



Advanced Appreciative Inquiry Practitioner Training

Program Manual-A Program in Two Parts

April-May 2006

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. Original content was prepared by Jen Hetzel Silbert and Tony Silbert of Innovation Partners International under Aurora Associates International.

Advanced Appreciative Inquiry (AI) Practitioner Training

Leading & Sustaining Rapid Positive Change Across Guyana

Contract 504-C-00-04-00110-00
Period Ending May 2008

Prepared for
United States Agency for International Development
Georgetown, Guyana

Prepared by
RTI International
3040 Cornwallis Road
Post Office Box 12194
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194

Prepared by Bruce Zagaris, Esq. Partner
Berliner, Corcoran & Rowe LLP, Washington, DC

RTI International is one of the world's leading research institutes, dedicated to improving the human condition by turning knowledge into practice. We have more than 3,800 people providing research and technical services to governments and businesses in more than 40 countries in the areas of health and pharmaceuticals, education and training, surveys and statistics, advanced technology, international development, economic and social policy, energy, and the environment. For more information, visit www.rti.org.
RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

Table of Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	1
Program Overview.....	2
Program Objectives	2
To gain a deeper understanding of the foundations of Appreciative Inquiry (AI), including.....	2
To develop skills to apply AI in your work and life, including:.....	2
Program Schedule at a Glance	2
Professional Development in AI.....	3
Introduction.....	3
Three Roles in this Field	3
Program Basics	5
Learning Group Formation.....	5
Integrating Principles and Practices of AI.....	5
Session 1: April 7-9	6
Agenda	6
Three Choice Points for Getting Started	8
Change Agendas That Are Being Approached With AI.....	9
Seven Forms Of Engagement: Possible Organizational Situations and Related AI Methods.....	10
Inquiry Strategy.....	11
Introducing Appreciative Inquiry	11
Educate Your Target Organization/Client System.....	11
Key Questions to Explore with Your Clients.....	12
AI Planning & Support Structures	13
Create a Planning Group	13
Determine the Need for a Core Team and/or a Steering Group.....	13
Steps for Establishing a Core Team and Introducing AI	14
Step 1: Establish the Core Group.....	14
Step 2: Conduct a Preparation Workshop.....	15
Pre-Engagement Data Collection: Sample Survey	17
Affirmative Topic Choice – a Fateful Act	18
Topic Selection - Identify the Focus for Inquiry	18
Topic Choice: A Fateful Act	19
The Art & Science of Reframing: 3 Steps	20
Criteria for Great Affirmative Topics.....	21
Topic Choice: Recent Examples	21
Characteristics of Great AI Questions	21
Example Topics with Supporting Prefaces & Questions.....	22
From Data Collection to Storytelling.....	24
Planning Field Projects.....	25

Application Project Worksheet	25
Field Project Work: April – May	26
Coaching Sessions	26
Learning Group Support	26
Session 2: May 12-14.....	26
Presentations of Field Projects	26
Developing a Network of Practitioners	26
(E)Valuation Closing the Learning Community	26
Additional Resources	27
Interview Protocol Examples	27
Generic Interview Protocol.....	27
Discovering the Strengths of Our Community and Our Leaders	27
AI with Young Children	30
AI with Teachers & Teen Youths	31
Heritage High School Student Questions	32
Imagine Heathside: Interview Guide for Students and Staff	32
Women Knowing Leadership	33
Creating a Small Forum Where Leaders of the World Religions Can Gather in Mutual Respect and Dialogue	35
Appreciative Parenting	39
Developing Partnerships Among International Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs).....	40
HIV/AIDS Ethiopia Partnership For Positive Change	42
YOUR EXPERIENCE IN THE HIV/AIDS SECTOR	42
SUCCESS STORIES: BRINGING ABOUT POSITIVE CHANGE.....	43
BREAKING THE SILENCE: LEADING WITH COMPASSION.....	43
COMMUNITIES HAVE ANSWERS	43
SAFE MOTHERHOOD.....	43
CARE AND SUPPORT.....	43
PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT.....	44
WISHES FOR THE FUTURE.....	44
When Losing a Loved One in Family: Appreciating and Affirming What We Have TODAY	44
Triumph in Change.....	45
High Point	45
Key Strengths.....	45
Signature Strengths	45
Images of the Future, 2011:	45
Coming to work and Enjoying It!	46
The Work.....	46
Communication and Team Work.....	46
Leadership.....	47
Imagining the future:	47
An Inquiry Into Optimal Margins (Profit) at a National Trucking Company	47
Celebrating Our History and Creating a Thriving and Peaceful Guyana	49
What You Value Most	49

Highpoint Successes.....	50
Extraordinary Citizenry.....	50
Mobilizing Unity and Peace.....	50
Envisioning the Future.....	50
Appreciative Facilitation Article	51
Facilitation Skills:.....	51
Sample Designs for Introducing AI	58
Introducing Appreciative Inquiry: A 45 minute design.....	58
Introducing Appreciative Inquiry: A 4-hour Design.....	60
2-day “Core Group” AI Workshop Design	62
Annex A: Meet the Facilitators	64

Acknowledgements

This workshop has been made possible by the **Guyana Democratic Consolidation and Conflict Resolution Project (GDCCR)**, a joint initiative between the Governments of the United States of America and Guyana. This five-year project is designed to help in the consolidation of democracy in Guyana mainly through increasing citizen's participation in policy making, improving transparency and accountability in governance and reducing vulnerability to ethnic and political conflict.

From its constructionist roots, Appreciative Inquiry puts high value on inclusion and cooperation. The GDCCR Project Staff and Facilitation Team would like to acknowledge and celebrate the many people whose contributions have made the contents of this workshop material possible. From their ever-growing portfolio of innovative practice, research, and stories on positive change, we have been inspired to find new ways of living, practicing, and advancing Appreciative Inquiry.

Dr. David Cooperrider, the original co-conceptualizer (with **Suresh Srivastva**) of Appreciative Inquiry, with several of his colleagues and students at Case Western Reserve University, created the basic theory and research that this Resource Book draws from. Much of that early work was done through the **U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)** pilot OEP (Organizational Excellence Program) and its successor, the GEM Initiative (Global Excellence in Management). **Ada Jo Mann** and **Claudia Liebler**, Co-Directors of GEM, have not only created and revised training sessions, lecture presentations and other materials used in this Resource Book; they have also incorporated ideas and materials from the several hundred people who have participated in GEM programs. This Resource Book was also strongly influenced by the work of **Diana Whitney**, **Cathy Royal**, and **Barbara Sloan** who, along with **David Cooperrider**, **Bernard Mohr**, and **Jane Watkins** were part of a small group of senior AI consultants who pioneered workshops for training others in AI. As such, they have created many of the models, training sessions, and theoretical underpinnings that have impacted the content and design of this Resource Book.

This resource book has evolved significantly in both its content and expression thanks to the thoughtful contributions of Jen Hetzel Silbert, Tony Silbert, Roz Kay, Loretta Randolph, Joanne Daykin, Catherine McKenna, Joan Chadbourne, Mette Jacobsgaard, and the many generous contributors to Case Western Reserve University's AI Commons.

As the conceptualization of AI expands based on multiple uses in human systems, new theory and approaches are emerging and are documented in the ever-increasing number of books and articles being written by AI practitioners. Many of which are referenced in the back of this Resource Book.

Program Overview

Program Objectives

The objectives of this Advanced AI Practitioner Training Program are two-fold:

To gain a deeper understanding of the foundations of Appreciative Inquiry (AI), including

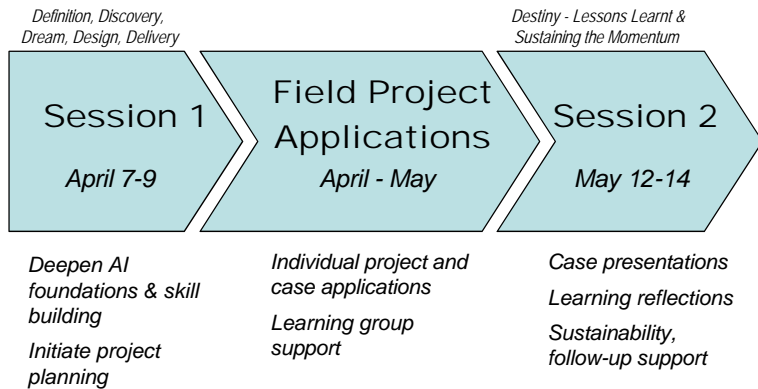
- Core processes, theoretical underpinnings, and principals of AI
- Success stories and case studies at the cornerstone of AI's global success

To develop skills to apply AI in your work and life, including:

- AI Definition:
 - Designing an effective change agenda, form of engagement, and inquiry strategy
 - Establishing a core team (stakeholder analysis, surveys, topic selection and crafting questions)
- Designing and facilitating the AI process with groups (Discovery, Dream, Design, Delivery)
- Post-intervention - sustaining the positive change (Destiny)
 - Positive change networks
 - Appreciative learning cultures
 - AI capacity development
 - Introduce AI to others
 - Coaching and learning group support

Program Schedule at a Glance

This Advanced Practitioner Training Program will follow a three-step approach, shown below, consisting of (1) a workshop session #1 April 7-9, (2) individual field project applications April through May, and (3) a follow-up workshop session #2, May 12-14.



Professional Development in AI

By Bernard Mohr and Jane Watkins

(March, 1999; Revised June 2001, Sept 2002, May 2005)

Introduction

As AI theory and practice continues to spread and evolve, we all share the challenge of making this body of work, both the theory and practice accessible to many without either trivializing it or making it overly complex. Our thoughts here are intended to provide useful guidelines for the professional development of those wishing to work as facilitators and practitioners in Appreciative Inquiry. We see these guidelines as evergreen—always a work in progress, as we all gain more experience with this evolving practice.

Three Roles in this Field

Formal certification in this field has only recently become available through a joint program offered by Case Western Reserve University and NTL Institute. However, we might usefully differentiate between professional development at three different levels—specifically, development for

- AI Facilitators
- AI Practitioners (you!)
- Senior Consultants/AI Trainers

Role Definition	Competencies for this role
AI Facilitators... Are usually internal staff or line people whose development typically comes from 2–4 day introductory workshops conducted by AI practitioners Work collaboratively under the guidance of an internal or external AI practitioner or Senior AI Consultant	After a 2-4 day introductory workshop, AI Facilitators would be comfortable in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - co-facilitating (with an AI practitioner) the development of customized protocols - conducting interviews - co-facilitating (with an AI practitioner) the writing of Provocative propositions

	co-facilitating (with an AI practitioner) for members of their organization, a variety of large group processes for systemic/structural changes
--	---

Role Definition	Competencies for this role
<p>AI Practitioners...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are "consultants" (internal or external, in staff or line management roles) whose development and certification typically come from: Participation in personal growth workshops, plus, participation in a 3–7 day AI foundations workshop, plus, supervised field work (such as an AI practicum or work under the guidance of an AI senior practitioner) plus, attendance at one or more advanced AI workshops - AI practitioners work independently in guiding client systems through the whole appreciative inquiry process, including: advising the client on how/where to get started, developing an appropriate inquiry architecture - conducting training of internal facilitators/interviewers - working with internal teams in topic selection and protocol development - Co-designing with the client a variety of processes for consensual validation, processes for redesigning the systems and structures of the organization to support the propositions, etc. 	<p>AI Practitioners function best when they are comfortable in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competence in articulating the Concepts and Research behind: - Social Constructionism, the new sciences and the emerging paradigm as context for AI - Image-action connection/Role of language and inquiry in image creation - People and organizations as mysteries to be embraced - A wide range of AI "applications" (e.g., community development, peacebuilding, conflict resolution, strategic planning, organization and business process design, team building, diversity initiatives, evaluation, etc.) - Competence in coaching clients in the following Appreciative Inquiry processes: - Identifying topics from generic interviews - Crafting customized protocol AI questions - Training interviewers - Identifying life-giving forces from the customized protocol interviews as prelude to possibility statements - Leading expressive dream sessions - Provocative Proposition (PP's) development - Expanding appreciative conversations throughout the system - Innovating the socio-technical architecture of the organization (i.e. the structures, roles, processes and systems) – so as to support and help bring to life the Provocative Propositions <p>Helping to build ongoing internal AI capability</p> <p>Competence in these AI Consulting Skills:</p> <p>Experiential Education</p> <p>Use of self as instrument (Being personally congruent with AI theory)</p>

	Contracting/client relations/project management Integration of AI with large group/interactive methods (e.g. Open Space, Future Search, Whole System Design, etc.)
--	---

Role Definition	Competencies for this role
<p>Senior consultants/Trainers of AI practitioners Typically: hold advanced degrees in the social science arena have at least 10 years experience as AI practitioners in a broad range of small and large system applications of AI regularly lead extended in- depth professional development events for people in the process of becoming AI practitioners (such as those offered by Taos and NTL/Case for AI Practitioners) have published numerous AI articles or books</p>	<p>In addition to the proficiency in the same areas as an AI practitioner, a senior consultant/AI trainer would: have extensive experience in a variety of AI applications and settings, including substantial experience in the design and management of large group events; understanding of and ability to conceptualize and work with large multi divisional, multi constituent systems; skill in the design and implementation of collaborative whole system planning and design methods, etc. be actively participating in an ongoing forum for peer consultation and development during the course of whole system AI change processes be steeped in the theory and research, models of practice and what is going on worldwide in this field</p>

Program Basics

Learning Group Formation

Learning groups will be formed and meet regularly throughout the program (and hopefully thereafter) to provide a safe, local forum for exploring more deeply and meaningfully the application of workshop learning to back-home situations, as well as for planning and designing field projects, and working on personal development goals.

Integrating Principles and Practices of AI

Throughout the program, we strongly encourage participants to ask questions about AI and to explore together its application in a diversity of contexts. We will discuss how the key principles of AI are expressed in our lives, how AI practices might be applied in our unique organizational/community settings, how AI works with other participatory approaches, and what doing this work calls forth from each of us.

1. Anticipatory Principle

Behavior and decisions are based not only on what we were born with or learned from our environment, but also on what we anticipate, what we think or imagine will happen in the future; we move in the direction of the future images we hold.

2. Positive Principle

The more positive the inquiry (hope, inspiration, joy), the greater and longer-lasting the change. Considering that a positive approach is just as contagious as a negative one, why not choose the former and multiply the benefits of sustainable positive change?

