Beyond Problem Analysis: Using Appreciative Inquiry to Design and Deliver Environmental, Gender Equity and Private Sector Development Projects

Trip Report 1: Sept. 28–Oct. 15, 1999
Kamasamudram, India
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1. Goals of the project and purpose of the trip

The goal of this project is to advance progress toward sustainable development and to facilitate sustainable livelihoods by providing governmental and non-governmental organizations in India with a better method of designing and delivering programs—one that identifies and reinforces a community’s strengths, achievements and vision, rather than focusing on its problems, deficiencies and needs.

The purpose of this project is to build capacity within a network of 11 non-governmental development organizations (NGOs) in the use of appreciative inquiry. This is a new community development method that moves beyond participatory problem and needs analysis by instead identifying and building on past achievements and existing strengths within a community, establishing consensus around a shared vision of the future, and constructing strategies and partnerships to achieve this vision.

The purpose of the first trip to Kamasamudram was for IISD to train a group of 22 senior MYRADA project staff in the use of appreciative inquiry, and then support them as they applied the approach with self-help groups, families and village development committees in their projects. The outcome of the training and work with MYRADA was successful and fulfilled the expectations of the participants as stated on the first day of the workshop. In a written evaluation, all MYRADA staff scored the workshop as either good or excellent.

Through the training the participants attained a clear understanding of the appreciative approach, allowing them to apply it successfully and innovatively in the field. They also attained enough skills to further integrate appreciative inquiry into the wider range of activities and relationships in which they are involved. This experimentation and search for best methods will be supported by a core group of appreciative inquiry trainers at MYRADA, regional appreciative inquiry workshops every three months, and limited advanced outside training.
2. Team members

- Graham Ashford, IISD (project manager and community development specialist)
- Neil Ford, IISD (participation specialist and video production liaison)
- Mette Jacobsgaard, IISD (appreciative inquiry specialist)
- Laszlo Pinter, IISD (measurement and indicators specialist)
- Saleela Patkar, MYRADA (local project co-ordinator and community development specialist)

For a full list of workshop participants please refer to Annex A.

3. Trip 1 project location

Kamasamudram, located in southeastern Karnataka, was one of three project sites chosen in which to conduct training and fieldwork. The three sites, Kamasamudram, Kadiri and Molakalmuru (near Holalkere on the map below), each represent a different geographic area with unique cultural characteristics, histories and strengths. The intent of conducting the training and fieldwork in these locations was to test appreciative inquiry under a variety of circumstances with a range of different local-level institutions. This approach also makes the most effective use of existing staff, funding and local goodwill. MYRADA is currently engaged in projects in each of these areas and has established (or is establishing) close ties with all of the local stakeholders.

The people around Kamasamudram make their living from a variety of activities including agriculture, sericulture, micro-enterprise, transportation and industry. In addition, for the last 110 years the Kolar Gold Fields have also been a major source of employment. The mines have nearly exhausted their gold supplies and are winding down. They continue to operate with subsidies from the government, allowing them to begin a phased shutdown that gradually displaces the remaining 5,000 workers. Like many resource-dependent communities around the world, families in Kamasamudram must now try to find new sources of employment - often forcing them to migrate in search of better opportunities.

MYRADA has worked in the Kolar District for some time and has good relations with the local self-help groups, village development committees, watershed development committees and other village-
level institutions. MYRADA’s Kamasamudram project is currently undertaking activities focused on micro-watershed management, and cottage industries in 130 villages. Several models of linkages have been established between credit groups and other financial and marketing institutions to support socio-economic development components.

