



An Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry

By Stephanie Judy and
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An effective forest use planning process requires groups of people to work together efficiently and flexibly, while also ensuring that all voices are heard and all positions are respected.

The tool recommended by Silva for this application is called **Appreciative Inquiry** (usually abbreviated to AI).

AI is a way of working with change in any human group—a family, a First Nation, a community, an organization, a business—by asking questions about the group at its best and designing a future that draws on the strengths uncovered.

What is Appreciative Inquiry?

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) encourages groups to inquire about, learn from, and build on what is working when they are at their best, rather than focusing on what's gone wrong and fixing problems. By using AI to understand their capabilities and resources, organizations bring about and sustain positive change.

The simple principles behind AI are that in every group something works (if nothing at all were working, the group would not exist) and that no problem happens all the time. The group moves forward by identifying the factors that contribute to their success, rather than studying the reasons for their problems and their failures.

First proposed by David Cooperrider at Case Western Reserve University, AI has been practiced around the world for more than a decade by non-profit organizations, businesses, families, schools, health care organizations, and governments. It has been used in small, rural, third-world villages, and in huge North American cities; with executives of Fortune 500 corporations and with street children in Bangladesh; in environments characterized by stability and cooperation, and in environments full of turbulence and conflict.

One of the best ways to describe AI is through a brief example:

A hospital in Arizona operated by Lovelace Health Systems was concerned about high turnover in their nursing staff—a rate of about 20-30% per year. Had the hospital administration used a conventional problem-solving approach, they would have hired a consultant to collect data about why nurses leave—perhaps by interviewing supervisors, assessing personnel files, and carrying out exit interviews. This data would then have been analyzed to figure out the source of the problem—i.e., to discover the conditions that contribute to high turnover. Then attempts would have been made to correct or alter those conditions in hopes of solving the problem.

In contrast, the AI approach that was actually used at this hospital did *not* ask why 20-30% of nurses leave each year, but rather why 70-80% of nurses stay. The nurses themselves—a staff of 300—collected data from one another, sharing stories about their best experiences on the job. From these stories, they identified key factors in their working conditions that let them function at their best. The nursing staff then worked with one another and with the hospital administration to support and reinforce those optimal conditions.

The outcome was a 30% reduction in nursing staff turnover in the first year, as well as additional unexpected positive effects, including a substantial increase in patient satisfaction with nursing care and measurable improvements in employee communications. According to Susan Wood, a consultant who worked on the Lovelace AI project, “The process unleashed nurses’ capability and energy to realize their value within the system. It gave nurses a heightened responsibility for their own satisfaction.” (Whitney and Trosten-Bloom 2003)

How does Appreciative Inquiry differ from other approaches?

Many other participatory change strategies exist, and have been used in various settings with varying degrees of success. **What makes Appreciative Inquiry different is its focus on local strengths and achievements, rather than on deficits and problems.**

Other kinds of planning and change strategies often proceed by defining needs, problems, opportunities, and obstacles. These approaches typically encourage local participation, emphasize local knowledge, and address real problems. However, such approaches often fail to sustain participation and commitment. Deficit-based approaches leave people with the impression that their community is full of problems and needs, many of which require the help of outside experts to overcome. The focus on needs entrenches a sense of dependence, and reduces people’s motivation to initiate their own activities, projects, and enterprises.

By building on local strengths and generating a sense of hope, Appreciative Inquiry avoids the unintended consequences that accompany deficit-based models. The outcomes of many AI processes are totally surprising to the participants. Future paths are identified that no one had thought of before, and there is usually broad-based support for and commitment to this future.

Appreciative Inquiry cannot guarantee a path to the future that is free of obstacles. What it can do is consolidate and sustain the vision and energy of the members of a group—a family, an organization, a community, a business—so that they face their future from a position of strength, confidence, self-knowledge, and self-respect.

Who is involved?

The ideal goal for an AI process is to get *everyone* in the room—i.e., the most complete and diverse group of people who are affected by the topic, decisions, or changes being made. In a school district, for example, such a group would include not only the school board, administrators, and principals, but also teachers, support staff (secretaries to janitors), students, parents, community members, business owners and employers in the community, and representatives from local colleges and universities that receive students from that district for further education.