3. Principle of Simultaneity

Inquiry and change are simultaneous moments; change begins the moment we ask a question and we move in the direction of our questions.

4. Constructionist Principle

We socially construct the world in which we live. We make meaning of the world relationally (subjective/objective).

5. Poetic Principle

A valuing of story telling as a way of gathering holistic information that includes not only facts, but also the feelings that affect that a person's experiences and the recognition that stories (like all good poetry) can be told about any aspect of an organization's existence. We are each authors in our organization's story—we continually co-create our history and our future.

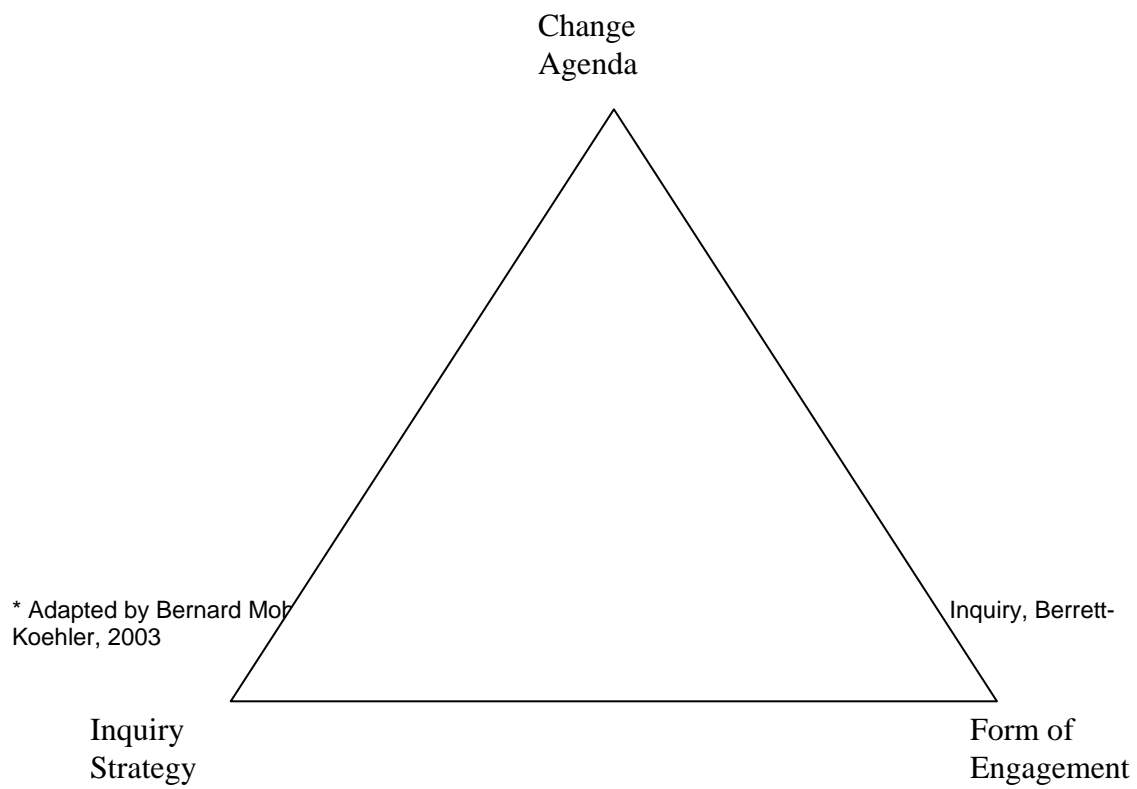
Session 1: April 7-9

Agenda

	Friday, 7 April	Saturday, 8 April	Sunday, 9 April
AM	PROGRAM OVERVIEW Introductions, sharing of hopes and learning objectives Review of the process Paired Interviews	DEFINITION (cont.) Topic Selection & Crafting Questions Topic choice – fateful act Interview guide creation	DESIGN & DELIVERY Design Creating the pathways to the future (design models, possibility statements, etc.) Delivery Organize to move forward
PM	DEFINITION Three Choice Points to Getting Started Change Agenda Inquiry Strategy	DISCOVERY & DREAM Discovery Interview data collection and use Dream	FROM WORKSHOP TO WORKPLACE & THE WORLD Appreciative facilitation Coaching and Learning

	Form of Engagement Establishing a Core Team and Other Support Structures Participant/Stakeholder Scan	Envisioning impact	Group Support Individual Project Presentations ("Invitations") Final preparations for Field Application Work
--	--	--------------------	---

Three Choice Points for Getting Started



Change Agendas That Are Being Approached With AI

People often ask, “How can the philosophy and methods of AI be useful to us?” Below are examples of Management Agendas that have already been successfully approached using AI. This is not an exhaustive list.

Organizational Level Strategic planning Culture transformation Customer satisfaction Morale and retention Organization resign/redesign Leadership development Organization fenewal Post merger integration Enterprise turnaround Diversity Evaluation of change interventions Knowledge management Inter-Organizational Level Alliance building Union-management partnership Strategic resource sharing Community Level Participatory planning Asset mapping Economic development Educational reform Peace building	Global Level Organization start-up Multi-local planning Consciousness raising Small Group Level Team development Business development Meeting management Instructional design Inter-Group Level Conflict resolution Process improvement Personal-Relational Level Leadership cultivation Performance appraisal Employee orientation Career planning Relationship enrichment
---	--

Seven Forms Of Engagement: Possible Organizational Situations and Related AI Methods

People often ask, “Who should be involved in the change process?” In most of the work we do, we use some combination of the involvement methods listed below:

Some Possible Organization Situations	Related AI Method
Small, focused working groups need to generate new knowledge, innovations and implementation plans	AI Learning Team A small group of people, for example, an evaluation team, a process improvement team or a group of students, conduct an AI 5D process focused on a specific topic, project or process.
An organization needs to involve many of its people but the constraints of available time are stronger than the benefit of intensive 3-4 day sessions	Progressive AI Meetings An organization, small group, or team goes through Discovery, Dream Design and Destiny over the course of 10–12 meetings that are each 2–4 hours long
All stakeholders need to be engaged over time (2 months to 1 year) and at multiple locations simultaneously	Whole System Dialogue Everyone in the system engages in Discovery, Dream, Design, Destiny over an extended period
Speed is critical. All stakeholders can be engaged, at one location, in a 3–5 day large group (50–2000 people) process	AI Summit Organizational members participate in a 3–5 day face to face process of Discovery, Dream, Design and Destiny
Members of different organizations want to collaboratively explore and learn about a common area of interest	AI Consortium Organization representatives join together to implement their own joint inquiry
The organization wants to diffuse change capacity throughout the organization and to create an appreciative learning culture	Positive Change Network Members of the organization are trained in AI and provided with resources to initiate projects and share materials, stories and best practices
The “system” is numerically large and dispersed (e.g., a city, community, or the world.) and the resources to bring people together are limited	Mass Mobilization of Inquiry Large numbers of interviews (thousands to millions), on a socially responsible topic, are conducted throughout a city, community or the world.

Inquiry Strategy

Note: Decisions for ALL the phases are usually made during the Definition phase even though we have chosen to show the decisions by phase to provide context.

Focus of the 5-D Cycle	Decisions to be Made
<i>Definition</i> Involves introducing decision makers to AI as a process for change, establishing a supporting infrastructure, and engaging participants in the process. AND <i>Affirmative Topic Choice.</i> Involves selecting the topics that establish the organization's course for learning and transformation.	Is AI appropriate for us? What is our Change Agenda? Who will serve on our Advisory Team/SC? What training does our Advisory Team/SC need? What Form of Engagement will we use? What will our Inquiry Strategy be? How and when will we introduce the process throughout the organization? Who will select the topics? Which topics will we study? Who will craft the questions? The Interview Guides?
<i>Discovery.</i> Involves conducting interviews, and making meaning of what's been learned.	Who will we interview? Who will conduct the interviews? How many each? What training will our interviewers need? Who will make meaning of the data? How? How will we communicate stories and best practices?
<i>Dream.</i> Involves individual and collective visioning, group dialogues, and enactments of positive images of the organization's future.	Whom should we involve? What experiential activity will we use to reveal our images of the future? What will be the outcome of our dream?
<i>Design.</i> Involves collaborative identification of the organization's social architecture and crafting Provocative Propositions—descriptions of the ideal organization.	What are we designing? Who needs to be involved? How do we describe our ideal organization?
<i>Destiny.</i> Involves unleashing self-organized innovation, through which the future will be made real.	How will we gather stories about what we have achieved? How will we celebrate? What are our parameters for self-organized action? How shall we self-organize? How will we support ongoing success?

Introducing Appreciative Inquiry

Educate Your Target Organization/Client System

Whether you are an internal staff person or leader responsible for a particular operating group, one of the very first challenges in beginning an AI based change process is to introduce the concepts and research underlying AI. Of course it is also

desirable to connect this first introduction of AI with some sort of participative decision-making as to the applicability of AI and next steps for the system.

In some cases the potential client may ask for a brief, formal presentation to some decision-making group from the organization. An outline for a 45-minute presentation is included the Additional Resources Section in the back of this workbook. We consider 45 minutes to be the very minimum, to say the least. Clearly, it is too short a time to expect that all the questions about AI will be answered. However, the 45-minute introduction is presented here because of its utility in building a base for the longer sessions, and because 45 minutes is sometimes all we have to work with. (Of course, it's also good to have articles and case histories handy. And best of all is to have your client attend a 3–5 day introductory workshop.)

The goal of the 45-minute introduction to AI is to introduce experientially the concepts and research underlying AI in a way that is both energizing enough for people to want more and sufficiently comprehensive so that people get a sense of AI's full potential as a framework for whole systems change rather than seeing it as the process of asking a few nice questions or looking at the world with an appreciative eye. The full outline of a 45-minute workshop is found in the Resources section of this Resource Book. There is also a bibliography of books and articles about AI that can be offered to those who want to read more.

Key Questions to Explore with Your Clients

Clarifying and agreeing on the use of an AI process often requires several conversations between the AI practitioner and representatives of the organization, particularly in situations where AI is a new approach for the client group. Sometimes these dialogues happen over the phone or in a face-to-face meeting.

Once you have provided your client with information about AI—preferably with, at least, the 45-minute experiential introduction—you and your client need to determine:

If AI is the right approach for the client and the situation. The important issue here is whether the client is comfortable with AI as an approach and is willing to commit to a comprehensive process using AI to test its validity. Thus, the question is not whether AI can be used in the situation; it is a perspective that can be used in any change process; but rather it is a question of client comfort and commitment to this approach.

If this approach feels right for the client, the next task is to determine the topic of inquiry that relates to the purpose of the change process. In other words, is this inquiry about building an excellent team or, is it about creating a more agile and focused organization? What is it that the client wants to know more about and how can we choose topics for inquiry that will be congruent with the AI choice to focus on the positive as a core value? Topic choice is an iterative process often involving

a cross section of the organization over time. These initial conversations are the beginning of that process.

It is helpful to ask the clients to consider a question such as, “If we proceed with this approach, what are the essential elements that need to be present for the change to be successful?” And this is the time to share any ideas you have about what needs to be put in place at the very beginning to help assure success.

Discuss with your client who should be involved in developing the topics and customized protocol for the inquiry, and in designing the overall Inquiry Process. Explore whether the system will support a core team of people to do the design work and, if so, what group in the organization will guide and support the work of the core team?

Note that these inquiries may be made several times with different groups of people. It may be that the initial group you are meeting with is not sufficiently representative to make decisions in answer to these questions. Think of this as an ongoing dialogue. If the client indicates a willingness to go ahead, it may be time to explore the creation of a core group and/or steering group as the next step. The next section will explore ways to do that.

AI Planning & Support Structures

Create a Planning Group

In all of our work with client systems we begin by partnering with either an internal staff person and/or a line manager who has some interest in exploring the use of AI within the organization. We call this partnership, composed of the external consultant(s) and the internal consultant and/or sponsoring line manager, “the planning group,” and it typically serves as a starting place to decide which other people to involve and when and how.

Determine the Need for a Core Team and/or a Steering Group

One of the early discussions within this planning group is a dialogue about whether we as the planning group are sufficiently representative to select the topic and develop the interview guide (the protocol) or whether we need to request a core team made up of a diverse cross section of the organization.

In most cases, this core team becomes the co-creators of the AI process for their organization. Often, they are also the people who embed AI in the organization so that it thrives long after we are gone. We have come to believe that just as the first questions we ask are fateful, this core team—its composition, enthusiasm for the project, and commitment to the organization—can be “fateful.” A first-rate core team has a powerful, positive effect on the success of the AI process in the organization.

For larger change processes, such as an organization-wide inquiry in customer service or a redesign of a business process, or perhaps a company-wide culture

change, it may be useful to consider establishing a steering group composed of people who have the resources and decision making authority necessary not only to get the Discovery and Dream phases underway but also to adequately support the Design and Delivery phases.

The particular guidance and support structure used is different for each application of the AI approach and every organization—as is the timing of the involvement of people for the core group or the steering group.

Steps for Establishing a Core Team and Introducing AI

- Step 1: Establish the Core Group
- Step 2: Conduct a Preparation Workshop
 - Introduce the Generic Interview and Review Interview Tips
 - Present a Brief Explanation of AI
 - Share Highlights of the Interviews
 - Create a Customized Interview Guide
 - Develop the Inquiry Process

Step 1: Establish the Core Group

Working with your contact person or planning team from the organization, select a small group of 3 to 30 people that represent each part of the organization and each staff level. Ask them to attend a meeting that will be the beginning of the AI process. (The meeting can be done in 1 day; however, we strongly recommend two days if working with a group of more than five people, or if you are working with multiple sections of the organization or multiple languages.)

The core group is the group that creates the Customized Interview Guide and develops the Inquiry Process. It is helpful to have a core group who will work with you throughout the process to link you to the organization and to co-create the steps in AI. Core groups can be as small as three or four people, and as large as 20 or 30, though in the latter case, it is wise to have a planning team of three or four who are your primary contacts.

At the beginning of an AI process with an organization, it is very important to talk about the inclusive and democratic nature of the work. Encourage the client to involve, as quickly as possible, people from all parts of the organization – function, level, length of employment, etc. The more diversity you have in the planning team, the more you will be working in the spirit of AI.

The task of selecting members of the core group usually falls to the informal planning team that has been created. Whenever possible explain the importance of multiple perspectives and voices. A cross-sectional slice of the organization works well.

