Using participants' ideas strengthens the change process simply because of the fact that

their expertise is necessary for meeting our future and achieving our success. By this, relational responsibility can grow and by this we all become producers of change. Everyone is valuable in whatever role or position they hold in the process. In my research I identified four important features which strengthened the change process greatly.

Appreciation

Using the ideas of Appreciative Inquiry, which are built on social constructionist thought, has been a crucial red thread. Emphasizing possibilities and positive values has generated powerful energy. Within this change process it means that the problem language has been shifting towards possibility language. Centering these language practices in what people do together in certain situations has had significant meaning for what they have been constructing). In *the I Believe In You! process* it meant that language practices were slowly changing into practices in which people started to talk about hope, possibilities, chances, strengths, enthusiasm, happiness - a reality of possibility was constructed. By working from the AI thought the process became an inclusive one for all, one which engaged all parties in co-constructing the wished for, positive future.



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Change processes can be seen as a cluster of actions of people doing things together. In doing things together, we are in relation with each other and the experienced reality. When we are in relation in appreciative ways, by-products like connectedness, trust, confidence, pride, enthusiasm and solidarity result. In the Suriname project, people moved in the process from thinking *I* to thinking *we*. One

of the many examples of this was the moment when I heard people talking about *our book*. In using this appreciative stance as a leitmotiv, people felt seen and appreciated all over the country instead of just in the main city Paramaribo. When the book was published, the process continued on, based on a strong foundation.

The positive stance helped to discuss and to solve problems together.

B

uilding bridges

From the appreciative stance, seeing differences as possibilities rather than problems helps us to build bridges, to connect with the other(s). In doing so, one of the by-products is a sense of future which is not experienced as threatening. Building bridges must be seen as a verb; we need to be constantly active in building and maintaining these bridges. Too often people think that this happens automatically. Maintenance often happens too late when these bridges collapse and we are asked as consultants or advisors to fix them. Looking back at the process, some issues helped to build these bridges. In the analysis we find: identifying key persons, seeing them as bridging persons, using existing networks, expanding the domain of participation, and relational responsibility. Using existing networks of participants has been an interesting feature. By using the networks, we could employ local knowledge and expertise to direct the change process *together*, in the wished-for direction. The identified key-persons within society, specifically in the educational field (such as the gallery keeper, the ministers' advisor, the facilitators, the fifteen interviewees, the head of the department of school radio and television and so on), were important in these networks. I like to call these key persons the bridging persons. These networks broadened our working field of influence. When we built these bridges we had to deal with the existing hierarchy within the Suriname's communities. The challenge was how to build good relationships with the key persons within this hierarchy. They were part of reality, we could not deny this, but again it depended on *HOW* we did things together with them which decided what kinds of relationships were built.

This leadership was dynamic and changeable depending on where we were,

with whom we were and what was needed in the joint action with others. Again, it is my experience that when we were in relation with each other throughout the appreciative stance, the gap between formal and informal knowledge became smaller. Having multiple sources of knowledge in this way, instead of just formal and often one-sided knowledge, helped to direct and match the process to the moment in better ways.

This participative change work constructed power with and to, instead of power over, realities. Within the generative change it became clear to me that all participants should be given the opportunity to be the producers of change. When we transfer this to educational reform it illustrates the urgent need to make students and teachers these kinds of producers within their school systems.

During the process, the domain of participation expanded. Some important issues to expand were: people feeling appreciated as important and valuable to the process, and inviting a broad selection of people all over the country to co-produce the process. They were not only the consumers, but were offered opportunities to be producers. Differences were appreciated, valued and used. Better understandings and giving space to multiplicity and participation contributed to sustainable change. Gergen (2003) says the existence of multiplicity and difference may in fact be our best strategy for sustaining the human project.

Focusing on the desired future encouraged people to improvise and imagine new ways of proceeding, and getting along together. Stories of value, wonderment and joy coming out of the AI approach were valuable resources to connect with one and the other. Using these stories touched people in many ways and supported their commitment to the process and its outcome. Looking for opportunities and possibilities seemed to erase boundaries and opened doors to build bridges. Dialogical and collaborative approaches helped to break down walls and to make people open to each other. The shared positive dream arising from many activities bonded people together.

By working at all levels, we showed that everyone was important and that we all are interdependent and interconnected to each other. Here, the relational orientation strongly emerged. The more we appreciated everybody's knowledge, the more

trust, confidence and support came out of it and with this we could achieve the best outcome. Above all, by this we could strengthen the relationships. Our *doing* or *making* together became better. It was this process that needed to be fed and to be modified continuously. It was a process of growing awareness which was achieved by using the collaborative and dialogical approaches.

We need to invest in maintaining these bridges, from the beginning to the end of the process; it even goes on afterwards, and this was what made the change process sustainable.

C

ollaborative practices

Change processes occur in many situations where people are doing things together. These performances require the relational other. *How* we do things together determines highly the impact of what we will achieve. Collaborative practices have this extra dimension when we approach them from the relational view. Here, London, St George & Wulf (2009, p. 1) experience collaboration as a life style and see it as a deliberate and purposeful way of relating which is simultaneously flexible and responsive to others. Again, it is the appreciative stance which invites others to contribute and participate in their own ways, without judging who should contribute what and to what level. Andersen (2008) speaks in her work about the collaborative relationships in which we connect, collaborate and construct with each other.

Producing shared meaning

The collaborative stance produced a growing, shared meaning. When people started to share their hopes and dreams in collaborative practices, new possibilities were built for further progress together. It was an energizing and motivating experience for all. Their ideas became new actions, new steps in the change process. Boundaries between knowing and influencing were blurred. Expanding relationships increased the motivation for co-creation. By collaborating to produce new knowledge in forms of ideas or answers, it was found that new interventions could be taken. It was like tapping into

the others' expertise. (Geertz, 1983) The not-knowing stance of the coordination group gave openness for others to help to find answers, which strengthened their commitment. This must be seen as intervention.

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**All who are in the process
must be able to give
meaning to what they do, in
being active producers of
change.**

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This matches one of Fullan's ideas (1991, 2003, 2005), that all who are in the process must be able to give meaning to what they do, in being active producers of change. These extra dimensions helped to better connect to the other. Shotter (1984) expressed in his work that we need to be open to be touched by the otherness of others and the otherness around them. These performances seem to fill this need.

Collaborative practices must not be seen as techniques, but should be understood as a philosophical stance. Thus it becomes a way of *being*. (Anderson, 2003, 2010). This stance encourages others to contribute and participate in equal and appreciative ways. With this belief, connecting and constructing with others leads to more authentic natural performances, not just techniques used (Anderson, 2008, p. 6). This way, we create collaborative relationships. Positive interdependence and the characteristic of promotive interaction (Johnson & Johnson, 1998) intensified the relationships in *the I Believe In You! process*.

What further helped to intensify the relationships in *the I Believe In You! process* was mutual agreement about the purpose of collaboration: what we wanted to achieve together, mutual expectations about outcome and process. Dian Hosking (2006) refers to the importance of multiple yet equal voices as an essential feature of the collaborative practices. We have seen in *the I Believe In You! process* that this aspect also strengthened the change process.

In the collaborative practices, such as the workshops and the different meetings,

hospitality created an unconditional welcome to the other, which positively supported these relational activities (Westmoreland, 2008). From this, an active engagement, in forms of willingness to support, to stay in contact or to stay related, appeared. This active engagement led us to shared ownership and a sense of shared belonging (Anderson 2008).

D dialogical practices

The analysis shows that communication, and therefore dialogical practices as a way of communicating, has been another important feature in generating sustainable change. During the whole process in Suriname, all kinds of communication took place. Communication can be seen as a way of people doing something together (McNamee, 2008a). Like the collaborative practices, dialogical practices have many forms. By influencing each other we generate new meaning or knowledge. This is exactly where I think dialogical practices showed their strengths in the change process. Co-creating of meaning and co-constructing of new understandings, co-creating of common sense, and where the constructionist literature speaks of co-creating something new, which we call transformation. The work of Otto Shamer (2010) has shown interesting ideas of going to this deeper level of *being in relation*, the level of generative dialogues, which generates the power for co-creation from the new paradigm of the relational orientation, shifting the social fields we are used to living in.

By the use of safety and openness, which are characteristic of dialogical practices, self reflexive and relational reflexive critiques were given voice. This helped us to understand and to appreciate differences in better ways. Knowledge coming out of these activities helped us to fine-tune and modify the process.

Relational reflexivity is seen, from the constructionist standpoint, by *being in relation*, and not as just happening in people's individual minds. Appreciating the differences didn't mean that we needed to agree with the other, but it meant that we carefully listened to and questioned the other's experienced reality. In the end, this all strengthened the relationship with the other, and through this it contributed to the processes of change which we all were part of.

Dialogical practices are ways to appreciate the many different voices, to make each voice as important as the others, and to commit or relate participants to the change process. The constructionist stance makes people feel included and valued as important. The social constructionist literature speaks of the importance of creating these situations; it is through dialogue that people can build new relationships, give voice to their own meaning, and simultaneously appreciate the meaning of others. It helps to bridge differences to create better futures. Anderson also emphasizes that when we genuinely value the inclusion of all voices, and the richness inherent in differences, there is less room for hierarchical and dualistic relationships and technical and instrumental processes. (Anderson, 2010, p. 2) Gergen (2003) says that we really meet the challenge of dialoging by moving beyond alienated co-existence to a more promising way of working together. This opens doors to people's hearts and minds and helps them to better understand each other. Out of these practices new knowledge comes which we can use to fine-tune the change process while going through the change process, rather than afterwards. It is important to grab the interactive moment! We need improvisational art to deal with these unpredictable moments, to pick them like flowers and use



them in appreciative ways for the change process. Careful listening and questioning and the appreciative stance are essential features in these practices.

Organizing dialogical practices helped us to be in relation in Suriname. Otto Sharmer, in his Theory U (2010), shows that when we organize dialogical practices in forms of generative dialogical practices, we re-connect to our sources of meaning and purpose. There we can tap into our energy to generate sustainable change. By being in connection with our own and collective sources we can co-create sustainable change. Within the educational field, this issue of being open towards the other and the otherness by organizing dialogical practices, instead of the usual individual-stance discussions throughout all levels of the system, stimulates the construction of relational responsibility and strengthens the sustainability of the change process dramatically. The importance of dialoging in vertical and horizontal ways, and bridging the different levels and hierarchies within systems, helps to open relationships instead of closing them (Van Leeuwen in Weisbeck, 2009).

How can we move forward within educational change?

It has become clear to me that the relational orientation has been an overlooked dimension within educational reform for many years. For students and teachers, who are the most important actors in the educational change process, it becomes hard to deal with the many influences from outside, such as government policy and politics, which limit their efforts to give meaning and voice to what they see as important in their daily practices. Here we see that within the present system we are out of relation. Policy makers are too far away and still miss the understanding of what is really going on in classrooms, which is more than just a mind business, it is also a heart business (Hargreaves, 2005); emotions do play important roles.

But it is not only the policy makers who are out of relation. In fact – as I see it – we meet this out-of-relation situation at every level within the educational system. Relational responsibility is still weak within the system, and this keeps many people in the individualistic stance with the question:

How can I survive in this present system? I see that lots of precious energy in forms of commitment, enthusiasm, power, pride, joy, motivation and so on gets lost. This being *out of relation* is also a way of doing things together, but the educational research has shown us that this doesn't bring us the success we need.

The research enriched me with the possibilities we may have in approaching educational reform from social or relational constructionism. I have experienced that *being in relation* and using the appreciative stance generates motivation, enthusiasm, commitment, joy, pride, and so on, as important by-products to generate sustainable change. Students and teachers, in fact all participants in the educational change process, become producers of change in many ways. By using collaborative and dialogical approaches we can build and maintain strong bridges to the other and the otherness. This kind of participative change work invites people to be part of the process, to be seen as important and equal to others. Inviting them into the process generates increasing power as a byproduct of this change process. The appreciative stance opens doors to others, and creates a safe and open environment to celebrate



By the use of safety and openness, which are characteristic of dialogical practices, self reflexive and relational reflexive critiques, were given voice. This helped us to understand and to appreciate differences in better ways



differences in the often unforeseen ideas of many. All participants in the Suriname project were given many opportunities to become the producers of change. They were heard and taken seriously. This meant that people were actively put into relation. Instead of an elite control group, who might think they had the power for establishing change, all of the participants were



Sustainability, then, is not an individual property but a property of an entire web of relationships



involved in generating change. It was actually giving back the power to those who are, and who should be, in charge of the change: the students and teachers..

I would like to conclude with Capra's(2008) insights: Sustainability, then, is not an individual property, but the property of an entire web of relationships. It always involves a whole community. This is the profound lesson we need to learn from nature. The way to sustain life is to build and nurture community. A sustainable human community interacts with other communities – human and nonhuman – in ways that enable them to live and develop according to their nature. Sustainability does not mean that things do not change. It is a dynamic process of co-evolution rather than a static state. (Capra, 2008)

We live in an increasingly complex educational world with many rapid changes. Relational thoughtⁱⁱ has shifted my fundamental understanding of change processes fully. I support the wish of Gergen (2008, p. 124) "The hope is to bring forth new and more promising ways of life."

People demand systems and services that are more flexible and respectful. They are becoming aware that they are dependent on each other to achieve better success. It is not the individual who should be celebrated and put in the center, as Western culture has done for many ages and still does. Solving the immensely complex problems humanity is encountering now and in the future compels dialogical, collaboration and ecological solutions. So patterns of traditions, the way we have always done things and the taken-for-granted, are more and more questioned than ever, so we can find these new solutions. The better understanding we have of the processes we engage in together, the more we can change our attitudes, together.

It is, in my opinion, a challenge to look at educational change processes in new

ways. By looking for something different from the business-as-usual approach, we might create new spaces for new approaches to what people are constructing together. Maybe we can give deeper meaning or understanding to our organized lives, involving others to participate in the change processes. Maybe we can establish processes in which we can learn and dialogue with each other to give meaning to the work we do, to give meaning to the contribution we deliver, and to the life we are living.

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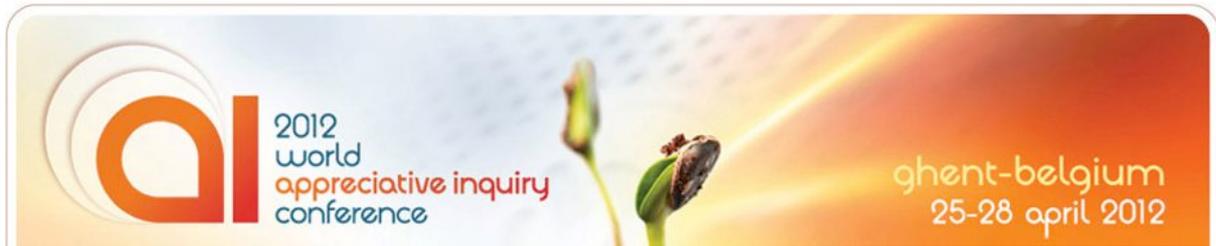
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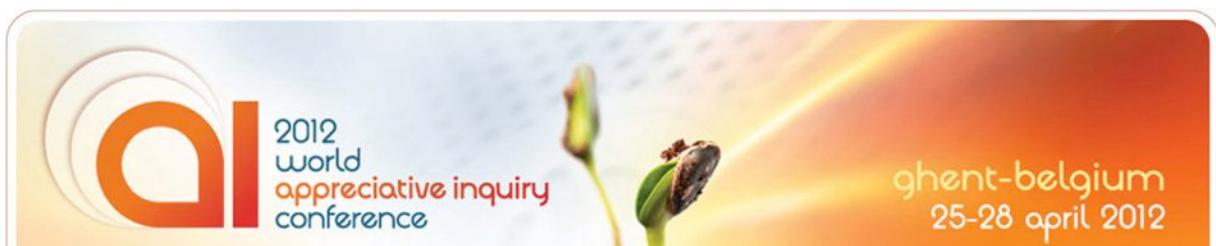
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The Impact of Appreciative Inquiry on Employees' Work Engagement Explained through Basic Psychological Needs and Motivation

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The Impact of Appreciative Inquiry on Employees' Work Engagement Explained through Basic Psychological Needs and Motivation

Abstract

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is implemented worldwide as a successful method for organizational change. Questions, however, remain as to what turns AI into an effective method. This paper investigates the relation between the characteristics of an AI-approach and work engagement. In an AI-approach, employees are encouraged to share their best practices, to connect to each other in taking initiative and to co-create what they feel as the best thing for the organisation. Appreciation and connecting are the two important vectors in the AI-model. Work engagement grows in work climates where adequate job and personal resources are available. We believe these resources grow and become salient through an AI-approach. It is therefore conjectured that the implementation of AI furnishes the necessary job and personal resources to satisfy the basic psychological needs, and the intrinsic motivation, hereby creating an impact on work engagement. Based on the characteristics of an AI-approach, a Connecting and Appreciation at Work scale was developed to measure AI-behavior. Our conjectures were tested by means of a survey among 132 employees of Flanders and the Netherlands. Based on the responses, we found that a higher level of self-reported connecting and appreciation is related to an increased level of work engagement. Moreover, this relationship is fully explained by employees' intrinsic motivation and satisfaction of basic psychological needs. Therefore, it can be concluded that an AI-approach creates the adequate job and personal resources to satisfy the basic psychological needs and to enhance intrinsic motivation, hereby creating an impact on work engagement. More quantitative research on the effect of an AI-approach on employees can contribute to understand the mechanisms, underlying in AI and increasing its success in organizational development and change.

Introduction

The past decade was characterized by tremendous change in various domains. A worldwide economic crisis challenged organizations to shift policies in order to live up to today's uncertain environments (Dicken, 2003; Mohrman & Worley, 2009; Obstfeld & Rogoff, 2010; Pauli, 2010). Organizational uncertainties and changes have often impact on employees' psychological well-being, nurturing more uncertainty and more stress (Bordia, Hobman, Jones, Gallois, & Callan, 2004). Already developed in the late 1980s, AI offers a successful method to craft solutions meeting today's challenges (Faure, 2006; Fitzgerald, Murrell, & Newman, 2001). Inspired by the ideas of Positive Organisational Scholarship (POS) (Donalson & Koa, 2010) and grounded in Social Constructionism (Gergen, 2009), an AI-approach means moving away from a deficit approach, shifting to a mutual inquiry into shared potentials as the life-giving starting point for the new (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2005). Evaluations of the success of AI-implementations are mostly limited to anecdotal and particular stories, explained in rather abstract constructs (Bushe, 2012; Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Grant & Humphries, 2006; Messerschmidt, 2008; van der Haar & Hosking, 2004). In this paper, however, we attempt to evaluate AI by tapping into the behavior, feelings and experiences of individual employees when AI is implemented in their organization. More specifically, we explore what is changing in the underlying psychological states of employees when their organization deploys AI-strategies. An answer to this question could contribute to a broadened understanding of AI. Moreover, it will enable us to explain the success of AI and to investigate whether employees' well-being is increased if an organization implements an AI-approach.

Appreciative inquiry: connecting and appreciation towards flourishing organisations

A review of the literature shows that an AI-approach is implemented in very different ways and in a variety of settings (Fitzgerald et al., 2001). However, all those different AI-practices are designed according to one general accepted procedure, namely implementing the 4-D Cycle: (a) Discovery, (b) Dream, (c) Design and (d) Delivery/Destiny (Bushe, 2012). The starting point in this recurrent cycle of co-inquiry is the affirmative topic, worded as the 'unconditional positive question' (Barrett & Fry, 2005, p. 35), connecting the object of inquiry with the positive core of the organisation. Regardless of the basic principles, the theoretic considerations and the daily implementations, an AI-approach is characterized by calling upon the involvement and engagement of all stakeholders for a mutual inquiry during

the 4-D Cycle. This inquiry is directed towards the discovery, appreciation and connection of strengths, and is supposed to generate a positive energy to collaborate (Barrett & Fry, 2005). The DNA of an AI-behavior refers to a double helix of ‘the appreciation of the appreciable world’ and ‘connecting an ever-expanding universe of strengths’, resulting in ‘energizing’ as the activation of ‘an energy to elevate and extend, to broaden and build, and to establish the new eclipsing the old’ (Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011).

Connecting (AIcon) refers to active stepping into high quality relations characterized by mutual emotional engagement towards action and creativity (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003). Going through the 4-D Cycle, the AI-approach urges all stakeholder to connect with everybody and with the whole system, in order to get a ‘collaborative dialogue and choice to achieve consent’ (Bushe, 2012, p. 88). Connecting means ‘collaboration, inclusion and cooperation’ (Barrett & Fry, 2005, p. 27). As to the workplace, connecting could be described as: *building high quality relations with all the stakeholders through a mutual sharing of strengths and dreams to co-create a shared vision on the future organisation.*

Appreciation (AIapp) refers to the appreciation of a discovered world of possibilities around us (Bushe, 2010). Appreciation goes beyond the happy and shiny world, it refers to the appreciation for what gives life (Bushe, 2012). It is depicting a possible future out of the discovered strengths. Appreciation can be understood as *appreciative intelligence*: the art to get through to the possibilities arising in humans and in systems (Thatchenkary & Metzker in Bushe, 2007). It is ‘tracking’ in a way of paying attention to discover latent clues combined with a life-giving ‘fanning’ as inflaming a starting fire (Bushe, 2001). Summarized, appreciation in the workplace can be described as: *the inquiry and the openness for life-giving possibilities in persons and systems, tracking them and fanning them as a growing potential in the organization.*

Flourishing employees for flourishing organisations: work engagement

At the intersection of connecting and appreciation, an organizational energy to grow wells up as a spring for the generative capacity of AI. Through appreciation and connecting, AI-interventions enable successful cooperative actions towards a new future, characterized by a broaden and build capacity (Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011). A theoretical ground for the impact of the double helix of appreciation and connecting is found in POS (Dutton, Glynn, & Spreitzer, 2006), the study of “positive, flourishing and life-giving dynamics in organisations”

(Cameron & Casa in Roberts, 2006). Distinguished from the interest in flourishing organisations, as studied in POS, this research is rather interested in Positive Organizational Behavior (POB), particularly in the outcomes on individual level, such as work engagement. Work engagement is characterized by (a) a higher level of energy, as understood in *vigor*, (b) a feeling of significance, enthusiasm and challenge, as understood in *dedication*, and (c) a full engrossment and concentration in one's work, as understood in *absorption*. Important predictors of work engagement are job and personal resources, such as social support, performance feedback, opportunities to learn and to develop, as well as a feeling of autonomy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Bakker, Schaufeli, Leiter, & Taris, 2008; Schaufeli, Salanova, & Bakker, 2002). We believe that connecting, understood as the alignment of shared strengths of co-workers, can possibly realize social feedback and learning opportunities. Furthermore, appreciation, or the inquiry into shared potentials, can enhance employees' positive self-evaluation, which has been identified as an important personal resource predicting work engagement (Bakker et al., 2008). These findings allow us to draw a first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Employees reporting more AI-practices report a higher level of work engagement.

Intrinsic motivation and needs fulfilment: basic for flourishing employees

Adequate job and personal resources are not only good predictors for work engagement, but, moreover, they are very important for employees' motivation too (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Motivation refers to aspects of activation and intention (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and is about what energizes and invigorates people (Meyer & Becker, 2004; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, & Lens, 2008). According to the theory of Self-Determination (SDT), motivation can vary from amotivation to intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsic motivation is considered to be related to effective performance and psychological well-being. Intrinsically motivated employees act because of what they experience as interesting and as giving satisfaction by itself. In contrast, amotivation implies that a person is not motivated at all. Adequate job and personal resources (i.e., supportive interpersonal climates, positive performance feedback, provision of choice) are found to have an impact on intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008). If AI furnishes those adequate job and personal resources, hereby increasing work engagement, it can be supposed that the effect AI has on work engagement can in part be explained by employees' intrinsic motivation. This increased motivation, caused by the

energizing and the invigorating effect of AI, consequently enhances work engagement, as is summarized in the next hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: The relation between AI-practices and work engagement, is mediated by intrinsic motivation.

According to the SDT, intrinsic motivation is assessed at moments when people strive toward optimal functioning and more well-being in a natural way (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, Soenens, & Lens, 2009). Optimal functioning occurs when people experience the fulfilment of Basic Psychological Needs (BPN) (i.e., autonomy, competence and relatedness). SDT researchers consider the satisfaction of the BPN to be crucial for humans to actualize their potentials and to flourish (Van den Broeck et al., 2008, p. 279). When conditions lead to the satisfaction of the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness, people report more intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and more vitality (Ryan & Deci, 2008). Providing adequate job and personal resources, not only leads to the satisfaction of BPN fostering more intrinsic motivation, but also predicts an increased work engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

We hypothesize that AI creates an organizational climate which nurtures the BPN. First, the need for autonomy refers to ‘self-governance’ (Ryan & Deci, 2006), to an experience of a ‘sense of choice’ and ‘psychological freedom’ (Van den Broeck, Vansteenkiste, De Witte, Soenens, & Lens, 2010). In AI, the very beginning is to let go of control and to encourage people to take initiative (Bushe & Kassam, 2005), and so it can be understood as enhancing the fulfilment of the need for autonomy. Second, the need for competence can be considered as the experience of getting the desired outcomes (Reis, Sheldon, Gable, Roscoe, & Ryan, 2000), as the feeling to be effective while interacting with the environment, through deploying one’s own capabilities (Vlachopoulos & Michailidou, 2006). During the 4-D Cycle in an AI-process, people are urged to tap into their strengths and competences and to depict how these strengths and capacities can change their future world (Barrett, 1995; Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011). So, during an AI-process, the recurrent inquiry into and appreciation of strengths and possibilities might impact on the need for competence. Finally the need for relatedness refers to a feeling of being part of a group, or a sense of communion, of love and being cared for (Van den Broeck et al., 2010). As an AI-approach strives toward co-sharing of strengths, beliefs, values, vision and commitment, leading towards an interdependent community (Bouwen & Taillieu, 2004), AI can possibly create the conditions to satisfy the need for relatedness.

We believe that AI can furnish adequate job and personal resources, resulting in the satisfaction of the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness which will furthermore lead to the enhancement of employees' intrinsic motivation and of employees' work engagement. This conjecture is captured in the next set of hypotheses about the mediating role of BPN in the relationship between AI-practices and work engagement:

Hypothesis 3: The relation between AI-practices and work engagement is mediated by the satisfaction of the need for autonomy (3.1), the need for competence (3.2) and the need for relatedness (3.3).

Method

Participants and procedure

A survey was conducted among employees in Flanders and the Netherlands. Respondents were contacted through social media as well as through the Flemish AI Learning Network. Participants were invited to complete an online questionnaire. A total of 132 employees completed the questionnaire, though some of them failed to indicate important socio-demographic characteristics. The characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Measures

AI-behavior.

In order to measure the level of AI-behavior, we developed a new scale. This scale was based on the two vectors in the AI-model: (a) connecting and (b) appreciation (Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011). A list of possible items referring to these two characteristics of AI was discussed with AI-practitioners. After several brainstorming sessions, a set of items was pre-tested, and finally refined into the *Connecting and Appreciation in the Workplace scale* (CAWs) with seven items, four items reflecting the connecting dimension (e.g., I learn by listening to past success stories of my colleagues) and three items gauging the appreciation dimension (e.g., I enrich my work by building on successes). Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with each statement on a 7-point Likert-type rating scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. A higher score on the AIcon or AIapp referred to a higher level of connecting or appreciation. The construct validity was assessed with a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) analyzing the responses ($N = 132$) using AMOS.

Model fit was evaluated using multiple criteria (Hu & Bentler, 1999): (1) the χ^2 statistic; (2) the comparative fit index (CFI), for which values of .95 and higher indicate very good fit; and (3) the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), for which values between .06 and .08 indicate a good fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1989). The results suggest an appreciable fit for the scale ($\chi^2(13) = 23.7, p = .03$; CFI = .97; RMSEA = .08). A reliability analysis showed that for AIcon Cronbach's $\alpha = .77$ and for AIapp $\alpha = .76$.

Work engagement.

Work engagement was measured with the Utrecht Work and Well-Being Survey (UWES-9) (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). This scale contains 9 items (e.g., My job inspires me). All items were to be answered on a 7-point Likert-type rating scale from *1 = never* to *7 = every day*, meaning that a higher score refers to more work engagement. In this survey, this scale showed Cronbach's $\alpha = .94$.

Basic Psychological Needs.

To measure the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness the subscales of the Basic Psychological Needs Scale at Work (BPNS-W) were translated (Deci et al., 2001). All 21 items were used: 7 items to assess autonomy satisfaction (e.g., I feel I can be pretty much myself at work), 6 items for the competence satisfaction (e.g., People at work tell me I am good at what I do) and 8 items for the relatedness satisfaction (e.g., I get along with people at work). All items were to be answered on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from *1 = strongly disagree* to *7 = strongly agree*. For all items, after recoding, a higher score pointed to an increased fulfilment of the need for autonomy, relatedness and competence. In this survey Cronbach's α for the subscale autonomy was .82; for relatedness .82 and for competence .86.

Intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation was assessed using three items (e.g., Because I enjoy this work very much) based on the Motivation at Work Scale (MAWS) (Gagné et al., 2010; Gagné et al., 2012). All items were to be answered on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from *1 = strongly disagree* to *7 = strongly agree*, with higher scores referring to more intrinsic motivation. In this survey Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$.

Analyses

All hypotheses were tested with the method for estimating indirect effects in multiple mediation (Preacher & Hayes, 2004). In order to obtain standardized regression estimates, all

the variables were standardized prior to the analysis. The bootstrapping approach was used in order to circumvent the power problem related to non-normal data (Mallinckrodt, Abraham, Wei, & Russell, 2006; Preacher & Hayes, 2004).

Results

We hypothesized a mediating effect of intrinsic motivation and BPN (i.e., autonomy, competence and relatedness) on the relation between the two dimensions of AI-behavior and work engagement. Intrinsic motivation, the need for autonomy, competence and relatedness can be assumed as mediators, when: (a) the two dimensions of AI-behavior significantly predict work engagement, (b) the two dimensions of AI-behavior significantly predict intrinsic motivation, autonomy competence and relatedness, (c) intrinsic motivation, autonomy competence and relatedness significantly predict work engagement and (d) the direct effect of the two dimensions of AI-behavior on work engagement after testing for the mediation is smaller than the direct effect as tested for hypothesis 1 (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Preacher & Hayes, 2004). All the hypothesized mediators (intrinsic motivation, autonomy, competence and relatedness) were entered together in one multiple mediation model.

In total 62.22% of the variance in work engagement was explained by the variables in the model ($F(6, 125) = 34.31, p < .001$). The structural relationships between AIcon and AIapp, the mediators and work engagement can be observed in Figure 1.

INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

As can be observed in Figure 1, the dimension AIapp was positively related to intrinsic motivation, autonomy and competence, but not to relatedness. AIcon was also related to intrinsic motivation and furthermore to relatedness, but not to autonomy and to competence. Of the proposed mediators, only intrinsic motivation and autonomy showed a significant relationship with work engagement. Moreover, as shown in Table 2, a mediating effect of intrinsic motivation was found in the relation of both AIapp and AIcon with work engagement. As for the basic psychological needs, only autonomy was found to mediate the relation between AIapp and work engagement. After controlling for all the mediators, the

direct effect of AIcon and AIapp on work engagement became non-significant, indicating a fully mediated relation.

Discussion

An AI-approach assumes driving employees to grow in connecting and in appreciation, creating flourishing organisations. The main objective of this study was to investigate the impact of an AI-approach on the individual employee. Referring to the double helix of appreciation and connecting, this research started with the operationalization of behaviour, typical in AI, through the construction of the CAWs. In order to evaluate AI, this was a necessary step to relate AI-behavior to other psychological theories, such as SDT, POS and POB. The proposed CAWs enabled to identify genuine AI-behaviour with the appreciation and connecting dimension. A first validation of the instrument showed promising results. Although our sample was fairly small for validation purposes using confirmatory factor analysis (Browne & Cudeck, 1989), the measurement model showed a satisfactory fit.

As for hypothesis 1, the results pointed to a significant relation between both dimensions of AI-behavior and work engagement. An increased work engagement referred to a higher level of vigor, dedication and absorption in work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). This indicates that the activation of energy, stirred up by the double helix of an AI approach, can be interpreted as more vigor, dedication and absorption referring to the broadening and building capacity of both AI and work engagement (Cooperrider & Godwin, 2011; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Work engagement assumes an energy and involvement reinforced by adequate job and personal resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Schaufeli et al., 2002). Through connecting and appreciation, an AI-approach, obviously, is able to deliver these adequate resources stimulating personal growth and learning and development opportunities as a pathway to more work engagement.

Hypothesis 2 presumed a mediation of intrinsic motivation in the relation between AI-behavior and work engagement. Results indicated a mediating effect of intrinsic motivation in the relation of both AIcon and AIapp with work engagement. Intrinsic motivation is demonstrated at moments when employees experience positive feelings and enjoyment because of the activities themselves, exploring new frontiers and striving to master new challenges (Deci & Ryan, 2008). Connecting, understood as building high quality relations (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003) and appreciation, understood as the 'tracking' and

'fanning' of the growing potential in humans and systems (Bushe, 2012) create a work climate where intrinsic motivation emerges. This is also in line with other findings that job and personal resources influence both work engagement and motivation (Bakker, Albracht, & Leiter, 2011). Furthermore, intrinsic motivation is found to elicit higher performance (Bakker et al., 2008).

Finally, hypothesis 3 brought the satisfaction of BPN into the model. Results didn't indicate a mediating effect of BPN between AIcon and work engagement. As for AIapp, however, results pointed at a mediating relation of only autonomy between AIapp and work engagement. AIapp, referring to a stronger 'appreciative mindset' and more 'appreciative intelligence' (Bushe, 2007), provides a positive performance feedback. So, AIapp cultivates an active coping style to impact on the work situation creating a feeling of autonomy, impacting on work engagement. The satisfaction of the need for competence is seen as an important predictor for motivation (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008), and is found to be related to emotional well-being. In this research; however, satisfaction of the need for competence was related to AIapp, but it didn't predict more work engagement. As to relatedness, connecting in an AI-behavior, understood as building high quality relations to take a commitment in co-creating a new future (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Bushe, 2001) differs from relatedness in BPN understood as being part of a group or as a feeling of belongingness (Van den Broeck et al., 2010).

Limitations and Future Research

This study used self-reports of individual employees. Comparing organisations with an AI-approach and organisations without an AI-approach could provide better data to analyse the model used in this research. Furthermore, the used linear regression approach does not allow any causal interpretations. Future longitudinal and experimental studies can establish some causal impact of AI-practices on employees.

In order to support more quantitative research on AI with longitudinal surveys tapping into mediators and moderators within an AI-process, it is necessary to refine the definitions of

appreciation and connecting. This refinement can make it possible to optimize the CAWs, basic for future research.

AI, as a qualitative action research method, means connecting and appreciation through sharing stories capturing the strengths and dreams of people. This quantitative research, however, was based on a questionnaire, tapping into latent psychological constructs in employees. Combining both research methods in the future may serve to understand even better and to evaluate the success of AI as a method to stimulate the flourishing of organisations along with satisfied and vital employees.

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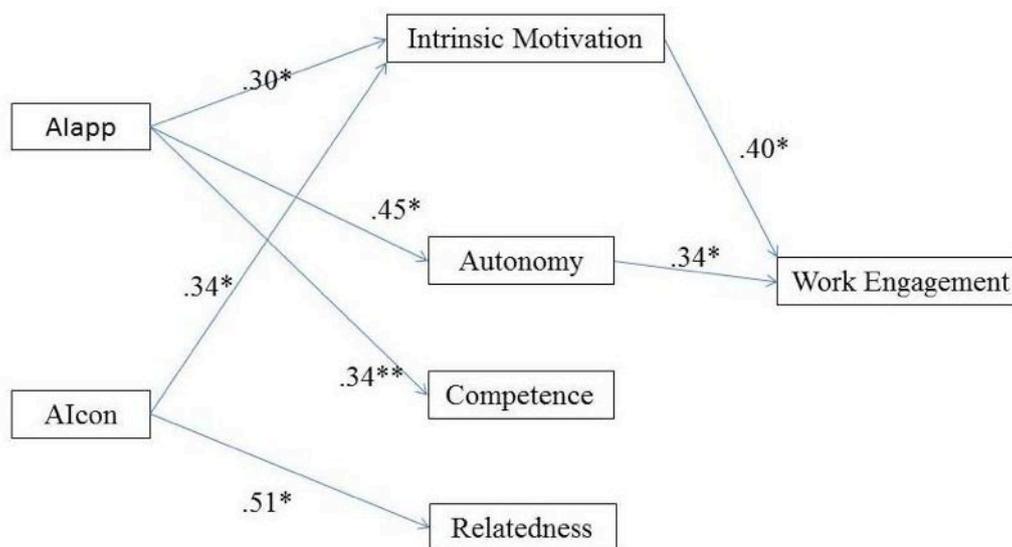


Figure 1. A summary of the structural relations between AIcon and AIapp, the proposed mediators and work engagement. Non-significant relationships were omitted from the diagram (* $p < .001$)

Table 1
Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample

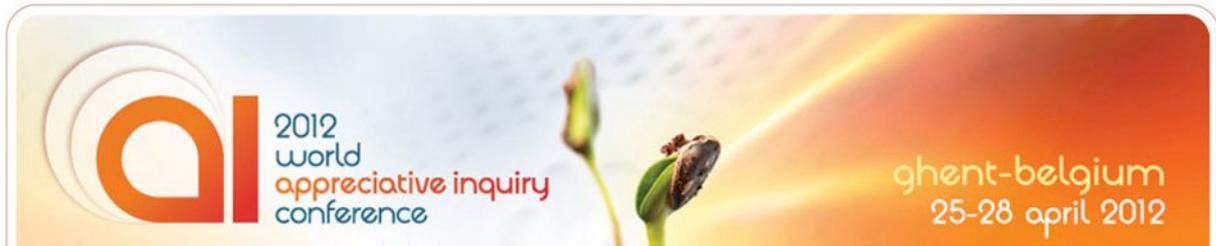
	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<i>Gender</i>		130		
Men	36.2			
Women	63.8			
<i>Age</i>		130	41.0	10.54
<i>Weekly working hours</i>		99	34.9	8.10
<i>Tenure</i>		129	9.01	8.60
<i>Education</i>		129		
Secondary education	24.0			
College	44.2			
University	31.8			
<i>Function level</i>		123		
Non-managerial position	9.8			
Middle-level position	15.4			
Executive	74.8			

Table 2

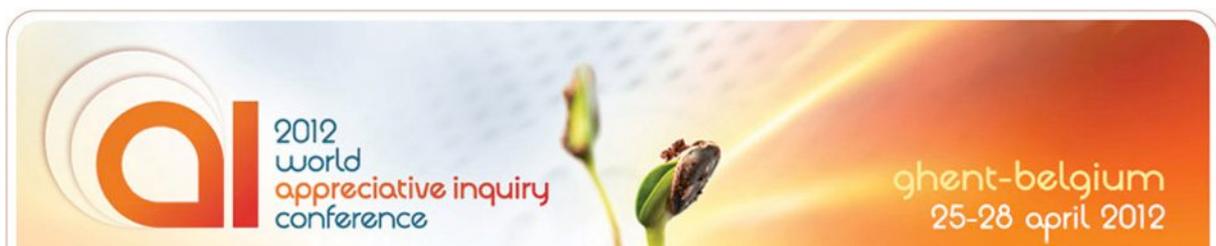
The indirect effects of autonomy, competence, relatedness and intrinsic motivation between Alcon, Alapp and work engagement

	Point Estimate	Bootstrapping BCa 95% CI ^a	
		Lower	Upper
Alcon			
Autonomy	-.026	-.034	.133
Competence	-.031	-.043	.175
Relatedness	.033	-.040	.126
Intrinsic Motivation	.136	.049	.265
Total	.193	.044	.413
Alapp			
Autonomy	.153	.073	.277
Competence	.006	-.044	.054
Relatedness	.008	-.007	.065
Intrinsic Motivation	.121	.054	.238
Total	.287	.150	.418

Note: Bias corrected and accelerated confidence intervals were used, based on 1000 bootstrap resamples.



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OPENING DOORS: GENERATING NEW CONNECTIONS TO FOSTER SOCIAL INCLUSION



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Opening Doors has challenged many of my belief systems. Through its many unique experiences I now see and experience our world and myself differently. Where I saw hopelessness, weakness, deficiencies and indifference I now see beauty, strengths, potential and passion. I step forward now, empowered and hopeful.

1. ABSTRACT

A partnership of agencies working in the area of health and aged care in the inner east of Melbourne, Australia, identified the potential health impact of social isolation on our community, particularly on vulnerable groups such as older people, people with disabilities, and people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In making an assessment of the current responses to isolation, the group noticed that human service agencies were struggling to engage with people who were potentially isolated and connect them with the vast resources available in the community. Research has shown that potentially isolated people are less likely to access relevant health and community services.¹

This project then started on a journey to address the key questions:

- How do we engage with people who are at risk of isolation in our community?
- How can we build sustainable initiatives that will foster community inclusion?
- If you were socially isolated, what would it take for you to take a risk and become more engaged in your community?

For example, a group of Cambodian elders in our local community had come to Australia as refugees and experienced torture and trauma in their own country. As this violence was aimed at dismantling the social connections between families and the wider community, such refugee communities may be divided, with little sense of community beyond a shared

¹ Australasian Centre on Ageing (2007)

national identity. This experience also leads to a distrust of government and formal services. Community leaders were concerned about the isolation of this group, but were unsure of how to address it.

Instead of looking to more “service” solutions, the partnership chose to use a capacity building approach, identifying grass roots community leaders who are passionate about everyone having the opportunity to participate in their community.

These community members were invited to participate in the Opening Doors Program alongside agency staff. The program commenced in 2009 and is now entering its fourth year in the Inner East Region. In 2011 the Program commenced in the Southern Region and is running for the second year.

The core approach of the program is to build on the strengths of the participants and their local communities. Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approaches (based on Appreciative Inquiry) are shared with participants and are utilized in developing the local projects that are worked up during the program and continue to foster social inclusion in local communities.

This paper will describe the development of this program and how it demonstrates Appreciative Inquiry principles. It will also describe the partnership and how that collaboration contributed to the success of the program. The outcomes for the individuals who participated, and the local communities will be described.

2. BACKGROUND and CONTEXT

“AI begins by identifying what is positive and connecting to it in ways that heighten energy, vision, and action for change.”²

This project did not begin by using the Appreciative Inquiry “4 D’s” but rather discovered them along the way. This discovery was prompted by the realization that traditional “problem solving” approaches were not working to address social isolation, and that our efforts were likely to be much more productive using a strengths-based approach.

Agencies in the Inner East of Melbourne are engaged in a coalition called the “Primary Care Partnership” (PCP) to proactively address the health issues affecting the population in the catchment of four local government areas. Social isolation was identified as a key issue for a number of groups in the community, with an initial focus on older people. The research confirms that social isolation has a major impact on the health and well-being of those who experience it.

² Cooperider et al (2008) p xv

Research shows³:

- Social isolation is a significant risk factor for morbidity (illness) and mortality (death);
- The size of this risk has been described as ‘comparable to cigarette smoking and other major biomedical and psychosocial risk factors’, although our understanding of the underlying causal mechanisms remains limited;
- Social isolation is also recognised as a risk factor for depression and suicide;
- Socially isolated people are less likely to access health and support services and to engage in behaviours that can have a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

The dilemma with the social isolation debate is that it focusses on people’s deficits. Older people who are frail, living alone, have cognitive impairments, limited mobility or come from diverse cultural backgrounds are seen as “at risk”. Communities are seen as excluding people due to their perceived deficiencies. The initial research for this project was with community and health services who identified that their primary response to social isolation was to refer people to another service, but their ability to link people back into ordinary community activities was limited. Thus in attempting to use the traditional “problem solving” approach, services were further stigmatising people as “in need” of human services.

The Partnership discussed possible responses, including establishing various projects to address these “disadvantaged groups”. After some discussion and input from Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) practitioners such as Mike Green⁴, the group decided to pursue a capacity building initiative that would seek out grass roots community leaders who were passionate about inclusion and interested in taking action at a local level.

However, the group was still learning about the ABCD approach as we attempted to identify areas of “high need” or social disadvantage to recruit our community leaders. This strategy did not prove particularly successful, and at first we thought we would not find enough people to commence the program. However, opening up the opportunity more widely and moving to an approach based more on “Open Space” principles proved far more effective. These principles include:

“All of the issues that are MOST important to the participants will be raised.

All of the issues raised will be addressed by those participants most qualified and capable of getting something done on each of them.”⁵

By going to the community to ask who was passionate about social inclusion, people came forward and raised the issues that were important to them. While some of these people worked in human services, many came from other walks of life in the community.

³ Australasian Centre on Ageing (2007)

⁴ Mike Green <http://mike-green.org/>

⁵ <http://www.openspaceworld.org/cgi/wiki.cgi?AboutOpenSpace>

“Open Space is appropriate in situations where a major issue must be resolved, characterized by high levels of complexity, high levels of diversity (in terms of the people involved), the presence of potential or actual conflict, and with a decision time of yesterday.

Open Space runs on two fundamentals: passion and responsibility. Passion engages the people in the room. Responsibility ensures things get done. A focusing theme or question provides the framework for the event. The art of the question lies in saying just enough to evoke attention, while leaving sufficient open space for the imagination to run wild.”⁶

Calling for participants who were interested in the Opening Doors Program brought forth people with passion and the desire to get things done. Participants were extremely diverse in age, cultural background and life experiences.

Applicants who demonstrated leadership capabilities and/or who were well connected in their community were selected to undertake the interview process, as it was viewed that these attributes would assist participants to establish responses within their local community aimed at reducing social isolation. Three to four applicants participated in each interview which was structured as a 2 hour workshop with the project manager, a steering committee representative and an independent person where possible. The workshops were constructed to promote conversations as opposed to strict question and answer format. Relevant topics such as: team work, leadership and personal strengths were explored and this provided opportunity for applicants to demonstrate their ability to engage with others and to meet with potential fellow group participants. A visioning exercise was also included using Jeannie Baker’s picture book ‘Belonging’⁷ as an example of how a socially inclusive community can develop over time. Applicants were encouraged to “dream” by drawing or describing the transformation of their own local community to a socially inclusive one and then to explore the commonalities of their vision with the other group members. People were finally selected based on their passion and ability to work with others in the program.

3. OPENING DOORS PROGRAM PROCESS

The Opening Doors Community Leadership Program offers participants (the future leaders) opportunities to develop their natural leadership skills and become aware of the many assets in their community.

The program commences with a two day retreat, where participants explore the concept of leadership and discover their own leadership strengths. During the program they are introduced to the Asset Based Community Development Approach which is based on Appreciative Inquiry Principles.

⁶ Owen <http://www.openspaceworld.org/cgi/wiki.cgi?OpenSpaceElevatorSpeeches>

⁷ Jeannie Baker (2004) **Belonging**

*Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) is a growing movement that considers local assets as the primary building blocks of sustainable community development. Building on the skills of local residents, the power of local associations, and the supportive functions of local institutions, asset-based community development draws upon existing community strengths to build stronger, more sustainable communities for the future.*⁸

Participants are encouraged and supported to engage in community conversations to help them to understand the kind of local community initiative that will engage potentially isolated people and help them to generate new sense of connectedness and belonging.

Following the retreat, participants attend workshops twice a month for six months in a variety of community venues. These visits help them to become more familiar with the resources in their local communities. Adult education principles underpin the program delivery and the content of workshops includes: community engagement training, case study presentations, group facilitation by experienced guest 'leaders' and participant reflection. A key component of the program is participants designing and implementing projects aimed at enhancing social inclusion in local neighbourhoods. In most instances this required significant networking and linking with community groups and organizations.

A Co-ordinator was appointed to facilitate the program who came with extensive experience in working within communities in a variety of roles. When a second program was started in the Southern Region, an Opening Doors graduate was appointed to assist with facilitating the Inner East program.

The Program is now in its fourth year, and between 2009 and 2011, The Opening Doors Program in the Inner East has assisted in fostering:

- **58 graduates** who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to make a difference in their community;
- **45 grass-roots community projects** that aim to address social isolation and make communities more inclusive;
- Over **4000 community members** who are engaged with their communities in new and positive ways as a result of these projects;
- A network of over **50 different organisations, businesses and groups** collaborating to promote social inclusion through their support of The Opening Doors Program.

Two evaluations⁹ of the program have been conducted showing significant benefits to the participants and the community through the projects established.

⁸ ABCD Institute www.abcdinstitute.org

⁹ Teshuva & Reid (2010); IESII (June 2011)

In both years of the program, participants were drawn from across the four local government areas and from a range of ethnicities, backgrounds, ages and abilities. Ages have ranged ranging from the 20's to the 80's and from 10 different ethnic groups.

The diversity of the group has been a key strength of the program, fostering strong, supportive relationships between people who may not have otherwise had the opportunity to meet. The groups were united through their passion for social inclusion and desire to see their communities move towards their vision of inclusive communities.



GRADUATIONS

2009 participants
(left)

2010 Participants
(below)



4. THE PARTNERSHIP

An analysis was also conducted on the partnership itself to determine the factors that led to its success in getting the program off the ground and continuing over three years with uncertain funding from year to year.¹⁰ The strong relationships formed within the group, and the ability to draw on the strengths of each of the partners were identified as key success factors. Partners came from a range of agencies and community groups and government, with people in a variety of roles including community development, health promotion and agency management. Initially agencies were brought together under the auspice of the Inner East Primary Care Partnership¹¹, but as the Inner East Social Inclusions Initiative (IESII) partnership matured, high levels of co-operation, trust and shared accountability were established and the partnership gained an identity of its own.

The Partnership was not an “organisation” in the traditional sense, but pulled together to organise the program to provide a more potent response to an issue seen to be impacting on the health of people in the local area. In working together in an appreciative way, the group developed the four competencies identified by Barrett:¹²

- **Affirmative Competence** – a focus on strengths to create vitality;
- **Expansive competence** – challenge conventional practices to stretch in new direction, evoking a set of higher values and ideals to inspire members;
- **Generative Competence** – integrative systems allow members to see the results of their actions, to recognize they are making a contribution and to see progress;
- **Collaborative Competence** – forums where members can engage in dialogue and active debate.

This was evident in an evaluation of the initiative conducted in 2009 by the Australian Institute of Primary Care at La Trobe University. The final report released in Feb 2010 stating the following:

“A key strength of the initiative has been the high functioning partnership of agencies that have worked together from the very early planning and securing funding stages right through to project completion and evaluation. The initiative has been overseen by a Steering Group comprising representation from the agencies, PCP and government departments who funded the projects. High levels of trust, commitment and collaboration have been achieved in the partnership resulting in very positive achievement toward common goals, shared decision making, in-kind support and staffing, sharing of resources, training and planning processes and importantly an

¹⁰ Held (2011) The Inner East Social Inclusion Initiative: A Working Partnership. **Lessons learned about successful partnerships for promoting health through social inclusion.**

¹¹ Primary Care Partnerships aim to improve their local service system and to support better health and wellbeing outcomes.

¹² Barrett, F. (1998) cited in Cooperrider et. Al (2008) p 205

*ongoing commitment to continue working together to reduce social isolation in the community.*¹³

The partnership analysis used appreciative questioning to elicit the factors leading to the success of the partnership. The following are some of the responses.

What was most appreciated about the partnership?

Three key themes emerged in response to this question:

1. **Shared vision, goal and passion.**
2. **Diversity** of people involved – different organisations, different roles/levels within organisations, not “representing” their organisations, bringing resources, knowledge, leadership, linking, capacity for all to learn. Especially involvement of government as partners. PCP partners driving, not staff.
3. **Commitment** (ongoing) and **motivation** to achieve real change on the issue of social inclusion.

What kept people most engaged?

The following themes summarise the factors that kept people engaged in the partnership:

1. **Energy, enthusiasm, determination, excitement** about what was evolving.
2. **Learning and growth:** The different, evolving and developmental nature of the approach of capacity building. The challenge of seeing ideas translate into reality. The growth and learning of individuals from being involved, and the opportunity to use their expertise and networks to address the challenges.
3. The **importance of the issue:** For some social inclusion was a work priority and there was a need to deliver results. There was also an evolving understanding of what it means for health promotion. The desire to address the particular needs of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups also kept some engaged.

What the partners contributed (from their own perspective)

Each of the partners was asked what they brought to the partnership, and these could be summarised in the following categories:

1. **Attributes:** determination, passion, beliefs, principles, balance, perseverance, creativity, willing to continuously improve, commitment.
2. **Knowledge and skills:** experience in community, ideas, systems knowledge, budgets.

¹³ Teshuva & Reid (2010) p 8

3. **Specific roles:** connector, resourcer, door-opener, broker, coach, advocate, presenter, promoter, networker.
4. **Time:** all partners contributed significant time to the partnership.
5. Access to **funding**.

What the partners contributed (from other's perspective)

The partner's perspectives on the contribution of others grouped into similar categories:

1. **Attributes:** clarity of thinking, belief in the project, approachability, honesty, reliability, humanity, focus, generosity, grounded, principled, passionate, battling to make a difference, willing to push and challenge, persistence, enthusiasm, professionalism.
2. **Roles:** enabler, communicator, leader, auspice, government (as partners, mediators), PCP as initiator and supporter, linking (mainstream organisations and minority communities), networking, co-ordinating, organising, resourcing, nurturing.
3. **Approach:** intellectual rigour, professional seminars, planning, capacity building not service delivery,
4. **Knowledge and skills:** preventative health, leadership, financial management, general expertise.
5. Building of **relationships** and strengthened links of individuals and organisations. Partners also brought contacts to other areas in government and the community that contributed to the initiative.
6. **Funding.**

The ability to provide funding for the Program has been critical to its ongoing success. This is also an area where ongoing sustainability is still to be achieved. It is important here to acknowledge the contribution of a variety of funders, from local government, community health, government departments and philanthropic trusts.

5. COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Two key outcomes have been identified in the evaluations to date. Firstly, participant's leadership knowledge, skills and confidence to engage with communities have significantly increased. Secondly, there are forty five projects underway and actively working to strengthen community connectedness and reduce social isolation in local neighbourhoods across the inner east catchment of Melbourne.

Impact on participants

While there is a range of data from formal sessions evaluations and rating scales, the quotes from the Opening Doors graduates best describe the impact of the program for them.

"Honestly, it's made a huge difference in my life...in fact life changing. I think doing this course has opened my eyes to what's possible and given me renewed faith in others...especially myself. I have more confidence and faith in my abilities and that's a big shift." Mike

Opening Doors gave me insight into how I can contribute. It helped me to focus on my strengths and see a different way to attract people to become involved. Bunbury

I learnt a lot from that program, most importantly how to listen. Margaret

I have learnt that a lot can be achieved with a small beginning. If we have a simple idea, a clear vision, along with persistence and determination, anything is possible. Linda

A profile of one a 2011 participant, Krishna, highlights one of the "treasures" in our local community that has been discovered through the Opening Doors program.

To summarise the life of Krishna Arora in a few paragraphs is no mean feat, but one thing is for sure: at 83 years young, she has a tremendous appetite for life and working with her community.

Having studied both at home in Dehli, and abroad in the UK, one of Krishna's first jobs was teaching at a finishing school in Mumbai (then known as Bombay). Quickly finding her passion in life, Krishna turned her eye to hospitality. In 1986 she moved to Madras and opened the Institute of Hotel Management, which she ran for six years.

Arriving in Australia in 1992 to help care for her grandchildren, Krishna initially found herself feeling isolated. "When I came to Melbourne I found lots of seniors who were very lonely. Money was a factor, but some of them didn't even know English, which was another barrier for them. They were effectively excluded from the community," she said.

Since then, she has worked tirelessly within the Indian community to bring about change in this area. She has been writing recipes for a local Indian paper for 18 years, has published two cookery books (which remain in print to this day), has been President of the Indian Senior Citizens Association and still works with the Federation of Indian Associations of Victoria.

Krishna believes that food is one of the great unifiers in our society. "Food is a thing that no one can avoid... It brings people together because it's the one thing that each and every one of us need."

Armed with this belief, Krishna has won numerous awards and accolades, including an honourable mention for the Victorian Senior of the Year awards and an award for excellence in multicultural affairs in Victoria. Her picture is currently hanging in Victoria Parliament House, as part of a celebration of prominent Indian citizens.

For her Opening Doors project, Krishna is developing a community kitchen where Indian seniors come together, share recipes and cook delicious meals so anyone in the community can attend and enjoy some lunch at a nominal cost. Krishna believes this is a great way to bring people together through a shared passion, and give back to the community in the process. When asked how she has found Opening Doors this year, Krishna replies:

I'm already telling people they should join. It was a fantastic course. There was a time when I didn't want to tell anyone my age, but I am not ashamed of that any more... You're never too old to learn, and never too old to try something new. Krishna

Participants from the newly-established Southern Region program also echo these sentiments:

What impressed me about the program was its bringing together leadership development, community development, project management and knowledge about social inclusion in a group based way. The program exceeded my expectations. Coupled with this was the pleasure of doing it with such a warm collaborative and supportive group of people. Matthew.

This program has sparked my mind, resuscitated my talents, sharpened my skills and provided me with the strength to see a light in a/the tunnel. I believe this is the best start on my long journey of my mission project. Ibrahim

Opening Doors is a good program because it identifies/recognises your leadership strengths. It also gives you the ability to work on your strengths and skills as a leader. Farzana

The two evaluations of the program¹⁴ have also quantified a positive impact on individual's leadership skills and their knowledge of Asset Based Community Development and approached to community building.

What is life-giving for communities? What helps people to connect?

The projects developed by participants during their participation in the Opening Doors Program have been many and varied. The common theme has been to find what is life-giving for members of the community who may be at risk of social isolation. For some, this

¹⁴ Teshuva & Reid (2010); Inner East Social Inclusion Initiative (2011)

may mean meeting people in the same position, but for many it is about sharing a common interest, being able to contribute, finding out about the resources already available in the community, and having the confidence and skills to utilise them. The following are some examples of projects that have been initiated as a result of the program.

University of the Third Age (U3A), Deepdene

The U3A is a self-funded, voluntary organisation formed to provide learning opportunities to members aged 50 plus who are retired or not working full-time. Courses cover a wide range of stimulating subjects. A critical feature of all U3As is the self-determination and self-help principle. A committee of management is elected annually from the membership, and all administration and tutoring is carried out by volunteers. There is an expectation that every member will, at some time, contribute to the extent that they are able.

While the U3A model has been around for some time, two participants in the 2009 Opening Doors Program saw an opportunity to open a new U3A in their local area, so that it would be more accessible to people who could not travel to other areas. The Deepdene U3A officially commenced with their Term 1 program in February 2010. At this time there were 26 paid up members, all friends of the participants, Joan and Sadie. In Term 4 2010, they had 228 paid up members. Their membership is now at 430 – their volunteer hours for last year 5642 – this is conservative and does not include preparation time for lectures. It also does not include time spent on the development of systems and programs, on making applications for grants, liaising with tutors, tutors' preparation time, networking with other U3As and with local council representatives. If these items were added, it would probably double this estimate. What is even more remarkable about this growing group is that the founders were in their late 70's and late 80's when first establishing the group. Joan and Sadie also had a determination to ensure that no one would be excluded from their U3A activities due to disabilities or frailty.



U3A volunteers
at work

Cambodian Seniors Water Exercise Group

One participant has a Chinese Cambodian background and was involved with both the Opening Doors as well as a project with Cambodian seniors. As a result of their experiences of trauma and migration, Cambodian seniors are often at high risk of isolation. Pichnay worked to support the Cambodian community to connect with services and the broader community. Using events to bring community members together, she then explored what their interests might be. Staying fit and healthy was a strong interest and Pichnay was successful in connecting her Cambodian Seniors with a water exercise class at the Clayton Swimming Pool. The swimming group has since become self-sustaining. The connection resulted from the Opening Doors visit to the Clayton Community Centre and the connection with a participant from the local Community Health Service.



Knitter Knatter

Joan has a friend in a nursing home that is passionate about knitting. She has inspired her to propose a knitting group to the Trinity Manor Nursing home which will provide opportunity for nursing home residents and community members to connect through a shared love of knitting. The group commenced in November and is held fortnightly. Many of the residents participating have dementia and initially the staff were sceptical about their ability to be involved. However, gentle support from the volunteers has enabled them to complete their knitting projects. Trinity Manor is pleased with the initiative and has provided their special, best china tea cups and saucers to be used for afternoon tea. Initial knitting projects focused on blankets for the nursing home bus and then for overseas projects.

Street by Street

Margaret partnered with the Project Co-ordinator of Sustainable Neighborhoods at the Craig Family Centre to hold a barbecue at her local public housing estate. More than 30

people attended, including some who do not usually answer their doors. The Co-ordinator spoke about what they could do to make their community more sustainable and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to network with so many locals. A number of residents are following up with him about energy, water and gardening initiatives.

Two other residents are enthusiastic about having more get-togethers at the estate and have offered to organize them. Margaret plans to organize other barbecue lunches in the area and open discussion around what residents could do to make their community more livable.

Celebrating Cultural Diversity at Parkhill Primary School

Linda saw the opportunity to make better connections with parents from multicultural backgrounds within the school community at her local primary school. She ultimately hopes to establish an ongoing social group.

6. CONCLUSION

Mike Green reminded us that *“a community that does not have room for everyone has room for no one.”*¹⁵ In seeking to achieve this vision in our community we will do well to pay heed to Margaret Wheatley’s ten principles for healthy community change¹⁶, in particular “people support what they create” and “the wisdom resides within us”. Rather than seek “top-down” **solutions** to the **problem** of social isolation, we learned to seek grass roots passion to connect with others to create an inclusive community. We continue to learn the lessons and benefits of an appreciative approach, and get better each year at sharing this with participants in the program.



2011 Opening Doors Graduates

¹⁵ Green, M. (2006)

¹⁶ Margaret Wheatley (2008) www.performancefrontiers.com/articles/Wheatleys%2010%20Principles.pdf

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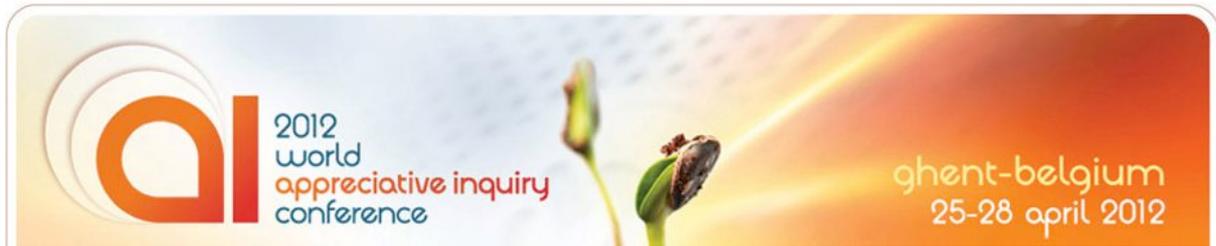
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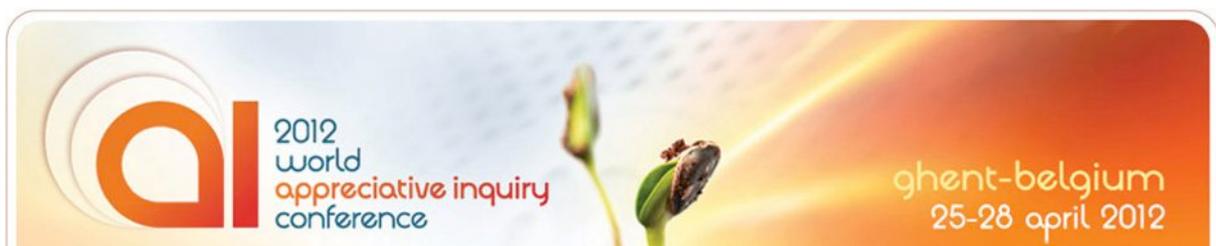
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Title: A collaborative initiative toward educational excellence: An Appreciative Inquiry approach

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Abstract

Nursing Education Institutions play a vital role in the realisation of quality insurance when educating and training nurse practitioners to deliver quality health care. Nurse educators, have a professional responsibility and accountability towards the nursing profession, students, patients, their families and the community at large to ensure quality education and training. This implies that nurse educators should constantly discover, understand and foster innovation for change to move nursing education towards educational excellence.

Nursing education institutions responsible for the education and training of nurse practitioners are professionally accountable, to develop nursing programmes of a high academic standard. Subsequently ensuring that nurse practitioners are competent when entering the nursing profession. In order to achieve quality education and training, thus ensuring higher skills levels, continued education and quality outputs, stakeholders are obliged to collaborate to enhance institutional change. A collaborative approach towards positive organisational changes utilised in this study was Appreciative Inquiry (AI).

Introduction

Today, nurses across the world are at the forefront of innovation and development in health care. One of the key challenges for nursing education is to prepare students for this rapidly changing health care arena. The education and training of nurses must be anchored within the local health systems and customized to meet the needs of patients, their families and the community (Farrell, Douglas & Siltanen 2003:364).

Moore (2008: [1]) is of the opinion that building educational capacity in schools of nursing has been identified as the most urgent nursing workforce need. As nursing capacity is built, particular attention must be given to the needs of nursing education, ensuring that quality preparation of nurses is not compromised in the rush to educate more nurse practitioners.

In order to achieve quality education and training, ensuring higher skills levels, continued education and quality outputs, stakeholders are obliged to collaborate to enhance institutional change. A collaborative approach towards positive institutional changes that can be utilised is Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Appreciative Inquiry is a philosophy, a model of change, and a set of tools and techniques that supports discovery, dreaming, design and creation of a shared vision that inspires people in an organisation to move towards a collective destiny (Stefaniak 2007:43).

For this reason it is very important to determine the collective vision for each programme offered by educational institutions, evaluate the findings and suggest improvements for the education and training of students in order to enhance the knowledge, skills and academic outcomes of students.

In the view of Billings and Halstead (2005:543) "the primary purpose of program evaluation is to judge the merit or worth of the total program being evaluated, as well as the individual elements of the program".

Watt (2007 [1]) is of the view that reviewing one's teaching practice (programmes offered) is an essential component of professional practice. Traditional methods remain locked into problems within the practice. AI offers a positive approach to view and consider professional practice in order to create change. A main focus of AI is to appreciate the best of practice (educational practice) and to carry that forth into the future. Change is brought about by examining themes from stories of practice and developing provocative propositions about future practice.

Appreciative Inquiry has much to offer organisations, in striving to remain relevant, competitive, creative, and socially responsible. AI has a unique role to play in supporting organisations efforts to build and sustain evaluation systems. As organisations continue to build internal evaluation capacity and become committed to ongoing and embedded evaluation practices, it becomes critical that organisations develop evaluation systems that organise, guide and communicate their work. At organisational level, designing and implementing an evaluation system ensures that all evaluation activities contribute to continuous learning, informed decision making, and the use of evaluation findings (Preskill & Catsambas 2006:46).

Context information

The setting within which this study was conducted, was a government funded NEI in the Gauteng province South Africa. The NEI has approximately 1200 pre-graduate and 200 post-basic enrolled students. Lecturer to student ratio 1: 163. Pre-graduate students must do 350 hours of theory and 1000 practica hours per year. The pre-graduate programme consists of a comprehensive programme leading to qualifications in General nursing, Midwifery, psychiatric nursing and community nursing.

The NEI has a principal, registrar and eight academic head of department that are responsible for the day to day functioning of the NEI.

Problem statement

The researcher was the external moderator for General nursing science at the specific NEI. At the given time the overall pass rate of fourth year students at the NEI was 50%. This necessitated further investigation and identification of challenges pertaining to academic outcomes of the students. The researcher realised that the programme was not evaluated for approximately 5 years.

The overall aim of this research was to, by means of Appreciative Inquiry, collaboratively evaluate the pre-graduate nursing programme and plan actions as a basis for moving a NEI in the direction of educational excellence.

