AI Practitioner

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The Impact of Appreciative Inquiry on International Development

Guest Editors: **Mette Jacobsgaard and Irene Nørlund**

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Mette Jacobsgaard
is a lawyer and social scientist who has worked with development aid for 28 years especially in Africa and Asia. She has used AI in her practice as a consultant and trainer since 1994.
Contact: 101572.622@compuserve.com
                    www.appreciative-inquiry.co.uk

Irene Nørlund
has worked in social change in developing countries for three decades, specializing in NGOs and community development; livelihoods, nutrition and health and organizations and participatory methods. She has trained NGOs in Mongolia in AI analysis. She is presently working in Research & Development at Metropolitan University College, Copenhagen.
Contact: inorlund@mail.dk

The Impact of Appreciative Inquiry on International Development

ABSTRACT

The expert role of the Western donors clashes with the belief that the peoples of the developing world should have a say in how they move forward Appreciative Inquiry can bridge some of those conflicts, especially when the experts change their role to become facilitators.

In our work with development aid to Third World countries over the many years we have had experience of working with conflicting paradigms. On one hand, there is an underlying paradigm that the Third World is a problem to be solved and Western donors have the knowledge, capacity and money to do so; on the other is the paradigm of public participation, in which the peoples of the Third World need to take ownership of their own development and more actively participate in the projects and programmes that are supposed to aid them. The expert role of the Western donors clashes with the belief that the peoples of the developing world should have a say in how they move forward.

We believe that Appreciative Inquiry can bridge some of those conflicts, especially when the 'experts' change their role to become facilitators. In this issue we have invited a number of AI practitioners, seasoned as well as a few relatively new to the approach, to share their experiences.

The practice of AI in development emanated from the pioneering work of the USAID-sponsored GEM (Global Excellence in Management) project in the early 1990s. A group of scholars and practitioners, mostly Americans, tried, tested and developed the practice through the project which worked particularly in the not-for-profit sector globally. The much used and quoted 4D model was developed by this project.

Charles Elliott wrote *Locating the Energy for Change* in 1999[1], in which some of the first cases of AI practice in development were documented in a published form. Since then, AI has taken off in a big way, not least because of the respectful way in which the approach brings on board all voices and emphasises what does and can work in a developing world that is still for some portrayed as problematic.

1 See page 77 for a review of the book.

The five AI principles are:
• Constructionist
• Simultaneity
• Anticipatory
• Poetic
• Positive

Our own experience has time and again proved how AI can ideally accommodate empowerment and the participation of beneficiary communities.

We were curious about other practitioners' experience with applying AI in the projects and programmes that they have worked with, so we asked a number of them to tell us their stories, especially with the following focus:

- How the use of AI influenced target group participation and ownership in the project or programme or in the specific intervention

- What the effects and impact were

- Surprises for them and the groups, and finally

- Lessons learned and reflections on how AI could be carried forward in international development practice

What lessons were learned?

This issue of *AI Practitioner* focuses on the experiences of AI in developing countries. The questions raised for the authors involved with AI approaches have generated a number of stories from the history of the development of AI as a concept and approach, and how it has been integrated in development efforts in different parts of the world (particularly in Asia and Africa), in different time phases and at many different levels – from grassroots levels to governmental.

The contributions strongly demonstrate that AI puts people first. It is participatory and creates ownership for the users involved in the programmes. The question is, what does AI do that many ordinary development methodologies are not capable of achieving? Why is it that the AI approach has proved effective in the cases described in this issue of *AI Practitioner*?

The five principles

The five principles, as outlined by Ada Jo Mann, Jen Silbert and Diana Carazas in 'From Seeds to Forest', form the AI philosophy:

- The constructionist principle (knowledge and destiny are interwoven)

- The principle of simultaneity (inquiry is intervention – inquiry and change are not separate)

- The anticipatory principle (our images of the future guide out current behaviour – positive image creates positive action)

- The poetic principle (human organisations and systems are open boxes – what we chose to focus on will grow)

- The positive principle (organisations move in the direction of the questions they ask).[2]

AI has in many respects been ahead of its time in the development cooperation context. AI supports grassroots participation, empowerment, development processes. The approach draws on post-modern and qualitative methods, trusting the construction of ideas between people. This may be the reason

2 Jane M. Watkins and David Cooperrider formulated a coherent AI approach in 'Appreciative Inquiry: A Transformative Paradigm.' *OD Practitioner* 32 (1) 2000, even if the history goes back to the mid-1980s.

AI has an inherent tendency to create networks.

why AI is gaining importance among organisations working with community development and issues like street children. In evaluation as well, there are many methods that are using qualitative approaches such as AI, as discussed in Mette's article on 'Embedded (E)Valuation.'

The articles in this issue show that experienced AI facilitators and scholars have been channels carrying the approach from one country to another, and from one field to another. It could be said that AI has an inherent tendency to create networks, due to the broad inclusion of people and stakeholders in the projects; the positive results have inspired others to try it.

There is great variety in both level and knowledge of development and experience of AI. There is, furthermore, great variety in terms of the scenarios.

Common denominators
First, the grassroots stakeholders are involved in the projects and processes which are based on positive stories about the times when they have been most alive, fulfilled and excited.

Second, AI needs an experienced facilitator at the beginning, even if the process can be taken over and continued by the organisations. The spirit can be continued and maintained, as in projects like in India's MYRADA.

Third, AI works both at grassroots level, as well as higher levels in organisations. In some cases the initiative comes from the central level and moves down, as in Kyrgyzstan and Liberia.

Fourth, AI can be used as a process for evaluation and learning, as in Malcolm J. Odell's piece from Sierra Leone.

We begin this issue – with the beginning. In the two first articles, Jane Watkins and Ada Jo Mann describe how the practice of AI was developed, tried and tested in the early years through development projects and more specifically in the NGO world. The story began in 1984 when David Cooperrider and Jane Watkins met.

Planting seeds that grow
Ada Jo outlines the fundamental AI principles and the 4D model. USAID should be credited as being instrumental and giving financial support to the early development of AI in 1990 in connection with the Global Excellence in Management (GEM) initiative. An initiative headed by Ada Jo and a few colleagues, it was the beginning of larger scale use of AI in development cooperation. The project now underway in Liberia ('From Seeds to Forest' by USAID to support the forestry sector was facilitated by Ada Jo to strengthen the partnership across the forestry sector). In this case AI was started as a process at national level before it was carried out into the localities through consultative teams.

The MYRADA project in South India, presented by A. Singh et al., is a fantastic story of how it has been possible to integrate AI and social capital in a fairly large-scale community development project in three provinces. The AI process was introduced in community based projects in the late 1990s. Social capital had already linked organisations at the same levels based on trust and mutual

'Generating inner energy' in Kyrgyzstan

support, and it was 'bridging' to outside organisations. AI added an important dimension for the women in the CBOs (self-help affinity groups) to plan for the future. It continues to be part of an integrated process in visioning and planning, right up to 2014!

Tobias Schueth writes about the Community Action for Health in Kyrgyzstan. He has been the representative for the Red Cross there since 2001, and became engaged in the government's National Health Reform program which functioned with voluntary Village Health Committees, which act as local NGOs. After having been trained in AI he started to slowly pilot AI together with staff and local health committees. The results were very positive in generating the 'inner source of energy' as one of the participants mentioned. More than 1000 villages went through the process.

Malcolm J. Odell comes with a different story in the article 'Letters from the Rainbow Planet'. A Peace Corps volunteer many years ago, involved with AI for ten years, he took on the task of helping a large-scale, EU-funded programme linking relief, rehabilitation and development in Sierra Leone. Malcolm drew on experience with AI in community work in Nepal, where he developed the innovative Malaku model, which he has since used in Sierra Leone to help the community create a presentation that, in the end, satisfied EU officials. When he returned a year later, the positive, appreciative approach was still ongoing, and many new projects were underway. The APA processes had worked!

Privilege Maguchu Chidzewere writes in his short piece about the community empowerment for development programme in South Africa. After a recent training course, he has been inspired to use an AI approach. He writes about changing the traditional top-down planning in his organisation to a strengths-based, participatory approach developed from the 4D model.

AI and street children

In this issue we have included no fewer than four cases of AI with projects that support street children. One reason is that some of the early 'experiments' with AI in development were made in projects supporting street children. Second, AI seemed an obvious choice to those of us who were invited to work in these volatile and challenging environments. Third, as always, there is coincidence.

As Father Patrick Shanahan describes in his article, 'Dream to Delivery', he was looking for and dreaming about something different, an approach that would honour the tremendous efforts that he and his colleagues have made in an extremely volatile environment of street children. He has been instrumental in changing the way street children are viewed in Africa. He has done so through the lens of AI. Although there may still be a long way to go, Father Patrick relentlessly pursues his dreams and belief that street children are individuals who deserve respect in their own right. A way to not only show respect but also to empower street children is by asking them to tell their stories with a focus on what works for them.

Chance would have it that Patrick, Mette, Charles and Jane were at Cambridge at the same time. AI was tested to the limit: the underlying principles of AI were taken and moved into an arena that was new to the trainers. They let social construction do the work. It was a great success; Mette went back several times to further embed the AI approach with organisations in Ghana. Father Patrick

Street children in Zambia

was instrumental in moving ahead with AI in other organisations working with street children as presented in Christopher Mulenga's article from Zambia, 'Friends of the Street Children'. Christopher took to AI as soon as he heard about it. He immediately and instinctively knew that AI would be the way forward in work that is not only tremendously challenging but also very rewarding when successful. He relates the impact that it has had not only on the organisation but also on the lives of the street children.

Others, inspired by this work, took up the intent as illustrated by Cathy Ward's article from Uganda. Although the work in Uganda differs in approach, both to development and to AI, it was inspired by the belief that street children are a mystery to be embraced rather than a problem to be solved.

The work with street children started with evaluation, as is discussed in the last article on embedded (e)valuation. This sets out a description of embedded (e) valuation and its significance for these projects.

AI supplements other approaches

What stands out in the contributions to this issue is that AI is not only participatory but also inclusive and empowering. Furthermore, it does not negate other approaches rather it supplements human capital very nicely. AI compliments other participatory approaches.

We hope that this issue will inspire many more development practitioners to take up AI, qualify as practitioners and, especially, experiment with AI as a new way of doing what they already do.

Mette Jacobsgaard and Irene Nørlund
Guest Editors, August 2011

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Jane Magruder Watkins

For over 30 years, Jane's work has focused on experiential education and Organization Development around the globe. An early innovator, she has experimented with applying AT to all aspects of organizational life, as well as in personal growth and human development. She developed AI Foundations workshops and the AI Certificate Program.

Contact: info@appreciativeinquiryunlimited.com

Appreciative Inquiry – A Global Phenomenon

ABSTRACT

Jane Magruder Watkins has, without a doubt, been one of the most important driving forces for spreading AI globally. She is the lead author of the bestselling book, Appreciative Inquiry – Change at the Speed of imagination. In 2009 at the global AI Conference in Katmandu, Nepal, Jane received the first Lifetime Achievement Award for spreading AI around the globe.

'The GEM Initiative became a living laboratory for sowing the seeds of Appreciative Inquiry around the globe, jump starting the "positive revolution in change" that is now occurring in almost every country and in all continents around the world.'

That quote comes from the article following this one about the GEM project written by Ada Jo Mann, creator and manager of the GEM initiative. In the article, she describes the major project responsible for spreading Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to all corners of the globe. Mette Jacobsgaard, editor of this AIP issue, asked me to tell the story of the events that led up to the choice of AI as the GEM project's approach to organization change and enrichment. Since I can't resist telling a good story, here is my version of the process.

The story begins at the 1984 conference in Florida sponsored by the NTL Institute of Applied Behavioral Science where I met David Cooperrider who was, at that time, a PhD candidate at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio. (The NTL Institute of Applied Behavioral Science is the origin of traditional approaches to Organization Development and a partner in creating the innovative School of Organization Behavior at Case Western where David studied and is now a professor.)

My passion for community organizing came from my experiences in Mississippi during the 1960s that led me, ultimately, into the field of International Development. When I worked for the Peace Corps in the headquarters office in Washington, DC, during the Carter Administration, I became enthralled with the community development work that the Peace Corps was spreading across the poorest countries around the globe. Later, I was recruited to work for the New TransCentury organization founded by Warren Wiggins (a man who had designed the Peace Corps for Sargent Shriver during the Kennedy administration). TransCentury began my journey into those poorest countries where I spread

Isn't it arrogant of us to go over there and tell them what to do? David Copperrider

forms of planning and implementation of projects using NTL's participatory approaches and methodologies.

Enriching women's lives in Kenya

I left TransCentury in 1983 to be Director of the International Development Office at the Episcopal Church USA in New York City. It was in this capacity that I began to work with women's groups in Anglican communities across Africa. One particularly amazing group of such women was in Kenya. Over the course of a three year project, these women began transforming their communities and enriching the lives of women across Kenya. In 1983, I asked my friend Doe Mayer, a master at creating documentaries, to film these women. We called the film *The Women Will*.

At the 1984 NTL conference, I offered a session to show the film and discuss the work in Africa. Among the small group that came was David Cooperrider. After showing the film, we had a Question and Answer session. David asked the first question. 'Isn't it arrogant of us to go over there and tell them what to do?' I answered that I couldn't agree more and explained that the purpose of this project was to give women a way to develop their leadership and planning skills so that they could be organizers and leaders of groups that focused on improving the quality of life for families and women in particular. We were teaching them a participatory planning process and leadership skills.

Introducing AI

As we ended the session, David asked if I would go with him to hear a presentation by John Carter, an NTL colleague who had applied AI in his work with a large accounting firm – the first such application since, at that time, AI was still largely a theoretical discussion. John had demonstrated how effective AI could be working with large systems and David thought I might be interested. It was the beginning of what became not only a partnership, but also a deep and lasting friendship.

David and I kept in touch. In one phone call he asked if I would work with him on a conference on AI to be held at Case Western in 1989. In preparation for that conference, several of David's colleagues wrote about work they were doing using AI in their research studies. He said to me: 'I want to focus on global organizations and particularly in the "not-for-profit" sector.' This intention led to two major projects:

1. The establishment of the SIGMA Center for Global Change at Case Western as a center for research and education dedicated to the study and development of worldwide organizations.

2. The Social Innovations in Global Management Conference that same year that highlighted student's studies of five not-for-profit global social change organizations using an AI approach to the research.

USAID and Case Western Reserve University

When Ada Jo invited me to work with her on this large AID funded project, and the staff at USAID giving us the grant suggested that we needed a University as a partner for the project, David's name was first up in my mind. Ada Jo was interested and one of our planning group was commissioned to talk to several Universities interested in international development work. David and Case Western Reserve University became our partners and we embarked on the

GEM was life-changing not only for those we taught, but also for those who staffed the workshops.

great adventure of an experimental year working with US based not-for-profit international development agencies.

And the rest is history. Not only did Ada Jo organize us to work with the United States' NGOs that first year, but USAID was so pleased with the success of that project that they increased the grant and extended the project to include international NGOs for several years. I believe that GEM was life-changing not only for those we taught/facilitated, but also for those who staffed the workshops and travelled the globe, spreading the original idea of empowering people to plan and manage their own projects and partnerships across cultures, and also inculcating the idea of appreciative ways of thinking and living that turned out to be far more compatible with the relational cultures of Asia, Africa and Latin America than it is with the Western model of finding what has failed and who is to blame.

The GEM Legacy

From that first AI Conference at Case Western in 1989, when the theory and practice of AI was new and involved mostly people who were associated with Case Western, to the most recent Global AI conference held in 2009 in Katmandu, Nepal, AI has become a global phenomenon. The Nepal conference had over 400 participants from 43 countries around the globe. Without a doubt, the GEM project has played a major and pivotal role in 'infecting' the globe with a process that is aligned with the rapid pace of change and enables people to search out and build on their strengths, their hopes and dreams, and their confidence that they, too, can create a future full of hope and possibility.

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Ada Jo Mann

Ada Jo Mann is managing partner of Innovation Partners International. She has 35+ years of experience collaborating with clients on strengths-based approaches to leadership development, strategic planning, organization design, whole system change, program development and evaluation, team building, and training.
Contact: adajo@innovationpartners.com

A Positive Revolution in International Development
A Living Laboratory for Appreciative Inquiry

ABSTRACT

In 1990, destiny brought David Cooperrider together with Ada Jo Mann, Jane Watkins and Claudia Liebler to co-create a program to increase the capacity of leaders of international development organizations. Global Excellence in Management – the GEM Initiative – became a living laboratory for sowing the seeds of AI around the globe.

The groundbreaking ideas of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) grew out of David Cooperrider's excitement about the possibilities for innovation and the positive organizational potential he observed during his dissertation research at the Cleveland Clinic in the early 1980s as a doctoral candidate at Case Western Reserve University. Over the next several years David and his mentor, Suresh Srivastva, and colleagues Frank Barrett and John Carter built the research foundations and developed the principles upon which the theoretical underpinnings of AI are based. In those early years they had several opportunities to introduce these ideas to the management community and to experiment with them in a handful of organizations.

In 1990, destiny brought Cooperrider together with a team of international development consultants (Ada Jo Mann, Jane Watkins and Claudia Liebler) to co-create a program to increase the capacity of leaders of international development organizations. After four highly successful pilot workshops introducing the AI approach to strategy and change involving executive leadership teams from more than 30 international aid organizations, Global Excellence in Management – the GEM Initiative – was born. Funded by the US Agency for International Development from 1994-2000 for a total in excess of seven million dollars, the GEM Initiative became a living laboratory for sowing the seeds of AI around the globe, jump starting the 'positive revolution in change' that is now occurring in almost every country and on all continents around the world.

Since World War II, external aid to the developing world has evolved along a continuum from relief to external, expert driven assistance to participatory stakeholder involvement. The unique contribution that the GEM Initiative has made to people-centered development lies in its enduring search for what gives life to individuals, communities, organizations and nations when they are functioning at their best. In the development context this translated into a dramatic change of focus from the long-held paradigm that assumed that third

Jane Magruder Watkins and David Cooperrider in a workshop

world nations needed to be fixed, to an appreciative stance which assumes that every person, every community, every organization has some capacity and some positive history which can be tapped into and built upon. The AI approach embodied in GEM programs built capacity upon the foundation of what works, what empowers, what motivates, what gives hope and what inspires change and innovation.

The purpose of GEM was to provide innovative resources to international and local NGOs to enhance their institutional capacity in delivering effective development assistance. GEM offered multiple programs, each targeting a different level of human and organizational capacity. All GEM programs used AI as the singular approach to change.

The Organizational Excellence Program

In the Organizational Excellence Program, NGO management teams participated in an organization-wide process of strategic change. During the preparation period, a representative team from the organization created a customized interview guide which was widely used throughout the organization and among its stakeholders. This interview guide was used by the core team to gather stories or data during the Discovery phase. Also, during this phase the stories were shared to identify common themes.

Next, during the Dream phase, these common themes served as a launching pad for creating powerful future visions of the organization that could be articulated in possibility statements.

It was during the Design phase that a new social architecture for the organization was created combining the best of the past with the shared vision of the future.

Finally, it was through the Delivery phase that processes for system-wide learning and innovation were introduced and nurtured.

Table 1: Contents of the 4D program

Discovery	Preparation Workshop	• Protocol development • Inquiry
Dream and Design	Residential Institute	• Themes • Propositions • Social architecture
Delivery	Follow up	• System-wide • Learning organization

The Appreciative Inquiry Model for Building Partnership

In the Appreciative Inquiry Model for Building Partnership, the 4D model followed a similar path. However, this time the focus was on inter-organizational excellence. The purpose of the AI process in this case was to create dynamic relationships that grew out of a shared vision and authentic dialogue.

During the Discovery phase, the partners inquired into what might give life to their partnership, especially looking for what each one uniquely brought. In the Dream phase, the focus was on creating a shared vision by dreaming together the impact this partnership could have on their joint enterprises. It was through

Discovery | Appreciating

'What gives life to partnership?'

