APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI) DISCOVERY PHASE
A GUIDELINE

KEY AIM

To reiterate, the aim of an AI process is to help an organization construct a better and more positive future. In the case of municipalities, the aim is two fold:
- The municipality government collaborates with stakeholders to design its own strategic vision and plan to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic.
- Collectively execute the strategy, including the stakeholders and their commitments. It involves strengthening leadership competencies.

The first phase calls for a large scale “appreciative interviews” to discover the successes, strengths and wisdom of stakeholders involved. The second phase is to collectively create a shared vision and commit to specific breakthrough initiatives. The third phase is to accelerate the implementation of the strategic plan as approved by the municipalities. (In some cities, it may mean working with the current budgets and plans.)

BACKGROUND

The underlying approach to UNDP’s city consultation process can be briefly summed as follows:
- Tap into and amplify the wisdom, skills and passion of all stakeholders.
- Collectively create a share vision and take a stand to constructing a new future.
- Integrate the vision, stand and wisdom into day-to-day action and practices, including learning and developing new skills and innovations.
- Commit to generating specific breakthrough results
- Redesign and revitalize work processes, internal systems and ways of doing business to enhance collaboration between stakeholders.
- Stimulate an honest dialogue within communities.

To reiterate, the aim of the discovery phase is not just to generate data and information but also to strengthen relationships and generate hope, optimism, relationship, and self-confidence. It is also to develop a core group of facilitator/coaches. Another aim is to create a Project Management Team (comprised of the city government, UNDP and a few key stakeholders).

An essential aspect is developing a cadre of local coaches who will be involved from the very beginning and will play a role in sustaining the efforts of the key stakeholders. In addition, a larger number of volunteers will be trained to facilitate community level dialogues all over the city.
PHASE 1: DISCOVERY OF WHAT IS BEST IN YOUR CITY

In the collaborative and appreciative inquiry, the facilitators and a team of stakeholders conduct a study to:

- Locate, study and amplify what is working well, best successes, problems overcome and why/how;
- Capture the best aspirations and hopes of people; their suggestions, and solutions to address critical challenges;
- Encourage them to widen their horizon of possibilities;
- Encourage a system-wide conversation about the future;
- Generate much needed hope, confidence, and self-trust to collectively construct a new future.

By identifying, illuminating and sharing the “positive core” of an organization, it enables people to see a different reality, and thus generate new hope and confidence in envisioning a more positive future. Research from neuroscience suggests that our brains construct views of reality that are different when initiated from a “positive core” of appreciation than when focusing on mistakes, constraints, or problems.

A few weeks after the report and city profile is completed and distributed, a workshop/summit of the stakeholders, including the city government, is held. Based on the discovery of the most positive core of the “community of stakeholders”, participants collectively envision what is possible for their city in terms of the epidemic. This “vision” represents their highest hopes and aspirations based on their own successes and strengths. Following the articulation of a shared vision, they design the key strategic areas or themes that will enable them to achieve their vision. The long term strategy will be formulated over the next 6-9 months – in the context of the national aids strategy, negotiations with various ministries and stakeholders. In addition, each stakeholder will commit to specific “breakthrough tasks”. Stakeholders will also collaborate on other tasks.

Visualization is the next revolution in strategic thinking and planning. With the new science we understand that the future is not information neutral, like a blank canvas waiting the master’s first stroke. Nor is it an ominous wall of darkness moving toward us at warp speed. The present is the future in its most creative state.

-T. Irene Sanders, author, Strategic Thinking and the New Science
Getting Started Discussion Checklist

This worksheet can help with the initial discussions to help a team get started with an AI project.

Our organization will use AI because we want to ____________________________ in order to ______________________________________________________________

☐ Who will sponsor this initiative? Whose commitment is essential for success? Who will champion the initiative?

☐ Who will manage and be accountable for the process and its success?

☐ What is the timeframe for the effort?

☐ Who are the stakeholders that will/must be involved?

☐ How many people will be involved?