Step 2: Conduct a Preparation Workshop

Once the core group has been selected, invite them to the 1–2 day preparation workshop (sometimes called the core group workshop).

Set up the workshop by explaining the purpose/goals of the preparation workshop, the agenda, the norms for working together, and have group members introduce each other in an appreciative manner; e.g., in twos, interview each other using questions such as: “Tell me what excites you about AI? What resources do you bring to this group for this work? What wishes do you have for our 1–2 days together?” Then share with the larger group some of the important things you learned about your partner.

Typical purpose/goals would be to

1. Clarify the difference between the AI approach and that of more traditional approaches to Organizational Change and Effectiveness
2. Help participants create a customized interview guide for gathering information using an AI approach
3. Develop a plan for collecting information and working with it. (i.e., creating the Inquiry Process)

Step 2a: Introduce the Generic Interview and Review Interview Tips

Once people have been introduced and the workshop goals are clear, it’s time to introduce the generic interview. Start by giving a simple explanation of AI as a different approach to understanding organizations (5 minutes). Generic interview:

Best Experience: Tell me about the best times that you have had with your organization. Looking at your entire experience, recall a time when you felt most alive, most involved or most excited about your involvement. What made it an exciting experience? Who was involved? Describe the event in detail.

Values: What are the things you value deeply; specifically, the things you value about yourself, your work and your organization:

Yourself: Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself as a human being, a friend, a parent, a citizen and so on?

Or... What would someone who knows you best (family member, friend, colleague) say are your greatest strengths/values/gifts?

Your work: When you are feeling best about your work, what do you value about it?

Your organization/community: What about your organization/community do you value? What is the single most important thing that your organization/community has contributed to your life?

Core Life-giving Factor or Signature Strength: What do you think is the core life-giving factor or signature strength of your organization? What is it that, if it did not exist, would make your organization totally different than it currently is?

Three Wishes or Future Image: If you had three wishes for this organization, what would they be?

Or... Fast forward to X years from today. You wake up to see your wildest dreams have come true: Your organization is what you'd most it to be, for yourself, your colleagues/family, your community, your world. What do you see that is new, better, and different?

The four-question Generic Interview is often used in one of two ways:

In a large system change process, the development of a customized interview guide especially tailored for an organization or group is frequently done by having a core team of members of the organization attend a Preparation Workshop during which they interview each other using a version of "The Four Generic Questions" included in this workbook. The topics identified from the interviews are then used to create additional questions to be used in a more comprehensive customized interview.

In a small system such as a management team, the generic interview questions are slightly modified by the consultant and client to fit the particular topic of the inquiry such as teams, diversity, etc.

Step 2b: Present a Brief Explanation of AI

Bring the group together and conduct a short discussion about how it felt to do this process. Make your own comments about what you noticed – the high energy level, the buzz of excitement in the room, the way people were interacting with each other.

Give the group a presentation on "What is Appreciative Inquiry." A format for a 45-minute presentation is described in the Resource Section of this chapter. A rule of thumb that we use is: "No matter how short the time, give preference to having the audience experience the appreciative interview! This, far more than any verbal explanation, will give them the feel of AI.

Step 2c: Share Highlights of the Interviews

Have the group share the highlights from the stories they heard and select topics. After compiling a list of the major topics in the stories, the group decides on three to five topics that they want to know more about. If the group is eight or fewer, you can work in one group. Break larger groups into groups of two to four interview partners—six to eight people—and have each group do the task.

Step 2d: Create a Customized Interview Guide

Using the three to five final topics that the group wants to know more about, write interview questions about those topics. Add to those, questions from the Generic Interview to construct a "customized" Interview Guide for your organization.

Sample Instruction here might be: “Using the chosen topics, create additional questions for the Interview Guide. Make the questions appreciative and affirmative, focused on stories, details, feelings, words that evoke the situation as the person actually experienced it in all of its excitement and creativity.”

Put a complete interview protocol document together as you want to use it in your data gathering. The questions formulated for each topic is added to the four generic questions to form a complete Interview Guide that will be used to interview stakeholders in your organization. You may want to write some introductory material to explain the project and the purpose of the interview.

Step 2e: Develop the Inquiry Process

This can be the last step in the workshop or the first step at another planning meeting at a later time. Create a list of those people you, as a group want to interview (Stakeholder Scan). Decide how many interviews each person can do and make assignments. Create a report sheet on which the interviewers can summarize the information that they got from each interview.

Pre-Engagement Data Collection: Sample Survey

Dear Project Planning Team members,

As we prepare for our AI Foundations workshop on May 16–19, we would like to gather your thoughts and ideas on topics that are of most interest to each of you AND to the success of a peaceful and thriving Guyana.

Jen Hetzel Silbert and Tony Silbert will be facilitating our workshop and they would like your input to help shape the workshop design and guide the affirmative topic selection. Please take a moment to answer the following questions.

QUESTIONS:

As we begin this effort it is important to reflect on what brings us together in the first place. Please share your hopes for Guyana and how they translate to your participation on this project—your role, goals, motives, etc.

In your opinion, what three areas are most important for us to focus on in support of a peaceful and thriving Guyana?

Anticipated topics:

- *Collaborating across differences – what does it mean to be a citizen of Guyana?*
- *Peaceful elections process*

- Others...

This workshop will be a success if... [please fill in the blank]

Affirmative Topic Choice – a Fateful Act

Topic Selection - Identify the Focus for Inquiry

In the process of choosing to focus on the positive, the early dialogues also include explorations leading to a decision on **topic choice** – the primary area of focus for the upcoming inquiry. The topic choices are guided by the overall purpose of the project (gender equity, evaluation, safety, customer service, innovation, etc.) These discussions about the focus of the work and the resulting topics to be explored are governed by the **Principle of Simultaneity**. As we seek to understand a situation by gathering data, the first question we ask is fateful. The organization will turn its energy in the direction of that first question, whether positive or negative. The seeds of change are embedded in that first question. Careful, thoughtful, and informed choice of topic(s) is key since the topics define the scope of the inquiry, and the inquiry provides the framework for subsequent interviews and data collection.

Because AI begins and ends with valuing that which **gives life** to organizations, inquirers focus on affirmative topics that are based on bold hunches about what gives life to their organization. Using these topics, the group formulates questions that lead to an appreciative exploration of the chosen topics. The group also writes questions that encourage conversations about the desired future of the organization. The questions about the topics lead the organization's members to discover those things that they most want to see grow and flourish.

Without the client system making the choice to focus on the positive as a core value, it is not possible to proceed with an AI process of change. In making this choice, the client needs to understand that choosing to focus on the positive does not mean excluding any reference to difficulties or obstacles. In fact, truth telling in AI is just as valued as it is in the traditional deficit-based problem solving approach. And it is a great deal easier to tell the truth about positive experiences! The choice about how to resolve difficult situations lies in both the choice of the primary focus for inquiry, positive or deficit-based, and in whether difficulties are seen as immovable obstacles or as sources of insight into strategies for effective forward movement. AI is at its most powerful when it is used to seek out the ray of light in what seems to be a totally dark and dismal situation!

As in all things with AI, there are multiple ways to proceed once you are asked to go forward in an organization. Topics are sometimes chosen by the client who brought you into the organization or, if you are an internal consultant or manager, by your own understanding of a situation. In time-limited and subject-focused processes—team building, conflict resolution—the topic is clear. Often your task in those situations is simply to help create AI questions about that topic: “Tell me a story about the very best team you ever worked or played with,” and so on. However, in complex system change the second part of embedding the positive core

value is to facilitate a group, ideally a core group assigned to you, to identify key topics that are affirmative. For example, an AI topic to study might be “excellent customer service” rather than “improving customer service.” This process of topic selection goes from the simple naming of the topic to be studied all the way to large system involvement in identifying the topics that are most important to people in the system.

In larger, more complex organizations, this topic selection process is often embedded in a longer workshop that leads to the development of the interview guide or protocol. We offer clients an exploratory two-day workshop for a decision making group in the organization. The workshop clarifies the difference between the AI approach and that of more traditional approaches to change. It includes an introduction to AI, a discussion of the shifting paradigm, and an examination of the theory of change that underlies this approach. It often includes identifying topics and writing questions for the Appreciative Inquiry Protocol used in the Inquiry phase of the second core AI process. The outcome of this exploratory workshop can be a go/no go decision. Alternatively, this can be the kick-off event to an already agreed upon AI change process. In this case, the workshop includes creation of a customized interview protocol and decisions on Inquiry Process. We will describe both of these more in the next chapter.

Topic Choice: A Fateful Act

AI is based on the logic that organizations move in the direction of what they look for. For example, when groups look for human problems and conflicts, they often find that by the end of their search, the number of problems and conflicts is greater than when they began. In the same way, when groups look for high human ideals and achievements such as effective teamwork, quality performance or peak experiences, these good things also increase.

Organizations construct worlds of their own making based on what they look for in the organization. Appreciative Inquiry accepts the idea that knowledge and organizational destiny are interwoven: what we look for as we seek to know people, groups and organizations is fateful. In other words, what we look for determines what we find. The organization’s energy and focus will move toward the first question that is asked. If we first ask what doesn’t work well in this organization, the energy of the organization will go toward finding all of the things that are wrong, broken, and dysfunctional. If, on the other hand, our first question is what gives life to this organization; what does it do well, then the energy of the organization will go toward finding those life-giving events, moments that represent the organization at its best. That is why it is so important to make careful choices about the topics and the tone of the questions we choose to ask. We can choose to study the deficits in the organization, as is the common practice of conventional problem solving, or we can focus on the generative and creative – the common values, empowering moments, and shared aspirations. AI inquires about that which gives life and vitality to the organization.

In summary: AI begins and ends with valuing that which gives life to organizations. During their preparation work, inquirers choose affirmative topics based on bold hunches about what gives life to their organization and write questions that encourage conversations about the desired future of the organization. The topics chosen and the questions based on those chosen topics generate conversations about the qualities that the group most wants to see grow and flourish in their organization. These conversations lead to the images of the future. The seeds of change are implicit in the very first questions that are asked.*

In this definition start-up phase, there are three suggested ways to create affirmative topics:

- Brainstorm possible topics
- Interview a few key people in an organization using the four generic questions
- Use existing financial or performance data

The topics can be anything related to organizational effectiveness. They can be about technical processes, human dynamics, partnership relations, cultural themes, values, the environment, sustainability, etc. Select topics that are positive affirmations of the strengths of your organization so that by asking questions focused on those topics, you will be helping your organization become the powerful force it seeks to become.

The Art & Science of Reframing: 3 Steps

- Acknowledge issue/problem/challenge
- Help in the reframing by asking “the other”
 - “What would you have if this problem went away?”
 - “What do you most want to see increase in value in the organization/community?”
 - “What would it look like if topic xyz were at its best?”

Then ask...

- Would that excite you? If not, what would?
- Has there ever been an example of this “behavior” in your past?
- Where has this image of what you want to move toward come from?
- Could we learn from the times in the past when what you want now has been present?
- What questions might we ask that would help us learn from the moments in the past when we have had what we now want?
- Would knowing the answers be helpful? What other questions might we ask?

* For more, see Wilmot, Tim, “Appreciative Inquiry and Organizational Capacity Building”, Global Social Innovations. Vol. 1, summer 1996.

Criteria for Great Affirmative Topics

Affirmative and Possibility-focused – stated in the positive, as if it’s already taking place

Bold, Evocative – Challenges status quo

Desirable System-wide – The organization wants to grow, develop and enhance themes; it’s engaging for all involved

Stimulate learning – The organization is genuinely curious about them and wants to become more knowledgeable and proficient in them

Stimulate conversations about desired futures – taking the organization where it most wants to go with strategic business relevance

Source: Silbert, J.H. and Silbert, T. (2005), Adapted from Whitney, D. & Trosten-Bloom, A. (2003.) *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Topic Choice: Recent Examples

Source	From – the <i>Problem</i>	To – the <i>Opportunity</i> , Affirmative Topic Choice
United Religions Initiative	Inter-religious conflict	Surprise of Friendship
Guyanese Amerindian village, Santa Rosa Mission (Sept 2005)	Interpersonal conflict and Hopelessness	Peaceful Coexistence and Self-determination
Guyana civil society leaders (May 2005)	Dealing with our past and reducing inter-ethnic violence in the wake of our elections	Celebrating our Past and Creating a Peaceful and Thriving Guyana
U.S. Navy	Lack of empowerment	Bold and Enlightened Leadership at Every Level
British Airways	Lost luggage	Exceptional Arrival Experience

Characteristics of Great AI Questions

- Are stated in the affirmative and suggest action.
- Help forge a personal connection between the interviewer and interviewee.
- Build on the assumption that the glass is half full rather than half empty.
- Give a broad definition to the topic. They give room to “swim around.”
- Presented as an invitation to tell stories rather than abstract opinions or theories.
- Value “what is.” Spark the appreciative imagination by helping a person locate experiences in the past or present that are worth valuing.
- Convey unconditional positive regard.
- Evoke essential values, aspirations, and inspirations.
- Draw on people’s life and work experience.

Example Topics with Supporting Prefaces & Questions

Topic: Peaceful Co-existence

Positive Preface: Peaceful coexistence happens when people value new perspectives different from their own—going beyond mere tolerance to appreciating a diversity of voices, regardless of community role, gender, age, and experience.

Questions: Describe a time when you were involved in bringing about peaceful coexistence with another person or group of persons. What happened, and what did you do to make this possible? How might more peaceful coexistence benefit you, your village, and Guyana as a whole?

Topic: Infectious Energy

Positive Preface: Organizations work best when they are vibrant, alive, and fun. You know, when the “joint is jumping!” You can sense that the spirit of the organization is vital and healthy and that people feel pride in their work. Everyone builds on each other’s successes, a positive can do attitude is infectious and the glow of success is shared. What’s more, this positive energy is appreciated and celebrated, so it deepens and lasts.

Questions:

Tell me about a time when you experienced positive energy that was infectious. What was the situation? What created the positive energy? How did it feel to be a part of it? What did you learn?

If positive energy were the flame of the organization, how would you spark it? How would you fuel it to keep it burning bright?

Topic: Self Determination

Positive Preface: When there is a will, there is a way. Self-determination is fueled by people’s strong passion and desire to achieve a goal and bring their vision to life – when direction and permission to move forward comes from within, not from someone else.