Delivery | Sustaining

'How can the partnership empower, learn, adjust and improvise?'

An AI Model for Building Partnership

Dream | Envisioning Impact

'What is the partnership calling for?'

Design | Co-constructing

'How shall we structure our partnership?

GEM participant with Ada Jo Mann

the Design phase that decisions were jointly made about how they would operate together and what implications there were for change in each of their organizations. The Delivery phase became a time for reflection, adjustment and innovation as the partnership sought to learn and grow together. It was during a partnership workshop sponsored by Save the Children USA that the 4D Model of Appreciative Inquiry was named.

Creating networks of countries using the AI model

Another application of the AI 4D Model involved the creation of a network of organizations. A group of NGOs from three neighboring countries wanted to explore the potential for forming a network in order to build each other's technical and organizational capacity. They had heard about AI and asked GEM for assistance. In this instance the 4D Model was used both to help these organizations decide whether they wished to form a network, and then to design and launch it. During the Discovery phase, the three organizations inquired into both the qualities found in effective networking as well as their individual hopes for forming such a network. In the Dream phase they incorporated their findings from the inquiry to envision their ideal network. At this point a 'go / no-go' decision was made. Having decided in the affirmative, the Design phase represented an opportunity to create the charter for the network to include such aspects as purpose, principles, structure and membership. Finally, during the Delivery phase, the network was launched and the joint activities began.

The GEM Certificate Program In Global Change and Social Innovation

The GEM Certificate Program In Global Change and Social Innovation was a unique, three-phased learning experience for NGO leaders charged with sustaining on-going capacity to build efforts both internally and in the field. The three phases of the program included a two-week intensive residential learning community followed by an application of AI in their own organizations, and then a five day follow-up learning phase to compare application results and increase their individual capacity to lead positive change. This groundbreaking program became a model for the development of future AI Certificate programs at Case Western Reserve University, NTL (National Training Laboratories Institute) and elsewhere.

AI has wings that now span the globe.

From deficit-based to strengths-based international development

As a result of these GEM programs, the AI approach to change and capacity-building has touched the lives of more than 1000 NGO leaders from over 200 organizations in at least 52 countries. There is no telling how many more people were introduced to AI by these AI pioneers. We do know that AI has wings that now span the globe in almost any country one can name. And it is clear that the seeds that were planted through GEM, thanks to the funding of USAID, have changed the development paradigm.

GEM certificate follow-up program in Cairo

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Anita Singh
teaches Oganisational Behaviour, Organisation Development, and International Human Resource Management in M.S. Ramaiah Institute of Management in Bangalore, India.
Contact: anitarsingh@gmail.com

Mr Bellegowda
head of project at MYRADA, is involved in planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes. He trained participants from NGOs, government and community-based organizations.
Contact: myradahuthur@yahoo.co.in

Mr Rajachary
has 26 years' experience in rural development. He has trained participants from NGOs, government, banks and community-based organizations in AI, development concepts and poverty alleviation.
Contact: myradahuthur@yahoo.co.in

Rangegowda Ramesh
trained in AI by MYRADA, has 12 years' experience in rural development, strengthening community-based organizations and training participants in development concepts and poverty alleviation.
Contact: ramesh.rjy999@gmail.com

Saleela Patkar
was part of the team that introduced AI in Myrada in 2000. Along with Graham Ashford of IISD, she co-authored *The Positive Path: Using Appreciative Inquiry in Rural Indian Communities*.
Contact: bellacchu@gmail.com

Thiyagarajan Babu
an academic activist and assistant professor at MINDS, a business school in Bangalore, is involved in several World Bank-assisted consulting projects.
Contact: thibabu@yahoo.com

Social Capital and MYRADA's Pioneering Approach

The Power of Women in Community-Based Organisations in Southern India

ABSTRACT
MYRADA has always been in the forefront of pioneering and spreading new ideas in development. This paper examines how MYRADA is bringing AI and the concept of social capital together, empowering the women and their villages.

Over the last few decades, research on community development has increasingly shown that involving community members in their own development through participatory approaches is critical for sustainable development. Two major trends have given rise to this new paradigm of community development: first, a weakening of the social contract that bound people together, especially the poor, and provided a cushion of social security especially in difficult times; second, a focus on problems which became ingrained in communities and which in turn attracted outside attention and assistance.

The government and NGOs took the responsibility of delivering 'ready-made solutions' for these problems. This paper explores the corresponding transformation in the practice of community development in MYRADA, with particular focus on women's community-based organisations (CBOs).[1] In this case study, we examine how MYRADA has been unleashing the power of women by building on the affinity among poor and marginalised women to create social capital while building their capacity through the AI approach.[2]

1 Homogenous and membership groups of poor people at village level, federated at the second level, under a resource centre managed by the community itself.
2 The work with AI is vividly portrayed in the film which can be downloaded from the website.www.myrada.org.

The concept of capital needs to be enlarged to include social capital.

MYRADA, founded in 1968, is a South Indian development agency focusing entirely on the poor and marginalised in rural areas and is presently managing thirteen projects in the states of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. It has also collaborated with government, bilateral and multilateral programmes, with other states in India and in countries such as Myanmar, Indonesia, Timor Leste, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Rwanda. Over the years MYRADA has evolved into a group of autonomous societies, companies and informal institutions sharing a common vision to promote livelihood strategies, local governance, management of natural resources and health and education, favouring the rural poor in an inclusive, equitable and sustainable manner.

In 1999, Appreciative Inquiry was introduced in MYRADA through a two-and-half year partnership with Canada's International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). Funding was provided by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID)[3] to field test what was then a new participatory development approach called AI. In the last 10 years, MYRADA has conducted AI workshops for most of its own staff, many in turn have used this approach with their own families, and 80% of the members of the CBOs.

These include self-help affinity groups (SAGs)[4]; watershed management associations (WMAs)[5]; SAG federations[6]; community managed resource centers (CMRCs)[7]; district level HIV-positive persons' networks; and district level Soukhya Samudhaya Samasthe.[8] Though the AI approach to community development was introduced in MYRADA in the late 1990s, social capital seemed to be gaining a foothold from 1984 through the creation of community-based organisations.

Extending the definition of 'capital'
Traditionally, the definition of 'capital' has included physical, natural and human capital. This overlooked the way in which 'the people engaged in the organisation' interact and organise themselves to generate growth and development. Hence the concept of capital needs to be enlarged to encompass social capital – the social structure plus the facilitation of the actors within that structure[9] – for a better understanding of community development.

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3 The project worked with governmental and non-governmental organisations in India.
4 Self-help groups or self-help affinity groups are CBOs, small groups of 15-20 poor men or women. The groups, mainly women's SAGs, are a major component of MYRADA's strategy for empowering the poor and marginalised.
5 CBOs are associations of poor farmers and other groups who live on or own land in a small, geographically contiguous area usually involved in planning for soil and water conservation, natural resource management activities, agriculture development and non-farm-based livelihoods.
6 One member is nominated from each CBO to represent the organisation at the federation level.
7 Created in 2004, each comprises 100-120 SAGs, WMAs and Soukhya groups. They are integral to MYRADA's withdrawal strategy as the role played by MYRADA in mentoring, monitoring and supporting these SAGs and WMAs is taken over by the CMRCs. The CBOs seek out membership in the CMRC and the latter levies a fee for the services they provide to nonmembers.
8 Registered societies at district level of sex workers. Focus is on health, safe sex, without oppression and harassment and, later by their own choice, on alternate livelihoods.
9 Coleman, 1988:598.

Social capital is
an important new
dimension of community
development.

Valuation of the impact of AI strengths-based approach at the community level was felt necessary. Such a study remains incomplete unless it recognises the impact of social capital in community development. There is growing empirical evidence that social capital represents an important new dimension of community development, a link that has gone unnoticed in sustainable development. The CBOs, poor people's organisations, embody a very important form of structural social capital which is indispensable in making development possible and sustainable. As emphasised by Coleman, unlike human capital, social capital is embedded in structures, not in individuals. This capital, which is embodied in relationships and groups of people, constitutes a potentially important asset and plays a significant role in reducing poverty.

A MYRADA case study in Karnataka

MYRADA brings the concepts of social capital and Appreciative Inquiry (AI) together in women's CBOs at community level, and building the capacity of its members for sustainable community development through AI workshops. Social capital and AI complement each other and seem to be essential for a sustained long-term development, more so in the context of the poor and marginalised women in the villages. This case study is part of ongoing research studying the impact of AI workshop by MYRADA on the members of CBOs.[10] The case study focuses on the impact of AI workshops on the CBO members of women's SAGs in three out of six CMRCs and explores the concept of social capital through these CBOs.

This is a descriptive study, based on qualitative analysis of the data collected from focus group discussions with the members of the SAGs; interviews with individual members of SAGs; observation of SAG meetings; SAG records like books, ledgers and vision charts; observation of the villages, the interaction of CMRC staff and others; and discussion with CMRC Managers and the MYRADA staffs in the MKHAD Project in Karnataka.

The structure of social capital: the relationship between CBOs, federations of CBOs and CMRCs

It is important to examine the structure of the CBOs in MKHAD project in order to understand the creation of social capital in the community.

Figure 1 (see following page) illustrates the three layered structure of the CBOs: SAGs are the base level CBOs; at the next level is the Federation of SAGs; and at the top level is the CMRC. This figure illustrates the scaling up of informal village level CBOs (they are not registered, have no office or full time staff) into the second level informal institutions of the federation of SAGs, which in turn scales up into the supra-community level CMRCs, the formal institutions.

SAGs, the base level institutions, self-select their members on the basis of internal bonds of affinity. These are membership and homogenous groups of poor and marginalised women from the village; they are linked by trust and mutual support. This affinity is the strength of the group and forms the basis for agreements, rules, regulations and sanctions. Since the SAGs bond the poor people together, it is an indication of social capital with no hierarchy.

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10 CBOs have participated in an AI workshop in six CMRCs (all in Kollegal Taluk) out of eight under the MKHAD Project. Approximately 80 % of the CBOs have been involved in an AI workshop, while the rest are yet to receive one.

Figure 1: the structure of the CBOs

Key
CMRC Community managed resource center
CBO Community-based organisation
SAG Self-help affinity group
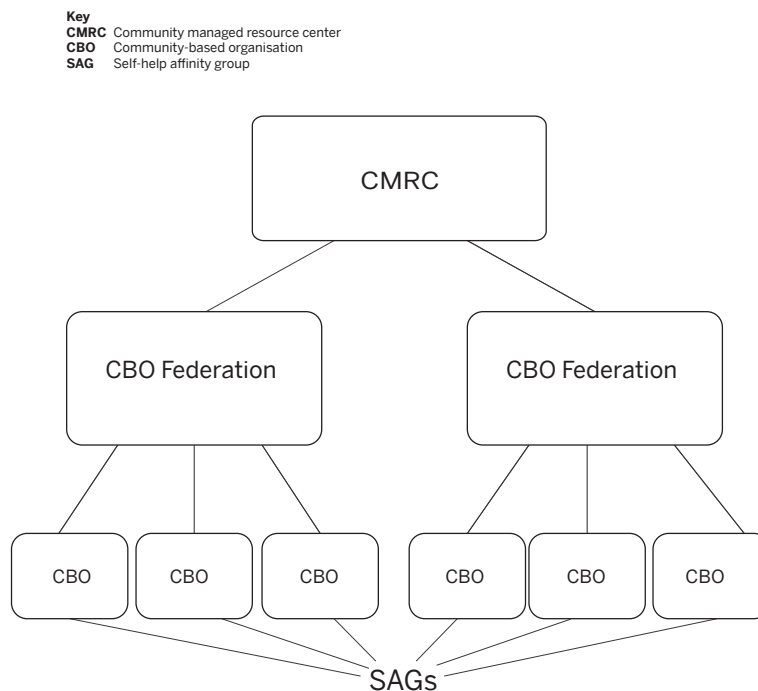
At a higher level, federations of well-managed CBOs represents the horizontal dimension of social capital in a network of 15–20 SAGs. These federations change oppressive power relations and create a level playing field in a sustainable, non-violent manner, looking at issues individual SAGs are unable to achieve. It is a link between the SAGs and the CMRC.

The CMRCs unite a number of base groups (100–120 CBOs) at a supra-community level. It embodies both the dimension of social capital; it is not just developing internal relations, horizontally linking the SAGs and the federation of SAGs within and among them, but at the same time building bridges, developing external links with government departments, private individuals (doctors, lawyers, engineers etc.), industries and institutions (banks, insurance companies), voluntary organisations, NGOs, donors and local councils.

The role of CMRCs in bridging with external linkages seems to be particularly important for the long-term sustainability of the CBOs as well as the development of the community. The individuals within the CMRCs assume several roles: political lobbying, activists, facilitators, service organisations and information hub.

Information sharing in an informal framework
Social capital affects economic outcomes. An in-depth study of these CBOs and the federation of CBOs shows that these groups provide an informal framework to organise information sharing, coordination of activities and collective decision making. Information sharing by the members plays an important role in poverty alleviation by facilitating easy access to credit. The CBO common fund is created by the savings of the women members (they contribute every week), and loans given to members at 24 % per annum (as opposed to 60% by the money lenders) rate of interest. In SAGs every woman member knows the written or unwritten rules, including penalties of noncompliance.

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Figure 2: The dimensions of social capital within a CMRC in the MKHAD project
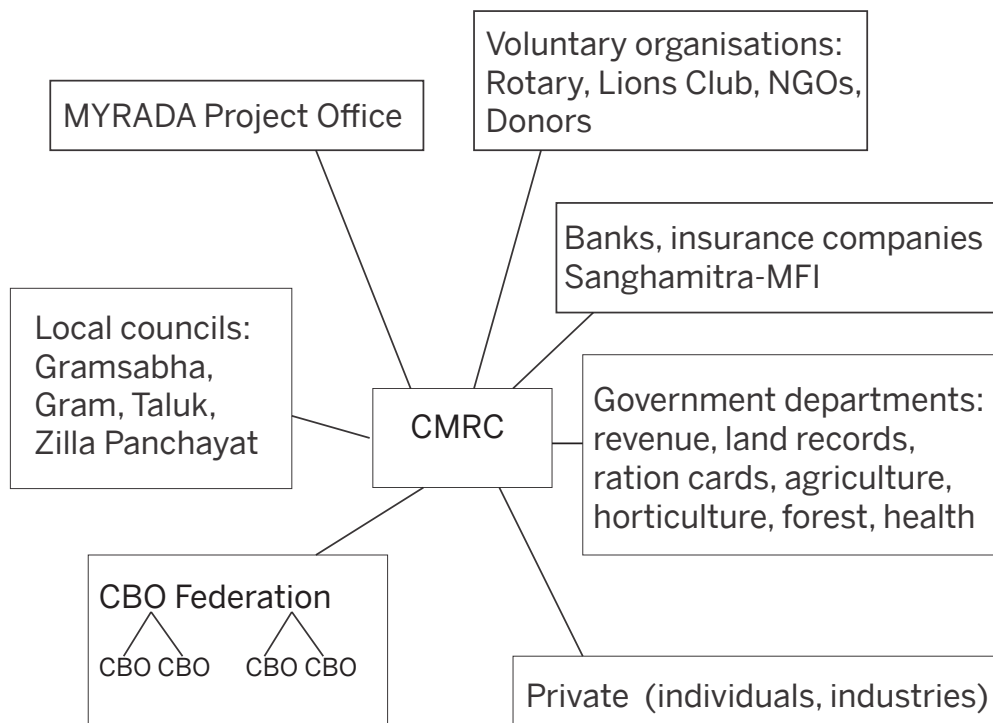
Information sharing thus reduces risk and uncertainty: they can depend on the SAG common fund rather than formal banks and insurance institutions.

Similarly, the members of the SAGs, federations of SAGs and CMRCs interact repeatedly, collectively coordinating activities and making decisions regarding activities like institution building and individual members (literacy, proper houseing and sanitation) and village development activities (awareness camps, tree plantation, etc.). This formal or informal interaction intra, inter-group and with external actors enhances trust and reduces transaction costs.

AI complements social capital
The three CMRCs under study combine social capital with workshops in AI for the CBO members to bring about a gestalt change in the community. Two to three years after the formation of a SAG, the members are given an AI workshop which lasts one to two days, depending on the capacity of the CBO. During this session, through oral story telling, members discover and track their own strengths, those of others in the group and of the CBO itself. The strengths and achievements of the SAGs are written on a chart. Recording and reviewing them is very important because they become the foundation stone on which the vision is built and 'best practices' are amplified in the next phases of AI. After identifying these strengths and achievements, the members build a vision for their own CBO.

Vision charts: central to the process
The SAGs' pictorial charts show how the women build vision not just for the sustainability of their CBO and their families, but also for the village. Their vision is multifaceted: social, economic and environmental development.

In SAGs, every woman member knows the written or unwritten rules, including penalties ... The common fund is created by the savings of the women members.

Vision charts of Sri Ganesh SAG, Chinchally village, Kamadhenu CMRC: (left to right: 2001-6; 2006-8; and 2009-14)

Social systems grow in the direction of what they study.

The pictures drawn illustrate vision in:

- Education

- Health and sanitation

- Legal awareness

- Learning to sign their name

- Village development(cleaning water tanks, drainage, planting trees; repairing or constructing community hall; supporting school)

- CBO strengthening (federation support; increasing savings, financial transactions and mobilisation of funds; network and linkages with external actors; help forming new SAGs)

- Alleviating the poverty of members

- Increasing income generating activities such as cow-, goat- and sheep-rearing, and small shops

- Purchasing household goods such as gas cooker, almairah and mixie; proper house and sanitation construction

- Conducting weddings without spending too much money

- Philanthropic activities (for example, giving notebooks to poor children in school, and helping earthquake, and flood victims)

These visions are developed for between two and five years. A few SAGs have the confidence to go for the five year vision the first time; others develop a vision for two to three years and, as they become experienced in AI, build the next vision for five years. It is also interesting to see how the pictorial representation of the vision improves over the years as the members are constantly learning, experimenting and improvising as they go through the iterative AI phases (4 D – Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny).

The development of vision charts over time
Social systems grow, like heliotropic plants, in the direction of what they study, and the vision created has a pull effect. The SAGs as a social system are constantly striving for co-creating better and better imagery for the future.

2001-6	Lists only the activities as their vision.
2006-8	Shows the pictorial vision, but all in a column, one under the other. The fourth vision shows a member with a small cap, then a bigger and in the last a wearing a big cap. The cap is the metaphor for awareness and this group has a vision of increasing (hence the growing size of the cap) health, education and legal awareness of its members over a period of two years.
2009-14	Shows the four arms of the vision as economic development, social development of members, clean village and environmental development. AI approach is participatory. This vision, co-constructed by all 15 members of this women's SAG, is for the members of the group, the group overall and the whole village. It also lists plans and activities for these five years.

Table: Vision for the year 2009-14 for Sri Ganesh SAG

Economic Development	• SAG saves 2 lakhs (1 lakh=100,000 rupees) • SAG financial transaction of 15 lakhs • All 15 members continue income generating programmes
Social Development	• All members will have income above poverty line • All members pay their tax (land, water, house) to the government • All members' children educated till twelfth Grade or pre-University College • 18 years as the marriageable age for daughters
Clean Village	• Streets have a garbage tank • Clean and hygienic drinking water facility
Environmental Development	• All members have constructed toilet

Action plan (2006-11) of Shree Vidya SAG, Hanur village, Spandana CMRC

Shree Vidya SAG, Hanur village, Spandana CMRC: the 6Ws

The design or the action plan is drawn up on a large chart showing 6Ws (What, Why, Where, When, Who, Whom), 1 H (How) and a Remarks column where the group writes down the names of the member beneficiaries, the existing amount in the common fund, or the names of awareness programmes conducted, for example health programmes like TB, HIV, pregnancy, adolescent boys and girls of the village, eye camp etc. The exhaustive and detailed action plan chart has helped the SAGs to constantly review the activities planned (in their meetings held every week) and achieve them.

