

A photograph of two women sitting outdoors, engaged in conversation. The woman on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a striped top, holding a drink. The woman on the right has shoulder-length brown hair and is wearing a patterned top. They are both wearing name tags. The background shows a blurred structure with diagonal lines, possibly a bridge or a modern building.

make a *difference*

MAGAZINE

NUMBER 1
JUNE 2017

EXTENDING THE GENERATIVE CONVERSATIONAL CAPABILITIES

STORIES OF PARTICIPANTS

INTERVIEWS & INITIATIVES

THOUGHTS ON THE IN-BETWEEN-SPACE

PHOTOS, QUOTES AND MORE....

Last May, we as Kessels & Smit organized a 'Make a Difference Event'. Even though it was triggered by our 40 years anniversary, it was not a birthday party, nor a 'strategic conference', but an attempt to create space for collective reflection and inquiry for ourselves and others into the question: can we make a difference in new ways in the future? As a topic for our inquiry we chose:

Radical connectedness for: Flourishing Human Beings | Flourishing Organisations | Flourishing World

Some 250 people responded to our invitation! We shaped the event together with David Cooperrider, one of the founders of Appreciative Inquiry, as an Appreciative Inquiry Summit. A process designed in such a way that it helps bring dreams to the surface, connect people with similar ideas, and allows them to create plans for action.

CONNECTION AND INSPIRATION

But just describing the event in terms of the plans that were created together and the initiatives that took shape doesn't really capture what happened. A lot more was going on. Not only did we inquire into how we could encourage radical connectedness and human flourishing by talking about it, we experienced moments of radical connectedness and flourishing as well. In one-on-one encounters or in group moments. People frequently mentioned that this was maybe the most inspiring and energizing aspect of the event. Sharing stories, hearing ideas and initiatives from others, meeting strangers who feel like friends after an hour, and experiencing how fast you can engage in a process of building new ideas with people whom you have just met left people energized and determined to continue to make a difference in their own work and social environment.

THE OTHER SIDE

There was a flipside: we also found that it was not always easy to radically connect - there were moments of disconnection and uncertainty as well. What are we here for? Why this group of people and not any other? Am I part of it? Do I want to? As one colleague described it: "I feel like I have re-connected and stepped into the process dozens of times in those three days. Am I going to participate in this activity? Do I want to show my vulnerabilities to this total stranger?" Each time she did connect again, she felt the effect of it. People changed groups when they felt it was not the group they wanted to be in, almost always finding someone else to connect with: either in an 'official' activity or informally - sitting on the dockside for example. In this way everyone created his or her own space to really get out of the event what he or she sought after. Several people made the observation that an important takeaway for them was the realisation that, in order to be able to connect with someone, or something, you have to be truly connected to yourself and what you want or need. Some people even experienced that the event (re)challenged them in that respect.

THE STORY GOES ON...

Our heads were spinning by the end of the three days full of images, stories and connections. What a space for creativity and exploration did we make together with everyone who was there. A great example that any human system moves in the direction of what it studies.

The K&S media crew has captured stories during the summit, and will continue to do so - sharing them on [madesummit.com](https://www.madesummit.com). But also in a series of magazines that will be published over the course of the next months. This is the first!

MAGAZINE

In this first magazine you will find:

- Some stories on initiatives that came out of the summit (such as seen@work, or the 'living with the seasons' initiative)
- Personal stories and reflections of participants
- Pictures from the event to grasp the atmosphere

The reflections on what happened and what it means to us as a company are only just starting to percolate. In this magazine we share a first story on how we want to further extend our generative conversational capabilities.

We really hope you enjoy reading it! It is our way of experimenting with the question of how to keep the energy alive and the process going, after the event.

On behalf of the entire MADE media crew:
Katrien Massa, Saskia Tjepkema (editors),
Hanneke Queens (design)

*We plan to make a second magazine after the summer.
Do you have a story to share for our next magazine?
Send an email to made@kessels-smit.com or leave a
message on madesummit.com.
We would love to hear from you!*

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THREE DAYS: WHAT DID THEY LOOK LIKE?

We shaped the event with David Cooperrider to follow the steps of an Appreciative Inquiry Summit.



MONDAY: DISCOVERY

Monday afternoon was the time for getting to know one another better and explore the topic. People engaged in one-on-one and group interviews on stories of 'radical connectedness', they shared stories on what 'flourishing' means to them....