Questions:

Tell your story about a time when you were self-determined to achieve something you were most proud of. What did you (and others) do to contribute to its success? Please share your experience.

Topic: Vibrant, successful companies

Positive Preface: Vibrant, successful companies attract clients. The work they do adds value to their clients' businesses. Clients return to these vibrant successful companies often and recommend them to others. Great people want to work for these companies, because the culture is alive, exciting, and it meets their needs in many different ways. **Questions:** Think of a time when you've either worked for or been a customer of such an organization. Tell me a story about that experience.

What was it that made that organization stand out from the rest? How did that organization attract clients? How would you describe the culture?

Topic: Exceptional Arrival Experience

Positive Preface: Our goal is to provide an exceptional travel experience both in the air and on the ground. The handling of a flight's arrival and baggage reconciliation is of equal importance to any other aspect of a passenger's journey. The arrival experience is the time to leave a wonderful lasting impression. It also provides the opportunity to recover from any service shortfall the customer may have encountered. Focusing on Exceptional Arrival Experience demonstrates commitment to both our customers and to one another.

Questions:

Describe your most memorable arrival experience, as a customer or, as airline personnel. What made it memorable for you? How did you feel?

Tell me a story about your most powerful service recovery. Describe the situation.

- What was it about you that made it happen?
- Who else was involved and why were they significant?
- What tools did you use or what did you do that others might be able to do when in a similar situation?

If you had a magic wand, how would you use it to enhance our overall arrivals experience for our customers? What ideas do you have to ensure exceptional arrival experiences for all our customers? And to make the process easier for us, as well!

Topic: Magnetic Work Environment

Positive Preface: In the physical world, all matter is held together by the pull between opposite electric charges. Successful companies are highly nimble, flexible communities. People connect in new and innovative ways. Suppliers and customers are pulled together and become seamless edge-to-edge organizations. Communities of interest form and are pulled together by shared values and interests. Knowledge networks form as catalysts for innovation and creativity. People, process, and technology experts are attracted and deliver high value solutions to their client needs.

Questions:

Think of a time when you felt “magnetically” connected to your client, your colleagues, and your community. . . Connected in a way that the force was so strong that it could not be broken. What was that experience like?

As you look into the future, describe how we are connected to our customers and our colleagues in a way that is so strong that we are seen as inseparable business partners.

Topic: Uplifting and balancing excellence in patient care, education, and research

Positive Preface: Academic Centers around the country are challenged to balance and integrate the priorities of superior patient care, education, and research. Organizations that strike this balance and are able to provide optimal patient services, create an innovative learning environment, and foster cutting edge research will lead the way in health care and ensure their success into the future.

Questions:

Describe a situation at Hospital XYZ where you were able to provide outstanding patient care that was enhanced by the education and/or research programs of the department.

Describe a successful teaching/learning or research experience you have had and how that contributed to delivering exceptional patient care.

From Data Collection to Storytelling

The Appreciative Inquiry Process is a way to explore the "life-giving" factors of the organization. It is a process of discovery. The information you collect in interviews will help you locate, illuminate and understand the distinctive strengths that give your organization life and vitality when it is functioning at its best. Information Collection/Narrative Exploration, or storytelling, represents the heart of the inquiry process. It serves as the starting point for dialogue that is core to AI—a unique theory of organizational innovation and change. In traditional research processes “data” is collected as an objective reality. It is assumed that the data, which is information, stands apart from the people involved and the process through which it is gathered.

In the process of AI we explore and enliven the appreciative stories of the organization. This kind of information collecting stimulates participants' excitement and delight as they share their values, experience and history with the organization, and their wishes for the organization's future. AI catalyzes the thinking and dialogue about positive possibilities that are so often de-emphasized or overlooked in the deficit language that is common in our current theory and practice of organizational change.

Further, AI approaches information collection and narrative exploration is a *mutual* learning process. Both the interviewer and the interviewed participant learn as together they explore the participant's values, peak experiences and wishes for the organization. The more people from the organization are involved in this mutual exploration, the greater the understanding and learning will be about the preferred future of the organization. Therefore, the selection of who will be interviewed is also fateful!

We use the term Inquiry Process to describe the process that the core group designs which includes who will do the interviewing, who will be interviewed, as well as

who will be involved in the Dream and Design phases, and how those phases be will carried out.

Planning Field Projects

The field projects are intended to help participants transfer program learning to the field, from workshop to the world. The session will encourage participants to generate creative ideas for their field projects and initiate planning efforts with the support of the facilitators and the program learning community.

The sessions will be an opportunity for participants to present their ideas about their field projects, invite feedback and ask for coaching from the community. The community will listen supportively and act as a sounding board, offering suggestions that help participants think outside the box, stretch their imagination and push the boundaries of what is possible.

The focus of the facilitator coaching and learning group networks will be on establishing structures that enable the projects to be completed powerfully. Two distinct kinds of conversations help build rigor into this discussion; conversations for possibility that help us question our assumptions, and conversations for action that focus attention on the details of effective implementation and leadership.

Application Project Worksheet

Name: _____

Project Title: _____

Change Agenda Overview:

Key idea, image, or purposes behind this project; what change or ideal future are you hoping to see.

Topic:

As you begin, is there an Affirmative Topic you wish to inquire about; a question you are most curious about? Please share.

Participation:

Who do you hope to involve in this project; which staff, partners, community members, network representatives, etc.?

Form of Engagement:

How will people be involved in the process?

Activities:

In general, what is the flow of actions, events, and conversations you can see occurring as this project unfolds?

Getting Started:

What are the specific next steps you will take to get your project going upon immediately leaving this Session #1 workshop?

Support:

What can any of the members of this learning group do to help you as you proceed? Be as specific as you can.

Field Project Work: April – May

Coaching Sessions

Coaching support will be provided to those who are able to participate via teleconference call through the GDCCR Project Office in Georgetown.

Learning Group Support

Participants will organize in groups (regional and/or by topic area) to meet and provide support to one another as you design and deliver individual field projects April through May (between Session 1 and 2). It is essential that all participants reap the benefits of this learning community so that, in essence, no person ever works alone. Individuals are encouraged to assist one another in the design of their field projects, and to serve as thinking partners through the life of our work together.

Session 2: May 12-14

Presentations of Field Projects

Participants will give brief presentations on the field projects that they have designed/delivered, as well as highlights of follow-up plans for sustaining the momentum of their change agenda.

Developing a Network of Practitioners

One of the most powerful outcomes of our work together is the building of a network of practitioners that has the potential to be a sustainable and highly effective capacity building mechanism. At its best, this program is designed so that no one person ever learns or designs AI interventions alone!

(E)Valuation Closing the Learning Community

At the heart of this second session is a review of the scope of *future* work, discussing next steps, engaging in an evaluation of our individual projects and of this overall program (through questionnaire and focus groups), as well as reviewing

key learning's and acknowledging each other for our contributions throughout the program.

Additional Resources

Interview Protocol Examples

Generic Interview Protocol

Prepared by David Cooperrider

Exploring Moments of Leading Positive Change: A High-Point Moment From Your Life: You no doubt have been part of many change initiatives—in organizations, in communities, at home, etc. Certainly there have been ups and downs, peaks and valleys, high points and low points.

Reflect on one moment or initiative that stands out as something of a high point, a time where you joined with others to create positive change, a time where you felt alive, effective, and engaged in something meaningful. What happened? When? Who was involved? Feelings? Insights?

If we now had a conversation with people that know you the very best and asked them to share the 3 best qualities they see in you—qualities or capabilities that you bring to the leadership of change—what would they say?

Your Community/Organization's Signature Strengths: assuming your community/organization will change in the future, *what are those three best qualities—distinctive capacities, signature strengths, assets, etc.*—that you would want to keep or build upon, even as the system moves into a new and changing future? Please share an example of these strengths in action.

Images of the Future, 2015: Let's assume that tonight you fall asleep and do not wake up for ten years. But while asleep many small and large miracles happened and your organization became the kind of organization you would **most like to see and be a part of**. As you wake up, you get a panoramic view of what took place. Evidence of positive changes surrounds you. You feel great.

What do you see happening inside and outside the organization (including its relationship to society and contributions to building a better world) that is new, positive and different—and how do you know?

Please complete the following sentence: I will be most proud of my organization in the *future when...*?

Discovering the Strengths of Our Community and Our Leaders

Prepared by Cherri Torres in 2003 for elected government officials in the community plus the Blount County Executive and City Managers.

Question #1: Talking About the Strengths of Blount County

What were the things that most attract and excite you about Blount County? About your work, about the people, about the County services, the education program? Why do you continue to live and work here?

Question #2: Continuity and Change

Things are changing rapidly, both in the world and in Blount County. In your view, what are the most important trends, events, and developments that are having an impact on Blount County?

What do these trends, events, developments imply for Blount County's future--its environment, its people, and its structure?

Question #3: Leadership

Leadership is about change and bringing out the best in people. We are all born with some leadership ability; communities that prosper the most are the ones that bring out the leadership abilities within each citizen. Outstanding communities empower and challenge people to go after things they believe are possible and even things they might think are impossible.

Your Leadership Role

Think back over your decision to serve in a leadership role in our community. What inspired you to step forward? What gifts and dreams did you have at the time, how did you imagine being of service to the community?

In your service to the community, no doubt, there have been high points and low points, struggles and successes. Recall a high point for you; a time when your leadership and efforts in the community helped make our community a great place to live and work. Describe what happened. What did you value about your contribution? What did you value about others that were involved?

General Leadership

You probably have seen or experienced a number of examples of leadership in Blount County--individual or group/team acts of leadership that you admire. Think for a moment about a story, one example, of the kind of leadership you value--something you have experienced, or heard about or have seen, anywhere in Blount County. What happened?

What is it that you value most in this story of leadership?

What--based on this story--is leadership? What does it involve in your view? Key Qualities?

Question #4: Collaboration, Communication, Trust, and Moments of Achievement in Blount County

Increasingly, any kind of community success requires bringing people together who have different backgrounds and interests, where there can be a free exchange of knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Describe a time when you were inspired by working with another person or a group where you may not have had the same ideas or opinions as the others, but you really worked together and valued each other.

- What did you value most about your contribution to this experience? What strengths and assets did you bring?
- What did you value about the others? What did you discover about people?
- What did you learn about working with people who had different interests?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- Now let's build on that story. Imagine a time in the future when Blount County has achieved a reputation in the United States as an Outstanding Community where all citizens cooperate to bring about the most desirable living environment in the country.
- What behaviors would you expect from the citizens?
- What behaviors would you expect from the leadership?
- What kinds of organizational systems, norms, or practices would you see making it possible?

Question #5: Promising Programs and Changes Happening in Blount County

Community leaders have already shown creative initiative in gathering citizen input and working together to bring about a desirable future for Blount County. As you think about Blount County—what initiatives, practices, or programs stand out for you in planning for the future of Blount County? (Examples are the Maryville 2020 programs and Nine Counties/One Vision.)

Please name the initiative or program, describe its strengths and potentials, and share where it is happening or the current outcome of the program.

What kinds of initiatives can you think of that have the potential of engaging citizen input and leadership in the future of Blount County?

How can we engage all citizens across the County? What kinds of initiatives would have the potential of hearing from everyone in the County (or at least a real cross representation of the County)?

How would you see yourself participating in such an initiative?

Questions #6: Images of the Future--Blount County 2005-2010

If you were to complete the following sentence with your highest aspirations and hopes for Blount County, what would you say . . . ?

"I will be most proud of Blount County in the future when _____".

Actions we can take today to start creating the future:

What single small change could we make right now that would have the biggest impact in creating a bright future for Blount County's?

What bolder change might we want to consider?

AI with Young Children

Prepared by Jackie Stavros, 2004

This is an example of how AI can be utilized by the very young child. This takes place in a kindergarten class in a private school in Michigan.

The question is directed to the Corporation for Positive Change (CPC) consultant:

Dear CPC:

Kindergarteners in my private school classroom are somewhat fearful of the transition to first grade. Can Appreciative Inquiry be used with children at this level? If so, how should I go about it?

Mrs. Hilary Robertson

FRC School

=====

Dear Mrs. Robertson:

We love the idea of using Appreciative Inquiry to help children make the transition from kindergarten to first grade. We suggest that you develop a set of questions and have kindergarteners and first graders talk to each other. Create questions that focus on discovering the children's best moments in school, their favorite activities and the new learning adventures they are looking forward to in their next grade.

Dr Jackie Stavros

for the CPC Consulting Team

=====

The outcome:

Based on our feedback, Robertson invited the first grade teacher and children to have conversations with kindergarteners. Parents were asked to facilitate these conversations among the 21 kindergarteners and 18 first graders.

The expectations were to discover:

- What's Best in Kindergarten and First Grade?
- What's Possible in First Grade?
- What's So Great About First Grade?

The goal for the Kindergarten and First Grade Gathering is to combine creative energies to:

1. Discover the best in times in school,
 2. Dream images of what first grade will look like,
 3. Write sound-spelling sentences that will have each kindergartener embrace first grade, and
 4. Continue to create a positive and nurturing learning environment for our children.
- The following questions were used to guide the conversations:

Meeting a First Grader

1. What is your name?
 - Why do you like to come to school?
 - What do you like best about kindergarten?
 - Can you tell me the story about your favorite thing in Kindergarten?
 - (In the same group the same questions can be ask of the first grader)
2. What does your teacher, mommy or daddy or best friend say are the three best things about you?
3. What do you love most about your teachers?
4. When you are feeling best about your work or day, what do you love doing or learning the most in Kindergarten?
5. What is the most important thing that you take home to share with your family from Kindergarten?

Your Images of First Grade

6. Now, imagine it is the Fall 2004, and you had a wonderful summer vacation, what are you most excited about going into first grade?
7. (Parents will have magic wands), we will grant you three wishes for what you hope to learn in first grade.
 - What do you hope to learn? What will it be like?

AI with Teachers & Teen Youths

Appreciative Inquiry at Heritage High School, Maryville, TN, 2001

Prepared by Cheri Torres & Carolyn Weisenberger, Mobile Team Challenge

Teacher & Faculty Interview

You have, no doubt, had classes where students excelled, where they worked hard and did well.

Describe such a class. What was the class like?

- What did you value about the students?
- What did you value about your teaching?

Recall a time when you were at your best as a teacher.

- What was it about you that made this a high point in teaching?
- What did you value about yourself as a teacher in this setting?
- What did you value about the students?
- What did you value about the administration and staff?