Managing their SAGs – and their families

It is important to highlight that the complex task of managing the SAGs is done by women who are mostly illiterate. Each group has only two or three women who can read and write. Managing their SAGs has made the women better managers within their families as well (in comparision with their husbands). The focus group discussion with the women members of the Allahhaibada SAG, in Basappanadoddi village, Spandana CMRC, reveals interesting stories. When they start talking and sharing stories of their past and present capacities, they highlight their achievements, unexplored potentials, core values, innovations, strength, best practices, moments of high point and competencies. In the language of AI, they discover their positive core.

The women are learning to link the energy of this core directly to their change agenda and are bringing about these changes that were never thought possible before. Sharing makes the positive core the common and explicit property of all so they can collectively and consciously co-construct a better future.

Crafting a vision for the future

During the focus group discussion, a woman said that in the beginning, they had to cover their heads with their sari and sneak out of the house to SAG meetings, hiding the membership book from their husbands, because the men did not trust the women or the group, more so because the CBOs have no office or staff.

Members of Allahhaibada SAG, Basappanadoddi village,Spandana CMRC

Today the same women come out of the house with confidence without covering their heads (she demonstrated this with gesture) proudly holding the membership book in their hand and their husbands are also encouraging them because the SAGs have helped these women support their families. The MYRADA's experience too indicates that when men's income increases they tend to spend it on themselves, whereas women use it for their family. The dynamics of this group discussion generates a confidence to change relations at home and in society showing the intangible assets being tapped into by AI.

Conclusion
The case study of women's CBOs in MYRADA shows that far from contradicting, AI complements social capital. More precisely, AI builds on social capital. This seems to be essential for a sustained long-term development, more so in the context of the poor and marginalised in the villages. It's positive impact on community development is slowly but surely emerging. However, working with poor, marginalised and illiterate women's groups still remains a challenge.

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Tobias Schueth
a German public health physician, has worked for the last 16 years in community development and health in rural South and Central Asia. Since 2001, he has been the Swiss Red Cross representative in Kyrgyzstan, developing the countrywide Community Action for Health program, now part of the national health reform.
Contact: tobias@elcat.kg

AI in Community Action for Health in Kyrgyzstan

ABSTRACT
This article describes how AI was introduced into the countrywide Community Action for Health programme in Kyrgyzstan.

First, a story: after a long, ten day training course on another topic that left trainers and trainees exhausted, I came in on the last day to reflect with them on what they had learned. Instead of my usual questions aiming for analysis about what was good and what was bad, I simply asked for the best stories of the last ten days.

After two hours of storytelling, I not only understood what they had learned, but the atmosphere had completely changed. As I said goodbye, a participant summarised: 'When you came in this morning there was immediately a different atmosphere.'

To which I answered: 'That was not because of me, but because of the stories in you ... The strength is in you – you have just to think of it, you have just to tell the stories...'

That was one of my first experiences in experimenting with AI in the context of the program of Community Action for Health in Kyrgyzstan (CAH). I had just done the AI Foundations course and wanted to see whether and how we could use AI in CAH. But before I can explain what we did with AI I need to present briefly the CAH program.

The frame: Community Action for Health in Kyrgyzstan
Kyrgyzstan is a Central Asian country of great beauty dominated by the Tien-Shan mountain range. It gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. It borders Western China and Central Asian neighbours. It is about five times the size of Switzerland, but has a population of only about 5.4 million. About two-thirds of the population live in rural areas.

CAH in Kyrgyzstan is a countrywide program, and part of the national health reform program. It is a partnership between voluntary village health committees (VHCs) and the governmental health system.

When we tested AI, we immediately sensed that it set free the energy, fantasy and creativity to look for assets.

Its goals are: (a) to enable rural communities to act on their own to improve health in their villages; and (b) to enable the governmental health system to work in partnership with village communities for improving health.

The development of CAH began in 2001, with support from the CAH-Project.[1] At the time of writing (2010) there are about 1,400 VHCs in Kyrgyzstan, covering around 80% of all villages and over 2 million people. The plan is to extend the CAH program to all villages over the next two years.

VHCs form federations on the rayon (district) level, which are registered as non-governmental organisations (NGOs). These federations in turn have formed a national association of VHCs in Kyrgyzstan (AVHC).

On the governmental side, about 120 health promotion specialists work with the VHCs. They build their organisational capacity so they can initiate projects in their villages and train members in implementing health actions on specific health issues. VHC members work without remuneration. These health actions have well-documented positive effects on the health of the population. Examples include a decrease in goiter prevalence among school students[2], an increase in exclusive breast-feeding during the first six months of life, and a decrease in alcohol consumption.[3]

AI set free energy, fantasy and creativity

Why did we introduce AI into CAH?

We had looked for a strengths-based approach for a long time to facilitate strategic planning of VHCs. The other assets or strengths approaches seemed dry, and left the VHCs with whom we tried them unenthusiastic using them. When we tested AI, we immediately sensed that it set free the energy, fantasy and creativity to allow them to look all by themselves for the assets they could make use of. We therefore chose it as the approach for a strategic planning exercise with all VHCs.

Secondly, we sensed that storytelling and the 'appreciative view' could be used as a tool throughout the system on a permanent basis providing a motor of constant – decentralised! – improvement and as a source for harvesting ideas for innovation from below.

Thirdly, it was clear that it would match very well our emphasis on respectful, non-dominant behaviour of staff with community members. The importance of such behaviour in the work with communities has been stressed, especially by PRA[4], practitioners and writers, in order to enable the development of a relationship of equal partners. Inherent in non-dominant behaviour is a strong

1 This project, under different names, has been financed from the beginning by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by the Swiss Red Cross. The Swedish International Development Agency and the Liechtenstein Development Fund (LED) have also contributed (SIDA). In addition, USAID has been supporting CAH through a separate project. For more information, go to www.cah.kg.
2 Schueth, Tobias, and Rosa Sultanalieva. 'Power from below – test kits in the hands of Kyrgyzstan retailers pressure producers to iodize salt.' IDD newsletter 29, August 2008: 16-17.
3 Schueth, Tobias. (2008) 'Kyrgyz-Swiss-Swedish Health Project, Annual Report 2008.' Project Document.
4 Participatory Reflection and Action, formally Participatory Rural Appraisal. PRA was very influential in the development of CAH in Kyrgyzstan, especially its emphasis on non-dominant behaviour.

Story telling created
energy and a lighter, more
lively atmosphere.

element of encouragement because it invites community members to occupy leadership space that dominant behaviour denies them. We felt that AI, with its emphasis on appreciating what others do, would allow us to reinforce respectful behaviour from another angle.

What did we do?
Exploration and experimentation
We started informally with asking for stories in meetings with health committees (VHCs) and staff to get a feeling of how it would go. In the process we learned how to ask questions to get stories, and the staff learned to recount stories. Reflecting with VHCs and staff on these experiments with story telling it became clear that it created energy and a lighter, more lively atmosphere in the meetings. The story at the beginning of this article stems from this period.

We started asking for stories in meetings

Strategic Planning
Discovery
Encouraged by this exploration phase, we arranged an introductory seminar with about 25 leading staff from the CAH programme. They experienced the discovery phase through storytelling and the identification of their life-giving forces, and we discussed the principles of AI. The staff was convinced that the approach would work with VHCs and held great promise for the CAH programme. As one participant put it: 'I understood that to make CAH sustainable we need not only guidelines, rules, orders, agreements in place but also an inner source of energy that VHCs and staff can tap into.'

Because meetings of VHCs can only last about two hours, we decided to do the strategic planning in two steps. The first would only be discovery (storytelling and identification of life-giving forces); the second, a month or two later, would involve dreaming and design.

Therefore, as a next step, similar introductory seminars were held with about 100 staff that work directly with the VHCs. They identified their own life-giving forces and then facilitated the discovery process with over 1,000 VHCs.

The feedback we received from the discovery seminars with VHCs was very encouraging. VHCs felt energised and many commented that the life-giving forces reflected exactly what they had felt as the motivation behind their voluntary work but had not been able to express. Now they had words for those feelings. They mostly revolved around concepts of responsibility for the common good, patriotism, the joy of new acquaintances and tasks outside of traditional roles, receiving gratitude and recognition. Bringing the reasons behind their work into consciousness (and shared consciousness at that!) seemed important to them in that it gave a sense of identity as a group, increased ownership, satisfaction and confidence – and renewed commitment. The seminar suggested that, at the end of the seminar, the VHCs arrange the life-giving forces in attractively on a flipchart pad, maybe with a picture summarising them, and hang them in their meeting rooms.

Dream and Design
About two months later, the VHCs went through the dream and design phases. During this seminar they first reviewed the life-giving forces from the discovery phase. They then did a valuation exercise where the group named two or three characteristics they valued for each member and collected them in a list. And finally, they listed the major achievements of their VHC so far.

A tree with the three assets – life-giving forces, strengths of members and achievements so far – as roots

‘All good deeds come back to you.’ Kyrgzy proverb

These three lists – life-giving forces, strengths of members and achievements so far – were then presented as the assets that VHCs already possessed and on which they would now plan and build their future. A tree was drawn on a flipchart pad with these three assets as roots. They were then asked to write their dreams into the crown of the tree, envisioning what kind of VHCs they would dream of becoming based on these strengths in five years' time.

Once the crown was filled with dreams, the VHCs were asked to consider what would be the consequences if these dreams came true. Things like gratitude, confidence etc. were written into leaves or fruits falling from the tree onto the ground. A Kyrgzy proverb was helpful in explaining: ‘All good deeds come back to you.’

Discussion guided them to recognise that these leaves and fruits ultimately re-nourished the life-giving forces, the roots of the tree. Thus, the idea of a cycle was put forth where their life-giving forces would bear fruits, but these fruits in turn would nourish their life-giving forces. Finally, VHCs were asked to think what else these roots would need in order not to dry out, to stay alive and grow. Raindrops were drawn and filled with outside resources but also with ideas like humour, parties, joy and so on.

As for designing, the dreams were then one by one put into a table and analysed as to which resources would be needed for their realisation and in which of the next three years they should be implemented. Furthermore, those dreams were identified that needed no outside resources and could be started immediately. Detailed planning of measures was to be done in later sessions.

As the reader notices, we did not use dream statements or provocative propositions. We felt it not needed for the process and that it would have been a

'Does anybody have a good story to tell?'

difficult endeavour to come to a meaningful statement in each VHC. We thought therefore to leave that better to the summit.

VHC Summit
In order to capture and focus the energy generated in the discovery and strategic planning processes in the periphery, we organised a summit with 160 representatives from (at that point) about 1,100 VHCs from all over the country about half a year after the beginning of the discovery process (in September, 2009). They convened for three days, starting with discovery, both interviewing each other and reviewing stories collected before from the discovery process in the VHCs. Life-giving forces were identified, dream statements enacted and formulated.

The enactments were truly amazing, taking us into TV shows far into the future and onto plane journeys to other countries. A team reconciled the many dream statements into one which was accepted by the plenary: 'We dream to see VHCs in Kyrgyzstan in the future as sustainable, independent, self-financed and strong organisations, closely cooperating with government and non-governmental organisations, and reaching an international level.'

The design foresaw the formation of a national Association of VHCs in Kyrgyzstan, a task which was completed a half a year later. A meeting with the Minister of Health and various donors where the VHCs presented the results of the summit and the minister and donors pledged continued cooperation completed the summit. A three hour DVD was made from the summit and sent to all VHCs.

Every staff meeting begins with the question, 'Does anybody have a story to tell?'

Integrating AI into the fabric of CAH: story telling in meetings, harvesting of ideas, and using the appreciative view
Besides using AI for strategic planning and a summit, we wanted to integrate it into the daily fabric of CAH. For that we promoted two things with our staff: storytelling in all meetings (formal use of AI) and what we call 'using the appreciative view' (informal use of AI).

Every staff meeting at all levels and every VHC meeting begins with the question 'Does anybody have a good story to tell?' The idea is, on the one hand, to lighten the atmosphere and bring energy into the meeting; but also, on the other, to make use of the heliotropic principle that imperceptibly yet invincibly builds hope and forward-looking attitude in people that helps them help each other to look at the bright side of things.

The best of these stories are systematically written down and collected and periodically distributed throughout the system. In addition, each group can identify 'best ideas' from such stories and propose them for implementation throughout the system. This generates innovation from below. We call this way of using AI 'formal use of AI' because it is governed by rules.

Beyond this formalised use of AI, we encourage each staff member to experiment with what we call 'the appreciative view', by which we mean the appreciative principles in interaction, at work and in private life. This informal way of using AI is not governed by rules but by each individual's intuition. This is very much linked to our focus on non-dominant behaviour outlined above, but adds a positive, appreciative element to it.

A thousand brains in a thousand places can achieve much more than a few brains on top.

The hope of course is that through such improved interactions on countless daily occasions throughout the system, the performance of the whole system constantly improves ever so slightly – independently from a central command. The metaphors that I use to explain the reason for this informal use of AI are that a thousand brains at a thousand places can achieve much more than a few brains on top and that it is much better if a system is lit by a thousand independent stars than by one sun in the middle.

Impact

The impact of AI on CAH is evident to everybody who has been working since its implementation. Changes were already perceptible after the discovery seminars, with their interviews and the identification of their life-giving forces. The summit added greatly to that enthusiasm. The delegates coming back from the summit full of a spirit of a nation-wide movement and armed with the DVDs spread the energy to their VHCs. Staff noted a boost in motivation. Together with the strategic planning this led to a dramatic increase in initiatives by the VHCs.

The staff themselves were more motivated, as noted by senior staff. Many staff testify that their behaviour with family and colleagues has been transformed by AI. Others say that transformation had taken place in their previous training of PRA and that AI reconfirmed what they had learned then.

Regarding the harvesting of ideas, there is currently one example spreading through the system. One VHC had begun to address the difficult social issue of massive overspending on funerals that is a cause of poverty. The story was told in the district federation of VHCs, written down by staff, transmitted up the system and put as a proposal to all VHCs many of whom are now considering to take action on it.

Lessons learned

We had to learn to ask the right questions to get stories not about action but about interaction.

In our experience, AI is a strengths-based approach that is appropriate and appealing for community-based organizations, and for systems steering such organisations. Especially appealing is one-on-one storytelling to elicit strengths and energy and to generate a positive atmosphere. The identification of life-giving forces –raising them to the level of consciousness – has powerful momentum in itself.

It was surprising that storytelling in meetings was sometimes found to be difficult in the beginning. At times 'there were no stories' or it was perceived as a formal exercise. In many cases in took about half a year for these plenary storytelling sessions to become really meaningful – but after that nobody wanted to miss them.

Another aspect of the difficulty with storytelling in plenary sessions was that people often delivered reports rather than stories: 'We did this, and then so much of that'. We had to learn to ask the right questions to get to the emotional content of what had happened and stories not about action but about interaction: 'What did you like about it? Are there stories that show human qualities?'

We also learned how to ask questions identifying themes from stories, which was not obvious in the beginning. A good example: 'What human qualities are visible in these stories?' It took quite a while to make certain procedures routine, like writing down best stories and collecting them, or what we meant by informal use of AI.

No one wanted to miss the storytelling sessions

In the end our experience boiled down to two reasons we give our staff to explain why we use AI in CAH: 1) it enhances energy wherever it is used, and 2) using it involves the chance of changing something for the better (the principle of simultaneity and the anticipatory principle). As managers, we hope that if this happens at numerous places, countless times it will entail the possibility of improving the system constantly, de-centrally: a shift may happen – and without anybody controlling it!

Ada Jo Mann
Ada Jo Mann is managing partner of Innovation Partners International (IPI). She has 35+ years of experience collaborating with clients on strengths-based approaches to leadership development, strategic planning, organization design, whole system change, program development and evaluation, team building, and training.
Contact: adajo@innovationpartners.com

Jen Silbert
Partner and co-founder of IPI, Jen is an experienced consultant, trainer and speaker who specializes in strength-based, collaborative approaches to strategic planning, leadership development, employee and community engagement, and workforce development.
Contact: jen@innovationpartners.com
             www.innovationpartners.com

Diane Carazas
Partner of IPI, Diane has over 25 years experience working in or consulting to international development organizations, with extensive experience working in Latin America. Diane has a Master's in International Administration from the School for International Training and is a professional certified coach with a Master Certification in Energy Leadership.
Contact: dcarazas@innovationpartners.com

From Seed to Forest
A Positive Revolution in International Development

ABSTRACT

A US Forest Service anthropologist seconded to USAID decided to try using Appreciative Inquiry in Liberia, where she was tasked with the design of the future USAID program investment in Liberia's forests. By convening a strength-focused consultative process the message changes dramatically to one that builds on successes, honors local wisdom and opens doors to sustainable, lasting, positive change.

Since the early days of Global Excellence in Management (GEM), Appreciative Inquiry has spread around the world and is now used by thousands of OD practitioners in their work with multinational corporations, governments, non-profits, and local communities (See Ada Jo Mann's article on p.12) . During this time it caught the interest of a US Forest Service anthropologist seconded to USAID. After reading about and experimenting with AI a bit herself she recognized its power to engage stakeholders in their own development and decided to try it out in Liberia, where she was tasked with the design of the future USAID program investment in Liberia's forests. She knew the task required the input, ideas and commitments of many diverse constituents, from government scientists to international donor agencies, private logging companies and indigenous village members.

She approached Innovation Partners International (IPI) in August 2010, who partnered with her to help her to meaningfully engage, tap into the wisdom of and strengthen collaboration between these diverse stakeholders. Together they designed a two-pronged appreciative consultative approach that included a national level Summit followed by a series of AI consultations in the communities affected by the development and conservation of Liberia's forests.

The objectives of this engagement were three-fold:

1. Generate meaningful input for, and build awareness of, the design of the US government's future investment in Liberia's forests

2. Strengthen current relationships and spark new partnerships across the forestry sector

3. Build and reinforce the appreciative capacities of the consultative field team as they engaged key community stakeholders

Day One: Dreaming the forests of Liberia

Why Liberia's forests?

Liberia is a republic on the west coast of Africa nestled between the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone. In the early 1820s Liberia became home to freed US slaves for whom 'liberty brought us here.' But, as history shows, this resulted in decades of conflict between African natives and the newly settled Americo-Liberians who, with continued strong relations and assistance from the US, remained a relatively privileged group.

Tensions further escalated in 1980 when a military coup ushered in a decade of authoritarian rule led by Samuel Doe. Nine years later Charles Taylor, a trained guerilla fighter and protégé to Muammar al-Gaddafi, launched a rebellion to overthrow the Doe regime, generating a prolonged civil war, an estimated 220,000 fatalities, and violent political fragmentation of the country.

Major fighting resumed and a second civil war broke out in 2000, just when Taylor was being accused of backing Sierra Leonese rebels. Though the numbers vary from source to source, it is estimated that over 250,000 people were killed by 2003 and over 200,000 were displaced refugees, sex slaves, and child soldiers. Of Liberia's estimated 3.9 million population today (UN, 2009[1]), approximately 85% remain unemployed, over 80% are living below poverty standards, and nearly half are under the age of 15.

Liberia's rich tropical rain forests were a source of income to the various war lords during the civil war. Consequently indiscriminate logging depleted the forests which are a major contributor to livelihoods, particularly of the poorest and most marginalized peoples. Sound forest management is critical to governance, to assuring sustainability of local resources and to the livelihoods on which they depend.

USAID understood the critical role of sound forest management in its efforts to help rebuild this war-torn nation. Working in partnership with the US Forest Service's (USFS) International Programs, it was poised to plan its future investment. And yet never before had all the key stakeholders – government scientists, international donor agencies, NGOs, civil society, private logging companies and indigenous village members who lived in and worked in support of Liberia's rich forests – come together to create a collaborative path forward, build on the strengths of forest communities and encourage their active participation in creating the future they most desired.

Sound forest management is critical to governance.