TUESDAY: DREAM AND DESIGN

On Tuesday, they were invited to Dream: what could happen if....? What kind of future would you see in front of you? The dreams were shared on stage and during lunch we tried to define the 'Design questions'. Some examples are: how might we support schools that contribute to children's flourishing, in the broadest sense of the word? Foster room for reflection and dialogue in organisations and communities? Create ways in which people can share 'the joy of struggling forward': share mistakes, not-knowing and insecurities so that we can learn from them? After lunch, different groups set out to work on these questions. Some big, some small... Brainstorming, creating prototypes: a chaotic and creative energy filled the room. Some groups immediately came up with concrete ideas, others were searching and wrestling a bit more. People sometimes switched themes if the exploration of the topic was different from what they had hoped. New themes emerged spontaneously. One team already took to the streets to test the interviews they wanted to use in their project. A group of artists tried out a new performance in the group. All sorts of things happened. We were reminded of AI author Frank Barrett: 'Say Yes to The Mess'!



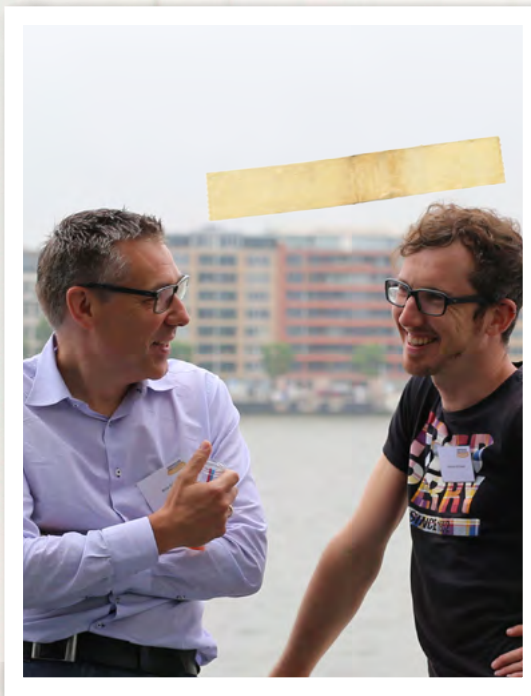
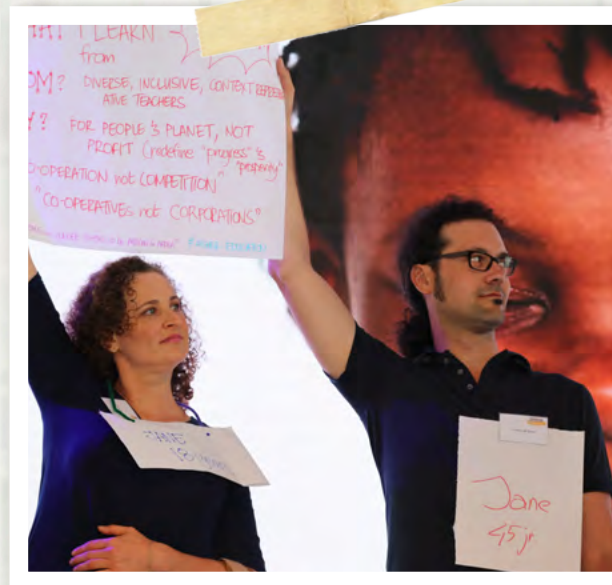
WEDNESDAY: DELIVER

Wednesday was time for a more focused and calm atmosphere. Groups and duos huddled together to work on actual plans and activities. Before lunch we had a moment on stage for no less than 23 groups who had formed around a (bigger or smaller) initiative (!). Examples include a group that develops a toolbox that teams can use to discuss their insecurities, flaws, difficult moments in learning; a partnership that wants to build a learning network amongst schools, and so on... There was enormous diversity. Next to that, numerous people went home with bigger or smaller ideas to take to their own organization: creating a mini-summit themselves for instance.

READ MORE?

If you want to read more about the conception and the design of the MADE event you can also check out these blogposts:

- [On MADE: our Make a Difference Event - 1](#)
- [MADE as a place to exchange and design together - 2](#)



WHO PARTICIPATED?

Since we really wanted the event to be carried by all of us at Kessels & Smit, we decided that each and every one of the 50-or-so international K&S colleagues would invite a couple of people whom they felt were also looking for (new) ways to make a difference in the field of flourishing individuals, communities and organisations. We were happy (and pleasantly surprised) that 200 people said yes to the invitation for the 3-day event... A group of 250 difference-makers showed up and stepped in!