Sometimes, however, getting every affected person involved at the beginning is not possible, or—where power is distributed very unevenly—not even wise. An intermediate goal is to begin with a *community of interest*. In the case of forest use planning, this would include forest users, such as First Nations, small-scale loggers, trappers, and recreational users; environmentalists—not only community-based environmentalists, but also representatives from any provincial or national environmental groups that are taking an interest in local issues; local small businesses that depend on the forest (organic farmers, tourism operators); educators and students; and any interested community members.

The group need not have worked together as a group in the past—Appreciative Inquiry can bring a group together. For example, Stephanie Judy, an AI facilitator who works with Silva, recently initiated an AI process with representatives from community groups, arts groups, businesses, and local government in a small B.C. town where there was a sudden opportunity to bid for a large project that could bring substantial benefits to the town. However, the groups needed to organize quickly and needed to cooperate closely in order to submit a timely proposal. Prior to their initial meeting, most participants were apprehensive about the likelihood of effective cooperation, since some of the groups had a difficult history with one another, and there were still open wounds from past events. The facilitator acknowledged the issues—that cooperation was key to the success of the project but that cooperation had been elusive in the past. Each participant was asked to tell a story about a time when they were part of a group that had demonstrated a high level of cooperation. After hearing one another's stories and analysing them for the factors that foster cooperation, the group quickly coalesced to generate the needed proposal and letters of support, and to set dates and agendas for subsequent meetings.

What does an AI process look like?

A typical AI process may take place over a one- to five-day period (depending on the size of the group and its goals), or it may be an on-going process that occupies a group for some part of each weekly or monthly meeting. The process follows what is called the 5-D cycle:

- **Define**—A steering committee or core group, with the help of an AI facilitator, defines the topic, and decides who should be involved and how the process will take place. Some groups, for example, decide to hold what is called an “AI Summit”—a two- or three-day process where everyone is involved all the time. Other groups choose to meet once a week for four to six weeks. Other groups begin by training interviewers who collect initial data throughout the community with one-on-one “kitchen table” interviews before convening a larger group. AI is flexible—it can be used with groups of all sizes and scheduled in a way that accommodates the group's other activities.
- **Discover**—Participants interview one another in pairs, collecting stories about the group at its best, collecting ideas about the group's most valuable resources, and collecting information about the group's desired future. A typical set of questions for a community would look something like this:
 1. Tell me about a peak experience in your community life . . . a time when you felt most alive, engaged, energized, and proud of yourself and your community.

2. Without being humble, what do you value most about yourself? your work? your community?
3. What are the core factors that give life to your community when it is at its best?
4. If you could make three wishes for your community that would come true in the next ten years, what would they be?

Following the paired interviews, the group as a whole (or small sub-groups of whole) analyzes the stories and data collected to discover key factors, ingredients, values, and resources that account for the group's previous successes.

- **Dream**—Participants imagine their desired future and give it shape. A dream may be in form of a written vision of the future, or it may be expressed in artwork, songs, poetry, stories, dance, celebrations, and skits. Commonly both written and artistic or action modes are used to express the dream.
- **Design**—Working toward the direction implied in the Dream, the group begins to define the values, ideals, and methods of change and growth that will achieve these dreams. These are written in the form of Provocative Propositions—bold statements written in the present tense that challenge the group to give form to its dreams.
- **Deliver**—The group, or appropriately delegated sub-groups, make specific, real-time plans for realizing the Design elements defined in the previous step.

At any point in this process, the group can return to the Discover stage and do a “mini-AI” to help them move forward. If, for example, a community group decided to initiate a water quality monitoring system, but felt uncertain about their ability to follow through in the long-term, they could stop and Discover the elements that make it possible for long-term community projects to succeed.

What are the benefits of AI?

Compared to other methods of organizing and planning, Appreciative Inquiry provides the following advantages to groups and communities:

- **AI promotes ownership of the process and the result.** An ideal AI process brings all stakeholders together to work actively with one another. The process is assisted by a facilitator, but the product (the plans for change) grows from the collective experience, wisdom, and resources of the stakeholders. Outside “experts” need not be involved, unless the community or group wishes to invite them.
- **AI honours diversity and opens the way for a group to benefit from its diversity.** An AI process, by definition, gives a role and a voice to everyone, from student to school board chairman, from cafeteria worker to CEO, from mayor to ordinary citizen. Genuine respect for diversity leads to richer solutions, better-informed group members, and a willingness to work toward mutually beneficial goals.
- **AI leads to immediate change, even in complex situations.** At the moment that we begin to investigate something, we also begin to change it. The Appreciative

Inquiry process begins by asking carefully crafted questions. Asking people to tell stories about how their group succeeds and how it functions at its best sets in motion creative, productive energy—the very same energy that is suppressed when a group is asked, “What’s wrong here?”

