'AWAKENING WITHIN, AWAKENING WITHOUT'

'CO-CREATING A LEARNING SOCIETY: FROM IMPROVEMENT TO INNOVATION IN ADULT EDUCATION'

AN E-BOOK DEVELOPED WITH SUPPORT OF THE GRUNDTVIG SUB-PROGRAMME

(LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME) OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

PREFACE

This E-book is one of the results of the EEC Grundtvig funded project: *'Co-Creating a Learning Society: from improvement to innovation in adult education'*. The aim of the project is to advance in and spread the use of strength based change and learning approaches in adult education in Europe in order to foster widespread motivation, initiative, participation and empowerment of adult learners. Therefore we collected best practices within adult education during the conference at the beginning of November 2011 with the theme **'Awakening within, Awakening without'**. After the conference those best practices formed the start of the development of this E-book to be able to share those learning's with others.

During the project we experienced as a project team our challenges and differences. The moments of awakening within myself and others brought me energy and the effort to continue. Those moments of awakening within myself and others created insight about how easily we can get lost in 'problem thinking'. Instead of complaining and being judgmental about for example, the other person's behavior, we learned to inquire within ourselves and ask what do I contribute to this situation?
Are we able to let previous experiences and perceptions go, to really open up to the other person?
I experienced that when I and the team members are able to do so, we could really meet each other. This created a broader awakening and deeper connection between us. We learned that to create the positive things we seek (the Awakening without) means starting to apply the appreciative principle to yourself and act in a positive way. If you want more connection, then start connecting to yourself first. If you want trust, then act out being trustful. As Ghandi famously said *"Be the Change you Seek"*.

In this book you will read more about the new competencies in adult development such as appreciation and inquiry. You will also read about the effect of positivity as expressed through Appreciative inquiry, which also includes the development of personal behavior and to creating societal wholeness by applying a systemic approach. Awakening within can also contribute to achieving an optimal performance and being in **flow** with each other. In this book many descriptions of cases are giving, where people involved within adult education are able to do so.
My wish for this book is that it inspires people to act out of the awareness that the inner and outer awakening are strongly connected, this is nice illustrated in the quote by Marilyn Ferguson:

'The greatest revolution in our generation is that of human beings,
who by changing their inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives'.

Annet van de Wetering
Project Coördinator

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The aim of the project is to empower the staff around the improvement of customer satisfaction by a much higher supply chain reliability and increase the engagement and the motivation of the entire staff. The results are measured by logistic performance and engagement survey results.
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Sarah Lewis

Future direction for Manchester Healthy Schools

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Leadership is at the heart of the failure or success of many change interventions. Appreciative Leadership may provide some help/answers in facilitation successful change programs. This intervention is designed to inform people about the possibilities and the challenges of Appreciative Leadership and to create an awareness that there are new approaches to leadership that will serve today's organisations in a more suitable way then the more traditional models of leadership.

Joep de Jong

Metasaga

Metasaga is a journey through the culture, heritage and physical landscape. It allows leaders at all levels to engage in deep self- reflection by exploring their environment. It utilises a strengths-based, whole system approach to evaluate how they operate as leaders and the performance of the organisation they lead. It makes leaders at all levels reframe their thinking using metaphor, narrative, tradition and artefacts found in their own physical environment. It combines the business techniques of non-directive coaching, dialogue and appreciative inquiry with the traditional storytelling teaching of our culture, the Norse saga.

Kate Coutts

Discovering and enhancing professional identity

During the workshop participants were given the chance to explore the nature of their professional identity and discover skills, abilities, dreams and what's already there giving life to it. And enhance their professional identity by designing the future based on its strengths. The overall aim is to enable participants to get back to their professional life from a different position and with a different perception of themselves and their strengths.

Anthoula Athanasiadou

Strengths spotting; a board game with a twist

The primary purpose of the game is to increase the player's knowledge of strengths, at a personal, team, and organizational level. The game allows player to discover their strengths towards personal potential, energizing, authenticity, optimal performance.

Anne Linder and Jesper Gregersen

Narrative techniques to enhance appreciative inquiry skills

Narrative techniques to enhance persons to listen humanely as well as analytically to the stories of others and to listen to their own stories with less judgement.

Madelyn Blair

Reconnect with personal values and power in the role of a teacher
Teachers and their role are very important for our society's future. In Greece teachers often have to deal with a lot of frustration out of the many problems in public school system. Using Appreciative Inquiry and other strength-based methods to create a context of safety and inspiration where participants could reconnect with their personal values around the role of a teacher; to allow participants reconnect with their powers as teachers and what they can do "right here, right now".
Ioanna Kleisari

Looking after me, looking after you
The Value of Mindfulness Champions to help people gain wellbeing, self belief and self confidence
The ultimate goal the programme is working toward developing a healthy, thriving and resilient population supported by mindfulness-champions, in a range of settings.
The 'experts by experience' approach has enabled people in the recovery movement as well as those with long-term conditions to improve their quality of life and community participation. It has also enabled people who had many years of addiction and worklessness to offer their strengths and experience to others.
Ruth Passman

Realising your potential;
Using Solution Focused principles in a workshop during a probation project
A Probation service project for education and practical support into employment for ex-offenders, offenders on Education and Training (ETE) programmes or community orders. To awaken realisation of latent skills and personal characteristics and illustrate how these can be useful in work place. Promoted as 'Realising your potential' the workshop has a motivational aspect and aims to demonstrate how these processes can be used by participants on an on-going basis.
Loraine Kennedy

3. COACHING

FIREworks : The "colouring competencies" project - in search of passion
FIREworks is a coaching style which uses the four phases of Appreciative Inquiry:
Discovery, Dream,design of the future and Destiny. FIREworks focusses on bringing out the best in people - their talent and is designed to reveal the client's passions; FIREworks aims to develop a motivational future and to help job seekers to realise their dreams. FIREworks also achieved a shift in the counsellor's perspective - from one concerned with people without jobs and skills - to one that emphasises people's potential, their dreams and talents.
Griet Bouwen and Bert Verleysen

Appreciative Coaching for Youth Employability.
Workshop on Personal and Professional Development for Youth Workers. This workshop was an experiential application of Appreciative Inquiry techniques to coaching for employability and was targeted specifically to youth workers who had a desire to work on their personal and professional development.
Juan Ratto-Nielsen

For your success
A Christian secondary school in the countryside of the Netherlands.
Coaching a team of teachers to improve their teamwork for the benefit of the pupils.
Cora Reijerse

Strength-Based Team Building
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Aristofanis Tzallas

Appreciatieve Embodiment as the base for communication, appreciation and cooperation
The purpose of the workshop was to raise the level of insight in their own communication patterns, to let them know how to appreciate their own practical approach to the work and the cooperation. The model "Appreciative Embodiment" helped to ensure that we spoke to the heads of the participants as well as the hearts and the bodies. The model is a great tool by which to create a workshop or a longer learning environment.
Mille Duvander

4. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Creating Norway's First AI-Program at University Level
A story about how a whole county is starting to use strengths based methods and Appreciative Inquiry in various sectors. The story takes place in Buskerud county and there are 4 main parties a privat AI-consultant company, an education institution that helps drop-out students at upper secondary to find their strengths and use them, the County governor and the University College of Buskerud. We want to see a whole county, from the County Governor to the kids in kindergarten, start using strengths based view on life and work. Resulting in that we launched now Norway's first AI-program at University.
Pål Tanggaard

A Training Program for Community Culture Carriers in the Municipaltie of Vejle, Denmark
The cooperation and co-creation between the municipal officials and the citizens on a large scale is the innovative part of the project.In recent years, villages and rural areas in Denmark has been under pressure from migration to cities and under pressure from loss of functions to the cities. This program facilitates a renewal of local communities in collaboration between municipality and citizens using strength-based methods.
Peter Sepstrup

Floating Learning Journey: Using art to communicate across cultures and languages
Working with refugees and asylum seekers to turn negative stereotype into positive image building on their strengths and brokering community solutions and positive interactions, the initiative strongly adheres to the belief that making art can change the way a person feels about themselves, their environment and their difficulties. It also allows the maker to reach out to others, to be understood.
Masoud Sani

Regaining learning skills with strength based coaching, positive psychology and AI for men and fathers in crisis after divorce and broken relations
Supplementing the healing process with hope theories in practice and supporting the growing self-efficacy is what gives the best and lasting result for men working through their crises. Men and fathers can now benefit from an effective way back to their normal life and it helps them keeping a stable relation to their study, job and family.
Jan Skaarup

Learning programmes - developing action research and appreciative practice AS-S part of neighbourhood development in a region of the United Kingdom
This story concerns developing action research and appreciative practice as part of neighbourhood development in a region of the United Kingdom. This story gives a short overview of the piece of work which developed over a period of years and then highlights a series of workshops which were organised.
Helena Mary Kettleborough

AI helps homeless clients develop their resilience
Back on Your Feet project –working with homeless engaged in substance misuse.
To train hostel staff in AI and engage with them to make their work more strength based. In particular to develop and pilot a programme for hostel residents.
Suzanne Quinney

Valuation using Appreciative Inquiry
To help secure the long term success of an organisation in the context of the economic downturn and threats to its traditional income streams through "valuating" the work of the community. To create a new vision that will encourage practices that are proven to be effective and reduce activity that detracts from the community's future sustainability
Sally Cray

Future Day concept
The context was a small village that just had been given the message that their main working place should be closed down. The purpose was to create hope for the future and especially for the young people. During the project we expanded the purpose to be for the whole region. Over 600 people and half of them school youngsters had been together a whole day talking about proud for their part of the island Gotland and expressed dreams of the future.
Sven Sandström

A PROFILE OF THE MAN WHO INSPIRED THE EEC LIFELONG LEARNING FUND

This project was funded under the EEC Lifelong Learning Stream from a fund named Grundtvig. The fund was named after an inspirational scholar, philosopher and politician who was a prolific writer and contributor to educational theory. It was felt important to include a brief description of the man whose life's work inspired the funding for this European-wide work in spreading innovative learning using Appreciative inquiry and strength based work. It is hoped that had Grundtvig been alive today, he would be similarly inspired by the ideas and practices of the practitioners who contributed to this project and the published outcomes contained in the open source book that accompanies this report. The bio is drawn and quoted from the website http://www.infed.org/thinkers/et-grund.htm (reproduced from the encyclopaedia of informal education).

Nikolai Frederick Severin Grundtvig, folk high schools and popular education

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Nikolai Frederick Grundtvig (1783-1872) was a prolific writer contributing major works in theology, education, literature, politics, and history. He was also a poet and hymn-writer. Outside Denmark he is probably best known for his contribution to educational thought and practice, and to social reform - in part through his pioneering of folk high schools. Mark K Smith explores his contribution.

Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1782) is one of the most significant figures in Danish history. He might not be as well known as some of his younger contemporaries such as Soren Kierkergaard (1813-55) or Hans Christian Anderson (180-75) but he had a profound impact on Danish life (Lawson 1994: 613). His writing around Nordic and Anglo-Saxon literature and customs helped fashion a sense of what is was to be Danish during the second half of the nineteenth century. Nikolai Grundtvig's contribution to Lutheran theology stimulated considerable debate, and his hymn-writing left a legacy of several hundred. In education he advocated popular, autonomous places of learning - what became known as folk high schools. He was a prolific writer and it has been estimated that a collected edition would need about 130 large volumes (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark).

LIFE

The son of a Lutheran pastor (and from a long line of country parsons), N. F. S. Grundtvig looked back at his home life with some affection. He found it rich spiritually and humanly - in significant part due to the affection and attention of his mother, but also through time spent with an older woman, Malene Jensdatter, who lived in at the vicarage. She sang and told stories simply and yet vividly, 'so that all through life Grundtvig came to regard her as a manifestation of the piety, worldly wisdom and gift of language of the common people' (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark). Grundtvig developed a particular interest in Icelandic language and folklore.

Nikolai Grundtvig was initially educated at home, then by a private tutor (another clergyman) in Jutland. He went on to study at the free school in Aarhaus and at the University of Copenhagen. He passed his course in theology by the time he was twenty - too young to be ordained - and becoming a clergyman, at that point, was not what he wanted anyway. Grundtvig worked for three years as a personal tutor - an experience that was to deepen his appreciation of education. His interest in mythology and literature was augmented at this time by studying the work of Fichte, Schelling, Shakespeare and Schille. By 1809 he had had a number of books published including Northern Mythology and The Fall of the Heroic Life in the North. The former was greeted as a significant development in the study of Old Norse thought. Grundtvig earned his living during this period by teaching history and geography.

THE LIVING WORD

Central to N. F. S. Grundtvig's thinking was the notion of the 'living word' (the term Christ used at the Last Supper). He talked of life as follows:

"I saw life, real human life, as it is lived in this world, and saw at once that to be enlightened, to live a useful and enjoyable human life, most people did not need books at all, but only a genuinely kind heart, sound common sense, a kind good ear, a kind good mouth, and then liveliness to talk with really enlightened people, who would be able to arouse their interest and show them how human life appears when the light shines upon it". (1856 quoted in Borish 1991: 18).

The first glimpses of Grundtvig's vision of the folk high school can be found in the preface to hi 1832 study of Scandinavian mythology Nordic Mythology:

"There will be the common centre from which the institution branches out into all the main lines of practical life, and back to which it endeavours to gather and unite all the energies of society. Here, all the civil servants of the state who do not need scholarship but life, insight and practical ability, and all of those who wish to belong to the rank of the educated should get the very best chance of developing themselves in a suitable direction and of getting to know one another".
(Grundtvig quoted in Lawson 1994: 614) Nikolai Grundtvig had visited Robert Owen and New Lanark to learn about the approach to schooling and education being pioneered there at the Institute - and we can elements of what he saw reflected in his thinking.

N. F. S. Grundtvig's first major work on education - The Danish Four Leaf Clover - appeared in 1836 following the first sessions of the provisional advisory councils (see above). His concern was to try to cultivate the 'loveliness' of the four leaves - the King, the people, the homeland, the language (Lawson 1994: 615). His solution, in significant part was the folk high school with bards or skalds - 'real teachers' - at their centre. The central aim of education was enlightenment about life - livsoplysning - with enlightenment originating 'mostly from the single person's own life or least be tried to see how it fits' (quoted by Lawson 1994: 615). This book was followed in 1838 by The School for Life and Academy at Soer. The Academy at Soer was, essentially, a school for the children of the aristocracy. It's orientation encapsulated for Nikolay Grundtvig, a lot that was wrong with education. He particularly took issues with the focus on Latin studies and examinations, and the lack of concern for practical matters. He argued for 'mutual education' and 'living interaction' (a secular corollary to his focus on the living word) (op. cit.: 616). Lawson discusses this as follows:

In a secular context Grundtvig meant that the ***the 'living word' was not formal instruction or lecturing as such but the communication of personal life between teacher and taught;*** either the teachings live in the life of the teacher and are actively responded to by the student or they do not live at all, the teachings being mere dead words. The 'living word' is not Biblical fundamentalism but the spiritual communication of the 'truth', words of power and authority evoking an active response in the listener. (1994: 616)

Such an understanding of education was not confined to the classroom but flowed through community life - and could be cultivated within the sort of setting that a folk high school provided.

FOLK HIGH SCHOOLS

Nikolai Grundtvig continued to develop this theme in his writing. In 1840 he published Request for and Idea of a Danish High School in Søro. By this point he was getting into the nitty gritty of organizing and running such a project - discussing things like the process of mutual teaching and conversation, and the formation of students' councils. Not unexpectedly, given the direction of his thinking and his initial starting point, he placed a strong emphasis upon **student participation** (Lawson 1994: 617).

The first Danish Folk High School was actually opened in Rødding in 1844 by Kristen Kold a follower of Grundtvig. The idea for the folk high school had originated in part from the need to develop residential forms of schooling - because of the dispersal of populations in rural areas. The school's prospectus claimed it would provide a place 'where the peasant and the citizen can obtain knowledge and guidance for use and pleasure not so much in regard to his livelihood but in regard to his situation as ... a citizen' (quoted in Moller and Watson 1944: 27). As Henry Morris was to do later, Grundtvig and his followers made connections with **the development of substantial social movements** - in cooperative agriculture, village meeting houses, independent congregations and so on. Lindeman comments (1929: 32).

In both the Danish and German models of adult education is included two aspects:
1. Intellectual, cultural and spiritual growth
2. A folk or group motivation and end.

Hence the significance to later generations of community educators.

The folk high schools of Denmark... are for farmers; students live in residence as part of a group; the farmer-residence aspect is fully as important as the fact that they have come there for study. (Lindeman 1929: 32). N. F. S. Grundtvig argued for a network of self-governing folk high schools ('Schools for Life'). Alongside this he made the case for a Nordic University ('The School for Passion').

IN CONCLUSION

By 1864 Denmark had fifteen Folk High Schools, by 1914 there were 83 (Rordam 1965) and the movement was well established in Norway, Sweden and Finland and isolated examples operated in the USA, UK, Japan Czechoslovakia and Switzerland (Manniche 1939: Davies 1931). It was argued that they made an immense contribution to the economic and cultural resurgence of a previously backward nation. Moller and Watson (1944) also maintained that the cultural and intellectual climate they, more than any other institution, created, enabled Denmark to unite against Fascism and resist the lure of collaboration to a degree not encountered elsewhere.

In the last fifty years their focus has shifted away from the concentration on rural pursuits. They are:
- Open to all those above eighteen years of age;
- Avowedly and by law not competence giving;
- Not academically competitive, with no grades or marks at all given;
- Outside of mainstream Danish educational system. (Borish 1991: 8)
- As Borish goes on to say - two further features astonish outside observers. First, that these schools receive 85 per cent of their expenses from the state. Second, they are free from state control in philosophical orientation (thus you have radical or feminst schools; Christian schools, folk high schools for athletic instruction or for music, foreign languages or retired people).
- In N. F. S. Grundtvig's work we can see some themes or strands that have been central to much adult, progressive and informal education thinking: the fellowship of teachers and students living and working together and learning from one another, as well as sharing in the running of the school.
- The importance of the 'living word'.
- The stress on common humanity even though one needs a thorough understanding of one's own culture before understanding that of others.
- Education as a 'living interaction' - a coming to terms with the meaning of one's own existence rather than vocational training or formal instruction (we can see this most strongly in the work of later writers such as Eduard Lindeman) (Lawson 1994: 618-9).
- The contribution of folk high schools to fighting Fascism is also down, in significant part, to Grundtvig's contribution. His concern for the preservation and development of culture and

identity did not take a narrow path. Instead he argued for folkelighed - **'community life that embraces everyone'** (Peter Manniche 1971 quoted by Lawson 1994: 619). Nikolai Grundtvig's vision had considerable power.

FURTHER READING AND REFERENCES

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Links
Centre for Grundvig Studies - http://www.teo.au.dk/cfg/enhed/praesent

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INTRODUCTION

The e-book arises from the contributions made to the Grundtvig conference held in Manchester 2011, under the auspices of an EEC Grundtvig funded project: Co-Creating a Learning Society: from improvement to innovation in adult education. The conference succeeded in gathering together a mix of over 40 case examples of AI practice within adult education which were written from the experience of those AI practitioners who had designed and implemented them. This e-book provides a range of case studies which demonstrate the many ways AI is currently applied within a variety of different community and organisational settings within adult education across Europe.

More than 40 abstracts were submitted for presentation and discussion at the conference. Twenty-seven cases were selected for inclusion in this e-book for the purpose of distributing them to a wider audience within the adult education sector as well as for sharing amongst (AI) practitioners within adult education. The case studies represent a range of applications in the field of AI and strength based change.

CASE STUDIES

The compilation of cases for this e-book grew out of the funding criteria for the Grundtvig lifelong learning project. The aim of the project was to identify and share 'state of the art' strength-based and change/Appreciative inquiry (AI) practice across Europe. Many of the cases included here are written by experienced AI practitioners within adult education who have been involved with the discipline for many years. Also included are some examples of AI interventions that were written by practitioners who were undertaking their first foray into the AI world. As such the cases represent something for different levels of AI experience.

All cases deal with some aspect of change. Some cases target change in personal development, others focus at the level of the group, organisation or a whole community or system. The cases represent different topics of application of AI and strength-based change for example in health, adult and youth education, business strategy, and in community development as well as different sectors in which the case study was conducted which include: public, private and community settings.

What we see is a very rich and diverse picture of AI practitioners comprising training facilitators, narrative therapists, organisation change consultants, coaches and mentors, and adult educators. Also evident is how innovatively the AI Euro community has interpreted the discipline. The result is a wide range of applications and case studies within adult education which offer material and ideas for use by others. Whether the reader is seeking to learn more about AI practice or to gain insights about how a specific AI approach works in particular circumstances, this e-book will offer practical guidance as well as provide access to support materials.

The cases are not complete accounts of what are often, complex social dynamics, but they indicate how AI principles are incorporated into change projects. Some examples include: improving mental health of former prison inmates (Passman); to rebuilding lives of young, and sometimes, drug dependent men, after bouts of homelessness (Quinney); developing pride in communities (Norstrum) and helping people to develop confidence to find jobs and build their self-esteem (Verleysen); undertaking voyages of personal discovery (Coutts) as well as using AI for business development and strategy (Lewis). Appreciative inquiry, as represented in this e-book, is an approach that is useful for facilitating change across a full range of the so called 'hard and soft' aspects of change management.

AUDIENCE

This e-book is written for consultants, practitioners, teachers, managers or educators who are interested in learning more about AI and strength-based change within adult education. It provides some case material to assist people with their own AI designs and in their consideration of how and when to use AI as an approach to change and development within adult education.

STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE E-BOOK

There are four sections to the e-book.

1. **Section 1**

   In Section one three introductory chapters offer 'framing perspectives' and are designed to provide an introduction to the founding theoretical context for Appreciative inquiry practice. The chapter by Nadya Zhexembayeva offers a perspective on design, inquiry, appreciation and wholeness as the new competencies in adult education. Lene Overgaard Mogensen looks at the link between AI and systematic thinking from the point of view of the facilitator. The third chapter by Ann Shacklady-Smith Flow-by-Design, considers what practitioners mean when they produce a 'flow'. She discussed how theories of learning, AI principles, energy and engagement and the concept of flow theory may combine to produce a flow of learning that is designed to maximise the AI experience.

2. **Section 2**

   Section 2, comprising 27 cases which are thematically organized into sections headed: Vision and Strategy, Personal Leadership, Coaching and Community Development.

3. **Section 3**

   A third section includes research reports and two recent studies that were carried out by network members.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE E-BOOK

This e-book presents a rich picture of activity and experience that emerged from the funded conference. It is also a 'work-in-progress', whose content will be further shaped by the AI community, because it is intended that this publication is offered as an open-source e-book. The e-book is, therefore, designed to be added to, as further case studies, research reports, commentaries are developed and submitted for inclusion. The authors may also, in time, update their cases with supplementary information to include evaluation reports or reflections on the outcomes of their interventions. Information about the structure and access will be available as the DLE site develops. It is hoped that the AI Euro story will be captured, told and disseminated through these e-pages.

FUTURE SUBMISSIONS

The following topics represent some of the potential chapters and sections for the development of this e-book. Colleagues are invited to contribute in these and other areas as their interest dictates to shape the future content. For now, the headings may serve to encourage submissions and discussion on how to take the book forward

THEORY CHAPTERS

2.4.1.1. Social constructionism
2.4.1.2. Positive Psychology
2.4.1.3. Systems thinking
2.4.1.4. New science

To *the EEC Grundtvig* project fund for the much valued resource to host the conference and to begin to publish the case studies. To *TNO Management Consulting* for supporting this project to its conclusion of the first phase, with supportive management from the CEO Kees Ahaus and designer *Irene Strikker* to make the e-book look visually attractive.

To *the Grundtvig project team*
Drawn from 8 countries and representing different types of organisations. We worked over the internet, at meetings and learned a great deal about collaborating on complex issues and within tight deadlines. The project members were: Leif Josefsson, Ann Shacklady-Smith, Yvor Broer, Annet van de Wetering, Lene Overgaard Mogensen, Aristofanis Tzallas, Harris Valasso, Peter Sepstrup, Nadya Zhexembayeva.

To *the editorial team*, who deserve special mention: Annet van de Wetering (head editor), Nadya Zhexembayeva, Lene Overgaard Mogensen and Ann Shacklady-Smith, for pulling this e-book together and remaining committed to the AI Euro Network principles:

Connect, Combine and Co-Create

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Born in Athens 1959, graduated Chemical Engineer from Aristotle University and specialized in Marketing professional services in the 80' s and Human Systems Development, in 2000. Working experience comprises 15 years as sales and marketing executive in the private sector till '98, that he started my own business, through "The Management Consulting & Training Services" firm, working in consulting and training programs and in different European projects with multinational working groups. Founder of Serendipity Management Consulting & Training Ltd, he is an active member in European AI Network (EU network around Appreciative Inquiry & Strength based Coaching) and Experiential Education Europe (EEEurope) network. He usually use the "appreciative eye" perception combined with soft skills development programs, to better facilitate implementation of changes.

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As a trainer and consultant Yvor facilitates group processes through reflection and dialogue with clear direction and a sense of humour. He believes in the contextualisation of learning through working with people's concrete challenges in their actual contexts - with whichever relations, organisational factors and political situation existing there. Yvor is interested in creating belonging in teams, units, organisations, businesses and communities, and he believes that learning, development and growth arises where feelings of belonging and purpose are widespread. As a coach and consultant Yvor is inspiring and motivating. He supports leaders, individuals, teams and community groups in developing their ideas into feasible and visionary action, where past successes meet future ambitions. He aims at creating an atmosphere, where best practices (and most successful failures) can be shared and explored.

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Facilitator, coach, networker. Explorer of new technology and thinking. On a learning journey, whether it's with his two-year-old grandchild or Maasai partner Rafael. Designing, facilitating or documenting spaces and conversations, live and on-line, leading to new perspectives, possibilities for engaged change and collaboration.

His journey started as a pre school teacher, went into public administration, then took a sharp turn into IT Sales where he found a space in the area of new ideas around collaboration supported by technology. Since the early 90's he has been committed to the exploration of shared spaces. We are now heading into what he calls a "Post virtual world" where real meetings will be more valuable than ever. Ideas around the Metafari has led to deep contacts in Tanzania, but also a whole new concept being adopted by schools and coaches in Scotland, Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles; the Metasaga

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Ann has an extensive background in education, research and consultancy in leadership development and change within the public and community sector. Ann has held senior positions in several International business schools in England and New Zealand, including Head of School of Management, International business, and Senior Fellow in Public Sector management at Manchester Business School. Ann specialises in appreciative inquiry (Ai) research, training, and coaching. She is currently part of a European-wide consortium, funded under the Grundtvig scheme to advance the AI philosophy and practice throughout the adult education sector in Europe. Her career long research interests include learning styles literatures and experiential learning practice in education and for supporting personal and organisational change.

Her primary research focus is on the use of appreciative inquiry and action research methods for implementing whole-of-system change. Ann is an active member of the AI UK and AI Europe networks and AI North West network. Using the AI method, she has introduced a town-wide Imagine St Helens project to help foster constructive and engaged dialogue between community groups and agencies involved in developing her local town and its future. She has consulted widely within the local government, health and not-for-profit sectors in the application of AI for evaluation research and whole of system change. She has conducted several major research projects in these areas and led international trainer and organisational workshops, summits and conferences in this field. Her voluntary role includes her work at the St Helens Community Empowerment Network, which she chaired for 5 years and is currently Director of the newly established social enterprise arm of CEN: CENterprising St Helens Ltd.

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She is a senior consultant within TNO Management Consultants, a management consultancy firm that facilitate change- and quality management. Annet has worked in the field of change management for 22 years with a primary focus on the use of appreciative inquiry. She is the initiator of the Dutch AI network in the Netherlands and the head editor of the Dutch AI magazine. Annet is a frequently asked speaker by universities and organisations and publishes articles in books and magazines. AI connects with her personal vision and approach of Change Management: 'I belief that an inquiring dialogue, while showing recognition and appreciation, is the most powerful element to create change and gets the best out of people. Also being involved in the change gives the feeling of ownership and creates sustainable relations, which will lead to great and inspiring results'.

CHAPTER 1

DESIGN, INQUIRY, APPRECIATION, WHOLENESS:

THE NEW COMPETENCIES FOR ADULT DEVELOPMENT

BY NADYA ZHEXEMBAYEVA

INTRODUCTION

In a sun-lit room around a messy conference table, nine senior managers are hard at work. At first glance, the intense discussions and passionate engagement might appear to be those of a typical strategy meeting: formulating the problem, analyzing options, arguing positions, and deciding possible courses of action. You can almost see what comes next: the final verdict, a recommendation followed by drafts of the 'strategic document,' and then off to meet with the deployment teams. Internal communication processes that cascade through the company; action planning meetings built around key performance indicators... We've all been there, right?

Now take a second look. The meeting briefs, scattered around the table, offer little more than a set of forceful questions. The well-stacked PowerPoints and reams of data have given way to post-it notes, markers, and giant flip charts. The table in front of you is one of forty such tables in a giant convention room hosting well over 300 people for a strategy meeting. Intense roundtable discussions are interrupted by skits and other creative presentations to the entire community. And if that is not shocking enough, you just recognized suppliers, customers, academics, NGO activists and policy workers playing it cool at every turn.

What is unfolding in front of you is not a product of a change guru's imagination gone wild. In China and the US, Brazil and Singapore, professionals come together to make – and implement – strategic solutions for the new challenges facing business, governments, non-profit sector and education alike.

While a three-hundred people strategy dialogue is one of the more extreme examples of how organizations respond to today's complex reality, it does speak pointedly to the demand for new competencies needed to survive in the any sector of society. Yes, the trusted aptitudes of the adult professional world, often referred to as left-brain capabilities[1], are still in the game: we continue to need solid analysis, precise measurement, and clear planning. Yet alone these staples of success are simply not enough. A new set of competencies, more often associated with the right-brain world of artists, inventors and Cultural Creatives[2], is required for the unexpected, complex, and messy challenges of today's professional world.

FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Here in this chapter, we will speak about four of them; 1. *Design*, 2. *Inquiry*, 3. *Appreciation*, 4. *Wholeness*. A surprising set, no question about it – perhaps straight from the pages of a new-age self-help book? Not to worry. By now, these new aptitudes have been around for more than a few years, and organization big and small have experimented with them and succeeded in creating real value for their stakeholders.

1. DESIGN

Ask any leader – whether Indian, American, Russian, or Swiss –what is the job of a good manager, and the answer will surprise you by its remarkable consistency. Management (no matter what type of organization you are running) is all about decision-making. In fact, the idea of decision-making as the main task separating a manager from the rest of the organization has become deeply ingrained in our thinking[3].

Decision-making, according to popular wisdom, boils down to a "selection of a course of action among several alternatives[4]." As systems thinkers Richard Bolland and Fred Collopy point out[5], this involves a particular attitude or approach to problem solving, one which tends to dominate organizational practice and education. This decision attitude is built on the assumption that it is relatively easy to come up with alternatives to consider, but rather difficult to choose among them[6]. Complex analytical tools and reasoning techniques are necessary to overcome the central difficulty of choice.

So far so good? Indeed, the decision mindset has served us well, and much of organizational life is built on the ability to analyze, assess and choose the right course of action. Yet, when it comes to the task of surviving on today's rapidly changing marketplace, one thing becomes obvious: we have nothing to choose from.

Let's illustrate this assertion with an example form business life – a sector, which demands much of the investment of adult education institutions. In October of 2005, Walmart CEO Lee Scott made a startling announcement broadcast to all 1.6 million employees and communicated to some 60,000 suppliers around the globe[7]. Walmart was initiating a far-reaching "business sustainability strategy," whereby environmental value was to be embedded into the current pillars of the company's competitiveness: big box stores, world-class distribution and outstanding supply-chain management. Three clear goals were selected as part of its vision of sustainability integration: "To be supplied 100 percent by renewable energy; to create zero waste; and to sell products that sustain our resources and the environment[8]."Only one minor problem: nobody knew how to get it done[9].

Imagine yourself at those early meetings dedicated to turning these goals into reality. As you ponder the enormity of the goals set forth by the company's top management, it becomes obvious that all the skills and aptitudes that brought about success in the past are no longer enough. Yes, great analytical techniques in support of a great decision-making are still important. But for a manager ready to choose the best alternative to create sustainable value, one thing is missing: the choices have to exist first. And this is where design comes into play – in business, public, or non-profit sectors alike.

Forget fashionable clothing and fancy kitchen utensils, and consider design as an attitude, a mindset, or a mode of thinking. At the core of such an attitude is an assumption strikingly different than that of the decision attitude. If decision is all about making a hard choice between easy-to-identify alternatives, design attitude assumes an easy choice between difficult-to-create alternatives[10]. Tim Brown, CEO and President of IDEO, ranked among the ten most innovative design companies in the world, illustrates this new reality in the following way: "a management philosophy based only on selecting from existing strategies is likely to be overwhelmed by new developments at home and abroad. What we need are new choices – new products that balance the needs of individuals and of society as a whole; new ideas that tackle the global challenges of health, poverty and education; new strategies that result in differences that matter and a sense of purpose that engages everyone affected by them. What we need is an approach to innovation that is powerful, effective and broadly accessible. Design thinking...offers just such an approach[11]."
Now, if design thinking represents a crucial competence to be acquired as a complement to good

decision making, how do we develop it? What are the elements and characteristics of good design that an organization should consider?

Tim Brown makes a useful distinction in his thought provoking Change by Design. To generate great choices and to come to meaningful solutions, a team has to attend to three overlapping spaces:
   a. an *inspiration* space, where insights and inputs are made;
   b. an *ideation* space, where insights are translated into ideas,
   c. and an *implementation* space, where the best ideas are brought forth into reality[12].

While you, as a reader, might appreciate a defined sequence in our presentation of the three spaces, in reality a team might move in and out of the spaces through multiple iterations and with no clear boundaries between them. Each of the spaces, however, offers unique benefits and challenges.

A. INSPIRATION

Some years ago, in conversation with professors and students at the Cleveland Institute of Art, we heard a story of a surprising experiment. A group of students received an assignment to design a comfortable, light, multi-function backpack. With designs submitted mid-way through the course, the second part of the assignment was distributed: to take the same demands and limitations, and add one more to it. With a vision to minimize waste, students were asked to make sure the backpack required the least number of parts possible. With only one additional design requirement, the change in the final products was staggering. Not only were the new designs less wasteful and often more elegant; the anticipated cost of production went down significantly across the board.

"Design is the first signal of human intention[13]," says Bill McDonough, the controversial architect-designer and half of the author team behind the bestseller, Cradle to Cradle. What the backpack story illustrates is the central task of the inspiration space in the process of design: to develop a clear intent and to translate it into specific requirements and constrains for the project.

Dan Pink, an author who did much to popularize design thinking and other right-brain capacities as essential for management, suggested two fundamental constraints for each good design: utility enhanced by significance. "A graphic designer must whip up a brochure that is easy to read. That's utility. But at its most effective, her brochure must also transmit ideas or emotions that the words themselves cannot convey. That's significance[14]."

Tim Brown and his IDEO team speak about three key constraints for every solution: "feasibility (what is functionally possible within the foreseeable future); viability (what is likely to become part of a sustainable business model); and desirability (what makes sense to people and for people)[15]."

If intent – manifested through clear constraints and requirements – represents the goal of the ideation stage of design, then engagement with your stakeholders represents its primary method. To create meaningful and impactful requirements, it is crucial to be deeply engaged with all parties who have value at stake. Whether it is your own organization's employees, "customers", partners, or other stakeholders, understanding their needs at a nearly visceral level becomes crucial. Here is how designer and author Jane Fulton Suri speaks[16] about this principle of good design: "Directly witnessing and experiencing aspects of behavior in the real world is a proven way of inspiring and informing [new] ideas. The insights that emerge from careful observation of people's behavior… uncover all kinds of opportunities that were not previously evident."

B. IDEATION

While the inspiration space offers insight and guidelines for the future, ideation space is there to translate insights into ideas worth exploring. But unlike the celebrated rapid-fire brain-storming sessions typical of mainstream organizational life, idea generation within a design mindset is a take-your-time, hands-on, deliberate and iterative process.

In the words of a design veteran, "Design thinking is inherently a prototyping process. Once you spot a promising idea, you build it. The prototype is typically a drawing, model, or film that describes a product, system, or service. We build these models very quickly; they're rough, ready, and not at all elegant, but they work. The goal isn't to create a close approximation of the finished product or process; the goal is to elicit feedback that helps us work through the problem we're trying to solve. In a sense, we build to think.[17]"

While it may look like you are wasting valuable time sketching and experimenting with things that might not see the light of day, investing into ideas allows you to test earlier, make mistakes faster, and get to solid solutions sooner. For the remarkably complex challenge of creating value, prototyping offers a way to explore unchartered territories with minimal risk.

GE, the global diversified technology, media and financial services company, has showcased the value of rapid collaborative prototyping with its celebrated Treasure Hunts. Designed as focused three-day multi-stakeholder sessions, the Treasure Hunts offer an in-depth audit of energy or water use, generate viable improvement options, and set the foundation for implementation[18]. Originally developed by Toyota, the Treasure Hunt usually starts on a Sunday afternoon to minimize disruption of operations. A cross-functional group of GE employees, suppliers, contractors and representatives of others companies are split into small teams and trained to identify opportunities in the facility where energy and resources are needlessly in use. An actual hands-on audit follows, and by the next morning each team generates the first leads for possible improvement. Monday is the time to con-nect with the operations professionals and technical experts to prototype the ideas and test their viability – this process also builds buy-in at the facility. And through the iterative process of prototy-ping, testing, and discussing, by Tuesday afternoon each team has at least 10 ideas with cost saving assessments already in place. The impacts of the GE Treasure Hunts are far reaching. As Gretchen Hancock of GE reports, "While efficiency projects are the direct outcome of the hunt, GE has trained more than 3,500 of its employees globally to think about wasted energy and water in a different and powerful way. Those individuals have identified more than 5,000 projects that have the opportunity to drive energy efficiency, eliminate 700,000 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions -- and $111 million in operational cost.[19]"

C. IMPLEMENTATION

While inspiration brings about insight, and ideation turns the insight into viable alternatives, imple-mentation is all about creating conditions for success. Of course, successful implementation of any kind of change depends on a number of factors. One particular factor stemming from design thinking is particularly relevant to the challenge of today's organizations: participation.