As a result of our organic process of inviting people, it was a very diverse group and we really cannot give a comprehensive overview or analysis of everyone who was there, but a few things we do know....:

 The majority of participants was from **The Netherlands**; there were a lot of people from **Belgium** as well. And we were blessed with guests from countries such as the **US, South Africa, the UK, Germany, Ireland, Syria...**

 Many participants are active in the same field as Kessels & Smit: they work as **coaches, facilitators, consultants**. But we also found that there were **managers, social entrepreneurs**, people from **non-profit organisations** and **NGOs, healthcare professionals, students, civil servants, school teachers** and - **leaders** were also well-represented. And the group was enriched with **researchers**, at least one **bereavement counsellor**, a professional **photographer**, a **professional clown** and other **artists, a civil rights activist, a publisher, designers, storytellers...** and many more professions.



Agewise, we had participants as young as **18 years** old, and as 'old' as **70**, and everything in between....



And we had **professional** relationships, but also **family** members, **neighbours** and **friends** of Kessels & Smit colleagues there.

At the start of the summit, to get a feel for who was in the room, we asked people to stand up if they came from a specific country, or from a specific professional background, or.... We had several such categories. Three things that happened then say a lot about the people who attended. First, within every category, we were never exhaustive in our list of possible answers: there were always some people whose profession, or country, was not named yet... And second: within every category, many people stood more than once. Both strong reminders that it is difficult to put our MADE participants into just one box.... Exactly what makes it such a rich group.

One of the triggers for this summit was a remark from Erwin De Bruyn, who once told our colleague Luc Verheijen: you really should do more to connect the people from your company's network, there is such a rich field of people around K&S.... If you get them together, new things will emerge. Our thoughts went back to these wise words on a number of occasions during the summit... Erwin was right. Our network consists of a rich and varied group of people, and what happens when you put them in a room together is amazing.

A group of people is sitting on a concrete pier by the water. They are looking towards the water and talking. In the background, there is a city skyline with several buildings and a large ship docked at a pier. The sky is clear and blue.

“THE SUMMIT MADE ME
EXPERIENCE HOW MUCH WE
CAN OFFER EACH OTHER AND
THE WORLD BY WANTING TO
SHARE AND BE IN SERVICE
INSTEAD OF WANTING TO BE
IN THE SPOTLIGHTS.”

🗨️ **Joep Schuermans**

STORY OF EZELLE

At best, and as so often happens at events like these, the spontaneous interactions with random strangers in between or after sessions, is what I am most grateful for...

There was the woman in the lunch queue who it turned out comes from that part of the world where I had been conceived. She ended up telling me about the folklore of that place and singing me an ancient song - all the while still standing in the lunch queue! I never saw her again.

Then there was the quiet guy in one of our groups who spontaneously lapsed into reciting poetry, by a poet I had previously never heard of but who I learned the next day, centuries ago lived in the house next to the one my friend lives in in Bruges.

I met kindred spirits; people who have been fighting oppression and seeking justice, and who fight structural "invisible" injustices like racism and sexism, and intersecting injustices, every day. I had opportunities to listen.

And I met two fellow countrypeople whom I am still in daily contact with. One of these and another kindred soul - from Northern Ireland -and I had a special moment connecting over coffee. I honestly don't remember what sparked the initial conversation but we realised we were all three experiencing goosebumps at the same time talking with one another. The conversations continue amongst the three of us. My wish is to experience and learn from the work of these two remarkable women and see how we may create an alchemy by combining forces in the future, for the greater good.

Ezelle Theunissen lives in Cape Town South Africa

WE WERE ALL THREE EXPERIENCING
GOOSEBUMPS AT THE SAME TIME
TALKING WITH ONE ANOTHER...

*Ezelle
Theunissen*



INVESTIGATING THE POWER OF APPRECIATIVE QUESTIONS

Margriet Schut

Angela Talen was one of the enthusiastic participants of the group Seen@work. This team of nine people stepped into the design question of 'how might we make organisations more flourishing?' A broad theme which they managed to scale down in the creative brainstorm and prototyping on Tuesday afternoon.

Angela: "Our idea is to capture flourishing moments of people in work by making short films in an organisation. How would it be if all employees receive short film clips on a regular basis in which colleagues tell about their special work moments, share on what they contributed and pay compliments to others?"

"We think it will have a multiplier effect. If people feel seen by others, it will boost their energy and wellbeing but it also makes them more open to seeing others, paying compliments, asking questions: 'Being seen@work makes you see others!' was our catch phrase." When the group thought of this idea, they were immediately inspired. But would it actually work? They decided to do a try-out during the summit.

ON-THE SPOT-INTERVIEWS

We brought our idea in action on Tuesday afternoon, during the prototyping session. So we asked employees of the Cruise Terminal venue about a special moment for them. 'What was a good moment for you today?' Also: 'What compliment do you want to give to a colleague?'