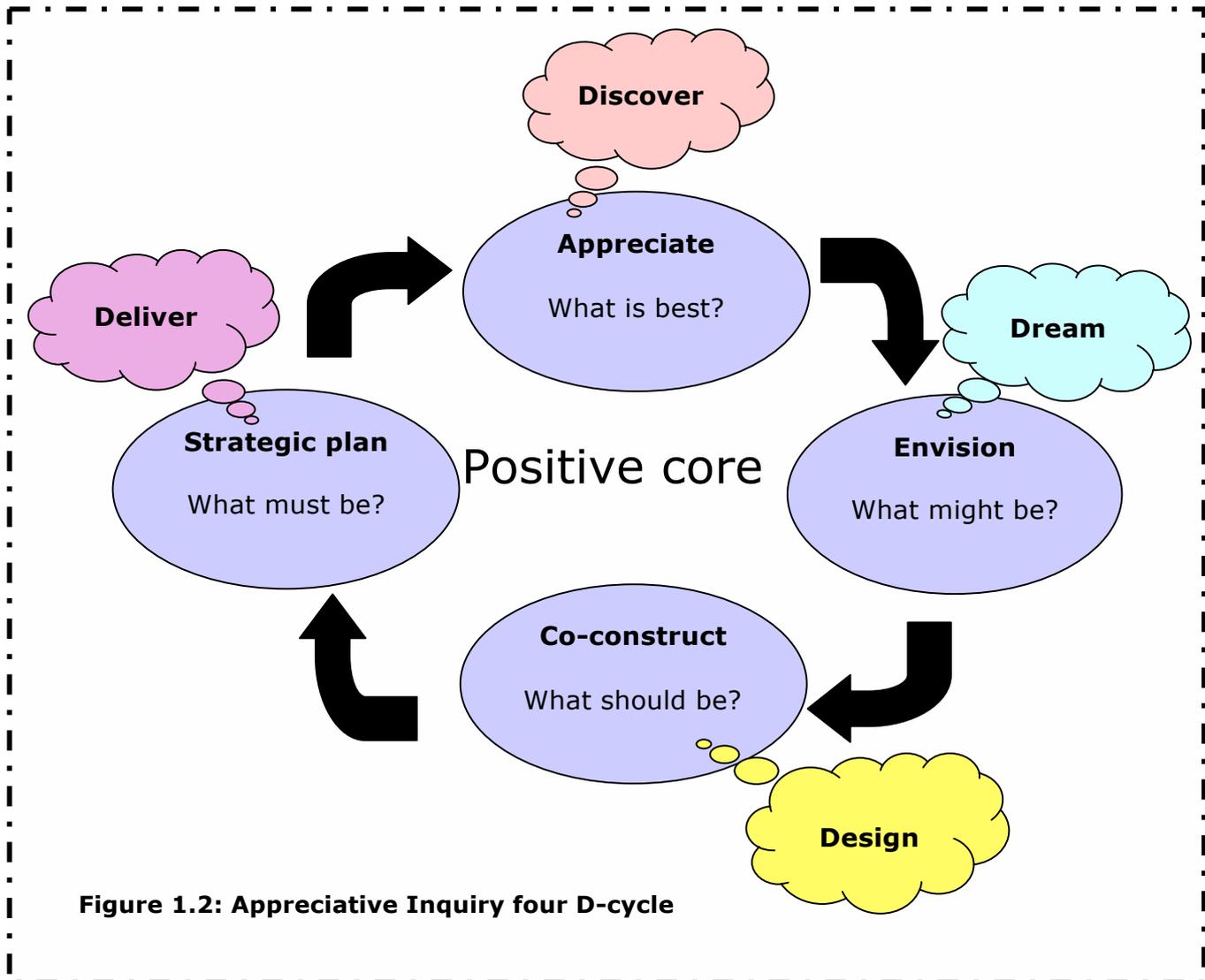
Why AI?

According to Preskill and Catsambas (2006:18) the sharing of stories is a prerequisite for beginning the organisation's reflection regarding the successes and strengths. It launches the inquiry with a celebration and the emergence of a vision of what the programme or organisation can look like when at its best. Once stakeholders (nurse educators and senior students) have told their stories, they are asked to describe the themes that emerged from the stories. Asking stakeholders to derive themes from their stories is a means of initiating group reflection.

The AI process gives nurses the opportunity and permission to reflect on incredible past accomplishments, and has allowed nurses to dream of a future where nursing excellence will serve as a flagship model of professional practice. A leader needs to be very nimble and versed in a variety of leadership strategies to meet the challenges of an ever-

changing work environment and workforce. AI should be one of those strategies (Stefaniak 2007:46).

In Figure 1 a representation of the 4-D cycle utilised in this study.



This research consisted of four phases namely the discovery, dream, design and delivery. Each of the phases will be discussed in detail regarding the objective, sampling, data collection, data analysis and principle of trustworthiness below.

In Figure 2 a schematikal overview of the research process followed in this study is presented.

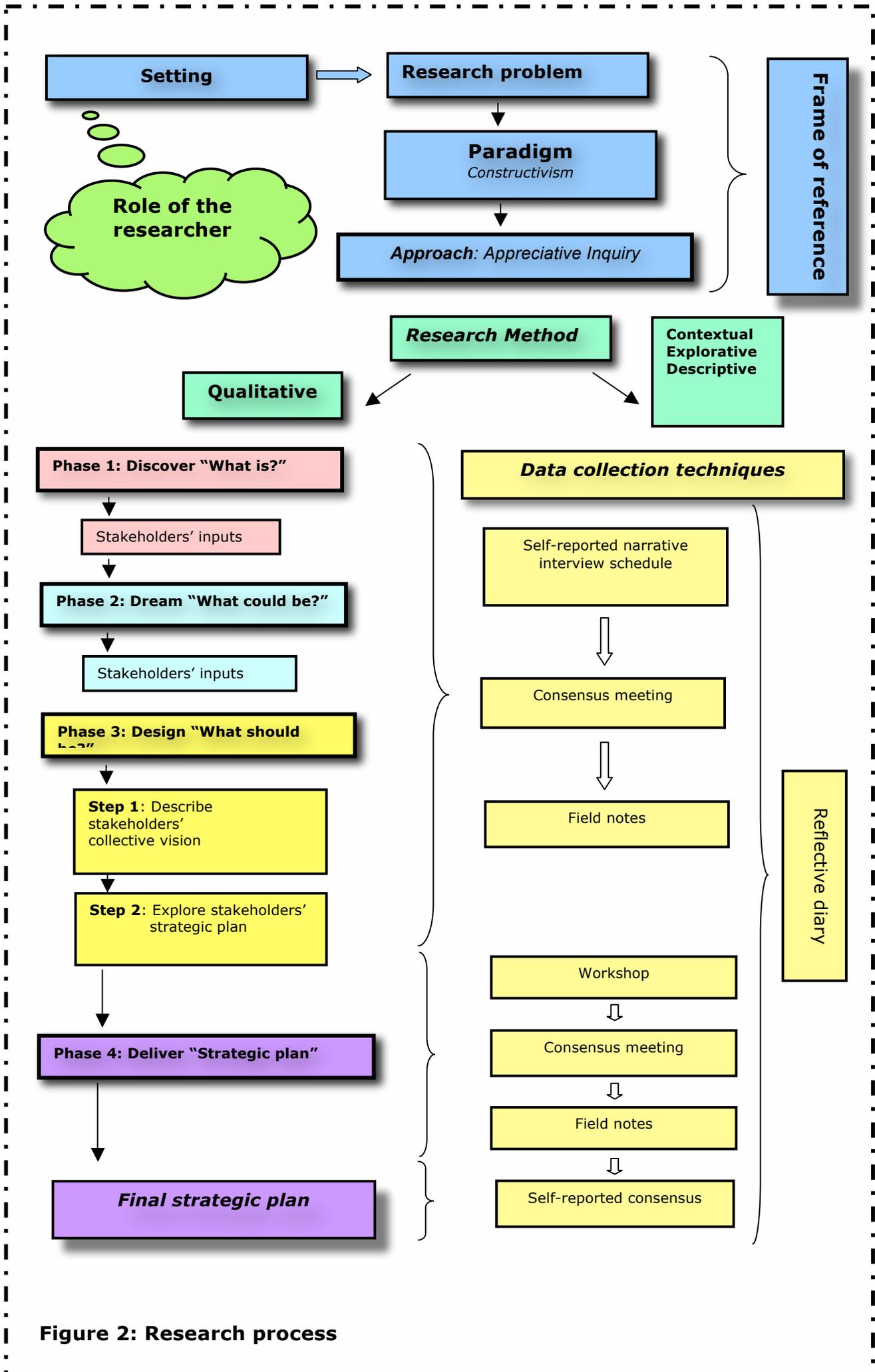


Figure 2: Research process



**Phase 1
Discover**

Phase 1: Discover “What is?”

During the discovery phase of the research process, the participants’ experiences of the four-year comprehensive programme were explored. Discovering and making explicit what works in an organisation helps people to clarify their dreams and aspirations, design meaningful futures, and chart a course of action towards a preferred destiny (Keefe & Pesut 2004:104).

Although the AI literature is of the opinion that the discovery phase should preferably be done in pairs or groups, it was logistically impossible in this study. The nurse educators involved in the education and training of the four-year comprehensive programme, from level one to level four had different timetables for the theoretical and practical component of the programme. For this reason it was impossible to arrange a date, time and place where fifty nurse educators could be available at the same time. Even within one level it was practically impossible, given that some nurse educators are involved in more than one level of the programme and in the theoretical and/or practical components of the comprehensive four-year programme.

To overcome this obstacle, the researcher in consultation with the promoters made a decision to construct a self-reported narrative interview schedule to collect data thereby participants were given the opportunity to participate and contribute towards this study.



**Phase 2
Dream**

Phase 2: Dream “what could be?”

During Phase 2 of the research process the participants’ wishes for the four-year comprehensive programme were explored. The main objective of the “dream phase” was meant for participants to envision themselves, the programme and the organisation functioning at its best. Participants were encouraged to think broadly and holistically about a desirable future. This is consistent with the views of Preskill and Coghlan (2003:10).



**Phase 3
Design**

Phase 3: Design “what should be?”

Phase 3 consisted of two steps, namely exploring participants’ inputs towards a collective vision and reaching consensus regarding the collective vision for the four-year comprehensive programme. In the design phase participants propose strategies, processes and systems, make decisions and develop collaborations that will create and support positive change. Preskill and Coghlan (2003:11) is of the opinion that detailed visions are developed based on what is discovered about past successes.

Step 1: Describe participants’ collective vision

During Step 1 of Phase 3 of the research process the participants’ collective vision for the four-year comprehensive programme was explored and described.

Step 2: Explore participants' strategic plan

Step 2 of Phase 3 of the research process consisted of exploring participants' strategic plans to reach the collective vision.

The population and sample, data collection, data analysis and trustworthiness relevant to Phases 1 to 3 of the research process will be discussed in Sections (a) to (e).

a) Population

The population refers to the total set from which the individuals of the study are chosen (Stommel & Wills 2004:297; Somekh & Lewin 2005:347; Burns & Grove 2007:40). In this study the entire population was regarded as research participants in the research process, participants who own the research problem, and learn and create knowledge (Hattingh 2001:80).

The target population refers to the entire population in which a researcher is interested (Babbie 2005:196; Burns & Grove 2007:342; Polit & Beck 2010:307). For the purpose of this study the target population consisted of two groups of participants, namely the nurse educators working at the specific NEI and the students registered at the specific NEI.

b) Sampling

In this study the researcher utilised consecutive sampling, as described by Polit and Beck (2010:311) consecutive sampling involves recruiting of *all* the participants from an accessible population who met the inclusion criteria over a specific time frame, or for a specified sample size. When all members of an accessible population are invited to participate in a study over a fixed time period, the risk of bias is greatly reduced.

⇒ ***Inclusion criteria***

The inclusion criteria included:

- Lecturers involved in the education and training of the four-year comprehensive programme at the specific NEI;
- Senior (3rd and 4th) year students enrolled for the four-year comprehensive programme at the specific NEI.

The inclusion criteria were set based on participants' expertise, experience and involvement in the specific programme, these participants could most likely make valuable contributions towards this study.

All the accessible participants (nurse educators and 3rd & 4th year students) were invited to participate in the study. A total of **245** participants agreed to engage in this research over a period of five months and included:

- 35 - lecturers
- 77 - 3rd year students
- 133 - 4th year students

c) Data collection

In this study the researcher utilised self-reported narrative interview schedules, a workshop, consensus meeting, field notes, a reflective diary and literature control. The phenomena in which researchers are interested must be translated into data that can be analysed. Without high-quality data collection methods the accuracy of evidence is subject to challenge (Polit & Beck 2010:338). The researcher utilised a self-reported narrative interview schedule to obtain participants' views on their peak experiences, wishes, challenges and vision for the four-year comprehensive programme.

⇒ ***Self-reported narrative interview schedule***

Dahlberg, Dahlberg and Nyström (2008:178) describe narratives as a description of a lived experience that is written down or recorded by the participant. Narratives focus on life events, as experienced by the participant which in some way illustrates the phenomenon that is the topic of the study. Narratives are a powerful form of human communication, participants should be directed to write as concretely, precisely and write as much as possible detail about the lived event (Dahlberg et al 2008:178).

The researcher utilised a self-reported narrative interview schedule in this study, to provide nurse educators and senior students at a specific NEI the opportunity to reflect on their peak experiences, wishes, challenges and vision for four-year comprehensive programme. The self-reported narrative interview schedule was made available to all participants (nurse educators and students) to give their inputs concerning their peak experiences, wishes, challenges and vision for the four-year comprehensive programme.

The researcher provided the nurse educators involved in the education and training of the four-year programme, each a self-reported narrative interview schedule in a sealed envelope to complete. Participation was voluntary and nurse educators who participated signed a consent form. The nurse educators were requested to deposit the completed narrative interview schedule and signed consent form in a sealed container at the receptionist's desk of the NEI. The researcher collected completed self-reported narrative interview schedules once a week for a period of three weeks.

The researcher had information sessions with the 3rd and 4th year students in groups during the allocated block week at the specific NEI. The researcher explained the aims, objectives and purpose of the study; participation was voluntary and students who were willing to participate in the study signed a consent form. The researcher gave students a self-

reported narrative interview schedule to complete during the information session. The researcher was present to answer any questions which may arise during the completion of the data collection instrument. Students deposited the completed self-reported narrative interview schedules and signed consent forms in a sealed container provided by the researcher, and the researcher took the sealed container with her after the information session.

A total of **35** nurse educators and **210** students completed the self-reported narrative interview schedule.

The researcher utilised narratives to provide the participants an opportunity to tell their stories about peak experiences, wishes, challenges and their vision for the four-year comprehensive programme. Preskill and Catsambas (2006:19) are of the opinion that the sharing of stories is a prerequisite for beginning the organisation's, reflection regarding its successes and strengths. Most important of all, when people tell stories that remind them of hope, joy and excitement, they often feel safer, are more collaborative, and ultimately, they become more engaged in the change process.

⇒ ***Consensus meeting***

In view of Wilson (2005:93) consensus literally means all group members agree. In decision-making, it means that all members *genuinely* agree.

Consensus means that all the group members can live with and support a decision regardless of whether they totally agree. In the consensus meeting, the group members worked to support a final decision, and individual ideas and opinions were valued. The consensus meeting was used to increase the trustworthiness of the findings of the analysis of the data obtained during the meeting.

The involvement of the nurse educators was negotiated before the start of the study and consensus was reached that the researcher (outsider) and

nurse educators (insiders) would share their knowledge to create shared vision and collaborate to form action plans, with outsider facilitation. This relation is referred to by Herr and Anderson (2005:40) as “*with/by*”, where the mode of participation is referred to as “*co-learning*”. Another consideration was the need to collaborate with the stakeholders beyond merely reaching consensus about the peak experiences, wishes and shared vision (Allen, Dyas & Jones 2004:110), but also to enhance their sense of ownership (Jamieson 1998) in (Allen et al 2004:110)

A consensus meeting was held with the principal and the academic heads of departments of the specific NEI, to confirm the findings as analysed by the researcher, from the self-reported narrative interview schedule of the participants. The members of the meeting confirmed the themes as identified by the researcher as correct. No additional themes were identified.

During the workshop consensus was reached with the nurse educators involved in the education and training of the four-year comprehensive programme on the co-constructed mission statement, shared vision and core values to be included in the strategic plan.

Consensus was reached by means of written feedback provided by the nurse educators who were part of the workshop, on the draft strategic plan for the four-year comprehensive programme. A final strategic plan was compiled with all the input from participants and the final feedback given in writing by the nurse educators. The final document was given to the principal and six academic head of departments. The principal and academic head of departments, confirmed that the proposed strategic plan can be accepted as correct and implemented as planned.

⇒ **Field notes**

Field notes as defined by Melnyk and Fineout-Overholt (2005:143) are self-designed observational protocols for recording notes about field observations. Most are not in fact recorded in the field, where researchers

may only be able to do “*jotting*” (e.g., phrases and key words as memory aids) until it is possible to compose an expanded account. Field notes are highly detailed records of events. As additional documents, field notes were written descriptions of what the researcher observed in the NEI and included both descriptive and reflective field notes (Lodico, Spaulding and Voeghtle (2006:119).

⇒ ***Reflective diary***

In view of Melnyk and Fineout-Overholt (2005:143) a reflective diary are notes researchers write to themselves, about ideas for data analysis, issues to pursue, persons to contact, questions, personal emotions, understandings, and confusions brought into focus by writing and thinking about the field experience. The reflective diary was employed to keep evidence of what was happening, why and where the researcher’s information evolved from as well as the research process itself (Kosky 2005:97; Polit & Beck 2006:220).

The reflective diary was used to keep record of significant events observed in the NEI, and the feelings and experiences of the researcher during the different phases of the research process. Data obtained was written in reflective journals, and included notes and mind maps.

The data recorded in the reflective diary included the time and date of observation and details of the informal meetings, conversations with nurse educators and the consensus meeting with participants. Remarks made by participants regarding the research, NEI and the programme were noted in the reflective diary.

d) Data analysis

Analysis of qualitative data relies on both rigor and imagination. In health research, qualitative researchers are increasingly expected to report their method of analysis in a transparent way. There is a widely held perception

that qualitative research is small scale. As it tends to involve smaller numbers of participants or settings than quantitative research, it is assumed incorrectly, in fact qualitative research can produce vast amounts of data (Green & Thorogood 2006:173; Polit & Beck 2010:465). In this study the researcher analysed 245 self-reported narrative interview schedules, 35 nurse educators and 210 senior students participated in the study.

Techs' (1990;142) descriptive method of open coding was chosen as a suitable method of data analysis in this research, based on the research interest, specifically to discover themes and concepts that are embedded in the multiple sources of evidence and to establish their connections in order to weave these together into a larger, consolidated picture (Creswell 1998:154-155; Babbie & Mouton 2001:498). This method of data analysis entails a combination of open, axial and selective coding. Asking questions and making comparisons are basic elements of this process (Babbie & Mouton 2001:499).

In Table one a summary of the derived themes, sub-themes, categories and sub-categories are depicted.

Table 1: Phases 1 to 3: summary of themes derived

The following colour coding system was utilised.

Colour coding	
Students	
Nurse educators	
Both	
Not mentioned	

Table 1: Phases 1 to 3: summary of themes derived

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories	Sub-categories
Quality education and training	Teaching	Competent nurse educators	Professional development
			Support for further education and training
			Innovative teaching strategies
	Learning	Competent students	Number of students
			Benchmarking
		Theory-practice correlation	Positive learning experience
			Application of knowledge and skills
		Clinical facilitation	
Research	Not indicated by respondents		
Institutional management	Selection criteria	Quantity	Ratio 1:35
		Quality	
	Programme development	Qualification	
		Curriculum	Content –choose speciality
			Workload
			Theory-practice correlation
			Assessment
Study leave			
Educational outcomes	Competent students	Knowledgable, skilled and caring	
Institutional resources	Library	Accessible	
		Recent	Electronic database
			Hard copies
	Support system	Personnel	
	Computer	Accessible	
		Literacy	Training programmes
		Support system	Personnel
	Simulation laboratory	Accessible	
		Recent	Models, computer-based training, DVDs, CDs
Support system		Personnel	



**Phase 4
Deliver**

Phase 4: Deliver “what will be?”

During this phase of the research a workshop was held with nurse educators, during which the mission, vision, core values and strategic plan for the comprehensive four-year programme was co-constructed to reach the shared vision as set by the stakeholders.

Results

Phase 1

During the first phase of the research Objective 1 realised. This phase was conducted to determine “*what is*” within the comprehensive four-year programme. Data was collected by means of a self-reported narrative interview schedule and focused on the peak experiences as perceived by the stakeholders concerning the comprehensive four-year programme. The researcher as facilitator of the research process included the stakeholders at the specific NEI who are involved in the comprehensive four-year programme (lecturers and senior students: 3rd and 4th year).

Findings

Findings of this phase of the research were based on the peak experiences articulated by the stakeholders, as evident in Table 1. A “sense of achievement” was their most satisfying experience. The students added that a positive learning experience in practice and the support from lecturers added to their peak experiences.

Implications

The implication is that both the stakeholder groups wish for the students to be successful and achieve learning outcomes. The lecturers felt a sense of achievement when their students achieved and were successful, the students on the other hand indicated a sense of achievement when they were successful and achieved a learning outcome.

Recommendations

Improve student success and sense of achievement by enhancing lecturer support in the practical and theoretical components of the four-year comprehensive programme. Aim for an optimal lecturer to student ratio of at least 1:25 instead of the current 1:79.

Phase 2

During the second phase of the research Objective 2 realised. This phase was conducted to determine "*what could be*" within the four-year comprehensive programme. Data was collected by means of a self-reported narrative interview schedule and focused on the wishes stakeholders have for the comprehensive four-year programme.

Findings

Findings of this phase of the research as evident from Tables 4.7 revealed that stakeholders agreed that the workload of the comprehensive four-year programme is "*unmanageable*". Lecturers were concerned about the volume of work that needs to be covered during a limited timeframe. The students expressed that the content was "*overwhelming*" and stated that they were unable to cope with the excessive amounts of academic information.

The lecturers additionally wished for selection of smaller students groups and restructuring of the four-year comprehensive programme back to a three-year diploma. Students additionally wished for study leave prior to

examinations, optimal educational resources and restructuring of the four-year comprehensive programme to a degree qualification.

Experience, support and placement in the clinical practice was emphasised by the fourth year students. These students expressed a concern about the fragmented allocation for short periods of time (two to three weeks) at various clinical settings during the clinical component of the programme. This short timeframe resulted in inadequate clinical experience.

Implications

The lecturer to student ratio at the specific NEI where the study was done is 1:163. This ratio is much higher than the internationally acceptable ratio of 1:25. The large numbers of students are unmanageable and hinder educational innovation. Smaller groups could enhance educational excellence and academic outcomes of students. Additional smaller groups of students would enhance personal interaction and support between the lecturers and the students, as well as enhance the facilitation of learning.

Currently students do not get any study leave before their examinations. For that reason they lack adequate time to prepare for the exams, as students work 12 hour shifts in the clinical practice the weekend before the examination period starts. This leads to absenteeism without permission from the clinical practice, which in turn may compromise patient care. Students indicated that they feel guilty for neglecting the patients, but they had no choice as they wanted to succeed in their studies. Many students have already repeated a study year; currently students may only repeat one study year. This implies that if a student fails again their studies are terminated.

Presently it costs the Gauteng Department of Health R58 000.00 per year per student for the comprehensive four-year programme training. At the specific NEI where the study was conducted averages of 30% of first year students fail. This implies that about 85 of the 300 first year students

have the opportunity to repeat the first year of training. This translates into an additional cost of R4 930 000.00 (85 X R58 000.00) for the Gauteng Department of Health.

Outdated and inaccessible resources (library and simulation laboratory) in terms of availability and accessibility to students could have a negative impact on the academic performance of students. Currently students do not have access to electronic databases; many lecturers do not have computers or internet facilities, and this negatively impacts the accessibility of information for academic purposes.

Recommendations

The relevance and inclusion of curriculum content, as it is presented presently should collaboratively be evaluated with all stakeholders at the various NEIs in Gauteng offering the comprehensive four-year programme. Realistic and achievable academic outcomes should be set for each subject.

The focus of the comprehensive four-year programme should be on ensuring quality education and training of students at NEIs, and not on quantity. The selection committee of the Gauteng Department of Health should re-evaluate current selection criteria and availability of resources when determining student numbers for each NEI. The lecturer to student ratio should not exceed 1: 35. Lecturers indicated that they would like to have input in the selection of students for the four-year comprehensive programme. A collaborative selection initiative between the NEIs and the selection committee of the Gauteng Department of Health could enhance the academic outcomes at NEIs.

Providing study leave to enable students to prepare for examinations could decrease the termination and failure rate amongst students. This in turn could decrease the financial burden of education and training of student nurses to the Gauteng Department of Health.

The Gauteng Department of Health should budget for the imperative upgrade of academic resources, especially library and simulation laboratory facilities at the NEI. Efficient resources play an imperative role towards educational excellence within the NEI.

Phase 3

During the third phase of the research Objective 3 realised. This phase was conducted to determine “*what should be*” within the four-year comprehensive programme. Data was collected by means of a self-reported narrative interview schedule and focused on the vision that stakeholders have for the comprehensive four-year programme.

Findings

Findings of this phase of the research as evident from Tables 4.7 and Table 4.10 revealed that stakeholders envisioned that students who complete the four-year comprehensive programme were knowledgeable, caring and skilled practitioners. In addition it was emphasised that the four disciplines should not be compulsory, but that the students should have a choice regarding which specific discipline they wanted to specialise in.

Implications

Stakeholders all envisioned an end-product (student) that is knowledgeable, caring and skilled after completion of the four-year comprehensive programme, a product of the NEI they could be proud of. At present the comprehensive programme consists of four major disciplines, namely General Nursing Science, Midwifery, Community Nursing Science and Psychiatric Nursing Science. Stakeholders expressed that all students are not interested in all four disciplines, and that the lack of interest in some of the disciplines by a large number of students is currently adding to unsatisfactory academic outcomes.

Recommendations

Changing the comprehensive four-year programme to a three-year general and community nursing programme, with an option to select an additional discipline (Midwifery or Psychiatric Nursing Science) in the fourth year could be a possible solution. If students are able to select the disciplines they are interested in, they normally work harder and perform better in the subjects they like most and are really interested in; this in turn could enhance the academic outcomes of students. If this suggestion is not feasible, the reduction of the current workload (content) will make it possible for students to cope. If students are granted study leave to prepare for the examinations the academic performance of students enrolled for the four-year comprehensive programme should improve noticeably.

Phase 4

During the fourth phase of the research Objective 4 realised and included the inputs of the lecturers, during a workshop as well as a consensus meeting. This phase was conducted to determine "*what will be*". Data was collected by means of a workshop and focused on the co-construction of the strategic plan that could be implemented to enhance educational excellence within the NEI.

Derived from the data collected during Phases 1 to 3, a draft strategic plan was constructed by the researcher. This draft was presented during a workshop and the lecturers were requested to give inputs regarding the mission, vision, core values and strategic plan to enhance educational excellence.

The strategic plan consisted of four sections, which included:

- Section A: Draft mission statement
- Section B: Draft vision statement
- Section C: Core values
- Section D: Draft strategic plan

The draft strategic plan consisted of three main strategic aims, namely quality education and training, institutional management and institutional resources.

The first strategic aim was quality education and training. It consisted of four main sub-strategies. Three of these sub-strategies were expressed by the stakeholders, namely excellence in teaching, excellence in learning and excellence in community engagement. The fourth sub-strategy, excellence in research, was included by the researcher, based on a thorough literature control conducted during the data analysis.

This was an area of concern as research is an integral part of the knowledge base of a profession which could enhance educational excellence and contribute to the academic output of the NEI. Consensus to add this sub-strategy was reached with the lecturers involved in the education and training of the four-year comprehensive programme.

The second strategic aim, institutional management, focused on the establishment of an enabling environment, increasing institutional visibility and sustained institutional governance for continuous change and enhancement towards educational excellence.

The third strategic aim, institutional resources, focused on human, technical and financial resources within the NEI. A final strategic plan document which will serve as working document for the NEI was compiled once consensus with stakeholders was reached.

The most satisfying two-letter word....



Let's use it!

Section A: Mission statement

The mission of the SGL Nursing College is to educate learners to become qualified, competent, caring and skilled professional nurse practitioners who are recognised globally. The College provides quality nursing education and excellent training relevant to the changing profession, society and healthcare environment. The College promotes learners professional and personal development and enhance opportunities to conduct research, which in return will advance nursing science and nursing practice. Enhancing collaboration between stakeholders promotes excellence in healthcare delivery to diverse populations in the community.

Interaction fuels action

John C Maxwell (2001:193)

Section B: Vision statement

Our vision is that the SG Lourens Nursing College will be recognised globally for the excellence of its learners and its outstanding contribution to knowledge and learning through educational innovation and evidence-based research.

Great vision precedes great achievement

John C Maxwell (2001:91)

Section C: Core values

Excellence: Excellence is the status of highest quality. It is a condition of exhibited superiority.

Caring: Caring is characterised by the concern and consideration for the whole person. Commitment to the common good, demonstrating the ability to understand the needs of other and a commitment to act in the best interest of all stakeholders.

Respect: Respect is the acknowledgement, consideration and regard for the ideas and unique contributions of other.

Innovation: Innovation is the creation and discovery of new ideas and ways of doing things through creative inquiry.

Collaboration: Collaboration is a partnership between individuals and organisations that bring diverse skills and perspectives to a task.

No one of us is more important than the rest of us

Ray Croc

Strategic aim 1: Quality education and training

Strategy 1: Excellence in teaching

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Quality educators	Recruit educators	○ Recruit educators with specific expertise (e.g. research expertise)	1	
		○ Recruit educators with post-graduate qualifications (masters and PhD)	1	
		○ Recruit educators with specific clinical expertise	1	
		○ Establish a college website with relevant information	2	
		○ Recruit educators with a passion for pre-graduate students		Continuous
	Retain educators	○ Recognise and appreciate individuals contribution to the NEI	2	
		○ Encourage an enthusiastic culture of learning	2	
		○ Promote a challenging culture of learning	2	
		○ Provide continuous support for academic and intellectual freedom	2	
		○ Communicate and celebrate scholarly accomplishments	6 months	
		○ Motivate nurse educators to study further		3-5

Strategy 1: Excellence in teaching *(cont.)*

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Quality educators <i>(cont.)</i>	Benchmark education	○ Showcase educational innovation	6 months	
		○ Establish formal collaborations and partnerships with other faculties and colleges in nursing, locally and globally		5
		○ Strengthen formal collaboration with clinical affiliates	1	
		○ Engagement in nurse educator and student exchange programmes		
		○ Facilitate "best practice workshops"		Continuous
	Mutual respect	○ Create an inclusive environment with mutual respect and where members are sensitive towards diversity	1	
		○ Offer/attend transcultural workshops	1	
		○ Organise cultural days to display and explore different cultures	1	

Strategy 1: Excellence in teaching *(cont.)*

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Quality students	Knowledgeable and skilled professional nurses	○ Plan and implement content relevant to the changing profession, society and healthcare environment	1	
		○ Advance teaching strategies to enhance critical analytical thinking and creativity of the learners	1	
		○ Continuous accompaniment of learners to ensure competent, knowledgeable and skilled learners	1	
Quality educational programme	Innovative approach	○ Collegial collaboration to explore new innovative educational strategies	2	
		○ Collaborate nationally with other NEIs and have meeting	6 months	Continuous
		○ Networking with other NEIs nationally and internationally	2	
		○ Showcase and appreciate education innovation within the NEI	1	

Strategy 2: Excellence in learning

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Learning experience	Create a positive learning experience	o Facilitate learning of clinical skills in the skills laboratory before exposure to clinical facilities	6months	
		o Consult experts in the specific area of specialisation		Continuous
		o Ensure nurse educator to student ratio in clinical facilities of 1:15		Continuous
		o Identify mentors in the clinical facilities	1	
		o Value and appreciate mentors for their teaching and support of students	1	
		o Plan and conduct workshops pertaining to role modelling, education and training for staff in the clinical setting		
Sense of achievement	Experience achievement	o Facilitate inter-NEI "competitions" e.g. debates, research presentations	1	
		o Acknowledge achievements (award system, publishing in NEI media)	1	Continuous
		o Celebrate and showcase students' initiatives, commitments and successes	1	Continuous

Strategy 2: Excellence in learning *(cont.)*

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Educator support	Theoretical component of the programme	○ Provide feedback of each subject evaluation	1	
		○ Improve study guides annually based	1	Continuous
		○ Provide guidance to indicate the expectations of educators	1	
		○ Encourage and facilitate group work and peer teaching and - reviewing	Cont	
		○ Continuous professional development opportunities for nurse educators	1	
	Clinical component of the programme	○ Increase clinical accompaniment, nurse educators and mentor should accompany students on a weekly bases	Weekly	Continuous
		○ Nurse educators and mentor should be available in the clinical setting to assist students in development of knowledge and skills to enhance clinical competency	Weekly	Continuous
		○ Upgrade clinical facilities at the NEI e.g. skills laboratory	1	
		○ Annual assessment of the clinical component of the programme	1	
		○ Continuous professional development opportunities for nurse educators to enhance there clinical skills	1	

Strategy 2: Excellence in learning *(cont.)*

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Workload	Manageable workload	○ Evaluate relevance of content and adapt to the changing healthcare environment.	1	
		○ Review assessment strategies	1	
		○ Improve available support for nurse educators (computers, invigilation, marking ext.)		Continuous
		○ Recruit support personnel for library	2	
		○ Recruit personnel for computer assistance	2	
		○ Initiate training programs for nurse educators and students with regards to computer programmes and online facilities	6 months	Continuous
		○ Review nurse educators workload	1	Continuous
		○ Comply with nurse educator: student ratio	1	Continuous
	Time to prepare for examination	○ Increase study days before summative assessment to enable students to manage the content	1	Continuous
		○ Implement remedial blocks before summative assessment	1	Continuous
		○ Plan examination timetable to make provision for at least two study days between written subjects	1	Continuous

Strategy 3: Excellence in research

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Research output	Increase research output	○ Facilitate and host research forum days	1	Continuous
		○ Enable a positive research climate between nurse educators and senior students	1	Continuous
		○ Increase the utilisation of research assignments	6 months	Continuous
		○ Enhance communication plan to showcase the NEI's research output	2	Continuous
		○ Create opportunities for nurse educators to attend conferences: oral and/or poster presentations	2	Continuous
		○ Appreciate and celebrate successes pertaining to research outputs	1	
		○ Initiate fourth-year research project and presentation of projects during research forum	1	
		○ Publishing articles in accredited journals	2	Continuous
		○ Offering continuous professional development workshops	6 months	Continuous
		○ Facilitate and host research workshops and research forums	2	Continuous

Strategy 4: Excellence in community engagement

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Community engagement	Initiate community projects and increase NEI visibility	○ Conduct a community needs assessment	1	
		○ Initiate community projects to address identified needs	1	
		○ Enhance active nurse educator and student involvement in the community (increase visibility) e.g. screening of blood pressure or blood glucose	1	
		○ Initiate and facilitate health education days in the community by students of the NEI	1	
		○ Expand partnerships to increase institutional visibility and support in the community	1	
		○ Enhance marketing and public relations efforts	1	
		○ Conduct workshops to plan community projects and community engagements	1	
		○ Assess the community's satisfaction with service delivery, availability and competency	1	Continuous

Strategic aim 2: Institutional management

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Enabling environment	Mutual support	o Enable nurse educators (e.g. conference attendance, workshops and continuous professional development programme)	2	Continuous
		o Establish a support group system (e.g. monthly meetings)	6 months	Continuous
		o Organise team building opportunities	6 months	
	Learning culture	o Create supportive structures (e.g. computers, Internet access)		Continuous
		o Plan and implement an academic in-service program according to the identified needs		Continuous
		o Upgrade library facilities-latest textbooks and journals	1	
		o Library hours to be extended to address the needs of the nurse educators and the students		Continuous
		o Motivate for more nurse educators to address the high student to nurse educator ratio (1:79)	1	
		o Conduct an assessment of the nurse educators educational needs	1	

Strategic aim 2: Institutional management *(cont.)*

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Enabling environment <i>(cont.)</i>	Promote participation	○ Provide opportunity to contribute to the programme development (e.g. curriculum planning)	1	
		○ Encourage and appreciate contributions to programme development	1	
		○ Encourage contributions pertaining to strategic planning	2	
		○ Promote development of nurse educators' managerial skills by rotating HOD functions	3	Continuous
	Mentoring	○ Initiate an internal mentoring programme between senior and junior students	2	Continuous
		○ Facilitate collaboration between affiliated university's nurse educators and NEI nurse educators for external mentoring and in-service training opportunities within the fields of speciality	1	

Strategic aim 2: Institutional management *(cont.)*

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Institutional governance	Continuous academic programme review	○ Conduct a quality audit of the educational programme	1	Continuous
		○ Student evaluation pertaining to theoretical component of the programme	1	Continuous
		○ Student evaluation pertaining to the clinical component of the programme	1	Continuous
		○ Implement a continuous quality improvement approach to provide for ongoing comprehensive evaluation of the curriculum	1	Continuous
		○ Educators review evidence and implement change towards a culture of excellence	1	Continuous
		○ Comply with accreditation standards set by the South African Nursing Council (SANC)	2	Continuous

Strategic aim 2: Institutional management *(cont.)*

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Institutional governance <i>(cont.)</i>	Enhance student performance	○ Monitor students' theoretical and clinical outcomes	1	Continuous
		○ Identify and improve support services to meet the needs of a diverse student population	1	Continuous
		○ Develop support structures to enhance learning	1	Continuous
		○ Encourage participation in research projects	1	Continuous
		○ Acknowledge and appreciate students contribution and performance	1	Continuous
		○ Negotiate for students to obtain student status instead of employee status	2	Continuous
	Conduct cost analysis	○ Monitor educator performance	1	Continuous
		○ Monitor student progress in relation to costs	1	
		○ Provide annual feedback regarding the NEI budget	1	Continuous
		○ Explore possibilities for student bursaries instead of student salaries	2	

Strategic aim 3: Institutional resources *(cont.)*

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Human resources	Nurse educators	○ Increase nurse educator numbers	1	Continuous
		○ Work towards a nurse educator: student ratio of 1:35	1	Continuous
		○ Increase availability of lecture rooms		5
		○ Create opportunities for further education for nurse educators e.g. sabbatical leave	2	Continuous
		○ Ensure continuous professional development of nurse educators	2	
		○ Negotiate for a secretary for the nurse educators to assist with administrative functions e.g. typing of question papers and study guides	2	Continuous
	Students	○ Provide a student centre e.g. for recreational purposes	2	Continuous
		○ Re-asses accommodation and transport facilities for students	2	Continuous

Strategic aim 3: Institutional resources *(cont.)*

Challenges	Strategic direction	Strategic actions	Timeframe	
			Short term (0-2 years)	Long term (2-5 years)
Technical resources <i>(cont.)</i>	Simulation laboratory	○ Upgrade the simulation laboratory to meet the needs of the students and set learning outcomes	1	
		○ Expand the accessibility of the simulation laboratory	1	
		○ Recruit support personnel for simulation laboratory	1	
	Library	○ Increase number of available electronic and hard copy journals	2	Continuous
		○ Increase number of current prescribed and recommended books	2	Continuous
		○ Facilitate in-service programs for nurse educators and students with regards to utilising online facilities	1	
		○ Plan and make study facilities available for students e.g. reading room	2	

Quality education and training + institutional management + resource management =

educational excellence

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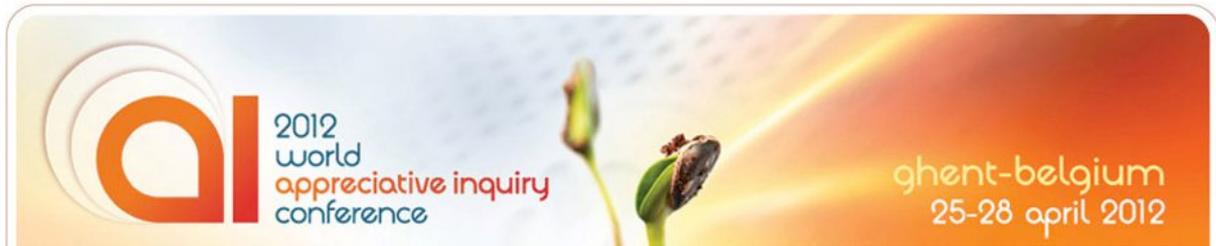
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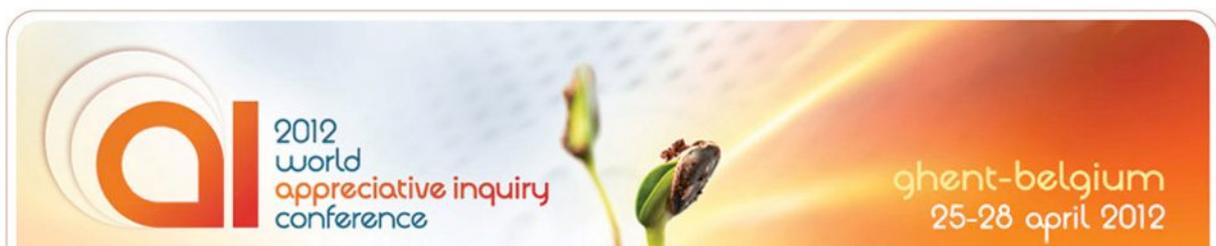
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Appreciative Supervision. Effects of Appreciative Supervision on the Social Practices

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Appreciative Supervision. Effects of Appreciative Supervision on the Social Practices

Stefan Cojocaru¹

Abstract

The paper analyses the way the results obtained by social workers are influenced by appreciative supervision; we initiated an experiment through which we aimed to measure the results of their activities with clients. The results were tested using two different approaches: one focused on the problem and the other centered on appreciation. We chose a pair of similar cases in terms of the child's risk of abandonment and we managed each of them differently, according to opposing views on supervision; the results showed that desired changes can be brought about more easily when using appreciative supervision. Apart from measuring the advantages of using appreciative supervision, the experiment highlights the disadvantages of focusing on the problem, the effects obtained through the latter approach being less substantial. The research results help us identify new visions of social intervention designed to solve social problems, refine language and achieve the desired results.

Keywords: appreciative supervision; appreciative inquiry; social work; problem-centred supervision; social vulnerability.

Introduction

Cooperrider and Srivatsva launched the concept of *appreciative inquiry* as a response to Lewin's *action research* developed in the '40s; the appreciative inquiry aimed to become an instrument for social change, and especially for organisational change. From the point of view of the authors, one of the failures of action research is due to its *focus on the problem*, an approach devoid of innovative potential. They believed that focussing on the problem inevitably leads to constraints on imagination and reduces the possibility of creating new theories. (Cooperrider & Srivatsva, 1987). The appreciative inquiry vision turns upside down the problem-centred approach, paying attention to what goes well in an organisation, its successes being identified by its own

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members. Researching the problems in an organisation results in their preservation, deepening and amplification; therefore, although in each organisation there are things that do not work well, in order to diminish their influence on development, the researcher must start from what works well in an organisation, from its successes, identified and interpreted as such by its own members. Cooperrider and Srivastva built the appreciative approach based on Kenneth Gergen's constructionism (1985), which sees reality as a social construction and as a constant reconstruction in the interactions between individuals. In the constructionist perspective, any organisation is a human construction, generated by the interpretations given by the social actors to this entity and to themselves (Cooperrider et al., 1995: 157). Therefore, in order to change an organisation, one must act on the way individuals interpret the organisation (Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1994). Whereas in the beginning the appreciative inquiry was used in *organizational development* (Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1987; Cooperrider & Srivastva, 1994; Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001; Cooperrider & Avital, 2004; Rattanaphan, 2010; Bushe, 2010), this strategy of change management has gradually expanded towards areas such as *education* (Yballe & O'Connor, 2000; Lander, 2002; Kumar & Chacko, 2010; Kelly, 2010; Cojocar, 2011), *healthcare* (Hirunwat, 2011; Rubin, Kerrell, & Roberts, 2011), *evaluation* (Coghlan, Preskill & Catsambas, 2003; Cojocar, 2008; Messerschmidt, 2008; Ojha, 2010; Kavanagh et al., 2010), *therapy* (Sandu & Ciuchi, 2010; Donaldson & Ko, 2010; Rubin, Kerrell & Roberts, 2011; Galazka, 2011; Wendt, Tuckey & Prosser, 2011), *education* (Kumar & Chacko, 2010; Kelly, 2010; Cojocar, 2011), *research methodology* (Cojocar, 2005; Reed, 2007; Kluger & Nir, 2010; Van Gramberg, 2010; Cowling & Repede, 2010), *leadership in organizations* (Ludema, Whitney, Mohr & Griffin, 2003; Bushe & Kassam, 2005; Hart, Conklin & Allen, 2008). Our aim was to see to what extent the appreciative inquiry could be applied in various social work practices (Cojocar, 2005). Thus, starting from the principles of appreciative inquiry, we built an appreciation-based supervision model.

Using Appreciative Inquiry Principles in the Supervision Process

Cooperrider and Whitney (2000) consider that the appreciative inquiry is based on five principles, which form the foundation for viewing social intervention in terms of "interpretations of reality". These principles help us establish the theoretic foundations for the way the supervision process is organised and the way the appreciative strategy is consolidated within this process: (1) *The constructionist principle*: This principle helps us understand the importance of individual interpretations in constructing realities and in manifesting the interactions between our mental models connected to personal practices adapted to social requirements, which are socially constructed in a relational process. Thus, changing a organisation through appreciative inquiry

means, above all, changing these interpretations and definitions, resulting in the building of a shared, collective and coherent image. This principle helps us stress the educational dimension of supervision, which is considered a form in which those being supervised take part in a reconstruction of the meanings experiences have for the construction of future actions. (Mezirow, 1996). Human actions are prescribed by ideas, beliefs, intentions, interests, purposes and means, values, habits and theories; the transformation of conventional human behaviours is achieved by *changing ideas, beliefs, intentions, interests, purposes and means, values, habits and conventional theories*; all these action generators are the result of social construction and have a strong effect in rebuilding the future frameworks of interpretation and action. Constructionism may be applied in order to bring about change in the way an organisation, community or any other form of social structure is approached, by going beyond the *subject-object, true-false, good-bad* etc. dualisms. (2) *The principle of simultaneity*. This principle concerns that fact that the way questions are asked during supervision meetings and the changing of practices are *simultaneous*; the mere formulation of the questions addressed by the supervisor causes changes to happen in the social worker's practices. This principle of the appreciative inquiry is fundamental in explaining the parallel process taking place in supervision. Searles (1995) is the first to mention the *parallel process* developed during supervision, while Yontef (1997) describes the parallel process taking place in supervision as a type of modelling occurring as a normal effect of the support function of supervision. The supervisors can create a stronger relationship based on support by highlighting the recent successes of those supervised rather than their problems and frustrations. This is an *appreciative vision*, which underscores the strengths of the social workers' activity. Underscoring successes (expressed through invitations to talk about the social worker's most recent achievements) favours the creation of the conditions required for an appreciative intervention or for an appreciative case management. The *appreciative perspective* in the supervision process can be developed through a parallel process in the social workers' practice with their clients, under the guise of negotiated rules, already carrying in themselves an interpretation of said rules. The social workers' interventions will be guided by these formalised expressions, assembled into procedures, which can make change in the client's situation possible. In order to succeed it is necessary to create the context for its application. When those being supervised describe their recent successes, according to the "heliotropic process" (Cooperrider, 1990), the supervisor can guide the discussion towards an analysis of these successes (Johnson and Leavitt, 2001) and explore together with the social workers other situations and other cases. The way this parallel process is led is important; it is necessary to steer those being supervised towards the strengths of the situation experienced by the client and by the social worker in the relationship with the client. (3) *The poetic principle*: According to this principle, institutional

practices are the result of the multiple interpretations of individuals, expressed through *language*, which, in its turn, had a formative character, being a part of the constructed world. Language is not a mere image of the world, but instead a form of social action. Ideas, representations, images, histories, stories, metaphors, generate events, depending on their *emotional charge* and on the way they are interpreted. *The metaphors* describing the organisations are ways of social action for structuring these organisations. Profound changes in social practices can be generated by changes in linguistic practices; language has a very important role in changing social practices, because it is the result of dialogue; thus, language becomes a "map" that precedes the "territory", and linguistic practices bring about social changes. (4) *The principle of anticipation* states that social work practices are influenced by the *positive future image* constructed through the individual creations that influence present events. In order to argument this principle, Cooperrider and Whitney use the example of the placebo effect used in medicine and the Pygmalion effect, which prove that the image the teachers have about pupils is a strong predictor of the performances of these pupils. This principle promotes in the supervision process and in the direct intervention in social work (and not only) a "reversed determinism", meaning that the goals, what can be obtained (the effects) are projected, while the circumstances that can contribute to the fulfilment of these goals (the causes) are generated later on; this is a process of designing and achieving change which we have called "social projectionism" (Cojocaru, 2006). (5) *The positive principle* concerns the potential and the force that appreciation has in organisational development, due to the fact it discovers the positive aspects and it achieves innovative change in correlation with the anticipation of a positive future. This aspect of positive change is an unknown in today's management (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2000), due to the fact that classic change management focuses on analysing and diagnosing problems or organisational deficiencies, leaving out the positive vision (Whitney, 1998).

Appreciative Supervision vs. Problem- oriented Supervision

Problem-centred supervision aims to identify the problems faced by the social worker when solving a case, diagnosing clients' problems, analysing the causes of the problems and finding solutions for eliminating them, being a prisoner of the deficiency paradigm. If the supervisor and those supervised focus their work on the *causes of the problem*, and this translates both into the way supervision is carried out and into the way the intervention is carried out (based on the supervisor's expectations), the social worker's attention will be focused on the past, on the moment when said problem appeared and developed. The discussions between the supervisor and the social worker are guided by questions generating causal responses, that are responses aiming to identify the causes for which the clients find themselves in a particular situation, the causes that generated the problem,

and the explanations concerning the ways in which the generating causes can be eliminated. In many situations in the practice of social work the causes are diverse and sometimes difficult to identify; oftentimes these causes can no longer be changed and in this case supervision has the role of supporting the social worker in identifying solutions for the current situation (the elimination of causes being impossible, the solution is focused on alleviating the "symptoms"). From this point of view, supervision is directed at identifying the effects of the problem and the solutions for diminishing them. Although the supervision is *solution centred*, the starting point of analysis remains the problem. Therefore, irrespective of approach, a focus on weaknesses, limitations, problems, shortcomings and failures continue to be the filters through which most practitioners interpret situations, thus decreasing the innovation and the creativity required for change.

Economic deprivations and other causes that limit opportunities can be overcome when the social worker proposes an appreciative intervention, by identifying and assessing the way problems were solved in the past, and the resources available for overcoming the current situation. The past is no longer seen as a sum of failures, problems and tragedies, but instead as a wide range of solutions found for overcoming such situations at those particular moments. The appreciative intervention perspective, based on the client's strengths and on the clients' being aware of them, refuses to identify clients with their shortcomings, failures or pathological situations. Every situation is rethought from the perspective of its positive aspects and of the client's potential. The *appreciative perspective* turns the professional from a *lead actor* into a resource made available to the clients, the latter becoming the protagonists. The practitioners are trained to see clients as intelligent human beings, using their own strengths and resources in order to overcome difficult situations and to increase their chances of improving their own situation; thus, part of the intervention aims to transfer competences from the specialist to the client or to other actors in the proximity of the client. When the clients call on the social worker, the first thing they present is the "vulnerable perspective", expecting the social worker to empathise with them, with their troubles and suffering, to understand and share the suffering. However, the strengths perspective emphasizes the fact that we should not neglect the mechanisms used by the clients in solving their problems and difficulties. The differences between the problem-based intervention and the appreciative intervention (built on strengths and on an appreciative interpretation of situations) can also be seen in the different manner in which the *classic supervision* and the *appreciative supervision* are viewed. In the appreciative supervision, the accent is placed on the *evaluation* of favourable situations, generating new opportunities for learning. In the cases where, during supervision meetings, the social workers present their own problems or weaknesses, the supervisor can encourage an *appreciative vision*, starting from the idea that these problems can be ignored, precisely in order to practise and learn,

together with the social workers, how the analysis of the situation can be carried out starting from the *identification of successes*. Most often, the clients may describe their situation in terms of problems and limitations; the supervisor's role is to transfer the social worker's interest and attention onto the strengths of the situation and to re-evaluate the client's state from this perspective. Rosenfeld (1997) recommends to social workers and supervisors three techniques of learning from successes: 1) adopt a reflexive attitude, 2) pay additional attention to the clients who have developed a flexible attitude, and 3) enter a genuine partnership with the client in order to learn from them. The appreciative supervision uses postmodern ideas, focussing on *strengths* rather than on *shortcomings and limitations*, on *potential* rather than on *constraints*, on *future possibilities* rather than on *past problems*, using *multiple perspectives* and abandoning *universal truths*. The appreciative supervision helps social workers cope with crisis situations and, due to the evaluation of long-term implications (as a part of personnel development strategy), it can build new competences for the future challenges of the organisation.

Stages of the appreciative supervision process

In order to explain the stages of appreciative supervision in this article, the models built by Rich (1993), Van Kessel and Haan (1993) were used, adapting them according to the principles of appreciative approach. From the analysis of these models, geared towards analysing problems and identifying the most appropriate solutions, we have directed supervision towards discovering, understanding and amplifying positive situations. The challenge to experiment with such a model came as an expression of the desire to identify new intervention strategies in social work. The model used has four stages (adapted in relation to the 4-D cycle, Cooperrider & Whitney, 2001):

- a) *the knowledge stage* – discovering the greatest successes of those supervised in their relationship with the clients, in similar situations encountered throughout their experience as social workers. It is an interesting fact that in this stage the supervisor focuses on the interpretations given by the social workers to the clients' situation, to the clients' life environment, to their own positive experience in the relationship with the clients; to the way they explain their own successes and the clients'. The supervision questions may be of this type: *What do you appreciate most about your client? What do you appreciate most about the client's family? What successes has your client had since you've started working with him/her? How do you explain these successes? Who else contributed to this success? What do you appreciate most in yourself as a case manager for the client's situation? What were your successes in connection with your client's situation? When have you felt best about in the relationship with your client? What is the most important thing you have*

contributed to changing your client's situation? What is the most important thing the organization has contributed to changing your client's situation? Which of the work procedures have been most useful to you? Which of your qualities have you used in order to change your client's situation?

- b) *the vision stage* – the stage in which the supervisors and the social workers build a joint vision concerning the potential of those supervised and of their clients, by formulating "challenging phrases", stated in the present tense, as if this vision already were a fact. The meanings of these challenging phrases are "negotiated" between the supervisor and those being supervised, through dialogue. Here are some suggested forms for organising the phrases during the supervision meeting, some of them encountered during the experiment in the implementation of appreciative supervision: *the client knows well his/her situation and resources, and copes with the situation; the client appreciates the support received from the organisation; the supervised social worker acts in cooperation with the client in order to change the situation; the supervised social worker is receptive to all the client's successes and appreciates them; the supervised social worker appreciates his/her client's successes; the supervisor is open, available and interested in the work of the supervised social worker; the supervisor recognises the efforts, successes and qualities of the supervised social worker; the client is the individual most interested in changing his/her own situation etc.*
- c) *the programming stage* – the stage of establishing the specific plans needed in order for the vision to become reality. The supervision questions may be as follows: *What can we do to help the client know his/her resources in his/her situation and overcome it? What do we do to make this client appreciate the support he/she is getting from the organisation? What practices should we promote to make the social worker act in cooperation with his client? What must be done so that the supervisor recognises the efforts, successes and qualities of the supervised social worker? What can the social worker do so that the client knows the social worker appreciates him/her? etc.*
- d) *the action stage* – the stage in which the plan established by the supervised social worker and the supervisor is applied. An outline of the plan may look as follows: a) *The social worker meets with the client bi-monthly and encourages the client to discover his/her own resources and successes; b) The social worker is flexible when working with the client; c) The social worker appreciates the client's experience and lets the client know when such a success is identified; d) The social worker assists the client in understanding his/her situation and in appreciating successes; e) The social worker helps the client build in*

his/her own environment a vision of what he/she desires for himself/herself and supports him/her in drafting an action plan etc.

Research Methodology

The paper presents the results of research in application of AI into the supervision. The practice of social work focuses mainly on solving problems, on reducing dysfunctions, on diminishing deficiencies etc. More often than not, allocating resources for providing problem-centered social services does not solve the problems for which the services were designed. Our research consists in experimenting appreciative supervision and in identifying the potential differences between the two approaches, the one centered on problems and the appreciative one. To measure the results obtained by social workers, we used a grid of evaluation was applied, every three months to all cases. The results we have obtained in the practice of social work through the application of appreciative supervision underscore the advantages of this approach, an approach which is capable to produce profound changes in the practice of social work. When the appreciative supervision was applied, the studied cases showed better results compared to the cases that were supervised classically (centered on problem); in our opinion, this shows that appreciative supervision is more effective also due to the parallel process in supervision that influences case management. The supervision model used for coordinating, supporting and training social workers directs case management and its results. The documents concerning the social worker's intervention, present in each case file, show essential modifications in terms of case approach; the meeting, visit and counseling reports reveal elements of appreciative intervention, noticeable in the way the clients' situations were approached and in the language used by the social worker when writing the documents. The appreciative supervision produces, indirectly, tangible results after a shorter period of time by comparison to the classical supervision. This can be seen in the results obtained within the experiment, which are due to the use of the appreciative approach in intervention. Therefore, in order to have effective interventions, we must plan for at least six months in a problem-centered approach of the case (and of the supervision), and for a minimum of three months in the appreciative approach of the same case.

We have include here the presentation of an experiment carried out on a six-month period, during which time we verified the results obtained by applying two different supervision models, problem-oriented supervision and appreciative supervision. For this experiment we identified ten cases with various degrees of risk in child abandonment. We first applied the *Assessment Grid for Child Abandonment Risk* and, depending on the score, five pairs of social cases were determined, as follows:

Pair 1:

Case 1, with a vulnerability score of 438 points

Case 2, with a vulnerability score of 459 points

Pair 2:

Case 3, with a vulnerability score of 812 points

Case 4, with a vulnerability score of 826 points

Pair 3:

Case 5, with a vulnerability score of 765 points

Case 6, with a vulnerability score of 778 points

Pair 4:

Case 7, with a vulnerability score of 652 points

Case 8, with a vulnerability score of 671 points

Pair 5:

Case 7, with a vulnerability score of 553 points

Case 8, with a vulnerability score of 562 points

During the six months of the experiment, each pair of cases was managed by a social worker. The cases were selected from the social workers' list of active cases. In this period case supervision was provided to the five social workers managing the ten cases included in the experiment. Each social worker had one case that was supervised in the conventional manner and one case that was supervised appreciatively, but none of the social workers were informed about this. The idea was to check whether appreciative supervision has any influence on the effectiveness of case management and to what extent it can be applied. In pairing the cases, the main criterion was the similitude of the situations, quantified through the risk assessment grid, and the goal was to experiment this form of intervention management (appreciative supervision).

In order to check the way the situations of the ten clients had evolved, the assessment grid for child abandonment risk (the same instrument used originally) was applied every three months. The application of the same instrument at different moments and to all clients was a strong basis for the objective evaluation of the modifications that had occurred throughout the experiment. The social workers were not informed about the different approach in supervision, in order to verify the validity of the parallel process theory in supervision; in other words, we tried to see whether changing the supervision approach at the supervisor's initiative can result in the change of the way the case management takes place. On the other hand, no other independent variables were introduced, such as additional material support for the managed cases, other types of activities etc.

Work hypotheses

1. The style in which supervision is organised influences the way case management takes place, due to the parallel process developing in supervision.
2. The social worker's and the client's effectiveness and results depend on the style of supervision.

Methods

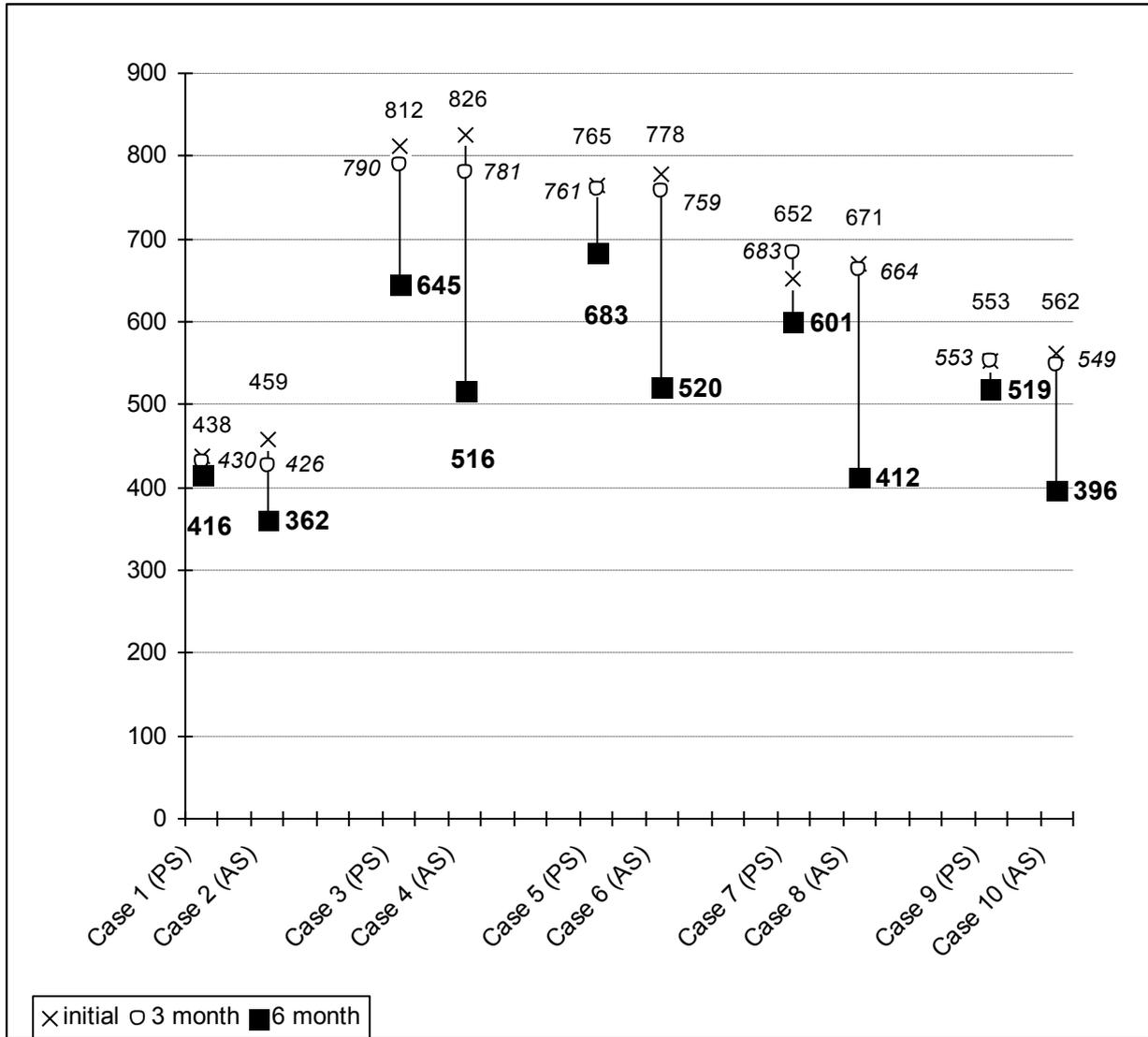
The following research methods were used for this case study:

- a) The *Assessment Grid for Child Abandonment Risk*, structured around a questionnaire and applied for the initial assessment, for the interim assessment (after three months) and for the final assessment (after six months); The *Assessment Grid for Child Abandonment Risk* aims to quantify the child's risk of abandonment. The *Family assessment questionnaire* is a batch of 145 items, grouped according to variables constituting risk factors. This grid was applied in order to measure the degree of child abandonment risk for the ten cases included in the experiment at three different moments: at the beginning of the intervention, at three months after the start of the intervention and six months after work began on the case. The *Assessment Grid for Child Abandonment Risk* can be used for any family for which the social worker considers there is a risk of child abandonment, or whenever a family requests a certain type of support from specialised social work institutions. The maximum value of the risk of abandonment, according to the grid, is 1500 points, and it can be applied at any moment during the intervention in order to measure the way the degree of risk has evolved. The grid may be applied at regular time intervals (for example every three months) in order to measure the evolution of the degree of risk in the family and to assess the effectiveness of the social work intervention. It may be used as an instrument for measuring the effectiveness of various social services provided to this category of disadvantaged population, and it may even be used for cost/benefit calculations.
- b) *The sociological experiment*, in order to highlight the way some independent variables introduced by the supervisor (supervision style) cause modifications at the level of the client's situation within the parallel process;
- c) *The interview*, used by the supervisor during the supervision meetings with the social worker.

Discussion

As it can be seen in Figure 1, after six months of intervention a drop in the level of abandonment risk was recorded in all the clients of the prevention service included in the study, irrespective of the type of supervision used. The evolution of the degree of abandonment risk for the five pairs of clients was different according to the type of supervision; the cases that were supervised appreciatively showed a more pronounced drop compared to the cases that were supervised according to the conventional method, despite the fact that the cases that were supervised appreciatively initially had a higher risk of abandonment.

Figure 1: Evolution of level of abandonment risk within the studied group



Note: "PS" indicates a problem-based supervision, while "AS" indicates the cases supervised appreciatively.

The figure shows that after three months from the start of the intervention, differences in the decrease of the degree of child abandonment risk (measurable through the score resulting from the application of the grid) appeared between the two categories of cases that were supervised differently; the higher the score, the higher the risk of child abandonment. For example, for case pair no. 3, the case that was supervised classically (case no. 5) showed a drop in the risk degree of four points compared to the initial score, while the case that was supervised appreciatively (case no. 6) showed a sharper drop in the risk degree (the value on the applied grid dropped by 19 points).

In order to assess the differences recorded in all the studied clients, we calculated the averages of

the differences in risk degree at three months and at six months from the start of the intervention. The results are shown below:

	Classical supervision		Appreciative supervision	
	Difference in absolute values across the five cases	Average of difference	Difference in absolute values	Average of difference across the five cases
Assessment at three months	3	0.6	117	23.4
Assessment at six months	356	71.2	1090	218

Table 1: Evolution of the average of decrease in child abandonment risk degree

It can be noticed that in the case of *classical supervision*, at three months since the start of the intervention, for the beneficiaries included in this type of supervision (cases 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9), the intervention had almost no effect (the average decrease in the degree of abandonment risk is 0.6, which is practically a null result); the score average of the classically supervised cases in the initial evaluation was 644. The cases that were *supervised appreciatively* (2, 4, 6, 8 and 10) showed an average decrease of the risk degree of 23.4 points at three months since the start of the intervention. Initially, the score average for the degree of abandonment risk in the cases supervised appreciatively was 659.2. The average decrease of the risk degree after six months is lower for the cases that were supervised classically (the average is 71.2 points) than for the cases that were supervised appreciatively (the average is 218 points); however, table 1 shows that the risk degree for the cases that were supervised appreciatively dropped three times more than the risk degree of the cases that were supervised classically. After six months of intervention, the cases that were supervised classically showed, on average, a decrease of the vulnerability risk by 11.05% (the average score according to the risk assessment grid was 572.8 points); in the situation of the five cases supervised appreciatively, the average decrease of risk was 33.7% (the final average score being 441.2 points). In order to see what had made the difference between the two categories of supervised cases, we analysed each case, trying to identify what had changed in the clients' situation six months on. In general, the cases that had been supervised classically showed a degree of decrease in vulnerability risk due to the clients' accessing resources within the community; the parents had managed to solve some issues related to the lack of their own and their children's

identification documents, and thus had the required documentation in order to successfully apply for financial support from the local authorities; the accent was placed on supplementing resources and on filling a financial need. In the situation of the cases that had been supervised appreciatively, the significant decrease of the vulnerability risk was due to a number of factors connected to the improvement of the relationship with the children's father and with the extended family, and to the finding of a job (the accent was placed on making the most of opportunities). The documents accompanying and recording the social workers' intervention show significant differences in the intervention strategy for the two types of cases; in the situation of the cases supervised based on problems, both the initial assessment of the clients' problems and the subsequent interventions were chiefly directed by the social worker towards clarifying the problems, identifying the solutions and supporting the clients in finding the best solutions for their problems. The language used in documenting the cases belongs to the deficiency paradigm, focusing on the reduction of deficiencies, of the limitations and obstacles the clients face. In the records of the clients whose cases had been handled by social workers under appreciative supervision, both the social workers' and the clients' main focus was on identifying resources – past or present –, on enhancing the clients' strengths and on motivating the latter for building a positive vision.

Conclusion

The principles of appreciative inquiry can be adapted and used in the supervision process in social work; the experiment demonstrates the usefulness and effectiveness of appreciative supervision by comparison to the problem-centred supervision. The supervision model used for coordinating, supporting and training social workers directs case management and its results. The documents concerning the social worker's intervention, present in each case file, show essential modifications in terms of case approach, both by the social workers and by their clients. The meeting, visit and counselling reports reveal elements of appreciative intervention, noticeable in the way the clients' situations were approached and in the language used by the social worker when writing the documents. The parallel process in supervision can be directed by the supervisor towards the social worker's and the client's actions; this process does not influence just the supervised social worker, but also, through diffusion, the client's situation.

When the appreciative supervision was applied, the studied cases showed positive results and the clients' situation changed faster and more visibly compared to the cases that were supervised classically; in the experiment we have carried out, where the independent variable was the supervision style (problem-based or appreciative), the appreciative supervision of social workers

has produced positive effects in reducing child abandonment risk – a three-fold reduction compared to problem-based supervision. On the other hand, in the case of services aimed at preventing child abandonment, it can be seen that the classical intervention, lasting less than three months, has no positive effect on the clients' situation. This practically means that in such circumstances, the financial, human and material resources used for an intervention that lasts less than three months are wasted without significant results. The classical intervention produces real results in the situation of the beneficiaries who use the services for the prevention of child abandonment after six months from the start of the intervention; this means that any intervention project aimed at preventing child abandonment and institutionalisation should be planned for at least six months. The appreciative supervision produces, indirectly, tangible results after a shorter period of time by comparison to the classical supervision. This can be seen in the results obtained within the experiment, which are due to the use of the appreciative approach in intervention, supported by a similar process in supervision. Therefore, in order to have effective interventions, one must plan for at least six months in a problem-centred approach of the case (and of the supervision), and for a minimum of three months in the appreciative approach of the same type of cases.