4. Schedule of activities

- Sept. 28th, 29th IISD team travelled to Delhi
- Sept. 30th  Workshop planning meeting in Delhi
- Oct. 1st  Workshop planning meeting in Bangalore
- Oct. 2nd  Rest day - Indian Holiday (Gandhi’s birthday)
- Oct. 3rd  Travel to Kamasamudram and orientation
- Oct. 4th  Training in Kamasamudram village
- Oct. 5th  Training in Kamasamudram village
- Oct. 6th  Training in Kamasamudram village
- Oct. 7th  Fieldwork with SHGs,* VDCs** and families
- Oct. 8th  Fieldwork with SHGs, VDCs and families
- Oct. 9th  Fieldwork with SHGs, VDCs and families
- Oct. 10th  Wrap-up and travel to Bangalore
- Oct. 11th  Video-editing and project planning
- Oct. 12th  Video-editing and project planning
- Oct. 13th  Video-editing and project planning
- Oct. 14th  IISD team departed

* self-help groups
** village development communities
5. Workshop training activities

Mette Jacobsgaard led the training workshop and fieldwork review with support from three IISD staff: Graham Ashford, Neil Ford and Laszlo Pinter. A total of 22 senior training staff from MYRADA were involved for the full seven-day period. The project team was pleased with the level of interest and commitment from all of those who took part.

The first three days of the workshop were spent presenting the four stages of appreciative inquiry to the participants and completing small-group and full-group exercises to reinforce the ideas. The four stages of appreciative inquiry are discovery, dreaming, designing and delivering (please see Annex B for a more detailed overview of appreciative inquiry). A fourth day of training had originally been scheduled but proved not to be necessary since all of the MYRADA staff preferred working longer hours rather than having the training last the planned eight days.

The training started with practical applications. Participants paid particular emphasis to using story-telling to recount periods of excellence. In the first exercise, for example, participants broke into pairs and recounted stories of times when they felt really excited about working for MYRADA, examining in detail who was there and what happened. They then spent time analyzing the stories to understand the factors that contributed to peak periods. This process allowed them to become more aware of the characteristics of MYRADA at its best.

The rationale for designing the training in this way was to let the participants experience the process itself before discussing the underlying theory of appreciative inquiry. The method is an experiential process rather than a technique that can be taught from a book. Generally, people find it difficult to immediately embrace the concept that through recognizing and reinforcing that which gives life to a group of people (achievements, strengths, vision and plan), problems can be overcome. The fieldwork nonetheless clearly showed a transformation of the MYRADA staff during which the connection to and full relevance of the classroom training was made.

For the workshop, the title of the fourth stage was changed from “delivering” to “doing” at the request of the MYRADA staff because they felt that the former term connoted a sense of dependency on MYRADA.
6. Fieldwork

Participants tested the approach with three self-help groups, two village development committees and one family. All groups were informed that the activity was not part of their regular training program, but was being undertaken so that MYRADA could explore better methods of interacting with community members. All of the groups were willing to put aside time to participate in the three fieldwork days of the inquiry. This participation testifies to the respect and gratitude that villagers feel for MYRADA.

The fieldwork component of the training was designed to give the MYRADA staff an opportunity to undertake an appreciative inquiry in several local villages with the support of the training team. During the fieldwork, MYRADA staff led the various groups through the four stages of appreciative inquiry with questions and exercises specific to each group’s particular context. The interview questions and protocols were planned in advance based on the experience that the participants had gained during their training. The fieldwork took place on three successive mornings, with the first devoted to discovery, the second to dreaming and the third to designing and doing. During the afternoons and evenings, the MYRADA staff discussed the morning’s results and shared insights into how the exercises or interview questions could be improved for future fieldwork.

The staff found appreciative inquiry to be structured in a way to move beyond problem analysis. Most people commented on the optimism and enthusiasm that appreciative inquiry generates, both among the villagers and among the MYRADA staff. There was a general feeling that the action plans that were developed did not raise expectations of outside assistance from MYRADA, but rather led villagers to the conclusion that they could do most things themselves. In several instances, local people discovered that their vision could be fulfilled through better information and initiative rather than with technical support or money.

Many of the participants made an important realization toward the end of the workshop: appreciative inquiry can be applied equally effectively to their lives. To use the method effectively with others they must make an “appreciative leap” themselves, internalizing the process and using it to realize their own full potential.