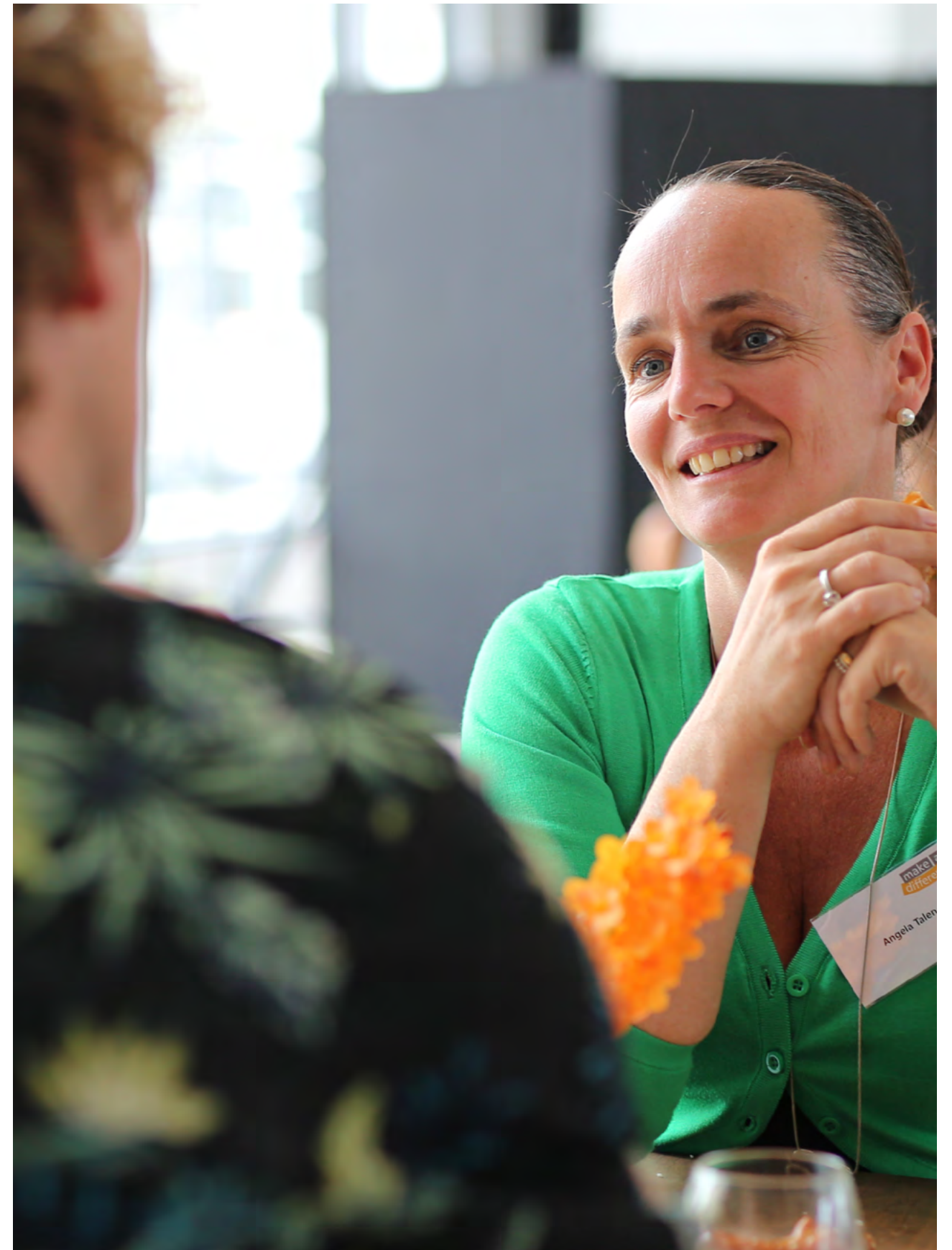
We interviewed the cleaning lady, a barman and the manager. And we found they all liked to tell about meaningful moments and found it easy to do so. For instance the cleaning lady told us: 'I avoided stress for people because I always made sure there was enough paper and I kept the toilets clean. And so did the visitors!' The questions weren't strange to them at all. Rather, they were energized by them.

WHATSAPP

The group did not only interview people in the Cruise Terminal, however. Angela: "I decided to do an experiment in my own organisation – a consultancy firm. While I was in Rotterdam, I sent a question to my colleagues in our whats-app group: With what have you made a difference today?"

Our group-app is normally used for sharing practical information only. Never for this type of questions. We only talk about such stuff in team settings and other live meetings. So it truly was an experiment.

At first, nothing happened. And I wondered what the hours of silence meant. Then, the first responses came in. And more and more colleagues made visible what they did and how they contributed to others, not only in their jobs, but also to their children for instance. The app group was filled with little stories and pictures."





