

# **A Celebration of Global Imagination: Listen to the Future**



## **Understand, Imagine, Create**

*An International “Imagine” Summit in Open Space  
September 13-15, 2002 – Chicago Illinois USA*

[www.imaginechicago.org](http://www.imaginechicago.org)

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## What Happened?

In September, 2002, 150 people from six continents responded to Imagine Chicago's invitation to gather in Chicago for the first meeting of Imagine projects around the world and those interested in being in dialogue with them.

Most participants were present as part of an intergenerational team, since most Imagine projects share a focus on intergenerational learning and action. Since it was impossible to determine in advance the full range of interests and possible contributions of people coming from such a diverse set of places and experiences, all gathered in Open Space – with no specific agenda laid out in advance – in order to maximize the possibilities for imaginative exchange consistent with each participant's needs, interests and gifts.

More than sixty issues were posted for discussion, in seven breakout rounds, spread over three conference days. The notes from many of these sessions are gathered here. In addition, an abundance of arts-based activities were also available in the space throughout the conference (painting, music making, performance, singing) in order to allow for multiple forms of expression and learning. On the third morning, each participant received all of the notes from the first two days of sessions. These were the basis for the posting of two last breakout rounds of 'action' issues.

All of the notes captured during our three days in Open Space are included here for your review. The notes presented here are living, breathing, working documents, captured and typed by the participants themselves, in the heat of high learning and active contributing, meant only to enable the round of conversation and action. Please take them as open invitations to get connected to the important and diverse issues raised at the conference. They may help you identify the most important issues around which you choose to act.

For more about Imagine Chicago, visit [www.imaginechicago.org](http://www.imaginechicago.org). These notes are also posted in a living archive and we hope they will continue to grow. This archive is open to all at [www.globalchicago.net/imagine](http://www.globalchicago.net/imagine).

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\*For more about Open Space Technology, visit [www.michaelherman.com](http://www.michaelherman.com), [www.globalchicago.net](http://www.globalchicago.net), and/or [www.openspaceworld.org](http://www.openspaceworld.org)

## Complete List Of Topics Posted For Discussion On First Two Days

Here is a complete list of the topics that were posted for discussion on our first two days, including those that somehow managed to elude a full reporting later on in this document. The names of the people who raised these issues are included in parentheses...

- If there was a world-wide television program, what would it look like and how could it help connect communities of the world? (Kathleen and Patsy)
- Imagine Durbin: Community participation in development planning and service delivery by municipality (Boxer)
- How to integrate the generations in a community? (Leng Leng)
- Mobilizing youths to connect to their parents and community (Ho Sun Yee)
- Learning to listen (Colin Brown)
- How to change the conversation among funders about impact/outcomes to allow more room for unimagined possibilities (Janet, Dallas)
- How can we make sure that our “imagination” processes are as inclusive as possible of those people that (sometimes) are seen as “part of the problem”? The outsiders, drug dealers, single mums, vandals, alcoholics.... (Cathy, Imagine Leith)
- Imagine conversations about bridging racial divisions (Kathy Livingston)
- Youth suicide: What is your country doing to prevent it? What do you know about youth suicide, etc.? (Jeff Brennan, Australia)
- Women’s empowerment in Nepal and the future vision (Usha Jha)
- Shifting from formal expertise way of thinking to inclusive imaginative thinking when technical experts are necessary and problem-oriented? (Nelle Temple Brown)
- How should a city agency practice civic engagement? (Charlotte Kaiser)
- Meaningful intergenerational connections around oral history and storytelling (Jan Bartlett)
- Weaving community and learning experiences via the web...using the internet as a tool/medium (Kari Sandhaas) combined with Community Media (Shilpa)
- Engaging people to improve the community (Siew Mui)
- Asset-based community development (Jody Krietzmann)
- Imagine Nepal (Ganapati Ojha)
- Liberating conversations from polarization and silence (Corky Beck and Bill Madsen, the Public Conversations Project)
- How to move from imagination to collective creation and inspired action? (Carolyn Cushins)
- An Invitation: Sharing moments, stories, experiences where relationships have been healed and the past transformed (Anastasia White)
- Imagine London: What the young people have achieved and what they want to do in the future (Pat Tawn)
- Issues that affect young people: what are their issue in your country: promote positive images. What courses at youth groups counselling etc. are available?
- The role of artists in building and connecting communities (Louise Terry)
- Unlearning barriers to imagination (Marish)
- Community development with youth and children: Organizing and Political Aspects (Lars)
- How to work with skepticism and lack of motivation (Macarena Garcia, Imagine Chile)

- What is a sustainable model for volunteer-community stewardship? (Charlotte Kalsner)
- Bridging the fear and gap between different peoples (Anwar)
- Funding and sustainable ideas for financing projects (Jane Kennedy)
- How can we re-learn to value our communities...how do we hear our ancestors over the noise? (Rob)
- Suffering Sadness Anger Despair Hope Imagination and Transformation (Bliss Temple)
- How can we get community participation that builds trust and ownership? Between people and government? (Melissa Nugent)
- Exploring imagination through mime and movement (Delroy and Kate)
- Making peace and women's movement a success in Nepal (Durga)
- Camp Imagine? Can we have an international camp? What should we talk about? What needs to be solved? What/where/how? (Melisa)
- Faith, imagination, and transformation—relationship and application (April)
- No trust, no hope, no power—can we imagine Jerusalem? (Hagai Hannan)
- How can we teach young people about appreciative inquiry process? (Janet Williams)
- Making a place at the table of Hope and possibilities for pain grief anger despair and cynicism. A conversation about making space for tapping into complaints to elicit hopes (Bill Madsen)
- How do we foster international youth exchange when the world\* is increasingly afraid? \*The parents and schools (Janet, Dallas)
- Lets make youth participate in local community in transitional countries (like Eastern Europe) (Milan Yugoslavia)
- Appreciative inquiry and peace building process (Buddhi)
- Creating learning communities (cities) (Bliss Browne)

## **Topics Posted The Morning Of Third Day - The "Action - Do It!" Day**

- Continuation: Faith/Spirit: Imagination And Social Transformation (April)
- Youth Voice And Leadership In Imagine Movement: How To Encourage And Support? (Kirstine)
- Jerusalem: The Next Generation
- International Appreciative Inquiry Forum: To Restore The Peace In Nepal (Buddhi)
- What Would A Global Imagine Webspace Look Like? Continued Later As... Globalimagine.NET: Getting Down To Specifics (Kari Sandhaas)
- Imagine How To Connect The Folk Schools Of Denmark And The Imagine Thinking/Movement (Lars And Kirstine)
- Ideas And Actions For Launching Imagine In New Places: Finding Partners, Funding Needs, Etc. (Jane)
- What Is The Best Role For Imagine Chicago Going Forward, Vis A Vis The Other Imagine Projects (Bliss Browne)
- Consultants and Appreciative Inquiry Practitioners - How will we connect the dots... from this conference to our clients and potential clients? (Bob New)
- Appreciative Inquiry Inspirations: Who inspired you? How inspired you? To do what? (Kate Start And Margaret Wright)
- Imagine How To Listen To The Voice Of The Children And Move To Action (Kirstine)
- Imagine Nagaland - Against A Background Of Violence And Struggle (Lovitoly Sema)
- Working With Marginalized Youth - Imagining New Ways (Bjarne And Lars)
- Imagine Nation TV - Continuation Of Issue #6 - What Would It Look Like And How Would It Connect Communities Of The Work With Action Planning? (Kathleen and Patsy)
- Actions To Link Imagine And Imagine-Like Efforts To Larger Movement Of Social Justice (Shilpa Jain)
- Use Art/Paint To Take Us Forward Playfully, Creatively (Cathy Ward)

## **ISSUE #1: How to integrate the generations in a community?**

**CONVENER(S):** Leng Leng Thang

**PARTICIPANTS:** Mathew Paul, Eduardo Vasquee, Delroy McLeen, Dan Mount, Patricia Norick, Uma Karki, Vidhi Jain

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Discussion: We discussed why we need to integrate the generations in the community, what are the benefits for both the old, the young and the community when the generations work together, what have been done, what other ways are there to make it happen and how to sustain the efforts. Mathew shared about his experience of organizing an assembly for the elders and the young in his community in Nagaland; Dan talked about the successful attempts of bridging the old and young through joint projects such as a skate park and playground in his community in Ohio; Delroy about how respecting the old is important to one's sense of belonging to the family and harmony in community. Patricia shared her project on one way to honor the women - by having college students interviewing successful female community leaders in Chicago and other parts of the country; Uma about her desire to find ways to connect the generations through her work at the Women's organization in Nepal, Vidhi about the effort of bringing understanding between the old and young by organizing a workshop for the young to identify people in the community they draw inspiration from and write about them. Finally Eduardo from Chile - the youngest in the group - reminds us that young people have great ideas to share and let's find ways to make them heard. (Please contact any of them for more details of their works/views)

Conclusions and Recommendations: We all agree that there are many reasons justifying the needs for generations to come together - it is natural, it addresses complementary needs, prevents the undesirable effects of age segregation. It benefits the individuals, the generations, the family, the community and the world. We identify the following issues/thoughts that may be helpful as we consider ways to connect the generations:

- the need to create public spaces for the generations to interact, this may be public space in terms of parks, open spaces, and public space through the arts and drama.
- the need for a mediator to bridge the generations and 'break the ice'. He/she can be someone from the middle generation, or a senior who has special connectivity with the young and vice versa.
- projects may be skills-based focusing on the resources that both generations can offer. E.g the old has experience, they have professional skills in building, engineering and carpentry which are useful to help conceptualize the creative ideas and dreams of the young.
- acknowledge and address the diversity and individuality of each generation so that we can better facilitate the communication.



- keep the intergenerational conversation going - in the process, both generations continue to explore what interests each other.

## **ISSUE #2: Mobilising Youths to Connect to Parents and Community**

**CONVENER(S):** Ho Sun Yee, Singapore

**PARTICIPANTS:** Barbara Michelloti (Chicago), Gurmit Singh (UK), Robert Bumpus (Ohio)

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **-Drama and Play**

Using Drama and Play as a platform to connect the community members from age 5 to 90 generated interesting discussions and possibilities. The process of getting ideas and themes for the play can also act as the connecting process. An example is the conduct of interviews with members of the community where those not inclined to acting and performance can also participate in the process of building a base of ideas and oral history for playwright to produce plays of interest and relevance to the community.