The AI Summit process and methodology

An AI Summit was especially appropriate given the need to convene dozens of diverse stakeholders in planning conversations that accelerate change and spark system-wide innovation, enthusiasm and a shared commitment to action.

At the heart of AI is the deceptively simple premise that organizations and communities evolve in the direction of the questions they regularly ask of themselves. This process was designed to invite the diverse stakeholders devoted to Liberia's forests to inquire into moments of exceptional value and success and then imagine new possibilities that build on what's best across the sector, thereby opening doors to innovation, collaboration and engaged and inspired action. The hope was to address the cynicism and resistance –

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1 http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Liberia

'I am noticing that we have a lot of common interests. I was surprised about the similar hopes that we have and the common ground.'

commonly found in international development contexts – and replace it with a renewed sense of possibility, shared commitment and positive action.
In preparation for the summit, numerous conference calls took place among the Advisory and Summit Planning Team members (representatives from USAID, USFS and IPI), bridging team members across North America with their counterparts in Liberia. In addition, a stakeholder survey and questionnaire was distributed to help team members expand their thinking about who to invite to the summit and where to conduct field visits.

Combining input from the conference calls and surveys, several key topics emerged as central to the Appreciative Inquiry interview process to be used at the consultative summit:

- Drawing on inner strength

- Partnership and collaborative spirit

- Communities have answers

- Role of the private sector and markets

The Appreciative Consultative Summit findings
Over 80 people – representatives from civil society, private logging companies, international donor agencies, NGOs, US and Liberian government bodies, and Liberian villages – came together on September 13-14, 2010 at City Hall in Monrovia to Discover, Dream, Design and Deliver on a topic that mattered deeply to them: the future of Liberia's forests.

The 4D process
Day one of the summit focused on the Discovery and Dream phases of the AI process. The goal of the Discovery phase was to inquire into and make public participants' collective 'positive core', namely the best practices, collective strengths, and local wisdom for informing the USG's future investment in Liberia's forests.

Figure 1: The AI 4D Process

Table groups brainstorm best practices

Among the many outcomes on day one was the creation of a wall-size 'positive core' which captured the key themes and root causes of success surfacing during the interviews, as well as strengths, skills and values critical to the forest's future and grounded in their positive past. After the interview the participants were asked to reflect on the interview process, out of which the following quotes emerged:

'I realized that we are all partners and that no one really owns the forest. We are all partners in protecting and benefiting from the forest.'

'I am noticing that we have a lot of common interests. I was surprised about the similar hopes that we have and the common ground.'

'Often time is our enemy and here I had time to really listen.'

'This exercise helped to break all of the barriers and made us feel that we are all equal.'

'This is great for us from the community because we have so much experience and so much to share. It is great that we can be heard. We have so many stories to tell.'

'I realized that we are all partners and that no one really owns the forest. We are all partners in protecting and benefiting from the forest.'

Building on their positive core and vivid images of the future from day one, participants were asked on day two to think about what it will take and what they will need to design new ways of working together. This was accomplished by creating a 'Marketplace of Ideas' through conversations focusing on the following topics:

- Technical capacity building

- Institutional capacity building

- Implementation of legal regulatory framework

- Community forest management

- Balance of livelihoods and sustainability

- Sector communication and coordination

- Benefits sharing in the three 'c's: conservation, community, commercial

Table groups, organized by the topics above, were encouraged to brainstorm best practices (what has worked well) and best ideas for going forward. Next, participants were asked to sit together in the following stakeholder groups and create an 'Asset Bank':

- Government

- Private sector

- Civil society

- Community members

- International community

'My words create my world and I choose hope.' Young man participating in the Summit.

Each stakeholder group was asked to make a list of the many assets their group brings to the forest sector: human, physical, financial and intellectual. This task first met with confusion, as most were accustomed to the mind-set of deficit (what was lacking, insufficient or altogether broken), versus asset (what was available, on hand, possible, within reach). Participant confidence quickly escalated as their attention shifted toward the 'glass half full' – the immense capacities and many assets they could bring to bear. As the ideas percolated, instead of struggling to identify their assets, several groups were concerned that they wouldn't have sufficient post-it notes to record them all.

Finally, stakeholder groups brainstormed their very best ideas for moving forward after the Summit, as well as suggestions for how each group could support the implementation of these ideas, building on the many assets each had identified. Numerous ideas emerged, from suggestions for technical support, to infrastructure and standards development, workshops, revenue analysis, improved working conditions, and civil society and community involvement in forest governance and decision-making.

Just before the close of the summit a community member approached the facilitation team to make one small request. 'Wish me a happy birthday,' he said, 'for today I am reborn.' With great jubilation the young man described the brand new lens – an AI lens – through which he now viewed his country – a nation filled not with despair, but with immense hope, courage and possibility. 'My words create my world,' he said, 'and I choose hope.'

Sam Koffa, a summit participant and representative from Liberia's Land Rights and Community Forestry Program, shared the following:
'Although we have a very long way to go to further frame and deliver on the various forest management issues and concerns, I am absolutely convinced and encouraged that forestry will never be the same – for the better – after this summit in one of our world's richest and yet impoverished nations.'

Field consultation preparation
Immediately following the consultative summit, the field consultation and the summit planning teams met to debrief the summit and to examine implications for the field consultations. The purpose of the preparation meetings for the field consultations was to:

- Clarify the purpose of the field consultations

- Agree on roles and responsibilities of team members

- Develop appreciative interview questions for the community and county conversations

- Design several agendas for field conversations depending on the expected participants and amount of time allotted for each visit

- Create a data collection format to capture the results of each community consultation

The composition of the field team was a critical success factor. The team included an external forestry consultant, an external AI expert, a Liberian representative from the Forest Development Agency, a local community development trainer and a logistics coordinator.

'This is great for us from the community because we have so much experience and so much to share. It is great that we can be heard. We have so many stories to tell.'

Community consultation method

The purpose of the field consultations was to:

- Provide additional data to augment what was collected during the national level Summit.

- Better understand the relationship that community people have with the forest.

- Identify ways in which community members have worked well together and collaborated with other stakeholders.

- Understand how communication about forestry issues has occurred between the community and national levels.

- Hear what aspirations and hopes community members have for the forest and their communities in the future.

In total, five Liberian communities were visited for the appreciative community consultations, all of which were the site of an ongoing community forestry project. To further broaden outreach, representatives from satellite communities also attended. The team spent approximately four hours of consultation time with the 20-33 community members in attendance, which included elders, women and youth, representing government (e.g. town chiefs, paramount chief) and associations (e.g. NTFP Association chair, farmer management groups chair).

The appreciative consultative visits harnessed the power of the Discovery and Dream phases of the AI process, where, equally important to the content (or data) collected, was the context within which the stories, experiences and hopes were shared. In one community, a participant told how parents hid with their children in the forest during the 14 year civil war period – that more than being a source of timber for logging, the forest represented safety, security, and survival. Many of the stories revealed tremendously painful circumstances – often war-related – yet each storyteller came from an appreciative place, describing their

Seeing AI principles come to life

gratitude to the forest for providing all their basic needs, from shelter, to security, food, water, medicine and even gunpowder made from leaves.

As Jane Watkins and Bernard Mohr point out in their book, *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination* (Jossey-Bass, 2001), 'No matter what the situation, AI can search for a time when we felt proud and excited about how we handled a particular dilemma.' Instead of burying the memories of conflict and war, the facilitators probed into what community members valued about themselves from their situation, revealing a way forward for Liberia's forests, while underlining the importance of diverse stakeholder inclusion along the way – that local communities too have answers to their own dilemmas, and that by asking and listening, they can be inspired to rise up and actively participate in sound forest management.

Seeing the AI principles come to life

The appreciative consultative process that took place in Liberia is an inspiring example of the five core principles of AI coming to life.

Table 1: The Five AI principles and their application in the Liberia Consultative Process

AI Principle	Definition	Liberia Consultative Process
The Constructionist Principle	Knowledge and destiny are interwoven. The way we know is fateful.	Involving stakeholders and community members in a consultative process grounds USAID's future investment in the diverse knowledge and experiences resident in local wisdom.
The Principle of Simultaneity	Inquiry and change are not separate. Inquiry is intervention.	The AI discovery questions are fateful, stimulating awareness about the importance of the forest in the past, while simultaneously creating a swell of hope for preserving and nurturing it in the future.
The Anticipatory Principle	Our images of the future guide our current behavior. Positive image, positive action.	The act of imagining a preferred future in relationship to the forest has an immediate positive, warming influence on current behaviors and readiness for collaborative action.
The Poetic Principle	Human organizations and systems are open books. What we choose to focus on grows.	By engaging stakeholders in the design of USAID's investment in Liberia's forests, future commitment to the outcome increases.
The Positive Principle	Momentum for change requires a great deal of positive affect . Organizations move in the direction of the questions they ask.	A focus on strengths, values, and collective assets begins to change the paradigm from a dependency mentality to one of confidence, hope, and commitment to positive change.

The stories, insights and findings from the AI summit and consultative field visits have since been shared with USAID and USFS to inform their preparation of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the United State's future investment in the USAID-Liberia mission.

The message changes dramatically to one that builds on successes, honors local wisdom and opens doors to sustainable, lasting, positive change.

Moving forward: lessons learned for new models of international development leadership

AI continues to extend through the globe with a new conversation and multiplier effect for positive action in the international development area.

Traditional models of donor 'aid' – though well intended – often foster an expectation of 'helping', as if the recipients lack the capacity to help themselves, making way for unintended consequences like donor dependency, with little to no promise of local ownership of the solution or sustainability.

Appreciative Inquiry, on the other hand, seeks to ask and understand where other methods strive to advocate and tell. AI does so by engaging as many as possible in the process of discovery and learning, leading people to commit to the dreams and plans they helped create. A renewed sense of confidence, commitment and collaboration are inevitable results, encouraging further inquiry, learning and ownership of the solution at the most local level – where wisdom is sure to reside, if one is willing to look for it.

The story of Liberia's appreciative consultative process could well represent a 'tipping point' in how USAID and other agencies and donor organizations choose to position themselves in the international development conversation. By convening a strength-focused consultative process involving a wide range of stakeholders and community members, the message changes dramatically from an external expert-driven approach to one that builds on successes, honors local wisdom and opens doors to sustainable, lasting, positive change.

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Father Patrick Shanahan
Born in London, 1941, Father Patrick is now entering his third life. He has worked in Africa since 1970; co-founded Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) and Street Girls Aid (S'AID) in Accra, Ghana. Founded Street Child Africa, London and co-founded StreetInvest, London where he is currently a consultant. He works exclusively for street children.
Contact: patrick.shanahan01@yahoo.co.uk

Dreams to Delivery
An Appreciation of the Appreciative

Father Patrick Shanahan has been instrumental in changing the way street children are viewed in Africa. He has done so through the lens of AI. Fr Patrick relentlessly pursues his dreams and belief that street children are individuals who deserve respect. He is the founder of Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS) and Street Girls Aid (SAID) in Accra, Ghana.

"Every child's story is true as it is being told."

The starting point in asking street children to be allowed into their lives is 'what was your best story this week', not 'what were your problems this week?'

My name is Patrick. I have worked with street children across Africa and been privileged to be part of their lives for the past 23 years.

By 1996 I had arrived at the philosophical position that I still hold: street children have the right to be street children. I hadn't set out to be controversial. If you take participation to its logical conclusion, you go down the road of accepting children where they are, and move from their position rather than your own. In time I came to believe that street children belong to a different culture.

At this point in time, we at Catholic Action for Street Children (CAS)[1] had organised ourselves with groups of local social workers working in the street with the children. They walked the streets in the areas where the children lived and 'counselled' them. It became clear to me that counselling had to be done from the perspective of the child, not the perspective of a grown-up, privileged person.

Clearly my philosophy needed workers who would be patient and move at the pace of the child on the street. It also meant we needed more workers trained to approach the child in a different way. This initially seemed unrealistic: the world around me believed that street children were vagrants who need to come off the street. Without using the word, by 1996, I was dreaming.

That year I met up again with Charles Elliot – my old Professor of Development Studies. I told him the two agencies I had co-founded in Accra needed a first and very necessary evaluation. He provided a team, talked about Embedded

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1 http://www.streetchildafrica.org.uk/pages/catholic-action-for-street-children.html. Fr Patrick also founded Street Girls Aid in Accra, Ghana, http://www.said-ghana.com

Every child's story is true as it is being told ... The strength of a person's story lies in the analysis of that story.

Evaluation and introduced me to Appreciative Inquiry. He led the way to daring to move on from the dream. Above all he said, 'it has to begin with the story.'

Dreaming in Cambridge

At the end of 1996 Charles and his colleague from Cambridge, Mette Jacobsgaard, came to Accra and carried out an evaluation of CAS and SAID. I spent my sabbatical year, 1997, in Cambridge under the watchful eyes of Charles and Mette. By 1998 the Dream was being analyzed and the Delivery became Street Child Africa, and a new organization for Street Children across Africa was born – the first of its kind.

This gave me the chance to access many small Africa agencies working for street children in Africa. We helped with the creation of Friends of Street Children in Kitwe, Zambia.

But I am running ahead of myself. A major part of my own dream was to work out a way to train enough street workers to go onto street corners and start the long process of joining the different world of street children. If I claimed that every street child had the right to be a street child – and I did and do – I had to move at their rhythm and listen to their stories. To achieve this, I needed a huge workforce and they needed to be prepared for what is, at times, a daunting task.

What emerged from the evaluation was that CAS had embarked on a new and innovative approach – we made friends with the children in the street, we had become their adult supervisors, counsellors, friends – especially friends in need.

The evaluation experience of 1996 had underlined the basic starting point for anyone wanting to work inside the world of the street child – enter it without judging or proscribing or bribing the child, or forcing the child to accept patterns for the future that he or she is not ready for. Let the child make his or her own history. Facilitate, encourage, protect, counsel, befriend, love but do not attempt to make life choices for small people living in challenging places and circumstances.

Street workers and street children

I introduced Denise McEvoy to Africa. Our shared vision was the importance of training those who work with the children on the street. By 2002, street workers' training was born and delivered in Zambia.

It is now called 'Take Off your Shoes', to remind every worker that shares in the training to enter the world of street children with the respect that must be accorded all cultures. The Dream is still alive. The Delivery is ongoing. As I write, street workers are being trained across Ethiopia, Sierra Leone and Ghana. We have been back to Zambia, Tanzania, Mozambique, Eastern Congo and Nigeria. Always, the basic message – listen to the child's story and move from there.

In March, 2011 I was asked to address the 16th Session of the UN Human Rights Assembly in Geneva. The entire Assembly was given over to street children. I spoke against what I call the 'Harry Potter' effect that people and governments look for in their approach to street children: the magic button syndrome. The instant answer to solve all problems. The refusal to accept that listening to a child's story is a slow, delicate process, and to fail properly to analyse it is to court disaster for child and worker.

Every African city I work in has thousands of street children who dream.

'Best' instead of 'worst'?

So I have constantly to analyse my own stories and my own ways of delivery. Do I always ask the generative question? 'Best' instead of 'worst'? Do I let the child hear about my dream? The great, abiding factor of AI is that it is not magic, not an instant answer. It is however, the way to enter into respectful dialogue, honouring that the other person has a story to tell, an important story about what excites them, what keeps them on the street and what it is that they get from life in the street that they have been unable to find elsewhere.

Do I keep that in mind, or do I stay in the world of making snap decisions and nicely polished conclusions to aid the 'development' of the street child?

The embedded evaluation in 1996 taught me to eschew such an approach. Yet the present climate surrounding the status of street children across the world is siren-like in its tempting approaches: cost effectiveness analysis is back and 'value for money'. Dreaming, I am often told in private by governments, is fine but it's not the 'real world'.

And yet every African city I work in has thousands of street children who do dream and do have the right to their own ways to deliver.

By pursuing my own dream, AI changed the approach of street workers' training. The 'best' story, listening to the dream, is key to the approach. It is in the appreciation that the fullness of the life of street children can be glimpsed.

It is the only way we will ever be able to find out what drives these young people and possibly assist them. Making judgements gets us nowhere: it closes the dialogue. Genuine curiosity and acceptance through storytelling – believing that we are the stories we tell – is the only way that I have found to make both my own dream come true, as well as those of the children I work with.

Nowadays I work for a small agency called Street Invest. Its main work is to offer street workers' training to people working with street children:
'Street Invest helps children who are not yet ready to leave the street. We do this by training the workers the children desperately need – as they are and where they are. No child should be alone'.

Does this mean that once the child's Dream has been heard Delivery automatically follows? Beware the 'Harry Potter' effect.

An African story

In the capital city of a West African country there is a street boy called Patrick. He is about 15 although he looks much, much older. He has a quite grotesque face. When he was very small there was a civil war. One day the rebels took his village to punish it for supporting the government. All small children had hot palm oil poured over their heads. Today, Patrick has no hair and a face that makes me sad. His parents and grandparents are dead. He lives on the street. Every time I visit his city, he finds me with the unerring radar that street children have. I always ask him where he slept the night before. He always says 'in my grandmother's house'. AI taught me never to say, 'that can't be, your grandmother is dead'. That's his best story. He knows I know. He also knows that I will accept his story, that he must tell me about it one day. He is my friend and he will never leave the street.

Christopher Mulenga
Executive Chairman of Friends of Street Children, relentlessly pursues the rights and improvement of the lives of street children in Zambia. His presentation – that the real problem is the conditions in the communities they live in – influenced government policy. In 2008, he received an International Service Award for the Defence of the Rights of Children.
Contact: fscserves@yahoo.co.uk

AI Application in Friends of the Street Children

EDITOR'S NOTE
Christopher Mulenga is one these rare people that one is blessed to meet during one's life. He immediately and instinctively knew that AI would be the way forward in work that is not only tremendously challenging but also very rewarding when successful.

'Christopher Mulenga is one these rare people that one is blessed to meet during one's life. He immediately and instinctively knew that AI would be the way forward in work that is not only tremendously challenging but also very rewarding when successful. He consistently looks for what is good in people, irrespective of their appearance and immediate actions. Here he tells about impact that AI has on the Friends of Street Children organisation as well as the lives of those children.'[1] Mette Jacobsgaard

Friends of the Street Children is a registered non-governmental organisation working with and for street children in Zambia. The organisation was founded in 2001 by a group of concerned citizens who noticed the influx of children onto the streets and felt duty bound to respond. The organisation has designed programmes for children aimed at removing them from the street situation, rehabilitating them and eventually reuniting them with their families or relatives. Other activities that the organisation is involved in are advocacy and skills training.

In 2006, when the chairman of Friends of the Street Children visited the UK at the invitation of Street Child Africa for the Schools Conference, there was an opportunity to meet Mette Jacobsgaard after the conference. Street Child Africa wanted to carry out an evaluation as well as widen the use of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) in the organisations that they supported. An arrangement was made during a meeting that Mette would conduct an (e)valuation of the activities of Friends of the Street Children in 2007.

All arrangements were made by Street Child Africa and the consultant was sent to Zambia to evaluate Friends of the Street Children using an AI approach. The workshop started on 22nd July 2007, attended by all members of Friends of the Street Children, as well as partners, community members, the police, street children and church representatives.

1 See www.internationalservice.org / 2008awrds for more details.

The wider selection of participants meant that all people involved or in contact with the work would be involved in the evaluation process. This would give an opportunity for the organisation to double check its approaches and find out if it was consistent with the children's expectations. It would also create a common understanding of what the organisation was dealing with.

Visions and dreams: the children's appreciation of street life

As part of the workshop we visited the children in the street both during the day and at night to interview them and have conversations about what they appreciated about their life in the street, the friendship and assistance they received from the organisation, and what their visions and dreams were. These interviews gave the organisation valuable and unexpected contextual information which could be used in future development of the project's activities.