FAMILY

Emboldened by these successes, the group took the experiment one step further. Angela: "I also sent a question to my family with a slight variation of the question: About what do you feel good today? Many family members answered with short enthusiastic stories. Only my daughter did not say anything. Is it that education does not have attention for positive moments? How can I invite her to share meaningful moments in this way as well? Or does she need other ways? Things to think about."

BRINGING IT FURTHER

The group has made a prototype of an actual 'seen@work' app. That is designed to help people share and exchange meaningful stories on how they made a difference on any given day, on what excites them in their jobs. And perhaps they will pursue the making of it. But even if the actual app will not come alive, there is spin off, because the experience of playing with these questions has touched all members of the seen@work group.

Angela: "I will definitely ask this question again, it works! I'll start to make this sharing-moments-activity grow. What I have learned is that my curiosity into positive experiences of others can already create a small significant movement. That is definitely something I want to pursue in my daily life. One positive question can do more than a full day-talk about what to improve... Attentive questions help us to reflect on where we are good at and what makes us happy. They help create flow. My intention is definitely to look with more appreciative eyes and ask these energy-giving questions more often. And perhaps create the app as well. We'll see!"

MY CURIOSITY INTO POSITIVE EXPERIENCES
OF OTHERS CAN ALREADY CREATE A SMALL
SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT



HAVE A LOOK AT
MADESUMMIT.COM

SHARING STORIES

Post-Summit. How our story is going to continue
While all the energy and the radical connectedness was still buzzing around in the Cruise Terminal, a little group of enthusiastic...

No power greater than a community discovering what it cares about
I am earth I'm not stuck in traffic I am traffic There is no pollution I am pollution I have (no) energy I am energy It is not...

Film MADE dag 3
De film die we de derde dag van MADE hebben gemaakt. Met beelden van het feest, korte interviews en de presentatie...

Key insights after the first day

Film MADE dag 2
De film die we aan het eind van de tweede dag hebben laten zien. Met korte interviews en sfeerbeelden. ...

Photos of the summit
Hope you enjoyed the summit! If you want to see some photos I've made during the summit you can have a...

I Can Make A Difference Challenge! Big prizes!
Use the backing track and sing along Karaoke style! Teach to your colleagues. Make a video of you singing the song while you're...

Dine With Us matches locals and newcomers
A concrete example of how small actions can make a real difference. By facilitating dinner parties between locals and newcomers, Dine...

Radical connections
An example of global connecting at the last day of the summit. Thank you all for accepting our invitation and making...

If somebody does not see you, you can always make yourself visible!
The 'I see you' group reflected on the process of building a prototype for 'practical I see you interventions' on Tuesday...

WE ARE THE FUTURE: CREATING A FLOURISHING NEIGHBOURHOOD

Els Desmet

Els Desmet is a city geographer, facilitator and consultant. She works and lives in Rotterdam. After MADE, she wrote an article to share her experiences with her broader network. (We have translated it into English)



A FLOURISHING NEIGHBOURHOOD

This spring, Anne Marie van de Wiel from Kessels & Smit invited me to participate in an international summit with 250 people from different countries. An international summit in my hometown Rotterdam! I felt lucky. Reflecting together on the topic of 'Making a Difference. Radical connectedness for: Flourishing Human Beings – Flourishing Organisations – Flourishing World' For three days, I jumped into the process, carrying with me the question: 'How can we create a Flourishing Neighbourhood?' A flourishing, beautiful, better Middelland. Because that is the focus of the experiment that we have started in my own neighbourhood Middelland. It is a co-creation process aimed at improving our community, supervised by our city's mayor- Ahmed Aboutaleb.

As the people who live there, we create the future of our own living environment together, with all of our small day-to-day actions.

THE POWER OF IMAGINATION AND OF ACTION

David Cooperrider, a thought leader from the US, led us through the three day process of MADE. His core message is: value what is there. Focus on what works well. On the examples that represent that which you want to achieve in the end. Because in a way, the future is already here. See those examples, pay attention to them, nurture them, make them visible and share them with others. It is important that we discover what it is that we really want. That we find out what we

truly care about, what triggers us and what keeps us going. Pinpoint those topics, put them in the spotlight. And then: don't be afraid to dream... Because "Imagination is more important than knowledge" as Einstein put it.

And after dreaming comes a time for action! Designing, planning, executing, evaluating, adjusting, and moving on with an improved version of the idea. Creating 'test labs'. That is what it is about. Or, as it says in my Summit Workbook: "The best way to predict the future is to create it" (Peter Drucker)

A MANIFEST FOR CHANGE

During the Summit we discovered the need for a Manifest, providing direction and focus. Interesting, because the scientific evaluation of the co-creation process in Middelland also pointed towards that direction. My neighbourhood needs a vision. That is why I joined a group of other summit-participants from different corners of the world to think about such a Manifest together.

