

# AI Practitioner

The international newsletter of AI best practice

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**AI Practitioner is published quarterly in November, February, May and August.**  
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## Women, Peace and Money

**Roselyn Kay, Malcolm J. Odell and Susan E. Pritchett Post**

[rkay@newheightsgrp.com](mailto:rkay@newheightsgrp.com) [macodell@adelphia.net](mailto:macodell@adelphia.net)

[Susan@newworldcoaching.net](mailto:Susan@newworldcoaching.net)

The desire to support an issue on Women, Peace, and Money arose when, in response to Anne Radford's request for support identifying topics for 2004, Mac Odell shared a stunning story about his experiences using AI with a literacy and micro-enterprise program for women in Nepal. Mac told of how these women became empowered through collaboration with other women in their communities and building on a dream of making better lives for themselves and their families. Mac's energy was high when telling the story of these women who went from saving pennies a week to collective small business revenues in excess of over \$20 million. The story reminded us all of the power of dreaming, collaboration and community, and action.

So here we are in August of 2004 with an issue devoted to the role of Appreciative Inquiry in women's empowerment. In this issue we are reminded of challenges women face around the world, especially the consequences of war, poverty, prejudice, and political and social oppression. Through the stories presented here we can also see the power of AI to bring hope, peace, and economic gains to the women while strengthening their communities, empowering them to support themselves and each other.

As editors reviewing and compiling these stories, we were particularly impressed by several aspects of the articles that were submitted:

- ◆ The global reach of AI and the impact it has had on women in all sorts of conditions is extraordinary. From the most impoverished of women in third world countries and refugee camps to middle class women in the United States, the process has brought discovery, learning, hope, personal and regional peace, and economic opportunity. In short, it was life-changing, affirming and empowering.

- ◆ The reach of AI goes beyond those women who participate directly. It is clear from these articles that there is a cascading or ripple effect when introducing AI to women. They share their experiences with their communities and families bringing the benefits of AI to others.

◆ Almost all of the articles contain an element of surprise — surprise on the part of the participants in the process regarding what they learned and what they were able to accomplish as well as surprise on the part of the facilitator regarding the impact of AI and the outcomes. There is also an element of intimacy in the process as highlighted by the authors' reflections on their personal learnings from working with women and AI.

Clearly these articles speak to important and far-reaching work and we are proud to present to you articles from around the globe where women have experienced the value of AI in building better lives for themselves and their families, covering such topics as:

◆ “Moving Mountains: Appreciative Planning and Action — Women’s Empowerment in Nepal” by Malcolm J. Odell, Jr. This feature article highlights how the process of AI was adapted to circumstances in Nepal and yielded significant and unanticipated economic benefits for the women who participated and their communities.

◆ “From Riots to Empowerment in Africa: Appreciative Planning and Action in a Liberian Refugee Camp” by Malcolm J. Odell, Jr. This article elaborates on the first article with a compelling story of how the APA process was used in a refugee camp and the impact it had.

◆ “AI: Empowering Women in the African Media” by Sherry Rockey. In this story, the author speaks to the application of AI to program evaluation with International Women’s Media Foundation’s African Women’s Media Center (AWMC) and the impact it had on the program and the women it serves.

◆ “Rubbing Our Deficit Eyes: AI and the Women in Ghana” by Phyllis Craun-Selka. Based on the author’s work in Ghana, this is the story of how the appreciative perspective shifts how we view the world and the benefits for both the participants and the practitioner in applying AI.

◆ “Appreciative Inquiry and Evaluation with Sex Workers in Cambodia” by Anne T. Coghlan. This is a story about hope for women in Cambodia, victims of their poor economic status, becoming sex workers and risking their health to HIV/AIDS. Through an AI evaluation process the women connected with their greater sense of value and hope for the future.

◆ “Inspiring Hope, Igniting Action Through Dialogue: The PMWD and The WIE Partnership” by Ilene C. Wasserman, Ph.D., AIC This article tells of the power of discovery and sharing among women of different faiths in Jerusalem and its impact on their community and on a similar community of women in the United States.

◆ “Bread, Salt and Good Hearts: An Appreciative Inquiry into the Lives of the Albanian Women” by Susan E. Pritchett Post. In this article, the author highlights the cultural applicability of AI and the powerful impact of interviews and discovery.

◆ “Discovery and Dreams: A path to empowered action” by Roselyn Kay and Marilou Bova. This article highlights the power dreams both recalled and imagined in helping women identify new possibilities for action.

Anne Radford also focuses her Viewpoint on the power of the AI Principles in her coaching work with women.

We hope that you are as excited as we are by the possibilities AI offers for changing the lives of women, facilitating economic development and creating the necessary platform for peace.

*Roselyn Kay, Malcolm J. Odell and Susan E. Pritchett Post*  
*Guest editors*  
*August 2004*