Increasingly so, for customers, mere consumption is increasingly insufficient. For employees, min-dless execution is less and less acceptable. For students, one-way knowledge transfer is ever more inadequate. Yes, good products, processes, programs and policies are still the necessary minimum – but they alone are not enough to compete. Jonas Ridderstrale and Kjelle Nordstrom argue this point well in their bestselling book Funky Business: "The surplus society has a surplus of similar compa-nies, employing similar people, with similar educational backgrounds, working in similar jobs, coming up with similar ideas, producing similar things, with similar prices, warranties, and qualities.[20]" In a

world of abundance and surplus, what we increasingly need is meaningful experience[21]. Giving your customers and employees a chance to truly participate – and co-create – the new reality of organizational life is the best way to design such an experience.

Whether it is products, services, processes or procedures you are trying to improve for the overall organizational success, design is a competence essential to your success. In the absence of ready-made-solutions and formulaic practices, we cannot analyze ourselves into a better, more profitable future. Rather, we have to create one. And when it comes to creation, design has a pretty good track record.

Yet, design alone is not enough. In fact, the following capability is essential to mastering design thinking. Ask yourself now, what might it be? Yes, we are talking about inquiry.

2. INQUIRY

Think of the last meeting you took part in where the objective was to come up with a particular solution. With a clear agenda set well in advance, and background materials distributed in preparation, you are now gathered and ready to tackle the challenge. Close your eyes and imagine yourself right at the start of the meeting. Really try it. What were you thinking? What did you pay attention to?

Chances are, you came prepared with a list of proposals ready to be offered along with well-developed arguments. Indeed, as professionals, we are expected to provide answers – not knowing is hardly an acceptable position. Yet, if recent research is any indication, pre-defined answers may not be the best route to high performance.

In 2004, scholars Marcial Losada and Emily Heaphy published a study[22] focused on what makes teams effective. Among the dimensions explored, the researchers studied the relationship between performance and the way conversations are structured. In particular, they focused on how many answers or solutions are generated during corporate meetings as compared to how many open-ended questions were asked. They called this relationship the inquiry/advocacy ratio – referring to deep explorative questions as 'inquiry' and to strong points and suggestions as 'advocacy'. (For the record, it might be worth mentioning that "Do you agree with me?" does not constitute an inquiry within this terminology.) To make sure performance is measured adequately, the researchers looked at profitability (SBU profit and loss statements), customer satisfaction, and 360-degree evaluations that offered assessments of the team members by superiors, peers, and subordinates. What Losada and Heaphy discovered is a striking difference between high-performing and low performing teams when it comes to the use of questions and answers in daily work. High-performing teams balanced inquiry and advocacy, offering on average 1.143 questions for every answer rendered. Medium performing teams used about 1 inquiry for every 2 advocacies. But when it came to low-performing teams, the ratio was immensely unbalanced: barely one question was asked for every 20 (!) points, arguments, solutions and proposals[23]. Other scholars, including Chris Argyris and Donald Schön[24] as well as Peter Senge[25], offer similar insight into the importance of this balancing task.

What the data suggests is that while answers are important, it is questions that we need to pay attention to if high-performance is our goal. And when it comes to surviving the ever changing business reality of today, questions have a crucial role to play.

In the late nineties, the Weatherhead School of Management made a commitment to building a new home for itself. The world-renowned architect Frank O. Gehry and his firm, Gehry Partners, became

collaborators in the design and construction of the new Peter B. Lewis Building. In the process of design, the team started with surprisingly simple questions: "What is teaching?" "What is learning?" "What is an office?" "What is a faculty?"

In ways similar to architecture, business calls for inquiry into fundamentals. But how can we learn this delicate act? What options do we have to consider and adopt?

In his 1990 ground-breaking work, *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge offered a colorful palette of skills available for balancing inquiry and advocacy. While some of the skills are less effective for our purpose (including politicking, interrogating, dictating or withdrawing), most of them have an important role to play in organizational development. Developing the essentials of these skills will serve you well in the task of sustainable value creation while, at the same time, supporting business priorities as a whole. Here is the menu of options adopted from Senge's *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Science of the Learning Organization*[27]:
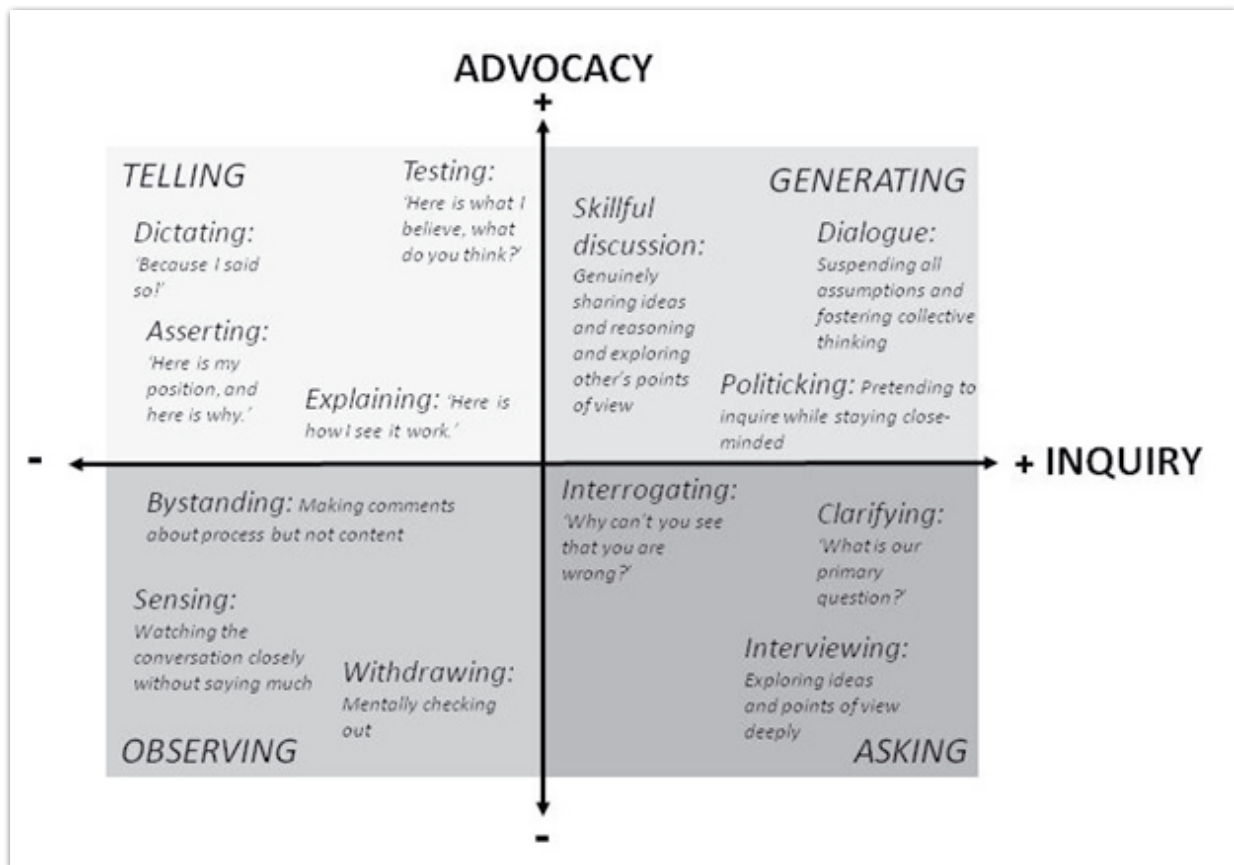
It is clear that organizational life creates a need for each of the four aspects of the balancing act – observing, telling, asking and generating. You might find some of the options on the menu more appealing than others; but it is remarkable what happens to a meeting once your repertoire expands. So, as you continue to build your inquiry muscle, here are a few simple ways to check if you are conquering the art of the question:

1. *An open end*: good questions are open-ended. How do you know that your question is a real inquiry? If you can answer with 'yes' or 'no,' or provide any other 'correct' answer, you probably just fell off the tracks of true inquiry. 'How might we…' or 'What would it look like to…' are among the best ways to question your way into embedded sustainability.

2. *Generative power*: good questions create. Period. If you are spotting a wave of excitement, inspiration, and desire to co-create as a result of the question asked, chances are you are amidst a generative inquiry. And since much of social and environmental challenges offer highly contested, touchy, and daunting issues to resolve, designing generative questions is an insurance policy against deadlock, energy drain, and withdrawal.

3. *Masterful assumptions*: nearly all questions we pose have built-in assumptions. 'How should we create a department of sustainability in our company?' assumes that there is an agreement around the need for such a department. Skillfully managing assumptions – being aware of them, choosing carefully, and aligning assumptions masterfully – is crucial for the entire trajectory of your embedded sustainability effort.

Eric Vogt, Juanita Brown and David Isaacs offer a perfect illustration of the power of open-ended well-designed generative questions in their 2003 exploration of *The Art of Powerful Questions*. "The director of HP Labs wondered why the organization was not considered the best industrial research laboratory in the world. He charged Barbara Waugh, a key staff member, with coordinating the effort to respond to the question, "What does being the best industrial research lab *in* the world mean?" To that end, Waugh initiated a global network of conversations around that question, using the company's technology infrastructure along with face-to-face gatherings to support the dialogues. Just by exploring the practical implications of the question in a disciplined way, the Lab began to see productivity gains. But one day, an HP Lab engineer came into Barbara's office and said, "That question is okay, but what would really energize me and get me up in the morning would be asking, 'How can we be the best industrial research lab *for* the world?'"

That one small shift changed the entire game by scaling up meaning and shifting the assumptions embedded in the original question. It profoundly altered the context of the inquiry—to become the best *for* the world as the larger context for becoming the best *in* the world. This question obviously "traveled well"—it was no longer just the Lab's question, but something that many others at HP began to ask themselves.

Employees at HP Labs and throughout the whole company responded to this new focus with a tremendous surge of collective energy. HP's E-Inclusion effort, a major project to enable the world's poor to enter the new economy while providing critical medical and other information to communities in the third world, stemmed in large measure from the HP for the World exploration[28]."

All in all, inquiry is a competence desirable for a vast array of professional challenges. When it comes to value creation, however, inquiry is not merely desirable, it is essential. But are all questions created equal? To search for the answer, it is time for us to turn our attention to the next competence vital in an age of environmental and social demands: appreciation.

3. APPRECIATION

On a minimalist yet provocative stage at the 2010 TED conference, Chip Conley shares a story of a maid who had been a friend and employee at the hotel he owns for 23 years. (TED is a magical community built around breakthrough ideas, so if you have not checked them out yet, we guarantee you a new addiction). In the story, Chip speaks about a question he posed for himself and his company, which was inspired by his friendship: how can somebody find joy in toilet cleaning?

Perhaps an unusual question for a leader in search for better business results, but for Chip the

inquiry was a matter of survival. In the wake of the dot-com crash followed by September 11th terrorist attacks, San Francisco Bay area hotels went through the largest percentage of revenue decline in the history of American hotels. Conley's company was the largest hotel operator in the area, and finding a way to weather through the storm was the name of the game.

In search of possible solutions, Chip accidentally stumbled on a familiar but neglected concept – Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Pondering the pyramid that covers needs such as shelter, food, water, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization, he wondered how his company addressed the higher categories of needs of its customers and employees. Building on this interest, the company started to systematically inquire into its employees' sense of meaning and its customers' sense of emotional connection with the organization. Miraculously, the more attention the company paid to meaning and connection, the more meaning and connection seemed to be created. Customer loyalty went through the roof; employee turnover dropped to one-third of the industry average; and the company tripled in size during the five-year market downturn[29].

The story of Chip Conley and his Joie de Vivre Hotels speaks pointedly to the question of what makes up a good inquiry. When it comes to generating positive change, all questions are not created equal. What we inquire into counts. In fact, questions can often determine the very destiny of a company.

Hardly anyone contributed more to our understanding of the power of good questions than organizational behavior scholars David Cooperrider, Ron Fry and Suresh Srivastva, the co-originators of Appreciative Inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry (or AI) is a change management philosophy often celebrated as the most important innovation in organizational development of the past decades. Just like any traditional change management approach, Appreciative Inquiry takes on a challenging area of company performance – whether it is productivity, customer satisfaction, cost efficiency, or any other domain. But unlike traditional problem solving, AI looks for answers in less than obvious places. Instead of analyzing past *failures and gaps* in an attempt to improve performance, through the process of Appreciative Inquiry managers systematically search for and analyze *successes* – and mainstream companies from Ernst & Young to Walmart are buying in.

So, what does this shift towards strength-based change look like, exactly?

When a major airline experiences excessive baggage loss, it is tempting to focus on specific instances of failure in trying to understand what went wrong. Appreciative Inquiry shifts the focus of analysis from the extraordinary baggage loss towards extraordinary arrival experiences – systematically finding and analyzing situations when a passenger had an exemplar arrival even when all circumstances, from weather to air traffic control, worked against the company.

For a two-million metropolitan struggling with new visions of development, bringing together the diverse stakeholders is the most difficult task. Instead of focusing on the political differences and social division lines, Appreciative Inquiry invites the city to consider its current strengths and find new innovative ways to elevate and grow them.

For a car service company striving for 100% customer satisfaction, it is normal to look into each lost or dissatisfied customer, searching for reasons for failure. Appreciative Inquiry challenges the company to deeply understand reasons behind each loyal and satisfied client, assuring that there is a compelling reason for every customer to stay with the company in the future.

Whether it is for profit or not, small or large, for all organizations, strength-based discoveries differ drastically from traditional strategic change efforts. When we focus on what we are doing wrong, we become experts in repeating our own mistakes. The analysis depicts to the last little detail how to

fail, but tells us little about how to succeed. When we address the issue on hand by bypassing the many cases of past failures, and focusing on examples where similar issues were resolved successfully, not only do we find surprising answers, but we also energize employees, foster creativity, and avoid blame games among our team, thus assuring successful turnaround in the change process.

And what about results? For an approach traditionally perceived as 'soft', Appreciative Inquiry has a remarkable track record[30]. For Hunter Douglas's Window Fashions Division, using Appreciative Inquiry in business process improvement initiative generated savings of $3.5 million in the first year. For the United Nations Global Compact, Appreciative Inquiry offered a grand-breaking approach to its very first Leaders' Summit, unleashing significant changes in the governance, accountability, and impact approaches of the organization. Green Mountain Coffee Roasters successfully achieved the "25¢ Challenge," which allowed for a reduction of operating costs of 25 cents per pound of coffee, approximately a 7 percent reduction in gross costs. Managers of Santa Ana Star Casino believe that Appreciative Inquiry was instrumental in driving revenues and achieving profit turnaround of 10 million dollars in 2003. The list goes on.

But how does it work, exactly? What are the discoveries and principles behind Appreciative Inquiry and the strength-based approach to change that allow it to bring such success to the companies?

1. First, *inquiry and change are simultaneous*. We used to think that analysis comes first, then recommendations, then decision, and only then implementation. What we are discovering is that questions themselves foster change, long before any formal answers are attained and implemented. As David Cooperrider and Leslie Sekerka put it: "Inquiry is agenda setting, language shaping, affect creating, and knowledge generating. Inquiry is embedded into everything we do as managers, leaders, and agents of change. Because of omnipresence of inquiry, we are often unaware of its presence. Nevertheless, we live in the worlds our inquiries create. Inquiry itself *intervenes*.[31]"

2. Second, *organizations move in the direction of their study*.[32] Not only does the change start immediately with the question posed; but the questions we ask determine the collective trajectory of our organizations. What we fight, fights. What we appreciate, appreciates. Remember Chip Conley's accidental discovery we shared at the beginning of this chapter? Inquiry into meaning and connection led to more meaning and connection – and brought about great financial dividends for his hotel chain along the way.

Let's do a little experiment. Pull out paper and pen. Got it? Now, think about the many meetings you participated in over the past three months – and choose the one that stands out as the worse meeting of all. Remember that one? Now write down a list of factors that – in your mind – made the meeting so bad. Just list them one-by-one, no rush.

Chances are, the list in front of you looks a little bit like this:

Worst meeting

- *No agenda*
- *Bad facilitation*
- *People came unprepared*
- *Lots of private conversations and email checking*
- *A few talk all the time and ask lots of irrelevant questions*
- *No clear agreements by the end of the meeting*

Now, flip the page, and write a new list. This time, go back to the very best meeting you had in recent years. Think about everything that made it work. At least a few of the following points probably made your list:

We have run this experiment with hundreds of professionals. Remarkably, every time we compare the two lists one thing jumps out. Do you see it, too? The two lists don't match. Yes, indeed, some points are nearly identical – especially those that touch upon 'technical' elements of the meeting. But then things get interesting. What we discover, in essence, is that focusing on what does not work and then eliminating those drivers of failure does not produce success.

You can have the best agenda, best facilitator and forbid the use of cell phones, but that does not bring you passion or commitment. The same thing happens for much more complex challenges – whether it is customer loyalty, employee satisfaction, student development or global sustainability, strength-based change methods will give you answers drastically different than those of deficit-based inquiry. Removing the bad does not guarantee the good. At best, all you get is 'not bad.' And for an organization striving to generate a profit in the era of crisis and uncertainty 'not bad' is simply not good enough.

Now, one more request. Bring yourself back to the second list and recall that best meeting. What do you feel? Can you see the faces around the room? Can you sense the excitement? Hopefully, for you as for many others, Appreciative Inquiry evokes positive emotions (otherwise, accept our apologies). A nice add on, one might think, but hardly essential. Well, a few additional facts might be in order here.

In the past few years, the science of positive emotions has made significant progress. What we now know is that positive emotions bring about a wide array of personal and individual benefits: they generate optimal functioning, expand habitual models of thinking and action, build personal and interpersonal resources, and enable flexible and creative thinking[33]. And when it comes to performance, positive emotions – such as appreciation, validation and encouragement – are vital. Remember the studies of Marcial Losada and Emily Heaphy[34] we explored earlier in this chapter? In addition to a high inquiry/advocacy ratio, the researchers also focused on the ratio of positive to negative verbal and nonverbal behavior and expressions in teams of different effectiveness levels. What they discovered is that low-performing teams has a ratio of 0.363, while high performing teams had a ratio of 5.614 – showing nearly six times more positive than negative behaviors in group interactions. Appreciation matters.

It might matter even more when it comes to the challenge of embedding sustainability into the DNA of business. With piles of contested, difficult, and controversial issues behind us and before us, the ability to generate appreciative inquiry and to focus on shared strengths is a competency worth investing in.

In general, strength-based solutions similar to Appreciative Inquiry leap-frog a company towards an aligned strategy, while energizing its employees to follow through on the designed goals and models. But in addition to shifting the 'what' of strategy and organizational development, strength-based philosophy also changes the 'who' and the 'how.' It is time for us to look at the final competency on our starter list: wholeness.

3. WHOLENESS

In our search for the competencies that are most important for the successful value creation, we have looked at design, inquiry and appreciation. One more capability stands out as essential for the challenge of modern business. Wholeness. Since an entire chapter in this publication is dedicated to systemic approach to change, here we will only touch upon this subject and connect the dots.

The immense challenges of today's world are complex, interdependent, and dynamic. They cut across the entire organizational system – and beyond – and thus require a systemic approach. Seeing and acting in accordance with the magnitude of the whole is the new skill to master. Wholeness is no longer optional.

For some of us, it comes naturally. Peter Senge and his colleagues behind the organizational learning movement offered this illustration of an aptitude for wholeness at the most fundamental level: "farm children learn naturally about the cycles of cause and effect that make up systems. They see the links in the milk the cow gives, the grass the cow eats, and the droppings which fertilize the fields. When a thunderstorm is on the horizon, even a small child knows to turn off the floodgate on a spring-water well, for fear that runoff carried downstream by the rains will foul it. They know that if they forget to turn off the gate, they'll have to boil their water, or carry it by bucket from far away. They easily accept the counterintuitive fact of life: the greatest floods represent the time when you must be *most* careful about conserving water.[35]"

For many of us, wholeness is an atrophied muscle, waiting to be re-built. For centuries, our science has taught us to break things into pieces and focus on the parts – Newtonian physics being the prime example. Margaret Wheatley, who offered a stunning exploration of the new science of quantum physics, chaos theory, biology and evolution and its implications for managers in her *Leadership and the New Science*, speaks about an alternative for us to consider: "One of the first differences between the new science and Newtonianism is a focus on holism rather than parts. Systems are understood as whole systems, and attention is given to *relationships within those networks*. Donella Meadows, an ecologist and visionary author, quotes an ancient Sufi teaching that captures this shift in focus: "You think because you understand *one* you must understand *two*, because one and one makes two. But you must also understand *and*." When we view systems from this perspective, we enter an entirely new landscape of connections, of phenomena that cannot be reduced to simple cause and effect, or explained by studying the parts in isolation. We move into a land where it becomes critical to sense the constant workings of dynamic processes, and then notice how these processes materialize as visible behaviors and forms.[36]"

Here are a few exercises you can use to continue building your wholeness muscle:

- *Learn the language of systems thinking*: the discipline of systems thinking has developed a diverse set of tools that allow you to understand the elements of a system and the relationships between them. While 'feedback loops' and 'system archetypes' may appear complicated at first, these terms for analyzing and depicting the whole come in handy when you are discovering the mechanism behind your product sales, employee turnover, or process innovation.

- *Practice organizational life-cycle analysis*: whether it is a product or service that you offer, understanding the entire life-cycle, from cradle to grave, from raw material extraction to end-of-life processes, is essential for managing risks and discovering opportunities to create new value.

- *Play with stakeholder mapping*: we have said plenty about crucial importance of understanding and engaging your stakeholders in the goal. Both of these tasks start with a very simple step: knowing who your stakeholders are. Even the smallest organization may be surprised by the number of people that have a stake in its future. Mapping out your stakeholders – and relationships between different groups and networks of stakeholders – is a great way to build wholeness reflexes.

All in all, the task of any wholeness exercise is to help you develop a particular way of looking at the world around you. Like many complexity skills, wholeness cannot be learned by reading about it. The good news is that we have plenty of pressures to start practicing it.

SUMMARY

Unlike the past streamlined recipes for professional success, the new era of uncertainty in the markets demands new thinking and unorthodox solutions. Design, inquiry, appreciation and wholeness represent only a starting point in the list of new competencies to be discovered, conquered, and delivered by adult education. Together, these unusual "muscles" might just be the right mix to bring an organization from surviving to thriving.

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CHAPTER 2

THE SYSTEMIC SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST APPROACH

BY LENE OVERGAARD MOGENSEN

INTRODUCTION

When working with an appreciative approach the systemic approach can be very inspiring as it brings depth and sustainability into the work. The systemic approach has been developed within psychotherapy and further developed within organisational consultancy. Shortly described the basic assumption of systemic theory is that meaning-making and coordination of action happens in complex webs of relations. The systemic approach thus turns the focus towards repeated patterns of action and communication among humans and towards the context in which these relations exist. Taking a systemic stance towards appreciative inquiry means embedding appreciation in a context, to look at the patterns that are present when things work well, and the context that allows such patterns to arise, it means acknowledging the organisational context (or the context of adult education), with its certain logic, management, purpose and goals.

The systemic approach helps answering important questions such as:
- How to ask in-depth questions about patterns of success?
- Who to involve in which parts of the process – and which role to give them?
- How to foster agency without blaming?
- How to embrace differences in (and sometimes disagreement among) perspectives?
- How to ensure management ownership and follow-up?
- How to create an environment of change, learning and co-creation & to deal with potential resitance to the process?
  How to understand the role as a facilitator and the relationship to management

FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter will focus on the relational aspect and explore the following topics:
1. Interpersonal relations & patterns of events'
2. Memberships and diverse positions (multiverse)
3. Defining the system to work with
4. Managing change from a systemic perspective
5. Managing context of actions and change

1. INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS & PATTERNS OF EVENTS

Our common-sense way of thinking is based on linearity, where X leads to Y. The adult educators are underperforming, so the manager tells them at the meeting to work harder.

As opposed to this the systemic approach claims that everything arises in relations between humans. We are nothing in ourselves, but only in relation to others, and we act differently in different relations. All events happen in patterns of interaction and feed-back loops.

An example of such a feedback-loop is escalation where more of one thing leads to more of the other. E.g. an escalating conflict where the parties raise their voice more and more. Another example is complementary relations where more of one leads to less of something else. E.g. the manager

continuously takes over, tells the staff to work harder, and instructs more and more, while the staff becomes more and more silent and motivation drops.

Our common-sense linear understanding arises because we try to understand the world around us and to create order and predictability by focusing on a limited sequence: X causes Y. The adult educators are underperforming, so the manager tells them at the meeting to work harder. The manager sees his actions as caused by the actions of the staff. In fact we tend to see our own actions as caused by others. We simply respond to what others have done before us, and in this way we put our own responsibility aside. Gregory Bateson, an anthropologist and one of the founders of the systemic approach, calls it punctuation when we focus on a limited sequence within a line of infinite incidents.

$$...X_1 \rightarrow Y_1 \rightarrow X_2 \rightarrow Y_2 \rightarrow X_3 \rightarrow Y_3...$$

What are left out of the equation are all the incidents before and after the punctuation within the staff-manager relationship. The adult educators might be underperforming because their motivation has been affected by previous negative feedback at meetings with the manager. Events are always part of larger patterns, often with a long history and with many additional actors and mutually connected relations. To understand one act you need to look at the larger patterns of interaction. An act has no meaning in itself, but gets its meaning in the context where other actors' acts contribute to its meaning. The world consists of complex webs of such relations, and there is not one cause to problems or success, but many mutually connected cause and effect-relations.

Looking at the world as consisting of complex relations encourages us to let go of internalised explanations and internal psychological characteristics such as a difficult staff-member, a passive-aggressive participant who does not want to support the change-process or an inefficient manager. In stead we are encouraged to think in relations and interactions causing either difficulties or success and wellbeing. We are encouraged to look at a staff-member in difficulties, rather than a difficult staff-member, and to ask ourselves, what is the context of the difficulties – or with an appreciative mind-set, what are the contexts in which he encounters himself in fewer difficulties? Finally we are encouraged to look at management as a relationship, where the manager is not the only one responsible for good management, but dialogues can be initiated about what good management is and how both staff and management contribute to the co-creation of great management.

An important point is that responsibility is always both individual and social. We are created by the relations we form part of. In this way we cannot simply attribute the blame of e.g. underperformance or bad management on one individual or on one group, but rather on the pattern that has arisen. Responsibility is therefore shared and social. At the same time, when people become aware of the pattern, they will also see that their actions are not just caused by others, but that they contribute as much to the actions of others, as others do to theirs. This opens their eyes to the potentials of choosing to act differently with the purpose of inviting others to change as well and in this way to change the pattern. The responsibility is therefore at the same time both individual and social.

When facilitating appreciative processes, this world view is highly inspiring, as it changes your mind-set from looking for the causes of success to the complex relations and patterns of interaction in which success, pride and well-being emerges. People often respond to interviews with vague positive adjectives describing the peaks (everyone was open, honest etc.), simple causes of the success (such as the work that my manager did, the expertise of my colleague), with internal characteristics of persons (a good manager) or external factors (better financial climate). However, it is important to go deeper to get to know the exact details of the interpersonal interactions and the feedback loops. What is everyone doing and saying differently when things are on the peak? It is furthermore impor-

tant to inquire into both the individual and the social responsibility. *So what are you contributing with? What are you doing differently? How do others react to this and how do you then respond? How does openness look? Who is doing what & how do others respond, when openness shows itself?* This is also called circular questioning.

2.   MEMBERSHIP AND DIVERSE POSITIONS (MULTIVERSE)

Apart from the single interactions within a certain relationship it is furthermore interesting to look at the various groups, that each individual is a member of. This can be both formal and informal groups, e.g. a certain team, unit, department or the whole organisation as well as placement in the hierarchy. Or it could be the more informal groupings around age, years of experience in the organisation, professional background or even groups outside of the organisation: a political party, volunteer work etc. Membership in groups gives us rights and duties and a certain perspective on reality. We get certain roles – or "hats" - and often feel loyalty towards the group.

Our diverse memberships point towards an important point, namely that we do not perceive the world objectively. There is not one reality, but different versions of reality, depending on our perspective on it. You can compare this with a situation where several people look at a large and unknown object from different sides. What each person will describe and how they will interpret what they see will depend on each their limited view on this object. Organisational and community life is so complex that no single person is capable of over-looking all its facets, but everyone will only see part of it from their perspective in the web of different groups. The true organisation might be out there somewhere, but we do not have access to it. We therefore need to put objectivity between brackets and accept that there are as many truths and perspectives as people present. Rather than believing in a universe, we must acknowledge the *multiverse* – the many equally true versions of the world.

Everyone looks at their work and their organisation from their perspective, with their concrete goals and challenges in mind, punctuating events in their own way to create meaning. Everyone does their best according to their own logic and understanding – to fulfil their life-goals, to do what they believe is good for their community, and to perform well in their job. Everyone tries to be loyal to their own experience and perception. What seems obvious from one perspective might, however, look completely differently and even counter-productive from another perspective.

This often leads to disagreement and negative internal characterisations of certain persons or groups, who are perceived as e.g. arrogant or unprofessional. Most people recognise endless discussions about what the right solutions to certain challenges are. Who has never been at a meeting thinking, "if they would only be able to see the obvious fact, that I am seeing, that if we would just do like this, then things would work better…"

The voice we speak with during workshops and meetings is affected by our memberships and roles and potentially we can speak with different voices during the meeting when we have several "hats" that we have to joggle with in our working life. To understand an act or statement, we therefore need to know if e.g. person x from an interdisciplinary team is currently acting or speaking as a team member, as the team-leader, as part of the management-team, or as part of the language educators. The group membership provides a context for the act or statement and tells us which perspective, concerns and hopes this person has. If it becomes unclear which "hat" the person is currently wearing, it becomes unclear how to understand the statement and misunderstanding might arise.

All of this reminds us of several important things when working with appreciative change.

- *First of all you must think carefully about who to involve in which parts of the process*.
It is important to strive for the representation of the diverse formal and informal groupings, including the management level to ensure that the diverse voices get into the room. If for some reason it is not possible to get everyone represented, e.g. because of limited resources, you can try to invite their voices indirectly through having someone interview them on beforehand or through asking the people present to put themselves in their shoes and imagine what would have been their perspective and contribution.

- *Secondly the consultant cannot be neutral.*
You cannot get rid of your own perspective, but you can realise that it is not the only truth - merely one perspective in the mulitiverse of perspectives. After that you need to find your curiosity and inquire into the other perspectives, and ask yourself in which context, and from which perspective, does it make sense to act and think like the others do? To do so you need a basic trust that everyone acts in a way which makes sense from their perspective and that everyone has good intentions.

- *Thirdly it is important to allow for the difference in perspectives*
to get the more complete picture and a more inclusive and sustainable view on the challenges, the past success and the future dreams, rather than to aim for agreement. It is important to welcome the difference in perspectives, by speaking out loud that differences are consider natural and that the group is expected to share their different points of view with the purpose of increasing understanding. You can ask each participant to voice their specific position in the organisation to create an understanding of who speaks based on which position, with which challenges and goals and with loyalty to which groups. When composing the groups during group work you can mix the participants in the beginning of a process to ensure understanding across groups, but often let people work within their formal groups towards the end of a process where concrete proposals and decisions have to be made (e.g. teams or units separately, management in one group).

3.   DEFINING THE SYSTEM TO WORK WITH

It has now been described how looking at interpersonal interactions as well as group memberships can inspire your facilitation work. Furthermore it is important to mention the delimitation of the system. Which interpersonal interactions do we look at and how many group memberships do we have to consider in the infinite web of interactions and memberships? The basic assumptions within systems theory are that a system is both limited from the external world and forms part of a larger system. A team is a system which is clearly distinguished from the rest of the organisation while at the same time forming part of and interacting with the organisation.

This understanding helps you to decide upon whom to involve in the co-construction of the future. If something does not make sense, if a process is not moving forward, and things are not changing in spite of good intentions, we might have to expand the system. Getting back to the previous example of the manager-staff relationship we might wonder, whether the teachers underperform, because the adult learners are not interested in the subject due to changes in the environment outside of the education institution; whether internal conflicts and competition between different units hamper their performance. Or whether the criteria on which they are evaluated – either set by the management or at a political level - is vague. Relevant questions would be: In which context does it give meaning that

the adult educators behave the way they do? Rather than giving them the label of underperformers we look for the contextual factors that make their acts logic. Based on this we might have to expand the system and involve representatives from the learners, other units, the management or even the political system in co-creating the future. Where exactly to put the limit between systems when deciding who to work with becomes a pragmatic question.

Goolishian has taken this point even further, by saying that the definition of a system is a kind of punctuation and it is therefore based on the perspective of the consultant or the manager. We might for instance have a tendency to see the individual, the team or the unit/department or the whole organisation as a system, but that is merely a social construction. When working with a problem we ought to see the system as the group of persons who share an understanding of something as a challenge or a problem. In this way the focus turns from social systems to linguistic systems. Who is concerned with the problem or vision and who talks about it? A problem can only survive because some people say that it is a problem. Having disagreements is not a problem in itself – someone needs to be alarmed about it. However, this does not mean that there needs to be an agreement on exactly what is the challenge, problem, or desire for change but just that there is one.

Often the management asks the consultant to work with a team or unit and solve a problem without being present themselves. However, the manager who sees and names the issue as a problem is part of the problem-defining system. If the manager does not become part of the process, an important perspective of what constitutes the problem, and of what the goals and the positive exceptions are, is therefore missing. Furthermore follow-up becomes difficult – not to say impossible – as the management who has the mandate to carry out decisions and follow-up on proposals has not been part of co-creating the desired future, and is therefore not part of the system around alternative action. He or she will therefore most likely not share the new ideas and perspectives.

What is important is to inquire into the different actors' understanding of the issue; the problem, challenge or desired future before starting up the process. The purpose is to gain an understanding of who the central actors around the problem or challenge are; who forms part of the system of the problem/ challenge; who talks about it; who finds it bothering; and who dreams about a different future? It is necessary to understand this as it is important to involve the system around the challenge or problem in the co-creation of a more desirable future – even when that system does not correspond with the more clearly defined common-sense system such as team or unit. Furthermore it is important to insist on strong management involvement as they have a central role in defining the organisational world, and therefore also in defining problems or their acceptable solutions.

4. MANAGING CHANGE FROM A SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE

YOU CANNOT CHANGE OTHERS, SO HOW TO MANAGE CHANGE?
An important point of the systemic practice is that you cannot change others, only yourself and through this invite others to change as well, so how can we then manage/facilitate change? This question will now be explored further.

According to Humberto Maturana we are auto-poetic beings. The term auto-poetic is taken from Greek and means self-creating. Maturana claims that we can never completely understand the outside world objectively. Instead we create our image of the world and the meaning of this image ourselves based on our previous experiences and on our specific perspective on the world. We always interpret what we see according to our experiences, values etc.

This means that when we send out a message, e.g. during a workshop, what we intend to transmit is not necessarily what the receiver of the message understands. They will interpret the message according to their own experiences and perspectives. When we communicate as adult educators, as facilitators or as managers, we can no longer understand communication as simply going from us as a sender and to the other as a receiver. A large part of the communication happens within the other person in relation to his/her perspective, previous experiences with us and others, attitudes etc. We are therefore in no way in control over what will be understood by the other. They will create their own images of what we have said. We can distinguish between exformation: all the messages we send out via mail, letters, in vivo - verbally and non-verbally) and information: what is actually understood by the receiver. We therefore cannot change others by simply instructing them.

When we cannot change others, how do we then ensure learning and change? Maturana says that appreciation is a pre-condition for change. Maturana's way of understanding appreciation is, however, slightly different than the one normally presented within appreciative inquiry.

We are all aware of appreciation understood as praising and evaluating others positively, something we tend to do endlessly with our own children. David Cooperider has made us aware of the importance of appreciation as valuing. He talks about the potential of growth in inquiring into what works best in order to create more of it. However, Peter Lang, who has had substantial influence on the development of systemic practice, talks about appreciation as acknowledging or recognising that whatever is there, is there for a good reason, that there must be a logic from a certain party's perspective and that everyone has good intentions with whatever they are doing. Peter Lang talks about the dream hidden behind the frustration, the drive and the wishes behind the conflict.

This is the kind of appreciation that Maturana talks about. No one is willing to let themselves be challenged until they feel that their perspective and understanding of the situation at hand has been fully heard, understood, appreciated and not disqualified. If you do not feel that your perspective is being appreciated, you keep focusing on your own ideas, and how to make others understand you and you close yourself off from new learning.

This broader understanding of appreciation qualifies the work of the consultant. In many situations the frustration or conflicts in teams or organisations are too high or the perceived problems too big for people to accept the invitation to start an appreciative (understood as valuing) process. Grave problems and conflicts can be dealt with through appreciative inquiry, but to "force" such a process onto people who truly belief that it does injustice to their experience, is not truly appreciating (acknowledging/ recognizing) their experience and perceived problem. You therefore have to start with some listening, appreciation (acknowledgment/ recognition) and reframing to find the dreams and good intentions behind the frustration, before you can start looking for the exceptions to the problems and the times where things work better. In this way you stand a better chance to make them ready to be challenged on their assumption that they have to find the causes of their problems. You make them ready to be invited into the discovery of the patterns of success and well-being.

As a facilitator the challenge becomes twofold: both managing and ensuring appreciation (acknowledgment/ recognition) on the content level: the topic of the workshop and on the *meta-level*: the level of the process, context, the history of relations and your position as consultant.

On the content level you must construct a process that gives a voice to everyone and makes it possible for each participant to express their perspective and have their perspective appreciated (acknowledged, recognized). You must help each person express their perspective in a way that others can listen to it without feeling disqualified themselves. You can try to help them doing that, by

looking for the good intentions and the dream behind the frustration, and by helping everyone to be transparent about their position and "hats" in the organisation, what they try to achieve within their work, and which challenges they encounter on their way. In this way possible negative internal characteristics about others will be put into a context of interpersonal interactions and others will get an understanding of why their behaviour (and good intentions) is interpreted differently by others.

On the meta-level (the management of the flow of the process as well as the relations) it is important to keep in mind that resistance to the process is there for a very good reason and because people have good intentions for their organisation. Reminding yourself of this can help you find your inner curiosity and help you to let go of annoyance, disappointment or feelings of insecurity. It is useful to simply inquire into their good reasons, and ask questions about which relations and practices they are trying to protect, rather than try to convince them of your own perspective. In this way you invite the participants into the co-creation of the process as well as the content.