Most found appreciative inquiry easy to understand, but at times challenging to use. Some of the participants found that the atmosphere of the fieldwork was a bit formal or artificial because it was the first application of appreciative inquiry and the participants were all getting used to the approach. Although the need for more practice was expressed, participants felt that the exercises had benefited the groups and that with follow-up the approach would work well.
The participants also discovered that appreciative inquiry could be used across a wide range of groups and activities. They noted that the information it generated was often new, more detailed, or more reliable than other methods currently in use. In one story that came out during their fieldwork, a woman described how with the support and cunning of the other self-help group members, she had been able to expose her husband’s covert gambling and drinking activities and convince him to lead a better family life. The story completely engrossed both the MYRADA staff and the self-help group members as it was recounted in detail. It demonstrated a level of solidarity and ingenuity within the self-help group that the MYRADA staff marveled at. The self-help group later developed a vision and action plan around ending drinking and gambling in the village. This type of outcome does not often occur when participatory rural appraisal (PRA) exercises are used alone.

Although the participants recognized the usefulness of appreciative inquiry in generating new information and enthusiasm, they did not see it as a complete substitute for other techniques such as PRA. They did, however, see the need to move away from using other techniques to identify and focus on problems. In the fieldwork, for example, drawings and PRA-style exercises were used to reinforce or alternatively depict stories, dreams and provocative propositions. This was useful refinement in cases where people were illiterate or where language was a barrier to accurate translations.

The MYRADA staff felt that appreciative inquiry was very effective in developing a provocative yet achievable group vision, something that they are currently working to emphasize. Appreciative inquiry seeks to generate the themes, feelings and emotions behind stories, not simply a list of activities or events. These discoveries are crucial in ensuring that the provocative propositions are grounded and represent more than a list of utopian dreams. They should be related to the strengths and peak achievements that have occurred previously in the group.

MYRADA needs to find words in local languages that best describe the essence of a provocative proposition. Translating the terms and questions in the approach from English into local languages was occasionally a challenge for MYRADA. It remains an essential piece of work for the future.

Some of the provocative propositions arising from the fieldwork were sharp, realistic and yet provocative. One example given is, “All poor families in the village are members of a self-help group.” This proposition is not a list of activities or needs but a vision arising from the experienced success of the members of one
The proposition further inspired a realistic and achievable action plan, which required no outside assistance. In fact, the members of the self-help group made individual commitments to begin immediately implementing the plan.

7. Measurement and evaluation challenges

When designing the project, several issues arose on measurement and evaluation. To begin to assess these issues, Laszlo Pinter, a measurement and indicator specialist at IISD, joined the project team’s first trip to India. The two key measurement and evaluation questions and IISD’s initial conclusions are summarized below.

What is the best method of evaluating the effectiveness of the project as a whole? How can participants determine if appreciative inquiry is more effective than other planning and participation methods currently used by MYRADA?

Since this is a pilot project, an objective evaluation that considers both the successes and failures of the project will be useful to DFID, MYRADA and IISD. Although such an evaluation may not appear to be entirely consistent with the intent of appreciative inquiry, which is to focus only on the successful aspects of a situation, IISD hopes that a balanced approach will better inform future applications of appreciative inquiry in development projects. Therefore, to determine the effectiveness of the project, some combination of the following approaches is being considered:

- consulting community members who participated in the appreciative inquiry, particularly those who have a previous history of interacting with MYRADA staff using methods other than appreciative inquiry;
- consulting MYRADA staff on the effectiveness of appreciative inquiry compared with their current methods;
- comparing the effects of an interaction with appreciative inquiry in one village with the effects in a ‘control village’ where a standard method such as ZOPP or PRA is used (many workshop participants felt that this approach raised ethical questions — if appreciative inquiry was in fact a superior method, is it acceptable to continue to use another technique that had a potentially disempowering effect?); and
- contracting an outside evaluator to conduct an independent evaluation.

Should a standard monitoring and evaluation system be changed to be consistent with the intent of appreciative inquiry?

At issue here is whether a monitoring and evaluation method that has been purposefully designed to be neutral can be combined with an approach that intends to emphasize only positive achievements and actions. If an evaluation brings to light a group’s failure to meet its objectives as set out in its action plans and provocative propositions, the energy and enthusiasm created in the discovery, dream and design stages of appreciative inquiry might be
dissipated. As this energy for change is one of the very immediate and unique benefits of appreciative inquiry, steps should be taken to preserve and nurture it wherever possible. Nonetheless, a question remains on the perceived legitimacy of an evaluation that does not give equal weight to success and failure.

