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APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY: A POSITIVE APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONAL  
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MARIA SOCORRO CRISTINA L.FERNANDO

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## APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY: A POSITIVE APPROACH TO ORGANIZATIONAL PLANNING AND LEARNING

MARIA SOCORRO CRISTINA L.FERNANDO\*, PhD

### Abstract

The primary purpose of the study is to open a new possibility in the planning process of the Technology Centers using Appreciative Inquiry in designing the future directions through the creation of the Development Plan. The discoveries articulated through themes drawn from the use of AI approach as planning process are valuable to support the various applications of AI in organization development. This study uses purposive sampling in identifying the participants who represented the stakeholders of the Technology Centers. The focus group (15-25 members), involved in all the phases of the study, are considered co-researchers in the development of the plan and the generation of the propositions. The study utilizes qualitative methods, namely:

- *Appreciative Inquiry Approach* in discovering and highlighting the strengths and positive experiences of the Technology Centers that are the basis for crafting the organization development plan; and
- *Grounded Theory Process* in generating propositions based on the insights gained from the AI Process. The study employs research tools useful in generating

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qualitative information, such as questionnaires, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, field notes, workshops, available organizational data, and feedback data.

The creation of the Development Plan's objectives, plans, strategies formulated aligns the actual organization with the strengths, vision and provocative propositions and builds the AI learning competencies into the culture embodied in the Development Plan for the Technology Centers. Thirteen (13) Grounded Propositions were generated from the insights of the participants from the use of Appreciative Inquiry in the planning process.

*Keywords:* Appreciative Inquiry; Technology Centers, Grounded Theory; life-giving forces, provocative propositions, development plan

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## Introduction

The Technology Centers of the Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco (FMA) offer relevant technology and non-traditional courses for the urban and rural poor, especially young women. These aim at providing opportunities for the poor to gain technology competencies and value-laden formation in order to prepare them to join the workforce particularly in the technical field, to overcome gender biases that limit their opportunities, give way to understanding women potentials, and provide the support they need at school and at work. The Technology Centers recognize the need of the young people to be educated in order to grow into wholeness and help bring about social and cultural transformation.

There are five Technology Centers: (1) The Mary Help of Christians School Women Development and Technology Center - Minglanilla, Cebu; (2) Mary our Help Technical Institute - Mabalacat, Pampanga;(3) Laura Vicuña Technology Center – Sta.Mesa Manila; (4) Laura Vicuña Women Development and Training Center – Malihao, Victorias City, Negros Occidental;(5) Mary Help of Christians Technology Center -Calapan , Mindoro Oriental. Only the first four mentioned Technology Centers are the focus of this study. The fifth Technology Center (agro-technology) became operational only when the study was already in progress.

Like any other organization, these Technology Centers need to set the directions towards the future. Organizational Planning is an important endeavor and must be carefully done to be able to guide these Centers to the fulfillment of its Vision and Mission. The proper choice of an intervention to planned change is imperative so that the discovery of their potentials may lead to a collaborative designing of its future.

The primary purpose of this study is to open a new possibility in the planning process of the Technology Centers. The choice of the Appreciative Inquiry Approach in planning is a proposal to an alternative planning experience. They have always used the Open Systems Planning (Strengths-Weakness—Opportunities-Threats or SWOT framework) and the idea was accepted as fresh wind that could enliven and improve the mode and system of their planning. Corollary to this work of applying the Appreciative Inquiry process is the presentation of a grounded generative theory of research based on the focus group's experience of the Appreciative Inquiry Approach in organizational planning. In the end, I also present my personal learning in the course of the work. This work is based on two objectives:

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- To formulate a Development Plan for the Technology Centers of the FMA based on the Appreciative Inquiry approach with the representative stakeholders of the organization.
- To generate propositions based on the focus group's experience of Appreciative Inquiry as a change process, using the grounded theory research methodology.

### **The Grand Tour Questions**

The questions related to the content of the development plan:

- What are the core life-giving factors of the organization that are most valued and which can be employed to chart the future directions of the Technology Centers of the FMA in the Philippines?
- What shared vision of the desired future can be generated from the discoveries of the positive forces and experiences in the Technology Centers?
- What provocative propositions can be crafted to provide a clear, specific, and shared direction for the organization's future?
- What objectives, plans, strategies can be formulated to align the actual organization with the provocative propositions and to build a culture open to innovation and change?

The question related to the experience of the focus group on the process used in planning:

- What discoveries (new learning, insights, patterns or themes) are evidenced or can be drawn from the use of Appreciative Inquiry as a process in the creation of a Development Plan for the Technology Centers of the FMA?

### **Significance of the Study**

The Development Plan that results from this study is a contribution to the progressive efforts in making the Technology Centers more responsive to present and future demands. It generates various possibilities for the Technology Centers to provide services to the poor youth especially women. Of equal importance is the experience of the participants using a new process in planning? The discoveries articulated through themes drawn from the use of the Appreciative Inquiry Approach as a planning process are valuable to support the various applications of Appreciative Inquiry in organization development.

### **Scope and Limitation of the Study**

The study limits itself to the creation of a Development Plan for the Technology Centers in a broad-spectrum form. Some other details in planning such as budget allocation are not included because the intention is for this plan to serve as a blueprint and guide for each of the local Technology Centers that have varied priorities and resources to carry out the plan in the next five years.

The participation of the members of the Technology Centers included a good number of representatives from every sector. However, the fast turnover of students due to training requirements in the Dual Training System made it less possible to have permanent student members in the focus group. The members of the focus group were confined to the representatives of LVTC Sta. Mesa and Mabalacat, Pampanga for reasons of proximity and availability for focus group activities. This was modified through the use of consultation through various means of communications such as telephone interviews, questionnaires, and e-mail.

The entire planning process involved a work lasting for years - from January 2002 to December 2003. This paper will present documentations of the results of every phase of the planning process in collated and final form. Purposive presentation of data gathered was done in the presentation and discussion of the results of the study.

The work of generating propositions based on the experiences began March 2003 until April 2004. I had to wait for the entire planning process to end to be able to conduct the exit interviews with the focus group and integrate them into the other interviews conducted after every phase of the AI process. The grounded propositions were drawn mainly from the interviews with the participants during the entire course of the study. These statements reflect solely the experiences of the members of this particular focus group involved only in the study.

### **Appreciative Inquiry as a Planning Methodology**

Watkins and Mohr (2001) in *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination* explain that in Appreciative Inquiry (AI) organizations create and move toward their vision of the desired future in harmony with the world view that sees the interconnectedness of the all parts of a system; that accepts the complexity and subjectivity of the world; that knows planning to be a continuous and iterative process; that embraces the concept of many truths and multiple ways to reach a goal; that understands the relational nature of the world; that believes information to be a primal

creative force; and that knows language to be the creator of “reality”. The Newtonian paradigm process of dividing things into parts, believing that there is one best way of doing any action, and assuming that language describes some ultimate truth for which we all search creates a way of solving problems that looks backward to what went “wrong” and tries to “fix” it. Appreciative Inquiry, on the other hand, looks for what is “right” and moves toward it, understanding that in the forward movement towards the ideal the greatest value comes from embracing what works.

### ***Appreciative Inquiry Defined***

Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros (2003) give a practitioner-oriented definition of Appreciative Inquiry:

*Appreciative Inquiry is the cooperative co-evolutionary search for the best in people, their organizations and the world around them. It involves the discovery of what gives “life” to a living system when it is most effective, alive, and constructively capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system’s capacity to apprehend, anticipate, and heighten positive potential. The inquiry is mobilized through the crafting of the “unconditional positive question,” often involving hundreds or thousands of people. AI interventions focus on the speed of imagination and innovation— instead of the negative, critical, and spiraling diagnoses commonly used in organizations. The discovery, dream design, and destiny model links the energy of the positive core to changes never thought possible.*

Appreciative Inquiry is based on the simple assumption that every organization has something that works well and these strengths can be the starting point for creating positive change. Inviting people to participate in dialogues and share stories about their past and present achievements, assets, unexplored potentials, innovations, strengths, elevated thoughts, opportunities, benchmarks, high-point moments, lived values, traditions, core and distinctive competencies, expressions of wisdom, insights into deeper corporate spirit and soul, and visions of valued and possible futures can identify a “positive change core”. From this, Appreciative Inquiry links the energy of the positive core directly to any change agenda. This link creates energy and excitement and a desire to move toward a shared dream (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

## **Appreciative Inquiry and Organization Development**

Watson and Mohr (2001) clarify that describing Appreciative Inquiry as yet another OD tool, or intervention would be only partially accurate and a disservice to those who seek to facilitate the co-creation of quantum shifts in the capability of the an organization to meet the demands of its customers, members, and other key stakeholders. Rather, Appreciative Inquiry must be thought of as a philosophy and orientation to change that can fundamentally reshape the practice of organizational learning, design, and development in much the same way that process consultation reshaped the field of management consulting 40 years ago.

In the early days of management consulting, the consultant was the outside expert who came to study an organization, decided what needed to be done to “fix” it, and propose a course of action. Consultants became discouraged, employees resisted and clients became cynical. With the advent of organization development (OD) as a discipline, the behavioral scientists, who were experts not in the work of the organization but in the behavior of people, introduced the idea that the people of the organization were the ones best equipped to identify what had to be changed and to formulate ways to make those changes. Instead of prescribing solutions, consultants began to help members of the organization to formulate their own solutions to problems they had identified.

What is happening is similar to that of Appreciative Inquiry. Like process consultation, Appreciative Inquiry can be and is sometimes applied effectively as a micro tool. But, as with process consultation, the real power and impact of Appreciative Inquiry is seen when it is used as a comprehensive orientation to change in complex systems. Comprehensive change means change in orientation-strategic shifts in the relationship of the enterprise with its environment, changes in the way the work of the organization is done, and/or changes in how the organization approaches problems of leadership, performance, conflict, power, and equity. Appreciative Inquiry is one way to approach strategic planning, organization design, diversity, evaluation (Cojocar, 2008), and so on, rather than an alternative to these interventions.

In the article, *Is Appreciative Inquiry OD’s Philosopher’s Stone?* Head, Sorensen, Preston, and Yaeger (2000) regard Appreciative Inquiry as perhaps the alchemist’s philosopher stone OD has been searching for. Appreciative Inquiry’s approach to organization development rooted in discovering the positive forces that give meaning to an organization and consequently allowing these positive experiences to guide the change process contrasts with the problem solving approach which first identifies the problem and what is wrong with the organization. In this fashion, Appreciative Inquiry creates a positive atmosphere for change that avoids the resistance and loss of hope for a better future encountered through the more traditional approaches. Its approach directly attacks one of the few “universal truths” of OD practice: successful OD

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requires overcoming resistance to change. Aside from just removing change resistance, Appreciative Inquiry also accomplishes two other principle goals of OD consultants-regardless of what culture they operate in: acquiring employee ownership into the program, and maximizing employee input into the design of the new system.

*Table 1. How Appreciative Inquiry Undermines Resistance to Change (Head, et al., 2000)*

Reason for Employee Resistance	How does AI Reduce Resistance
Fear of the unknown- we know what we have, but we don't know what change will bring	AI works from the known- the organization is trying to "recapture" the already experienced peaks.
Change can cause the employee to question his/her self-image-"Can I do the new task?"	AI begins with what the employees like most about the existing system-making the peak experiences the norm. The implication is that at the same time non-peak experiences will be adjusted /removed.
The employees feel imposed upon- they have all to work for change, but only the "organization" will reap the benefits	AI clearly puts the "gain" into personal terms. The process focuses on how to permit each employee to constantly experience the personal satisfaction that occurs during the "peak experiences."
The employees view this change process as another "fad"- "why adopt anything new when management is going to forget it in a couple of weeks anyway?"	AI does not appear to be a revolutionary concept. Its goal can be seen as making "what is going on" better. It is logical, and fits in to the current paradigm -managers are always trying to get the current system to be more effective and efficient.

Ludema et al. (2003) in *The Appreciative Inquiry Summit* build on participative and large group intervention OD methodologies but break new ground by stressing the relational nature of innovation and by highlighting the power of the positive to unleash

extraordinary organizational performance. The Appreciative Inquiry Summit is based on the understanding that the future is truly unknown and unknowable, and that people in the organizations are constantly in the process of building something new. When they are most alive and most vital, they are not simply improving systems; they are jointly inventing surprising new ways of organizing. This perspective is particularly important in today's world, in which vigorous global competition, instantaneous electronic communication, and the elimination of previously polarizing political, cultural, and geographic boundaries are rapidly configuring the social and economic landscape. The Appreciative Inquiry Summit is designed to meet the challenges in an era that calls for methods of organization change that allow everybody to innovate for extraordinary performance. The Appreciative Inquiry Summit shares the following common features with other pioneering approaches:

- *The importance of getting the whole system in the room.* When people see interconnections among departments, processes, people, and ideas, they know better how to participate and therefore are able to make commitments that were previously impossible or unlikely. If anyone is missing, there is much less potential for new discoveries and innovative action.
- *A focus on the future.* Ronald Lippitt and Eva Schindler-Rainman, in their work with community futures conferences, concluded that problem solving depresses people, whereas imagining ideal futures creates hope and energy. In all large-group interventions, the focus is on helping people generate energy for action by imagining the future rather than focusing directly on the problem.
- *Dialogue, voice and the search for common ground.* When people are free to listen to each other and to share their unique experiences, they get a much clearer picture of one another's perspectives and are more likely to build shared understandings. They are also more likely to discover common dilemmas and shared aspirations that are larger than their own agendas, which lead to common ground.
- *A commitment to self-management.* People will invest huge amounts of energy into real business issues that are of passionate concern to them. Self-management contributes significantly to the amount of work people do, the quality they produce, and the high degree of implementation that follows large-group interventions.

### **Qualitative Study and the Grounded Theory Approach**

This section deals with the presentation of (1) qualitative research in organization and people development and (2) the grounded theory approach.

### *Qualitative Research*

It is any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification (Strauss and Corbin, 1990). It is a naturalistic, interpretative approach concerned with understanding the meanings which people attach to phenomena (actions, decisions, beliefs, values etc) within their social worlds. It is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that makes the world visible. These practices... turn the world into a series of representations including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. Qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring into them (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003).

### **Grounded Theory Approach: A Qualitative Method**

Theory denotes a set of well-developed categories (e.g. themes, concepts) that are systematically interrelated through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social, psychological, educational or other phenomenon. The statements of relationship explain who, what, when, where, why, how, and with what consequences an event occurs. Once concepts are related through statements of relationship into an explanatory theoretical framework, the research findings move beyond conceptual ordering to theory. A theory usually is more than a set of findings; it offers an explanation about a phenomenon. (Strauss and Corbin 1998, cited in Patton, 2002).

Grounded theory is a qualitative research approach that was collaboratively developed by Glaser and Strauss. Its systematic techniques and procedures of analysis enable the researcher to develop a substantive theory that meets the criteria for doing “good” science: significance, theory-observation compatibility, generalizability, reproducibility, precision, rigor, and verification. While the procedures are designed to give analytic process precision and rigor, creativity is also an important element. For it is the latter that enables the researcher to ask pertinent questions of the data and to make the kind of comparisons that elicit from the data new insights into phenomenon and novel theoretical formulations.

The foundational question in grounded theory is: What theory emerges from systematic comparative analysis and is grounded in fieldwork so as to explain what has been and is observed? (Patton 2002) In contrast to the other qualitative theoretical traditions and orientations, he reveals that grounded theory focuses on the process of generating theory rather than a particular theoretical content. It emphasizes steps and

procedures for connecting induction and deduction through the constant comparative method, comparing research sites, doing theoretical sampling, and testing emergent concepts with additional fieldwork. (Patton, 2002)

Strauss and Corbin (1990) define the Grounded Theory Approach as a qualitative research that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon. Grounded Theory is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory then proves it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge. The research findings constitute a theoretical formulation of the reality under investigation, rather than consisting of a set of numbers, or a group of loosely related themes. Through this methodology, the concepts and relationships among them are not only generated but they are also provisionally tested. The procedures of the approach are many and rather specific. The purpose of grounded theory method is to build theory that is faithful to and illuminates the area under study. Researchers working under this tradition also hope that their theories will ultimately be related to others within their respective disciplines in a cumulative fashion, and that the theory's implications will have a useful application. Grounded theory is meant to "build theory rather than test theory".

Grounded theory operates from a correspondence perspective in that it aims to generate explanatory propositions that correspond to real-world phenomena. A grounded theorist must therefore possess the following characteristics (Strauss and Corbin, 1990):

- The ability to step back and critically analyze situations;
- The ability to recognize the tendency toward bias;
- The ability to think abstractly;
- The ability to be flexible and open to helpful criticism;
- Sensitivity to the words and actions of respondents;
- A sense of absorption and devotion to the work process.

### **Appreciative Inquiry as Action Research and Qualitative Method**

James Troxel (2002) considers Appreciative Inquiry as a form of action research of organization and social life. Works of researchers and open systems theorists Eric Trist, Fred and Merrelyn Emery, Russ Acknoff, Chris Argyris, and many others have documented action research's capacity to transform the objects of its research. Their

works have revealed that action research has a “generative capacity,” a “capacity to challenge the guiding assumptions of the culture, to raise fundamental questions regarding contemporary social life, to foster reconsideration of that which is ‘taken for granted’ and thereby furnish new alternatives for social actions” (Gergen, 1978 cited in Troxel, 2002). Appreciative Inquiry has this capacity in that organization members-through in-depth interviews- are given the opportunity to retell the story about their organization and its future directions (Troxel, 2002).

Gervase Bushe (1998) in his work *Appreciative Inquiry with Teams* presents Appreciative Inquiry as a form of action research that attempts to help organizations and communities create new, generative images for themselves based on affirmative understanding of their past. Working from a socio-rationalist theory of change, (Barrett, Thomas & Hocevar, 1995, Bushe, 1995, Cooperrider, 1990, Gergen, 1990) these new images are expected to lead to developmental changes in the systems in which they are created. The four principles Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) lay down for appreciative inquiry are that action research begin with appreciation, should be applicable, should be provocative, and should be collaborative. The basic process of appreciative inquiry is to begin with a grounded observation of the “best of what is”, then through vision and logic collaboratively articulate “what might be”, ensuring the consent of those in the system to “what should be” and collectively experimenting with “what can be” (Bushe, 1998).

### **Researches Done Using Appreciative Inquiry as Research Methodology**

Various works consider Appreciative Inquiry in itself as a theory grounded in the most life-giving, life sustaining aspects of organizational existence. Researchers and practitioners of Appreciative Inquiry facilitate innovation inspired by imagination, commitment, and passionate dialogue. The discoveries consequently generated in the dialogue sustain and enhance the life-giving potentials of persons, communities, and organizations.

Part of the task of action research is to produce a theory of change, which emerges from the change process itself. Appreciative Inquiry is “grounded theory building” in the sense that the operating framework and images of the future of the organization emerge from the study of the organizational life itself (Troxel, 2002). Methodologically, Appreciative Inquiry has close affinity to grounded theory building, which is concerned with the discovery of theory from data rather than the testing of hypothesis, and is particularly useful where there is little directly relevant theory to the topic or study or when the theory which exists is too abstract and differentiated to be helpful (Johnson and Cooperrider, 1991).

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James Troxel's (2002) article *Appreciative Inquiry: An Action Research Method for Organizational Transformation and its Implication to the Practice of Group Process Facilitation* presents the generative capacity of Appreciative Inquiry and its process of building on the vibrant life-giving forces of an organization. In this article he presents his initial participation in an "Appreciative Inquiry" research project in 1989, as a staff member of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), Chicago which has been selected to be a case study for a research project designed and managed by the Department of Organizational Behavior at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. This was part of the work done by Pamela Johnson and David Cooperrider in *Finding a Path with Heart: Global Social Change Organizations and their Challenge for the Field of Organization Development*. Over ten years of involvement since his first introduction to Appreciative Inquiry, Troxel ends up his article with a summary of lessons for the group process of how Appreciative Inquiry can be a useful tool for organization development.