Imagine you woke up tomorrow morning and a miracle had occurred; when you come to school Heritage has become your ideal school in which to teach. Describe what you see, hear and smell? What is your experience is like? What makes it ideal?

Heritage High School Student Questions

Recall a class or teacher that was a great learning experience for you, one where you looked forward to going to class, did all your work, and tried hard. Describe it. What made it great?

What did you like about yourself, your teacher, and your classmates in the particular class?

If you could make HHS into your dream school, what would it be like? Describe a place that would help you be able to prepare for your future, whatever it may be.

Imagine Heathside: Interview Guide for Students and Staff

Prepared by Jon Adamson, Neil Samuels, Glyn Willoughby (2002)

Who is being interviewed? _____

This person is a: Student (year____) Teacher Staff

How long has this person been at Heathside? _____

Who is doing the interview? _____

Date: _____

Note: If interviewing a student or teacher, start with question 1. If not, please start with question 2.

Student: Think about the best teacher you have had at Heathside. Tell me about a time you were having a brilliant experience in his or her classroom.

Teacher: Will you please tell me a story about the class you most enjoyed teaching?

Will you please tell me a story about a time when you felt most excited and enthusiastic here at Heathside? It may have been in the classroom or not. *(If necessary, ask What was happening? Who was involved? What were you doing?)*

Can you please share a time here at Heathside when you knew that you mattered and it helped build your confidence.

Can you think of a story that demonstrates the caring atmosphere at Heathside?

We believe people do their best when challenged to excel and are given the encouragement and support to do so. Will you tell me about a time here when you felt you were pushed to be your very best and knew you had support behind you?

What do you think gives life to Heathside? What is at the center of this school, which if it did not exist, would make Heathside totally different than it is today?

If you had three wishes for Heathside which would make it an even better place to learn and work, what would they be?

If you came to school tomorrow and one small thing had changed making the school better, what would it be?

Women Knowing Leadership

Prepared by Kim Eberbach, Eileen Shanahan, 2003

The Art of Authentic Leadership

When we are authentic, we are wholly present. We are connected to our passion and we put ourselves out with conviction and enthusiasm. We lead by being ourselves, by being genuine. We trust what we know and we operate from that knowing.

When have you acted from a deep sense of authenticity? Tell a story about this time. Who was involved? What circumstances made it possible? What did you learn about yourself and others?

Tell me about someone you know who leads authentically and lives an authentic life. What impact does she have on you and others around her? What is special about who she is in her work and life?

Imagine it is twenty years into the future. Women feel that the organizations where they work promote and thrive on authentic leadership and living. What do these organizations look like? What does the workday look like? How do people behave? What is being accomplished?

Developing and Enriching Others

Developing people is about valuing others and having faith in their capacity to grow. In developing others, we create a safe and suitable forum for them to define and accomplish what they want. We support them in creating their own happiness. We create a context in which people feel so good about themselves that they become the next best version of who they are.

Think of a high point you have experienced in helping someone recognize and develop her own unique gifts. This can be a time when you drew out the best in another; when you supported, empowered, nurtured, or passed on wisdom you had cultivated. Tell the story of the experience in detail. Who was involved? What was special about this person? What did you do? What was your impact on the person? What made this experience meaningful for you?

Without being humble, describe what you value most about your contribution as a mentor, coach, or model.

Imagine it is three years from now and you have just finished collaborating on a book of success stories about developing leadership in women. What would have been the chapter you wrote? Talk about it.

Honoring Difference

Communities and organizations thrive when all members are included and can bring their expertise to the goals at hand. When we honor differences among individuals, we affirm that there are many paths to achieving goals. Honoring difference is characterized by shared power, joint decision-making, and equal recognition. And, it fosters enormous productivity. Diversity in gender, race, class, age, sexual orientation, religion, culture, and personality style, profoundly enriches our learning about the world and one another. It enables us to see new possibilities in others, ourselves, and in difficult situations. It allows for the best possible insights and outcomes to emerge.

Tell me about a time when you had an exceptional working relationship with someone different from yourself. What did that difference look like? What made the relationship exceptional? What did you learn? What did you accomplish together that you could not have done alone? What lasting impact has this experience had on you?

What do believe is unique about you that you value greatly? When did you first realize this was unique about you? What do you value most about it?

If there were two things that the group in this room could do to honor diversity as we move forward in our families, communities, and organizations, what would they be?

Being the Change You Wish to See

Our presence has the power to make a difference, to transform a situation. It is a time when who we are—our being and what we bring of ourselves to a particular circumstance—has tremendous impact.

Think of a specific time when you created the reality you wanted, when your presence, who you are, transformed a situation. Tell the story of the experience in detail. Who was involved? What did you do? How did you do it? What was the impact?

Without being humble, describe what you value about using yourself to inspire a transformation.

Imagine that women are having an immensely positive impact on the world scene by being present in conversations at the international level. What does their presence look like? What transformations are they inspiring? How is this unfolding?

Courageous Leading: Doing What Needs to Be Done

Taking risks, standing in the fire of high emotion, and asserting oneself in the face of great odds is courageous leading. Sometimes circumstances arise that pose unusual difficulties; they seem too complex or ambiguous, perhaps too frightening to tackle. During these times, our energy is expanded and we can challenge old systems of thinking and being, and/or we can break new ground all together.

Think of a particular time when you took a risk, confronted a challenge head-on, and did whatever needed to be done, when you felt clear, focused, and capable, when you utilized insight, creativity, and/or entrepreneurship. Describe what happened and what you did. What did you value most about yourself during that time? What did you discover about yourself? How have you used what you discovered to support you in creating other successes?

Describe a time when you have witnessed women acting as a group with great courage. How did this come about? How did you know it was courageous action? What lessons are there to be learned from this?

If courage were a positive flame for women, how would you spark it? How would you keep the flame burning bright?

Creating a Small Forum Where Leaders of the World Religions Can Gather in Mutual Respect and Dialogue

Moderated by David Cooperrider, Nov 1998, Washington DC

Welcome and Reflection by His Holiness the Dali Lama, Richard Blum, and Bishop William Swing

OPENING DIALOGUE

Question #1: A story from your life journey...? One could say a key task in life is to discover and define our life purpose, and then accomplish it to the best of our ability.

Can you share the story of a memorable moment where **clarity about life purpose** emerged for you— for example, a moment where your calling happened, where there was an important awakening or teaching; where there was a life-changing experience, or where you received clarity around some guiding vision?

Now, beyond this story....What do you sense you are supposed to do before your life is over?

Question # 2: Insights from important interfaith encounter—exploration of personal meeting and friendship between people of different religions?

We have all been changed both in outlook and our lives, because of encounter with people from other spiritual traditions or religions. In your work as a leader you might have had one, two, or perhaps many encounters with people of other traditions that stand out as particularly significant.

Share a story of one experience that stands out—for example, an encounter outside the normal “safety zone” where you were surprised or humbled; or where there was an experience of healing and hope; or where there was genuine experience of compassion, joy, love, or friendship.

Whether it was difficult or easy, what did you come to respect most, not just about that person, but about their particular religion or practice?

Question # 3: What qualities could make meetings like this significant and effective?

In his book The Good Heart, His Holiness the Dalai Lama elaborates on the idea that “leaders of each religion should become better acquainted with one another.” After talking about hard and “very, very unfortunate” conflict in the name of different religious traditions, and what it means “in the eyes of the public,” he talks about the great potential of ongoing dialogue.

You probably already know, based on lots of experience, what kind of things could make this type of meeting worthwhile, meaningful, and successful.

So imagine an ongoing, secure, private, small, and relatively unstructured forum where leaders can have conversation with one another, know one another in mutually respectful ways, and reflect on the hard issues of the world without binding any institution to another.

What qualities of relating could help make it work?

Bottom line: what would make meetings like this, perhaps in the future, worthwhile to you?

What kinds of things would you like to experiment with?

INSIGHTS FROM THE PAST

Question #4. World events and trends over the past 100 years?

Taking steps to create an enduring dialogue among leaders of religions does not happen in a vacuum.

Think about the five most important historical events that have occurred over the past 100 years—global or local events and trends that give you a sense of urgency, readiness, or calling for our work here? What trends or challenges do you see as most significant? Examples?

ASSESSMENT OF THE PRESENT: OUR WORLD AND THE HARD ISSUES

Question # 5. The emerging story of inter-religion relationships? Against the background of many world problems and conflicts, there is also a hopeful story that offers a glimmer of what is possible when we find ways to promote peace rather than war, cooperation rather than prejudice, and sustainability rather than environmental degradation and human oppression. (The 1996 Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential lists over 15,000 global problems and documents, for example, that half of the armed conflicts in the world in early 1993 were not between nation-states but between groups from different religions.)

The century since that historic gathering in 1893 in Chicago—the Parliament of World Religions—has seen a vast widening of interfaith dialogue, interreligious prayer and meditation, pilgrimages, joint action, and study in world religions. Indeed it appears there is a worldwide urge for an enduring, daily cooperation among people of the world's religions to make peace among religions and to serve, in the presence of the sacred, the flourishing of all life. As leaders in these arenas: What are we most proud about? What are we most sorry about?

Think about the most significant achievements, milestones, developments and infrastructures that have happened locally or globally in your lifetime. What developments are you most proud about?

Conversely, as you look at events or trends in the world, and the current responses of religious leaders including yourself, what are you most sorry about? What are the hard issues of the world that we, as leaders, should be most reflective about in our deliberations with one another?

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE: VISIONS OF A BETTER WORLD

Question #6. Your vision of a better world, and the special tasks and significance of the world's religions in the new century? Dag Hammarskjöld, former United

Nations Secretary General, said: “I see no hope for permanent world peace. We have tried and failed miserably. Unless the world has a spiritual rebirth, civilization is doomed. It has been said that the next century will be a spiritual century or it will not be.”

Put your thinking about 30 years, a generation or so, into the future. Even though the future is, in so many ways, a mystery, we want to begin to visualize the kind of world you feel we are being called to realize, a better world, the kind of world you really want. What do you see in your vision of a better world?

Specifically, what are **three** changes or developments in your vision? What is happening in the world a generation from now that is positive and different, and how do you know? How would you feel if these three things were realized?

Question #7. Your vision of the relationships between the world’s religions and leaders? The assumption in the invitation is that there needs to be, in today’s complicated and interconnected world, an ongoing and sustained conversation among the religious leaders of the world. The simple hypothesis: the world will be a different, a better place. It is easy to see the value of something like this, is it not?

Lets imagine a scale from 1 to 10—where a rating of 10 represents *your vision of the ideal kind of relationship among leaders* of the world’s religions and spiritual traditions.

Using your scale, how would you rate in broad terms where the leaders are today, in terms of the quality and kinds of relationships?

What does your 10 look like? The quality of relationships? Frequency of contact and communication? A metaphor?

Lets assume a significant and growing number of leaders from the world’s religions do choose to get to know one another—and they begin to succeed. A safe, confidential, and non-binding forum is created. *How might the world benefit? How might you and your faith community or organization benefit?*

FUTURE MEETINGS: 1999 AGENDA, HOW OFTEN, AND WHERE?

Question # 8. Next Steps? Again, putting yourself in the future, lets suppose that in fact a high quality and enduring forum for dialogue has been successfully created—it is a safe and level playing field where leaders and their envoys can come together to talk, in confidence, about the hard issues of the world.

As you imagine such a forum, and assuming resources are not a constraint, what are some things (process, content, structure) that could happen, or should happen, to make it a win-win-win for everyone—for the world, for your work in your community and organization, and for inter-faith relationships?

What would make it exciting and compelling for you?

What are some possible places for a next meeting?

Let's begin to set the Agenda.

Appreciative Parenting

Prepared by Dawn Cooperrider Dole, Jen Hetzel Silbert, Ada Jo Mann

1. Peak Parenting Moment: As parents, we all have experiences that are wonderful and other times when things don't go so well. Today I'd like to focus on the high points. Think about a time that really stands as one of your peak moments as a parent. Recall a time when you felt most alive, most excited, most engaged, or most involved in your role as parent. Please tell me about that time and what it was that made it so special.

- Who was involved?
- What was happening?
- How were you feeling at this time?
- What were you thinking?
- Describe the situation in detail.

2. Values: Next I'd like to talk about the positive qualities in yourself and others. Think about the things that matter most to you. This question has three parts.

First, without being humble, what do you value most about yourself as a parent?
[Wait for answer]

Second, what do you think your children value most about you? [Answer]

Finally, what do you value most about your children, and what do you think they value most about themselves?

3. Expressions of Love: The love a parent has for a child goes deeper than we can easily express. Expressing that love happens in many ways. When you think back to the years you have had with your child/children, tell me about a time when your expression of love surprised you, enthralled you, and brought more emotion than you had ever imagined.

- What did you do?
- What did your child?
- What were the circumstances surrounding the expression of love?
- What did you learn from that experience?

4. Communication: Communication is important in any relationship but especially in a parent/child relationship. Think of a time when communication went really well between you and your child/children? A time when it was open, healthy, and loving. A time that you feel was an example of truly loving, effective communication.

- What fostered this communication?
- How did it impact you?
- How did it impact your child?
- How did this impact your relationship?

5. Overcoming Difficulty: At times parenting is more rewarding than anything else in the world and at other times it can be very frustrating. Think of a time when a difficult moment was turned into a loving, relational building, transforming moment. Tell me about that time and what it was that contributed to or fueled the transformation.

6. Support Systems: There is an expression that it takes a village to raise a child. Think for a moment about the support that you have had in raising your child/children. It may have included family members, neighbors, friends, child care, or other organizations or people. As you reflect on the various types of support, think of one or two that stand out. Which support systems impact/ed you the most, and what is it that you appreciate and value the most about them?

7. Empowerment – Think of a time you did something as a parent that turned out to be particularly empowering for your child. Tell me about that time. What were the underlying causes of creating this empowering situation for your child? What did you learn from it, what do you think your child learned from it?

8. Purpose: This next question may seem simple at first but it is important as we explore future possibilities as parents. What do you see as the core purpose for your role as a parent? What is it that you believe the world is calling you to be, do and become as a parent?

- How might this impact your relationship with you child/children?

9. Hopes for Our Children: Even though we know our influence is limited and that our children will make decisions on their own, we also know that the future is co-created. As parents we have hopes and dreams for our children as they are grow. What is it that you hope for most for the future of your children? And how can you begin to co-create that future with your children?