The attempt made by social work to solve problems may not always result in the reduction of obstacles or deficiencies; the orientation towards identifying deficiencies and dysfunctionalities yields poorer results than the appreciative intervention and, when social work practitioners remain anchored in the deficiency paradigm, it preserves the problem, without creating the necessary conditions for positive change.

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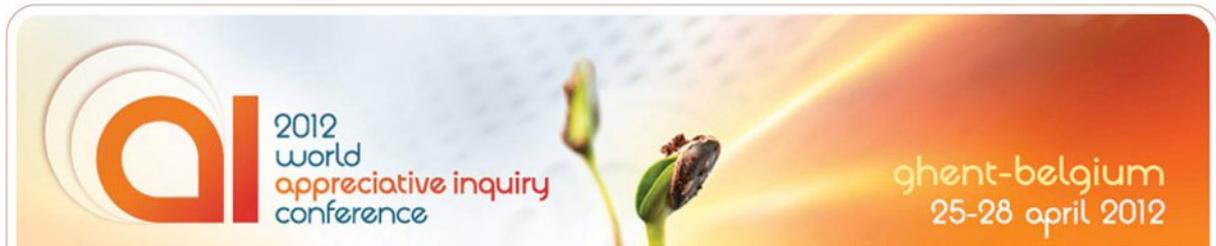
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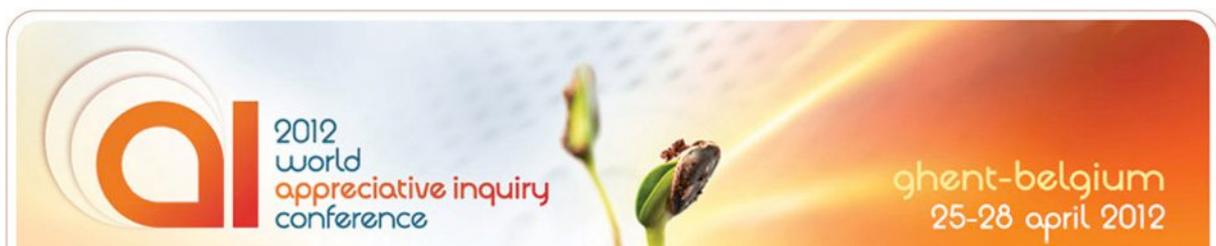
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Working Appreciatively In End-Of-Life Care: An Intervention to promote collaborative working between care home staff and health care practitioners

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Abstract

Background

In England the majority of care homes that provide long term care to older people, have no on site clinician and rely on primary health care for medical and nursing support. Residents are in the last years of their life and invariably have dementia. The Evidem EOL study focused on end of life (EOL) care for people with dementia in these settings. Phase One found, despite an awareness of EOL care pathways, high levels of uncertainty amongst care home and primary health care staff around how to anticipate and support residents dying with or from dementia. This paper describes the implementation and evaluation of a modified Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach to address these uncertainties.

Methods

This study used the principles of AI with three care homes, as an intervention over six months to develop different strategies to support EOL care for people with dementia.

Results

The method created rapid engagement between participants who did not have a history of working together to improve the organisation and delivery of EOL care for people with dementia. Interventions arising from the AI meetings addressed

those areas of decision making and care identified in phase one of the study as difficult and challenging. The value of the modified Ai approach is considered in terms of its ability to be context sensitive, how it promoted collaboration and built capacity in the EOL provision for older people with dementia.

Conclusion

Providing EOL care for people with dementia living in care homes requires different systems of care, practitioners and family member to work together. The modified AI approach was an intervention that supported relational working and enabled participants to engage with the inherent complexities and uncertainties of EOL care for people with dementia.

Introduction

In the UK, care homes are the main providers of long- term care for older people, many of whom have dementia and are in the last years of life [1]. Staff working in these settings have limited access to specialist palliative care support and see their primary role as providing a home like environment rather than medical care [2]. Research in care homes on end of life (EOL) care for people with dementia, are largely descriptive and focus on deficiencies, in knowledge and care, and structured interventions to support assessment, decision-making and symptom management [3], [4].

There is limited evidence of residents, relatives and care home staff discussing and identifying research priorities for end of life (EOL) care for people with dementia and few studies reflect the context of care or test models that support partnership working [5]. Commentators and researchers have asked whether alternative approaches to joint working between health care and care home staff, are needed to avoid medicalising the dying process and creating unintended consequences for the overall focus and quality of care that care home staff can provide [6], [7]. This paper details the use of a participatory research method, Appreciative Inquiry (AI), within the Evidem EOL study. The study focused on EOL care for people with dementia living in care homes with no on-site nursing. AI was used as an integral part of an intervention to support and sustain good EOL practice. The paper considers to what extent AI, as a research method, was

able to connect across social and health care organisations to meet the challenges of facilitating EOL care for people with dementia within the context and culture of care homes.

Background

The Evidem EOL study was in two phases. Phase One (2008-2010) tracked the care received by 133 people with dementia living in six different residential care homes over 18 months.. Phase One findings highlighted the high levels of uncertainty experienced by all participants (care home staff, residents, and primary care professionals) around dying with or from dementia and the limited value of prognostication as a way of planning and managing eol care for this population.

Appreciative Inquiry as a research methodology

Devised in the USA [8] as a complement to conventional forms of action research, AI is a method for promoting positive organisational development [9, 10]. It assumes that in every organisation something works well and change can be leveraged through discovering, sustaining and spreading these moments of excellence within the wider system. AI in health care organizations has been used to facilitate better communication, cohesive leadership, organisational change and capacity building within the medical and nursing workforce [11-13]. The collaborative and appreciative stance of AI is of particular value in research with people with dementia and settings such as care homes, both of which are often negatively perceived [14]. The use of AI in elder care has focused on the appreciative and relational process of using AI to engage differing stakeholders and change how staff work with and for older people [10, 15, 16]. However, the integration and sustainability of AI outputs into the wider care system has been under-developed [9].

Using AI to develop dementia sensitive interventions for people with dementia living in care homes

An AI 4D cycle framework assumes a stable unitary organisation and consistency of workforce. However, in this study participants (care home and health care staff) were constrained by being based in different locations with

limited resources to give additional time to meeting and working together. As it was not possible to engage with all people involved in providing and receiving care the AI method was modified. Care home based, short one hour facilitative meetings were developed, and delivered over six months. . The method needed to be flexible to work with changing participant membership at the facilitated meetings, creating a team in the moment. These protected meetings brought together for the first time health professionals and care home staff to talk about EOL practice. Previously, discussions had been resident specific and often task based.

Sample:

Three care homes participated in the AI meetings. 14 people participated in the 3 meetings -, 7 care home staff, 3 General Practitioners (G.P's) and 4 District Nurses (D.N's). 9 participants (care home staff, G.P's and DN) attended all three meetings. Although residents and their families did not participate directly in AI meetings, their stories and experience identified in Phases One and Two underpinned the AI intervention. All care homes had participated in Evidem EOL stage one and were self-selecting.

The Intervention

The intervention focused on supporting people through three facilitated meetings of one hour using the components of the 4 D A.I. framework. Discovery, Dreaming, Designing, Delivery embedded within the teams daily practice in EOL care.

Meeting One, (Appreciation /Stories), the emphasis was on revealing participants' present capacity and good practice in giving EOL care to people with dementia within the care home. The themes from these stories were used to direct participants forward to create future directed statements about EOL care within their practice with residents. E.g. *“All residents know they can live and die in this their home if they wish to”*; *.”We liaise with the GP to ensure we are all singing off the same hymn sheet”*; *“We are providing excellent support and communication between the care staff, GP and integrated team and resident and their families”* and *“We really value the small things and celebrate them”*.

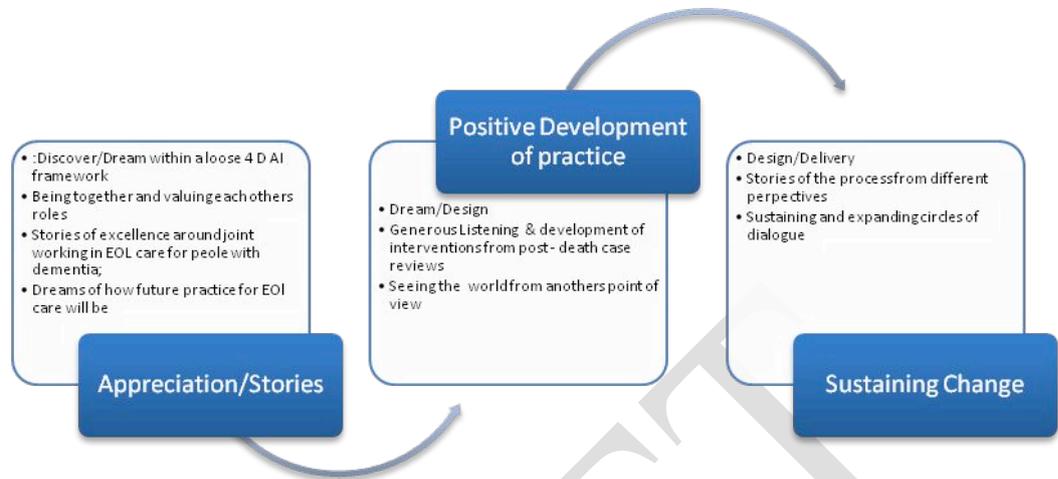
Meeting Two (Positive development of practice), continued to use discovery of good practice and the group's statements of future intent for developing EOL practice and began to develop plans to make this achievable. These plans were developed utilising reflection on, after death analysis' (care notes, interview with key staff members and time line of death) that had occurred recently during the project. The emphasis on using these after death analyses was on the process of care and the alignment of strengths and adjustment of practice where necessary to move towards the future directed statements. This emphasis allowed for the telling of real life/nuanced stories within a framework of generous listening [17] where problem talk is framed in appreciation and possibilities and forward thinking reflection. The tension between reflection on and judging specific practices was held by asking each participant to see the case from a variety of different perspectives. Thus, the discussions of the EOL pathway within the cases were looked at first from the point of the primary care doctor / District Nurse, secondly the care home staff perspective and then the resident and family viewpoint. This proved a powerful tool in keeping participants open to the point of view of others and valuing difference but with enough detail to enable realistic plans to develop the future directed statements about the organisation and quality of EOL within the care home. For example, one GP was able to imagine himself as a member of care staff confronted with a collapsed resident, calling out of hours for urgent medical advice. He acknowledged the inevitability of calling paramedics when the out of hours response was slow, which often ends with a resident being transferred to hospital and possibly dying there. Similarly, a member of the care staff imagined what it was like to be an out of hours doctor, relying on the information provided by the care home to judge whether hospitalisation is appropriate.

Meeting Three (Sustaining Change), concentrated on sustainability and embedding the principles of AI working as part of everyday working and wider organisational systems. Reflective questions included, What made a difference? Where are we now compared to where we hoped we would be? Participants

reflected on the positives but also the challenges of the AI intervention and set their own plans for furthering the work. Essentially this allowed each group to negotiate with each other what realistic sustainability might look like rather than taking on imposed targets. Using this context based approach three different structures emerged based on the strengths and interests of participants. One care home is using an existing GP visit as a strategic overview meeting to attend to the development of EOL care in the home. Another is creating structures to involve the other GP practice and spread their learning. The third is using AI principles to collaborate more with the DN's who were unable to continue to attend the facilitated meetings.

Meetings were complemented by fortnightly contact with the home by the Evidem EOL research team. The research team supported the principles of AI working and worked with participants between the meetings. The meetings were facilitated by a nurse researcher with experience in AI and EOL care. The facilitated meetings were digitally recorded and anonymised. Fig 1 diagrammatically represents the modified AI approach.

Figure 1



Implementing the intervention

. The implementation of the project are presented using Reed's[17] typology of features in AI research :1) supporting people 2) people getting together3) telling stories 4) positive development and 5) changes in the workplace.,

Supporting people

The emphasis was on validating and developing everyday practice and embedding the principles of AI in EOL care in the homes. Participants felt pressurised to get on with their job, use certain tools and documents, and this militated against opportunities to talk and reflect together on how they provided EOL care. Recognition of this led to a discussion about slowing down to speed up. Time given to establish relational and collaborative patterns of working meant that future conversations/practice decisions in a more urgent/crisis situation were more likely to be based on trust and an understanding of competing priorities and concerns . Written and email communication were used

to reiterate the progress work of the meetings, share examples of good outcomes from EOL care and support the development of ground-up specific organisational change. The emphasis was on using existing tools/information/local expertise and working with the participants to use these to forward the participants' vision for EOL care within each care home. For example, the leaflets produced by Dying Matters (www.dyingmatters.org) on talking to relatives about EOL care were supplied to one care home and the researchers shared a recently developed policy and consent form for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACPR) developed for local NHS services, available to the GP, DN and care staff associated with another care home.

2) People getting together

In addition to the formal meetings and facilitation of related initiatives, the AI approach led to changes in other areas of care home life, e. g. talking at the regular relatives group. Central to enhanced collaborative working was the mutual appreciation of each other's roles and shared language around the development of EOL care in the care homes. Crucially this was the first time that participants heard what others appreciated and valued about what they did in the care home to support EOL care. Below are some examples from the 1st AI meeting;

“GP is a breath of fresh air, he actually listens to our opinion” (Deputy Manager)

“Nice to know they (NHS staff) have faith in us!” (Manager)

“they [care home staff] have far greater knowledge about dementia than we have” (District Nurse)

“I found them [care staff] reassuring presence.....good to have someone else with that experience to sound that off” (GP)

“They [care manager and staff] are fundamental to the care, they are possibly the most important part, they can change the way it goes, [hospital etc]” GP

Curiosity about their places of work and how they worked together was encouraged and open questions such as, “What have you noticed between meetings?” helped identify what happened in practice, including the structural

barriers and difficulties of cross organisational working in EOL care for people with dementia. The conversations in each of the groups achieved a shared recognition of the complexity and challenges of the work. This became the starting point for joint planning and shared decision making.

3) Telling stories

The phrase “Good Gossip” was used to introduce the idea of appreciative conversations and story- telling of good practice. Leaflets explained the AI principles, giving exemplars of how an appreciative conversation might look and the role of listener and speaker within that and encouraging the participants to try it out. Unlike the hierarchy that existed outside the meetings, all participants had a voice and their stories equal value. Evidem EOL researchers tried to model the AI approach in their project based conversations in the care homes and in the way findings were shared from Phase One. Outside the meetings, the story of the AI process continued through newsletter, emails, presentations and discussions at the steering group. Some stories were written or expressed through drawing although the majority of story telling was verbal, consistent with the oral based practice of care homes. In one care home, the manager began to spread AI practice outside EOL care, putting “good gossip” posters in the staff room to facilitate staff to reflect on and share with colleagues what they valued about everyday work in the care home. This home also incorporated appreciative language into staff appraisals and their hand overs. For example, reporting a resident as frustrated rather than aggressive to encourage staff to respond in an open and enabling way.

4) Positive development building on what is...

Facilitation focused on a curious and positive attitude to the realities of practice rather than a need to quickly analyse or apportion responsibility within a situation. This approach allowed participants to reflect appreciatively on their own position and encouraged a drawing out of each other’s capacity. This in turn led to the participants themselves developing strategies to sustain change. For example, to strengthen team working outside the assigned workload, the DN had the idea of arranging a regular drop-in tea between the care staff and community nursing team. This was a response to the frustrating reality of

sporadic and inconsistent nurse involvement in the home. The DN and care home also spoke of shared training and it was arranged for some DN staff to attend some in-house (care home) training on dementia. The DN recognised the skills of the care staff and hoped in return she could offer some training on medical issues such as pain relief or pressure sores. One care manger specifically commented on the reciprocity and benefits of training the two groups of staff together for future working relationships

Participants were strategic in using existing developmental opportunities to embed the AI work: e.g. a GP registrar used an audit of residents Do not Resuscitate (DNR) status to further the group’s intention to create structures to strengthen residents wishes for EOL care and also to fulfil his own CPD requirements. However, wider organisational issues could not be achieved solely by means of the meetings and opportunistic discussions within the care homes. This required the involvement of the research facilitators, to canvass opinions of key stakeholders (e.g. Ambulance Trust, paramedics) and feed this back to the care homes.

5) Changes in the workplace.

Interventions that came out of the AI meetings validated the findings from Evidem Phase One. Table One sets out these interventions. Crucially the design of the EOL interventions e.g. language used, format and their delivery were led by the care home staff and health practitioners working in the homes.

Table 1

	EOL Collaborative interventions
Ch1	Creating a resource to support staff talking about dying with residents and relatives Recording of wishes in care plan, specific to dementia homes.
Ch5	Audit of DNR wishes within the home. Clarify legal position and local policy of DNR, and documentation work with paramedics.
CH6	Out of hours GP checklist (what information do Out of Hours GPs need so that calls can facilitate timely and appropriate care)

Evaluation

Evaluation of the AI intervention used both processual data (themes emerging from the transcripts of the meetings and field notes,) and summative data(post intervention interviews with participants). An economic evaluation of the cost of the intervention was also carried out. Outcome measures that served as a proxy measures for improved collaborative practice pre and post intervention were collected. These measures were: a) Number of unplanned hospitalisations and resultant economic cost; b). Recorded conversations or meetings by care home staff with patients and relatives about EOL issues; c).Evidence of advanced planning around EOL issues for residents/family through completed advanced care plans and documenting resuscitation status.

Preliminary analysis demonstrates

1. Increased confidence in talking about EOL care and care home staff engaging in EOL planning. 16percent increase in care home staff documenting conversations.
2. Increased use of advanced planning tools to think ahead in terms of EOL care
3. Decreased Unplanned admissions to hospital leading to a 45percent reduction in hospital costs
4. Increase in reassurance and support felt by care home

The communication with XX is no longer doctor-carer, 'you do this, I'll do that', but it's more I think there's an improved confidence with the staff to be able to say, 'doctor, we're concerned that this patient is deteriorating, what do you think we should do? I don't think would have happened without these meetings'' (GP 3rd AI Meeting CH5)

5. Increased collaboration and cross service working .

Activities that evidenced increased collaboration

- Coffee mornings
- Knowing each others names
- Having each others mobile phone numbers
- DN now involved in helping provide EOL care (not previously)
- DNs and Care staff working together in areas of care

- Regular meetings between GP and care home manager
- GPs, care staff, relatives and residents meeting together

“Yeah I think so. It was really helpful, wasn’t it, meeting the District Nurse and GP, and making us work more as a team. It helped us know what we’re entitled to in regards to help, and they realised where they can help us. We can be quite independent as the care-provider, knowing there’s that extra support, and since having those meetings, we’re totally different to before. Staff felt a little bit more in control I think, and they’re not so panicked. It was much better” (Exit interview with Manager and Deputy Manager)

Methodological Limitations

The limitations of using modified AI as an approach are its reliance on skilled facilitation; the need for support outside the meetings; consistent and representative participant involvement and its sustainability.

The role of the facilitator who was both a nurse with palliative care expertise and an AI trained practitioner was key to the quality of the facilitation of the meetings. However, on-going work relied on researchers who did not have this training, who were able to work with the principles of AI, in their ways of working with the participants. Whilst more work would need to be done to evaluate the impact of the facilitation, condensing the AI process (usually conducted over a minimum of two days) to a total of 3 hours required more focused facilitator involvement to enable shared working, to distil ideas and to move forward the process. The Evidem EOL researchers engaged with wider health and social systems that impacted on the feasibility of developing EOL initiatives in the care homes. The participants did not have the resources to go beyond their place of work. This would suggest that to effect change arising from the AI process there have to be external individuals able to provide support and continuity albeit in a “resource light” way. They acted as “boundary spanners” [18] to the multiple and complex systems within which residential homes were situated.

This modified AI approach worked with health care providers and care home staff. It was difficult for the DN’s to commit to the three meetings. However, the

one DN who did attend became pivotal to the EOL intervention. Whilst it is beyond the scope of the paper to detail the reasons why community nurses were unable to sustain involvement, issues of control over workload and financial payment cannot be discounted. It is noted that the pattern of less involvement from community nurses was evidenced in Seymour et al's [19] survey of external support for EOL care in nursing homes. They found that most support was from the GP.

The use of the AI intervention created a rapid engagement between participants who did not have a history of working together to change and improve the organisation and delivery of care. The sustainability of the principles and specific EOL interventions is however currently unknown. A critique of AI research is that often the time lag from engagement to actual perceived change is lengthy and constancy is hard to maintain [20, 21]. In Evidem EOL change could be quickly evidenced and small wins recognised and emphasised. Other studies suggest that for action plans, clear organisational investment in the intervention and provision of resources are vital for sustainability [11, 22]. Whilst the long-term outcome of this study is currently unknown, part of the intervention has been to work with the participants on how they will sustain it and what resources would be necessary to create new opportunities to influence and develop EOL practice.

Discussion

Participatory approaches such as AI are important if "end of life care for all" is to move from the rhetoric of partnership and involvement where the reality is still professionally defined and led. The value of AI is considered in terms of its ability to be context sensitive, promote collaboration and capacity in the eEOL provision for older people with dementia resident in care homes.

Context

The culture and organisation of any system will affect how healthcare interventions can be sustained and spread [23]. The reality of residents living and dying within a residential care setting creates unpredictability around health status, when priorities should change and the appropriateness of involving secondary and specialist EOL care [19, 24]. This modified AI intervention started by talking together about real life care home cases. The emphasis on

generous listening to each others' practice seemed to modulate against the superficial, unchallenging conversations that some researchers feel result from an emphasis on positivity ([25] Rather it allowed a complex and often risky dialogue about the uncertainties of giving good EOL care for people who are both living and dying over time with dementia [26].

The importance of vulnerability and trust in working in the often emotionally fraught area of EOL care seems to be well framed within the principle of AI. AI helpfully embeds the transactional elements of care, i.e. competencies and policies *about* EOL, with the relational aspects of care i.e. thoughtful reflective responsive judgement *within* a specific context[27].

Collaboration

The emphasis of the AI intervention on working together beyond organisational boundaries and professional hierarchies seemed particularly helpful in bridging the gap between public and independent providers of residential long term care. The intervention created a shared language around EOL that allowed the knowledge, experience and priorities of all participants to be valued. Thus the development of the EOL initiatives e.g., the negotiation of what should go in the out of hours checklist and what language it should use and where it should be placed in the home were as integral to the intervention as the checklist itself. This validation and support of learning from your own and the other's experience is increasingly seen as part of the answer to the systemic failure of older persons care evidenced in UK welfare service [28, 29]). Evidence based interventions for EOL care in care homes that are predicated on prepackaged specialist palliative care knowledge can be resisted if practitioners do not feel they can adapt the knowledge to their work area [30]. The AI collaborative approach obviates this issue. This work suggests that palliative care educators and providers can most effectively impart knowledge to residential homes by recognising and learning both from and with them. As residential homes are a place where older people with dementia will both live and die, this role change from outside experts to co-producers of knowledge [17] will be increasingly important and urgent. It would be naïve however to suggest that the outcomes of such methods are not affected by power relations and the engagement of key

stakeholders and finance to resource their spread and sustainability. AI approaches do however encourage individual as well as organisational change, arguing that small changes allows for current practices and support structures to develop, embed and thus sustain change [31].

Capacity

This approach replaced the existing models of health care professional involvement, which are a response to the skills and knowledge deficits in both the care home and in the generic community workforce. In contrast, the focus of this approach was to work with the capacity of staff and health professionals in realising collaborative, active and evidence based EOL care for people with dementia in care homes. Seymour et al's (p137) recent mixed method enquiry into EOL care in nursing care homes argues for a focus on challenging the discriminative attitude and wider societal beliefs about care homes. They caution that improving EOL care through rectifying inadequate knowledge is an error of simplistic thinking. This modified AI approach provided a counter-balance to the marginalisation, and increasingly punitive scrutiny of practices in care homes. Rather, it provided a way of building on the best of what is already present in EOL care in residential homes and an intervention that could develop initiatives to further embed excellence in practice.

Conclusion

The realities of cross organisational working, the multiplicity of knowledge and skill and the uncertainties that characterize dying with dementia, militate against the provision of good EOL care in care homes. Particularly, for those care homes that rely on external medical, nursing and specialist services for EOL care.

This paper suggests that these challenges can be circumvented by a modified AI approach working appreciatively within the context of the care home. This appreciative stance is counter to a view that often sees care homes as places of deficit, that require training in EOL care through educational packages created by specialist palliative care experts.

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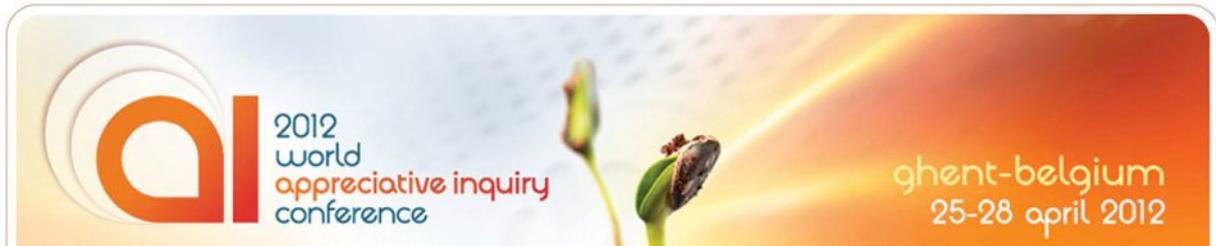
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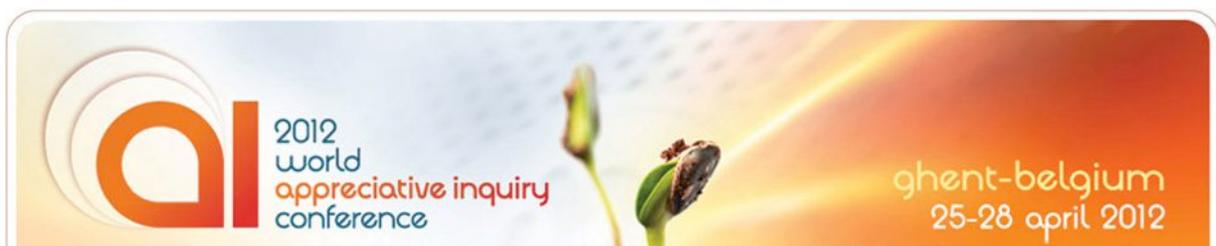
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Putting Appreciative Inquiry in Service of Intergovernmental Planning, Budgeting and Delivery in South Africa

Mark Oranje¹ and Elsona van Huyssteen²

1. Introduction

The advent of democracy in South Africa midway through 1994 provided the prospect of a new start for a country torn by hundreds of years of colonial rule, racial segregation and oppression. Key to the realisation of such a brighter future was rapid, sustainable, equitable and inclusive economic growth and development. Given the intricate quasi-federal Constitution of the country, this in turn required high levels of intergovernmental harmonisation, integration and coordination in planning, budgeting and implementation amongst the national, provincial and local spheres of government. In order to ensure this, national government instituted an enabling legal and policy framework, and introduced a series of capacity-building initiatives throughout the country. Despite all of these endeavours, the first decade of democracy saw intergovernmental and integrated development planning remaining far from the ideal (CSIR & DPLG, 2005; Adam and Oranje, 2002; Merrifield *et al*, 2008; Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2007).

While this far too limited level of transformation meant that the lives of millions of South Africans did not change to the extent that it could have, it also led to a growing erosion of the perception of the people of the power of the State to bring about the much desired change (see Oranje, 2012). This, arguably, also contributed to a growing loss of confidence amongst officials and politicians, and a growing view that the challenge was insurmountable, and hence a lack of delivery was understandable and excusable (Merrifield *et al*, 2008). Amongst planners, it led to a growing sense of frustration with (1) the planning, governance and funding regime and (2) their own inability to do make planning do what it says it does: 'make the lives of people better' (Oranje, 2012).

Despite the growing sense of despair, all was not lost, for at the same time, the experience of failure, had led to a growing body of thought in the planning and development field that 'things could still be turned around' if certain key bold and enabling steps were taken, notably the following:

- The introduction of a national development vision and development framework or plan, which would provide the direction and glue to tie together the many (1) sector strategies and programmes, and (2) provincial and municipal plans and frameworks;
- The hosting of strategic, high-level deliberation sessions between stakeholders in and outside of government with the aim of reaching a shared understanding on the development potentials and needs in every district and metropolitan area in the country within the national development vision and framework;
- Tied to this, the identification of the bottlenecks/constraints to unlocking the potentials and addressing the needs in each district and metropolitan area, and the reaching of an

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agreement between all the stakeholders on what needed to be done to address these in the three spheres of government, the private sector and the community;

- Following on from this, using these agreements as directives in all planning, budgeting and implementation activities in all three spheres of government; and
- Finally, using the agreements so reached to assess the actions and performance of all three organs of State in all three spheres of government (see Merrifield et al, 2008; The Presidency, 2004; 2006a; 2006b).

The opportunity to practically see to what extent these proposals would have the desired result came towards the end of 2006, when the Office of the President launched a novel and ambitious project to harmonise, integrate and align national strategic spatial planning and municipal development planning (The Presidency, 2006b). Called the '*National Spatial Development Perspective-District Application Project*', the project sought to use the spatial logic and principles of the '*National Spatial Development Perspective*' (NSDP) to structure a process of high-level intergovernmental and civil society dialogue, strategizing, plan-preparation, resource-allocation and implementation in each of the country's 46 District and 6 Metropolitan Municipalities (The Presidency, 2006b; CSIR, 2007a). A key component of the project was the use of local, indigenous and technical knowledge, to explore the unique (1) development potentials and prospects, and (2) the needs of people and places. As yearned for by many of those in the planning and development fields, these explorations were intended to:

- Inform the reaching of a shared understanding between different spheres of government, the private sector and communities on the development potentials and needs of each of the 46 District Municipalities in the country; and
- Guide decisions as to what needed to be done to unlock the potentials and address the needs in each of these District Municipalities (The Presidency, 2006b).

With this shared understanding as base, *high-level agreements on action* would then be reached and signed off by representatives from all three spheres of government and the private sector, as well as community leaders.

Both the authors of this paper were deeply involved in the project in variety of capacities during its three-year lifespan. This paper, written from an appreciative, yet critical perspective, is a shared reflection of their experiences of the project. As such, the paper has three sections:

- A brief description of the project and its roll-out;
- An indication of the points/places and ways in which appreciative inquiry was used in the project; and
- An appreciative, yet critical analysis of the impact and contribution of (1) the role played by Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in the project and (2) the project itself.

While the bulk of the content is derived from the collective memory of the two authors, a degree of triangulation was achieved through a multitude of semi-structured interviews with participants and group-sharing and learning sessions (see CSIR, 2007a; 2007c).

2. The 'National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP)-District Application Project'

As alluded to above, the project had as its key objective to ensure that senior representatives from the three spheres of government rigorously debate and reach a shared understanding and agreement on:

- The developmental needs and development opportunities, challenges and bottlenecks in all the District and Metropolitan Municipalities throughout the country; and
- The infrastructure investment and development spending required by all three spheres of government to address these needs and utilise the potentials in an effective, efficient and sustainable way (The Presidency, 2004; 2006b).

This objective was pursued within the developmental logic and normative principles as set out in the NSDP (see **Box 1** below), and backed up by detailed spatial analysis of the participating districts, using the foci of the NSDP ('*need*' and '*development potential*') as pillars for the analyses (see **Figure 1** below).

Box 1: A brief overview of the National Spatial Development Perspective (NSDP)

The NSDP, prepared by The Presidency and adopted by Cabinet in January 2003, was an indicative, guiding perspective and not a plan (The Presidency, 2003). As such, the NSDP did not make explicit statements on State action in specific geographic locations. Instead, it provided a spatial logic and set of normative principles, based on both local and international best practice and theory, to inform and guide decisions on infrastructure investment and development spending by all three spheres of government in sub-national spaces/regions, later referred to 'functional (economic) regions'. Essentially, the NSDP sought to ensure greater rationality, synergy, coordination and integration in State infrastructure investment and development spending (The Presidency, 2006a). At its heart the NSDP had a deep concern with 'people, not places' (The Presidency, 2003). In practical terms, this translated into focusing significant infrastructure investment in areas with proven economic development potential, and development spending in areas with high levels of poverty (The Presidency, 2003). Places with, for instance, their origins in spatial engineering by the apartheid regime, with no or very little economic development potential, would thus not be targeted for massive road and other forms of hard infrastructure investment. Instead, State spending in such places would focus on building and supporting the people living there through education, health care, grants and making available labour-market intelligence (e.g. information on tender and job opportunities).

This was done with the clear intent of ensuring the popularisation and application of the NSDP in district development planning processes as part of the broader agenda of establishing this regional unit as the spatial area/territory of State planning action. All of this was based on the assumption that the various components of the agreement would then be translated by the respective spheres and sectors into plans and budgets, as and when these were prepared. This, it was believed, would provide a foundation for state and private sector investment and spending to take place in the district, as a spatially defined entity, in a focused, coordinated and synergistic way.

The project started as a pilot with 13 of the 46 District Municipalities selected in eight provinces (all, excluding the Gauteng Province) in a process of negotiation between The Presidency, the Provincial Governments and the respective Districts Municipalities (see The Presidency, 2006a, 2006b). Thereafter, the project was rolled out in batches of between eight and fifteen Districts at a time,

with the final twelve being completed in June 2010³. While this roll-out was largely based on the availability of funding, it was argued, it also allowed for learning and experimentation with different consultants, and with different combinations of members from earlier teams in new teams. The use of different consultants was also explained as ‘allowing for capacity to be built in a broader group of service providers’. While the first series of pilots included significant sharing and learning sessions, this was not done in the later phases, nor was provision made for learning or sharing of experiences between earlier and new consultants or teams.

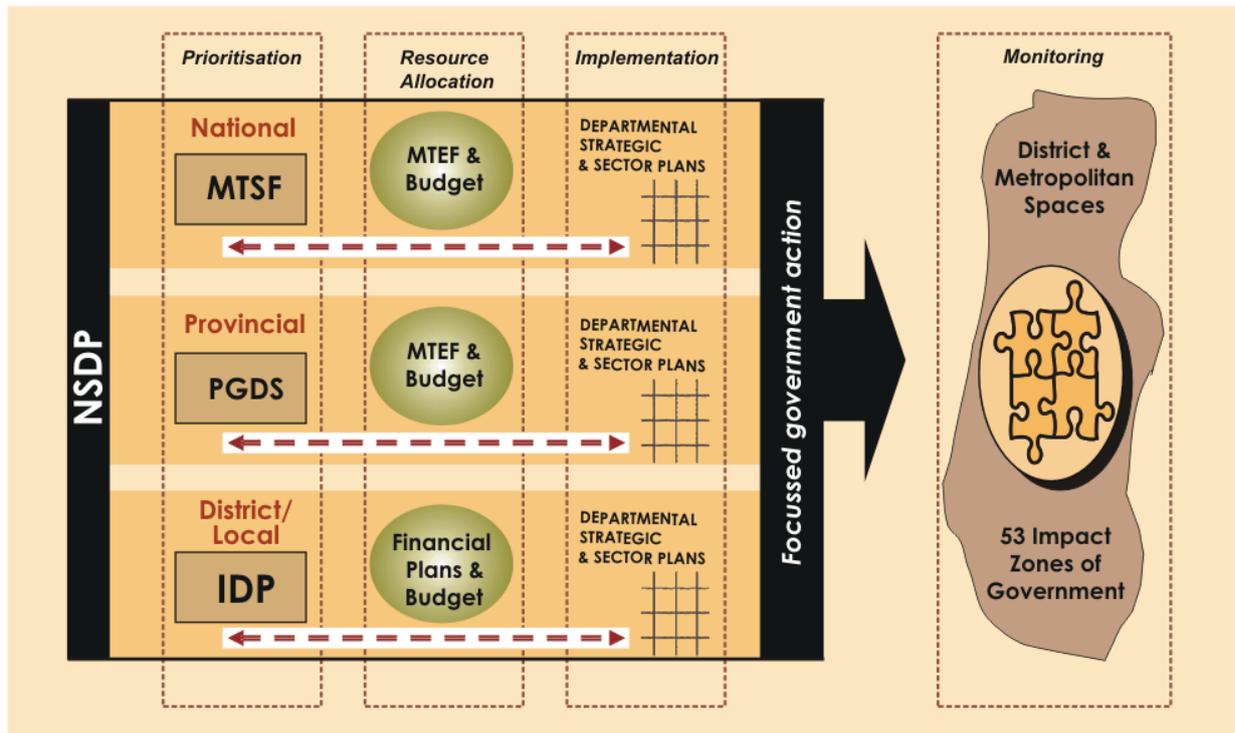


Figure 1: Idealised alignment of planning instruments to achieve intergovernmental prioritisation, resource allocation and implementation (The Presidency, 2006a: p14)

While the methodology deployed in the various phases varied, the key components were:

- The appointment of consultants and the setting up of a project team consisting of the project manager in the Presidency, the consultant team, a project champion in the District Municipality and representatives from the district and local municipalities and the Premier’s Office and/or Departments tasked with local planning and economic development.
- Data-gathering from secondary sources and through interviews with key informants in the community, the private sector, organised labour, NGOs and the local and provincial spheres of government, culminating in the preparation of a draft ‘Development Profile’ of the district, including a series of GIS maps. In accordance with the terminology of the NSDP, the key constructs in terms of which the data was presented, were ‘need’ and ‘development potential’. The bulk of this information was generated through a refinement of the spatial analysis-platform and accompanying socio-economic dataset originally developed at national scale for the 2006-

³ The original idea of also including the Metropolitan Municipalities was shelved as the view was expressed that ‘the most urgent need was located in the District Municipalities and the Metropolitan Municipalities did not need such a project’ (see CSIR, 2007b).

NSDP⁴. In most districts, this task was eased by the existence of datasets, often generated in municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs), Local Economic Development (LED) strategies, Spatial Development Frameworks (SDFs), Growth and Development Strategies (GDS) and specific sector initiatives.

- The hosting of a one or two-day workshop in the district, facilitated by the consultant team and supported by technical experts, and attended by representatives of all three spheres of government (notably the Offices of the Premier in the respective provinces and the Presidency), and in some cases private sector and community representatives, at which the draft Development Profile was deliberated. A key objective here was to ‘test’ official secondary, technical/expert, outsider knowledge of the district area against (1) local and context-specific knowledge of the area, institutions and spheres, and (2) the expertise and experiences of participants representing different disciplines and sectors. During these sessions, the facilitators and their technical support teams and project champions, used the draft Developmental Profiles to structure the discussions, highlight mismatches in prioritisation and resource allocation, flag bottlenecks and elicit debate. For this and the follow-up session to be a success, attendance and active participation by key district and local politicians, senior officials from district and local municipalities and high-level representatives from provincial and national sector departments, The Presidency and Offices of the Premiers was imperative.
- Amendments to the draft Development Profile on the strength of the deliberation at the workshop, and the preparation of a set of proposals for the development of the district for which high-level intergovernmental agreement would be required.
- The hosting of a second one-day workshop in the district at which the amended Development Profile and proposals were deliberated and shared understandings and agreements reached on the key needs, development potentials and long-term development objectives of the district, and the responsibilities of each sector and sphere of government in meeting these objectives.
- The preparation of a final Development Profile and set of priority actions that had the support of all representatives and had to be ‘carried forward’ by each sphere and sector of government into their respective planning, budgeting and implementation actions⁵. It was then left up to the various government actors to decide how to ensure this and how to take these agreements further in their respective institutions, planning processes and intergovernmental forums

While still essentially focused on the same objectives and going through the same basic steps, the project underwent a few changes in terms of prescribed methodology and the name of the output. Influenced by the OECD’s preparation of ‘Territorial Reviews’ in its member countries, the key areas of focus (especially for the preparation of draft development profiles) were prescribed in the projects after the pilots, based on the contents of these Territorial Reviews, and the output called a ‘*[name of district] Territorial Review*’. This move, which was seen as unproblematic by the project management in The Presidency, was not welcomed by all, and seen by some as an unwarranted

⁴ The Geo Spatial Analysis Platform Version 2 (GAP2) was developed by the CSIR, Presidency and Department of Trade and Industry in a collaborative effort. For more information see CSIR, GAP2 (CSIR, 2007b).

⁵ It was initially envisaged that these agreements would be signed off by Mayors, Premiers and Ministers.

departure from the initial intentions and methodology of the project, and viewed as lacking in focus the project's stated development, planning and action-focus.

3. The Use of Appreciative Inquiry in the Project

At the time of the introduction of the project, both authors had been exploring ways of using AI in reinvigorating planning processes they were involved in on the supra-national, African continental scale (see Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2005) and on a municipal strategic development planning scale (see Oranje, 2007), as well as in shaping their own views on what they, as planners could contribute/do. At the same time, one of the authors had turned to AI as one of the angles from which to see(k) and extract value and beauty from detailed life histories of planners for her PhD, entitled '*Being and Becoming a Planner*' (Van Huyssteen, 2011).

The appointment of one of the authors (Elsona van Huyssteen) as project manager and the other (Mark Oranje) as one of two development planners to conceptualise the pilot along with the project manager, provided an opportunity to introduce AI to the project. This was not just as a result of what was a new perspective to both authors at the time, but also a belief that the project, which had to (1) identify and spatially locate potential, but also (2) reinvigorate an often disillusioned and increasingly cynical group of community leaders, planners and associated built environment professionals and politicians, could and would benefit greatly from its application. This saw the use/introduction of AI in five areas in the project (see CSIR, 2007c; Van Huyssteen and Oranje, 2008):

1. In the preparation and use of a new interactive and learning tool, called the 'Strategic Engagement and Analysis Matrix' (SEAM), that *inter alia* sought to provide for the:
 - Surfacing, focused deliberation and the reaching of a shared understanding and agreement between stakeholders on local development potential, and on that which was good about the district, be it located in people, places, institutions and/or networks, instead of the search for and focus on problems;
 - Integration of local, indigenous and statistical knowledge and the use of such knowledge to elicit stakeholders' views of what had made, and was still making their districts good/strong, what should be enhanced and deepened, and how these potentials could be harnessed to address needs in the district;
 - The celebration of what was good in a district and the broadening and deepening of the ways in which this potential was described and used; and
 - The establishment of groups of stakeholders with a common agreement not only on what was good about the district, but what they agreed to protect and use for the collective good.
2. In the work-sessions, during which facilitators were explicitly instructed to not start the sessions with a statement and discussion of problems, but rather with *what was good* about the district and what could be used/exploited to make life in the district better, its economy stronger and more inclusive, and ensure that its people had a better quality of life. In addition to this, provision was made for a full day in the work-sessions in which the participants were given 'the task' to dream/imagine what their district would be like in future, how it got there in terms of utilisation of its potentials, and how it would sustain/retain this level.

3. In the format of the presentation of the project-deliverables on purpose-made, simple templates, which provided for the recording of the shared understanding and agreements reached by participants on (1) the potential and need in the district; and (2) the actions that will be undertaken by the various organs of government in the district. These templates did not make provision for long lists of problems, but instead prompted the project facilitator to focus on potentials and needs, and made it clear that potentials were opportunities to be used to address needs.
4. In the search for examples of places with similar development potential-profiles to learn from these places in terms of how to make (better) use of the development potentials, and to introduce such success stories to the work-sessions.
5. In the sharing and learning sessions, in which both project successes and less successful components were shared and used to make immediate amendments to the project methodology, the use of data, the preparation for work-sessions and the presentation of project deliverables.

4. An Appreciative Analysis of the Project and the Use of AI in it

As indicated in the previous section, AI was used extensively in the project, not just in specific project components, but also in the approach to the project. In the following two sub-sections, (1) the project is assessed from an appreciative, yet critical perspective, and (2) the use and value of the utilisation of AI in the project, is discussed.

4.1 Doing an Appreciative Analysis of the Project

An appreciative exploration of 'what worked' in the project and what could be replicated in other districts and other projects, revealed the following:

1. The project demonstrated that representatives from the three spheres of government can get together and that such intergovernmental development planning projects can, if well-implemented and managed, result in high-level, serious, meaningful and constructive deliberation and even decisive and progressive action. Given the focus on getting things done and adding value, the deliberations did not succumb to negative, meaningless and regressive discussions or monologues on problems and challenges with no hope for a better tomorrow. The project furthermore demonstrated that it is possible to have rich and rewarding trans-disciplinary discussions between people coming from a variety of local, political, multi-sectoral, technical knowledge backgrounds. This in turn led to far more nuanced understandings of opportunities than mono-specialist-driven engagements generally do. These kind of multi-sectoral and stakeholder engagements also resulted in the introduction, development and dissemination of a new series of positive words, concepts and constructs with which to look at, explore and talk about places and potentials.
2. The project allowed decision-makers/shapers from a variety of perspectives and backgrounds to focus their attention, and crucially, their plans, strategies, frameworks, budgets and implementation efforts in a distinct geographic unit – i.e. the district in this case. It also shattered the myth that the outcome of a planning process needed to be a thick, dense,

unfriendly, inaccessible document. The short, crisp 6-8 page template-based summaries of (1) shared understandings on needs, potentials and challenges, and (2) agreements on roles, responsibilities and actions of the various stakeholders, provided a fresh approach to reaching and documenting and ensuring implementation of intergovernmental engagements.

3. The project provided an ideal opportunity for locally-based individuals and groups who really cared about their communities and the places in which they lived their lives, to engage with powerful decision-makers and demonstrate their willingness to take hands and do what was required to make their lives and places better. For activists and planners in many of the more rural areas where the feeling often was that no-one listened or cared, the project brought a feeling that there was hope and that there was a real concern about their/these places too. Maybe even more important, that there was at least a wish to invest and spend in such places in a way that took seriously what local people knew about their places with regards to need and potential.

The project, unfortunately, also experienced a number of challenges, which were at times very disappointing, even heart-breaking, but at least provided valuable learning experiences. The most significant of these were:

1. The excitement and feeling of doing something new, meaningful and different often lasted for as long as the deliberations were taking place, and in many cases dissipated as fast as they had begun in the often very disheartening living and frustrating bureaucratic work environments many participants had to return to. In many cases the new appreciations, new concepts and new hope, were soon forgotten or fell into disuse in unresponsive, conservative, 'legal compliance-driven', low-energy/passion work environments.
2. Power, and concerns about who has it, may get it/lose it and potentially benefit from it, reared its ugly head in many interactions, or after the intergovernmental engagements. In a number of cases, the process was viewed as challenging existing processes and initiatives, and its simplicity and success in cases and places where progress had previously been ruled 'to be impossible', proved to be its downfall. Closely associated with this, one of the successes of the project, the challenging and even breaking-down of professional and boundaries and senseless, artificial territories, also led to the demise of the project in a number of municipalities. Often the champions of such processes in municipalities, generally younger officials, were seen as a challenge to managers or politicians in 'higher positions'. In such cases, the project became a liability for those that believed in it, and often saw it come to an abrupt end, or the champions seeking employment elsewhere.
3. In a number of municipalities, the limited or even complete absence of filtering through of the ideas and agreements reached in the deliberations into municipal, provincial and national plans and budgets, and hence the limited visible, tangible change in the lives of people and places, led to cynicism not just about the project, but also about the power of the State, people, planning and 'the pursuit of a better future'. While this was a serious concern and one that many of those involved in the project were deeply troubled about, it did in most cases not lead to a lasting sense of despair. Instead it fuelled the wish and desire and sense of urgency to try again, think and explore more and work harder.

4. The appointment of new consultants at every round of the project roll-out after the pilot phase had the positive outcome of creating a wider awareness of the project and providing more consultants with an opportunity to work on the project. Potentially it also allowed for more and more diverse inputs on how to undertake the project and improve it. However, very little of the envisaged learning and improvement actually took place, as the 'single-appointment mode of roll-out' did not allow for consultants to take ownership of the project, and really get stuck in it, as those involved in the pilot phase did. For most of these 'post-pilot phase consultants' it was 'just another project' that they were successful in being awarded in (just another) tender process that had to be rolled out and completed in accordance with a clinical Terms of Reference. In many of these cases it was about compliance, and not the pursuit of anything beyond the confines of the single project appointment.

4.2 Assessing the use of AI in the project

In the following two paragraphs the use of AI in the project is discussed, focusing on (1) the participants in the project, as garnered from interviews with participants, and learning and sharing exercises, and (2) the authors (CSIR, 2007a; 2007c; Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2008).

1. Many of the *participants* indicated that they found the appreciative approach to be a very welcome change from the otherwise negative so-called '*development planning*' discussions, which often entailed little more than the sharing of depressing, sensationalist, spectacular stories of development failure and doom. Many of them expressed the view that they saw the AI approach as something that planning should pursue far more seriously than the disempowering problem-focused planning processes they had been part of and/or become used to. In a number of cases the view was expressed that, as development-focused practitioners and politicians, they felt far more comfortable/at home with the AI approach than the problem-centred approach. It clearly was a case of much rather being 'proponents of hope than orators of doom'. There were of course those that felt that the AI approach sought to gloss over serious challenges to development and deny the real developmental *problems* that planning had to get stuck in. Some argued that the appreciative approach was soft, unrealistic and 'part of a postmodern plot to undermine scientific discourse'; others saw it as part of a sinister political agenda with as its aim a denial of the State's role in service delivery and its limited success in genuine, real transformation. This feedback, in many cases provided by seriously concerned participants who had, after years of failed starts and lack of progress, become highly cynical of State action, was not seen as negative. Instead, it was used to improve the roll-out of the project in subsequent municipalities by being acutely aware of it and preparing for it appropriately. One way of doing so was by emphasising that the approach was not about denying deep and serious conditions of underdevelopment, but about (1) engaging them from a perspective that argued that *they could and would be overcome* and (2) consciously seeking and finding solutions to address them.
2. The *authors* came to AI from a planning paradigm that had proven unable to deliver on the need for intergovernmental development planning, budgeting and delivery, and sought in it not only a vehicle to make multi-stakeholder engagement processes more constructive and more focused on actually bringing about a better future and not just talking about it, but also to reinvigorate participants and themselves by regaining and strengthening the planning ethos that *a better life*

is possible. For both authors, the AI approach proved to be incredibly empowering and transformative. Both left the project not only with a renewed and even a stronger conviction about the positive power of planning and plans, but also with the realisation that planning could only do so if it was done inclusively and used constructively. In addition to that, the use of AI demonstrated what a community of engaged people can achieve when they apply their minds consciously and constructively, in a collaborative way, and with the collective, the future and the positive, as their shared frame of reference. Finally, given that one of the authors is a lecturer in a planning programme at a large university and the other is involved in many capacity-building processes, the positive experiences they had and the strengthening of their conviction about what planning could do, if practised in an appreciative and constructive way, was, and still is being carried forth in their lecturing and capacity-building endeavours.

5. Concluding thoughts

Even though the fragments of a project covered in this paper are from a uniquely South African story and a series of intergovernmental and government-private sector-community engagements in that country, its illustration of the value of AI in shared analysis, intergovernmental dialogue, development planning, community development and personal growth, is sure to be interest to a wider audience. While the paper indicated that there were many challenges and frustrations, it also *demonstrated the value to be gained from:*

- An 'appreciative analysis' in surfacing and considering the potentials and needs of districts and the communities that call them 'home';
- Constructive, multi-stakeholder discussions on the individual and collective capabilities of different spheres and sectors of government in terms of planning and budgeting for, and investing and spending in the same geographical area/space; and
- Government officials exploring/looking at a district from an appreciative perspective, and not from the standard 'problem-centred' angle.

Finally, it highlighted the therapeutic value for planners of using an AI approach in conceptualising, rolling out and making sense of their own beliefs, intentions and actions, as well as those of others they are interact with and wittingly or not, deeply influence in their (joint) pursuit of 'a better life for all'.

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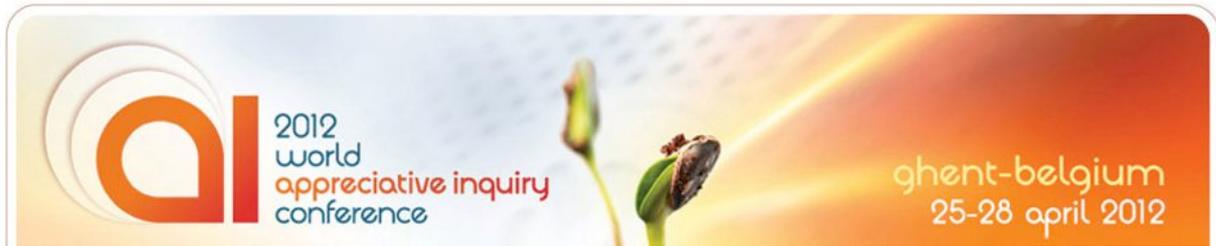
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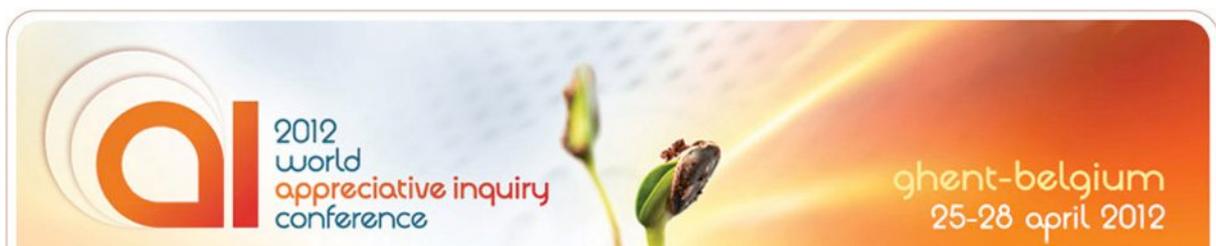
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Moving From Deficits to Strengths:
Using Appreciative Inquiry to Enhance Student Engagement and Motivation

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Introduction:

Student engagement is an area of concern for many educators as students with higher levels of engagement and motivation tend to learn more

than their less motivated or engaged peers (Schreiner, 2007). Research into strengths-based approaches shows that people working from their strengths display higher levels of motivation, confidence, satisfaction and competence and that they tend to learn and retain information more easily (Rath, 2007; Clifton & Harter 2003; Linley & Harrington, 2006; Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In addition, when teachers are both socially supportive and intellectually demanding students tend to be more engaged and positive about their own learning (Brookfield, 2006; Stipek, 2002; Turner, Meyer, Cox, DiCintio & Thomas, 1998).

Appreciative Inquiry is a strengths-based approach that encourages participants to share their peak experiences in order to extract the common themes. Those themes are then used to develop strategies to replicate or build upon the peak experience in the current context (Cooperider and Whitney, 2001; Watkins and Mohr, 2001). Although originally an organizational change approach, AI is now widely used in education. The literature indicates that using AI approaches in the classroom leads to enhanced student engagement, participation and achievement (Yballe & O'Connor, 2000; AI Commons, nd;).

Background of the Participants

This study is an ongoing exploration of the efficacy of the AI approach in enhancing student learning with high intermediate language learners at the

College of the North Atlantic—Qatar. In general, the learners at the College of the North Atlantic are similar to other tertiary students in the Arabian Gulf. They have progressed through a K-12 system in the throes of constant reform. The emphasis in their prior schooling was memorization to pass examinations. The initial Rand report for the Qatari government “found an educational system that will be familiar to many Arab region scholars: a rigid curriculum emphasizing rote learning, hierarchical institutions with unclear goals, lack of incentives or accountability, and misallocated resources” (Rand, 2006, p.4-8). As a result, students are often weak in English and Arabic language skills. Further, they are frequently completely unprepared for the foreign methods that their English teachers use to try to ready them for studying in an English medium of instruction academic program (MacLeod, 2007; Rostrom, 2009). To further exacerbate the difficulties for students and teachers, students often do not choose their own majors so they are not always willing to work hard to prepare to study.

Objectives:

1. Move students from the common deficit-based, teacher-dependent mindset to a more self-reliant approach focused on using their strengths to learn more effectively.
2. Use a positive discourse to foster improved student attitudes, increase interaction between students and increase students' engagement with their learning

3. Facilitate students' adopting a set of appreciative agreements, or commitments around what they would do individually and collectively, as a class to achieve their goals.

Methods:

I. A case study where participants used the following AI process:

1. Discovery- a structured interview with a partner to explore their best learning experiences.
2. Dream- shared their partner's stories (and their own vision of an ideal class or college) with the group and extracted meaningful patterns or themes.
3. Design— Using the data from part 2, developed an individual plan to maximize their learning and promulgated a series of agreements governing group behavior
4. Destiny- Changes from step 3 were implemented

II. Participants gave feedback on the AI approach although we did not use this meta-language or discuss the nature of AI. Students took part in short semi-structured interviews or answered a short questionnaire to explore if the positive approach in the class had improved their learning experience and if so how.

Results:

Almost all students showed renewed commitment and enthusiasm for the class. In general, the AI approach resulted in increased quality and quantity of

participation, increased attendance and overall a more positive attitude from students. Participants reported that the process made them feel more positive, confident and interested in learning. These results are consistent with the facilitator's observations and the results previously reported in the literature.

Conclusions and suggestions for further research:

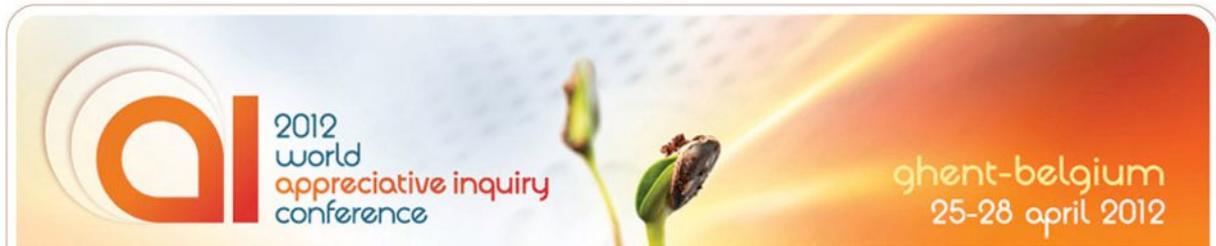
Given the positive results experienced by the investigator and the students involved, the investigator plans to continue to conduct and document small-scale case studies with CNAQ students. A large scale study comparing the attitudes and results of students taught in a traditional approach with those of a group taught using an AI approach is in the preliminary planning stages.

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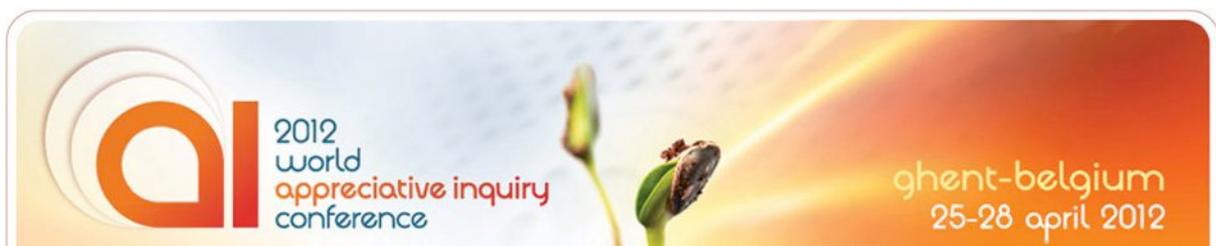
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Evaluating local and public envisioning processes from a user perspective

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Abstract

The Appreciative Inquiry-cycle consists of four processes, focussing on discovering, dreaming, designing and delivering. The method of envisioning is an important activity in this cycle, especially in the process of ‘dreaming’. In this paper the focus is on the role of envisioning in local strategic policy processes in the Netherlands. These processes are not always explicitly defined as Appreciative Inquiry trajectories, but have various characteristics in common. In that sense, experiences in the context of strategic policymaking can shed new light on the use of envisioning methods and prove a source of inspiration for the Appreciative Inquiry research community.

The added value of envisioning for strategic policy processes has been emphasized in literature. In this paper the central question is why and how local policymakers apply envisioning activities in their strategic policy processes and which added value, levers and barriers they perceive in everyday practice. In other words, theoretical assumptions will be compared with experiences in practice, from a user-perspective.

Empirical evidence has been gathered by means of a retrospective scan. It was based on a literature review, a scan of policy documents, in-depth interviews, secondary data and observations of the author. Policymakers in the Netherlands were asked how they perceived the use of envisioning methods and experiences in the field. The initial results of the scan are presented in this paper and will be elaborated in the coming years.

1. Introduction

Strategic policymaking is about anticipating the future. Governmental organisations design policies to tackle problems and opportunities now and in the future. In case the future has been taken into consideration in strategic policymaking so far, the ways in which it has been done can vary. In daily practice long term visions are created, and trend, prognostic and scenario studies are performed. By using these methods a better understanding can develop with regard to future changes. On the one hand they allow to create a more structured, more integrated and better grounded idea of a wishful future. On the other hand they enable organisations to question whether one is prepared for exogenous changes that might have an impact on the territory or the issue at stake.

In this paper focus lies on experiences of governmental organisations with envisioning, as a way of taking the future into consideration. Envisioning is defined as the process of creating a strategic vision. A vision can be seen as a lodestar – an image of the future that offers direction yet is never reached (Hines and Bishop, 2006). Senge (1994) defines a vision as a picture of the future you seek to create, described in the present tense as if it were happening now. Thus, envisioning is about creating a positive image of the future. In that sense the method of envisioning has some characteristics of the Appreciative Inquiry model, focussing on the positive aspects of an organisation or an issue at stake that can be built upon (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005, 2008). Appreciative Inquiry attempts to use ways of asking questions and envisioning the future in-order to foster positive relationships and build on the present potential of a given person, organisation or situation.

In this paper the focus lies on envisioning processes in the context of local governmental organisations. In (Rijkens and van der Duin, 2012) it is underpinned that differences can be identified while comparing practices on the local and the national level. Hence demarcation is needed. More specifically, attention will be paid to municipalities undertaking a strategic policy process, in which a vision is created. Such a vision can be seen as a description of a desirable future for the municipality. In this paper experiences with organisational visions for municipalities are excluded.

Empirical evidence has been gathered in the Netherlands, there being a tradition of envisioning on the local level since the nineties. Many municipalities prepare long term visions nowadays, with time horizons of 10, 20 or even 30 years ahead. This can be explained by national policies developed in the beginning of the nineties. At that time, the national government developed and implemented the so called GSB-policies (in Dutch: Grote Steden Beleid, Large city policies), which stimulated the top municipalities ranked by number of inhabitants in the Netherlands to develop long term visions. The main motivation behind this stimulus was to arrive at more focussed, and integrated frameworks for policies aimed at and made by cities. In doing so, national financial budgets for the cities could be distributed in a more grounded and efficient way. During the years that followed, smaller municipalities followed this example and discovered the added value of envisioning for their own policymaking. Besides in the Netherlands, municipalities are obliged to develop spatial planning visions for the long term nowadays, since this has been organised by a new spatial planning law since 2008.

The initial results of the scan are presented in this paper and will be elaborated in the coming years. These initial findings can shed new light on the use of envisioning methods and serve as a source of inspiration for new dialogues within the Appreciative Inquiry community, among others.

2. Research approach

In this paper, the central question is: how are envisioning methods used in the creation of strategic policies and what is the perceived added value from the point of view of policymakers? In various sources, the added value of envisioning for strategic policymaking processes has been emphasised (see among others (Loorbach, 2010), (Van der Loo, Geelhoed and Samhoud, 2007) (Weisbord and Janoff, 2000) (Van der Heijden, 2002)). We examine whether these theoretical assumptions correspond with the experiences of policymakers in their everyday practice.

In this paper findings are based on literature reviews, a scan of policy documents, in-depth interviews and observations of the author. This research is explorative by character. For example, the questions used in the in-depth interviews were formulated in an open and explorative way. Visions and envisioning trajectories of the following municipalities have been analysed: Almelo, Alkmaar, Amersfoort, Amsterdam, Arnhem, Breda, Delft, Den Bosch, Den Haag, Den Helder, Deventer, Ede, Eindhoven, Emmen, Enschede, Gorinchem, Haarlem, Heerlen, Helmond, Hengelo, Leeuwarden, Leiden, Lelystad, Maastricht, Midden-Delfland, Nijmegen, Rotterdam, Sittard-Geleen, Utrecht, Venlo, Zaanstad. In depth interviews took place in Amsterdam, Breda, Heerlen, Maastricht, Midden-Delfland and Rotterdam (Overschie).

For this paper, a comparison has been made with secondary data based on ((Polderman, 2011) and (Futureconsult, 2011)). In this analysis the focus is also on experiences of municipalities in the Netherlands (covering 88 municipalities in the Netherlands). In this scan the researchers made use of questionnaire research, in depth interviews and literature review.

In setting up and analysing these cases, a demand-driven approach has been adopted, focusing on the end-user perspective – i.e. that of policymakers who have applied envisioning methods – and using their perceptions as a measure of the perceived added value. The aim is to increase insight into topics such as the experience with envisioning methods in strategic policymaking, the motives policymakers have for using the envisioning method, and the perceived levers and barriers.

Strategic policymaking can be seen as a cyclic activity, consisting of different phases: agendasetting, policy preparation, decision making, implementation and evaluation (see (Howlett and Ramesh, 2003)). In practice these phases are more diffuse by character and thus not that linear as depicted. Among others, envisioning can be useful in the policy preparation phase, for example to inspire and create a framework for policy strategies.

This paper is structured along the lines of the following research questions:

- Which motives do policymakers of municipalities have in order to apply envisioning methods in strategic policy processes?
- Which kind of visions do they create?
- Which kind of process designs do they use?
- What is the perceived added value of envisioning in strategic policy processes?
- Which levers and barriers are perceived when applying envisioning methods?

3. Results

Which motives do policymakers of municipalities have in order to apply envisioning methods in strategic policy processes?

Motives can vary. In some municipalities creating a vision on the long term can be experienced as a required activity (e.g. because the Dutch national government requires local governments to do so, see introduction). In most municipalities it is experienced as a crucial and valuable activity, whether it is required or not. A distinction can be drawn between content-driven and process-driven motives for using envisioning methods in strategic policy processes. When the main motive for using envisioning methods is not necessarily a desire to realize a concrete policy end-product (such as a policy document), the motive is said to be process-driven. Examples of process related motives are developing support for policies, and creating a mutual learning process etcetera.

Main motives behind envisioning initiatives that have been analysed are content related. Most important content driven motives behind developing visions for the municipality brought to the fore are about creating an overall frame, a so-called compass for new policies. This compass can be seen as an integrated framework rather than a sectoral one, coherent and consistent by nature. Content related motives are also about safeguarding the independence of a municipality (see also (Futureconsult, 2011)) by building a stronger identity for it and developing arguments explaining why the municipality is a legitimate entity in its own right. But also in the opposite situation, it can be used to create a new identity after the fusion of different municipalities into a new one with more inhabitants. Such fusions can be seen as an important institutional trend in the Netherlands, for the past 10 years. The main driver behind it is to stimulate scaling and thus enhance efficiency.

In less cases, process related motives are leading. City councils start up an envisioning process to have a participatory initiative in the municipality: people get involved again with policymaking (see also (Futureconsult, 2011)).

Which kind of visions do they create?

Taking a look at the visions that have been developed by Dutch local governmental organisations the following conclusions can be drawn. Most visions seem to be consensus-like visions. The ambitions the stakeholders agree upon can be found back in the visions. Sometimes issues people have not agreed upon can not be found back in the vision. Placing high emphasis on consensus can create tension with regard to the innovation potential of a vision. Remarkable is that in many visions of local governmental organisations, innovative and / or unique ambitions seem to be

missing. Exceptions to the rule are for example visions in which municipal goals of climate neutrality have been expressed. Becoming climate neutral often takes decades and innovative strategies for structural, systemic change are needed. In this case one has to deal with a structural problem (among others the issues of energy scarcity and climate change) with a high level of urgency to change the current situation and the strategies followed.

Visions are about the future, which is surrounded by uncertainty. Looking back for 30 years for example, we can learn from history that developments are not business as usual. They are usually not linear by character. The same holds for the future. Future developments may develop in different directions in comparison to the societal developments we experience today. In case of the practice of envisioning for city councils, one might expect that visions consider a changing future and that in an envisioning process alternative futures have been taken into consideration. Today's envisioning practices often show that minimal attention has been paid to autonomous developments that might affect the future of the municipalities. In this context, different practices have been encountered:

- No attention has been paid to a future analysis of autonomous developments
- Attention has been paid to a modest future analysis, by taking some linear autonomous trends into consideration, trends that illustrate a business as usual future, without taking uncertainties into consideration. Trend analyses of other organisations have been copied, or prognostic simulations have been carried out (inside or outside the organisation).
- In hardly any vision document of a city council a foresight analysis (or results of it), such as a scenario analysis, has been found, where different possible alternative futures are taken into consideration. Arguments that have been expressed during the in-depth interviews illustrate that most city councils do not have the in-house expertise to perform such an analysis.