Photo: A street child gives a presentation at an evaluation workshop

Non-judgemental and respectful

The workshop was conducted by Mette using AI approaches, and we concluded by putting up a strategic plan which could guide the work. During the workshop, participants learnt that each street child has potential for survival and development if he or she is perceived with an appreciative eye by the people around the child. The most important learning from the workshop was the agreement to adopt a new approach of being non-judgemental towards the children, and to respect them where they are and as they are. Street workers understood that the concept of being non-judgemental and respectful of the children whatever their situation could encourage many children to rediscover themselves and be assisted regardless of their background or past failures.

A new AI breath entered the organisation at all levels: the police counterparts, community members operating market stalls, members of staff and the street children themselves passed through a process of transformation. Staff started appreciating themselves and the people they were working with.

Jesus said, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'
Mark 9:37

AI impact on the organisation

The organisation experienced a transformed attitude towards children. Development-oriented approaches for the children have been noticed in all the members of staff who attended the training. As well, there have been a lot of chances given to the children to develop and survive, against the background of prejudice and irrational judgement on the potential of each child by service providers.

More approaches in the organisation have been developed to look at the child as an individual, unique and very special. This aspect has developed self-esteem in the street children and enabled them to adjust accordingly. The number of children on the streets has dropped as a result of improvement in the approach and appreciation of the individual street child. The benefit to the child has been that each one is treated as an individual as well as collectively, as one of the street children.

Street children are very creative: their potential can easily be tapped into.

There has been appreciation in the way street children adapt themselves to the streets and the harsh conditions associated with living on streets. Street children are independent and as a result appreciating their wellbeing has proved vital in working with them. The survival of children in the street situation largely depends on their resourcefulness. This was discovered after the challenge resulting from the AI training, especially when we asked the children about their best moments in the street.

A problem or a person with a problem?

The new view of a street child has been established in Friends of the Street Children. The child is no longer perceived as a problem but a person with a problem. This means that instead of blaming the child for being on the streets, the workers are engaged in resolving the problems faced by them.

Through AI approaches, the organisation has discovered that street children are very creative and their potential can be easily tapped to move them ahead in a better life situation. This has been a strong discovery, and has assisted many former street children to enter school through street-based Street Corner Education. We have 320 former street children in high schools and more than 600 children in primary school. Most of these children went through the Street Corner Education during their stay on the streets and are now reunited with their families in homes. This has assisted our core objective of reunification of children with their parents.

Through the non-judgemental approach of AI, street children have benefited in our services and we will continue applying these skills in our organisation for the benefit of all the less privileged children in our reach.

Street boys in Kitwe

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Cathy Ward

Having trained as an art therapist and systemic practitioner, she later managed a family centre service. She currently uses neurological approaches for the treatment of trauma and post traumatic stress with children in the South of England. She is a founding trustee of Amazing Children Uganda, a charity that finds sponsors to fund street children into school.
Contact: catphin@btopenworld.com

Building on the Strengths of Street Children in Kampala, Uganda

ABSTRACT

From a chance meeting on a social enterprise course in the UK with a young Ugandan, Olivia Mirembe, Cathy Ward accepted an invitation to go to Uganda to co-lead a project with a group of street children in 2007. She describes that first initiative and the appreciative evaluation of the charity's progress undertaken in 2010.

I work in the public sector as an art and systemic therapist using approaches to individual, family and organisational change that draw on people's abilities and special qualities, rather than their weaknesses. From a chance meeting on a social enterprise course in the UK with a young Ugandan, Olivia Mirembe, I accepted an invitation to go to Uganda to co-lead a project with a group of street children in 2007.[1]

Olivia and I had both been trained in Appreciative Inquiry with Anne Radford and Mette Jacobsgaard, and shared a passion for working with children. We were both inspired by AI because it 'deliberately seeks to discover people's exceptionality – their unique gifts, strengths and qualities.' (David Cooperrider, 2001)

In this article, I describe that first initiative, why the project then became a charity, and the appreciative evaluation of the charity's progress that I and another founding trustee undertook in 2010.

Our first gathering

The 2007 inquiry that we carried out was simple in structure but far reaching in effect, because of the powerful themes that emerged. Olivia and I were both drawn to understand more about the current situation of street children there and whether a strengths-based approach – i.e. one that drew on the children's resources in overcoming the challenges they faced – could be helpful for them.

We were introduced to 63 young people aged from approximately three to eighteen who were sheltering within a Pentecostal church. They had been brought together by Gladys Babirye, who leads that church's street child mission.

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1 For further information on the project, visit www.amazingchildrenuganda.org

They described
experiences of loss, abuse
and vulnerability – and in
spite of that, resilience.

With the help of Gladys and five other Ugandan volunteers, we structured a day to gather the children's stories and hear what they needed. We asked them: tell us about how you came to be on the street and what would make your lives better. We wanted the day to be playful too, and the children chose a recreation park with a swimming pool and adventure playground for our meeting.

Each child presented their personal story articulately and powerfully through a mixture of spoken or written words and drawings. They described experiences of loss, abuse and vulnerability – and in spite of that, resilience. They shared their hopes. What they told us was that above every other need for food, shelter and clothes, they wanted to go to school.

We then carried out a thorough networking exercise in the area, on local radio and TV to highlight the children's needs. Many organisations took part but made no definite offers of support.

Planning our response to the children

In the absence of a local response, Olivia, Gladys and I began to plan how we could get the children off the street, fed, clothed and educated in the most sustainable way.

The model of helping that emerged was shaped by Olivia's and Gladys's own lived experience. Both of them had been street children and Olivia in particular had benefited from international aid when a Swedish priest had funded her early education. We decided we would try to sponsor the children into boarding schools so they could access education, food, shelter and care.

Returning to the UK, I immediately found that friends and family were generous in offering to sponsor individual children.

Within a few months we had sponsored ten children of different ages; they were thriving in school.

In discussion with two friends and colleagues who had supported the project from the start, we confronted the challenge of how we were going to do more of what was clearly working well.

The option we decided to pursue was to become the trustees of a charity. Its non-faith based focus would be on accessing education for this special community of children and young people.

Photo: The Open Space sticker experience

Where we have got to now

Since 2007, we have visited the project, now called Amazing Children Uganda, twice and we are planning another visit this year. Our aim for these visits as trustees is to re-connect with the community of children, monitor the progress of the sponsored children by visiting them in school, and build on partnerships with other agencies whose values and aims align with ours.

We also produce annual and other reports and one page summaries of our work.

We needed to reconnect with the children and our church partner.

Since our first contact in 2007:

- 27 children have been sponsored and are flourishing academically and taking leadership roles in their boarding schools

- We have funded holiday programmes for the sponsored and not-yet-sponsored children to develop their skills, capacity and well being through a broad range of activities.

- Gladys Babirye is now project coordinator.

- We continue to build a working partnership with the church where the children shelter.

The 2010 visit

Three years on from the start of the project we felt that we needed to reconnect with the children and our church partner to review how the project was going. We decided to use an AI evaluation process to do this.

The general areas we wanted to explore were:

- How can we make sure that the model of sponsorship that we use empowers the young people?

- How can we continue to focus on and integrate the voices and views of the children at the centre of what we do as a charity?

- How can we work with our church partner's view that we are an answer to their prayers without getting overwhelmed by their high expectations of us?

Our aims of the review at the outset were to:

- Attend first to the children not yet sponsored into school and then the children in school and their teachers

- Find out how both groups of children had been coping and what had helped them

- Raise and build awareness of the children's skills and how they might develop these to build a stronger community and futures for themselves (McAdam, 2009)

- 'Grow' a more energised self-sufficient group, with lower expectations of the charity and us as trustees

Engaging the design team of volunteers

When we arrived in Uganda, we met with six volunteers who had been working with Gladys and the children for some time. In a brief rehearsal of the inquiry process, I explored these young men's and women's ideas and considerable skills. I asked them about the abilities they brought to their involvement with the children; what they were proudest about and how they could use their skills more. Their replies were very moving. They were able to show how they contributed a passionate enthusiasm and a variety of talents including music, art, drama, and sports, health and self-care expertise.

An ACU drummer in action.

Together, we forged questions and planned practical details for a successful two day appreciative inquiry with the children not yet sponsored. The children had chosen to meet in the same recreation park where they had met in 2007. We included in the design fun activities. Singing and dancing were encouraged and led by the volunteers.

Here are some examples of the questions we asked the children:

- How have you been able to survive until now? What are some of the things you have been doing to survive? Write down, draw or speak your ideas.

- What are the changes that have worked well for you since Amazing Children Uganda was involved? What changes or things could have worked even better?

- What do you need more support with?

We also asked the children about the gift of giving:[2]

1. Tell us about a time when you have helped one of the children in your community who was less fortunate than you or who needed your help.

2. Now do a picture of how you can imagine helping your community even more and helping it to be strong. Show in your drawing how you would like it to be.

3. We are meeting next week again. We would like you to think about what you would be able to do during the week that would help another child. When we next meet we look forward to hearing what you have done and what has been easy or difficult.

Outcomes of the first day

The children's music and energetic tribal dancing –the introductory activity – was joyfully exuberant.

The children were happy to get into groups led by the volunteers to guide them through the questions we had prepared. They wrote, spoke or drew their responses.

The community was well ahead of us in developing a culture of sharing! They explained that every holiday the sponsored children would join them and teach them to read and write and do maths. They told us that ACU had brought positive changes to them in this way.

The children went on to describe 16 activities that helped them survive or earn small amounts of money, such as fetching water, cleaning jobs and collecting rubbish.

The day ended with swimming and more jubilant drumming and dancing.

2 Wakhungu et al, 2010

Voting for reading, writing and maths

Later in the week, we reflected on the children's communications and planned our next day using a variation on an Open Space design. Open Space Technology is based on the principle that groups have the innate capacity to self-organise and agree their priorities and take forward collaborative actions.

The second day: choose three activities

Alice, one of the volunteers, drew beautiful pictures of all the activities the children had described. This was important as many couldn't read. The children placed stickers on the three activities they would most like to develop. They then developed plans for these. Finally they voted for the one that would be easiest to achieve and would benefit most children, including the youngest.

The three highest-voted activities were:

- Reading, writing and maths

- A football and netball team

- Becoming a choir and music and drama group

In the end, becoming an income generating choir and music and drama group was voted tops by a long way.

Some of the children from the ACU community in primary school

The ACU children in school

We carried out a similar review with the children in school to find out how they were experiencing this major change to their lives and what difference it made and how things could be even better for them. We met with the ACU children in larger or smaller groups, or with individuals, depending on how many were in each school.

Examples of the questions we asked them were:

- What difference has it made to your life going back to school? What are you proud of? What have you gained as a person? What skills have you learned?

- Have there been any difficulties or challenges for you since you have been sponsored?

- What things do you need more support with?

The children confirmed that they were happy and that they were doing well in school and felt they were gaining skills that they wanted to pass on to others in the community. They thought that these skills would enable them all to have a 'bright future'. We also heard from the children about individual health needs that we had not been aware of. The ACU children at one school gave us clear examples of how the in-school health and dental treatment was poor and insensitive. When we discovered that the teaching also was not up to standard for the two students there and the head teacher was expecting backhanders, we moved them to another school where they have settled well.

A third of the sponsored children had been able to take part in the second day-event in the recreation park because the school term had ended by then. Although we were not able to do a separate inquiry with them, Gladys found out that the other sponsored children enthusiastically agreed with their peers about the best activity to develop. This was because the whole community has a passion for singing and dancing.

Using AI has enabled us to connect with and have a much better understanding of the inherent strengths and potential of this group of young people.

Going to school: a top priority for the children!

Outcomes of the inquiry

- The approach helped us build a more a child-centred ethos as an organisation.

- Hearing the children's, volunteers', teachers' and church's voices, we were able to take stock of our project in a more holistic, constructive and evidence-based way than before.

- A stronger sense of connection, relationship and trust between the children, volunteers and the trustees was forged.

- Both ACU trustees and the leaders of the church where the children shelter were glad to know about the activities the children want to develop. In the most recent holiday programmes we were able to offer professional tutoring in all three of the children's highest voted activities.

- We were able to use donations as seed corn to back their decision to establish a choir and music and drama group by supporting an initial concert, held in January 2011, when the children gave a successful musical performance for the local community to raise funds for the choir's development.

Using the Appreciative Inquiry process with the ACU community

- A key success factor in doing the inquiry was being able to build on relationships with trusted partners on the ground and have them co-lead the process. This was because of my initial friendship with Olivia Mirembe in the UK and through her, my meeting with Gladys in Uganda. It was very rewarding to work with the group of committed volunteers who Gladys has enrolled to support the children.

- It appeared to be an exciting, fun and capacity-building process for everybody involved.

- It successfully embodied our collaborative and strengths-based philosophy.

- We were able to understand the remarkable culture of shared learning that exists in the community, and through this the potential for transformation and change.

- The volunteers saw the power of the process in engaging the children in decisions about their futures, and want to continue to work with the children in this way.

- We need to continue to use AI approaches so children waiting for scholarships can generate images of a better future and identify and build on their own resources to improve their situation. The charity's role will be to encourage and coach them in this process while finding sponsors for educational scholarships. Going to school remains the children's top priority.

- AI brought an inspiring, energising and moving dimension to our work!

AI in international development in the future

- In international development it is crucial to build self-sufficiency and reflect the views and needs of the people involved, particularly if they are children. As participants, children's voices are least often heard. AI is a child-friendly, culturally appropriate and adaptable method for encouraging their participation and ownership in social action, community or economic development initiatives.

- Because AI enshrines the principle of active participation and decision making at all levels and ages, it holds out the promise of being able to enhance strategic development in an inclusive and ethical way.

Conclusion

As trustees, we believe we can use AI as a participative model to build on the effectiveness and relevance of many of our charity's policies and practice. For instance, we are hoping to use the process to explore with the community, volunteers, schools and the church how the children keep safe. This is in order to implement our child protection and safeguarding policy in a more practical and user friendly way.

We hope AI's transformational power will impact not just on this community of children, but on the broader community in Kampala, as they increasingly recognise the value of the children currently exiled onto its streets.

Carrying out this review of our project using the AI approach has enabled us to connect with and have a much better understanding of the inherent strengths and potential of this group of young people. It has made clearer how to help sustain and improve their situation in a way that is owned and endorsed by them.

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Malcolm J. Odell, Jr.

Malcolm ('Mac') Odell helps organizations, corporations, businesses, and NGOs create dynamic geometric positive change and growth with his 'short-sweet,' action-oriented approach, 'Appreciative Planning and Action' (APA). He specializes in sustainable community and agriculture development and women's empowerment.

Contact: macodell@verizon.net

The Makalu Model
Forerunner of the Appreciative Planning and Action (APA) Model

ABSTRACT

Based on the early work with Appreciative Inquiry by the US-based Mountain Institute working in Nepal, as well as the original 4D model, Malcolm J. Odell has developed the 'Appreciative Planning and Action' (APA) model for work with communities in developing countries. He has also added the concepts of the 'Super D' and 'Empowerment Art'.

Table: The 7Ds of Appreciative Planning and Action

Kathmandu, Nepal, December 1996

Chandi Chapagain and I walked two days from Bung over several snow-covered passes in the western corner of the Makalu-Barun National Park, just south of Everest, and caught a lift on a cargo helicopter from the village of Phaplu down to a Terai town in the lowlands. I made my way by a series of dilapidated buses to Kathmandu in time for the holidays.

The better part of a year had passed since, together with a 'Pied Piper' collection of colleagues from our conservation and development project who had joined me on a series of treks to at least two dozen villages that took us well over 500 miles on foot, we had come up with what we now call the 'Makalu Model.' Beginning with some fifth generation photocopies that Bob Davis of The Mountain Institute sent me from the US, I worked with my team in Nepal to come up with something short and sweet that we could do in just a few hours with local villagers, often illiterate, to help them break the dependency syndrome and mobilize their communities for development. From the beginning both the project staff of about 100 as well as the village people we were working with, among the poorest in the world, were so excited about what we did together that I handed over the job of managing this project and took up the evolution and testing of what we're now calling Appreciative Planning and Action, or just 'APA.' Here's what it looks like:

Discover	The best: success, what works
Dream	Of even better: what we want more of
Design	A strategy: a general plan to get there
Deliver	An action plan and personal commitments
Do it now!	Take the first step, now!
Discuss	'A-Valuation': positive evaluation and feedback
Dance and drum!	Celebrate success

Picture created by Maithili women, Nepal

The 7Ds of APA start with a streamlined version of the classic 4Ds of AI, to which we add three additional short steps:

- Do it now!

- Discussion / Dialogue

- Dance and Drum

The 'Do it now!' step first originated when Bob Davis was trying out an early version of the approach with an enthusiastic group of villagers in Sikkim. They had come up with an action plan for creating an eco-tourism program to attract visitors trekking toward Mt. Kanchanjunga to stay a few days in their village, helping generate much-needed income. Caught up in the energy that had developed around making this plan, one villager suggested, 'Why don't we take a short break right now and clean up the village so people will want to stay here?' Within a few minutes, having picked up several plastic bags blowing through the village, the assembled group was busy picking up trash which they used to start a small bonfire.

Dance and drum

'Dance and drum' emerged spontaneously from this Do it Now! step, when our staff anthropologist, Khagendra Sangam, took me to his home village during early APA experiments and helped lead local people through the process, coming up with an action plan to preserve traditional songs and dances. When one old man enthusiastically began to describe one of these that he was worried might be lost to posterity, Khagendra asked him, 'Can you do this dance?'

'Of course!' replied the man, with a large grin.

'Well, why don't you do it now?' responded Khagendra.

What can you do right now, during the next 5–10 minutes to get going ... now? Do it!

In no time drums had appeared almost by magic and the old man was dancing vigorously to the song and beat coming from the gathering crowd of young and old. Preservation and teaching of this ancient dance was happening before our eyes.

'Discussion / Dialogue,' which is simply a brief reflection on the process – what we've accomplished, and how to do it even better next time – is sometimes swapped with the Dance and drum step depending on the context. Sometimes it seems appropriate to end up with a celebration, while at other times we close, often standing in a circle after the dancing is over, encouraging spontaneous comments from participants on what they liked best about the session and what they'd like to do next.

Applying the APA 7Ds

|	
Discovery	• Share personal stories with each other about experiences you have had related to the opportunity in some way. What inspired, excited you about these stories?
Dream	• Based on these real experiences, what is your dream about the opportunity for the future? For 10–20 years from now? For your children, your grandchildren?
Design	• How would you go about planning to realize this dream? What can you do during the coming year to begin to realize this dream?
Deliver	• What will you actually do during the coming month to start to implement your plan? To start to realize your dream? • What personal commitments will you make to get started this week?
Do it now!	• What can you do right now, during the next 5–10 minutes to get going...now? Do it!

Dialogue / Discussion	• Now let's draw a success tree – just like our problem tree, but based on our opportunity:
	    Trunk: The opportunity – the successful resolution of the problem
	    Roots: root causes of the successes
	    Branches, leaves: results, outcomes from the successes
	
	• Draw a face that expresses how you feel right now.
	
	• Add a word that summarizes how you feel right now.

Dance and drum!	• Hit the drums. Let's dance! Show how we feel!

The Super D – Discovery

Discovery, in my view, is the real key to success. If we get Discovery right the rest of the process will go smoothly and seamlessly. When people get in touch with the power that is embedded in their successful achievements, when they feel the empowerment of those experiences, then Dreaming of even better and Designing and Delivering plans to achieve even greater successes becomes easy. And to get in touch with that power, there's nothing like great stories. Sharing good stories enables participants to relive their experiences, to recapture the feelings they had during those experiences, and to draw strength and understanding from

Laws

What you seek is what you find
Where you think you're going is where you end up

The Makalu Model

4Ds of AI

Discover: the best, success, what works
Dream: even better, what we want more of
Design: strategy, general plan to get there
Deliver: action plans
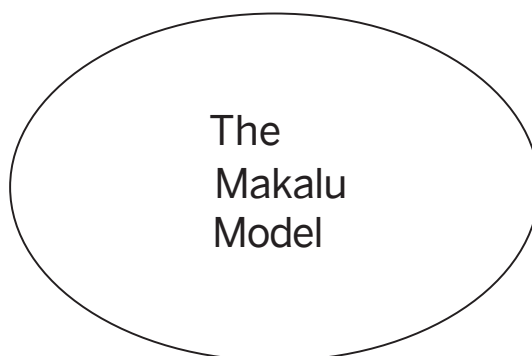
Goal

Seeking the root causes of success

Principles

If you look for problems, you find – and create – more problems
If you look for success, you find – and create – more successes
If you believe in your dreams, you create miracles

Empowerment before our eyes ... and all through a picture and a story.

them. And one of the best ways we've ever discovered to get good stories is to start with pictures, what we call 'Empowerment Art.'