- Undertaking the transformation of organizations is more possible out of an appreciative mode than out of a critical mode;
- The affirmative process of inquiry brings people together in a way that makes of them a cohesive team and a community, thus resulting in the success of the overall endeavor;
- For "outside" researchers in Appreciative Inquiry, trusting the process of inquiry is more important than directing it as experts;
- Collaborative research efforts are successful to the extent that there is a match and compatibility between the values of the two parties involved;
- Making propositions is an act of affirmation and faith in the organization.
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Pamela C. Johnson and David L. Cooperrider's work *Finding a Path with Heart Global Social Change Organizations and their Challenge for the Field of Organization Development* (1991) engaged four organizations characterized by people-centered paradigms of service and technologies of empowerment, and engaged in innovative processes of transnational cooperation. These organizations also bridge traditional barriers in the service of the global imperative. Case studies were conducted of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, The Nature Conservancy (Latin America Division), the Hunger Project, and the Institute for Cultural Affairs as prototypes for a long-term research program to focus on GSCO's and the ways in which they organize to foster social change. A preliminary meta-analysis of the cases suggests that there are five key organizing principles which sustain Global Social Change Organizations (GCSO). The ethos of Global Integrity Ethic suggests some possible challenges and opportunities for the field of organizational development: (1)

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the challenges of stewardship; (2) the challenges of global sustainability; (3) the challenge of bridging. Together these suggest ways in which the values of OD can be reinvigorated and that OD professionals can reclaim the power of their heart in work as they participate in building a global civic culture.

The study used the common appreciative inquiry approach. Data were collected using three major sources: (1) Open-ended formal interviews conducted with key members of each organization; (2) Historical documents (newspaper articles, books, unpublished 'white papers', internal newsletters and publications, board reports, training materials, annual reports, meeting minutes, strategic plans, and a variety of other sources of historical information concerning each GSCO examined by the researchers; (3) Observations made by the researchers concerning the daily transactions and organizational processes and other significant events such as retreats, planning sessions, etc. The data were compiled into descriptive case studies from which common organizational themes were extracted. The propositions were derived from an analysis of these common themes.

Gervase Bushe (1998) developed a form of appreciative inquiry that can be used in small groups. In its simplest form it focuses on developing shared, generative image of team work. Bushe describes the method:

First, group members are asked to recall the best team experience they have ever been part of. Even for those who have had few experiences of working with others in groups, there is a 'best' experience. Each group member is asked, in turn, to describe the experience while the rest of the group is encouraged to be curious and engage in dialogue with the focal person. The facilitator encourages members to set aside their clichés and preconceptions, get firmly grounded in their memory of the actual experience, and fully explore what about themselves, the situation, the task, and others made this a "peak" experience. Once all members have exhausted their exploration, the facilitator asks the group, on the basis of what they have just discussed, to list and develop a consensus on the attributes of highly effective groups. The intervention concludes with the facilitator inviting members to publicly acknowledge anything they have seen others in the group do that has helped the group be more like any of the listed attributes.

Bushe's conclusions show that the simple process has a positive effect on the groups. His conclusions include: (1) the process helps members of new teams establish personal identity and differentiate themselves; (2) new teams can also benefit from this way of generating "group guidelines" and appreciative recognition can help to build group cohesion; (3) on-going teams can benefit from a "best team" inquiry in several ways. It can help to create a safe gateway into difficult issues for a group. When lack of appreciation is the issue, it can create so much tension in members that they deal up

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their resentments and expectations. It can aid the development of shared mental maps of group success. It can help create affirming, generative images that allow for a different discourse, a different set of understandings and opportunities to materialize for a group. This can be therapeutic for a group struck in a paradox. In working with teams to develop affirming, generative images, an appreciative inquiry into something other than teams is often appropriate and can have very positive impacts on groups and their members. As a change process appreciative inquiry is a powerful “pull” strategy and can sometimes transform a relationship or a group.

A case study on the *Efficacy of Appreciative Inquiry in Building Relational Capital in a Transcultural Strategic Alliance* involved two alliance-building interventions conducted in Jaina, Maharashtra, India in December 1998 to explore the following research question: How can Appreciative Inquiry and other group formation concepts be used to create a sample intervention to support the forming of a transcultural alliance? Their findings reveal that Appreciative Inquiry provided stronger support for alliance building than did management education intervention. Appreciative Inquiry helps build social bridges. In this case, Appreciative Inquiry provided a means for alliance partners to learn their colleagues’ values and beliefs, develop an understanding of the alliance’s core competencies, provided opportunities to cope with issues obstructing the relationship, and built positive energy in the process. Interventions based on AI have broad potential for helping strategic alliances build relational capital to encourage sustainable transcultural collaboration so vital for successful organizations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Miller, Fitzgerald, Preston and Murrell, 2002).

In another work, *When is Appreciative Inquiry Transformational? A Meta-Case Analysis?*, Gervase Bushe and Aniq Khamisa (2004) conducted a case analysis of the use of Appreciative Inquiry for changing social systems published before 2003.

These were examined for the presence or absence of transformational change and the utilization of 7 principles and practices culled from a review of the theoretical literature on AI. Though all cases began by collecting “stories of the positive”, followed the “4-D model” and adhered to the 5 principles of Appreciative Inquiry articulated by Cooperrider and Whitney (2001), only 7 (35%) showed transformational outcomes. In 100% of the cases with transformational outcomes, the appreciative inquiry resulted in new ideas and knowledge and a generative metaphor that transformed the accepted beliefs of system members. In none of the non transformational cases was new knowledge created and in one a generative metaphor emerged. Instead, non transformational Appreciative Inquiry focused on changing existing organizational practices. In 83% of the transformational cases, the “destiny” or action phase of the appreciative inquiry was best characterized as “improvisational”. In contrast, 83% of the non transformational cases used more standard “implementation” approaches in the action phase in which attempts were made to implement centrally

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agreed upon targets and plans. The authors conclude that these two qualities of appreciative inquiry, a focus on supporting self-organizing change processes that flow from new ideas rather than leading implementation of centrally or consensually agreed upon changes, appear to be key contributions of Appreciative Inquiry to the theory and practice large system change that merit further study and elaboration (Abstract of the paper).

Lorisa Socorro De Boer (2000) used Appreciative Inquiry as the method in her work *Creative Planning for Urban Transformation: The Creative Experience of The National Coalition for Urban Transformation (NCUT)*. Some of the insights of the participants in the process include (1) that Appreciative Inquiry affirmed and heightened NCUT's gifts in networking; (2) and that the Appreciative Inquiry experience of NCUT provided the coalition an opportunity to enable its members to discover, articulate and own their dreams, design and co-construct their social structure and shape their collective destiny.

Part of the conclusions of De Boer indicate that principles and processes of Appreciative Inquiry have proved to be helpful in enabling a new ecumenical coalition to create a shared future vision to transform a metropolis. The appreciative stance of AI is new and relevant in Philippine culture where due to centuries of colonization the Filipino tends to downgrade oneself and one's culture. The collaborative principle of AI affirms the natural cultural propensity of the Filipino's "bayanihan" or collective neighborhood action. AI is a useful tool in strengthening and developing friendships by providing processes where participants can discover mutually congruent ideas. The processes of AI allowed stakeholders to have ownership of the plans and assume responsibility for their implementation.

Sheldon Drogin (1999) worked on the research *An Appreciative Inquiry into Spirituality and Work* (Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, Karl Jaspers) that examined the relationship of spirituality and work from an appreciative and heuristic stance. By highlighting some of the best examples and experiences of individuals who are integrating work and spirituality, theory was generated that is intended to provoke and ignite the imagination in terms of what is possible in the future spirituality of work. Interviews were conducted with ten co-researchers during 1996 and 1997. They were selected because they were considered to be exemplars of individuals integrating their spirituality and work. A review of literature traces the history of work and examines a spirituality of work from Buddhist, Christian, and Jewish perspectives. The meaning, design, beauty, nature, and future of work are then given consideration. In order to better understand the evolution of spirituality in relation to work, a framework was established that is based upon the work of the existentialist Karl Jaspers. An analysis of work and spirit examines factors that have led to their separation. The literature review concludes with contemporary trends of spirit in the workplace. The study revealed a

variety of themes that were common to many or all of the co-researchers. Included among these were: service, trust, intuition, energy, synchronicity, non-attachment, work as a calling and something greater calling. All the co-researchers found deep meaning in their work. Based upon the evolutionary framework of Jaspers and the search for greater meaning in work that is prevalent, they appear to be in the Geist mode. There are many significant actions being undertaken to unite spirituality and work. Many of these actions are being sold as still yet another means to improve the bottom line. The study proposes that the separation of work and spirit is largely a social construction, and that the unity of work and spirituality requires that we move beyond the apparent duality. This movement, however, is an inner movement rather than an outer action. The movement is toward realizing the sacred in everyday life and realizing the ordinary in the sacred (Drogin, 1999).

### **Synthesis**

Appreciative inquiry is a journey to transformation. The related literature and studies provide a presentation of some of the planned change intervention approaches used in organization development. It is evident that the evolution of planned change interventions is characterized by a shift from top-level initiated and controlled change process to a grassroots whole-scale participative change process. Appreciative Inquiry developed as a progeny of the other positive large-system planning methods. Appreciative Inquiry is presented as an organization development tool that takes off from the other side of the pendulum. While all other approaches start from diagnosis and analysis, Appreciative Inquiry begins with an adventure with the strengths- not only of the organization but also those of the individuals who make up the organization.

Appreciative Inquiry is also presented as an action research method. Together with it is an explanation of qualitative research specifically the grounded theory approach which is used in the study. Appreciative Inquiry and Grounded Theory have common grounds. Data derived from new knowledge, plans, theories, or propositions of both are “grounded” on the phenomenon being studied.

Diverse researches that utilize Appreciative Inquiry as a tool for planned change management and action research are presented. Noteworthy is the fact that although Appreciative Inquiry is utilized as a tool for planned change in these researches, it also simultaneously creates a culture and personal transformation in their respective participants and facilitators. Appreciative Inquiry promotes and enhances the ability of the participants to open dialogue and consensus-building because it assists people to seek common ground. Appreciative Inquiry also enables them to honor their

differences rather than reconcile them. Hope and ownership for the desired preferred future takes the place of resistance to change. Today Appreciative Inquiry continues to find many diverse applications in groups, communities and organizations. Appreciative Inquiry at its initial stages of development has already found its niche as a powerful change tool in social transformation and organization development. The Appreciative Inquiry phenomenon makes us “realize a new capacity to live our interdependence with one another as human beings and with the planet. The next twenty-five years are going to be some of the most creative in human history” (Cooperrider, 2002).

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this study has two parts, namely: (1) the process of utilizing the 4-D cycle for the organizational study and planning of the Technology Centers of the FMA, and (2) the grounded theory process of generating propositions from the participants' experience of using the Appreciative Inquiry Process.

#### ***Appreciative Inquiry: Organization Development Plan for the Technology Centers***

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is fast emerging as a popular organizational development approach that emphasizes building on the organization's assets rather than focusing on problems, or even problem solving. Conceived and described in the work of David Cooperrider and his colleagues at Case Western Reserve's School of Organization Behavior, AI is being offered by its advocates as a “worldview, a paradigm of thought and understanding that holds organizations to be affirmative systems created by humankind as solutions to problems. It is a theory; a mind-set, and an approach to analysis that leads to organizational learning and creativity”. Appreciative Inquiry is both a way of being in the world; and a process for working with change in any human system - families, groups, organizations, and communities (Watkins & Cooperrider, 2000). As such, “AI reflects the core values of OD (organizational development)” (Sorensen, Yaeger, and Nicoll, 2000).

AI identifies and values the factors that give life to the organization by tapping times when it was at its best. It begins and ends with valuing that which gives life to the organization. The organization's “positive core” begins and ends the inquiry. These are among the most important concepts underlying Appreciative Inquiry: (Liebler, 1997).

- *Image and action are linked.* The behavior of human beings is influenced not only by the past and current environment, but also by our images of the future. Successful organizations have a positive guiding image widely shared that galvanizes action. Therefore, in Appreciative Inquiry, a great deal of time is spent in creating a shared dream for the organization.

- *Organizations move in the direction of the question they ask.* The seeds of change are implicit in the first questions asked. The kinds of questions you ask of each other determine what you find, and what you find sets the direction of the journey. This has tremendous implications for how to first enter organizations or communities. The first step in the 4-D cycle is to discover what works in the organization.
- *All organizations have something about their past to value.* All organizations, no matter how conflicted at the moment, can find a best practice, a set of experiences, or a time in history when things worked well. Instead of spending all of the time searching for deficits, we believe in balancing things by spending time analyzing what has worked well in the past. This work provides a platform from which to spring toward the future. The stronger focus on what worked in the past, the further out and more vibrant the dream of the future. Many organizations are not fully aware of their own potential. By preceding the visioning process with an inquiry aimed at discovering moments of excellence, the stage is set to allow richer and more provocative possibilities to emerge.
- *Organizations are not fixed.* So often our organizations are maligned rather than appreciated and understood. They are seen as problems or, worse yet; as unavoidable evils that are needed to make things happen in the world. It is easy to start thinking about organizations as if they cannot be changed, yet human beings created them in the first place! Virtually any pattern, system, or structure created by humans is open to alteration.
- *Building appreciative skills is a key leadership task.* Appreciative leaders are those who notice and heighten positive potential within an organization and see radical possibilities beyond the boundaries of problems. The processes of appreciation have a tremendous mobilizing effect. Leaders understand how to use this effect to bring people together around issues of mutual concern. They are able to engage organizational members in provocative dialogue by asking questions such as: "If we were able to start doing one thing tomorrow that would change for the better the way we do business forever, what would that one thing be?" These leaders develop skills within the organization to recognize, study, and celebrate small and large successes; to engage in dialogues for learning; to be creative; to dream; and to act.

### **The Appreciative Inquiry 4-D Cycle**

In the problem-solving paradigm, it is assumed that something is broken, fragmented, not whole, and that it needs to be fixed. The function of problem solving is to integrate, stabilize, and help raise to its full potential the workings of the status quo. As Staw

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(1984) points out in his review of the field, most organizational research is biased to serve managerial interest rather than exploring broader human and / or social purposes. Problems are "out there" to be studied and solved. The ideal product of action-research is a mirror-like reflection of the organization's problems and causes. There is little role for passion and speculation.

As an approach to organization change, AI involves the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. This is significantly different from the conventional managerial problem solving. The key task in problem solving is to identify and remove gaps or deficits. In contrast, the key task in AI is to identify and leverage strengths. (Ludema et.al. 2003) In Appreciative Inquiry, the organization is seen as a mystery - a "not yet" with a lot of possibilities. Organization leaders develop, nurture, and introduce high human values into organizational life. It perceives organizations as arenas of human interaction whose purpose is some kind of esthetic interweaving of differences and diversities, arenas where people come together to learn how to share, to care, to cooperate, to dream and to co-create the future together. AI is a form of organizational study that selectively seeks to locate, highlight, and illuminate what are referred to as the "life-giving" forces of the organization's existence, its positive core. Two basic questions are behind any AI initiative: (1) What, in this particular setting and context, gives life to this system-when it is most alive, healthy, and symbiotically related to its various communities? (2) What are the possibilities, expressed and latent, that provides opportunities for more effective (value-congruent) forms of organizing? (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

The following propositions underlie the practice of AI:

- Inquiry into "the art of the possible" in the organizational life should begin with appreciation. Every system works to some degree. Therefore, a primary task of management and organizational analysis is to discover, describe, and explain those "exceptional moments" that give life to the system and activate members' competencies and energies. The appreciative approach take sits inspiration from "what is". This is the first step of the process in the 4-D cycle. Discovery, Valuing, learning, and inspired understanding are the aims of the appreciative spirit.
- Inquiry into what is possible should yield information that is applicable. Organizational study should lead to the generation of knowledge that can be used, applied, and validated in action.
- Inquiry into what is possible should be provocative. An organization is an open-ended, indeterminate system capable of becoming more than it is at any moment and learning how to take part actively in guiding its own evolution. Appreciative knowledge of "what is" becomes provocative to the extent that the learning stirs members to action. In this way, AI allows use of systematic

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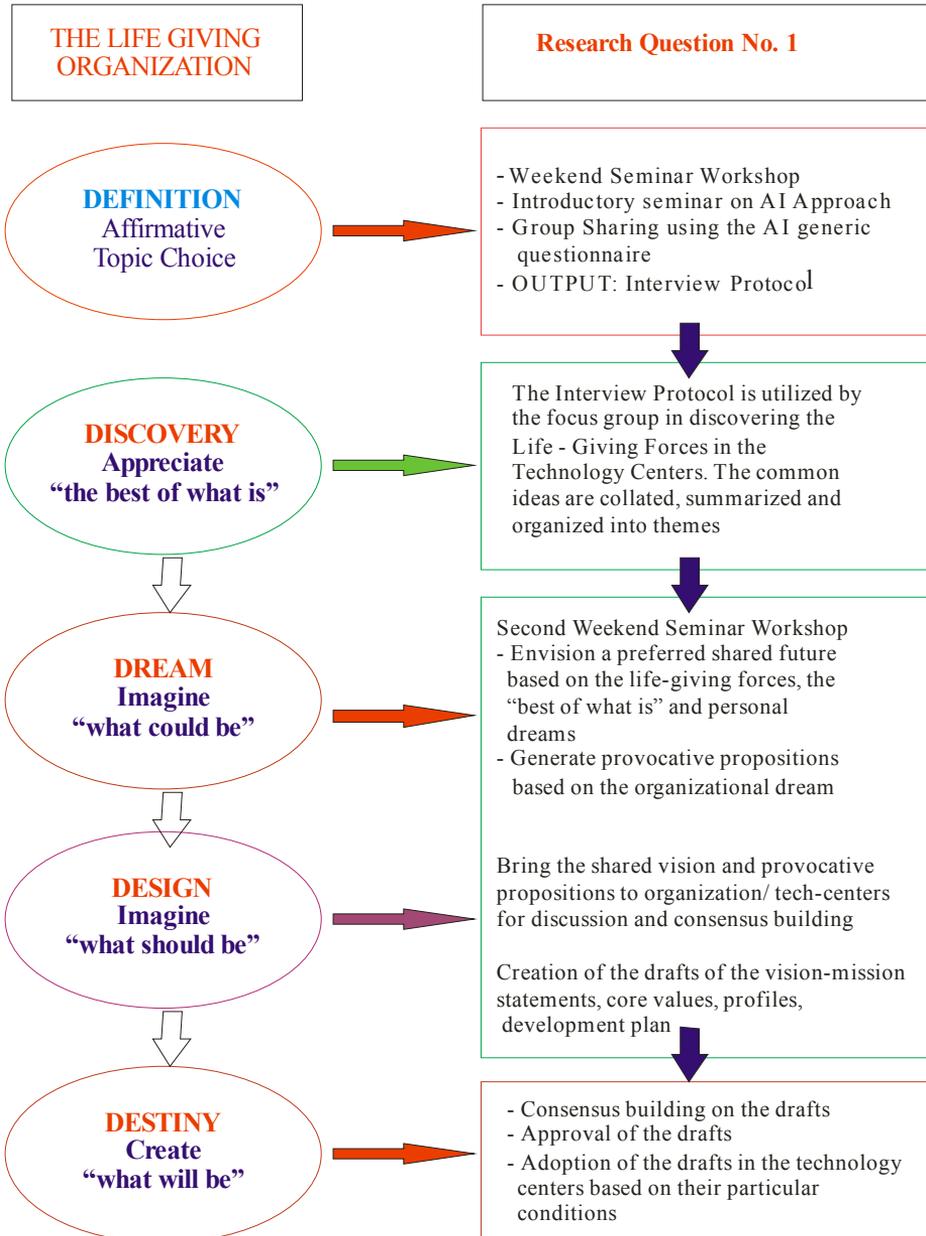
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management analysis to help the organization's members shape an effective future according to their own imaginative and moral purposes.

- Inquiry into the human potential of organizational life should be collaborative. This principle assumes an immutable relationship between the process of inquiry and its content. A unilateral approach to the study of social innovation is a direct negation of the phenomenon itself. (Cooperrider, et.al. 2003).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework on the Process of Creating an Organization Development Plan for the Technology Centers



*Affirmative topic choice: setting up the stage for the AI process*

The preparatory phase of the Appreciative Inquiry Process provides the opportunity for the focus group to identify the life-giving forces and core factors in the organization through the use of a set of questions. These life-giving forces may include the peak experiences which made them fully alive and committed to the organization. This phase is accomplished as the group members' dialogue on two basic questions:

- What are the factors that give life to the organization when it is most alive, successful and effective?
- What are the possibilities that will create a life-sustaining, affective, vision-based organization?

