

Brief Encounter with the Taos Institute

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An Awesome Time at the 2019 World Appreciative Inquiry Conference

The Taos Institute was well represented among the 400+ people from 30 countries who gathered for the World Appreciative Inquiry Conference recently held in Nice, France, March 19 – 22, 2019. The Taos magic began when over 30 Taos Associates, friends and family gathered for an opening reception. It was a grand reunion and a reminder of the tremendous coherence among the AI and Taos communities. Hugs and laughter filled the room as we reconnected with seldom seen friends and colleagues from around the world.

The conference program was packed full from 8 am to 8 pm with inspiring and exciting keynote sessions and workshops organized around three key themes: AI for organization change, AI for personal development and AI for social change. We came away from the conference with an immense sense of the power of Appreciative Inquiry which is happening all around the globe in thousands of locations creating positive change and a world where all voices matter, where change is a collaborative process and strengths lead the way.

Taos founders and associates presented preconference and keynote sessions on [Business as an Agent of World Benefit](#), The New Positive Change Equation, [Conversations Worth Having](#), [Building Resilience with AI](#), AI and Gender Equality, and AI in Communities. There were a number of notable firsts offered by Taos associates during their keynote sessions. Miriam Subirana and colleagues Roberto Aristegui, Circe Peralta Huerta, Lorena Merino Naranjo, and Felix Vilorio presented the first bilingual plenary at an AI conference, filled with heartfelt stories of how Appreciative Inquiry is being applied to rebuild a community after an earthquake, transcend violence, sustain and preserve peace and reconstruct women communities. Cheri Torres, Jackie Stavros, Jeanie Cockel, Joan McArthur-Blair, collaborated in presenting a plenary session on Resilient Conversations. Jackie Kelm and Tony Silbert collaborated on a plenary session on Appreciative Living and using AI in everyday life. David Cooperrider and Lindsey Godwin drew from the field of positive psychology as well as AI as they presented their new model of P.O.S.I.T.I.V.E change. Gervase Bushe talked about Dialogic OD and Suzanne Quinney presented with two colleagues on Finding Everyday Excellence.

In Diana Whitney's plenary, she and colleagues from South Africa invited the entire group into a



conversation about how AI can be used for social change, especially focused on gender inclusion and equality. Many of these keynote sessions focused upon books that are available now or soon to be published.

The workshop we facilitated on Appreciative Inquiry in families is among our conference highlights. Close to fifty people joined us to explore family issues from an AI perspective. Topics they brought to the discussion included: troublesome teens, aging parents and a spouse who wouldn't load the dishwasher! We became a rich learning community as we talked about and



crafted simple “AI questions to enhance daily family dialogues.” Dawn Dole, Lindsey Godwin and Matt Moehle presented a workshop on Appreciative Inquiry in Education, attended by about 45 people.

Other workshops that stood out for us were: Appreciative Inquiry in rural communities in Nova Scotia, Canada, working with women who have experienced trauma through abuse, violence, and substance abuse. The work is transforming the women and their communities. We also participated in AI in philanthropy, Appreciative Voice, AI in the

Media, After the AI Summit – Designing change to last, and so many more. And of course, the AI Practitioner was there sharing the many stories that have been published over the past

Finally, we must acknowledge the fantastic job of the conference hosting/organizing team in France – Jean-Christophe Barralis, Christine Cayer, Kti Dossot, Eir Mellet, and Jean Pages. They had everything ready for a warm, welcoming, enlivening event. The food and pastries were fantastic, and the beauty of Nice, France was all around us. We are already looking forward to the next World Appreciative Inquiry Conference and invite you to join us at that time. Location to be determined.