It is a challenge for municipalities to take uncertainties into consideration in envisioning initiatives. As Hines and Bishop (2006) state there are two types of future, the expected (the official future) and the unexpected. The expected future is hardly news. The task is to present futures that are both plausible and unexpected. Such futures may, at first glance, appear surprising or even ridiculous. According to Hines and Bishop (2006) one must be prepared to appear ridiculous at first, stepping outside the organisation's comfort zone and encouraging others to join in and contemplate the unexpected. In line with this, an interesting example that has been brought to the fore in some of the in-depth interviews is about the development of economic recession. When preparing visions before the recession started, visions were ambitious for example with regard to the planning of new building office locations. The past years local governmental organisations are confronted with recession and the ambitions are not met. By taking uncertainties into account on forehand, by focussing also on a recession like scenario, ambitions can be formulated in a more robust way, and more attention will be paid to the way strategies can be adjusted in time in a flexible, efficient, and effective way.

Empirical evidence is also about the coupling of long term visions and actions of today and tomorrow. In daily practice of local governmental organisations the coupling between vision and strategies is often missing. In daily practice, many visions have not been translated into concrete strategies, including actions to be undertaken in the short and long run, in order to enable the realisation of the vision. An important success factor for the implementation of a vision is to use the vision as a framework of inspiration for strategy development. As Hines and Bishop state

(2006): the main benefit of linking a vision to a time continuum is that it helps the organisation construct a mental model along the lines of 'This is how we proceed now, in the next year, within the next five years, and in the long run'. Beyond one general vision, whose attainment may seem dauntingly distant, two or three subvisions sequenced along a time continuum allow the organisation to express its preferred long-term range development in clear, achievable steps. Policymakers indicated that the next step is to budget the actions to be undertaken which increases the status and credibility of these actions. It is not surprising that not everybody sees the added value of thinking of the long term, in case visions have not been used to develop concrete strategies.

Which kind of process designs do they use?

Appreciative Inquiry processes are participatory by nature, involving all members of an organisation. Envisioning processes in the context of local governmental organisations are also participatory by nature. Members of the organisations (the management and civil servants) themselves, members of the commune council, external organisations and citizens might get involved in the participatory process.

Looking at the empirical evidence, visions have been constructed in different ways, according to different types of participatory models, and levels of participation. It can be concluded that envisioning studies in the Netherlands are performed - increasingly in a participatory way, thereby including not only internal but also external perspectives.

With regard to internal perspectives, participation can vary according to whether only one department within the organisation has been involved in developing the vision or different departments. The role of the municipal council may also vary. It may be very active and prominent in developing the vision, or it can be limited to the validation of the vision at the end of the envisioning trajectory. The role of the management board of the city council can be very active and steering, or rather that of a silent partner.

External participation can be limited to a modest group of key partners of the city council, or can be very broad, involving organisations and persons even beyond the borders of the municipality. Citizens are a specific group of stakeholders. The effort that has been put into involving a representative group of citizens varies. In most participatory processes they have been invited to become involved in the envisioning process. Among them, only engaged citizens will move to action. The latter however is not a representative group of inhabitants of the municipality. In some cases a lot of effort is put into visiting citizens who are difficult to come in contact with because of - for example - language barriers.

The argument of variation also holds for the levels of participation for different types of actors that have been met in various participatory envisioning trajectories. The level of participation varies between reflection on a draft vision and co-production of the vision. In case of reflection the process design of the envisioning trajectory consists of mostly one-off townhall meetings. Such a trajectory takes less time than a co-productive one. In case of the latter, especially workshops are organized with stakeholders. Often people become involved in the envisioning process on more than one occasion. In the Netherlands there has been a tendency in the past few

years to use social media tools in envisioning processes as to increase and improve the level of participation.

What is the perceived added value of envisioning in strategic policy processes?

With regard to the perceived added value of envisioning in strategic policy processes, the question is whether these perceptions correspond to the motives expressed on beforehand, before starting the envisioning process. It is interesting to conclude that in the interviews especially the process-related added value has been emphasised, while mainly content-related motives were initially leading.

Process driven impacts are among others about the stimulation of participation within and beyond the organisation (see also (Futureconsult, 2011)). By developing a vision in a participatory way, internal and external support for the vision and related policies increases. By sharing perspectives on the future of the municipality people gain respect for others' perspectives, choices and motivations. A common ground of understanding is established in dialogue.

Besides the process related impacts, also content related ones have been mentioned. Visions are indeed considered compasses to be used as frameworks spanning different sectoral strategic policy processes. With the aid of a vision focus can be achieved in policymaking. One has a reference basis at one's disposal, to be used as an integrated framework to make and to weigh choices. Especially in times of economic recession, the added value of a vision is related to the focus the vision offers; the vision offers arguments to use budgets in a more efficient way. By having a vision as an integrated framework, which is underpinned and shared by stakeholders, one has arguments for (a new) focus of policies and choices. Some policymakers mentioned the fact that the added value of a shared and well underpinned vision is that one can argument why specific policies are not carried out and specific options have not been chosen. With regard to the policy cycle, these content related impacts are especially experienced in the policy preparation phase.

According to policymakers, visions have an internal and an external function. An internal function is related to the internal organisation of the city council. One develops and implements policies, and a vision can be used as a reference framework in doing so. Yet, visions also have an external function in strengthening the image of a municipality. By communicating a wishful identity of the municipality, and by working on this identity, the image of the municipality can be strengthened. By means of a clear and inspiring vision, municipalities may attract new inhabitants, visitors and tourists. In other words, visions can be seen as tools in support of city branding.

Local policymakers indicated that they perceived the intersectoral approach of developing integrated visions as a great benefit. It would appear that this approach is unlikely to be taken for granted within local governmental organisations. The approach had a content-related and process-related benefit. By combining knowledge from different sectoral domains, people attained new insights, for example with regard to strategies. And through intersectoral dialogues, some arrived at a better understanding of one another's perspectives on the future of the municipality. So the envisioning process stimulated mutual learning, allowing participants to learn from each other's perspectives on the future, to think in a way that transcends party-politics and length of legislative term, providing them with a common foundation for future policies.

Which levers and barriers are perceived when applying envisioning methods?

Finally, in most of the interviews, the policymakers indicated that the envisioning process and the vision itself were used in a suboptimal fashion. In retrospect, they felt that insights from future analyses could be better connected to and embedded in ongoing policy development processes throughout and beyond the organisation, so that strategies and actions related to visions could be realised in practice.

Several reasons for this, dealing with several barriers and levers, have been brought to the fore. Types of barriers and levels that were mentioned in this context are about factors in relation to people and the organisation of the municipality. On the level of people in the organisation important success factors are related to the knowledge and skills of people working for the municipality, especially with regard to knowledge and expertise how to develop a vision and how to design and organise an envisioning trajectory, whom to involve, how to communicate etc. Envisioning also asks for visionary people, having future oriented ideas and ambitions with regard to their municipality. An argument that was brought to the fore is that these kinds of capacities are sometimes lacking in municipal organisations. Designing and facilitating a process of envisioning requires skills that are often lacking when the respective local organisations decides to conduct an envisioning process for the first time. Besides, the impact of a vision and envisioning trajectory to a significant degree depends on who is involved. With regard to the initiator and coordinator, the success depends partly on their level of leadership. Policymakers also indicate that leadership depends on the degree of confidence among colleagues and stakeholders with regard to the envisioning initiative.

Visions sketch a strategic, future oriented, and integrated image of the future of the municipality, sectoral plans can be inspired by. However in practice policymakers experience that it is difficult to achieve that an integrated vision is being used throughout the organisation, cross cutting the different sectoral departments. In the local case studies, policymakers concluded that, with regard to the organizational embedding, one of the key challenges is to find ways - in terms of operational models and procedures - to embed and secure a strategic, future oriented, and integrated way of thinking and the insights generated by envisioning processes throughout the various strategic levels and sectoral departments of their organization. Besides one of the findings is also that the visions and the related development process is owned by only a small group of people in the whole organisation. So, the vision is not owned by the rest of the (strategic part of the) organisation. It became clear that policy-makers struggle with implementing future-oriented thinking and acting in the current organizational structures. They felt that the ambition of exploring the future in an integrated way could be in conflict with existing organizational structures, which are often sectorally organized.

Policymakers at the local level noted that, in order to embed the paradigm of future oriented policy-making successfully within their organizations, they would need to address and transform not only the organisation but also the existing organizational culture. Civil servants indicated that, in their view, the existing culture tends to have a short-term focus, which can clash with the long-term perspective of most foresight studies. Da Costa et al. (2008) stated that a lot of effort and commitment is needed for policy-makers to switch from dealing with short-term issues towards a more long-term and holistic approach. Policymakers feel that future-oriented policy-

making can thrive in a culture where openness and innovation are celebrated and change is embraced rather than opposed.

Last but not least, creating and having policy support is an important success factor in realising ambitions formulated in the vision. A step further, having support for the vision, might also increase the cooperation of stakeholders and internal colleagues in realising the policies related to the vision.

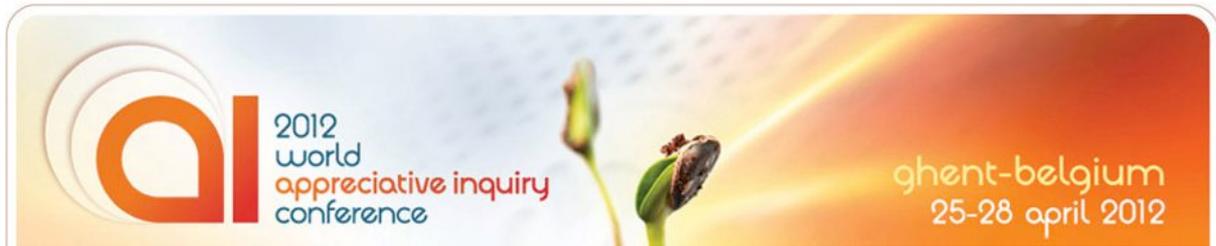
4. Synthesis and conclusions

In this paper the central question was why and how local Dutch policymakers apply envisioning methods in their strategic policy processes and which added value, levers and barriers they perceive in everyday practice. Interesting to conclude is that the motives behind envisioning trajectories are mostly content driven, while the perceived added value not only comes to the fore in the content-related impacts of envisioning but also in the process-related impacts. Content-related added value is about the integrated character of envisioning, having an overall coherent and consistent framework for policymaking. Process-related added value is about the intersectoral dialogues and the creation of buy-in and support, while cross-cutting programs of political parties. With regard to the visions themselves, the issue of not including or considering autonomous future developments - both certain and uncertain - in the envisioning exercise, deserves attention. The same holds for the issue of strategizing with the aid of a vision; how to use visions to develop short and long term actions. In this paper it came to the fore that there is no single recipe for a participatory envisioning process. Different process designs are possible, depending on the goal of including different actors in the participatory process, but also on the budget and time available. With regard to different levers and barriers, the challenge for municipalities is to embed visions more deeply within and throughout the organisation (across different departments) which is a challenge of acquiring the right expertise and skills on board, and working on a more future-oriented, visionary and integration-minded culture on the organisational level.

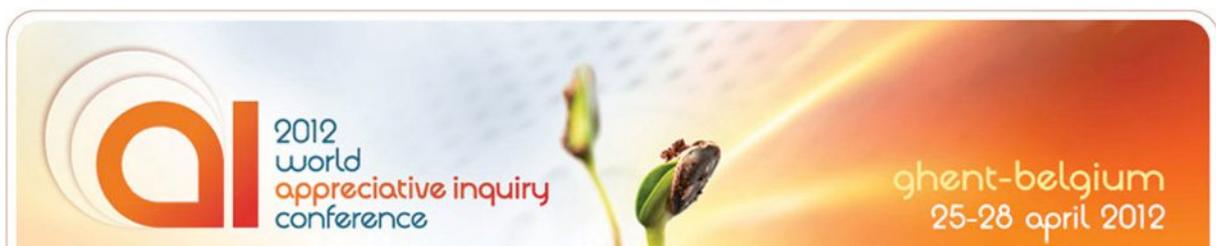
A careful conclusion can be drawn that in the Netherlands municipalities already have some experience in envisioning, ever since the 1990s. They can be seen as pioneers in the field of long term envisioning. The experiences in the Netherlands can therefore be inspiring to municipalities in other countries. In the Flemish-speaking part of Belgium, for example, the idea of envisioning on the local level has recently been receiving increased attention. Because of the coming obligation of the so called 'meerjarenplanning' (translation: planning for years) for municipalities, an increasing number of them are starting up envisioning trajectories. Paying attention to the long term, transcending the period of a legislature, is a new activity to many Flemish municipalities. Examples of municipalities in Flanders that have already developed a long term vision are larger cities such as Ghent. The experiences in the Netherlands illustrate how to develop visions, and offer crucial questions to be considered when starting up an envisioning trajectory. They also point to some levers and barriers to be taken into account.

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Appreciative speech in supervision practice

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The article aims to identify the level of appreciativeness of the specialists regarding the supervision relationship at the level of the speech of interviewed specialists in a qualitative research developed by a specific methodology Grounded Theory into an elite NGO of child protection in the North East region of Romania. We try to identify the elements of appreciative thinking, analyzing the supervisee and supervisor's speech, using Cooperrider's model, known as the 4 D model. To determine how experts perceive the process we proposed a secondary analysis, a supplementary appreciative inductive coding, through the already existing Grounded Theory coding, just to expose that this method can identify inductive categories based on an appreciative discourse.

Key questions of conducting this action can be formulated as follows: Is the supervisor-supervisee relationship seen in a positive view, in terms of appreciativeness by specialists? How does this approach influence the organizational effectiveness and professional and personal development of specialists?

Key words: appreciative inquiry, appreciative speech, appreciative thinking, Grounded Theory.

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Introduction

Through this approach we aim to identify the level of the specialists' appreciativeness regarding the supervision relationship, having as basic source the speeches of the specialists interviewed in a qualitative research carried out by the specified methodology of Grounded Theory in an elite NGO in the area of child protection from North Eastern region of Romania. We will construct a supplementary coding, an appreciative inductive coding, through the already existing Grounded Theory coding, just to expose that this method can identify inductive categories based on an appreciative discourse. If this method treats reality (supervision) by being masked by the discourse not the attitude towards the process itself, we will enhance this method by showing how it works using the discourse instrument- the understanding of discourse itself through a semiotic analysis.

During this action we tried to identify elements of appreciative thinking, analyzing both the supervisee speech and that of the supervisor, approaching in an innovative model of appreciative inquiry, known as 4D. To determine how experts perceive this process we proposed a secondary analysis based on a model derived from the Grounded Theory analysis. In this approach, we started from the questions: Is the supervisor-supervisee relationship seen in a positive view, in terms of appreciativeness by specialists? How does this approach influence the organizational effectiveness and professional and personal development of specialists?

Supervision as a practice is subject to continuous changes compared with the need for training of specialists and their perception regarding the role of co-transforming process itself can be analyzed based on their speech in appreciative terms precisely through reference to principles of appreciative inquiry. In literature, supervision is understood as an educational process (Robinson, 1949), administrative (Barker, 1995) supporting professionals, the quality of

service, making decisions for the organization, promoting directions, rules and values by guiding employees (Cojocaru, 2005), from the perspective of Kadushin, supervisors being considered trainers, consultants, therapists, managers and even directors (Kadushin, Harkness, 1976).

The paper provides a particular description of design and execution of the supervision implications, using the supplementary appreciative coding to the discourse of specialists in social work field.

We wanted to analyse the derivation of a possible interpretation model on the speech of supervision, which we constructed it in appreciative language terms. Subjects perceive the process as developer, expressed in terms of gradual co-transformation and co-creation, observed in the presence of their specific terms in component categories of the stages, in different temporal forms. Appreciative language exposes the supervision as catalyst of organizational development.

Another feature of the model is the recurrent of common discursive pattern, namely co-construction of professional excellence and success through the supervision.

It was identified a central position in speech relationship supervisor –supervise - which is seen as a partnership with co-transforming implications.

Appreciative inquiry

Appreciative inquiry is presented as a mode of action-research that meets the criteria of science as spelled out in generative-theoretical terms, a cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them (Cooperrider and Srivatsva,1987) and involves systematic discover of what gives a system ‘life’ when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms.(Cooperrider, Whitney, 2005). Appreciative inquiry

inspires the complex process of integral quality development who must be supported by psychological and an organizational framework (Cooperrider, 2005). The appreciative inquiry vision turns upside down the problem-centered approach, paying attention to what goes well in an organization, its successes being identified by its own members (Cojocaru, 2010). Appreciative inquiry is developed in many forms, it can be applied in as many constructive ways as individuals and organizations need to apply in order to increase the best of their capacities and their strengths conducting to the organizational success. Bushe sustain that many of the normal organization development processes required for successful change are required for appreciative inquiry as well (Bushe, 2010).

Supervision – review

In literature there are many definitions of supervision, which is understood as an educational process (Robinson, 1949), administrative (Barker, 1995) supporting the professionals, the quality of service, making decisions for the organization, promoting directions, rules and values by guiding employees (Cojocaru, 2005). From the perspective of Kadushin, supervisors were considered as trainers, consultants, therapists, managers and even directors (Kadushin, 1976). Traditional definition of supervision was built on three essential functions: (Kadushin, 1976): administrative, supporting and educational, while according to the integrated model of clinical supervision developed by Philip Rich (1993) supervision has the following four functions: facilitation, professional development, socialization of staff and providing services.

If facilitation involves developing and maintaining work culture and determines social workers to be proactive, creative, responsible and honest in communicating with others, then

professional development aims to develop professional skills and knowledge transfer being based on a culture of lifelong learning. The socialization of staff is involved in the process by which values, standards and behaviors desirable for the organization and profession are induced to those supervised. Offering services is geared to ensure the quality of services at professional standards of the organization through permanent evaluation of services offered and their adaptation to the needs of beneficiaries (Cojocaru, 2005).

Methodology

The target group of research

The target group of research is composed by the employees of a NGO in child protection in the North East region of Romania. There are 4 interviewees: three specialists in social work supervised in professional activity, and the direct supervisor of the organization.

Grounded Theory

If Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; 2007, Goulding, 1999) is characterized by building categories inductive and follows the gradual construction of progressive inductive coding, through secondary analysis we achieved in fact an additional induction represented through appreciative discourse analysis. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) a theory is a set of relationships that provide a plausible explanation of the phenomenon under study. Grounded Theory provides a systematic method involving several stages, which is used to generate the theory or relates to a reality of the phenomenon (Scott, 1996). During an inductive process, conceptual categories are created with a level of generality that is increasing, which explains the researched subject. *Constructivist Grounded Theory* is based on data coding using sensitive

concepts - analysis tools that can be revised to be concordant with the shades of the subject studied (Denzin, Lincoln, 2000).

Additional phase of Grounded Theory - Semiotics grid based on 4D cycle

Additional to the initial analysis through Grounded Theory, we performed an analysis of appreciative speech, an appreciative coding based on which we extracted from the basic text only terms and parts of appreciative speech.

In accordance with the appreciative nature of the analysis and based on the model of tetra-phase 4D of appreciative inquiry, we built the appreciative inductive categories.

The appreciative speech selected is identified as the constructive terms of co-creation, co-transformation, vision, focus on results, development. Appreciative discourse analysis aims to identify only those co-transformer elements that come in direct contact with appreciativeness, our lecture being appreciative. It is necessary to illustrate through en vivo the difference between the analysis specific to the paradigm centered on deficiency and appreciative analysis.

In the deficiency paradigm the supervisor response on its contribution in the professional development of the supervised could be interpreted as being of paternalistic influence, the supervised being the inexperienced protégé and discretion while the supervisor is the hierarchical superior whose solutions and decisions are always better.

In an appreciative perspective, supervisory relationship has a co-creator purpose, communication unlimited by temporal formality of the supervision session being an advantage in receiving the support and the proper reception of feedback given by the supervisor.

I am always there with them and support them, that's why I do not need to make many individual official sessions, they ask me, I answer them.

*I'm not a person to relate to them only through appointments
(supervisor, May 2011)*

We propose to identify the co-transforming nature of supervision, not its deficiency. *Always there* exemplifies the professional availability and transfer of knowledge and experience to a professional in training. The benefits are multilateral after the functionality of this process: the supervisee develops professional skills, the supervisor experiences sharing of knowledge and actually an exchange of experiences is made, so that in the end, through qualitative results of their work, the performance of the organization is transpiring.

Analysis of the categories constructed after the appreciative referential

Following a secondary analysis of data used in Grounded Theory, we established an appreciative inductive analysis, extracting the appreciative speech from the text thus forming categories whose features folds on the appreciative inquiry stages of Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny.

Discovery

Effects of supervision perceived in terms of what works - *improvement, quality, qualitative services, support, encouragement, results orientation, effects, performances, benefits, planning, development, comfort, safety, well done job, self-confidence.*

Improvement of work in social services and *quality* of providing these services in working with beneficiaries are two aspects stated especially by supervisees. According to the principle of simultaneity, things that individuals think and speak of, things that they discover and learn,

things that supplies dialogue and inspire future are those things they are looking for starting with the first question.

Supervisor helped me to improve my work in social services. (Social worker, May 2011)

Effects of supervision are increasingly better. Supervises improve their professional performances. (Supervisor, May 2011)

Keywords such as *support, encouragement* and *orientation towards result* are aspects that are associated with initial status of supervision implementation in organization. Their impact is even greater in the context of ongoing professional development. Orientation towards result mentioned by the supervisor of the organization shows his opening in collaboration with the social worker, in the positive approach of some given cases in order to solve professionally and effectively the potentials problematic or conflict situations.

I often used version of support, encouragement and orientation towards result and less towards deficit or what they failed to do. (Supervisor, May, 2011)

Appreciative speech is also supported by enouncing of benefits perceived by respondents, keyword used in descriptive terms of a process under which the organization is developing.

Supervision brings benefits through the fact that: Provides planning, a real contact with situation, which can give you a prediction on the evolution, based on which you make a work strategy. (Supervisor, May, 2011)

The supervisor is seen as the one with whom the professional divides his decision and actions in supervision relationship, he is a co-transforming part of supervision, and through his forming actions in fact a double professional development is achieved.

Transferring his knowledge to the supervisee, the supervisor becomes part of organizational success.

It gives you a certain comfort when making a decision regarding a case consulting someone who knows he is responsible for the advice he gives (Social worker, May 2011)

Transforming impact of supervision is experienced in working directly with the supervisor, their work being the sum of supervisor implication and of the supervisee quest for developing. The participants to supervision create, through their attitude towards the process of supervision, quality standards of the working environment which are beneficial to progress; here is where we see the applicability of constructionist principle of appreciative inquiry.

Co-creation of professional success– *beginning, progress, learning, development, clarifying, excitement, to deal with successfully, emotional release, balance, guidance, feedback, success, deepening, long term, self-confidence, consultant, support*

The characteristic of this category lies in the co-creative nature that supervision has in professional success. Appreciative speech is identified particularly in the exposure of early career of each social worker. The impact of supervision was felt on beginner social workers. Supervisees appreciate the process as on who form them and comes in response to their request of developing needs. We see in the speech of respondents that process is approached such as *supply and demand*. The principle of simultaneity can be seen from a response of supervisee:

If I need guidance, I ask for it and it is provided to me. (Social worker, May 2011)

At first I was offered supervision and I was actually formed by it (Social worker, May, 2011)

Consistency of supervision process offers social workers a future perspective regarding the development as specialist in the field. The keyword *long term* exposes the certainty of a continuous evolution, a foreshadowing of future by perpetual *modeling* of supervisees.

Commonly found in the speech of supervisees, the keyword *beginning* describes both initial stage of their career in social work field as well as the beginning of supervised work. Their initiation into a new field whose beneficiaries are social workers themselves transforms them into an important part of organizational change.

Relationships between supervision participants undergo changes depending on the implications of the process. Beginner social workers are gradually becoming specialists under the influence of supervised work, aspect found in the interviewees speech. Professionals' needs

are satisfied through the supervision relationship. Continuous guidance and verification are forming elements and are stated to be accomplished by this process, the result being precisely the progress of each supervised specialist. The progress from beginner to expert is the result of a collaboration oriented towards success.

Self evaluation of supervisees brings an element of professionalism in their speech. Awareness of progress, shown here through non-emotional involvement in working with beneficiaries, is a demonstration of professional maturity, the progress being assigned to the supervisor.

The greatest progress I made is that I am not so much emotionally involved in cases I work with, something I learned from the supervisor.

(Social worker, May 2011)

Keywords such as *emotional release, balance, development* accentuate the positive and appreciative attitude of supervisees, these being associated with progressive individual training from both psychological and professional perspective, the result of these interventions of qualitative supervision being reflected in the effectiveness of the organization.

It helps me release emotionally (social worker, May 2011)

It provides me a balance, always guiding me (social worker , May 2011)

I evolved, I improved the quality of services and work with beneficiaries

I manage to perform duties correctly (social worker , May 2011)

Dream

As a result of the participative inquiry within existing conditions in the organization when it works at its best, identified in the Discovery stage, specific to Dream phase, individuals manifest their desires and motivations regarding the organization.

Foreshadowing success in forming of supervisees –*very well adapted, very frequent, formative role, always, offer support, relational, depth, long term, modeling*

Folded on the *Dream* phase characteristics, the category aims to expose those parts of speech that reflect appreciative behavior and attitudes concerning the success as foreshadow of organizational success through the development of specialist. Both the supervisor as a professional trainer and supervisee as one whose needs require permanent satisfaction are determinants of professionalism and their collaboration to produce results involves directly the constructive change. Satisfying these needs leads to performance.

From the perspective of the supervisor, the collaboration is characterized by providing it at any time of the professional development of supervisee exemplified through the phrase *I am always there with them*. From the perspective of an appreciative approach the presence of the supervisor is the source of support, and continuous training. The fruitful relationship of specialists even outside of formal supervision sessions is a stimulating factor in professional activity. Participants are not conditioned by the time period set for a formal meeting; continuous collaboration and communication are the co-transformation factors of professional excellence.

*I am always there with them and support them, this is why I do not need to make many individual official sessions, they ask me, I answer them.
I'm not a person to relate to them only through appointments
(Supervisor, May, 2011)*

A defining aspect is the *long-term modeling* of supervisee by supervisor. Gradual formation is appreciated by supervisee, the desideratum as the result of this process being the professional status, implicitly the excellence in providing services as success and transparency of the organization.

On long term the supervisor models you somehow, makes you a professional over time, because at first you tend to be very subjective.

(Social worker, May 2011)

Subjectivism in working with the beneficiary is an unfavorable aspect while the objective optics of the situation is desirable. At the development of this optic, the supervisor is considered to be the main determinant.

Supervision functions in positive transformation - *support, maintain quality, encouragement, orientation towards result, performance exposure, feedback, coordination, verification, emotional release, balance, clarification guidance, counseling*

More empirical evidence is needed showing that positive practices in organizations produce desirable changes in organizational effectiveness (Cameron, Mora, Leutscher, Calarco, 2010). Appreciative nature of respondents' discourse is generated by the presence in the text of keywords that describe defining elements of the supervisory process. Co-transformation of professionals through the practice of supervision has as foundation the positive represented in this context by the functions of supervision. Once again we identified within the text the appreciative speech in the form of development needs. Each of the transformation elements of supervision is directly connected with the action of specialists. Development needs through supervision are actually included in a request-offer process, situation in which the supervisee is seeking support, guidance, feedback, consulting, and the supervisor is the giver which contributes effectively to their satisfaction.

The support provided is directly related with quality of services that specialists provide to beneficiaries. Therefore, the need of applicability of such a function in working with supervisees

is delimited. Interconnection of functions reinforces training of specialists in providing quality services.

The most important function is the support and assistance to achieve the quality of service (social worker, May 2011)

The supervisor is the individual who promotes the support function in working with specialists, its approach being especially appreciative. Results Orientation is a factor of changing professional optics, which triggers the development of a qualitative system and motivates the specialist to open towards an appreciative view. The supervisor, in our point of view, becomes the promoter of appreciativeness in organizational work.

I often used version of support, encouragement and orientation towards result and less towards deficit or what they failed to do. (Supervisor, May, 2011)

The *support* is considered a constructive function in professional training of social workers.

Supervision has also consulting, support and training functions over the social worker. (Social worker May 2011)

Supervision functions that have been implemented here would be the emotional support, technical support, sustentation (supervisor, May 2011)

The *consultative* role that supervision fulfils facilitates the work of specialists with beneficiaries.

Design

The knowledge gained in previous stages is then transposed into the texture of everyday functioning of the organization as a form of design, specific to the process.

Supervision relationship - co-transforming implications - *clarify, improvement plan, objective feedback, involvement, support, work flow, experience, discussion, vision, a very fine relationship, feeling safe, professional, compatible, morality, capacity to adapt, efficiently.*

The main element characteristic to supervisory relationship is perceived by supervisees as a *clarifying discussion*, either individual or in group. Improvement plan becomes thus a goal in the supervision relationship on the basis of which previous activities are perfected, are evaluated for an excellent value practice in terms imposed by the system.

In the individual discussion with the supervisor all aspects are clarifying: a performance improvement plan of the supervisee is made, supervisee is informed about the situations in which he has coped successfully, and the achievements during the year are presented(Social worker, May 2011)

According to the respondents discourse, the supervisor is the key person of the organization, the professional in the relationship with who their actions are valued after monitoring and evaluation that are both objective and forming. The supervisor's involvement makes "*work flow*". The functioning of organization is conditioned by the transposition of knowledge gained during the professionals' development.

*Supervisor involvement and the support I receive are observed more,
"work flows" (Social worker, May 2011)*

Working with supervisor helped me a lot. (Social worker, May 2011)

Adaptation of supervising to training needs of social workers is also a goal, an idea shared by the supervisee as well as by supervisor, the latter ensuring through his speech that he is aware of the steps of supervision but also of his adaptability as professional in the training of supervisee, the common goal being excellence.

*I know which are the steps of supervision their needs, and so on, and I
adapt them according to what everyone has to do (supervisor, May
2011)*

The image of the experienced supervisor expressed by supervisee can distinguish two visions. An initial appreciative vision manifested by professionals, is the one where the supervisor is the person to whom their future development depends on, because through the experience gained by him, superiority towards professionals exists.

*When your supervisor has a superior experience certainly he can offer
you the feedback you need. (Social worker, May 2011)*

*We have a professional to professional relationship, in my opinion, only
that she has a wider experience than me, that's clear (Social worker,
May 2011)*

Another important element in terms of appreciativeness is the compatibility supervisor-supervisee. The answer of one of supervisee involves the notion of morality as defining for compatibility as well as the need for continuous adaptation and conditioned by the context of the supervisor.

The compatibility of supervisee with the supervisor is often a matter of morality, and is given by their capacity to adapt in situations in which they are set. (Social worker, May 2011)

Communication is the most effective way to resolve complaints and problems at work, and a strong point that the supervisee sets out is the relatively small number of employees of the organization, which allows them an easier and effective communication.

Being few, we communicate very effectively and often, thus we manage to make our problems or complaints known in relation to the one next to you, professionally speaking. (Social worker, May 2011)

The supervising relationship through the characteristic of discussion given by supervisee and the process itself is an advantage in the exposure of problematic situations. Appreciative factor is present in the recognition of supervision process, a possibility for emotional release, for solving the less positive aspects.

Qualitative Supervision - factor of organizational co-transformation - *always supported, opening, talk, help, solving, group supervision, develop, track quality, influence, I became, professional.*

In this category, parts of the speech which are repeated in the construction of other categories can be observed. Keywords such as: *quality, development, professional* are commonly found in speech, which accentuates the important elements generated by supervision, and expressed in appreciative terms, both as a desideratum and as an aspect really fulfilled or in progress of fulfillment.

The opening of social workers is encouraged by the supervisor and especially through the word *always* is observed the intensity with which this behavior is practiced by the supervisor.

The discussion involved by supervision has decisive role in the professionals' relationships, because through communication a healthy practice in the organization is achieved.

I have always supported their opening, to announce in advance their problem, and this is not part of the dead line - this is vital, for example, discussing the reason why work is not going, in order to help him solve the situation. (Supervisor, May 2011)

Supervisor endorses appreciative attitude, thinks appreciative and promotes this vision oriented towards result and appreciation to the professionals with whom collaborates. A transfer of knowledge and experience is achieved in a repeated cycle.

I emphasized more appreciative result than the corrective one. (Supervisor, May 2011)

Resolving the situation leads to favorable results. From the speech of respondents we noticed the way group supervision is perceived. If the application of individual supervision involves a discussion with clarifying purpose, evaluator and providing feedback with appreciations regarding the active involvement of the supervisor as a trainer, the group supervision is appreciated as a mini training with *recreation role, stimulating ideas and relief of the team.*

Directly related to the process of supervision respondents appreciate quality as being a necessary condition of their work but also a product of the supervision relationship. Organizational co-transformation is the product of collaboration of professionals directed by the process of supervision.

It helps to keep the quality of services we offer to beneficiaries (Social worker, May 2011)

Now, through the influence of supervised work, I became a professional (social worker, May 2011)

We considered both the relationship of supervision and the qualitative process of supervision co-transforming factors of the organization defined by performance and transparency, determinant factors of the future development both, individual and organizational, based on the strong points identified in the organization.

Destiny

Recognizing that any knowledge evolves, the organization considered as living form, continues to learn, starting from things that work, and improvises based on the new things that it learns.

Organizational Development – construction towards success - *improvement, offered, professionalism, evolved, performed properly, self-orientation, customer orientation, manage, professional work, feedback, develop, shape, long term, unitary character, qualitative services, results, common direction, team.*

The correlation of appreciative speech concerning the positive factors of the evolution of profile organizations with continuous learning leads to the construction of organizational success.

According to interviewees' answers, professional activity of social workers is conditioned by consistency of supervision. *Evolution* and *improvement* are co-created by the

unitary work and with specific guidance to positive. Shared vision and the consensus of social workers on the organization purpose lead to organizational development.

I evolved, I improved the quality of my services and the work with beneficiaries, and I manage to perform tasks correctly (Social worker, May 2011)

The orientation towards self of the social worker is considered a key factor of individual developing and is required to be pre-oriented towards the client.

social worker must turn to him first before turning and reporting towards the client. (Social worker, May 2011)

The keyword *manage* can be considered an appreciative element in conditions in which the gradual evolution of social workers is marked by successes, accomplishments and depth of knowledge.

I manage to perform tasks properly, for example (Social worker, May, 2011)

I manage to make the difference between the work under the influence of personal emotions and the professional work. (Social worker, May 2011)

In terms of the effects of supervision, social workers mention *feedback* and *modeling* actions of the supervisor as defining in their development.

Between individual and organizational development there is no strict delimitation, because the latter involves the former. Individual progress translates into organizational progress.

Common direction and results after a proper process of supervision stimulates professionals positively. They manage to self-assess appreciatively their results, but the biggest impact in this process is still the supervisor. The supervisor is considered as the source of these

results. Self-assessment is directly related to their assessment regarding the supervisor, the latter serving as the gatekeeper of quality standards.

The supervisor is the person who offers a unitary character in the organization work, meaning we all go in the same line, he draws a specific direction in working with beneficiaries, with the establishment of a certain type of beneficiaries to whom we provide our services in a qualitative way. (Social worker, May 2011)

The constructive optic and the openness towards appreciation of qualitative services are elements enunciated by professionals as being outcomes of supervision.

Professionals appreciate supervision as the constructive modeling practice in order to obtain an efficient outcome, training and motivating process in fulfillment of tasks correctly, that has the advisory and support role and is impacting with the increasing of self-esteem and self-respect, both in the case of social workers at the beginning of career as well as those experienced.

Progress through transparency of services – *purpose, functioning correctly, quality, qualitative services, performance, quality supervision, exposure, optics, welfare, professional skills, goal.*

The characteristic of Destiny phase is defined by a series of keywords that emphasize the attitude of respondents regarding the status of the organization in terms of progress and transparency of services. The specialists self-assess, in relation to the results of the organization, the purpose of their actions being the justification for a correct and qualitative functionality.

The purpose of our actions is important and shows us that we operate correctly and qualitatively. (Social worker, May 2011)

The purpose of supervision is appreciated, besides a series of constructive aspects, as providing services to high quality standards. The work of a supervisor is polyvalent and directly influences the supervisee's attitude toward self and the organization, as it influences the status of the target group of the organization.

Supervision specifically aims as the social worker to provide quality services to beneficiaries. (Social worker, May 2011)

The report between performance and the quality of supervision is outlined by a fine line, fact observed especially in the discourse analysis of the supervisees.

The performances of the organization are in relation with the quality of supervision, because if you have no quality in supervision the services you provide are not qualitative (Social worker, May, 2011)

Through performance, planning and structuring, the quality of supervision and the adaptability to the process of the organization personnel transpires. In the speech, elements of negative nature appear precisely to exemplify the impact of supervision in their solving.

Supervision has a role in exposing the organization performance; it shows the level of structuring and planning. (Supervisor, in May, 2011)

The supervisor's attributions are appreciated in terms of continuous learning, implementation of an organizational culture, promoting the statute of the organization with humanistic character. These aspects are found in the language of supervised staff. Positive and result-centered perspective is an asset in durable and progressive functioning of the organization.

The supervisor taught me that we are an organization with a certain status and a set of rules aimed at our beneficiaries' welfare and that we must offer qualitative services which reflect our professional skills.
(Social worker, May 2011)

The categories analyzed do not intend to accurately reproduce the 4D cycle of appreciative inquiry, but rather to outline the relating of appreciative speech with elements and steps specific to the method.

Theoretical generation by relating the categories

Reporting of categories identified after appreciative inductive coding is based on relating their common keywords. There are correlations between categories within the same stages specific to 4D cycle as well as between categories of different stages. In the appreciative speech identified, we noticed the common presence of words: *improvement, quality, evolution, training, support.*

Evolution as a result of an effective supervision practice is the connecting word between categories of the Discovery phase and can be analyzed from the perspective of what goes well in the organization but also as co-creative component of professional success.

Respondents use a speech which they also endorse. They consent the importance of participation to development. The relationship of coordination of those two categories leads to exact identification of the strong points from the perspective of interviewees. By enouncing these ideas they contribute to a professional success, they build a positive image of the work system and are aware of their development status. *The support* appears in the speech placed in categories from different stages, *Discovery* and *Dream*, and can be interpreted both as a function in the

DISCOVERY

- Perceived effects of supervision - what works
- Co-creation of organization.
- Co-creation of professional success

DREAM

- Foreshadowing of success in forming the supervisees
- Supervision functions in positive transformation

A model of analysis of the speech on supervision

We wanted to analyze the derivation of a possible interpretation model on the speech of supervision, which we will construct in terms of appreciative language.

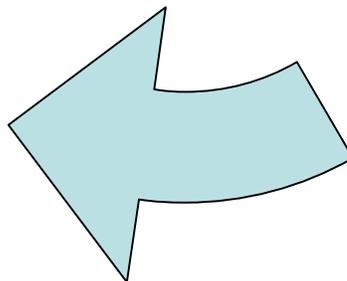
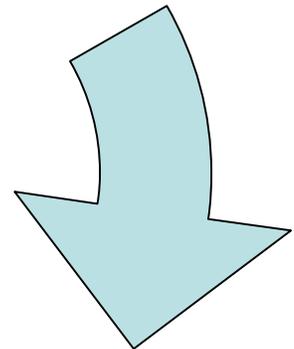
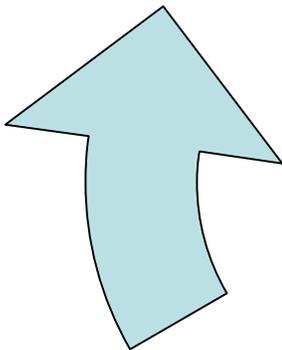
We will present the model as a 4D diagram:

DESTINY

- Organizational Development - construction towards success
- Progress through service transparency.

DESIGN

- Supervision relationship, co-transforming implications
- Qualitative supervision - organizational co-transformation factor



The categories identified after applying the semiotic grid are placed to each other in 4D circular form. Therefore *Discovery* phase is defined by the categories *Effects of supervision seen in terms of what works* and *Co-creation of professional success*.

We framed the construction of these categories in *Discovery* stage because of the key terms which are found in interviewees' speech, words that sets out the process of identifying the strengths of the organization- *quality, qualitative services, support, encouraging, results orientation, effects, performance, benefits, planning, development, comfort, job well done* -with an impact on own experiences of professional growth.

Specific to the same stage there are also the keywords of category *Co-creation of professional success*- consensual terms, present both in the language of supervisees but also of supervisor, defining progressive steps in organizational culture that led to *formation, development, learning, evolution* but also to the nature and temporality of co-creative factors, because the beginning of training through supervision is set out as a starting of a process with role in *balance, guidance* and *providing feedback*. Interviewees' discourse generates in the same step the process' finality in terms of strengths such as *success, deepening, long-term safety, consulting* and *support*.

Specificity of *Dream* stage is given by expression of desires and dreams of interviewees regarding relationships and development in and with the organization. *Success foreshadowing in forming supervisees*, as representative category was built by the following terms *have adapted very well, very frequent, formative role, offering support, long term, modeling, professional*.

The category *Functions of supervision in positive transformation* folded on characteristics of the same *Dream* stage is defined by appreciative terms with transforming role:

support, maintain quality, encouragement, result oriented, performance exposure, feedback, coordination, verification, emotional release, balance, clarity, guidance.

The stage *Design* was defined by categories which through the methodological terms express the planning of the previous stage of *Dream*. Fulfilling the dream is conditioned by *the relationship of supervision which involves co-transforming implications* and by *Qualitative supervision as factor of organizational co-transformation*. The process of supervision and the relationship supervisor-supervisee are considered by respondents as crucial in successful planning and facilitates by clarification, improvement plans, objective feedback, involvement and support, the transition to stage *Destiny*. Specific terms such as *work flows, experience, vision, safe feeling, professional, morality*, describe the later development.

We folded on the specific stage of *Destiny* categories defined by terms, which are found within previously built categories, but the context in this phase is different. *Destiny* involves implementing strategies from previous stages, represented here by the categories: *Organizational development - construction towards success* and *Progress through transparency of services*. Keywords such as *improvement, work in excitement, professional work, develop, shape, long term, unitary character, quality service, results, common direction*, show the strategic implementation manner whose final goal is organizational development, implicitly the system's success.

Conclusions

In analysis of this model we identified a set of features.

Cyclical is characteristic to appreciative discursive model in supervision. Subjects perceive the process as developing, expressed in terms of gradual co-transformation and co-

creation, fact observed in the presence of specific terms within component categories of the stages, in different temporal forms. Common pattern of stages, the development, can be modified depending on the time of its identification or awareness. Appreciative language exposes the supervision process as the catalyst of organizational development.

Another feature of the model is the recurrent of common discursive pattern, namely the co-construction of excellence and professional success through the supervision.

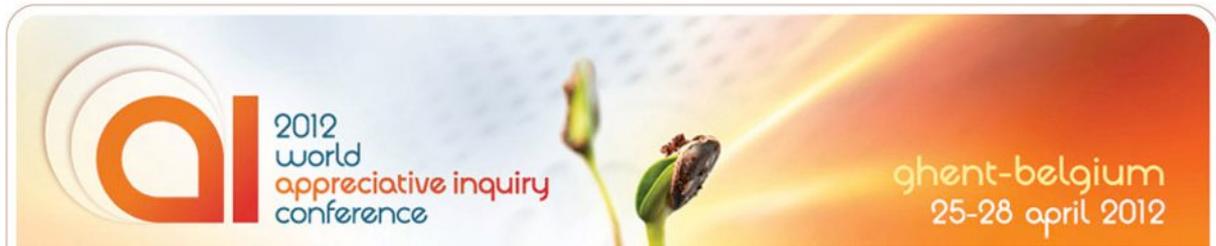
A central position was identified in the speech, regarding the supervisor-supervisee relationship which is seen as a partnership with co-transforming implications.

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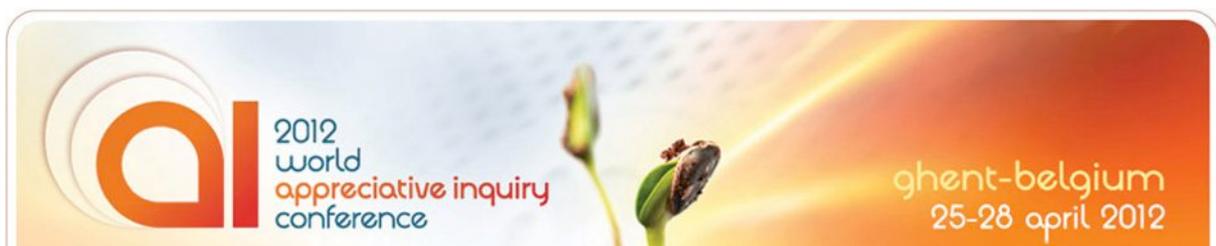
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From the hospital bed to the board-room. Using appreciative inquiry, what can we learn from the activities of spiritual counselors with regard to employee-motivation?

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Abstract

Using an appreciative view, this article explores the interaction of spiritual counselors with staff in Dutch hospitals and its effect on intrinsic employee motivation. We assume that spiritual counselors set a good example of how to help a person to get in touch with a personal (if you wish 'spiritual') space inside that will have a positive generative effect on the persons' intrinsic motivation and well-being.

The central question of this article is: How do spiritual counselors in Dutch hospitals facilitate organizational and employee development?

Based on six exploratory and appreciative interviews we conclude that it is plausible to say that spiritual counselors are experts in the field of discovery and appreciation of the life-giving core of human beings. By authentic contact, reflection and consultation, taking a pastoral and bridging role, recognition of a person's spiritual dimension, creating time and space, displaying expertise and conducting research, they are likely to have a positive generative impact on employee-wellbeing.

1. Introduction

"I am not a human resource, I am a human being!" (H. Mintzberg)

The creation of space and calmness, taking time, paired with respectful listening, and authentic contact, without a goal or judgement, seem to allow a person to connect with a part in themselves that generates positive action. Albeit, this has been the observation of the authors in their practices as Human Resource Development- and AI- (Appreciative Inquiry) professionals.

However, interventions and conversations that touch the realm of meaning are not regularly part of our interaction at work. At the same time, well-regarded management authors like Stephen Covey (*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* 1989 and *The 8th Habit* 2004), Lynda Gratton (*Living Strategy: Putting People at the Heart of Corporate Purpose* 2000, *The Shift* 2011), and Otto Scharmer (*Theory U* 2009) state that tapping into this 'spiritual' dimension, in addition to the biological, social and psychological level (as defined by Covey 1989) is beneficial to the individual, and eventually contributes to the effectiveness of the organization.

At the same time, there are several professions in which conversations about 'meaning' and 'being' are accepted, for example in coaching or pastoral work. In this research we want to explore the overlap of these two realms: conversations about meaning in an organizational setting. At the heart of this overlap lies the profession of spiritual counselors in hospitals. These professionals are known to apply their skills mainly in the interaction with patients and their families. However, the profession has been changing, and spiritual counselors are becoming more present also in other parts of the organization and get involved in organizational- and employee development as well. Sometimes consciously, most often unconsciously. Using an appreciative view, this article explores

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the interaction of spiritual counselors with staff in Dutch hospitals and its effect on intrinsic employee motivation.

2. Two stories

We assume that authentic contact with a trustworthy person, in a setting that helps a person to get in touch with a personal (if you wish 'spiritual') space inside, will have a positive generative effect (Gergen 1978) on the persons' intrinsic motivation and well-being¹. We want to share two stories that we personally experienced to illustrate this.

"This lady has been a problem for a long time", I was informed by my well-meaning colleague when I started my new function as HR Director at a middle-sized company in the North of Holland. 'She is not very motivated, gets angry easily, but also doesn't want to follow a coaching-trajectory, let alone wanting to leave the company. Why don't you talk to her? You are a new face.' Soon the meeting was arranged. To my surprise, I met a friendly, middle-aged, very capable lady, a mother of two, somewhat tired, but not the 'problem-case' I had anticipated. I was truly curious who this lady was. I didn't judge her, as I was new myself. Maybe these were ingredients that caused her to finally tell somebody about the miscarriage that she hadn't been able to cope with. The meeting lasted less than one hour. Following our conversation, she sought professional help on this question and was able to finally mourn and accept her loss. No company coaching trajectory needed. No dossier-building. No expensive lay-off. This curious and appreciative conversation was replicated with several other 'problematic' employees, with equal results. I was touched: instead of working towards a goal, the mere 'being' with a person, the suspension of judgement, respect and the creation of a safe space, can lead to such impressive results."

"In a coaching session I met a woman who felt unhappy in her current job. We worked with value cards and I asked her to choose from the bottom of her heart: 'What makes your work worthy?' Why would you get up every morning to go to work? She chose ten cards and finally reduced them to four. We talked about how these values were part of her everyday life at work and she realized that they were only present in the margins of her work-life. She decided to let these values blossom, and live them to the full. A few days later I received a message from her, that she was looking for a new job, as she understood that the environment she had been working in, was not the place where she could play to her strengths enough and live her values at the heart of her work. She now chooses to live more from what she believes in. I was impressed that the conversation and respectful questioning about what truly deeply matters to her gave her strength to act upon it and give life to her core (her 'true self'). Connecting to what you believe in seems to create a path for new steps, if you choose to be faithful to it."

These stories made us reflect on how we treat the human side in organizations. It seems to get squeezed between efficiency, procedures and quality measurement. Some authors think that the *vertechnisering* [technicization] (Doolaard 2009), or "functional rationality and technical professionalism" (Kunnean in Blokland 2009) takes its toll on employee motivation. In a study in the U.K. by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development in 2006 "stress and other mental health conditions are now among the main causes of employee absence" (CIPD absence management survey 2006). In times that ever more organizations strive for sustainability, as expressed in human resources concepts like the New World of Work [Het Nieuwe Werken]², or

¹ As there are many definitions of well-being, we follow the one of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development in the U.K. as this is directly related to the work-environment: "creating an environment to promote a state of contentment which allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation." (CIPD, 2007). A corresponding concept in the Netherlands is 'De zeven bronnen van arbeidsvreugde' [The seven sources of pleasure at work] (Kouwenhoven, 2005).

² A concept advocating other ways of working, with regard to 'smart workers' and 'smart technology'. Practically, this is translated into flatter hierarchies, flexible hours, virtual teams, and working from home.

age-aware personnel policy [Leeftijdsbewust Personeelsbeleid], new ways of employee-motivation are needed that match with the principles of these approaches. We assume that spiritual counselors may provide a good example of how this can be done.

The central question of this article is:

How do spiritual counselors in Dutch hospitals facilitate organizational and employee development?

- a) what activities do spiritual counselors perform to tap into motivation of staff?
- b) what 'working ingredients' characterize their interactions and conversations towards staff?

First, let us examine the field of motivation, to provide a context for our argument.

3. A discourse on motivation at work and the contribution of AI to this field

Much research has been done on motivation (see for concise overviews of the history of theories of work motivation Deci & Ryan 1985, and Jaquet 2012). In short, since the 1950s, authors distinguish between extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation³:

"Extrinsic" motivators refer to those factors, outside of an individual, that influence motivation, such as a salary or a performance bonus. "Intrinsic" motivators refer to factors innate to human beings that self-generate motivational energy." (Jaquet, 2012, 73) Deci & Ryan define intrinsic motivation as "the energy source that is central to the active nature of the organism" (Deci & Ryan 1985, 11). Commonly known intrinsic rewards that drive engagement are meaningfulness, choice, competence and progress (cf. Thomas, 2009).

Research in neuroscience, psychology and organizational behavior indicates that persons that operate in an environment that allows and encourages them to act on their motivation and strong points exhibit (cf. Buckingham & Clifton 2005, Fredrickson & Losada 2005, Tjepkema & Verheijen 2009):

- higher productivity;
- more cooperation and innovation;
- more loyalty;
- less work-related accidents.

The challenge for organizations is thus to create a space, in which people can connect to their deepest drivers (also referred to as passion or core-strengths) and feel encouraged to act on this intrinsic motivation.

In the last two decades, the growing fields of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Positive Psychology have been supporting the concept of intrinsic motivation as the energy source that is central to a system: "that what gives life" (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, Seligman 2003, Cooperrider et. al. 2005). In Appreciative Inquiry, "a key assumption of appreciative inquiry is that we awaken our imaginative capacity when we make deep connections with the core of what gives life to a human system." (Zandee & Cooperrider 2008, 194). This core is about talent, passion, meaning, even spirituality. It is about creating joy and curiosity as well as live life with others appreciatively. AI is a way of living, behaving, relating and being that values strengths and provides a positive approach to intrinsic motivation. It stresses the importance of valuing and appreciating, and the impact of opening spaces for individual abilities, skills and motivation to be seen and valued. The question is,

³ The term intrinsic motivation was first coined in 1950 by Harlow, Harlow, and Meyer (1950), "who demonstrated that monkeys learned to solve a puzzle apparatus for no other reward than the enjoyment of doing it." (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

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how is this done? How does one create an environment at work where people can operate from their intrinsic motivation and abilities?⁴

Although there is a substantial body of literature arguing for the benefits of intrinsic motivation, organizations are only slowly implementing the scientific findings. In an 'evidence'-focused environment, such as the health-care sector, a 'soft' concept like intrinsic motivation that is about passion, meaning, even spirituality, runs counter to their daily practice (Reed 2006). Intrinsic employee motivation, however, is a complex concept that requires a different assessment than the traditional linear techniques used to measure extrinsic motivation (van Noort & Wabbels 2008, Mackor 2010).

Traditionally, interventions to enhance (intrinsic and extrinsic) motivation, apart from management, have been provided by HR, and under their auspices, by training- and development departments, internal and external career counselors, consultants, trainers, and coaches⁵. Spiritual counselors have not been commonly associated with the care for staff, although this has been part of their function profile for over 30 years (cf. function profiles of VGVZ and HCC). We know them as professionals who talk to patients in the difficult times of their lives about what they believe in and sometimes about their mission or purpose in life. In this article, we inquire into the profession of spiritual care to learn more about the nature of the conversations and interventions that tap into intrinsic motivation. To spiritual counselors it is their daily practice to talk about and connect to the 'invisible', and reveal the positive core, sense of purpose - or intrinsic motivation - of people in such a way that it is clear and focussed.⁶

4. An introduction to the changing function of spiritual caregiving

Spiritual counselors hold a historically established position in healthcare institutions (cf. Smeets 2006, Haart 2007, Doolaard 2009), such as hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, and psychiatric institutions. Furthermore spiritual counselors are employed by the armed forces, the police, and penitentiary institutions (de Haan & de Reuver 2009). In his thorough examination *Spiritual Care in a Hospital Setting* (2006, 3), Smeets defines three levels of involvement of spiritual counselors (using the definition of Post & Vermey 1998, examples from VandeCreek & Burton 2001):

- a. Micro level: concerning the "process of relations between patients and counselors".
Examples: grief and loss care, assistance with decision making, rituals, prayer.
- b. Meso level, being the care institution itself, and the relations among staff.
Examples: staff support relative to personal crises or work stress, facilitation of staff communication, participation in interdisciplinary education.
- c. Macro level, regarding the "relation between those requiring care, those offering it and those who insure its quality, as well as its direction by government".
Examples: pointing to human value aspects of institutional policies and behaviors, interpreting and analyzing multi-faith and multi-cultural traditions as they impact clinical services, facilitation of ethical deliberation.

Currently, it is foremost the involvement on micro-level the spiritual counselor focuses on and is visible: the interaction with the patient and their family (cf. Zock 2008, Holsappel et. al. 2010). This

⁴ NB: This is not an argument against abolishing extrinsic motivation. As Mackor (2010) argues, extrinsic motivation has clear benefits, especially when implemented in a 'dialogue-', rather than 'command and control' style.

⁵ The terms 'employee well-being' and 'good employment practices' ('goed werkgeverschap') have become prominent in management- and HR-literature in the last years. This trend is reflected in a growing interest in qualifying programs, such as Great Place to Work, Koploperz (in Holland), and Investors in People.

⁶ We do not want to introduce a new functional column in addition to HR, but merely analyze the nature of the interaction and their effects on staff.

role has been developing strongly in the last decades (Doolaard 2009) and is reflected in the current definition of the Dutch Association of Spiritual Counselors:

The professional and official guidance and caregiving to people in the process of seeking meaning for their existence, from and on the basis of religious and existential convictions, and professional consultation in ethical and philosophical aspects of caregiving and management. (source: VGVZ - Dutch Association of Spiritual Counselors in hospitals)

Traditionally, spiritual counselors have been sent by a church. Out of a collaboration of Protestant, Catholic and Humanist counselors in 1970, the professional organization VGVZ has been established in the Netherlands. Ever since it has been working on the professionalization, quality control, and registration of the profession. Today, spiritual counselors are being educated from a broader spiritual background, and work increasingly territorially, meaning to care for patients on certain departments or 'floors', rather than strictly of their own denomination. However, muslim, hindu and buddhist spiritual counselors in the Netherlands that still work rather categorial. The spiritual counselor commonly operates from a systemic 'sanctuary position', meaning he/she is not bound to achieve a goal, but rather to create a space:

In the Netherlands, spiritual care is often characterized as 'being present' and as offering 'disinterested attention'. That is to say, according to adherents of the theory of presence a spiritual counsellor [sic] offers primarily a 'listening ear'. The aim is not, at least not primarily, to translate the story of the patient into a professional 'diagnosis' and the spiritual counsellor [sic] does not offer a 'treatment' either. (Mackor 2008).

This 'sanctuary position' is one of the aspects under scrutiny as the function of the spiritual counselor and its context are changing (idem). Although the main focus goes towards the patient and their family (on micro-) level, involvement on meso-level, towards staff, has been increasing. Typical activities include giving ethical advice, participation and/or facilitation of ethical deliberation, and providing training with ethical or theological content to hospital staff. These tasks have become an integral part of the function description of the spiritual counselor in the Netherlands (cf. function profile of VGVZ-website). However, interviews with spiritual counselors indicate that their involvement with staff goes further than mere ethical training.

5. Researching the work of the spiritual counselor using appreciative inquiry

In six interviews with spiritual counselors in five different Dutch hospitals, we gathered stories about interaction with staff.

5.1 The interviews

In open-ended, unstructured interviews, we asked spiritual counselors, who are, or have been working in hospitals, to talk about their interaction with staff or on organizational level. Using AI, we asked

"Locate a story that illustrates when you had the feeling you were making a difference to (a) staff member(s) with regard to their motivation or wellbeing."

Most of these conversations were conducted one-on-one, in the office of the counselor, and lasted one hour. One interview was submitted by email, and clarified subsequently in a phone conversation. One interview was conducted via Skype. At first, all interviews started slowly. "We have no time to care for staff, we focus on the patient". When the interviewer persisted patiently and appreciatively ("I am quite sure that in all your years of work, there must have been one moment when you had the feeling you were making a difference for a staff-member."), stories followed. Of the results, we want to share three stories.

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Story 1: Micro level (personal). Rotterdam. On personal contact with staff

"I think that the interaction with a spiritual counselor is of another level than with professionals directly employed by the hospital. Employees are very well aware that the spiritual counselor operates from a 'sanctuary position' outside the common hierarchy. I remember a long-term contact with a female employee in a health institution I have worked in from 2000-2003. She was being mobbed, and I supported her to stay strong. She did not call in sick, but continued to come to work.

Another story involves a female doctor, who consulted me regularly to ask my opinion on patient-cases from an ethical point-of-view. What started out as a 'cup-of-coffee-coaching' developed into regular dinner conversations, continuing even today. The doctor saw me as a trustworthy conversation partner, and an expert on meaning and ethical questions. Someone, whom she could clarify ideas with, not only with regard to her work, but also with regard to her position as a doctor and a person."

Story 2: Meso level (interdepartmental). Utrecht. On an initiative to revive the passion for working at the hospital: Fireside Talks

"This initiative started in 2010 with a group of employees who were concerned about the human side of our hospital, I was part of this group. The common question was 'how can we react to the increasing focus on functionality in our work?'. The members of this diverse think tank started talking about their personal passion at work, and before long the idea was born to start a series of 'fire side talks'.

To date, 120 employees have participated in 15 meetings of 1.5 hrs each, 'from coffee-lady to manager'. The meetings take place in the hospitals' boardroom, with an artificial fire projected on the wall. The meetings are opened by reframing the situation: "Imagine you are in the lobby of a nice hotel in a far-away country, we all have met there by accident, and discovered that we happen to work for the same employer: our hospital. Now lean back, relax and have a drink." People subsequently talk about their personal 'fire', their passion, feelings and hopes regarding their work. Afterwards, they are asked to give the name of one co-worker, who would be interested to join the fireside talk as well. This 'fire' has been spreading for almost two years now.

The strength of these meetings is that there are no decisions, no minutes, no agenda. People often report afterwards that they feel inspired and re-connected to their passion. The setting is 'totally unusual', people are used to functional meetings. We also link to the diversity of the hospital organization, the meetings are open to everybody (10.000 employees). This initiative is backed by the directors, they allow us to meet in their boardroom."

Story 3: Macro level (organizational). Nijmegen. On safeguarding the human dimension in the hospital

"We observe that many people believe in 'something', but they don't strictly choose one tradition, but rather construct their own faith, we call these 'bricolage-believers'. Many employees in our hospital belong to this category. My direct colleagues in Nijmegen, and me, are - in contrast - rooted in one tradition, and are reflecting continuously on our position within this tradition. This distinguishes us from other professionals in the hospital.

I feel I can't take that 'jacket' off when I go home, I am always and everywhere a spiritual counselor.

We bring a new dimension into our hospital, just because we 'are there'. We try to make the dimension of 'deep compassion' and 'appreciation' visible, be it in personal contact, teaching or ethical deliberation. This goes beyond questions like 'when should we stop respirating the patient?' We represent values like love, meaning and appreciation.

In all we do, we try to enforce this dimension, for example in consciously paying compliments to nurses, doctors and managers. In addition to mere content transfer, we create space in our module on ethics in the training for doctors to process their own experiences of death and dying. Nine out of ten participants cry. Another small example is that we greet people with their name, like 'hello

Hans', instead of the common 'hi'. Small things like this change the atmosphere. We end meetings, for example, with 'what gives me pleasure in my work' and 'what gives me displeasure'."

5.2 Analysis of activities, 'working ingredients' and roles

We clustered and categorized the twenty situations of activities and interactions gathered in the six interviews, according to the levels as used by Smeets (2006). For each level we distilled what is typical about the interventions. Cooperrider et. al. (2005) use the term 'working ingredient': elements that have contributed to the success of the intervention. We subsequently identify roles displayed in the interaction that we link to our findings.

A. Micro Level: The one-on-one conversation with staff

Examples:

- Spiritual and emotional support of an employee who experienced mobbing.
- Informal consultation on ethical issues ('coaching on the go').
- Serving as a bridge between patient and staff ('this patient is difficult, I wonder if it has to do with me').
- Giving respectful feedback to a young, male doctor-in-training who had started laughing in a multi-disciplinary meeting, upon hearing the counselor using the word 'spirituality' (and subsequently making this doctor-in-training aware of the added value of spiritual counseling).

A1. What is typical about these interventions?

- Short interventions, during coffee break or literally in a door-way.
- Trust is built over time.
- Trust depends on quality of interaction with staff member (neutral, trustworthy, appreciating).
- Staff member sees counselor as expert on meaning and ethical thinking.
- The conversation is free and detached from hierarchy.
- Calm, authentic, respectful, curious and appreciative attention.
- Suspension of judgement.

B. Meso Level: Department and inter-departmental activities

Examples:

- Co-crafting a course on 'mindfulness' for staff in collaboration with the training department.
- Organization of reflection meetings ('Fire Side Talks') with staff members that create a space for conversation, where the participant can reconnect with their personal passion ('What do you enjoy about your work?').
- Facilitation of inter-collegial consultations of first-line staff as a neutral facilitator.
- Participation in multi-disciplinary meetings.

B1. What is typical about these interventions?

The spiritual counselor:

- Is visible and communicates their skills and ambition;
- Collaborates and co-creates with other parties;
- Creates an unusual setting;
- Connects people in a safe environment.

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C. Macro Level: Activities regarding the organization

Examples:

- Speaker at the ‘meet the expert’ series for doctors in training (representing the spiritual dimension).
- Participation in in-house think-tanks on a wide range of organizational issues, e.g. on crafting core values, representing the spiritual dimension.
- Creating space in training for doctors to connect with their personal stories of death and loss in their own life.
- Deliberate enforcement of an appreciative culture by careful contact, such as paying compliments, attention, small thank-you gifts to employees to enhance a more ‘human’ work-environment.
- Organizing annual memorial services for deceased staff-members.
- Organizing a one-day symposium on ‘giving and taking’, reflecting how first line care givers experience their work;
- Conducting research on history and position of spiritual care.

C1. What is typical about these interventions?

The spiritual counselor:

- Represents the dimension of ‘being’ in the organization;
- Creates a space for life-events, by taking a pastoral role;
- Creates space around a topic with regard to ‘meaning’.

Within the small sample of our pilot, spiritual counselors display a number of roles⁷. Based on the answers given, we distinguish seven roles:

1. Expert on ethics and theology (e.g. role in ethical deliberation, speaker in ‘meet the expert’ series, participator in in-house think-tank);
2. Coach/counselor (e.g. towards first-line staff like doctors and nurses, providing emotional and spiritual support);
3. Process-facilitator (e.g. in inter-collegial consultation, fireside-talks);
4. Bridge-builder (e.g. between patient and staff, among staff; among ‘dimensions’);
5. Representative (e.g. embodying the ‘human’ or ‘spiritual’ dimension);
6. Researcher (e.g. PhD-thesis by head of Spiritual Counseling);
7. Pastoral worker (e.g. annual memorial service for staff members and patients)

We have grouped the answers as follows:

Working ingredient	Effect	Role associated
Authentic contact	Prevents employee-absence	Coach, Representative
Reflection and inter-collegial consultation	Fosters informed professionalism	Facilitator, Coach

⁷ These are the roles associated with the examples given as response to our questions. We are not striving to be complete, thus have not included roles that were not mentioned, like teacher or trainer.

Working ingredient	Effect	Role associated
Taking a pastoral role	Gives space to life-events, which can be processed and thus don't create systemic hinder or blockades	Pastoral worker
Recognition of employee's religious and spiritual values and beliefs	Sense of belonging and direction among employees	Representative
Creating group space and time for reflection	Renewed energy and focus	Facilitator
Bridging function	Fosters understanding, smoothens work-flow, prevents conflict	Bridger
Expertise on ethics and theology	Places the separate professional activities in a context, enhances 'Quality of Care'	Expert
Conduct research on aspects of spiritual counseling in a hospital	Adding to professionalization of the care-process	Researcher

We conclude from these stories that the interactions, regardless from which role, are beneficial to the individual in a way that leaves them feel positively regenerated. The interactions created a state of well-being that enabled the affected employee(s) to execute their function more effectively.

6. 'You can't outsource spiritual integrity': spiritual counseling in an IT-organization

Is the claim we are staking utopia? We think not, as many readers will be able to identify colleagues in their own organization, who, when interviewed with an appreciating mindset, display the very characteristics of a spiritual counselor. Here we want to portray one of them, Fons Hendrix (name changed), a 45-year old father of 3 sons, who is employed by an IT-multinational in the Netherlands. He started as IT Manager, followed courses in personal and spiritual development, and practices Buddhism.

What is your position in the company?

I don't walk around saying 'I am a spiritual counselor', although I feel I am. I simply ask questions, by which people get into another line of thought. Officially, I am a career counselor, so 'officially' employees come to me with career-related questions, but an estimated 30% have a question regarding 'meaning'. Many young employees approach me with questions about meaning and life. Some say they cannot connect to their manager.

What do you do that works?

I talk with people about who they really are, I help people de-stress. I take care of the company's soul, if you wish. Managers come to 'chill' with me. They say they feel rested and calm after an hour of talking or walking with me.

From the hospital bed to the board-room. Using appreciative inquiry, what can we learn from the activities of spiritual counselors with regard to employee motivation?

How do you do that?

I look for the question behind the question. Before the meeting I already tune into the meeting. I don't connect to the person in their role as manager or employee, but as a genuine human being, with compassion. From heart to heart as you wish. During the meeting I stay connected to the greater whole. I check myself if I am not talking from an ego- or power position. I try to feel what a conversation is really about, then I try to create moments in the conversation in which all collides and becomes one. Thereby, I also make my meeting partner part of the whole.

Can you tell us stories when you were 'at your best', that illustrate your approach?

I. Once a manager came with no apparent question. The conversation started with an operational topic, about 'lean'. I felt that there was another reason why he wanted to see me. I then followed little clues in the conversation towards his own role in his work. It became clear that he wasn't satisfied with his role as manager. I explained the concept of archetypes to him, and that he could see himself also as a teacher, instead of a manager. This insight touched him deeply.

II. A young female employee came to talk to me, whose value is honesty, and who has regular moments in which she is suffering from the difficulties of her frank behavior and candid communication. I acknowledged this, but reassured her she could carry this. Her values are a part of her. I tried to make her aware of her own power. She realized: "Being true to my value can result in pain, but I can carry this pain. This way I can stay true to myself."

III. A trainer of our training department came to see me. She said that the participants wanted more, not only behavior-skills, but wanted to go deeper. We then compared the skills we were using. While she draws from a whole range of instruments, I realized in this conversation that instead of instruments, I act from a sense of trust and alignment with the other, based on the belief that 'what I am looking for is already there'. My motto is 'slowly, but surely', instead of a 'fast-fix' approach. This insight triggered me to offer meditation evenings for employees, which we have been organizing for several months now, once every week.

How do you organize to stay close to yourself?