'Empowerment Art'
To start we used a simple exercise in which the participants played the role of villagers. We gave each of the 'villagers' a single sheet of paper and a marker, asking them to draw a picture of a time in their life or work when they felt really proud of themselves, joyful, happy about something they did for themselves or others in their families or communities, a time when they felt empowered, or did something they'd love to boast about if they could.

Dolalghat – Nepal, October 1997
We've just come from testing out the APA process in a village along the road from Kathmandu to the Tibetan border. Together with a group of seven Nepali staff from the Women's Empowerment Project, we have just spent several hours in Dolalghat conducting an APA meeting with a couple of dozen local people, including about a dozen women. We asked them to draw pictures of their successes, the things they'd done in their village that they were most proud of, and then pictures of their dreams for their children and grandchildren.

We'd first used pictures like this in the mountain villages near Mount Makalu because we were working with illiterate women whose natural timidity was only exacerbated when we used the written word. Until we introduced this picture exercise, the women were too shy even to stand and give their names, hiding instead behind their shawls and giggling with embarrassment. When we gave them paper and marker some of them had never held even a pencil before and didn't know what to do. With a bit of gentle coaxing by those who knew what a pencil was, they soon came up with simple drawings representing some important, positive experience in their lives. Then, asking each one to stand, show her pictures, and tell us the story behind it, we were bowled over by their enthusiasm. The shyness disappeared entirely. They jostled with each other for a turn, grinning and sharing their stories proudly. Empowerment before our eyes ... and all through a picture and a story.

Malcolm J. Odell, Jr.

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Contact: macodell@verizon.net

Letters from the Rainbow Planet
Appreciative Planning and Action in Sierra Leone

ABSTRACT

Malcolm J. Odell tells a very personal story of using the '7Ds' – Discoveries, Dreams, Designs, Delivery, 'Do it now,' and 'Dance and drum' – to help rebuild villages in Sierra Leone after the civil war.

Welcome to the crisis meeting

The sun is setting and I've just arrived in this remote and war-ravaged eastern corner of Sierra Leone. Our Land Rover broke down half way here and we're all bushed.

Even before I rinse the grime off my face or search for a cool drink, David Gatare, field coordinator from Rwanda and in charge of the International Red Cross (IRC) program in the area, approaches with a big smile. He is a delightful guy, full of energy and wit, in spite of the horrors he has seen. Beyond his warm welcome, however, I can see an anxious furrow on his brow. He gives me a hearty handshake, and then comes to the point. 'I know you're whipped, but can you join us for a crisis meeting tomorrow morning?'

'What's the crisis?' I ask innocently. It has been a long bumpy ride out here from Freetown, which now seems at the other end of the world. The road, once a fine asphalt highway, was full of potholes which seemed specially designed to destroy the front end joints of our Land Rover. I'm not sure I'm quite ready for a crisis.

'We've got a real crisis. We've had funding for over a year now from the European Union for this new project, Linking Relief, Rehabilitation, and Development (LRRD). An EU team from Freetown is coming Monday to see what we've done … I've been over the planning documents we signed. We have nothing to show for all the money they've given us! Yes, a crisis!'

I ponder the situation briefly, looking back a similar crises I've seen over the 40 years since I first went to Nepal as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1962 and decided this kind of work was just what I'd like to do for the rest of my life. Oh, brother, another crisis! Here we go again. Then, pausing to think about what I've learned since I became involved with Appreciative Inquiry about ten years ago, I reconsider. Another moment of thought and then my reply:

Photo: Waiting for help along the road to Koidu.

'I'd be glad to join the meeting, David. But I can assure you, there is no crisis.'
David laughs heartily. 'How do you know, Mac? You've just arrived. I've just looked over our project documents, the logical framework, and objectively verifiable indicators. We're nowhere. We've a real crisis.'

'Trust me, David. You don't have a crisis. We'll work on this in the morning and I'm sure you will be ready for that EU team Monday. Meanwhile, I suggest you relax and get a good night's sleep.'

Pretty brazen for someone who's just arrived, has not met the staff yet, nor seen the work they've done in the field during the past year. But I have a strong hunch that we'll have a good meeting tomorrow and the EU team will be fully satisfied on Monday. Besides, I need a good night's sleep myself and I certainly don't want either of us to toss and turn.

Sierra Leone is known as 'the land of dirty diamonds.' It has just emerged from a tragic decade of civil war. Corruption, much of it tied to an illegal diamond trade, devastated the government, the economy, the nation. But that civil war is over. People are returning from refugee camps in neighboring Guinea and Liberia. And there is hope. There is a rainbow out there. The IRC team sees the rainbow.

The EU team has come and gone. They may see a rainbow, too. They're delighted with the progress of the LRRD project and looking forward to coming back to see more in a few months time. We'll have plenty to show them then, I'm sure.

When you looked at the minutiae of the project plans and indicators, there was plenty that hadn't been done the way the designers had planned. But there was also plenty to share with the EU team about what had been done. Donor satisfied. New plan in place. Crisis over. Or was it never there to begin with?

Let's go back a few days and see how we got here.

From crisis to opportunity: a recap

Look for the good stuff. Imagine what 'even better' looks like.

When we gathered the first morning I started off by asking the team members what they had done, related directly or indirectly to the LRRD project, that they had enjoyed most, that was exciting or that she or he was especially proud of. After a bit of thought – they were used to looking at the problems, not the achievements – the stories started coming. And once they started it was difficult to stop. Within 15 minutes we had a couple flip charts full of things that people were excited about. From the general stories, we then focused in on stories of successes related in one way or another to each of the project's four major objectives. This gave us a few more flip charts. I didn't worry about those specific tasks that had been identified, just the main objectives – the reasons why the EU had funded this project.

We then turned to the question of what they hoped to be doing during the next few months, their plans for 'what's next?' Again the ideas flowed, followed by each person at the meeting making a few concrete commitments about things they definitely plan to do, things clearly within their grasps to accomplish over the next few months. Again, we filled several flip charts.
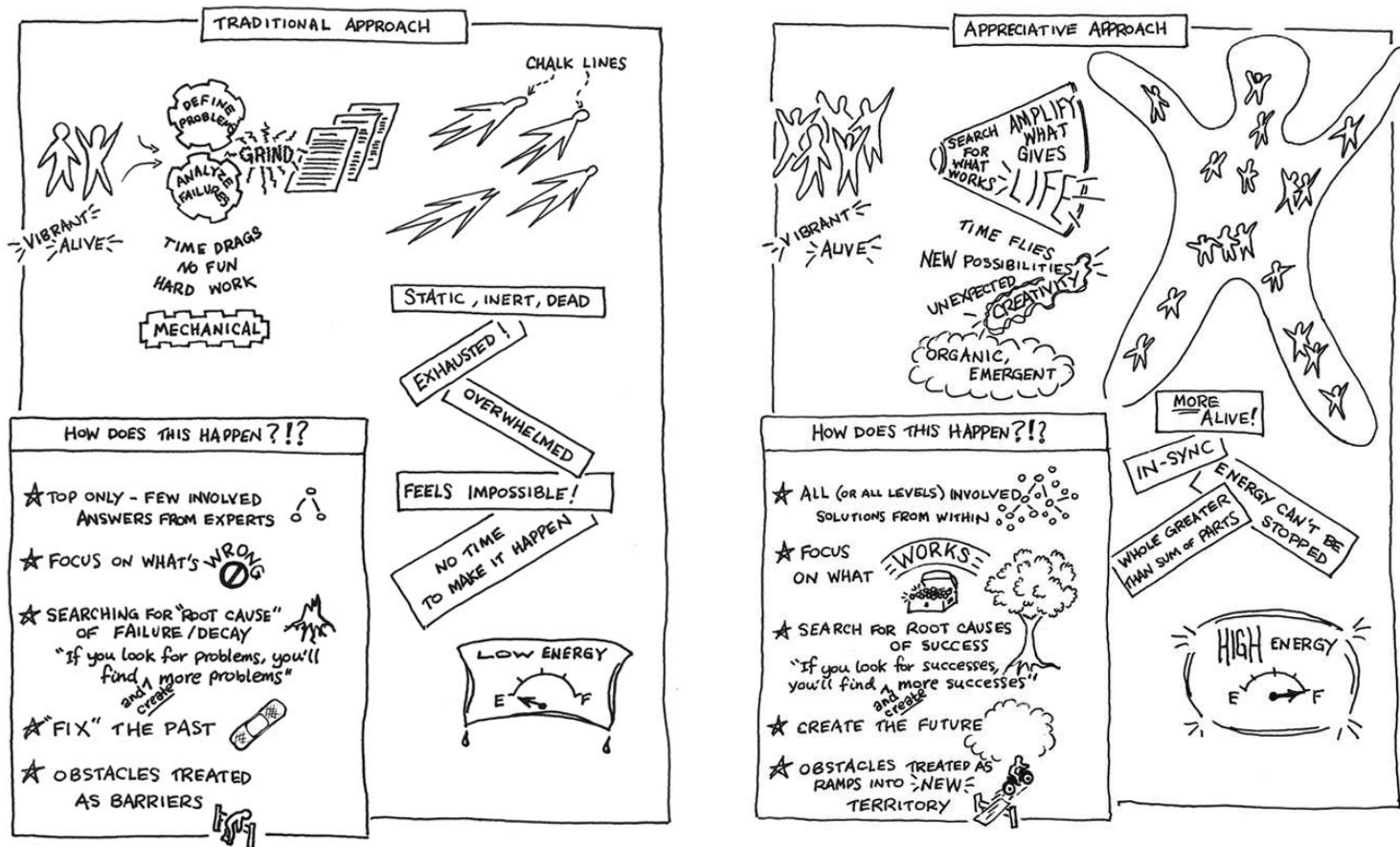
The flip chart: the traditional versus the appreciative approach

Then I turned to the group and asked, 'Do we have a crisis?'

They smiled, laughed and shook their heads. David grinned and responded , 'No crisis! We're in good shape. Let's turn these flip charts into a short report, prepare a few summary posters and enjoy the rest of the weekend.' Crisis over. Appreciative planning and action (APA) works. Look for the good stuff. Imagine what 'even better' looks like. Make a plan. Take action.

Application
We often default to crisis mode because we see only one view of the situation. In this case, I was the one who offered the fresh perspective of another way of looking at this situation. I asked:

- What did you do related directly or indirectly to this project that you enjoyed most?

- What did you do related to this work that was exciting or that you were especially proud of?

- What are you going to do next to help make more of this good stuff happen?

The result was people could connect to what had been accomplished, not be overwhelmed about what yet needed to be done. We can always find more to do; we have to stop and assess what we have done to have the motivation to continue.

The priorities that communities come up with follow the money, rather than things that are important ... We transform the 4Ds of AI into the 7Ds, the APA approach.

Some background

Most development organizations generally attempt to assist communities in making a basic assessment of their problems, their needs, rank them by priority, make an general plan for coming up with potential solutions and their implementation. Sounds familiar? In the end they, like managers anywhere, apply for funding and/or material support (like cement, pipe, roofing, etc.) and technical support (for health, agriculture and so on). This process isn't bad, but it is rather complicated for largely illiterate communities, and – since it is almost always donor-driven – it tends to encourage people to look for handouts, for the money and resources that the donor has available to help. Translation: It turns otherwise independent and resourceful local communities into professional beggars, increasing rather than reducing dependency ... or at least it doesn't do much for promoting genuine empowerment of those involved or fostering a genuine spirit of community self-help. The priorities that communities come up with tend to follow the money, rather than the things they really think are most important. Reminding them of their problems only gets them caught up in those problems rather than in solving them.

Introduction to APA

David Gatare, the field coordinator and overall in-charge for the IRC program in this area comes from Rwanda where he's seen as bad or worse situations than here. Here's how he opened our training program:

'We are responsible for the reconstruction and development of Sierra Leone and a million eyes are on us. This is a pilot project for Sierra Leone and for the European Community that is supporting us. And you, as the community mobilizers, hold the key to success. And if we are successful, others will follow our lead. We will be facilitating communities to develop themselves, to find their own capacities, to recognize that they can turn their problems into resources and potential for development ... We are agents of change but to change others, you must first change yourself – to turn problems into potentials – to help people see the great potential of Sierra Leone and it's people ... We can make a difference. So let's start now, here with this APA training – seeking to discover our own capacities and help others to find theirs.'

Then he rolled up his sleeves and joined the group of about 15 local staff, in going through an initial two hour APA exercise.

Application

Seeking the Root Cause of Success – All the knowledge we need is in the room

- What inspired us most about the stories we heard?

- What did we learn from these stories about what led to success?

- What factors led to empowerment, excitement, joy?

To warm things up and set the stage for the five days, I had everyone pair up with the person they knew least well in the room and interview each other around a time in their lives when they felt proud, joyful about making a difference – a time they did something that made life better for themselves, their family, their community, or those in their workplace – anytime, anywhere. After a few minutes of sharing stories, I then asked each one to introduce their new friend and share highlights of their story and what inspired them about it. Out of this

People were jumping in with great enthusiasm … so excited by the pictures they were creating.

came some amazing stories of surviving the civil war, building a new school in a home village, or uniting lost children with parents presumed dead. From these we brainstormed together the 'root causes of success' behind these stories, what we learned from them, and specifically what factors led to empowerment, excitement and ultimate success.

With these inspiring and personal stories still in mind, and along the lines of the normal planning process, I gave a quick overview of the APA philosophy and mission: how we transform the 4Ds of AI into the 7Ds, the APA approach.

The APA mission
To empower communities and individuals to:

- Take pride in what and who we are and what we have achieved

- Dream of what might be

- Plan for what will be, and

- Feel the energy that comes from making commitments and taking the first step

To be simple enough that anyone can do it, yet profound enough to change people's lives.

The 7Ds – building on the Super D
From there – during the rest of the first day and through the second – the LRRD Community Mobilization Team reviewed and practiced exercises for each of the rest of the 7Ds (Discovery, Dreams, Designs, Delivery, Do it now, Discuss and Dance and drum), dissecting them, getting to understand them better, and then role-playing how they might try them out them in the village the following day. Everything builds, however, on the Super D Discovery.

When we have great Discovery stories flowing, the whole process seems to roll with a momentum of its own. Great Discoveries lead to grand Dreams, grand Dreams lead to vivid, creative Design for a doable strategy and approach – all based, of course, on those things they have already done successfully. From a strong Design, the process flows right into the Delivery of realistic action plans and those powerful personal commitments which ensure that the plans won't just sit on the shelf.

By the time the second day of activities was over, the group felt very comfortable about the 7Ds, and ready to head out to several nearby villages to try them out. In seven groups of two each, they prepared an outline for a short APA meeting to be conducted in each of seven small communities.

I must admit, I was a bit anxious about this village exercise. Most of the communities were being rebuilt, the war having devastated them while the residents had fled as refugees to Guinea and Liberia. Now they were back after ten years of total dependency on donors and relief agencies, where everything had been a hand-out. How would they respond to a purely self-help APA exercise that presumed they would come up with both plans and all the resources necessary to get started on implementation? Maybe this time the process would flop. I went ahead anyway.

The final presentations: role-playing the scenarios.

When we have great Discovery stories flowing, the whole process seems to roll.

'Do it now!' – off to the villages

By the end of the second afternoon these participants were feeling quite confident and ready to try it out in some villages the following afternoon. They went in pairs to try the process out about half an hour outside Koidu, down a winding rutted dirt road that crossed several improbable streams on simple bridges made of tree trunks. I accompanied one group and David Gatare another. Within a couple of hours the teams had completed their first APA meeting, returning all smiles, with reports of real enthusiasm topped off with action plans, commitments, and – in two cases – activities already started on the ground. David's report:

'When they started with Discovery they first drew pictures on the ground with a stick. Villagers joined in enthusiastically scratching out pictures of some of the things they had done together of which they were particularly proud ... When they came to the Dream, they drew more pictures around the one they'd drawn of their success. People were jumping in with great enthusiasm ... They were so excited by the pictures they were creating.'

In the village where I accompanied one team, a lot of energy emerged around building a grain store and drying floor. Land was pledged, resources committed and an action plan for getting started was agreed upon by everyone present. Despite a sudden rain shower, which pushed us into a charming thatched local church, the plans were nailed down, commitments made and the meeting was closed with enthusiastic drumming and dancing. Two of the teams in other villages reported back that before they left, local people had grabbed their tools and started clearing land for projects before the rain came. Consensus: the approach is easy to use, generates genuine enthusiasm, self-confidence and commitment, gets results in a hurry, and is a lot of fun.

From Dream teams to action plans for next steps

With the successful experience of conducting a real APA planning session with local communities, the team returned energized and enthusiastic about creating down-to-earth action plans for implementing a full-scale community mobilization program throughout their project area.

Distilling the 'best' and 'even better' from the field activities into a series of lessons learned, we set about forming four Dream teams around the personal interests of each participants along with the major objectives of their program. Over the next two days, using the same basic APA, we turned their dreams for their community mobilization program into concrete action plans, and personal commitments for getting started. On the afternoon of day five, the four Dream teams gathered to share their Discoveries, Dreams, Designs, Delivery, Do it now, and Dance and Drum. I held my breath to see what might emerge.

Final presentations

With things apparently moving along well, I even went so far as to leave them working entirely on their own Friday after lunch. In fact, I headed back to the office. There, on their behalf I invited any and all interested staff to come to see their final presentations, and join our wrap-up celebration at the end of the day.

By inviting guests, I was taking a bit of a gamble. I had only known this crew for just over a week and never been quite sure how they were really responding to all the new ideas and methods I was throwing at them. And I must admit, I was a

Across the dusty, ragged little campus I heard the beat of African drums.

The final celebration: dancing and drumming

bit anxious when I returned about 3 pm and found them still busy in their groups putting the finishing touches on their presentations. There were no visible signs that they were ready for company. Guests were beginning to arrive. My anxiety increased further.

I need not have worried, because just as the thought crossed my mind that this could be a complete bust, across the dusty, ragged little campus where we were gathered, I heard the beat of African drums, and a rising song. In a single line, shoulder to shoulder, with a marvellous shuffling dance step, came the first group, drums beating as the first verse of what I recognized was a song about APA filtered across the yard. As the second vehicle full of curious IRC staff rolled through the gate, they moved to surround those arriving, adding verse after verse in their marvellous Krio language, grinning from ear to ear.

Dance and drum

I had hardly to say a word, the team took it completely from there. Augustine welcomed everyone with a few well-chosen remarks, I thanked everyone for coming, and the fun began. Group by group, they came forward, quickly went through the very impressive plans they had made, and – one by one – gave their personal commitments to carrying the work forward – all the while accompanied, preceded, or followed by a song, dance, and/or role play of one sort or another. My favorite group had everyone present play the part of a village conducting an APA meeting with us.

With great good humor they went through the whole 7D process, interspersing it with outbursts from quarrelsome villagers, pontificating by the chief, and both realistic and humorous interchanges that typified what were very likely scenarios in such a village meeting. Before we knew what was happening, action plans for training the rest of the IRC staff in APA had emerged, along with a series of planned interventions to mobilize all villages within the project area. They were, as the project title suggested, 'Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development' for the reconstruction of their communities, their lives and their incomes.

Taking APA to the villages

With the training completed and action plans in hand our teams were disbursed through hills, valleys, jungles, and numerous small villages – rough roads almost all the way.