- **AI is sustainable.** The appreciative process itself generates the positive energy that is needed to carry out changes. Because the changes proposed are based on the group’s own experience, and are developed by the stakeholders themselves, the group members have a significant investment in the outcome. The AI process is also cyclical. It is not a linear process that is carried out and completed. At its best, an AI process yields an “appreciative organization” or an “appreciative community,” where many members are skilled at designing a future that carries forward the best of the past.
- **AI generates solutions that are grounded in reality.** Plans that are put forward by outside experts may not fit a community appropriately. The AI process is designed to build a future that honours and carries forward the best of the community’s past, and that makes optimal use of its present resources. The solutions that a community designs through an AI process are not based on abstract principles, but rather are “grown” from their collective experience.

What about problem solving?

. . . In the long run, what is likely to be more useful: Demoralizing a successful workforce by concentrating on their failures? or helping them over the last few hurdles by building a bridge with their successes? Don’t get me wrong. I’m not advocating mindless happy talk. Appreciative Inquiry is a complex science designed to make things better. We can’t ignore problems. We just need to approach them from the other side.

~ Thomas H. White, President, GTE Telephone Operations

Appreciative Inquiry has much in common with what is known by classroom teachers as the Pygmalion effect. Numerous studies have shown that when teachers believe that they are teaching groups of unusually intelligent students, the students’ performance meets the teachers’ expectations. In other words, what we look for, we get more of. If we look for outstanding performance, we find it.

In contrast, if teachers are told that their students are below average in intelligence, or that they have behaviour problems, the students once again meet the teachers’ expectations. Again, what we look for, we get more of. If we look for problems, we find them.

Most of us are familiar with “problem-solving approaches” to change, and we can confirm from personal experience that these approaches . . .

- are slow to show results, since no step forward can be taken until the situation is thoroughly analyzed;
- rarely create the conditions that inspire innovative, creative, or unusual solutions;
- usually generate defensiveness, as participants seek—openly or covertly—to assign blame for the problem;

- exclude many participants, sometimes because “problem” content needs to be kept confidential, and sometimes because potential stakeholders are judged—by themselves or others—to be unable to understand the problem fully; and
- drain the energy of participants, alienating many stakeholders from the group and its issues.

Even if a problem-oriented process arrives at a solution, the outcome may not be in the best interests of the group or the community, and may, as a result, bring more problems in its wake, by, for example,

- reinforcing deficit-based perceptions, so that individuals or groups are labelled and subsequently need to be “treated” or “developed” under the supervision of experts;
- eroding community confidence, capacity, and self-trust, by encouraging professionals or consultants to fill roles that previously would have been assumed by individuals within the community;
- creating a self-fulfilling prophecy (like the Pygmalion effect mentioned above) where problems are seen as normal community expressions, and/or where certain individuals or groups within the community are designated as “problems” in and of themselves; and
- altering the language that a community uses to describe itself, as they adjust their recollected history and their current actions to a disease- or deficit-based model, and begin to employ diagnostic labels and problem-solving interventions.

[Some of the points above were first proposed by David L. Cooperrider and Diana Whitney in an essay titled “A Positive Revolution in Change: Appreciative Inquiry.”]

Appreciative Inquiry does not ignore problems; rather, it approaches them from a completely different perspective. The practical results of AI sometimes look *exactly* like the results of good problem-solving, with one profound difference: at every point in the process, AI sustains a high level of commitment and energy among participants, rather than leaving them drained and demoralized, as deficit-based problem-solving processes usually do.

On the other hand, the practical results of AI sometimes look *nothing* like the results of problem-solving. Brilliant ideas are often generated that no participant (and certainly no outside expert) could possibly have anticipated.

How can a community apply AI to ecosystem-based planning?—a case study

For a group’s first experience with AI, it is helpful to have a facilitator who is specifically trained in AI facilitation and has experience using the process. (Note that not all facilitators have AI training or experience. Appreciative Inquiry is distinct from other organizational processes and facilitation models.) Once a group has been through the entire AI process and once a core group or steering committee understands the principles of AI, the process becomes cyclical and self-sustaining. Many groups that have used AI speak of themselves as “appreciative organizations.”