I meditate 45-60 minutes each day. I make sure I get enough sleep and only commit to a 32-hour work-week. I try to create calmness in the evenings and in the weekend, so I am rested and can genuinely be present. I regularly meet with good soul-mates and participate in an annual retreat. At work, I try to connect with like-minded people.

What is your dream?

My dream is to be the wise man on the pillow, in a place people often walk by in the building, like the entrance or the reception. People will have reached a level of awareness that makes them ask me questions. I am the 'wise man in the hall'. I also had a real dream, that of a destroyed city, and I was staying and working in it.

What trends influence your work?

The new generation wants to be themselves most of all, that is the difference. They are no longer motivated by the classic career paths. They are not motivated by competition. They want real contact. At the same time there are more and more employees per manager. As a result the connectedness is lost. I think that each leader in the organization has to have something of a spiritual counselor in him/ her. You can't outsource spiritual integrity.

A few weeks after our interview in late 2011, Fons' position was terminated, although he could prove that, instead of the company-broad 18% turn-over, a mere 4% of the employees who sought contact with him decided to leave the company. Fons was relocated to the HR-Department, where one of his projects is to improve communication between manager and employee. He was also asked to offer meditation training within the company's in-house academy.

7. Conclusion

This article addressed the question of how spiritual counselors in Dutch hospitals facilitate organizational and employee development - consciously and unconsciously.

We assume that we can learn new insights from them that help organizations to create a space, in which people can reflect on their deepest drivers and feel allowed and encouraged to act on this intrinsic motivation.

Based on our small sample of interviews, we conclude that the spiritual counselor is an expert in the field of discovery and appreciation of the life-giving core of human beings. By authentic contact, reflection and consultation, taking a pastoral and bridging role, recognition of a person's spiritual dimension, creating time and space, displaying expertise and conducting research, they are likely to have a positive generative impact on employee-wellbeing.

8. Further research

In further research with a larger sample, we want to explore the positive correlation between spiritual counselors' activities with regard to intrinsic employee-motivation. We also aim to relate the tentative roles to those of an organizational 'catalyst' as described by Brafman & Beckstrom (2006).

Our ambition is to gain a deeper understanding of the 'working ingredients' and the roles spiritual counselors display in the light of employee- and organizational development. This may mean that other professionals may take up these roles, too. We would like to collect more stories, like the one of Fons Hendrix presented in this article.

Finally, we hope to have contributed to a nuanced self-image of spiritual counselors in terms of their contribution to not only the well-being of patients, but also to the well-being of staff, and subsequently, the organization.

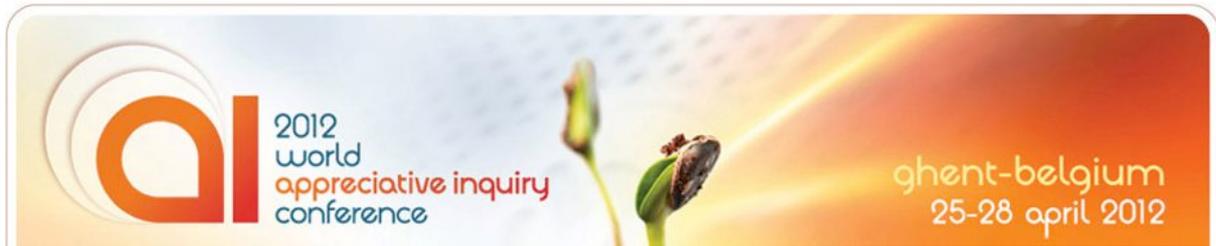
From the hospital bed to the board-room. Using appreciative inquiry, what can we learn from the activities of spiritual counselors with regard to employee motivation?

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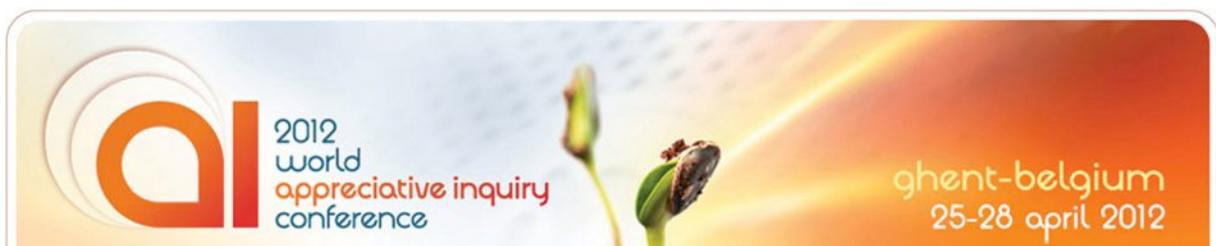
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VGVZ (Association of Spiritual Counselors in Healthcare, The Netherlands: www.vgvz.nl)



BINDER PAPER SUBMISSIONS 2012 WAIC MAY 2012



Draft

Connecting Communities and Schools to Make the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

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Key words: School wellness, appreciative inquiry, readiness, assessment

Abstract

This paper will describe how the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative used Appreciative Inquiry to conduct research on successful school wellness teams, develop a readiness tool for school wellness teams to gauge their capacity for action and sustainability, and provide support for school wellness team planning and programming. Work group members also used the approach in coaching the school teams and among work group members. Overall, participants found the focus on learning what works and why very valuable in discovering strategies that can build capacity in school wellness teams despite the lack of funding at the school level. The work group also reflected on the results of this work and identified strategies for improving the process of developing the readiness tool and using it in the school wellness team context and in other projects as well. The overall process illustrates the value of using Appreciative Inquiry to frame readiness research and practice.

Introduction

Past research has focused on individuals and individual behaviors and the practice emerging from this research has also addressed individual awareness, behaviors, and attitudes, often with little long-lasting results. New directions in research on obesity and chronic diseases have focused on the social nature of these conditions (Braveman et al. 2011; Cohen S, Gottlieb B, Underwood L. 2000; Cubbin et al. 2008; Economos CD et al. 2007; Flora, C. and A, Gillespie. 2009; Hollar D, et al 2010; Kanjilal S et al. 2006). Obesity appears to be more strongly related to who you hang out with than your gene sequences (Christakis, N.A. and J. H. Fowler. 2007). The practices emerging from this research identify social settings in which groups can develop alternative behaviors. One site that offers both opportunities and challenges for influencing food and fitness decisions in a social context is the school (Hollar, 2010). Current federal legislation in the United States mandates that school districts that receive federal funding must develop and support a school wellness team. Like many unfunded mandates, many school wellness teams exist more in form than in fact. The recent decline in state support for schools has increased the likelihood that wellness teams exist more on paper than in reality. With funding from the Wellmark Foundation, the Northeast Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative (FFI) began a process to address capacity building within school wellness teams in their region. Using Appreciative Inquiry as both a way of framing the situation and as a tool for strategy building and assessment, FFI developed an assessment tool to help wellness teams develop the capacity to plan and implement context-specific programs for improving student and staff access to healthy foods and fitness-related activities.

Framing the Issue

The FFI team relied on five areas of expertise to craft their approach: community-based approaches to wellness, participatory research and capacity building, readiness, Appreciative Inquiry, and grounded theory.

Community-based approaches to wellness: Much of the emerging research and practice around supporting healthy people identifies a link between healthy communities and the wellness opportunities of the citizens who reside there (Woolf SH et al. 2011; Pickett KE & Pearl M. 2001; Macintyre S. 2000.). The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Braverman et al. 20011) has funded much of this research and supported the piloting of intervention strategies based on this research. In the US, the National Institute has also begun funding projects that engage communities in reframing the wellness question, redirecting resources to support community and social activities to support healthy lifestyles, and building on local assets to support alternative structures, activities, and opportunities. Finally, private not-for-profits have also begun investing in community-based wellness projects. FFI is one seven such projects funded by the W. K Kellogg Foundation.

Participatory research and Capacity Building: Participatory research and evaluation focuses on bringing the researcher/evaluator together with the target population to create new knowledge about the situation. Approaches to participatory research (Selener, D. 1997) vary from total participation in the design, development, data collection and analysis, and reporting to strategies that just engage participants in data collection. Participatory research has been adopted in numerous settings for three key reasons. First, researchers are often not privy to informal knowledge and tacit wisdom in a community setting that can greatly impact a project. By engaging participants in the design and development of the research, these pools of knowledge can be better understood and integrated into the overall design. Second, by participating in a research/evaluation process, participants gain new skills that can be used in other projects that require research or evaluation. Third, many community members across the globe have complained that researchers who study them, take the knowledge and use it for their own career, leaving little behind. Participants in these situations are often not even compensated for their time and effort in assisting the researcher. More importantly in some cases, researchers appropriate knowledge that does not belong to them. For us, a key principle of practice is to strive to leave behind more than you take with you. Since many community groups do not take time for reflection, the focus group provides a great opportunity for members from these groups to engage in reflection and hence develop new knowledge and understanding about their community-based work.

Emerging research on successful community change initiatives emphasizes the importance of capacity building to successful community change (Kubisch, et al. 2010). Moving reliance from outside to internal experts is key to building local capacity. A participatory approach for this project was chosen not only to generate new and more accurate knowledge but also to build the skills and capacity of the FFI staff who could then use these new skills and the accompanying knowledge to generate additional research efforts supporting their work thus increasing the capacity of the initiative to conduct their own research and evaluation activities.

Readiness: The emerging research on successful community change has also focused attention on readiness (Kubisch, et al. 2010). Sometimes the difference between one community succeeding in reaching a goal and another lagging behind has much more to do with what they started with than with their commitment and passion for change. A plethora of readiness assessments have been created during the past several decades. These tools are often used as pre and post-test surveys to measure how particular programs have addressed readiness issues and built their capacity. Perhaps more often, they are used as a discussion tool to help groups understand what aspects of capacity they need to work on in order to succeed with the overall project. In this study, our intention was to use the tool to work with teams to assess their capacity and to design strategies to address capacity needs. We plan to use the tool a second time to structure a reflexive discussion on progress in capacity building.

Appreciative Inquiry: Using Appreciative Inquiry when working with schools can literally transform opportunities to work with schools on key issues. Schools and school staff have borne the brunt of many misplaced attacks. Schools in the US tend to get blamed for everything – bad grades to juvenile delinquency to obesity, and are expected to address every concern affecting a student and his/her family, and funded to do very little of this out-of-class work.

The Initiative decided to use Appreciative Inquiry (Reed, J. 2007) to frame all their work with schools to avoid becoming one more interest group complaining about schools and school problems. Instead, they focused on the schools' desire to support healthy students and staff, families, and communities and asked how they might be of assistance. This approach gained them entry to school-based wellness work that others using a problem approach do not have. The FFI work team working with the wellness teams therefore used Appreciative Inquiry to design the focus group process. Our goal was to identify the factors that respondents felt contributed to successful wellness team policy and program work. We focused on what the schools and school teams "want more of."

Grounded Theory: Grounded theory (Glaser 2002) is an approach to collecting data in order to develop theory. Data collection efforts continue until no significant new data appears. Then the data collected is analyzed to identify emerging patterns and causal links leading to the development of theory of change related to the topic. Because our universe of successful school wellness teams was so small, we see a need to repeat this activity with teams that have become more active and successful in the future.

Research Approach

The research process was designed using Appreciative Inquiry in order to focus on factors contributing to successful school wellness teams. Working with a member of the FFI evaluation team, the FFI staff decided to conduct focus groups with successful teams in order to identify those elements that seem to underlie their success. The initial assessment process included 5 key steps.

1. Identifying the sampling frame: The FFI staff developed criteria for successfully functioning school teams based on the elements of the mandate including:
 - a. The team has had at least one positive experience with policy change (i.e. policy that eliminates chocolate milk in the cafeteria).
 - b. The school has institutionalized the wellness structure so that administrators participate, a regular time for meetings is set, and the team has a membership list and a plan of action.
 - c. The team has developed the capacity to engage in an intervention such as changing what is sold at football games.
 - d. The school wellness team includes a diversity of participants representing the community and the school with strong community participation.
2. Selecting the sample: Using the criteria for success school teams, the collaborative sought nominations of schools with teams that met the criteria. In all they got the names of three schools.
3. The FFI work group focusing on school wellness teams participated in an Appreciative Inquiry training session followed by a short training on conducting focus groups. A role play of the focus group protocol helped FFI staff develop both the skills and the confidence to undertake the actual focus group process.

4. The work group intended to conduct three focus groups with members of the school wellness teams identified earlier, but later learned that one group did not actually meet the criteria to be part of the sample. An effort to do a focus group using a phone conference call across school wellness teams was also put aside given the difficulty in finding schools that met the criteria.
5. Data from the focus groups was used to develop a readiness tool for school wellness teams to assess their capacity and to develop strategies to build additional capacity. The work team will also use the data to assess the impact of their work with the teams and teams' expanded capacity.

Results

FFI staff analyzed the data from their focus groups and developed 16 indicators of capacity to support school wellness team success as described in the criteria for selection. The readiness tool is included in the appendix. In addition, we identified 15 additional indicators from the readiness literature. FFI staff used the tool to engage 10 school wellness teams in a discussion to assess team capacity and to identify strategies to build their capacity. As the tool was used for discussion, FFI staff did not collect specific scores. FFI staff to plan to administer the tool this spring to see how teams have worked to build capacity creating benchmark that can be used in future years.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Appreciative Inquiry was a critically important element in the FFI work with schools. Initially it refocused conversation from what schools are doing wrong to what schools can do to improve health and how FFI might support that work. AI was also used to structure discussions within the FFI work groups and with school wellness teams. The use of AI in developing a readiness tool was determined to be very effective as the AI process brought out underlying themes related to readiness that are often overlooked. Using the tool, staff and wellness teams were able to identify concrete steps to increase their capacity to make positive changes in the schools. FFI staff continue using the approach in coaching the school teams and within work groups. Overall, participants found the focus on learning what works and why very valuable in discovering strategies that can build capacity in school wellness teams despite the lack of funding at the school level. Indeed the focus on the positive has helped some school teams identify and access alternative funding sources. The work group also reflected on the results of this work and identified strategies for improving the process of developing the readiness tool and using it in the school wellness team context.

We invite others to use and adapt the tool in school-based wellness work and share your results with us. Focusing on readiness can provide a group that has been unable to make progress, a way to have a conversation about their capacity to make change and the strategies that would enable them to be more successful in the future. The issue of readiness has often been overlooked in community wellness work as projects tend to focus on specific activities and events.

More and more research is emerging on factors that contribute to readiness across different kinds of community and organizational based change efforts. This project provides support for the idea of using Appreciative Inquiry in framing work to uncover readiness factors, particularly in specific contexts, can be very effective.

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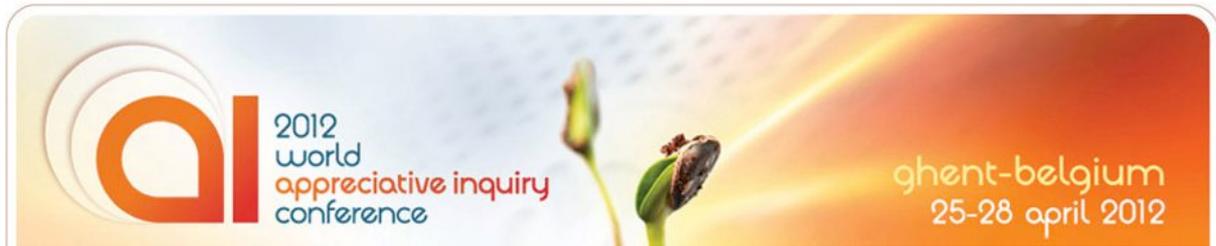
Appendix 1: School Wellness Team Readiness Assessment (draft)

Some School Wellness Teams are able to make significant policy and practice changes; others can wallow in frustrated inactivity. Successful School Wellness Teams often have key characteristics already in place as they organize for to create a healthy environment. The following grid lists those characteristics and prompts a response describing the Wellness Team’s level of capacity in each area (**1 is not yet in place** and **5 is very strong**.) This grid can be used in group settings, as a survey tool, or at Team meetings, prompting conversation about the characteristics of practice and policy change in schools. Those items with the highest scores are assets that support successful change that already exist in your community. Paying special attention to those items with the lowest scores will help determine if the current situation is ripe for capacity building and the specific areas in which a team coach or technical assistance might be most helpful.

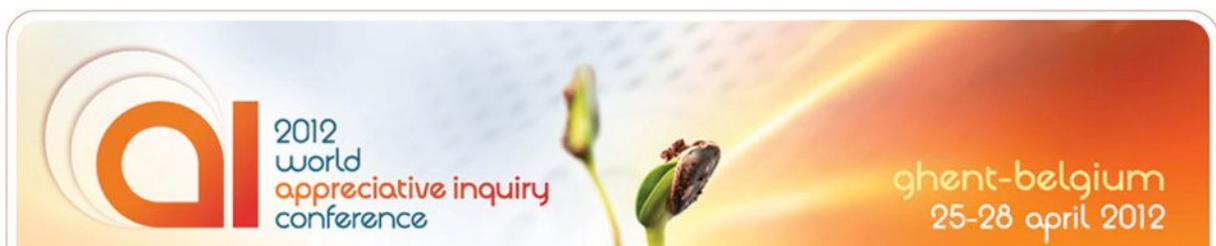
Characteristics of Successful School Wellness Teams	Levels of Current Capacity					Comments
	1	2	3	4	5	
Support from principles (building-level support)						
Support from superintendents						
Support from community leaders						
Support from youth						
Support from parents						
The team has effective and well organized meetings (agendas, consistent meetings times)						
Time is taken to reflect on the team’s progress, even small successes.						
The team reflects diverse representation.						
The team makes good use of outside support and coaching from people with skills in successful community change.						
Team members’ personal interests connect with the work of the Wellness Team						
The team has a clear focus or vision that is shared and revisited providing structure and guidance.						
Wellness team communicates regularly and clearly with the school community						
External funding sources for wellness activities and teacher stipends						
The school community understands that wellness is a priority in school (contract language, hiring strategies, staff participation expectations).						
Team members feel comfortable enough to experiment.						
Non-team members feel comfortable working with the wellness team.						

Other community change readiness factors found in the research that can be included in a readiness assessment

People are open to bringing in outside help.						
People are open to sharing and learning together.						
Local groups are connected and trust each other; spirit for collaboration.						
People focus on the discovery and appreciation of local assets.						
An emerging vision for the future is widely shared in the community.						
The leadership team believes it has the power to make change.						
A big challenge calls people together with a sense of urgency.						
A hopeful attitude is present despite the challenges.						
A game plan or roadmap for the community is in process.						
Community sparkplugs (people who keep the flame) are willing to champion the effort.						
A good-sized and representative group is committing time and energy to the work.						
Cultural brokering across community differences is evident.						
Change agents express willingness to be coached and to serve.						
People understand how a coach will work for and with the community.						



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Working with youth at risk – report from a Norwegian school working with an Appreciative Inquiry approach

Written by Bjørn Hauger and Ingebjørg Mæland March 2012

Abstract

This paper describes appreciative student talks in detail, and how the Tree-method, Strength Cards and Road Map are used as tools. In such talks students are met in an unexpectedly positive way or with questions which they have perhaps never considered before. The students are asked questions which make them consider themselves, their school and their future prospects in a new light. Appreciative student talks are based on the idea that all students are competent and have all the prerequisites for achieving that which is important to them. The method is based on recent research within positive psychology and Appreciative Inquiry (AI). The experiences in this article are mainly from The Arbeidsinstitutt in Buskerud (AIB) and some of the upper secondary schools in the same County in Norway. The paper assumes the reader is familiar with AI Theory and practice. But a short introduction of AIB is given in the beginning of this paper because there is only one Arbeidsinstitutt in the world. A short brief about the development work with AI is described as a context of the work with the appreciative student talks.

Introduction - About the Arbeidsinstitutt in Buskerud (AIB)

The Arbeidsinstitutt in Buskerud offers training opportunities for youth at secondary school level. AIB has about 170 fantastic students each year within four divisions situated respectively in Modum, Ringerike, Drammen and Kongsberg municipalities in Buskerud County. Many of these young people have yet to decide what they want to do in life. Some have made the "wrong" education choices, some are tired of school or do not feel they fit in at school for various reasons. These youth can apply directly to the AIB through the normal school application process and make use of the gap year as a period of clarification without losing their right to secondary education. But the majority of these youths are encouraged to transfer to AIB by support services. Secondary schools use AIB as an alternative learning arena for students who would be considered to benefit most personally from training there.



There is a continuous intake of students over the whole school year. AIB has several workshops which focus on practical training related to parts of the national school curriculum. The use of school and work placements throughout the year is used according to the individual student's needs. Many have a go in several different workshops and in different work placements during the year. In the educational workshop the students can improve their Norwegian, English, Mathematics and other subjects. The purpose is to clarify, motivate and prepare the youths for continued schooling and work.

AIB is mainly financed by the County and with some support from the Municipalities. The national Department of Education has supported AIB during 2010 -2012 with 2, 5 mill NKR each year to a project named "More knowledge about *how to do it*"? They want AIB to: 1) spread the strength based way of thinking and working to schools in Norway 2) to qualify youths to lead AI-processes and 3) to continue the development work with AI in AIB. The main goal is to increase the learning culture in schools for all learners, to make sure students learn as much as possible, thrives and increase motivation for more learning and prevent drop-outs.



Last year AIB was chosen as one of four organizations which received an agreement with the Norwegian Crown Prince Håkon Magnus and Princess Mette Marit foundation for year 2011-2013. The intention is to support projects that include youth actively into our society. It is of course a big honor for AIB to be recognized this way and we are most humbled and grateful for this opportunity. The economic support is totally 1.5 mill NOK and it has given AIB new important possibilities to spread the strengths based way of thinking. An exciting plan for the project is made together with the students and the work has started.

Appreciative student talks and assertive approaches to school drop-out

Working to prevent student drop-out in secondary schools has been an important area of focus for the schools and is included in the government's policy for reducing poverty in Norway. Even though the consequences of dropping out of secondary school are not necessarily negative for all students, studies show that Reference to a Swedish study referred to in Sætervoll and Glomsvoll (2003):

- Young people who leave secondary school early have difficulty holding down jobs
- They are much more likely to become unemployed
- They are seldom given job opportunities other than those in industries sensitive to economic fluctuations with poor pay and work environments

In other words: Dropping out of school reinforces social inequality. Social problems are also a contributing factor to school drop-out. We know that the most drop-outs occur among students who apply under special conditions (for example those with learning disabilities), students with minority backgrounds, and those who have substance abuse problems and psychiatric issues (Baklien, Bratt and Gotaas 2004).

What can the school and social services do to prevent at-risk students dropping permanently out of school and work life? When the school and support system are facing students who are tired of school, who have poor attendance or who abuse drugs or alcohol, it is natural to try to uncover the reasons to the problems in order to find the right initiatives to help. This paper will tell about an alternative and a more assertive way of dealing with these problems. Researchers in positive psychology suggests that if one is to succeed in making profound changes in established behavioral patterns, one has to abandon the frame of perspective which is at the base of negative thought patterns (Sekerka and Fredrickson 2010). This does not mean that one should overlook the problems that the student struggles with at school, or that which is failing in schools. One has to work with the problems in a more assertive way.

Appreciative Student Talks is based on such assertive thought. The talks are a method of guidance which begins with everything that functions well with these students and focuses on helping them find their way to their own strengths. The talks highlight for them how they can use these strengths to realize their potential both at school and in the workplace.

AIB's continues development journey with AI from 2005 -2012

The practical methods presented in this paper are a result of a long period of developmental work at the Arbeidsinstitutt in Buskerud (AIB). The 5D model is well known and used a lot. The work began in 2005 with the development of the educational policy for training. Based on the educational platform, AIB has established five core values and in Norwegian language they all start with a T and it is called AIB's five T's;



Well-being, Belonging, Trust, Credibility, Availability

These concepts should be communicated constantly, be put into practice and be visible. The tools which are developed and used during the work with AI have been valuable in the formation of this culture. It is important that those involved decide together which value characterizes the activities, and this requires knowledge and awareness of how to do this. The most important thing is to have the objectives and competency to transform the desired situation into reality. Shared understanding, communication and common approaches all contribute to the facilitation of this work, which needs to function as a persistent process.

Through this work, AIB created its educational platform which devotes more attention to the individual student, which determines the values which characterize the AIB's encounters with the youths and contribute to making the ordinary school day good for all students. The factors of being present at the school are particularly effective at getting students to stay there. School absences, and later drop-out, becomes a kind of coping strategy for the student. Confronted with overwhelming absence factors, drop-out becomes a 'reasonable' choice writes Buland and collaborators (2007). Recent research shows that such organizational development measures should be an important part of drop-out prevention work at the school (Baklien, Bratt and Gotaas 2004).

Through this development work, using Appreciative Inquiry, the staff and leaders themselves were able to experience how use of positive work methods create new energy in the organization, contribute to building better relations among the staff, and resulted



in people setting themselves more ambitious goals (Hauger and Nesje 2006). It was on the basis of these experiences that AIB chose to use the same approach in their daily follow-ups of the students. It is the experiences from this development work which are presented in this paper with practical methods for student talks. A very important factor in the development work has been the ongoing parallel processes in all levels of the organization.

It has been incredibly exciting and motivational work where all involved have had continual training and follow-up in using the AI method. A core group with AI coordinators/change agents has lead the work and distributed leading has been developed during the years. Four AIB departments have attained a common language and common tools. During the last two years the students are more and more involved as equal learners in all levels of the organization and during the years transformative changes has been realized (Bushe 2007).

All the staff in AIB has still, after seven years of continues development work with AI, the will and energy to try new ways of thinking and communicating. The engagement and enthusiasm has, with its ups and downs, increased and is now fully supported. The importance and understanding grows about: the meaning of generative questions, - reflection is more than just retelling, - guided questioning is necessary to make new theories, -the focus question has to be as clear and generative as possible (Gergen 1999). The learners find it very interesting and also quite fun to work with questions like:

"What do we take for granted?" And "If something happens that we can't even think of now, it is bigger or more spectacular than you could dream of,- what could it be? What would you like to tell about then?"

"I think that the mood among the colleagues and youth is completely different now. The entire atmosphere is much more positive. This schooling has worked for everyone. I think we expect slightly more from them. It is a completely different way to work, the way we talk to them, the way we ask them about things as well. I think they are made more aware. "(Teacher at AIB)

About Appreciative student talks

Buskerud County adopted an action plan in autumn 2007 to prevent drop-out and improve continuation in secondary school learning. The AIB was awarded funding to prepare a method book about the potential which lies in student talks and career planning based on a strength-based approach and in an organization where a problem-solving culture had been established. This common base was invaluable. AIB chose to go with an action research approach in the additional work, and prepared a questioning guide and log form for the research. The book was ready in 2008, and rather than an end of a work it was marked as a start of a continuing developmental work.

Appreciative student talks is an important tool for recruiting and keeping the youths in formal education, and making it possible for them to realize their goals. Close follow-up and continuous contact with parents/guardians and any possible support agencies are included as a natural and important part of the work at AIB. It is important to make sure that everybody collaborates in order to support the student in achieving their goals.

In 1990, David Cooperrider and Suresh Sritastva wrote a groundbreaking article which they named "Positive Image, Positive Action: The affirmative Basis for Change". In it they present the idea that human systems move themselves towards what is being focused on. With a basis in medical research as well as research in psychology, anthropology and sports psychology, they argue for future plans having a lot of influence on the potential for change. The ideas we have of our future decide the actions we make now. If we are to assume that there is truth in this, we ought to be very aware of the mental images we have of our future.

In the design stage, work towards the dream is continued and instructors cooperate with the participants in creating career plans which support and build up the desired future situation. Here we are supported by Winston Churchill's words: "We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us". When an architect designs a house, he/she must include the load-bearing elements which will make the house stand. In career planning, we allow students to shape and create the building blocks and load-bearing elements which are necessary to realize a dream.



The dream talk

The dream talk can be used at the beginning of a program or in the very first student talk. Sometimes it takes several talks for the student to manage to clarify their future dream in relation to career and work, though we express clearly from the first talk that the first aim for the student is to decide on a career path or profession. The career plan can be started and the first weeks are a clarification stage which can be planned with target dates. During this stage the dream picture will become clearer. The talks are connected to the roadmap method. The dream is described normally as a long-term goal in a career plan and the smaller sub-goals ("steps") can be added in accordingly. During periods when a

student is lacking motivation, a "dream visit" can help bring it back up. There are of course youths who do not stick to one dream over this time, but that just has to be considered natural at that age. We then write up the new dream, and see it all as a clarification process for the student.

Why



This method can be used in a class with all pupils together or in individual talks. Our experiences have showed us it is particularly suited to those youths who don't know what they want to do with their lives. To be able to see the connection between training and the meaning it has for achieving their own goals, gives increased motivation for learning. Even though some don't have the foggiest idea what they want to do, most have at least an idea of where they think they want to live, and what they want to do in their free time. In order to live alone and have

good friends, they will be dependent on having an income. It is therefore important to talk with these youths about how they imagine themselves doing this – and create a mental image of a good and exciting future. The point of all this clarification and their education becomes clearer and their motivation grows. Teachers and students obtain a common picture of what the student will work towards, which builds trust and good relations.

How

Using appreciative interviews involves the youth and sets a positive focus. The instructor must create an atmosphere of complete trust and confidence. By showing an interest in the student as a person, asking about the future, friends, hobbies and not just about school, builds confidence and gives the instructor insight into more of the student's capabilities.

Many students are able to say a lot about how they want things to be in 3-4 years. It is important to write it down exactly the way the student tells it, and show that you appreciate the student. Look into what they mean with the words they use to get the clearest possible picture of what they want. Those who reply with "dunno", "I wasn't the one who decided I should be here" or "that's got nothing to do with you/it's none of your business", require a more creative approach. A good start can be to ask "do you think you'll be living at home in three years?" The follow-up "where do you think you'll live then?" can be redeeming. The answer that they'll be living in a flat or apartment usually follows quickly and the conversation is underway. "What would it be like there? What does your living room look like for example? Do you have a car?" To investigate and create these images together with the youths can give some exciting conversations. It is both interesting and important to write down what is said. These images fill out parts of the dream and are written at the top of the roadmaps. If the career description is vague, write down key words that are mentioned, such as "something to do with cars".

Unlikely goals:

It is important to look after the youth's dream. To give the student a reality check by saying "maybe that's not really right for you" quickly kills any initiative. Trust that the process itself, with student talks and career planning over time will help the youth themselves understand and adjust their plan. This requires however that the instructor is completely present the whole time, listening and asking guiding questions which encourage the student's reflection.

Working with student talks is working with relations as a methodical tool. The work has shown how appreciative student talks in a process model is an approach which can be

used to help students create a career plan to reach their own goal, or achieve something which is important in their lives. It has also shown how this approach itself can be understood as a measure in preventative work. The approach helps youths who are in risk zones to gain maturity, and can give a constructive direction to their lives.

Let us give an example: An instructor at the AIB talks with one of the course participants about a career plan.

"The girl is very clear about what she doesn't want to do, but has little idea about what she would actually consider doing. The talk takes time. The focus is on what the girl doesn't want or can't see herself doing."

According to the staff at the Arbeidsinstitutt this is a typical situation. They meet students who have little self-confidence and who do not contribute much in their conversations with the adults. It is often the teacher who has to "drag it out" of the student. This is usually so in the beginning of the conversation. The way that the student involves herself is to talk about what she doesn't want to do. The student underestimates her own competence and her own resources. Neither does the student have any idea about what she wishes or wants to do. The teacher tells how the conversation moves slowly. But in the course of it the teacher shifts the focus.

"I ask where she sees herself in five years," explains the teacher. "The question comes unexpectedly for the student and she needs to think about it. But after a while she begins to tell how she wants an apartment or a house which is out in the country. She sees herself driving a car because of the remote location. "It could well be a Volvo", she says. "I would also like to have at least one dog".

In the course of the conversation "we get a good tone and a good understanding of each other", explains the teacher. What is it that triggers this change? It is the new questions which the teacher poses to the student during the talk. Questions which explore the students strengths, her hopes and dreams. At the AIB we have learned to shift a conversation from having a negative focus to having a positive focus. With the student's dream as the starting point, the teacher and student together can work towards finding concrete approaches to take. The teacher explains: *"For example we could start with the process of obtaining a driver's license - or totally concrete things which she herself had to figure out to get herself in work and to start looking for jobs".*

For many of the teachers and instructors it has been a discovery that even the quiet, insecure and immature students can have so many dreams about their future. Those at the Arbeidsinstitutt tell how these appreciative student talks make students *"become more open and motivated during every talk"*. Furthermore, they explain how using positively directed communication can contribute to the youths achieving their goals more easily.

One of the teachers sums up his experiences with the use of this method in his work with a boy who lacks motivation and is absent a great deal because of his social background.

"He dares to show more of himself, he has begun to take the first small steps towards his dream. His attendance has dramatically improved, he has begun at an educational workshop. He sat in on classes for one day at high school. It has made the clarification part simpler and quicker."

The example above points towards the core of appreciative student talks: Conversations which have an exclusively positive focus. The goal is to find out what the student is capable of and is good at, what they dream of achieving - and how they can use the resources available to them to get there.

Appreciative student talks can be used both during guidance talks with 'ordinary' school students, and in work which follows up those students who for various reasons struggle at school.

What I see, is that it becomes much more real and you can help create the path they take to get there. And that we set up small goals all the time. I wasn't really good at doing that before, but now I see what they dream about achieving. And often I think it's really realistic. They want normal things, it's nothing unrealistic. And we can start helping them earlier than we could before, because now we have a likely target.

Instructor Karen at AIB

Roadmap as a tool in appreciative student talks



One of the main goals for appreciative student talks is that the youths create a plan for how to realize their dreams and goals. The dream should function as a compass which gives life direction. Students therefore need to acquire skills in seeing the relationship between the dream and the actual actions which will carry them towards their dream.

With the instructor or guide considering themselves as a contributor to the youth realizing their goals, new exciting opportunities and challenges open up in their work. Teacher and student find out about the student's interests, successes, strengths and dreams through conversations. Behind all of these conversations lie career goals to be drawn up. It can be anything from furniture builder, doctor, or car mechanic to chef. For many students there is a long way to go before they get there. The big goal is broken down into small steps. Then important milestones can be marked out for celebration once reached.

In AIB we have learned that it is a very effective planning tool for all the learners having a visual roadmap on the wall. The same experiences with use of roadmaps and appreciative talks are shared by those working with organization development (Hauger et al 2008). The advantage with the roadmap is that it doesn't end up in a drawer or on a shelf under piles of paper.

From positive psychology research we know that people with clear goals and aims in their life are happier than those without. Big goals with visionary characteristics draw out extra resources from the person working to realize their plan. If one is to succeed, one must transfer big aims into smaller steps. The concept of stepping is used to describe a way of working to achieve a large goal by breaking it down into much smaller goals (or sub-goals). In our experience, this is a skill that needs to be learned. By using the roadmap method, we practice these skills. The smaller steps are clarified and it becomes important to be able to see them individually, often in the form of mental images. When these sub-goals are accomplished and celebrated, new energy and motivation is created. This is why celebration is an important part of the roadmap.

In AIB the roadmaps are displayed on the walls in the classroom or workshop. Both the student themselves and the instructor are constantly reminded of the direction and goal they are heading towards. In student talks, appreciative interviews are used to find which strengths and competency the student has which can be used in working towards these goals. The strength tree exercise is useful in the talks as well. Concrete actions which the student can take, and supportive measures from the teacher, parents and others involved, are all noted down in the plan. Target dates and evaluation are written in.

If students are to achieve their goal and sub-goals, they must also learn how to tackle obstacles and solve problems that they encounter along the way. It is worthwhile to look at situations where the youth has displayed some level of problem solving/coping. Look into these situations and try to find exactly what the youth did effectively. In this way the youth has to define obstacles and identify and activate strengths to get through or around these obstacles. To help the student visualize themselves as they overcame an obstacle, one can ask questions such as "how did you use others around you?" or "in what way was it that your mum was able to help you?"

I feel like I've learnt so much from the roadmap. Every time I come up with a goal, I put it on there. What motivates me to get my goals is that when we do, we have a little party. That's my motivation. It's also pretty good to have something to work towards. The roadmap has been like, the best way to learn that. I feel like the roadmap has helped me so, so much.

Daniel, 16 years old

Aim

The Roadmap method visualizes students' goals, what to do, when and whom, and celebrations of successes along the way. Sensitive information is of course not put into the Roadmap. Youths recognize that they own the roadmap and the goals that are on it. It can be a living document where dreams and goals can be adjusted according to what comes up. The visual roadmap makes it easier to hold continuity and attention on the goals, and dreams are transformed into concrete actions.

How

Making the roadmap on blank, ordinary paper with a marker has had a good effect. Put the date of the conversation at the bottom of the paper and draw a timeline all the way up the paper, ideally about 1.5 meters. The dream is written at the top. This can also be written in question form; "what would it take for me to..?"

In a student talk about a career plan, the instructor often speaks about the dream which lies in the future. When the student succeeds in reaching a sub-goal, the reasons for success are mapped out. These reasons can be help from others, or own actions or ways of thinking. These documented reasons for success can be brought up at later opportunities when things get tough and sub-goals seem unattainable. When discouraged, the student should be asked to talk about their dream to try to increase motivation again. The roadmap method can also give good effect in areas such as reading skills, any subject or life area where students wishes to improve themselves.

Tree Method



The tree exercise is useful for figuring out sub-goals (steps) and actions. After having identified which sub-goals, these are written at the lowest end of the timeline on the Roadmap, with time allocated for evaluation. The Tree exercise is based on the three first D's in AI's 5 D-model. If there is a problem, it should be rewritten as a wish (Definition), and the focus is shifted to what the students would like. The desired situation is written into the trunk of the tree. This should be worded in a short, concise

manner. Then ask the students to tell a story about their best experiences within this focus area (Discovery). When the students have told their stories, the teachers ask them to about possible reasons for these successes. The questions should be as open as possible and it is important to ask further in-depth questions: What was it that leads to...? Can you tell a little more about that? What do you think made it like that for you?

At this stage it is important not to contribute with your own understanding or answers, or to try to moralize. We need to be patient and wait for answers. Sometimes the participants need time to think.

The answers given by the students are filled in in the roots of the tree and are called the **energy-giving factors**. An incident becomes a root. Take several examples from the students and fill out many of these energy-giving factors - they can build on each other and often do. This can be achieved by continually asking: What do you mean by? What was it that made that..? Through this process the students can realize that they are competent and have the ability to be able to create to achieve the goals they set for themselves.

Then the teacher asks a new question: How would it be if we could have these energy-giving factors present every day - all the time? The answers are written in the crown of the tree (Dream), and through this the students can envision how their future could look. It is very important here to get the students to express what they see, what they hear, feel etc.

Strength cards



Strength cards are used in talks between the teacher/instructor and a youth and can also be used in groups or between adults. The aim for the strength cards method is to identify the student's personal strengths and express them in words.

In the last few years, researchers have been working on giving detailed descriptions (and classifications) of those character traits which contribute to creating optimal functioning. There have been two particular pioneering works in this field. The first is The Gallup Organization and the work of Donald Clifton with the development of Strengthfinder, a system for classifying and identifying talents. The other is Christopher Peterson's and Martin Seligman's work (2004) with classifying positive character traits. While Clifton has been concerned with understanding which stable human qualities create tangible success at work and school, Seligman and Peterson have been looking at what creates success in life. One can consider that across different cultures, there exist moral goals (or virtues) which all humans strive after.

The strengths cards are used together with the roadmap. When strengths are identified through appreciative student talks the youths wrote them on the roadmap. The youths are trained to look for the best at each other and then they tell each other what they have seen and give strengths cards to each other.

A concrete example: Appreciative student talk where the questioning technique from appreciative interviewing, tree method and road map is used:

The instructor started the talk: "I initially asked if it was ok for the students and the other participants if the talk could be done in a slightly different way, because I was learning and trying out something new - a new method that the students could also use if they wanted. They answered yes, and I went and got a big sheet of paper, rolled it out on the table, and wrote the date on it with a big marker. I drew a line and said that the top of the sheet is four years into the future.

Then I asked the student: "How is your life going to be in four years?" The answers came quickly: "I am working, working in sales, have a family, kids, house, car and dog." "How is your take on everything?" - "Good, have good friends." "What does that mean?" - "Have stopped playing around." "That sounds good. So, you want to work to

look after yourself, get a job so you can get a house and car. Have control over your behavior so that you can have good friends and a nice family life?" - "Yeah, that would be cool; I'm managing alright now though you know..." "We around you want to help you manage to get all these things you're planning on. That's why I want to be honest with you and say that right now, some others are saying that you're not behaving how you should. They don't know how things are going to work out for you. We know that sometimes you don't have full control and end up in serious trouble. We have to figure this out. What will it take for you to have control over your aggression, and what will you do when you get angry?" - "I guess I have to stay calm..." - "It's not as if you get so angry every time either, you usually don't actually, so we can talk about what you do when you don't get really angry?" - "I haven't been playing around lately though, have I?" Turns to the guardians who answer: "No, it's been going ok. He/she is good at home, positive and hangs out with nice friends."

- "That sounds good. What do you think is most important to do here at AIB these first three weeks, so that people here will really believe that this is going to work out?"

- "I've got to work on trust?"

- "Yes, I think that's important. Have you worked at building up trust before?"

- "Yep"

- "Can you tell me about when you've done that?"

- "Yeah, I was at a place where I had to be followed around everywhere. I had to work on trust, to be allowed to be on my own."

- "What did you do to build trust then? Is it ok if I draw a tree and write down what you say? It might seem silly, but I've learned that it can be easier to see what we're talking about then."

Then the youth told the story about how he/she became allowed to be on their own, and summed it up thus:

- "I sucked up to the people working there"

- "How did you do that?"

- "I was happy"

- "What else did you do?"

- "I did what I was told"

- "Like what?"

- "Like tidying, washing up"

- "Did you do anything else?"

- "Started doing the things I knew I was supposed to do"

- "What happened then?"

- "They were happy"

I wrote this at the top of the tree

- "Did you do anything else? Is there anything else you can think of?"

There ended up being many roots, and eventually I said - "Did you do all this?" And showed that I was impressed. "Yeah!" said the youth and also seemed impressed and surprised. "Yeah, but I don't call this sucking up, I call this building trust," I said, "and what you told me now convinces me that you CAN do it. You can, you only need to do it more. How do you think things will be if you do more of this, how do you think people will react?" "They'll be happy with me" "Yes, do you think anything else will happen?" "Everyone is just like, more easy-going"...(I continue asking and the youth gives me many answers which I write in the crown of the tree. This created a picture of how the youth could have things, and the potential he/she had to achieve what he/she wanted). "Could you consider making trust the aim for these first three weeks?"

- "Yeah, would do you mean?"

- "Well, it's important that others here see that you are doing things differently now. Are there things here in the roots of the tree that you can do to show this?"

- "Yeah, I can start smiling at people"

- "Anything else?"

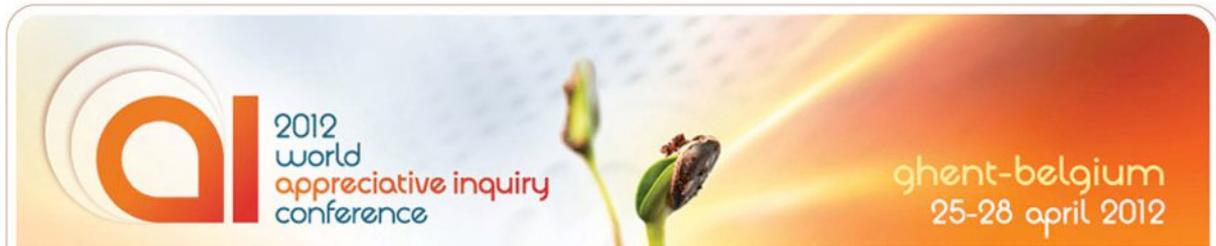
- "Say hey"

- "Anything else you would do?"

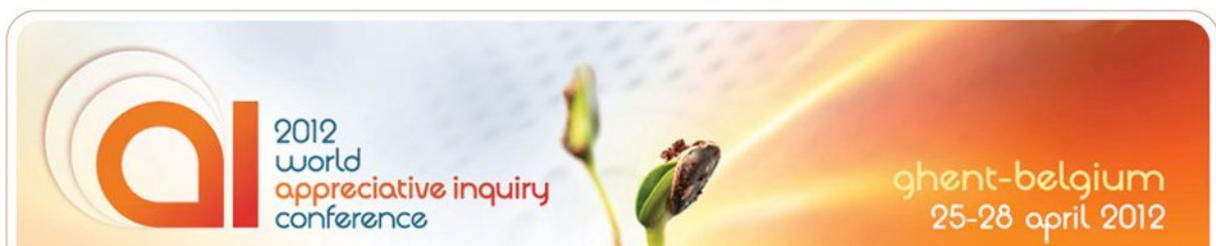
- "Body language, I can be more like, awake. And maybe tidy up after myself in the cafeteria"
- "Is it ok if we put this up in your Roadmap?"
- "Yeah, whatever"
- "I would really like to talk to you each week to see how it's going, and to take your plan further. I'd also like to hear how it's going in the different subjects too. Is that ok?"
- "Yeah, that's ok"
- "Then we'll set up the next meeting on the plan here, ok?"

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**BINDER PAPER SUBMISSIONS 2012 WAIC
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Theme: Connecting self to Others, from Inner to Outer

Engaging collective futures through being and becoming: Making meaning and taking action

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In this paper the focus is placed on the integral relationship between individual practitioners ('planners') and the integrative practice of 'development planning/urban and regional planning'. The paper is based on career narrative research, steeped in appreciative inquiry and undertaken as part of a PhD thesis by one of the authors. The paper provides examples of how the activity of engaging collective futures, through planning and development as community of practice, is highly connected to and dependant on the growth and self-actualization (being and becoming) of these agents, on their beliefs and passions, and the ways in which they (as individual beings) engage an unfolding future.

Introduction

'Development Planning', 'urban and regional planning' or 'town and country planning', can be described as a set of activities and/or community(ies) of practice that are concerned with the ideals and ideas of enhancing quality of life, of development, of sustainability, of common good and of engaging collective futures. A community of practice (discipline) that is (we would argue) in the business of: (i) dreaming, imagining and narrating better futures; (ii) infusing thought into courses of action; and (iii) mobilising actors and resources across a multiplicity of boundaries, to realise these futures.

In South Africa it is an activity and set(s) of ideas continuously questioned and pressured in terms of improving impact by addressing developmental challenges strongly embedded in socio-economic and spatial landscapes (Turok and Parnell, 2009). The focus of such discussions is most often on: (i) developmental and sustainability challenges of places, communities, socio-ecological systems, cities, regions and societies; and (ii) capacity and skills challenges of the community of practice. However, for many involved within this community of practice, it is also an activity and set of ideas that are deeply intertwined into a passion for making a contribution, adding value and sharing 'visions' and dreams for a collective future.

In this paper an attempt is made to share how an appreciative inquiry (AI) approach, which places the focus on the integral relationship between the agents and the activity and practice of 'planning'

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(instead of merely focussing on the practice of planning or on the skills sets within it) can contribute to the debate on improving impact and action. A relationship or connection that unfolds as an interdependent and intertwined growth path, where 'planning' and 'development' can be seen as drawing on and evolving through the range of agents, individuals and communities of practice involved within it, but also as an activity providing a space for these agents, individuals and communities of practice to evolve in/through.

The paper provides an opportunity to engage these symbioses. It is based on career narrative research, steeped in appreciative inquiry and undertaken as part of a PhD thesis by one of the authors.

The findings highlighted in the paper provide evidence that the activity of engaging collective futures, through planning and development as community of practice, is highly connected to and dependant on the growth and self-actualization of these agents as whole persons/beings, on their beliefs and passions, on their courage, and the ways in which they (as individuals) hope and engage an unfolding future.

In the first part of the paper we will provide some background to the study by introducing the integrative practices of development or urban and regional planning in the South African context and the challenges faced by practitioners in this field. Secondly we will introduce the research and the appreciative career narrative research on which the paper has been based. In the third part of the paper we provide examples, based on findings of the research, of a series of connections between the individual and the collective within the practice of planning in South Africa. Lastly we reflect on implications of how such connections between the individual and collective can support this integrative practice (probably with some relevance to other integrative and future orientated practices) to engage complexity, sustainability and the unfolding future in a more meaningful way.

As a core part of a PhD journey, these findings are also an illustration of an enquiry that prompted (and still prompts) us as authors to learn, reflect, appreciate and be inspired by the journeys, quests, dreams and hopes of others... and in the process also of our own. May some of these reflections and hopefully intriguing glimpses into connections... likewise intrigue and/or inspire your own reflections.

Background to planning in South Africa/ a quick peak into the planning landscape in South Africa

Ideally the paper should probably have started off providing a concise definition of what the practice of 'development planning' or 'urban and regional planning' within the international and South African contexts entails. However, as well recognised in planning literature it is quite a challenge to provide a unitary definition, or even overarching description (see Hudson in Hillier and Healey, 2008, p83), as what constitutes 'planning activity' or 'the planner' has remained a continually shifting concept - partly explaining some of its key characteristics.

The South African Planning Profession's Act (2002) attempts to provide a definition by describing the activity of planning as "areas of expertise which involve the initiation and management of change in the built and natural environment across a spectrum of areas, ranging from urban to rural and delineated at different geographic scales (region, subregion, city, town, village, neighbourhood), in order to further human development and environmental sustainability..." (South Africa, 2002)

through land use management, organisation of service infrastructure, integration of social, economic and physical sectors within human settlements and through preparing strategic plans and policies serving the interests of the public to benefit the present and future generations.

However, given the integrative and dynamic nature of the practice of planning (even though the study involved planners with backgrounds in formal planning education) this study does not attempt working with a narrow definition, but much rather engages planning in terms of the 'planning idea', which since its origins has been associated with 'purposeful action' and the belief in the ability to act in public interest and to effect social change (Hillier and Healy, 2008, p.xiv).

In South Africa as many other developing countries, meeting long and short term development and sustainability challenges such as poverty, inequality, unemployment and dire living conditions affecting millions of people, are magnified by resource and capacity scarce environments. In this case, complicated by the socio-economic and spatial legacies of Apartheid. However, in South Africa these challenges are fortunately not only left as the responsibility of the state, but has through history generated active engagement by civil society, as well as local and international communities of practice, including those concerned with development and planning. Amongst many initiatives spearheaded by the developmental state and partners over the last fifteen years, was the introduction of a new democratic and more integrated planning system, as well as huge efforts in establishing new institutions (Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2011).

"World-wide, and particularly in South Africa, the responsibilities of local government have increased dramatically over the last decade much of which has fallen within the ambit of the "planner's work". This has included inter alia the need for the development of strategies for managing poverty reduction and addressing inequality; increasing environmental management demands; and the promotion of economic development at a local level, and the growing demand for community participation in consultative planning processes" (SACPLAN, 2012, pp6).

Within the planning fraternity specifically a lot of emphasis is currently placed on building a more effective planning system and sets of planning instruments³, generating information and designing planning support systems and models to provide an evidence base to support decision-making (van Huyssteen, et al. 2010), and improving the competence of planners with an emphasis on formal training, short courses and skills development programs (SACPLAN, 2012).

In addition to the emphasis placed on integrated development planning and intergovernmental alignment over the last couple of years (Oranje and van Huyssteen, 2011 and 2007), most recently, national government has also embarked on a process of developing a national planning vision (National Planning Commission, 2011) (even though not yet in the cadre of the inspiring AI examples in Brazil and other countries), and setting up planning legislation that requires municipalities and provinces to develop long term future orientated plans as well (South Africa, 2011).

Whilst many planners have actively been involved in attempts at visioning and transforming South African settlements, institutions and planning processes through the democratic transition period, these new moves and associated global challenges are bringing a renewed call to the community of

³ The process of developing new national planning legislation is currently underway with the finalization of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Bill, 2011.

practice (as is the case internationally in other ‘intervention disciplines⁴’) to reconsider roles and contributions in taking action and engaging the unfolding future. This will most probably, in the words of Lovering (2009, p4): “...bring new demands for planning to do what it has always presented itself as doing – protecting the needs of ordinary people rather than privileged minorities, the public rather than private interest, the future rather than the present”.

A short introduction to the narrative research on which the paper draws from and the relevance of an AI approach

In spite of its novel ideals and future oriented outlook, planning can often be associated with an overt focus on problems and on ‘all that is wrong’. Instead of bringing hope, it might even “...have a chance of alienating and disheartening those that will have to bring the dream to fruition through their collective efforts. This method of setting the dial on ‘negative’, while the good waves [or parts] wade/move through, is not very constructive. Even worse so when it is considered that the initial drive for intervention ...was a desire for positive change/improvement, and not the search for and solving of problems. Given the extremity of the difficulties many poor countries find themselves in, such a focus on the negative of course has every chance of generating/raising such a huge number of problems/challenges that it could lead to a feeling of despair, debilitation and even complete stasis” (Oranje, 2005:1).

In the same vain many studies, especially in South Africa, conducted to determine and better understand planning, as well as planning competencies and capacities, have been designed to determine what the problems are that need to be addressed or to identify the capacities and competencies that can be regarded as ‘lacking’ or ‘inadequate’ (Goss and Coetzee, 2007). Mostly focused on what ‘should’ planners be able to do, in order to address the wide range of legislative and societal demands.

In line with such a focus on ‘problem-solving’ and thus also on ‘problem identification and description’ a whole language has developed to define, describe and stress both “organizational” (include also “place” and “municipal” within the planning context in South Africa in particular), as well as “individual” deficits (see Goss and Coetzee, 2007; Todes, 2004; Meicklejohn and Coetzee, 2003), in line with what Mellish (1999) describes as a language of deficient and inadequate performance.

Whereas competency in planning before the 1990’s in South Africa was often described in terms of the so-called ‘art and science’ of planning, which has both an inspirational and efficiency ‘ring’ to it, it became associated with an un-exhaustive list of standardised processes (see Oranje and Van Huyssteen, 2007) and ‘knowledge, skills and values’ in outcomes based ‘speak’ since the early 2000’s.

However, the research on which this article is based as part of a PhD study was mainly concerned with moving away from a ‘deficit’ and ‘lacking’ and ‘gap orientated’ view, towards a more

⁴ Even though the paper is using planning in South Africa as its context, we as authors would argue that it might be valuable to reflect on relevance to, and symbioses between, practitioners and communities of practices in other countries, as well as in other integrative and action orientated practices engaging collaborative processes and collective futures.

appreciative and learning orientated perspective. It thus used narrative methodologies and an appreciative inquiry approach⁵ to explore and learn from competency within the wholeness of life⁶, including processes of learning, issues of roles, relationships, dimensions of power, knowledge, skill, worldviews, context, change and underlying characteristics enabling impact and relevance within the context of a career in this community of practice (McClelland in Sivasankaran, 2011, p18; Albanese in Sivasankaran, 2011, p11).

The research was aimed at exploring “being and becoming” within this community of practice - engaging the competency debate in a constructive way, by focusing on past successes and experiences, and learning from competencies as well as individual ways of learning, growing and adapting within this community of practice (see Fry, 2000; Hall and Hammond, undated; Reed, 2007).

As stated by Reed (2007, p2) *“AI concentrates on exploring ideas that people have about what is valuable in what they do and then tries to work out ways in which this can be built on – the emphasis is firmly on appreciating the activities and responses of people, rather than concentrating on their problems... it challenges us to rethink our ideas on how people work, how change happens and how research can contribute to this process”*.

Within this research, planners are essentially viewed as ‘inside’, and part and parcel of planning (see Hillier and Healey, 2008). The enquiry recognises that whilst the practice of planning is influenced by and dependant on, societies, institutions and systems beyond and within its influences, it essentially is also interdependent on the growth of individual agents and communities of practice within planning. In the same ways in which such individuals might also be relying on the practice of planning to provide them with the challenges, space and dreams to grow and evolve.

The research entailed exploring career narratives, solicited through in depth appreciative and reflective narrative interview processes. The narratives on careers were obtained from 40 practitioners (from different age, gender and race groups across various parts of South Africa) within the planning field, identified by peers as planners (practitioners, educators etc.) that are perceived as ‘having impact’ and making meaningful contributions in the field.

In following an appreciative approach, the study was thus not focused on identifying the ‘ideal’ ways for planners to engage with the ideas, practices and struggles of planning, or the ideal sets of competencies or drivers of such competencies. It is rather structured to recognise, acknowledge and learn from what is existing, and highlighting that which contributes towards performance and impact. Focussing on competency and performance in context of career and life, it also recognises the interplay between individuals and their context, and the importance of relational processes (see notion of ‘relational responsibility’ MacNamee and Gergen, 1999 in Reed, 2007, p37.)

⁵ Over recent years AI has also become established as a research approach and process (not merely a technique) (Michael, 2005). As such it is extremely useful as it not only contributes towards understanding and generating of new knowledge, but also towards transformation (Reed, 2007).

⁶ The value of exploring the wholeness of our lives through narrative inquiry in the competency context is highlighted by (Clandinin and Huber, 2002).

"I think the confusion on planning still exists in the country at this present time. So we began a major learning process. Not longer after that, we started an amazing kind of experience where we were starting to teach ourselves. We eventually threw the question away of what planning is and replaced it with what should planning be if it is to have any use in this bloody world."

Connections between the personal and the collective: Examples from within the South African development and planning community of practice
(Participating planner, van Huyssteen, 2012)

One of the many fascinating (and most probably unsurprising) findings of the research was the integral relationship and set of connections that seem to exist between the activity and practice of 'planning' and the agents, 'planners' or practitioners within the practice of development and urban and regional planning in South Africa.

It is evident from the research (van Huyssteen, 2012) that individual agents impact the future, through much more than merely their planning activities, but rather as whole persons/beings - shaped by and shaping the whole at the same time.

In addition to a wealth of information on competencies and different pathways of learning and growing, strong connections and positive correlations have for example been found between (i) perceptions around personal capacities, skills and knowledge; (ii) approaches to change, adaptation and learning; (iii) a sense of purpose, motivation and passion for development; (iv) ways in which planners choose to frame and make sense of 'our' and 'the' past; (v) perceptions and beliefs about own abilities to influence the future; and (vi) and perceptions and beliefs about the ability of 'planning' as an idea, activity, process and set of plans to influence the future.

A few key themes have been selected from the rich set of career narratives and research findings, in order to provide an indication of connections between the individual and collective, and of mirroring beliefs and perceptions about and activities within the collective practice of planning in perceptions and beliefs of 'planners' about themselves, and vice versa.

- (1) **The ability to adapt and learn** - Practitioners who highlighted their own ability to adapt and learn as a crucial strength and/or one of their own key competencies, in most cases also described the practice of planning as essentially a practice that is able, and needs, to adapt and constantly change – depending on the context and changing environments. In most of these cases, the critical importance of learning within a constantly changing environment is regarded as an essential ability, not only of individuals, but of the community of practice.

A key ability mentioned by most participants is to be able to engage complex problems and contexts, even if not 'knowing' any answers or even approaches up front. This ability is also regarded as critical for planning as practice, in order to adapt, stay relevant and innovate within an ever changing environment. Interesting within this context, is that the interview as appreciative and reflective process opened up an explicit recognition for a vast range of often unrecognised and very personal learning processes throughout planning careers and lives.



"...how we can make the world a better place?",

"...what are the problems that the world faces?"

"...how do we lay the right foundations for people to live positive and constructive lives?"

(Participating planner, van Huyssteen, 2012)

(2) **Powers and abilities to engage the unfolding future** - A strong connection is evident between

the beliefs and passions of participants (planners) and the ways in which they (as individuals) hope and engage an unfolding future, and the way in which they engage with, belief in and act upon the ability of planning as an idea and activity to influence the future.

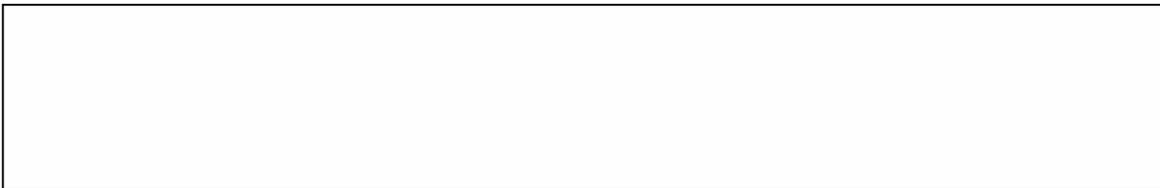
"...the philosophy of planning and the ethics/values that came with it were a heavy influence

Some of strongest connections between the individual and collective in the study have been

found in relation to beliefs about the ability to influence the future, as well as ways in which the past are being described. Individuals who believe/ have the perception that they can actually impact on, and have the abilities to impact on/or contribute towards the unfolding future, also hold strong beliefs and perceptions about the important ability and role of the practice of planning to influence and contribute towards the unfolding future - an ability reflected and cited through inspiring, even though often challenging, experiences.



(3) **Purpose and drive** - One of the key aspects that stood out in the different career narratives was the strong relation between the personal sense of purpose, levels of competency and impact achieved within the lives of planners. Given the strong sense of purpose and high levels of dedication, there is also a deeply embedded 'willingness' to 'keep going', to make huge personal sacrifices and to have the courage to engage challenges in spite of (often realised) fear for failure. It is often this sense of purpose that strongly relate to the reason for many of the participating planners having chosen the particular career, with deeply embedded passion to make a contribution towards improving livelihoods, sustainable futures and/or addressing poverty and inequality.



(4) **Ethical grounding** - For many planners that participated in the study, a strong connection can be drawn between personal value systems and ethics and the highly value based practice/ethical basis within which they expect planning practice to operate. It also strongly relates to the 'idea' of planning, the purpose of planning and the ways in which planning is described and even practiced by themselves.



"You can not get involved in this type of discipline if you don't have a passion for it.
It will drive you absolutely nuts"

(Participating planner, van Huyssteen, 2012)

(5) **Linking the role of planning to personal strengths** – Many examples can be cited of linking individual and collective identity. One such example is by engaging planning in the role of an activist, where for a number of planners a very strong connection exists between engaging in the practice of planning as a change agent, and planning's ability or promise to using planning as a vehicle of transformation. A very good example of this was the way in which planning was utilised as a mechanism to challenge existing status quo, raise awareness and install democratic processes during the post-apartheid transformation period in South Africa. Another example on the other end of the scale is engaging planning as a highly skilled technological orientated exercise, often evident amongst participants with highly developed analytical skills and competencies. Linking the different roles of planners as developed over time, very strongly to individual competencies and abilities.



The findings provide evidence that the activity of engaging collective futures, through planning and development as community of practice, is highly connected to and dependant on the "being and becoming" of agents "doing" or acting in planning and development.

However, probably the most significant finding (within a study aimed at learning from career narratives in an appreciative way in order to understand what supports impact within planning and development practices) is the clear connection between (i) skilled and inspired individuals, with hope for the future and a passion to make a contribution to the whole, a belief in their own abilities and enabling conditions to achieve self-actualisation and (ii) developmental impact. A connection which might suggest, that individual self-actualisation and a personal passion for the whole, are quite important considerations in engaging collective futures in a more sustainable and integral way. It is thus not only about putting knowledge into action, but also about making meaning (or connection to purpose) in a way that inspires action.

In reflection and conclusion:

It is illustrated in this enquiry that exploring those aspects and connections underlying, supporting and driving the ability and competence of individual agents to add value and to have impact in a future and action orientated practice such as planning, can contribute to our understanding of the integral relationships (i) between those involved in the activity of planning and the activity and practices of planning, and (ii) between ways of improving the activity of planning (and its ability to engage a complex and challenging future) and supporting the actualisation and whole person development of those involved in this activity. In such a way it illustrates the importance of connecting the personal with collective hope, ambition and challenges.

Granted that there are numerous aspects to consider in engaging the future and addressing wicked and complex problems within relation to their specific contexts (and that 'planning' often has a limited role to play), we are essentially arguing in this paper that it might be worth our while to

consider the bearing of these extremely personal and unique aspects and experiences on the collective. This is definitely not a novel idea, to the contrary - an extremely obvious statement. But even more so, then a statement beckoning an answer for why this 'obvious relationship' is often overseen in planning, as probably in many other communities of practice.

Given that human systems grow in the direction of the deepest and most frequent inquiries (Cooperider 2003:37-38), it is argued that an acknowledgment or awareness of such connections calls for a more explicit consideration and appreciation of the role of agents. Acknowledging that the activity of engaging collective futures, in this case through planning and development as community of practice, is highly connected to and dependant on the growth and self-actualization of agents "doing" or acting in planning, could provide a (with the emphasis on 'a' and not 'the') novel way of 'thinking, seeing and acting for powerful, purposeful change' (see Mellish, 1999 and van Huyssteen and Oranje, 2008) in the ways in which we approach efforts to improve planning and capacity. It *inter alia*, implies that:

- Appreciating and considering agents, project champions and teams (as whole persons and complex multi-faceted beings) within planning and development orientated projects and contexts might be much more important for project and development outcomes than what we have been recognising (especially within the practice of planning and in building capacity of the developmental state in South Africa);
- Competencies, capacities and performance and/or impact are influenced by much more than the mere "skills" of planners and development practitioners. Instead of a mere focus on training aimed at improving knowledge and skills, there could be immense value in engaging planners and development practitioners, not only on their values, but on their attitudes, hopes and beliefs with regards to themselves. The findings also pose interesting questions about the value of more appreciative and integral approaches (see Wilber et al) to engage learning and reflection in planning theory, practice and education; and
- That there could be significant collective value in supporting individual agents to believe in themselves, to grow and to realise their potential and to pursue their passions – once again highlighting the value of coaching and mentoring, reflection and other interactive processes and innovative approaches, within under-graduate and continued professional education, as well as within institution or project specific capacity building initiatives.

On a broader level, even though the authors explored the question of individual and collective connections by making use of life histories of South African planners, the research findings could most probably also be of value to other integrative disciplines, communities of practice and the international community of AI practitioners.

On a personal level, these reflections, however, also serves as a reminder of how any one of us, can add value, engage learning, make meaning (find inspiration, hope and motivation) and significantly contribute to our collective futures by actively engaging our own being and becoming.

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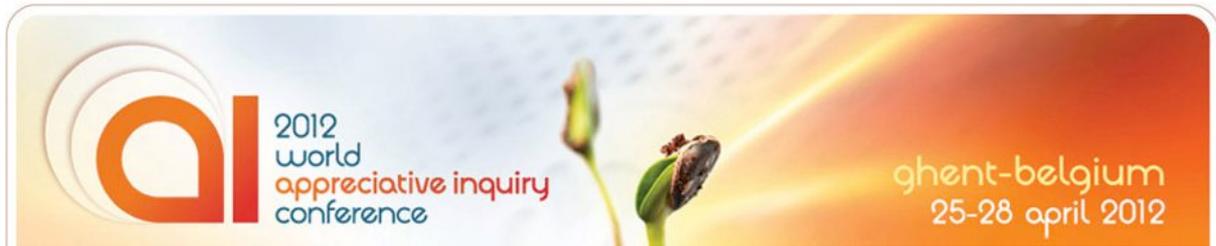
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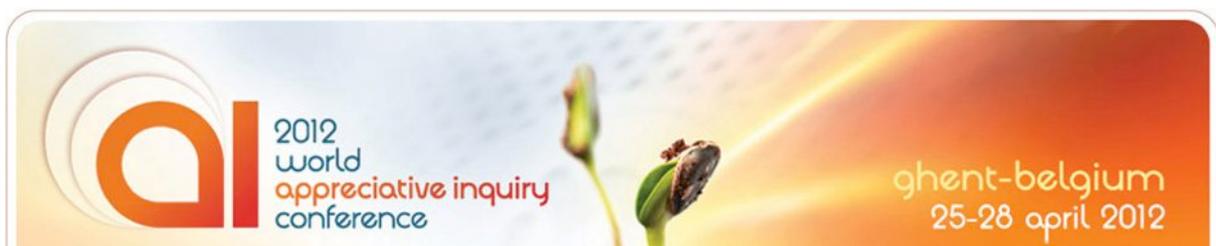
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Introduction

I am a co-founder and Trustee of IFMR Trust, a private trust headquartered in Chennai, India with the mission of ensuring complete access to finance to every individual and every enterprise.

For IFMR Trust complete access to finance means providing an array of financial products that enable protection of income streams from risk, growth of assets, planning for agricultural seasonality and animal fertility cycles, and appropriate diversification of income streams. It also means providing these products in a manner that is suitable and appropriate to the needs of the individual or enterprise.

Our organization is Indian. In four and half years we have grown to have approximately 800 employees. One hundred of them are located in our Chennai office and are the brightest minds in India. Seven hundred of them are scattered throughout rural India and come from the places they are now serving as financial advisors. I am the only expatriate.

IFMR Trust is a new breed of organization that is not a for-profit company, but that uses market forces and mechanisms towards a social mission.

It would easily be possible to fill a paper discussing the work that we have done using appreciative inquiry internally across the IFMR Trust group and in individual companies.

The focus of this paper is not on the work that we did internally within IFMR Trust for organizational development, but rather on that work that our appreciative inquiry efforts inspired in our companies to change the way that they do business by inserting appreciative and dialogic practices into work that is normally hyper-empirical, diagnostic, and highly critical.

There were many stories to choose from, but in the limited space we have I will focus on just three:

1. How we are shifting our process of investing in companies to be more appreciative.
2. How we are shifting our participation in the board processes of our investee companies to leverage appreciative inquiry
3. How we are using appreciative inquiry to heal a wounded industry

IFMR Mezzanine: Appreciative Investing

The first story I will share is about IFMR Mezzanine.