5. MANAGING CONTEXTS OF ACTIONS AND CHANGE

One last useful and inspiring perspective on facilitating change processes is the management of contexts. The context is the frame around the "text" – the frame around the actions. The context gives meaning to the actions. The context is a frame of understanding and meaning – the rules of the game. What is possible to say and do here? The context clarifies and categorises the conversation or message. Misunderstandings and dissatisfaction often occur because there is an uncertainty about the context – what you are a part of and thus which kind of actions and conversations are possible.

An important task of the facilitator or manager is therefore to manage the context and clarify what is expected from the participants at different steps in the process. Maturana has proposed three domains of action to describe such three different contexts that the facilitator and manager navigate in: *the personal domain, the domain of production and the domain of many explanations*. All three domains are always present, but one always dominates our conversations. Misunderstandings often arise when there is uncertainty about which domain is context for our talks.

THE PERSONAL DOMAIN
The personal domain is the subjective perspective. It is based on our personal experiences, attitudes, personal and cultural values, ethics, professional background etc., that we all carry with us.
All statements and acts are implicitly expressing personal and cultural values, and the personal domain is therefore always present as our personal ethics. When we speak within the personal domain it is often in an informal, impulsive and emotional way saying: "I think that we should do it like this", "I really disagree with this way of doing things" or, "that is great!" When we talk about our work or private life with our colleagues during lunch we generally talk from the personal domain about our likes and dislikes, how things are going and how we think they ought to be different.

THE DOMAIN OF PRODUCTION
The domain of production consists of the temporarily negotiated truth: the written and unwritten rules, categories and criteria we have agreed upon and that guide our way of behaving in everyday life. In organisations these are for instance: sharing of competences and responsibility, lines of communication, procedures for decision making, and measurable goals. The domain of production is based on a linear logic, rationality and a universe. There is one (temporary) truth and right and wrong ways of doing things. When we talk within the domain of production we say things such as, "we normally do it this way"; "we have agreed to deal with such situations like this and that" and "according to the rules and procedures it has to go like this."

The domain of production is necessary for action and production in organisations. We need rules and guidelines to get things done. And if things are unclear in the domain of production – if there are too few or too many opposing rules, so people get lost - everyone starts filling out the holes by applying their common sense. They start speaking from their personal domain. However, common senses often conflict with each other. Therefore, the more uncertainty on the domain of production, the higher level of misunderstandings and conflicts will arise in the organisation.

The management has the responsibility on the domain of production. They must ensure that there are clear goals and strategies for the organisation and that the structure and procedures support these goals. There are two common responses from the management to a possible uncertainty on the domain of production.
- One way is to claim participatory leadership and allow the dominance of the personal domain with endless discussions and laissez faire.
- The other way is to create clarity by adding more rules and criteria. Unfortunately making more rules limits creativity and innovation. Problems will be solved by treating their symptoms rather than inquiring into the underlying assumptions and discovering alternative ways of dealing with issues. However, there is a third way, namely dealing with the uncertainty via the domain of many explanations.

THE DOMAIN OF MANY EXPLANATIONS
The domain of many explanations is a norm- and value-free area. It is the domain governed by diverse perspectives and no agreement – thus of the multiverse. It gets its name from the diverse explanations behind people's different opinions, likes and dislikes. It is the domain where all voices have the same weight, where people step into equal roles, and truly listen to each other with curiosity to understand the explanation behind the different opinions, to understand which interpersonal interactions, group memberships and perception of problems, dreams and solutions each person brings to the room. The domain of many explanations is governed by circular logic. Disagreement gives way to curiosity and the urge to make decisions is temporarily put aside. When people speak within the domain of many explanations they speak tentatively, "I wonder if it would also be possible to do it differently" or "another way of looking at the issue at hand is to..."

Consultants often prefer to invite people into the domain of many explanations. However, it is important to be aware that one domain is not better than the other. They each serve different purposes. No work would get done if it wasn't for the domain of production and as mentioned previously uncertainty on that domain creates conflicts. Likewise the personal domain represents our personal, professional and cultural ethics and we would not be able to act in our personal or professional lives if we had no ideas about what is good or bad, right or wrong. However, when we get stuck on one of these two domains, a trip to the domain of many explanations might enable us to create change on either the personal domain or the domain of production. We might slightly change our ethical priorities or at least get a better understanding and acceptance of why others choose differently. And we might be able to agree on new and better procedures and goals in the domain of production.
The facilitator or manager can invite everyone into the domain of many explanations to see if it makes a difference in any of the other two domains, but it is important to be able to navigate on the two other domains to avoid getting stuck in the domain of many explanations with no clear outcome of the reflections. Furthermore it is important to be clear about which domain is the context of the process at which time.

MANAGING THE DOMAINS

As mentioned above the manager is responsible at the domain of production, whereas the facilitator very often tries to initiate reflections at the domain of many explanations. When the manager acts as a facilitator at a meeting or workshop the advantage is that he/she can directly give answers if uncertainties arise as well as follow-up upon the reflections. However, there is also a clear disadvantage, as even when he/she invites the staff into the domain of many explanations, the staff might not dare to move into this domain. They might either have difficulties separating the two different "hats" of the manager or they might fear the consequences of raising their perspectives. It is therefore important for the manager to discuss this dilemma openly and to be clear about when he/she is speaking within which domain.

When facilitating processes as an external consultant it is important to discuss the role of the management – either if they are present or absent. It is desirable to have the management present, as they are eventually the ones responsible at the domain of production. The management has an important role in setting the frame of what is negotiable and what is not, as well as the procedures of decision-making and follow-up on the reflections. If this frame is not there it becomes difficult for the group to know what is expected from them and how things will be followed up upon. It is a common misunderstanding of many managers who claim participatory based management that structure hinders involvement and creativity. Often the right kind of structure increases involvement, as it is easier to take part when you know what is expected from you and what your input will be used for.

When facilitating processes it is very useful to be clear about the domains, for instance following this structure:

1) CLARITY ON THE DOMAIN OF PRODUCTION

The first step is to clarify what is going to happen at the workshop, what the role of the facilitator and the manager is, what the role of the participants is, what is negotiable, what is not, who makes decisions and how are decisions made? Is it for instance a participatory decision-making process or is it rather a hearing, after which the manager takes the final decision. In this way the domain of production is introduced, and to do so, you need to have the points cleared with the management. Working with the management or steering team with a clear mandate is therefore an important part of any change process apart from working on the actual content with the group.

2) INVITATION TO DOMAIN OF MANY EXPLANATIONS

During the second step the group is invited to share their perspectives and considerations without striving for agreement, but with the goal to truly understand the differences in perspectives. In this way the group is invited into the domain of many explanations. An appreciative inquiry process is one example of entering into this domain, but there are also many other methods that can be applied.

3) THE PERSONAL DOMAIN

This domain will be present all the time as the underlying values and wishes–of each individual.
To take the personal domain into account it is important to give everybody a voice and to ensure that everyone is listened to, understood and appreciated for their good reasons and intentions for the organisation. To make sure that we do not get stuck on the personal domain, but lift the personal statements into the domain of many explanations, you can ensure that people talk and listen differently than in their everyday life. One way to do this is to use methods where the "dialogue is separated". This means that the roles of the dialogue are clearly separated in one person talking and the others listening to the explanation. This can for instance be through interviews or through talking in rounds – either in small or larger groups.

4) DECISION MAKING

Finally the process has to come to a conclusion where decisions have to be made. We have to get back to the domain of production to be able to continue the actual work after the workshop. How this will be done depends on the agreement with the management or steering group as explained under point 1.

Sometimes you encounter with groups that would like to skip the phase of the domain of many explanations as they consider it a waste of time. When they look back at the process they claim that what really made sense to them was the last phase, where things were concluded and decisions were made. However, decisions made after having spent some time on listening to diverse explanations are much more sustainable and inclusive. Furthermore it is easier to make such decisions after having reflected at the domain of many explanations as it brings clarity on what needs to happen when everyone has expressed themselves, have been appreciated and have listened to and appreciated others.

SUMMARY

In the previous pages some of the most inspiring points from systemic theory have been introduced.

First of all the systemic ideas about interpersonal relations and patterns of events have been introduces. Rather than merely looking for the causes of success, it is important to look for the complex relations and patterns of interaction in which success, pride and well-being emerges, and circular questioning can be used to discover these.

Secondly the idea of diverse memberships, within both formal and informal groups has been described as well as different perspective on the world arising from these. There is not one reality but a multiverse of realities. The difference in perspectives should be welcomed, by speaking out loud that differences are consider natural and that the group is expected to share their different points of view with the purpose of increasing understanding. Furthermore each participant can be asked to voice their specific position in the organisation to create an understanding of who speaks based on which position, with which challenges and goals and with loyalty to which groups.

Thirdly the idea of the "system of the problem" has been introduced as very helpful in deciding who to work with. It is useful to inquire into the different actors' understanding of the issues to find out who talks about the perceived "problem" and who dreams about a different future and thus who the important stakeholders are.

Fourthly the systemic ideas about appreciation as a condition for change have been elaborated. But appreciation understood as acknowledging or recognising that whatever is there, is there for a good reason, that there must be a logic from a certain party's perspective and that everyone has good intentions with whatever they are doing. As a facilitator you must ensure appreciation (acknowledgment/ recognition) on both the content level: the topic of the workshop and on the meta-level: the level of the process.

Finally the theory of the three domains has been introduced: the personal domain, the domain of many explanations and the domain of production. It is easier to participate meaningfully when the context of the dialogues is clear: what is expected of everyone, what are the rules, and how are decisions made? Management commitment should be ensured as the management is responsible on the domain of production.

Hopefully others have been inspired through these ideas and reflections. Academic citations have been left out in the hope that the pages have become easier and more interesting to read. In case you want to pursue the sources or just read more, a list of references and further reading is included below.

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CHAPTER 3

FLOW-BY-DESIGN

BY ANN SHACKLADY-SMITH

INTRODUCTION

In pondering where to begin with this discussion on *flow*, I imagined – like Joanna Lumley, who set out to discover the source of the majestic and raging river Nile and found a humble trickle of water – that my search for the source of ideas on *flow* may also take me to surprising territory - and it did. This chapter reveals the story so far. My wish is, that it will encourage further contributions to this fascinating topic and contribute to the design considerations of AI practitioners who attempt to create *flow-by-design*.

My considerations on *flow* began in the editorial team when establishing criteria for case study submissions. We suggested that authors should provide an explanation or image of the *flow* of their case study. By this, we meant an indication of the design process, the intellectual thinking that underpinned the case study. These days it is also fairly common to find a visual representation of the design *flow* presented at the introduction of AI events, so the request seemed to be a reasonable one.

This criterion, however, turned out to be variously interpreted, but was intended and generally understood to mean the *flow* or sequence of learning events that comprised the case study and the thinking behind it. A few contributors provided a *flow* of a specific learning workshop or learning exercise, and others a diagram showing a chronological sequence of events, preparatory meetings and marketing activities that led to the event. Others provided a course outline. Examples are included on the learningeurope.eu weblink.

The apparent confusion over the term *flow* prompted me to investigate the idea further. This motivated me to explore what lay behind the different concepts of *flow* and how *flow* contributes to the thinking of practitioners who are working from a perspective of strength-based change. In writing this chapter, therefore, it started with a reflection on my own experience. I also sought expert testimonies from colleagues their practice in creating *flow* at a World Cafe discussion during the Grundtvig Conference held in Manchester in 2011. I consulted some of the primary literature sources on adult learning and flow theory, which seemed to offer a logical starting point for considering *flow* as part of the learning design process.

The Conference planning team, of which I was a member, had also designed a *flow*, which we discussed and presented in different formats to guide our decisions about the structure, timings, learning content and atmosphere for the conference. Although no definitive discussion took place about what the conference team understood by *flow*, many of the ideas presented in this chapter did feature in our conversations and design of the conference *flow*. A copy of this is shown as Fig 3 in Appendix 1 along with a commentary and illustrates some of the key points made in this chapter.

FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

The conscious design of **flow** in learning is the focus of this chapter. The factors that influence the design of flow will be explored, as seen from three perspectives:

1. A learning theory perspective, exploring **flow** as designing a 'natural sequence of learning'.

2. The perspective of ensuring AI theory and principles **flow** through the Appreciative inquiry design. The attention is discussed that faciliators must give to designing and managing different energy **flows** that are also a vital feature of Appreciative inquiry processes.

3. How flow theory and the creation of 'optimal performance' as proposed by Mihaly Csikszentmihali (1992) relates to Appreciative inquiry process.

Throughout there will be looking specifally at **flow** as it applies to the design of Appreciative inquiry activities. Also for convenience, the term 'facilitator' is been used throughout to refer to the person involved in the design and hosting of the AI or learning activity, although, in practice this may involve several different roles and people. Consistent with the style of this e-book, references in the text are kept to a minimum for ease of reading. References cited are included at the end of the chapter and detailed subject bibliographies are available on the learningeurope.eu link.

What follows is both a summary of the information drawn from these sources and my thoughts on the topic. I conclude with a reflection on whether there is more that can be accomplished with Ai, were facilitators to build 'optimal moments of performance' into their AI processes. I invite further inquiries into this. I also note that 2012 is the Chinese *Year of the Dragon* which symbolizes **flow** and invite reflections on what this means for the **flow** of AI in the world.

PROVOCATIVE PROPOSITION:

FLOW-BY-DESIGN - ACHIEVING OPTIMUM LEARNING AND ENERGY STATES THROUGH APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

1. FLOW AS A NATURAL SEQUENCE OF LEARNING

Designing **flow** into the learning process involves, amongst other things, devising an appropriate mix and **flow** of learning activities to achieve specific learning outcomes, usually; through a planned programme of learning. Much of the design will depend on the type of learning programme, whether it falls within an educational award-bearing structure and therefore, subject to prescriptive content and delivery criteria) the age and experience of participants, the environment for learning, the resources available, the subject matter, and whether distance or face-to-face tuition is involved. These are some of the many variables that will inform the design that eventuates.

In developing a design for learning, facilitators will draw, (explicitly, or otherwise, through the use of specific learning methods), upon one or more theories of learning to support their approach. Of importance here is the central question of *how do people learn best? And what methods and sequence of learning supports or maximises learning?* These questions are the subject of intensive research and cover a wide range of perspectives from which to consider these core questions: for example, scholars have examined the role of memory, motivation, behavioural and cognitive proces-ses, social and education background, emotional, psychological and social factors, learning style preferences, and holistic versus incremental learning, to try to establish the factors that influence

what and how people learn. (See: Dewey, Brookfield, Knowles, Gardener and the references below for background theory.)

Learning programmes that typically fall within the field of AI and strength-based change, however, tend to be informed by the principles and guidelines drawn from adult learning theory. Principal amongst them are:

- Adult learners learn best through experience and will have developed learning style preferences (Kolb; Honey and Mumford).
- Include ideas, experimentation and reflective elements of experience as sources of learning on which to develop personal and collective performance (Kolb).
- The experiential cycle of learning, popularised by Kolb is popularly used as a model for course design.
- Acknowledge that learners have different learner style preferences and will focus on some aspects of learning more than others.
- Self-directed learning, whereby learners to set their own goals and learning activity, is more likely to generate motivation, be seen as relevant to the learner and lead to sustainable development and change (Rogers).
- Co-design learning with potential learners and co-facilitators to arrive at the programme content, structure and methods will more likely secure programme relevance and stakeholder/ learner commitment (Rogers).
- Offer a balance of methods, as appropriate to the subject matter and to appeal to differing multiple and emotional intelligence (Gardener and Goleman) and learning environments (Dunn and Dunn).
- Provide choices over levels of participation in all activities including the choice not to take part.
- Facilitators need to be prepared to abandon or change the programme *flow* as learning unfolds.
- Pilot the learning activities with potential learners (e.g. trial the appreciative questions/ protocols).
- Where possible, design from a whole-system perspective.

An examination of the case studies included in this e-book will demonstrate how some of the principles cited above are integrated in different ways into the learning *flow*.

Examples are: Coutts' Metasaga where learners contributed to the learning design through needs analysis studies and in the initial inquiries to scope the AI and learning process; in Passman's case on Mindfulness where inquiries are extended to multiple stakeholders as the change in the system required a systemic approach; and in Verleysen' Fireworks case the AI interviews focus on personal experience and results in the setting of personal learning goals on which the learners build their learning and development.

Learning styles can also be seen to be accommodated within the cases presented as facilitators describe the range of learning methods they have introduced to their programmes. These include: practical case histories, visual media and electronic and social methods of learning. This, facilitators will have judged, caters for learners with kinaesthetic, visual, auditory and sensory learning dispositions, as well as accounting for the situation where learners have differential access to learning technology. Using a variety of methods also contributes colour and interest. The use of role play, storytelling and art, singing, and theatre performance add motivational energy to the *flow* or process. These approaches are generally welcomed by learners for whom this form of stimulus or information generation works better than reading and writing based methods.

It is fair to say that the adult learning principles discussed above, are pretty well established within the AI community. They are evident in the AI cases presented and implicit in the **flow** of learning that underpins them.

In the next section AI activities are considered both as learning content at the psychological level (learning about the AI subject and how to do it) and AI as a process of change, at the meta level of design where change strategy and the influence of multiple stakeholders, amongst other things, also influence the **flow**. **Flow** refers to how AI principles, as illustrated in Fig 1 AI design based on the Four D generative model of change, are built into an AI event as well as reflecting the learning design principles discussed above and the **flow** implied by them.

2. FLOW - INCORPORATING AI PRINCIPLES IN THE DESIGN OF LEARNING
In introducing this topic, it seems important to refer to a popular definition of Ai, one drawn from David Cooperrider's teaching. The definition illustrates several important features that will likely influence the facilitator's approach to the AI design.

1. The AI **flow** is implied in the words highlighted blue and represents the AI cycle of change and implied methodology as shown in the Four D cycle and its application in Fig 2 below.
2. The **flow** can be designed into all kinds of AI activity as illustrated in the cases that follow from one-to-one interviews to week-long multi-stakeholder summits.
3. Specific AI theoretical principles underpin the definition and **flow** but in the 4 D model and typical definitions of AI are implied rather than overtly stated.

Appreciative Inquiry Definition

"It is the discovery for the best in people, their organizations, and the relevant world around them. It is an art and practice of asking the unconditional positive questions that strengthen a system's capacity to apprehend, anticipate and heighten positive potential. Instead of negation, criticism and spiralling diagnosis, there is discovery, dream, design and destiny. It works from accounts of the "positive change core". AI links the energy of the positive core directly to any change agenda and changes never thought possible are suddenly and democratically mobilized."

The above definition expresses AI theoretical principles and a methodological **flow** of how to apply them (see Cooperrider and Whitney). In my experience, the closer the AI activity reflects the AI theory principles, the more effective and sustainable is the change. An illustration of how this might work is given in Fig 1 below which shows the order of learning that would be followed in the conduct of an AI change project using the AI Four Ds as the model of change. Also discussed are some of the questions that may influence the facilitator's design decisions and the direction of **flow**.

Fig 1: Integrating AI theory with learning activity using the AI Four D Model of Change

AI THEORY PRINICIPLE

1. Something works

Regardless of how seemingly difficult or gloomy the situation, in relation to the topic under review, there will be positive examples to be revealed (whether people or organisations). Somewhere in the system lies the example of the behaviour, value, change you are searching to introduce. The positive experience is contained within the system.

2. The Questions asked determine what's found

The positive past or best of what works can be discovered through inquiry, using unconditional positive questions, the more positive the question the more sustainable the change.

3. An organisation will reflect the focus of the questions asked of it and the attention and energy given to particular topics

Change can therefore be achieved by focussing attention, inquiry and conversation on a different perspective e.g. by concentrating on the things an organisation does well rather than it's deficiencies

4. Simultaneity

Change begins the moment you ask the question and organisations will move in the direction of the questions asked

5. Anticipatory Principle

Anticipating positive images of the future can create energy and inspiration to act towards realising the change

6. Social Construction

Individuals construct the worlds they live in (personal lives as well as the groups and organisations and communities that arise through social relationships) through their inquiries, questions, conversations and in relationship with others

7. Poetic Principle

Organisations were created through human interaction and are capable of change and re-creation. AI provides a method and philosophy or achieving this goal from a strengths based view of social life

AI LEARNING ACTIVITY

Create (with the client or learner groups) an inviting 'Topic', a provocative propsition that asserts the best of what might be in relation to the topic. Such as: *Bold and Enlightened Leadership Living with health*

Discovery Phase

A search for the positive past examples of the topic using appropriate Appreciative inquiry methods: AI Questions, interview protocols, research inquiries, summits. Each is designed to generate interest and evoke positive memories, using appreciative, unconditional questions. Develop the inquiry questions and design of AI events with the whole system in mind and involved.

Provide opportunity to relive the memory, share with others and build new ideas to extend more of the good into the mainstream organisational activity. Use, paired interviews, share stories with others, in groups, build a thematic picture of the stories and common themes.

Reflective activity to invite participants to notice in self and others what changed when the conversation began/stories told about the topic. (energy increased, emotion, values interest revealed, more joyful motivational states experienced)

Dream

Reveal the common core strengths to all participants. Develop ideas for the future from a picture of a known positive past.

Exercises in perception and communication which show how individuals view, interpret, discuss and construct their relationship to topics and each other on the basis of the same data. 4

Design

Participants start to make recommendations, design activities and plans of action, identify resources or set up design teams for creating the future based on the discovery phase.

Destiny

Changed perspectives, practices, services, relationships result.The AI Four D cycle is repeated and embraced as a method of creating positive change to and within the system.

Examples of learning activities that represent the application of the AI principles including how to construct powerful appreciative questions, interview protocols, summit designs, evaluation studies, and research are available through the learningeurope.eu.

The AI Four Ds shown in the table above are typically represented as a cycle as shown in Fig 2.

Fig 2 The AI Four D Cycle
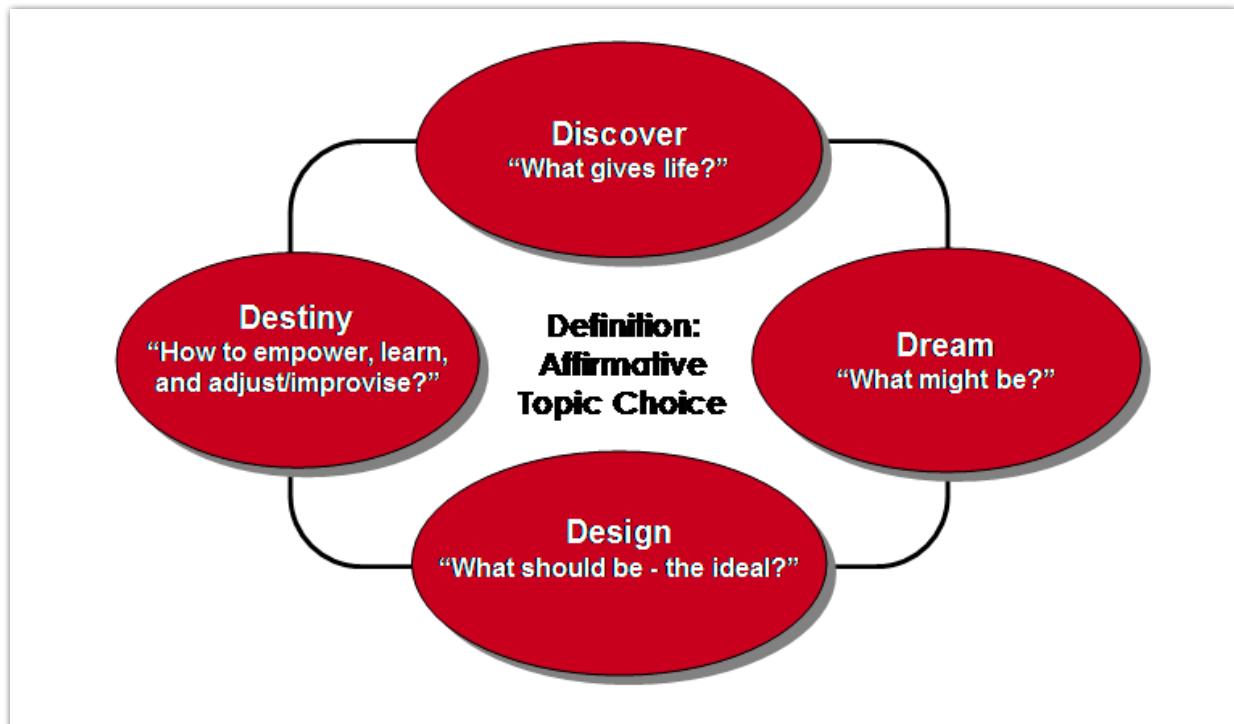
The *flow* of activity starts with the *Discovery* of the stories of best experience of the inquiry topic. The core ideas, energy and values associated with the stories are carried forward by participants who develop *Dreams* of a desired future where the positive elements are more widely reflected in their organisation, community or personal lives. The desired image of what can be achieved is embraced by participants who volunteer to *Design* the plans, policies, service improvements and associated activities to be implemented. The positive changes resulting from the process represent the *Destiny* phase.

The aim of an AI *flow*, which is based on the above principles, ideally begins with a whole-of -system perspective, particularly where the intention is to upscale the change to the whole system. Overgaard Mogensen discusses this aspect in more detail in her chapter, 'The systemic social constructionist approach'. Facilitators, at this stage, are concerned to focus not only on the appreciative questions that they may ask to develop the design *flow*, but also on clarifying, in the mind of the client, the aims, purpose and expectations of what can be achieved through an AI process. This stage can be critical in revealing to the facilitator the client's intentions and commitment to change.

Some typical questions facilitators will consider in designing their AI flow and content will include:
- Where did the motivation for the AI event come from?
- Who should be involved?
- What is the system under review?
- Who can best represent the system in the design phase?
- What will be different if this issue was no longer present?

The last may also help elicit some insight on thinking about the specific outcomes the client hopes for and to build the possibilities into the design. For example, clients who seek stakeholder approval for any change that results from the process are best advised to involve them in the generation of the change. Questions concerning available resources and the timing of events and other practical matters will also be relevant at this stage.

In asking these questions at the outset the facilitator is distinguishing between two levels of the design of **flow**. One level refers to the meta- level of learning design which incorporates the strategic elements of change, to ensure the structural inclusion of particular stakeholder groups such that collective outcomes accrue as an example. The second level is the personal and psychological level of learning whereby the learning principles and method chosen for the design supports the delivery of intrinsic motivation and personal outcomes as well as being appropriate for the subject matter.

The **flow** will be designed to accommodate the relationship between these two levels of learning. This approach is distinct from devising a flow solely **flow** a psychological viewpoint of individual learners (or groups of learners where the individual provides the design focus). In such cases the **flow** could miss the overt connections to the wider system in which the learners live and work and any changes that emerge are likely to be both partial and conditional on other influences that were not taken account of in the design process.

Bringing the whole system into the conversation about **flow-by-design** at the outset makes the potential for impactful change. Passman's case where the focus is on creating personal mindfulness and wellbeing could have been designed as a personal development programme for specific individuals and groups. However, as we see from her case more impactful changes occur in personal and societal terms when different parts of the social system are engaged in the design of learning **flow**.

Involving all stakeholders may have an influence on the topic under review (e.g. in the Passman example managers and leaders, health professionals and agencies, former prisoners and community members) at the outset in designing and participating in the AI process strengthens an organisation's capacity for identifying and sustaining change.

Crafting the positive inquiry protocol and questions is, therefore, a core aspect of designing the Appreciative inquiry **flow** as shown in Fig 1 above. The inquiry is designed to find peak experiences from a positive and life-giving point of view. The questions posed must necessarily reflect this viewpoint for the positive (appreciative) **flow** to occur. To do this partially, or to introduce a strengths and weakness question, as some practitioners suggest, is to undermine the very strength of AI and prevent the appreciative **flow** from developing to its full potential.

The AI protocol and crafting the generative and appreciative questions are an important feature of the **flow** and critical to ensuring that the right (positive) energy state for the initial stage of the event emerges. From this energy flow, subsequent stages of the AI process is generated as discussed below.

Flowing with the energy: how do facilitators manage **flow** in workshop situations

Generating and managing the flow of energy through the AI process, is also a vital aspect of Appreciative inquiry activity. Individuals are carried forward, often on a wave of emotion, to co-create dreams and activities involved in designing a positive future. Where the energy level dips, or the mood of the group does not support the drive to create design teams, or to take responsibility for taking forward certain actions, the gains from the Discovery phase can be lost.

How do facilitators cope then when the schedule of events in the programme and energy *flow* are out of sync? Sometimes the facilitator may find it necessary to interrupt the *flow* because time has run out for that stage of the programme. The reverse can also be true, where the programme timings may dictate a certain activity to be started, but the energy in the group is not quite there. The confident facilitator will ask the group to reflect on its energy state, which is often a euphemism for motivation, and determine the *flow* with them. This is by far the most productive way forward and can help shift the energy of the group so that group members can move on with the learning.

What I find interesting here is the apparent common understanding among learners about the idea of *energy* in the learning system, and its impact on the *flow* of learning and progress of the group activity. Sometimes, facilitators find that the group has simply run out of energy. They are emotionally tired from the trip down memory lane and the high octane exchanges that have accompanied the Discovery phase; the group may simply need a break.

AI processes, we know, can be physically tiring and emotionally draining, particularly as participants are discovering some truths that may prove shocking to their self-esteem and have serious implications. The discovery that, what they have practised for many years, adds little value to the customer, for example, or that they are personally responsible for halting innovation in the system, or that the group needs time to resolve some conflict that has emerged, are not uncommon revelations that emerge from an inquiry. Time is needed, sometimes, to intervene in the natural flow of events, to quieten the process and consider how to proceed in an appreciative way that keeps faith with the principles of AI.

I recall one incident where it was necessary to introduce a session of 'appreciative coaching' following the Discovery phase. This was found to help managers come to terms with how they could take a leadership role in progressing some of the ideas that had emerged. The facilitator simply asked the group *'What will be of help to you right now to move this along?* There followed a discussion about where the group' s energy lay and led to an understanding of the managers' concerns and the suggestion to introduce a session of peer-peer coaching. Demonstrating here the adult learning principle that participants can find the solutions to their own issues and the AI precept that in every negative situation lies positive experience that can hold the answers to move forward. This story offers also a small example of how Discovery (and the AI Four D model can be repeated at the micro level within a larger AI event).

In this case the programme change allowed the managers to unpick the issues and find a way forward. *Flow* is, therefore, also about sensing how the learning and the insights gained through the learning are landing with participants. By making changes to the programme so, as in this case, was the learners'*flow* rather than the meta *flow*, was prioritised and the appreciative principle was sustained.

Timing a lunch or overnight break between the Dream and Design phases, say, also provides some welcome space for participants to rest and to reflect on the very rich data that emerge from the Discovery phase. This rest period often enables learners to consolidate their learning and to participate much more fully in the Design activity.

The overlapping connection between the *flow* of learning experience of individual learners and the meta *flow* of the AI process requires constant attention by facilitators who will adjust things as they see as necessary to achieve the (sometimes) differing stakeholder outcomes. One of the reasons facilitators use Open-Space methodology in the Dream and Design phases is that it offers a common-to-all experience *flow*, yet it provides the opportunity for a *flow* to be generated by self-directed

interest, motivation and energy that affords each participant relevance and personal value. Thus the management of *flow* becomes a shared activity where innovation and co-creation tends to produce magnificent results.

Turning now to what to call the *flow* of engagement and another dimension of *flow* is added to the mix. Here, facilitators may be keen to have all participants feeling connected to the programme and to one another within the first few minutes of the programme.

Devising a *flow* that can accommodate the quiet introvert, as well as the talkative extrovert, is also a sensitive issue. When working with a group of people who are unknown to one another, I generally introduce an early 'low risk' engagement of one-to-one introductions, then pair-to-pair, small group discussion, then larger groups and so on, until all participants have had some verbal and face-to-face contact with most of the other participants. Inviting each person to introduce a fellow participant can also take some of the anxiety away from those who are reluctant to speak in public.

In other circumstances, say, with an established work group, then introduce more challenge and start with a noisy networking introduction with participants moving around the room, from person-to-person, exchanging a short greeting and some piece of personal information that is unlikely to be known by their colleagues. In conducting AI summits with very large groups (over 100 participants) where different languages and cultures were present, you can use a whole-of -group circle using sound to connect participants through chants and singing. In another instance, you can invite participants to send a self-selected cultural greeting around the circle. Participants quickly exchanged handshakes, hugs, cheek-to-cheek touch and embraces.

One aim of the *flow* was for participants to hear all voices as equally contributing to the opening session, particularly as different levels of hierarchy were present. It was a simple and effective way of connecting 100 or more people within opening minutes and generated a positive energy for the rest of the week.

Underpinning the decision of *flow* in each of the above examples is the principle that adult learners are active participants in the learning process. It would be inconceivable therefore to devise a *flow* of learning that didn't require learners to speak in the small or large group setting. Yet, we also know that confidence levels and learner style preferences have a bearing on how learners wish to partici-pate. Facilitators must be capable of devising *flow* of learning that can provide the most helpful, low risk, activities that give learners choice and stretch their experience.

Dialogue, storytelling, narrative are also core to the AI process and developing an inclusive and safe environment for this to occur is critical to its success. In projects. Involving young people, vulnerable adults or people with low literacy skills, the *flow* takes on a different look, perhaps using art work and theatre performance, and the inclusion of advocates to present their client's perspective. These are all considerations of designing a *flow* of learning that accommodates and respects the diversity, ability, and potential vulnerability of learners.

The nature of the topic, the time and resources involved, the extent to which there is a particular need to create relationship among the participants, will all have an influence on design decisions and the type of energy and *flow* of engagement that the facilitator will attempt to create. Facilitators are also mindful that the *flow-by-design* can be interrupted by external events. The training room or venue maybe changed at the last minute and so the nature of the learning activities has to change and the *flow* may be related to what the physical space can support. The participants may be fewer or greater in number than planned for and the format and *flow* of planned learning activities change.

As Lewis discusses in her case where participants are called away from the training program at short notice, the **flow** was interrupted and a revised **flow** had to be developed on the spot.

There are clearly many permutations involved in **flow-by-design** and there is no magic combination. We are talking of a dynamic social process where the facilitator and the stakeholders assess and fine-tune the learning or AI process as they go along. They do so with best intentions of creating an effective event to yield productive outcomes.

To this end and focusing on the individual rather than meta level of understanding of the idea of **flow**, the facilitator may design **flow** to specifically achieve a learner's 'optimal performance' on a given topic. We turn to **flow** theory to shed light on this aspect of flow, as follows:

3. FLOW THEORY

The inspirational and pioneering work of Mihaly Csikszentmihali (1992), who introduced the concept of **flow** into positive psychology, provides the starting point to the discussion **on Flow** theory. His definition of flow as *'completely focussed motivation'*, involves *"the very many positive aspects of human experience - joy, creativity, the process of total involvement with life"* (1992:xi).

When a person is in **flow** she is *'fully immersed in a feeling of energised focus, full of involvement and success of the process of the activity.* **Flow** *'represents, perhaps the ultimate in harnessing the emotions in the service of performing and learning. In* **flow***, the emotions are not just contained and channelled, but positive, energised and aligned with the task in hand. To be caught in the ennui of depression or the agitation of anxiety is to be barred from* **flow***. The hallmark of* **flow** *is a feeling of spontaneous joy, even rapture while performing a task."*
(p1 http://en.wiki idea.org./wiki/Flow_(psychology).

Since this widely cited work on **flow**, there have been many documented research studies concerning the benefits of *being in the* **flow** and the impact on achieving *'optimal performance'* in a specific area of skill. Studies have been undertaken in a number of performance related fields, such as: art, science, teaching, learning and sport and in samples of workplace performance (op.cit 1992).

There are several aspects of **flow** theory that resonate with AI, not least the conscious focussing on the positive, joyful aspects of any activity in which one is engaged. This is referred to in AI theory as taking an appreciative or valuing, perspective. Both **Flow** and AI theory refer to this process as a matter of making a conscious choice about how one views the world and often involves a re-learning of how we frame, use language, and relate to others.

Conditions for creating *Flow*

Of particular relevance of flow theory to the AI field is the idea that subject to certain criteria the conditions for **flow** can be created Csikszentmihalyi, M & Rathunde, K (1993 p60) and Csíkszentmihályi, (1975). Ten factors are identified as accompanying an experience of **flow**, though not all factors need to be present, at one time, for **flow** to be experienced, they are:

1. *Clear goals* (expectations and rules are discernible and goals are attainable and align appropriately with one's skill set and abilities). Moreover, the challenge level and skill level should both be high.2.
2. *Concentrating*. A high degree of concentration on a limited field of attention (a person engaged in the activity will have the opportunity to focus and to delve deeply into it).
3. *A loss of the feeling of self-consciousness*, the merging of action and awareness.
4. *Distorted sense* of time, one's subjective experience of time is altered.
5. *Direct and immediate feedback* (successes and failures in the course of the activity are apparent, so that behaviour can be adjusted as needed).

6. *Balance between ability level and challenge* (the activity is neither too easy nor too difficult).
7. *A sense of personal control* over the situation or activity.
8. *The activity is intrinsically rewarding*, so there is an effortlessness of action.
9. *A lack of awareness of bodily needs* (to the extent that one can reach a point of great hunger or fatigue without realising it)
10. *Absorption into the activity*, narrowing of the focus of awareness down to the activity itself, action awareness merging.

Some of these ten factors are also typically found to accompany AI experiences. It may be appropriate to investigate further whether it is desirable to develop AI designs to purposefully create conditions of **flow** as a part of the AI experience. Further reflections on this follow.

The autotelic personality
Csíkszentmihályi also hypothesised that people with several very specific personality traits may be better able to achieve **flow** more often than others. These personality traits include:
- curiosity
- persistence
- low self-centredness
- a high rate of performing activities for intrinsic reasons only.

People with most of these personality traits are said to have an 'autotelic personality', that is: *'being self-driven to pursue specific goals that are intrinsically motivating'* though research in this area has not proven conclusive. See studies reported in Snyder, C.R. & Lopez, S.J. (2007).

It is interesting to note that the autotelic personality traits listed above are precisely the characteristics that AI facilitators witness time and again in their work, particularly in the Discovery phase as participants recall a 'high peak' moment.

Given the frequency that these characteristics appear as part of the AI process, one may speculate that either there is an overabundance of autotelic personalities attending AI events or that the characteristics are generated by the AI activity rather than representing a personality trait per se. What is witnessed (and often also self-reported through participants' course evaluation) of being in the **flow** is an increased curiosity, and highly concentrated engagement in conversation and in group activities, that are generated. This seems to occur regardless of the social/psychological and demographic mix of participants and the range of topics involved, *which may hold varying degrees of interest for different participants*.