Further fieldwork will be necessary to determine if the two approaches are mutually exclusive and if any attempt to combine them will inevitably compromise one or the other. In this respect, IISD is particularly interested using future fieldwork to explore whether iterative applications of appreciative inquiry can in some circumstances replace the need for continuing monitoring and evaluation. Project monitoring and evaluation usually occurs against a static target that is established early in the planning process. Yet, it is almost inevitable that as the action plan is being implemented, the group will be considering new initiatives to pursue. As such, the former target may not remain relevant to the current group goals. Iterative applications of appreciative inquiry might avoid this problem by allowing the group to rediscover what it is doing well (an evaluation emphasizing strengths), continue dreaming and designing its future (revisiting the provocative propositions and resetting the priorities of the groups’ goals), and update its action plan to reflect its current goals. Should such a strategy be pursued, further questions are raised regarding who would conduct the subsequent inquiries — the MYRADA staff or the group members. If it is to be the latter, then capacity building in the use of appreciative inquiry needs to occur within the groups.

8. **Production of a training video on appreciative inquiry**

During the training workshop and field exercises, the project team worked with a local filmmaker and technical crew, to produce a training video on appreciative inquiry. This aspect of the mission proved to be very successful.

The film maker, Anil Annaiah, met with the project team before production began, to discuss the participatory nature of the project, and to develop an approach to production that did not intrude on the training exercises. This approach proved effective: during the workshop and field exercises, MYRADA staff said that they soon forgot about the camera and microphones. Even though they kept to the background, Mr. Annaiah and his team were able to record creative visual sequences for the discovery, dream and design phases of the appreciative process, both with MYRADA staff in the workshop, and with local people in the villages. The training video that will be produced from these sequences will introduce appreciative inquiry to new practitioners in a direct, visually compelling manner.

The project team reviewed the videotape that was shot during the training sessions when they returned to Bangalore, then developed the following structure for the final production in a “paper edit”: 
Opening sequence: Introduction to MYRADA and its work at the village level. Explanation of why MYRADA is interested in the appreciative approach. Interview with Mr. Fernandez, the executive director, about the limitations of a needs-based approach to community development, and the appeal of an approach based on local strengths and achievements.

Discovery sequence: Explanation of the discovery phase of an appreciative inquiry by Mette Jacobsgaard, the workshop facilitator. Shots of MYRADA staff participating in “discovery” exercises and group work in the classroom. Shots of MYRADA staff introducing “discovery” exercises to self-help groups, village development committees and families in villages. Interviews with staff and villagers about the discovery process.

Dream sequence: Explanation of the Dream phase of an appreciative inquiry by Mette Jacobsgaard. Shots of MYRADA staff participating in “dream” exercises and group work in the classroom. Shots of MYRADA staff introducing “dream” exercises to self-help groups, village development committees and families in villages. Interviews with staff and villagers about the dream process.

Psychology sequence: Explanation of the energy for change created by appreciative inquiry. Interview with Mette Jacobsgaard about the effectiveness of positive images as a force for change. Interview with a MYRADA staff member about the value of dreams and creating a vision in the development process.

Design sequence: Explanation of the design phase of an appreciative inquiry by Mette Jacobsgaard. Shots of MYRADA staff participating in “design” exercises and group work in the classroom. Shots of MYRADA staff introducing “design” exercises to self-help groups, village development committees and families in villages. Interviews with staff and villagers about the design process.

Concluding sequence: Interview with Saleela Patkar, MYRADA’s training co-ordinator, about the potential uses of the appreciative approach within MYRADA. Closing montage of remarks from participants.

Mr. Annaiah is using the “paper edit” as a guide in the post-production process. The training video should be finished by December, so that the project team can use it to introduce the next round of training.

The project’s work plan calls for further video production during the second training workshop. The project team no longer considers this work necessary, however, because a complete training video was produced during the first training session. It should be noted that further video production may be necessary near the end of the project, if MYRADA develops an approach to appreciative inquiry that is significantly different from the version that was delivered in the first training session, or if a follow-up with the original workshop participants is desired.
9. Field guide and Internet site

Participants recognized a strong need for a field guide to appreciative inquiry that explains best approaches and contains case studies. They feel it is too early, however, to write this guide. A core team of MYRADA staff was formed to begin collecting appreciative inquiry materials and case studies over the next 18 months to produce a field guide near the end of the project.