10. Three Wishes: If I had a magic wand and could grant you three wishes for you as a parent, what would they be?

11. Action Items: What two or three things can you do right now that would help move you in the direction of your wishes?

Developing Partnerships among International Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs)

Prepared by Ada Jo Mann

1. Being Part of a Really Good Partnership: We would like to start with a question about your most positive or significant experience in a partnership

relationship. Over the years you (and/or your organization) have been in many partnership relationships. As you reflect back over all those experiences, there have been ups and downs, high points and low points, or peaks and valleys as far as the partnership experience was concerned. For the moment we would like you to focus on a high point--a time you felt you were involved in a really “good” partnership, a time that stands out as significant, meaningful, mutually empowering, or particularly effective in terms of results achieved. Please share the **story of this good partnership**: what made it a good partnership experience? How were you involved? How did the partnership operate? What were the feelings? Key lessons? [Note: *You might want to answer this question in two ways: (A) a good personal partnership you have had with another person, and (B) a good partnership your organization has had with another organization*].

2. Best Qualities and Skills: We all have different qualities and skills we bring to any new partnership. Let’s reflect on those qualities and skills from several different levels:

- a) Yourself: Without being too humble, what is it that you value most about yourself as it relates to things you bring to building high quality partnerships? What are your best qualities, skills, approaches, values, etc.?
- b) Your Society or Culture: Every society or culture has its own unique qualities, beliefs, traditions, or capabilities as it relates to preparing us for building good partnership relations with others. What two-three things about your culture or society are you most proud about as it relates to qualities that might enhance or help in building good partnerships? Can you share a story about your culture that illustrates its best partnership qualities?
- c) Your Organization or Group: What, currently, are your organization’s best practices, skills, values, methods, or traditions that make it prepared to be a good partner organization?

3. Stages of Development: Think about a current partnership relationship between your organization and another organization. Obviously relationships change over time. What, in your view, were the stages of development in the partnership? If you thought about the relationship like a play—with act one, act two, act three, and so on—what was the key theme or storyline for “act one” like? Act two? Act three? What were the challenges that your organization had to deal with in building a higher quality partnership? How did you most successfully deal with the challenges? Key lessons?

4. Why Build Organizational Partnerships? From your organization’s perspective, why go to all the trouble of building organizational partnerships? Why not just operate alone? What, in ideal terms, are the benefits and outcomes of forming good partnerships?

HIV/AIDS Ethiopia Partnership for Positive Change

Prepared by Ada Jo Mann and Tony Silbert, 2003

As part of a special planning process we are conducting interviews with a range of stakeholders who are in some way involved with the HIV/AIDS sector in Ethiopia. In particular, our goal is to locate, illuminate, and understand the distinctive values, best practices, and programmatic successes which have occurred over the years in our collective fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In other words, we are interested in understanding more about what is happening when we are at our best, when our work has made a difference.

The information you provide in this interview will be used to help a representative community of HIV/AIDS donors, practitioners and beneficiaries create a shared vision of opportunities for future action based on the collective strengths and successes this study reveals. Our interest is in learning from your experience. The collected comments, experience and suggestions from all of those interviewed will be summarized and drawn upon at the **Partnership for Positive Change Summit** to be held in Addis Ababa, June 3–5, 2003.

The interview takes about one hour. The interview will focus on times when programs and services are operating at their best. I will take notes from time to time, but the information I collect will be confidential and anonymous.

YOUR EXPERIENCE IN THE HIV/AIDS SECTOR

To get started, I'd like to learn about your beginnings with the HIV/AIDS sector.

- What drew you to this work?
- What were your initial hopes and aspirations when you joined the battle against HIV/AIDS?

Looking at your entire experience, can you recall a time when you felt most alive, most involved, or most excited about your involvement in the HIV/AIDS sector?

- What made it an exciting experience? Who else was involved?
- What was it about you that made it a peak experience?

Let's talk for a moment about some things you value deeply. Specifically, the things you value about 1) yourself; 2) the nature of your work; and 3) your organization.

- Without being humble, what do you value the most about yourself, as a human being, a friend, a parent, a citizen, and son/daughter?
- When you are feeling best about your work, what do you value about the task itself?
- What is it about your organization that you value?

SUCCESS STORIES: BRINGING ABOUT POSITIVE CHANGE

In spite of the many challenges we encounter in the fight against HIV/AIDS, there have been some amazing examples of success. The success may have been the result of an especially effective program intervention, a community effort or an inspired leader.

- What is the most outstanding or successful achievement you have been involved in? A project or accomplishment of which you are particularly proud?
- What other inspiring stories of success come to mind?
- What factors (e.g., leadership, teamwork, culture, innovation) contributed to these successes?
- What have been the most successful strategies for educating young people about how to protect themselves from HIV?

BREAKING THE SILENCE: LEADING WITH COMPASSION

One of the many challenges faced in the fight against HIV/AIDS is the stigma associated with the virus. At the same time there have been many acts of compassion and empathy especially modeled by courageous individuals, community leaders, and faith-based organizations.

- What courageous acts of compassion are you aware of?
- How have faith-based organizations made a difference?

COMMUNITIES HAVE ANSWERS

HIV/AIDS affects the entire community. It is ultimately the community response which will determine the course of our success in containing the disease and sustaining those living with its challenges.

- What positive community approaches to supporting people and families living with HIV/AIDS have you encountered?
- Additionally, how are communities supporting orphans and vulnerable children?

SAFE MOTHERHOOD

One way to stop the spread of HIV is to offer prevention services to pregnant women in order to protect their babies from contracting the virus at birth.

- What examples of successful outreach to pregnant women have you heard about?
- What are the traditional ways in which pregnancy is celebrated and supported?

CARE AND SUPPORT

While programs which focus on prevention are of utmost importance-- care and support of the large numbers of men, women and children already infected with HIV/AIDS is urgent and compelling.

- What have been the most successful strategies for reaching people with the HIV virus or with AIDS?
- What have been the most sought after and effective basic care and psychosocial support services?

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATIVE SPIRIT

The fight against HIV/AIDS is being led by the collective hard work of government ministries, international and national NGOs, faith-based organizations, trade unions and associations, CBO's, donors, and families. Many human and financial resources have been mobilized to support and conquer this disease. It is especially through partnership and collaboration that these resources can be leveraged for maximum success.

- What examples of successful partnerships or joint efforts in this sector are you aware of? What made them successful?
- Describe for me an extraordinary display of cooperation among diverse individuals or groups in the HIV/AIDS sector?
- Think of a successful partnership or network (focused on a common goal) that you have been part of. What are the factors that made it successful?

WISHES FOR THE FUTURE

If you could develop or transform the way in which HIV/AIDS is approached here in Ethiopia what three wishes would you make to increase the likelihood of success in containing and eradicating this disease in the future? What is the most important first step (smallest step) we can take as a community to achieve these wishes?

When Losing a Loved One in Family: Appreciating and Affirming what we have TODAY

The questions below are intended to help your family open new doors in this time of fear and uncertainty. They will begin by inquiring into those positive high points in your family history—those feelings of joy and happiness, of triumph and affirmation—that are immortalized in your memory. By rediscovering and appreciating your past, you can uncover a generative, positive fuel source that will propel and sustain you into this still vague, but now more hopeful future.

Take a moment to come together as a family and ask the questions below, one question, one person, at a time. Be sure to read the question aloud first before answering. Take notes to preserve the stories that come about—they're priceless, timeless treasures to be kept forever.

Questions

- Family histories carry many ups and downs, high points and low points. Think about a high point, a time of pure joy—feeling proud, hopeful, excited, and happy to belong to this very gifted, special family. What story, or memory, comes to mind?

- When you are at your best—when you are most happy—what is it that you are doing?
- Without being humble, describe what you do best as a member of this family (wife-husband, mother-father, daughter-son)? What is your contribution, or gift? What about this role makes it so special and meaningful to you?
- What makes your children [or parents] the greatest on earth? What do you value and appreciate most in each of them? Tell them aloud.
- Imagine a future where your wildest dreams came true for all your loved ones that your greatest hopes were fulfilled. What does that future look like? Who is doing what, and how are your loved ones going about their day? Describe in detail the dream you see.

Triumph in Change

Adapted by Jen Hetzel Silbert and Tony Silbert; Original by David Cooperrider.

High Point

You no doubt have experienced many changes in your life—in your organization, community, at home, etc. Like waves in the sea, these changes bring many ups and downs, high points and low points. While some changes we can plan for and anticipate others we cannot. No matter, we triumph in change when we choose to act in a manner that taps into our strengths and transforms challenge to opportunity.

Reflect back on a significant change in your life or work in which you triumphed in change. What happened? Who was involved? Feelings? Insights? What has this experience taught you—about yourself, your work, and handling change in your life?

Key Strengths

If we had a conversation with people that know you best and asked them to share the three greatest qualities they see in you—qualities or capabilities that you bring to leading or handling change—what would they say?

Signature Strengths

Assuming your company or organization will change in the future, what are those three best qualities—distinctive capacities, signature strengths, assets, etc.—that you would want to keep or build upon, even as the system moves into a new and uncertain future? Please share an example of these strengths in action.

Images of the Future, 2011:

Fast forward to five years from today. Many small and large changes happened and your company/organization became what you would most like to see and be a part of. You get a panoramic view of what took place. Evidence of positive change surrounds you and you feel terrific, excited and proud of what you see.

What is happening inside and outside your company/organization that is new, different, and better—for you, your company, your community, the world—and

how do you know? How have your and your organization's signature strengths contributed to this?

Coming to Work and Enjoying It!

Prepared by Joanne Daykin.

An organization in which people want to come to work is one which embraces professionalism, quality and excellence. It supports a strong work ethic, dedication, teamwork, autonomy and sense of community. It has leadership that instills trust, provides open communication, feedback, and autonomy; helping us come together under a well understood and shared vision.

All these things help us to embrace change, allowing us to grow better and stronger. By sharing positive experiences within the framework of a story, the good things that have been successful in the past can be used to create a dynamic and enjoyable workplace. These positive experiences can open our minds to possibilities that can have an impact on our work environment, our value, and organizational growth.

The Work

The work at this division unites us! It involves many people who contribute to achieve quality and excellence in our products. Dynamic, exciting and vital work allows us to enjoy our jobs. When hard-working people are challenged by interesting work, they achieve at their peak. When we are at our best, we unleash our creativity and energy which makes work more rewarding and fulfilling.

- a) Tell me about a high point in your work life—a time when you felt most alive, most engaged or really proud of yourself or your work. Who was involved? What was it about you and the situation that energized you and allowed that peak experience to emerge?
- b) What first attracted you to your work? What is the one thing about your work now that you value most deeply, that you want to make sure is kept as we move forward?

Communication and Team Work

- a) Good communication and relationships can flourish in an environment where people feel included, supported, and can express themselves openly.

Tell me about the most exciting team effort you have been involved in and the synergy within the team? What were the circumstances that allowed this connection to happen? What are the qualities of the people you have most fun working with?

- b) Communication in General: Given the diversity of our workforce and the specialized nature of the work we do, it is essential to communicate effectively.

When have you had the most meaningful connection with someone from a different background? Tell me about your best personal experience with being listened to?

What were the circumstances? Who was involved? Where do you find information that has the greatest impact on?

Leadership

Great leadership at every level happens when there is a shared vision, open two-way communication and trust.

Tell me about a time when you were involved in something that had a shared purpose, good communication and trust.

- Who was involved?
- What conditions were present that allowed for it to happen and what were some of the contributing factors?
- How did it feel?

Recall a time when you or someone else, assumed a leadership role. Describe the situation.

- Who was involved?
- What made it great?
- What inspired you about this leadership example?
- How did others respond?
- How could this experience enhance our organization?

Imagining the future:

If you had the ability to make any wish for this division come true what would you wish for that would make a dramatic difference in your passion for coming to work and enjoying being here? What is one thing you could do YOURSELF within this division that would help make a difference in your passion for coming to work?

An Inquiry Into Optimal Margins (Profit) at a National Trucking Company

Prepared by David Cooperrider.

What results do you want? With revenues, tonnage, and sales at record levels, one of the most important opportunities we face is to engage everyone in increasing positive margins now—to do so will call on discovery of new strengths, build on old strengths, and carry us to higher levels financially.

- a) As you look at this company from the perspective of our capabilities, and as you think about the business context and opportunities, how do you define optimal margin—for us? Define it: What is the positive margin you want and believe we have the capability to create? Right now? In the moderate time frame? Longer term?
- b) What results do you want from this meeting? What would make this day a good one for you?

Insights from your work. We all pride ourselves on the things we do that add the most value in terms of creating margin. Some of our work activities add lots of value, while others do not. Likewise there are some things we do as leaders—our style, our approaches to managing people—which engage everyone else in increasing margins. Let’s reflect (see questions below) on some of the essential things you do that you feel add the most value.

When you think of your precious time, and how you spend it, what are the things you do which, in your view, add the most value in terms of creating margin? Any examples?

Ideally, if you were able to re-craft what you do, what parts of your work (from the perspective of creating margin) would you want to keep doing, let go of, or do new and different?

Keep doing?

Let go of (things that are not really needed)?

Do new or different?

As you reflect on your leadership here at this company—times where you have mobilized or helped develop others-- there have been high points and low points, successful moments. Please describe one situation, or change initiative, that you are proud of—an achievement in which you feel you had impact in realizing better margins. What happened? What were the challenges? What was it about you or your leadership style? Lessons learned?

Let’s think about other leaders or successful stories of change—situations you have heard about or seen here at this company as it relates to engaging people to achieve good margins. Is there a story or an example that stands out for you—something that exemplifies the kind of leadership approaches we should aim for more often? Can you describe the leadership? Insights?

Life-giving Relationships: An Interview for Couples

Here are some questions for couples to use as part of an appreciative inquiry interview. These are only sample questions. You can make up your own questions, keeping in mind the focus of your inquiry. In other words, what is it that you would like to inquire into and illuminate and then create in the future?

Looking back at your past, tell me about a time when you felt most alive, most fulfilled, or most excited—a time when you can say you were living out a personal calling, something you’ve always wanted to do or dreamt of doing. What was it and what about it made it so spectacular? Share with me how this experience made you feel, what you valued most about it.

Now, looking at your entire experience with me—from the day we first met to now—tell me about a time when you felt most alive, most fulfilled, or most excited for us to be together. What was happening and what were we doing? Tell the story in detail.