Group *flow*
Moving on from Csíkszentmihályi's focus on the individual in **flow** he suggests that there are several ways in which a group in itself can work together, so that each member achieves **flow**. The characteristics of such a group include:
- Creative spatial arrangements: chairs, pin walls, charts, but no tables; thus work primarily standing and moving
- Playground design: Charts for information inputs, flow graphs, project summary, craziness (here also craziness has a place), safe place (here all may say what is otherwise only thought), result wall, open topics
- Parallel, organised working target group focus
- Advancement of existing one (prototyping)
- Increase in efficiency through visualisation
- Using differences among participants as an opportunity, rather than an obstacle

FLOW THEORY AND AI

Again, it would seem that aspects of the *flow* experience, as *Csíkszentmihályi* defines it above, are typically experienced as part of the the AI process, particularly but not exclusively in the Discovery phase. As people recall their high peak experiences or positive moments of the topic in question, they often describe *flow* moments. Also, as groups of participants move through the different stages of the AI Four D cycle, as shown in Fig 2 the dynamic of group activity and the outputs generated parallel the conditions cited above for achieving group *flow*.

The AI practitioner will also recognise some of the '10 factors for achieving group *flow*' listed above, as typical elements of an AI environment. Indeed, elsewhere, Zhexembayeva's description of the meeting with managers in the opening paragraph of her chapter about the new competencies for adult development, illustrates this point nicely.

There is much more that could be written about *flow* theory than can be accommodated here. Not least, the many applications of the theory that refer to the generation of intrinsic motivation. In *flow* theory, the individual learner will find intrinsic motivation in the activity because they choose it out of personal interest. This is not always the case with AI, as inquiry topics may be chosen initially by the client organisation, or community and may hold varying levels of interest for participants at the outset. Nevertheless, the AI process seems to succeed in generating motivation towards the topic under review. Whether this is connected to intrinsic or extrinsic factors, and if so, how such factors may influence AI design considerations, open up a potential fruitful area of study.

AI represents an invitation to individuals and groups to search for the intrinsically positive, high peak moments of success on a chosen topic. It further seeks to expand on them and magnify their presence, by scaling up the ideas gained in Discovery to larger scale projects that are likely to be implemented through small and large work groups, organisations and networks. In this way, both intrinsic and extrinsic opportunities to generate motivational activity or potential in the *flow* 'optimal performance' form an integral part of the typical AI process. In my experience, and with few exceptions, no matter what the topic, most participants are able to recall/relive a high peak, maybe an ***in-the-flow*** moment. This experience of *flow* also spreads, as stories are shared and as people get caught up with the energy and excitement that *flow* from identifying the common themes implicit in their different stories and the core values that underpin them. But is there scope to go even further?

SUMMARY

What began as a request for information as part of the case submission process has led on to a fruitful discovery of how the concept of *flow* is used, more or less overtly, by AI facilitators. Having regard for the sequencing of the learning content provides part of the *flow* consideration, as do the management of energy and ensuring that the *flow* of AI theory occurs within the AI cycle of learning activities. Add to this the insights from the brief excursion into *flow* theory and they combine to produce a much more complex picture of how facilitators may create ***flow-by design***.

It is a tricky and skilful business, often occurring under the radar of published course information. These critical *flow* decisions remain an invisible part of the learning design, yet are an integral element of the design and management of an AI learning event. It is hoped that this inquiry into *flow* serves to expose more of this hidden aspect of the thinking process that inform AI designs and perhaps helps to expand our understanding of the topic and enrich our practice.
It was illuminating to reflect on the *flow* design that was produced for the 2011 Manchester Grundtvig Conference, over many months with a team of dedicated professionals. Their expertise in learning, training education, community development and Appreciative inquiry combined to co-create a learning experience exemplifying many of the principles discussed here. Wondering how we might,

in future, design programmes which incorporate some of the additional ideas on **flow** discussed in this paper and where more research in this area may take AI theory and practice.

The reflections on flow theory may lead one to conclude that AI change methodology seems implicitly to create the conditions that contribute to the achievement of 'optimal performance', as defined by Csikszentmihalyi. To the extent that this is the case, AI practitioners may wish to explore further how to achieve this systematically and systemically within their AI work.

We know that many AI events produce variable experience and outcomes. It is in this area that **flow** theory may shed some insights on AI theory and practice. The emphasis on the intrinsic experience of **flow** as 'optimal performance' invites further consideration as to whether this aspect could be more consciously developed as part of the AI process. This could be applied at the psychological level of learning in the design and crafting of AI protocols and questions to generate personal and collective 'optimal performance' and the development of change. Looking also to the meta level of learning and change, the concept of achieving 'optimal performance', could this be applied to the discipline of AI itself? To its practitioners and as an explicit aim of AI activity?

Will this produce better quality follow-through activity? Could this be a factor in achieving sustainable outcomes? These are interesting reflections and offer, perhaps, a line of thought worthy of further research.

Some inquiry questions for the purpose of continuing the discovery of **flow-by-design** are offered below:

- What inquiry questions have you experienced that have stimulated in you or others the memory of a **flow** experience?
- Are there examples from evaluation data that reveal 'in the **flow** moments', characteristics and autotelic personality traits?
- How might we distinguish stories that indicate **flow** memories from other 'high peak' stories and what are these differences?
- Would better outcomes emerge from an Appreciative inquiry project were **flow** experiences specifically sought?
- What do evaluation data say about the factors that contribute to successful/ sustainable AI project outcomes?
- Can AI outcomes from known case studies be related to the quality of **flow** experiences?
- To what extent do examples of 'high peak' experience resemble outputs of known 'optimal performance?
- What research is possible and desirable to examine further the relationship of **Flow** theory to Ai?

FINAL REFLECTIONS: 2012 THE YEAR OF THE DRAGON AND THE SYMBOL OF FLOW
I end this chapter with a look to the future. 2012 is the Chinese Year of the Dragon symbolising the protector of **flow** in Chinese myth. Among other qualities the Dragon controls the waters, floods, seas and rivers. Its three structural joints represent the trinity of **flow**: *creation, preservation and destruction.*

In 2012, does the Dragon beckon us to reflect on what we may begin, preserve or end to sustain **flow**? Perhaps this affords a timely opportunity to consider more widely and reflect upon how we, in our work, **flow-by-design** in the world?

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APPENDIX I PICTURING FLOW-BY -DESIGN

The example in **Fig 3** below, illustrates the features of a **Flo**w that was designed by the planning team for the 2011 Grundtvig conference hosted by the Euro network, in Manchester. The Manchester conference team members were : Kate Sibthorpe, Mary Meehan, Liz Jane, Helena Kettleborough, Kathy Mills, Cliodhna Mulhern, Dave Broome, Peter Hook, Abdul, Hamied, David Shaked, and Ann Shacklady-Smith

Fig 3 example of recorded Flow of AI euro Network Grundtvig Conference

The above was developed as a purposeful attempt to achieve many of the **flow** conditions discussed in this chapter, including an appreciation of learning theory, the **flow** of energy states and the flow of AI principles. The design of **flow** was considered at a meta (whole of conference design) as well as at the psychological level of learning as expressed in the discrete activities such as AI interviews, feedback sessions, open space and world cafe processes in which AI principles and questions were integrated.

A pictorial representation of the *flow* can serve as a record of what happened or what was planned for. In this case, the conference team produced a picture of planned and actual *flows*. The picture captures something of the invisible architecture that lies behind the design decisions. It also offers participants and facilitators a different way of reading the programme from that provided by the more typical and linear scheduled description of programme activity. (A copy of the detailed *flows*, the logic behind them and conference programme is available on the learningeurope.eu link below.) The brief account of a sample of the conference programme below illustrates:

1. **Opening circle: focus on flow of engagement (green circle to left of picture)**
To foster an all-inclusive engagement of all participants within the first hour of the conference. Each participant held the Euro network 'bead chain' (a symbolic chain where each of the12 beads represent the place where the meeting was held) and introduced themselves into the circle.
Honouring a distinguished member who had passed on: video, stories, tributes; engaged participants emotionally to one another, the network and to the conference theme *Awakening from Within*. This latter was a natural flow and an unintended but welcome consequence of the activity which took on its own beautiful dynamic.

2. **Awakening from Within: focus on flow of energy from within to without (e.g. pink and orange circles)**
Sharing, tastes, smells, sounds of home cultures - an exercise in deepening connection and awakening the senses, moving also from silence to higher energy activity and sounds. Participants had been asked to bring samples of food, or cultural symbols to share with other conference participants. The exercise started in silence and within a short space of time participants built up energy, connection and contact with one another. This was followed by a deeper spiritual exploration of self and meaning. Evaluation reports, at the time and since, have confirmed that the combination of processes to *Awaken from Within* were extremely successful (and as intended) did create the energy, environment and psychological preparation for the deeper sharing and collaborative work that followed.

3. **Moving to experience AI process, using Paired interviews: focus on flow of learning about AI process and topic (orange circle with pair under yellow banner)**
To experience an appreciative inquiry process that was related to the conference theme. This was designed to discover more about the topic as well as to introduce new participants to the AI process. It also provided opportunities for practitioners to apply skills in how to conduct of AI projects at large scale events. At this stage participants are connecting the intellect with emotional and spiritual facets of communication. The outcomes of the inquiry were profound.

4. **To Awaken Without: focus on flow of deepening and widening learning and whole of system engagement (most activities to right of the picture)**
To create engagement with external topics and the wider, national, Euro and global community, open space, world cafe, project inquiry visits, and skype connections with AI colleagues in international AI networks, were designed into the *flow*. This created opportunities for strategic dialogue and for making larger connections with the external environment. Several international collaborations were formed during the conference to progress the work of the Grundtvig cases, the Network governance and structures. Support for the extension of strength-based work in the host City of Manchester, as well as for colleagues in other parts of Europe and the world was also offered, to help to develop AI projects.

VISION

&

STRATEGY

DRIVING POSITIVE CHANGE IN AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

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PURPOSE

This AI project has been organized in an International Organization in the Automotive Industry. The leader of this organization was facing two types of difficulties:

- Logistics performance (the performance was far below expectations : 25% below expectations)
- People empowerment and motivation (all the problems were mainly solved by the upper level of the organization and the management team members where totally overwhelmed by the workload)

The aim of the project to empower the all staff around the improvement of customer satisfaction by a much higher supply chain reliability and increase the engagement and the motivation of the entire staff. The results will be measured by two means:

- logistic performance : the CLIP being the number of delivered items to the customers according to expectations
- Engagement survey results

IMPACT

Inside the organization:

- The supply chain results improved from 70% to 94,4%
- The people motivation and engagement is measured via an internet based engagement survey and the motivation grew up from 68 to 85%
- The first line of management has started to act differently. For example, during the daily quality meeting where quality problems are raised, are starting now with "what worked well the day before."

OUTSIDE THE ORGANIZATION:

This experience has been so different and so successful, that the General Manager of the Unit where this Supply Chain Group is situated asked me to give them a flavour of what it is. They notice the tremendous results and some behaviours of some people he knew who acted very differently than he used to see them to behave.

I have trained the management team of this unit to do a "discovery" and "dream" phase on the topic "cooperation". They did it by their own, helped by the people of the Supply Chain Group who had already been trained and had a total AI experience.

This unit is developing, producing and marketing car bulbs all over the world. They are in a 0 defect culture and acts on a daily and even hourly basis on problem solving with tools like "root cause analysis" and approaches like Six Sigma and Lean Manufacturing. They are successful and the General Manager wanted to build on these successes.

A video has been done on this event and will be issued in a couple of weeks. The company has been astonished about the effect which has been created.

DURATION OF PROJECT

The project lasted 6 months, with different AI initiatives taking place during the process as shown below.
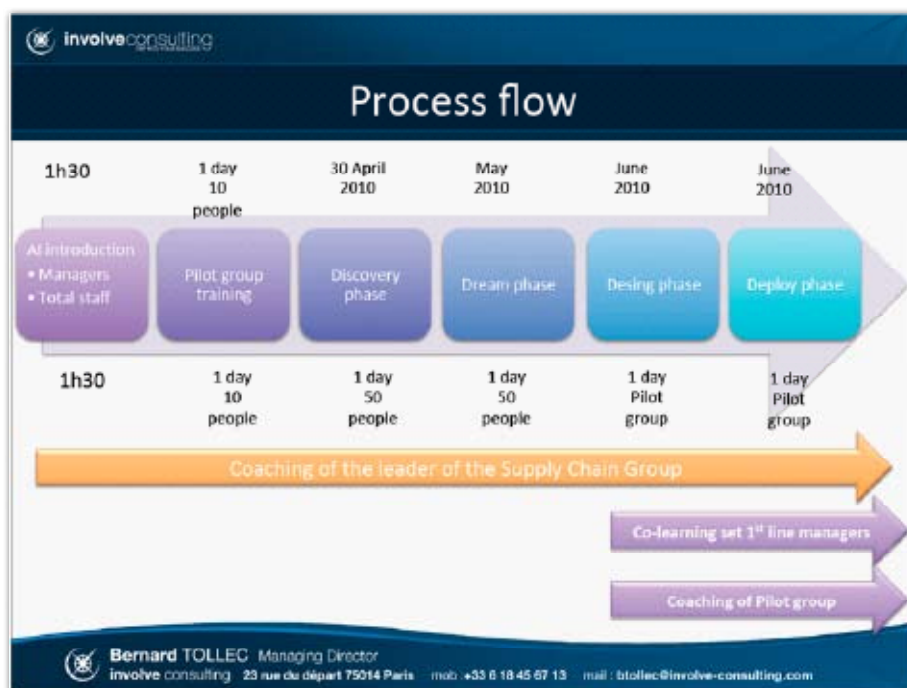
RESOURCES

Two consultants and a group of internal facilitators in the pilot group.

Other resources and information
A weblink to the movie about the project:
http://www.involve-consulting.com/blog_en/7-our-customers/#video

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

Before starting the process, we have organized a 1h30 "test" with the total staff, going through a discovery phase about what they liked the most about their job. The aims of this sequence were twofold:
- Show to the people this approach which is totally at the opposite of what they are used to do
- Show the leaders how this could work and show the 1st effect of this approach on their staff

During the process the facilitators offered coaching of the leader of the organization, coaching of the pilot group.
After the end of the project, we have organized co-learning with the specific pilot group, reviewing the process in depth.

REFLECTIONS

It's possible to introduce AI in a culture which is strongly focused on problem solving !! It doesn't not take too much time to change the way thinks have been currently done. People who did not dare to speak and act became very energized and engaged through the process.

THE USE OF AI METHOD IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR

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CONTEXT

This case discusses the use of Appreciative Inquiry method for organisations in the transport sector in a region of Sweden. the case focusses on an engagement exercise done to gain new perspectives on transport services; to assist with strategic planning and improve collaboration between different organisations and work-groups. The intervention is useful as a single short event, as in this case, or as part of wider organisational development.

The responsible authorities for transport in the Mälardalen region of Sweden, accountable to the regions for 3 million inhabitants, have been having increased problems with customer dissatisfaction for a number of years. With the aspiration to bridge the gaps within the head umbrella organisation consisting of local and regional transport companies I was appointed to design a 24-hour strategic planning event where consensus on the long-term goals of the organisation could be reached. The participants consisted of appointed managers from every local and regional company which were divided into different work groups depending on their specific expertise and responsibility. Together with a team of designers and workshop facilitators we developed an AI-based experience, from invitation to evaluation of the outcomes.

PURPOSE

The main purpose of the intervention was to help the organisations to:

- Analyze how the appointed managers *could* realise their common vision to offer a "fast, easy and affordable travel experience" to their customers in the region.
- Identify preferred success factors and forces in the cooperation between the organisations.
- to "design" a stereotype customer for the purpose of understanding the customer travel experience.
- Have participants agree on an outline timetable of activities for the period 2010-2016

IMPACT

Through interviews we mapped the expectations and fears of the participants. Based on this, and in close collaboration with the hosting organisation, the arrangement matured ending up including a five sessions flow-chart. The five sessions and their objectives are described in more detail below.

TARGET GROUPS – WHO ARE THEY AND WHAT DO THEY WANT/NEED?

The session was based on a "build-to think" methodology having the participants working to create passenger profiles that put the customer's positive travel experiences into focus and then implements a simple value mapping on each profile and experience.

WHAT IS A FAST, EASY AND AFFORDABLE TRAVEL EXPERIENCE?

The participants conducted one-to-one Appreciative Inquiry interviews among themselves. The

interview questions followed the four D flow: Discovery, dream, design and evaluation. The key appreciative theme was: *"Together, you are to discover and share your most positive travel experience, which then becomes both a source of inspiration and knowledge bank when you create concrete action plans"*. The aim is for the managers to identify the personal key factors that make for a fast, easy and affordable travel experience. The information was then shared in small groups as well as in the large group. The success factors were mapped and broken down into actions to be undertaken by specific task force groups.

SUCCESS FACTORS AND FORCES IN ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

Through classical kinship charts the participants identified, sorted, grouped and prioritised forces, success factors and reasons for optimism in their collaboration.

ACTIVITY PLAN

Through a back-casting exercise the different task force groups were asked to identify, sort, group and prioritise at least five new activities that they wanted to implement in the coming years. The activities naturally sprung from the above mentioned exercise based on the one-to-one interviews.

EVALUATION

The participants were asked to put 'post-it' notes on a large billboard answering our questions:
I was happy...
I was disappointed...
I was surprised...
I was proud when...
Next meeting, I would...

Two weeks after the event a phone call was made to each participant for the purpose of evaluating the event. Participants were asked questions concerning what value the work had added *to their approach to work*; their general opinion concerning the work done at the workshop and since and what they wanted to see more of in future events. The responses were summarised and sent back to the organisations.

DURATION OF EVENT

The event ran as a conference from lunch-to-lunch (over a 24 hours period) during a weekday in a conference hall in a town location away from everyone's ordinary working place. This was an important move so that everyone had to travel there, using their own services, but more importantly so that they felt that this was a new and fresh start to their collaboration.

RESOURCES

When participants arrived they were given a printed event plan describing each session, the purpose and goal. In addition we created 'mingle cards' to be used during coffee breaks and dinner. The discussions and results were documented and summarised by the consultants and sent back to the organisations. The follow-up evaluation discussion was made by telephone. The resources used in addition to the consultant were:

1 graphical designer
2 workshop designers
1 person specialised in telemarketing
Material: A2 papers, crayons, colour pencils, post-it notes in different sizes and colours.

Further information and resources available from www.learningeurope.eu
flow diagram/ program of the process in Swedish available.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION
Before:
The host, CEO-of the organisation, was helped to write an engaging invitation and workshop schedule *that was designed to stir the curiosity of potential participants.*

During:
Each part of the session had its unique specific guidelines as described above. However, the participants were encouraged not to hold back any ideas, thoughts or feelings but to share them with their colleagues and with the facilitators.

After:
When doing the phone evaluation we showed real consideration to capture and value all the participant's thoughts and impressions about the event, our work and the results.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS
Since the group represented a socio-demographic mix, but with an emphasis towards conservative people, we knew that making a professional impression was essential for the project to be taken seriously. We therefore wanted to surprise them with something that was serious but also intriguing and fun. That's when we involved a graphic designer to help produce a professional visual record of the event. He helped us to design the flow-chart, mingle cards and the documentation/summary that we sent back to the organisation. We got extremely good feedback on all the visual materials that we produced and several persons mentioned this specifically as having made a significant positive difference for them.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS
The on-spot evaluation which was later followed up by phone was a great source of information and knowledge for us on how to improve our work as well as giving the organisations information on how to continue their work. On an individual level persons who took part stated they were impressed and happy with the fact that we were so eager to get their feedback.

THE EXPERIENCE DAY

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CONTEXT

In 2009 I started to introduce Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in our organisation, which is a large public semi-government organisation with 21.000 employees, and which is in continuous change since it started out of a merger in 2002. Many changes have made the organisation as it is now and still many changes will be made as it has to cut its budget extensively in the coming years.

The management board has granted the wish that the course the organisation has to go has to become the course of every employee. To give life to that wish, it is important to see the organisation as an open system that is dependent on its human capital. Changes can be successful if employees are motivated and will have the power to work and learn together. Space and time for dialogue has to be created to give meaning to the granted wish.

In this context, I chose an organic way to introduce AI: throwing a pebble and let it ripple into the organisation. I had the support of my superior and the director of our department. My first idea was to organise an Experience day. I could not foresee then what a great success the Experience day would become. About 300 employees from all parts of the organisation attended so far.

The Experience day is part of a larger program to introduce and work with AI within the organisation. With a consultancy firm very well known with AI in the Netherlands, we developed a tailor-made four day AI facilitator training. Up to now, about 75 employees successfully did the training. One of the elements of the training is that the participants have to make use of AI in a practical situation in their own working environment and have to present this as a case story on the fourth day of the training.

We organise AI network meetings three times a year in which participants may find a stage to share stories about their successes with using AI making it possible for others to learn from them. We also created an AI group with a purpose of sharing on Yammer.com, which is used within our organisation as a social media network. AI started a wave of positive energy and enthusiasm which is still growing.

Additionally, in the near future, we are implementing or planning:
- Appreciative Leadership workshops for management
- Appreciative auditing
- AI facilitator training within the organisation as part of the organisation's learning program
- Training-the-trainer program for facilitators who want to become an AI trainer
- Facilitator coaching by experienced facilitators
- Connecting strength-based approaches to the results of the organisation.

As it was a significant starting feature for introducing AI and is still successful, I have chosen to share the Experience day with you.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Experience day is for participants to learn more about the philosophy and the approach of AI with the purpose to discover how it can work for themselves, the department they are working for, and the organisation.

DURATION

The Experience day is a one day event. It starts at 9.30 and ends at about 17.00 hours. The program for the day consists of three parts:

- An introduction into AI
- Experiencing the approach with the affirmative topic 'My client is a brilliant'
- Exploring questions in a World Café setting about what AI may bring you and what possibilities you see in using it.

RESOURCES

To co-create the affirmative topic and the program for the Experience day, I invited four employees who showed their eagerness to participate in the first Experience day. A consultant who worked with the company before also joined the group. We had three inspiring afternoon meetings, in which we designed the title of the affirmative topic, wrote a lead-in, crafted the interview questions, and edited an announcement.

As we expected that it could well become a successful day, we decided to also write a script to make it easier in the future to organise the day.

To make a start with inviting to participate in the first Experience day, we sent the announcement by mail to all the employees of the departments for which the members of the core group were working.

For the following Experience days, we expanded the invitation to other departments such as the Human Resources Department and the Learning Academies in our organisation. The announcement was also placed on Yammer.com.

Participants told their colleagues about the inspirational experience they have had and the energy it gave them to look to their work with appreciating eyes. I was mailed and called spontaneously by employees who also wanted to participate in an Experience day. And so the energy spread itself into the organisation.

IMPACT

The Experience day is creating awareness that there is another way of looking at the organisation, a way of looking at the things that go well, a more positive and satisfying way that engages to contribute to change. The latter might well be the reason for the success, because it gives lots of exciting possibilities in our organisation which is mostly deficit oriented.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

BEFORE THE EXPERIENCE DAY

The before mentioned script is helping us a lot in the preparations for the day. By following it, we won't forget anything. We use technical means to show slides and short movies and we use flip-charts, post-its and all kinds of materials to creatively enact the dream.

About two weeks before the day, I send the participants a program and some last minute information about the location. The location was already mentioned in the announcement.

DURING THE EXPERIENCE DAY

During the day, we are always with two facilitators. We start with welcoming the participants and do an opening exercise to connect with each other and setting the energy free for the day.

Next, we introduce AI in an interactive dialogue with the participants supported by showing some slides and short movies. We introduce the affirmative topic and the interview, and then have the participants interviewing each other in pairs. For the interviews we provide an interview guide with instructions for the interview, the lead-in and the questions. Being the hart of the AI approach, we always notice the energy that is arising when the interviews proceed.

After the interviews, the participants share their stories in groups of 6 to 8. We ask the groups to write down the stories in short on flip-charts, to make sense in total related to the affirmative topic, to co-create a vision of their desired future, their dream, and to write it down in a short vision statement.

The next step, which we apply mostly as the fun part of the day, is to ask the group to visualise their dream in a creative way for instance a sketch, a play. or a collage, and to present it to the other participants. The generated enthusiasm during this step is so prominent that we call it the highpoint of the day.

To explain the Design and Destiny phase, we created an interactive dialogue with the participants supported by some slides, and we introduce an Individual Action Approach. Each participant is asked individually to make a commitment for an action he or she can do in the next two weeks to get in the direction of the dream. Also, they are asked to share which talent or quality they would like to contribute, and what they would like to learn to help create the dream. We let them write this down individually on post-its and then share with them that all the commitments, shared talents and qualities, and learning wishes are the ingredients for an action plan to make the dream come true.

In the last part of the day, we create a World Café setting by putting tables in the room. The participants take place at a table and chose a host. In the first round each table has a twenty minute dialogue on the question: what is the power of AI for you? In the second round everybody except for the host is switching to another table. The question this round is: what possibilities do you see in using AI for yourself, your department and the organisation? Before starting the dialogue, the host at each table is sharing the highlights from the first round.

We end the day with a panel of three or four colleagues who are already experienced in using AI. They reflect on the highlights of the dialogues in the World Cafe and share their own experiences with the participants.

Before leaving we ask the participants to share a feeling of the day on a flip-chart or post-it.

AFTER THE EXPERIENCE DAY

Within two or three weeks, we evaluate the day by calling all participants personally. It gives us some idea what the day has brought to them and if and how they are going to make use of AI in the future. They can do a training to learn and experience more about AI or maybe they want help in facilitating change.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

The panel of three or four employees who are already experienced in AI deserves special consideration. It is the moment of the day in which the connection is made with what is already being done in

the organisation by using AI. This connection makes the participants realise that looking at the organisation from a positive perspective creates positive energy, and that they each can add more of that energy.

We have named this part of the Experience day "Pay it forward" after the movie, and we always start with showing a scene from the movie in which the boy Trevor is telling what the principle of pay it forward means to him as it comes to making a difference in this world.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS

I applied the interview as being the hart of AI, the sharing of stories of successful moments, and the co-creating of a vision in several shorter workshops. I mention two situations.

The first was a workshop with a group of management coaches who wanted to learn how to apply the strength-based approach of AI in their coaching practice. The second was an AI network meeting in which we deepened our knowledge of the strength-based approach and the philosophy and we discovered the almost unlimited possibilities to apply AI.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

To illustrate what specifically contributed to the success of the Experience day I would like to share some thoughts of participants:

- It's refreshing and it's new
- An approach driven by trust
- AI stimulates creativity and generates enthusiasm
- Using strengths to appeal to the positive core of the organisation is awesome
- Equality in enacting the positive approach - not functional roles but talents are leading
- Talent matters
- It goes beyond organisational boundaries
- Changing is developing from a positive way of thinking
- Your energy and enthusiasm shows that you really and truly believe in the positive approach.

REFLECTIONS

It is just fantastic to see how many people feel attracted by the positive energy of Appreciative Inquiry. It gives me the drive and the joy to share my enthusiasm and appreciation with everyone that is sincerely interested in what Appreciative Inquiry can do.

In the experiences I have so far, I notice that people are getting excited by telling stories of their successes and like to take these successes as a starting point for their travels into the future. It creates new not yet seen possibilities.

The power of the organisation lies within the qualities and talents of the people. There is a lot of positive energy in people and groups within the organisation. It is a challenge to free that energy to make people feel good and have them go to work with pleasure.

CO-CREATING A NEW BUSINESS STRATEGY FOR 2020

FROM INQUIRY TO COOPERATION TO INNOVATION

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CONTEXT

This case study focuses on a commercial company in Croatia: Metro Cash & Carry Croatia d.o.o. (further: Metro). Metro Cash & Carry is the first company that applied an AI approach in Croatia.
The company is part of the German Metro Group that is active in 33 countries in Europe, Africa and Asia, has ca.300.000 employees with their Headquarters in Düsseldorf, Germany.
Metro Cash & Carry has been in Croatia for 10 years and has become the largest wholesaler in Croatia with approximately 1200 employees and six locations throughout the country, the headquarters are in Zagreb.
Based on an annual marketing, sales and financial plan, which has to be approved by the German Board, Metro is then independent in their local (Croatian) operations.
The general business process consists out of:

- purchasing of goods, both centrally from German HQ, Croatian suppliers and others
- distribution of goods, to their 6 outlets or shops
- selling of goods, to Croatian companies in various sectors and entrepreneurs

PURPOSE

The goal of this project was to co-create a business strategy for 2020 in a different way, taking into account the specific Croatian mentality and culture. Development of management and employees should be an integrated part of this approach.

IMPACT

A concrete, hard result is one list with ca. 80 prioritized projects that everyone agrees upon. The activities are summarized under terms as Strategy, Management Style, Decision-making process, Marketing, Human Resources, ICT and other. And this result is based on the ideas and visions of more than 200 people including 15% of all Metro employees.

As a soft, but in reality a much harder result than the above mentioned, is an enormous feeling of spirit, involvement and commitment to the results they co-created in 2 days. They developed a great team work, a strong desire for deeper communication and cooperation, a positive believe in development, growth and expansion for the company and for themselves. Finally, and above all, people have the confidence that this is all realistic in the spirit 'we can do it, YES we can' as many put it.

DURATION OF THE EVENT

The total time of the first phase of the project is 10 Months.
The initial talks with the CEO started May 2011; the assignment was given on the 2nd of August and the final results were ready for a Board decision mid December 2011.
The decision to continue with the next steps will be taken the second week of February 2012.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

The most important guidelines are to be a real facilitator and to stimulate participants to discuss and have dialogues together to explore their own ideas, to stimulate their creativity and use their own experiences, to give unconditional trust in their own capacity and to help them to let go of their 'fear for bosses', especially in this culture.

Participants are not interested in theory or possible knowledge of the facilitator.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATION AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

The most important aspect was to balance between Croatian culture and decisive, result orientation. Balancing between the foundations of a strength based, AI approach and a culture that is more deficit and blaming oriented.

Balancing between a 'macho management style' and stimulating people to become more independent thinkers, self-confident and taking initiatives.

In developing a set of selection criteria for the interviewers and by organizing extra training sessions for the interviewers we created a group of potential change agents.

During the interview period I had some talks with the CEO and in one of these talks he informed me that he would leave his position in Croatia per 1 November as he was promoted to a position at the Metro Headquarters in Germany. His successor was already appointed and would start on 1 November officially, but, he would only be present in Zagreb for 1-2 days a week.

The new CEO did not give priority to being involved in the AI process; he wanted the project to continue as planned and would try to be present at the second day of the summit.

This change at the top had consequences for especially the top of the company and influenced the organisation in several aspects. Especially new initiatives were postponed.

In the end the new CEO did not participate in the summit.

ASPECTS OF THE CASE THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS

I think that the complete project phases and approach are applicable to other situations where special attention is required to the specific details that are different in every other situation.

WHAT SPECIALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE CASE

The support of the CEO and two Board members who believed in the necessity to change and develop toward strength based management style.

The enthusiasm of interviewers which was growing during conducting their interviews and which was a development process in itself.

The in-depth exchange and cooperation that grew during the summit.

The proud feeling that they managed to co-create a great result at a strategic level for their company.

REFLECTION

There was a growing lack of communication, commitment and support by some persons, whom became more focused on their own position after knowing that a new CEO was coming. On the other hand was the daily responding to mails from interviewers and answering their questions, as well as providing individual coaching when necessary and, the support of a number of interviewers and board members was very helpful to come to the results.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained by sending an e-mail to John Lodder.

CONTENT OF THIS CASE STUDY

1 - HOW DID IT BEGIN?

In May 2011 the CEO of Metro talked with me about his wish to create and develop a long term strategy for Metro in a different way, taking into account the specific Croatian mentality and culture. Development of management and employees should be an integrated part of this approach.
I asked the CEO how effective and sustainable the results of the strategy process should be. Our discussion, that took around two months, was whether to use the common SWOT analysis and work from there on a "top-down business as usual" process or whether he would have the courage to involve all stakeholders, internal stakeholders from all levels, and external ones?
I suggested using Appreciative Inquiry as a more effective approach and he started reading books and articles and searching the Internet about AI. After several meetings he decided to use Appreciative Inquiry as the best approach, with special focus on involving as many stakeholders as possible.

After the CEO and I agreed about the general outline the Board approved to the strategy process based on Appreciative Inquiry and an Internal Project Leader, a person I had to cooperate with very closely, was appointed. (The start of a talent management development program). We should make a detailed proposal for the Board of Metro Croatia which we worked out during July and August 2011.

2 - OUR PROJECT OUTLINE AND PLAN

The Internal Project Leader (IPL) was first introduced to the basics of AI and we had a few meetings to make a detailed project plan for the Board. We started with adjusting the companies' Mission and Vision Statement in a language everybody would understand and we formulated it in a challenging way.
From the Mission we created a few 'Affirmative Topics' out of which the Board had to choose three. Besides, we made a concrete planning of activities till the end of November 2011, we named it 'Moj Metro Dream 2020' which the Board had to approve.

The importance is that the top commits itself to a concrete goal and to a framework in which the goal should be achieved. From there, in the strategy development process, 'all voices are equal' till we reach the final decision-making phase.

3 - THE KICK-OFF: I HAVE A DREAM

The Board approved and we had a Kick-Off meeting beginning of September. It was an introduction of the project 'Moj Metro Dream 2020' to all internal stakeholders by the CEO, supported by the Abba-song 'I have a dream'. Present were some 60 people; Board members, managers, employees from all levels and from all locations in Croatia, as well as representatives of the Trade Union. We introduced Appreciative Inquiry in a basic and practical format, the three Affirmative Topics and the different steps of the project plan. Metro also distributed a special issue of 'Moj Metro', the monthly internal magazine, including names and contact info of the interviewers, to internally communicate and inform all employees about this project.

The first reactions of the people were very positive but also a bit hesitating; main questions they had were about 'would it be possible to see everything so positive?' and 'would it be possible to achieve results in this way with so many people and in our culture?' Note: Appreciative Inquiry, like every strength based approach, is not about denying the 'negative' but merely to primarily focus on what is going well and good, what are the best things to take along with us in the change process toward new goals and challenges.

4 - THE THREE AFFIRMATIVE TOPICS

Shortly put, the three affirmative topics we started to work with are:
- Shared Ownership, our employees have a high sense of belonging to our company
- Being the Innovation Leader in our market
- Offering a Unique Buying Experience for our Customers

5 - THE INTERVIEWS

Based on specific criteria we selected 24 employees from all locations, to conduct interviews with employees (100), customers (60) and suppliers (10) of the company. The interviewers first were trained in two groups to conduct these interviews in an AI-way, using a specific designed interview questionnaire based on the three Affirmative Topics. Metro Customers and Suppliers were chosen and asked for their cooperation. All employees were informed in local meetings and had the possibility to be interviewed by calling/mailing one of the interviewers. The interviewers ended up with 120 employee, 60 customer and 10 supplier interviews. The interviewers made reports of every interview, which were summarised by the external consultant to be used at the 2 day summit we planned in November 2011.

Before starting the preparations for the November summit we had an evaluation day with all 24 interviewers. The goal of this day was to reflect on their experiences and to check the summarised reports, to adjust and/or add information to be sure we would work with valid data as input.

6 - THE INTERVIEW RESULTS

If a marketing bureau would do this type of research it would deliver a report filled with statistic data, cold numbers and you would pay some 60.000 euro for it. For Metro it took, except travel expenses, ca. 500 hours of internal time. But now, all together, we received the experiences, visions and view-points of nearly 200 people about their ideas for the future of Metro. And these are not only persona-lised results but also meaning making information and in-depth, vivid research data.

Even more crucial is that simultaneously a process started in which the interviewed people felt important because their opinion was valued! This made them feel deeper involved and committed to the results as they felt responsibility for the input they gave and they were eager to cooperate on the realisation of their ideas. People feel like being a part in co-creating a change process.
The interviewers conducted ca. 10 interviews each and for them it was a new experience to gather

so much information in a structured, but especially personal way. They gathered knowledge about wishes and desires for a future as their colleagues, customers and suppliers see it.
The effect was that it made the interviewers feel like being change-agents.

For each of the interview target groups the summarised results were divided into 2 categories:
- *Immaterial answers* referring to non-tangible aspects (like behaviour, attitude, cooperation and team processes, atmosphere, communication, etc.)
- *Material answers* referring to tangible aspects (like structure, business processes, money, assortment, marketing etc.)

The results were further divided in positive and negative answers; in our approach we called the negative answers 'wishes for the future' that should be seen as opportunities for improvement.

7 - AN UNEXPECTED INTERVENTION

During the interview period I had some talks with the CEO and in one he showed me an internal 'Metro Group Management Summary' in which this Croatian AI - project was communicated to all country managers. In a next meeting he informed me that he would leave his position in Croatia per 1 November as he was promoted to a position at the Metro Headquarters in Germany. His successor was already appointed and would start on 1 November officially, but, he would only be present in Zagreb for 1-2 days a week.

The new CEO did not give priority to being involved in the AI process; he wanted the project to be continued as planned and would try to be present at the second day of the summit.
This change at the top had consequences for especially the top of the company and influenced the organisation in several aspects. Especially new initiatives were postponed.
In the end the new CEO did not participate in the summit.

8 - THE AI-SUMMIT 16 AND 17 NOVEMBER 2011

We had two days with approximately 60 people, including members of the Board, Managers, representatives of the Trade union, manager Training and Development, the interviewers and employees from all locations and all levels. For about 80% this was the same group that was present during the Kick-Off.

At the start the participants received a 'Workbook with two parts:
- *part 1: practical exercises we would work on during the two days as well as*
- *part 2: a summary with theoretical 'mini lectures' as background information about the theoretical foundations and assumptions of AI offering the possibility for later reading.*

The opening of the summit was a short and practical introduction about Appreciative inquiry to have 'all noses in the same direction' and showing the, at that moment, just released video of Jacky Kelm. After this introduction we followed the 4D cycle of Appreciative Inquiry during the two days.
From the start the participants were divided in subgroups which we named 'Innovation Teams'.
In total every innovation team of 8 people had to fulfill 12 group assignments.

After finishing every task each group has 3-5 minutes to present their results to all other partici-pants. After these presentations every team has the possibility to adjust their own results with something they heard or thought off during this plenary exchange. We used different formats for these plenary exchanges.

9 - THE DISCOVERY PHASE

The Discovery phas started with interviews in pairs using the same questionnaire and affirmative topics as used before by the interview team. The difficult task for the participants then was to integrate all experiences, visions and ideas from the earlier interviews with their own experiences, visions and ideas. They managed this process superbly and came up with great visions and ideas for Metro 2020.