From the responses, three to five topics which usually represent what people want to discover more or learn about are decided. These are called affirmative topics and are important in leading conversations to the kind of future the people desire for their organization. The choice of topics to study in an organization is crucial because organizations move in the direction of the inquiry. It is important that leading questions are chosen carefully and the topics selected are phrased affirmatively (Bañaga, 1993). Careful, thoughtful, and informed choice of topics defines the scope of the inquiry, providing the framework for subsequent interviews and data collection (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

The preparation phase is complete when a planning group in an organization has a clear agreement on the topics that they want to see grow and flourish in their organization; an interview guide (interview protocol) to be used in exploring these topics has been prepared; and a clear decision about who will be interviewed and who will do the interviewing has been reached. This sets the stage for the beginning of the 4-D process (Watkins & Cooperridder, 2000).

*Discovery: Appreciate “the best of what is”*

The purpose of the discovery phase is to search for, highlight, and illuminate factors that give life to the organization, the “best of what is” in any given situation. The list of positive topics for discovery is endless: high quality, integrity, empowerment, innovation, customer responsiveness, technological innovation, team spirit, etc. In each case the task is to promote organizational learning by sharing stories about times when these qualities were at their best and analyzing the forces and factors that made them possible (Ludema, et al., 2003).

Life-giving forces are the unique values, structures, and processes that make the very existence of an organization possible. They are both *élan vital*- the energy that gives an organization breath and an organization's building blocks that give it form and

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substance-ideas, beliefs and values as well as structures, practices or procedures (Troxel, 2002).

Different types of instruments for data collection may be used including interviews, observations, focus groups and analysis of documents. Interviews seem to be most widely used. Appreciative Inquiry looks at interviewing as an intervention in itself. The spirit behind this phase is not so much concern for objectivity as the creation of a kind of "oral tradition" or atmosphere where the members of an organization can share with each other those factors that they appreciate most in their organization. The interviewers are exhorted to be especially keen in capturing and recording "exceptional" stories, anecdotes, flashes of inspiration and key quotations. From the data that are gathered, the key elements in terms of "life-giving" factors are distilled and generalized (Bañaga, 1993).

In the Discovery Phase, people share stories of exceptional accomplishments, discuss the life-giving factors of their organizations, and deliberate upon the aspects of their organizational history that they value most and want to bring into the future. In the Discovery Phase, members come to know their organization's history as a positive possibility rather than a static, problematized, eulogized, romanticized, or forgotten set of events. Empowering and hopeful conceptions of organization frequently, if not always, emerge from stories that are grounded in organizing at its best. Appreciation is alive and stakeholders throughout the organization or community are connected in a dialogue of discovery. Hope grows and organizational capacity is enriched. This is where storytelling begins. The distinguishing factor of AI in this phase is that every carefully crafted question of the topic choice is positive (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

### ***Dream: Imagine "what could be"***

During the dream phase, the interview stories and insights are put into constructive use. Dream dialogues are often integrated into appreciative interviews- with questions about wishes, hopes, and dreams for a better world and a better organization-and/or combined with Design during an Appreciative Inquiry Summit. As people listen to each other's stories of the "best of what is" they begin to recognize common themes or circumstances when the group performed well or visible patterns by which they can build their ideals or search for new possibilities for the organization- by envisioning together. As organizations move in the direction of what they study, the crafting of dream questions and activities has strategic significance. According to Ludema et al. (2003) these dreams paint a compelling picture of what the organization could and should become as it conforms to people's deepest hopes and highest aspirations having been culled by asking positive questions.

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The articulation of the dream is done through a process of dialogue in groups and is usually presented through creative dream enactments such as poetry, TV commercials, songs, one act plays, and others. Once the dream is articulated, attention turns to the creation of the ideal organization that they want. The process of dialogue facilitates an open sharing of discoveries and possibilities and the individuals gradually come into an agreement about the ideal they want for the organization. The dream and design phase often happen in conjunction with each other since the creation of the "social architecture" of the organization must be aligned with the overall vision of the organization.

### ***Design: Determine “what should be”***

The Design phase of the 4-D process is key to sustaining positive change and responding to the organization’s most positive and highest potential. Grounded in the best of what has been, good appreciative designs address all three elements necessary for effective organizational change: continuity, novelty, and transition. The positive core identified and expounded in the first two phases begins to take form (Cooperrider et al., 2003)

Whitney & Cooperrider (2000) in their article *The Appreciative Inquiry Summit: An Emerging Methodology for Whole System Positive Change* explain that in this phase, participants focus on crafting an organization in which the positive core is boldly alive in all of the strategies, processes, systems, decisions and collaborations of the organization. Provocative Propositions (or design statements) are crafted. These are affirmative statements of the future organization, stated in the present tense, that stretch the organization towards its dreams. While they are not statements of specific actions to be taken, they are actionable.

Provocative Statements bridge “the best of what is or has been” and describes one’s speculation about “what might be”. Provocative statements are derived from the stories that actually took place in an organization and try to answer the question: "What would our organization look like if it were to maximize and preserve the potentials we have discovered?" They keep our best at the conscious level. Because they are reality-based, organization members connect to them and are inspired to do more of what works (Hammond, 1996).

As provocative propositions are composed, the desired qualities of organizing and organizational life are articulated. (Cooperrider et al., 2003) The beginning point is the selection of organizational elements. Organization members may choose to develop their own social architecture or they may choose to write provocative propositions based on a common model such as Marv Weisbord’s Six-box model or the McKinsey’s 7-S model. Some or all of the organizational elements may be included in

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the crafting of the social architecture: leadership, strategy, culture, staff/people, business processes, management practices, societal purposes, structures, shared values, stakeholder relations, social responsibility, communication, systems, competencies, customer relations, results (SAIDI - AI Seminar, July 2000).

The idea behind the group creation of propositions is to move the “individual will” to “group will”. The common vision they have articulated together helps give all members a feeling of significance, purpose, pride, unity, and a strong sense of ownership of the organization. Ultimate authority is derived from the consent of others. Organization dreams are translated into action through a process of consensus mobilization. Group will creates synergy that results in group's achieving more than the sum of the individuals. Group will occurs when the group shares a clear goal that all members believe will happen and accordingly behave to make it happen. (Hammond, 1996)

### ***Destiny: Create “what will be”***

The final phase, Destiny, is an invitation to construct the future through innovation and action (Ludema, et al., 2003). The goal of the Destiny is to ensure that the dream can be realized. Like the other phases, destiny is full of continuing dialogue. Provocative propositions should be revised and updated. Additional Appreciative Inquiry interviewing may take place with new members in the organization and/or new questions for existing members. The Destiny phase represents both the conclusion of the Discovery, Dream and design phases and the beginning of an ongoing creation of an “appreciative learning” culture. There are two aspects in the Destiny phase: (1) Aligning the actual organization with the provocative propositions created in the Design phase; (2) Building an Appreciative Inquiry learning competencies into the culture (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

Destiny is a time for integration, commitment, and focused action. It is a time for agreeing on how we will take the work of the earlier phases and move it forward at the practical level, and how we will support each other in that process. But it is more than that. It is also a time for seeding the organizational ground of transformation so that it can continue to grow new inquiries and lead to more discovery, learning, and sharing of knowledge, wisdom, and best practices. This last phase is in a sense both a closure and the start of the rest of the organization's life. Successful destiny activities set the stage for ongoing positive change (Ludema et al., 2003).

The Destiny Phase aims at creating a culture and structure of continuous learning, innovation, improvisation and change. This suggests, that the organizational structures provide not only the opportunity for the daily search into qualities and elements of an

organization's positive core but also establish a convergence zone for people to empower one another- to connect, cooperate, and co-create.

Stakeholders are invited into an open-space planning and commitment sessions during this phase. Individuals and groups discuss what they can and will do to contribute to the realization of the organizational dream as articulated in the provocative propositions. Relationally- woven action commitments then serve as the basis for ongoing activities. The key to sustaining the momentum is to build an “appreciative eye” into all the organization’s systems, procedures, and ways of working. Provocative propositions may require that an organization’s processes and system be redesigned. (Appreciative Inquiry Process by Corporation for Positive Change- SAIDI AI SEMINAR, July 2000).

The study of De Boer (2000) mentions the concept of the “learning organization” where members are committed to continuous learning, adjustment, and innovation in support of their shared vision. In this step, the organization becomes its own learning organization, one in which the members continually expand their capacity to envision and create the results they truly desire. This is a positive journey which celebrates their past success. The organization will be able to revisit the phases whenever necessary, while keeping an eye on the challenges ahead.

Peter Senge (1990), the proponent of the Learning Organization Model defines learning in organizations as the “continuous testing of experience, and the transformation of that experience into knowledge- accessible to the whole organization, and relevant to its core purpose”. Peter Senge (1990) writes that the most successful visioning processes have the same goal for organizations: to develop a sense of destiny which the organization recognizes as its own, and helps its members to act accordingly. One compelling way to begin is by returning to the sense of purpose of the organization’s original leaders. This does not mean turning back the clock; it means using the vision of the past to help energize today’s vision process.

### **Grounded Theory: generation of final propositions**

The research employed the grounded theory process of qualitative research for the generation of the grounded propositions based on the AI experience of the focus group. This part of the study complements the generation of new knowledge and looks forward to enrich the field of Appreciative Inquiry.

*Grounded Theory* is a qualitative research approach that focuses on the process of generating theory rather than a particular theoretical content. It emphasizes steps and procedures for connecting induction and deduction through constant comparative

method, comparing research sites, doing theoretical sampling, and testing emergent concepts with additional fieldwork.

A grounded theory is one that is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents. That is, it is discovered, developed, and provisionally verified through systematic data collection and analysis of data pertaining to that phenomenon. Therefore, data collection, analysis, and theory stand in reciprocal relationship with each other. One does not begin with a theory then proves it. Rather, one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area is allowed to emerge. Grounded theory is meant to “build theory rather than test theory” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

### **Grounded Theory Research Designs**

Grounded Theory is a general research methodology, a way of thinking about and conceptualizing data. It is a set of procedures for analyzing data that will lead to the development of theory useful to that discipline. Because of its generality, grounded theory is easily adapted to in-depth studies of diverse phenomena.

### **Purpose**

Grounded theorists start with broad research questions that provide the freedom and flexibility to explore a phenomenon in depth. The research questions identify the general focus for the study and tend to be action and process oriented. Depending on how the question is focused, the researcher gathers different data and attends to different aspects during analysis.

### **Process**

In grounded theory studies, the researcher attempts to derive a theory by using multiple stages of data collection and the refinement and interrelationships of categories of information (Creswell, 1994 cited in Leedy, 1996). The theory is “grounded” in that it is developed from the data, opposed to being suggested by the literature; that is, theory as an expected outcome from, rather than a starting point for, the study. By linking descriptions of the participants’ perceptions to more general social science theories, grounded theorists aim to contribute to the development of the theory. An important assumption underlying this approach is that “all of the concepts pertaining to a given phenomenon have not yet been identified, at least not in this population or place; or if so, then the relationships between the concepts are poorly understood or conceptually underdeveloped. Thus, grounded theorists (like all other researchers) try to find answers to questions that are important but not yet answered.

Gall et al. (1996 cited in Leedy, 1996) define theory as “an explanation of the commonalities and the relationships among observed phenomena in terms of causal structures and processes that are presumed to underlie them. Grounded theorists aim to identify and describe these plausible relationships among concepts and sets of concepts. Grounded theory strives to provide researchers with analytical tools for handling masses of raw data”. Grounded theory emphasizes systematic rigor and thoroughness from initial design, through data collection and analysis, culminating in theory generation. Grounded theory produces a core category and continually resolves a main concern, and through sorting the core category organizes the integration of the theory. Grounded theory begins with basic description, moves up to conceptual ordering (organizing data into discrete categories), and then theorizing (“conceiving or intuiting ideas-concepts-then also formulating them into a logical, systematic, and explanatory scheme”) (Patton, 2003).

## **Data Collection**

Strauss and Corbin (1990) indicate that the way grounded theory is applied in practice varies with the specifics of the area under study, the purpose and focus of the research, the contingencies faced during the project, and perhaps also the temperament and particular gifts and weaknesses of the researcher. As in other qualitative designs, data collection is "flexible," characterized by openness to changing conditions. Grounded theorists have used historical records, interviewing, and observation strategies to collect their data.

Drogin (1997) for instance, used an approach that was a synthesis of Patton's (1980) work, included the following methods of data collection:

- the informal conversational interview which allows the greatest amount of spontaneity in terms of questions and conversation (the intent is to have the interviewer and the interviewed jointly participate as co-researchers in a dialogue);
- the general interview guide which lists certain topics with the intent of covering the same issues with all co-researchers; and
- the standardized open-ended interview in which all participants are asked the same questions.

Interviews were conducted using an interview guide in order to optimize the time available while providing a systematic and comprehensive approach. The guide contained open-ended questions to more effectively elicit the reasoning behind the responses. He adopted Moustaka's (1990) language choice which refers to author as the primary researcher and the participants in the project as co-researchers.

Interviews also followed the guidelines of Appreciative Inquiry that Cooperrider (1994) outlines including (a) explaining the appreciative inquiry approach, (b) dealing with negatives, (c) the interview rhythm, (d) friendly probing, (e) seeking generalizations and organizational factors, (f) attention and time, and (g) valuing co-researchers and confidentiality.

## Data Analysis

Analysis in grounded theory is composed of three major types of coding. Coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data. Analysis in grounded theory is composed of three major types of coding. These are: (a) open coding; (b) axial coding; (c) selective coding.

- *Open Coding* is the process of breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing, and categorizing data. It fractures the data and allows one to identify some categories, their properties, and dimensional locations. A Category is a classification of concepts. This classification is discovered when concepts are compared one against another and appear to pertain to a similar phenomenon. Thus the concepts are grouped together under a higher order, more abstract concept called category.
- *Axial Coding* is a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. It utilizes a coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies and consequences. In axial coding our focus is on specifying a category (phenomenon) in terms of conditions that give rise to it; the context (its specific set of properties) in which it is embedded; the action/interactional strategies by which it is handled, managed, carried out; and the consequences of the strategies. These specifying features of a category give it precision, thus we refer to them as subcategories.
- *Selective Coding* is the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development. A Core Category is the central phenomenon around which all the other categories are integrated.

Data collection and analysis are tightly interwoven, with early analysis efforts directing subsequent data collection. Underlying all levels of coding is the constant comparative method of analysis, defined as the continual process of comparing data segments and data codes within and across categories. A *category* is an abstract name for the meaning of similar topics. A *pattern* is a relationship among categories. The

relationship between two or more concepts generate a theory (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993 cited in Leedy, 1996) by dealing with many conceptual relationships, the researcher produces theory that is considered to be “conceptually dense”. Because of the inherent interest in building theory, grounded theorists are more interested in patterns of interactions between and among people than individual perspectives per se. “Grounded theories connect this multiplicity of perspective with patterns and processes of action/interaction that in turn are linked with carefully specified conditions and consequences (Strauss and Corbin, 1994 cited in Leedy, 1996).

For data analysis, Drogin (1997) for instance, sorted the interview transcriptions into themes or categories which formed the basis for the narrative. This process is referred to as segmenting and he cites Tesch’s (in Creswell, 1994) eight steps for use in the analysis of data.

- Examine all of the data and get a feeling for the whole;
- Select a particular interview and make notes regarding the underlying meaning;
- Repeat step 2 for several interviews. Group ideas into similar topics (the affinity diagram was used as an effective means for accomplishing this step);
- Establish a code for each of the major topics and codify the data into appropriate topics. Allow new topics to emerge as appropriate;
- Determine the best wording for each topic and group topics that relate to each other. Use a chart to show interrelationships;
- Alphabetize the categories based on their codes;
- Assemble relevant data for each category and perform an analysis;
- Recode data as necessary;

*Generalization* in social research concerns the potential for drawing inferences from a single study to wider populations, contexts or social theory. In qualitative research it is sometimes referred to as the transferability or external validity of research findings.

- Reliability is generally understood to concern the replicability of research findings and whether or not they would be repeated if another study, using the same or similar methods, were undertaken. Because of the nature of qualitative research, the terms confirmability, consistency, or dependability are often preferred. All of them refer to the security and durability of a research finding.
- Validity of findings or data is traditionally understood to refer to the ‘correctness’ or ‘precision’ of a research reading. In qualitative research it concerns the extent to which a phenomena under study is being accurately reflected, as

perceived by the study population. Again, alternative terms, such as credibility and plausibility are sometimes used.

- Validation refers to the process of checking the validity of a finding or conclusion through analysis or cross-checking with other sources.
- Member validation involves taking research evidence back to the research participants or study population to see if the meanings or interpretations assigned are recognized and confirmed.
- Triangulation is a method to check external validity and it involves the use of different methods and sources to check the integrity of, or extend, inferences drawn from the data. It assumes that the use of different sources of information will help both to confirm and to improve the clarity, or precision, of a research finding. (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003 ). Patton explains that the term triangulation is taken from land surveying. Knowing a single landmark only locates you somewhere along a line in a direction from the landmark, whereas with two landmarks (and your own position being the third point of the triangle) you can take bearings in two directions and locate yourself at their intersection. There are four types of triangulation as identified by Denzin (1978) : (1) Methods triangulation: the use of multiple methods to study a single problem or program; (2) Triangulation of sources: comparing data from different qualitative methods (e.g. observations, interviews, documented accounts); (3) Triangulation through multiple analysis/investigator triangulation: using different observers, interviewers, analysts to compare and check data collection and interpretation; (4) Theory triangulation: use of multiple perspectives to interpret a single set of data.

### **Communicating Findings in Grounded Theory Research**

Strauss and Corbin (1990) indicate that “the conceptual relationships developed through grounded theory are stated as propositions and are presented in discursive form. Discursive presentation captures the conceptual density and conveys descriptively also the substantive content of a study. It is recommended that, to achieve “integration” (a picture of reality that is conceptual, comprehensible, and above all, grounded), it is necessary to explicate the “story line” (the core category) through which all other categories are related. These relationships are then validated against data and further developed and/or refined as needed.

In his work *Qualitative Research Methods and Evaluation Methods* (2002), Michael Q. Patton classified Appreciative Inquiry as a particularly appropriate qualitative

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application and comments that the interest lies in the fact that Appreciative Inquiry is grounded in qualitative understandings and prescribes a particular process of qualitative inquiry that includes a dialogue process among participants based on their interviewing each other. They ask each other question that “elicit the creative and life-giving events experienced in the workplace” (Watkins and Cooperrider, 2000). These questions aim at generating specific examples, stories, and metaphors about positive aspects of organizational life. Participants in the process analyze the results in groups looking for the themes and topics that can become the foundation for positive organizational development going forward. AI integrates inquiry and action within a particular development framework that guides analysis and processes of group interaction. The qualitative questioning and thematic analysis processes constitute a form of intervention by the very nature of the questions asked and the assets-oriented framework used to guide analysis. In this way, inquiry and action are completely integrated- thus is considered a participatory inquiry.

The work of Pamela Johnson and David Cooperrider (1991) *Global Social Change Organizations (GSCO)* is a prototype of a long- term research program focused on GSCO's and the ways in which they organize to foster social change. A number of key organizing principles that appear to lend competence and vitality to the GSCO's were drawn out. These organizing principles were presented in the form of propositions. With Appreciative Inquiry adapted as the guiding principle of the research approach, the organizations were led to the discovery of those processes of organizing which lend organizations their distinctive competencies and vitality. The discovery of the “best of what is” makes it possible to create an emergent set of propositions about the “best of what can be” capable of transforming the attention of the organization toward the higher ideal.