First and foremost we (as an international group of people) found that Ghandi's famous quote pretty much sums it all up: "**Be the change you wish to see.**" That is the vantage point. Don't linger in negative stories about systems or things beyond your control. Be aware of the notion that you hold the key for change. By doing something. Taking a step. Taking a stance. Getting involved. From an intrinsic motivation. Because you feel things could be better.

“ACT AS IF WHAT YOU DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE. IT DOES”

Another quote from my Summit Workbook...: "Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does." (William James). My thoughts wander to Joke van Bilsen, a nice and friendly woman who lives in a house next to me. Joke has established 'Het Goede Gebeuren' [The Good Happening] and with that she contributes to a more open and friendly Middelland. Exactly from the day-to-day, seemingly small actions and experiences. I suddenly experience it as a call-to-action. An urgent personal request. A slap in the face, even. To focus and be 'there' with my full attention. And to be, wherever and whenever I can, the change I want to see – in my day-to-day existence.

Back to the Summit and our Manifest. As a group, we also found that conflict deserves attention in our vision. **Any fundamental change brings conflict.** There is no way around it. Better be prepared.

For that reason alone, creating the new future will take energy. And that means that it is important to **take care of yourself.** To take the rest you need. To make sure that you have enough energy for yourself and for being able to pay attention to others and their needs.

Because creating the future is not something you do by yourself. It is vital to seek out others, to collaborate, in (small) groups and networks. **"Don't be alone, seek inclusion."**

A vital guiding principle in those collectives is **diversity and variation.** The group that you bring together should always be diverse in nature: young and old, different cultures, men and women.... The variation in viewpoints and ideas will always help you to get further in different areas.

We also need **new economic models.** The current capitalistic growth model is not future-proof. The backlash on our social and living climate is too big. We truly need new concepts.


Public spaces, meeting spots, beautiful and inspiring locations... in order to be able to let new things emerge we need them in all sorts and shapes. The international MADE Summit is already a beautiful example of this. There are many inspiring examples in my neighbourhood as well. Toekomst Talkshows [Future Talkshows], hosted by a journalist who lives in our community, the Friday Afternoon Walks where every neighbour can join, activities in for example De Spoortuin [Train Track Yard] – a previously uninhabitable space turned into a green oasis by and for neighbours.

In public spaces in the neighbourhood the people from Middelland can share their dreams and ideas, create common ground and a sense of collectiveness. Small groups can emerge, creating initiatives and experiments that will contribute to a Bloeiend, Mooi, Mooier Middelland [Flourishing, Beautiful, Better Middelland]. In my mind's eye, I can easily picture it. Can you?

On Tuesday *Hotspot Hutspot* created a beautiful dessertpainting for all the participants.

Hotspot Hutspot wants to activate vulnerable groups of people in Rotterdam and help them to participate in society. They use 'food' as a means to achieve this. Volunteers, young and old, work together in the vegetable garden, kitchen and local restaurants. They learn a profession, get work experience. They work on social skills, build a relevant network. And while they do, they are of value to the neighborhood. They build a lively and welcoming meeting place. *More info*





I CAME WITH THE INTENT TO INQUIRE WHAT 'LOVE' CAN MEAN IN ORGANISATIONS. AN UNDERUSED RESOURCE IN MY OPINION. WITH A LOT OF POTENTIAL. FROM THE MOMENT I ARRIVED HERE, I FELT SUDDENLY NOT ALONE ANYMORE WITH THESE ASPIRATIONS, I DISCOVERED A WHOLE COMMUNITY. MAYBE EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT IT IN THEIR OWN WORDS BUT CERTAINLY I COULD FEEL THE SAME INTENTION. REFRESHING, REVITALISING, STRENGTHENING,....THANKS!"

 **Annemie Colruyt**

APPRECIATING INQUIRY – THOUGHTS ON THE IN-BETWEEN-SPACE

Joeri Kabalt

‘[...] TO BE LOST IS TO BE FULLY PRESENT,
AND TO BE FULLY PRESENT IS TO BE CAPABLE
OF BEING IN UNCERTAINTY AND MYSTERY.
AND ONE DOES NOT GET LOST BUT LOSES
ONESELF, WITH THE IMPLICATION THAT IT IS
A CONSCIOUS CHOICE, A CHOSEN SURRENDER,
A PSYCHIC STATE ACHIEVABLE THROUGH
GEOGRAPHY. THAT THING THE NATURE OF
WHICH IS TOTALLY UNKNOWN TO YOU IS
USUALLY WHAT YOU NEED TO FIND, AND
FINDING IT IS A MATTER OF GETTING LOST.’