Note that all these results are based on the best experiences they had in the (recent) past. This means that they are certain that whatever comes out further in this process is realistic and doable, simply because they have done it before.

10 - THE DREAM PHASE

In the Dream phase every innovation team had assignments to end up with creating a Dream statement, their vision of how Metro would look like in 2020. With the credo: 'nothing is impossible' this turned out into a funny and very creative afternoon, without blockades or limitations.
The final assignment for this day was to prepare a 5 minute creative presentation of their dream; we would start day 2 with these presentations.

2 different examples of creative expressions of the 'Metro Dream 2020':

In this phase you could see that a process was developing, where colleagues are talking in-depth, exchanging and dialoguing with each other; everybody was listening and giving input.
In AI terms the process of cooperation and co-creating really started here.
Also noticeable was a nice kind of competition between the groups, every group was trying to be better than the other, which positively influenced the quality of their results.
We closed the day at 5 pm and it was interesting to see that every team worked further on their presentation 'in their own time', some till 18.30.

The second day we started with the creative presentations of the dreams for 'Metro 2020'.
We saw role-plays and watched 'movies', '2020 TV interviews' etc. Some teams were dressed in uniforms and some made beautiful pieces of art using the available materials.

The goal of these creative presentations is to have fun; more important however is the psychological meaning that it is a personal and group internalisation of the desired future they co-created.

11 - GOING FROM THE DREAM PHASE TO THE DESIGN PHASE

This phase is always a bit difficult process because people have to get back with their feet on the ground and that requires a soft landing. The teams managed this very well and started with high levels of enthusiasm and energy working on their assignments of this phase. Tasks were mainly directed to co-create so called 'high-potential possibility maps', to develop and grow concretely toward their dream/goal for 2020. It contains all necessary organisational design elements which they have to prioritise at three levels of importance. After checking and reviewing the results, and after sharpening them into so called 'provocative propositions' we ended this phase.

Provocative Propositions are a specific kind of vision statements which should stretch the status quo, challenge common routines and that offer new possibilities for positive change. After formulating they are checked out by a set of 6-8 critical questions and every team has to agree upon everything stated. This means actually concrete practising 'shared ownership' for the common results.

12 - FINALLY, IN THE DELIVERY PHASE

We work on an innovative planning program. In a structured way the Innovation Teams think of concrete, short and long term activities that are necessary to realise their common goal. Every team gives their projects priorities with implementation dates, name a person who takes the ownership for each project and names of who should support and/or also be involved, like certain specialists for instance. The result is a large number of lists with a larger number of activities and priorities produced by every team. The second day ends with a last, very important, but very difficult, plenary assignment. All participants now become partners in a dynamic plenary process of decision-making with the goal to: 'co-create one project planning list out of all the team productions' and 'everybody has to agree on the common end result'.

13 - THE SUMMIT RESULT

A concrete, hard result is one list with ca. 80 projects that everyone agrees upon. The activities are summarised under terms as Strategy, Management Style, Decision-making process, Marketing, Human Resource, ICT and other. And this result is based on the ideas and visions of more than 200 people including 15% of all Metro employees. As a soft, but in reality a much harder result as the above mentioned, is an enormous feeling of spirit, involvement and commitment to the results they co-created in 2 days. They developed a great team work, a strong desire for deeper communication and cooperation, a positive believe in development, growth and expansion for the company and for themselves. Finally, and above all, people have the confidence that this is all realistic in the spirit 'we can do it, YES we can' as many put it.

14 - HOW TO CONTINUE AND HOW TO MAKE THIS SUSTAINABLE?

Directly after the summit we worked out all the results and we made a clear summary of all projects. We sent it to all participants with the question to check and adjust if necessary.
Mid December all responses are received and partly adjusted.
These results will be proposed to the Board for a final decision-making in the beginning of February. Decisions and next steps will be communicated to all people in a special issue of 'Moj Metro Dream 2020'. The Board decision will determine the continuation and sustainability and the people are full hope and expectations because they want to continue.

15 - GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

The most important guideline is to be a real facilitator and to stimulate participants to discuss and have dialogues together to explore their own ideas, to stimulate their creativity and use their own experiences, to give unconditional trust in their own capacity and to help them let go of their 'fear for bosses', especially in this culture.

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY – REAL WORLD PRAGMATICS

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TYPE OF PROCESS

The process discussed below refers to a range of events/learning elements that can be delivered over an extended period, but details on one significant part.

CONTEXT

The client was an engineering organisation, previously part of the Government, now in the private sector. Following an employee survey, the HR Director wanted to hold a series of local events to create organisational change (and improve scores on the employee attitude survey). This idea evolved into 4 appreciative inquiry based days, 3 world cafe based events, 3 decision making events, one simureal event and two celebration events over two locations (south England and Scotland) over a period of a few months.

The organisation is 800-1000 strong and we would be working with groups of up to 30 people at any one time - both to avoid excessive disruption to production, and also to keep the process within the permission and influence remit of the HRD. We aimed to touch 10% of the workforce in one location and 50% in the other.

PURPOSE

The objective was to help the organisation in its expressed, but not yet enacted, desire to become more flexible, responsive and innovative: in other words to move from one where change is a hierarchical, top-down, mechanistic process to one where change is more organic, bottom up and emergent.

In addition it was hoped that the activities and outcomes would have a positive effect on the scores on the employee survey when it was re-run in approximately 6 months.

IMPACT

The employee survey has been rerun with good improvements in all the targeted areas. Other observable outcomes are:

- 12 active improvement projects, all from the ground up and all focussed on improving work communication, coordination or productivity are established.

- A number of staff feeling empowered - that they have been heard and have been able to put ideas into action. This starts to change the story that "they can't have influence".

- High quality communication between front line staff and the Managing Director and other members of the Senior Management Team, leading to positively changed perception both of managers of staff and vice versa.

- An appreciation in the senior team of the value of working in these ways, and a commitment to doing more.

DURATION OF EVENT
The focus of the discussion below refers to a single one-day Appreciative Inquiry event.

RESOURCES
Process - AI and Open Space
Materials - post-it stickers, flipcharts, magazines, scissors, glue, pens, Lego bricks,

Further information and resources available from: learning resources.eu

- flow diagram/ program of the process

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION
Carefully crafted letter of invitation to event (and RSVP process).
Line Manager understanding and support (patchy in this process).
See attached document for process on day (follow link learningeurope.eu in further resources section below).
Support afterwards to groups to develop 'business case' presentations for the ideas they wanted to put forward.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS
This was the most interesting part of the process. So many things seemed less than ideal on this particular day that I compiled a list of desirable things not in place during the event - it reads.

I wouldn't start from here:
Only part of the system is in the room
People 'sent' by managers with no briefing about what to expect
Time away from working to achieve their production targets
No idea what they are coming to
Link to 'bigger agenda' not clear to many participants
No management were present
Late news of an announcement briefing all to attend today
20 people present not the 30 expected

The group that assembled was confused, not happy about being pulled off the line at short notice to attend some strange event, with work on their mind.

What I had as a following wind in this less than ideal situation was:
It's a very compliant organisation, so people will 'go along' with whatever they are asked to
It makes a change for them from usual work
They have the opportunity to meet colleagues
They are interested in the organisation's future
They have experience and knowledge of the company

Faced with this disconsolate, grumbling, restless group that felt they would rather be somewhere else I:
Established the status of the attendees – found they were 'sent' and had little or no idea of what to or why
Explained what we would be doing, encouraged them to stay but also offered them the possibility of leaving

Eased them in with a good mingle of introductions and sharing successes

Flexed around their need to attend the briefing – and to absorb its implications

Bent with the wind – agreed management should be present, but didn't amplify, and seized any positives to build on

Stuck with the voluntarism principle

Was prepared to come away with nothing

In the light of this I stayed with the principles of these ways of working
1. Focussed on who was there rather than who wasn't
2. Emphasised the volunteer principle and stuck with it
3. Meet the needs of the group to be in two places at once
4. Gave time to the adjustment needed to the news about attending the briefing
5. Adjusted the plan for the day to accommodate less people
6. Acknowledged the frustrations of the lack of 'whole system' representation
7. Trusted the process to produce engagement

The day got better and went well with projects and commitment by the end.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS

The general design of a morning oriented to gaining shared understanding of resources followed by a space in the afternoon for self organisation would seem applicable to other situations.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS?

Talking here about the longer process:

HRD vision and understanding of emergent and positive change

The robustness of the AI process

The energising power of self-organisation

The continuity provided across the events by having the same facilitator - who also understood something of the organisational context

Absolute clarity re volunteer nature of event and a commitment to maintaining that in the face of an organisational culture of command-and-tell

Power of voice and participation

Mix of participants from across the departments and functions

The coordination process across the different events that allowed the projects to become connected

The HRD's personal interest, energy and follow through

The Senior Management decision-making panel, and the support provided to project groups to put together short, punchy, persuasive business case arguments.

The face-to-face nature of the presentation and decision.

The different patterns of communication and connection

Sticking to the AI principles of what is working, who is there, what we can do

REFLECTIONS

How the process, based on the AI principles, is so robust that it can deliver under many diverse, and certainly less than perfect, conditions.

FUTURE DIRECTION FOR
MANCHESTER HEALTHY SCHOOLS

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CONTEXT

This case study focuses on a public health programme in a large UK city. The programme had been running for ten years based on a partnership between Education and Health Services. Initially the programme was established by staff locally to engage schools in addressing the high levels of health inequality experienced in the city. Latterly it had become part of a national scheme which led to nationally recognised awards for schools.

With the arrival of a new national government in May 2011 major changes were introduced to the organisation and focus of Schools, Education and Health Services, including the abolition of the national scheme, and significant reductions in funding. This resulted initially in a policy vacuum as the details of the new policies were developed and then a period of major upheaval as organisations, such as the local Education and Health Services, responded to the changes. During this period the programme, like many other services, continued as best it could, though staff morale plummeted as uncertainties about the future of the programme itself and individual jobs became more manifest.

I had been working with the programme for several years, as an evaluation consultant. In October 2010 the programme co-ordinators asked me to draw together evidence of the programme's impact to support discussions on its future. Since the focus of government policy was on developing local solutions, I suggested, the programme hold an inquiry with its main stakeholders instead. The co-ordinators were excited about adopting an Appreciative Inquiry approach but were anxious at the speed that decisions were being taken and wanted the inquiry to be completed before the pro-gramme moved to its new organisational 'home' in January 2011.

Due to the lack of time and significant personnel changes that were occurring in stakeholder agen-cies we developed an inquiry model based primarily on face to face interviews.

A workshop was held in early November with the Healthy Schools team (11 people) which aimed to:
- Provide an introduction to Appreciative Inquiry and discuss in more detail the inquiry framework we were hoping to use
- Complete the Discovery and Dream aspects of the process. The team divided into pairs and each person answered a series of questions. The questioner then feedback the key points to a small group which, in turn, reported back the main headlines to the whole group.
- Design the interview process with schools and other stakeholders

The team then held face-to-face interviews with headteachers/senior staff in 64 schools over the following 3 weeks while I interviewed other stakeholders including senior managers in Health and Education and commissioners in Public Health. The information from the interviews was then ana-lysed and the initial findings discussed with the team in mid-December. Following this a report

submitted to the programme's Strategic Partners before Christmas. A Design workshop was held with the team in January followed by meetings with commissioners and managers. This has led to a new programme being developed that encompasses the new national policies and the outcomes of the inquiry process. A brief evaluation of the impact of the inquiry took place in September 2011. This case study focuses primarily on the Discovery and Dream aspects of the inquiry.

PURPOSE

The aim of the inquiry was to determine the future direction of the programme. There was particular emphasis on identifying the positive core of the current programme that needed to be sustained, and ideas and wishes for the new programme. By engaging the major stakeholders in the process, the team also hoped to gain a greater understanding of different perspectives of the programme.

IMPACT

The evidence generated by the inquiry had a significant influence on the decisions on the programme's future. The new commissioners and managers gained a greater insight into the strength of support for the programme from schools, the quality of relationships that staff had with the city's schools and the importance of maintaining a universal public health offer to schools.

"Evidenced the importance of Healthy Schools work and the value given to the programme by schools"

The inquiry also improved staff morale, gave a sense of direction to programme staff, and improved the understanding of each other's perspectives.

"At the time it was motivating – to hear feedback from schools about what they appreciated about us and the Healthy Schools role"

"Didn't realise it at the time but the survey was the 'kick......' we needed to get things moving after election of Coalition Government and 6 months of stagnation"

"Helped to identify the strengths of the programme, helped to see the value of Healthy Schools from the headteachers point of view"

DURATION OF EVENT

The Definition, Discovery and Dream stages of the inquiry took 2 months, from initial conception to final report. The Design element was developed over the following six months.

RESOURCES

The main resources used were staff time, to conduct 64 face-to-face interviews in individual schools, and consultant time to facilitate the overall inquiry, conduct 9 interviews with commissioners and managers, and analyse data (10 days).

Further information and resources available at www.learningeurope.com

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

An interview schedule for schools and commissioners/managers was designed, in consultation with the Healthy Schools team, beginning with 'Discovery' questions and followed by 'Dream' questions. At the initial team workshop there was also discussion of the format of the interview, especially the introduction and ending.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

The most exciting aspect of this inquiry was the programme's desire to seize the window of opportunity that appeared, when everything around the programme was in flux. Having experienced six months of uncertainty and confusion there was a strong sense of stasis and inertia while organisations waited to discover the implications of the changes in national policy and funding.

By being proactive and taking the initiative, this inquiry significantly altered the predominant energy that permeated organisations at that time, and gave the programme a 'sense of its future' and strong evidence to support negotiations about its future.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS

Accessing schools is often difficult, especially for those outside the formal education sector. Although the programme had a high level of participation from schools generally it had struggled to engage headteachers in decisions about the future of the programme. Whilst time and resource consuming, being able to go into individual schools and have face to face meetings with heads provided a very successful means of ensuring their participation in the inquiry. It also generated a wealth of fascinating data, in a very short period of time that will inform the development of programme for several years.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS?

- The commitment of team and the programme co-ordinators to the inquiry. Their courage to take the initiative and enthusiasm to maximise the reach of the inquiry had a domino effect on all the other stakeholders.

- The level of engagement of schools. Over a third of the city's schools took part in the inquiry and with almost two thirds of their headteachers participating directly themselves. Such levels of engagement, especially in the limited timescale, reflected the quality of relationships the team had with schools and the concerns schools had about the future of the programme.

- The openness of commissioners and managers. Most of the commissioners and managers interviewed were changing jobs during the inquiry. The frankness with which they approached the inquiry contributed to the richness of the data collected.

REFLECTIONS

The inquiry, of itself, did not determine the future of the programme has had initially been envisaged. This was partly due to the major changes of senior staff at the time of the inquiry which made it impossible to gain commitment to the inquiry process from senior decision-makers at the outset. The breadth of the organisational and policy upheaval also resulted in decisions about the programme being taken over a longer timeframe than originally anticipated. Instead, the evidence generated by the inquiry was used in the negotiations about the programme's future resulting in a new programme being launched with broad stakeholder support in October 2011.

This experience raises broader questions about the feasibility of undertaking an inquiry during a period of significant organisational upheaval and, conversely, the degree of stability needed in an organisational system for an inquiry to be most effective. With hindsight, this inquiry did succeed in stimulating an extensive dialogue about public health promotion in schools at a pivotal moment. It was, however, perhaps optimistic, given the organisational fluidity, to expect the inquiry itself to achieve system change.

APPRECIATIVE LEADERSHIP

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'Leadership is the authentic expression of one's inner life that creates value through collective effort' Sam Yau

CONTEXT

An approach to the introduction of Appreciative Leadership within an organization which can be a short introductory event or part of a of longer flow of organization development. Normally changing the leadership style in an organization to a more appreciative leadership style will require a longer period of time (several months to several years) as it often involves a change in culture of the organization as a whole and more specifically a change in culture and behavior for those who are leading, or should we say facilitating. This can be summarized by stating that it means that an organization is moving from a 'control' model to a 'trust' model. Another way of summarizing is that an organization is moving from a model that is mainly defined by the phrase 'Knowledge is Power' to a situation where the organization realizes that 'Shared Knowledge will be the Competitive Edge and create Strength'.

PURPOSE

Leadership is at the heart of the failure or success of many change interventions. Appreciative Leadership may provide some help/answers in facilitation successful change programs. This intervention is designed to inform people about the possibilities and the challenges of Appreciative Leadership and to create an awareness that there are new approaches to leadership that will serve today's organizations in a more suitable way than the more traditional models of leadership. To facilitate people in learning, understanding and applying Appreciative Leadership in their own environments, if applicable. The approach should serve both profit and not-for-profit organizations to create healthier and more sustainable organizations. Organizations that serve at least a triple bottom line: People, Planet and Profit.

IMPACT

This approach has been found to help organizations to have a more holistic view of the world they operate in, starting with a sound balance between the 'three Ps': (people, planet and profit). So far, results with organizations have shown positive outcomes in all 'three Ps' when Appreciative Leadership was applied. Emperical research shows that organizations that implement have higher employee and customer satisfaction scores, lower sick leave figures, and deliver healthy financial results. When implemented over time an often significant change in culture will be become apparent.

DURATION OF EVENT

The approach can be variously designed to accommodate learning sessions ranging from 2 hours to 2 days. The event will focus on understanding the background and complexity of Appreciative Leadership and will normally require more time after the event to get fully implemented.

RESOURCES

Typically, this can be delivered as a lecture/workshop event. It could also be presented as a 'matching and mentoring' process, whereby colleagues skilled in Appreciative Leadership, would be matched with those colleagues interested in learning more about the approach and can be helped in one-to-one situations, perhaps within a coach/mentor framework. The mentor/coach would assist learners to acquire the basic appreciative orientation, and skills and knowledge during the implementation phase. The last slides in the presentation that is part of this workshop talk about the 'disciplines of the Appreciative Leader', a set of guidelines one considers the possibility of becoming a real appreciative leader.

Further information and resources
• Slides of Appreciative leadership
• Flow chart of the process for introducing Appreciative leadership
Available from learningeurope.eu

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

Before: Intake on specific teams - discover what are the issues the community is struggling with around the changes they are facing. Understand, check with the audience what they see as the key aspects of the leadership role. Take time to built a good understanding of where the audience is in there thinking. For example: Not everybody is familiar with the 'Triple bottom line". Check before you start where the group stands when it comes to terms like these.

During: Sharing of knowledge, experience and models around appreciative leadership. Take considerable time to built a) the model around the value add by leadership. Starting with data, which becomes information when value is add, which in turn becomes knowledge after adding value. This is usually where one could take some time to spent on the notion of 'Knowledge is Power'. Especially as the next step of adding value, which is adding value to knowledge, is the creation of wisdom. And then we are in a completely different realm, i.e. the realm of Shared Knowledge, which is the real strength of the organization. When facilitating the second model, i.e. the one where the balance between the external and the internal clock is discussed, it is important to take time to explain what is meant by the 'external clock' and the 'internal clock'. It is highly recommend that one should try and familiarize oneself with the work of the late Flemish professor Cornelissen on time as well as with the work of the philosopher Bergson on the topic of time. It is also helpful to distinguish the 'three industrial revolutions' (industrial revolution, early 1800's, the rise of psychotherapy and mass production at the start of the 1900's and finally the arrival of internet around the turn of the century) and their implications for the value systems in our society.

Follow up: Mentoring/coaching of participants around the implementation of their own specific (appreciative) leadership issues. It is highly recommended that particularly in case people want to implement Appreciative Leadership in their organizations that considerable time and effort is invested in this part of the facilitation. It will be crucial for the outcome.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

Specific considerations is to explain to participants the notion that appreciative leadership will require a sense, an awareness that there is a need to slow down the speed of our 'internal clock' in order to deliver appreciative leadership. Reflection is key for any environment that wants to apply Appreciative Leadership and reap the benefits of it. This is quite contrary to what is felt as 'normal leadership practice' today. Giving examples of what this means is important. In that respect one can think of the speed at which our 'external clock', our society is running. And more in particular at the speed at which technology is developing. Over the past few decades we have seen an enormous acceleration in the speed at which our technology operates and even more importantly connects us. Some people

consider the introduction of the internet in late nineties of the last century as the 'third industrial revolution' making it possible for all of us in the western world to access any type of information 24/7. At the same time our 'internal clock', the speed at which we operate, grow, develop has not changed significantly. And it is this unbalance which is currently creating deep senses of discomfort with what is going on and may actually be a the root of many of the crises we are facing today. So approaching leadership from the perspective that it needs to restore a balance that will help be successful is at the core of what we are trying to achieve with Appreciative Leadership. Explaining this process will be crucial when it comes to successfully deliver a workshop around the theme of Appreciative Leadership

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS

In general the notion of the value chain in leadership, leading to Appreciative Leadership, can be applied in a much wider sense. This is due to the fact that different general concepts of thinking and theories have been combined to a fairly general approach that tries to explain today's developments in our western society. Please see set of slides that deals with this aspect by following the link to the DLE resources.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTES TO THE SUCCESS OF THIS APPROACH?

The combination of the thinking of philosophers like Cornelissen and Bergson (around the perspective of time) with the work of David Cooperrider (Appreciative Inquiry) and the perspective of an holistic business approach (or at least the triple bottom line approach) has lead to a fresh approach on how to facilitate organizations and what is required of an Appreciative Leader in such organizations. It is the sincere, balanced, attention given to people, planet and profit that has contributed to the success of companies and the wellbeing, happiness of the people working in and with these organizations.

METASAGA

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CONTEXT

Metasaga is a journey through the culture, heritage and physical landscape. It allows leaders at all levels to engage in deep self- reflection by exploring their environment. It utilises a strengths-based, whole system approach to evaluate how they operate as leaders and the performance of the organisation they lead. It makes leaders at all levels reframe their thinking using metaphor, narrative, tradition and artefacts found in their own physical environment. It combines the business techniques of non-directive coaching, dialogue and appreciative inquiry with the traditional storytelling teaching of our culture, the Norse saga.

TYPE OF PROCESS

Metasagas can last 2 hours, half a day or a full day. They can be stand-alone events or form part of an extended programme. They have been utilised with school children, public and private sector professionals and charity groups. The groups can be generic team or people from a variety of backgrounds. Metasaga stems from the work of Leif Josefsson on Metafari. It was originally used with individuals as part of the nondirective coaching process

The first group Metasaga took place in Unst, Shetland in June 2008 and brought together senior leaders from the Education Services of Orkney and Shetland. It has been transformed from Metasaga to Metasgeul in the Gaelic culture of the Western Isles. The work is supported by a wikispace, which was voted runner up in the best educational wiki of 2010. See
http://metasaga.wikispaces.com/

Further information and resources available on www.learningeurope.eu

CASE STUDY – ABRIACHAN FOREST

SETTING

The forest of Abriachan is high in the Scottish mountains above Lochness. The woodland is managed by a community trust and as well as providing access to the woodland they are involved in forest school education for children and adults.

DELEGATES

Delegates were from a variety of backgrounds, including facilitators who wished to learn the process to enhance their own practice and adults from harsh realities that were using the process to reflect and move on.

DURATION OF THE EVENT

The event took place in early March after a very harsh Scottish winter. This was a full day event split

in to two distinct sessions:
- The process of Metasaga and how to deliver it
- A Metasaga trail through the forest.

A virtual representation of this Metasaga can be found at:

http://metasaga.wikispaces.com/Abriachan+forest+Trust

PURPOSE
Like many Metasagas there are a number of aims for the day:
- To create a metasaga in the woodland, visitors can use .
- To replicate the metasaga on the virtual site.
- To encourage literacy by using storytelling from the culture of the area.
- To encourage deep reflection and values based discussion work with adults and young people from harsh realities.
- To increase and develop leadership skills of facilitators present.
- To encourage a focus on strength based change and encouraging a positive ethos.
- Reflect the values of the trust.

RESOURCES
The major resource is the environment, the forest in this case. An important part of the Metasaga is the guide or facilitator. The guide decides on the route and the order of the stops. Their skills can enhance the metasaga experience. They must tell the stories related to the stop but can also draw from the narrative of other traditions that support and develop the idea. This is where they influence the group towards positive strength based discussion. They will also be required to use coaching skills as they encourage individuals towards deeper reflection as they move between stops. Two guides facilitated this Metasaga, one with a storytelling Gaelic background and the other with knowledge of woodland. Specialised knowledge is not necessary.

In the current financial climate it is good to offer metasaga to clients as it literally has no cost in relation to resources and room hire. Costs are limited to time. Once the metasaga is created, it belongs to the delegates. Metasaga is open source. It belongs to everyone.

IMPACT
Metasaga uses a variety of techniques set in the environment and culture of the leader to develop the whole person, create a sense of purpose and recognize core values. It encourages participants to consider the ethos of their organization, engage with the change process and establish a shared vision. It creates a sense of belonging, community and connectedness. using familiar places, stories and artefacts. Essential to this is the provision of space and time for self-evaluation and deep reflection, within a familiar landscape and culture.

- A number of facilitators now use it in their work.
- A virtual metasaga for Abriachan is on the wikispace.
- Trust members, use the trail set up around the woodland.
- One group have increased their own literacy skills by developing their own metasaga along the nearby canal.
- A rich conversation took place after the metasaga
- One coach had a prolonged coaching session with one member of the group as they moved along the trail.
- Music and stories from the area were incorporated into the metasaga capturing the culture and heritage of the area and the participants.

DESCRIPTION OF METASAGA PROCESS

A group of participants come together to explore leadership, team building, organisational change and encourage self-reflection. The Metasaga is created in the local environment; preferably the home of the participants but this is not essential. A route or trail is identified containing 5 or 6 stops. Each stop centres on a significant feature in the landscape. We take the feature and utilize it as a metaphor or trigger to explore the individual and group development needs. The guide would explore this route prior to the event.

At each stop the feature is used to consider the values it suggests through metaphor. The next step is to discover the questions that arise from the exploration of the both the place and the metaphor. The guide suggests a few questions, but members of the group are encouraged to develop their own questions, thus increasing their ownership of the learning experience. The story or narrative related to the landscape is shared, resulting in further exploration of values and questions, but moves on to identify skills or attributes suggested by the narrative. Participants can share their understanding of the story, tradition or folklore related to the place. A task can be set around the place or story, which encourages experiential learning. Finally the group is asked to identify a piece of music that captures the learning experience discovered at the stop. In island and rural communities tunes or songs often exist that have been inspired by the landscape and can be used to enhance each stop.

Each stop should build on the previous and develop reflection in a number of areas related to personal and professional development. The idea is to allow deep thinking and reflection at an individual level while providing an opportunity for collective responses to be shared if appropriate. Individuals are encouraged to journal their experiences. As the group move from stop to stop rich conversations take place between delegates.

Much of the sharing and reflection of the experience takes place after the event. A communal, but simple meal is organised to allow people to share together in a nurturing environment. A shared meal of soup, bread and cheese was provided in the trust's outdoor classroom. Rich conversations take place over the meal and participants often express a reluctance to leave.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

Metasaga is a powerful tool facilitating deep reflection in professional and personal development. It uses everyday symbols and metaphors to explore the connections between rational thought and deep emotions - between head and heart, between self and other. It is allegorical in nature and has many layers of meaning. It can be understood by everyone, regardless of ability, age or experience. It has the potential to alter our thinking and transform our organisations. Metasaga in itself is a metaphor for the change process, a journey of discovery. Begin the journey, discover yourself in the world around you.

"We don't receive wisdom;
we must discover it for ourselves after a journey that no one can take for us"
Marcel Proust

DISCOVERING AND ENHANCING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

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CONTEXT

I work as an independent, private psychotherapist and systemic family therapist since 1990. To my opinion, as well as based on my experience, psychotherapy is the means, which facilitates and supports personal development (and not "just" a problem-solution procedure – without of course neglecting the important role of psychotherapy in coping with actual problems faced by the individuals undertaking psychotherapy sessions; either working individually or in groups or with their families). Thus, some 10 years ago I decided to extend my activities as a psychologist into becoming a "facilitator" by designing and conducting workshops on issues of interest, such as communication, self-esteem, coaching and consulting, team-building and team-spirit etc, in the context of personal growth and evolvement in private and/or professional life.

A number of these workshops were designed on a private basis and were brought out in the "free market," while others had been designed based on specific needs of the company/organization, who approached me as a consultant.

The context of the event to be described is my own wish to extend the psychotherapeutic services offered at my office into workshops, conducted according to the AI and other Strength-based Change Approaches. It represents the opening up of my own Professional Identity to a broader spectrum of sharing knowledge and experience aiming at the personal growth and evolvement of individuals, who are interested in this. Moreover, it was inspired by the dream to spread the idea of AI by using it in the way the workshop is designed and, thus, allowing the participants to experience it rather than by "teaching" it directly. And, as it is only natural, all participants gain in personal and professional development, the facilitator(s) included – as the phrase says: "the teacher is being twice taught". Therefore the name chosen for my Systemic Center for Mental Health and Personal Development is **Synexelixis** ("co-evolution", in English).

Another basic part of the context is the element of co-facilitation. As systemic thinker, I can only imagine this kind of work to be held by co-working with others, in other words creating a system of facilitators, which gives valuable enrichment and reflection possibilities.

The specific series of workshops on Professional Identity is being designed and conducted in co-operation with my colleague Mrs. Haritini Karra, systemic psychotherapist, trained in AI and also a member of the European AI Network.

PURPOSE

"DISCOVERING AND ENHANCING PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY" was the title of the specific workshop, describing its purpose. More specifically, participants were given the chance to:

a. explore the nature of their professional identity and discover skills, abilities, dreams and what's already there giving life to it
b. enhance their professional identity by designing the future based on its strengths.

The overall aim is to enable participants to get back to their professional life from a different position and with a different perception of themselves and their strengths, which they can use in order to open up new paths in a way that will lead to professional fulfillment.

DURATION
The workshop was held on Fri 14.00 – 20.00 and Sat 12.00 – 20.00, i.e. 14 hours in two days.

RESOURCES
Main source of inspiration for the workshop is the Appreciative Approach, starting with the assumption: "under every problem lies a frustrated dream". It was constructed as an interactive procedure, i.e. following the concept of "sharing, participating, co-creating" and was based on the experiential learning, which enables the assimilation and the "personalization" of the knowledge taking along. Based on the assumption "words create worlds" narrative approach has been used through story telling and the "stories in the story" method. Another main element used was the externalization of the Professional Identity as an autonomous living entity, which participants got into a dialogical relationship with. The main values are respect, appreciation and inclusiveness. The basic principles are the "active listening", exploring with an "appreciative eye" ("appreciative ear" in Greek), discovering the strengths and bringing the dream into the light.

Valuable resources are also: the personal experience of the power of AI, the quality of the relationship of and the common ground between the facilitators, as well as the vision to spread the Appreciative Approach.

IMPACT
Starting the workshop, participants reported about their expectations and referred to their personal motivation to attend the specific workshop: the main trigger were feelings of being stuck, insecure and unhappy in their professional life. At the end of the workshop, the "gifts" participants reported taking along had to do with creativity, new ideas, opening up of new horizons, new opportunities, ideas of co-operations, freedom, happiness and feeling at ease with themselves. A follow-up meeting of the group is scheduled to take place in December. In the meantime follow-up conversations were held on an individual basis, in which all participants reported of having started new projects, which were a) driven by their ideas and revived dreams and b) supported by a co-operative group they have formed with other relevant people. The sense of bringing their Professional Identity into "flow" again was the common denominator of their stories.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION
Inclusiveness, respect and appreciation were the main elements while working on this workshop before, during and after the meeting. We have invested several hours of thinking, reading, writing and discussing the design of the workshop and there we had the chance to listen to each other and learn from each other, to exchange views and visions, ideas and experience. Thus, the outcome was the synthesis of the voices of both of us. During the event, the same principles were active, meaning that we were open to the voices heard, respectful to the flow of energy and appreciative to the contribution of all group members.

First of all, it was very important to set up a clear context by giving the time needed to share expectations and motivation, to explain the way we are going to work and to ensure the consensus of the participants.

Since it was a private initiative, it was obvious – and very helpful - that participants were there on their own decision. This means that they were also open and committed to enable a co-creating process, in order to benefit from the procedure.

During the workshop we remained open to closely listening to the route of the energy developed, in order to adjust the flow of the process, i.e. the time, the brakes and/or physical movement.

After the workshop came to an end, the facilitators held a "reflection meeting" starting with the question: "what went well and what can go even better next time". Through this procedure we came to some beautiful ideas regarding the organization of our next workshop, which were then celebrated with excellent food and wine.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

The initial design of the workshop was based on the process of the AI approach the way we have been trained on this, i.e. the 4 d's model (discovery, dreaming, designing and delivering or destiny). What makes this workshop special and us very proud of it, were the two ideas that were generated through our discussions, namely a) the idea of externalizing Professional Identity as an autonomous living system, reflecting on it and getting into a dialogue with it and b) the idea of exploring its polyphonic nature through the retelling of stories in the first person.

Moreover, the idea of using a "mail-box" for the letters written *from* the Professional Identities to the holders, emerged during the process. Thus, participants "posted" the letter by putting it into the box and received their post the next day by discovering a letter addressed to them in that box.

Last but not least, participants developed the conversation on the last part of the workshop (the delivery phase) by sharing experiences about successful projects already accomplished in the past (both, from personal as well as professional life), simply by taking and following a first, "small" action that did not show at first where it would lead. Of course, this creative and generative initiative was more than welcomed by the facilitators.

It is very important to set up a concrete and clear context based on the idea "connect, combine, co-create" by investing the time needed and by including all the voices in the room.

It is also very important to follow small rituals that enable the creation of common ground, i.e. common language and common culture of the system, which results to a kind of connection that reassures sharing, exchanging and the emergence of the knowledge and the experience that is already there, as well as the enrichment and the further development of this knowledge and experience.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

Good and well worked through relationship between the facilitators
The commitment of the participants and the facilitators
The time invested on setting up a clear and concrete context of working together
The value of inclusiveness
The principle of co-creating
The passion to spread the idea of Appreciative Approach by creating small, individual units of people "exposed" to this in practice

REFLECTIONS

We intend to continue the series of the workshops on Professional Identity. It is also in our intention to assemble follow-up meetings, which will every time be enriched by new participants, namely those who in the meantime will have attended the subsequent workshops.

Reflecting on the richness of the themes elaborated before, during and after the specific workshop (as well as the previous one, held in 2010), the dream of the next step is already there: the emergence of a Professionals' network, filled with the AI spirit. Such a network would supply the space for the persons involved to exchange knowledge and experience, so that they can take further their dreams and actions. Imagine the impact on their individual growth and development, as well as the impact on the people they are working with!

STRENGTHS SPOTTING:
A BOARD GAME WITH A TWIST

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CONTEXT: A FLOW FOR A SPECIFIC EVENT AND POSSIBLY PART OF LONGER FLOW

This is a brand new product - a board game – which has a focus on strength-based reflection. We have tested the game with different teams in the educational world; Teachers, psychologists and care-givers. Furthermore, we have knowledge-based support from people and researchers who are enthusiastic about board games used for educational purposes. In the early development of the game, we primarily focused on the educational world, but in the development process we realised that the game could also be used with great success under the most common HR tasks. The game can be used in almost all contexts where one wants to work with a strength-based approach. The game can be used both as an introduction to strength-based approaches or as an evaluation of a shorter or longer course about strength-based change.

The primary purpose of the board game is to increase the player's knowledge of strengths, at a personal, team, and organizational level.

The game can be played with a minimum of 2 players and a maximum of 8 players.

Research from (Seligman and Peterson, 2004) assert that everyone has a personal strength profile, which consists of 5 primary strengths, which Seligman calls "our top strengths". The personal strengths are the cornerstone of our personal authenticity, and perhaps the most important key to building resistance to disease and to creating personal happiness. A strength is a personality trait, or a psychological characteristic that can be seen in many different situations and over a long period of time. Seligman (2004) has presented a list of 24 personal strengths, describing the personal characteristics which produce happiness, satisfaction and wellbeing. This game allows players to discover their strengths and those of others in the game based on Seligman's thesis (summarised briefly below).

- *Personal potential.* The strengths already exists in us in a greater or lesser degree. A strength may be in "sleep mode" but unfold under optimal living conditions. We cannot choose what strengths we want because we are biologically and psychologically predisposed with a personal strength profile.
- *Energizing.* When the individual uses his or her strengths, genuine positive emotions are created such as: pride, satisfaction and happiness and results in a further increase in positive mental energy
- *Authenticity.* When the individual uses his or her personal strengths, others will experience the person as authentic. The person is thus true to himself, his personal positive characteristics, values and preferences.
- *Optimal performance.* Exposure of our strengths increases with the strengths put into play. We are more open to outside world and you learn faster, because the neural networks that represent our strengths-profile gives us a neural edge.

The strength based profiles that are discovered are then used for the purpose of analysis, discussion or for making development or other decisions,

A second purpose of the board game is to improve and focus participants' reflexive for example about workplace performance. In this example of the game use, we can consider the workplace to consist of a lot of individuals who come together to solve many different tasks. The employees' performance is affected by their personal strengths, their beliefs, motivations and perceptions and are coloured by their personal and professional experiences.

However, part of the personal contribution given by employees, rarely sees the "light" because the observer can only infer other people's thoughts and feelings by observing their actions and speech. This game helps to strengthen the personal capacity for observation and reflection of actions and speech such that the inner and invisible aspects of strengths can be revealed and valued. Inspired by Tønnesvang (2009) distinguishes from 4 levels of reflection which refine and vitalize the reflection-process.

During the game the participants must reflect on these four levels:
- What do you know about the strengths?
- What actions are based on the strength?
- What emotions are connected to the strength?
- What are your thoughts about the strength?

More over the purpose is to support the players' meta-reflection (reflection on the colleague's reflection) and by that support the common sense dimension of the workplace and points forward to new opportunities/new ideas.

IMPACT
Here are some of the responses from people who have played the game

"There was great enthusiasm for the game - especially in the our group, so we continue to play here in January. It was fun to see how the element of competition came in and affected the scores at the end of the game, here some tactics also came into the evaluation"

"We were 6 who played the game,and many of us only knew each other slightly, and we walked away with greater knowledge of each other … … and at the same we had a lot of fun "
The game has the potential to set the stage for making and supporting a strengths-based change. By

knowing your own and others' strengths, you are better equipped to engage in change and see new opportunities.

DURATION OF EVENT

The time of the game depends on the pre-agreed limits for the game. Ranging from half an hour to one and a half hour. After the game, you may need to set aside time to follow up on the strength-profiles which are developed as part of the evaluation of the game. This will ensure the greatest impact for the game participants.