Figure 2 .Process in Generating the Grounded Propositions Based on the Participants' AI Experience

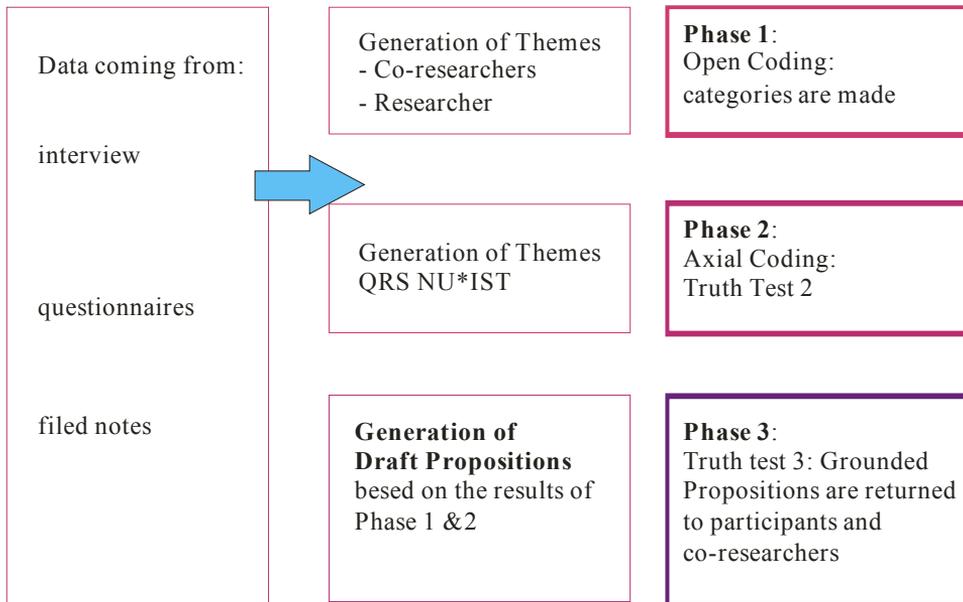
**Research Question No. 2 Using the Grounded Theory Research Design**

**DATA GATHERING PHASE**

Purposive sampling from Focus Group using  
Interviews and questionnaires  
Field Notes

Selection of co-researchers

**DATA ANALYSIS & TRUTH TEST PHASE**



**FINAL GROUDED STATEMENTS**

## Methodology

This section describes the methodologies used to collect, analyze and synthesize the data for (1) the creation of the Development Plan for the Technology Centers of the FMA using the life-giving forces discovered in the Technology Centers of the FMA and (2) the generation of propositions based on the focus group's experience in the application of Appreciative Inquiry as a change process.

The *Appreciative Inquiry Process* was used in discovering and highlighting the strengths and positive experiences (life-giving forces) of the Technology Centers that became the basis for crafting the organization development plan. Using the Appreciative Inquiry process involves maximum utilization of the descriptive data taken from the peak experiences of the participants and the future they envisioned for their organization.

The *Grounded Theory Process* was used to generate propositions based on the insights gained from the use of the Appreciative Inquiry Process. Descriptive data coming from interviews and field notes documentation were utilized for the generation of themes.

The research methodology adheres to the *Emergent Design* method that presupposes adapting inquiry as understanding deepens and/or situations change; the researcher avoids getting locked into rigid designs that eliminate responsiveness and pursues new paths of discoveries as they emerge.

The research began with a proposed methodology that included processes and questionnaires. However, working with a focus group as co-researchers gave rise to a more in-depth exploration of the initial design. The method presented here applied the approved basic framework of the methodology but several portions, steps, questionnaires, and further developments have been enriched and modified as I pursued the research with the focus group and my mentor. Each step of the process was founded on the emergent ideas drawn from resultant data and conclusions.

## Population Sampling

*Purposive sampling* from the members of the technology centers was used in identifying the participants of this study. In Purposeful Sampling also known as criterion based sampling, sample units are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the

central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study. These may be socio-demographic characteristics, or may relate to the specific experiences, behaviors, roles, etc. Members of a sample are chosen with a 'purpose' to represent a location or type in relation to a key criterion. This has two principal aims. The first is to ensure that all the key constituencies of relevance to the subject matter are covered. The second is to ensure that, within each key criteria, some diversity is included so that the impact of the characteristics can be explored. There is a range of different approaches to purposive sampling. This research specifically employs *Theoretical Purposive Sampling*, a particular type of purposive sampling in which units are selected specifically on the basis of their potential contribution to the theory. It is mainly associated with grounded theory and involves iteration between sample selection, fieldwork carried out and data analyzed; a further sample is selected to refine emergent categories or theories, and so on until no new insights would be generated by expanding the sample further (Ritchie and Lewis, 2003).

The criterion set included (1) the participants' capacity for active participation in the initial planning, i.e. their ability to bring viewpoints and experiences from many different levels of and from many different perspectives about the organization; (2) ability and their capacity to implement the consequent stages of the planning process in their respective Technology Centers; (3) they must have worked in the Technology Centers for about a year except for students/alumni.

Among those included in the initial stages of the study were the lay and FMA members of the Administration, Faculty and Staff, students, alumni of the Technology Centers of the FMA. The focus group (15-25 members) consists mainly of the Technical Coordinators, Faculty and Staff, Students and Alumni who were involved in all the phases of the study and were considered as co-researchers in the development of the plan and the generation of the propositions. At every phase of the process of the creation of the Development Plan, interviews, consultations and feedback were solicited from the other members of the Educating Community of the four Technology Centers involved in the study.

### **Population Profile**

Table 2 shows the number of participants during the entire planning process. The data include the focus group members but do not show the number of stakeholders who attended the consultations held by the focus group members in their respective technology centers. Focus group members participated in all the phases of the work.

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*Table 2. The Participants of the Research Process*

	Administration Lay Consultant	Teachers & Staff FMA/Lay	Students Alumnae	Parents	Total
1 <sup>st</sup> AI Weekend Seminar	5 Administrators	4 FMA 8 Lay	10 students 2 graduates	0	30  (Focus Group)
Interview Phase in the Technology Centers	12 Administrators 1 lay consultant	2 FMA 19 Lay	51 students 14 graduates	4	103
2 <sup>nd</sup> AI Planning Workshop  Dream-Design Phase	4 Administrators	2 FMA 6 Lay	2 students 1 graduate	0	15  (Co- researchers)
August 1-2, 2002	5 Administrators	2 FMA 5 Lay	2 students 1 graduate	0	15  (Co- researchers)
Presentation & Consultation	6 Administrators	5 FMA 24 Lay	29 Students 1 Graduate	0	65

## **Research Question 1: Process of Creation of the Development Plan for the Technology Centers using Appreciative Inquiry**

### **Preliminary Step: Affirmative Topic Choice - Identifying the Focus for Inquiry**

*“The seeds for change are embedded in the first question we ask”*

The first step in an AI intervention is selecting the affirmative topic choice: the selection of the topic(s) that will become the focus of the intervention. (Cooperrider et al. 2003) It is an important phase and involves the definition of the scope of inquiry and provides the framework for subsequent interviews and data collection (Watkins and Mohr, 2001).

Selecting the affirmative topic choice begins with the constructive discovery and narration of the organization’s “life-giving” story. The topics, in the initial stages, are bold hunches about what gives life to the organization. Most importantly, the topics (usually three to five) for an inquiry represent what people really want to discover or learn more about. The topics will likely evoke conversations about the desired future (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

Selecting an affirmative topic choice is a fateful act because organizations move in the direction of inquiry. People commit to topics they have helped develop. Representations from the different stakeholders must be involved in the definition phase. Diversity is essential to provide a greater richness of relationship, dialogue, and possibility. Affirmative topics chosen should meet the following criteria: (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

- Topics are affirmative or stated in the positive.
- Topics are desirable. They identify the objectives people want.
- The group is genuinely curious about them and wants to learn more.
- The topics move in the direction where the group wants to go.

### ***The Technology Centers Choose Topics for Inquiry***

The Appreciative Inquiry Process started with a weekend seminar-workshop held on January 2-3, 2002. It initiated the participants with the AI process through an introduction of the basic concepts, principles, methods and processes of AI. The first

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draft of the Interview Protocol was the output of the dialogue and discoveries made during the two-day seminar. There were 32 participants representing the four training centers. The design of the two-day seminar included the following activities:

Day 1:

Welcome Note and Introduction

- Presentation of the goals and hopes of the session
- Appreciative introductions: Getting to know each participant

Micro Overview of Appreciative Inquiry

- What is Appreciative Inquiry?
- Creating Customized Protocol and Data-Collection Strategy

Step 1: Conduct Generic Interviews

Step 2: Identify Themes/Topics

- From the generic interviews, identify key themes/topics and language to be used in developing the customized protocol

Step 3a: Create First Draft of Customized Interview Protocol

- Combine themes emerging from the generic interviews with research questions into a first draft

Step 3b: Test Protocol Draft 1

- Test Interview 1: Participants test the Protocol by interviewing one another
- Interview Debriefing

Day 2: Questions raised about the process undertaken during the first day were answered.

Continuation of the process

Step 3c: Create Draft of Customized Interview Protocol

Revise the protocol based on results of test interviews

Approval by consensus

Step 4: Develop Plan for Data Collection and Analysis

Stakeholder Mapping

Identify key stakeholder groups

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Plan interview process

Create a preliminary plan for data compilation, analysis, and presentation

Debriefing and Closure; Evaluation of the AI Experience

With the introductions done, enough time was provided to reflect on the preliminary generic Appreciative Inquiry questionnaire. Two to three persons made up a group consisting of an administrator, faculty and staff, students, and alumni.

In the plenary assembly, a representative from each group shared the collation or highlights of their dialogue. These included shared experiences, discoveries (or the so-called “aha!” experiences), and personal dreams for the organization. These provided them with the material necessary for their choice of the affirmative topics for inclusion in the Interview Protocol. The group came up with a consensus on five topics: (1) Vision-Mission; (2) Salesian Family Spirit; (3) Integral Quality Education; (4) Programs for the Underprivileged and (5) Networking.

Five groups worked on each topic and prepared interview questions which would (1) seek to discover what the organization has done well in the past and is doing well in the present; and (2) ask the participants to dream about and design a better future for the technology centers. Each group presented questions in draft form to the assembly. These were commented on and revised. The final design was left to the selected members of the focus group. They also decided on other details necessary for data gathering, such as:

Preparation of the instrument to be used (Interview Protocol)

Identification of persons to be interviewed

Setting Timeframe

Mode of Data Collection and Collation

### **Step 1: Discovery - Inquiry into the Life-Giving Forces**

*“People have more confidence going into the future (unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (known)”.*

The primary work in this phase is to conduct interviews based on the topics that have been identified in the Preliminary Phase: Affirmative Topic Choice. Interviewing is a tool for exploring the “life-giving” forces of an organization. It is a process of discovery. The data collected will help locate, illuminate, and understand the

distinctive strengths that give the organization life and vitality when it is functioning at its best. The “data” are gathered in the form of stories from people within the organization. Two assumptions are at work here: (1) people in the system are able to provide the richest responses to our questions and (2) the very act of asking and answering the questions begins to shift the organization in the direction of the questions asked. Stories have a depth and breadth that allow meaning to be conveyed much more effectively than would a list of key points or other more analytical reports. Stories engage the imagination in ways that analytic discussions cannot (Watkins and Mohr, 2001).

The Appreciative Inquiry interview serves as a starting point for the positive dialogue that is the core of Appreciative Inquiry. The interview explores and brings to life the positive stories of the organization. Further, the interview initiates dialogue that generates and catalyzes the thinking about positive possibilities for the future. The collective surfacing of memories makes possible multiple forms of organizational innovation that could not be achieved through linear extension of memories recollected within a reductionist, deficit-based paradigm. In addition, this kind of data collecting stimulates the participants’ excitement and delight as they share their values, experiences, and history with the organization and their wishes for the organization’s future (Watkins and Mohr, 2001).

### ***Creating a Positive Future for the Technology Centers by Building on the Best of the Past***

Data gathering in the four Technology Centers began as soon as the approved text of the Interview Protocol became available in print. We interviewed 140 persons who represented a cross-section of the different stakeholders of the Technology Centers. Their feedback reports became the basis for the preparation of the next phase of the study in May 2002.

### ***Identification of Themes***

The results of the interviews were collated and from these themes were identified. Themes are important threads from the inquiry data and are short answers to the question: “What do we hear people describing in the interviews as the life-giving forces in this organization?” Identifying the themes and life-giving forces not only continues the reality-creating conversations, but also provides a link between the inquiry we have conducted into the past and the image of the preferred future we will create in the fourth core process. The themes become the basis for *collectively imagining what the organization would be like if the exceptional moments that we have*

*uncovered in the interviews become the norm* in the organization. (Watkins and Mohr, 2001)

### ***Theme Identification Process***

The selected members of the focus group met to carry out two of the subsequent Appreciative Inquiry phases leading to the creation of the Development Plan. The co-researchers accomplished two tasks, namely: (1) the theme identification process, and (2) the creation of shared images of the preferred future through the crafting of provocative statements. The theme of the day “Reinventing the FMA Technology Centers” included the following activities:

- Orientation

Status Report on the Research Work

Review of the Appreciative Inquiry Approach

Overview: Discovery-Dream-Design Phases

- Theme Identification Process

Presentation of the Collated Answers to the Interviews

Classification into themes (Output: Themes on LGF)

- DREAM PHASE: Guided Imagery / Group Work

Presentation of Group Work

Synthesis

- Provocative Statements

Guidelines on how to make good provocative statements

Group Work: Creation of Provocative Statements

Presentation of Provocative Statements/ Clarifications

Consensus building: Which among the provocative statements expresses their shared image of the preferred future of the Technology Centers?

### ***Theme Identification Exercise***

A theme is an idea or a concept about what is present in the stories that people report as the times of greatest excitement, creativity, and reward. A theme identification exercise was conducted by the focus group. It was patterned after the process proposed by Watkins and Mohr 2001.

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- The focus group members were given enough time to read the collated data. Each member made a personal selection of high-points, life-giving forces: themes that were present in the collation. After making their personal list, they grouped themselves into two work teams where they shared their stories/selection. Each team created a list of the themes that were present, agreed on them, and then finally selected three to five themes per group. They were asked to write down their group's selected themes on a scattergram chart that provides a visual image of the whole group's consensus for the preferred themes.
- A representative from each group reported their work output to the assembly. Questions raised by some of the other participants served to clarify some points essential for the next step in the process.
- Each person was given a colored pen and working alone, decided which of the themes presented on the scattergrams were most important to be included in the dream of the future of the Technology Centers. They used check marks to indicate their choice. Each person was entitled to make 3-4 choices. The choices made are indicated on the scattergram (cf. Appendix). By consensus the final choice included the following themes:

*Salesian Family Spirit* (lived in the school and shared in the home, workplace and community);

*Holistic Formation* (formative encounters and activities, human, spiritual and Salesian formation, professional training);

*Organization* (includes state-of-the-art organization, networking, tri-sectoral partnerships);

*Empowerment* (poor young women empowered, paradigm shift).

### **Step 2: Dream Phase - Creating Shared Images for a Preferred Future**

The second phase of Appreciative Inquiry is to engage as many organization members as possible in co-creating a shared image or vision of a preferred future. The creation of this future image comes directly from the stories of special moments and the resultant themes or life-giving forces identified in the previous phase. The invitation is to imagine an organization in which those special moments of exceptional vitality found in the stories become the norm rather than the exception. The creation of the shared image of the preferred future often progresses through two stages: (1) articulation of the dream for the organization by creating a visual image and a written image of the most desired future for the organization as a whole and (2) generation and

description of an organization structure (social architecture) that helps achieve the desired future (Watkins and Mohr, 2001).

***Facilitating the Creation of Shared Images:***

I used a guided-imagery exercise to facilitate the creation of shared images. It was an activity familiar to all the participants. Each person found a comfortable place and with the group engaged themselves in the dreaming process.

When the guided image exercise was done, each participant shared her dream experience to the whole team. When they have completed their dialogue, they chose which among the facets of their dreams would form part of their Group Dream for the Technology Centers. The two groups presented illustrations of their group dreams and a representative presented the group dream to the assembly.

***Provocative Propositions***

Provocative propositions are expansive statements of how organizational members plan to organize themselves in pursuit of their dreams. They are a set of principles and commitments in the sense that they describe the ideal organization. They stretch the status quo, challenge common assumptions and routines, and suggest real possibilities for change. At the same time, provocative propositions are not “pie in the sky” Being built from the organization’s positive core, they are grounded on real examples of success from the past. They are statements that bridge the best of “what is” with the aspirations for “what could be.” They are meant to answer the question: What would our organization look like if it were designed in every way to expand our positive potential and unleash ever-higher levels of performance? (Ludema et al. 2003)

The group discussed their dream picture and decided how to put it into writing, i.e. writing a statement that puts their vision into words guided by the instructions on writing provocative propositions. They also based the propositions on the output of the phases already undertaken. Some samples of provocative statements were made available as reference. Each group crafted a macro provocative proposition and micro propositions that describe what the Technology Centers would look like and feel when all the chosen themes are at their best. Each group decided to take two of each chosen themes (LGF) and craft corresponding micro propositions for each of them.

### **Step 3: Design Phase – Building the Social Architecture for Organizing**

*“Organizational transformation is much more than the critical mass of personal transformation. It requires macro level changes in the very fabric of organizing the social architecture” (Diana Whitney).*

The Design phase defines the basic structure that will allow the dream (or vision) to become a reality. Like the other phases, the Design phase requires widespread dialogue about the nature of the structure and processes. This is what is meant by co-constructing the organization’s future (Cooperrider et al., 2003). Organizational design is to people as water is to fish. It has a profound influence on their performance and well-being, but they rarely pay attention to it, much less take steps to change it. In Appreciative Inquiry, it is just the opposite. We see every element of an organization’s social structure as a human creation open to reinvention and “redesign.” We believe that changes in the social structure represent powerful leverage points for moving organizations towards its dreams. As a result, we create conscious conversations about how organizations can design themselves to heighten their health and performance. We persistently ask the question: What forms of organizing can bring out the best in people, liberate cooperation, and give form to our highest values and ideals? Finding answers to this question is clearly an on-going quest. There are four essential ingredients for appreciative organizational design: (1) make it values-based, (2) develop designs that liberate human creativity, (3) involve the whole system, (4) embrace perpetual designing. (Ludema et al., 2003)

#### ***The Stakeholders Engage Themselves in Co-creating the Organization’s Future***

The focus group held several meetings to review and summarize the output of the recent AI process. These were sent to the participants with the request that they give their feedback and proposed revisions. The focus group found that the propositions were still “generic” and had to be enriched and phrased out in a way that would really “fit” into the context of the Technology Centers. We sent some guidelines to help them in the process:

- take into account the realities of all the Technology Centers;
- revise the provocative propositions using words and style that would reflect and provide the specific and clear direction for all the organization’s activities.

I started the work of fine-tuning all the outputs of the seminars and feedbacks when all the materials were sent back. The work was done in constant dialogue and consultation with the focus group members. The group worked on the draft of the proposed Macro-Provocative (Vision-Mission) Statement and Core Values for the Technology Centers.

The draft of the proposed Macro-Provocative (Vision-Mission) Statement and Core Values for the Technology Centers of the FMA was sent to the participants of the seminar. They were requested to present this draft to members of their respective Technology Centers and to solicit further comments from them. They were to ask their fellow stakeholders if the draft propositions expressed the organization's dream for the future and that they understand and feel a sense of ownership for them.

### **Step 4: Destiny Phase - Creating a Highly Improvisational Organization**

*“Allow yourself to dream and you will discover that destiny is yours to design” (Jackie Stavros).*

The final phase, Destiny, is an invitation to construct the future through innovation and action. (Ludema et al., 2003) The goal of the Destiny Phase is to ensure that the dream can be realized. The Appreciative Inquiry perspective looks at the role of improvisation in building appreciative management into the fabric of organizational culture. The design team publicly declares intended actions and asks for organizational support from every level. Self-selected groups plan the next steps for institutionalization and continued vitality. This is where the dream becomes a reality. Like the other phases, destiny is full of continuing dialogue. Provocative propositions should be revised and updated. Additional Appreciative Inquiry interviewing may take place with new members in the organization and/or new questions for existing members. The Destiny phase represents both the conclusion of the Discovery, Dream and Design phases and the beginning of an ongoing creation of an “appreciative learning culture. There are two aspects in the Destiny phase: (1) aligning the actual organization with the provocative propositions created in the Design phase; (2) building Appreciative Inquiry learning competencies into the culture Cooperrider et al., 2003).