I love this quote from Rebecca Solnit’s ‘Field guide to getting lost’¹. It simultaneously excites me, puzzles me and scares me. It beautifully illustrates what I mean when I talk about ‘inquiry’, somehow the lesser explored half of ‘Appreciative Inquiry’. Stepping into a space of inquiry requires stepping into the unknown, allowing ourselves to dwell and linger there. To get lost, and to encounter things you did not know you were looking for. To *live* the questions, as the poet Rainer Maria Rilke² says, without setting out to find any answers.

To me the MADE event was such a space of inquiry, an in-between-space. Full of possibility, but also filled with uncertainty and vulnerability. A space in which we not only *talked about* radical connectedness and human flourishing, but *experienced it* as well. *Lived it*, or sometimes the absence of it. Throughout the three days, it felt like I had a heightened awareness of how I was radically connected, and sometimes dis-connected, to my self and to others. In Action Research we speak about first-, second- and third-person inquiry³, and being in this in-between-space raised questions for me at all three levels: How can I radically connect to my self? How does radically connecting to my self help me to show up more fully? How might that support or invite others to do the same? Do I have to be connected to my self in order to connect with others? And what do I do when I don’t feel connected? How do I want to connect with others? Who do I want to connect to? Aren’t we all connected anyhow? How are we connected as an emerging community of difference makers? What is holding us together as a community? Do we need anything to hold us together?

Staying in this space of not-knowing filled with questions, does ask something different from us. Perhaps what John Keats

– yet another famous poet – calls ‘negative capability’: ‘when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason’⁴. Easier said than done. At the start of MADE, I shared the story of my grandmother’s journey to Curacao, how I admired her courage to travel to an unknown destination on her own. Perhaps I should also have told you the story of my other grandmother, who spend most of her life travelling from one place to the next. First with a wagon and a horse, later on with a trailer. For her, the in-between-space was not a temporary adventure, but her home. With all the joys and struggles that came with living in that space.

The joy of struggling forward, one of the phrases from MADE that will stay with me. Perhaps that is what I love most about being in the in-between-space. The richness of it. It was not always easy, nor was it always perfect. But I did feel fully alive in this space, there was a certain magic to it. And it taught me so much about what I find important, in work and in life. It reminds me of what our host David Cooperrider recently argued in an interview: ‘We need to reawaken our sense of awe, surprise, and wonder about what gives life (“the appreciative eye”) because this sparks the imagination and opens our minds to new possibilities that might transform the status quo.’⁵

This speaks to why I think such spaces of inquiry are relevant and important. I think they help bring back (small moments of) wonder to our lives, to question our taken-for-granted ways beliefs and to see new possibilities. To reflect, and to reconnect to what we find important, the essence of things. And if we think of this MADE event as an experiment in creating such a rich space of inquiry for a large amount of people, I think we most definitely succeeded. And I for one feel like creating more of such spaces, in which we get lost together and find unexpected gifts along the way.

- ¹ Solnit, R. (2006). A field guide to getting lost. Canongate Books.
- ² Rilke, R. M. (2011). Letters to a young poet. Penguin UK.
- ³ Marshall, J. (2016). First person action research: living life as inquiry. Sage.
- ⁴ Keats, J. (1899). The complete poetical works and letters of John Keats. Houghton, Mifflin and company.
- ⁵ Grieten, S., Lambrechts, F., Bouwen, R., Huybrechts, J., Fry, R., & Cooperrider, D. (2017). Inquiring Into Appreciative Inquiry: A Conversation With David Cooperrider and Ronald Fry. Journal of Management Inquiry.



STORY OF SIBRENNE

When Sibrenne Wagenaar returned home from MADE, she turned her inspiration into a post in her newsletter @ennuonline. She shared the following post (we translated into English).

"It was a special experience. Three days full of talking, dreaming, designing, making plans... with 250 other professionals. The topic was 'radical connectedness for a flourishing world.' Connection resurfaced as a common thread in all conversations.

To me, connection is about dialogue, contact, authenticity, togetherness. About finding, seeing, empathy and intimacy. Technology can support all of that. Would you be interested in creating new connections or solidifying existing ones? Small steps can make a big difference. In this newsletter I share three easy-to-do activities."

Talk to a stranger

According to Kio Stark talking to strangers helps us to be 'in the now', and feel more alive. These interactions teach us new things. Connecting to different types of people enriches our world view. And helps us to step outside our 'frame of thinking'. And it is easy to do: especially on-line!