The first step is to form a core group or steering committee that can work with the facilitator. It is helpful for this group to familiarize themselves with the principles of AI. The *Resources* section below includes a list of resources and websites about AI.

The participants in the process who are not members of the core group or steering committee need not understand AI in detail, although they may be curious about it, since the process will be unlike the kinds of problem-solving group activities that many people will be used to.

If no facilitator is available, a core group can form an AI study group, reading one or more of the recommended books in the *Resources* section, and discussing how best to adapt the process to the group's needs. While a facilitator can make the process go smoother, and can provide a neutral or impartial viewpoint when needed, Appreciative Inquiry is one of those processes that can be used with confidence because it will "do no harm."

In applying AI to ecosystem-based planning, a community or First Nation would follow the 5 D's outlined above.

As a case study, some of the highlights of an AI process carried out with the Skownan First Nation in Manitoba in 2000-2001 are described below. This community was specifically looking for land-based economic opportunities related to its culture. More information about this project is available from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) at <http://www.iisd.org/ai/waterhen.htm>.

The final report of this project (46 pages) can be downloaded in .pdf format at http://www.iisd.org/pdf/skownan_final_nopics.pdf. All quoted material below is taken from this final report: "Integrating Aboriginal Values into Land-Use and Resource Management: Final Report, January 2000 to June 2001" published by IISD in 2001.

Define

With the help of an AI facilitator, the steering committee or core group defines the topic, and decides who should be involved and how the process will take place. The Skownan First Nation worked with project managers and project assistants from the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in Winnipeg.

The topic chosen needs to be as broad as possible. It is better to choose a topic that encompasses many possibilities over the long term, rather than a topic that narrows the focus or concentrates on the short term. The Skownan First Nation chose as their topic "Integrating Aboriginal Values into Land Use and Resource Management."

The core group then decides on interview questions and the interview protocol. In some cases, it will be necessary to generate an interview guide, particularly where paired interviews will be taking place over time and carried out by a team of interviewers. In the Skownan project, experienced AI facilitators trained six young adults from Skownan First Nation in Appreciative Inquiry and practical interviewing techniques.

Other factors to be decided at the "Define" stage are too numerous to outline here, but are well-explained in *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change* by Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom (see *Resources* section for publication details).

Discover

In the “Discover” phase, participants interview one another in pairs, collecting stories about the group at its best, collecting ideas about the group’s most valuable resources, and collecting information about the group’s desired future.

Some of the questions used in the Skownan First Nation Project, as listed in their Final Report were:

- Skownan is in an area of wonderful natural resources such as forests, lakes and rivers, and fresh air. People in Skownan value these resources for the many benefits that they provide. When you think back on your life in Skownan, what do you think are the most important benefits that the land and waters provide to you, your family and the community?
- Please tell a story of one particular incident when you were out on the land and felt really excited and fortunate to live where you do—close to nature. Who was there and what made it special?
- The people of Skownan have many skills; some have been passed down from their parents and grandparents, others have been learned new. What skills do you think are most important to a strong and close community?
- When you think back on your life in Skownan, can you think of a time when the bond between people in the community was closest? What was it that made people feel so connected? What were they doing together?
- If you were to recount a story of Skownan First Nation that makes you feel proud, what would it be?

Following the paired interviews, the group as a whole (or small sub-groups of the whole) analyzes the stories and data collected to discover key factors, ingredients, values, and resources that account for the group’s previous successes.

A few of the factors and values that emerged from the Skownan interviews included:

- The forest gives protection and comfort to the people.
- The forest is a magical and mystical place, connecting Ojibwa people.
- The forest provides food, shelter and medicines.
- Going onto the land provides peace and healing. People feel good about themselves. They develop a spiritual and loving relationship with the land.
- It is fun to spend time on the land; people are happy in the bush. The land gives a feeling of togetherness to the people.
- Hunting moose and deer brings happiness and pride to the hunter and feeds families. Wild meat tastes better and is healthier than store-bought meat.