In this phase, participants set up strategies and processes based on the propositions they have created in the design phase. It means looking at the entire horizon and being able to map out the future of the organization. They involve themselves in planning, designing, deliberating, and deciding concrete ways and means in order to bring the organization from where it is to where they want it to be. Another Appreciative Inquiry focus group seminar-workshop was held to attaining the following:

- Build Consensus for the final draft of the proposed Vision, Mission and Core Values of the TCW based on the provocative propositions.
- Brainstorm on all the creative things that might be done to realize their chosen provocative propositions.

When the draft of final version of the Development Plan was on hand, copies were submitted to the (1) Provincial Coordinator of all the Technology Centers, (2) Directresses and Technical Coordinators of the four Technology Centers involved in the research work. They were asked to give their comments and suggestions. Furthermore, meetings were scheduled in each of the Technology Centers to present the draft of the Development Plan to all the stakeholders. The aim was to engage them in further dialogues on it and involve them in decision-making to build a strong sense of consensus, ownership and commitment at the personal and organizational levels. In Appreciative Inquiry this process ensures ownership, continuous innovation and inquiry in order to bring the organization to its desired preferred future. The participants included the Faculty and Staff involved in the Technology Centers, representatives from the graduates, student representatives (one to three representatives from every course depending on the number of enrollees). Eventually, the draft of the final version of the development plan was accepted with some minor revisions and further suggestions for consideration and was finally presented and approved by the Board of Trustees. The Development Plan was likewise presented by representatives of the Technology Centers to its German sponsor organization - InWent-Capacity Building International, during their two-week seminar "Strengthening the Cooperation Between Companies and the Vocational Training Centers of the Salesian Sisters in the Philippines" held in Worms, Germany on November 11-December 4, 2003.

### **Research Question 2: The Generation of Grounded Propositions Based on the Focus Group's Experience in the Application of Appreciative Inquiry as a Change Process**

#### **Research Participants**

Theoretical purposive sampling was employed in the selection of the participants for the research on the second question. Focus group participants in the second research question included the all those involved in all the steps of the research leading to the creation of the Development Plan. However, the participation of interviewees from the

Discovery phase (Step1: use of the interview protocol) was limited to a selected group who represented every sector of the stakeholders of the Technology Centers. This was done to avoid handling numerous data. The Technical Coordinators took charge of selecting the members of this representative group based on the person's ability to articulate their experience and ideas about the Appreciative Interviews they have participated in. The Technical Coordinators selected 50-75% from the total number of those who participated in the interviews.

### **Data Collection**

Data was collected through interviews that were conducted with focus group throughout the planning process. Interviews were conducted using prepared interview guides to optimize the time available while providing a systematic and comprehensive approach (Patton, 2002) for the appraisal of the participants' experience in every phase of the planning process. The interview guides contained a list of questions intended to create a dialogue that encouraged complete disclosure as far as possible. Respondents initially wrote down their answers to the questions and then shared them with the assembly. The discussions were audio taped and later transcribed. The answer sheets were also collected after every workshop. This process was done at the conclusion of every stage of the Appreciative Inquiry process. Individual interviews with the focus group members were also conducted towards the end of entire planning process (August-September 2003). These were also audio- taped and transcribed. Data collected from all the interviews were transcribed and collated. The answers to the first three questionnaires were collated per topic. Results were reviewed periodically and presented to the focus group members.

### **Data Analysis**

#### ***Coding Procedures in Grounded Theory***

Coding represents the operations by which data are broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways. It is the central process by which theories are built from data. Analysis in grounded theory is composed of three major types of coding. These are: (1) open coding, (2) axial coding, and (3) selective coding.

#### ***Open Coding***

Open coding is the analytic process by which concepts (conceptual labels placed on discrete happenings, events, and other instances of phenomena) are identified and developed in terms of their properties and dimensions. The basic analytic procedures

by which this is accomplished are: the asking of questions about the data; and the making of comparisons for similarities and differences between each incident, event, and other instances of the phenomena. Similar events and incidents are labeled and grouped to form categories.

A Category is a classification of concepts. This classification is discovered when concepts are compared one against another and appear to pertain to a similar phenomenon. Thus the concepts are grouped together under a higher code, a more abstract concept called a category.

### *Axial Coding*

Axial coding is a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories. This is done by utilizing a coding paradigm involving conditions, context, action/interactional strategies and consequences. In axial coding the focus is on specifying a category (phenomenon) in terms of the conditions that give rise to it; the context (its specific set of properties) in which it is embedded; the action/interactional strategies by which it is handled, managed and carried out; and the consequences of those strategies. These specifying features of a category give it precision, thus we refer to them as subcategories.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) observe that though open and axial coding are distinct analytical procedures, when the researcher is actually engaged in analysis he or she alternates between the two modes.

### *Selective Coding*

Selective Coding is the process of selecting a core category, systematically relating to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development. A core category is the central phenomenon around which all the other categories are integrated.

In axial coding the basis for selective coding is developed. There are several steps involved in accomplishing selective coding:

- The first step involves explicating the story line (or the core category). This means, just as with open and axial coding, that the central phenomenon or core category is given a name. The criteria for choosing a core category should fit and describe the phenomenon for what they stand. The criteria must be broad enough to compass and relate, as subsidiary categories, other categories. The core category must be the sun, standing in orderly systematic relationships to its planets.

- The second consists of relating subsidiary categories around the core category by means of the paradigm. Once the properties of the core category are identified, the next step is to relate it to the other categories, thereby making them subsidiary categories. Relating categories to the core category is done by means of the paradigm- conditions, context, strategies, and consequences.
- The third involves relating categories at the dimensional level. Grouping is done again by asking questions and making comparisons. Once the data are related not only at the broad conceptual level but also at the property and dimensional levels for each major category, the rudiments of a theory are already in place.
- The fourth entails validating those relationships against the data. Validating the relationship against the data completes its grounding. With the various aspects of the theory thus laid out in memo form, either diagrammatically or narratively, the researcher is ready to make statements of relationship and to validate these statements with the data. There should be statements denoting the relationships between each of the categories, as they varied according to context. These relationships can be compared against data, both to verify the statement and to support the differences between the contexts at the dimensional level.
- The fifth and final step consists of filling in categories that may need further refinement and/or development. Satisfied that the theoretical framework holds up to scrutiny and that conditions and processes are built in and accounted for, the analyst can then go back to the categories and fill in any missing detail. This is necessary to give conceptual density to the theory, as well as increased conceptual specificity. Usually this filling-in continues even when the project phase of writing for publication, since writing itself reveals occasional minor gaps in the theoretical formulation.

These steps are not taken in linear sequence nor are they distinct in actual practice. In reality, one moves back and forth between them. (Strauss and Corbin, 1990)

### ***Coding of the Data of the Study***

The transcribed data were first of all “tidied up” in order to prepare them for coding and analysis. Copies of individual interviews and collated forms of all the interviews were put in order according to dates and participants in preparation for preliminary assessment.

Collations of the data were checked and read many times to verify the quality of the data and to get a sense of the whole. Words, phrases, and sentences which were considered important, significant and of interest were marked out. I followed the

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practical steps proposed by LeCompte (2000) in finding items for coding into categories and themes after data are sifted by repeated readings of field notes, interviews, and texts.

Similar concepts were grouped together and a list of all possible meanings was made. Categories were generated through line-by-line analysis (comparing and contrasting items- single words, phrase by phrase) and coding by sentences (asking what major idea is brought about by the sentence or interview). Spradley's (1979) semantic relationships (Table 3) were utilized as criteria in facilitating the work of comparing items. Through these criteria, items in the data can be substituted by phrases so as to organize them into sets of like and unlike items. The resulting lists constitute a taxonomy, category, or classification scheme. (LeCompte, 2000) Categories were named using code notes or memos to denote the concept identified at the different stages of coding.

*Table 3. Spradley's Semantic Relationships*

1. X is a kind of Y	7. X is the place for doing Y
2. X is in place of Y	8. X is used for Y
3. X is a part of Y	9. X is a way to do Y
4. X is a result of Y	10. X is a stage or a step in Y
5. X is the cause of Y	11. X is a characteristic of Y
6. X is the reason for Y	12. X is a place for doing Y

Further inductive analysis through comparison was undertaken to avoid bringing my own biases, assumptions, patterns of thinking, and knowledge gained from experience and thinking which can block our seeing what is significant in the data and prevent me from moving from descriptive to theoretical levels of analysis. The flip-flop technique (turning the concept upside down, imagining the very opposite or making a comparison at the extremes of one dimension) was employed. Strauss and Corbin (1990) affirm that this exercise helps the researcher to think analytically rather than descriptively about the data, to generate provisional categories and their properties and to think about generative questions.

Co-researchers were also asked to comment on the identified patterns after I have sorted out items into meaningful sets. Locating patterns involves reassembling them in

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ways that begin to resemble a coherent explanation or description of the phenomenon under study. It involves looking for some characteristics that were used to identify items as well as (1) similarity and analogy, or sets of items that are identical or serve the same purpose; (2) co-occurrence, or sets of things that occur at the same time or place; (3) sequence, or groups of things that appear in series; (4) hypothesized reasonableness or patterns researchers think should exist, based on prior research, experience, or hunches; (5) corroboration or triangulation, or patterns whose existence is confirmed by other pieces of data or information. Patterns are assembled by looking at each set of data, asking of it the same kinds of questions. (LeCompte, 2000)

A computer software for qualitative data analysis, QSR NUD\*IST, was utilized for the second phase of the coding analysis. QSR stands for Qualitative Solutions Research, a software development company in Melbourne Australia. NUD\*IST stands for Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing, Searching and Theorizing.

QSR NUD\*IST is a computer package designed to help users in handling non-numerical and unstructured data in qualitative analysis. The software processes data by indexing, searching text or searching patterns for coding and theorizing the data. It is designed for asking questions and building and testing theories. Its tools link documents and ideas in ways that allow the researcher to (1) search for patterns in coding and build new codes; (2) clarify ideas, discover themes and store memos about the data; (3) construct and test theories about the data; (4) generate reports including the text, coding patterns and/or statistical summaries; (5) display matrices and build models by linking with graphical display software.

Once patterns, themes, and/or categories have been established through inductive analysis, deductive analysis was used for the generation of theoretical propositions or formal hypotheses. The identified patterns were grouped and assembled into structures and groups of related or linked patterns. All of these were taken together to generate propositions. It involved a laborious task of creating diagrams, conceptual maps, flow charts and developing rough conceptual categories that were constantly reviewed, critiqued, and revised. The co-researchers participated in the work of conceptualizing and commenting on the rough propositions under construction. A conceptual diagram of the grounded theory process was developed to show the tasks done at various stages of the coding process leading to the creation of the propositions.

The semi-final drafts of the propositions were sent twice to all participants who attended the entire planning process, whether or not they were part of the focus group. Revisions were made based on their recommendations and comments.

## Results and discussion

This section discusses the results of the study which involves (1) the formulation of a Development Plan for the Technology Centers using Appreciative Inquiry approach, and (2) the generation of the propositions based on the focus group's experience using the grounded theory methodology.

### Creation of the Development Plan for the Technology Centers

This section presents the results or output of the different phases of the Appreciative Inquiry process leading to the creation of the development plan. It also discusses the organizational change that each Appreciative Inquiry phase has brought about in the Technology Centers.

*What are the core life-giving factors of the organization that they value most and which can be employed to chart the future of the Technology Centers of the FMA in the Philippines?*

The core life-giving factors of the Technology Centers are grouped into six main areas: (1) Shared Commitment to the Vision-Mission of the Organization, (2) Keen Experience of the Salesian Family Spirit, (3) Integral Development of the Faculty and Staff (4) Integral Education of the Students (5) Intensified Assistance Programs for Disadvantaged Youth especially Women-at-Risk, and (6) Promotion of Reciprocal Networking with the different sectors of the Educating Community, Industry Partners, Government and Non-government Organizations .

- *Shared Commitment to the Vision-Mission of the Organization.* Among the common best experiences of the participants is the acknowledgement of the creative fidelity of the administrators, faculty, and staff in the delivery of the institutional vision mission through holistic formation, education and the programs for the poor.
- *Keen Experience of the Salesian Family Spirit.* The Salesian Family Spirit is the distinguishing mark of the Salesian educating community. Rapport is characterized by dialogue and collaboration, non-discriminatory and warm relationships, a strong sense of belonging.
- *Integral Development of the Faculty and Staff.* The Technology Centers offer the possibility of gradual preparation enabling them to share the responsibility of organizing and carrying out our educative work. This is made possible through constant updating seminars for the faculty and staff, type of governance, upgrading

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of curriculum and facilities corresponding to industry demands, scholarship grants, etc.

- *Integral Education of the Students.* The Technology Centers offer poor young people, especially the women-at-risks, possibilities to direct their future through quality vocational-technical education steeped with values education. The dual training system offered in the curriculum further trains the students on hand-on skills and expertise which industries so require. The cutting edge of the Technology Center lies not only on quality technical education but also on the solid values formation offered to the students.

- *Intensified Assistance Programs for Disadvantaged Youth especially Women-at-Risk.* Human promotion and empowerment especially of women from the poorest families in the territories is the specific mission of the Technology Centers through the implementation of programs for the poor and the underprivileged such as scholarships, the Study-Now, Pay-Later Scheme, job placements, income-generating projects, cooperatives, outreach services, etc

- Promotion of a reciprocal networking with the different sectors of the Educating Community, Industry Partners, Government and Non-government Organizations. The thrust of the Technology Centers makes them capable of preparing highly competent trainees and gain access into the competitive area of the industrial sector. Networking helps them build up a culture of professionalism, competence, commitment and excellence.

The discovery of the core life-giving forces during the initial phase of the 4D process of Appreciative Inquiry started a conversation process that kindled the participants' enthusiasm and stirred up their capacities to build the future of the Technology Centers on their strengths. The experience has created a sense of excitement and anticipation for the other phases of the planning process. The novelty of the approach and effective use of dialogue in bringing to the fore the success stories created a sense of accomplishment and worth on the personal and organization levels. Their experience of "the best of what exist" fostered a strong climate steeped with affirmation steering them to fuse and mobilize their strong suits, resources, and aspirations for a future direction. These stories bring a level of inspiration, of "global relevance" to the process. They touch people's hearts in ways that elevate their decision-making and assessment of Appreciative Inquiry as a viable tool for their organization. (Cooperrider et al., 2003)

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*What shared vision of the desired future can be drawn from the discoveries of their positive forces and experiences in the Technology Centers?*

The collective vision of the participants derived from the macro-provocative statements is stated through the Macro provocative Statements made by two groups—which are the bases for the Vision:

- The TCW, a dynamic technical, educational organization imbued with Salesian Family Spirit empowers young women especially the poor and the marginalized through a comprehensive education in order to be partners in the sustainable development of the society.
- The FMA-TCW is called to be dynamically organized Educating Community committed to a holistic formation of the youth and the poorest in the Salesian Family Spirit geared towards their empowerment in building communities with conscience, commitment, and competency.

These two were considered together with the feedback of the participants of the study in the formulation of the VM Statement:

The Technology Centers of the FMA are Educating Communities

- permeated by the Salesian Spirituality;
- characterized by a culture of excellence;
- advanced through continuous improvement and benchmarking;
- achieve relevance through innovation.

The collaborative efforts of the Educating Community and the partner-agencies promote integral development of the youth affected by different forms of poverty through quality and value-laden vocational-technical education that leads to gainful employment.

Together, we accompany the young towards becoming persons of

- Christian conscience;
- Competence;
- Commitment;
- Social responsibility.

Servant leaders and partners in the sustainable development of the Philippine and global society

## **The Shared Vision Creates a Common Identity and a Shared Sense of Purpose**

The participants expressed that creating a shared vision has “pushed their boundaries”. Communication and interaction progressed in an open, relaxed, encouraging and cooperative atmosphere. The rapport established made it possible for the participants to identify and share their collective hopes and aspirations of the future. They began to more fully regard the Appreciative Inquiry planning as a positive and viable process that builds peoples and relationships. Ricketts and Willis (2001) state that the dream phase generates empathy necessary for people to share their dreams, to understand and relate the dream of others. By developing rapport and building empathy, the high level of trust required for the success in the Design phase naturally occurs.

The vision gained consensus because the participants were certain that their personal aspirations were considered in the crafting of the shared vision. It is the communal snapshot that illustrates the ideal future founded on what they have achieved best in the past. Cooperrider et.al. (2003) explain that the new level of enthusiasm and images embedded in the dreams facilitate the creation of specific actions and propositions for the future. It is the greatness demonstrated in the past that allows stakeholders to achieve their vision for the future. In short there is no question as to whether the new vision is achievable; the participants have already demonstrated their desire, willingness, and ability to make it possible. This energy and synergy is what will carry the group to the Design Phase.

*What provocative propositions can be crafted to provide a clear, specific, and shared direction for the organization’s future?*

The provocative propositions crafted at this phase are the following:

- *Relevant and responsive quality technical education.* The Technology Centers offer quality technical & value-laden education through blended learning approach for poor and disadvantaged youth. It models the highest standards of instructional leadership in the institutionalization of the Dual Training System (DTS). The Educating Community lives up responsibly to a high standard of professional preparation and culture of excellence ensuring that we are in track with the changes in global technology and industry.
- *Salesian Spirituality: the hallmark of our education.* The Salesian Family Spirit characterized by deep and open relationships, dialogue, mutual trust, collaboration, formation to commitment and social responsibility permeates our educational environment.

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- *Empowerment and equal opportunities through employment and entrepreneurship.* We educate the poor and disadvantaged young people, especially women-at-risk, to be competent and competitive workers. With particular preference, we form women to contribute their distinct, feminine, and professional quality contribution to the world of work. Our educative methods and interventions are “women-friendly” - made possible through gender inclusive approaches. Our graduates’ competencies match with high standard industry requirements: our cutting edge towards gainful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- *Agents of change in the global economy.* Challenged by a fast-track global economy and drawn together by our common vision and mission, we form ourselves as leaders and managers of change: critical and reflective thinkers; professionally, culturally, technologically competent; possessing positive work values & attitudes, giving primacy to human service and its contribution to the development of the society.
- *Strategic partnerships for integral sustainable development.* Partnerships are proactively sought, built and nurtured. We forge tri-sectoral partnerships and multi-sectoral networking. This weaving of relationships enhances and ensures successful implementation of dual training, sustains the operations of our technology centers, provides gainful employment for our graduates, and contributes to the technological progress of our society.

The propositions embody the concrete commitments to generate sustainable and systemic change in the organization: its systems, structures, processes, and culture towards the shared preferred direction. The provocative propositions re-create the organization’s image of itself by presenting clear, compelling pictures of how things will be when the positive core is fully effective in all of its strategies, processes, systems, decisions, and collaborations. In this way, provocative propositions redirect daily actions and create future possibilities and a shared vision for the organization and its members (Cooperrider et al., 2003).

The participants of the study also regarded the propositions as expressions of the core values of the Technology Centers and were incorporated into the framework of the draft of the Development Plan as Key Directions. By choosing to work along this outline, the participants establish that they consider the draft of the development plan as a comprehensive effort that bridges and aligns the best of the organization’s past and the collective aspirations of the future. This validates the proposition that in Appreciative Inquiry- “future images emerge through grounded examples from the organization’s positive past.”

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*What objectives, plans, strategies can be formulated to align the actual organization with the provocative propositions and to build the AI learning competencies into the culture?*

The Development Plan as presented here serves as a basis for the particular plans for the four Technology Centers. The plan which started with appreciative dialogues, collective vision and provocative statements is finally complete and provides direction for the organization – its people, systems, processes and structures. The content of the Development Plan is stated in general lines to allow the individual Technology Centers to adapt them to their particular settings. All the stakeholders know that the entire content was grounded on the data generated throughout the planning process.

Moreover after having completed the planning process, the participants began to see the impact of Appreciative Inquiry process holistically. An evident climate of enthusiasm and heartening assurance that they can bring their aspirations to completion prevailed. The completion of the plan spurs a particular vigor to make it suitable and operational in their respective Technology Centers. It also inspires them to continue the positive learning behavior and appreciative momentum that have been initiated and sustained by the planning process. Cooperrider et al. (2003) calls this the “creation of appreciative learning cultures”.

Participation in Appreciative Inquiry inspires action. The process of focusing on action commitments flows from earlier processes of discovery, dream, and design. During the destiny phase, open space processes serve to invite self-selection and self-organization of action agendas. The whole group gathers to discuss the path forward. Whatever is offered up determines what will be done. It is an emergent, self-organizing process for setting the organization’s action agenda for going forward. Enthusiasm runs high as people give their voice to their commitment to the organization’s future (Whitney & Cooperrider, 2000).