IFMR Mezzanine is an Indian investment fund that makes 5-7 year loans of approximately \$100,000-\$250,000 to small micro finance institutions in India.

IFMR Trust noticed that there were many small micro finance institutions that needed significant capital to upgrade their management information systems (MIS) and human resource information systems (HRIS) to the point where banks would be willing to lend them money and institutional investors would be willing to invest in them. Without these systems in place the micro finance institutions were seen as “small time” and not ready for investment.

In the past the entrepreneurs of these micro finance institutions funded these upgrades to their companies by selling equity in their firms and in the process they diluted themselves so much that they lost a meaningful interest in their own firms. The entrepreneurs tending to then move on. This was suboptimal for the entire system as the passion of the entrepreneur was lost.

To engage this situation IFMR Trust launched IFMR Mezzanine.

IFMR Mezzanine’s innovation was to offer loans that would provide enough capital to upgrade these MIS and HRIS systems. The tenure of the loans that IFMR Mezzanine decided to offer were longer term (like equity), but unlike equity they did not result in the entrepreneurs of the micro finance institutions losing their interest. The interest rate was higher than that of short term loans, but it was far more desirable to the entrepreneurs than selling equity in their companies.

With upgraded MIS and HRIS systems in place the micro finance institutions could then access additional the short-term loans from banks and institutional investors that they needed to continue to grow without diluting the entrepreneurs to the point of dis-function.

The underlying bet that IFMR Mezzanine was making was that by investing a little money in these MIS and HRIS systems – infrastructure – that they would spark fast growth in the micro finance institution because the micro finance institution would be able to access additional sources of funds.

Given that the loans were very long term and that they had skin in the game, IFMR Mezzanine had incentive to nurture these companies with a long-term focus. If the investee company went broke, then IFMR Capital would be towards the back of the line to get any payout from the sale of assets.

IFMR Mezzanine’s intention was to pick small micro finance institutions with high potential, build a deep relationship them, and then nurture their growth. IFMR Mezzanine was intended to seek out high potential organizations, add better technology, and then help the companies to reach their goals.

Basically, IFMR Mezzanine is a coaching company for micro finance institutions. While the coaching role is now the guiding metaphor for the team, this was not originally the case.

Originally, the approach that IFMR Mezzanine took was structurally more adversarial and diagnostic. This is not to say that the team was nasty in their approach. In truth, they were a thoughtful and considerate group before engaging with appreciative inquiry.

The intention was positive, but the structure of the process was problematic.

Engaging investees as something to be examined by outsiders impacted the way that IFMR Mezzanine's team engaged with the microfinance organizations and increased the degree of suspicion of negative intention.

Initially, IFMR Mezzanine had developed a highly detailed evaluation tool and a rating system based on their evaluation tool. Among diagnostic evaluation tools for investment there was no question that their tool was exceptional, and it was empirically complete. Even on those aspects that were hard to measure empirically, the team had set up a frame for judgment.

Of course, the embedded assumption is that there is a right way and a wrong way, and it is not too far of a logical walk to come to the conclusion that those who are doing it the wrong way are either deviants or incompetents. This mindset was slipping into conversations about the motives of potential investees.

The standard practice IFMR Mezzanine followed was to request copies of all process and policy manuals and then to send a team of analysts to visit the prospective investee micro finance institution. The team would then interview the management team, some front line employees, and would audit the technology systems and the processes outlined in the manuals to see if they were in use.

If a company managed to pass through this process and secure funding, then IFMR Mezzanine would basically continue "due diligence" in this manner throughout the life of the investment.

After exposure to the appreciative inquiry work, the team was concerned that this process was creating an adversarial relationship that was interfering with their desire to establishing a deep relationship with their investee companies.

I was excited about the prospect of seeing how to design a more appreciative investment process while still preserving the rigor of the investment process. My sense was that there was a way to find a balance that shifted the frame from critical to appreciative in some areas and yet retained a critical analysis where it served a positive purpose.

A few weeks later IFMR Mezzanine was scheduled to evaluate a micro finance institution called Gupta Credit located on the border of the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka about halfway between the megacities of Hyderabad and Bangalore.

Instead of leading with their evaluation tool, IFMR Mezzanine this time came with crayons and butcher paper.

IFMR Mezzanine's intention was to use appreciative interviews and a visualization exercise to communicate to Gupta Credit that IFMR Mezzanine wanted to help them get to the future that they wanted, and that even if they didn't sanction a loan in the immediate term that they still were invested in Gupta Credit's future and would keep engaging with them.

It could be that this engagement would include a loan, but it might not. Either way IFMR Mezzanine had a similar mission – of providing access to finance to low-income households – and thus was eager to be a positive force in the life of Gupta Credit.

This alone was a big shift. It was a statement by IFMR Mezzanine that they and Gupta Credit were connected in a larger way than just this transaction, and that Gupta Credit's existence and growth – its life -- mattered to IFMR Mezzanine beyond their balance sheet.

The IFMR Mezzanine team had 40 of Gupta Credit's employees interview each other using an appreciative interview protocol. Sitting in circles together on the floor of Gupta Credit's headquarters the Gupta Credit team came to a set of themes and a sense of the positive core of the organization.

In most micro finance organizations the CEO and perhaps a few members of his or her second line of management are educated in one of India's elite institutions and come with a pedigree from one of India's leading banks. The rest of the team are locals from lesser institutions earning at best \$100-\$250 a month. Gupta Credit was no different.

The IFMR Mezzanine team could see genuine surprise in the face of the Gupta Credit CEO as he listened to his employees articulate their sense of the positive core of Gupta Credit.

Then they used oil pastels and butcher paper to draw their vision for Gupta Credit over the next five years.

The clearly stunned CEO stepped back from the exercise and went around to each and every one of his employees to talk about the image that they were creating.

His face turned from surprise to shock as he listened to the depth of each person's vision, and he shared with us later that he was taken aback at how aligned the vision that his employees had with his own vision and how

strategically they were thinking about how microfinance could transform their community.

He was seeing passion and vision in his employees frontline employees that had been untapped by a well-meaning organization that leveraged its employees as mere gophers to collect and deposit cash rather than as human beings inspired to help uplift their communities.

This approach to human capital management was and is typical of many well-intentioned micro finance institutions and my comments are not meant to disparage a good CEO as much as a far too mechanical industry practice.

The CEO told us in a reverent tone that he could see that interaction with IFMR Mezzanine would be good for Gupta Credit.

In this experiment IFMR Mezzanine stopped at the Dream stage of the appreciative inquiry process and then shifted back to their default diagnostic process to harvest the information they needed to make an investment decision, but the change in the wavelength of the interaction between IFMR Mezzanine and Gupta Credit as a potential investee had already been set.

Gupta Credit engaged the diagnostic portion of the engagement openly. The CEO expressed repeatedly that he trusted IFMR Mezzanine and felt no need to hide any information. The degree to which warts were exposed over several days of interactions was far beyond what the IFMR Mezzanine team had experienced in previous micro finance institution visits.

Several days later when the IFMR Mezzanine team left the Gupta Credit CEO and some of his staff people were clearly sad about their departure as they walked them out to the car.

This experience deeply impacted the IFMR Mezzanine team.

Instead of focusing on the many reasons why it might be challenging to extend credit to Gupta Credit the team focused on what was working and took a reasoned call that with IFMR Mezzanine's support the strengths would make the weaknesses not really matter.

An investment of \$100,000 was made by IFMR Mezzanine into Gupta Credit and the investee continues to thrive despite a harsh external environment.

The IFMR Mezzanine team continues to experiment with an appropriate balance between having a critical eye and an appreciative eye, but there has been a shift by the team from an objective investment process that stands apart from the investee company to a more connected process.

IFMR Mezzanine now looks at the community they are trying to serve and starts from the premise of a relationship with all entities in that community. Engagement by IFMR Mezzanine with these entities now is not about saying yes

or no to a transaction as much as trying to make a positive impact through their engagement – even if there isn't a decision to fund.

From this perspective the powerful rating tool becomes something that is used to have a developmental conversation versus a guide to a yes or no decision. From a less judgmental position there is the ability to step into the shoes of the organization given its experience and take a more nuanced view.

IFMR Mezzanine: Making a Board of Directors more Whole

The IFMR Mezzanine team then looked to leverage their experience with appreciative inquiry into an existing investee relationship.

IFMR Mezzanine had previously invested in Bluebird, a micro finance institution based in Patna, Bihar.

Bihar, located Northeast of Calcutta (now Kolkata) is the poorest state in India. Its per capita income is closer to that of Sub-Saharan Africa than the rest of India. In population size is larger than California.

Bluebird was started by a bank executive originally from Bihar who had moved to the Indian capital of New Delhi and had a long and successful career in banking. Once his children had finished their education and gotten married he and his wife, a successful HR executive from South India, decided to move to Bihar to give back to India by starting a micro finance institution.

The couple were successful through their efforts Bluebird grew in scale and quality to the point that a US-based microfinance investment and advocacy organization called Zoom took notice and chose to buy a share of Bluebird.

In addition to putting in cash, Zoom also deployed experienced staff members to help grow the organization. Then IFMR Mezzanine invested. This resulted in an organization with at least five internal camps: the original promoters, the managers inserted by the first investor, the first investor, an independent director, and IFMR Mezzanine.

While times were good and the organization was growing rapidly this kind of factionalism wasn't a challenge.

However, in October 2010 the Indian microfinance industry went into crisis. In the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh (which includes Hyderabad) entrepreneurial politicians started to blame a few large micro finance institutions for the suicides of rural farmers.

It was unclear what the role of microfinance was in these suicides -- if any at all, but funders were frightened away by scandal and decided to wait on the sidelines for resolution by the Reserve Bank of India or the central government in Delhi before providing additional funds.

Micro finance institutions like Bluebird were all of a sudden starved for cash, and in tough times at Bluebird the factionalism of Bluebird's governance structure became more of a challenge. This challenge wasn't unique to Bluebird. Many micro finance organizations across India were facing similar internal turbulence.

The IFMR Mezzanine team believed that Bluebird needed to break through internal challenges and unify their leadership in this moment of crisis.

Therefore, they saw value in getting the Board of Directors, the investors, and the senior management team to have a dialogue about the future of Bluebird. Whatever action was to be taken would be more effective if all parties were united at a deep level.

To start the process a few members of the senior management of Bluebird were trained in how to do an appreciative interview by IFMR Mezzanine. Appreciative interviews were then conducted with 100 Bluebird field executives and central employees.

These interviews yielded a clear sense of the positive core of the organization and a mountain of customer interaction success stories. With all of this data in hand, IFMR Mezzanine structured a two-day appreciative inquiry process immediately before the quarterly board meeting

The intention was to move a small group through the Discover, Dream, and Design phases of the appreciative inquiry process and then have people move right into a board meeting where they had the power to make formal decisions based on the Design they chose in the appreciative inquiry process.

The focus of the event was on creating a Bluebird that had abundant sources of funds.

The meeting started with all parties: the promoters, the equity investor team, independent directors, and the IFMR Mezzanine team all sitting on opposite sides of a large square table. The table and walls were decorated with photos and quotes from the appreciative interviews of the staff.

Members of each faction were paired with someone from another faction to do the appreciative interview. There was a heavy focus in the interview protocol on the path of the interviewee into the micro finance industry and into Bluebird with the hope that focusing the leadership group on their shared values around the work and their focus on Bihar as an area of great need and potential would help lessen the focus on each faction's position on the board as founder, management, or investor.

A passionate debate erupted about the positive core of the organization that helped each side understand the other's view about what Bluebird was, and that helped each faction to clarify what the other saw as the organization's strengths. Palpably in the room the board's factions started to dissolve, body language opened up, and the board took a life beyond the factions and individual egos.

As we stepped into the Dream phase we ended up with two competing dreams for the organization that represented a choice that the organization would have to make: to scale across India or to focus more deeply on a specific region.

Where the board level conversation about this topic would have immediately gone to the numbers, this conversation actually pushed the numbers to the side and focused on the kind of change all people around the table wanted to make in

the world and how they could leverage their resources to make it happen. In the end the organization chose depth over breadth – the riskier strategy, but one that all sides were more emotionally invested in.

The more pragmatic board members then started really pushing for specifics as we moved into the Design and Destiny phases. We had consumed two of their days and grand thoughts were floated in the room, and they were not going to let anyone shirk from them.

We did not intend move through the Destiny phase or to formally link the appreciative inquiry process to the board meeting, the board members – hearing much talk in the process that they supported – forced the group to stay longer to move through the Destiny phase because they wanted to lock down what was being said.

In the board meeting the entire output for the Destiny phase was entered into the minutes and in the year that followed this process every single element that was decided in the management and board level appreciative inquiry process has seen action and most have been completed and then some.

IFMR Mezzanine's team took a few lessons from this experiment. The first was about the need to take the time to gestate the leadership of an organization. Abruptly putting a new set of people into a board meeting was less desirable than going through the process of defining a new whole with each addition of investors and each significant change in the management team. The second was about the power of the power of the appreciative inquiry process in getting the board to grapple with the things that really matter – values and vision -- before getting mired in day-to-day constraints. This was seen to be highly relevant for organizations in a fast growth environment like micro finance where new parties come to the table on a constant basis. Finally, the team was shocked at how much the uber-pragmatists on the board leveraged the appreciative inquiry process once they realized that it wasn't fluff. Once these people were catalyzed, then they became the strongest proponents of appreciative inquiry and were keen to build it into their processes.

And that is precisely what Bluebird has done. Appreciative Inquiry-inspired efforts have started to move through Bluebird just as they have through IFMR Trust, and as we approach the six-month anniversary of the Bluebird board process there is a call from the board to repeat the process.

IFMR Capital's Partners' Meet: Healing A Wounded Industry

The third story I will share is about IFMR Capital.

The thing that a micro finance institution is selling is money. They buy money at a certain rate of interest from banks (and other large institutions) and re-sell it at a higher rate of interest in the form of loans to people without access to formal financial institutions.

Most banks make a few large loans. Micro finance institutions make many small loans. Holding everything else constant it costs much more to do many things than to do few things.

To work around this a Bangladeshi man named Mohammed Yunus came up with the idea of lending to groups of people instead of individuals. He figured that the groups would have a better sense of who would repay and who would not repay. The micro finance institution would avoid the cost of figuring out who was credit worthy and pass that cost on to the group. If one person defaulted on the loan, the others would be responsible.

This innovation, called the joint liability group, worked wonderfully. Repayment was close to 100% and the processing cost to make each loan dropped dramatically. The loan officer disbursing the money didn't need to worry about the creditworthiness of the individual borrower so her role became much simpler – all she needed to do was to manage the setup of groups, give the money, and then come each week to collect the payments.

More and more people around the world began to see the potential of this innovation to transform the lives of the poor, and micro finance industries grew in Asia, Africa, and Latin America – and especially in India.

To give a sense of the appeal of the micro finance product in India I will give a general sense of the substitutes that the borrower had:

- The vegetable vendor has access to overnight lending to buy fruit and vegetables at a rate of 2.5%-10% a day -- this means an interest rate of 900%-3600% a year
- The village moneylender may charge an annual rate of 50%-100% for a small emergency loan
- The trader may charge 3-5% of the value of your crop to transport it instead of lending you the money to pay for transport -- meaning an effective annual interest rate of over 1000%

With only these options even the most aggressively priced microfinance institutions found many willing customers for their loans.

In a competitive market the price of the loans would have naturally been driven down to the point where there was little profit, but the demand for microfinance loans in India was (and still is) so vast that even to say that 10% of that demand was sated would be an overstatement.

The potential for huge profits attracted people with a profit motive as well as a social motive. Large investors swooped in as well. The benefit of this was that massive amounts of money were being focused on those who needed it the most – far more money than would have been possible in a donation driven model.

The interest rates that most entities charged for their loans ranged from 25%-50%. Given the higher cost of operations and the high cost of buying the money to re-sell a medium to large micro finance institution could be viable with an interest rate in the mid to high 20's and a small micro finance institution could be viable with an interest rate in the low 30's.

From the data it was clear that some micro finance institutions that were operating more honorably than others. IFMR Trust launched IFMR Capital to ease the flow of money into the hands of these well-run and mission driven organizations.

IFMR Capital buys micro finance loan portfolios the highest quality from micro finance institutions, re-packages them, and then resells them in blocks to large investors. In doing so they give micro finance institutions the access to working capital they need to grow while transmitting the risk of their loan pools to large financial institutions with a global footprint that are better able to bear that risk.

Because they are doing this at large scale across many institutions and because they are aggressively monitoring quality and practices, the banks and other funders are willing to loan the money at a lower rate. In the case of IFMR Capital's partners it means that they can make cheaper loans to their low-income clients.

Unlike the financial institutions in the USA that caused the global financial crisis by re-packaging and selling mortgage loans, both the microfinance institutions and IFMR Capital directly invests in the loan portfolios that it sells so that if they default, then the microfinance institution and IFMR Capital lose their money first. Thus, IFMR Capital has proper incentives to know the organizations in which it invests deeply enough to protect its own interest.

IFMR Capital grew to serve 34 micro finance institutions before the Indian micro finance crisis hit in September 2010.

As mentioned earlier in this paper, the Indian micro finance crisis was focused in the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. Entrepreneurial politicians blamed microfinance for the suicides of a few farmers. In particular they pointed their fingers at one large micro finance institution that had recently had an initial public offering. This micro finance institution and its media friendly CEO were a

perfect target. Politicians in Andhra Pradesh told clients not to pay back the loans and repayment dropped from 100% almost to 0% immediately.

Despite all of this, microfinance in every single other state in India continued on (to this day) at almost 100% repayment rates and without charges that micro finance institutions were causing suicides.

Regardless, banks and other lenders to micro finance institutions got scared. If any state's politicians could arbitrarily stop repayment and the central bank wouldn't intervene, then investing in micro finance loans was unviable. All funders decided to wait on the sidelines until this issue was resolved. A whole industry that had been growing at 50%-100% per year came to a stop.

To IFMR Capital this situation seemed unfair to good micro finance institutions and even more unfair to their loan customers who would be forced back into the hands of the moneylender.

While the difference in quality was visible to IFMR Capital, it was harder for regulators or the media to distinguish between micro finance institutions that were operating in a clean and transparent manner and which put the needs of their clients first and the rest of the industry and those that were less honorable.

The reaction of the overall micro finance industry association was essentially capitulation. Rather than fight back with facts, data, and testimonials from millions of clients to get outsiders to see that this was the act of a few deviants, the leaders of the industry admitted guilt.

IFMR Capital knew that the micro finance institutions that they were working with weren't guilty at all, but at the same time they also knew that these micro finance institutions needed to evolve the way they did business that they were effectively invulnerable to the kind of turbulence that faced their industry – especially when the spokespeople of the industry had admitted their guilt to things they didn't do.

IFMR Capital reached out to its partners and invited them to come together – as the highest quality entities in the industry – to have a conversation about the future of the industry and what they as the leaders of the highest quality micro finance institutions should be doing about it.

A director of IFMR Capital travelled to each micro finance institution and did appreciative interviews with the leadership teams of each organization before the event. IFMR Capital's executive team initially had a sense that they would need to persuade their clients about what they believed was the required evolution of the industry, but we discovered that leaders of these organization were more aligned in their perceptions of what had gone awry than expected and that universally they were isolated, frustrated, and eager to do something proactive with their peers.

The CEO's all agreed to the appreciative interview – probably because it was with a board member of a company that was providing them with money. However, the interviews loosened up quickly as the interviewer focused on how these leaders had come to work in micro finance and what they valued about their companies and the work.

The CEO's really just started opening up after the initial questions of the pre-interviews. Virtually all of them had come into the micro finance industry to do something noble and heroic, and all of a sudden they had become pariahs.

Their families and friends started questioning if they were exploiting the poor. It was disheartening for them. At a deeper level they all also saw the hundreds of thousands – and in some cases millions -- of people that their businesses were helping; people who had no other source of credit except the local moneylender.

At the same time they also knew that some lower quality institutions that were more exploitative. There was an outrage at these institutions for abusing the trust that they had been given. It was clear that there was the potential to create a new whole consisting of the group of high quality micro finance institutions.

A two-day, CEO-level event was created. The question posed to the participants was about how to make the micro finance industry so invincible that the kinds of challenges it faced now would disappear.

I had some concern about the term “invincibility” – both as a double negative and because it might give the sense of invincibility from a sense of defensiveness and not from being so proactive that attack would be fruitless. However, this proactive version of the term invincibility was a part of the appreciative interview process that preceded the event and this distinction was detailed in the conference workbook.

The two-day event started with the CEOs interviewing each other. They had been seated at tables by their expertise. Some of the CEOs were former CFO's, others were focused on product development and innovation, others on operations and process efficiency, and so on. Thus the interview pairs were with people who didn't know each other, but who had a deep passion for the same thing.

At the most surface level there was a desire to create a whole that was the high quality micro finance institutions in India. In creating and sustaining this new whole – high quality micro finance institutions -- it was our belief that we would impact the broader industry and be able to impact the governance of the larger industry. The first step in creating this whole would be getting the parts of that whole to see it too.

The conversation about the positive core was cathartic, and it got people to state their values and what came out was a unified primal scream for an identity more than that of a micro finance institution.

We had focused tables of CEOs on sub-themes: Governance, Risk Management, Markets, Product Scope and Development, Operations, Customer Focus, and Organizational Culture.

With butcher paper, magazines, scissors, glue these CEOs worked with each other to come up with dreams within their focus area. Even if we had stopped there, the friendships that were sparked and the insights that were catalyzed by having a group of cutting edge people in a certain area able to engage with each other was worth the event. Each group produced an aggressive visual statement of where micro finance institutions separately and as a whole would need to be to achieve invulnerability.

And then the fun began.

Unlike other events that I have led or seen, at this event every participant had complete decision-making authority and had an entity-level perspective. In addition, in the absence of a meaningful industry group, there really was no existing overarching structure. We as IFMR Capital were perhaps the closest organization to a governing body, and we were determined to just play the facilitator.

As each group presented to the other groups it became clear to the room that there were resource constraints that would tend to force choice between the optimization of one dream or another.

This proved to be extremely positive as there was a spirited conversation about what the future should look like and why. The group understood the value of dreaming before designing, and at the same time they were keen to make sure that the dream they were laying out was exactly what they all wanted.

Meaningless rhetoric about good governance and transparency and independent directors became well fleshed out concepts in the mind of this group and they came to daring dream statements in each focus area.

Perhaps more importantly than the statements was the respect that people were getting for their colleagues. Before the IFMR Capital Partners Meet these CEOs would know some of the colleagues by name and a few in passing. After the event these CEOs really knew the values and respected the expertise of their highest quality colleagues. Most of these people felt that they had been alone in a sea of charlatans, and they discovered that there were many others just like them.

In the design stage there was quick alignment on a few core design elements,

Working groups were formed after the design stage, and IFMR Capital has taken it on as a part of their business objectives to follow up on all of the line items froze upon in the destiny stage.

We used the appreciative inquiry process to engage with part of the micro finance industry that we believed had more life in that it was comprised of microfinance institutions that were not only better by the numbers, but that also had cultures more aligned with the mission of our own organization.

The industry as a whole had lost connection with its positive core, and our intention was to isolate part of that industry and to reconnect it with its core, and then to push those institutions to go as far as they could to extend that core. We believed it was in their self-interest to do so.

On that front I believe we have created some success. We coalesced the most vibrant members of the micro finance community and got them to engage in a dialogue about who they were and were not. It was a positive and inspiring dialogue, and yet at the same time there was a clarity among the group about what they were choosing not to be.

We are still early in the process, but the leaders of these organizations are acting as a united front to shift the larger governing body. The real test will come now that the Indian micro finance crisis is passing. In the coming days we will see if this new whole that was so vibrant in the space of the Partners Meet continues to have a shadow.

Conclusion

These are just three stories among many of how appreciative inquiry is being used by IFMR Trust beyond the organizational development space. We have had successes also in advocacy, in the redesign of our retail banking customer experience, and in other areas as well.

As an organization we've gone beyond doing appreciative inquiry to having it be an embedded competency of the organization and a way that we approach much that we do.

The take away I have had from this work is about the tremendous importance of forcing people out of a critical frame to consider another way of thinking and being.

The wonderful thing about paying people or investing in companies is that it gives you power to get people to do things that they wouldn't do otherwise.

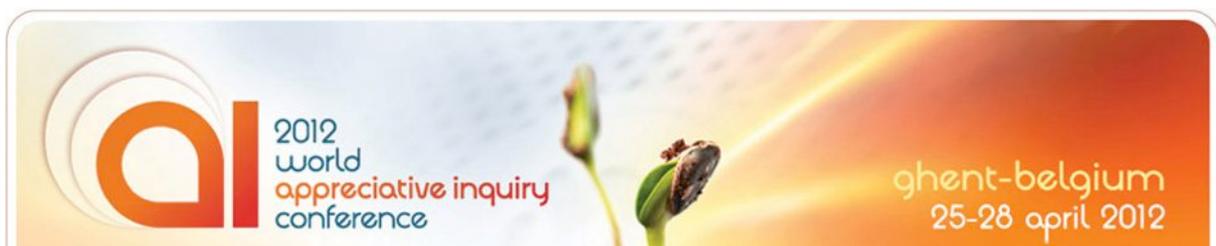
This is a power that can be used for good, and I've been aggressive about inserting appreciative inquiry inspired work into many contexts inside my organization and in other people's organizations.

Rupert Sheldrake, the physicist, proposes in his theory of morphic resonance that phenomena become more probable the more often they occur. However, they have to start occurring in the first place or the status quo will continue and become more probable.

It is precisely in places like the financial sector -- where even mention of the term "appreciative" triggers fear of touchy-feely-ness -- that the aggressive insertion of processes like appreciative inquiry may make additional appreciative inquiry more probable in the future.



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Restoring Right Relationship: Re-connecting Faith Communities through AI to Find the Voice of Common Vision

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Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has launched a significant stream of practice that turns positive imagery into positive action helping organizations to discover what has been characterized as their *life giving core*. David Cooperrider suggests that organizations are “affirmative systems, governed and maintained by positive projections about what the organization is, how it will function, and what it might become.” The AI process brings organizations renewed vision and new direction. It has been found to have important advantages over problem-based strategic planning models. But how does an appreciative approach work, in the case of organizational cultures in significant conflict, where deep wounds have left relationships seriously damaged? We explicate a tried appreciative process of generating shared voices in deeply conflicted communities. Six distinctive voices frequently emerge on the journey to finding a *voice of common vision*. One of these is the shared *voice of woundedness*. The *voices* encompass multi-layered, multi-lens perspectives representing the richness of the divided community. The process allows a community to honor the relational complexity of both their connectedness and their shared woundedness. It mirrors back to participants in a poetic, responsive format, and in their own words, their shared *voices*. We discover a relational restoration that grows from honoring the individual and collective voices, the passionate voices of both hurt and shared vision. In a moment of meeting, that holds a sacred quality, a service of restoration includes components of *passion, presence, and poetry*. Beyond its use with faith communities, the process touches a broadly shared search for relational wholeness. This affirmative approach for holding--with a sacramental quality--both voices of common vision and voices of woundedness, opens a pathway to healing in fractured communities. The process stands in contrast to the problem-solving approaches of mediation and traditional conflict resolution work.

Introduction

In the practitioner’s work with community and faith-based organizations, we have found affirmation of David Cooperrider’s suggestion that organizations are “affirmative systems, governed and maintained by positive projections about what the organization is, how it will function, and what it might become” (Cooperrider, Whitney, & Stavros, 2003, p. 370). The AI process brings organizations renewed vision and new direction. It has been found to have important advantages over problem-based strategic planning models. The presenter’s experience

is that over and over again, organizations have found renewed purpose, new energy and commitment, and a strategic path forward.

Often the shift is almost imperceptible, but significant. A salient example is the impact of a one day AI stakeholder meeting with a community coalition of faith-based organization serving homeless families. The AI process brought forward a significant shift in how stakeholders saw their mission. Participants began to speak of the deepest motivations that brought them to their involvement with homeless families. In the space of a few hours, the stakeholders made a subtle, yet profound shift in the way that the organization looked at its mission. Instead of seeing itself as an organization that “exists to minister to the homeless” there emerged a sense of the organization as one that exists to “share the blessing we have experienced in working with homeless families to regain their independence.”

That shift was two-fold: First, it focused more on *assets* and less on *deficits*. Secondly, it emphasized relationships that are more complex. Instead of focusing only on the relationship between the homeless and those who provide services to the homeless, the emphasis shifts toward relationships among an array of community partners, including the network of churches and other service providers (both faith-based and secular) and both individuals and organizations in the community impacted by homelessness. In this shift, the conversation in this organization began to focus less on the *moral responsibility* to help those most in need, and more on the sense of *blessing* and growth that participants experienced in their ministry. Participants described how their lives had been changed by working with other families. They reflected on assumptions and prejudices they once held about the causes of homelessness that evaporated when they came to know families just like their own in so many ways that found themselves without a home.

This almost imperceptible shift in focus was to have profound impact on the way the organization did business. The core value shift was for the organization to focus more on the *blessing* of its ministry and less on the *burden* of serving homeless families. That value shift led to shifts in the service delivery model toward one that was more collaborative, and a shift in the funding paradigm that blended public and private funding revenues. As a direct outgrowth of the visioning process, the organization set the goal to deepen community partnerships with other agencies serving the homeless they had never worked with before. The invitation to the community to participate in helping homeless families was significantly reshaped, emphasizing less *responsibility* to help those most in need, and emphasizing more the relational aspect and *blessing* of working with homeless families.

Appreciative Inquiry in Faith Communities

In the case of the homeless coalition, the AI process that precipitated the change was one that began with *discernment*. The presenter adopts with some modifications the four phases of the AI process (the 4 D's) in its facilitation with faith-based organizations. The modified approach is that the added first 'D' is *discernment*. The AI process as we present it to faith-based organizations includes these five phases: *discern, discover, dream, design, and deliver*. In this process, the phase to *discern* lies closest to the *positive core*. In the visual representation of an AI 5D Model, *discern* replaces *define*.

The discernment step is utilized with faith-based organizations including churches, social justice ministries, colleges and universities, and community service organizations. It is accepted by faith-based organizations across religious traditions and denominational lines. It is responsive to the question that is frequently asked by faith-based organizations considering an AI process.

This question is illustrated by an inquiry just received from a rural Mennonite community that is beginning a thoughtful journey with AI: “How do we focus the process at a spiritual level? (It is easy to get pulled into a method or approach without articulating how God can be active in our efforts.)” (Private communication to the author, March 2012).

What is the *discernment* phase? It is a quiet time of listening for God’s leading of the ministry of the organization and the direction of the process. It asks from the place of silence, “what is it that God and the community are calling us to be and to do?” It is a phase that invites in a sense of higher purpose and calling. It suggests listening for divine leading in listening to each other, as God speaks in and through us.

While this phase is utilized in diverse faith traditions, the practice, as we use it, stems from the Quaker (Society of Friends) and their practice of *discernment*. It mirrors the Quaker sense of a reflective practice by which organizations find a way forward for shared decision making that reflects a shared sense of higher purpose (Fendall, Wood, & Bishop, 2007). Reaching for a “group discernment” (p. 37) that is larger than consensus, the Quakers have sought a “hidden wholeness” (Palmer, 2004). A sometimes mystical connection to divine leading grows out of *speaking from the silence* to find a shared voice and direction. Quaker *discernment* has been practiced over centuries in meetinghouses around the world, yet Quaker’s are often reticent to describe what, for them, is less of a *process* and more of a *spiritual practice*. Outside the Quaker stream, faith communities often find in the step of *discernment*, simply a time for quiet reflection, prayer, and centering.

Appreciative Inquiry in High-Conflict Organizations

But faith communities are often not centered, prayerful, and quietly reflective. Faith communities are as divided by conflict as secular organizations, sometimes more so. And AI practitioners are increasingly invited into the work that William Nordenbrock (2011) describes as “guiding a fractured community to wholeness.” His work describes how faith communities are often “fragmented along ideological and theological lines” (p. ix) and proposes using AI as a process “toward a practical theology of reconciliation” (p. 16). In the experience of AI in a faith-based context, there are complexities of relatedness (Gergen, 2009), complexities of situatedness (Clarke, 2005), and cultural and religious traditions that call for going deeper than the surface statement that conflict can be “an opportunity to bring about a transformation” (Nordenbrock, 2011, p. 31). Beyond a *theology of reconciliation*, is a need for developing contexts for deeply divided and deeply wounded individuals to find a place of meeting and healing.

The presenter’s AI work has led him into faith-based organizational cultures that are deeply divided, divisive, and where bitter conflict has clearly cast a dark shadow over shared values of faith and practice. This has led to the challenge of exploring what AI can bring to these situations. This approach here has been brought forward in the faith-based contexts of university departments, churches, and community organizations. It has found a way to integrate the community or organizational voices of woundedness, into the rich fabric of narratives that emerge from a constructed listening process.

The Process of Finding and Sharing Voices

How does an appreciative approach work, in the case of organizational cultures in significant conflict, where deep wounds have left relationships seriously damaged? It does not

happen in a one day AI process! It has been seen to happen in a listening process that may take from several weeks to over a year. This presentation explicates a tried appreciative process of generating shared voices in deeply conflicted communities (Mahaffy, 2012). Six distinctive voices frequently emerge on the journey to finding a *voice of common vision*. One of these is the shared *voice of woundedness*. The voices encompass multi-layered, multi-lens perspectives (McNamee & Gergen, 1999) representing the richness of the divided community. The process allows a community to honor the relational complexity of both their connectedness and their shared woundedness. It mirrors back to participants in a poetic, responsive format, and in their own words, their shared *voices*.

We discover a relational restoration that grows from honoring the individual and collective voices, and the passionate voices of both hurt and shared vision. In a moment of meeting, that holds a sacred quality, a service of restoration includes components of *passion* (Philippe, Vallerand, & Lavigne, 2009), *presence* (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004), and *poetry* (Stavros & Torres, 2008). Beyond its use with faith communities (Branson, 2004), the process touches a broadly shared search for relational wholeness (Gergen, 2009). This affirmative approach for holding--with a sacramental quality--both voices of common vision and voices of woundedness, opens a pathway to healing in fractured communities (Nordenbrock, 2001). The process stands in contrast to the problem-solving approaches of mediation and traditional conflict resolution work.

In initiating work with deeply divided faith communities, the practitioners schedule interviews with key stakeholders-- intentionally including those who are perceived to be central to significant conflicts. Following the individual interviews, the facilitators engage a core group in an AI process. Next, a series of small *listening groups* are scheduled. These are led by

facilitators experienced in AI as well as the Small Group Norms Challenging Model (Berkowitz, 2012).

The small groups are designed to be as broadly inclusive of as many of the *voices* of the community as identified in the individual interviews and the initial AI process. Groups are held both within the community for ease of access of participants and outside the community to be inclusive of those who have left the community as a result of conflict. Groups with young people and elders are held in settings they self-select. This may be a coffee shop in the case of youth, or a retirement community in the case of elders. The listening process in the small group setting evokes the stream of voices that will ultimately be coalesced and brought back reflectively to the faith community.

The purpose of the small groups is to bring forward to the conflicted community a “multivoiced” (McNamee & Gergen, 1999, p. 12) reflection of the complexity of the relational constructs (Hosking & Pluut, 2010). Often, the community perception is that the conflicted voice is the only one. The design of the small groups is intentional toward bringing forward “relational consciousness” (Gergen, 2009, p. 396) so that the community might begin to sense the possibility of a “life-giving future” (p. 403).

As we have been invited to facilitate *listening sessions* in faith-based communities, we have found six distinctive voices emerging with some consistency (Mahaffy, 2012). They are: 1) The Voice of the Disenfranchised (Marginalized); 2) The Voice of Youthful Vision; 3) The Voice of the Elders; 4) The Voice of Creed and Confession (Historical Voice); 5) The Voice of Woundedness; 6) The Voice of Community Calling. When the six voices are brought back to the fractured community, reflecting in their own words a multiplicity of perspectives, the Voice of Common Vision begins to emerge. This will ultimately be presented in a poetic, responsive

format in a sacred setting, allowing the community to honor the complexity of both their disconnectedness and their connectedness.

Uncovering the Voice of Woundedness in an Appreciative Setting

AI has been successfully used in faith contexts. It holds relevancy and promise in an age when “the church is challenged to clarify its very reason for being” (Branson, 2004, p. ix). But often, the issue beyond *relevance*, is how to mend relationships in a faith community that seeks to be a beacon of light to the world, but has become an incubator of enormous pain and hurt from broken and hurting relationships. In such a context, the *woundedness* of the organization, meets with immediacy the first efforts toward “positive affect and social bonding—things like hope, excitement, inspiration, caring, camaraderie, sense of urgent purpose, and the sheer joy of creating something meaningful together” (p. 47). How can “events that are most positive about the organization become the sole focus of the process” (p. 47), when the *voice of woundedness* is the loudest voice in the choir?

The approach of the *Voices* project builds on a participatory and relational perspective that encourages with equanimity the coming forward of all voices. By not avoiding or diminishing the voice of woundedness, it is honored as one of the many voices of the community.

This approach to supporting positive change in deeply wounded organizational cultures, is intentional in honoring the voice of woundedness, while creating a context in which it can become just one of many voices. Along with inviting “high-point” experiences, participants are invited to share their experience of woundedness as well. The approach allows for the unspoken to be spoken. It allows for the uncovering of the relational aspect of the woundedness, that the

woundedness is inevitably shared to some extent across the organization. It explores the *passion* in the voice of woundedness and how that is reflective of a relationship that is valued.

The voice of woundedness in the faith community, often emerges as a passionate and poetic *lament*. Individual voices of hurt become the shared *song of sorrow*. Individual hurts are discovered to be shared, and silent festering wounds become open and spoken. The voice of woundedness is reminiscent of the *Book of Lamentations* in the Jewish and Christian traditions. The voice reflects a communal, a confessional aspect, and the beginning of a community exploring together, sometimes for the first time, their own woundedness. It includes the communities own understanding of the way out from their own woundedness in remembering their deepest shared values. The *voice of woundedness* as spoken in the small groups encompasses much of this complexity:

*“This is our confession of how we have harmed each other.
How do we stay caring in the middle of all this hurt?
We have lost our spiritual reflex;
We are like a dysfunctional family tearing each other apart;
It has been a whirlwind that has created havoc;
Afraid that there will not be enough, we have grabbed for more;
We have liked power, and destroyed each other for that;
Now we are struggling to recover.
I want to be forgiving, and just don’t know how;
This is not who we really are; This is not what God calls us to be.
In this crazy mess, we have been really scared.
I felt so abandoned.
God speaks to me and says “humble yourself before me.”
How do we begin again to treat each other as Christ would have us?
We can walk the walk, and just not talk it;
Somehow we can and must begin building bridges.
It is time to put animosity behind us.”*

Emerging Voices

The voice of woundedness that precipitated the change process in the community, begins to be one of many emerging voices. A voice identified by the faith community as the *voice of living justice*, speaks this: *“we are not called to serve the mission of the church. We are called to serve real human needs. This is who we really are...safety...sanctuary...hospitality. This is who we really are—a people giving flesh to what it means to love justice, to live justice, to show mercy, to walk humbly with our God.”* The voice of the elders speaks of the next generation: *“There has to be something for the next generation. What is it that we are leaving to them? Understanding about feeding people and the value of giving more than receiving, we remember that there is so much life still here.”* The voice of youthful vision speaks: *“We need music, we need liturgy for ourselves. We need a language and liturgy we can claim as our own. Music is such a doorway to what we value. How can we speak in a language that will be heard? We want pink polka dots on the windows of this sanctuary...windows that let us look outside and see that it is raining, and invite us to go outside and just jump in puddles. My Grandma has this picture. It is a picture of God. God is feeding hungry people. He is meeting people where they are are.”*

AI has identified components of “appreciative organizing in the small group” (Anderson, Cooperrider, Gergen, K, Gergen, M., McNamee, & Whitney, 2004, p. 32). The small groups as that are central to the *Voices* project include each of the identified basic components for small group practices (p. 32):

- Valuing the communication of others
- Honoring diverse viewpoints
- Including potential stakeholders in the dialogue
- Exploring multiple selves
- Cultivating “not knowing”
- Nurturing narratives of “we”

- Moving beyond practices of blame

In the small group process as a component of finding *The Voice of Common Vision*, we have found each of these to be essential. It seems that especially relevant to the deeply wounded community are moving beyond practices of blame, nurturing narratives of “we”, and exploring multiple selves.

Poetic Presentation

The gathered *voices* of the community are brought back to the community in the context of a service of celebration. Essentially what we have refined is *appreciative worship*. It is a ritual or ceremony for “celebrations of the ‘we’” (p. 29) of the faith community. The voices are brought back in poetic presentation. AI brings forward the *poetic principle* that the life story of the individual or the organization is an open book and like a great poem “is constantly being written, and rewritten, read and reinterpreted” (Stavros & Torres, 2008, p. 66). AI suggests that “how we interpret the voices, events, and experiences impacts our lives” (p. 66).

It has been the tradition of our practice to bring the multiple voices back to the fractured community in the form of poetry. The format we use for bringing forward the multiplicity of voices of a faith community is a merger of *slam poetry* (www.poetryslam.com) and *responsive reading* (www.psalmsandprayers.com). Slam poetry has numerous meanings in different contexts, but encompasses a perspective that poetry belongs to a community, not the poet, is to be shared, is to be performed, and should be appreciated. Responsive readings have brought forward prayers and psalms in diverse worship traditions. They often divide readings between a *leader* and *people*.

The voices are presented in this poetic format. The community is invited to participate in the reading of the voices responsively. Every word in the litany is taken directly from one or more of the voices that came forward in the small group listening process. A lay pastor works with us to insure that the litany is respectful of the liturgical traditions of the community. The setting for the sharing of the voices is a sacred one. It may be held in the sanctuary of a church. In whatever setting it is held, the process takes great care to be respectful of the rituals and ceremonies and traditions of sacredness of the faith community. It is sacramental in character, and depending on the traditions of the faith community with which we are working, may include the sacrament of communion.

Essentially, the celebration of the *voice of our common vision* is *appreciative worship*. It is a celebration of the movement from *mourning* to *gladness* that is evidenced in sacred texts across religious traditions. To borrow words from the Psalms of David from the Jewish and Christian traditions: “How long will you be heavy of heart...I am weary with my moaning...the Lord heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds...celebrate the fame of your abundant goodness, and sing aloud of your righteousness”. (From Psalms 6, 145, and 147 from *The New Jerusalem Bible*).

The turning of mourning into gladness is a core theme in faith traditions. It touches the deepest aspects of the *lived experience* (Van Manen, 1990) of faith communities. Much as the bringing forward of the “client’s voice” has been “paramount in the evolution of (a)...collaborative approach to therapy” (Anderson, 1997, p. 132), the bringing forward of the *spiritual seekers* voice has been instrumental in healing broken relationships in faith communities.

Passion, Presence, and Poetry

The culmination of the appreciative process in faith communities, is sometimes identified as a *service of restoration*. In a moment of meeting, that holds a sacred quality, this service includes components of *passion* (Philippe, Vallerand, & Lavigne, 2009), *presence* (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004), and *poetry*. There is passion in both the voice of shared vision and in the voice of woundedness. Research in positive psychology applied to health and well-being has identified a distinction between *harmonious passion* and *obsessive passion* (Philippe, Vallerand & Lavigne, 2009). An interesting exploration would be to consider if the movement from the voice of woundedness to the voice of common vision, might be viewed as movement from obsessive to harmonious passion.

Exemplar of the Voice of Common Vision

The *Voice of Common Vision* (Mahaffy, 2012) encompasses the multiplicity of voices in the faith community. It creates a choir that includes the *song of lament* as only one voice and that no longer overshadows all other voices. It is our experience that communities value this poetic presentation of the multiplicity of their voices and find in it some new way forward to step into the mystery of their faith journey and remember who they are as a *called* community.

Below is one example of the *Voice of Common Vision* (Mahaffy, 2012) as it came forward in a deeply divided community that found a way to move forward together. The *voices* were read responsively by members of the community and a service of reconciliation was structured around the sharing of the voices.

THE VOICE OF OUR COMMON VISION
A Poetic Expression of Appreciative Visioning
Facilitated by GRE Consulting for a Faith Community

<p>We are one voice,</p> <p>We are many voices The Voice of Living Justice Called to serve, not the mission of the church But called to serve real human needs. The Voice of Reconciliation Risking losing everything To become who we really are The Voice of Elders With mountains to climb Even when it is hard to get around.</p> <p>We are one voice The Voice of our Common Vision A called people A surrounding and caring Community Turning pain into vision and action Celebrating life cycles Embracing, Nurturing Looking for the good Then building something on it. Doing more than we can do Not letting our limitations stop us Meeting human needs In the moment of need Doing the best with what we have Listening, Valuing every story</p> <p>Your story and mine</p> <p>We are one voice</p>	<p>We are many voices:</p> <p>The Voice of Youthful Heart Desiring a place with pink Pokka dots And a place to feed hungry people The Voice of Community Engagement Not judging people by their looks, But reaching deep inside to discover Who they really are The Voice of Confession Confession of how we have hurt each other That we have neglected the prayer life Of our community, lost our spiritual reflex</p> <p>This is our story</p> <p>We are many voices,</p> <p>We are one voice</p>
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Conclusions

Branson (2004) suggests that AI presents the opportunity for faith communities to take “an intentional pause, making the space and taking the time to discern God’s redemptive presence in our midst and to discover anew God’s call for our ministry” (p. x). The work we do in deeply conflicted faith communities suggests that this requires listening not only to voices of hope and vision, but also to the voices of woundedness. It requires listening to the voice of the *poet* as well as the voice of the *prophet* (Brueggemann, 1989).

Moving the practice of AI into facilitation of reconciliation and restoration within deeply divided and wounded communities presents important opportunities for deepening the work we do as AI practitioners. It raises important questions in regard to working with vulnerable populations. It has been our practice, as we develop this work, to provide access to professional counseling services for individuals who have been in adversarial and unsafe relationships and choose to be participants together in an appreciative process.

Ken Gergen (2009) suggests in *Relational Being* that “...expanded, appreciative, and critical consciousness is effectively a state of worship” and that “in the simple acts of listening with care, affirming the other, and giving expression to the multiple relations of which we are a part, there is a divine spark (p. 394). While rejecting dichotomies between the *sacred* and the *secular*, the presenter suggests that faith communities provide an opportune forum for discovering that “sacred presence has substantial relevance to daily life” (p. 393). It is our sense that the sacredness of the moment of relational restoration that grows from the appreciative process of moving a fractured community to wholeness (Nordenbrock, 2011) may have its

rootedness as much in what it means to be human beings in intimate relationship, as much as it lies in the constructs of communities of faith.

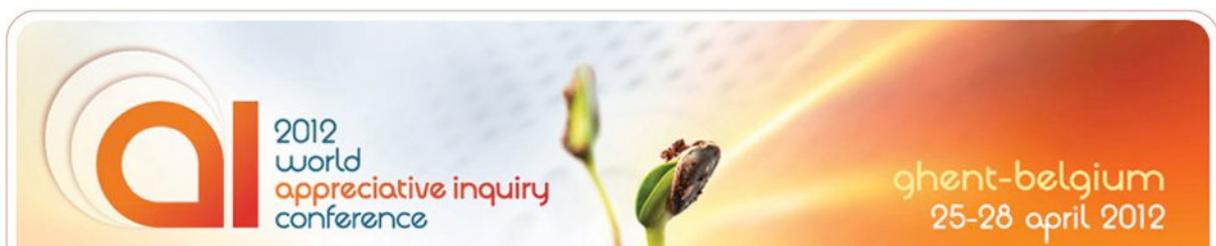
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Abstract

This paper highlights the importance of taking enough time in the preparation and delivery of an AI summit in order to truly co-create a new organizational reality. The authors emphasize the need to take enough time to: define the work, build an empowered steering committee, spread the inquiry, make meaning of the inquiry, hear everybody in the room, and time to learn from the process.

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Taking Enough Time: Back to Basics of the AI Summit

Introduction

In this article, we share our insights about a very simple principle underlying the AI summit processes: co-construction of a new organizational reality requires time. Specifically, enough time is needed to: 1) define the work, 2) to build an empowered steering committee, 3) to spread the inquiry, 4) to make meaning of the inquiry, 5) to hear everybody in the room, and 6) to learn from the process. We had these insights during the 10 months process to prepare and execute an Appreciative Inquiry summit at Nextel Peru, a mobile phone company with 1500 employees. The summit was the first of its kind in Peru and brought together 400 of members of Nextel, as well as 100 external stakeholders. Early on in the processes, we faced some initial resistance to AI, we thus realized we needed to slow down and take time so that we (consultants and the organization) could co-create a process that would be grounded in the specific needs of the organization. The following is an account of the many ways in which we took time to honor the principles of AI and allow the organization to find its strengths and build from them.

Taking time to define the work

“I am happy because we have now a focus and a clear opportunity to do something. Before we had very confusing ideas. Now we have reached a consensus about our priorities. Now we have guidelines to allocate our resources.” (VP of Operations)

Effective action requires clarity of intention. Slowing down the decision-making process and taking time to define the work before acting helps you effectively respond to the needs of the organization. Back in August 2010 a low turn out to one of their traditionally best-attended organizational events, caused the CEO and his top management team to worry about employee commitment at Nextel. They labeled the issue as “a problem in the culture of the organization”.

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Their request to us as external consultants was to fix the culture as soon as possible. We, as outsiders of the organization, however did not understand their request: What did they mean by culture? What exactly did they want to fix? What did they want from their people? In order to answer these questions we took a great deal of time getting to know the organization.

Specifically, we spent about 20 hours in a series of individual conversations with the CEO and with each member of his top management team, as well as a two-day off-site meeting with the team to identify together their priorities and the work required to respond to them. This time together allowed the team to develop a shared image of the historical trajectory of the organization and a collective decision about their three top priorities: 1) the need to develop organizational capacity to face new commercial and technological challenges, 2) the need to empower the second line of managers, and 3) the need to foster employee engagement. They summarized all of this in one statement: “We want Nextel to be vibrant again.” The time spent listening and working with the top management team allowed us to [see the fit between the characteristics of the organization and the AI Summit](#) as a process to address the three identified needs.

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Taking time to build an empowered Steering Committee

“We have learned, during these past months, how to take responsibility and action of a project that involves the entire organization. Usually only the leadership team conducts this type of efforts. But this time we did it together, collaborating across functional areas and hierarchical lines”. (Second line manager HR)

The preparation and delivery of the AI Summit is a collaboration that requires the Steering Committee (SC) to feel comfortable with the AI principles and method. Taking time whenever necessary to explain, learn, or question AI is essential for the development of the commitment of

the members of the SC. A committed SC will take ownership of the process and will infuse the spirit of the AI inquiry throughout the organization.

For us, the SC was one of the key vehicles to address the need of empowerment of second line managers. The top management team selected second line managers with strong influence in the organization to the SC. Our task was to support SC to feel comfortable with the principles and methods of AI and to take ownership of the project. We went through a training process that: 1) started with a 2 day off-site session in which the SC learned about AI, defined the objective of the project and named the positive core; 2) continued with the preparation and delivery of a 2 day pre-Summit event with 60 of their peers, which helped them experience first hand the Summit in motion; and 3) ended in a 4-hour debriefing of the pre-Summit experience. In addition to these main activities we took time throughout to address questions, concerns or critiques whenever they arose in the group or in individual meetings. In addition to addressing the need of empowerment of the second line managers, we discovered that by taking an active role preparing and conducting the pre-Summit and the Summit the SC lowered the natural resistance to the unknown AI process.

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Taking time to spread the inquiry

*“Participating in the inquiry has allowed me to hear amazing and beautiful stories. I feel I am budding again after many years. I have renewed appreciation for the company and its people.”
(Second line manager IT)*

If we really believe that ‘words create worlds’ and that we co-create the organization through the conversations we have, the language we use and the stories we share, then it is essential to take the time to involve a critical mass of the organization to begin any new conversation. From July

through August 2011, 60 second-line managers from all areas in the organization conducted an average of six 2-hour AI interviews each. There were around 360 interviews officially reported and systematized through an on-line system. This set of interviews sparked informal AI interviews across the organization that ranged from one-on-one to group interviews across areas. By the end of the pre-Summit interview process about 700 members had shared their stories and dreams of Nextel. This large-scale inquiry served to discover what gives life to Nextel, and helped build a social network that was instrumental for the success of the Summit and that has become a platform for collaboration.

Mauricio Puerta 8/2/12 22:12
Verwijderd: of the organization
 Mauricio Puerta 8/2/12 22:13
Verwijderd: their organization

Taking time to make meaning of the inquiry together

“Now I am clear about what brings life to our company. I know now the specific areas I need to attend to sustain and foster a culture of passion to create Nextel.” (VP of HR)

We found that it was essential to our success to take the time to discover the themes and expressions manifested through the interviews, so they could inform the construction of the interview guide and the structure of the Summit. The pre-summit interviews highlighted the key concerns and aspirations of the members of the organization, and also expressed the language that had meaning for them. But given our role as outsiders, we needed to take time to make meaning of the interviews in collaboration with the SC. Given the amount of data generated, this process was no small undertaking! First, the 360 interviews were stored in an electronic retrieval system, and classified into stories, quotes and themes by the Information Sub-Committee. Then, together with the SC we dedicated four sessions of 5 hours each to identify the themes relevant to the organization and the language that truly spoke to its members.

Mauricio Puerta 8/2/12 22:14
Verwijderd: to the organization
 Mauricio Puerta 8/2/12 22:14
Verwijderd: collectively
 Microsoft Office User 8/2/12 11:55
Opmerking [1]: Was this a subgroup of the SC or a different group all together?
 YES
 Microsoft Office User 3/2/12 15:47
Opmerking [2]: Did they do this process with you? Were you at each of these meetings?
 Mauricio Puerta 8/2/12 22:19
Verwijderd: The result of this effort was a set of themes that reflected the positive core of the inquiry and served as the foundation for the summit work. The analysis also yielded a wording of the inquiry that spoke to the members of the organization in their own language. So rather than imposing a pre-conceived framework onto them, we were able to truly co-create the process and language we used together.

Taking time to hear everybody in the room

“I have come to realize something I had never even imagined. Our people have the wisdom, the creativity, and the passion to respond to the big challenges we have ahead. I do not understand why have we relied for so long solely on external consultants when we have all this talent in our own home.” (VP of Marketing)

Fundamentally, the AI summit is an act of co-creation through conversation and it requires all stakeholders to seed the collective work. Taking time to converse and hear all voices creates a virtuous cycle leading to the formation of a collective affect and images for action. When it was time to design the flow of the actual three days of the AI Summit, we decided that more important than key note speakers and lengthy explanations was to start the AI experience as early as possible. Thus, we gave 2 hours at the outset for the one-on-one interview process. While we know many summits begin with an interview, we have seen how this element is often shortened to make room for other introductory speakers. Yet, giving a full 2 hours to this process allowed the formation of a rich tapestry of stories and interpersonal connections.

Later in the summit process, it was also critical for us to ensure that all participants’ voices be heard as equals. The use of a giant screens and multiple roving cameras allowed any person speaking to be the center of attention for the whole room. During the first day we heard stories of Discovery and saw images of the Dream from each one of the 60 tables. During the second day we heard the 25 provocative propositions developed during the Design phase. On the third day, we took the time to see the presentation of each one of the 45 prototypes developed to articulate **Destiny**. In the moment, we initially questioned giving this much time to report out, as again this is an area we often see truncated in AI Summit processes, with only a handful of the whole reporting out as time allows. However, rather than using the clock as our guide, we used the process and kept going until everyone had a chance to present. While it took a long time, the

Microsoft Office User 8/2/12 11:57

Opmerking [3]: I added this next part based on our conversation--- see if it truly reflects what happened!

Thank you, this is accurate.

end results were worth it, as people felt heard and empowered as they had a chance to share in front of the whole.

Taking time to learn from the process

The experience of the AI summit can be a great opportunity for organizational learning, for it challenges deeply held assumptions about the nature the organization and the role of management. In order to take advantage of this opportunity the SC and the leadership team needs to take time to reflect on the experience and make collective meaning of its implication for the way they see the organization and make decisions. From the inception of our project, we made an effort to take the time at the end of every SC meeting to reflect on the key lessons. After the AI summit, we devoted two days to distill the lessons for the organization and the lessons for each one of the members of the SC. The result was a reported shift in the mindset of some of these leaders about their own way of leading, and a set of practices to foster innovation, collaboration and engagement at multiple levels of the organization.

Closing Reflections

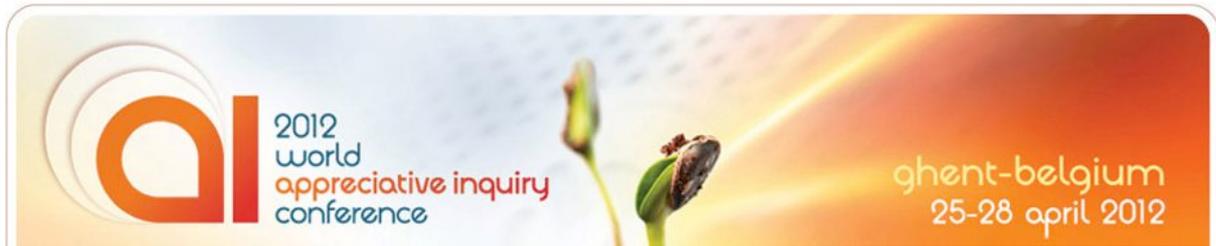
From our experience, we saw that taking enough time allows the organization to grow into the AI process in a way that support the integration of its principles and methods well beyond the event it self. It becomes a truly transformational experience that puts the issues of the organization at the center of the stage rather than having AI as the center. Taking enough time is not an easy task in the mist of so many competing organizational priorities. Taking time is an intention that requires full commitment from all the people involved and needs to be constantly

negotiated. If this intention is upheld from beginning to end the organization will harvest significant rewards, as we saw with Nextel.

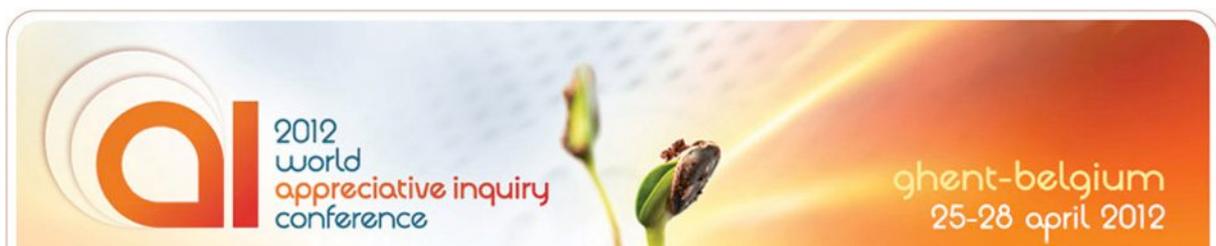
Microsoft Office User 8/2/12 22:23

Opmerking [4]: Your article is fabulous! While I am hesitant to cut anything, I wonder if we can tighten it up at all to trim it down to under 2,000 words? That would be about 100-150 words less than right now (not counting the bio and abstract). See if there is anywhere you feel you can tighten it even a little. Thanks so much!

Did some trimming here and there I think we are under 2000 now. Let me know if this is ok.



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A journey towards practice development for rape survivors: an Appreciative Inquiry approach

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Executive summary

Rape is a global concern which occurs in every culture and in all levels of society. Approximately 72 of every 100 000 females were raped in 2010 in South Africa and one out of every two women stands a chance of being raped during her lifetime (POWA 2006:1).

The South African National Management Guidelines for Sexual Assault (2005: 1) asserts that all health care professionals' has to respond to the health needs of the female rape survivors. Traditional methods used to evaluate practice remain locked into "problems" and focus on "what is not working" or "what is wrong". In contrast, Appreciative Inquiry utilise an evaluation approach for organisational improvement and focus on achievements rather than problems.

Using Appreciative Inquiry as a process, female rape survivors were provided an opportunity to voice their needs and views. Based on their suggestions nurse practitioners was able to reach consensus on specific interventions that should be implemented to develop their practice. Implementing the suggested interventions should enable the health care professionals to embark on a journey that envision moving from a disease-centred to a patient-centred management approach of female rape survivors in an emergency unit of a tertiary public hospital in the Limpopo Province in South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Rape is a global concern which occurs in every culture and in all levels of society. The Federal Bureau of Justice estimates that 72 of every 100 000 females were raped in 2009 in South Africa. In a tertiary hospital in the North West Province of South Africa a total of 560 rape survivors were admitted to and managed in the emergency unit, of which the predominant number (73%) consist of females (Hospital: emergency unit statistics 2010). The rape survivors are managed in terms of a standardised protocol, using a predominant disease-centred approach.

The WHO (2003:18) emphasise that, regardless of the setting and location of a health care institution, "*care should be ethical, compassionate, objective and above all, patient-centred*". Nevertheless the dominant mode of patient management in most organisations is towards task orientation and disregards the needs of the individual (Garbett & McCormack 2004). Modern trends in the development of practice are unambiguously orientated towards the improvement of patient care and services by focusing on patient-centred care. In a patient-centred approach, patients become active participants in their own care and receive whatever services can assist them to meet their needs and preferences. Patient-centred care can be described as individualised care that recognises the uniqueness of each patient's preferences, needs and condition resulting in practice development (Kelly-Heidenthal 2003: 257).

Practice development is a continuous process of improvement towards increased effectiveness in patient-centred care. Practice development by means of improvements in patient care should reflect the expressed needs, views and opinions of patients (Garbett & McCormack 2004). An environment in which the voice of the patient is listened and adhered to in order to develop practice is the only one in which a disease-centred approach can be moved towards a patient-centred care approach.

The components of the disease-centred approach currently utilised are vital and should not be discarded. The emergency unit is equipped with the same standard "evidence collection kits" for the collection of forensic evidence that are used by the South African Police Services in the RSA. There is a program of continuous professional development for all health care professionals who work in the emergency unit of a hospital. However, the voice of the female

rape survivors regarding their views of the management they receive in the emergency unit remains silent and unheard. The overall aim of this research was to utilise Appreciative Inquiry as a process in order to evaluate the care received by female rape survivors' in an emergency department in the Limpopo Province.

Guided by the 4-D cycle of the Appreciative Inquiry process the objectives of the study were:

- To discover “**what is**” the views of female rape survivors regarding the best aspects of emergency care received in the emergency department
- To dream “**what could be**” the ideal emergency care received by female rape survivors in the emergency department
- To design “**what should be**” addressed regarding the emergency care received by female rape survivors in the emergency department
- To deliver the interventions “**what will be**” implemented to enhance patient-centred care

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS

Although evaluation is primarily regarded as negative, it can be approached in a positive manner. Utilising Appreciative Inquiry as an evaluation process offers an opportunity to evaluate practice in a positive manner in order to create change (Reed 2007:169; Coghlan, Preskill, Catsambas 2003).

The Appreciative Inquiry process was based on the 4-D cycle (view Figure 1). The four phases of the 4-D cycle include discover, dream, design and destiny (Cooperrider & Avital 2004:142). Guided by the four phases, the participants were asked positive questions. Through dialogue awareness (the first step in the change process) were created regarding the needs and views of female rape survivors (Reed 2007:27). Health care professionals became aware of “what is” working and “what could be” the ideal to meet the needs of female rape survivors. Based on the findings, the health care professionals reached consensus on interventions to be implemented to develop their practice from a disease-centred towards a patient-centred approach.

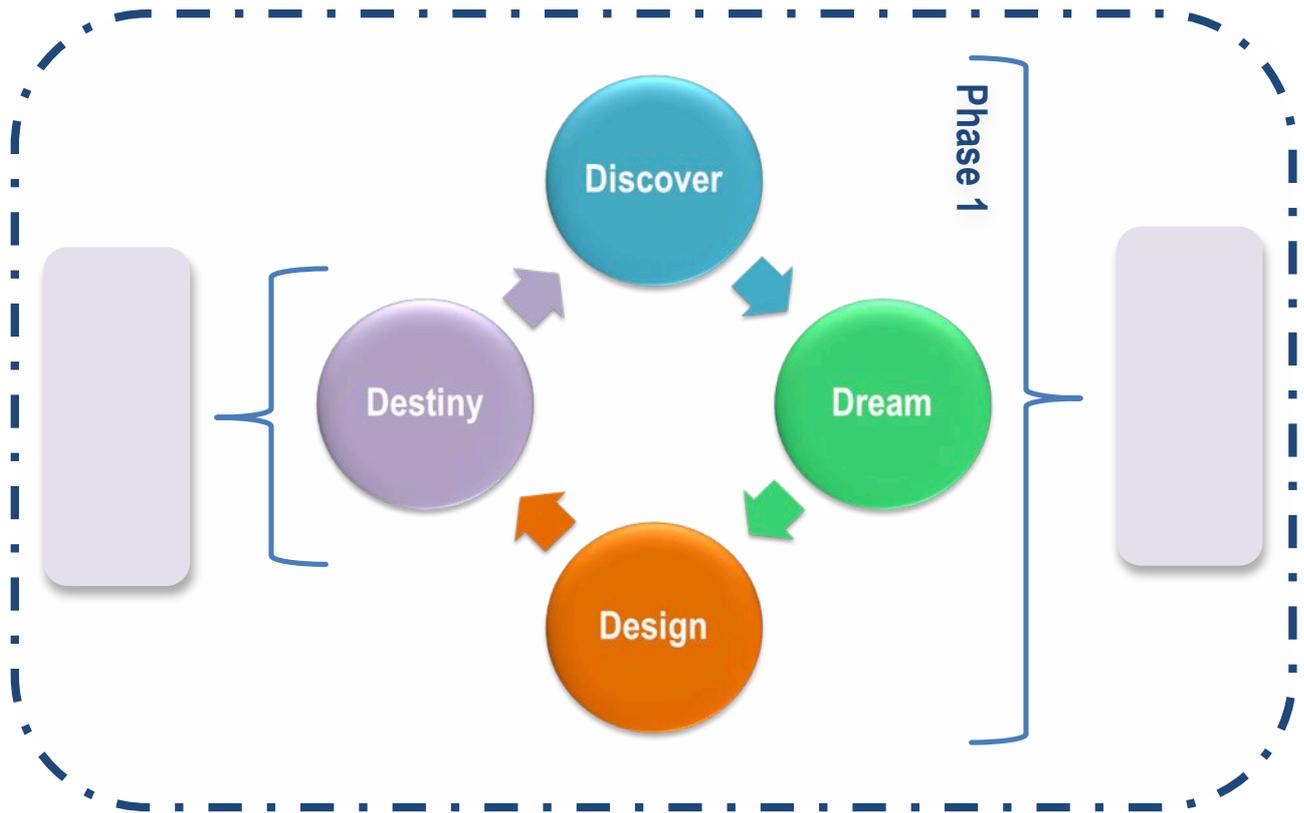


Figure 1: Appreciative Inquiry 4-D cycle (adopted from Cooperrider et al. 2005:5)

The utilisation of the Appreciative Inquiry process and incorporation of the 4-D cycle are integrated in the discussions concerning the research methods.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study followed an inductive research approach, using a qualitative inquiry research design, which was guided by the Appreciative Inquiry process. The research was conducted in two phases:

- Phase 1: Voice of female rape survivors
- Phase 2: Interventions towards practice development

RESEARCH METHODS

Phase 1: Voice of female rape survivor

Target population

The target population included female rape survivors admitted to the emergency unit and who met the following inclusion criteria:

- 18 years or older who
- understand and speak English and were
- admitted and managed in the emergency unit between January 2011 and December 2012 and
- minimum three months following the incident

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used Female rape survivors are counselled following discharge from the emergency unit. The counsellors who were involved to handpick individuals who were regarded as mentally sound and stable and willing to participate in the study (Burns & Grove 2009).

Data saturation

A total of 13 participants were interviewed. Data was saturated following nine interviews. In an effort to enhance the trustworthiness of the study, an additional four interviews were conducted and no new information emerged.

Data collection

Data was collected by means of appreciative interviews and field notes. Acknowledging the intimate and distressing event the female rape survivor has been exposed to, a rigorous process was pursued to gain access to the participants. Approval from (1) the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Pretoria and (2) the Hospital management were obtained. The counsellors involved in counselling the female rape survivors in the emergency unit following the incident were consulted to identify potential participants. The counsellors were briefed about the study, emphasising the aim and value thereof. Consensus was then reached between the researcher and counsellors on the strategies that would be used for the researcher to gain access to the potential participants. The counsellors agreed to identify and contact individuals who met the inclusion criteria and follow the steps as identified in Figure 2.

- The counsellors then contacted the individual approximately three months after the incident and told her about the study. If the participants were willing to participate, the counsellors asked her permission to reveal her name and contact details to the researcher. However, the participants were given an option to remain anonymous - the participant and counsellor

Interview

- o Brief participant on aim and value of the study
- o Negotiate a suitable time and place for conducting the interview
- o The interview was 18 years or older
- o Understand and speak fluently
- o Able to attend counselling in the emergency unit
- o (October 2010 to May 2012)
- o Three months after the rape incident

First contact with participant

- o Step 1: Used by participant to contact researcher. The criteria
- o Step 2: Discuss information leaflet and informed consent form with participant
- o Step 3: Assess willingness of individual to participate in the study
- o Step 4: Obtain consent that the individual prefer to use during contact with researcher
- o Step 5: Negotiate preferable date and time during which researcher can contact individual
- o Step 6: Provide researcher with necessary information to contact potential participant

then agreed upon a pseudonym that was used during contact with the researcher. The counsellors then negotiate a time and date during which the researcher could contact the participant and then inform the researcher and give relevant information. If the rape survivors indicated that she do not wish to participate, she was thanked for considering the option and her details was not be conveyed to the researcher.