☐ How will we select topics for the inquiry?

☐ How many interviews will be conducted? Who will conduct them?

☐ How will stories be collected, shared and analyzed from the interviews?

☐ What communication vehicles will be used to keep people “in the loop”?

☐ Who (or what groups) will be involved in each stage of the project?

☐ How will logistics be managed?

☐ Who needs to be trained? Who will train them?
A GUIDELINE FOR STAKEHOLDER INQUIRY: PHASE 1 FOR THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM

This is a guideline for the project management team (client organization plus UMP advisor). The project management team (or PMT) must be established at the very beginning, starting with the proposal itself. I have assumed that the PMT has been established.

1. Brief, clarify and enroll the PMT on the purpose, intended outcomes, approach and methodology of the City Consultation and Stakeholder collaboration “project”. Please note that while UMP calls their approach the City Consultation process, the current approach to HIV/AIDS goes beyond a consultative process to building a community of stakeholders and implementing specific “breakthrough” tasks/actions – even as the long term strategy for the city government is being formulated.

2. Identify and invite a group of volunteers to do the actual inquiry and write up the report. The PMT needs to enroll these volunteer “interviewers” so that they are ready and eager to volunteer their time, energy and experience. The volunteer should represent the city government, relevant ministries, and other stakeholders – about 12-15 persons.

3. In collaboration with these volunteer interviewers, a list of all the stakeholders are identified. The stakeholders need to include relevant ministries, NGOs, PLWHA, business associations, religious groups, donors, and the media. Each volunteer commits to meeting with at least 2 stakeholder organizations. An initial letter is send out to them with a request for their time. The volunteers call the stakeholders and get the appropriate names (about 3 persons per organization).

4. The PMT will also identify potential members of the steering committee and through the mayor (or equivalent in each city) invite and form a steering committee. This committee will meet at least twice before the first workshop.

5. The volunteers are trained by a UNDP consultant to conduct the interviews and write up the report. IN addition, they will also be briefed on the overall project outcomes and methodologies.

6. The PMT then manages the inquiry and writing of the report. The actual work is done by the group of volunteers, some of whom are from the city government itself.

7. UMP will also (in consultation with the PMT) hire a consultant to help write up a base line/city profile.

8. Once the report is completed, the PMT will brief the steering committee and then distribute it to each of the stakeholders who have confirmed their participation in this process. (I do not recommend releasing a press release of the report itself.)

9. Participating stakeholders should be asked to hold their own internal discussions of the report and come with ideas, proposals and suggestions prior to the workshop itself.

10. I recommend a celebratory dinner/party upon completion of the report – with the volunteers and steering committee.
FOR THE AI DISCOVERY PROCESS

QUESTION for PMT: What is the key impact or positive change you want to see from the entire AI process in the hospitals? In other words, what is the future you want to co-construct in your city regarding the HIV/AIDS epidemic?

TIMELINE: At least 2-3 weeks prior to the first workshop. The translated report (3-4 pages) should be distributed to the hospital staff coming to the workshop at least a week prior to the workshop itself.

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT AND MANDATE
♦ Who needs to be enrolled to use AI for the proposed application? Within the municipality? Key stakeholders, Ministries, PLWHA?.
♦ How will you enroll them? (recommend an actual process)
♦ Who will be in the core team? (recommend: city staff, anchor organization and few stakeholders).

TOPICS TO STUDY
♦ What are the topics that we must inquire into? Or What do we want more of? see recommended topics.
♦ Who will create the interview guide?

INTERVIEW STRATEGY
♦ Who should do the interviews?
♦ Who should be interviewed? All municipality managers, stakeholders, PLHWA, etc)
♦ How many interviews should we do? At least all the staff. As many as possible (time and money permitting) of patients, stakeholders. Do across different levels and sections
♦ What about an initial set of interviews to test out questions and learn? - Yes, test it out with the staff themselves.

