

# Leadership Development in an Appreciative way

*Leadership Training of Trainers with Women's Development Council (WDC) Bihar*

---

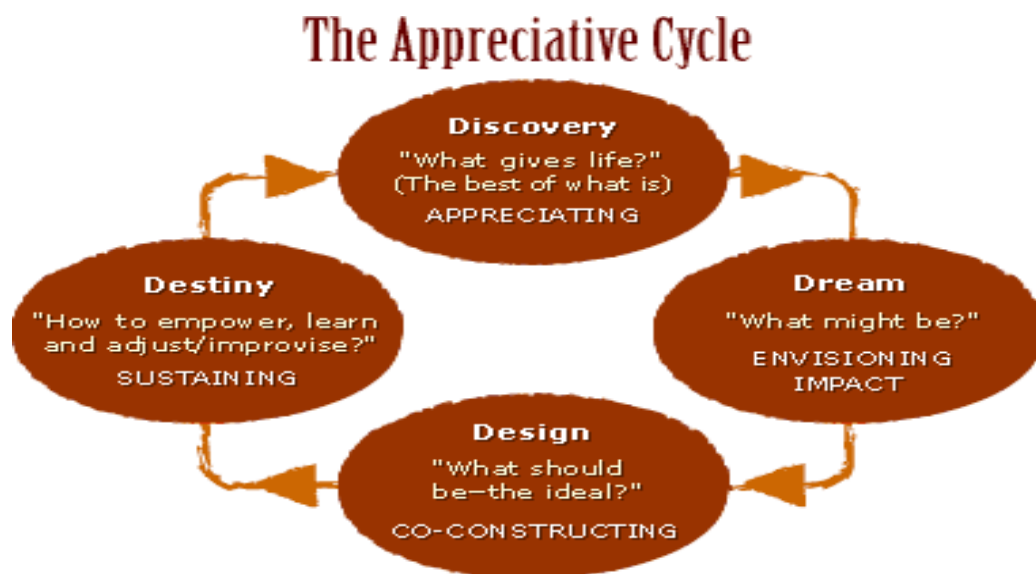
Leadership is the process of influencing people to take responsibility for their lives. Leadership is always there within us, waiting to be discovered.

These are the beliefs based on which we started our work with the staff of the WDC in Patna. There is saying that "what you believe is what you see" – we saw leadership among the staff and prepared them not only to own it, but also train others to discover the same!

We decided on Appreciative Inquiry as the basis of this training. It was important that the women and men driving these programs discovered their own potential for influencing change. We wanted to change the belief that leadership should come from 'outside' and to discover the leadership within. Developing their pride through an understanding in their own capabilities grounded in conversations and stories of their leadership was the base on which the entire program was built.

Appreciative inquiry is a strategy for purposeful change that identifies the best of "what is" to pursue dreams and possibilities of "what could be." It is a co-operative search for the strengths, passions and life-giving forces that are found within every person and system—those factors that hold the potential for inspired, positive change.

There are four steps to the appreciative approach.



For more understanding of AI, please visit [www.aicommons.org](http://www.aicommons.org).

Our work focused on helping these designated 'trainer leaders' discover and use their own leadership skills to develop a leadership program that is context relevant and therefore doable. This was done in three phases.

In the first module, we focused on their own leadership competencies, where AI was used. In the second module, they articulated their dream for the leadership program that they will design and in the final phase, the training design, along with the modules and the evaluation process was finalized.

These trainers conducted at least one roll out leadership training and the leadership development processes and modules were documented for easy replication after which a review was held.

**Impact to date:**25 master trainers were trained. These Trainers have since rolled out this program 8 Districts. Around 240 women were directly trained. In the second and third phase, 3300 & 39600 women were trained. Since each phase created new trainers and leaders, the spread has been exponential.

We believe that the success was driven by the grounding in the philosophy of AI, which led to the belief that change was possible and could be led by the people who were affected by it.

Leadership is within, discover it!

=====



RSankarasubramanyan and Wasundhara Joshi are consultants who worked with IIE and WDC in creating the program. They are based in Mumbai. They can be reached at [rsankara@yahoo.com](mailto:rsankara@yahoo.com), [wasundhara@gmail.com](mailto:wasundhara@gmail.com)