- What made it exciting?
- Who/what else was involved?
- What was it about me that helped make you feel so alive?

Let's talk about some things you value deeply—specifically, the things you value about yourself and your relationships with the people you love most.

- Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself as a person?
- What do you value about the relationships you share with special friends, family members?
- What do you value about the relationship we've created together?
- What is the most important thing this relationship has contributed to your life?
- What do you experience as the core factors that give life to this relationship? Give some examples of how you experience those factors.
- What three wishes would you make to heighten the vitality and health of this relationship?

Fast-forward five years from now. Your wishes have come true and life, as you know it, is better than you could have ever imagined. From our relationship, to our lives at work, with friends, with family, and at home, we have a lot to be grateful for. What's happening? Tell me in detail the images you see.

- What small steps or changes can you make today that will get you closer to making this future image a reality today? Further, what support will you need from others in order to take those steps fearlessly?

Celebrating Our History and Creating a Thriving and Peaceful Guyana

Prepared by Jen Hetzel Silbert, Tony Silbert, Joanne Daykin, and Jim Statman, 2005.

What You Value Most

Your story: Creating a Better Guyana

We've all been a part of initiatives where we have joined with others in compassionate and engaging ways to bring dreams of a better world into being. As you scan the years of your work, there may have been ups and downs, high points and low points. For the moment, let's reflect on a high point—one memorable time when you joined with others to create a better family, workplace, community, country, or the world. Please share with me the story, feelings, and insights that are useful for our work here.

Let's talk a moment about some of the things you value deeply about yourself, the nature of your work, and Guyana.

Without being humble (unduly modest), what do you value most about yourself as a person – your qualities, strengths, and experiences?

What do you value most regarding the nature of your work? Who/what inspires and motivates your work? What are the core factors that give you life and resilience in your work?

What do you value most about Guyana?

Highpoint Successes

In the next two questions, we will ask you to reflect on high points you have experienced in *Extraordinary Citizenry* and *Mobilizing Unity and Peace*. Feel free to draw upon a compelling story from a previous professional or personal experience.

Extraordinary Citizenry

No matter what our ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural diversities, we ARE citizens of Guyana. At our best we come together as citizens united and we carry our citizenship proudly. We recognize that we are individually and collectively responsible for creating a peaceful and thriving Guyana.

To you, what does it mean to be an extraordinary citizen? Describe a time when you have been an extraordinary citizen and supported a thriving Guyana—a time when you came together with other citizens or groups or organizations to make a positive impact on Guyana. What happened? What made this experience so exceptional for you? What were the key ingredients to this success?

Mobilizing Unity and Peace

Peaceful relationships are forged by genuine and trustful connections. Like an epidemic, they make contagious the spread of peaceful and productive relationships. Whether working in our organization community, constituency, or across the nation, we create ripples that expand around us, strengthening our communities, mobilizing peace, and uniting us as citizens.

Tell me about a high point you've had in mobilizing unity or peace—a time where you enabled cooperation, more positive relationships, and helped create a ripple in the spread of peace. What happened and who was involved? What support or resources made this possible? What were the outcomes and benefits you, your organization, and your community experienced?

Envisioning the Future

Let's assume that by magic you have suddenly leapt forward to the year 2009. You discover that many small and large miracles happened and Guyana has changed in

ways you would most like to see it—for yourself, your family, your community, your children, and future generations. You go out and get a panoramic view of the thriving and peaceful Guyana that surrounds you. You are happy with what you see—it's the Guyana you most want to be part of.

So now, share highlights of what you see: what do you see happening that is new, better, healthy, and good? What do you see in your vision of a better Guyana? How are we working together differently?

What was the smallest change we made which had the greatest impact on achieving our vision for Guyana?

Appreciative Facilitation Article

Facilitation Skills:

Harnessing the Power of Diverse Groups to Improve Program Performance

By: Rolf Sartorius & Dian Seslar Svendsen, Social Impact

While most managers recognize the benefits of participation, many lack the practical skills to effectively involve diverse stakeholders in planning and managing programs. Most excellent facilitators are not "naturals" at what they do--rather, they work hard to develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to harness the power of groups. These people help diverse groups to learn from their collective experience, take joint action, and develop their own facilitation skills. This provides a brief overview of facilitation including its benefits, core values, basic concepts, guidance on when and where it is needed and practical tips for using facilitation to increase participation. It concludes with a practical evaluation tool to assist facilitators to improve their facilitation skills.

The Benefits of Strong Facilitation Skills

- Increased ability to manage diverse groups
- Improved skills for managing conflict
- Better utilization of knowledge, resources, and capacities
- Enhanced collaboration, coordination and understanding amongst project stakeholders
- More committed and timely group action
- Increased management capacity of partners
- More effective meetings and workshops

What Is Facilitation?

The term "facilitation" can be confusing. Webster's Dictionary says that "facilitate" means "to make easier or less difficult; help forward." So facilitation is the process of making something easier and less difficult. This is a very broad meaning.

We use "facilitation" in the context of group meetings or workshops in which a basically neutral person with no decision-making authority helps the group to be more efficient and effective when planning, implementing, and monitoring and

evaluating meetings and workshops. These meetings, involving diverse groups who have a stake in the program, take place at each stage of the project cycle and are used to make important, often consensus-based, decisions about program management and future directions.

Our philosophy heavily emphasizes using "facilitation skills" in program management to further group members' understanding of self and each other; planning processes; problem solving and decision-making skills; and co-operative and collaborative processes.

Core Values

Schwarz (1994) modifies Argyris and Schoen (1974) to develop a set of core values which should guide facilitation.

Valid Information

- People share all relevant information.
- People share information so that others understand it.
- People continually seek new information to determine whether previous decisions should be changed.

Free & Informed Choice

- People define their own objectives and methods for achieving them.
- People are not coerced or manipulated.
- People base their choices on valid information.

Internal Commitment to the Choice

- People feel personally responsible for their decisions.
- People find their choices intrinsically compelling or satisfying

Useful Guidance

Rogers (1969), a pioneer in learner-centered approaches to education, offers many sound ideas for effective facilitation. Although much has been researched and written since Carl Rogers developed his ideas, his guidelines (with slight modifications) are still relevant and timely:

- A main role of the facilitator is setting the initial mood or climate of the group.
- The facilitator helps to elicit and clarify the purposes of the individuals in the group as well as the more general purposes of the group.
- She or he relies upon the desire of each participant to implement those purposes which have meaning for her or him, as the motivational force behind significant learning.
- He or she organizes and make accessible a wide range or resources for learning.
- The facilitator is a flexible resource to be utilized by the group.
- He or she accepts both the intellectual content and the emotionalized attitudes and tries to balance his/her emphasis or these aspects with the group's corresponding emphasis.
- The facilitator may share opinions with the group, once the acceptable climate has been established, but he or she must do so in ways which do not demand nor

impose but represent simply a personal sharing which group members may take or leave.

- Throughout the group experience, the facilitator remains alert to expressions which indicate deep or strong feelings.
- In his or her functioning as a facilitator of learning, the facilitator recognizes and accepts his or her own limitations.

Practical Tips

A facilitator is neither a content expert nor a lecturer. A facilitator helps participants to interact with each other, gain new information, and build upon their experience. The facilitator guides a process which will help participants to reach their stated goals and objectives within the time allotted. The facilitator's key role is to help the group experience and learn together. If you are working with participants who may not understand the role of a facilitator, explain this to them.

A good facilitator:

- Keeps the group focused on task and process
- Remains as objective as possible
- Is an informed guide helping the group to chart its course and accomplish its goals
- Listens more than talks
- Adopts to various learning styles
- Encourages everyone to participate while remembering that individuals participate in different ways. Some may talk only in small groups, but they are still participating. Others may wish to talk constantly and may be contributing little.
- Protects members of the group from attack by others
- Is gender and culturally sensitive
- Energizes a group or slows it down, as needed
- Recaps, occasionally, what has happened in the workshop and helps group to make connections between the sessions.

You will become a good facilitator if you follow the above hints and also:

- Be alert to signs of confusion (puzzled or frustrated looks, people asking neighbors questions, resistance, etc.).
- Don't do the group's work. Learning is more effective and lasting if the individuals and small groups discover on their own (learning by doing).
- Circulate, but don't become a permanent part of any one group because you may too easily influence the group.
- Spend sufficient time with each group during small group work to be certain they have grasped the tasks and concepts supporting it.
- Review portions of the small group tasks which are causing confusion if several individuals or groups are having difficulty.

- Ask frequently if there are questions. Sometimes the training activity specifically suggests asking if there are questions, but you should ask even if the activity does not specify doing so.
- When you DO ask a question, allow group members time to think before answering. Slowly count to 10. This may seem like a long time and silence may feel uncomfortable, but allowing participants time to think is essential if you want thoughtful answers.
- Don't feel that you must be an expert. Remind the group and yourself that you are a facilitator. Remind them (and perhaps yourself) of THEIR expertise and experience. Ask other participants for their ideas on a question. Don't feel you should answer everything—you shouldn't!
- Be flexible. Keep the times of your sessions and depth and breadth of content somewhat flexible. Changing something doesn't mean you planned poorly, but probably means you are listening, watching, and adjusting your plans to fit the situation.
- Take at least two 15–20 minute breaks—one in the afternoon and one in the morning. Suggest short "stretch breaks" as needed.
- Finally, RELAX!

When And Why Is It Needed?

Rich, effective, growthful dialogue within groups cannot be forced but it can be encouraged and nurtured. This is a main part of a facilitator's role. Through careful planning, designing effective and proven processes, observing and making skilled interventions, a good facilitator can make the difference between slow, boring, or hostile meetings and workshops and more effective ones in which group members actively contribute, feel ownership, and ultimately apply their understanding and learning in their work. The following are just a few ways facilitators can improve this process.

Encouraging Dialogue

Senge (1990) writes of the importance of "dialogue" for team learning within the learning organization. Facilitation is essential to this process. Senge suggests that through dialogue, the group benefits from a "larger intelligence." Senge identifies three basic conditions for dialogue:

- All participants must "suspend" their assumptions, literally to hold them "as if suspended before us"
- All participants must regard one another as colleagues
- There must be a "facilitator" who "holds the context" of dialogue

Without a facilitator to guide the dialogue, meeting or workshop participants tend to revert to old habits and the "dialogue" quickly digresses to discussion or debate.

Guiding the Group's Process

If a facilitator's main purpose is guiding the group's process, they are often called a "process facilitator." Senge points out that the facilitator walks a fine line between

guiding the process and drawing too much attention to herself/himself and taking away from group members' ownership and responsibility for the group. The facilitator can also guide the process by asking critical, open-ended questions. For example, if someone makes a statement, the facilitator may say,

- "In what other ways could we explain this?"
- "Does anyone else have another perspective?"

Mirroring the Group's Process

Groups often become so engrossed in what they are doing that they lose sight of what is happening in the group. The facilitator is in the excellent position of standing back and "reflecting back" to the group what he or she can see happening. This function is especially important during times of crisis. The facilitator can express his observation and then guide the group in taking its own actions to return to the course. For example, if lots of ideas are flying around he may point out that several people seem to be saying the same thing, yet appear to be disagreeing with each other. In this case he/she is not saying what the group "should" do, but merely making an observation.

Increasing Participation and Inclusion

An important function of the facilitator is to regulate the group's dialogue and discussion. The facilitator helps to balance contributions made within groups. He or she can do this through group process intervention skills as well as changing methods within the group context, such as using smaller group discussions.

Basic and Developmental Facilitation: Problem Solving and Skill Development

Schwarz (1994) makes the distinction between "basic" and "developmental" facilitation. In basic facilitation, a facilitator works with a group at a specific time to solve a specific process. In developmental facilitation, a facilitator consciously works with the group to improve its processes. They may also solve a particular problem, but more importantly, they have improved the way they work together so that they will be better able to solve other problems in the future. In basic facilitation the facilitator shoulders more of the responsibility for the group's success while with developmental facilitation the responsibility is shared.

The developmental approach to facilitation emphasizes capacity building for long-term improvements in groups' efficiency and effectiveness. Although the approach is more in line with development philosophy it requires more time to facilitate groups using this approach.

Differences Between Training And Facilitation?

Many times the terms "facilitator" and "trainer" seem to mean the same thing, but they are, in fact, different. One may be a trainer but not a facilitator. Likewise one may be able to facilitate a group's process but does not have training skills. Social Impact offers a training process to teach facilitation skills and it also models facilitation skills in the process it advocates.

Renner (1983) suggests that all instructors are not natural facilitators. He says "to be an effective facilitator an instructor ought to possess certain basic skills:

- adequate expertise in the subject area,
- some general knowledge of learning theory, and technical (instructional) skills to present the material so that it can be learned,
- a well-developed repertoire of interpersonal skills through which he can establish, maintain, and develop effective relationships and an atmosphere conducive to learning."

SUMMARY

Effective facilitation encompasses a broad range of knowledge, attitudes and skills in working with diverse groups. Good facilitation work builds ownership and commitment to program results and increases the likelihood that programs will respond to participant's actual needs.

An Evaluation Form for Practicing Facilitators

Excellent ways to practice facilitation skills are through training, co-facilitation and practice in small group and team settings. The following evaluation form can be used by facilitators to get structured feedback from their interventions. The form can also be adapted for teams who want to evaluate the whole team's ability to facilitate its team meetings (team managed facilitation). Like other instruments of this kind, the form should be used in a positive way, to build dialogue around opportunities to improve facilitation.

Facilitator Evaluation Form

Circle number that most aptly describes facilitator with 5 = Fully Agree and 1 = Do Not Agree at All

The designated facilitator helped us to:

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | All participate in the discussion. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. | Promote mutual learning and understanding. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. | Foster inclusive solutions. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. | Use our time effectively. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. | Make good use of the information available to us. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. | Establish common objectives for the meeting. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. | Adhere to our meeting norms. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. | Remain clear about our tasks. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 9. | Clarify steps we would follow in performing our tasks. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 10. | Stay conscious of the processes that we were trying to use. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 11. | Get back on track when we were confused. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 12. | Keep our inputs relevant. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 13. | Keep our inputs clear. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14. | Communicate respectfully with one another. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 15. | Develop sufficient information about all topics discussed. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 16. | Explore alternatives fully before making decisions. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 17. | Encourage differences in opinion. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 18. | Manage conflict. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

The designated facilitator:

- | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 19. | Listened actively. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 20. | Summarized and synthesized key points. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 21. | Asked open-ended questions. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 22. | Reserved judgement and kept an open mind. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 23. | Encouraged people to take responsibility for their own actions. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Sample Designs for Introducing AI

Introducing Appreciative Inquiry: A 45 minute design

From: “Using the Generative Power of Dialogue for Creating Change at the Speed of Imagination,” by Bernard Mohr, January 2000

Begin with introductory comments on “What is Appreciative Inquiry?”