Writing workshops with coordinated themes and true stories also help to connect community. It is also considered a good way to create awareness of our cultural roots and interest among the young on their cultural heritage. This is a concern among 3<sup>rd</sup> generations of migrants where their kids do not have much contact with their mother tongue ( such as Punjabi ).

It was also felt that a play involving the family members and members of community is a good celebration of family connection and community.

#### **-Food and Culture**

It was also felt the play could also feature the food we eat, such as preparation or significance as occasions to foster bonding to family and culture. Making time for family to eat together at least once a week and without TV is also an important platform for family bonding. The Chinese have the tradition of the reunion dinner on Chinese New Year's eve where the significance of dishes are explained to children, making it an interesting and fascinating time for bonding and appreciating their own heritage and culture.

Borrowing the idea of the Oktoberfest, we can also introduce a foodfest for family or community like Frazeysburg FoodFair as a way to get families to volunteer and put together their family recipes and display and make it into a community celebration. As families are so busy nowadays, such an activity would make quality time for family to bond together as one family and with the community, serving as good role models that family can have fun together while doing a worthwhile project in serving the community.

#### **-Dance**

Youths are naturally attracted to dance to channel their boundless energy. The experience of bringing Lindy Hop as a dance form to schools where they are first taught on the historical derivation of the dance form followed by a demonstration and mass participation would be a good opportunity to bring new experiences to the youths. Interests generated can be channelled into dance clubs who can then be guided to share

their new found expertise to social service organisations like old folks home, orphanages so that the youth can do something enjoyable ( like dance ) and at the same time, entertain and bring vibrancy, fun and joy to the less privileged. Over time, youths can also be challenged to be imaginative and create improvisation to the dance form by incorporating their cultural (Indian or Chinese ) steps into the Lindy.

#### -New Community Facility

For communities which have the privilege to start new community facility, it was suggested that co-locating a toddler infant care, childcare and before and after school care, youth drop in centre and an elderly drop in centre would leverage on the these different age group to serve and bond together. Example, youths could play mentoring with younger kids, the senior citizens with appropriate skills and experience could also mentor the youths. With such a facility, the centre can have a monthly birthday celebration bring all age groups to celebrate together.

#### -Intergenerational Activities

It was felt that having workshops where parents and their teenagers can come together to have a short presentation on issues such as parent-child communication followed by breakout sessions where parents are put together with other children would give a wonderful opportunity for both parent and child to listen and better understand each other feelings. Parents would then learn that their kids are no different from other kids in what upsets them etc.; likewise kids would learn that all parents have the same concerns about them.

Volunteering as families can be a good platform to meet bonding needs and at the same time give avenues for serving the community. Getting a few families to bring some senior citizens or less privileged persons on an outing is one possible way to connect youths with their parents and serve the community.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With imagination in group discussions, we were able to build on one another's ideas to work out possibilities to bring about activities to facilitate bonding between youths and their parents. We conclude that youths are attracted to drama, dance and sports ( we did not dwell much into sports ) and these are ideal platforms to bring youths together.

Having identified these platforms, it is now up to each individual to find the right capable and passionate leaders to make it happen.

We hope that at the next conference, we can get to hear how other Imagine groups can implement these ideas and share their journey with us.

### **ISSUE #3: Learning to Listen**

**CONVENER(S):** Colin Brown

**PARTICIPANTS:** Jane LaPointe, Boston; Ellie Moore, Chicago; Sven Sandstrom, Sweden; Marcarena Garcia, Chile; Earl Thompson, Nepal; Dugra Pokhrel, Nepal.

#### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The risk of listening is that you might have to change your mind.

The invitation to participate in conversations

Appreciative Inquiry -- "Tell me a story when"

If self-help books really worked, the bookshelves would be getting smaller not larger

Problems are opportunities.

## **ISSUE #4: Community Media**

**CONVENER(S):** Shilpa Jain (India)

**PARTICIPANTS:** Colin Brown (Scotland), Louise Terry (Australia), Luke Cammack (USA), Carolyn Cushing (USA), Eve Tulbert (USA), Jeff Brennan (Australia)

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Our group talked about the importance of thinking about media broadly -- far beyond what's seen as media (massive forms like satellite television, radio, magazine, news) and instead exploring media as anything which expresses and communicates. We did not feel that using technology or mainstream forms of media was impossible, but rather that we should feel comfortable in saying bigger is not necessarily better, and we don't have to have media which is for everyone, all the time. We talked about diverse people being able to communicate and express stories which are important to them.

Shilpa shared some elements of media making in Udaipur as a Learning City, including gathering oral stories in Mewari (the local language) and a local artist's drawings and compiling them together into a storybook, and collecting the stories and images of local artisans (potters, jewelry makers, washermen, traditional healers, etc.), to share with families in the city and surrounding areas. The idea was to facilitate conversations in Mewari, about local work, arts, traditions, values, as well as current issues like globalization, consumer culture and environmental disasters. Shilpa also shared how they are using a number of low-cost forms of media -- puppetry, dance, folk stories, proverbs, sayings, wall murals, wallpapers, youth- and child-created bulletins, cartoons, posters, etc., in which people of all ages and communities can share the experiences and ideas which matter to them, in relation to each other and to their hopes for a different city.

Eve shared the experiences of Scrap Mettle Soul in Chicago. They carry out appreciative dialogue conversations with different groups throughout their neighborhood. They gather stories, weave them together, and try to pull out common threads to script into a play. Then the original storytellers as well as members of the neighborhood are invited to come and perform the play. Everyone who comes is cast in a role. The play is performed in a local park for the public. Eve talked about how it was important to be able to use media like theater to share peoples' stories, in forms where they could create, ask questions and generate their meaning in the process.

Luke mentioned that what makes these forms of media different from mainstream media is that they are engaging and relational. They are necessarily interactive and so they add an aspect of dialogue that is really missing in mainstream television or radio.

Carolyn mentioned the New World Theater at the University of Massachusetts, which gathers people together for eight days to share their stories and put them into dramas, music, songs, dance, etc. Shilpa mentioned a creative artist, Jane Sapp <janesapp@aol.com> who draws from an appreciative mindset to create with young people their own music and songs of social action and social justice.

The group also offered some exercises and tools for generating local community media -- such as doing a round of storytelling, where each person in the circle adds one word to the story, going round and round til they come to a full stop. This can also be done with dance, with each person in the circle adding a move and a sound, to create a whole dance.

Shilpa mentioned the need to hold a sense of critical media awareness alongside creative expressions of stories and experiences, because of the role the mainstream media is playing in peoples' lives and communities today. How can we ask questions and challenge some of those forms, and be aware of the biases/perspectives in the way stories are told? She saw questioning and creating media as happening side by side, and in fact, the process of creation as a mode of questioning - seeing your own biases and thinking about those of the makers of the mass media.

Colin shared his work in Scotland of having young people interview elderly people, and documenting the interviews on video. In addition to factual and appreciative questions, Colin also has the young people and elderly people explore a box of 'old' items together -- things like ration cards or old coins -- to bring out more interesting stories. After these interviews, many young people display a newfound interest in their grandparents and other elders; they become curious about their stories, as they have begun to see them as real people, who had real lives. He described how important it was to capture the stories of people who will soon be gone -- including our own family histories -- and how those stories can have relevance for today, both in terms of forming new relationships and understandings, but also for dealing with some of current issues and concerns. Colin described how he had not had much success in getting the videos distributed to mainstream networks, as corporate interests diverged from his own, but was looking for ways to expand the audience base of these videos. He has been selling them locally, and showing them in schools and colleges and in elderly folks homes and bingo halls. He is looking for ways to bring young and old people together to watch the videos and discuss them -- maybe in the future by linking up with local organizations.

Luke shared how he was hoping to start an Imagine process in Colorado Springs and wanted to video intergenerational interviews about peoples' memories of the city and their hopes for it. He thought it would be great premiere these story-interview-videos at a citywide film festival as a launch for Imagine Colorado Springs.

Eve discussed how it might be good to expand upon the videos by having young people and old people act out some of the stories together, so that they can further generate an empathy and appreciation for their experiences. She mentioned how communicating stories of change can stimulate change in actions and ideas among people. It can inspire them to transform situations, when they see the stories of people who have made transformations.

Shilpa thought it might be useful to connect the stories told with concrete efforts that young people and old people could work on together -- such as a project around zero-waste (as regenerating part of a historical relationship to balance with nature and simplicity) or an effort to revitalize traditional forms of healing and well-being.

Carolyn shared her latest ideas for community poetry: small books of poetry (business card size) that could offer the work of local poets and be distributed all around a city (coffee shops, restaurants, bookstores, newspaper stands, markets, etc.), and also guerrilla poetry, which have "the poet is in" stations in diverse locations, which can share poems that touch both personal stories and political issues. She also described sidewalk festivals, in which local artists can put up exhibitions, and there can also be self-generating exhibitions around questions like, "What is your dream for the city?" "What do you hope to see in 10 years here?"

Colin mentioned how a group in Scotland had received a grant from the Scottish Art Council to create poetry all over the city, including plastering it on the sides of buses and buildings. They also had signs with a few lines of poetry, where people could 'graffiti' to add their own thoughts and lines.

## **ISSUE # 5: Netting the Web: How can the Internet be an effective medium for learning and community building?**

**CONVENER(S):** Kari Sandhaas

**PARTICIPANTS:** Sven Sanstrom, Sweden; Rick Smyre, NC; Mildred Wiley, Chicago; Peter Smith, Human Neighborhood Project; Cathy Ward; April Kunze; Marilyn Martin; Macarena Garua; Jean Carter Hill, Chicago; Louise Terry.

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The group explored the various ways in which the Internet can be used to support, create, and supplement LEARNING and COMMUNITY BUILDING.

The possibilities extend as far as our imaginations take us! We touched on themes of dialogue, networking, learning spaces, tranformational learning, informal learning, unintentional outcomes, access, self-organizing, ownership, authorship, and cross-pollinating with various other medias, amongst other topics.

We often hear of the Internet as a "virtual" space. But it is real tool for real people in the real world. It is as useful as we have made other communication mediums -- such as telephone and writing letters. It can be more democratic and more personal than broadcast media and can be used to leverage the power of broadcast media. In the past, local groups had to generate fliers, mailings, pay postage. The Web can open up access avenues.