RESOURCES USED

The game "Strength spotting" is true to the latest research from positive psychology and knowledge about how positive emotions is needed to vitalize both systems and relational factors.

The game incorporate elements of adult learning theory that are known to result in effective game based learning outcomes. For example creating learning by doing, creating clear goals that move the learner towards goals and offer something to strive for (the strengths). The game involves some level of personal struggle, it is not too easy to accomplish but there is clear causality, and clear player position in the game, thus creating a place from viewing the world and to act from, how to manage resources. The game also helps players to create clarity about their personal abilities, attitudes and strengths and how to use this information to make meaningful decisions concerning, for example their personal development, or their personal, team and organisational interactions.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION OF THE GAME

It is important to create a game that supports the development of the participants' knowledge of their own strengths, the team and the organisation. The game should therefore be set up to support reflection and involvement at all three levels and to consciously lead towards a positive view of human resources. The facilitation is supported by questions in the game that support the reflection and hopefully encourage the player to make the strength based intervention.

The game can help the participants to discover that some of their own strengths may live a 'shadowy existence' and the game can help players' to focus on their unknown potential. "Strength spotting" can help individuals, teams and organisations to flourish.

During the game the participants focus both on their own strengths and those of their colleagues, in is way they come together to identify and reflect on their common wellbeing.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

The game creates learning about strengths on a new refreshing and engaging way, from a traditional didactic powerpoint presentation or whiteboard teaching method. The game approach allows participants to create new dialogues and perspectives on their own and others' strengths and to find new ways to put them into practice in the everyday workplace.

A significant part of the game is the strength-profile, which function both as an evaluation tool for the game and as an overview of the for the person, the team or the organisation. With the strength-profile participants can quickly gain an overview of the strengths they use most, and which is more hidden.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS

The facilitator can select and refine where to place the reflective focus: at the individual, team and/or organisation level. At the same time the players experience the game as fun and one that creates excitement among the players.

The target audience is any professional, leader, or manager, who is interested in developing their personal and professional capacity from a strengths-based values perspective.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTES TO THE SUCCESS OF THE GAME AS A LEARNING TOOL?
One of the board game's greatest advantages is that they support participants' personal reflection on both enjoyable and interesting way. We have made great effort in creating a game that is both amusing, instructive and gives participants the best opportunities to get into the flow. Although you can play for half an hour, participants often choose to continue because they are gripped by the game. The game has been tested - both with groups where the participants knew each other and in groups where participants do not know each other. Both types of groups have described that the game is worked well.

LITTERATUR

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NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES TO ENHANCE APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY SKILLS

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PURPOSE

The workshop was offered by the Centre for Narrative Studies in partnership with Pelerei, Inc. It was designed to assist the participant in learning tools:

1. to listen humanely as well as analytically to the stories of others,
2. to listen to their own stories with less judgement,
3. to connect narrative practice tools and techniques to organizational work, especially, but not exclusively, through the use of Appreciative Inquiry, and
4. to use the Narrative Room techniques.

DURATION OF EVENT

2 days (with prerequisite attendance at Living Stories which is a 1 day course.)
The days were structured as following:

DAY 1

08:30 to 09:00	Registrations
09:00 to 10:30	Honing our listening skills
10:30 to 10:45	Break
10:45 to 12:30	Storying our way here through Living Stories
12:30 to 01:30	Lunch
01:30 to 02:30	Exploring the Story: Stage One
02:30 to 02:45	Break
02:45 to 04:45	Exploring the Story: Stage Two
04:45 to 05:00	Closing

DAY 2

09:00 to 09:30	Story and Constructing Our Reality
09:30 to 10:30	Exploring the Story: Stage Three
10:30 to 10:45	Break
10:45 to 11:30	Exploring the Story: Stage Three (cont.)
11:30 to 12:30	Practicing Narrative Room
12:30 to 1:30	Lunch
01:30 to 02:00	History and Literature on narrative practice
02:00 to 03:15	Integration of Narrative Practice
03:15 to 03:30	Break
03:30 to 04:15	The ethics of narrative work
04:15 to 04:30	Capturing lessons
04:45 to 05:00	Closing and Evaluation

RESOURCES

The resources for this course included:

- Two senior instructors with deep experience and understanding of narrative practice, facilitation, and organizational development. Experience in business was also required.
- A classroom that was designed for flexible arrangements to allow for small group exercises as well as full group participation. The room was also large enough to offer working space for small groups in the 'corners' to do some of the exercises. A second space was also used for some of the exercises do that the individual groups could work without interrupting the others. Out doors space was used as well for the same purpose (this was only used during temperate weather). AV equipment included PC, LCD projector with speakers, four easels, and various markers. An assortment of 'toys' and miscellany were provided for certain exercises.
- Materials for the course included a workbook for each participant.
- A bibliography is always supplied so that participants could continue to deepen their knowledge as they choose. The list is made up of both landmark pieces and current ones.

IMPACT

Participants reported dramatic change in perception of the power of narrative in their lives and work. One participant who works with the military has changed his entire approach to writing up case studies used in learning events by incorporating story elements and using the principles of ethical narrative practice. Another participant reported that while Appreciative Inquiry taught her to ask questions, this course taught her how to listen – and to listen deeply enough to change the way in which she reacts to others. A third example was a PhD candidate who revamped her entire study program as a result of her enhanced understanding of narrative learned in the course. She incorporated social constructionism into her work from the ground up.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

Facilitation was guided by the principles of respect for both the individual participants and their stories. No judgment was placed on either, and behaviour was to exemplify this.
During the sessions, presentation was shared with the understanding that if the other wished to interrupt, it was done with overt permission.
Each participant was checked to assure that all had roughly equal opportunity to speak and contribute. When members were silent, subtle design changes allowed them to have silent periods to prepare their comments for the whole group. These design changes did not interrupt the flow but rather supplemented it. The participants were never to be aware of any change.

After the sessions, the instructors were available to the participants for at least 30 minutes. Instructors remained in the room to assure their availability during this time.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

As noted, slight changes to the activities were introduced as needed to permit different learning styles to proceed without interruption to the whole while accommodating individual needs.

Learning the Narrative Room techniques required the use of one of the student's stories. Permission had to be overt and given freely. This permitted the other participants to see how the concept of respect of the narrative is done.

Applying the techniques to the business process requires that the facilitators (instructors) to be able to draw from the group real business situations on which the class would discuss along with the instructors.

Last, but not least, narrative practice work is deep and sensitive. Instructors must be well-versed in the topic and have extensive experience in its use.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

The **content** of the course was mature and deep. Moreover, the exercises were designed to allow the **adult learner** to contribute to the lesson naturally. The exercises were also designed to accommodate **many learning styles** and changed from one form to another throughout the sessions.

The **instructors** were of highest calibre both in content and group facilitation.

REFLECTIONS

This course has deep impact on the participants. The full outcome from this study is seen over time as well as the immediate changes. As a result, the course must be approached with great care, using only the most qualified instructors. Modelling in the classroom must be exemplary of the principles of the ethics of narrative practice. Participants should be able to see the principles in action even before they study them. Thus, the team that is teaching here must also be a smooth running team.

LIVING STORIES

Living Stories is the hallmark process of the Center for Narrative Studies. Continuously refined since the Center was created in 1995, Living Stories has proven to be an adaptable, powerful technique, engendering understanding and change in a myriad of situations.

Skills

Listening with curiosity rather than criticism
Appreciating what is told
Honoring what is told
Learning to trust what your mind selects

Desired outcomes

Build familiarity that bonds a group quickly
Engender curiosity
Provide the group with an identity (why are these stories OUR stories?)
Get distance from the story

Number of participants

Break-out groups may have three to eight participants; the ideal group has five.

Time Required

Minimum of one hour

The Gathering Process

Introduce Living Stories process and describe the ground rules and the use of the story stick . (Three minute stories, no discussion of the story except to name it, silence is given at the completion of each story, and the person with the story stick holds narrative authority.)

1. The facilitator gives the 'cue' for the story (For example, "Tell a story from your past.")
2. Break into small groups. Each group chooses a timekeeper. The timekeeper gives a hand signal at 30 seconds before time is up to allow the teller to complete the story.
3. Each member has three minutes to tell a story that relates to the cue from the presenter
4. After a moment of silence, the group members suggest titles for the story; "The title I offer for your story is…"
5. The teller selects from those offered or creates another title for the story; each title is recorded on flip chart (easel) sheet
6. After all stories are told, the group selects one story to be told to the full group. The sheet is posted on the wall.

The Exploration Process

7. The room is reconfigured into a performance space. The selected tellers sit at the front of the room and others face them as an audience.

8. Someone from each small group reads the titles from their group and introduces the person whose story was selected.

9. The selected story is retold to the full group, followed by a moment of silence.

10. When all selected stories have been retold, the facilitator opens a discussion in the full group to explore the meaning of the stories told to the group as a whole, the common threads among the selected stories, the unique aspects of each story, and overall, what these stories might mean about the members working together.

Notice that with this design, all voices are heard. Some tell their story to the full group while the others' voices are heard through the reciting of the titles given to each of the stories in the small group as noted in step 8.

Submitted by Madelyn Blair,Phd

[1] The story stick is a tradition of the Native Americans whereby the person who is holding the stick is the one who speaks. All others listen until the person hands the stick to another.

[1] If the group is very large and there are more than 6 stories that need to be told, a second round is done where the selected stories of two groups are told to the two groups, assembled into a single larger group. The larger group then selects one of the stories to be told to the full group. (Thus, when working with a very large group, it is important to select the size of the original groups so that the number of groups is even.)

RECONNECT WITH PERSONAL VALUES AND POWER IN THE ROLE OF A TEACHER

IOANNA KLEISARI
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CONTEXT & PROCESS

I consider teachers and their role very important for our society's future. In Greece teachers often have to deal with a lot of frustration out of the many problems in public school system. I felt moved to support some of them that I personally knew, as a small start, and invited them to participate in a one-day workshop where they would work with some new ways and gain new inspiration and courage for their role.

I believe there is also a possibility of longer flow, taking this small training group as a prototypein bringing more people from the school communities (teachers, parents, students, managers), using Appreciative Inquiry and other strength-based methods in the future.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the workshop was:
- to create a context of safety and inspiration where participants could reconnect with their personal values around the role of a teacher;
- to allow participants reconnect with their powers as teachers and what they can do "right here, right now";
- to help educators overcome frustration and realize which changes they want to create through their own position as teachers; and
- to help participants discover new vision, create energy around the new vision, and develop the steps to follow it through.

DURATION OF EVENT

One-day workshop, 10.00am – 18.00pm.

Additionally, prior the workshop, a two-hour preparation meeting with participants took place, allowing for a discussion about the ways we will work in the workshop, principles, and questions. Furthermore, a follow up meeting is scheduled to take place 4 months after the workshop.

RESOURCES

I have built on my personal commitment and a strong wish to spread the Appreciative Approach in our society using a number of approaches, including: Systemic Theory, Positive/ Affirmative questioning, Narrative approach, The importance of positive language and positive stories, Principles of Appreciative Inquiry, The 4 D model, using a number of relative books and articles, including the AI Practitioner and other websites on Appreciative Inquiry.

IMPACT

Participants arrived carrying a lot of anger, tiredness, discouragement and sense of helplessness. As

they worked with the questions about the 'best part' of their role, their best teaching experience, and their wishes, they reconnected with their motivation, experience, success, dreams and, more importantly, their power. Through the Discover – Dream – Design – Deliver (The Appreciative Inquiry 4D model) the participants' energy and spirit changed completely and new meaning emerged.

By reconnecting with their own past success stories, during the ability spotting in the *Discovery* phase, teachers experienced a precious bath into their re-sources and personal value. Through *Dreaming* about the best school, they broke frustration limitations, found new meaning and a greater vision and a deeper, solid understanding of what they want to create. By writing down in *Design* and *Deliver* phase how they, from their own role as teachers, helped to actualize the dream of the best school, how, when, where, with whom, they opened up possibilities, solutions and actions in ways and levels they could not think before.

At the end of the day problems started to sound like possibilities for co-creating change and new meaning. The participants' solutions included inviting, involving and activating a wider web of society groups, for the school benefit. They had moved from frustration to innovation.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION
Systemic Appreciative Principles

- Principle of respect to each one's space and differences (creating a context for communication with trust)
- Heliotropic principle (Appreciative Approach)
- Systemic Approach (everything is in connection with everything, focus on relationships and relations)
- Principle of the uniqueness of every system (focusing on the process)
- Principle of respect for the knowledge that is already there (co-creation, interactive process)
- Principle of bringing up the new (creativity/new learning)

The specific workshop was built to emphasize the importance of participants' own powers, in the context of *right here, right now*. It is most important to always remember and keep alive that *everybody* can create change in our organization and society, from *our* role, from *who we already are*, and from small actions that we all can *create, keep and make grow*.

Working with Appreciative Inquiry and Strength Based Change strengthens the power of 'right here, right now', as it builds on who you already are *today*. People regain their dignity and personal value. When abilities are recognized and witnessed and re-discovered, they can do miracles with them as a fuel.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS
At the beginning of the workshop, the word 'frustrated' kept coming on in language, dropping the energy and showing no way out. I remembered that Peter Lang had told us in a workshop 'If the word ... did not exist in language, in which other word would you say this?' so I asked them the same question, using a flipchart and writing down the answers: "If the word 'frustrated' did not exist in language, with which other word would you choose to describe how the school problems make you feel?"

Within a few minutes, after saying words like 'troubled', 'hopeless' etc, and as I kept on asking for more words, the participants started using words like 'committed', 'motivated', 'determined', 'persistent', 'stronger', 'dreamer'. It was a very strong break-through moment and huge shift in the energy

and the possibilities. Frustration became a vehicle for motivation. They were already connecting with their dreams behind the frustration.

Another very helpful part of the process was during the Design and Deliver phase of the 4 D model, that we put papers over a whole wall and put the different year dates on the paper (up to 2015). Participants were asked to start 'actualizing the dream' of the best school they had created in the Dream phase before, by writing down on the paper what happened in each year and period. Having the months and years in front of them all the time on the wall, actions and success became more specific and time-framed towards the dream. In this way they could also become clearer in what they did when, how and with whom, and which part was their own action and which actions included others.

Although we usually use this way when people come from the same organization, and these teachers were not all working in the same school, the fact that everyone had the freedom to write down everything they wanted, gave them more inspiration. They were being motivated and influenced from each other's input. In this co-influence and co-creation they opened up personal boundaries and came up with more ideas.

At the end of this phase we returned to the present moment and everyone had to come up with some specific actions that they wanted to start doing, right on the next week.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS OF THE PROCESS

Before the workshop:
- Context markers for human communication. Definition of relationship, goal, time/duration, place, rules and principles about the training in the meeting we had before the training.
- The participants' commitment and will to try something new.
- The agreement that all information shared in the discussions about the different organizations (schools) was confidential.
- Naming the workshop «Right here, right now». This set the focus on the power of the present moment and the resources they already have.

During the workshop:
- Working in pairs and in the group of 4. Group exercises.
- Personal narratives – story telling.
- Giving the space for negative feelings and agony to be expressed, but investigating the knowledge and experience that is already there and what is already working in the system.
- Focusing on the life giving forces for each participant.
- Changing the language. Positive affirmations of experiences/dreams/wishes. Words create worlds. The language we use creates our reality/ our fate.
- Working with what is already working. *What we focus on grows.*
- Changing the focus of what is not working to what I can *personally do differently* and *today.*
- Focusing and connecting with the *power of the present moment*.
- Aikido exercise: the Centering Breath.
- Focusing on the importance of small actions of hope and change, and implementing rituals to keep them alive.
- Investigating the dream behind the frustration.
- Creating some timelines for specific actions.
- At the end of the day everyone left with at least one concrete action that they could start doing right on the next day.
- Setting a date for a follow up meeting 4 months later.

After the workshop:
- Emailing the participants the flipchart notes of their elaborating the questions, their group drawing and their collective thoughts at the end of the day.
- Sending them articles and websites for further reading on Appreciative Approach.

REFLECTIONS

This training day was very important for me personally as a Systemic Appreciative trainer to realize again the possibilities and the power of working *with what I have today*. All I had was a small group of very committed people. And my personal commitment to spread the AI ideas in every way I can. No contract, no big group, no organization involved, no fee. But out of this small group came a tremendous co-creation of new meaning, courage and new actions of hope, both for the participants and me as a trainer.

At the end of the day I had also moved from frustration (situation in my country and also not working much this period) to innovation: spreading the AI ideas and spirit through every possible context, small scale, informal and volunteer contexts. It was a big meaning shift and courage for me to understand that there are things we can do *all the time*, without waiting for better circumstances or opportunities.

In Greece right now, all we have is *today*. My hope is to focus on what each and every one of us can do for our communities, from where we are today, who we already are today. This is why I created this volunteer workshop and this is why it became new hope in action for me.

FLOW DIAGRAM PROCESS
«RIGHT HERE, RIGHT NOW»

One-day workshop for teachers - 10.00am – 18.00pm

- *Welcoming, Introduction*

- *Getting to know each other.*
  (in pairs) Introduce yourself and share 3 things that you want the other person to learn in particular about you. For each pair, every person introduces/tells the story of the other person to the others in the group.

- *In open group:*
  What was your personal motivation to participate in this day?
  What are your wishes/expectations about this workshop?

- *Short presentation of some Systemic theory and Systemic Appreciative Approach principles*

- *Questioning: Conversations* (in pairs)
  What is the best part of being a teacher? Sharing in the group.
  What is your best experience about teaching? Sharing in the group.

- *Writing down: Values - Life giving forces - Motivation forces - Success factors*
  Conversation about how we live our talk, and we are the stories that we tell.
  The language we use creates our reality. Language is action.
  How can this be applied to your communication with your students?

- *Moving to the future:*
  What 3 wishes do you have for yourself in your work?
  What 3 wishes would you have for your school to fulfill its dream? Sharing

4 D Model

Discover
Interview in pairs.
Share a story from your teaching experience where you had to deal with a problem in the school and you are very proud of the way you handled this situation.

Ability spotting.
Sharing the skills and abilities in the group - Writing down on flipchart – clustering into categories.
Writing two statements/proclamations about this group using the abilities and strengths from the interviews.

Dream (in pairs)
It is now May of 2015. You exit the school gate, after having a wonderful day at the school, which is working in the best way. Describe your day in detail.
Back to group of 4, sharing the dreams.
Group drawing: the best working school. Presentation of group drawing.

Design   (Co-constructing)
Deliver   (Empowering - Sustaining)

What made it possible for you to do this? What is about this school that made this possible?
Writing ideas, designs, actions, events, that bring more fulfillment to the dream. Papers over a whole wall with all years marked on them. Teachers writing down what happened in each year and period, when, how, with whom, starting from the time after the workshop. Focusing on what each one did from their own position as teachers.

Closing
Thoughts and reflections at the end of the day. Saying goodbye with sharing a highlight of the day that each one takes with them as they leave.

'LOOKING AFTER ME, LOOKING AFTER YOU'

THE VALUE OF MINDFULNESS CHAMPIONS TO HELP PEOPLE GAIN WELLBEING, SELF BELIEF AND SELF CONFIDENCE

RUTH PASSMAN
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CONTEXT

A ground-breaking Mindfulness and mentoring project is our success story. A huge amount of positive energy has been dedicated to exploring the value of Mindfulness and the prospects for its future use in helping people to regain wellbeing, self-belief and self-confidence in their journey to recovery and employment. A range of remarkable contributions from many individuals were pivotal to the outstanding success of the entire project, including an eight-week groupwork programme, held at the Manchester Buddhist Centre, a superb 'Next Steps to Work Day', and the Mindfulness Pilot Celebration Day in April of this year held at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester .

The participants have found funding for the foundational phase of training to develop themselves as teachers in Mindfulness. The aim of this is to support peers in the Recovery and carer communities and they have applied for funding for the final teacher training phase. The *'experts by experience'* approach has enabled people in the recovery movement and those with other long-term health conditions to improve their quality of life and community participation.

PURPOSE

The ultimate goal the programme is working toward, is to develop a healthy, thriving and resilient population supported by mindfulness-champions, in a range of settings. The idea is to co-produce community health and wellbeing from the asset base of local people and places from the perspective of Mindfulness. The particular focus is upon mindfulness, however mindfulness-champions themselves have developed other areas of strength and are approaching the promotion of wellbeing through a range of perspectives.

Workplace support for mental and emotional wellbeing and online mindfulness training to reduce anxiety for staff facing employment uncertainty and redundancy is being provided by the community champions in partnership with a local mental health trust. A psychology lead person is developing a programme to address a number of issues for example: how to make psychology a part of everyone's care, building capacity for all health and social care contacts to be informed by psychological thinking, value based training in collaborative, personalised and dignified care in all staff-to-staff and staff-to-patient contact, drawing up**on** the illustrative principle of psychological care: 'Looking after me, Looking after You'. All of this is designed to ensure the sustainability of this project, and the further development of trainers (both numbers and competences)

IMPACT

The recent pilot project demonstrated the benefits of Mindfulness training provided by a third sector provider (Breathworks) who offer training for vulnerable individuals facing a broad range of life challenges. Carers of people with age-related health conditions, autism spectrum learning disabilities, mental health disorders and active drug addictions, participants from the recovery movement,

as well as an asylum seeker attended a Mindfulness training course provided by the Manchester third sector organization (Breathworks). The project evaluation indicated improvements in self-esteem and personal confidence. Further information on the evaluation methods used is available on the learningeurope.eu website. The 'experts by experience' approach has enabled people in the recovery movement as well as those with long-term conditions to improve their quality of life and community participation. It has also enabled people who had many years of addiction and worklessness to offer their strengths and experience to others, for example:

- as University community researchers to co-produce long term condition interventions and prison suicide prevention strategies.
- as Dignity Champions and are volunteering with projects supporting older people living with dementia to participate in creative and stimulating activities
- as Mindful Champions introducing Mindfulness taster sessions to community settings and to healthcare staff in the acute sector.
- as Digital Champions to ensure that those at risk of exclusion from the digital learning experience have an opportunity to see a peer who has been on the same life course journey (prison inmate, drug dealer, etc) succeeding in strength based personal and organisational transformational change.

DURATION OF EVENT

Although this work has extended over several months with many different activities and strands to it, the work can be demonstrated and delivered through short activities as occurred at the Grundtvig conference in Manchester during November 2011, the benefits of the programme were shown using short workshop sessions on the floating learning space venue. An example description of the activity follows:

Experts by Experience: Mindfulness teaching in the recovery movement

Community champions found ways to voice their powerful strength-based recovery stories. They invited the conference participants to meet them and hear their testimonies and experience their "floating learning space" on the narrow boat was moored adjacent to the conference venue. The event gave an opportunity to the local champions of strength-based mutual support and advocacy to those who work in prisons (where they were previously inmates); and with people in recovery from addiction. The local champions offered inspiration to others to have hope, that they too can start their own journeys of asset based personal and community development.

RESOURCES

To develop this project a number of resources were necessary, they included: in-kind support to the steering group in relation to clinical governance and clinical management issues. In addition, civil servant and health colleagues provided coaching resource so that a cadre of community leaders were supported to develop their strengths and to gain employment as mindfulness-champions in a range of settings. This helped to facilitate the co-production of community health and wellbeing from the asset base of local people and places.

Further information and resources from learningeurope.com

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

Let the participants tell their stories and support them to identify the elements of their stories which will inspire support from organisations and funders in order that they can pass on their help and support to others as they progress through their transformational journeys.
After the event, support the champions to voice their stories within the digital resource for example

through the Grundvig DLE programme and highlighting particular strengths of their conference participation and indicating what work they need to do with adult learning tutors to further progress their work in this field, for example from the Workers Educational Association. Stories can be honed and captured in a book and via other methods including the DLE and film.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

A specific contribution to success therefore was the appreciative mentors and buddies helping the participants to find their inner strengths and talents and develop as teachers to create longer term sustainability.

A special consideration is to create a process which reflects the learning desired. The mindfulness pilot was supported by a professional team. A number of participants commented, unprompted, on the empathy of the mentors and the support team members and the respect and equity maintained between professionals and course participants was a factor in the success of the project.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS

Peer led, co-created innovative learning
Co-produced learning pilots
Transformational community learning resources
Relational based as opposed to simply knowledge based learning experiences

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS?

The use of 'Trusted brokers' from the third sector to identify and support clients to join the mindfulness pilot.

Senior civil servants and health managers have provided voluntary mentoring and support and have personally gained and learned from being involved in the coaching relationships.

REFLECTIONS

The learning environment needs to inspire or support a thirst for learning – cultural settings in general and the wellbeing boat in particular offered a powerful and positive space to voice and experience transformational learning. This floating learning space was found to be free from associations with other learning environments in which adult learners may have previously 'experienced failure'.

Mindfulness Flow Diagram

CV writing support,   work and volunteer placement opportunities
opportunities to voice strength based stories

appreciative coaching support   empathy   equity

Developing mindfulness champions

positive learning environments   sustainable employment

Art, health and creativity   recording journeys to inspire others   Mindfulness

REALISING YOUR POTENTIAL;

USING SOLUTION FOCUSED PRINCIPLES IN A WORKSHOP DURING A PROBATION PROJECT

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CONTEXT
A Probation service project for education and practical support into employment for ex-offenders, *offenders on Education and Training (ETE) programme*s or community order*s*

PURPOSE
To awaken realisation of latent skills and personal characteristics and illustrate how these can be useful in work place. Promoted as '*Realising* your potential' *the workshop has a* motivational aspect *and aims to demonstrate how these* processes can be used by participants on an on-going basis.

IMPACT
The impact of the training is evaluated by participants reaction and comments on the day, some written and verbal feedback at their next session with support worker, *and* evidence of further work in workbook and job success!!

DURATION OF EVENT
A half day workshop as part of longer programme. The nature of the clients' situations means they drop in and out of the weekly *workshops organised within the probation service.*

RESOURCES
Facilitation skills, spaghetti and marshmallows (soft sweets), sticky labels and observation skills

Further information and resources available from www.learningeurope.eu.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION
Invite participants to do something a little different. Just have a go - no right or wrong approach. *The challenge is to build the tallest tower using spaghetti and marshmallow*s. No facilitator comment *during the activity. Participants* can work alone, in pairs, small groups or just watch.

The observers,(i.e. *the* facilitator and usually 2 support workers) then observe, noting *in positive language* on sticky labels, individual strengths, behaviours, skills etc..

After some laughter and mess and fun, the *competition is declared closed* and some photos *are taken* with the group's permission.

Each person *is then asked* for *his/her* reflections on what they did, how they contributed, what worked well for them, *how they felt etc.* with affirmations as they progress.

Others in the group *are invited* to add their comments, again in a positive manner. *A*ny potential 'negativity' *is turned* into helpful behaviour in some circumstance or other.

Then the observers *give their feedback relating to each participant's skills and approaches to the challenge which would be positive* in a variety of situations. The observers *give the* participants *their* stickers with the strengths written on them for sticking in their work book (s*impler for those* with newly acquired literacy skills)

After the whole group has completed the round, *the facilitator,* noticing the positive energy and 'feel good factor' in the group, *lists* some of these attributes and explains how they might be useful in the workplace. For example, someone who keeps going when things go wrong *demonstrates a commitment to the task in hand.* Someone who listens to others' ideas or comes up with different ideas *is able to make a constructive contribution in a team situation*. Even non-participants who watch the process and prefer to see how others do things before jumping in too quickly, *can be invaluable independent observers.*

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS
By allowing freedom of expression and movement, no one *is* forced to join in but *most* do so in their own time. *Facilitators* sit back and *observe as* silently *as* wallpaper.

Sensitivity in balancing positive contributions from everyone, especially as some of the group may feel vulnerable or exposed, *is of paramount importance.*

Lots of positive praise *amongst* participants *is* reinforced *by the facilitator who explains* how *each observed attribute is useful in the work place. Thus* participants can validate their contribution *for* themselves.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS
The principles of the exercise, with different materials and levels of observation, could be replaced by more peer reflection in writing before being verbalised. On this occasion it was then linked to how the behaviours could be useful in the working environment. However a facilitator could link the strengths and positive behaviours to any relevant situation e.g. a managerial role.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS?
The personal, observable *and positive* feedback *resulted in* participants *believing* in themselves. The immediacy, intimacy *and positive nature* of the feedback, particularly from colleagues, was most powerful. *Also, the session provided an* opportunity for skilled observers, *who work with the participants on a regular basis*, to build on and link *their skills and personal attributes* to future prospects.

REFLECTIONS
Recognition of personal positive behaviours is very motivating for those who feel they have 'lost their way' or have huge hurdles to overcome. Seeing in a fresh light how they can potentially make contributions to the workplace *using* their strengths is an excellent platform from which to move forward with other future building approaches.

COACHING

FIREWORKS :
THE "COLOURING COMPETENCIES"
PROJECT - IN SEARCH OF PASSION

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TYPE OF PROCESS
The case study elaborates the job coaching process between the counsellor and client and illustrates the key elements of the appreciative inquiry approach to coaching and what this achieves for the client and for the counsellor.

CONTEXT
Fire works is developed by Stebo (Genk –Belgium), an organisation that supports the socio-economic development of neighbourhoods and regions and Evenwicht (a consultancy organization working on work-life balance.

Long-term work is an important part of the process of emancipation and activation of long term job seekers. For a large group of people, long-term work is simply not in the cards. Those who, for whatever reason, didn't complete their education, or had to climb a mountain of social problems, usually don't have a lot of choice in the job market. In times of growth, they join the labour market, but when the economy is doing less well, they are the first to fall away.

When there is no work available for them, they learn to live with limited financial resources and often in social isolation. Without the 'obligations' that provide structure to the day, with little money and social contacts, people start living from day to day. Because the future is uncertain, they concentrate on the short term. It happens frequently that people grow comfortable in that situation and take comfort in their short-term certainties. It takes more than just several tens of euros more in income to get them to go back to work. People who have been without work for a long time have to rediscover what it is that gives them the energy to more forward: discovering talents, passions, and enthusiasm, and then realising that it is possible to develop an attractive future.

The question that comes up immediately is: how can we discover passion? Can passion be measured? Can we study it, measure it, and map it? Or will we have to think of something else? Does

passion provide just the energy that people need to retake control of their futures? What do we have to do to increase their self-driving capability?

In our search for a suitable methodology, we discovered Appreciative Inquiry. The decision to go searching for the sources of energy, the concrete and narrative and playful way of thinking about the future, was attractive to the project team. We decided to learn more about AI and gradually developed a coaching methodology and tools for working with the disadvantaged on developing an energetic picture of the future, based on personal passion.

PURPOSE

FIREworks is a coaching style which uses the four phases of Appreciative Inquiry: phase 1 Discovery, Phase 2 Dream, Phase 3 Design of the future, and Phase 4 Destiny. FIREworks focusses on bringing out the best in people - their talent and is designed to reveal the client's passions; FIREworks aims to develop a motivational future and to help job seekers to realise their dreams. FIREworks is a way of helping the clients to look at their current reality and focus on what is possible to achieve. FIREworks also achieved a shift in the counsellor's perspective - from one concerned with people without jobs and skills - to one that emphasises people's potential, their dreams and talents. The counsellor works with the client to identify their strengths, to develop their competencies and to help to make their dreams come true. In this way, FIREworks also offers a methodological framework for job counsellors to follow and was found to offer an approach to career counselling that the counsellors also derived inspiration from.

IMPACT

STORIES CREATE COHESION

People like to tell stories and learn more about themselves in the telling. When someone is telling a story, they make connections between the events, the environment, and their personal experience. A story is never just about competencies. The storyteller is often talking about the broad context: the surroundings that he prefers to be in, the way people treat him, the things he likes to do, what motivates him. A lively story also creates a lively 'wide-angle picture' for the counsellor, too. A story provides more insight into everything that relates to everything else and influences each other. Exchanging stories is inspiring and, above anything else, pleasant. The relationship between the job-seeker and his counsellor deepens. It invites counsellors to free themselves from rigidly following interview techniques that they've learned well and to have a relaxed relationship with the job-seeker.

Fatima was given the chance to get experience as a receptionist at Stebo for a year. At the end of the work experience, her counsellor asked her about the direction she wanted to apply for jobs in. Almost automatically, Fatima thought about the social services, about helping people. It was quite natural... she had been watching her colleagues do that for a year by then. When she was invited to tell a story about a strong memory, however, her talent and motivation turned out to welcoming customers, fashion and jewellery. Her future plan looks quite different now, because telling stories brought insight into what was really important for her.

FOCUSSING ON THE POSITIVE

Whatever gets your attention will start to live. Positive images stimulate. It seems simple. And it is. Dealing with that in a conscious way requires a bit more effort and attention, however. Counselling means helping to focus the attention and by doing so, helping to focus people's energy. We let go of the idea that our primary task as professionals is to solve problems (unless it's urgent to do so, of course!). We teach people to cast an appreciative glance on the reality around them and look for the possibilities together. We name the strength that people bring to bear to keep going even in difficult circumstances. We can still solve problems, but now as part of the possibilities that we are helping to turn into reality.

"One of my clients couldn't set any goals for herself. She just didn't know what she wanted. Thanks to FIREworks, all that changed. She discovered what it was that gave her energy. She became aware of her talent. After that, it became possible to develop a positive plan for the future. She went looking for work actively and found it," a counsellor says.

BUILDING AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Telling stories about strong moments from the past and dreaming about the future is a lively and pleasant activity. The atmosphere is informal and constructive. The relationship between the counsellor and the client is equal and reciprocal. That is only possible if the counsellor can present herself as she really is. The best way to invite people to show their true selves is for the counsellor to do that, too. Being authentic means daring to be personal, sincerely involved, and, of course, ethical: do what you say you're going to do. Authentic counsellors act from a position of spontaneity that makes contacts smooth and human.

A counsellor said it with just a few words: "Talking about passion is good for the relationship with the client."

ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY

The appreciative voyage of discovery may begin on the familiar path of strong memories, but leads to new paths in the future. Leaving the beaten path requires creativity: seeing new possibilities, making new combinations, suspending judgement.

The dream phase is the ideal creative phase. The biggest challenge for the person is thinking freely, suspending the inner judgement, putting the 'yes, buts' on hold for a while. That's a difficult assignment, because the brain is accustomed to judging and selecting immediately. It requires a conscious effort on the part of the counsellor and the job-seeker.

In the Dream phase 3, the focus is on helping the client to develop a realistic plan for the future, and, here, too, creative skills are useful. Designing a plan for the future starts with combining the different components of passion and using those combinations to think of possible activities that incorporate all of those elements.

Those creative skills are extremely important for people today to be able to participate in this complex and constantly changing society. Counsellors who are aware of that will teach those creative skills and offer chances for practice throughout the Fireworks process.

During the dreaming phase, a job-seeker came to the conclusion that three things were very important for her future: she wants to help people, being creative, and she needs a lot of movement in order to feel good. Along with her counsellor, she thought of 20 professions containing those essential elements. The variation between them was great, ranging from sports monitor to setting up a flower shop. She didn't simply latch on to the first idea, but kept a variety of options open for the future. Based on her competencies, her current situation, financial resources, etc., she decided where to concentrate her energy. If that doesn't succeed, she still has a lot of options in reserve!

CREATIVE REFRAMING

A counsellor's creative abilities are often challenged in a lot of different ways: to deal with all of the problems, objections and obstacles that clients throw up, openly and constructively. "There's something good about everything bad," is one appropriate proverb. The art of counselling is to turn the problem around in such a way that the possibilities that are hiding within it become visible. 'Yes, but' can usually be translated creatively into 'how can we make sure that?". The counsellor who teaches

her client to look at the same thing from a different perspective has done her a big favour. It's not about wanting to be naively positive. It's about recognising the energy and the strength in people and using it positively. Even when dealing with problems, and especially how people deal with them, positive power can be named and used.

"Employers don't want to hire Moroccans because they're all racists," Abdullah said, refusing to continue looking for work. "How many percent of the Moroccan young people are unemployed in this neighbourhood?" the counsellor asked "At least 30%," Abdullah said emphatically. The counsellor raised his eyebrows and asked "and where do the other 70% work then?"

DURATION OF EVENT
One can use the method for an individual coaching process. It can take several sessions of f.e. one hour. For group sessions (8 -10 participants), it takes usually about 6 sessions of 4 hours during 3 weeks.

RESOURCES
No specific resources needed.
There is a handbook and a 2-day training available to help and guide the counsellor to go through the process. A methodology offers a concrete, sometimes detailed structure for a counsellor's actions. That applies to FIREworks, too: clearly structured phases, each with its own objectives, with clear steps within each phase, example basic questions and supplementary questions and, finally, planning aids. A methodology is a well-conceived aid, and that's all it is. The more important aspect is under-standing the intentions that lie behind the methodology. Counsellors who get the chance to connect with that find themselves able to act authentically and enthusiastically.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES
The author has produced a more detailed account of the stages involved in the coaching process. The English version of an overview by these steps is downloadable at www.talent-bezieling.be.There is also a step by step facilitator's guide available in Dutch at the present time. This is available from learningeurope.eu

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION
Available in the handbook (in Dutch). Process flow is given below.

Special considerations and unique solutions in the process

"A lot of people spend their whole lives fishing", Norman Peale said, "without knowing that they're really not looking for fish."

Appreciative Inquiry is an outstanding way for reeling in what someone really wants in his life, so that a future plan can match personal ambition. Once someone becomes aware of their ambition, they can focus on the future. By doing that, people from disadvantaged groups can also rediscover the motivation of creating their future themselves.

Aspects of the case that can be applied to other situations

The fire goes out...

Every great and commanding movement in the annals of the world is a triumph of enthusiasm.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Passion is a strong theme for employees in organisations. Not only did the process (job) counsellors recognise that it would be a good approach in working for the emancipation of the disadvantaged. People also felt the passion in themselves being aroused.

All of the personnel were invited to become familiar with FIREworks on the basis of their own experience. They thought about their own passion, learned to verbalise it and created a picture about a future in which their personal motivators could shine through (even more).

It was very inspiring to share personal passions with colleagues. It brought out the talents, values and sources of joy that support the colleagues in their lives and work.

In the course of the exchanges, we collectively built up a new field of expertise about the often concealed richness within our organisation. That knowledge continues to be felt in the organisation even though the training sessions have been concluded. Colleagues remember one another's dreams, and give each other tips, information, and networking contacts. Some of the personal dreams of our employs are good ideas for future projects in our organisation.