IISD is building a multimedia Internet site where visitors can find out more detail about the project, the partners and appreciative inquiry. Information on the project is currently available on IISD’s Internet site, IISDnet, at http://iisd.ca/casl/projects/myrada.htm. The expanded site will include pictures, video footage from the training video on appreciative inquiry, and trip reports. It will be online in early December 1999.

10. Participant comments and workshop evaluations

This section summarizes comments made by participants in their written evaluation of the training and fieldwork.

On the usefulness of appreciative inquiry:
Participants commented that appreciative inquiry is an innovative approach. It produces more realistic and reliable data than many other current methods, possibly because it more accurately reflects human psychology. It provides a structured way to develop both the vision and the capacity of a group through a purposeful exploration of periods of excellence. As an undercurrent in all of MYRADA’s work, an appreciative approach will require that techniques such as PRA be applied differently so that they no longer focus so strongly on problems and needs.

On the applicability of appreciative inquiry to MYRADA’s work:
Most people felt that appreciative inquiry could be applied in a wide range of circumstances from large village-level institutions to small families. Participants were keen to begin using appreciative inquiry in their different project activities to confirm this belief. Many people expressed the need for developing a process through which experiences and best practices in using appreciative inquiry could be shared among the various MYRADA projects.

Several participants felt that appreciative inquiry would be useful as a personal development tool. Indeed, most people felt that unless the principles of appreciative inquiry were internalized the method could not be applied to its full potential with others.

Suggestions for improving the training or fieldwork:
Some participants suggested shortening the training or fieldwork sections of the workshop, or both. Others, however, indicated that more time was needed between the four stages of appreciative inquiry so that each stage received adequate attention and reflection. Several people felt that more time was required for fieldwork so that the dreams and action plans more accurately reflect group
priorities and consensus. Several participants suggested that the training be more intensive with homework and assigned reading. Some people requested that a detailed agenda be provided before the training. A few people indicated that they would have preferred some theory on appreciative inquiry first rather than the experiential exercises. Many people expressed the need for a follow-up workshop to share experiences as the approach was applied in MYRADA’s project activities.

11. Next steps

The training and fieldwork conducted during the first trip produced encouraging results. So much so that MYRADA wishes to move ahead more quickly than was originally planned to train their project staff and begin using appreciative inquiry in their various activities. To achieve this objective, while maintaining the integrity of the approach, the following amendments to the work plan are proposed.

1. Forming a core IISD/MYRADA appreciative inquiry training and support team. The team will initially consist of approximately eight MYRADA project staff and two IISD staff (Graham Ashford and Neil Ford). Members of the core team will be responsible for:
   - designing and delivering the next two formal training sessions (in Kadiri and Molakal Muru);
   - co-ordinating and overseeing the continuing transfer of skills in appreciative inquiry within MYRADA;
   - ensuring that the results of MYRADA’s fieldwork in appreciative inquiry are shared between the different project sites for maximum impact; and
   - and liaising with the international development community to ensure that MYRADA remains informed of the latest developments in appreciative inquiry.

2. Convening regional workshops on appreciative inquiry.

To address the stated need for a process to share experiences and best practices within MYRADA’s activities, project staff will convene periodic workshops. Regional workshops will occur every three months at nearby project sites, and larger workshops will take place every six months to share experiences within MYRADA projects as a whole. The core training and support team will plan and convene these workshops. The discussions at these workshops are expected to contribute to the development of the field guide on appreciative inquiry, and to the project’s Internet site.
3. Obtaining advanced training in appreciative inquiry

One of the primary objectives of the project is the progressive transfer of skills in appreciative inquiry to the field staff at MYRADA. To achieve this objective in a shortened time frame, IISD, in consultation with the local project co-ordinator at MYRADA, proposes that four members of the core training and support team receive advanced training in appreciative inquiry.