We arrived in Koardu to find people already gathering for our planned meeting; we decided, with the chief, to start our meeting early. The town crier, equipped with a portable megaphone, walked around the village calling people to join the meeting.

A crowd of at least 65 people gathered in the Court Barrie, a solid, well constructed community center, open on three sides, where village meetings and customary court sessions are held. Daniel posted the agenda on the wall behind the head table, and the chief read it to the gathering. After the normal Christian and Muslim prayers, the chief welcomed everyone, including outside guests from IRC and Mukonga Agric. Trading Co. A scribe introduced all the leaders and representatives from the villages in the area.

Anxiety is apparent. But the community mobilizers press forward with their APA role play and demonstration. Stories are shared and interest rises. Dreams

After one month I found most of the tree trunks had been uprooted and two swamps had been filled.

emerge as shy women are encouraged to come forward and draw pictures of their hopes for the village. Within 30 minutes, the singing and dancing starts. Laughter and vibrant chatter replace timid giggles. Plans emerge. Promises are made. Then the chief stands to give the obligatory closing remarks. 'This is the best community meeting we've had since I can remember.' A plateful of rice and meat stew is hand out. The process is working. This is something new!

Postscript
Koidu Town, Kono District, Sierra Leone, 1st August 2006

'Welcome back – let's go see the road'

It's 4am and I'm sitting cross-legged under a sagging mosquito net, overhead fan whirring softly overhead, restless and still coping with jet-lag after shifting time-zones between the US, Kenya, and Sierra Leone. I am on a follow-up mission for 'review, assessment, and refresher training' for the LRRD team, now re-christened SCOPE (Sustainable Community Empowerment, or something like that). I got a warm welcome in Freetown from David Gatare, now deputy director for operations for all IRC programs in Sierra Leone. 'They call me "field marshall for APA,"' he joked, 'because I want to build the process into everything we do. No more problems, just opportunities!'

After a bone jolting seven hour trip over marginally improved roads, I'm here in Kono again. They have 86 projects underway in the 43 villages they are working in, but the one they want to tell me about is the road. Komba, one of the new faces, tells the story:

'After training, I found one community accessible only by footpath. I was worried how we might get supplies to the village for our projects, but the community agreed to carry supplies on their heads ... the next thing I knew they had started to build a local access road themselves. On my second visit they had cleared the brush; by the third visit they were felling trees; after one month I found most of the tree trunks had been uprooted and two swamps enroute had been filled with palm trees; on my fourth visit I went with Samual Paka and found the road was passable by motor bike. The villagers surrounded our bike and danced. Then, a few weeks later, we came with the big project Land Cruiser, and there was even more singing and dancing. Some of the children had never seen a vehicle before, and there was a great celebration.'

Indeed, progress in the Land of Dirty Diamonds. There is a rainbow out there. The people of the villages of Kono District can see it. The IRC team sees it. Now the children can see the rainbow. It's time that the world community saw the rainbow.

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Privilege Maguchu Chidzewere
is an organisational development facilitator. He is also an assessor and moderator at Community Based Development Programme (CBDP) Management Education. Privilege has roots in community development. He writes about AI, team building, community development and organisational development.
Contact: maguchuprivilege@yahoo.com

Hearing and Valuing All Voices
A Community-Based Development Programme in South Africa

EDITOR'S NOTE
Privilege Maguchu Chidzewere was in the AI Foundations training I did in South Africa in March – he was so keen and interested in how this approach could change the way he is working so I asked him to write about it.
Mette Jacobsgaard

What we do

The organisation that I work for is called the Community Based Development Programme, operating as CBDP Management Education. We are based in Troyeville, in Johannesburg, South Africa. I work as an organisational development (OD) facilitator. We work with community based organisations (CBOs), and we seek to capacitate these through skills training. The idea is to create a strong grassroots leadership in community organisations that understand development and which can then initiate, manage and monitor their own development.

This is important because communities here have not been given a chance to decide on their own development path by the government. In fact, the government does what we may call 'imposed order' in communities as opposed to a participative kind of development.

A good example is the integrated development plans (IDPs). The community is supposed to decide on future development plans about itself, and the government is supposed to hold consultation meetings with the people. However, this does not happen; only a few individuals who are close allies of ruling party officials are consulted and local councillors submit these to the government. Subsequently this becomes law and affects the whole community. CBDP becomes important in teaching people about their rights and participative democracy. The organisations we work with are poorly resourced and they still manage to provide key services to address community needs.

We run a programme called the Community Empowerment for Development (CEFD). The programme has the following steps for OD facilitators:

- Desktop research

- Environmental scans

We encourage organisations to network all the time.

- Confidence building workshops

- Future search conferences;

- Development management education (DME) courses;

- An organisational development phase, and

- Coaching and mentoring

- AI conference

We award certificates to DME course participants and encourage them to use skills acquired during training back in their organisations. We also encourage organisations to network all the time.

Since some of our staff participated in the AI Foundations course at Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre we have decided to introduce Appreciative Inquiry workshops into the current work, and have an Appreciative Inquiry Summit at the end of the programme to evaluate the programme activities, in order to make improvements.

Common skills required in Ivory Park

As part of the broader CEFD programme, an Appreciative Inquiry Workshop was held in Ivory Park in May 2011. The purpose of the workshop was to enable participants who enrolled on the Development Management Course (DME) to discover their learning points and expectations during training. The learning points will then be integrated in to the leaning modules that the facilitators are updating at the time of writing to suit the needs of the communities that CBDP is currently working with. The workshop was therefore given the topic: 'creating a high performing team through skills training'. Two AI-trained CBDP facilitators guided the 28 participants in identifying what everybody wanted regarding skills training. The following skills were important:

- Communication

- Gender and development

- Finance management

- Project management

- Marketing and costing

The facilitators presented what is covered by CBDP modules and delegates unanimously agreed that the skills most required are covered, and some of these will be integrated into the current workbooks.

How I see AI changing the work that we do

We believe that community transformation becomes possible because each person's positive emotion can have an impact on the other. People who experience positive emotions become more helpful to others. In our work as community development practitioners we encourage strong and constructive networks, but they fail sometimes because people are negative about other people and about themselves, and they do not believe in themselves or their strengths.

For any organisation to move forward sustainably, all voices must be heard and valued.

In CEFD we aim to capacitate community based organisations with skills but sometimes the next time you visit that organisation, the trained people have left because they are not happy or they have been offered better opportunities elsewhere. Whereas it is very positive that the individuals are themselves capacitated by the training to go and seek other opportunities, the community as a whole may lose out.

We can therefore change such things if Appreciative Inquiry is used where people can appreciate the positive core of relationships and organisations and start to use their strengths to get the best that gives life to projects and or their organisations. Instead of looking at what is broken in community-based organisations, we will now concentrate on what is the best that gives life to them, and build their future from that and include all people in the organisation, unlike before.

How we implement AI in our community development projects

Instead of going to communities with preconceived ideas for solving their problems, we will now use the 5-D model of Appreciative Inquiry to facilitate the community to define, discover, dream, design and do what is best for the community with the guidance of trained AI practitioners.

Our OD practice will change from trying to fix what is broken to creating what is desired. In our past OD phases we were discussing their problems with organisations and what had gone wrong instead of focusing on what was desired, and the best experiences of the past from which organisations could derive inspiration. In fact, dealing with problems meant that somebody had to take responsibility which brought further and more complicated problems.

To use an example, when we visited the Magalies Agricultural Cooperative in Tarlton, the participants on the DME course were not happy with the leadership. Further diagnosis of the problems indicated that they wanted to start their own organisation which excluded other members, whereas we believe that an appreciative approach would have strengthened relationships.

We have also learnt that for any organisation to move forward sustainably, all voices must be heard and valued. Every member of the organisation should therefore be included in OD unlike in the past when facilitators interviewed only senior members of the organisation and the participants that had been trained by our organisation.

We may also consider reviewing the decision to issue Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) accredited certificates to Community Based Organisations' participants because this may not address our organisational objectives of empowering organisations with relevant skills required. Instead, people think of leaving organisations once they possess skills, creating further gaps in the organisations and community when they lose these people.

We want to focus on identifying the core values of organisations, to energise people and encourage them to feel enthusiastic about their own organisations and what they can achieve for the community.

Mette Jacobsgaard
is a lawyer and social scientist who has worked with development aid for 28 years especially in Africa and Asia. She has used AI in her practice as a consultant and trainer since 1994.
Contact: 101572.622@compuserve.com
              www.appreciative-inquiry.co.uk

Irene Nørlund
has worked in social change in developing countries for three decades, specializing in NGOs and community development; livelihoods, nutrition and health and organizations and participatory methods. She has trained NGOs in Mongolia in AI analysis. She is presently working in Research & Development at Metropolitan University College, Copenhagen.
Contact: inorlund@mail.dk

Embedded (E)Valuation

ABSTRACT

Mette Jacobsgaard, in collaboration with Irene Nørland, considers the advantages of using embedded evaluation to go beyond traditional data collection, analysis and judgement of merit and worth, by generating shared meaning amongst the involved parties.

'Aid thinking is lazy thinking: limited numbers of weak evaluations contribute to a lack of consensus around the simplest of questions – what works?' Abhijit Banerjee, MIT[1]

Evaluation based on the traditional rules of social science is increasingly at odds with the complexity and volatility found in our contemporary world. The prevailing paradigm of social science is both expert and problem-solving based. Most reviews and evaluations of development aid projects and programmes are made against plans based on a logical framework analysis made for the project or programme, sometimes several years before the evaluation, by 'experts' external to the project and the culture in which the project will be taking place. Evaluation against set plans, assumptions, problem analyses and dreamt-up indicators developed by 'experts' often fail, or produce disappointing results, which are elaborately documented in reports left on a shelf to collect dust.

In 1995, Dr Charles Elliott of Cambridge University and I were tasked with the job of evaluating the work of an NGO in Ghana. Operating in an extremely volatile field – street children – their greatest fear was to be evaluated against plans which became irrelevant as soon as they were made. Although the ultimate objective of the NGO's work may have been to get the children off the street into a 'normal' life, they also knew that the success rate was extremely small.

One of the reasons, they believed, was that they simply did not know enough about what attracted the children to the street and kept them there. In addition to knowing something about their past performance, the NGO wanted first and foremost to learn: they wanted their staff to learn, they wanted their donors to learn, and they wanted to learn from their clients, the children in the street. On

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1 ODI Background Note (Dec. 2007) *Aid Effectiveness: The Role of Qualitative Research Impact Evaluation*.

We made positive assumptions about the lives that the children led in the street, and were rewarded with a wealth of information.

that basis, together with Jane Magruder Watkins, we developed the concept of 'embedded evaluation'.[2]

Taking responsibility

With embedded evaluation, the expert becomes a facilitator, assisting the client together with a number of stakeholders, including in this case, the street children, to look at what has worked well in the project and what changes could be made to enhance the performance. Whereas the original objectives for the organisation and project may guide the questions asked, the questions themselves are open to allow new and unexpected information that could take the project in a different direction.

Instead of ticking boxes against a list of expected outcomes, the information that comes from 'tell me a story of ....' brings a richness and – importantly – a context which gives valuable clues as to how the project could 'do more of' – or even change direction. Embedded evaluation is a process of self-evaluation. Through the use of AI the project actions are valued and therefore the stakeholders, including those who lead the project are much more likely to take on board the learning from the evaluation. As the focus of AI is on what works well and what can be changed to make it even better, the stakeholders and especially the implementers of the project are in a better position to be open and take responsibility for past as well as future actions.

Who are the stakeholders?

Much of the success of an embedded evaluation is determined by initial decisions about purpose, goals, focus, process and stakeholders. The purpose, goals and focus are usually dictated by the terms of reference given by the client, i.e. a donor agency. However, arriving at the best framework is often an iterative process. It is not always obvious who should be involved from the stakeholder group and even less so from the wider stakeholder group.

Stakeholders are any person, group or institution with an interest in, or which has information about or has contact with the individual, team or service, product, project or program. Any person or group that has the capacity (irrespective of their organizational status) to influence the outcome of the evaluation is essentially a stakeholder.

Variation in evaluation

In this brief article we do not have the space and time to cover the many variations in evaluation, some of which are qualitative.[3] At the same time, it is our experience that evaluations of aid projects and programmes usually operate with one or a team of professional evaluators who carry out the entire evaluation. They give direction and maintain control of the evaluation and its conclusions and recommendations.

2 The effects of this work are described by Fr Patrick Shanahan in his articles starting on page 39 of this issue.
3 Michael Quinn Patton is one of the foremost scholars working with presentation of qualitative reserach and evaluation and the multiple approaches that have developed since the 1980s and 90s. (*Qualitative Evaluation Methods (*1980); *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 2nd Ed . (1990); *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, 1st Ed. (1978); 4th Ed. (2008). All published by Sage Publications.)

Embedded evaluation allows recipients of aid to evaluate the delivery of aid ... it generates shared meaning.

Embedded evaluation usually involves facilitation by an experienced AI practitioner, who facilitates a process through which a number of stakeholders take responsibility and become the evaluation team. Many other evaluation methods are headed by a team of external professionals with little or no direct stake in the outcome of the evaluation. Embedded evaluation further allows the stakeholders, and especially the recipients of the aid, to evaluate the delivery of aid that is after all meant to support them.

This presents a shift in paradigm: in many evaluations, the goals are to provide an objective assessment of the project or programme. Stakeholders have an inherent stake in the assessment and are therefore not seen as being objective. Even in most qualitative evaluations where the stakeholders' assessment is included, it is the task of the evaluator to ensure the objectivity in the final evaluation.

And back to the NGO in Ghana
We first trained the staff of the NGO to enable them to go into the street and ask their clients to tell stories, based on questions such as:

- Tell me what you really like about being here in the street.

- Tell me the story of a time when you found it most exciting to live in the street.

- Tell me a story about how your life has changed since you came into contact with the NGO.

We made positive assumptions about the lives that the children lead in the street and were rewarded with a wealth of information which surprised even the NGO staff, most of whom were local social workers. The NGO received feed back about the impact they had on the lives of the children, set in the context of their daily and real-lived lives. They also received a wealth of information about the lives of the children, especially what attracted them to the street.

Had we asked the children to rate the service of the NGO on a scale from one to five, we would have had information about whether the children found the service good, satisfactory or bad, with no clue about the real reasons behind the answers. Closed questions and questionnaires with quantitative questions such as 'how many training sessions have you attended' merely give you a number.

Instead, by asking the children to tell stories and by making positive assumptions about them as human beings with a choice, they volunteered extra information about the NGO: what they liked and what they wish could change.

Including the staff of the NGO as active participants in the evaluation as well as the children enabled them to enter into an ongoing dialogue about the project, the lives of the children and the changes that could be made, both from the NGO's side and the children's. Valuing what the NGO was there to do, and in particular valuing what they had accomplished as well as what still needed to be done and changed, based on their own judgement of possibilities empowered them as well as embedded the outcome of the evaluation.

Making the choice to use embedded evaluation means making the choice to go beyond traditional data collection, analysis and judgment of merit and worth.

Stakeholders not only identify problems but find their own solutions.

Embedded evaluation generates shared meaning amongst the involved parties as well as energy to move forward on the basis of a shared understanding of what works well. It is my experience that people are much more likely to suggest changes – including drastic changes – to the way things operate, if they know that they have the ability to perform well. It should be noted that embedded evaluation using AI does not negate problems and needs for change. The stakeholders not only identify the problems but find their own solutions to them, thus embedding the outcome of the evaluation. As the purpose of most evaluations is to take stock, make changes and adopt those changes, I find embedded evaluation an ideal way to proceed.

In fact – Appreciative Inquiry is (e)valuation.

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Special issue on Sales and Finance

Call for Articles

Sales/Finance and Appreciative Inquiry: Positive Images, Positive Action, Positive Results

Guest editor: Ralph Weickel, principal of Performance Management

We are looking for 6 to 8 key articles in sales and finance that have special resonance with people coming to the World AI Conference, April 2012. Articles could address questions such as:

- What are the applications, breakthroughs and success stories using the practice of AI in sales/finance?

- What are examples of the potential of AI in the development of future financial systems and applications?

- Where is the potential for AI to be applied in the development of sales as a profession and industry?

Timeline for Contributions

August 20, 2011: Please send in your Initial proposal (300 words max)
September 30, 2011: We'll let you know if your entry has been accepted
November 30, 2011: We'd like to receive your completed article

For the full Call for Articles, go to www.aipractitioner.com.
Contact Ralph Weickel at crom13@earthlink.net for further information.

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Lena Holmberg
has a Ph.D. in Educational Research, worked as a consultant and manager in an IT company and started the AI consulting company Apprino. With Jan Reed, she was guest editor of the November 2007 issue of *AI Practitioner* which focused on AI and research.
Contact: lmholmberg@gmail.com
               lenamholmberg.blogspot.com

Jan Reed
Ph.D. B.A, RN has been involved in research for many years. She has a nursing qualification, and teaches and supervises healthcare students at Northumbria University. She is well known for her ground-breaking book, *Appreciative Inquiry: Research for Change*.
Contact: jreedhexham@gmail.com

AI Research Notes
edited by Lena Holmberg and Jan Reed

AI Research Notes carries news of AI research developments. We'd like to make it as collaborative and appreciative as we can – we know that many of you are working and thinking about the relationship between academic research and AI, and that you have news, comments and questions which we'd like you to contribute.

Shweta Bisen
Pt Ravishankar Shukla University
Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India
shweta0562@gmail.com
shweta2811@rediffmail.com

The author of this Research Column is Shweta Bisen. The article is a summary of her brand new master's thesis. Her supervisor was Dr Mrs Priyamvada Srivastava from the School of Studies in Psychology at the Pt Ravishankar Shukla University in Raipur, Chhattisgarh, India. The thesis focuses on a very important topic, namely on how an appreciative capacity can help managers, especially in turbulent times. As pointed out by Shweta herself, much research related to Appreciative Inquiry has dealt with qualitative methods, which is why we are especially happy that she has chosen to do quantitative research and are willing to share her results with us. If you want to know more about her research and her plans for her PhD work, please contact her.

We are very happy to include work from students in the Research Column. If you are interested in contributing or know somebody you think should be included in the column, please contact us.

Appreciative Capacity: Predictor of Conflict Management Styles
A great question confronting industrial society is concerned with the issue of how the skills of managers can be enriched so as to make it possible for them to act with greater proficiency when their contributions are dealing with and through people, especially their subordinates. One way of looking into this issue is from the conflict perspectives. Roberts (2005) reported that 30–42% of a manager's time is spent dealing with conflict.

According to Daft (1992) and Terry (1996), several factors create organizational conflict – scarce resources, ambiguities, personality clashes, power, goal differences, communication breakdown and perception being some of them. The independent variable selected for the study was appreciative capacity, a mental ability that affects how the world is perceived and, in turn, is deliberately thought about and acted upon. (Thatchenkery and Metzeker, 2006) Pareek (1982) proposed a contingency model of conflict management strategies. This model consists of avoidance/approach mode to conflict management based on three dimensions:

1. Mode of conflict management: avoidance vs. approach mode

Appreciative capacity
is a kind of intelligence
... individuals with high
appreciative abilility can
see the end goal.

2. Reasonableness of the out-group: open to reason vs. unreasonable

3. Interest in peace: interested in peace vs. belligerent

Appreciative Capacity

Thatchenkery and Metzker (2006) postulate that appreciative capacity is a kind of intelligence that is associated with the ability for accomplishing a goal or set of goals, relying primarily on how the available abilities and resources can be best utilized and not so much on the extent of abilities or resources available. According to them, those with high appreciative capacity have an ability to endow everyday activity with a sense of purpose. They can re-frame, they are flexible and they are actively and spontaneously adaptive.

Thatchenkery and Metzker conceived of Appreciative Intelligence as having three basic components: (a) appreciating the positive, (b) re-framing and (c) seeing how the future unfolds. Four state-like qualities appear consistently in subjects possessing high appreciative ability (a) developed persistence, (b) conviction that one's actions matter, (c) tolerance for uncertainty and (d) irrepressible resilience.