Access to the Web can be opened up to people who are not yet comfortable with it via community groups who can offer intergenerational mentoring of young to old and vice versa. Lower economic populations can gain access via many community resources such as free web space, funding for computer grants, etc.

For example, the Human Neighborhood project has helped get local groups connected. They offer free web space on their own site. They've offered laptops for those who did not have computers, etc.

Another participant shared her project of organizing a Brisbon Art Festival solely via the Web. The Web has enabled this process to be more democratic as everyone in the arts community who participates becomes a leader/organizer. Their webspace, <[straightoutofbrisbon.org](http://straightoutofbrisbon.org)> has provided the space for a self-organizing process. As the project organizer, she reflected on how that role is shared by everyone, using online discussion groups and postings which gain ongoing feedback and input from the participants.

On the subject of learning spaces and using the web for appreciative inquiry, another group member shared his experience of using the Web to post questions of appreciative inquiry about the future of his city. He got some responses immediately, and was surprised to get a final one another 6 months later, from someone who put many months



of planning and thought into her offering. The Internet provided the means for her input to get to him.

Another woman reflected on how school systems and universities churn out graduates like sausage factories. In response, we discussed how the Web can be used to create and offer a space for open learning much like a museum space. People come to it with who they are, bringing what they know; they can choose their paths through the space; they can connect with others to create a shared experience; they can leave their thoughts for others to see, and thus create a constantly transforming, evolving space. Dialogue and interactivity can be facilitated in both formal and informal ways. Even a web camera could be used for people to see one another and teleconference.

Another woman joined the discussion, sharing about her work with Imagine Englewood and the creation of "Make a Difference Day." She described one of the projects that happened on Make a Difference Day in which students from the suburbs were invited to paint porches of the elderly in the Englewood neighborhoods. Volunteers and resources were organized for the day's activities. Our group responded with ideas about how this particular project could be ongoing via the Internet. Just imagine: There could be a [paintingporches.org](http://paintingporches.org). (Idea spark!) In this website, a volunteer section could solicit people who are interested in doing the painting. In another section, paints and painting supplies could be solicited. In another section people who need their porches painted could sign up for this service. Other medias could be used to tell the public about the website and the project. This sparked the group to imagine that the website could become a portal for many other ongoing learning and community possibilities -- it could become a learning space and a space of community dialogue: "Porch Conversations" could take place. People could find opportunities for real life porch discussions (perhaps an interviewing project). A grant or internship could organize young people to record these stories. The website could be used for posting these and adding others. The subject of Porches itself could be explored and the role they play in neighborhood life, the safety and health of a community, the intergenerational opportunities, etc. We were getting goosebumps imagining the endless ways to "reclaim the porch" and create "porch possibilities." We considered the porch as one of the original informal learning spaces and were especially interested in the intergenerational aspect of this. Local artists could offer unique expressions of the porch paintings and inspire a whole porch painting movement, becoming a catalyst for other neighborhoods to find their self expression via porch painting.

Perhaps "porch possibilities" could be a whole movement! You gotta love it: the possibility of an older, traditional space, THE PORCH meets the new high tech medium of the Web!

**ISSUE #6: If there was an international television program called "IMAGINE-NATIONS" what would it look like and how would it connect the communities of the world?**

**CONVENER(S):** Kathleen Alfiero and Patsy Wiggins, lighthearted productions, Portland, Maine (www.lightheartedme.com, e-mail lhp@maine.rr.com., 207-799-4544)

**PARTICIPANTS:** Jan Barlett, Bliss Browne, Shilpa Jain, Kari Sandhaas, Nancy Cobb, Janet Williams, Therese Rowley, April Kunze, Muriel Finegold, Jane Kennedy, Yeo Siew Mni, Judy Rogers

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Lighthearted Productions is in the process of creating a television program and developing studio space on the waterfront in Portland, Maine. Our company of five women is into its third year of growth and possibilities. Our focus is on life affirming visual productions, publications, products and gatherings bringing marvelous stories and great ideas to life.

In asking the question, "If there was an international television program called "Imagine-Nations" what would it look like and how would it connect communities of the world?, we explored how our connection with each other might bring to life a different way of sharing our lives and stories from continent to continent.

We believe that these are unique times and that we are ready to build community through media-television, radio, internet, magazines and other effective means of communication that could include puppetry, music and other creative venues. The discussion was exciting and everyone was involved. While exploring how a program might look, we talked about spirituality, distance learning, inter-generational story sharing, how to impact those who do not have access to media, voices of children and their needs, hope and justice, humor and more. While talking specifically about how a program might look and , what it might include, it was agreed by all that it felt much like a movement..a movement to support and inspire healthy ways of living- physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually . We asked, "are we creating a women's forum that circles the globe?" It was asked, "is this just about women?" and the following discussion included the thought that it is time for women to step forward for the benefit of all and that this effort would involve all people. We talked about program themes, segments, and formats that would build international learning communities. The program will originate and disseminate from Portland, Maine, and will connect people from different cultures and places around the world where imagination and possibilities are happening. Everyone stated that she wanted to stay connected and be involved in some way and we agreed to continue the conversation and begin action planning at Sunday's session. It was an incredible conversation and inspired all of us to dare be who we are!!!!!!

## **ISSUE #7: How Can A City Agency/Municipality Practice Civic Engagement?**

**CONVENER(S):** Charlotte Kaiser, Boxer Mpoutshane

**PARTICIPANTS:** Charlotte Kaiser, Levitsky Sema, Anastasia White, Sherry Robbins, Joyce Puah, Phillippe Sithole, Jane LaPointe, Boxer Mpoutshane, Jane Hudson, Kathy Livingston

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Need to build capacity for citizen leadership, not "participation," which as a word is losing its meaning--people are burnt out by "participation" without a clear purpose
- This is also the key to ensuring representative participation: you will destroy the civil society you are trying to foster/create if you continually invite people to meetings that do not lead to action, ask for their voice and then do not listen to/act upon their wishes, speak hollowly of "empowerment" and keep all the power in the hands of the government
- It's important to understand the civic culture of the community you are working to engage
- there is a continuum of maturity of democracies, and along that continuum can be found different problems/issues that need to be confronted. FOr example, in South Africa, a new democracy, elected leaders feel easily threatened by a strong civic tradition among their constituents. Whereas in the United States, complacency is much higher among the citizenry, and likewise expectations that the government will take care of it is much higher. So the obstacle there is to give people faith that there is a purpose to their participation.
- We concluded that continuing to keep the vision and purpose alive is key to successful civic engagement--people will not come to meetings just for the sake of them. Meetings need to end with an action to be taken; people need to see results of their involvement.
- It's not enough to invite people to participate, no matter how much good faith is present in the invitation. To achieve real partnership between government and community, we must also build the capacity of community to create structures--organizations, groups, etc.--through which they can engage with government and be empowered to give themselves voice.
- but simultaneously it's vital to educate/train the GOVERNMENT, too! And not just the elected officials, but the civil servants, the bureaucrats who are actually running things. They need to be trained to consider citizens as consumers, to welcome civic participation and respond to it positively and not defensively.
- This will help to address the fact that in many ways the success or failure of a government's efforts to practice civic engagement depends on long-term relationships between the community and government (see thoughts on continuum of democracy, above).

**ISSUE # 8: How to move from inspired action to collective creation and inspired action?**

**CONVENER(S):** Carolyn Cushing

**PARTICIPANTS:** Pat Joshu, Nelle Temple Brown, PC Gooden-Smiley, Gurmit Singh, Muriel Finegold (Imagine Boston), Sherry Robinson, Yap Ching Wi, Margaret Wright

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**THOUGHTS ON WHY PEOPLE WERE DRAWN TO EXPLORE THIS QUESTION:**  
my group is good at discovery/storytelling and visioning and want to find ways to move to and sustain action; want to inspire young people for action; just starting project and want to hear from others; people are tired of just talking and want to take action; am a artist of ideas and want to think more about implementing ideas; people want to be rallied so how can we take action; wonder how things take hold and work; know that action will come when we are ready; people often think that someone else will take care of things (i.e. government, the person with the job).

We then took a minute to reflection on a question that arose from people's thoughts:  
**WHAT MAKES AN IDEA TAKE HOLD AND CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE?** Try to think of an actual example.

People shared the following thoughts and stories:

One person was reminded of Robert Fritz's idea that we are balanced between and experiencing the tension of The Current Reality / What Is and What Might Be / The Future. This tension leads to creativity. Another person commented that the tention between the two is like an elastic that is always pulling back to the Is. How to make it so that it does not always pull you back? Perhaps the elastic needs to be snipped offered another member of the group.

One participant shared her story of the development of a network of NGO folks in Singapore. They came together with no concrete goal, but with a felt need that they shoould connect more / that they were tired of working alone. The spark for this project grew during a series of year long discussions sponsored by the government about what Singapore might be. NGO people kept seeing each other and decided that they should find time to make some informal connects. As they talked, they realized that they had something important here and moved to formalize the organization. Being formal created some new barriers as there are strict laws about associations and public gatherings. The group had to patient as people went to their organizations to get permission to participate. They formed an e-mail group with open members, anyone could participate so even people who were not formally members could partipcate / keep up-to-date. First actions revolved around educating themselves through informal teas/afternoon gatherings and a series of forums. Eventually did two public conferences on Civil Society and Partnerships for an Active Community. In these conferences, worked to help make connections between groups doing related work (example: connecting people working

with handicapped people and women's groups around home-based employment issues). After these conferences the network decided to disband.

The next story was about a health project using web TV in Chicago neighborhoods. The idea evolved out of people's needs. Realized that there was not a connection between people on their blocks. The West Side Health Authority recruited a person from each block to be a web TV resource person for their block. These "Citizen Leaders" would get the information from the web and share it with their neighbors. The Citizen Leaders got training and support for starting to use the web TV. The Citizen Leaders opened themselves and their homes up to their neighbors. The idea of "each one, reach one." The project opened the doors up for other things. There is now a technology group and different technology classes are taught. Obviously, it was important that there was a funder willing to support this technology idea.

We followed this story with a discussion of VOLUNTEERING. "There is too much to change for just a few people to do it." We talked, though, about how often there is small group of people who do a lot of work. This group of about 10% of the group or neighborhood will burn out. One participant offered good ideas about the need to support people to come and do a few things / small things, to encourage them to take risks, and to support them in what they do. Another participants offered that this process needs some specific facilitation, that this is an important part of the process.