Dream, Design, and Deliver

At this stage, participants imagine their desired future and give it shape. These three steps are intertwined, and cyclic. Here are some examples, organized by topic, of Dreams, Designs (strategies), and Deliver statements (specific, practical steps for implementing the design) that resulted from the Skownan First Nation’s AI process:

Topic	Dream	Design	Deliver
Respecting the Land	<p>Our people respect the lands and the waters.</p> <p>Our people work to ensure that the land and water are clean and healthy for our children and the animals.</p>	<p>Keep the land much the same as it is now</p> <p>More people active on the land hunting and trapping</p> <p>Teach young people outdoor skills</p>	<p>Have summer camps on the land for fathers and sons, mothers and daughters</p> <p>Have Elders teach traditional skills in the schools</p>
Spirituality	<p>Our people respect each others' spirituality or ways, be they Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Native culture or atheist, and we are free to practice our own beliefs.</p>	<p>More love, spiritual freedom, healing, unity, and respect in Skownan</p>	<p>Meeting of spiritual leaders</p> <p>A sharing circle to discuss the impact of the blockade on the people living in Skownan</p>
Chitek Lake	<p>Skownan First Nation's place of peace and freedom for our people and the bison. It is a natural place that supports our community through fishing, small-scale logging, and eco-tourism, and provides habitat for our animals.</p>	<p>Joint management of the Chitek Lake Protected Area between the province and Skownan.</p> <p>Retain hunting rights for Skownan First Nation in the traditional use area</p>	<p>Know what a protected area is and how it can be used</p> <p>Inform more people about the protected areas initiative</p>
Community	<p>Our people work together to build a strong, safe and united community for our children and future generations</p>	<p>Define expectations of respect and tolerance at the Band level, in the school, and have children respecting each other</p> <p>More open communication between community members</p>	<p>Hold community dinners</p> <p>Develop a newsletter on respect and other topics, including announcements and safety tips</p> <p>Explore and assess the value of restorative justice approaches for the community</p>
Livelihoods	<p>Our people provide for our families through productive work based on traditional activities on the land. Working individually, we support our community as a whole.</p>	<p>Establish a lodge for eco-tourism</p> <p>Develop a small-scale sawmill to provide timber for housing and to sell</p>	<p>Build a cover for the portable sawmill</p> <p>Obtain the skills and knowledge to develop a Five-Year Management Plan for an eco-tourism lodge</p>

Education	<p>Our people strive for higher education. We complete high school, excel at our jobs, achieve our goals, and bring meaningful employment requiring skills and education back to Skownan First Nation.</p> <p>Our children are educated in our traditional values, and we have the skills knowledge, and respect needed to survive on the land. Our people speak Ojibway.</p>	<p>Develop policy manual for Skownan School</p> <p>Talk to community leaders about school issues</p> <p>Develop adult education program that includes life skills, academics, and employment preparation</p>	<p>Re-establish Parent Program in Skownan School</p> <p>Involve Elders in Skownan School and Adult Education to teach survival skills on the land and respect</p> <p>Secure nominal roll funding for adult education</p>
Recreation	<p>Our people build pride, unity, and strength in our bodies and minds through recreation and meditation.</p>	<p>Build a new arena in the community</p>	<p>Identify resources for building the first phase of the new arena, including human resources, plans, materials, and money</p> <p>Prepare a three-phase plan for expansion of the existing recreation hall</p>

The expected outcome of AI

AI treats an organization like a stream flowing toward the sea. (Thanks to Bernard Mohr and Jane Watkins for this metaphor.) The water in the stream will inevitably encounter obstacles on the way—logs, stones, narrow places, dams. When it comes to an obstruction, the stream continues to move toward the goal, circumventing the obstacle in the most efficient possible manner. The stream doesn't stop at an obstacle—a log, for example—and attempt to “deal with it” by measuring the log, finding out where it came from, how long it has been there, and why it lodged in that particular place. Nor does the stream make any plans for moving the log. Rather, the stream continues toward its goal—the sea—circumventing the log in the most efficient manner possible. (In many cases, the log actually improves the stream.)

Organizations that work with AI report remarkable results—increased levels of commitment and energy, innovative plans, and improved communication.

The first steps of an AI process are crucial, because they point the way to the outcome. The axiom (once again) is that *what we look for, we get more of*. As explained in the examples above—the hospital that looks for reasons why nurses are loyal employees tends to find nurses who are loyal employees; the community groups who look at how diverse groups can cooperate tend to find ways for their diverse groups to cooperate; the

community that looks at how young people contribute to the community finds young people making a significant contribution to community life.

AI resources

Books

*Titles marked with an asterisk are especially recommended for community groups.