Currently, advanced training in appreciative inquiry is only available in the United States through institutes including the Taos Institute, the Global Excellence in Management (GEM) Institute, and the NTL Institute for Applied Behavioural Science. Of these institutes, the NTL Institute for Applied Behavioural Science program is particularly suitable, as many of their staff have previous experience working in developing countries. Further, because of their interest in contributing to capacity-building initiatives in developing countries, NTL has offered to give financial assistance scholarships of $250 to each of the three MYRADA staff for the seven-day course they offer in January 2000.

Advanced training will allow these staff to contribute more substantively to the next two formal training sessions (in Kadiri and Molakal Muru), and will help to ensure that the integrity and effectiveness of appreciative inquiry is maintained during the continuing skill transfer within MYRADA. It will also put them in more direct contact with other appreciative inquiry practitioners, allowing them to remain informed of new applications of appreciative inquiry in community development.

4. Delivering the next two trainings (Kadiri and Molakal Muru) successively

Delivering the Kadiri and Molakal Muru training sessions successively will be more cost efficient, as it will save on the cost of an international airfare for one IISD staff. In addition, it will give time for three MYRADA staff to receive advanced training in appreciative inquiry so that they can participate more effectively in the Kadiri and Molakal Muru training programs.
## Annex A—List of Workshop Participants

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Designation</th>
<th>MYRADA Project</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Amarnath S. Jadav - Project Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Germalam Area Development Project, Arepalayam</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Belle Gowda - Project Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Kollegal Hill Area Development Project, Hanur</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. C. Kumaraswamy - Training Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Holalkere Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. G. C. Devaraju</td>
<td>MYRADA/PLAN Madakasira Project</td>
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<td>5. H. K. Ramegowda - Training Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Western Ghats Environmental Project - Karwar</td>
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<td>6. K.G. Holajjer - Project Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA CIDOW - Molakalmuru</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. N. Kumaraswamy - Community Organiser</td>
<td>MYRADA Kattery Project</td>
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<td>8. Lathamala - Programme Officer</td>
<td>Chitradurga District Support Programme</td>
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<td>9. K. Madevan - Training Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA, Hanur Dharmapuri Project</td>
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<td>10. Moses Samuel Jesupatham - Training Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA/PLAN Dharmapuri Project</td>
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<td>11. P. Vijaya Kumar - Project Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Holalkere Project</td>
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<td>12. P. Rajachary, Training Co-ordinator</td>
<td>MYRADA/PLAN HD Kote Project</td>
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<td>13. Y. Ramesh - Sector Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Kadiri (KIPDOW) Project</td>
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<td>14. R. Raviprakash - Training Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Kollegal Hill Area Development Project, Hanur</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Rohan Mallick - Project Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Kamasamudram Project</td>
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<td>16. Saleela Patkar - Training Co-ordinator</td>
<td>MYRADA Bangalore</td>
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<td>17. Shreekant V. Gondkar - SHG Development Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Gulbarga PIDOW Project</td>
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<td>18. Smita Ramanathan - Training Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Kamasamudram Project</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. K. Vinutha - Sericulture Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Talavadi KVK, Talamalai</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. William D'Souza - Programme Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Mysore Regional Office, Mysore</td>
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<td>21. Y. Nageswara Reddy - Sector Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA/PLAN Madakasira Project</td>
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<td>22. V. Yenjerappa - Project Officer</td>
<td>MYRADA Challakere Project</td>
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Annex B—Appreciative inquiry primer

Appreciative inquiry is a paradigm of thought and understanding that holds individuals, groups and organizations to be affirmative based on best practice. Used in place of the traditional problem-solving approach, appreciative inquiry seeks what works best and provides a frame for creating a future that builds and expands the life-giving realities as a metaphor and organizing principle for the future of the organization.

Appreciative inquiry is based on the principle of social constructionism, holding the belief that people construct their own reality. We create that which we can imagine. Thus, anticipating a positive future we are likely to create a positive future.

An appreciative inquiry consists of four main phases, all interdependent and continuously revolving in a circle – “The 4-D cycle”:

Discovery phase
The primary task of the inquiry and the discovery phase is to appreciate the best of “what is” by focusing on peak moments in the life of people, groups and organizations. In the discovery phase, people share stories of exceptional accomplishments, discuss life-giving factors of their relationships and partnerships, and highlight the aspects of their history that they value and want to preserve in the future. Seeking to understand the unique factors that made the peak moments possible allows people to let go of the difficulties and focus on and learn from the factors that have worked well.