A thirds story was offered about a neighborhood improvement project in Chicago. The Alderman had a vision of making a particular street more of a neighborhood and limiting the amount of drive-through traffic by narrowing the street and doing more plantings. At first people did not like this idea. As people began to be involved in the process of planning the street, of talking about what kind of plantings they would like to see many began to support the ideas. It took three years to implement the project. People are generally happy. Some people had to see it for it to be OK. People in the high rise apartments are starting to come down and do plantings and be more part of the neighborhood. Able to piggy back off a city beatification project sponsored by the mayor.

We concluded our discussion with people sharing A LEARNING THAT CAME OUT OF THE CONVERSATION. Ideas included:

- It takes time to see the ideas to translate into action and become reality.
- Often have to give up on the goals to help people develop ideas and take ownership.
- Just keep those ideas coming. Keep going through the process.
- I must be the change that I want to see
- Just do it! Don't waste energy worrying about it, just do it.
- Time and relationship building are important. They are action!
- Don't have to be alone with your idea. Once you start moving people will be there with you and things will happen.
- Conversation is powerful for making the connections between ideas.
- Partners need to be part of the process.
- Not to be afraid to be that instrument of change!

- The idea of letting a network die was interesting and reminded me of paying attention to the organic process. Don't have to keep things going. Can let go of an idea and release energy to do other things.
- Those who start things must let others in, let ownership grow.
- There are plants and waters and God gives the increase. Ideas don't die, but come back as part of the circle (of life).

## **ISSUE #9: Meaningful Intergenerational Connections Around Storytelling and Oral History**

**CONVENER(S):** Dr. Jan R. Bartlett

**PARTICIPANTS:** Dr. Richard Geer, Milan Stooic, Fawn Reid, Sandra Tan, Melisa Wong, Janet Williams, Dr. Thang Leng Leng, Chip Shrodeder, Carol Schrodeder, Margaret Wright

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

We had an inspirational and exciting discussion around storytelling and communities and the importance of intergenerational connections. Specifically, Jan Bartlett shared her research on a storytelling retreat between unrelated adolescent girls and older women. Richard Geer discussed his work with communities related to oral history and plays that were based on and inspired by the personal stories that emerged from peoples lives in various communities. Leng Leng Thang shared a program from Japan that involved older adult volunteers who went into schools to discuss stories about the 1995 Earthquake. The elders, were respected and were able to not only tell stories, but ultimately modeling values to the young people. Margaret Wright and Dawn Reid shared stories and the particular challenges in Leith, Scotland and talked about the success of parades.

The group discussed the degree of isolation between generations that is prevalent today's society. This was apparent in our discussions especially in the USA, Scotland, and in Japan and Singapore. The role of TV was an vital force among youth and important in Scotland as it relates to credibility. If it was on TV it was perceived as more glamorous and therefore OK. The following are additional aspects of our discussion:

\*\* For Richard's plays, stories were collected over several months and then there was a week of production when the plays were preformed by individuals in the community.

\*\* In Florida Richard worked with a community in 1997 after a hurricane, during the collection of oral histories and stories, many stories emerged related to the flu epidemic of 1918, which were incorporated into the community play.

\*\*The Flu epidemic was part of the living history of the people in the community that had not healed or been processed.

\*\*The response from the plays was overwhelming positive and created a community identity; a place where once people were reluctant to claim as their own evolved to an identity and relationship of pride.

\*\*In some cases young people preformed roles of their grandparents.

\*\*Stories connected to cemeteries; the stories need to be connected through real people.

\*\*It is important for the facilitator to have a vision and to transmit to others the glamour and involved with being connected to the project.

\*\* Jan's research involved bringing together unrelated participants who were selected to participate. Through several early interviews key stories were identified, so that when groups happened they were around specific topics, such as puberty, therefore the group leader is able to draw out these stories to facilitate the discussion. Having topics created an atmosphere that allowed for both the girls and the women to share. If anyone is interested in the positive results from this research, please contact her by email.

\*\*Leith has a rich and old historical heritage in its' cemeteries, which connected to real people could be a tool for the telling of stories. The Leith many youth and adults see themselves in the role of victim, perhaps they can use stories of success and hope to light a path.

\*\*One idea is for the young people of Leith to provide a tour of their area to the adults and explain their world to them.

\*\*Stories generate an energy that carries people toward each other.

\*\*Richard Geer: stories are psycho-nutrition!!

\*\*Janet talked about the Imagine Chicago Citizen Leaders program and a model to look to for ideas.

\*\*a great idea of connecting for communities was to send the people out for a set time having them to look for things that they have not noticed before. When they return list them and ask for a plan of action.



**ISSUE #10: Imagine London- A project for 10-18 year-olds to find out what they think makes a healthy city**

**CONVENER(S):** Pat Tawn

**PARTICIPANTS:** Pat Tawn, Duane Oakley, Kerry Wilson, Jayshree Pithia, Sara Ali, Tim Wilbolrn, Cathy Sharp, Cathy Ward, Lars Jolhansen, Joyce Push, Bjarne Larsen

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Imagine London [[www.imaginelondon.org.uk](http://www.imaginelondon.org.uk)] is a project managed by the King's Fund in London. The King's Fund is a health charity set up by King Edward the VII to help the London Hospitals in 1897 for Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

The Imagine London project came into being after Bliss Brown visited London and talked about the Imagine Chicago project. Funding was obtained from the Department of Health and the King's Fund and a project officer - Kate Healey - was appointed to oversee the project. Kate wrote to all the schools in London [over 400] to ask whether they would like to become involved in the project. A planning group of 15 young people aged from 10-18 years was appointed and they met on a regular bases - 1 a week - to talk about what was important to them and once they had agreed their 5 subjects:

Environment [inc pollution]  
Crime and safety  
Emotional well-being  
Transport  
Children's Charter

Having agreed these subjects, the young people met together to plan and organise events to in order to discuss the subjects with other young people. They agreed that the format for each day would be workshops in the morning, with report-backs in the afternoon, followed by a panel of politicians and experts in the field of the subject who would answer questions from the audience. The workshops were facilitated by community artists: dance, drama, music - rap, poetry, art - painting and modelling and each one had to discuss or symbolise the message that the young people wanted to get over to the adults. In the afternoon, the report-back took the form of a performance by the young people who were in each workshop. Before each event, the planning committee thought about the questions they wanted to ask the panel in the final part of the day and decided to use a question box into which they put questions and anyone else during the day who felt nervous about asking a question in front of their peers could place a question in the box. However, once a few questions had come out of box the audience soon started taking part and asking questions. One of the politicians told Pat Tawn [after the event] that it was one of the hardest things he'd ever had to do because the young people were 'really shooting from the hip' and not mincing their words!

The conferences were each attended by approx 60 young people and were held on Saturdays. It's a tribute to the young people that they attended on a non-school day!

The final conference was held at the Ocean Music Venue in Hackney North London. This is a well known music venue for young people and meant that young people were encouraged to attend by the fact that it is currently an 'in place' where they would normally go to see their favourite music idle. 350 young people from schools all over London attended and signed up to children's charter that the panel had produced. It was a very good humoured day with no real problems or clashes between the different schools and parts of London - slightly chaotic at times - moving the children from one workshop to another, but overall, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves. During the breaks and organisation called 'Jump up to the Mic' invited the young people to get up and perform and we were entertained by some really talented young performers from amongst the participants.

After each of the conferences a report was produced by the planning committee and the project officer, Kate Healey, and these can all be found and downloaded free of charge from the Imagine London website: [www.imaginelondon.org.uk](http://www.imaginelondon.org.uk)

The final paper is the children's charter and this will be presented to the Mayor of London Ken Livingston at the end of September who has shown a lot of interest in the project. The charter is being presented in conjunction with a similar charter from the children's rights office. The planning committee have been meeting with the children's rights office on a regular basis to exchange ideas on what their charters should include.

In the group discussion with the young people they were asked what they felt they had got out of being in the group and what they wanted for the future. They all responded that they felt good about doing something that might make a difference and that they would like to continue working with their group even if it was not for the Imagine London Project.

**ISSUE #11: What is a model for sustainable VOLUNTEER community stewardship?**

**CONVENER(S):** Charlotte Kaiser

**PARTICIPANTS:** Hans Uijen, Adell Young, Vidhi Jain, Yeo Siew Mui, Shashi Menon, Phillip Sithole, Jane Hudson

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

We decided that the connotation of the word "Volunteer" is all wrong and we need to find a new word or change people's perception of what the word means.

Too often "volunteer" means "do something for free that other people get paid to do" when in fact it should mean "be an active participant in my community."

In most of the world's societies today, no value is placed on activities where no money changes hands. We see this in the fact that when nations calculate GDP they don't include labor for which there is no pay--such as that of stay-at-home parents. And so we must find a new way to value and validate the work of community activists and stewards.

"The Answer to How is Why" is the name of a book. So the answer to our question is the answer to the question, "Why is there no sustainable model for volunteer community stewardship?" The above two points begin to address this latter question.

We wondered how the idea of "pay it forward" could apply to our work organizing community involvement. Instead of concerning ourselves with being able to pay volunteers, back, how can we "pay forward" their contributions? Answer: by being responsive government agencies, by listening to and acting on their contributions.

We noticed that compulsory community service programs in schools begin to foster early this idea of volunteering as taking time away from other "meaningful" or "valuable" activities.

"What do you like to do? What can you do?" these are questions we need continually to be asking in the communities where we are seeking broader participation & engagement.

We need to allow sponteneity back into the process of civic engagement.

## **ISSUE #12: Successful imagine conversations to bridge between racial/ethnic divisions**

**CONVENER(S):** Kathy Livingston

**PARTICIPANTS:** Hans Uijen, Anastasia White, Melissa Wong, Sandra Tan, Tim Welborn, Mr. Kragujevac, Lars Johansen, Donna McFarlane, Philip Decter and others

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

In the session, examples discussed involved race, religion, ethnicity, age, class and/or country of origin. The examples of successful activities were heartening and support a greater hope for the future. All participants indicated their communities had underlying, often unspoken, tensions that exist. In some cases, speaking in public about the issues are "taboo" or risk taking.

Stories of successful activities follow:

#### **Individual Conversations:**

Conversations between individuals with at least one person being open to hear different views. Example: White supremacist felt comfortable to talk with African-American man because he had observed him being open and easy to talk to. (What do you value in people? )

**Observed Dialogue:** Having only two people (who are blindfolded so they can't see their dialogue partner) talk about a particular issue while others watch.