Only at this stage the researcher was given access to the participants and the interviews were arranged at a suitable date and time for both parties. Informed consent was obtained from the researcher before initiating the interview.

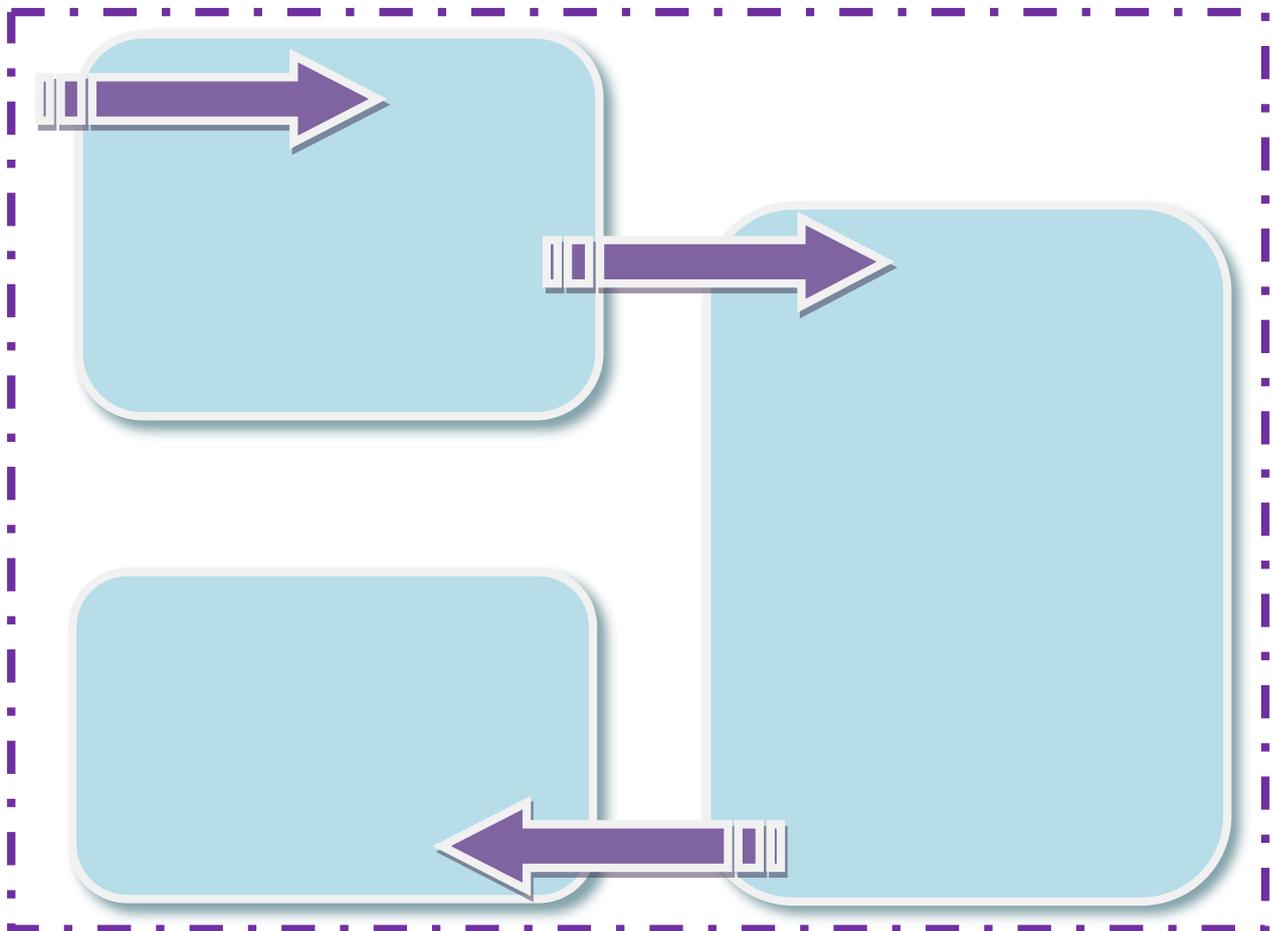


Figure 2: Schematic representation of gaining access to conduct the interview

The appreciative interview focused on the first three D's of the Appreciative Inquiry process used, namely *Discover* (appreciating “**what is**”), *Dream* (“**what might be**”) and *Design* (“**what should be**”). View Figure 1.

The questions that were asked included:

1. Think about the management you received in the emergency unit. Will you please share with me the following:
 - 1.1. What did you value most about the management you received?
 - 1.2. What did you value about the health care professionals (nurses and doctors) that assisted you?
2. What are your wishes for the management of future female rape survivors in the emergency unit?
3. Based on your needs, what additional suggestions do you have which we can be implemented by the doctors/nurses to improve the care you received in the emergency unit?

The semi-structured interviews will be transcribed verbatim, ensuring that the data transcribed is correct and reflect the full account of the interview (Botma et al. 2010: 2014).

Data analysis

The data was analysed using thematic analysis steps as described by Tesch (in Creswell, 2009) to identify, label and group the identified categories. The results were presented to the nurse practitioners in Phase 2.

Phase 2: Interventions towards practice development

Target population

The target population included the multi-disciplinary team members who work in the emergency unit and were involved in the management of rape survivors. The multi-disciplinary team members included:

- Nurse practitioners (16)
- Doctors (5)
- Counsellors (4)
- Social workers (2)
- Police officers (2)

Sampling

Purposive sampling was utilised. Eight professional nurses, one enrolled nurse, four medical doctors, a psychologist, a social worker, four professional counsellors and a police officer participated in the consensus workshop.

Data collection

Data was collected by means of a workshop, which was based on the fourth phase of the 4-D Appreciative Inquiry cycle, namely *Destiny* (“**what will be**”). View Figure 1. Feedback relating Phase 1 was given to all the participants. Participants were given an opportunity to ask the researcher questions concerning the research findings.

The participants were divided into pairs and asked to discuss the following research question:

1. What interventions can you recommend should be implemented in the emergency unit to meet the needs of female rape survivors regarding the emergency care they received?

The participants were instructed to interview each other in a quiet, respectful tone, listening, talking, clarifying and taking notes. The participants were asked to indicate their suggested interventions on an A4 paper. The pairs were asked to form clusters of four and then discuss and reach consensus on the suggested interventions. The clusters were provided an opportunity to discuss the interventions with the group members. Consensus was reached amongst the group relating to the interventions that would be implemented to move away from a disease-centred towards a patient-centred approach.

Data analysis

Similar to Phase 1.

Trustworthiness

According to Polit and Beck (2008:539), the quality of qualitative research can be measured against the standards for trustworthiness. The standards of trustworthiness applicable to this study, were derived from Lincoln and Guba’s framework (Polit & Beck 2008:539; Polit *et al.* 2001:312) and summarised in Table 1.

Table 2: Summary of the measures utilised to enhance trustworthiness

Method	Strategy	Application
Credibility	Prolonged engagement and persistent observation	Researchers are all involved in the management of rape survivors (experience vary from five to 20 years)
	Member checking	- Used consensus methods - Used independent coder
Dependability	Analysis triangulation	- Used different units of analysis: individual feedback, paired interviews and consensus - Field notes was documented throughout the process
Confirmability	Comprehensive recording of information	- Dialogue was tape recorded and transcribed verbatim - All feedback was documented
	Person/investigator triangulation	- External coder was utilised
Transferability	Purposive sampling	- Participants were selected purposively
	Dense description	- Aim was to obtain rich descriptive data by using an experienced facilitator during the workshop - The research design and methods are described in-depth
Authenticity	Prolonged engagement and persistent observation	- As described
	Comprehensive recording of information	- As discussed
	Analysis triangulation	- Independent coder consensus
	Data presentation	- Thick descriptions
	Disclosure of researchers credentials	- AI facilitator doctoral prepared in nursing and skilled in facilitating the AI process

Source: Adapted from Polit and Beck (2012 : 255)

Ethical considerations

Female rape survivors' right to self-determination, privacy, autonomy, confidentiality, full disclosure about the study, and protection from discomfort and harm was ensured throughout the study (Burns & Grove 2009). Before the research commenced, ethical approval was obtained the Faculty of Health Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of

Pretoria. Permission to gain access to the research site and participants was obtained from the Hospital.

Participants were required to sign informed consent before participating in the study. Consent letters will be kept separate from the biographical information and all written responses to ensure anonymity of the participants' contribution. A participant information leaflet accompanied the consent form. All participants were informed that they have the right to voluntary withdrawal from the study at any stage without prejudice (Sarantakos in Creswell, 2009:89) or any consequences. The researchers were available for any questions at all times during the data collection period. No participant was coerced in any way to participate in this study. The researchers will refrain from using the names of the participants in any documentation to protect their anonymity.

Participants sharing their needs and views of the emergency care that should be received by female rape survivors could include unpleasant experiences which might lead to the uncovering of painful emotions. A counsellor will be available during and following the interview. All participants will have access to a debriefing session if required.

Results

Highlights of the main research results are summarised in Table 2. The steps included in disease-centred approach utilised in the emergency are listed. The needs of female rape survivors are indicated and the interventions planned by the multi-disciplinary team members are indicated. Implementing the interventions will move the current disease-centred approach of female rape survivors towards a patient-centred approach.

Table 2: Journey towards practice development

Diseased-centred care	Phase 1	Phase 2
	Female rape survivors' needs	Towards patient-centred care
	<p>Raise awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Knowledge about available services ✓ Cost of anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs 	<p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ Raise awareness campaign to community members regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • services rendered at the emergency unit • availability of free availability of ARV drugs following rape
	<p>Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Follow up scheduled only during office hours 	<p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ Follow-up scheduled for after hours
1) Admission	<p>Confidentiality in jeopardy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Triage area ✓ Administrative admission 	<p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ In-service training to all administration clerks relating the importance of maintaining confidentiality of female rape survivors ☉ Poster in admission area indicating that female rape survivors' should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not go through formal triage system, but be directly admitted to the emergency unit • not inform admission clerk of rationale for admission • admitted to designated examination room and provided medical assistance before completing admission forms • complete admission forms with assistance from admission clerk in the examination room
	<p>Support: family members/significant other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Value is underestimated ✓ Regarded as an "information tool" for female rape survivor (e.g. drugs, follow up dates) ✓ Encourage the female rape survivors throughout the management process ✓ Female rape survivors should be allowed to have family member/significant other present throughout the process 	<p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ Ask female rape survivor if they wish to have family member/significant other at their side during the entire management process ☉ Allow family member/significant other at female rape survivor's side throughout the entire management process ☉ Share all information with female rape survivor and family member/significant other
2) Examination room	<p>Examination room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Room is too small ✓ Bell should be available to call for assistance ✓ On suite shower and toilet not available 	<p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ Exchange examination room for one of the bigger rooms available, which is more spacious and include an on suite bathroom ☉ Place a bell on the bedside trolley
3) History taking	<p>Repetition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Repeating the history to the different role players (administration clerk, registered nurses, doctors, counsellors) leads to unnecessary recollection of the incident ✓ Repetition is time-consuming 	<p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ Administration clerk not to obtain history from female rape survivors ☉ Registered nurse and doctor obtain history simultaneously

Diseased-centred care	Phase 1	Phase 2
	Female rape survivors' needs	Towards patient-centred care
4) Forensic examination	<p>Procedure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Rape kit should be available immediately ✓ Door should be locked during forensic examination to prevent other health care professionals to enter during the procedure ✓ Female health care professionals (registered nurse and doctor) must conduct the forensic examination ✓ Health care professionals must be competent and confident to conduct forensic examination ✓ Shorten timeframe of the forensic examination 	<p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ Contact management and police and re-negotiate availability of rape kits ☉ Handyman requested to install locking mechanism on door ☉ Door locked at all times during forensic examination ☉ Female health care professionals are delegated to conduct the forensic examination ☉ All health care professionals working in the emergency unit are trained in forensic examination procedures to decrease examination time ☉ Monitor and evaluate timeframe continuously
5) Laboratory studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV 	<p>HIV results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Anxious about results, which is only available on Day 3 follow-up visit 	<p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ Registered nurse involved in female rape survivor management will contact and inform patient about HIV results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephonically if HIV result negative • Re-schedule immediate follow-up visit if HIV result positive
6) Administer of drugs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ARV's • Sexual transmitted disease prophylactics • Anti-emetic • Emergency contraceptive 	<p>Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Forget important information relating drug usage ✓ Request information relating to all the drugs ✓ Patient education should be simplified 	<p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ Compile a simplified patient information leaflet relating all the drugs used to manage the female rape survivor ☉ Provide each female rape survivor with an information leaflet before discharge
7) Provide drugs (three days) for treatment		
8) Refer to counsellor	<p>Counsellor involvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Counsellor should be involved ✓ Counsellor should be a female if requested ✓ Counsellor should not be involved during admission 	<p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ Disseminate research findings to counsellors ☉ Counsellors are not consulted during first admission ☉ female rape survivors are asked whether they prefer female counsellors before referring them ☉ female rape survivors are referred to counselling service, indicating patient's preference of the gender of the counsellor
9) Discharge	<p>Follow-up dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Difficult to remember all the information relating follow-up dates ✓ Allow female rape survivors to shower before discharged 	<p>Intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☉ Provide each female rape survivor with a patient follow-up appointment card ☉ Female rape survivor must be given an opportunity to shower in on suite bathroom before being discharged

Diseased-centred care	Phase 1	Phase 2
	Female rape survivors' needs	Towards patient-centred care
10) Schedule follow-up visits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 3 • 3 months • 6 months • One year 	Follow-up admission Appointment for follow-up is traumatic as female rape survivor is asked to provide rationale for follow-up at the admission area where people are seated	Intervention Follow-up appointment card is given an identification number (G-file) to inform admission clerk about rationale for follow-up visit without female rape survivor having to explain

Conclusion

Health care professionals involved in the management of female rape survivors focus on a “disease-orientated” approach. The emphasis is on the medical management of these patients, often neglecting the needs of the individual. Providing female rape survivors an opportunity to voice their needs can assist health care professionals to include interventions based on the needs of the patient and as a result develop their practice as they embark on a journey towards patient-centred care.

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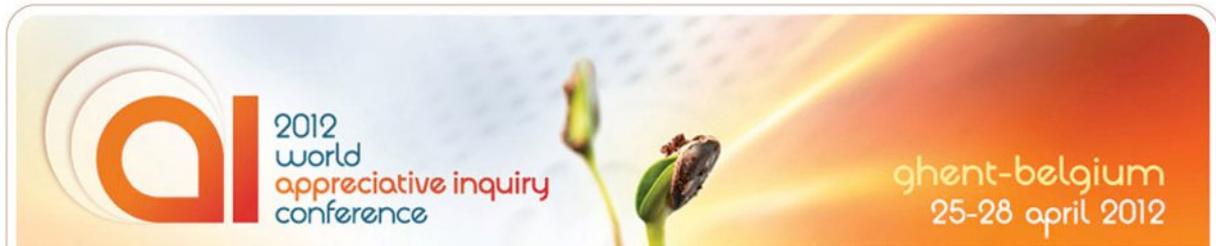
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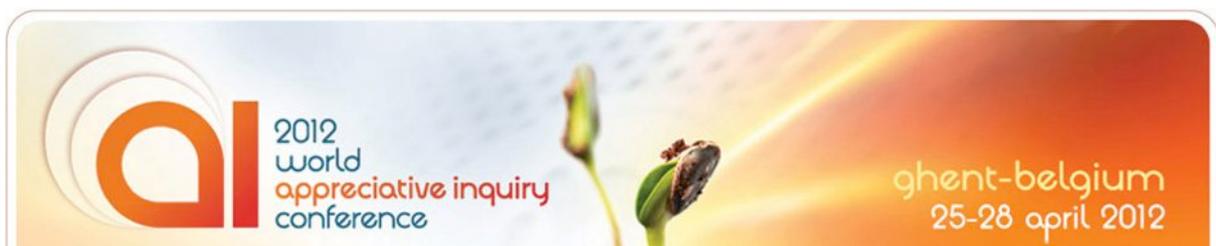
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Appreciative Inquiry :

Going beyond connectedness, Sustaining the energy and making change happen.

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Abstract

Appreciative Inquiry has immense potential of generating positive energy and strong feelings of connectedness amongst people involved in the process. This is primarily because the connections are happening at an emotional level – beyond the content and structure of the organisation – at basic human process, leading amongst others to personal and professional development.

However most organisations, in their day to day life, have a primary focus on the content and structure. Once the team is through with the Appreciative Inquiry workshop, the challenge lies in sustaining the energy which was generated in the workshop and taking it forward in the working life of the organisation, so that the group continues to focus on the DESTINY to make Change happen.

This paper describes two cases of use of appreciative inquiry, with contrasting results due to different levels of focus maintained in sustaining the energy.

Introduction:

The starting point for the Appreciative Inquiry process is to find the core strengths of an organisation or any system – the life giving force behind it – and build further on that.

The process of finding this life giving force is the Discover phase. For the members of the organisation to discover this life giving force, an environment of exploration needs to be created. It is essential to have a conducive environment for this Discovery phase, since this environment acts as

a container for all the emotions and the energy that gets generated in the process, in a person, group or relationship.

The process of Discovery happens essentially by taking the members of the organisation back in time when the organisation, or the members of the organisation, were at the peak of their success and then let them re-live that time. This effort of making them relive their success makes them get in touch with their emotions that were generated at that point of time. And also by reliving a successful event of the past, connects them to the conditions and culture in the organisation at that point of time that made the success happen. These conditions and culture are indicative of the life giving force of the organisation.

The emotional high that is generated in this process enables the members to further identify a Dream for their organisation or themselves for the future, leading to an Aaha experience!

In most Appreciative Inquiry interventions, the first two phases of Discovery and Dream are held in an environment, that is conducive to generate the emotional state and arouse energy in the group and sustain it during the period of the intervention. In some cases, even the Design of converting this Dream into Action is done in a similar environment.

This environment, which acts as a Container for the emotions and energy generated is one of the key ingredients, which allows the organisation to tap and harness this inherent potential of the team, letting members of the organisation embark on this journey towards a better future with renewed focus, which otherwise was not getting tapped.

However in most organisations, the day to day life has a primary focus on the content and structure of work. Once the team is through with the Appreciative Inquiry workshop, the container is no longer available for its members to sustain the energy required to implement the designed actions. This is a pity, as this force of Energy would have helped the organisation to move from Design to Destiny.

The challenge thus lies in sustaining the energy which was generated in the workshop and taking it forward in the working life of the organisation, so that the group continues to focus on the DESTINY to make the Change happen.

It takes planned effort to sustain the levels of connectedness and energy in the real life of the organisation. This paper highlights some of the aspects of this effort, which includes the need of clearly defining specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound goals (SMART goals), with a clearly defined owner for each goal (SMART-O goals). Also, people need to be made to remain in touch with the emotional states related to achieving the goal, along with focus on defining ownership for actions generated.

This aspect of the Appreciative Inquiry is often ignored giving the wrong notion that Appreciative Inquiry is only about generating positive euphoria. However it is possible to achieve the goal of 'Design to Destiny' by having a continued focus by being in touch with the emotional states and energy generated until the final goal is met.

Background and Method

This paper contrasts two cases with different results.

In both cases similar level of connectedness amongst participants was reached and a similar level of positivity and energy along with a greater sense of belongingness, amongst the team members was generated. And so was the desire to move to a better and a brighter future. An almost similar perfect movement from DISCOVER to DREAM.

However the journey from DESIGN to DESTINY was different.

In the 1st case, it was left more for the team to drive themselves to the DESTINY with no follow-up planned with the consultant. It was seen that the team could not keep up its energy levels and commitment for the change. In the 2nd case however the contract extended unto the DESTINY phase, with regular monthly reviews planned with the consultant.

Even though in the 1st case, it were the team leaders who were driving the actions, it concluded without bring about the desired change. While in the 2nd case, the task forces were defined and lead by the team members themselves – with the team leaders primarily taking the role as members of the task forces with occasional facilitative roles – achieved far greater results. The task forces continued to run with a continued focus on the goal. This was achieved by the defining a new concept of SMART-O goals (SMART goals with clear Owner defined).

In both cases, Appreciative Inquiry methodology was used, with more or less similar kind of approaches, from Discovering the strengths of the team to Dreaming about a positive future and Designing the way to reach the future leading finally to the Destiny.

In Case 1, Appreciative Inquiry was also used to manage the merger of two teams, whereas in Case 2, Appreciative Inquiry was used not only to dream of a future Vision but also for the team to identify its identity and discover the Mission of the organisation with an aim to improve the engagement of the team members.

The Case Studies

Both the cases are from two design groups of a High Tech company dealing in Research & Development of Micro Electronic components, where looking at the future and designing things in advance is a mandatory requirement for survival. In both the cases, the aim was to define a technical vision for the group.

We will try to analyze what really happened after the Appreciative Inquiry workshops in both these cases and how the results differed driven by different approaches used.

Case 1 : Organisation Change and a New Vision

This is a case where two design groups with similar profile of work, merged to increase synergy between themselves. Managers of both the teams were of similar experience and similar profile. However one of them (manager X) was more technically oriented than the other and led a smaller team of around 4 people, where as the other manager (manager Y) was more managerially oriented and led a bigger team of 12 people. Both these managers reported into a common senior manager.

It was decided amongst manager X, manager Y and their senior manager to merge the two teams, with manager Y leading the new formed group while manager X focus his role in a Technical lead position.

It looked like a good balance for the team. Also since both these managers were involved in this change willfully, it had all the ingredients of success. Manger Y would focus on the business development and managing the operations and people of the team and Manager X would focus on the technical challenges, future technical directions and technically grooming designers of the team.

We were asked by the senior manager to help in the integration of the two teams and help them define a Vision for the new group and have a direction to move to a better future by harnessing existing synergies.

Interview Process:

Before embarking on the process to aid the team to define a Vision, it was important to ascertain that the change actually was with the consent of both the managers and that both of them were viewing it positively.

For this we requested the senior manager to be able to do an interview process with both manager X and manager Y to get their view on this change. We also requested the senior manager for his interview to understand from him and his perspective about this change.

After understanding the senior manager's perspective, we wanted to compare it with what the two managers thought about the change.

The Aim was not just to see if all three shared a common perspective, but to find out if there were some deep concerns which would impact the change process. We also wanted to use these interviews to make the managers think about various dimensions of the change, which will make it work and what risks they needed to keep in mind.

Our interviews with both of them were more on less based on a set of questions we had decided before hand. These included:

- Questions related to Self.
 - o Do you think that this Org Change makes sense?
 - o Do you have the competencies for the new role?
 - o Does the other manager have these competencies?
 - o Would it be good for your career?
 - o Any specific concerns about the impact of change on you?

- Questions related to team and inter-personal relationships between manager X and manager Y.
 - o What kind of inter-personal relations are there between the two of you?
 - o What impact it will have on your team?
 - o Any specific concerns about the impact of change on the team?

- Questions related to Change.
 - o What will make this change a Failure?
 - o What will make this change succeed?
 - o What positives do you see in this change?
 - o What possibilities do you see that this change creates?

After completing both the interviews, we not only had a good understanding about the various dimensions of change as felt by them. We also initiated the two managers into the change process, by this process of exploration.

Our finding was that there was a good synchronization amongst the two managers on the benefits of change. They even shared a common understanding of the risks, as well as the importance of how critical their relation was for the change to be successful. Their belief in the change was aided by the fact that they had enjoyed an open and a good working relationship of more than 10 years.

It was agreed that we would have a one day workshop to facilitate the change process and help the team identify a future for themselves.

The flow of events and process contained therein:

Ice Breaker:

We started the workshop by an activity which highlighted the importance of team work and collective success. The aim was to link up with the bigger design, where the responsibility of the success of the newly formed team was in the hands of each team member.

The activity energized the people and oriented them towards the agenda of the workshop.

Discovery:

In line with the fundamentals of Appreciative Inquiry, we wanted the teams to get in touch with their own strengths. However since this team was a newly formed team, created by merging two separate teams, we had to do the Discovery phase in such a manner that each team initially did the Discovery independently.

We also modified the Discovery phase in such a way, that we could utilize it for team members to appreciate the strengths of the other team too. This was done to improve affiliation between the members of the two teams.

We broke the group into 3 teams. First team was made by the members of the erstwhile team X. And the team Y, which was a large group of more than 15 people, was broken to form two groups, so that we had a fair distribution of people.

Discovery question: We asked them to explore the key strengths of their own team and what made it a successful team. We asked them to anchor their thoughts on a successful past event of their team, and discover the strengths of their team. Thus they listed down a list of strengths of their team.

Modified Discovery question: We then asked them to explore the key strengths of the other team - not just work related strengths, but also behavioral strengths. We deliberately asked them to focus on these two separately, in order to avoid them from focusing only on task related strengths.

Sharing the Discovery: Having identified the strengths of each other's team we asked them to share this first, in the large group.

This activity created a lot of happiness in the members and developed likability of each other, since they were quite happy to hear the strengths of their team from the other team members.

Next we asked them to share the strengths – the life giving force – of their own old teams.

A sense of positivity and a lot of energy was generated in the team members, along with affection towards the team members of the other team.

Dream:

Having made them discover the strengths of their team and the other team, we asked the small groups to be together again and explore the possibilities that are possible in the new combined organization.

This was a forward looking activity, where the aim was to involve the team members in trying to look into the future and define it for themselves as a new team and not just as individual teams.

This activity had two benefits. One was the obvious dream step. Two it aided the merger of the two teams, making the team members look at a collective future with a positive mindset.

We then made the small groups to present their work to the large group one by one.

We also asked them to put their work up on the walls as flip charts.

At the end of the activity, we had a set of points on the walls – gallery method, which described the future state that they envisaged for themselves and the team, And this was a collective outcome of the team, hence the ownership seemed quite high towards the dream.

Design:

We then wanted the team members to move away from their old identities and see themselves as members of the new team.

We asked them to make four new groups, completely mixing people from the two groups and asked them to think about concrete actions that would be needed to be done in order to achieve the possibilities discovered in the previous activity.

This is all we could do in one day.

As we had initially scheduled one day, we asked the team, how they intended to proceed. They unanimously agreed to meet in a few days to continue the work. So a half day session was scheduled in the same week.

We got together in a couple of days. After doing a quick summary of all that had been done in the previous workshop and then asked them to get back to their groups to continue the work from where they had left of.

The actions were divided by them into three broad categories : Actions related to themselves, Actions related to other team members and Actions related to Leaders.

Later we asked them to share the actions in the bigger group and let the group decide on the practicality and feasibility of the action and agree on an implementation plan.

We now had a plan of how the group wanted to reach the vision that the team had dreamt of.

The group concluded by congratulating each other and was now ready to embark on the journey towards the future.

However at this stage there was no contract made between the consultants and the managers on how they would take stock of the actions and how the reporting of the actions would be done.

The move from the Design and the Destiny phase was left more on the team members themselves to follow and track.

After a couple of months, when the consultants met the two managers, we realized that there had hardly been any follow-up meeting held to track the actions. The team members and the two managers had gotten busy in the routine operations and had not found time to look at the outcome of the workshop.

We also realized that the manager X, the technical lead was disillusioned with the new organisation, since the manager Y was not able to allocate any team member to work with him for the future projects and the entire team was busy serving the current customer needs.

In a few months, manager X moved out of the team into a different position and manager Y left the organisation as he did not see the team really growing to a future they had envisaged for themselves.

Case 2 : Defining a Mission and Vision to have more Engagement.

This is a summary of an Intervention we did, where we used the Appreciative Inquiry method with a stronger focus on follow-up.

A team manager (with a team of 30 engineers) approached us with a request of wanting to define the Mission of his team. Perforce he wanted something which could bind his team together and define a common goal and a common purpose for them.

When we asked him, how he wanted to go about it? He said if we could facilitate a workshop for his first line leaders (7 people), to define their mission and vision.

We suggested to him, why not invite the entire team into the workshop. He was a bit surprised, since he could not imagine how we could do some constructive work of defining the mission & vision with 30 people.

We told him the benefits of having all the team members present. He would have the buy-in of everyone in the team to whatever the outcome would be as it would be a joint development. Secondly, it would also act as a team-building exercise for them.

We explained the philosophy behind the proposed plan for the intervention, which was of Appreciative Inquiry. He agreed readily and was willing to do the experiment.

So we agreed on a date to have a 1 day team workshop with all the 30 people.

The flow of events and process contained therein:

Ice Breaker:

We started the workshop by making the team members go into a Discovery phase.

The 1st question that we asked them was to think of an event in their life which has been the most pleasant and the most rewarding event of their life - something which they could call as the epitome of their success. We asked them to work at the individual level first. When they were done, we then asked them to get into pairs and share with each other their success story. We also asked them to change partners and share their stories with as many people as possible.

This exercise lasted for about 30mins. It served two purposes. One it acted as an Icebreaker for the team and opened them for the workshop and two, it got them initiated into a discovery mode experiencing the positive feelings associated with it.

When we asked them to re-group, we asked them to share the feelings and emotions they went through when they did this exercise. All of them shared that it was a very pleasant exercise and all of them felt good to re-live the success stories of their lives.

Discovery:

Next step was to start to discover the key strengths of their team, the life giving force of their organisation.

This we achieved by asking them to get into pairs and do interviews with their each other. We gave them an interview sheet having questions and blank sheets to make notes.

We realized it was important for them to frame the questions correctly and hence we gave them the framework of the questions.

A sample of one of the questions is produced below.

Q1. There are times in our professional career when we feel proud to be a part of our team and ourselves. We work with others (and sometimes solo) and accomplish/contribute something which remains a moment of pride in our career. Such moments are characterized by creativity, synergy, teamwork and high performance.

Think of a time when you felt proud to be a part of MSDD*. You were part of an extraordinary success story. You had accomplished something significant.

Please share with me your story of such accomplishment.

- What was the goal?
- Who established that goal?
- What was done by you and others which contributed to this accomplishment?
- What did you do, that made this a peak experience for you?
- What did others contribute to this achievement?
- Who all were involved?
- What was happening?
- What were you doing?
- What was the overall feeling like?
- What impact/influence did it have on you?
- How has it contributed to your work, your life and made a difference?

**MSDD was the name of their team.*

This was a clearly directed question, without giving any choice. The aim was to make them relive the finest moment of their career in this team. Get into specifics so that they could relive their emotions of that time.

There were other questions which they needed to answer, with the aims to extract answers for the following questions:

- What makes my role exciting?
- What are my Values
- MSDD best traits.

And for the interviewer, we had asked them to record the “key words” and “phrases” that the interviewee spoke on a separate Interview summary sheet.

After about 20minutes, we asked them to swap the roles.

Once the interview process was done for both, we asked them to join another pair to form a team of 4 people each. We asked them to share in this new team one or two stories that they had heard from their interview partner and also read the highlights of the Interview summary sheet.

After having heard each other's stories, we asked them to create a list of themes for each of the categories listed below.

- Peak Experiences and Accomplishment
- What makes my role exciting?
- What are my Values
- MSDD best traits.

We then asked them to record themes for each category on a separate chart of paper and told them that they will have to share the themes, along with 1-2 stories with the entire group. They could present the themes in any creative way they wished.

After about 1 hour of work, the teams were ready to present in the large group. All the teams presented the outcome of their sub-groups in the large group. (There were 7 small groups in all).

Interestingly the themes were mostly same in all groups. We also asked them to share how they were feeling. We could sense the feeling of joy, excitement in the group.

We now had 7 Chart papers for every topic. This completed the DISCOVERY phase of our journey.

We reinforced to the group, what they had discovered was the life giving force of their group. We encouraged them by recognizing the efforts they had put to get this out.

Dream:

Next we asked them to get back into the sub-groups they had formed earlier and answer two questions.

Q1. According to them, what were the common goals of their team?

Basically, an answer to the question "why does their team exist"?

Q2. Also having discovered the strengths of their own group, as a team what would they like to achieve together in future, (A positive compelling future).

Q1 was a slight deviation from the Appreciative Inquiry model. In Appreciative Inquiry methodology after the Discovery phase, people are asked to Dream about a positive future. However since the aim here was also to understand the common goal, we put in this question.

The teams worked in small groups for 1 hour on both the questions. Later we asked them to share what they had discussed in the large group.

We started to scribe the sharing done. At the end of the session, we had a set of Flip Charts which summarized their views of their purpose (mission) and the future (vision).

Before closing the day, we rechecked how all of them were feeling. It was really amazing to see the energy levels of the team; Even after a 10hour working day people were excited and enthusiastic. We had started at 09:00am and it was well past 07:00pm. The Manager seemed to be the most excited person. He said he was so happy to see so much alignment in the team and their desire to do more.

For us, this demonstrated the power of Inquiring in an Appreciative manner.

One word of **caution**: As an OD Practitioner we need to be aware that the team and participants are in a very different emotional state which might not be in sync with our own state. Since we have only been witness to what the group was doing. The group on the other hand was emotionally involved in the whole process and hence at a different high. As a consultant we need to be aware of it and facilitate accordingly.

Before we finally closed, we agreed that we needed to consolidate the output of the day. It was agreed that we will have a meeting with the Manager and his first line leaders to consolidate whatever was generated through the day.

So we had a meeting with the Manager and his first line after a couple of days. The Agenda was to summarize and consolidate whatever was there on the chart papers.

We achieved the same through a workshop, keeping Appreciative Inquiry mindset, so that the meeting continued to keep the energy alive.

At the end of this 2hour session, we had a consolidated output of in the form of a presentation.

The next day, this consolidated output was presented to the entire large group of 30 people and they were asked for their inputs to check whether we had missed something. We let the team manager do this presentation to the entire group. This was done intentionally for them to feel and own the proceedings. People did give their inputs and the presentation was finalized. With this we completed the Dream phase, where we had a mission statement as well as a vision statement of the team. Interestingly we did not arrive at a single statement of visions, but a set of vision statements.

There was an agreement to keep it like that for them to be able to see the vision in detail.

Design:

Next steps, which are equally important to actually call this intervention a success, are the **Design & Destiny** phases.

We choose to do the Design phase in the smaller group of the Manager and his first line.

The Aim of the Design phase was to look at the plan and strategy to arrive at the action items, which were necessary to do what was missed in the Mission and also what would be needed to move towards the common Vision.

We started by looking at the output of the Dream phase, which was in the form of flip-charts and converted into a tabular format (Microsoft XL file). We separated the enablers from the vision/mission statement and mapped each enabler with each statement of the mission/vision statement. While doing the mapping, there was a lot of discussion on clarifying each word of the mission/vision statements to get clarity. Also the enablers were also categorized under four broad categories related to:

- Customer
- Strategy
- Technical
- Behavioral Aspects.

This process of mapping the enablers, clarifying the mission/vision statement took 4 sessions of average 3hours each with the manager and his 1st line.

Next the output of these sessions was presented to the entire team of 30people, which involved not just presenting but gathering their inputs, refining the statements etc – this again was done in 2 sessions lasting 3hours each. Finally we had a clear list of enablers mapped into mission/vision and also categorized under the 4 broad categories.

It was decided that there would be four task forces made based on the four categories under which the enablers were clubbed.

Destiny:

Then we started the final phase of actually defining and implementing the actions. In the next meeting, all the 30 team members got together and volunteered themselves into the four task forces and also selected a leader for each task force. This process was completely voluntary. People chose the task forces based on their interest and the leaders got emerged automatically.

A protocol was set that each task force would meet independently every week and define clear actions and also identify the owners of each action. What was decided that each action would be very specific as to what needs to be done, it would be measurable to know when it gets done, should be achievable and feasible to do, should be relevant to the mission/vision and should have a clear time boundary. It was given a name of SMART-O (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound with a clear Owner defined).

Defining SMART goals removed the ambiguity about what the action really was and also made it clear how it was relevant to the overall Vision of the organisation.

Defining Owner clearly set the ownership of the action, which helped people to focus on their own actions and also left the onus on them to track the progress and also to report the progress in the monthly review meetings.

It was decided that there would be a monthly review meeting of all the task forces, where the leader of the task force would present to all 30 people (including the managers and the OD consultants) the progress of the actions of their respective task forces and also to take feedback and inputs from all other people.

Since last 3 months, we have had 3 review sessions. In the 1st session, the leaders presented the purpose of the task force as well as key actions identified. In the next session, they had a clear plan of actions with owners (SMART-O) for most of the actions and the 3rd session was dedicated to the progress of the actions in the task force.

The plan was to continue such review sessions for next 6months, by when most of the actions would have got started and some of them completed.

What could have been done differently?

When we look back the two interventions to determine how things could have been designed and done differently so that we could potentially get better results, we have a few thoughts in mind.

In Case 1, clearly the contracting phase should have contained the follow-up and review. As we saw, the team got so much involved into the normal operations - they could not remain connected with what they had generated. We, as consultant, should have been able to anticipate that and indicate in advance to the managers, the importance of follow-up, so that they would have been more sensitive to this process.

We believe that the lack of follow-up was not due to the intent or willingness missing in the managers, but lack of sensitivity and importance to this process.

We are not suggesting that we as consultants needed to own the process of implementing actions, but make the managers sensitive to the potential risks. Hence as consultants, we needed to anchor the process – if not own or drive it.

In Case 2, since the time period from the Design of the actions to implement the actions was very long, we could have done well by checking the view points of the leaders separately. Our hunch is that at times the leaders were not completely focused on the actions. We picked this up in our monthly review meetings were at times some of the leaders seemed to be out of sync with the proceedings. Even though we made checks with them in the meeting only, we still feel there was need to check their state of mind and view point outside the review meetings.

Even if the ownership of the action points were jointly held by the team members, we do not want to undermine the role of the leaders in this action implementation process.

We could have achieved the same by having one to one sessions with the leaders, giving us access to their point of views.

Conclusion

As a summary, it is easier to generate connectedness in the DREAM and DESTINY phase of Appreciative Inquiry. What is important for the practitioners and managers to remember is that it takes planned effort to sustain the level of connectedness and energy in the real life of the organisation – where the primary focus always has been on the content and structure.

People need to be made to remain in touch with the emotional states, related to achieving the goal, along with focus on defining ownership for actions generated. And the provision for sustain the energy needs to be thought about in the contracting phase of the intervention itself. Many

managers might not be able to see the risk of not planning these steps, even if they are completely open, willing and involved in the change process. Hence it should be the responsibility of the consultant to make the managers sensitive to this aspect.

This aspect of the Appreciative Inquiry is more often ignored and hence giving the notion that Appreciative Inquiry is only about generating positive euphoria, whereas it is possible to achieve the goal by having a continued focus till the final goal is met.

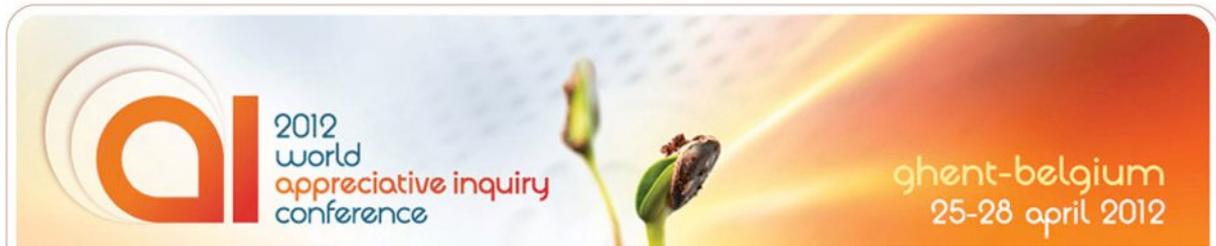
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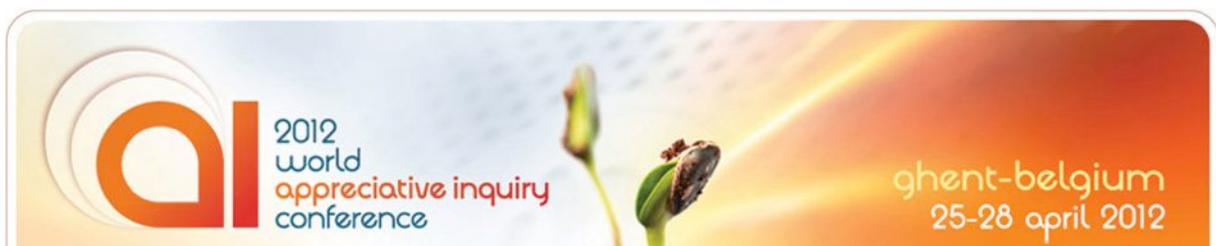
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From Appreciative to Spiritual Inquiry: A Generative Contribution of Appreciative Approach for World Renewal

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By:
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Abstract

Experience and study have shown that massive changes are taking place in the society in various aspects of development whether it is economical, social, educational, political or environmental. People are more suffering than enjoying because of moral deterioration and terrorism in different ways, which are adversely affecting human life and development process in the society. This shows that we need to have a new culture of development that saves our life and the mother earth.

Human development, peace and prosperity are possible through positivity, generativity and the enrichment of inner self. The problem inquiry approach is far from the social and spiritual reality, so it cannot change human inner self as a result development takes place superficially. Many problems are in our heart, mind or in our inner self not outside, but we are looking for the solutions from outside.

Religion and spiritualism emerged before the advent of money, capitalism and socialism. They have been embedded in human life from the very beginning, so they cannot be ignored rather they should go with science, technology and development.

The positive cum spiritual inquiry development approach can go far beyond the comfort zone of the usual methodologies. This action approach brings people, their culture, religious and spiritual core values, soul, mind and body together for overall human development. Spiritual inquiry is a culture of positive cum spiritual governance for global good that enhances our capacities to achieve developmental goals and supports to sustain a human friendly society.

Background

Development is essentially about systematic, open and deliberate application of appropriate policies and utilization of resources to enhance material and moral standard with self-discipline for the emancipation of human life. For responsive and positive transformation of people's ways of living, attitude and behavior, it has to address the present needs of people without disturbing the possibilities of future generations. Development, therefore, is an integrated, balanced, continuous progress; prosperity of different dimensions in the society that combines social,

educational, spiritual, economic, environmental, technical, political and different human development aspects. –*Chapagain 2012*

Prior to the understanding of development process of any society, we must understand its historical foundation. Every society and nation has its own sets of values, principles and beliefs.

Development Foundation of East and West

Internal, external, national and international factors profoundly affect the development process in every country. The logic provides the broader perspective to development by which we can compare and analyze the foundations of development of various countries of East and West or North and South. The Eastern (more aptly Non-Western) countries have greater orientation towards internal and social aspects of development but less to the technical, international and global aspects. This is reversed to the case with Western countries. –*Chapagain 2012*

Asian and African development pattern has been rooted into internal, social and cultural values whereas Western / European is mainly brought up with technical, physical, scientific and global base. These technical, physical and scientific styles of development have become dominant patterns of development since the dawn of Western colonization over Africa and Asia. Furthermore, the Western style of development has been gradually adopted throughout the world. This style of development usually overlooks the internal aspects of development but rather nourishes technological, physical and scientific expansions.

Supposition: The more we are aware of our internal and social values, the more we are capable to grow and develop ourselves and our society.

Development Style of the East and the West

East = First internal, social, spiritual and then national, international and scientific

West = First scientific, national, international and then social, internal and spiritual

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is a thought provoking positive science for the search of best in development, business, education and spiritual sectors. It is characterized by generative, constructive and transformative principles, theories and practices. –*Chapahain-2012*

"Appreciative Inquiry is an approach ... based on strengths rather than weaknesses, on a vision of what is possible rather than an analysis of what is not." -David Cooperrider

No society or person is completely positive or negative in itself. They consist certain positive values. Positive styles and values can be seen in religious writing as in Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity in scattered forms. In an organized form, it has been researched and applied by Prof. David L. Cooperrider and Suresh Shrivastava at Case Western Reserve University, Ohio, USA.

Appreciative Inquiry is one of the positive approaches somewhat similar to positive psychology. It is a cross-fertilization of Eastern spiritual philosophy, Western knowledge management and action research.

Human Capacity Building through Appreciative Inquiry Approach in Achieving Developmental Goals

Appreciative inquiry is favourable in building human capacities and achieving developmental goals. People having positive traits are more capable of achieving personal and organizational goals than the ones having negative traits. This has been dealt by a piece of Chapagain's Ph.D. research made in 2004.

In an attempt to measure the degree of usefulness of AI approach in achieving human resource capacities and development goal, respondents were asked to rate through a four-scale instrument. As presented in the table below, out of 111 respondents, 107 people responded to the query. Among the respondents, 31 (28%) responded it as being 'strongly useful' followed by 39 (35%) who stated it as 'useful'. The remaining 37 respondents affirmed 'same as earlier' and 'no idea' and four out of the total did not respond at all. This indicates that AI is useful in building human resource capacities and fulfilling developmental goals.

Usefulness of Appreciative Inquiry Approach in Achieving Human Capacities and Development Goals

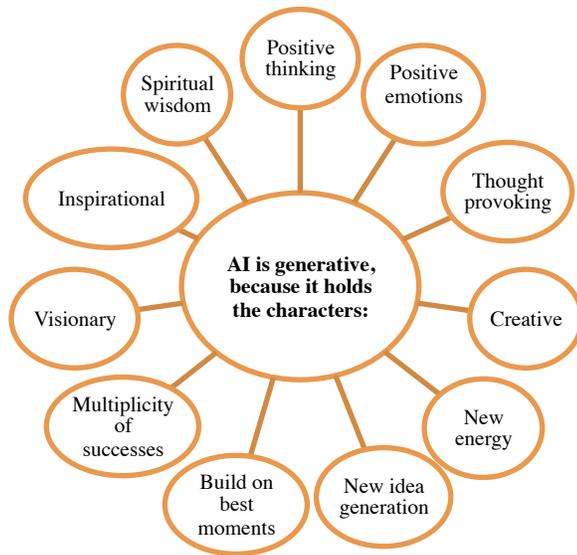
<i>Usefulness of Appreciative Inquiry in achieving human capacity building and achieving development goals</i>	<i>Number of Respondents</i>	<i>%</i>
Strongly useful	31	28%
Useful	39	35%
Same as other approaches	16	14%
No idea	21	19%
No response	4	4%
<i>Total</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>100%</i>

Source: Chapagain, 2004

The above research finding suggests that the exposure of individual to appreciative inquiry develops positive traits and the cumulative efforts of such individuals making organizations responsive to capacity building and change. Appreciative / positive thought and behavior are the fundamentals of human life not only for building capacities but also building patience, peace and attaining developmental goals. Positive thought leads towards positive inquiry, action, love, peace, freedom and eventually brings institutional changes in human system and in the society.

Appreciative Inquiry is Generative, so it is Transformative

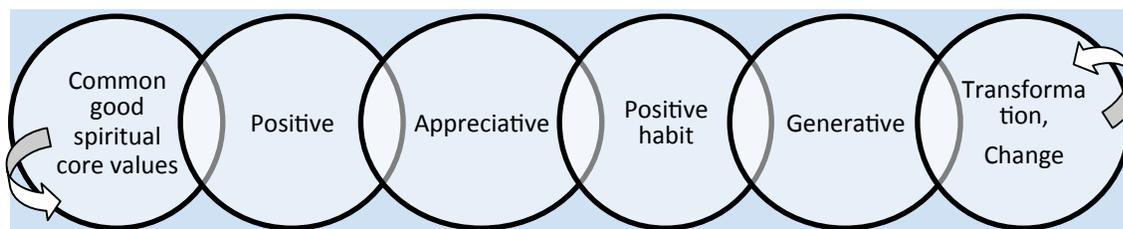
Appreciative inquiry is induced by positive forces, it is thought provoking, mind blowing and generative rather than just appreciative because it holds the characters:



The characteristics held by AI approach exhibits that it is progressively changing and advancing by amalgamating many positive cores of other positive and spiritual sciences for personal transformation and world renewal. Spiritual wisdom is surrounded with positive core values for human wellbeing. They are directly related to appreciative/positive approaches or even above them.

Appreciation is a character of positivity and both appreciation and positivity contributes to generative power. Positivity and generative power are complementary to each other at the initial course, later they may hold independent character. However, the process stirring from appreciative to positive and positive to generative will be reiterating. If we desire just appreciative out of positivity, the transformational process will be questioned. As a result appreciative inquiry is generative, thus it creates ripple effect for societal transformation.

Spiral Flow of Positive Transformation:



Source: Chapagain, 2012

How Generative Vibration Storms in Human Mind for World Renewal?

The modern age is the age of science where religion has no or virtually less space. Nevertheless, science, religion and spiritual wisdom are logically connected with each other. Conflict basically takes place due to unjust behavior, social exclusion and religious biases. Religion and spirituality have to be taken deeply and wisely to unite the world into a humanly interfaith, because creating

interfaith among different religious groups is crucial to sustain a global good society. Positive approaches can solicit fundamental concepts and positive elements from the best practices of religion that leads people towards peace, truth and service.

Appreciative /positive approaches are constructive and generative which ignite practitioners' hopes, possibilities and potentials. It also engenders new knowledge and skills to come up with common good values. Continuous constructive and open forces of positive thinking spark the generative gift. Open, positive, appreciative and spiritual cores are supporting with each other. When positive approach passes through crucial experiences; it will generate new knowledge, common good values and ethics.

Research Questions

- Imagine that it is 50 years from now and the news headlines are telling us that the Earth is healthy and thriving. What would you do to continue the health and vitality of the Earth?
- When did the first human being appear in the world?
- Did the first human being appear with his /her caste, class and religion in the Earth?
- Who created our caste, class and religion in the world?
- When did spiritualism, socialism and capitalism appear in the world community?
- What would happen if the Islam and Christian population of US are just reversed at present?
- What would happen if the Islam and Hindu population of India are just reversed at present?
- When did the money appear in the world community?
- Every one of the world cultures and people have possible unique and important gift to share with the world and this is equally true for your country. Being a citizen of your country, what unique strength or quality do you see about this country and its people which could be offered to the rest of the world as a gift towards creating a global community?
- Do universal core values contribute to save the mother Earth if accepted and followed by the world community?
- How is human being different from rest of all living beings?
- How do you know the people having positive traits are more capable than the ones with negatives traits in building capacities and achieving developmental goals?
- In 20 years from now as you realize with your deepest hopes and aspiration, how would you describe the future of your country in terms of what new, better and different things would be happening?
- How do you communicate the “universal core values” in your organization, your country and beyond?
- How do you see the world community after 100 years from now?

Religious-cum-Spiritual Search to Draw Global Good Values

In this connection, the world major religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity have been looked into shortly. Hinduism has been looked from the eyes of other than Eastern perspective.

Christianity and Eastern philosophy especially the Vedic (Hinduism) and Buddhism are some of the major sources of positivity and common good spiritual core values, which contributes to create global good values and universal spiritualism.

Hindu religion

"The strength of Hinduism lies in its infinite adaptability to the infinite diversity of human character and human tendencies. It has its highly spiritual and abstract side suited to the philosopher, its practical to the man of the world, its aesthetic and ceremonial side attuned to the man of the poetic feeling and imagination; and its quiescent contemplative aspect that has its appeal for the man of peace and the lover of seclusion." Sir Monier Monier-Williams (1819-1899) -Indologist and head of the Oxford's Boden Chair

"Hinduism gives its followers complete freedom. It does not insist on any particular discipline or prayer. Religion has to release us from bondage. The only imperative commandment it can have is to ask us to purify ourselves. Hinduism has emphasized the need for inner purity. Indian civilization and culture has shown a tremendous capacity for assimilation and absorption. If Hinduism becomes narrow, we shall be destroying our precious heritage." - Vinoba Bhave, (1894-1982)

"The Hindu mind represents humanity's oldest and most continuous stream of conscious intelligence on the planet. Hindu sages, seers, saints, yogis and Gyanis have maintained an unbroken current of awareness linking humanity with the Divine since the dawn of history, and as carried over from earlier cycles of civilization in previous humanities unknown to our present spiritually limited culture." - David Frawley, also known as Pandit Vamadeva Shastri the American eminent teacher and practitioner of Ayurvedic medicine and Vedic astrology and author.

"Hinduism is the one world religion that reaches out to embrace other faiths with respect, a welcome change from groups who expend enormous amounts of energy condemning the sincere beliefs of others. There is no eternal damnation in Hinduism because Hindus believe absolutely no one is excluded from divine grace." Linda Johnsen

On the day after Gandhi's death (30 January 1948), London Times editorial said: *"No country but India and no religion but Hinduism could have given birth to a Gandhi."* This saying provides greatness of Hinduism.

"An ignorant man without any positive faith who knows only to doubt, goes to ruin. To such a doubting, none there is neither this world nor the world beyond. There is no happiness for him." Bhagavat Gita, - 4 II 40

There were many wars broke out in the world. India was fragmented into three pieces when the British left. During the Mughal Empire (over 300 years) and independence time, numerous Hindus were massacred. Many of them were forced to lose properties, land, territories, spiritual learning center like Takshayasila, Nalanda, Somanath, Amarnath, Kashi Vishvanath, Krishna's birth place temple of Mathura, Ayodhya and many more. Western also tormented them. Dutch historian, Dr. Koenraad Elst (1959-) said, *"Most western scholars positively dislike Hinduism when it stands up to defend itself. They prefer museum Hinduism, or innocent Gandhian kind of Hinduism, and they readily buy the secularist story that an assertive Hinduism is not the "real Hinduism"*.

Here I am presenting some pieces of writing by a brilliant and brave Catholic writer **François Gautier**. His writings have been observed in 71 prominent articles and pasted: <http://www.francoisgautier.com/En/71.html>. Besides several articles, he has written prolific books too.

His writing uncovers the fact of genocide intending that not to be repeated such inhuman cruelties in the world again. He has mentioned several cases of Hindu holocaust especially of Mughal period and some before and after the British freedom.

Some of the pieces of the writing of François Gautier are:

"Hindu Civilization has deepest and arguably the longest continuous history of existence. But its children know very little about her past. During Islamic period (over 300 years), the civilizations of North, North-West, central, Eastern and eventually even its Southern reaches were devastated. During that traumatic period Hindus suffered incalculable damage and trauma. When Hindus internal struggle against this foreign tormentor were about to succeed, the country faced another foreign threat and was colonized by the European colonizers....."

The massacre of 6 million Jews by Hitler and the persecution that Jews suffered all over the world in the last 15 centuries has been meticulously recorded by Jews themselves after 1945 and has been enshrined not only in history books, but also in Holocaust museums, the most famous one being in Washington DC. It has not been done with a spirit of revenge - look at Israel and Germany today - they are in the best of terms; yet, facts are facts and contemporary Germany had to come to terms with its terrible actions during Second World War.

Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists have suffered also a terrible Holocaust, probably without parallel in human history. Take the Hindu Kush for instance, probably one of the biggest genocides of Hindus. There is practically no serious research ever done about it and no mention in history books. Yet the name Hindu Kush appears many times in the writings of Muslim chroniclers: in 1333 AD Ibn Battutah, the medieval Berber traveler, said the name meant 'Hindu Killer', a meaning still given by Afghan mountain dwellers.

A few known historical figures can be used to justify this estimate. Encyclopedia Britannica recalls that in December 1398 AD, Timur Lane ordered the execution of at least 50,000 captives before the battle for Delhi; likewise, the number of captives butchered by Timur Lane's army was about 100,000. Encyclopedia Britannica again mentions that Mughal emperor Akbar ordered the massacre of about 30,000 captured Rajput Hindus on February 24, 1568 AD, after the battle for Chitod, a number confirmed by Abul Fazl, Akbar's court historian. Afghan historian Khondamir notes that during one of the many repeated invasions on the city of Herat in Western Afghanistan, which used to be part of the Hindu Shahiya kingdoms "1,500,000 residents perished". "Thus, writes Vyas, it is evident that the mountain range was named as Hindu Kush as a reminder to the future Hindu generations of the slaughter and slavery of Hindus during the Moslem conquests"...

Hitler, in his monstrous quest for a "pure" race, murdered six million Jews in his gas chambers during the Second World War; and Belgium historian Koenraad Elst estimates that between the year 1000 and 1525, eighty million Hindus died at the hands of Muslim invaders, probably the biggest holocaust in the whole history of our planet. ...

Or take the later plight of the Kashmiri Pandits. Over four lakh Kashmiri Pandits have been forced to flee their homeland. Many Pandit, men, women and children have been brutally murdered. About 70,000 still languish in makeshift refugee camps in Jammu and Delhi. Scores of temples in Kashmir have been desecrated, destroyed, looted; More than 900 educational institutions have been attacked by terrorists.

Properties of Pandits have been vandalized, businesses destroyed or taken over; even hospitals have not been spared...

Journalists should also do a little bit of introspection and try to think for themselves. It is unfair, as it has been done in Ayodhya and after the Gujarat riots, to put so much blame on Hindus as if they are the worst criminals in the world and the destroyers of Nehruvian secularism. Millions of temples were destroyed in India by Muslim invaders, some of them the most sacred to Hindus, like the Kashi Vishvanath, Krishna's birth temple in Mathura, the rebuilt Somnath temple and the Treta-ka-Thakur temple in Ayodhya, and Hindus hardly ever protested. When they dare to destroy one disused mosque, without any human casualties, what a hullabaloo has been created year after year by journalists, Muslims and secularists. When Islamic militants plant bomb, they kill scores of Hindus every time. Do Hindus plant bombs upon Muslims? Does one journalist dare to say that?

Hinduism, the timeless Vedic spirituality, which has given the world hata-yoga, meditation, Pranayama, Ayurveda and the concept of the Avatar which allows for religious tolerance... Hinduism has always shown that it is not fundamental, that it accepts the others, with their religions and customs, as long as they do not try to impose these beliefs on the majority community. Indeed, in a recent report, the UNESCO pointed out that out of 128 countries where the Jews lived before Israel was created, only one, India, did not persecute them and allowed them to prosper and practice Judaism in peace. (Similar or even higher example India demonstrated in the case of Dalai Lama and Mother Teresa).

"No nation can move forward unless it squarely faces its past. The courage to remember helps us not to repeat the same mistakes and to build a better future for our children" - Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

We all or the world community should follow universal human values by honoring the past that naturally shapes the beauty of future. Erasing the history and turning the picture into the wall cannot change the reality of the society.

Buddhism

Buddhism, a monotheistic religion had its origin about 2600 years ago when Siddhartha Gautam from Nepal got himself awakened. The Four Noble Truths and Eight-fold-paths are the foundational beliefs and defining features of Buddhism.

The Four Truths of Buddhism include the assumptions that all life knows *Dukha* (suffering), wanting is the cause of suffering, there is however a way out to end suffering. Eight-fold-paths are the way to end the sufferings. The Eight-fold-paths consist of right understanding, right aspiration, right effort, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right mindfulness and right concentration.

“Thousands of candles can be lit from a single candle, and the life of the candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.” Buddha

“You cannot travel the path until you have become the path itself” because “The way is not in the sky. The way is in the heart.” Buddha

Christianity

Christianity had its origin as a Jewish Sect in the Eastern Mediterranean Coast of the Middle East and later spread to different parts of the world. Christians believe that Jesus is the Messiah prophesied in Hebrew Bible, often referred to the "old testament". Christianity the largest religion now represents about a quarter to a third of the world's population.

Christian denominations mainly have faith on Holy Trinity of God – God the father, Son of God and Holy Spirit. The death, decent into hell, resurrection and ascension of Christ are also religiously important to them. Church, Bible, and Communion of Saints hold the holiness. Very often, they believe in Christ's Second Coming, the Day of Judgment and salvation of the faithful.

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” Jesus Christ.

“Happy are those who work for peace” - Jesus Christ.

Islam

Islam is the religion emerged and introduced by Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century. It has spread in many states. Identity of Islam as a religion rests upon 'The Five Pillars of Islam'. These pillars define the basic identity of Muslims – their faith, beliefs and practices – and bind together a worldwide community of believers into a fellowship of shared values. These five pillars of Islam include *Shahadah* (profession of faith), *Salah* (prayer), *Zakat* (alms giving), *Sawm* (fasting during holy month of Ramadan) and *Hajj* (the pilgrimage to Makkah).

"He who has done an atom's weight of good will receive his rewards, and he who has done an atom's weight of evil will receive his punishments." — The Holy Quran, 99:7, 8

"Allah directs you in regard of your Children's (inheritance): to the male, a portion equal to that of two females.... These are settled portions ordained by Allah." Qur'an 4:11

Spiritual Understanding and Global Values

“The human being is an eternal soul living within a physical body and is not the physical body.”
Brahma Baba 1876 Sindh - January 18, 1969, Mount Abu, Rajasthan, India

Firstly, we all are the human soul then only we are white, black, male, female, high level, middle level, high caste, low caste, rich and poor, skilled, unskilled, religious, non-religious, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Jews etc. If we do not accept that we are powerful human souls to foster co-existence and avoid discrimination; conflict may arise in the society. We human beings are above the class, caste, color, creed, ethnicity, religion, culture, politics, etc. Neither of us are the poor and rich body, but we are the powerful souls consisting in the physical body as Brahma Baba said. We must accept this universal truth to unite the world. The Earth is not poor. But poor human beings are making it poorer.

Universal Core Values for Global Good:

Foremost, the universal core values for global good will unite all. These values are equally useful to anyone, anywhere in the world. Peace for me, my country, the brave and well-off country like the USA and the India, Belgium, Russia, Iraq, Sudan. This is how the universal values fit to all equally. This process will advance human greatness and save their life from intentional, unintentional, known and unknown anger, greed, suspicion, guilty, hate, stress, conflict and terrorism.
Source: Chapagain 2012

Love, Peace, Truth, Wisdom,
Integrity, Justice, Co-
existence, Service, Devotion,
Contentment

us

We may think, bringing the diverse people, their feelings, monotheism, polytheisms, culture, nationality and flags at one place are difficult. But, if we shift our thinking from a self mode to common good mode or of universal core values by staying aloof from ego, it will not be a problem.

Moving from Appreciative Inquiry to Spiritual Inquiry

Religion, science and social science are the branches of the same tree. We cannot detach religion and spirituality from science and development. Religion and spiritualism emerged before the invention of money, the dawn of capitalism and socialism. Therefore, we should converge the human friendly core of science, religion, positivity, spiritualism, and development for world renewal.

This new idea generation is the gift of positive philosophy. Barbara L. Fredrickson also explains that the positive approaches are more open to new ideas. She writes about the cores of positivity in her book 'Positivity' pp 21, 24 - "Positivity opens us. The first core that, truth about positive emotions is that they open our hearts and our minds making us more receptive and more creative. Positivity transforms us for the better. This is the second core truth about positive emotions. By opening our hearts and minds, positive emotions allow us to discover and build new skills, new ties, new knowledge and new ways of being."

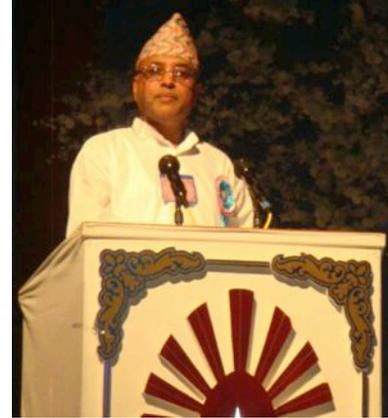
She has presented ten forms of positivity: joy, gratitude, serenity, interest, hope, pride, amusement, inspiration, awe, and love. (pp39) Anger, shame, contempt, disgust, embarrassment, guilt, hatred, sadness, scared, and stress are mentioned as other different form of negativity. (pp144)

She does not assert for the complete emptiness of negativity to flourish positivity. It is not wise to ignore negative thinking easily. Negativity and positivity are relatives. Even the best goal of positivity is achieved by being alert on negativity. It is therefore wise to oversee negativity quickly and transform our thinking and action into positive side strongly.

Convergence of Positivity, Science, Spiritualism and Development

"Spirituality is the realization of the soul and its realization with God"- Brahmakumaris

Rush of development, moral and environmental degradation, terrorism etc are indicative for why we need new culture of development that saves our life and the mother Earth. This new culture is possible only when we have unity, universal values, human value based education, integrity and rule of law. This new emergence will follow an innovative development cycle, a convergence of positivity, spiritual cores, science and development, which is described below. The innovative development cycle as presented below indicates that the Golden age (Satya Yug) will come again right after the Iron age (Kali Yug) to save the life, mother and motherland. The re-occurrence of Golden age will be a modified Golden age amalgamating with positivity, spiritualism, science and development. This action cycle will be known as 'Positive- cum- Spiritual Inquiry Action Cycle' that will capture the essence of our past, present and future. This can be used in any sector of development of both East and West. This can go beyond the regular comfort zone of problem solving, participatory and even common positive approaches. I have shared this action cycle in many different forums, trainings, workshops and conferences. I had presented this as a paper in a conference of 'Convergence of Science and Spirituality for World Renewal' (4-8 Sept 2010) organized by Brahma Kumaris Ishwariya Vishwa Vidyalaya, Mount Abu, Rajasthan, India.



Albert Einstein writes "The whole of science is nothing more than a refinement of everyday thinking." This saying directly asserts that science and development will go together, otherwise as Einstein says, "Science without religion is lame. Religion without science is blind." Actually we need corresponding knowledge of science, social phenomena, spiritualism and development to serve the world community. Without knowing spiritualism, the meaning of the science will remain incomplete. Science qualifies the meaning of social and spiritual science whereas social and spiritual sciences spark the biotic and abiotic connectivity of science for better world.

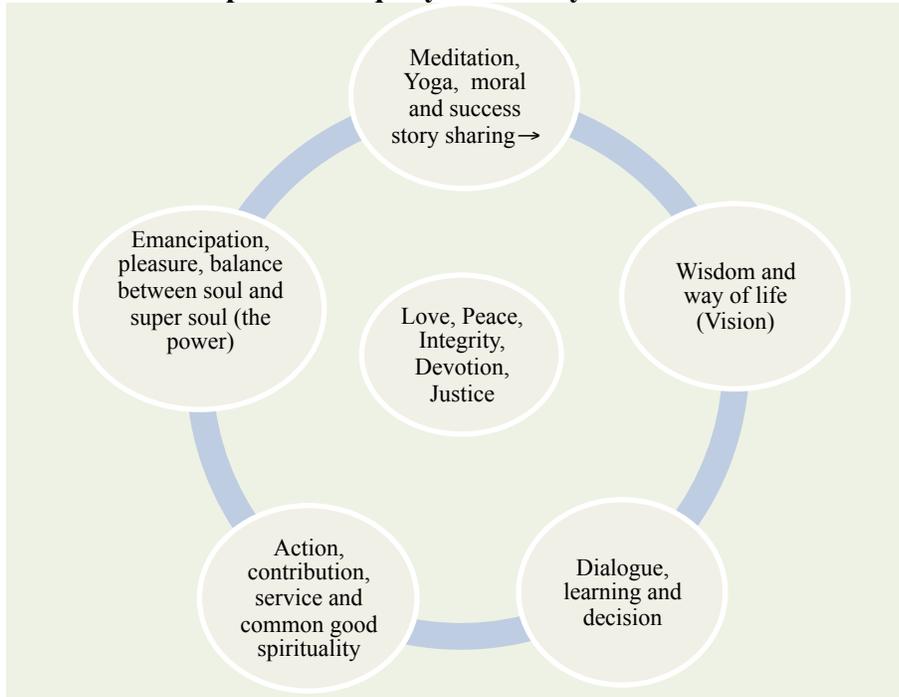
Spiritual Inquiry Cycle for Development

Problem inquiry cycle was started around hundred years ago by the Westerners in many countries of the world. This approach did not work well from the beginning in the Non-West. This is one of the reasons why many Asian and African countries are still below poverty line. They have become expert in problem-exploring and blaming but not in the solutions finding.

Over the last 25 years, Appreciative Inquiry action cycle for organization, business and community development has come into existence. It is comparatively working better than the problem solving cycle. This cycle has better attracted the people over a short period of time because of its strength based principle, constructive and generative character and ethical education.

The positive-cum-spiritual inquiry action cycle is apt here to address the gaps appeared at the foundation of development. This common good development cycle is easier to apply in the countries that are from the internal, social and spiritual background. However, this equally works for other communities of West since it is based on the common good values for world renewal.

Positive- cum- Spiritual Inquiry Action Cycle



Source: Chapagain 2012

Short Introduction to the Five Steps of the Positive- cum- Spiritual Inquiry Action Cycle:

This is a strength based **positive-cum-spiritual inquiry action cycle for human and humanity development firstly introduced in the world** connecting positivity, science, development and spiritualism. This can be applied in any area like education, development, business, management, theology etc. Short introduction of each step of the cycle are:

1. Meditation, Yoga, Moral and Success Story Sharing

For the first step, participants will be asked to go with meditation, simple Yoga and to share relevant moral and success stories to set the learning environment and make a base for the coming steps. An energizer can be played to reinforce the learning environment and to refresh the participants.

2. Wisdom and Way of Life (Vision)

Future vision will be envisioned in second step with peace, patience and wisdom. Picturing or writing methods will be used considering the level and interest of the participants. The information of the past as to see the realistic vision of future will also be looked into.