Dream phase
The next step is the dream phase. During this phase participants are challenged to use the stories, data and best practices about a partnership as a launching pad for boldly envisioning what the future might become. What is the future calling for?

This phase involves challenging the status quo and building a vision of the impact the people, groups and organizations have the potential to achieve. Grounded in the inquiry in the discovery phase, the participants construct a provocative proposition, which should be bold, challenging, realistic and worded in the present tense.

Design phase
During the design phase the participants move on from the image they have constructed together of their desired future and begin to design a structure or “action plan” which will support and carry forward their shared dream and provocative proposition. This involves the concrete actions needed to achieve the dream. The design or action plan should in itself be an inquiry into the details and steps, which need to be taken by the involved parties and stakeholders. Individual commitments can be solicited from the parties to ensure that action is taken. This phase also provides the data against which monitoring can be made.

Delivery phase
This last phase of the cycle is implementation during which the various actions decided on in the design phase are carried out. The relevance and reality of the preceding phases are tested and will lead to a new discovery phase when the provocative proposition and dream is realized, thus continuing the cycle.
Annex C—Implementing agencies

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)
The project will be managed and implemented through a partnership between the International Institute for Sustainable Development (Canada) and MYRADA (India). Given the nature of the proposed project activities, however, collaboration with other NGOs and community groups in the fieldwork component will be essential.

IISD was established as a not-for-profit private corporation in 1990 through agreements with the governments of Canada and Manitoba. Based in Winnipeg, its mission is to champion innovation, enabling societies to live sustainably. IISD uses the definition of sustainable development from the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission): development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. This definition involves selecting development pathways that link economic efficiency, environmental protection and the well-being of people now and in the future. The Institute implements projects to address sustainable development issues at community, corporate, national and international levels.

IISD defines livelihoods (as opposed to employment) as the activities, assets and entitlements which local people use to make a living. We consider livelihoods to be sustainable when they can cope with and recover from stresses and shocks, preserve or enhance capabilities and assets, and maintain the natural resource base. In the mid-1990s, the institute developed an analytical framework to understand sustainable livelihoods by convening international workshops and conducting fieldwork in five drought-prone African countries. The framework defines sustainable livelihoods as the integration of community strengths, appropriate technology and supportive policies.

Currently, IISD is developing methods and approaches to help local people create sustainable livelihoods in their communities. Specifically, we are developing:

- Appreciative inquiry as a method to help local people analyze their situation and create their own vision of community development; and
- Community-based media as a method to communicate the vision of local people to decision-makers in government and business.

MYRADA
MYRADA is a large (450 person) non-governmental organization working in micro-credit, forest and natural resource management, micro-watershed development, poverty alleviation, empowerment of women and community development. MYRADA works directly with 75,000 families in three Southern Indian States. MYRADA’s activities are undertaken through collaborations with state- and national-level government agencies, institutions, banks, other NGOs, and international aid agencies. MYRADA is recognized as a leader in participatory community empowerment methods and arid eco-zone development strategies. As a result of their achievements in these areas, they are regularly invited to provide training and exposure visits to government and private institutions in various parts of India and abroad. MYRADA conducts an average of 4,700 training programs annually. About 90 per cent of these training programs are conducted at the village level in rural India. MYRADA has 12 well-equipped residential training centres.
MYRADA has established the following mission statement to guide and integrate its work amidst emerging needs and new challenges:

The Mission Statement: (March 1994)
- To foster a process of ongoing change in favour of the rural poor in a way in which this process can be sustained by them through their efforts;
- To build and manage appropriate and innovative local-level institutions rooted in values of justice, equity and mutual support, which can ensure their sustainable livelihoods;
- To recreate a self-sustaining habitat based on a balanced perspective of the relationship between natural resources and the legitimate needs of people;
- To influence public policies in favour of the poor and to build supportive institutional linkages between official institutions and peoples organizations; and
- To support small NGOs and foster the emergence of new NGOs working in rural areas.
- To promote networking among peoples institutions and among NGOs.

For more information on this project please contact:

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