#### **Classes in Schools:**

In Singapore, structured instruction on culture begins in primary school and continues through college, which help students become sensitive to the variety and values of other cultures. The curriculum is designed for the particular age level, with increasing amount of critical inquiry as students are older.

#### **Large Public Events:**

Festivals that celebrate religious events of various faiths or cultural heritage (such as the Celtic Music Festival) provide broad exposure for a large group of people.

#### **Structured Community Programs:**

**Faith Tours --** Community programs that provide "tours" of three or four different faith traditions in one program. It was mentioned that the word "tour" was less threatening to some than just an "open house".

**"Imagine Programs" --** "Imagine" programs allow for inclusion of youth, adults and older adults build bridges between ages (among other connections).

**Trained Community Facilitators --** Group of community people trained in negotiation and appreciative inquiry that help in larger scale processes.

#### **Other Helpful Components:**

Structure so as not dialogue about the differences themselves, rather look at other topics the two groups could share experiences and begin to build trust and acknowledge the humanness of each person. (What is your favority smell and why?)

Sometimes you have to acknowledge the pain or injustice that has occurred, before moving forward. (You have been through this particular experience. How have you been able to survive this journey? How have you integrated this experience in your family?)

Helpful to have significant leaders to role model the behavior that is desired and use the power of symbols. (Mandela and his jailer)

Taking care to understand actions that perceived are injustices are not just cultural differences. Conversations can help bring these things out.

### **ISSUE #13: How to work with skepticism and lack of motivation**

**CONVENER(S):** Macarena Garcia (Chile)

**PARTICIPANTS:** Charlotte Kaiser, Peter Smith, Eduardo Vasquez, Dolores Peterson

#### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

First of all, we made a concept difference between the lack of motivation and the skepticism. The lack of motivation needs more work and more motivation for us, and refers to the people that don't want to work, neither to be bothered with these things. Skepticism refers to people that don't believe in the project, its products, the hope of help of it. These people make questions, make you doubt and represent a critical force that may be useful. People who are skeptical could be a better ally, because once you convince him or her he would not go away so easily and would work in a convinced way.

We thought about possible solutions or tips to help get people more motivated or more trusting in our projects. We concluded:

- it is good to remember your successful experiences in motivating people, because you can use some of the learned in that works to plan the new ones.

- people need to get something out of all of this, they've got to be useful, they need the FEEDBACK of their work. In the projects that work with intangible work it is helpful to try to get the things more tangible and near to the people that is working so they can see the product of their efforts.

- all this has to do with EVIDENCE OF THE INVOLVEMENT people need evidence
- also you need PATIENCE you can't expect to get the people you want immediately. In many times it would take a time to get them. For that is important not to act impulsively, is important to go step by step.

- if you are fearing a low motivated answer, never never ask for money, money has the strange power to make people run away.

- many times when people says no, it doesn't mean no at all, it's mean not yet. To have good answers is important to have some things in mind: the ones you're asking for help may be working in other projects and you may have to wait for their time; people help better when they decided how help, it's good to expose the needs of the projects and let the volunteers decide how they would participate. All this has to do with listening the people.

- begin with small, easy and fun works if it's possible. Do not get them into huge work, begin with short-time goals.

And at the end one more tip: let the lack of motivation be a reason for more motivation to you. There's work that have to be done out there.

**ISSUE #14: Experts and expertise -- how to combine with imagination-based thinking and not be dominated by the elitism typical of "expert" thinking?**

**CONVENER(S):** Nelle Temple Brown

**PARTICIPANTS:** Cathy Sharp, Gurmit Singh, Bliss Temple, Yvonne Bonner, Bjarne Larsen, Bliss Browne

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

We need to find the right language to be heard. Many participants are working in bureaucracies and recognize the pressure to "feed the bear" -- to say what needs to be said in the language that they expect to hear to the politicians. Bureaucrats therefore tend to be and use the language of experts though a different language may be needed for NGOs and community members

Everyone has different forms of expertise -- technical, cultural, experiential, etc. Our formal systems favor formal knowledge, not experiential knowledge, and favor written words over artistic forms of expression -- final reports in written form may not reflect the learning that has happened via the arts. One must usually establish oneself as an

A key question (based on example of medical expertise and experiential disability expertise of disabled people): in what way can grassroots communities use the necessary technical (medical) expertise of others without giving up ownership of the project or having their own experiential expertise invalidated? The typical situation conjured up by the word "expert" is a superior person with superior education and knowledge who therefore can lord it over others.

Language is the key issue. Need to find words that convey new ways of thinking. Suggestion to use "expert" only to mean a narrow type of already-established essential technical knowledge in a field. Experts are the keepers of this knowledge. But if we concentrate on the word "learning" we would see that about 90% of the stuff we need to know is not known already so we need to have in the process all of those who will be the community that makes for the best learning. This will include but not be limited to "experts" in the narrow sense, but include keepers of various kinds of embodied knowledge. We need to appreciate all keepers of knowledge.

Leadership and management and facilitation/gathering are different. Leadership is required when facing adaptive challenges. Management is based on applying learning (expertise) that already exists. Facilitation harnesses the leadership capacities in each person and tries to identify the appropriate language and ideas that are emerging from the new "we".

Many technical advances occur from seeing limitation clearly and looking for creative solutions. Many key inventions: typewriter, telephone, transistor, first computers were invented for disabled people. A new language around disability might be "creatively abled. imaginatively abled" since this is the reality of life for a disabled person in terms of what it takes to live in the world.

Use story-telling to change culture in an office, help people see new possibilities which you model in your own behavior, too.

Experts often know how to do something and push the pace faster that non-experts can appreciate. Important not to go too fast or you lose participation.

Important not to run away -- eing patient, staying engaged, being persistent, and being good at losing are essential qualities for doing community work.

If you are willing to give away credit to those motivated by power or status, you can often get your ideas accepted -- humility is a key quality for success of your ideas.



**ISSUE #15: How can we make sure that we are as inclusive as possible in our imagination processes so that we include those who are sometimes seen as part of the problem? The drug dealers, single mums, vandals, etc**

**CONVENER(S):** Cathy Sharp

**PARTICIPANTS:** Richard Geer, Melissa Nugent, Corky Becker, Yvonne Bonner, Marilyn Martin, Rob Chappell, Lovitoly Sema, Fawns Reid, Bill Madson, Bjarne R. Larsen, Louise terry, Hagai Agmon Snr, Claudia Chidiac, Charlotte kaiser, Pati Ojha.

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Main points of discussion

TRUST

Involve those we want to work with in the design of the project

Importance of how the project funding is structured

What would happen if the funders were the beneficiaries? The people become the experts. The funder is a partner - but we should not manipulate the funders.

The "art of waiting" - create relations while you wait - create space and time

create the partnership from the start

shift from "helping" them to "learning " from them.

Inclusion in what? Whose agenda?

ask instead "who do we want to reach out to?".

Is there a tension between the imbedded notions of representativeness (implicit in the original question) and the Imagine notion that who ever is here are the right people?

## **ISSUE #16: Funding/fundraising and sustainability**

**CONVENER(S):** Jane Kennedy

**PARTICIPANTS:** Edith Njuguna, Richard geer, Jane Hudson, Barbara Mchelotti, Dan Mount, Marilyn Martin, Clark Riley, Luke Cammack

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The following areas for fundraising were identified as 'standard' -

- \*Special Events
- \*Annual membership drives
- \*Grants
- \*Entrepreneurial ventures.

Those with experience recommended a balanced approach and mix of all four options. The last, entrepreneurial ventures, was discussed more broadly with the issues around non-profits moving into generating profit through ventures or 'product' development being considered as timely and worth pursuing.

Generally, it was agreed that developing and nurturing relationships with existing and potential funders was the most rewarding (in every sense of the word!) way of sustainable funding.

Jim Lord - The Quest - has been developing an appreciative inquiry approach to fundraising. His work is documented on the web. (Search Jim Lord or follow links from Case Western web sight).

Other recommended reference material included:

The Seven Faces of Philanthropy (Author unknown)

[www.mapnp.org](http://www.mapnp.org) (Management for Non Profit organisations)

Some innovative and original fundraising ideas arose:

- 1) Multi beneficial, multi-pronged, learning, community building and fundraising 'scavenger' hunts.
- 2) 'Quirky' ideas for match -funding such as all night 'kick-ball' events
- 3) Auditing donations of time and kind with value for match funding scenarios
- 4) Exploring internships.

And finally. based on the South African model of 'stokvels' it was suggested that all the non-profits, Imagine projects and associated friends set up an international pool of funds whci is accessible on a consensual manner by all partciapnts for specific projects. To explaoin further, stokvels wrere initiated during the aapartheid era by communities excluded from the traditional banking systems. Neighbourhoods would get together and contribute a percentage of their income to a central fund. As the fund increased and capital was accumulated, contributors took turns in accessing funds for such things as college education, housing, funerals etc.

Worth thinking about.. Imagine a fund we all contributed to that could facilitate an international 'camp' in the not so distant future..!

## **ISSUE #17: Engaging People to Improve the Community**

**CONVENER(S):** Yeo Siew Mui

**PARTICIPANTS:** Pat Tawn, Barbara Micheleh, Eduardo Vasquez, Hanan, Dan Moont, Delores Peterson, Marilyn Martin, Kevin Payne

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Do things subtly - Use Arts to engage them. Through the process, community is formed and transformation will take place.

eg. Community Theatre

- collect true stories of people
- get a person to put it in to a play
- gather volunteer actors, actresses in the community (target those who are not professional actors/actresses)
- create opportunities for the people to bond during rehearsals
- perform the play for the community
- > transformation takes place

2. Conduct Community Leadership Programme (9 month programme)

- Rationale: we need people who are passionate to lead and instigate community projects

Steps:

- Advertise the programme to different organisations and invite young upcoming leaders
- Training programme include teambuilding, examining leadership styles and ways of dealing with people
- Have sessions to discuss education, recreation, industrial development and those that are about community development
- Give them scenarios on situations like "If you are a 16 year old, pregnant, where do you go to for help" so that they will understand what's available in the community.
- Before the programme ends, ask the class to come up with project so that through the process, they become interested in the community more and feel responsible for the project

3. Create Sense of Ownership in the Community

eg. Community Garden for people to be involved

- harvest of Community garden can be given to the unfortunates
- get volunteers to teach skills to the unemployed on horticulture, gardening
- a place for people to enjoy
- get people to contribute to the community garden, like giving seeds
- have volunteers to upkeep

eg. Block Committee

- weekly activities for the residents to clean up the block, or have barbeques etc
- collect resources on interests of the people and tap on their interests

## **ISSUE #18: Bridging The Gap Between People**

**CONVENER(S):** Self Organizing

**PARTICIPANTS:** Jean, Rick, Sherry, Margaret, Shingh, Diana

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

We began our discussion by defining fears and what does it mean by being different. We discussed the differences between government and people, between gender, between ethnic communities. There are challenges between different organizations, groups of people seeking funding for particular communities. Some communities receive funding easier than others. There is competition between the different organizations which prevents them from coming together.