Talking about passion is feeding the passion at the same time. If someone shares something about his own passions, he encourages his colleagues to think about the same things for themselves. Those who learn to recognise their own passions and to express them, become enthusiastic and motivated. And motivated people exude infectious energy.

Experience a collective passion increases the strength of an organisation. The organisation becomes, as it were, the vehicle that the personnel can use to live from the position of their personal passion.

Working at Stebo means making a life goal reality, living from talent, values, and joy. That awareness does something to people. Together they carry the organisation, and present it to the world.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS OF THE CASE?

FIREworks aims to teach an extremely important skill through doing: choosing positive images, appreciating what is, looking for what gives energy, learning to look at difficulties from another perspective. Throughout the whole process, clients practice on focusing attention. They learn to turn objections into challenges, to see the strength in problems.

Through FIREworks, people create new perspectives in their lives themselves. That is a crucial step for a great many people who had thought that they were not allowed, or able, to make fundamental changes in their lives.

OTHER REFLECTIONS

Of course, we don't deny that we will encounter difficulties on the way, but with a motivating dream driving us on, problems and conditions take on a different dimension. They become bumps in the road rather than thorny bushes that it's almost impossible to get through.

And, no...of course, we can't, not even with FIREworks, guarantee that people actually achieve their dreams. That requires effort, and support, and, yes, a bit of luck here and there, now and again.

But we do know that a motivating and achievable picture of the future acts as a renewed source of energy.

We want to give people their dreams back, and to make them stronger so that they can stop others from denying it or taking it away from them.

APPRECIATIVE COACHING FOR YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY

JUAN RATTO-NIELSEN
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CONTEXT

Training Course "Spice Up Your Potential!" Training in coaching and mentoring - Rural Youth Europe, Council of Europe - European Youth Centre, Strasbourg, France - March, 27 – April 3, 2011 - Trainer - External Expert in Job Coaching - (designed five-step Appreciative Job Coaching workshop for the event)

PURPOSE

Appreciative Coaching for Youth Employability
Workshop on Personal and Professional Development for Youth Workers.

This workshop was an experiential application of Appreciative Inquiry techniques to coaching for employability and was targeted specifically to youth workers who had a desire to work on their personal and professional careers and deepen their coaching practice by incorporating AI principles.

Aims:
- To support youth workers' professional and personal development
- To provide them with useful tools and methods for job coaching

Objectives:
- To identify group and individual needs, expectations and objectives in youth work both for youth workers and youngsters.
- To discover and reflect about what youth workers do in their jobs and how it effects their personal and professional development.
- To envision attainable scenarios for the development of professional goals in a positive way.
- To construct a plan for success based on individual career goals based on current and potential skills.
- To implement the different outcomes developed throughout the previous steps and close the building process.

IMPACT

The methodology was based on Appreciative Inquiry. The idea of building on strength, rather than just focusing on faults and weaknesses is a powerful idea to use in coaching dynamics.

It also served the dual purpose of supporting the learning process by providing a method and framework to the workshop and giving youth workers a very popular and useful tool they can also use when doing coaching. The ultimate goal was to capitalise on the different competences they identified and developed in order to design a professional career path in accordance with their present assets and potential skills and goals. The other outcome was to apply the tools and methods they had experimented with for job coaching back in their organisations.

DURATION OF EVENT
1 ½ days

RESOURCES
Material: flipchart sheets, assorted A4 colour sheets (20 sheets), A4 white paper, assorted colour markers, crayons, glue bars, pens magazines to clip, scissors, paper tape, data projector, screen, computer and speakers
Hand-outs:
- Concepts cards for mandala (1 set), one-page personal profile template (1 per PAX)
- 5 types of CVs. Templates (1 set per PAX)
- Discover questionnaires for "what do you do exactly?" activity.
- Samples of job application letters (1 set per pax)
- Information on job interviews (1 set per pax)
- E-book: "You will hear from us…" What you should know when applying for a job in another EEA country - EURES - European Commission
- Feedback checklist (1 per Pax)

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION
The workshop follows a five-step sequence:
1. Pre-assessment - Different strokes for different folks: Identify individual needs, expectations and objectives in this learning strand.
2. Discover - What do you do exactly? : Participants work in small groups to find out what the other participants and themselves do in their organisations and how it is related to their personal and professional development.
3. Dream - Imagine… This part is about what will work well in the future.
4. Design - Paving the way to success: They identify their career goals and construct a plan for success.
5. Deliver - Let's do it! The last phase of an "appreciative inquiry" process where participants implement what they have developed.

PART 1
a. Title & duration of session:

PRE-ASSESSMENT - DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS
90 minutes

b. Aims
- To identify group and individual needs, expectations and objectives in job coaching both for coaches and coachees.

c. Description

1. Mandala design as a concept map - group work - 20 min.
   - Firstly, participants are asked to reflect on what a job coach is and relate it to their personal experience in job searching or coaching other people.
   - The trainer explains the concept of mandala and shows a few samples of mandalas.
   - Participants are asked to draw a group mandala that will serve as a mind map.
   - Guiding concept cards are provided focusing on positive aspects, such as responsiveness, enthusiasm, humour, tolerance, etc.
   - There are two blank cards that the participants are supposed to fill in with their concepts.
   - Participants are told to represent those concepts on the mandala and depict their interactions.
   - Participants are encouraged to discuss the concepts and to focus on their individual objectives as potential coaches/coachees.
   - At the end they present the mandala and explain it - 5 min.

2. One-Page Personal Profile design - individual work - 30 min.
   - Templates of a "one-page personal profile are distributed to the participants.
   - They are asked to work in couples and interview each other to create a "one-page personal profile" for each of them (as first-step for their CVs) that provides information about their motivations, strong points and professional objectives.

3. Input - intro to CV writing - 35 min.
   - The trainer introduces Europass and 5 types of CVs - functional, chronological, combined, targeted and creative with a short Power point presentation (10 min.)
   - Templates of the different types of CVS are distributed
   - Participants use their OPPP to prepare a first draft of their CVs.

4. Journal time - Individual reflection time - 5 min.
   - Participants have 5 min to write down thoughts, ideas and reflections after each session.

PART 2
a. Title & duration of session
Discover - What do you do exactly?
90 minutes

b. Aims
   - To discover and reflect about what participants do in their jobs and how it effects their personal and professional development.

c. Description

1. What do you do exactly? - Grids - Group work - 35 min.
   • The trainer presents the activity and shows a template grid with column headers including job in mother tongue, job in English, function, tasks that the participants have to fill out, favourite tasks, why... (hand-out with set of sample questions).
   • Participants are divided in groups of threes or fours and are told to make an enquiry to find out what the other participants do in their organisations and how it is related to their personal and professional development.
   • They are encouraged to use the previous OPPP as an aid.

2. Grid Presentation - Individual work - 5 min per group - 25 min.
   • Participants present their group grids.
   • They have to present one another according to the information on the grid and the info they have shared.
   • Time for questions from the other groups is allocated at the end of each presentation.

3. Debriefing and input part - Feedback on presentation and public speaking skills - 20 min.
   • The trainer gives feedback on the presentation skills focusing on verbal and non-verbal communication.
   • Participants are asked to give their feedback, as well.

4. Journal time - Individual reflection time - 10 min.
   • Participants have time to write down thoughts, ideas and reflections after each session.

PART 3
a. Title & duration of session
Dream - Imagine...
90 minutes

b. Aims
   • To envision attainable scenarios for the development of professional goals in a positive way.

c. Description

1. Simulation Activity - Group work - 35 min.
   • Participants sit on the floor and are told that they will have a storytelling session.
   • The trainer explains that once upon a time there was a noble that needed to fill a number of posts in her/his castle and that they have to apply for those jobs.

- Participants have to choose one character (jester, warrior, wizard, peasant, blacksmith, etc.) and tell how he or she looks like, by drawing a picture and include in that picture what characteristics/competences he/she should have. They are encouraged to work on the character that is closer to their own objectives and expectations or the one that they feel more comfortable with. They are free to make up new characters.
- They can do it individually or in small groups according to the character they have chosen.

2. Creation Activity - Job application letter - Individual work and group work - 35 min
- Participants have to prepare a job application letter according to the character's objectives in order to apply for one of the jobs and post it on the wall next to the character's picture.
- The group will be asked to have a look at the letters and take down notes about the different sections, experience, goals, references, etc.

3. Debriefing and input part - debriefing and introduction to job application letters - 15 min.
- The creation activity is followed by a short debriefing activity focusing on the application letters and the notes the participants have taken down.
- The trainer gives some feedback and tips along with handouts of sample application letters.

4. Journal time - Individual reflection time - 5 min.
Participants have time to write down thoughts, ideas and reflections after each session.

PART 4
a. Title & duration of session
Design - Paving the way to success
90 minutes

b. Aims
- To construct a plan for success based on individual career goals based on current and potential skills.

c. Description

1. Creation Activity - Roadmaps - Individual work - 35 min.
- The trainer shows different kinds of maps (Google maps, satellite maps, tourist maps, etc.) with a common feature: a path with a starting point and a destination. (printouts or projection)
- Participants are asked to identify they career goals and construct a plan for success by drawing their professional "roadmaps" as a reflection, presentation and marketing tool.
- They work on individual roadmaps on a flipchart or A3 sheet to place the different products they have created during the day so as to recognize their goals, present situations, competences, and future steps in order to attain the goals.

- They are encouraged to create a holistic view of themselves so as to understand their individual potentials vis-à-vis achievable professional goals and present it as a marketing tool to potential employers.

2. Self-Presentation and Marketing Presentation - Individual work - 30 min.
   - The trainer introduces the activity explaining that it is a professional presentation with a time limit and they have to address the audience as if they were potential employers.
   - Participants have 3 minutes each to present their roadmaps to the group using their presentation and marketing skills.

3. Debriefing and input part - intro to job interviews - 15 min.
   - The presentations are followed by a short debriefing activity to get feedback and share opinions.
   - The trainer gives some feedback and tips along with handouts of information about job interviews as a preparation for the following day's mock job interviews.

4. Journal time - Individual reflection time - 10 min.
   - Participants have time to write down thoughts, ideas and reflections after each session.

PART 5
a. Title & duration of session
Deliver - Let's do it!
150 minutes (with short break)

b. Aims
• To implement the different outcomes developed throughout the previous sessions and close the building process.

c. Description

1. Simulation - Mock interviews - Group work - 60 min.
   - The trainer introduces the session and asks the participants to recall the job profiles they have prepared during the "dream" phase (jobs for the castle) by quickly reviewing them.
   - Participants are asked to form groups or couples consisting of people that have shared the same character so as to have a common knowledge of the job profiles (not necessarily about the applicant goals).
   - The groups will be provided with sample questionnaires to conduct mock job interviews.
   - The groups take turns to do three types of interviews in groups or couples (panel, competency based, and telephone interviews)
   - While one group is doing an interview, the rest of the participants are assigned roles as feedbackers and asked to collect information with the help of a checklist provided by the trainer.

2. Feedback and input part - 30 min.
   • Feedback collected during the interviews is shared in plenary to highlight the strong points and skills to work on.
   • The trainer gives tips on handling the different types of interviews and recognising, interpreting and verbal and non-verbal communication to build rapport with the interviewer.

Short break - 15 min.

3. Debriefing and closure of AI Process - 35 min.
   • After the break, there is a debriefing activity about the morning activity and Appreciative Inquiry as a coaching method for the participants and a framework for the sessions.
   • The participants are guided into reflecting on how to use the acquired coaching competences in their own organisations.

4. Journal time - Individual reflection time - 10 min.
   • Participants have time to write down thoughts, ideas and reflections after each session.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS
The AI process is divided in 4 phases (discover, dream, design and deliver) and in this case a fifth phase was added, pre-assessment. Youth workers were encouraged to recognise their strong points, sources of motivation and professional goals. They assessed their own skills and became aware of their objectives.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS
The workshop as a whole can be applied to any formal HRD training intervention. The different sessions can be also used separately in individual coaching sessions.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS
In the end, they managed to capitalise on the different competences they have developed throughout the day and design a professional career path in accordance with their present assets and potential skills and goals.

"FOR YOUR SUCCESS"

A TEAM OF TEACHERS IMPROVES THEIR TEAMWORK FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUPILS.

CORA REIJERSE
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CONTEXT
Christian Secondary school. The teachers' team and their team leader of an "advanced vocational education" school. (VMBO) in the countryside of the Netherlands. The pupils are in the age from 14-17.

THE PROCESS & DURATION OF EVENT
a.   Interview with two directors of the school and the team leader about the team problems - /3/11
b.   Individual interviews held by the facilitator with all the team members and the team leader - 4/4/11
c.   Feedback to the team in their weekly team meeting about the interviews. Common decision for a positive topic: To make together a success of the "Leerhuis" - 12/4/11
d.   First team session Discovery of the strengths and the positive core of the team. The whole team and one of the directors - 10/5/11 9.00-17.00.
e.   Second team session Dreaming about the ideal Leerhuis - 14/6/11 13.00-17.00
f.   Planned: Designing the ideal Leerhuis: mutual agreements, principles and rules - 25/10/11 15.00-17.00
g.   Evaluation of the process with the two directors - 27/10/11

PURPOSE
To solve the conflict between two teachers and the bad effect of the conflict on the team members. To help the team move and to work on the obligatory education innovations that started two years previously (they were stuck, passive and un-enthusiastic).

IMPACT
The conflict has escalated to a level of the directors of the school. One of the teachers is "non-active" and no longer a team member or teacher. The team joined the first team session on discovery positively.

Very good work is done on connecting the team members and collectively dream about an inspiring and interesting educational setting for the pupils. Together for your success! That is the slogan of the teacher team. At this moment the design and destiny of the new educational setting are still waiting to happen. In this month (October 2011) a tem session is planned to set the rules and mutual agreements on the innovation of the setting that is called "het leerhuis" '(the house for learning').

RESOURCES
Materials like paper, tape, coloured pencils, glue, flip over and pens.
Program and interview guide/handouts, mind maps and photo's of the team.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

Before the meeting: to take care of the personal introduction of each team member to the facilitator. Because the team was not used to coaching and perceived the conflict between the two colleagues and the impact on the team as their main problem. It was important to hear all the personal stories and the hopes and dreams about the team. To ensure that the focus of the inquiry was a common decision. They choose to focus on making together a success of the "leerhuis". They decided that constructive and inspiring communication or handling conflict were subjects that would come along with the chosen focus. They did not need a focus on communication.

During: To really facilitate the process so that it becomes the team's story and is connected to their reality.
To take all the time that is needed to connect in the discovery process.
To appreciate different opinions and feelings and invite everybody to let their voice be heard.

After: To keep the memories alive and produce together something tangible like a little photo book with pictures of their mapped positive core and a mind map of the results of the sharing of the interviews.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

My aim was to help the team to connect, combine and co-create. The conflict between two of the teachers needed attention and time of the team all along the team coaching process. The perception of and feelings about the problem and how to cope with it was very relevant for every individual. These issues had to be put on the table in the beginning of the sessions to clear the air and create the space for the team to free their attention and energy for the teamwork.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS

The connection between people that develop by sharing success stories from the past. And by sharing the hopes and dreams about the future to fulfil the common tasks, ambitions and destiny that lie ahead of them.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS

Their complaints in the intake interviews about the lack of enthusiasm, the lack of discipline in attending meetings and the lack of rules and mutual agreements about how to treat the pupils seemed to be the other side of a great, sincere willingness of the team members to invest in each other and their relations during the team coaching process.
Their common dedication to the pupils and wish to make this team work for the success of the pupils. Their pupils are intellectually spoken not very talented. I felt the passion in the teachers to reach them in all kinds of different ways and to help them to be successful and proud of themselves.

REFLECTIONS

One of the teachers in the conflict is a man of 64 years old. He is not motivated to work in a team. The directors of the school were not willing to make a tailor made working contract for him for his last two years working as a teacher. They wanted to treat every teacher the same way. I am going to have a conversation with them about the existence of differences and how to accept and appreciate differences. Now that the teacher is non-active, there is still an issue about the ending of his career. I learned to plan ahead the next time. For the first time doing team coaching in an educational setting I was surprised by the lack of long term planning and the primacy and urgency of all kind of daily issues. That is the reason for rather long time intervals between sessions.

STRENGTH-BASED TEAM BUILDING

ARISTOFANIS TZALLAS
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CONTEXT

The team building training took place in a context of a series of changes in the internal environment of a large company, the temporary lack of company leadership, frustration for both the short and long term, and a significant number of middle managers who need to be inspired in order to guide and inspire by themselves a great number of blue collars.

Our consulting company enjoyed some years of collaboration with the company in the field of human resources development through the provision of training programs. This was an opportunity to design a training event on the occasion of an annual meeting of middle and senior managers.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the team building training activity selected was to support the company middle and senior managers overcoming the existing situation, offering them the opportunity to apply the AI principles.

The workshop was designed based upon the following questions:
- What is the purpose of the training program?
- What is expected from the training activities?
- What is expected as an outcome from the training?

We posed these question three times, for the company, the participants and the trainers.

Given the answers to the best of our knowledge we agreed with the company that we prioritize them as follows:
- to design the program for the participants,
- to use what is suitable for the trainers to handle it over 200 persons,
- to deliver to the company the expected outcome "What I can/ could do to make the company even better?"

Therefore the purpose of the training was focused on the results coming out by the implementation of AI principles. Practically participants answered five questions throughout the whole training event.

The 5 questions were the following:
- What makes them a unique winning team?
- What blocks them from being the winning team?
- What they believe they can do, to overcome obstacles in being the winning team?
- What they can do to boost their strong/positive characteristics, in the winning team?
- What is inspiring them to be part of the winning team?

DURATION OF EVENT
The total length of the activity lasted around 6 hours.

RESOURCES
AI principles, experiential education activities, a lot of materials to be used in the workshops and the activities like painting/ designing materials, plaster, different papers, balls, ropes and wood pieces.

IMPACT
The task of leadership is to create an alignment of strengths, making our weaknesses irrelevant",
Peter Drucker.

In this case participants started appreciating positive actions and attitudes they have shown in the past, elaborated them combining all positive issues in a Coat of Arms, and finally created reifications, presentations, songs or sketches for 3 minutes showing what they can deliver and how they feel empowered answering the above questions.

All these outcomes (videotapes and constructions) were delivered, analysed and commented to the management team of the company and constitute the basis of an on-going change program implemented throughout the organization.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION
The core concept of the European AI network: connect, combine & co-create, has been applied to both the facilitators teams and the training group.

The facilitators' team consisting of 7 practitioners with more than 7 different backgrounds, connected through their values and principles, combined their diverse knowledge and experiences, abilities and skills on an appreciative way and mutual respect, to co-create and deliver a workshop in a team building event for 200 people. Practically all ideas were expressed and addressed specifically on how to create the training activities that can be facilitated by each one of the facilitators on the same way, ensuring the expected outcome.
Precise and detailed instructions were distributed with time frame to everyone and one person was in charge to coordinate the facilitators' team for anything unexpected or any inconvenience could happen.

During the event the 200 participants had the opportunity
 • to connect themselves sharing trust, engagement and personal values,
 • to combine their skills, experiences and competencies, and finally
 • to co-create a physical "bridge" to their dream.

Participants worked in pairs, and in different group sizes from 3 up to 50 people according to every activity.

After the event the facilitators' team reviewed the videotapes produced during the event, summarized the personal remarks to the common key points, highlighting the key positive and the key negative remarks, and agreed on the feedback presentation to the company management team.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS
Taking away all known techniques of formal presentations, enabling productive dialogues with physical activities stimulating positive energy, replacing participants typical presentations with reifications and theatrical techniques, we created a climate that everybody liked to be part of it.

APPRECIATIVE EMBODIMENT AS THE BASIS FOR COMMUNICATION, APPRECIATION & COOPERATION

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CONTEXT

The organisation is a non-profit company that aims to cover the interests of people who are injured from specific illnesses. The members are mostly 50-80 years of age. The organisation consists of 17 regional unions, with 8-10 members and a small leader team. Three of these regional unions would attend the workshop in combination with a meeting in the small union. The workshop had the duration of ½ a day.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the workshop is to raise the level of insight in the members communication patterns, to let them know how to appreciate their own practical approach to the work and the cooperation that are happening in the small regional unions as part of the national organisation. The model "Appreciative Embodiment" helped to ensure that we spoke to the heads of the participants as well as the hearts and the bodies.

RESOURCES

1-2 consultants to facilitate the workshop, to help start out the exercises, to follow up and to give inspirational talks. The physical environment needed was important, as some of the members are wheel chair drivers.

IMPACT

The impact is evaluated after the workshop and participants usually show improved communication insights, a more skilful and appreciating approach to conflict solving and more knowledge about their own responsibility in the union cooperation. The impact is also the fact that the exercises from the workshop inspired the participants to retry them afterwards in different settings, which ensured a better cooperation and handling of the monthly meetings.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION AND SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The decoration of the room was very important, because several of the participants is in a wheelchair. They are used to get around like that, and we had to make sure that there was extra space around the tables and we needed to count extra time when people were going to a break, since it took much longer time, to get out of the room, and to get back.

Also we needed to adjust our classic exercise "walk & talk", which we always prefer to have outside to get fresh air. The exercise was now "roll and talk" and some were inside, because of the outside areas conditions for wheel chairs. The handling of the room and the requirements made a positive atmosphere among the participants.

**ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS**

The considerations and decorations of the room are essential if you are building a workshop for people in a wheel chair. You might think that this is common knowledge, but our participants tell us otherwise. As a speaker you always need to think about the audience in according to age and hearing possibility. We needed to adjust our place in the room when we spoke and we needed to speak in a slower tempo. We need to be flexible and to be 100% open to the needs of the participants. And they have both physical needs, mental needs and spiritual needs. To stay open to the participants and to the situations that arise, that is something you can apply in other situations.

Giving a workshop to people with some disabilities means that the consultants stay open and don't give the impression that it is cumbersome. On the other hand it is important not to make to much of a deal out of the fact, that people in a wheel chair can't get around as fast as others. A good balance between listen to people needs as always and not making to much extraordinary attention to that. To see the human being first.

SUCCESS FACTORS

First of all, it is crucial to create that safe learning environment that made the participants feel worthy and useful. Their contributions and their development was the most important. And they were not quite used to that approach. They were used to one-way communication from an expert of communication.

The model "Appreciative Embodiment" helped to ensure that we spoke to the heads of the participants as well as the hearts and the bodies. The model is a great tool by which to create a workshop or a longer learning environment:
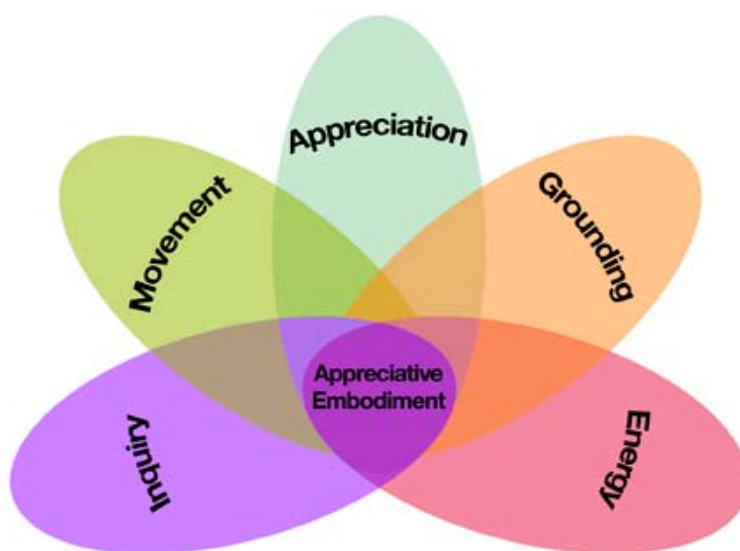
The model is a learning concept to build up a learning environment in a workshop, a course, a training session

It is based on the five elements inquiry, movement, appreciation, grounding and energy and these five helps the trainer to always remember to take into account that the people learning, the participants are whole people. It opens up to teach on other levels that the logical, since it includes the brain, the body, the heart and the relations.

Depending on the participants the consultant can plan the day by using the model.

1. *Inquiry*
   From left to right we start with inquiry, which nearly always contains some kinds of open questions to the subject, to the participant, to the participants to ask each other or to ask to their own practices. To be curios is a way to open up the subject and the participants and it contributes to making a safe and open learning environment where all kinds of questions are appreciated. The inquiry is also a concept to remember for the consultant, when you ensure to stay open and inquire into the participants to make you sure find them where they are and start the process there.

2. *Movement*
   The next leaf is called movement and is named so to make the consultant remember to create a framework for some kind of movement. It may be a walk & talk, small games or energizers or it may be to shift the location or the setting if possible. It could be to do a metafari where small groups take a walk nearby the house to look at tress, buldings, roads, car, people or everything else they see, and to come up with a good metaphoric question from a specific place, that moves the mind of the other participants.

3. *Appreciation*
   The third leaf appreciation is often an introduction to the theoretic background of Appreciative Inquiry, since there are still people unfamiliar with this approach or to whom it is still awkward to develop things from a resource perspective. It can also be to ensure some questions in an appreciating interview or having the participants come up with their own questions, which tend to investigate successes, resources and victories.

4. *Grounding*
   The fourth leaf is necessary, when the participants need time to let all the new impressions, relations and learnings sink in. It can be tough to learn all day, to talk and listen and be in dialogues and be challenged out of your comfort zone. And besides remembering breaks as a most important thing, we also recommend to make room for silence by guiding a meditation. Typically we would guide a physical relaxation meditation where you train your awareness on your body lying down on the floor. In the case with the wheelchair users, we would guide the meditation with everybody sitting up in their chair.

5. *Energy*
   The last thing we count in as important when preparing a learning environment is energy. The consultant needs to be very sensitive to the energy in the room and to have the currage to react on specific energies, make room and acceptance about special energies and to make the participants conscious about how the energy influence the learning in the room. Sometime the atmosphere of the room is really solid and then you can take an unscheduled break. Another time you might want to jump to an exercise with movement or a short meditation, because that is what is needed in the room.

The order of appearances is not important and sometimes the IMAGE model is visualized for the participants, for them to know the concept of the workshop, sometimes the model is just visible in the preparing phase. In the case of the wheel chair users the model was not important for the participants, because the focus was on communication, appreciation and cooperation.

COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENT

CREATING NORWAY'S FIRST AI-PROGRAM AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

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CONTEXT

In essence, this is a story about how a whole county is starting to use strengths based methods and Appreciative Inquiry in various sectors. The story takes place in Buskerud county and there are 4 main parties involved: *LentSareptas* (a privat AI-consultant company), *AIB* (an education institution that helps drop-out students at upper secondary to find their strengths and use them), the *County governor* of Buskerud and his administration team and the *University College of Buskerud*.

Key note about AIB. For several years, politicians wanted to lock down the organization. 10 years ago, AIB was introduced to Appreciative Inquiry by Sareptas (now LentSareptas), and little by little AIB has grown to be a national example of how to work with a whole system (both the youths, trainers and the whole society in Buskerud).

PURPOSE

We want to see a whole county, from the County Governor to the kids in kindergarten, start using strengths based view on life and work. (And after this, there are only 18 counties left to see all of Norway start using strengths based approaches...)

IMPACT

This autumn we launched Norway's first AI-program at University level, 15 ECTS points. The study is a joint venture between LentSareptas (private consultancy company), AIB (learning/working institution for young people that has dropped out of school) and Buskerud University College.

In Norway most Universities are skeptical when it comes to using action research and positive psychology. To launch an AI-program at university level shows that AI is being taken more seriously and that we are getting closer to our dream of creating a whole strengths based county.

The target group for the AI-study is teachers, school directors and other leaders and facilitators interested in strength based change processes. The study was filled up in short time (35 students).

The study is unique in Norwegian context both because it is the first program focusing on AI and strength based methods and because of the study's openness to the learners' input on the content and results of the semester. We want to co-create the content and results together with our learning colleagues.

The first three days of the learning process both teachers and students participated in a 4D learning process with the following focus: *How can we co-create a learning community which ensures that everyone contributes at his/her best in a way that releases energy and creates waves (results) in puddles, lakes and oceans?*

The response from the first gathering was overwhelming and we really think that this will be the best study in Norway! We are already discussing with the University College to create a master program and we hope to establish a master program within 2-3 years. LentSareptas has also invested in a strength based competence center in Tanzania and we hope to launch the program here as well. We are also in a process with Fredskorpset (The Norwegian Peace Corps) to finance exchange between the Tanzanian competence centre and LentSareptas and AIB.

During the dream and design process we started believing that a full scale web platform should be developed. This is now being taken care of, and LentSareptas is working with a platform that can support both the learning process in the AI-study and a full 4D-process.

DURATION OF PROJECT
It has been 8 years since we started to work with AIB, and we now see great impact at a variety of schools, kindergartens, county administration etc.

RESOURCES
Bjørn Hauger was the first consultant that started to work with AIB, now we are several people working both with AIB and the AI-program at the University College.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION
It is important to assure broad involvement of as many stakeholders as possible, making everybody involved aware of the theory behind AI, and giving them personal experience of the impact of what AI brings into life.

We use the 4 D model, problem versus strength-tree and roadmap as methods. These methods and approaches are easily visualized, and both young people and adults can re-use them.

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS
The single most important factor for the success of launching the AI-program is the success we've had with AIB. For several years politicians wanted to lock down AIB. 8 years ago AIB was introduced to Appreciative Inquiry by Sareptas (now LentSareptas), and little by little AIB has grown to be a national example of how to work with a whole system (both the youths, trainers and the whole society in Buskerud). AIB was chosen as one of four success institutions working with drop-outs of the Nordic Council of Ministers and one of three best practices of the Norwegian Royal family (His Majesty Prince Haakon and Mette Marit).

Together with other contributions in the region done by LentSareptas, this lead the county and the University College of Buskerud to start the work with creating the AI-study because teachers, trainers and consultants see what AI can create in a region.

We have worked with long term goals from the start, and we still do. This gives everybody involved a feeling of being part of something big, something they can't miss.
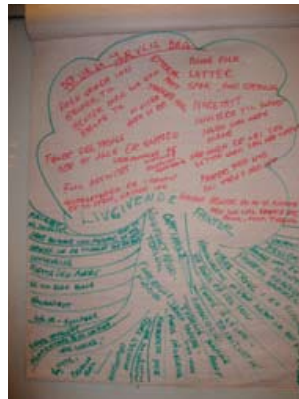
REFLECTIONS

One challenge we see right now is that most of the participants in our Appreciative Inquiry project are teachers working with practical areas (carpenters, sale- and service, mechanics etc.). The literature we use is quite hard for our participants to relate to and understand. Maybe we could get some good ideas to answer this challenge in a good way?

A TRAINING PROGRAM FOR COMMUNITY CULTURE CARRIERS IN THE MUNICIPALTIE OF VEJLE

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CONTEXT

In recent years, villages and rural areas in Denmark has been under pressure from migration to cities and under pressure from loss of functions to the cities. This program facilitates a renewal of local communities in collaboration between municipality and citizens using strength-based methods. With a goal of creating lasting, sustainable change, the program was implemented in a city with 50.000 inhabitants and in villages with 500 -1000 inhabitants.

In order to "walk the talk," the municipality first educated the employees to talk and work in an appreciative way. Then, the citizens are offered the same seminar to learn how to employ local resources to create local projects they care about. The projects were then implemented with support of local community.

The cooperation and co-creation between the municipal officials and the citizens on a large scale is the innovative part of the project.

PURPOSE

The municipality started this program with the following goals:
- To strengthen the community, the public health, environmental issues, and beyond.
- To facilitate change and to promote a new positive dialogue between organizations like the municipality and citizens, starting the process of change bottom up and with emphasis on local needs, solutions and resources.
- To promote local involvement in the community and create entrepreneurs that will start "projects".

DURATION

The program took place over 5 sessions x 2½ hour in 5 months or 5 sessions x 1 day in 1 year. However, we have developed two programs with the same content:
  a) with the duration of one year and five whole days of education, and
  b) with the duration of 5-6 months with five evening seminars (3 hours). In both programs, students work in between seminars.

IMPACT

The formal workshops served as a way of starting the process of change, and the results of the work from 2006 till today 2012 are very visible. In many cases, we have seen a lasting change, with new people joining the projects, permanent groups and traditions started, and projects implemented that support existing structures. All these successes are used when starting new projects, whereby people tell their past stories of success and create a new spark.

Six local communities in Vejle has been involved the program.

RESOURCES

- Teaching and preparation time.
- 30 local citizens
- A big room, electricity, a projector, pencils and paper
- A small fund to pay for minor projects (7000 Euro). However, in practice most of the money was never used, because the citizens found local resources instead of external funding. But it was important for them to know the money was there.

Video about project: http://www.rune.vejle.tv/012859332851609/the-vejle-model

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

The process has been described via a step-by-step guide and a video of 5 minutes that is available via Vejle Municipality. Generally, the key steps included the following guidelines:

- Contact local community leaders and get them onboard. Use a lot of time here. It is the most important aspect as you also learn a lot about the community. Call the ones in the phonebook, tell about the project, ask what is important to them, and ask who else to talk to.
- Ask local contact person to find a room and food. They know where the community meets.
- At the meeting, introduce yourself, the program, and the method with great respect of what has been achieved locally until now.
- Ask the participants to tell a story to the persons next to him/her about a local project he was a part of that was a success (the biggest success), and the other way around. Then tell about their biggest dream for the community.
- Get them into small groups (no more than eight participants in one group) and let the groups discuss their common dreams. What would they like to achieve? A spokesperson from each group presents the dreams.
- Conclude the first meeting by talking in plenum about the dreams and ask everybody to sign up if they want to participate. Present the next meeting date and confirm in writing after the meeting.
- Focus the next meeting on local resources, and then use the follow up meeting to focus on individual projects developed at the workshops. Provide one-on-one coaching for teams working on the projects. And at the end of the program, finish with some champagne!

KEY SUCCESS FACTORS

1. Starting by reflecting on previous successes to build up energy, creating connection between past and present, and remembering "how to do".
2. Collaboration between local resources and government resources. Neither owned the process or the goals. It was a real joint leadership between the community and the municipality, each doing what they did best.

FLOATING LEARNING JOURNEY: USING ART TO COMMUNICATE ACROSS CULTURES AND LANGUAGES

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CONTEXT

The Who Cares? Cultural Programme and Legacy Hand Made Socials at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester: April-June 2011

Using art to communicate across cultures and languages, the Who Cares? Cultural Programme brought people from diverse backgrounds together to engage and interact creatively. Each event was built around a community mentoring session with befrienders and volunteers on hand to welcome and offer support to people new to the area.

Extending an especially warm welcome to refugees, asylum seekers and anyone new to Manchester or the UK to explore the gallery's fantastic global art and textile collection, to try out a creative activity or just pop in to meet, mentors and make new friends. Participants joined us each week for refreshments and a light lunch. They were then invited to explore the Whitworth Art Gallery and participate in a variety of fun and exciting creative activities, to include Drawing, Calligraphy and Crafting, Poetry and Music Making. No previous experience was needed. The sessions were run on a drop in basis so individuals could join in at any time and attend as many of the Saturdays as they wished.

The Cultural Programme consisted of a series of welcoming and supporting creative Saturday afternoons in the Whitworth Art Gallery culminating in a Celebration Event and a planning session for What Next? The Hand Made Social Workshops to be held at the Whitworth Gallery between November 2011 and March 2012 are a direct outcome of this evaluation and will be led by refugee/ BME artists who will co-train and co-deliver with their creative mentors.

Working with refugees and asylum seekers to turn negative stereotype into positive image building on their strengths and brokering community solutions and positive interactions, the initiative strongly adheres to the belief that making art can change the way a person feels about themselves, their environment and their difficulties. It also allows the maker to reach out to others, to be understood. Being heard is a basic human necessity that can get lost in a busy world. The initiative brings attention to the visions and words of people who are often lost in corners. By embracing experimental techniques, excluded individuals and groups are supported to make their mark, however wavering or elusive. We are deeply committed to pushing the boundaries of languages, text and art to include outsider voices exploring displacement and what it means to have a refugee background. Allowing ordinary voices to be privileged , allowing the refugees and asylum seekers' own voices and their societal condition (exclusion, other-ness) to be part of societies' story-making, creating stories from personal histories and engendering empowerment via the creative act itself/reversing or subverting power relationships.

The aim is to increase participation in creativity and learning from disadvantaged adults in the community, most disconnected from formal learning. This includes ethnic minorities and those outside the labour market because of their immigration status. The well documented benefits in promoting cultural diversity through the use of ICT to improve economic and social participation and integration is factored into creating Digital stories, and tapping into the creativity and histories of immigrants and minorities by stimulating their participation in co-producing learning resources.

PURPOSE

Individuals are to be welcomed to participate in an ongoing programme of activities that celebrate cultural diversity, difference AND commonality and to enjoy the music, dance, art and creativity of Manchesters' global communities. Each of the activity sessions, as well as being fun and stimulating, is intended to positively impact on participants' sense of wellbeing. The activities encourage participants to make connections, be active, take notice, keep learning and to give to others.

Rugs and cushions from around the world create a relaxed and comfortable environment in which to sit and think about items that are currently important in our everyday lives, and produce 'quilted journeys' that reflect this. In the next stage Hand Made Social Who Cares? Cultural Programme legacy workshops, there will be an opportunity to collectively create a small quilt of individual stories ESOL teacher and crafter, Regina DeGiovanni will be on hand to support interested participants to stitch words that are relevant to them on to squares of fabric, creating and crafting something that can be representative of their own lives and journeys. Other local craftists will share techniques with participants in the use of beads, buttons, sequins and braiding to personalize their 'quilted journey'. The quilted stories will be exhibited at the Peoples' History Museum Community gallery as part of the 'Peripheral Vision' project display and workshop participants will have additional opportunities to work with a WEA tutor and an ESOL teacher to record their personal stories in a book and through film media.

IMPACT

It has enabled people to share their strengths and experience with others, offering respect, empathy and relational care and compassion, for example:
- As befrienders and mentors
- As refugee/ BME artists and creative mentors
- As Learning Champions to ensure that those at risk of exclusion from learning and in particular the digital learning experience have an opportunity to see a peer who has been on the same life course journey (failed asylum seeker etc) succeeding in strength based personal and organisational transformational change.
- As BME community members to new arrivals and neighbours in Manchester
- As adult learners, discovering their confidence and interests and returning to the gallery to access it and join in gallery activities without project support, following the Cultural Programme.
- As members of Manchesters' diverse communities, celebrating difference, diversity and commonality.

