

Conversation about cases of Appreciative Inquiry in nation building and regional development with the active support of business



BY JEANNETTE SCHONEWILLE

Anastasia Bukashe and Ilma Barros have had a dialogue amongst multi sector stakeholders in the aim of regional development. They presented the highlights of successful cases of Appreciative Inquiry that have led to large scale regional development and nation building. These are examples from South Africa and Brasil. These cases have led to regeneration in all sectors and cross borders.



Dr. Anastasia Bukashe



Dr. Ilma Barros



Anastasia Bukashe and Ilma Barros shared their stories and experience in Appreciative Inquiry for nation building on stage by asking each other questions. What has been happening? How were companies inspired to incorporate the processes? Their stories are remarkable examples of how to stimulate business interest in societal issues and how to stimulate change.

What is happening in Brazil?

Business As Agents for World Benefits (BAWB) comments 'Every single and global issue we face is a business opportunity in disguise' Peter Drucker said sometime. Ilma Barros explains the purpose of the BAWB 'World Inquiry' is to discover, amplify, and promote extraordinary business and society innovations that:

- Revolutionize the way the world eradicates poverty
- Restore the biosphere
- Build stronger communities
- Shape sustainable peace

World Inquiry is a worldwide action research initiative that uses Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to learn more about the role of business in society. In Brazil, Ilma Barros started in 2003 BAWB conferences where participants and innovators gathered every year in different regions of the country. Appreciative Inquiry promotes 'Generative Encounters'. This initiative has inspired other organisations to increase their societal awareness. During these conferences Ilma shared stories of how companies scale up their societal efforts. World Inquiry always sparks exchanges about the role and potential of business: *How to be Great by Doing Good?* Ilma says 'the sharing of stories of mutual benefit will promote new thinking, conversations, connections, and learning that will lead the world toward a healthy, peaceful, and sustainable future' After the conferences, companies generated new and interesting partnerships and a whole new way of working together that even impacts on the growth of their businesses'. It became both a process and a platform for increasing the quality of exchanges year by year in four of the five regions in Brazil. The number of conferences increased from 14 in 2003, 15 in 2004, 54 in 2005 to 43 in 2006.

Three phenomena have occurred as a result of the BAWB in Brazil:

1. The participants were enthused by the positive experiences of the BAWB conferences in Brazil
2. They discovered the urge to initiate more exchanges to forward their ideas and insights and bring them to fruition.
3. They saw the possibility that their 'doing good' projects could in fact become a new business in themselves.

In this way business has the opportunity to be a new creative force on the planet that could contribute to the wellbeing of people, profit and planet. By sharing stories of creative initiatives that have already taken, we can scale up the generative power of AI.

What is going on in South Africa?

Anastasia Bukashe presented the creation of new developments in South Africa. She has been working as a practitioner extensively in Africa, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, North and South America, and recently in Asia. This work focused on reconciliation and building sustainable peace. In these settings she always works closely with local communities and organisations to build capacity and learning in jointly enriching ways. Anastasia is frequently asked to present at conferences and global forums to highlight issues of human rights and peace-building.

The Axiom News wrote about the contribution of Anastasia at the WAIC in Ghent 'while some are saying South Africa was supported by the African continent during its struggles, and those deeds to be honoured now, others are angry about the opportunities that are being stolen by foreigners.' 'We need to have a different conversation about what it means to be in Africa, and what it means to be South African in Africa,' says Anastasia. 'What is the world calling for Africa to be, what are we calling for each other to be, and what are we witnessing in each other that makes that possible?'

She has been working for more than a year now to bring these questions to groups of citizens and civil leaders. It's been incredibly slow work, she says, with a few significant shifts here and there, as when she convened a group of key civil leaders for such a conversation.

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Video presentation Bukashe and Barros 