The primary purpose is for the people to assess their own needs and to act on it. The consensus was that the agendas change when the government is in control of meeting the needs of the people. The key to bridging the gaps between different people is to discover their common goals and create an indirect approach or process for them to achieve those goals. Celebration is a good example of indirectly connecting people.

## **ISSUE #19: Camp Imagine**

**CONVENER(S):** Melisa Wong, Sandra Tan

**PARTICIPANTS:** Peter Smith, Tim Wilborn, Janet Harrison, Thang Lengheng, Manish Jain, Yap Ching Wi,

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### Introduction of Vision

Camp Imagine is a forum to raise awareness within the youths and seek their feedback on their concerns and problems. Youths are encouraged to take ownership of their discussions, come up with an action plan and implement these proposals with the support of the High Five Youth Alumni (the youth voluntary group of Sandra and Melisa!)

This discussion hopes to explore the issues faced by other communities so as to give a global outlook to Camp Imagine! 2003 and perhaps from a network with other potential camps under the Imagine! wing, to share their feedback and proposals. or perhaps international participation in these camps, if the topics raised are relevant (this is the future, we hope). But now, our common issues :

#### Issues raised

- Inertia: Youths tend to be unwilling to take initiative in identifying and solving their problems. They feel that their proposals do not count and most probably will not come true anyway.
- Education - is our education really offering our youths ample opportunity regardless of their academic abilities - streaming the different academic abilities of youths? Interaction/ feedback between students and teacher - how can teachers teach better?
- Parent involvement - if youths are truly interested in a certain issue and invest time and effort to it, chances are they will be able to convince their parent to give them moral support. This form of encouragement is a source of pride and motivation to be involved in such activities and should be explored.
- Lack of opportunities - 'throw outs' by the system versus true 'drop outs'
- Brain drain - youths prefer to look outside their communities for opportunities and for a brighter future, rather than to return to their communities to contribute thereafter. What is the drawing factor or motivation for them to return?
- Bullying/ Violence within schools
- Considerations when organising youth activities - the time should not be too extended; it should cater to the attention span of different groups of youths involved.
- Possible fertile area for feedback is the youths-at-risks. Such leadership camps should be opened encourage participation from these youths, instead of the academically - inclined students.
- Ownership of project - youths have to possess a sense of ownership over the program and brought along the whole journey from the birth of the idea to the implementation of

that idea, ex: getting kids to design their own playground - they may take care and feel more sense of belonging to their respective community.

- Competition - perhaps we can organise competitions in areas of interests - such as video filming, screensaver creation etc - the catch, being that you have to be an active student of the school in order to participate. Youths may be motivated to stay in school so that they can participate in these courses or contests.

Application:

Appreciative inquiry/ asset based learning - how relevant are these tool kits?

- is there a tendency to generalise problems?

- reason being that people's mindsets are highly exposed to media influence (ex: advertisers spend millions to create "needs" in the audience). This influences what people term as their "problems" or "lack of"s.

- Therefore, a better (?) general approach could be critical media learning etc.

- Need to design programs - by contextual approach so that these tool kits, if used, are adapted to the needs of the various classes of discussions.

- Suggestion - that these tool kits cannot be used for high-end discussions, ex: politics; as of now, it is more applicable to community discussions or microlevel discussions thereof.

- Combination of part of AI/Asset based learning a more general inquiry?

- Debatable how these theoretical approaches do benefit the practical scenarios in different communities,

- Consensus that these tool kits generally will work best if people are aware of the problems in the first place - ignorance and lack of willingness to cast aside traditional mindsets are the biggest obstacles to these approaches.

## ISSUE #20: Creating Transformational Learning Communities

**CONVENER(S):** Bliss Browne

**PARTICIPANTS:** Bea May Holland, Yvonne Bonner, Mathew Paul, Cathy Ward, Jane Kennedy, Diana Ryan, Pat Joshu, Kirstine Andersen, Elinore Moore, Jennifer Martin, Lisa Dinga, Bob New, Hall Healy, Gurmit Singh, Corky Becker, Joyce Puah, Marilyn Martin, Jean Carter Hill, Cathy Sharp, Chris Kingsbery, Claudia Shidiak, Janet Williams, Emory Williams, Rick Smyre, Lisen Kebbe, Sven Sandstrom, Hans Uigen, Therese Rowley, Clark Riley, Lars Johansen, Kari Sandhaas

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Summary: Rick Smyre of Communities of the Future first shared some observations about transformational learning and what is needed:

- distinguishing between *reforming* (which extrapolates from the past) and *transforming* (which is oriented to the not-yet);
- shifting from hierarchy to webs and relationships;
- recognizing there is no one way of looking at things
- shifting from focus on informational content to core competencies
- taking account of future trends (like shifts in the economy toward more entrepreneurship)
- asking the right questions
- connecting disparate ideas
- shifting from “teachers” to “learning leaders” who help build capacities to transform
- shift from “either/or” to “both/and” thinking
- connecting in each other to what has most value

Manish Jain responded with some questions and observations from his work with Shikshantar in Udaipur, India ([www.swaraj.org/shikshantar](http://www.swaraj.org/shikshantar)) on both learning communities and learning societies:

- what should be the limits of institutions, communities, media?
- How do we take account of the past and present in thinking about the future?
- How do we “decolonize” knowledge? (wonderful image of a train on the track...if one turns over the driving to another group, the train nevertheless moves in the same direction and path as it did before)
- Whole worlds exist outside of formal institutions; there is much indigenous knowledge (situated, concrete, contextual) though it is often devalued (and that devaluing can become internalized by those devalued)
- Action is where people are doing things; in a learning ecology, many people are creating spaces for doing things
- How can we create space for learning to happen in many places, how do we support self-organizing learning processes/

Bliss noted the distinction made by Ron Heifetz in *Leadership without Easy Answers* between leadership and management in which he says that leadership is required in situations of adaptive challenge where new learning is required; management is sufficient

if the learning in hand is sufficient to the challenge at hand. If we are facing some adaptive challenges of great impact for which new learning is required, what are those challenges? What questions about learning do we want to challenge ourselves and others to think through?

- Decolonizing needs to happen at individual level before social level...what must each of us unlearn?
- How to shift what happens in schools??? Our children are often being educated into limitations rather than possibilities
- How can we shape our own learning by listening to those at the edges? (note; they may have much greater view of whole and stimulate different creativity born of necessity; many significant inventions originally adaptations for the “disabled”, like telephone, transistor, etc)
- How can we accommodate individual growth at institutional level? (one strategy may be to identify and learn from positive deviance)
- What human rights can we learn to embrace collectively?
- What are the alternatives to the military response to conflict?
- How do we relate to the environment?
- How can we rectify the disparity between rich and poor?
- How can we assure safety in communities and in learning communities?
- How can we develop a participatory world view around issues of justice, sustainability and participation?
- What does it mean to have justice, sustainability and participation in a dynamic, diverse world?

In Denmark, a blue ribbon committee across sectors identified four core competencies for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They included

1. relational competence
2. change competence
3. learning competence
4. competence of making meaning

- How can we make local meaning, create local identity?
- How do we help more people take personal responsibility?
- How can we achieve connected individuality? Uniqueness-unity-connection
- What is our definition and use of power?
- How do we create space where everyone becomes a teacher of others?
- How can we have social security (a collective safety net) without undermining personal initiative?
- How does one teach or learn solidarity?
- What unlearning needs to happen to liberate our personal and collective imaginations and eradicate cynicism as a socially acceptable measure of sophistication?



**ISSUE #21: Making a Place at the Table of Hope and Possibilities for Pain, Grief, Anger, Despair and Cynicism**

**CONVENER(S):** Bill Madsen

**PARTICIPANTS:** Councillor N Majola, Charlotte Maiser, Boxer, Bjarne Larsen, Philip Sithole.

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

This began as a conversation about making space for and tapping into the power of complaints to elicit hopes in Appreciative Inquiry. After an initial contextualizing, we began with an exercise that could be used in communities in which people are trapped by despair and cynicism and unwilling/unable to engage in a discussion about hope and possibilities. Briefly, the exercise draws on work by Robert Kegan and elicits participants' complaints, inquires about what they'd like to see instead, then uses that to inquire about the commitments and hopes behind those complaints, and then offers space to move into an envisioning process about future possibilities for those hopes and commitments. From there we moved into a wide-ranging discussion about the importance of balancing envisioning possibilities and acknowledging injustice, and envisioning the future and acknowledging the past and explored examples of this from South Africa and the United States. There were many powerful images that emerged and unfortunately I don't have time here to capture. If people are interested in more information about the exercise and its potential usefulness, please contact Bill Madsen at [madsen1@attbi.com](mailto:madsen1@attbi.com).

## **ISSUE #22: Listening to the voice of children**

**CONVENER(S):** Kirstine Andersen

**PARTICIPANTS:** Lisa Dinga, Margaret Wright, Bjarne Larsen, Milan Stoodic, Vikuochouthou Tapa

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Let me first tell you about this project:

The National Council for Children in Denmark (NCC) that works for the childrens rights as citizens (UN konvention) wants for the next couple of years to start a programme so that the whole society becomes more aware of that children have an opinion of their own, and that children are a reesource, that should be listened to.

Plan with the children, not for the children!

NCC wants to inspire authorities, community/workers, civil servants, schools, kindergardens who meet the children in the daily life and those who have the power to set the frame for childrens life - to acknowledge the voice of the children

Most of the NCC work takes place in the world of adults and on the premises of adults (like everything else) and NCC is seekeng new ways of listening to children and are inspired by Imagine Chicago methods, AI, community development projects etc.