3. Dialogue, Learning and Decision

The visions seen in the second step will be put into intensive dialogue to understand better and take a decision. Relevant positive inquiry related tools can be used during the exercise. Inspirational quote or provocative proposition can be made, displayed and shared to make the determination stronger and raise motivation.

4. Action, Contribution, Service and Common Good Spirituality

To accelerate the action, interested people can offer *daan* (gift) in cash or resources as a Dharma. This can be a part of the social responsibility. All these will be made in self-motivated ways. *Puran*, preaching, moral, positive or spiritual enlightening program can also be organized to disseminate knowledge, wisdom and collect resources. Self-motivated and feel proud style will be taken into priority. Service to humanity will be recognized high. Plan of action can be put into a standard and mutually agreed planning format.

5. Emancipation, Pleasure, Balance between Soul and Super Soul

This is the step to review, reflect, and learn lessons, feel liberated and enlightened. This also entails the celebration of successes in self, organization and community by connecting to soul and super soul. Soul denotes our own soul (*atma*) and the super soul (*param-atma*) denotes the soul of the great personalities (Gods, yogis, swamis, great leaders, great social reformers etc). This process multiplies the strengths and encourages us to move further for even better.

The positive-cum- spiritual inquiry cycle works better for the overall development of human being. But spiritual injustice and fundamentalism are harmful for any nation. So, we should utilize the human- friendly spiritual core values by pummeling the dark side of it. This is the principal reason to converging development, science, positivity and spiritual wisdom together for sustainable development.

"I believe that spirituality and science are complementary but different investigative approaches with the same goal of seeking the truth. In this, there is much each may learn from the other, and together they may contribute to expand the horizon of human knowledge and wisdom." Dalai Lama

Conclusion

An embryo of blooming change starts from positive emotions and common good core values. This entails the generative power of Appreciative Inquiry upon which this paper stands.

Appreciative Inquiry is advancing towards common good values and interfaith by converging positivity, development, science and spiritualism. Positive and spiritual cores are growing-up

through constructive and generative character of AI. Considering the closer intent of both spirituality and positive approaches; it can be inferred that appreciative inquiry is simultaneously reinforcing a new development paradigm naming "Positive Cum Spiritual Inquiry for Human and Humanity Development".

Development assumes two different manifestations: tangible and intangible. Positive inquiry has greater orientation towards intangible side of development which ultimately leads us to pull off physical aspects of development. Positive people are comparatively more capable and productive than the negative ones in achieving individual and social prosperity.

We should consider that we are human beings for the first (eternal soul) then only the religious and political being and the scientist. The universal human values will unite us all. This is the need of the day to lead science, spiritualism and development together for world renewal otherwise the thing may happen as Einstein says: *"I know not with what weapons World War III will be fought, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones."*

*"There is only one caste, the caste of humanity.
There is only one religion, the religion of love.
There is only one language, the language of the heart.
There is only one God, he is Omnipresent."* - Sai Baba

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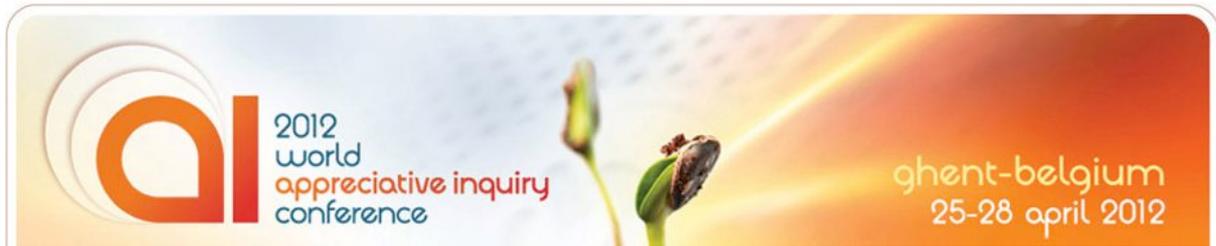
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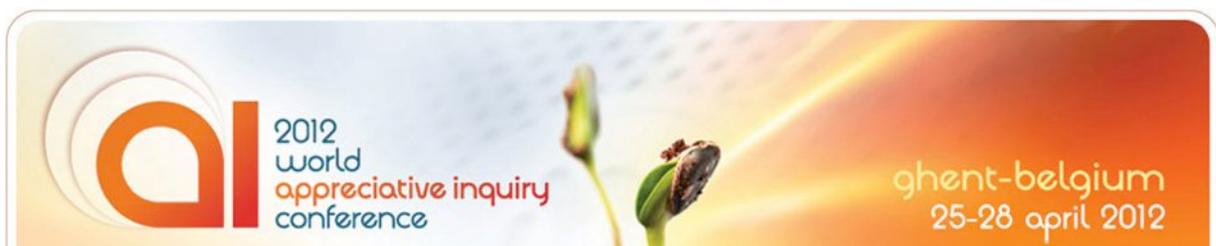
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M.A. cultural][engineering: university education for agents of positive change
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This is the story of „cultural][engineering“, an unusual bachelor’s and master’s course at the Otto-von-Guericke University in Magdeburg, Germany. “cultural][engineering” (short: CE) is an educational frame for agents of positive change with a focus on developing an attitude of connectivity, interdisciplinary sensitivity, and innovative agency. Developed without relation to the concept of Appreciative Inquire (short: AI), the two concepts seem to intuitively pursue the same principles. This paper explores this common ground and extracts possible take aways for both schemes of positive change and development.

CE practice

We delve right into the practice and start with a tangible impression of cultural engineering in action. For this we look at three kinds of practical projects realized by students as part of their studies. Being sensitive to the function and atmosphere of space is – as we shall see – one cornerstone of the CE thinking. While all kinds of space from micro- over macro- to cyberspaces can be engaged, urban space in particular lends itself to be experimented with in terms of engaging society and the public at large. „Talking Walls“, was a CE project engaging space in the form of a specific building in the centre of the city. Magdeburg itself is a mid-sized city of a little over 200.000 people about 1,5 hours from Berlin in what has been formerly been the German Democratic Republic. With the German reunification and the fall of the wall most of its industry fell flat as well and many old buildings went into disrepair. Among these the once beautiful house of crafts which had gained personal significance to many citizens during GDR times as a community place of celebrating family events and biographical milestones. Several commercial attempts to revitalize the building had failed, legal constrictions inhibited developments, and the building seemed doomed beyond repair. At this point a team of cultural engineering students formed to engage the situation with the aim of drawing public attention to the neglected building and starting to re-attract investment interest. They arranged guided tours in the building where contemporary witnesses would narrate their memories. Creative audio-visual media, theatrical actors and interactive installations would illustrate and bring to live forgotten times and create snapshots of life within the desolate walls. Over 100 citizens joined one of over 20 tours in just two months time. Many of them left with tears and moving statements about the lost beauty of the place. One year later a public initiative started to form, two years later the city decided to reinvest 9 million Euros and today, four years later, the building is under huge reconstruction. The story is much more complex of course and it is not possible to draw a linear line from this limited intervention to the happy end, but it shows that it is possible to engage spaces and their

emotional significance in a way that contributes to and sometimes catalyses long-term developments as it stirs attention and directs mental and social energies into positive futures. It is true for many of the more complex issues that a river cannot easily be turned to flow into another direction, it can however be redirected through digging an alternative riverbed over time¹. „Engineering culture“ inevitably means to work with such long-term horizons, dynamic complexities and subtle influences if it is to achieve some real change. If we look at CE from a bird's eyes view we can take „Talking Walls“ to represent a whole category of typical intervention projects drawing attention to and creating an awareness for neglected aspects or niches of society. This can be related to buildings as in this case. It can also take the form of public photo shooting competitions, city area reconceptions, artistic festivals in unlikely places etc. Besides sensitivity to the dimension of space, the cultural engineer cultivates a keen awareness for the cultural layer of collective meaning and meaning making. What is being overlooked? What is not important here?² are questions uncovering implicit priorities and blind spots in collective value systems. One CE project e.g. is drawing attention to the overlooked 1000 residents of St. Petersburg's psychiatric asylum Peterhof, just a few miles from the touristic high place of the city's famous castle. A professional b/w photo documentation had been coupled with pictures drawn by the residents themselves together with a narration of their anecdotes and personal stories providing an insight into their life's perspective. The ensuing exhibition in Magdeburg was conducted together with Russian and Swiss partners A similar project using simple video techniques helped a small village threatened by demographical developments to create a shared narration of their collective identity emphasising their strengths and points of hope. In another instance an experiential darkness path enriched with personal encounters of blind people was offered for the normally sighted to get a first hand feeling for a life in the dark. The second category of projects typical for what cultural engineers do in order to engage and question cultural norms deals with communication, media and relationships. „Switching Tables“ is an example of a fun project instigating new relationships around distributed dining. Three cooking teams prepare the different courses of one menu at their homes in different places across the city and after each course get on their bikes to change places to finally join all teams for the finish at a bar. In this way new acquaintances are made and new parts of the city are discovered around shared culinary pleasures. Instigating relationships, discovering new spaces and appreciating other cultures is also realized in projects such as musical festivals with artists from the city's twin towns in Poland and Bosnia, intercultural gardening, or city-wide anti-racism rallies. The third kind of projects takes a comprehensive approach to complex challenges in addressing the system level of societal-cultural phenomena and working with the force of institutionalisation to prepare the

¹ Jullien, François (1999): Über die Wirksamkeit, Berlin.

² Baecker, Dirk (1999): Die Organisation als System, Frankfurt/ M.

riverbed for the long-term. In this sense the students started a local cultural association³ in 2003 which has served as a platform for dozens of urban projects since then, has grown to 150 members until today and has won the city's cultural award last year. Similarly, a students' organisational consulting company was founded and a.o. has offered creative workshops visualising organisational culture through the subtle use of colours. Beyond student projects, on institutional university level the faculty behind CE is active in Maputo, Mozambique, where together with the local university it offers a double degree in „educational system design“. Supporting the Mozambiquan decision makers in designing a national education system which is tailor-made and suited to their historically grown requirements, the demographical challenge of a population rate of over 50% children and rural infrastructural preconditions is a task indeed. Particularly if the educational system is not just to be copy pasted from the „developed world“, but is meant to be grown and gardened out of the native Mozambiquan soil in order to fit and make sense for the long term. The CE principle here is to appreciate and seriously take into account the shape of the social-cultural reality at hand and to uncover the forces that keep constructing it as such. This then provides a working basis for the cultural engineer to start reimagining these realities in new and alternative ways and to instigate a process of co-creation and co-shaping of new versions of this collective reality.

All these experiences in real-life projects contribute to building a confidence within the students for engaging existing social systems with a keen awareness, expectant hope and deep seated conviction that change for the better is always possible and that social and cultural „realities“ do not need to stay the way they are. Being able to say this of students and graduates does point to a certain new educational quality as it is certainly quite unlike the simplistic educational model of „preparing learners for the labour market“. If compared to the classical university education the results are much more practice driven, if compared to classical vocational or applied studies the resulting competences are much wider rooted and deeper grounded, and if compared to the modernistic mind-set of rationalistic faith in constant scientific progress it is much more aware of the unmanageability of human society's complexity. In any case what we are looking at speaks of a new quality of empowered actors for positive change and the question remains as to how this competence can be developed in a formal training context.

“cultural][engineering”

These days, there are many educational initiatives across the globe experimenting with learning formats for this new breed of change agents. Most of these very differently framed new formats go unnoticed as a grand coalition has not yet emerged. Initiated by Renate Girmes, senior professor for learning theory and school didactics, cultural][engineering started out in 2001 with

³ KanTe e.V.

the explicit aim to educate border crossers bridging the worlds and leveraging potential of change hidden in this “in-between”. In order for them to gain a genuinely interdisciplinary perspective and to act competently in unpredictable situations, a new educational format would need to be devised. It was clear that a broad methodological repertoire spanning from the humanities to the engineering sciences would need to be brought around a core of learning theory and pedagogical reasoning for starting and accompanying processes of personal, collective, or systemic unfolding. Soon after, like-minded allies were found in the faculties of cultural science, logistics and business informatics, all convinced of the value of mutual awareness between these very different disciplines. These pillars were carefully integrated into one new cohesive whole ensuring that students would not be confronted with an undigested “knowledge potpourri”, but find a coherent educational frame around a truly innovative curriculum solidly based in foundational pedagogical principles. Through the cultural sciences the learners would be enabled to understand the relativity and contingency of social worlds’ current realities, theories of knowledge, learning and informatics would enable them to analyse and rethink the symbolic construction of meaning and collective orientation, and the “hard science” logistics would provide methods for the concrete modulating of organisational processes. In order to provide space for creative combinations of these inputs and to learn how best to shape the form of their relation, a project module was positioned at the centre of the curriculum. As a result, a high degree of practical experience – such as we have observed in the project stories above – gives the course an applied profile quite unlike the usual practice of German academia. Dedicated trainings in project management, interface management, and innovation management provide the necessary crosscutting skills for the practical challenges. However, to act (and to intervene) in a knowledge-based way requires learners not only to be solidly grounded in a strong and applicable theory and to take practical responsibility for exercising its application in real life settings, but it demands from them the willingness and competence to understand, rethink and shape their most critical tool of the trade: themselves. In practice it can regularly be observed that some new students are undergoing an initial phase of disorientation and confusion when confronted with concepts and impulses challenging their established worldviews, patterns of thinking and patterns of interaction. Likewise regular is the experience that students returning from practice times report that “suddenly they get it” and they start making sense of the all the “reflected reflection” and the “thinking of thoughts” that constitutes the key of the dialogic teaching times. While some of the students are undergoing this a kind of personal maturation process before they arrive at a point where they can actually appreciate and start to utilize what they are learning, there are always others who are captivated from the first moment and increasingly thrilled by the on-going discovery process which the course provides for them. It is surely indicative that this is typically true for the older students, those with a prior profession or significant life experience beyond school and regular study. All of this confirms what is obvious to the ped-

agogical eye: that character and personality development is key to a study program with such a profile as cultural engineering. Overall, this profile could probably be best described as a kind of applied action-, intervention-⁴ or transformation science, but is – as can be expected for experimental set-ups – not easily categorized into either of these. As a matter of fact, it could alternatively very well be labelled a “studium generale” aiming not to teach any science as such, but rather a proficiency in using all kinds of science in a way that is relevant to the task at hand. In any case, over the last eleven years and through dozens of notable student projects, cultural engineering has earned itself a reputation in Magdeburg to a degree that it is among the first on the list of the city’s mayor for culture. Over the years the course kept drawing comparably high numbers of students, both from across Germany as from abroad. Graduates are going into fields as varied as industry, administration, culture, education or media and take on jobs as different as HR management, process optimisation, business coaching, educational design, city planning, or international communication. When after years alumni are asked about the key take aways from their studies they consistently highlight that there they have learned to look at the world in a new way and to “read” it from many different perspectives, to spot possibilities, opportunities and alternatives to how things usually are, and to develop a sense of confidence in their capability to quickly deal with change and new requirements whenever they arise. Many of them identify strongly with the notion of “being a cultural engineer” and they relish in giving sense to the paradoxical notion of “engineering culture” when asked about it. Now, what is the secret and what lies at the core of this small, but remarkable success story? To uncover the lessons we could draw from it in relation to AI, we need to dig deeper into the story and to better understand the driving force or – as the AI practitioner would say – the positive core of CE.

To understand the mental and emotional disposition behind CE we need to remind ourselves about its pedagogical foundations. When conceiving the course Renate Girmes started her thinking with the philosophical pedagogy of Johann Friedrich Herbart, successor to the chair of Kant in Königsberg and founder of pedagogy as a science. Herbart’s interest was all in character development and in how teachers can do best in guiding this process. As a child of his time, Herbart was driven by the enlightenment ideals of liberty, self-responsibility, and self-determination. Education for him meant to enable a responsible handling of human liberty and the human necessity for self-determination. He designed a non-deterministic, open and empowering approach to education in which the learner him- or herself would find the motivation to make choices and learn to take responsibility for them⁵. What he has in mind is a very practical

⁴ Lesjak, Barbara (2009): Gruppendynamik als Interventionswissenschaft – eine neue Herausforderung? in: Zeitschrift Gruppendynamik und Organisationsberatung, 1/2009, 7 – 21.

⁵ Herbart, Johann Friedrich (1997): Über die ästhetische Darstellung der Welt als das Hauptgeschäft der Erziehung, in Dietrich Benner: Johann Friedrich Herbart: Systematische Pädagogik, Weinheim.

learning process of interesting⁶ oneself in the many facets of this world, actively engaging in them hands-on and in doing so to unfold one's identity and character. If this „discover-do-become“ kind of learning process becomes a habit, it results in a multi-sided, yet well-integrated, balanced personality capable of handling freedom and self-determination responsibly. Having interested oneself in different facets of the world and participated in different walks of life, one is capable to sympathize with and differentiate between different perspectives and develop one's own unique integration.⁷ If this multi-sided and actively engaging personality is taken as essence and objective of the pedagogical efforts, it remains to ask how and under which conditions this can be achieved and what the qualitative direction is that this unfolding should follow? That this learning is a process of „unfolding“, very much alike the unfolding of rosebuds slowly but steadily revealing the potential of beauty within, and in no way anything like a passive consumption of external pieces of information, is foundational to this view of the human nature. Together with Maria Montessori, Italian psychiatrist and famous reform pedagogue the conviction is cherished that human nature has a natural tendency to unfold in a positive, healthy and also socially constructive way if only given the liberty, space and stimulation needed. If as she says „the child is the builder of the man“⁸ it is paramount to realize that „unfolding“ is the general generative principle at work in all living things and social constructions alike and that for meaningfully engaging them it is enlightening to understand the contingency of their genesis. Maturana called it „autopoiesis“⁹ and constructivism, systems theory, and cybernetics point to the very same insight: that the social worlds unfold in the very process of relational repetition, much as human nature does. Both are equally uncontrollable and unmanageable, yet conditionally susceptible to external influences which can become triggers for self-induced change within a system. Purposeful influences by an educator towards the learner is Herbart's notion of education. To arrive at the ability to do so, the educator has at his hands an array of tools and methods – to help open up to the learner a world of knowledge. After clarifying the constructivist starting point of the learner's educational journey the most pressing question remains as to where to direct it in terms of values and qualities? For cultural engineering the answer lies in an orientation on positive attentiveness, or with Georg Franck: attention¹⁰ for the other. If attention is

⁶ „Inter-est“ as a state of in the „in-between“ of things.

⁷ Herbart's „mid of many sides“. I am aware that my representation of Herbart is – inevitably - inspired by post-modern concepts. For the implicit notion of „relational learning“ cp. S. Papert; on the centrality of relations in general cp. B. Latour; for the notion of relational identity cp. H. White or K. Gergen; for a rooting in cognitive sciences cp. Humphrey: „the subject of many objects“.

⁸ Montessori, Maria (1972): *Das kreative Kind*, Freiburg.

⁹ Maturana, Humberto/ Varela, Francisco (1987): *Der Baum der Erkenntnis. Die biologischen Wurzeln des Erkennens*, München.

¹⁰ Franck, Georg (2007): *Ökonomie der Aufmerksamkeit. Ein Entwurf*, München. Franck is drawing heavily from Levinas concept „Das Antlitz des Anderen“.

freely given – actually: gifted – to another person, the other’s identity is confirmed, re-enforced, and thus strengthened. Being, unfolding and becoming is thus encouraged and the gift of attention received will be „paid-forward“¹¹ resulting in a kind of „virtuous cycle“ – providing a vision of a healthy „attention economy“. A person cultivating „heart“ – as the organ of positive attention to others – will thus increase in what Franck calls „moral excellence“ and what Fromm in his concept of the „being mode“ calls „love“¹². Now, what could be proposed as a suitable way of getting there? Within CE the saying of Moshe Feldenkrais is used frequently: „if I don’t know how I am doing things how can I do it differently?“¹³ Feldenkrais is famous for his physical method of heightened self-awareness as a means to enlarging the scope of one’s bodily actions while working on one’s posture, both of the body and of the mind. The CE module „(mental) training“ follows this logic when it provides space and guides the students to reflectively work on their attitude. From Feldenkrais also we can learn to look behind the surfaces to identify triggers and leverages likely to help bringing about a desired change. And more often than not, this is not a cognitive effort accessible through desk work, rather a whole body, whole person experience in which the unfolding needs to emerge together with a heightened awareness of one’s self as well as of the situational potential with its specific limitations and opportunities¹⁴. It is on this basis of a certain competence of „reading the world“¹⁵ and oneself that the cultural engineer becomes a person capable of intuiting, designing and instigating well founded influences in the systems and social worlds around. Thus the whole pedagogical framework underlying CE is geared towards bringing about the ability to contribute to a responsible shaping of one’s world, be it in the little or in the big, and thus towards what could be called „shaping competence“¹⁶ or better a „formation competence“¹⁷. Many other authors and theories ranging from philosophy, pedagogy and sociology over cultural and cognitive sciences to economics, management, informatics and technical sciences could be added in the same vein as Feldenkrais: providing tools and methods for heightening awareness, gaining orientation or enhancing the general competence for (re-)design and intervention in complex social systems. If finally an actor takes on himself the task to walk through this world with a decided view of improving it, and taking into account what we said about the complex intervowenness of our time’s worlds, in order to do so

¹¹ Movie: „Das Glücksprinzip - pay it forward“

¹² Fromm, Erich (2010): Haben oder Sein, München.

¹³ Attributed to Feldenkrais in differing form.

¹⁴ Jullien 1999

¹⁵ Blumenberg, Hans (2000): Die Lesbarkeit der Welt, Frankfurt/M.

¹⁶ „Gestaltungskompetenz“ as used in Education for Sustainable Development (www.transfer-21.de)

¹⁷ Alternative title for CE: „Cultural formation – formation culture“. The English and French words „formation“ and the German „Bildung“ point to the connection between the act of giving form and the educational ideal of a generalised „action competence“.

responsibly he will by necessity need to learn to walk graciously among and between very different worlds. And it is alongside and through this very journey that he will have and use ample opportunities to continue improving the comprehensiveness¹⁸ of his view, the sensitivity of his heart¹⁹, and the excellence of his intuition.

„Cultural engineers“

Now what does a cultural engineer as an „agent of connectivity and positive change“ look like in practice? First of all, he is an actor capable of unfolding beauty in very different human worlds knowing how to unlock them, (co-)create impact and responsibly review developments. His engagement of „inter-est“ can take the form of „inter-vention“ or „in-novation“. Because he is able to look behind the seemingly obvious, he is able to spot potentials for change and possible points of leverage. He can instigate collective initiatives of change, invite to playfully explore alternatives or create unexpected connections to completely other social worlds. As a wanderer between the worlds and disciplines he is a natural connector, translator and bridge builder, confident in handling interfaces and always eager to explore and open new opportunities for cooperation. It is clear that such a bridge-person needs to be a multi-context person, familiar with different disciplines and worlds all distinct in their orientating models of reality and cultural programmes. It is likewise clear that a certain mediating capacity is needed on top of a multi-language competence if such a person is to facilitate connection between partly antagonistic worlds. In order to act competently at this intersection of worlds, and even more so in absence of any particular disciplinary specialisation, a kind of orientating, connecting meta-knowledge is needed for „all the knowledge of this world“²⁰ to fall into place and be readily identifiable for use in case of relevance. In line with connectivism's tenets this meta-learning level indispensably gains a higher priority than supplementary factual knowledge like the one usually considered in academic education. Within CE this meta-knowledge takes the form of a topographic map of nine categories of basic human activities interrelating the dimensions of space, time and meaning as well as the categories of exploring, reflecting, and operating activities. Yet, be it as practical as it might, no good is any meta-knowledge, if it is not applied in a responsible and connectivity-affirming, i.e. an appreciative way: A requirement which is calling for character rather than knowledge and for maturity rather than methods. Attitude, personal mastery and leadership skills come into play here. From all that has been said it becomes clear that being an agent of positive change requires more than applying a certain methodology or bringing to a task a range

¹⁸ Fuller, Richard Buckminster (1998): *Bedienungsanleitung für das Raumschiff Erde und andere Schriften*, Hamburg

¹⁹ Frank 2007

²⁰ Cp. Girmes Girmes, Renate (2011): "Mapping" the Educational Knowledge for the continuous support of teachers and educational staff, DETA Conference 2011, Maputo. for an action-oriented framework.

of conceptual tools. Where heartfelt appreciation, sincere interest and positive communication are key, it is clear that the one core tool of the change agent is the person him or herself. Thus attitude becomes key and the central focus of the educational efforts. For CE this means that the focus is on helping students develop a new attitude towards the world, one that is marked by interested openness, appreciative empathy and „post-heroic“ engagement. „Post-heroic“ here means to act both boldly and humbly at the same time, as being painfully aware of one’s own limitations, the basic human need for complementation by others, as well as the limitations set by the inertia and autopoeisis of social systems. Experiential knowledge about the construct- edness and therefore workability of the social world constitutes the foundation for any hope to change and to the general possibility of unfolding the hidden beauty of people, organisations and social spaces. In spotting, creating or unfolding these positive potentials the cultural engineer is playful and collaboratively exploring development paths and always ready to learn from a failed experiment while taking heed to ensure participation of all those touched by this „reality exper- iment“²¹. Responsibility here means to include double loop learning reflecting on generated/ anticipated impact and readjusting plans and measures on the go. Responsibility also entails a preference for sustainable long-term developments, and in many cases goes hand in hand with a conscious spiritual journey of the actor.

Comparing principles

After this first review of the disposition and core foundations of CE it appears as if indeed the AI method to positive change and the CE approach – developed completely independently from each other – do have a lot in common. Let us verify this by comparing notes on the level of the foundational principles of the two. In its essence cultural engineering empowers actors to en- gage with human worlds confidently in order to contribute to the responsible shaping of change and development. Appreciative Inquiry is a change management methodology based on „the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them.“²² While CE is birthed out from and stands on the shoulders of philosophical peda- gogy, AI stands on the history of the science of organisational behaviour and combines elements from resource-based management and positive psychology. And while the classical object of change in the AI world is the organisation, and for CE it is the city²³ both approaches have ex- panded beyond their original sphere of application and are encompassing the whole of our many and much different social worlds. For now we can note that while rooted in different soil, both

²¹ Groß, Matthias et.al. (2005): Realexperimente. Ökologische Gestaltungsprozesse in der Wissensgesellschaft, Bielefeld.

²² Cooperrider/ Whitney/ Stavros (2008): Appreciative Inquiry Handbook, Brunswick, 3.

²³ As an experimental starting point for all kinds of other spaces: relational space, mental space, physical space...

are approaches for engaging, handling and steering change, both are foundationally rested on very basic positive assumptions and directions, and both are set to encompass the whole of our human world(s). The philosophy and methodology of change underlying AI is inspired by different streams of scholarly thought which can be summarized in five principles²⁴ which we will shortly review with the question about common ground between AI and CE:

1. The Constructionist Principle: The social constructionist theory asserts that reality is created in communication and therefore accessible to a collective recreation. Theory and practice of this principle has lately become the foundational tenet for social scientists and change makers alike. For AI it means that „human knowledge and organizational destiny are interwoven“ and that organizations need to be treated as „living human constructions“. Practically it also means that „words create worlds“ and need to be chosen carefully, particularly when phrasing appreciative questions. In the CE context constructivism is the very foundation of epistemological and pedagogical reasoning as received from von Foerster, Watzlawick, Piaget and Papert. It first of all fosters an overall awareness of workability of social reality. Practically it means that collective representations of reality are key to engaging and changing collective action (organisation) and orientation (culture). The cultural engineer here draws from cultural science viewing culture as a socially constructed web of symbolically represented meaning²⁵ and uses tools of action-oriented knowledge management for the analysis of organisational processes²⁶.
2. The Simultaneity Principle: „Inquiry and change are... simultaneous. Inquiry is intervention.“ For AI this principle means that „the very first question starts the change“, not only through its content, but also through its implicit dimensions of relationship, atmosphere, an orientation. Thus, the power of linguistics is heightened and the crafting of a good AI question turns into an art in its own right. The same concept is used in CE though under a different label. With Marshall McLuhan we keep in mind that „the medium is the message“ – and actually (much) louder than its content.²⁷ In practice the medium can be many things: it entails the space or the setting that can be very elaborately designed as a conducive learning environment. The cultural engineer is very conscious of the notion of space and understands that space again is a social and thus relational construct providing room for interventions

²⁴ Cooperrider/ Whitney (2005): *Appreciative Inquiry : A Positive Revolution in Change*, San Francisco. 49ff. ; Stratton-Berkessel (2010): *Appreciative Inquiry for Collaborative Solutions*, 48ff.

²⁵ Geertz, Clifford (1992): *Kulturbegriff und Menschenbild*, in: Habermas, Rebekka et al. (Hg.): *Das Schwein des Häuptlings*, Berlin.

²⁶ Senge, Peter M. (1999): *Die fünfte Disziplin - die lernfähige Organisation*, in: Fatzer, Gerhard: *Organisationsentwicklung für die Zukunft*, Köln. Schüppel, Jürgen (1996): *Wissensmanagement*, Wiesbaden.

²⁷ Cp. the „4 ears concept“ of Schulz von Thun

through the spacing or articulation of physical and symbolical goods²⁸ as well as for hodo-logic considerations²⁹.

3. The Poetic Principle: „What we focus on grows.“ This principle highlights the critical role of attention and of the profound feedback effects that go with it. In AI practice the actual topic choice is a matter of attention and a fateful decision to be made. As is the choice of metaphors if such are introduced as „the metaphors we use shape our beliefs“. In CE the role of attention is critical as what I look at gets larger and through being perceived it actually enters into existence³⁰. It is thus of utmost importance in the development of both, our personalities and our organisations to carefully choose the „mental diet“³¹ providing the raw material of our generative communications³². Since „organisations are conversations“³³ and „an organisation’s story is constantly being co-authored“³⁴ this basic pedagogical principle is valid not only to individual learners, but as much to the learning collective.
4. The Anticipatory Principle: This principle „speaks to the power of vision, especially the ability to create and hold the vision of the future that we want to bring into the world“. As images stick in our minds, impact our hearts and inspire our actions, they are powerful instruments in re-creating our worlds. Revealing existing patterns of expectation and underlying assumptions or meaning making imaginary is a powerful first step of deconstructing existing reality. For AI then „creating positive images together“ becomes one of the most important steps in any change process. Within CE a profound change of perspective is gathered from Buckminster Fuller who in his legendary „Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth“ makes the case for viewing our world in its abundance and underlying generosity rather than as a place of scarcity and deprivation.
5. The Positive Principle: positive affect leads to positive action: The power of the positive emotion is awesome and the positive affect the central resource of the AI approach. When appreciated, affirmed and encouraged we outperform our own expectations and vice versa. This is why affirmative language and a glass-half-full perspective are central to the AI agent. Likewise, the CE agent works with the theory of affect and affectation³⁵ as the rich moment of unconscious consideration of the ramifications of a perception or the possibilities of an ac-

²⁸ Löw, Martina (2001): Raumsoziologie, Frankfurt/ M.

²⁹ A city from the viewpoint of the traveller: Lynch, Kevin (2001): Bild der Stadt, Basel.

³⁰ Berkeley principle: „Esse est percipii“

³¹ Herbart, Johann Friedrich (1806): Allgemeine Pädagogik aus dem Zwecke der Erziehung abgeleitet, Göttingen.

³² Müller-Funk, Wolfgang (2002): Die Kultur und ihre Narrative: Eine Einführung, Wien.

³³ Splitt, Marcus (2012): Dialog als Element organisationaler Aktivierung, Entwicklung und Veränderung, Masterarbeit, Magdeburg, 6.

³⁴ Cooperrider/ Whitney (2005): 51

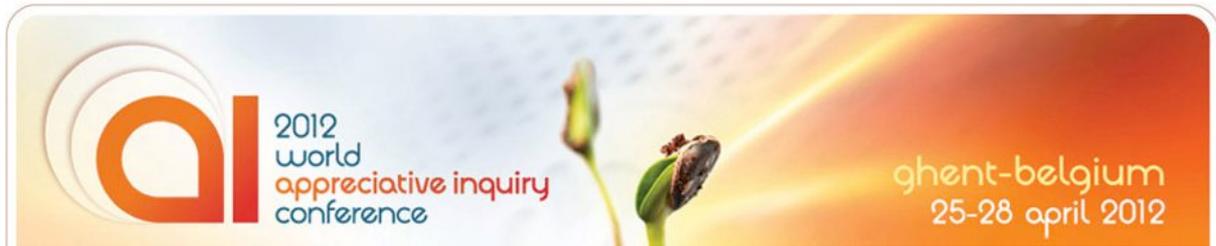
³⁵ Massumi, Brian (2010): Ontomacht. Kunst, Affekt und das Ereignis des Politischen, Berlin.

tion. It thus creates an awareness of the ultimate ontological potential sitting just on the brink of the moment of becoming. A conscious modulation of the affectation of the involved actors can be a way towards shaping the disposition of a situational potential towards the desired impact.

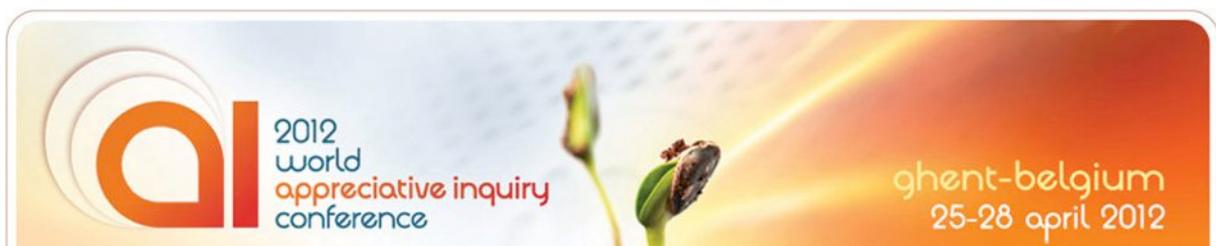
When comparing notes on the level of these basic principles it becomes clear that there is vast overlap of philosophical ground and between the disciplines of AI and CE. There seems to be a complete fit in spirit even though there are clear differences in terminology and scholarly sources. The biggest difference remains in the level of application and the specification of focus. While AI is in principle an extremely focused discipline around the use of the positive in the practical facilitation of change, CE is much broader with regard to the kind of impact pursued, the portfolio of methodologies used and the role taken by the change agent. Where the two worlds are a perfect match is on the subject of „appreciation“ which – understood as positive awareness of, empathy with, and participation in – is absolutely central to the pedagogical foundations and the normative orientation towards a positive balance in our „attention economy“, and basic to the life giving power of the „heart“ we exhibit for one another.

When asking what the two approaches could learn from each other, the first thing to spring to mind as a potential take away for CE is the importance that AI puts on the power and the predominance of the collective. While CE practice usually is a team effort, it would do well to acknowledge this foundational dimension more carefully, e.g. by training more specifically in (large) group facilitation methods. Taking note of the trends in positive psychology and resource based management could contribute to the CE repertoire; and finally AI would seem to be a perfectly fitting approach for a cultural engineer when engaging in contexts of enterprise organisation and leadership, a point of comparable weakness of today's CE practice. For AI as a method CE could provide an impulse and invitation to grow beyond a superb facilitation method and to engage and partake not only as facilitators, but as full co-creators, co-shapers and co-interventionists. This seems fully in line with the recent developments of AI as a general philosophy of change. For AI it could mean to realize that there are natural allies in the rich field of philosophical pedagogy and thus an opportunity to win a whole new stream of pollinating literature. Finally it seems interesting to think through the consequences of the three engineering dimensions of space, time³⁶, and meaning for the AI practice. Finally, for both approaches it remains to see that both of them are pointing to a larger picture than what can be contained in themselves and that there are natural allies out there in the worlds of practice and theory alike striving to reach to the shared desired goal of „a better world“ in as many beautifully unfolded faces, facets and facades as possible.

³⁶ Implied in the dimension time are processes and systems.



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Appreciative Inquiry and Its Practice: ALIVE in the PHILIPPINES!

By

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The first public seminar introducing Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to Philippine audience of passionate learners on just about everything was held way back in July 2000. (I had just returned in the country after a week of exposure to the concept by no less than the AI-Guru himself, Dr. David Cooperrider).

Thereafter, what happened next included more public workshops and fora on AI for orientation and increased consciousness-raising on the concept and its slowly emerging practices, publications – newsletter, journal and even occasional exposure to media of national publications, creating and expanding networks leading to the establishment of the *Association for Appreciative Inquiry – Philippines*, research initiatives using AI either or both as theoretical premise or research methodology, AI-designed courses and programs at SAIDI Graduate School of OD, and consulting engagements exposing AI to planning or teambuilding interventions. All these beginning efforts in the country converged into the 1st Asian AI Summit last 2010 organized by the same institution. This event was participated in by Dr. David Cooperrider and some 280 participants, mostly from across organizations in the Philippines and significant attendees from Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal and Cambodia. When this happened, I was certain that AI is ALIVE in the Philippines; and yes, AI is already in the consciousness of Asians. Indeed, a celebrated and momentous event!

Many AI-learners and beginning practitioners have had different attempts applying the philosophy, practices and the 4-D rubrics of AI. Most of these individuals have been trained and supervised by SAIDI Graduate School of OD. In my presentation, two cases of our engagements will be cited.

***CASE 1: AIAS TOOL TO BULD A SHARED VISION
IN A MICROFINANCE SETTING***

Microfinance is a very real and concrete transaction currently used by both government and non-government, international and local groups as a handle in alleviating poverty. There are some groups making a bold claim that microfinance is their tool to eradicate poverty. My take: good to push microfinance this way to rally some immediate, critical response, but the practical results do not and seemingly, cannot yet show support to this claim.

The laboratory-organization is a non-government institute – the Center for Agrarian for Rural Development (CARD). CARD has been operating in the Philippines for 25 years now, as of 2011. Its current client-base is 1.5 M families. Its pronounced bias is for women-clients. The founders noted an aspect of the Filipino culture where the Filipino wife on receiving the earnings of the husband immediately sets aside payments for obligations and manages whatever is left to cover food and other household expenses. This is not quite the case, though, with the husband. With his earnings in his pocket from work, he gets easily ‘tempted’ to join friends for a drink on the way home. Often the case does not end with just a drink! Whatever is left from the drinking session, that is turned over to the wife to manage and settle obligations and budget for food and other

family needs. CARD is currently the largest microfinance institution in the Philippines. In the last 5-years, CARD has been extending training and consulting services to countries in the ASEAN region on matters related to starting their own microfinance initiatives. Last 2009, CARD received the Ramon Magsaysay award for Public Service. (This Asian recognition may be likened to the Nobel prize award).

The Problematic situation that confronted CARD some three years ago: The clients were not honoring procedures and commitments; they were engaged in multiple memberships which saddled the members more obligations to handle; their relationships were getting disturbed and bruised, from bad to worse because of requirements that needed to be fulfilled. The account officers working directly with the clients were hitting burnout. They were plagued with interpersonal issues; they were confronted with issues which triggered serious questioning of the core of their involvement in the microfinance services and they felt inadequate doing their job. Worse, these officers were projecting to the clients their doubts and frustrations. This situation reached a tipping point when clients and service providers represented only their respective interests - the former, source of loans and the latter, source of employment. Whatever vision and mission that drew them initially together was nowhere in the horizon.

On CARD's invitation for SAIDI School of OD to extend a consulting presence in the institution, I suggested an initial intervention of storytelling. To my mind, AI may be able to help to improve the situation. And these Questions guided the planned AI-intervention:

1. What could be an entry point for appreciative inquiry in a problematic microfinance landscape?
2. How exactly can AI be practiced in a micro-economic activity towards a 'happy' landscape?
3. What initial results can be expected by CARD?
4. What solid outcomes can it contribute positively to CARD?

The immediate intervention for the account officers was two-layered: revisit the vision and mission of CARD and bring them into a journey of building a shared vision and mission. It took us three years to cover all groups of account officers (a total of close to 1,000) doing about their work in different places of the country. The immediate intervention took 2.5 days. The methodology was mainly storytelling. The activities accompanied the participants across the following journeys: intrapersonal, interpersonal and organizational. The main platform for the intervention was appreciative inquiry. Here, the intervention used AI as handle to build a shared vision and mission among key players in providing microfinance services to their clients.

The 'halo' effects of the intervention: positive energy infused into the dying embers of commitment to the work they were engaged in, a 'lift' that motivated them to be back again in the service of others and a more meaningful disposition for the job they held.

The landmark results after three years: the officers have started to live out the habit of 'positive' conversations, they have noticed improvements in their storytelling ability and they have a more meaningful awareness of their role in the microfinance service.

**CASE 2 : "UBAS"* AS A WAY TO COLLABORATE
FOR GRASSROOTS GOVERNANCE**

{*UBAS – Ugnayan nang Barangay At Simbahan}

*In English: Collaboration of Local Government (@ village level)
and the Local Church*

UBAS is a partnership of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) with the Church and the League of Barangays. The DILG is a department under the Office of the President of the Philippines. The church referred to here is the Catholic Church. And the League of Barangays is the organization formed by all the leader-heads (called "Barangay Captain") of the Barangays, the smallest political units of our republic (may be likened to village governments).

UBAS is a church-initiated offer made to the DILG Secretary. Three Bishops of the Catholic Church spearheaded the initiatives as a concrete response to a declaration made by Pope Benedict XVI in a speech he delivered sometime in 2010 before the Catholic Bishops' Conference. The Pope said,

"... the political community and the Church, while highly distinct, are nevertheless both at the service of the integral development of every human being and of society as a whole..."

This initiative recognizes the fact that the Barangays (*villages*) coincide territorially with parishes (*smallest unit of organization of the Catholic Church*). Hence this is a good opportunity for the parishes and barangays to work together for the efficient delivery of services and the attainment of integral development of the citizens.

Apropos, the Problematic situations that UBAS wishes to address include the following: very low participation in barangay development activities (*like local planning and administration*) and barangay-based institutions, non-transparency in disclosing local budget (*finances, bids, public offerings by the Local Government Units*), human rights issues and concern among informal settlers, inefficient disaster risk reduction, preparedness and response, and most of all, widespread corrupt practices.

UBAS had three bishops who conceptualized and partnered between and among themselves to respond to the situation in the local communities. A bishop is the head of a diocese*. (*A diocese* is the larger unit of the Catholic Church that gathers under a common structure several parishes within a geographically contiguous territory*). At the end of 2011, the Archdiocese* of Manila had joined the partnership. (*An archdiocese* brings together dioceses within a geographically contiguous territory*). The initial gains of the **UBAS** initiatives: Now the Church and the barangay government have started to work together. Both parties have defined their areas for collaborations and partnership and the next steps to expand and sustain the partnership. Both parties have structures their roles as partners and have created a monitoring team to follow through decisions and agreements within the partnership. Consultations and

information sharing are now basic strategies adopted by both parties. Concrete and specific projects are now undertaken by the partnership. Such projects include among others:

- Clean-up drive of the barangay especially the river system
- Values formation on good governance
- More systematic feeding program for children of financially deprived families
- All out campaign for anti-drug abuse
- Tree planting to save a watershed project
- Solid waste management program
- Traffic management
- Increased advocacy on people's participation in local governance
- Promotion of transparency in the barangay operations
- Informal settlers relocation program
- Livelihood program for Out-of-School-Youth

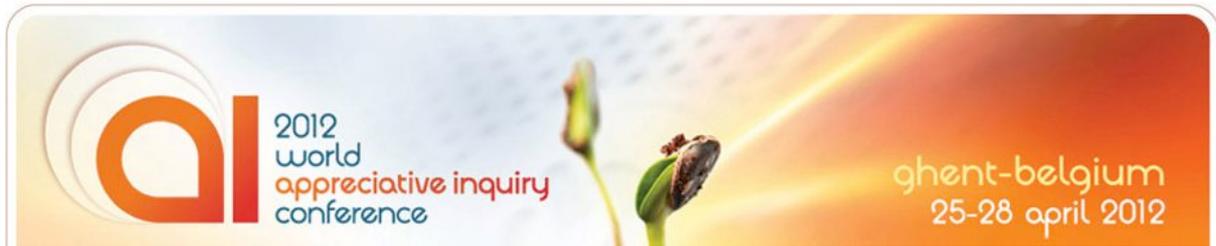
But **UBAS** continued to be confined only among the initiators and its first follower. It is this specific concern that the organization invited SAIDI School of OD to brainstorm with the working group on strong recruitment possibilities. The suggestion to gather positive stories (*using the AI Protocol of Value, Peak and Miracle Questions*) on the initial gains of **UBAS** was chosen. From hereon, **UBAS**, guided by SAIDI School of OD, prepared a plan what and how to gather these desired stories.

The outcomes, so far, of **UBAS'** projects – mostly, in progress: increasing exposure to the other dioceses, increasing communication between the church officials and the local government officials, sharing of resources between church and local government and, media has started to be palpably present in the activities organized by the partnership.

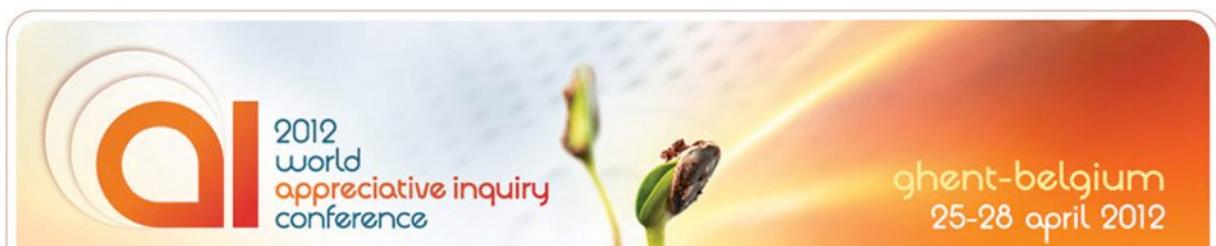
My Point of Departure, for now: The '*AI power*' shown by both cases is the Power of the Story. In the first case, stories renewed the fading '*animo*' of young service providers who wish to contribute significance to alleviating poverty in the country. In the second case, stories provided the climate to get into an alliance with others, thus pushing stronger a growing collaboration between two entities, Church and Local Government, all wishing for the integral development of the citizens and nation building. From another perspective, these two cases affirm that storytelling is really natural to Filipinos. A storytelling so structured according to the rubrics of the AI-Protocol and the 4-D roadmap is very adequate to keep ALIVE Appreciative Inquiry in the country.

(Intervention details will be presented in a workshop format).

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André Rieu: An educational appreciation

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Abstract

By means of interdisciplinary connections, attributes of music artists (and the coupled aesthetic experiences which are elicited during their performances) can serve as direction indicators for solutions to difficult situations that teachers encounter in their classrooms. By appreciating the artistry and performance of André Rieu and his orchestra, one can identify artistic strategies employed by the artist that might be useful for the professional development of teachers. This aesthetic, appreciative approach to teacher training serves as a pleasurable alternative to regular teacher training activities. During an appreciation of the 2010 South African concerts of André Rieu and his orchestra, 32 educators from a secondary school in Bloemfontein, South Africa, identified six positive themes of his artistry and behaviour that could, according to them, inform educational practice and the professional development of teachers.

Introduction

Feldman and McPhee (2008: 402) put a very basic question about professional development to in-service teachers: "... what can you do to become the best teacher you possibly can be?" They then anticipated the most likely response of many teachers as follows: "Well, I'll attend an in-service or go to a seminar." While they agree that this is widely accepted and the most common approach to professional development, they also find this an unfortunate situation. "In-service education, workshops, and other training formats are almost invariably short-term, many no longer than a half-day and some just an hour or so long. The idea that such short-term workshops are an effective means for improving teaching practice is another

widely held myth in teacher education” (Feldman and McPhee, 2008: 402). They also argue that “(t)he learning that does occur is rarely solid enough to give teachers the confidence and skills they need to make consistent and sustainable improvements in what they do” (Feldman and McPhee, 2008: 403).

When reflecting upon our own encounters with the in-service training formats described above, we feel saddened to support their arguments and observations: we have ourselves suffered greatly at the hands of boring presenters and the rather pointless contents of such training opportunities.

But how then should in-service teachers be developed and empowered in a sustainable manner? It would be a senseless exercise to subject the current set of professional development opportunities to severe criticism without providing a feasible alternative. We want to suggest a rather surprising one: the music arts in general, and the concerts of André Rieu and his orchestra, specifically.

The arts – and André Rieu - for teacher development?

If one wants to utilize works of art for the purpose of teacher development, one would – as a matter of principle – have to provide some evidence of similarities between these two seemingly unrelated fields. The critical thinker would surely have the right to ask: “How can one possibly learn from the *arts* about *teaching*?”

We shall again start our deliberation about this problem by presenting an observation of Feldman and McPhee (2008: 126) about the opinion of experienced educators about the art of teaching: “ experienced instructors believe that no matter how much theory and research we now know and regardless of what advances may come in the future, ultimately teaching is and will always be an art. [...] For these experienced instructors, teaching will forever be as much art as it is science, if not more so, calling for the qualities that are the hallmarks of any art – creativity, innovation, and imagination.”

These two authors then delight us by providing the very metaphor from the world of musical performances that we were looking for within the context of our study:

Consider music. No doubt it is an art. It is a craft that in its highest form demands and draws on the unique, creative expression of each person who

participates in it, whether an instrumentalist, vocalist, or composer. We can all likely agree that although some people may possess natural ability, such inborn talent cannot alone yield a skilled performance. The mastery of this discipline also requires the study of the theories and principles that underlie it and, of course, a great deal of practice. For the novice, the path to mastery begins with a little of the art and a lot of the science and the routine of regular drills. Only when an individual becomes knowledgeable about basic theory and proficient in the fundamental techniques, does he or she find the freedom to give creative and personal expression to what is ultimately an infinite number of combinations of only a few basic elements (the 12 notes of the Western musical scale, for instance).

The craft of teaching is much the same. Each time you walk into a class, your work calls for the creative and somewhat unpredictable composition of the many distinct components that comprise the teaching-learning transaction - content, context, people and processes - all *orchestrated* [our emphasis] into some kind of unified and satisfactory whole. This challenge remains no matter what are the particular circumstances or settings of the courses you teach or how much experience you have under your belt. You could faithfully apply behavioural conditioning techniques or religiously follow the steps of mastery learning, relentlessly use computers and information technology and develop all kinds of theories to explain how people think and learn, but then what? Nothing can be ensured to work in the same way with the same results every time. Every class will always be a mix of many minds (including your own) in many moods with many manners of expression interacting in ways that can change not just from day to day but also from moment to moment.

The connection between the worlds of education and musical performance, we believe, has been established by this comparison. The teacher might be viewed as the conductor of an orchestra – in a classroom. André Rieu is the highly successful conductor of his highly popular orchestra – in a theatre. Education might be explained metaphorically, comprehended and studied as a form of performance. The world of education can be illuminated by the world of the arts.

Would it not be an exciting endeavour to study the artistic attributes and strategies of an internationally renowned band of performers – and then apply what we have learned from them in our classrooms – to improve our educational practices? That, we believe, would provide us and the colleagues that we have invited to our venture with an exciting professional development session. At last, we might add.

The 4D-cycle for professional development of educators

It is through the process of appreciative inquiry (AI) that the authors guided teachers to identify attributes and characteristics of the performance of André Rieu which they could apply to their own teaching. Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010: 1-2) give the following description of AI:

“Appreciative Inquiry is the study of what gives life to human systems when they function at their best. This approach to personal change and organization change is based on the assumption that questions and dialogue about strengths, successes, values, hopes and dreams are themselves transformational. In short, Appreciative Inquiry suggests that human organizing and change at its best is a relational process of inquiry, grounded in affirmation and appreciation.”

According to Watkins, Mohr and Kelly (2011: 68-75) the essential ingredients or DNA of AI comprise of six principles with six generic processes. The principles are the constructionist, simultaneity, anticipatory, poetic and positive principles, as well as the overarching principle of wholeness.

The constructionist principle implies that the reality of an organisation or situation is constructed through social discourse, conversations between persons in the organisation or situation and the formation of an agreement about how they see that reality. The principle of simultaneity recognizes that change and inquiry does not happen apart from each other, but that change is irrevocably linked to inquiry and happens with the asking of the very first question. The anticipatory principle holds that the most important sources that we have to effect organisational or situational change lie in the images that we can form of our future. Only a projection of positive expectations can result in positive change taking place. The poetic principle values storytelling as a means of obtaining information about an organization or situation. It

does not only focus on the facts at hand, but also on the feelings and experiences of the members of the organization. The positive principle suggests that “Positive affect is just as contagious as negative affect” (Watkins, Mohr and Kelly 2011: 74). This is seen as so important, because momentum for change is born out of positive affect and social bounding within the organization or teaching situation. The principle of wholeness unleashes potential and provides the opportunity for individuals to work together to improve and change. The idea of wholes that precede parts is fundamental in this instance.

These principles lead to five generic processes of which the first is to choose the positive in a situation or a portrayal as the focus of the inquiry. The inquiry should secondly be into stories of life-giving forces, so as to act as a catalyst of immediate change. The location of themes that appear in stories, presentations or performances and the selection of topics for further inquiry constitute the third generic process, while the creation of shared images for a preferred future by the participants typifies the fourth generic process. The last process which completes the AI circle involves the finding of innovative ways to create the identified change. These processes, which support the 4D-cycle of AI (see Figure 1), lay the foundation for and gave direction to the appreciative inquiry into the artistry of André Rieu which the authors report on in this presentation.

Methodology

This study was purely qualitative in nature and grounded in the interpretivist paradigm. Thirty-two educators from a secondary school in Bloemfontein, South Africa participated in an appreciative inquiry of the 2010 South African concert of André Rieu and his orchestra. Preceding the workshop, the very first general process of AI took place in the hearts and minds of the educators teaching at the Bloemfontein school: they reflected on the positive aspects of the school setup that they encountered each workday and realised that certain aspects could be improved. This was the first step in their appreciative inquiry journey. “Appreciative Inquiry begins when the organization consciously chooses to *focus on the positive as the focus of inquiry*. As a result, the first choice point is not *whether* to collect data about an issue, but rather what the *focus* of the data collection process will be” (Watkins, Mohr and Kelly 2011).

The participants were formally invited to the workshop by the researchers and each participant provided written consent to and an understanding of the following: agreement to participate in the mentioned research study; that they understood what the study was about; that they knew why they were participating; that they knew what the risks and benefits were; and that they gave the researchers permission to make use of the data and photos gathered from their participation. The participants furthermore asked for permission from the District Director of Education in the Motheo Education District to be released from their teaching responsibilities on 1 November 2011 in order to attend the said workshop.

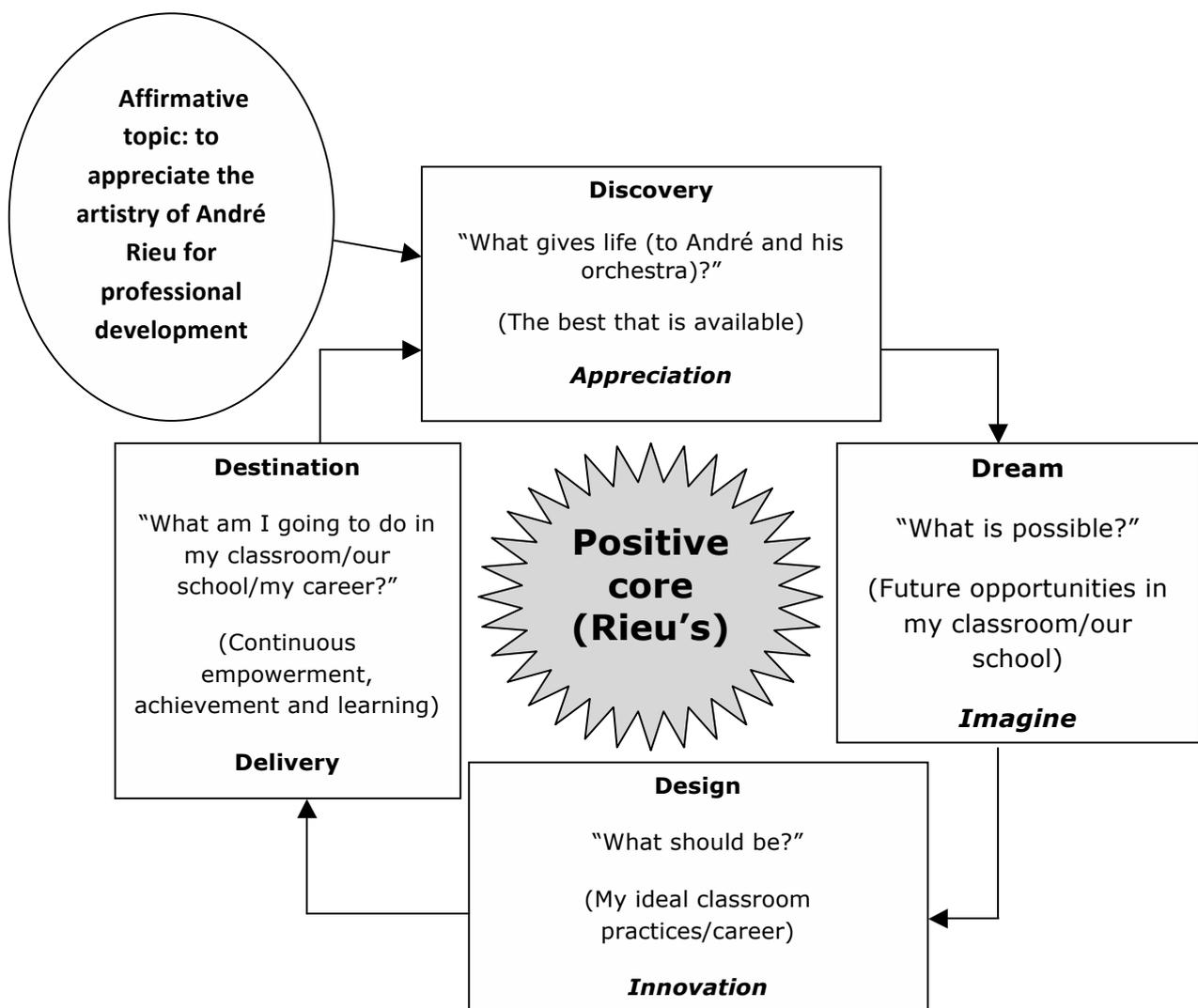


Figure 1: The appreciative inquiry 4-D cycle
 (Adapted from Cooperrider, Whitney and Stavros 2008, and Whitney and Trosten-Bloom 2010: 6.)

Starting with the Discovery phase of the 4D-cycle (see Figure 1) the educators were given the opportunity to appreciate an hour-long extract of items performed at the very first concert of André Rieu and his orchestra in South Africa (see Figure 2).



Figure 2: Participants appreciating the André Rieu concert

This documentary-concert DVD also included comments and opinions of the concert goers, the organizers of the concert, staff of the hotel where the performers stayed, André Rieu's son, as well as South African celebrities who attended the concerts. While appreciating the concert, the participants were given the opportunity to personally and individually reflect on the artistry of these excellent performers by reporting on their thoughts, insights and observations regarding the following questions provided in the interview protocol prepared by the researchers: why is this an excellent performance; what did I enjoy about the music; how does André Rieu contribute towards the excellent performance of this orchestra and the soloists; how did the choice of a South African soloist (Kimi) contribute to the success of the whole show; what do I find striking about the comments made by individuals in between the music items; which of these comments might be relevant or applicable to our educational situation at our school; which main aspects of this whole performance might be applied to the work we do as teachers at our school? The purpose of this activity was to help the participants identify possible connections between the performance of André Rieu's orchestra and excellent teaching.

After watching the concert DVD in the auditorium of the School of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology Education at the University of the Free State, South Africa, the researchers and participants moved to a spacious lecturing room which could accommodate group work (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Participants conducting appreciative interviews

Trapezium-shaped tables were arranged in circles to facilitate the group work that the participants took part in. The 32 educators were grouped into five groups. Four groups had six members each and the remaining group had eight members. The participants could choose whom they wanted to work with in a group and no specific method was used to make the divisions. Each group appointed a group leader.

Once seated and grouped, each participant had to form a pair with a member within his/her group to conduct appreciative interviews with. Based on what the participants saw in the performance, they were guided by appreciative interview questions included in the interview protocol to identify insights, stories or strengths that could give life to their organization. The questions included the following: which music item was your personal favourite and why did you prefer this specific one; which aspect of the performance did you value most and why; what characteristics from the performance of André Rieu and his orchestra might you apply in your classroom; what would you say is the ONE thing that gives life to his performance – the one

thing without which it would simply not be the same; can you explain why André Rieu and so many people in the audience were crying; why is the interaction between André Rieu, his orchestra and the audience so successful; in your opinion, what can we as the staff of the school possibly take from the performance of André Rieu and his orchestra to improve our teaching; what could he possibly do to make his performance even better?

After completion of the interviews, a process of locating the themes that appear in the stories, started. Each participant had to decide on the one best insight or story or comment heard and recorded during their interview. The group leaders then recorded these insights as interview summaries on the flip charts provided to each group. All these best insights per group were then presented to the whole audience of participants by the individual group leaders. There were thus five flip charts with interview summaries: four containing six insights and a fifth containing eight. For the purpose of presenting each group's findings to the whole audience, the flip charts were placed in a central position where everyone could see what was written on the charts. After the presentations by the six group leaders, each participant was provided with six stickers which they had to stick on the six insights written on the flip charts which most reflected their perceptions and feelings based on the questions asked in the interviews and the observations made while watching the concert-extracts. The 32 insights on the flip charts were then categorized, by the researchers, into six constructs; each construct containing dimensions relating to the construct. The six constructs represented the positive core of André Rieu's artistry and the participants' interpretation of aspects of his performance that could be made applicable to their teaching situations.

The design of a poster-sized visual collage by each of the five groups signalled the start of the Dream phase of this appreciative inquiry (see Figure 1) and furthermore contributed to the retention and realisation of application possibilities of the six positive themes. Each group had to design a poster based on the discovered attributes and present it to the whole audience (see Figure 4).



Figure 4: A presentation of a collage by a participant

The purpose of the collage exercise was to create a visual image of the extraordinary teaching team that the participants envisaged or dreamed they could become, based on the insights that they got from the performance of André Rieu and his orchestra.

The last activity of the workshop involved the development of a provocative statement by the whole participating group that would capture the essence of the teachers' purpose and drive in their teaching. The single-line statement had to be based on all the activities of the day and had to describe their envisaged teaching environment in an optimal way. The following tips on how to formulate a provocative statement were provided: does the statement stretch and challenge; are the consequences of the statement desired; is the statement stated in affirmative, bold terms; is the provocative statement written in the present tense? The design of a collage and the formulation of a provocative statement constituted the end of the Dream phase of the 4D-cycle. The Design- and Destiny-phases of the 4D-cycle involving bringing-to-life the new images of the preferred future, is in the process of being carried out at the school during the 2012 academic year and will be evaluated by the researchers at a later stage.

Results and discussion

The identification of the one best insight or story or comment heard and recorded during the interviews, gave rise to the following data:

Group 1 identified the following six themes: a belief in what you do; cooperation between members; good preparation; communicating passion and emotion; communicating passion through body language; uniting your audience.

Group 2 identified these six themes: good preparation; providing good guidance; using an element of surprise to keep attention; passion and professionalism; perfectionism; the positive influence of a calm, friendly environment.

Group 3's themes were the following: enjoying what you do; the appreciation of good work; providing the opportunity for development; team work; passion and enthusiasm; to show emotion.

Group 4 contributed the following themes: discipline and commitment; team work; a burning passion for what you do; communication; appreciation; motivation and enthusiasm.

Group 5 was the eight-member group and they identified the following themes: team work; love what you do; emotional support; appreciating uniqueness; personality; appreciating each person's contribution; participation of your audience; inclusivity – making everyone feel welcome.

After each participant was given the opportunity to indicate his/her preferred six dimensions, the researchers counted the votes and organized them into six positive themes. The themes are presented in Table 1. Of the 192 possible votes that could be cast, only 168 were actually made. This indicates that some participants did not use all their votes. The following question then arised: would these positive themes identified by the participants be really valid in terms of contemporary educational theory and thus be applicable for the professional development of educationalists? If we could embed these themes into educational theory – and it is our aim to do exactly that – the insights of the teachers would be validated.

Table 1: Positive themes-count

Number	Positive theme	Count
1.	Passion and enthusiasm	46
2.	Teamwork	35
3.	Inclusivity	28
4.	Preparation, professionalism and personal development	22
5.	To be compassionate	21
6.	Appreciation	16
		168

Of the six, passion and enthusiasm for their daily teaching scored the highest count. Feldman and McPhee (2008: 130) describe enthusiastic teachers as being excited about the subject they teach. They present the material in an engaging manner. They also challenge students at an appropriate level to keep learning interesting. Killen (2010: 141) describes an enthusiastic teacher in the same terms: "An enthusiastic teacher conveys to learners a feeling of involvement, excitement and interest. This message is transmitted in a variety of ways, including facial expression, gestures, body movements, eye movements and vocal characteristics."

To be able to work successfully as a team in order to produce a positive output, was second in order. Killen (2010: 38-39) confirms that the willingness to share and collaborate is an attribute of successful teachers:

They work with others to achieve goals. In their investigation of teachers whose students were highly successful in matriculation examinations, Ayers, Sawyer and Dinham (2004: 151) found that 'The faculty's closeness as a team in one form or another was seen as important in contributing to teacher, and therefore student, success'. Spady (2001: 36) refers to such teachers as 'constructive' people, who freely and selflessly share to enhance the well-being of others. Such teachers are willing to share their ideas and learn from one another because they have a "student learning orientation" to their teaching and appreciate that "to enhance another is to enhance yourself" (Spady 2001: 37).

Killen (2010: 31) likewise confirms that the third positive theme identified by the teachers, inclusivity, is an important component of significant learning:

Teachers should not claim that quality learning is occurring in their classrooms unless all learners feel that they are being involved in classroom activities because their backgrounds, interests, insights and intelligences are valued. Valuing individual students and their contributions to the classroom goes beyond valuing cultural differences. As Clark (1997: 1) suggests, you have to teach learners that 'each one has unique capacities which are worthy of nurture, or our children will learn that it is much better to suppress uniqueness so as to conform to some societal norm'. Inclusive teaching practices should explicitly recognise and value learners' diversity, and encourage the participation of learners from all the social and cultural backgrounds represented in the class.

Preparation, professionalism and personal development were grouped together and could be summarised as *professional development*, which is described by Baden, Sanders and Fincher (2011: 372):

Any activity designed to help an adult, especially a professional, to become current or remain current in his/her field; to develop and enhance skills and knowledge; or to increase the breadth and depth of understanding that can lead to improved practice. In education, professional development encompasses the intentional, ongoing, and systemic processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students.

Killen (2010: 38) considers the ability to be compassionate – the fifth positive theme identified by the participants – as a pedagogical practice of excellent teachers:

They care about their learners. Teachers should respect all learners, be concerned about their welfare, have empathy with them and make them feel accepted and important (all factors that help to build the positive self-esteem of the learners). 'Effective teachers have friendly, mature relationships with their learners, and demonstrate caring, humour and commitment' (Ayers, Sawyer and Dinham 2004: 146).

Appreciation, the sixth and last theme identified by the participants, lies at the core of positive relationships within an organization like a school, and Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2010: 2) capture the essence of it effectively by describing it as follows:

Appreciation has to do with recognition, valuing, and gratitude. The word appreciate is a verb that carries a double meaning, referring to both the act of recognition and the act of enhancing value. Consider these definitions:

- *To recognize the best in people and the world around us.*
- *To perceive those things which give life, health, vitality, and excellence to living human systems.*
- *To affirm past and present strengths, successes, assets, and potentials.*
- *To increase in value, as in 'the investment has appreciated in value.'*

Feldman and McPhee (2008: 130) provide four guidelines for the successful founding of positive or appreciative relationships by successful teachers:

- Fair: They [successful teachers] treat students equally, and their expectations and standards are firm and clear. They are also sensitive to individual differences and capabilities.
- Caring and Personal: They establish rapport with students and create a sense of community in the classroom. They are friendly, approachable, and accessible.
- Respectful: They honour and appreciate individual differences, which are seen as a source of divergent ideas rather than as problems or sources of potential conflict. They accept the mistakes students make as a natural part of the learning process.
- Have High Expectations: They possess a positive attitude and convey their confidence in their students' ability to learn even as they challenge their long-standing ideas and values.

An assessment of the impact of the development of the school's provocative statement, as well as the implementation of the six positive themes in order to enhance organizational and/or professional development, will be carried out as a second phase of the study.

Conclusion

This is a study in two stages of which the first stage has been completed and which was reported on in this presentation. The first stage entailed the guiding of a group of teachers at a certain South African school to identify positive themes from the artistry of a popular classical musician that, according to them, could be made applicable to their daily teaching activities and thus facilitate their professional development. This was accomplished through the process of Appreciative Inquiry. The 4D-cycle of AI has proven itself to be an excellent framework for this creative endeavour. The second stage of the study will be completed once an assessment of the impact of the teachers' findings on their organizational and professional practice has been made. The study showed that common themes between the worlds of musical arts and education can indeed be identified and validated by embedding it in current educational theory. Aesthetical and educational experiences and approaches that correlate with one another within these two domains therefore do exist.

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