*Browne, Bliss and Shilpa Jain. 2002. *Possibility Handbook: Ten Years of Imagination in Action*. Chicago: Imagine Chicago. [can be downloaded as a .pdf file at <http://www.imaginechicago.org/home.html>]

Cooperrider, David L. and Diana Whitney. 1999. *Collaborating for Change: Appreciative Inquiry*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, paperback, 48 pp.

Cooperrider, David and J. Dutton (Eds.) *No Limits to Cooperation: The Organization Dimensions of Global Change*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Cooperrider, David., P.F. Sorensen Jr., Diana Whitney, and T. Yaegar (Eds). 2000. *Appreciative Inquiry: Rethinking Human Organization Toward a Positive Theory of Change*. Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing.

Cooperrider, David and Diana Whitney, D. 2001. *Appreciative Inquiry Handbook: A Constructive Approach to Organization Development and Change*. Lakeshore Publishers, Cleveland, Ohio.

* Elliott, Charles. 1999. *Locating the Energy for Change: An Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry*. Winnipeg: International Institute for Sustainable Development, [This document—288 pages—can be downloaded from the IISD website at <http://www.iisd.org/ai/locating.htm>]

Hammond, Sue Annis. 1998 (2nd ed.). *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*. Plano, TX: Thin Book Publishers, paperback, 70 pp. [<http://www.thinbook.com/>]

Hammond, Sue Annis and Andrea B. Mayfield. *The Thin Book of Naming Elephants*. 2004. Bend, Oregon: Thin Book Publishing Co., paperback, 110 pp. [<http://www.thinbook.com/>]

* Hammond, Sue Annis and Cathy Royal (Eds.). 1998. *Lessons From the Field: Applying Appreciative Inquiry*. Plano, TX: Thin Book Publishing Company, 295 pp. [<http://www.thinbook.com/>]

Mohr, Bernard and Jane Magruder Watkins. 2001. *Appreciative Inquiry: Change at the Speed of Imagination*. John Wiley & Sons, paperback, 288 pp.

*Rich-New, Kathleen and Bob New. 2003. *Looking for the Good Stuff: A Guide to Enjoying and Appreciating Life*. Clarity Works!, paperback, 52 pp.

*Stavros, Jacqueline M. and Cheri B. Torres. *Dynamic Relationships: Unleashing the Power of Appreciative Inquiry in Daily Living*. Chagrin Falls, Ohio: Taos Institute Publications., paperback, 169 pp.

Srivastva, S. and D. L. Cooperrider (Eds.), *Appreciative Management and Leadership: The Power of Positive Thought and Action in Organizations*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc.

* Whitney, Diana, and Amanda Trosten-Bloom. 2003. *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 264 pages.

Websites

- <http://appreciativeinquiry.cwru.edu/> This is the “AI Commons”—an academically-based site for discussion, announcements, .pdf documents, conference and training schedules, and links. You can also subscribe to ai-list (an e-mail discussion list) from this site.
- <http://www.thinbook.com/thinbook/chap11fromle.html> This is a link for downloading an essay called “What is Appreciative Inquiry?” by Sue Hammond and Joe Hall (downloadable in .pdf format). This is a chapter from *The Thin Book of Appreciative Inquiry*.
- <http://iisd1.iisd.ca/ai/default.htm> This is the AI page of the website of the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) in Winnipeg. The site includes detailed descriptions (much of it downloadable in .pdf format) of AI processes with the Skownan First Nations in Manitoba and the Myrada project in Southern India, which used AI to address poverty in four small communities. This site also contains Charles Elliott’s excellent book about AI, called *Locating the Energy for Change*, in a downloadable .pdf format.
- <http://www.iisd.org/ai/waterhen.htm> This is the IISD webpage that describes the Skownan First Nation (formerly called Waterhen First Nation) Community Values Project—“Integrating Aboriginal Values into Land Use and Resource Management.” The final report of this project can be downloaded in .pdf format at http://www.iisd.org/pdf/skownan_final_nopics.pdf
- <http://imaginechicago.org> This is the website of Imagine Chicago—a huge youth- and community-based AI project that has now conducted interviews with more than a million people, and has initiated dozens of citizen-controlled on-going social and community initiatives. The site includes a downloadable document outlining the processes and accomplishments of this 10-year-long (and still on-going) AI process.

A mild caution for communities who are meeting AI for the first time—you’ll find lots of corporations using AI, and the “corporate presence” on some websites is substantial. Corporations know a good thing when they see it, and AI works for corporations as well as for communities and non-profits.

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