Table 4. The Development Plan of the Technology Centers (sample from the original)

Key Direction: RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE QUALITY TECHNICAL EDUCATION			
Key Objectives	Performance Indicators	Strategies	Coordinating Teams / Persons
<p>Delivery of a world-class holistic education to facilitate gender equality, eradicate poverty, and promote employment of youth especially women through access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- competency based, values laden, and technology updated curricula</li> <li>- innovative approaches at the level of the changes in technology and industry</li> <li>- better quality standards of instructional leadership in the institutionalization of the DTS-state-of-the-art facilities</li> </ul>	<p>FMA Technology Centers are leading centers for Vocational Technical Education and the Institutionalization of DTS</p> <p>Relevant programs (initial and continuing training) are specifically designed to meet local and industry demands</p> <p>Gender sensitive/inclusive curricula, teaching materials and methodology</p> <p>Professional managers and administrators</p>	<p>Benchmark with the best of the class</p> <p>Apply for ISO 9001</p> <p>Realignment of courses to suit specific needs</p> <p>Seamless (Ladderized) curriculum (feasibility study) for Com tech and Elex</p> <p>Continuing faculty and staff development program in all areas (academic, technical, spiritual, Salesian, socio-cultural, etc)</p>	<p>Central committee in schools</p> <p>Technical Directress/ faculty and industry partners</p> <p>Technical Directress and Coordinators</p> <p>Technical Directress</p> <p>Coordinator and Faculty</p>

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	<p>Enhanced collaboration and partnership for Dual Training System through the German Experience</p> <p>Multi-skilled and highly trained personnel in technical-vocational education</p> <p>The school environment facilitates the teaching-learning process and ensures work efficiency for quality service</p>	<p>Scholarship Funds/Grants for further studies (here and abroad) of the administration, faculty and Staff and for the SNPL program for the students</p> <p>Research Oriented Work for Faculty</p> <p>Upgrade/Improve/add structures and facilities necessary in the different training centers</p> <p>Infrastructure of the roads leading to Malihao, Victorias, Negros Occ.</p> <p>Dormitory for the students</p>	<p>Technical Directress and Coordinators</p> <p>FMA Local Council</p> <p>Local Government and hacienda owners</p> <p>Local and Provincial Councils</p>
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Key Directions: EMPOWERMENT AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP			
Key Objectives	Performance Indicators	Strategies	Coordinating Teams/Persons
<p>Delivery of a world-class holistic education to facilitate gender equality, eradicate poverty, and promote employment of youth especially women through access to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-broader occupational choices for our graduates especially for women in non-traditional occupations</li> <li>-new employment and entrepreneurial opportunities</li> </ul>	<p>“First-preference” opportunity for hiring or employment in industries (100%hired)</p> <p>Successful entrepreneurs from the mass base portion of the society (MASA) who are owners and managers of their own business enterprises</p>	<p>Integration of Entrepreneurial Training in all TVET courses, and even in 4th year High School in our schools offering Basic Education</p> <p>Job/Business Portals</p> <p>Enterprise Shelter or Business Incubation</p> <p>Income/employment projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperatives</li> <li>Garment trade</li> <li>Capital assistance</li> <li>Micro-lending</li> <li>Livelihood projects</li> <li>Self-help programs</li> <li>Agro-produce</li> </ul>	<p>Trainors of Entrepreneurship Program, Coordinator, BEd Personnel and Administrators</p> <p>Industry partners</p> <p>Industrial Coordinators</p> <p>Micro-lending institutions</p>

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Key Direction: AGENTS OF CHANGE IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY			
Key Objectives	Performance Indicators	Strategies	Coordinating Teams/Persons
<p>Technology Centers are resource centers for information, expertise and innovative technology</p> <p>Standardize services and procedures such as: Information and Communication, Compensation Schemes, Recruitment and Selection, Job Design, Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism, Training and Development</p> <p>Administrators and the faculty &amp; staff are leaders and managers of change</p>	<p>Other TVET centers benchmark with our Technology Centers.</p> <p>Other centers benchmark with industry and other TVET centers</p> <p>Revision and /or Development of the following manuals:</p> <p>Manual of Procedures</p> <p>Administrative Manual</p> <p>Faculty &amp; Staff Manual</p> <p>Systematic Formation Program for the Administrators, Faculty and Staff</p> <p>Career Path for the Administrators, Faculty and Staff</p>	<p>Strategic Planning for the TVET Centers (as a system and as individual TVET Centers)</p> <p>Creation of Committees formed by representatives from all centers to undertake the work of the evaluation, revision and /or development of the manuals.</p> <p>Formation of a committee to create the modules for the Systematic Formation Program</p> <p>Functional Human Resource Department</p>	<p>Technical Directress, Representatives from each sector of the Educating Community, industry partners</p> <p>AdHoc Committee for each Manual – coordinated by each TVET Centers, Technical Directress and TCW Head at the FMA Commission on Education Level (COMED)</p> <p>Technical Directress, Coordinators, Faculty and Staff Representatives</p>

### ***The Experience of the Focus Group on the Planning Process***

This section presents the grounded statements based on the Appreciative Inquiry experience of the focus group during the entire planning process. The grounded statements were generated or drawn out using the grounded theory method of qualitative research. Figure 5 shows the categories that emerged from the different coding procedures and were consequently used in the formulation of the final grounded propositions. Prior to the selection of the categories in the open coding procedure, data was grouped into two main clusters, namely: (1) *Doing AI* in the Creation of the Development Plan of the FMA Technology Centers, (2) *Being AI: Personal and Organizational Level*. These two clusters were most evident during the process of data sorting. Three main categories emerged from the data during the open coding analytic process: (1) *Appreciative Inquiry as a Professional Experience* which includes the experiences of the participants at the four technology centers and of the focus group or co-researchers who were involved in the entire process; (2) *Appreciative Inquiry as a Personal Experience* which takes account of the individual Appreciative Inquiry experiences of the participants; and (3) *Appreciative Inquiry as an Organizational Experience* which narrates the collective experience of Appreciative Inquiry in planning. These main categories were selected after analysis of the data provided enough concepts to be grouped together in describing a particular phenomenon.

Further analysis of the data during the axial coding phase generated five subcategories which describe Appreciative Inquiry as a process that (1) values persons, (2) builds up collective collaboration and co-construction, (3) invigorates convergence and ownership, (4) furthers continuous learning for life, and (5) is a viable and more preferred alternative planning experience (Figure5).

The use of the computer software QSR NUD\*IST allowed us to further search for the patterns in the data. The resulting text searches served as the building blocks for new codes that made us further clarify ideas discover themes and generate draft propositions. Finally the selective coding procedure generated two main categories with four other categories from which the draft propositions are based. These two main categories as shown below are: (1) Individual Affect, and (2) Organizational Outcome. The various patterns and themes included in these main categories are aligned with the 4D Process of Appreciative Inquiry and associated with Frank Barrett's four key areas of competency in the creation of highly improvisational organizations. (Table 5)

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*Table 5 .The Basic Themes and Patterns Derived from the Appreciative Inquiry Experience*

AI 4D	DISCOVERY	DREAM	DESIGN	DESTINY
BARRETT'S OD COMPETENC E	AFFIRMATIV E COMPETENC E	EXPANSIVE COMPETENC E	GENERATIV E COMPETEN- CE	COLLABO RATIVE COMPE- TENCE
Individual Affect	Self-Worth Mutual Affirmation Shared Trust Shared Value	Creativity	Empowermen t	Continuous Learning of Life Skills
Organizational Outcome	Rapport Team Spirit Consensus Commitment	Collaborative Co- Construction	Co- responsible Leadership Stewardship	Organizatio n/ Team Learning

*What discoveries (new learning, insights, patterns or themes) are evidenced or can be drawn from the use of Appreciative Inquiry in*

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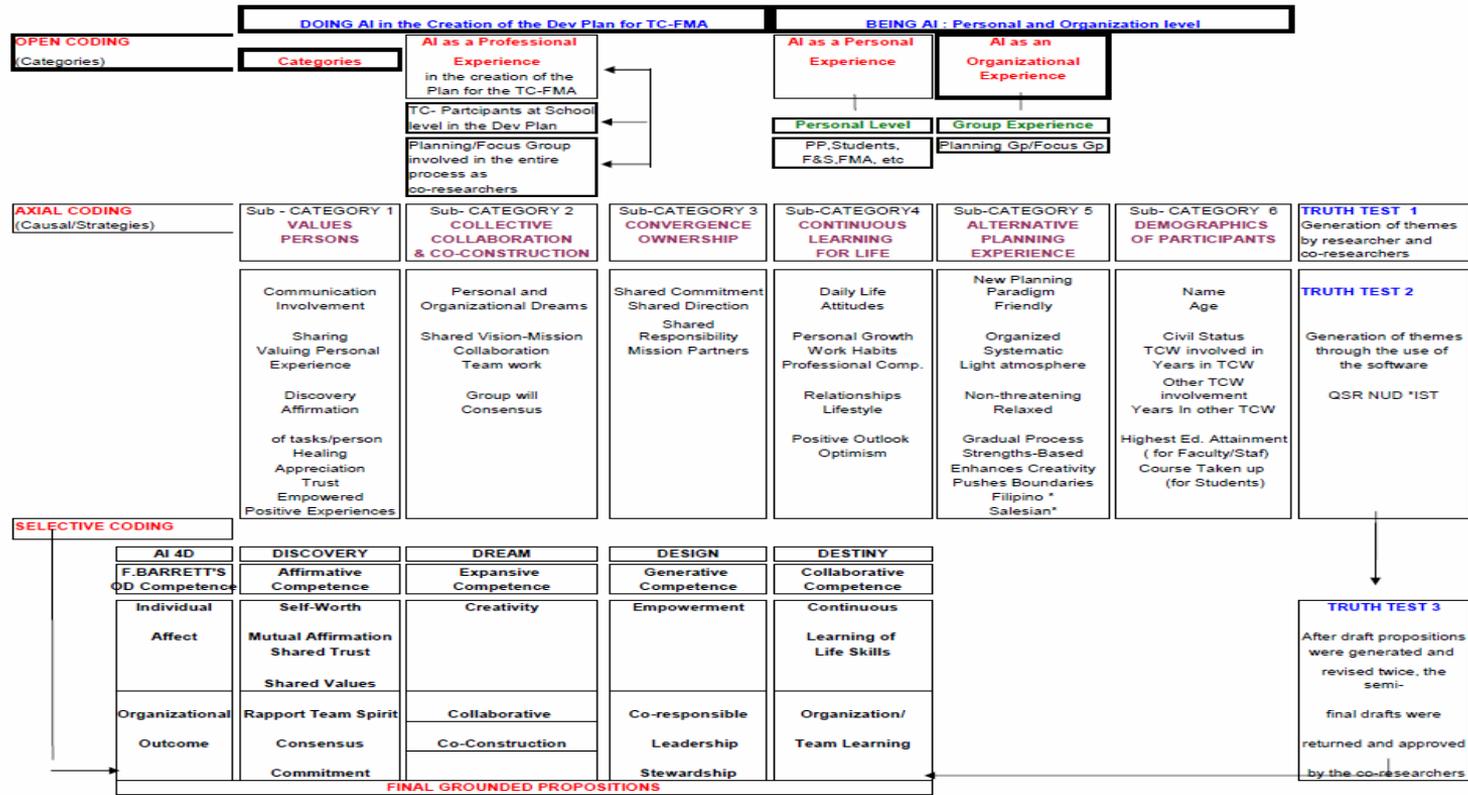
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*the process of the creation of the Development Plan for the  
Technology Centers of the FMA?*

The key learnings, insights, patterns or themes emerging from the Appreciative Inquiry experience of the Technology Centers are formulated and presented in this section as propositions. The propositions present the impact of Appreciative Inquiry on the personal lives of the participants and on the culture of the organization. Frank Barrett's four competencies found in appreciative learning cultures are used as points of reference in the discussion.

Figure 3. Process of Generating the Grounded Propositions Using Grounded Theory Approach



## Discovery and Affirmative Competence

Affirmative Competence refers to the capacity of the organization to draw on the human capacity to appreciate positive possibilities by selectively focusing on current and past strengths, successes and potentials. In nurturing affirmative competence, leaders of a high-performing organization celebrate members' achievements, directing attention to members' strengths as the source of the organization's vitality (Cooperrider, Whitney and Stravos, 2003).

In the Discovery Phase, the assumption is that human systems are drawn in the direction of their deepest and most frequent explorations. The discovery phase, designed around an interview process, is a systematic inquiry into the positive capacity of the organization. Interestingly, the interviews are not conducted by outside consultants looking in to define problems, but by members of the organization. This often occurs with a majority of membership and stakeholders participating. In other words, there is a system-wide analysis of the positive core by its members. The argument is that as people throughout the organization become increasingly aware of the positive core, appreciation escalates, hope grows, and community expands (Cooperrider and Sekerka, 2003).

*Proposition 1a. Affirming People Strengthens Commitment to the Vision-Mission. The affirmation of each person's highest potentials and their contribution to the success of the organization fosters enthusiastic participation, mutual trust, hope, optimism, and satisfaction, and commitment to the vision-mission among the participants.*

Appreciative Inquiry involves and values people. The process gives space for people and their life stories to be told, heard, considered and appreciated since sufficient time is given for dialogue and listening. The participants feel valued and esteemed not only for what they do but more so for what they are. Those interviewed feel they are given importance because their experiences, dreams, and suggestions are recognized in the creation of the plan. The positive language and active voice of Appreciative Inquiry builds up an impression that conveys involvement and participative commitment.

Enthusiastic participation and mutual trust were fostered as they shared their positive life stories, the organization's success stories, and high points in the daily life of the Technology Centers: its people, vision, mission, purpose, structures and activities. A considerably high level of satisfaction, sense of gratitude, and appreciation was brought about by their personal and collective realization of their self worth, the success stories of the Technology Centers, and the convergence of their personal and

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organizational aspirations. Grounding themselves on the many discoveries of possibilities in the Technology Centers empowers them to pick up the pace of change from this shared positive consciousness to build the future of the organizations based on these strengths. All these are consistent with Cooperrider's observation that "through an appreciation of organizational life, members of the organization learn to value not only the life-enhancing organization itself, but also learn to affirm themselves" (Cooperrider, 2003).

In the appreciative organization, members reawaken their innate capacity to appreciate value and see in wholes rather than exclusively focusing on particulars and each person's innate capacity to come up with sound ideals for a good future for oneself and for one's world (Srivastva and Barrett, 1999 in Cooperrider and Srivastva, 1999, p. 394).

When Appreciative Inquiry is followed by consistent behavior of affirming the individuals in the organization or communities, it further instills in the policies and rituals of the institution those things that people have discovered as their best behaviors and characteristics. Behavior should follow the language discoveries in the initial inquiry. The information that is gained and shared in the personal questions is vital to defining the new/continued behaviors in the organization. Behavior should also follow the guidelines of Appreciative Inquiry protocol, creating open and inclusive systems, sharing information, and remaining open to new possibilities. It is helpful to have executives and leadership prepared for information sharing that shifts from "need to know" to collaborative sharing (Hammond and Royal, 1998, p.182).

Some of the quotes from the interviews are presented below:

- AI Planning is affirming. It is not as grueling as the other planning strategies I've already gone through. It is very person-oriented. We focus on what is right and best rather than on what is wrong. In that way we value who we are, what we do and are motivated to do better.
- It gives importance to its members for better performance. It helps us to look to recognize and appreciate the assets of each individual. Appreciation inspires the person to do his/her best...
- The gradual presentation of the process that started with /from our story/life giving story gave a holistic and affirming attitude toward the planning process.
- The planning process gives us the chance to enrich each other with the contribution of our stories, feedbacks, suggestions and the space to tell our stories

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(freedom to talk) which helped us in the development of the plan. The strengths were highlighted and will be sustained. Sharing our success stories rekindled our dedication to work, to the vision and mission of the Technology Centers.

- I realized the importance of formulating a development plan based on our strengths or positive points. It can be replicated in all our other settings. It focuses one's directions towards the future. By being positive, we can successfully accomplish the tedious task of organization planning.

“Where appreciation is alive and stakeholders throughout the organization or community are connected in discovery, hope grows and organizational capacity is enriched” (Cooperrider).

*Proposition 1b. Affirming People Brings the Diverse Stakeholders to a Consensus Visioning. The Appreciative Inquiry affirmative experience and positive climate further team spirit and team learning. The resulting consensus provides for a common ground necessary in the work of future planning and commitment to its realization.*

The climate of affirmation, listening, and the gradual unfolding of the process of designing the positive collective dreams/images formed a social bond characterized by group will and cohesion. Members were responsive to team learning. The experience of Appreciative Inquiry created consensus, cooperation, and community: a bridging of minds and hearts. It has formed a collaborative system characterized and impelled by an affirmative focus, expansive thinking and a generative sense of meaning. The relational characteristic of Appreciative Inquiry is highlighted by this proposition. Interviews bridge the space between persons and their conversation initiate expansive dialogue, forge friendships, partnerships, and build up team spirit and enhance teamwork. They have found a common ground that creates a trustful sense of connection, interdependence, team identity and team spirit.

Zandee (2001) describes constructionist research as relational, appreciative and generative in character. It is relational in character since it focuses on what happens in the ‘in between’- the conversational space between you and me, the place where we can meet in genuine dialogue. A relational stance guides a collaborative approach to inquiry to places where action and research meet. Stories are the royal road to the study of relationships and the patterns that connect. A relational constructionist approach will be appreciative in nature since it asks us to welcome and listen to ‘the other’ so that

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together we can engage in inquiry with and through our differences. It is also generative in character since it keeps the conversations going to make people aware of the infinite possibilities that we have to create our world together.

The group involved in the planning process formed a team that coordinated and collaborated for the attainment of organizational goals (Larson and Fausto, 1989; Mosely, Megginson & Pietri, 1989). Teamwork is effective collaboration, cooperation and coordination among and within team members. It is the “fuel that allows common people to attain uncommon results and the catalyst that yields excellence from shared strengths.” Participative intervention gives all stakeholders an opportunity to contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization. Highly collaborative teams have the purpose of building ownership of operations as well as ensuring the members’ alignment of the organizational direction (Libato, 1998).

Some of the quotes from the interviews are presented below:

- After the Appreciative Inquiry interviews among our trainees, past pupils and sisters, I noticed a great change in their attitudes which improved their skills and competencies. It was an effective process which bonded everyone with one mind and heart in one common vision. It created a better perspective of collaboration and understanding.
- I appreciate the involvement of all the stakeholders from all Technology Centers (not only the big bosses) in the planning. Everyone was consulted and considered.
- The process of valuation rekindled our dedication to work, commitment to the vision-mission.
- This approach is a big leap from the ordinary. It makes us aware that in our littleness we can make big leaps for change. There is always something we can do to improve quality of holistic technical education.
- It gave us the courage and challenge to move on with what we have started for the improvement of our centers and of our trainees. The unity, harmony and commitment of the members of the technology centers have great impact in their progress.

## **Dream and Expansive Competence**

Expansive Competence implies that the organization challenges habits and conventional practices, provoking members to experiment in the margins. It makes expansive promises that challenge them to stretch in new directions, and it evokes a set of higher values and ideals that inspire them to a passionate engagement. High-performing organizations create a vision that challenges members by encouraging them to go beyond familiar ways of thinking; they provoke members to stretch beyond what have seemed to be reasonable limits (Cooperrider, et.al. 2003).

Greenleaf (1998) explains that a dream “is a deeply felt and yearned for hope of the possible”. Unless you have thought or will think through your dream, there is no way you can achieve it. Taking the time and effort to do this will provide a thousand subtle benefits- every thought and action will be influenced consciously, subconsciously, or unconsciously by your dream. It will pull you, lift you and enrich you.

It is similar to what Cooperrider calls “the inner dialogue” that renders persons and organizations powerful guiding images of the future. One of Appreciative Inquiry’s core principles states that a positive inner dialogue creates positive actions. The Appreciative Inquiry dialogue creates guiding images of the future from the collective whole of the group. It exists in a very observable, energizing and tangible way in the living dialogue that flows through every living system, expressing itself anew at every moment (Cooperrider, et. al., 2003).