The starting point is a one-day conference in november which is planned as an intergenerational meeting and dialog between 75 akults and 75 children. The aim of the conference is to try a method of dialog that give the participants an experience which can give inspirations for their own work, and to collect good stories, experiences, ideas and suggestions within the two themes selected: 1) How to develop a better life for children in school, and 2) how to develop a better life for children in the local community.

NCC hopes that after this conference the idea spreads like ripples in the water, so the conference can be a starting point for lots of good stories to take place.

Before the conference: 4 classes of 7<sup>th</sup> grade are chosen to become the focusgroups to help develop the questions for the one adult/1 child interviews at the conference.

I find this programmes very visionary, and I feel very privileged to be part of the project as facilitator. But I also am very eager to learn from all you folks. Who has experiences swith involving children on their own premises and how to create menaningful dialogging between children and adults. Here are some of the ideas that came up:

When you meet with the children, tell about the conference and the dialogging proces. Just show it by doing it.

Ask the children>

What would you most like to ask your teacher or parents about?

The best possible school that could be. What would it look like. Draw a picture. Ask the other part of the class to appreciate their picture.

Share a story about where you really felt listened to.  
What are the things you like in your school and your community?  
How can you add more of that?

Make sure you find the childrens way of talking - ask them for words to use

What are the children really curios to talk with the adult on the conference about?

Summing up the dialogproces at the conference:  
Groups pick common themes that come out of the stories.  
Share in the big group - on the wall

At the end of the conference:  
What has inspired you in this proces & Which one little thing can you go home and do

How can you make it a childrens conference / - cfan you have the children design the day?

A little thing you can do

## **ISSUE #23: Imagine Nepal**

**PARTICIPANTS:** Chris Kingsbury, yeo Siew Mui, Terese Rowley, Eve Tulbert, Buddhi tamang, Durga Pokhrel, Uma karki, Usha Jha, Gana Pati Ojha

**CONVENER:** Gana Pati Ojha

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Ojha briefed the context in Nepal and provided rationale for establishing the Imagine Nepal Initiative. Nepal was once a very peaceful country which was recognized by many countries as a zone of peace. Many religions are going compatibly. Nepal has also applied appreciative inquiry approach in many development programs. There are about 5000 interviewers representing, NGOs, INGOs, government offices, academic institutes. It has an Appreciative Inquiry Nepal Network.

Recently, since 1996, the country is in trap of the internal conflict. There and there fights between the establishment and the moist group. Not only has the conflict disturbed the economic activities and total social life, killings of people has become the headline of the daily news.

The Imagine Nepal was created to bring peace and prosperity in Nepal through dialogue and appreciative inquiry approach was considered a suitable process of doing this.

One of the interesting information was that there were many other countries also under similar conflict situation. Participants expressed using some innovative ways of resolving conflicts rather than using muscles.

Chris suggested to use the Future Search method to prepare different stakeholders into a common agenda. She demonstrated how it should be used. Thebese supported the idea of using the Future Search.

## **ISSUE #24: Liberating conversations from polarization and silence**

**CONVENER(S):** Corky Becker and Bill Madsen, The Public Conversations Project

**PARTICIPANTS:** Jane Kennedy, Marilyn Martin, Ho Sun Yee, Diana Ryan, Fr. Matthew Paul, Hans Uijen, Kristene Anderson, Kathy Livingston, April Kunze, Nancy Cobb

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Bill and Corky structured the conversation to model a possible one time dialogue. Participants agreed to guidelines of participation. The opening question asked people to think about the importance of constructive conversation in their lives, at work, at home and in the world, and then asked people to give an example by telling a story of a successful experience with a divisive issue or divided community, or a challenging experience if they preferred. Then we opened the conversation using guidelines for creating a coherent and respectful conversation, the goal of which was to come up with ways that people in the group had experienced to contribute to a constructive conversation.

An interesting aspect to the content of the opening go round was the cross cultural contexts of the speakers. I learned about interesting challenges and innovations in the cultures and countries represented in the group: India, Netherlands, Denmark, and South Africa. Other people were from the US and represented diversity of interests, settings, and regions of the country.

Some principles that appeared to be important in the group were: examining assumptions, suspending assumptions, listening with those ideas in mind; examining the white elephant in the room and in oneself; finding a third place in oneself from which to enter the conversation: a point of ascension between the polarized sides; the importance of not reacting while holding to one's beliefs, patience; recognizing one's own participation in injuring and harming others, and feeling profound sorrow and apology in acknowledging wrongdoing or harm to others as a part of reconciliation; inviting the dignity of all people; self reflection; appreciation of the other-what they are doing that one is appreciative about even when there is a polarized divide between groups, and looking for small changes that would make a difference; establishing a legitimate role as a facilitator or convener in relation to the group; the importance of respecting and understanding beliefs, values and ways of thinking in a cultural context; working with individuals when groups are divided: finding individuals who want to work together, looking at traditions that institutionalize attitudes toward others that create negativity, distrust and misunderstanding.

## **ISSUE #25: Working with marginalized youth - imagening new ways**

**CONVENER(S):** Bjarne Larsen and Lars Johansen from Denmark

**PARTICIPANTS:** Marilyn Martin/Cape Town, Boxer/Durban, Janet Harrison/Dallas, Fanns Baird/Edinburg, Melissa Wong/Singapore, Sandra Tan/Singapore, Joyce Puah/Singapore, Lovitoly Sema, Margarth Wright

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Marginalized youth is a part of youth in general and can not be separated from the need to include youth much more as participants in developing society. Marginalized youth must be seen as a result of the lack of including youth as a whole. Work with young people must contain the basic question of how to make a meaning of life for each and every young person.

After the presentation we asked the question "What would be the most important things to think about or to do when you are working with youth?"

The following list is a summary of our discussion and stated as answers to the question and it will serve as a guideline for future developing of youth work:

- speaking to youth helps me to think differently - to see and appreciate youth as learners and teachers
- to create open space for youth, create structures that meet the life of the youth, movements, flexibility, building up institutions and closing them down in order to make the young people participate in developing them
- to create environments that allows young people to get to know themselves and make new choices for their lives
- focusing on possibilities instead of the obvious problems
- including young people as future adults in designing the programs and activities
- speaking to the youth about the future and thereby creating a bigger framework
- speaking to the young people instead of thinking of what they are
- asking questions bridging the gap between the present situation and the dream
- acknowledging the dreams of the young people and speaking with them about the dreams and about other ways of being with the dreams
- to go with the dream and at the same time keep "the highway open" for other possibilities
- to work with the difficulty of choosing among many possibilities for life by doing short term dialogues - "It's OK not to know what you want, but it is not OK not to do something!"
- important that youth work with youth
- parents should be taken into the work in order to give them hope that they can make a difference for their child
- by inviting them to participate in schools and exploring ways to cooperate with them also in secondary schools
- writing letters to parents about positive peer perception of their child
- as marginalization often starts in the school we must consider how we can make education more a learning process than a "booking" process.

**ISSUE #26: AI Consultants and Practitioners - How do we connect the dots from the conference to our clients and potential clients?**

**CONVENER(S):** Bob New

**PARTICIPANTS:** Cathy W., Cathy S., Buddlis T., Usha J., Nancy C., Lisa D., Don M., Durga P., Jennifer M., Pat J., Hans U., Peter Sm., Luke C., Earl T., Matthew P., Gurmit S.

**SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

After introductions and describing our ideal clients connections were made and we moved into the discussion of "how do we enrich the tapestry" of what we do with the wonderful experiences and stories we have shared at Imagine Chicago 2002.

Some of the ideas we have heard at the conference and shared with each other included:

Jody Kretzmann's session of Asset Based Community Development. He shared with his group many books he has written that provide resources that are transferable to many different environments and clients. For more information on his books contact ACTA Publications at 1-800-397-2282.

The conference has "opened my eyes" and "has provided many stories I can take back to share with clients."

When we discussed Appreciative Inquiry and resources to use the following were suggested:

The AI Listserve - available through Case Western Reserve University. Try a search on Case Western Reserve University and Appreciative Inquiry. Someone suggested it might be CWRU.edu.

Lessons From The Field by Sue Hammond (including Mac O'Dells case study on using the AI process when you only have 2 hours) seemed to be very helpful to most of the group.

The discussion included FutureSearch and how it differs from Appreciative Inquiry. We talked about how can we bridge the "best of both" while realizing each client's needs are very individualized. The Change Handbook by Peggy Holman was suggested as a wonderful resource that looks at the different models and discusses potential environments in which they succeed.

Inspirations from the Conference from our group includes:

"I have been inspired by everyone."

"Tim's story -- how he was an original interviewer for Imagine Chicago and how it transformed his life."

"We are all part of the fabric of the process - the real magic is sharing with others."

"I heard stories about an amazing woman. Connecting ' grandmothers' who are struggling and yet share hope. She dodges bullets everyday and yet knocks on doors to help connect women in her community."

"Uptown Chicago -- 85 languages, highest rate of AIDS, homelessness. Community is interviewed and those stories create the language for the community play. There was a story where someone put a scarecrow in her garden -- her neighbors helped decorate it and it was ultimately used in the play." Great community building.

"The power of communities who become alive from the inside out."

The story of the GTE Call Center that when AI interviews were complete they discovered they liked celebrations. They had no money so they began to empty the paper punch into a bag (creating confetti) and donated some their petty cash money to buy balloons. They would create a 60 second celebration with balloons & confetti to celebrate new job promotions, new puppies, etc. This resources was discovered from within and resulted in reduced employee turnovers.

Finally the discussion moved into "How do we as consultants influence decision makers to realize the benefits of the Appreciative Inquiry methodology?"

- " Its relational; conversational; inspirational; situational; and transformational"

- "In today's world no one has money or resources -- my job is to help you find the many resources you already have within your corporation or organization."

- "Offering the power of the interview as a gift to potential clients."

- "Realizing people need to be 'valued' and need to be 'appreciated'" - "Everyone discovers the wonderful gifts (and resources) they have to offer."

The group would love to have a website to share ideas in a chat room like setting, resources, and positive stories of success from other conference participants.



## **ISSUE #27: US Military Aid to Nepal – A Letter in Support of Peace in Nepal**

CONVENERS: Usha and ???

PARTICIPANTS: announced in morning news plenary session...

The following was offered in the morning news session with the request that US citizens forward something like this letter to their senators and congresspeople, in support of peace in Nepal.