Appreciative Inquiry is a practical philosophy of being in the world at a day-to-day level, and it is also a highly flexible process for *engaging* people to build the kinds of organizations and world that they want to live in.

As a practical philosophy of being in the world at a day-to-day level, AI invites us to choose consciously to seek out and inquire into that which is generative and life enriching both in our own lives and in other the lives of others, along with an exploration of our hopes and dreams for the future.

As a process for *engaging* people in building the kinds of organizations and a world that they want to live in, AI involves collaborative, inclusive discovery of what gives a system “life” when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms; and, the weaving of that new knowledge into the fabric of the organizations formal and informal infrastructure.

Appreciative Inquiry is not another OD intervention; rather, it is a new approach to existing OD interventions such as strategic planning, business process redesign, teambuilding, organization restructuring, individual and project evaluation, coaching, diversity work, and so on.

Tell your audience: “In an organization the AI process may look like this:”

Put the chart of the 5-D cycle on chart paper or on an overhead and use it to give a brief explanation of the overall AI process. Make it clear that there is no formula for using AI, just guiding principles and the general sequence of the 5 D’s which get customized in every situation.

Give your participants an Inquiry Mini Experience

After you have presented your introductory comments, tell participants that they will now take part in a brief inquiry experience. Ask the participants to form pairs. (A threesome works fine if you do not have an equal number of participants.) Tell them that one partner will interview the other for five minutes and then switch roles for another five minutes.

Tell the **interviewers** that their goal is to encourage a vivid description of events and to help the interviewees tell very descriptive and detailed stories. Encourage expansion of the stories’ richness by using comments such as, “Tell me more about the part when...”

Post the following two interview questions on a chart and tell the participants to begin.

Interview Questions

Think about a time when you were really engaged in and excited about your work. Tell me your story about that time. What was happening? What were you feeling? What made it a great moment? What were others doing that contributed to this being a great moment for you? What did you contribute to creating this moment?

If you had three wishes for your organization, what would they be?

After the interviews are complete, debrief the interview process by asking participants, “What was that experience like for you?”

Talk about the two intertwined ideas undergirding the practice of AI:

The Image-Action Connection

Ask: “What happens when?”

- you tell a three year old, “Don’t go near the pool”?
- you give your golfing buddy, just before she swings the club, the following advice: “See those trees on the right? Be really careful not to hit your ball into those trees!”
- You are on your way to meet with someone that always makes you feel very good about yourself, someone with whom you find yourself laughing frequently and behaving in an unguarded spontaneous manner?

Using your own knowledge and the information on the scientific information on Positive Image; Positive Action presented earlier in this Resource Book. Explain to participants the connection between positive and negative images and human behavior.

If you have time you might ask the audience for examples from their own lives.

The Role of Conversations in Creating Social Reality (Social Constructionism). The traditional view of “reality,” particularly as it applies to human behavior, is that

- reality only exists externally to us,
- the eye is a neutral mirror of the reality that is “out there”
- the function of language is to describe the “given” reality of the world

The social constructionist view holds that through language and social discourse, we are constantly evolving and creating new realities:

The images of things that we anticipate (like the anticipation of seeing someone who makes you feel really good about yourself) are a powerful reality in and of themselves

These images lead to actions/behaviors

Conversations (particularly inquiry) continuously create new images that in turn lead to new actions, which in turn create “new realities.”

In Summary (suggested concluding remarks)

AI is an approach to the development of human systems that recognizes that we can choose to approach human systems with the view that either:

Human systems are primarily constellations of problems/obstacles to be analyzed and overcome, or

Human systems contain mysterious life-giving forces to be understood and embraced.

Since we can decide what to focus on in our conversations we have a choice. If we are focused on improving an organization, a team, a family, or a relationship, for example, we can choose to focus on what is broken, what is a problem, what is frustrating us, or we can choose to focus on that which is life-giving, energizing, and valuable to us. The choice is fateful!

AI recognizes that whichever assumption we make about the nature of reality, that choice will lead us to a certain focus in our conversations. And those conversations will lead to certain images being dominant in our minds and those images will in turn lead to action at both the conscious and unconscious level.

AI uses the power of inquiry to engage our imagination, which in turn influences our actions. By focusing through Inquiry on that which is life-giving, that which is energizing, that which is joyful and fun—and amplifying those qualities by involving the “whole system” in co-construction and co-innovation based on the findings of the inquiry, AI enables systems to transform themselves.

NOTE: If there is time left, people generally have many questions.

Introducing Appreciative Inquiry: A 4-hour Design

Following is a sample design used to introduce AI in a public school that was dealing with merger fallout. The group experiences the interview process, identifies themes and, once they agree that they want to proceed, decide on next steps such as selecting a core group. This design is a useful introductory process BUT DOES NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR A CORE GROUP WORKSHOP.

Time	Activity	Speaker Notes
8:00–8:15	Introductions; goals of the session & participants hopes for the session	How we got to this point; sponsor's hopes for this process and the school's future; agenda for today

Time	Activity	Speaker Notes
8:15–8:25	Mini Overview of AI	<p>“Over the last 30 years of working in both the public and private sectors, my experience has been that people are usually willing to talk about what’s wrong but as they talk about it, there seems to be a downward spiral of despair. Instead of being energized, people became de-energized. David Cooperrider reviewed research on the connection of image and action, research from medicine, education, and psychology, and developed Appreciative Inquiry – the idea that there is a connection between the images we hold of what is possible and the questions we ask about our past and present. The AI approach to change can be applied to your family, your team, your school. The approach is like a journey that engages people in creating the sort of school or team or family or community that they want to live in. It focuses people on what happens when things are at their best. The rationale is twofold: When you focus on the positive, it becomes a springboard (energizer) for the future. It also generates exceptionally useful information about what to enhance and build on as you move into the future together.</p> <p>Very briefly, the phases of an AI based change process are: Initiate (this meeting), Inquire (find out what contributes to moments of greatness so we can expand this in the future. We want to articulate profound knowledge of a system when it is operating at its best.) Imagine (collectively imagine what could be. Imagine how it would be if the moments of greatness are the norm rather than the exception). Innovate (what changes do we want to make so that what we imagine can happen?)</p>
8:25–9:15	Paired “exceptional moment” interviews	<p>Form the participants into pairs (if the number is uneven, form one group of three). Ask the pairs to take turns interviewing each other using the following questions. Each interview should last 20 minutes.</p> <p><u>Interviews questions:</u></p> <p>What first attracted you to your work, to your profession? What were your initial impressions? What excited you?</p> <p>In each of our lives there are special times when we just know that we have made the right career choice, moments when we feel really good about the work we are doing and what we are contributing to others. As you think back over your last 4–5 years at this school (or at another school) can you <u>tell me a story</u> about one of those special moments when you felt most alive, involved, and excited about your work and when you were affirmed in your commitment to being part of the teaching/ learning? Who were the significant others? What made them that? What was happening at that time in your life? What made it a peak experience? What factors in the school (in your environment), made it a peak experience?</p> <p>Without being humble, tell me what you value deeply? About yourself? When feeling best about your work?</p> <p>What is the single most important thing your work has contributed to your life?</p> <p>What is the <i>core factor</i> that gives vitality and life to this school—the one thing without which this place would just not be the same?</p> <p>If you had three wishes about how to create a participative change process that would lead to the best possible learning and working environment that would be a significant expansion of the best that you have experienced in your past, what would you wish for?</p>
9:15–9:20	Debrief of the interview Process	What was the process like for you?
9:20–9:30	BREAK	
9:30–10:30	Exploration of interview content	<p>Sharing of interview high points; identification of what gives life to this school. What stood out for you in the interview with your partner? What sparked your imagination? What made your heart sing?</p> <p>Subgroups draw a picture of what the “new school would be like” and share</p> <p>Identification of criteria for a good participative change process at this school</p>

Time	Activity	Speaker Notes
10:30 11:30	Description of and dialogue about the proposed journey/AI process and the choice points, plus.	Initial thoughts on how widespread the participation in this process should be Decision on whether they want to be the interview team, or whether they think a 50-person paired interview process in a large group setting is better If we have time, what do you have enough curiosity about so that we should include it in the final customized protocol?
11:30 11:45	Clarify next steps	Create an action plan for: developing a customized protocol communication of the decisions from this meeting designing/planning the large-group meeting (if that is the choice)
11:45 12:00	Appreciative debrief of today's meeting and meeting closure	Which part of today's meeting most intrigued or engaged you? What part of today's meeting should we try to build on as we meet with others in the future? What wishes do you have for the next time we meet?

2-day "Core Group" AI Workshop Design

This is a sample design for a core group that has been charged with developing an AI based evaluation process for an organization development intervention. The workshop helped the core group learn about AI, create a customized interview protocol and make a plan for interviewing internal and external stakeholders in the organization. In the Interview resource section, there are examples of customized protocols that were created using this workshop.

	DAY ONE
8:30	Opening Session: Welcome Overall Purpose of this Evaluation Process Goals of this 2-day Preparation Workshop Agenda for this workshop Appreciative Introductions: Who we are and what we bring
9:30	THE AI EVALUATION PROCESS: Context, Assumptions, Approach, Desired outcomes of the Evaluation process, Steps, Roles and Critical Success Factors for this process
10:30	BREAK
10:45	CREATE CUSTOMISED ABC PROTOCOL AND DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY: Step 1 Conduct generic interviews Workshop participants interview each other using the four generic AI questions
11:45	What is Appreciative Inquiry? Overview of theory, research, & principles
12:30	LUNCH
1:15	Step 2: Identify Themes/topics: From the generic interviews, identify key themes/topics and language to be used in developing the customized protocol
2:00	Step 3a: Create first draft of Customized Interview Protocol Combine themes emerging from the generic interviews with research questions into a first draft
3:30	BREAK
4:00	AI Interviewing Skills: Interview Tips Practice Introducing AI Practice Conducting Interviews Documentation/Note Taking Guidelines
5:30	Review of the Day:

	Questions; Preview of Day 2; Interview Assignments for Day Two
6:00	ADJOURN

	DAY TWO
8:30	Check-in and Questions Note: Past workshop participants have found this unstructured time to be among the most valuable components of the workshop, since it allows participants to focus on whatever their unique learning needs are at that moment
9:00	Step 3b Test Protocol Draft #1 Test Interview 1 - either Design Team members or Simulation Participants are interviewed by our workshop participants in one-on-ones
10:00	BREAK
10:30	Test Interview 2 - either Design Team members or Simulation Participants are interviewed by our workshop participants in one-on-ones
11:30	Interview Debrief: Questions, comments
12:15	LUNCH
2:00	Step 3c: Create Draft #2 of Customized Interview Protocol. Revise the protocol based on results of Test Interview #1 and #2
3:00	Step 4: Develop plan for data collection and analysis Identifying Key Stakeholder Groups Planning the interview process Preliminary plan for data compilation, analysis and presentation
3:45	BREAK
4:00	Next Step Planning: -- Conducting Pilot Interviews -- Final Protocol Revision -- Company-wide Embedded Evaluation Interviews -- Steps Beyond Interviews
5:30	Debrief: Workshop debrief and Closure
6:00	ADJOURN

Annex A: Meet the Facilitators



Jen Hetzel Silbert, MSOD and Principal of Innovation Partners International, is an experienced consultant, trainer, and facilitator supporting public and private sector organizations around the world. Her passion is to help clients reframe current challenges and build upon compelling goals in a manner that is collaborative and informed by collective strengths, best practices, values, and hopes for the future. Jen brings to the project extensive experience in applying Appreciative Inquiry (positive change) to community building, conflict resolution, strategy development, process innovation, organization design, and leadership development, which she gained through her years as a consultant/manager in several corporate management consulting organizations, and later as an independent consultant. She holds dual BS degrees in economics and international studies from American University, and a MS in organization development from Johns Hopkins.

A pioneer and leader in the field of Appreciative Inquiry, Jen has supported the Guyana Democratic Consolidation and Conflict Resolution Project (GDCCR) since March 2005, designing and facilitating numerous AI foundations and introductory workshops across Guyana.

In addition to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), some of Jen's clients include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), American Red Cross, DC Sustainable Business Network, U.S. National Intelligence Community, U.S. Navy, U.S. Department of Justice, Nextel, Wright Express, Management Concepts, Chemonics, Blackbaud, and the National AIDS Marathon Training Program. You can find Jen, who's also a former marathon coach, running with her dog along the shores of Rhode Island, USA where she lives with her husband and daughter.

jen@innovationpartners.com
(401) 782-6090



Tony Silbert, MSOD and Principal of Innovation Partners International, has over 18 years of experience in organizational development, change leadership consulting, and training design and delivery. He works with private, public sector, and non-profit organizations in a variety of industries, both domestically and abroad. Tony's primary areas of emphasis include Appreciative Inquiry (AI) for large-scale change/transformation, strategic planning, organization design, teaming and collaboration, and group process facilitation. Tony served as a lead facilitator at the GDCCR's inaugural AI Foundations Workshop/Summit in Georgetown in May 2005, the co-project director for 2nd International Conference on AI in Miami in Sept 2004, and the keynote speaker at the Treasury Board of Canada's Classification 2003 Symposium. He has been a guest lecturer and speaker at numerous universities and conferences, and has led various training sessions on AI,

change management, knowledge management, train-the-trainer, and logistics management.

Current and past clients include Allstate, Blackbaud, MetroHealth System, Bell Canada Enterprises, American Express, U.S. Agency for International Development, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Mellon Bank, Points of Light Foundation, U.S. Intelligence Community, Department of Treasury, and Department of Health and Human Services. Tony holds a Masters of Science degree in Organization Development from American University/National Training Laboratory (AU/NTL). In addition, Tony is a member of NTL and a Partner/Charter Co-owner of Appreciative Inquiry Consulting, LLC—a virtual community of practice promoting positive change around the world. Tony is based out of Wakefield, Rhode Island USA.

tsilbert@innovationpartners.com

401.782.6191