*Proposition 2a. Creating an Organizational Space for Creativity Generates the Seeds / Bases for the Organization’s Collective Future. The Appreciative Inquiry process provides an organizational space for creativity essential in crafting new, affirming, and generative images: seeds/bases for the co-construction of their preferred collective future.*

*Proposition 2b. The Positive Climate of Appreciative Inquiry Helps in Generating Positive Dreams for the Future of the Organization. The non-threatening and trusting atmosphere combined with a supportive rapport among the stakeholders made them daring in creating great dreams great for the future of the organization.*

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New, affirming, and positive images were generated during the moments when the group members engaged in spirited conversations and in the sharing of their stories and dreams. The spontaneous, relaxed, and affirming ambiance provided the organizational space to articulate their dreams and engage in visioning with much ease and confidence. The affirmation brought about by the experience of articulating their dreams grounded on strengths and potentials encouraged them to stretch the possibilities beyond the limits they were used to. They were encouraged by the absence of negative self-talk and self-image on the personal and organizational levels which usually hinders their participation. The creation of the shared image of the preferred future progresses through two stages: (1) articulation of the organizational dream by creating a visual and a written image of the most desired image of the organization as a whole and (2) generation and description of an organizational structure that helps make the desired future a reality (Watkins and Mohr, 2001). This process proved to be one of the most inspiring and promising phases for everyone during the planning process.

*Proposition 2c. Each Participant's Personal Dream Becomes an Element of the Organization's Vision. Appreciative Inquiry makes participants realize that their personal dreams are highly valued and contribute to the organization's vision.*

The involvement of the stakeholders in the different phases of the planning process was highly appreciated. The inclusion of representatives from all the sectors generated an organizational-wide interest. Although it took much more time to get everyone involved, the participants knew that the inclusion of each one's aspirations is significant in ensuring the success of the creation of the Development Plan. Watkins and Mohr (2001) explain that getting the whole system in the room brings out the best in people; it facilitates the "whole story" coming together and it inspires highly committed actions on behalf of the whole.

The focus group that worked throughout the planning process had a remarkable influence in setting, sustaining, and building up the momentum, tone, vitality and spirit of the planning process. They maintained the sense of belonging of the stakeholders in the process. They insured that each participant's values, deepest concerns and aspirations were integrated in the organizational vision. Peter Senge (1990) observes that shared visions emerge from personal visions. He uses the metaphor of a hologram to illustrate the movement of crafting shared visions from personal visions:

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*“If you cut a photograph in half, each part shows only part of the whole image. But if you divide a hologram, each part shows the whole image intact. Similarly, as you continue to divide up the hologram, no matter how small the divisions, each piece still shows the whole image. Likewise, when a group of people come to share a vision for an organization, each person sees his own picture of the organization at its best. Each shares responsibility for the whole, not just for his piece” (p. 212).*

Consensus Visioning or the coming together to agree on a common vision statement for the organization (Ludema, 2003) guarantees that the vision statement reflected each of the participant’s personal vision. It took a considerable amount of time for the group to translate the vibrant images of the future into a comprehensive vision statement and to give form to the common vision through provocative statements but when it was finished the participants felt a profound sense of collective accomplishment and bold determination to realize their shared vision together.

Building shared vision is not about people surrendering their individual visions. It is about deepening each person’s unique sense of vision and establishing harmony among the diverse visions so that we can move forward together. It does not require surrendering our uniqueness. If anything, it requires more, not less, of our uniqueness (Senge, 1992, in Spears, 1995).

Greenfield (1998) explains that regardless of the stress of circumstances, institutions function better when the idea, the dream, is to the fore, and the person, the leader is seen as servant of the idea. It is not “I”, the ultimate leader, who is moving this institution to greatness; it is the dream, the great idea. “I” am servant of the idea along with everyone else who is involved in the effort. As the ancient Taoist proclaimed, “When the leader leads well, the people will say, ‘We did it ourselves.’” The leader leads well when leadership is, and is seen as, serving the dream and searching for a better one. The dream has the quality of greatness if it not only provides the overarching vision for the undertaking but also penetrates deeply into the psyches of all who are drawn to it and savor its beauty, its rightness, its wisdom. The test of greatness in a dream is that it has the energy to lift people out of their moribund ways to a level of being and relating from which the future can be faced with more hope than most of us can summon today. (Greenfield, 1998)

Some of the quotes from the interviews are presented below:

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- I like the brainstorming and the visioning of our dreams. I was able to express my ideas, convictions and dreams. I am happy to be part of the vision/dream for the center.
- Conceptualizing our dreams, formulating the vision, strategies and programs. Happy, excited, “WOW” experiences, sharing ideas, interactions, and discussions – they were all
- interesting and enriching. I even congratulated myself for the developments.
- Boundaries were pushed during the guided imagery. It allowed us to use fantasy to develop positive images for the development of the Centers. Our Technology Center has a long way to go but we already have a head start.
- Very positive, very relaxed atmosphere. It really pushed my boundaries. Before this, I was just complacent but now I become excited – on fire with the terms that we used in dreaming. I became on fire with the provocative terms we used- this process really takes long because of the process of paradigm shifting.
- It is good to know that everyone has great dreams for the Technology Center. I realized that dreaming big for the future of the Technology Center is not the task of administrators only. Dreaming great dreams for the institution also belongs to the each member of the Technology Centers.

### **Design and Generative Competence**

Generativity is a term used in developmental psychology to refer to the nurturing of future generations and continuation of the species, usually by having children (Erickson, 1959/1980). There is emerging research to indicate that generativity may be internally motivated by strong needs for both power and intimacy (Mc Adams, 1985). It is somewhat related to Etzioni’s concept of transcendental capacity, that is, the capacity of human beings to project an ideal vision of a preferred future and pull themselves toward it, thus capable of transcending limitations of the environment and of the individual (Etzioni, 1968). In this case, generativity refers to the organizational and social focus on posterity, on willing a world to future generations that one would most like to inherit. It is what Kolb (1988) calls the response of caring as it applies to “...a generative social contract ‘Accept responsibility for the world and you are given the power to change it’” (Johnson and Cooperrider, 1991).

Generative Competence means that the organization constructs integrative systems that allow members to see the results of their actions, to recognize that they are making a

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meaningful contribution, and to experience a sense of progress. High-performing organizations inspire members' best efforts. Their systems include elaborate and timely feedback so members sense that they are contributing to a meaningful purpose. In particular, it is important for people to experience progress, to see that their day-to-day tasks make a difference. When members perceive that their efforts are contributing toward a desired goal, they are more likely to feel a sense of hope and empowerment (Cooperrider, et.al. 2003).

*Proposition 3a. The Appreciative Inquiry Process Enables Participants to Share Closely with the Mission of the Organization. In the process of re-inventing the Technology Centers, the participants realize and consider themselves not just employees "working for" the organization. They regard themselves as stewards and mission partners "working with" and co-responsible for the progress of the entire organization.*

The Generative competence of the Technology Centers is reflected in its aspiration and commitment to form "Servant Leaders" from among its stakeholders. This is articulated in the Vision Statement. Appreciative Inquiry has initiated this commitment from the first day of planning and continued to build up on this commitment to empower the stakeholders to personally and collectively pursue this vision. The Technology Centers use the term "mission partners" to express the thrust of stewardship shared by the every member of the Educating Community in different but equally important works and roles. Aside from being a planning process, the experience of Appreciative Inquiry works as a catalyst in effecting more vibrant and committed sense of belonging to the institution. The mission partners consider themselves more effective and efficient collaborators of the institution- invigorated by a healthy sense of pride in their personal and professional competencies and in everything that the Technology Centers stand for.

The experience of empowerment was also particularly felt and evidenced in the positive and transforming experience of the poor and disadvantaged students who felt valued, important and needed. Being highly regarded has improved the levels of their self-confidence, enthusiasm, and participation. Appreciative Inquiry was an opportunity for the affirmation of their strong points and possibilities on which they can build their hopes for the future. Together with the mission partners they hold themselves responsible for the realization of the shared vision. Every individual felt that the performance of their daily ordinary activities serve as building blocks in the

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realization of the vision and goals of the institution. Bañaga (1998) writes: “Using dialogue to create a shared vision empowers people to achieve their goals. Members of an organization, who come together to interact and to design a shared future, unleash synergy. Synergy means that the power of the whole is greater than the sum of its individual parts. There is power when everyone shares in a common vision.”

*Proposition 3b. The Appreciative Inquiry Process Makes Participants Responsible and Accountable for the Attainment of the Plan. The mission partners guarantee that their leadership potentials, sense of ownership, commitment and service are at the service of the organization’s thrust to realize the plans they have designed for the Technology Centers.*

The employees of the Technology Centers envision and consider themselves mission partners responsible for the completion of the plans. In this way, their commitment goes beyond engaging in the initial conceptualization of dreams but moves to forge partnerships of service. With these conviction and commitment they build up the community with whom and for whom they want to achieve the shared vision and goals. Regardless of their roles and duties, they have assumed responsibility for the visionary part and the implementation part of leadership (Blanchard, 1998 in Spears, 1998). Like circular waves generated by throwing a pebble into a pond, the vision’s circle needs to be continually expanded beyond the circle or core cadre of those who helped develop it (Levin, 2000). Wheatley (1992) describes vision not simply as a destination to seek but as a field that permeates the entire organization, affecting all who bump against it. Taking the vision forth and engaging others in its exploration helps build this field. Likewise, vision is a long-term proposition which implies stewardship to protect the interests of future generations (Spears, 1998).

Peter Senge (1990) narrates how a certain product development team became committed the realization of company’s shared vision:

*“Once the vision and how it would develop crystallized, the participants began to work in an extraordinary way. The energy and enthusiasm was palpable. Each individual felt a genuine responsibility for how the team as a whole functioned, not just “for doing one’s part”. Openness to new ideas shifted dramatically and technical problems that had been blocking their progress began to be solved”.*

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*Proposition 3c. The Rewarding Experience of Participants Furthers the Attainment of the Organization's Vision and Plans. Appreciative Inquiry is a learning experience that enhances personal growth and develops team learning: providing the participants with competencies necessary to carry out the organization's vision and plans.*

The participants consider the Appreciative Inquiry experience as a privileged moment of learning. They learned not only a new approach in organizational planning but they also enriched themselves with “life-skills”. These “life-skills” are new perspectives, attitudes, behaviors, choices and values that are proposed and/or reinforced through their participation during the Appreciative Inquiry process. The participants acknowledge that they have experienced growth on the personal as well as interpersonal levels. Appreciative Inquiry as an approach for change has also reinforced personal growth and learning which consequently became the potent and significant influence in the participant's support for the development of the organization.

Peter Senge, et.al. (1999) state that “Learning depends on people's choices. The first rule of all learning is that learners learn best what learners want to learn. . Direct personal benefits constitute the first source of reinforcing energy for deep sustaining change. It is inherently satisfying to work in a team where people trust one another and feel aligned to a common sense of purpose. Dr. W. Edward Deming used to say, “People seek joy in work.” In this day of “bottom line focus” when people often assume that personal needs are subservient to the business' needs, it is liberating to discover that the two can be aligned rather than in opposition. Indeed people's enthusiasm and willingness to commit themselves naturally increase when they realize personal results from a change initiative; this in turn reinforces their investment, and leads to further learning. John Seely Brown of the Xerox Company says: “Organizations are webs of participation. Change the participation and you change the organization.” Networks of people who rely on one another in the execution of real work, bound together by “a common sense of purpose and a real need to know what each other knows” are regarded as “the critical building block of a knowledge-based company.”

Some of the quotes from the interviews are presented below:

- A very positive and enriching process. It was remarkable to discover higher and common grounds and ideals. There is a strong sense of ownership of the vision and the spirituality.
- The common goals and vision bring out the best efforts in everybody. We are satisfied and this has motivated us to be more responsible in our roles and duties.
- I am satisfied with the process and the outcome. These make me feel proud and inspired because I know that I am not merely an ordinary hired employee but I am here to render service that contributes to the fulfillment of the Dream.
- The profiles drawn up inspire me to live up to these challenges. The ideals are the norm of our advancement.
- Planning is enhanced when built on the positives because it is encouraging to see that we are good and can become better. The process and the plan challenged us to live and start now to form the quality of students, teachers and administrators.

### **Destiny and Collaborative Competence**

Collaborative Competence means that the organization creates forums in which members engage in ongoing dialogue and exchange diverse perspectives to transform systems. Collaborative systems that allow for dialogue promote the articulation of multiple perspectives and encourage continuous, active debate. The high-performing organization creates the environment that fosters participation and highly committed work arrangements (Cooperrider, et.al. 2003).

Destiny is a time for integration, commitment, and focused action. It is a time for agreeing on how to we will take the work of the earlier phases and move it forward at a practical level, and how we will support each other in the process. But it is more than that. It is also a time for seeding the organizational ground of transformation so that it can grow new inquiries and lead to more discovery, learning, and sharing of knowledge, wisdom, and best practices. Successful destiny set the stage for ongoing positive change (Ludema et al, 2003).

One of the significant effects of the Appreciative Inquiry process in the creation of the Development Plan is the initiation and fostering of the discipline of appreciation (Paddock, 2003) in the Technology Centers. While the Appreciative Inquiry process has traced the map for the future of the organization, the planning process also became a moving factor in fostering personal growth and transformation of the participants

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through the reinforcement of positive life skills and values affecting their daily realities. Simultaneous with the direction setting of the institution's future comes the direction setting of their personal lives through a renewed positive change in their paradigms, perspectives, attitudes, interpersonal relationships, personal convictions, work habits, lifestyle and choices. This personal transformation is basically a redirection to "look at their lives with an appreciative lens" which they consider as learned and espoused from the experience of Appreciative Inquiry. This gradual and progressive personal change is considered an essential factor in propelling the organization's great efforts to attain its shared vision since "an organization's commitment to and capacity for learning can be no greater than that of its members" (Senge, 1990).

*Proposition 4. The Appreciative Inquiry Process Enhances the Participants' Self-Possession and Sense of Personal Integrity. The positive experience of the Appreciative Inquiry process is an effective and motivating factor in advancing positive self-worth, confidence, direction, and personal growth and transformation of the participants.*

Paradigm shift was a common experience of the participants. This helped them to appreciate and live according to the values proposed by the organization. They find a more noble purpose in seeking life's directions and in committing themselves to the educational mission of the Technology Centers. Johnson and Cooperrider (1991) call this "authenticity" which refers to the way in which people live and enact personal and heartfelt values in response to the compelling vision of the organization.

*When one is learning to act with authenticity, they are also attempting to transcend their own limitations. People speak of not only acting upon, but being transformed by the mission. At an individual level, this is involved with the willingness for self-discovery, for operating at the uncomfortable edge of one's competence and learning what needs to be done in the moment one is doing it. Authenticity is achieved by going beyond what is comfortable and risking creative insights and "breakthroughs". It is to live responsibly, to be accountable for all the circumstances surrounding one's existence (Johnson and Cooperrider, 1991).*

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Senge (1990) refers to this as Personal Mastery which involves continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively. It goes beyond competence and skills, though it is grounded in competence and skills. It goes beyond spiritual unfolding or opening, although it requires spiritual growth. It means approaching one's life as creative work, living life from a creative as opposed to a reactive viewpoint. People with high level of personal mastery have a special sense of purpose that lies behind their visions and goals and live in a continual learning mode.

The work undertaken together with the co-researchers unravels new discoveries, builds on new learning, forms collaborative interactions, and fosters a broader and more in-depth interest in the organization and its future. The strong sense of hope builds the organization through a more collaborative application of their learning of appreciative inquiry.

Cooperrider et al. (2003) identify two important organizational tasks in the destiny stage which will sustain the momentum of change, namely (1) the creation of appreciative learning cultures and (2) the creation of highly improvisational organizations.

- The *creation of appreciative learning cultures* is a task and challenge in the Destiny phase involving the effort to create a radically new, innovative organization or tweaking an already well-run organization, appreciative learning cultures nurture innovative thinking by creating a positive focus, a sense of meaning, and systems that encourage collaboration. Appreciation involves the investment of emotional and cognitive energy to create a positive image of a desired future. Appreciative learning cultures accentuate the successes of the past, evoke images of possible futures, and create a spirit of ongoing inquiry that empowers members to new levels of activity.

- The *creation of highly improvisational organizations* is a "goal" of the process. These are organizations that demonstrate consistent strength in four key kinds of competence: Affirmative, Expansive, Generative, and Collaborative. The discussion of these four competencies in relation to the generated propositions based on the participants' experience of Appreciative Inquiry process is a validation of the process' viability and credibility in achieving these remarkable results in the areas of productivity, improvement, efficiency, and performance.

Some of the quotes from the interviews are presented below:

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- Appreciative Inquiry I encouraged me to make a paradigm shift, i.e. to think and act positively. This is important especially when we work with the less fortunate and disadvantaged persons. They have been used to believing that they have less and cannot go further in life. We can help foster a healthy self-esteem through this approach.
- I am applying what I learned from the Appreciative Inquiry experience in my daily life. I look at the strengths whenever I plan discover that my way of thinking and acting improves. I also do when evaluating activities.
- I became more responsible, creative and generous in my work since the Appreciative Inquiry Planning. It is good to be part of a plan that includes all the dreams and goals that we aspire for. It is also a challenge because when we dream, we know we have to work hard to make it a reality.
- Paradigm shift. The positive approach is new to me because I was always used to the negative-trouble shooting. I learned that we can build on the positives. Another experience concerns the involvement of all the members of the educating community who were challenged and delighted to join the planning. All their dreams and experiences counted and were part of the plan. Everyone's voice was heard - the plans came from the contributions of all the stakeholders of the Technology Centers. We learn so much from each other.

### ***The Researcher's Key Learnings and Insights***

The following propositions are the key learnings and insights based on my experience as a facilitator and researcher using the Appreciative Inquiry approach in this study. They are insights resulting from the experience of the planning process, field notes, observations, interactions, reflections, study and research.

*Proposition 5. Appreciative Inquiry resonates with the Philippine culture and values orientation. The resonance of Appreciative Inquiry approach with the Filipino's cultural and value orientation facilitated its acceptance as a viable and effective methodology in the formulation of the organization's Development Plan*

Appreciative Inquiry is not a culture-bound approach. The innumerable success stories related by many studies and works employing Appreciative Inquiry in many countries prove its acceptance in the global setting. This study involving the application of

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Appreciative Inquiry Approach in Technology Centers found in four different localities in the Philippines finds that Filipino participants showed positive acceptance of the Appreciative Inquiry approach. The positive relational and dialogical perspectives of Appreciative Inquiry highly appeals to the Filipino's communication and interpersonal approaches. Bañaga (2003) finds Appreciative Inquiry highly suited to his Asian culture because it is a "very gentle" process which builds the strengths of people instead of tearing them apart. Likewise, De Boer (2000) writes "that the appreciative stance of Appreciative inquiry is new and relevant in the Philippine culture where due to centuries of colonization the Filipino tends to downgrade him/herself and his/her culture. Furthermore she states that the collaborative principle of Appreciative Inquiry affirms the natural cultural propensity of the Filipino's "bayanihan" or collective neighborhood action.

Jocano (2001) explains that Filipinos communicate what one wants without "hurting feelings" and therefore alienating people. The most common formal ways of communicating involve the processes of pagsasanguni (consultation), paghihikayat (persuasion), pagkakasundo (consensus). Consultation is one of the indirect ways of conveying a message without offending people and involves the participation of the other person in decision-making. This approach meets the Filipino sensitivity for personalized and reciprocal concern. It strengthens the individual identity with the group. Persuasion moves the conversation to the original intention by appealing to the experience and by confirming consent or agreement thought the postlocutionary question *hindi ba?* (isn't it?). Through consultation and persuasion, consensus is reached without transgressing any social, ethical, and moral norms. In this way, good relationship is maintained; interpersonal and intergroup cooperation is enhanced (Jocano, 2001).