--

I am writing this letter to urge you to take action on a pressing international issue. *Please oppose the potential 25 million dollars in U.S. military funding for Nepal.* I am writing this letter after meeting with Nepalese civic and government leaders. They felt that the process of building a lasting peace in Nepal has been halted by the United States's promise of more guns and armaments. They urge us to support a true peace process by giving aid for micro development projects, health and education, and not for arms. As you may know, the people of Nepal have been struggling with civil war since 1996.

The Maoist insurgency there has built up its forces by recruiting young people and by simply stealing guns from the military and police forces. Civilians in Nepal have long been caught in the cross fire of this terrible conflict. Many citizens have been intimidated, kidnapped, and killed by the Guerrilla army. Many citizens have been wrongly targeted and put to death by the National military's effort to eradicate the mountain armies. Just a year ago, the violence heightened to such a level that the government declared a state emergency.

But something else stirs in the unrest, unlike in the history of other such conflicts. There has been a concerted effort to build a peace movement that starts in civil society. The Nepalese leaders that we spoke to –government officials, educators, and business have trained 5,000 civilians to be facilitators of a mass peace making process. They have built relationships and trust among government leaders and among the Guerilla army. They have gained commitments to the process of peaceful negotiation. They have set out upon a path that will lead to true peace, National vision, and sustainable development.

I want you to know that the U.S. promise of more guns and armaments and has brought this momentum for peace making to a sudden halt. Many government leaders in Nepal have been deafened to the loud cry for peace among their own people. They turn their ears towards an easy solution that can only increase already escalating violence. How can the U.S. truly help this situation? Not by adding fuel to a fire already ranging out of control. Instead of arms, we can send aid for development and assistance in mediation.

The peace of a nation hangs in the balance. I appreciate your support for the *people* of Nepal.

Sincerely,

## **ISSUE #28: Faith/Spirit, Imagination and Social Transformation: Relationship and Application**

**CONVENER(S):** April Kunze

**PARTICIPANTS:** Carolyn Cushing, Yap Ching Wi, Eve Tulbert & Nelle Temple Brown

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

We threw out the following questions and asked participants to address whichever questions they had a response to:

--What drew you to this session/what questions did you bring?

--Share stories in which you see elements of faith, imagination and social transformation. We will use these stories as a basis for analyzing a relationship among the three.

--We have learned through the imagination movement how to use imagination to strengthen and spur the transformation of individuals & societies. Should faith/spirituality/religion be brought more fully into this work? Why or why not?

--If the answer to the above question is "yes", what should the goals of such a movement be AND what should they NOT be? In what ways could this be constructive and in what ways destructive?

--How does this discussion practically inform our work for social transformation: how should we change the way that we bring or don't bring faith/spirit into our imagination work and our social transformation work?

### **DISCUSSION:**

Stories of/models for bringing faith/spirit into social transformation work:

1. Spirit in Action. Contact: Carolyn Cushing. Spirit in Action was formed with three main goals (paraphrased): 1) Activists work FOR something instead of AGAINST; 2) Activists bring spiritual practice to bear on their work; 3) Heal divisions. Spirit in Action operates through the vehicle of "Circles of Change". These circles bring together "spiritual activists" for a period of 13 weeks for reflection and action. Each gathering is convened with a trained facilitator and includes ritual, food and reflection and each Circle determines their own action. While Spirit in Action has only held one full-length round of Circles so far, these actions have included creating a discussion around leadership development for Circle members and creating a CD of inspiring music. Most groups continue meeting after the 13 weeks are up. One interesting question has been how to integrate spirit throughout the life of the Circle and its work and not relegate it to just be an item on the Circle's agenda.

2. Gandhi's life and work. Based on the idea of truth-seeking/struggle for truth (note: not Truth).

## **ISSUE #29: Participation Through Mime And Movement**

**CONVENER(S):** Delroy Mclean and Kate start

**PARTICIPANTS:** Cathy Ward, Jennifer Martin, Colin Fraser, Jujar Singh, Bob New, Ho Sun Lee, Janet Harrison, Jeff Brennan.

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Warm up game-cat and mouse
2. Breathing exercises,
3. Head to toe stretch
4. Mime techniques
5. Neutral hand and working hand
6. Surfaces
7. Fixed point
8. Doors and Windows
9. Illusion
- 10 Character building: walking-shape-leading with
- 11 Human sculptures of community. how would we change them-what would that produce? one of the sculptures was a human boat-what happens if we don't know where we are going, what sort of boat we are in and how best to paddle.

Through the sculpture, we explored individual/s perceptions of community and how changes made big differences to the dynamics of the community. Also the need to listen to the smaller voices whose contributions or ideas are as valid as those with stronger personalities and confidence in group settings.

What also came out was how to use human sculpting on faces, perhaps with children and young people to help people perceive and read body language of themselves and others. We discussed how physical contact was integral in developing interpersonal states and bringing people closer together, crossing personal boundaries in a safe setting.

Through the mime and drama process we were using, a different language to communicate which encouraged a fuller expression of feeling and stimulation of the senses.

The non verbal approach revealed insights and learning on many different levels for both participants and spectators.

This made clear the potential of this medium to engage a wide variety of contributors. There was a visible increase in positive energy and shared creative expression which has built stronger connections in the group which continued outside of the workshop process.

Through our shared imaginings we could instantly bring to life our visions of community and generate and rehearse opportunities for the future.

Our conclusion for the workshop was that we were able to acknowledge the physical communication that happens between people who can be overlooked.

## **ISSUE #30: What would a global imagine web space look like?**

**CONVENER(S):** Kari Sandhaas. Summary collectively written by participants.

**PARTICIPANTS:** Bliss Browne, Macarena Garcia, Yeo Siew Mui, Hans Uijen, Clark Riley, MichaelHerman

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

We discussed the idea of having a web site for the imagine movement. Michael proposed the idea of create a wiki document that would be made by the community, the beginning of it would be posted this evening by uploading the conference notes. The wiki concept is that it is totally made by the community by linking documents, notes, comments, photographs, videos, ideas, histories to a portal that would be accesible worldwide. This will be immediately available at <http://www.globalchicago.net>. This is a quick launch open space that we envision being open to everyone. This feature we forsee as being an ongoing feature of a fully integrated website to be developed over time.

We have initially checked on the availability of two names: [globalimagine.net](http://globalimagine.net) and [globalimagination.net](http://globalimagination.net). There are no other websites currently using these names, so we anticipate securing one of these URLs.

The purpose of [globalimagine.net](http://globalimagine.net) (GI) is to provide a way to gather symbols, stories and words about hope and imagination. To serve this purpose, GI will provide a convenient worldwide resource on the web within which various imagine organizations and other individuals and groups can communicate, support each other and share their ideas. GI will support, connect, and inspire, and act as a catalyst for imaginative social transformation.

GI needs to address the following areas of concern:

- global connectivity
- social conscience
- promote community action
- bringing hope and inspiration
- organizing resources and tools
- enabling knowledge sharing
- make participatory learning and interactivity possible

Some of the elements we envision including within GI are:

- linkiing to other URLs
- posting conference and meeting nortes
- identifying geographical locations
- issues and projects listings and descriptives
- calendar(s)
- programs and agendas of various imagine cities
- search engine
- newsletter and bulletins (local and global)
- resource document

- chat rooms
- list services
- discussion groups
- forums
- "how to" information
- work tools
- audio/video and image (media)
- sandbox
- learning experiences
- ideas to promote change
- relationship building ideas
- support meaning making
- mission reinforcement
- promoting dialogue
- establishing databases
- common indexing and protocols

The overall hope is to entrench the use of imagination for social transformation, remember, action is when people do stuff. : )

#### Action Plans:

- Launch open space "wiki document"
- Establish Taskforce
- Determine website contents
- Write concept paper
- Research potential funding organisations
- write grant proposals to get funding
- design and build integrated website

## **ISSUE #31: Imagine Nagaland - Vision And Challenges That Lie Ahead**

**CONVENER(S):** Ms. Lovitoly Sema and Fr. Mathew C Paul sdb

**PARTICIPANTS:** Totary Hanan, Anastasia White, Lovitoly, Mathew C Paul, Hagai Agmon-Snir, Boxer Mponthana, Therese Rowley

### **SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS and/or RECOMMENDATIONS:**

A brief introduction to the socio-cultural background of the Nagas, the inhabitants of Nagaland was given to place us in the right context.

A bird's eye-view of "Imagine Nagaland", the biggest Imaginary workshop involving the whole state of Nagaland with 2 million people was next presented. The workshop conducted under the leadership of Peter Delehaye from UNICEF was a real mile stone in the history of Nagaland.

As a follow-up of the Imagination Processm there is a great reawakening among the people of the state to take ownership and responsibility for their own future. On the government level, a movement has been initiated to "communitize" the various services. We have started with Education and Health sectors, as a starter. Further lots of "Good Governance" workshops has been taking place across the state to streamline all the government employees and make them committed to give quality services to the people.

In the discussion that followed how to take the Imagine process forward against the backdrop of various challenges like the struggle for self-determination, the lack of peace, the presence of various "interest groups" etc. the following points emerged.

Anastasia White of South Africa said the forces in her country was very strong because the resistance movement was committed and they had a vision for South Africa of their dreams. It is nt only the leaders but everyone shared in the collective vision. This shared vision took away all the differences and everyone was able to rise above peronal and tribal differences.

The charismatic presence of Mandela and his vision to take SA forward by carrying everyone in it to a path of reconciliation and looking forward rather than looking background was a great driving force.

The question of individual tribe's identity need to be preserved at all costs. In what way it will be done will be different from place to place so opined Anwar Isaacs.

The need for inegration, as a vial force had to be acknowledged by all stake-holders.

Another success story was the "Participatory nature" of the people, who play vital role in every field. It is essential even for development which should not be imposed upon us. But accdording to Ponthana should follow the three Ps - Purpose - Process and Participation in Execution.

"We do not want to be divided" is the cry of any group of individuals who share a collective vision and are committed to achieve anything worthwhile in life.

Some of the other note-worthy quotes that were put forward were: "Necessity of recognising and acknowledging the difference" is essential for nation building. "The nation comes first". "While accepting the over-riding identity of individuals and groups, allegiance to the national goals is a must" - Anwar Isaacs.

Another success story was based on recognition and allowing traditional authority systems to exercise adequate power in the running of the government. Here we speak of the power sharing option.

Above all the success of any movement will depend on putting TRUST in people and making "people come first".