SPREADING WHAT WE LEARN
♦ How will you spread the ideas and best practices learned in the interview process? (give report to all staff)
♦ Who are the stakeholders to involve in the dream and design phases?
♦ Who and how will we implement our decisions/actions?
# Overview of Roles and Responsibilities for City Consultation & Stakeholder Collaboration for HIV/AIDS

## Phase 1: Collaborative Inquiry
- **Consultants**
  - Introduce approach to the clients
  - Help to establish project structure and strategy
  - Train core team of facilitators

- **Steering Committee**
  - Become knowledgeable about project approach and outcomes.
  - Establish a multi-stakeholder committee and its mandate

- **Project Management Team**
  - Select/invite potential facilitators
  - Become knowledgeable about approach and outcomes
  - Determine interview strategy
  - Select potential stakeholders

## Phase 2: Multi-stakeholder summit
- **Consultants**
  - Support the Project Team
  - Train coaches
  - Facilitate the Summit

- **Steering Committee**
  - Champion overall project and enroll other stakeholder
  - Participate – as an equal, essential voice
  - Provide leadership
  - Set up NOW seed money and criteria (optional)

- **Project Management Team**
  - Enroll participants
  - Ensure Communication of “best” stories
  - Manage the completion of base line/city profile
  - Adjust project strategy as needed

## Phase 3
- **Consultants**
  - Facilitate #2 workshop
  - Support UMP and (PMT) Project Management Team

- **Steering Committee**
  - Train facilitators for community conversations
  - Train coaches

- **Project Management Team**
  - Create a larger pool of NOW seed money from other stakeholders
  - Empower PMT
  - Strengthen collaboration.
  - Recognize and celebrate small wins and lessons learned

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Ravi Pradhan  
Karuna Management, Inc/  
Guidelines AI BB  
Nov 4, 2003
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
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| - Learn about the inquiry and facilitation.  
- Interview stakeholders and write up report  
- Decide whether to join team of coaches  
- Involve local UNDP office feedback  
- Transition to new PMT coordinator.  
- Conduct interviews  
- Summarize “best” stories  
- Post workshop: train as facilitators for community conversations  
- Train stakeholders to conduct their own inquiry  
- Facilitate community conversations |
| Volunteer to conduct AI interviews and complete report.  
Volunteer to become facilitators for community conversations.  
Educate the leadership of each organization about the approach, intentions and methodology of program.  
Make internal decision to participate fully.  
Complete the interview prior to the stakeholder workshop  
Meet internally to map out possible breakthroughs and role  
Assign senior people to participate in the workshop. Empower them negotiate and commit to specific Breakthroughs.  
Implement action plans.  
Conduct their own stakeholder inquiry  
Find ways to collaborate  
Share success stories  
Find ways to improve and innovate ways of doing business  
Strengthen internal management and leadership  
Map out best practices and lessons learned. |

Proposed role/responsibilities of UMP (to be finalized for each city):

- Create internal alignment about the approach, intended outcomes and methodology. It includes ensuring that the UMP staff person working with each municipality has a clear understanding and support for this process.
- Contract out the job of doing the second part of the city profile to a local “anchor institution”. Where feasible, UMP will sponsor the staff of this institution to learn the key methodologies, coaching and community conversations.
- Work closely with the project management team of their respective municipalities from the very inception to ensure the success of the investments by all players.
REPORT FORMAT
(based on inquiry/interviews)

- Profile for each stakeholder

- Q 1 & 2:
  SELECT 5-6 BEST OR SUCCESSFUL CASES NGOs, and 5-6 from the City and other Ministries. WRITE IT UP AS PRIZE-WINNING ESSAY - half a page per story. This means you will have a total of about 10-12 cases.

  MAP THE POSITIVE CORE – what led to these successes, the root cause of success. Map out this positive core for the entire community of stakeholders. Again, write it in full sentences. Unique strengths, qualities, processes, best practices, policies, skills, etc that led to these successes.