*Proposition 6. The Appreciative Inquiry approach reinforces the values of the Salesian Spirituality. The dialogical, relational, collaborative, and optimistic stances of the Appreciative Inquiry approach reinforce and enhance Salesian Spirituality and its core values*

All the Technology Centers are characterized by specific "organizational culture" called the Salesian Spirituality. All the members of the Educating Community share the values of this specific spirituality. The dialogical, relational, collaborative, friendly, and optimistic stances of Appreciative Inquiry are also fundamental values of Salesian Spirituality and style of education. The compatibility and similarity of the proposals

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and activities of Salesian Spirituality with Appreciative Inquiry facilitated the participants' willingness to accept and participate actively in the different phases of the planning using the Appreciative Inquiry approach. The participants acknowledge that the positive experience with the Appreciative Inquiry approach renewed their regard for the relevance and efficacy of the Salesian Spirituality and style of education.

Paddock (2003) cites how an Appreciative Inquiry process conducted in the Benedictine University reaffirmed and advanced its Benedictine identity and established a clear and compelling Benedictine University identity based on the Benedictine values that already existed as a positive core which were further reinforced and brought to life through the Appreciative Inquiry process.

*Proposition 7. The experience of AI facilitation generated the following insights: (1) The affirmative presence of the AI facilitator is in itself an intervention for change; (2) The AI process engages the facilitator and the participants in a journey leading to a fusion of strengths, capacity building, and community building; (3) A new generation of leaders and style of partnership emerge when facilitators and participants play to their strengths during the AI process.*

### ***The affirmative presence of the AI facilitator is in itself an intervention for change.***

Facilitation is a skill that makes life easier for people and brings out the best in them. The facilitator guides the progress of the process. The work of Appreciative Inquiry facilitation posed several challenges to me especially in creating and setting the climate for positive change necessary as AI is accepted as a viable OD approach. The work of facilitation does not rely only on the knowledge and mastery of the theoretical basis and methods of Appreciative Inquiry. Appreciative Inquiry is gradually accepted and highly valued when participants the experience AI itself especially through an affirmative facilitator who is the first change agent or mediator in the process. It is often said that "the medium is the message." The emphasis of AI on face-to-face conversations (storytelling) necessitates that an AI facilitator be an Affirmative Present

Presence- ready to invest on real-time presence with and for the participants. This demands personal discipline, relational skills, work preparation, professional competence, readiness to learn from another AI expert/mentor, and moreover, a congruence of life that speaks of a lifestyle lived in the appreciative mode. The value-added factor of facilitating the Appreciative Inquiry process lies in the fact that I as the facilitator happened to be the first person to be influenced and formed by it. The values of AI and the positive experience of AI facilitation progressively spilled over into my way of life and daily choices. The task of AI facilitation has become more of an adventure in exploring new grounds rather than a research work that was simply to be accomplished.

***The AI process engages the facilitator and the participants in a journey leading to a fusion of strengths, capacity building, and community building.***

The initial level of interest, inquiry, rapport, energy, motivation with which we started the AI process gained momentum towards a remarkable level of creativity, leadership, consensus, ownership and team spirit as the process progressed. From the first experience of joy, trust, affirmation and hope, AI has progressively seized the participants' involvement toward a new level of energy that creates and draws out the best possibilities there are in themselves and in the organization. The attention, space and value given to storytelling, dialogue, emphatic listening, mutual trust, openness, respect for diversity, collaboration and constructive thinking were valid contributions in facilitating the fusion of strengths, capacity building and community building.

The process calls for the capacity for flexibility, the art of positive reinforcement, and a sense of accurate timing in putting across the appropriate questions. It calls the facilitator to "stay with the group" while having the "appreciative eye" and the knack to draw out, guide, appraise, and align the interactions, dialogue, expressions, results and experience into a meaningful and powerful image that correspond to the participants' desired design of their future. This creates an energized environment so that participants make themselves accountable for the realization of their common desired destiny. Their strong sense of fulfillment in the optimum use of their emergent creative and leadership potentials has proportionate positive effects on their personal integrity, quality of relationships, professional life, and commitment to social responsibility.

***A new generation of leaders with a distinct AI partnership style emerges when facilitators and participants play to their strengths during the AI process.***

The emergence of a new generation of leaders is achieved through the personal development, team learning and team spirit that the AI experience has inspired and during the process. This is particularly true when describing the experience of the co-researchers who have worked together throughout the entire planning process. They have grown knowing, accepting, appreciating each other. They have grown caring about each other while working towards a common goal. They achieve a particular style of positive partnership and leadership built on discoveries, strengths, and passion for a common desired future. They form part of something greater than themselves. Their enhanced sphere of influence and quality of involvement make them prepared and optimistic to multiply the positive experience. The level and style of their partnership, which go beyond the symbiotic level, becomes an essential factor of the accomplishment of their goals for sustainable partnerships with agencies and industries in society. The embryonic stage of sustainable and effective partnership starts its existence and growth among the team members who first desired it.

The organization involved in technology is also more human and more alive because persons are valued more than structures and systems. Their harnessed creativity, efficiency, and leadership capacities drive the organization to success. The sense of loyalty to the vision of the organization is intensified. Individuals and teams assure responsible and creative delivery of the goals and objectives as a result of the revitalized organizational culture-which at this point is more vision-driven than managed by control.

Presented below are samples of the participants' appraisal of the AI facilitation:

- I thank you for the approach and your mode of facilitation elicited spontaneous responses.
- There are no pre-conditionings and judgment – these created a relaxed and safe environment for us to share and to work even better as a team.
- The process was done in a very organized and systematic method. It is adapted according to the level of the participants. While prior preparation is very evident, the facilitator can patiently adapt to the pace / work condition of the participants.

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- The process achieved its purpose because of the cooperation of the participants, atmosphere of simplicity, joy, trust, and friendship - primarily demonstrated by the presence of the facilitator.
- Your friendly presence brings on a non-threatening, light and enriching atmosphere which inspires and encourages us to put in all our best efforts.

Cooperrider and Sekerka (2003) write a comparable observation in their article *Toward a Theory of Positive Organizational Change*:

*Our theory proposes that participants' inquiry into the appreciable world leads to an elevation of inquiry, which contributes to an expansion of relatedness to others that creates a fusion of strengths. Inquiry was pressed by the experience of positive emotions, which help individuals to draw upon their combined strengths. As a result, the positive energy is much greater than what was available before the participants began the process. In Appreciative Inquiry, movement within the technique (i.e. from discovery to dream) involves cultivating narrative rich environments, reenactment of stories of human cosmogony, analysis of interdependent causes of success, relating to history as a positive possibility, metaphoric mapping or symbolizing of the system's positive core, and the enactment of visions of a valued future that people want to create. The aim is the fusion of strengths that connect organizational members to their shared positive core. It appears that there is an almost natural development moving from appreciative awareness to an expanded cooperative awareness, which emerges as a shared realization of collective empowerment. Inspiration is associated with the building of commitment and sense of purpose. Joy connects with creativity, liberation, gratitude, and an increasing propensity to serve.*

## **Summary, Conclusions, Recommendations**

### **Summary**

The summary is drawn from the experience of the formulation of the Development Plan of the Technology Centers of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians (FMA) and the generation of the grounded propositions based on the experience of the participants of the planning process using the Appreciative Inquiry approach. The planning process was undertaken with the representatives of the different stakeholders of the four Technology Centers of the FMA in the Philippines. The 4D process (Discovery to Destiny phases) of Appreciative Inquiry was utilized in the formulation of the Development Plan. The Grounded Theory approach used in qualitative research was utilized in generating grounded propositions from the participants' and researcher's key learnings and insights. The results of this study have been formulated, deliberated upon, and approved by the stakeholders and Board of Trustees of the Technology Centers.

The results of the study include the following:

#### ***The Formulation of the Development Plan of the Technology Centers of the FMA***

- *The core life-giving factors* that are most valued and were employed in charting the future of the Technology Centers of the FMA in the Philippines are grouped into six main areas, namely: (1) Shared Commitment to the Vision-Mission of the Organization, (2) Keen Experience of the Salesian Family Spirit, (3) Integral Development of the Faculty and the Staff, (4) Integral Education of the Students, (5) Intensified Assistance Programs for Disadvantaged Youth especially Women-at-Risk, and (6) Promotion of Reciprocal networking with the different sectors of the Educating Community, Industry Partners, Government and Non-government Organizations. The experience of creative dialogue through positive inquiry in the discovery of these core life-giving forces promoted an organizational climate characterized by stronger social connections, creative organizational thinking, enthusiasm and hopeful determination to build the future based on the organization's strengths. The environment became progressively steeped with affirmation encouraging them to fuse and mobilize their strong suits, resources, and aspirations for a future direction.

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- The shared vision of the desired future drawn from the discoveries of their positive forces and experiences is: (1) The Technology Centers of the FMA are Educating Communities permeated by the Salesian Spirituality, characterized by a culture of excellence, advanced through continuous improvement and benchmarking, achieve relevance through innovation; (2) The collaborative efforts of the Educating Community and the partner-agencies promote integral development of the youth affected by different forms of poverty through quality and value-laden vocational-technical education that leads to gainful employment; (3) Together, we accompany the young towards becoming persons of Christian conscience, Competence, Commitment and Social responsibility; (4) Servant leaders and partners in the sustainable development of the Philippine and global society. The shared vision creates a common identity and shared sense of purpose. Consensus was achieved because the personal aspirations were incorporated in the formulation of the shared vision. The shared vision is thus regarded as the communal snapshot that illustrates the ideal future of the Technology Centers. Appreciative Inquiry is also regarded as a positive and viable OD process.

- *The provocative propositions* crafted to provide a clear, specific, and shared direction for the organization's future are: (1) Relevant and responsive quality technical education, (2) Salesian Spirituality: the hallmark of our education, (3) Empowerment and equal opportunities through employment and entrepreneurship, (4) Agents of change in the global economy, and (5) Strategic partnerships for integral sustainable development. The profiles of the Ideal graduate, teacher and administrator form part of the provocative statements. They consist of traits that should characterize the stakeholders of the Technology Centers along the lines of the Vision Statement. The propositions present the compelling organization's image and the stakeholders' concrete commitments in order to generate sustainable and systemic change in the organization. The profiles are the statements of the members' consensus on what they envision as their self-portrait corresponding to the organization's vision and core values. These profiles create a greater sense of individual and collective ownership, accountability, and reciprocal interest for the attainment of their collective aspiration.

- The objectives, plans, strategies formulated to align the actual organization with the provocative propositions and to build the AI learning competencies into the culture are embodied in the Development Plan for the Technology Centers. The Development Plan is stated in general lines to allow the individual Technology Centers to adapt them to their particular settings.

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- The participants favorably valued the entire Appreciative Inquiry process particularly upon the completion of the plan. The experience inspires them to continue the positive learning behavior and appreciative momentum that have been initiated and sustained by the planning process. They are also committed to support the adaptation and implementation of the Development Plan in their respective Technology Centers.

The Grounded Propositions Generated from the Participants' Experience of Appreciative Inquiry:

- *Affirming People Strengthens Commitment to the Vision-Mission.* The affirmation of each person's highest potentials and their contribution to the success of the organization fosters enthusiastic participation, mutual trust, hope, optimism, and satisfaction, and commitment to the vision-mission among the participants.
- *Affirming People Brings the Diverse Stakeholders to a Consensus Visioning.* The Appreciative Inquiry affirmative experience and positive climate further team spirit and team learning. The resulting consensus provide for a common ground necessary in the work of future planning and commitment to its realization.
- *Creating an Organizational Space for Creativity Generates the Seeds / Bases for the Organization's Collective Future.* The Appreciative Inquiry process provides an organizational space for creativity essential in crafting new, affirming, and generative images: seeds/bases for the co-construction of their preferred collective future.
- *The Positive Climate of Appreciative Inquiry Helps in Generating Positive Dreams for the Future of the Organization.* The non-threatening and trusting atmosphere combined with a supportive rapport among the stakeholders made them daring in creating great dreams for the future of the organization.
- *Each Participant's Personal Dream Becomes an Element of the Organization's Vision.* Appreciative Inquiry makes participants realize that their personal dreams are highly valued and contribute to the organization's vision.
- *The Appreciative Inquiry Process Enables the Participants to Share Closely with the Mission of the Organization.* In the process of re-inventing the Technology Centers, the participants realize and consider themselves not just employees "working for" the organization. They regard themselves as stewards

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and mission partners “working with” and co-responsible for the progress of the entire organization.

- *The Appreciative Inquiry Process Makes Participants Responsible and Accountable for the Attainment of the Plan.* The mission partners’ assure that their leadership potentials, sense of ownership, commitment and service are at the service of the organization’s thrust to realize the plans they have designed for the Technology Centers.

- *The Rewarding Experience of Participants Furthers the Attainment of the Organization’s Vision and Plans.* Appreciative Inquiry is a learning experience that enhances personal growth and develops team learning: providing the participants with competencies necessary to carry out the organization’s vision and plans.

- *The Appreciative Inquiry Process Enhances the Participants’ Self-Possession and Sense of Personal Integrity.* The positive experience of the Appreciative Inquiry process is an effective and motivating factor in advancing positive self-worth, confidence, direction, and personal growth and transformation of the participants.

### The Grounded Propositions Based on the Researcher’s Experience, Key Learnings and Insights

- *Appreciative Inquiry resonates with the Philippine culture and values orientation.* The resonance of Appreciative Inquiry approach with the Filipino’s cultural and value orientation facilitated its acceptance as a viable and effective methodology in the formulation of the organization’s Development Plan.

- *The Appreciative Inquiry approach reinforces the values of Salesian Spirituality.* The dialogical, relational, collaborative, friendly, and optimistic stances of the Appreciative Inquiry Approach reinforce and enhance Salesian Spirituality and its core values (e.g. Salesian Family Spirit).

- *The experience of AI facilitation generated the following insights:* (1) The affirmative presence of the AI facilitator is in itself an intervention for change; (2) The AI process engages the facilitator and the participants in a journey leading to fusion of strengths, capacity building, and community building; (3) A new generation of leaders and style of partnership emerge when facilitators and participants play to their strengths during the AI process.

## Conclusions

Participation and engagement in the Appreciative Inquiry process result not only in improved organizational planning outcomes but also in commitment. The conclusions of this study corroborate that Appreciative Inquiry is a viable and effective OD change intervention technique. Moreover, Appreciative Inquiry Approach is an effective catalyst in developing personal growth and organizational culture. The following are the conclusions of this study:

- The commitment of all the stakeholders of the organization is a key factor in creating and sustaining the emergent appreciative culture. Such culture builds a vibrant organization characterized by high participation, loyalty, creative and enthusiastic interest in the organization's welfare, inspired initiatives, innovation and actions. The initial positive ties established through person-to-person connections within the organization is an effective starting point in launching effective and positive network partnerships with agencies and industries.
- The Appreciative Inquiry experience leads the participants to recognize a new and deeper meaning and value of *work*. They discover a deeper meaningfulness and appreciation in their work. Work becomes a "calling" as participants begin to regard what they do as significant contributions in the attainment vision and mission of the organization.
- The Appreciative Inquiry process is a generative learning process. It is always creating itself anew. The launching of the initial positive question in the process initiates or inspires the continual cycle of action and reflection. Appreciative Inquiry is an iterative process because it provokes new learning, insights and propositions. The validity of the generated propositions is contextual and never absolute.
- Appreciative Inquiry is an inspiring field of learning that elevates the learner's capacity to higher grounds of thinking and creativity. It strengthens the positive identity of persons and generates a positive affect towards learning. This expands self-knowledge, relationships and outlook towards the discovery of "new things" one still has to learn from others and from the world at large. Appreciative Inquiry is an effective holistic and humanizing process. It makes people more fully human and more alive. It is for this reason that many organizational gurus like Cooperrider and Johnson (1991) call Appreciative Inquiry as the "Path with Heart"
- The Appreciative Inquiry approach is a remarkable positive technique/process for facilitating the development of leaders, particularly among the disadvantaged

youth: young people who have experienced setbacks in their life brought about by economic and moral deprivation or abuse. They live along the fringes of society and very often are not regarded for what they are and what they can become. The positive experience of Appreciative Inquiry is a strong alternative experience that transforms them into self-confident, self-regulating, and highly motivated leaders capable of producing another generation of leaders through their service of leadership.

### **Recommendations**

- The positive experience and outcome of the Appreciative Inquiry approach in planning is at its emerging stage. It has significantly contributed to the growth and development of organizations. The following recommendations hope to further Appreciative Inquiry's effectiveness and efficiency in personal, social, and organizational transformation.
- Adopt Appreciative Inquiry as a planning mentality or paradigm for organizations. Having experienced the positive and transforming power of this methodology, I recommend that organizations use Appreciative Inquiry in directing their organizations into the future. Appreciative Inquiry builds on strengths and unleashes unlimited possibilities for organizations. This is in contrast with the problem solving methodologies that centers on problems and works through command and control which limit human potential on the personal and organizational levels. While it is already gaining ground in other countries, organizations in the Philippines have yet to challenge themselves to make a shift in the way they perceive and work with organizations. Appreciative Inquiry would be a beacon of hope to persons in organization who resist change brought about by the cultural and social consequences of the deficit language of the problem solving methodology.
- Organizations that experienced and highly regarded Appreciative Inquiry as an effective OD approach need to look for and/or organize integrated approaches and strategies to ensure the continuous development of the emerging appreciative culture. This initiative is effective in ensuring the progressive shift from the "problematic mode" to the "appreciative mode". The conscious sustainability involves strategically reconstructing the organizational core processes, structures, personnel development, traditions, and many others.

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- The Technology Centers need to find strategies in order to integrate the Appreciative Inquiry approach in its curriculum, administration, faculty and staff development program, student services, leadership programs, community extension services, networking and partnerships, and many other aspects of the organization. This thrust ensures the development of the nascent stage of positive environment that the Appreciative Inquiry experience has already initiated. The strategies recommended need not necessarily be “astonishingly spectacular” or “something out of the ordinary.” Rather these strategies start with the daily ordinary conscious choices made by each stakeholder in the organization that could have a cascading effect on the organizational level of vitality. The resonance and compatibility of the values and approach of Appreciative Inquiry to Salesian Pedagogy will prove effective in advancing this integration. Provisions for valuation of the appreciative culture and creating opportunities for sharing of experiences among the co-researchers (FMA, faculty and staff, students) of the study will prove beneficial in empowering them as key persons /facilitators in the sustainability and development of the appreciative culture in the Technology Centers of the FMA. The proper integration of programs in the faculty and staff development and youth leadership formation programs can help further this proposal.
- Development of a qualitative and quantitative appraisal tool/test that will assess the extent of influence that Appreciative experience effects on the organizational life and structures of the Technology Centers (e.g. school culture, achievement level, etc.). This appraisal tool will facilitate the creation of an appreciative culture. This appraisal tool may help develop other affirmative organizational theories, methodologies, practices, and further AI studies.
- Encourage or conduct further qualitative or quantitative research studies of organizations that have applied AI in applied in organizational planning especially in the Philippine context. These studies would further validate the viability and effectiveness of AI as a planning approach and contribute to enrichment of the emerging and fast-moving researches of AI as an action research in organizational transformation and development.
- Develop Appreciative Inquiry Formation Programs for AI Leaders or Facilitators who will promote Appreciative Inquiry and guarantee the sustainability of appreciative cultures in organizations that have already experienced Appreciative Inquiry. Training AI leaders or facilitators in organizations will advance the organization’s interest in building appreciative culture. The presence of trained AI leaders or facilitators in an organization would ease out the

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apprehension that the initial appreciative atmosphere would simply die out after some time without able facilitators, supportive leaders or structures that would ensure the progress of appreciative culture in their organizations and cultivate appreciative leadership.

- Establish partnerships /networks between organizations that have already utilized AI in the Philippines. Partnerships or networks will ensure sharing of expertise and best practices, resources and developments through the various efforts and initiatives of member institutions and organizations. Appreciative organizations bonding together can create a strong leverage of engaging and learning communities through collaboration, discussion groups and purposeful activities such as consciousness raising seminars and workshops, training, advocacy, continuous learning, publications, benchmarking, programs, projects, conferences, and many other inventive and entrepreneurial projects possible for every sector of human life and every type of organization (educational, business, healthcare, government, non-government agencies, church, etc). These networks and partnerships can lead to increased social impact, sustainability, enhanced organizational capacities, promote affirmative leadership and organizational orientations and cultures, positive social innovations through individual and collective potentialities: fresh and new forms of organizational relationships and structures that give hope and spells new models of organizational excellence in all strata of human life.

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