Method

The sample for this study comprises 250 managers selected randomly from the service and manufacturing sectors. The response rate of usable questionnaires was 91% (N=164).

Multiple Regression Analysis was used to find best predictors of appreciative capacity for all eight conflict management styles.

Dependent variable	Conflict management styles based on Pareek's model (2002): - four avoidance styles (resignation, withdrawal, defusion and appeasement) - four approach styles (confrontation, compromise, arbitration and negotiation)
Independent variable	Appreciative capacity: - three dimensions: appreciation, visualization and actualization
Statistics	Multiple regression
Measures used	- Opinion survey of conflict management developed by Pareek - Appreciative acumen inventory developed by Maheshwari (2009)
Sample	164 managers randomly selected from service and manufacturing sectors.

Results and Discussion

The objective framed for the study was to find out the best predicting factors for an appreciative intelligence for conflict management styles. Several styles were investigated, with many interesting findings. For example, the appreciative capacity was established as a significant predictor for defusion style, and showed positive relationship, i.e. as the appreciative capacity of the manager increases tendency to use defusion style also increases. Sometimes, despite the best intentions, passions swell and tempers flare and discussions become

personal; it is critical to stop and take a breather to allow emotions to settle. This is what mangers do when using a defusion style.

When the out-group is recognized as open to reason and interested in peace, managers try to defuse the conflict by appealing to the good sense of both groups, to the sentiment that both are part of a larger group and have common interests, interdependence and mutuality.(Pareek, 2002) Appreciation quality makes them feel connected with an out-group, and they develop an understanding that by exploiting others they will be exploiting themselves. They feel compassionate and empathetic towards the out-group as they develop an identification with them.

Also compromise was significant for and positively related to appreciative capacity. Compromise involves bargaining and mutually giving up something to reach a settlement. It can be used to get a quick resolution, with the prevention of further escalation. (Robin, 2002) When the out-group is interested in peace but identified as unreasonable and seeking its own interest, managers high in appreciative intelligence prefer a compromise style. Because individuals with high appreciative ability can see the end goal, they believe their actions and abilities will take them towards a successful conclusion. Reich (2004) believes that such expectations allow managers to overlook or underplay negative information and selectively seek positive actions. They value the person and situation, and out of their positivity feel connectivity with the universe.

Appreciative managers bring an air of connectivity, gratitude, positivity and empathy, which itself reduces conflict among people. When such people are present in an organization, conflict management become easier as their vision and insight adds depth to their approach in dealing with people and situations. Their ability to commit to goals and their resilience makes the impossible possible. Further research focusing on appreciative ability in employees could become an integral part of attempts to develop effective conflict managing skills at all levels of organizations, thus enhancing organizational learning and effectiveness.

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Jackie Stavros
DM, is Associate Professor and DBA Program Chair, College of Management at Lawrence Technological University, has co-authored books, book chapters and articles including *Thin Book of SOAR: Building-Strengths-Based Change*. She consults and provides training using strength-based whole system approaches.
Contact: jstavros@comcast.net

Dawn Dole
is Executive Director of the Taos Institute and the Knowledge Manager of the Appreciative Inquiry Commons (http://ai.case.edu). She also consults with schools, businesses, churches and non-profits to bring about positive and collaborative change.
Contact: info@taosinstitute.net
www.taosinstitute.net

AI Resources
edited by Jackie Stavros and Dawn Dole

AI Resources features a rediscovery of classic and new resources for your use. Resources will include list-serves, books, journal articles, book chapters, DVDs, websites, blogs, podcasts, etc. ... all in one place useful for learning more about AI to help with your consulting practice, internal work, teaching, training and extending your knowledge base and resources.

This August 2011 issue of *AI Practitioner* highlights international development work using Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Ten years after the inception of AI, in 1990, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), funded a project called Global Excellence Management Initiative (GEM) with Case Western Reserve University to offer capacity building and leadership training to international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) around the world on global social change issues using AI. The program goals were to:

1. Promote organizational excellence in development organizations on an international basis;

2. Create new forms of global cooperation; and

3. Sustain excellence, develop capacity to continually learn, adjust, and innovate.

AI provided the foundational operational principles and approach to capacity building for this international development program. For more information on the GEM initiative please visit the AI Commons at http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/gem/index.html.

Here are a few additional links leading to resources on the AI Commons related to international development:

Positive Questions and Interview Guides Detail

Training Design Detail

AI and Organizational Sectors

HIV/AIDS Interview Protocol and Packet

Capacity Building

Jackie Stavros (1998) completed an exploratory study that included four organizations from the GEM initiative and six organizations from Africa on the application of AI as a relational process of building capacity. This research created a greater appreciation and awareness of the importance of building organizational, multi-organizational, and global capacities in international development organizations. The findings from this study offer both utility and value for INGOs, donor organizations, governmental agencies, researchers and policy makers involved in international development activities. To read her dissertation *Capacity Building Using an Appreciative Approach* and other noteworthy dissertations on social construction and AI please visit the Taos Institute's website at
http://www.taosinstitute.net/noteworthy-dissertations

The Taos Institute is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the development of social constructionist theory and practices for purposes of world benefit. Taos Institute Publications offers several books that may be of interest to those in the field of international development listed later in this column for your review at
http://www.taosinstitutepublications.net

Videos

There are video resources from which you can learn about AI's long-term impact on international development. Here we feature three films.

MYRADA

The first is by MYRADA organization called *The Positive Path: Using AI in Rural Indian Communities* at www.myrada.org or http://myrada.org/myrada/film5.html.

MYRADA is directly managing 13 projects in 20 backward and drought prone districts of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. MYRADA's mission is: 'Building institutions of the poor and marginalised which are appropriate to the resource to be managed and objective to be achieved.'

The second film is also from MYRADA in collaboration with the Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD):

Appreciative Inquiry – A Beginning documents the experience of development workers and community members with AI to empower local people by helping them build a vision for a better future based on their community's strengths. Then, by drawing on these strengths, the community charts a path to turn their vision into reality.
http://www.iisd.org/publications/pub.aspx?pno=404

UN Global Compact

The third film highlights 1200 organizations involved in the United Nations Global Compact. An AI Summit was held in the spring 2004 with the Global Compact at the United Nations with Kofi Annan.

Go directly to this link to see the full description of the summit:
http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/commentFeb05.cfm

This film is a very good illustration of AI and its application in global change agendas. If you are interested in the triple bottom line and sustainability you will find this an interesting one. At the AI Commons you can download the final project report and review new initiatives and projects.
http://appreciativeinquiry.case.edu/intro/commentFeb05.cfm

Books on international development
The following is a list of books on AI which relate to international development work:

Organizational Dimensions of Global Change: No Limits to Cooperation
Cooperrider, David and Jane Dutton. (1999) Human Dimensions of Global Change series. Sage Publications.
ISBN: 978-0761915287.

This book facilitates, cross disciplines and national boundaries, an emergent dialogue around the issue of global change and cooperative potential. Written by an interdisciplinary group of leading scholars, the book explores how organizational scholarship and thinking can inform the understanding of issues of global value and change, and examines the potential of cooperation as a practice, an organizing accomplishment and as a value for understanding issues of global change.
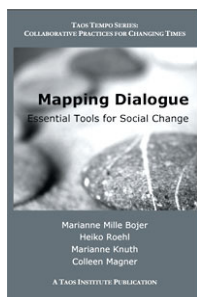
Mapping Dialogue: Essential Tools for Social Change
Bojer, Marianne, Heiko Roehl, Marianne Knuth and Colleen Magner. (2008) Taos Institute Publications. ISBN: 978-0-9712312-8-3.

These authors are an international team of dialogue practitioners for social change and offer in their book guidelines for assessing what tools to use for which situations, to deal with the increasing complexity of sustainable social change. This book profiles 25 dialogue methods in a variety of case studies from deep democracy, open space technology, world café, the Israeli-Palestinian School for Peace, and more. The book also provides insight into the foundations of dialogue work with inspirations from traditional African approaches to dialogue.
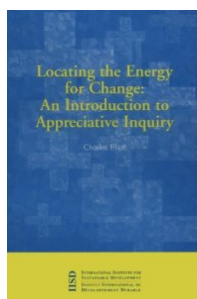
Locating the Energy for Change: An Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry
Elliott, Charles. (1999) Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). ISBN: 1-895536-15-4.

IISD is a global NGO headquartered in Canada to promote sustainable development in decision-making around the world and introduce AI to international development practices. This book describes how AI can be used in developing nations around the world. There are several case studies, including one from three Mauritanian villages in the Western Sahara using AI in community-based projects. The stories, guidance and lessons learned in this book are helpful for anyone concerned with understanding how to bring assistance to a complex and changing world that deals with global social and environmental issues. You can download a pdf version of the book from the IISD website:
http://www.iisd.org/ai/locating.htm.

Birth of a Global Community: Appreciative Inquiry in Action
Gibbs, Charles and Sally Mahe. (1999) Crown Custom Publishing (Reprinted 2003). ISBN: 978-1933403168.

The birth of the United Religions Initiative (URI) is the story of how hundreds, then thousands of people across cultures, oceans and faith traditions began to share a common call to make the world they lived in more like the world they yearned for in their dreams. This book tells how one person's vision and conviction evolved to include a global community working together to make their dreams real – dreams reflected in a call of the sacred within a world-wide, faith-based organization. AI as a process provided the ability for an organization to be formed which would be: inclusive, decentralized and self-organizing. AI and the URI together embarked upon a 'spiritual journey'; the theme of this narrative shares a blueprint of a working, global, vibrant community that is ongoing and sustainable.
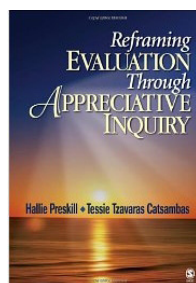
Reframing Evaluation Through Appreciative Inquiry
Preskill, Hallie and Tessie Tzavaras Catsambas. (2006) Sage Publications, Inc. ISBN-13: 978-1412909518

This book introduces the application of AI to the practice of evaluation. International development professionals may be interested in this approach when designing and evaluating programs. This book reflects current issues that evaluators and organization development professionals face, such as cultural diversity, increasingly distributed populations, the challenge of the ever-changing program design and using credible qualitative evaluation methods. It provides a step-by-step guide that will help readers know how to apply AI to evaluation. It empowers readers to use this approach for strengthening their own evaluation practice. This book is a bridge between evaluation and organizational development disciplines and enriches both fields.

Positive Approaches to Peace Building: A Resource for Innovators
Sampson, Cynthia, Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Claudia Liebler, and Diana Whitney. (2009) Taos Institute Publications. ISBN: 978-0-98119076-3-5

This book presents an innovative perspective on peace building from 32 contributors. The readings offer a balance of theoretical frameworks and practical case studies to inspire new and innovative work among peace builders. The book describes the social construction of imagined futures to move beyond 'problem solving' and its ethic of 'neutrality,' towards AI practices that flourish in the context of affirmation, presenting a provocative way to think more deeply about how we conduct our peacemaking and peace building relationships.
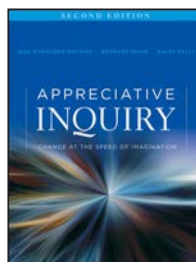
NEW! Appreciative Inquiry – Change at the Speed of Imagination
Watkins, Jane Magruder, Bernard Mohr and Ralph Kelly. (2011) Second edition. Pfeiffer Publishers. ISBN 978-0-470-52797-9

Now available! The second edition is thoroughly revised and updated and demonstrates how to use AI as an effective way to work with organizations as organic systems. This new edition updates three key areas in AI: the theoretical basis, fundamental assumptions and beliefs, and the AI process. This new edition also includes several new international development cases in AI with

one by the featured editor of this issue, Metta Jacobsgaard on 'Valuation of the Effectiveness of AI for the Zambia Police Services Victim Support Unit'. Congratulations – Jane, Bernard, and Ralph!

If you are looking for material on development and stakeholder participation in development that is not directly related to Appreciative Inquiry, the following resources may be of interest:
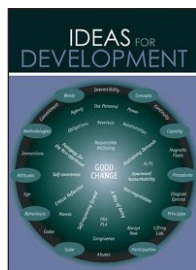
Ideas for Development
Chambers, Robert. (2005) Earthscan. ISBN-13: 978-1844070886

Robert Chambers, one of the 'glass is half full' optimists of international development, suggests that problems can be solved, and everyone has the power at a personal level to take action, develop solutions and remake our world as it can and should be. Chambers peels apart and analyzes aspects of development that have been neglected or misunderstood. In each chapter, he presents an earlier writing which he then reviews and reflects upon in a contemporary light before harvesting a wealth of powerful conclusions and practical implications for the future. The book draws on experiences from Africa, Asia and elsewhere, covering topics and concepts as wide and varied as irreversibility, continuity and commitment; administrative capacity as a scarce resource; procedures and principles; participation in the past, present and future; scaling up; behavior and attitudes; responsible wellbeing; and concepts for development in the 21st century.
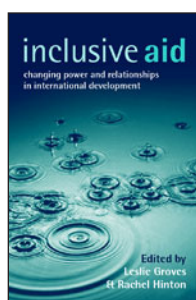
Inclusive Aid: Changing Power and Relationships in International Development
Groves, Leslie and Rachel Hinton, eds. (2004) Earthscan. ISBN-13: 978-1844070336

Rapid and profound changes are taking place in international development. The past two decades have promoted the ideals of participation and partnership, yet key decisions affecting people's lives continue to be made without sufficient attention to the socio-political realities of the countries in which they live. Embedded working traditions, vested interests and institutional inertia mean that old habits and cultures persist among the development community. Planning continues as though it were free of unpredictable interactions among stakeholders. This book is about the need to recognize the complex, non-linear nature of development assistance and how bureaucratic procedures and power relations hinder poverty reduction in the new aid environment.
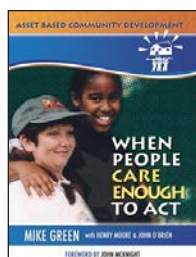
ABCD in Action: When People Care Enough to Act
Green, Mike with Henry Moore and John O'Brien. Foreword by John McKnight. ABCD Publications ISBN-13: 978-1-895418-74-3

Developed in response to the question 'I love ABCD (Asset Based Community Development); what do I do Monday Morning?' – and based on Mike Green's and Henry Moore's highly regarded work as ABCD organizers, consultants and trainers – these materials support a practical approach to creating community collaborations that work. Enriching each other, the book and the DVD provide clear exposition of ABCD organizing principles and best practices, examples of ABCD organizing in action, learning exercises, worksheets and reflections from experienced practitioners of ABCD organizing.

ABCD IN ACTION DVD – Asset Based Community Development
http://www.inclusion.com/dvdabcd.html

ABCD in Action profiles five diverse groups who have utilized the principles of ABCD to create partnerships with those they serve and in effect, rejuvenate and revitalize their organizations.

Included are profiles from:

- Neighborhood associations in Savannah, Georgia

- Beyond Welfare, an organization supporting people in poverty in Ames, Iowa

- The Archdiocese of Upper Michigan in Marquette, Michigan

- Lakes Region Community Services Council, supporting people with disabilities in New Hampshire

- Neighborhood Housing Services, an organization providing affordable housing opportunities in Asheville, North Carolina.

About the November 2011 AI Resources

We will be looking at Appreciative Governance, supporting the unique issue of *AI Practitioner* which will be initiating an on-going inquiry into the principles and practices of Appreciative Governance. A group of 13 AI practitioners began this inquiry during a Collaboration Studio in the autumn of 2010. The articles in this issue reflect their effort to develop a set of governance principles for strengths-based organizations and their work, and research into how Appreciative Governance models allow members of these organizations to generate sustainable value.

We would like to hear from you if you have unique resources for us to feature in this issue. Please send us names and information on any type of resources dealing with appreciative governance by September 1st, 2011 to jstavros@comcast.net and info@taosinstitute.net.

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Bernard J. Mohr

is a founding partner of Innovation Partners International. As an executive consultant and organization designer he helps in assessing change readiness,institutionalizing the change through governance processes. Recent books include *Appreciative Inquiry: Change At the Speed of Imagination* (Second edition),
Contact: bjmohr@InnovationPartners.com

Sallie Lee

For fifteen years, Sallie Lee, working through her consulting practice, Shared Sun Studio in Ashville, USA, has offered creative, practical processes for whole systems, serving as thinking partner, facilitator and strategist for client groups, training over 1200 people in AI. She co-developed the collaborative models of Kindling Group Magic, META, and FAIR.
Contact: sallie@sharedsun.net

Cheri Torres

is a partner with Innovation Partners International. She brings 30 years of experience in human development and relational effectiveness. She has authored / co-authored *Dynamic Relationships: Unleashing the Power of Appreciative Inquiry in Daily Living* and *The Appreciative Facilitator: An Accelerated Learning Practice and From Conflict to Collaboration*.
Contact: cheri@mobileteamchallenge.com

About the November 2011 Issue
Appreciative Governance: The Principles and Practice

Governance is the set of activities that guide the functioning of a human system, enabling members to set direction or purpose, to make decisions assuring the fulfilment of their purpose, and to set the standards of relationship, behavior and accountability. We know new governance models are needed. Thinking differently about governance is the first step; a set of principles and a process for the design and implementation of new governance systems are also required.

Everywhere we turn we see evidence of a need for new governance structures: the inability of the global financial system to self regulate; the malfunctioning of the Deepwater Horizon 'network' responsible for taking corrective action when an explosion occurs on the oil rig. From the Wall Street crash and great depression of 1929 to the massive bankruptcies (and criminal conduct) of Enron, MCI / Worldcom, and many other corporate scandals, including the 'great recession' of 2008, the issue of organizational conduct has grown in importance for all of us.

Issues of conduct have not been limited to commercial organizations. Major not-for-profit organisations (NPOs) such as the Roman Catholic Church, the United Way, the American Red Cross, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the American Cancer Society, and Toys for Tots are among the many NPOs which have had senior executives imprisoned and / or fined for various forms of malfeasance. This issue of AIP shares the results to date of an on-going inquiry into the principles and practices of Appreciative Governance. The articles reflect our effort to answer key questions such as:

1. What if Governance is happening everyday in every corner of the system (vs only in the boardroom) and what if it is concerned with a lot more than compliance, strategy, corporate reporting and selection and compensation of executive management.

2. How would the design of governance and control systems (traditionally almost exclusively the purview of accountants, lawyers and economists responding to negative situations) change?

3. How would a participatively-developed set of governance structures and systems (based on principles for strengths-based organizations) generate sustainable value?

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IAPG Contacts and AI Practitioner Subscription Information

International Advisory Practitioners Group IAPG

Members of the International Advisory Practitioners Group working with AIP to bring AI stories to a wider audience:

Druba Acharya, Nepal

Gervase Bushe, Canada

Sue Derby, Canada

Sara Inés Gómez, Colombia

Lena Holmberg, Sweden

Joep de Jong, Netherlands

Dorothe Liebig, Germany

John Loty, Australia

Sue James, Australia

Maureen McKenna, Canada

Liz Mellish, Australia

Dayle Obrien, Australia

Jan Reed, United Kingdom

Catriona Rogers, Hong Kong

Daniel K. Saint, United States

Marge Schiller, United States

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Bridget Woods, South Africa

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Disclaimer: Views and opinions of the writers do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher. Every effort is made to ensure accuracy but all details are subject to alteration. No responsibility can be accepted for any inaccuracies.

Purpose of AI Practitioner
This publication is for people interested in making the world a better place using positive relational approaches to change such as Appreciative Inquiry.

The publication is distributed quarterly: February, May, August and November.

AI Practitioner Editor/Publisher
The editor-in-chief and publisher is Anne Radford. She is based in London and can be reached at editor@aipractitioner.com

Shelagh Aitken edits and lays out AI Practitioner.
She can be reached at editor@seaproofread.co.uk

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