RESOURCES

- Mainstream, High Quality Cultural Venues.
- In-kind befriending and coaching support from public sector colleagues so that a cadre of BME and refugee community leaders can be supported to develop their strengths.
- Creative Workshop Facilitation - Co-training:
  - o For the public sector coaches with artistic talent to develop their strengths and be a support to make a career transition by gaining experience of working within Creative industries
  - o For the refugee and BME community members with artistic talent, needing support in work shop facilitation and language skills.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

A specific contribution to success was the appreciative mentors and buddies helping the participants find their inner strengths and talents and develop as teachers to create sustainability. Another is creating a process which reflects the learning desired. The Cultural Programme was supported by a volunteer team and a number of participants commented on the respect and empathy of the mentors and the positive welcome they received from the cultural venue.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS

Peer led, co-created innovative learning opportunities supporting independence, personal development, mental/physical health and well-being, digital inclusion, democratic engagement, social cohesion, stronger families and compassionate, appreciative communities.

Transformational community/ professional learning opportunities

Relational based befriending and mentoring support; a crucial element of added value which enables those most difficult to reach and retain in learning activity to be included through. 'Bridging, brokering, mentoring and voluntary befriending'.

The relationship with the Cultural providers in Manchester can be applied to other situations so that cultural opportunities can be intertwined with learning opportunities and under-represented artists can lead their own workshops and develop their own work.

Maximising the contribution of community learning to the inclusion of 'unpopular' groups, engaging and motivate disadvantaged adults utilising curriculum innovation, and strategies to create progression pathways towards the wider learning continuum. Non- formal Lifelong Learning can support the engagement of individuals, reaching new groups of learners and enhancing participation in non formal learning to improve opportunities and skills and secure greater participation, particularly among those who have had least opportunity in the past.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS?

Trusted brokers from the third sector to identify and support clients to join the Cultural programme and initiate befriending relationship with mentors.

Senior civil servants and health managers have provided voluntary mentoring and support and have personally gained and learned from engagement in the Cultural Programme. Through building positive relationships with mentees and learning about diverse cultural contributions and from the opportunity to develop transferable skills and volunteering opportunities which have helped them with career transitions.

Support from civil service and health manager unions (FDA and MiP) which enabled us to enhance the informal learning opportunities and the voluntary mentoring support from their members.

REFLECTIONS

The learning environment needs to inspire or support a thirst for learning. Welcoming high quality cultural setting in general and the wellbeing boat in particular offer a powerful and positive space to voice and experience transformational learning, free from associations with other learning environments in which adult learners may have previously 'experienced failure'.

The Hand Made Social activity sessions provide a unique opportunity to explore world culture through the Whitworth Art Gallery's collections and community. Local talents and Manchester residents from

a variety of different backgrounds, many of whom already have strong links to the Whitworth and its collections, will run the sessions. The aim of the activity sessions, as well as being fun and engaging, is to investigate and develop ways of working for and with people newly arrived to the local area and with members of Manchesters' diverse communities. To gather a variety of different viewpoints springing from the many different 'ways of seeing' and experiencing art, culture, and creativity. Participants will be encouraged to think about how they connect with the rich mix of global cultures in Manchester and represented in the Whitworth collections and exhibitions gallery and what resonates with their own culture. This is a journey of exploration in how the mainstream Cultural Corridor venues might build ongoing cultural community-led interaction with diverse local communities.

The initiative offers a return on social capital and wellbeing through inclusion in a usually minority pastime (canal boating) The project offers an innovative, high quality package of learning, arts and crafts, health and wellbeing including access to the outdoor environment and it enables access to the Manchester cultural corridor and its learning opportunities for BME women, migrant workers, refugees and asylum seekers, older BME men and people having English as a second language. That group includes carers, individuals who have claimed asylum due to their sexual orientation and people with learning disabilities. There will be an additional focus upon enabling Cultural Champions to develop via the project. To sustain refugee/ BME participation in the mainstream cultural venues of Manchester via the Freedom of the Cultural Corridor' (FOCC) inclusion programme Launch.

REGAINING LEARNING SKILLS

WITH STRENGTH BASED COACHING, POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND AI FOR MEN AND FATHERS IN CRISIS AFTER DIVORCE AND BROKEN RELATIONS

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TYPE OF PROCESS
Counselling of a man in crisis.

CASE STUDY: COUNSELLING OF LARS
Lars H. is 33 year old and came to the centre for consultations after a rupture in the relationship, which occurred eight weeks before his contact to Men's Support Centre.

He has been a toolmaker for ten years and has until now had a good and stable job though problems are emerging. He has recently begun a longer additional training at the local technical learning facility. The break with his partner has made him unsure of the future; he has mood swings, does not sleep well, is frequently testy and irritable and has low spirits.

The counselling course for Lars followed a pattern often seen and used for men in crisis. When Lars came to the centre, he had lived through the initial stages of the grief and frustration cycles and he was ready for targeted advice that "would get him restarted with the study he loved." That the causes of his crisis also got "treated", he found acceptable and perhaps necessary as long as it would benefit the course.

SHOCK PHASE
Lars explains that he has not been himself; he has been absent and lacking emotion. He has not been able to express the inner pain and does not respond to what has happened. He finds it necessary to get sick leave from the study. Although the emotional reactions have not yet fully occurred in this phase, Lars needs physical care and freedom from responsibility. It is often a problem that some people seems to be highly unaffected by the incident during the shock phase and therefore do not feel the need for care.

REACTION PHASE
Subsequently, Lars is hit by many conflicting emotions from the broken relationship and its consequences. He senses an inner chaos, confusion and crisis. Reality becomes pressing. He starts feeling grief and a sense of futility and resignation. Lars describes it as the worst time in his life. He often cries with violent shakes, feels like he is inside a bell jar and finds it hard to accept a need for help. When it is at its worst, Lars has dark thoughts about ending his work and the study - and perhaps life.

REPAIR PHASE
Here Lars contacted the support centre. In the conversation with Lars, it becomes clear that his inner life force, family and friends helped him over the acute crisis reaction. He has found a balance and is more adapted to what has happened. He senses a growing positive change in his perceptions and perhaps a stronger inner self than before the broken relation. It seems odd and unexpected for Lars

that it is like this. He sees himself as having more insight in his own and others' reactions to what has happened. Lars rather quickly starts concentrating on finding better solutions; he thinks about resuming the study and will seek advice. He has heard good about the Men's Support Centre from others and has emerging but unstable optimism about the future.

NEW START PHASE

We choose an intensive process with Lars where a positive psychological approach, appreciative inquiry and strength-based coaching are powerful features to support and help Lars and men in similar situations. Lars achieves a rapid insight and understanding. He gets control over his emotions that still pop up. He manages to tell about the internal processes and can relate constructively and realistically to them. Lars quickly focuses on a new path in life and the technical campus has been contacted to find a good and workable solution for him when resuming the additional training.

PURPOSE

With a professional and competent effort it is possible to minimize the economic and social costs of broken relations for all stakeholders, including the loss of resources for workplaces and society. The effort helps ensuring that men do not start an often heartbreaking social collapse. The experiences from the support centre for men confirm that a social collapse and leave from education can be avoided with a dedicated support and effort at the right time.

With the competent and necessary action, men can quickly be brought back on their feet and become self-reliant. They get back on their feet within a much shorter time horizon than without the same relief effort.

IMPACT

Lars resumed his education at the campus. He and the campus agreed to a customized restart, which extended the study with three months. The efforts made in the men's centre gave him a possibility to reacquire his courage and it brought him back into the class. This is of great benefit to him, his family and our society which can look forward to taking full advantage of the learning he gets at the campus.

He subsequently had three additional consultations, which contained no new problems and mostly assured Lars that he was back on the right track. He does very well in his study and can now give others the good advice to seek help in time.

Society has with the rapid response given Lars a valuable return in an attractive and useful study. Businesses can look forward to a toolmaker with insights and understanding of the human conditions of life - maybe a good manager someday.

DURATION OF EVENT

Lars had ten appearances. We followed an intensive course with daily conversations in the first week (5), followed by meetings every second day in the week after (3) and finishing with two conversations in the last week (2). For others this is stretched to a longer period, all based on individual needs. Lars was assured that he can always get help and counselling immediately. This gives him confidence and courage to move forward on his own.

RESOURCES

Men's support centre use and include strength-based coaching and positive psychology as essential elements in working with men in crisis.

Experience shows that men respond positively to a concrete and action-oriented model. The methods are chosen to serve as a useful catalyst in the processing of the emotional turbulence in such a way that control and balance will be recovered with a more effective progression. This is especially the case if there is a focus on specific tasks in the clients work with the crisis.

Physical activity and exercise also helps to accelerate the process and allows simultaneous redemption of fixed thoughts.

Networking groups are to many men a source of increased understanding of others and their own reactions and needs in a life crisis.

Activities such as common dining, local cultural events like sport, theatre, concerts and lectures are also included. Men often search for such opportunities to network. An important aspect is that they often meet their new friends here.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

When men go for counselling it is important to meet the man with empathy and understanding. It is often at the first meeting a good and fruitful process is founded. A calm, friendly, dedicated and trustworthy approach to the man's problems is most valuable to a good process start and a good result. During the process men appreciate the often intense and direct approach in the counselling. They are challenged on their attitudes and perceptions which are imparted to concrete and useful insights into problems and approaches to solutions.

List of key issues when giving counselling

- Get an overview of the situation
- Demonstrating positive authority
- Demonstrating care and be empathetic
- Be attentive and patient
- Be honest and open
- Maintain contact with reality
- Motivate for physical activity
- Offer help with practical and concrete problems
- Use physical contact as needed
- Search and distribute information when needed
- Motivate to take responsibility for own problem solving
- Accepting the distressed person's pain and sorrow
- Accept ones own and the distressed person's constraints
- Saying no without rejecting.

At the conclusion of a consultation the most positive and forward looking strength giving elements in the conversation or the process is highlighted. It advises the man to work with the found strengths and positive thoughts and test them in everyday life.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

Supplementing the healing process with hope theories in practice and supporting the growing self-efficacy is what gives the best and lasting result for men working through their crises. Men and fathers can now benefit from an effective way back to their normal life and it helps them keeping a stable relation to their study, job and family. Hope can be defined as a psychological construct in which the hopeful person feels that he is:

a. capable of coming up with a goal for change
b. able to set up a plan for achieving these goals, and
c. able to sustain the motivation for carrying out the plan.

Improved self-esteem can be achieved with skills training to increase competences. That can be training in social skills, work and academic skills, skills in solving problems, assertive skills. Positive expectations and a solid self-esteem naturally lead to a higher self-efficacy which can be seen in

improved cognitive resources and flexibility to cope with challenges. When combining hope and self-efficacy we will have a person who not only believes that he is capable of bringing about change, but who also can conceptualize that change and bring it into reality through conscious planning.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS

The described methods can with necessary adaptations and modifications be transferred to treating load reactions, stress disorder and milder male depression. It has proved effective to supplement with cognitive therapy and mindfulness meditation where this is possible. The described methods are also partly used at Universities and other learning facilities to improve the individual person's continued learning.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS?

Men's support centre work with men's self-understanding and self-knowledge, understood as an insight into their life situation, more confidence and self-worth, more confidence in their discernment and greater confidence in their social environment, job relations and study.

Efforts are made to continuously improve their competences in and after a burdened period to act and handle issues as they 'rejoin the society'. To use, communicate and consult the public institutions and authorities - whether it is related to a study or a job - and to find new objectives for the future.

Staff engagement, education, life experiences and trustworthy attitudes are important for the good and right help to men in crisis to regain their learning skills.

A ROOM FOR LIFE AND GROWTH

In addition to the given active help and support the surroundings has subtle and gentle impact in the process towards regaining the way in life and learning skills.

The decor of the centre has to give the men a sense of being surrounded by "surplus" - and not deficits. Therefore a chosen aesthetics and a thorough design with a focus on good design can be recommended. Aesthetic design and decor are importance signals from the spatial location about the psychological climate that surrounds staff and client. The idea is that the physical and spatial surplus spreads to the ailing man and making him look a little brighter on his life situation. The hope is that the quality of the ambient will be important as a kind of mental catalyst for the man's mental state, so he gradually experiences sprouts of positive psychological habitus between the moments of hopeless darkness.

Space, design and architecture do something to our inner wellbeing, enhance the healing processes and promote learning.

REFLECTIONS

Men need more than ever specialised centres and dedicated staff. Men should have access to and experience equal possibilities in life crises where they can benefit from a rapid and targeted support. Coordinated with local government, partners and regional facilities more men can be avoided from untreated long lasting crisis with an often fatal social downturn.

With the right help and support in the right time, men can continue in important lifelong learning activities at work and the study to great and lasting value for them, their families and our society.

LEARNING PROGRAMMES

DEVELOPING ACTION RESEARCH AND APPRECIATIVE PRACTICE AS-S PART OF NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT IN A REGION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

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CONTEXT
OVERVIEW

This story concerns developing action research and appreciative practice as part of neighbourhood development in a region of the United Kingdom. This story gives a short overview of the piece of work which developed over a period of years and then highlights a series of workshops which were organised.

BACKGROUND

I have worked all my life in the field of social justice, including equality for girls and young women in the youth service; equality for women in a local authority; tackling poverty and disadvantage through empowering local community members to become active members of a regeneration project and developing services for local communities within a local authority. Throughout my career I have worked with the principles and practices of community development, which aim to strengthen communities and build on their assets and vision. For the past 10 years I've worked with action learning and action research, including appreciative inquiry. For the past three years I was Director of two regional learning projects for neighbourhood development and community empowerment in a region in the United Kingdom.[1] In my role, I was involved in commissioning project work around appreciative practice as detailed in the enclosed case study.

DEVELOPING APPRECIATIVE PRACTICE AS PART OF COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN NEIGHBOURHOODS IN A REGION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Following my experience of participating in action research as a participatory learning method as a student on a Masters in Responsibility in Business Practice at Bath University[2], I decided that the approach would be very valuable to introduce to neighbourhood practitioners. Working with colleagues from the University of Bath, we developed firstly a four day and finally one day course on appreciative practice for neighbourhood practitioners. This course ran at a community centre in 2006. Following this course, I participated in the Appreciative Practice Scrutiny Inquiry by the Local Authority, being held on a disadvantaged estate, which energised the community and stakeholders.

Since then, I have co-facilitated training on appreciative practice. This gave me the opportunity to develop the material for appreciative practice sessions and pay attention to the participatory methodology being used. I find the listening exercises, the story telling exercises and the dreaming sessions to be very valuable. I subsequently went on to use the exercises in team meetings and in one off meetings.

During 2009 and 2010, I commissioned two pieces of work to develop "thinking out of the box"

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[1]. *These learning programmes were funded on a regional basis by the then UK Government.*

[2]. *This course is now run from Ashridge, and involves learning about the theory and practice of sustainability and action research as a methodology.*

workshops, which brought the ideas of action research and appreciative practice to neighbourhoods and neighbourhood workers. One of these thinking out of the box workshops was on appreciative inquiry. The rest of the case study gives more detail of organising these workshops.

CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF APPRECIATIVE PRACTICE IN A REGION

The regional Government office were interested in checking out the value of appreciative practice as an approach, so it was agreed to fund through the regional empowerment partnerships a series of workshops on appreciative inquiry with local authorities in the region during 2009/10, to unlock the potential of front line workers. As part of this work, the Local Improvement Advisor, convened a planning group, including the Regional learning bodies, Government Office, the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and two Local Authority practitioners working with appreciative inquiry. In the Planning Group, we looked at the importance of gaining senior management support for any initiatives and for gathering the widest number of stakeholders in the room to take the initiative forward.

Following these planning meetings, four local authorities agreed to undertake an appreciative inquiry. One Local Authority declined the opportunity. I was involved in the commissioning and monitoring of the work. Two experienced facilitators in Appreciative practice and strength based work were engaged to run the process. The appreciative practice workshops were very well received by the participating Local Authorities. A full report on this piece of work is available from the NWTWC website: http://www.nwtwc.org.uk/uploads/NWTWC-appreciative-Inquiry.pdf

PURPOSE WORKSHOP

The overall aim of the learning programmes was to improve quality of life in neighbourhoods, particularly disadvantaged neighbourhoods and to increase community empowerment. The aim of the workshops on 'thinking out of the box' were to bring the skills of action research to officers working in neighbourhoods, councillors and in so doing, deepen practice in neighbourhoods and communities and open up new skills.

IMPACT

Course participants learnt new skills in action research and reflective practice methods. Action research ideas were brought into neighbourhood working. Course attendees felt that the skills would be useful for both communities and officers.

DURATION OF EVENT

Five one day events, held over a period of several months.

RESOURCES

Each workshop was facilitated by a trained facilitator. The sessions were held in community venues.

FACILITATION

The sessions needed careful facilitation and good organisation. Each facilitator was skilled in the particular area of work.

Table 4.1 Thinking out of the Box workshops 2009/10 - all the workshops were held in different local authorities to cover one region of the United Kingdom

Title of workshop	Topic
Working systemically in a complex world	Complexity, change and participation in neighbourhoods
Partnerships towards innovative action	Innovative ways of dealing with complex challenges using Theory U[i]
Appreciative Practice	Can organisations that try to appreciate what is best in themselves discover more of what is good?
Knowledge in Neighbourhoods	Many ways of knowing
Reflective Practice	Theories and practices
Alternative Communication in Neighbourhoods	Listening more attentively to self
Leadership and Sustainable Neighbourhoods	Creating sustainable communities using systems and futures techniques

Adapted from Kettleborough (2011), page 93, Thinking out of the box: introducing action research into neighbourhood practice in the north-west of England in Marshall, Coleman and Reason, Leadership for Sustainability, An Action Research Approach, Sheffield: Greenleaf

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS
The workshops were promoted as a package but attendees only needed to attend one workshop. The package of workshops helped identify that there is a range of thinking reflectively. A series of day events ensured that no one felt pressurised to attend a workshop they did not feel comfortable with.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS
This range of workshops could be reproduced with the appropriate organisation and facilitation and is a relatively inexpensive way of developing action research learning.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS?
This workshop was part of an ongoing, evidence based commitment to developing action research and appreciative practice as part of work in neighbourhoods and community empowerment. Once the workshops were completed, a further piece of work was undertaken with specific local authorities to use appreciative practice to unlock the potential of front line workers.

REFLECTIONS
The "thinking out of the box" workshops enabled learning to happen at a very local level on different and innovative ways of thinking.

I am presently writing a PhD based on how we can "learn our way into sustainable communities." I am building on the work outlined in this case study and developing how we can use appreciative practice and action research to help communities learn their way into a sustainable future. I would like to share and understand more about this working with colleagues from all over Europe. I would be interested in being in contact with anyone aiming to run their own series of 'Thinking out of the box' workshops, or running appreciative practice workshops in neighbourhoods.

FURTHER RESOURCES AND INFORMATION
The author has published the following publication: Kettleborough (2011), Thinking out of the box: introducing action research into neighbourhood practice in the north-west of England in Marshall, Coleman and Reason, Leadership for Sustainability, An Action Research Approach, Sheffield: Greenleaf

[1] Scharmer C. Otto, 2007, Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges. Cambridge MA: the Society for Organisational Learning

AI HELPS HOMELESS CLIENTS DEVELOP THEIR RESILIENCE

BACK ON YOUR FEET PROJECT –WORKING WITH HOMELESS ENGAGED IN SUBSTANCE MISUSE.

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CONTEXT

I initiated conversations between myself and a manager for a homeless hostel about whether using an AI based approach could contribute to helping homeless hostel residents be more resilient, especially to support them as they moved on into independent living and training and volunteering. I had noticed in earlier contacts with this world that people made progress, but when they experienced setbacks that caused them to go into depression and back into substance misuse.

PURPOSE

To train hostel staff in AI and engage with them to make their work more strength based. In particular to develop and pilot a programme for hostel residents.

IMPACT

Most residents that were involved made unexpectedly great progress – 5 out of 8 moved into independent living within 4 months, and have maintained tenancies. All of them engaged in training and education, and dealt with difficult situations and decisions in a very resilient way. Several demonstrated increased 'emotional resilience' and managed their own responses better than in the past.

DURATION OF EVENT

Stages in development of AI in work with homeless hostel.

1. 'Definition':

    • Dec 2009: Exploratory conversations with hostel manager
    • Agreement of funding for a pilot
    • May 2010: AI conversations with staff to introduce them to the strength based approach
    • June 2010: 2 day staff training in AI
    • Formation of core group from those who were most interested to do more

2. Planning of a 3 day residential programme for homeless hostel residents together with core group of staff

3. June mini AI session to introduce residents to this way of working

4. July 2010: Delivery of the residential programme

5. Identification of how the staff intended to follow it up in the hostel

6. Ongoing application by staff – including weekly 2 hour drop in AI based sessions

7. Oct 2010: Review meeting with residents after 3 months, producing achievement diagrams. Also production of the video hearing from them about their achievements

8. Jan 2011: Repeat residential

9. Feb 2011: Piloting of one day AI course for those residents who couldn't go away for a longer period

10. June 2011: Evaluation done by hostel staff of residents achievements

11. Sept 2011: Roll out of the programme to more hostels locally

12. Oct 2011: Residential for new staff/hostel

RESOURCES
To train staff and develop and deliver the initial pilot was quite intensive – approximately 20 days; however it has resulted in staff being able to independently develop their approach.
To roll the programme out to 6 other hostels is taking 9 days
Also costs of a cheap youth hostel for the residential and a venue for day courses.

FURTHER RESOURCES
The author has made a description of the project "Back on my feet" Roads to recovery in a Westminister homeless hostel. Furthermore she has written an outline of the Stages in development of AI in work with homeless hostel. Source information for both documents can be found on learningeurope.eu. Last but not least a video and more information can be found on:
http://www.appreciatingpeople.co.uk/?page_id=127
www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest/biglocal

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION (INCL. BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER MEETING)
Given the chaotic nature of the client group the facilitator needed to be comfortable with chaos and inattention and disruption. It was also important to give the members permission to absent themselves at any point if things got too much for them –but then to encourage them to come back and to talk about things.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS
Essentially we converted the AI process into a personal development programme, which operated a little bit like group coaching.
It was important that the staff and the hostel in general supported the strength based approach in daily contact with residents on their return from the residential.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS?
The fact that clients were being asked to focus on their strengths and successes rather than the story of problems that had apparently led to them being in this situation.
The commitment and dedication of great hostel staff who engaged in the process themselves.
We encouraged as much as possible a culture of full sharing of the process – staff were not just observers.
The fact that residents were asked to articulate their own vision, and then some small steps to lead them towards it (and, of course, the generative power of the process).

VALUATION USING APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

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CONTEXT

The current global financial recession is undoubtedly affecting organisations in the voluntary sector. Whether this be through reductions in donations from private individuals or through a reduction in opportunities to bid for government grants. In the UK Voluntary and Community Organisations (VCO's) in the health and social care sector are also feeling challenged by the move to personalised budgets and changes in commissioning arrangements with the introduction of GP commissioning boards in the NHS. Another feature of VCO's is that they are dependent on a large number of dedicated volunteers. It is particularly important to engage them along with service users and paid staff in moving forward, so that everyone's energy is focussed in the same direction.

It is this backdrop that sets the scene for a year long Appreciative Inquiry (Ai) project in Kent, England. Through my networks I had become increasingly aware of Voluntary organisations struggling to maintain a cash flow and becoming more and more concerned about their longer term viability. I could see that confidence was diminishing and anxiety was setting in. As I work in a University I was able to bid for some Funding to pilot an approach to Valuation using Appreciative Inquiry, a way of engaging the organisation in intelligently refocusing its activities and drawing out energy and momentum for positive change from within rather than seeking external expertise to "do to" the organisation. The particular fund I accessed is designed to encourage entrepreneurial thinking in developing projects and contribute to socio-economic regeneration. I was keen to demonstrate the benefits of using AI "valuation" for the organisations themselves as well as building internal capacity by drawing together skill and expertise from two different University Faculties.

The project was designed to have two phases. In phase 1 we planned to carry out a "valuation" project within a VCO, piloting the use of an appreciative inquiry approach starting to develop a valuation toolkit that will inform phase 2. In phase 2 we planned to further test out the approach with a second VCO, and raise awareness of the benefits with the Kent VCO network. Our plan also included: Producing a film to showcase the work, developing a toolkit to be freely available to organisations in the voluntary sector. Presenting the work at conferences and seeking opportunities to get the work published.

OVERVIEW OF APPROACH:

To draw on the expertise from the two faculties involved, namely consultancy expertise In Organisation Development from The Department of leadership and management with the evaluation and research expertise from the Centre for Health & Social Care research.

We applied the 5D AI change model alongside the process consultancy model.
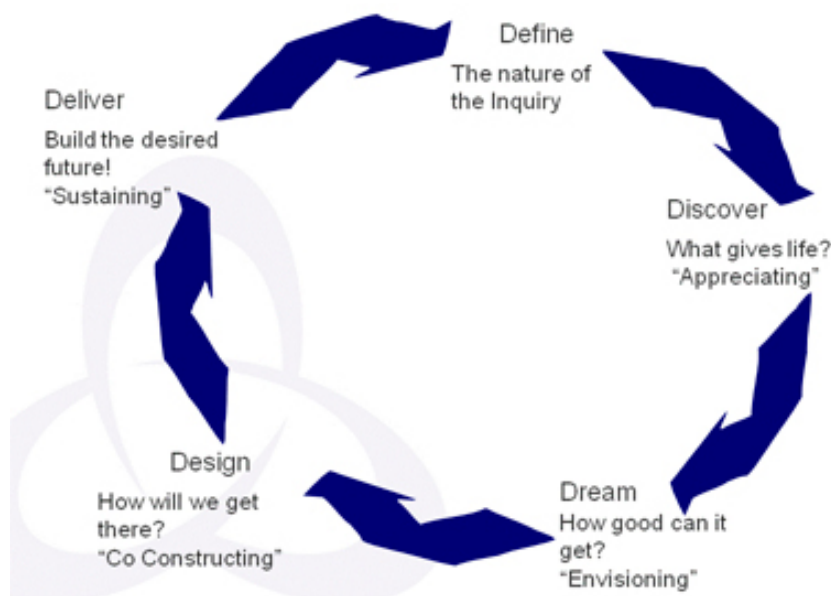
Our AI approach was based on the four universal principles as articulated by David Cooperrider, founder of Appreciative Inquiry, Professor, Weatherhead school of management, Case Western Reserve University

1. *What we ask determines what we "find"*
0. *What we find determines how we talk*
1. *How we talk determines how we "see" our future*
2. *How we "see" our future determines what we achieve*

In our pilot study we sought to apply these principles in the following ways:

I. To seek out all voices in the system and encourage active participation and co creation
II. Change is seen as starting on day 1 of the process and continuing
III. The focus is on changing the organisation which in turn enables people to change
IV. Builds on the life giving forces present when the system is performing at its best in human, economic and organisational terms

Work Programme

The remainder of this case study will focus on the Discovery & Dream Phase of the first test organisation.

PURPOSE

To help secure the long term success of "Organisation 1" in the context of the economic downturn and threats to its traditional income streams through "valuating" the work of the community.
To create a new vision that will encourage practices that are proven to be effective and reduce activity that detracts from the community's future sustainability.

IMPACT

As with any AI process the benefits start to emerge from the outset. In this instance some of the memorable ones were:

- *The teasing out of the focus for the inquiry with the board of trustees and the healthy debate about how they would engage with the project*
  This created an opportunity for a much needed dialogue about the nature of the trustees relationship with the organisation, their role as a supporter in difficult times vs the need to scrutinise the organisation.
- *The establishment of a working group to plan and carry out the project*
  The Chief executive was keen to engage a real cross section of the organisation, including volunteers, service users at different stages of their treatment, staff, team leaders and the Chief Executive herself. This working group made the project work. As they became familiar with AI they started to grow in confidence and engage in dialogue in ways that had never happened before. They helped inform the lines of inquiry making sure every question was worded in a way that a service user or external stakeholder could contribute to. They were fiercely proud of the organisation and through their discovery interviews took increasing ownership for ensuring the process was a success.
- *The early discovery interviews with members of the wider community*
  The core group were delighted with both what they discovered (lots on fabulous stories of success and incredible dedication) but also the energy with which everyone engaged in the process. They found themselves in dialogue with people they would not have otherwise have had the opportunity to converse with and the effects are ongoing in terms of breaking down barriers between parts of the organisation and encouraging more interaction with the local community
- *The growing ownership of the inquiry by members of the core group cumulating in individuals presenting themes and facilitating tables at the summit*
  This was a delight to witness. As service users and volunteers alike who had to date quietly gone about their business presented the themes from the interviews with great conviction. Several trustees commented on how moving and convincing it had been.
- *The positive power of the summit*
  The summit was a cumulation of months of discovery and planning by the core group.
  The organisation closed it's doors to visitors for the day and 70 people squeezed into the cafe to be part of the process. The day started with four short personal perspectives of the organisation. This created a really moving and compelling backdrop for the day and emphasised just how precious the organisation is and just how important it is to continue to serve the needs of its population. Once members of the core group had fed back the themes and messages from the different groups of stakeholders a further phase of discovery took place. This was followed by some creative visioning. At the end of the day everyone regrouped to work with people who shared a common interest in pursuing one of the ideas generated on the day. These initial ideas have been pursued further by members of these groups working up their ideas into action plans and implementing them. In the meantime the Chief Executive worked with one of the trustees to create a three year strategy informed by the summit.

- *Compelling visions were created*
  After a fabulous lunch (prepared in the organic cafe) on the summit day, the table groups set to work envisioning the future informed by and grounded in the outcomes of the discovery. Armed with creative materials they produced an amazingly rich set of pictures to capture the essence of the organisation in 2013. Each group sold their vision to the rest of the room noticing the core aspects and points of difference as they did so. This was certainly a high point in the day as the groups put all their creativity and passion together. There was much laughter not to mention glue, glitter and string everywhere you looked!
- *The whole system took part*
  The core group worked hard to identify and engage all those within and around the community who could help sustain the organisation. Before the summit the 1:1 interviews included previous supporters and benefactors as well as partners in the local community. A simplified version of the interview pro forma was created to be used with cafe and shop customers in small groups. Some of these people came along to the summit event and have continued to lend their support to the action plan.Over 70 people took part in the whole system summit (including trustees, staff, volunteers, supporters, local partners, members of the local community).
- *The organisation now has a clear vision that is owned by all and a strategic plan to steer them towards a successful future*
  This plan is built on the firm foundations of the organisations past successes, incorporates the collective wisdom and imagination of the whole community and as a result has high levels of ownership. The organisation feels confident about its future and has already started to win new grants, attract more service users, promote itself more widely and make changes to the way it functions. There are signs everywhere of energy, activity and optimism.

One memorable quote sums up the experience: "It was like having a spa break for the organisation".

DURATION OF EVENT
- The Discovery and Dream phases took place over a six month period.
- The core group undertook to interview 65 people as part of the discovery phase.
- The summit meeting was planned with a lead in time of 8 weeks to encourage maximum participation and to complete the Discovery interviews and groups around peoples day jobs. (Typically each member of the core group carried out 8-10 interviews or groups over the six month period)
- The core group met once a month to check on progress, continue the planning, share themes and help plan the summit.
- The summit event took place on one 7.5 hour day in the cafe of the organisation

RESOURCES
A university fund paid for the process consultancy provided by the team. (Two University staff (with occasional input from others) were involved on a part-time basis over a period of nine months (6 months for the Discovery & Dream phases). A student in the media department produced the film on a voluntary basis. All the other resources were provided by the organisation and their local population. Heaps of wisdom, a willingness to engage in the process and an incredible belief in the value of the organisation!

See the film produced to showcase this project on youtube:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWSuOgPCk6c

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

In this project our team had a variety of roles.

- At the outset our role was to give confidence to the board of trustees that this approach could add value and genuinely support their long term future against a fear that it could detract key people from chasing short term cash.
- At the next stage we immersed ourselves in getting to know the organisation and the people involved. We established and trained the core group and co created a plan for carrying out the project with them. One example of an early success was inviting each member of the core group to bring a symbol of something that epitomised the organisation for them. The ensuing group discussion really helped break down barriers and relax the group.
- We invested quite a bit if time creating the lines of inquiry with the core group, testing these out and checking back against the trustees brief.
- Our role in the Discovery phase was two - fold. We undertook some discovery interviews alongside group members to help develop their skills and confidence. We then stepped back and supported the efforts of the group picking up particular interviews where it was considered helpful to have an external perspective.
- In the summit itself I worked in close partnership with the Chief executive. She topped and tailed the day. I acted as the lead, orchestrating all the different elements and managing the timings and overall guidance for the audience. The core group acted as table facilitators and played a role in presenting themes from the discovery. These large scale events do need careful orchestration and pre planning. I even had a script for parts of the day and a participant pack for every member of the audience with all the information they would need over the course of the day. The day itself felt like it ran itself which was a great relief after all that pre planning beforehand.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

One of the considerations in undertaking this project was engaging service users with mental illness. I was reminded very often of the AI principle of wholeness because this turned out to be an incredible gift. Some of the most powerful suggestions for change came from service users seeking more of a stretch in their treatment which was a total surprise to staff and volunteers but of course made perfect sense! I was also incredibly moved when one of the service users who had been on the core group fed back that engaging in the project had reconnected him with his old self and made him feel he had a role to play and supported his recovery.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS

Much has been written about the power of whole system summits. I found Ludema et als[1] work a really helpful guide. Our experience with this project is to trust the wisdom around you.

- If all things had been equal a two day summit would have been great. This clearly wasn't going to be an option here so we did what we could in one day building on lots of discovery beforehand.
- Co creation has its value at every stage. Early on I had to reign in my tendencies to come up with solutions and allow the wisdom of the core group to emerge. Equally I felt confident in taking "starter for ten" lines of inquiry to the core group to play with rather than starting with a blank sheet of paper which I felt they would have found daunting and more time consuming.
- We developed a very close working relationship with the Chief Executive which enabled us to support her through a tough time with her trustees, enabled us to get to know the organisation much more intimately and be accepted by the community. One of her gifts to the process was an inspired suggestion that we open the summit with four personal stories about the organisation. This was really moving, and succeeded in engaging everyone in the process and set the tone for a really productive day.

What I took from this experience is a growing confidence to be guided by the principles whilst allowing each application to take on its own special shape informed by the wisdom of the people involved. What specifically contributed to the success?

A combination of factors came together synergistically.
- An organisation crying out for help ready to grasp the olive branch offered
- A Chief executive who modelled a strength based approach to running her organisation and was open to using AI
- An organisation that delivered a unique and very precious service to its service users
- An incredible cohort of service users, volunteers and staff with the wisdom and imagination to co create the next phase of their organisation
- A team from the University with complementary expertise and experience, inspired by the organisation and its ethos and ready and willing to work in partnership with the organisation and go the extra mile.

REFLECTIONS

This project was the highlight of my year. It was a real privilege to work with such an inspiring organisation doing such a worthwhile job in its community. I was blessed with support from my AI network which gave me space to reflect on the challenges and stay true to an AI philosophy. I also really enjoyed working with colleagues with different expertise and experience and sharing learning and developing our capability internally.

FUTURE DAY CONCEPT

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CONTEXT

The context was a small village that just had been given the message that their main working place should be closed down. We got the task to do something for the schoolchildren aged 13-16.

PURPOSE

To create hope for the future and especially for the young people. During the project we expanded the purpose to be for the whole region.

Duration of event
1 day

PROCESS

October 1999   Process start. We signed on to work with the project

Nov, Dec 1999   Marketing, grounding the idea in the school management

Jan 2000   The Planning day meaning that we gathered a smaller group to test the logistics and the questioning. Start the youngsters to write invitations to grown ups

Feb 2000   The future day – one day with an AI-process 300 youngsters and 300 decision makers working a whole day with the future of the village and the north part of the island of Gotland

April 2000   Follow-up meeting

IMPACT

The impact was that the event gave people something to talk about that was connected with hope for the future. Over 600 people and half of them school youngsters had been together a whole day talking about proud for their part of the island Gotland and expressed dreams of the future. A very lucky day where we accomplished a great feeling hope for the future and something to talk about as a symbol for the future, something to remember. Stories live long and travels fast from mountain top to mountain top.

RESOURCES

- Three consultants
- A sport hall with a lot of chairs placed into 20 groups with 30 chairs in each. Signs that showed the number of the group and a number of smaller group-rooms

- Lists where we had mixed grown ups with youngsters very carefully and also a mix of youngsters to avoid have groups of youngsters that they knew each other
- Microphones
- A music group playing world music
- Signs for the Open Space part

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATION

Three consultants worked parallel in the project with the different phases planning, leading and follow up guiding the group and the smaller groups through the process.

Every group had an envelope with instructions on papers in different colours. This was prepared before the meeting.

During the meeting we started to give a brief information on the times for the different activities and then we guided the groups carefully through the process step by step like this:

- *First exercise* is to discover what you are proud of today by interviewing in pairs. Work two and two – one adult and one youngster in your group. If there is an uneven number of participants in the group, you work three people in one group.
- *Second exercise* is that you share your stories of success with another couple by retelling what you heard.
- *Third step* is that you work in the whole group with describing the desired future and pick a symbol for your work. You may use the smaller rooms and then we all gather here at 2 o´clock exactly and then you are prepared to give a presentation of your desire future.
- *After all* the presentations we arrange a Open Space session: nnow filled with all these proud stories and nice pictures of the future, we want you to think what you want to do to make these dreams come through. Over 50 different groups were established and we let them have their first meeting and then they handed in the notes for publishing on the website.

After the meeting we published on the website the notes and the names of members and contact persons and the time for the next meeting. This was made to make it possible for people to join the groups and for the work to develop. Then after 2 months (in April) we arranged a follow up meeting and around 70 people came and presented the status of their work. We had also engaged people from different EU-units and the local council to inform about possibilities to apply for grants.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS AND UNIQUE SOLUTIONS IN THE PROCESS

The mixing of generations was very successful and we really felt that it was true what Cooperrider and Whitney said that you are not sarcastic to a child.

ASPECTS OF FLOW THAT CAN BE APPLIED TO OTHER SITUATIONS

To carefully plan the logistic activities and to trust the AI process.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESS?

The idea of Appreciative Inquiry, the mixing of generations, the need for a manifestation, the grounding in the local community and in the schools.

REFLECTIONS

Very much effort was put into marketing the whole idea. This was something no one had experienced ever so we had to sell it to the youngsters, the teachers, headmasters and then we let the youngsters invite the grown ups they wanted to participate. And who could resist an invitation coming from a 14 year old saying that we want you to come to our Future Day. Another thing was to describe it as a coming success.

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