- WRITE UP THE HOPES/ASPIRATIONS as expressed by respondents. Write it as an essay – of the most common themes. Q # 4

- What would represent a transformation in reducing stigma and discrimination? Q# 5

- Who else needs to be interviewed? Name of stakeholder and interviewer

- Reflection of interview itself by the stakeholders

- Reflection by volunteer interviewers.

Note: I recommend that teams of 4-5 interviewers combine their findings and write up one final report. In the case of Port of Spain, it was decided to write up several of these sub-reports (one for the ministries, one for the city government, and one for NGOs). An executive summary of the city profile and the full report of the stakeholder inquiry should be distributed at least two weeks prior to the first workshop, preferably a month in advance. The report then serves as a common “data base” from which to look ahead.
Introduction.

Thank you for giving us the time to do this research. It will take about 1 to 1.5 hour.

**Why are we doing this?**

The city corporation has taken an initiative to involve key stakeholders to address the growing epidemic of HIV/AIDS in our city. As you well know, T&T with a population of 1.5 million is ranked 5th in the English speaking Caribbean and 17th in the world as far as the incidence of AIDS is concerned.

Our city is embarking on a process of transforming our response to this epidemic. We are involving all the key stakeholders to collaborate together with the support of UNDP.

As part of the process of involving stakeholders, we are meeting people like yourself to learn about your best experiences and wisdom, your highest hopes and aspirations for the city with regard to HIV/AIDS, the challenges the city faces, and so on.
Many times in these kinds of meetings, we ask questions about what isn't working well, what are the problems and difficulties, what you are unhappy about, etc. This time we are going to approach our meeting from a different perspective. In this approach, we begin by identifying our best achievements, experiences, successes - the best aspects and strengths, and qualities of our hospital. In other words, what are the positive factors that give life to our staff and to the hospital?

The information gathered from you and 40 others will written up in a report and disseminated to all the participants of the stakeholder process.

The city government and stakeholders will come together in a workshop in August to examine the findings from this inquiry and ask what is possible for us in our city in terms of HIV/AIDS. We believe that collectively we can construct a more positive future in our hospital and that we can transform the way we respond to this epidemic. We therefore ask for your cooperation and support in embarking on this process. The important thing is to learn from your and other people's experiences and suggestions. Please feel free to speak from your heart. All the data from the various meetings with staff, stakeholders and patients will be written up in a combined report. Your name will not be attached to any story, quote or suggestion you make - without your permission.

You will not be quoted by name. Your responses will be pooled with other responses and written up in a report. It will be given to everyone participating in the city stakeholder process.

QUESTIONS (it is okay to ask probing questions)

1. Tell me about your organization’s most successful or proud achievement (whether in HIV/AIDS or any other social program). For the city government, it could be in terms of the their programs for other similar type of programs in Health, sanitation, poor people, but not in infrastructure development). What impact, when, where? What factors were essential or critical to the success of the program besides money? How did your organization grow from this experience? What lessons did it learn?

2. Tell me about a problem, or obstacle or challenge that your organization overcame in the past year or two? How did it overcome it? How did it effect/benefit the organization? What does it reveal about the strengths of the organization?

3. As a professional person or volunteer, tell me about your most proud achievement or when you felt you were operating at your best, when you felt most inspired and passionate about what you were engaged in? What did you accomplish? How did you feel back then? What does this reveal about your strengths, your values and your qualities?
4. Imagine it is the year 2008, and the national media is reporting on the extraordinary results in addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in your city? What has been transformed in the year 2004? Top 3 hopes or aspirations?

5. What would represent a transformation in how we address stigma and discrimination against:
   - People living with HIV/AIDS, and in particular
   - Women and youth who are positive.

6. What legacy do you (as an individual) want to leave behind in 5 years in terms of changing the current reality of HIV/AIDS in your city? What role do you hope or aspire to play?

7. Is there anything else you wish to say?

8. Who else, do you think, needs to be involved in the city consultation process over the next 6-12 months? Would you like to interview them and send us a report?

9. Ask the person: How do you feel about this process? What did you learn from it?