

From: R Sankar

I am the current president of TAPIN, a network created a year ago bringing together practitioners of Appreciative Inquiry. AI is slowly gaining popularity in India both in the corporate and development sector. I have done some work with the health sector, especially related to the field of Maternal and Child Health along with my wife Dr Wasundhara Joshi.

I learned about this method at the National Training Laboratories in the USA some 11 years ago. After returning to India, one of the first places this was used was with the heads of department at LTMGH in 2000 (Sion Hospital and Medical College, Mumbai). This was part of the initiative for Maternal and Child Friendly Hospitals (MCFHI) supported by the UNICEF in collaboration with a group of Doctors led by Dr Armida Fernandez, the then Dean of Sion Hospital.

I worked with the group to design a summit for a City Initiative for Newborn health for Mumbai, held in 2001. This program has been led by the NGO SNEHA (Society for Nutrition Education and Health Action) and has used AI extensively in their work with communities and the health system.

Wasundhara and myself conducted a TOT on using AI for MCH for a group belonging to an international network testing the effectiveness of women's groups on Maternal and Newborn mortality. This work has now been taken to all the community and systems work being done by MIRA of Nepal.

The latest work has been building leadership for RCH through the LDM program of the Packard Foundation. Here we worked with the WDC department of Bihar, and some leaders from Jharkhand, to create a vision for the RCH leadership and skills building using AI as the methodology. 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.

In both these experiences, the impact and spread of this process is very striking. It sometimes takes time, but each individual who is touched by this process becomes the point for further radiation and in a few years the change has spread across communities and countries.