<http://www.taj.nl/nl/blogs/blogazine/waarom-je-vaker-met-vreemden-zou-moeten-praten/>

Show your appreciation

What book or which article have you read lately that really touched you? Which conversation with whom do you still remember vividly? Why not find this person online...? And send them a tweet, or a LinkedIn message to voice your appreciation. Keep it brief: a few words or sentences can be enough. Just to make or strengthen the connection.

Take the 'generosity' test

How generous are you? According to Ferrazzi, generosity is one of the five mindsets that can help in developing valuable relationships. Focus on what you have to offer, instead of what you need. How good are you at that?

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/keith-ferrazzi/whos-got-your-back-the-fo_b_210954.html

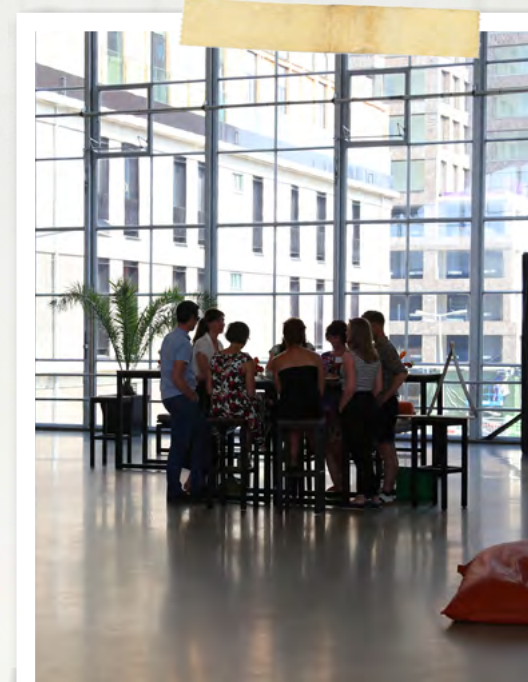
John Stepper developed a brief and very effective test to find out. [Click here](#) if you want to try it out!

<http://workingoutloud.com/blog/the-generosity-test?rq=generosity>

DON'T ASK WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS. ASK WHAT MAKES YOU COME ALIVE. AND GO DO IT.

BECAUSE WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS IS PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME ALIVE. Howard Thurman.





SHARING STORIES ABOUT FLOURISHING: JASMINE OF DAMASCUS

Margriet Schut

Adel Albaghdadi is clear about why he decided to participate in the summit. He didn't have to think long about the invitation: "MADE serves for us all as a great opportunity to share thoughts and experiences with curious people from all walks of life who want to move their ideas from intention to impact. I perceive it also as an occasion to familiarize with good practices."

From helping refugees to becoming a refugee to founding WE...

In our Discovery interview at the start of MADE he tells me that, as a 15 year old boy, he supported refugees from Lebanon. He made people feel welcome in Syria, at that time a free country in a region riddled with conflict. He could never imagine that one day he would be a refugee himself, leaving behind his beloved country.

Nowadays he has founded his own non-profit initiative: 'WE'. An innovative, socially conscious and action oriented project that aims to develop various initiatives aimed at combatting combat xenophobia, building bonds and promoting inclusion in The Netherlands. 'WE' is born out of the aspiration to cultivate spaces for empathy and cross-cultural understanding. Adel: "I boldly call myself a Changemaker because I constantly and consciously decide for myself to be part of the solution and not the problem. I believe in a better future, and I'm determined to help create it."



WE

"WE ARE THE REFUGEES": How did Syria look like before the war? What's going on there nowadays? About the journey, I myself went through fleeing my homeland, and the life I live now in The Netherlands: I point out these topics during my presentation. Towards the end, I show a "self-recorded" video displaying the life in a Dutch Refugee Camp, and lastly, an interactive Q&A session with the audience takes place.

"WE ARE THE ELDERLY": Facilitating social events for the Dutch elderly to convey cultures through food, music, and entertainment.

"WE ARE THE LABELS": Sharing life stories of those who have been negatively labeled by their societies, in order to reveal the real human side of them.

"WE ARE THE INFORMATION": Making online services/information effective and accessible for the Newcomers in order to help them find their ways in The Netherlands.

For further information please check "[WE](#)" [organization page on Facebook](#)

Jasmine

As a symbol for flourishing, he tells me a story about the jasmine scent in Damascus and shows me pictures. "Nobody can destroy the smell of jasmines in the city of Damascus. Every year the jasmine bushes come back again, all over the city. Jasmines are stronger than planes and bullets. Jasmines go beyond conflict.

People die or leave the city, the jasmines stay and spread their sweet, innocent smell. Jasmines symbolize optimism; they invite us to stay positive."

And he goes on, leaving the metaphor behind:

"Two years ago I had to leave Damascus and arrived in the Netherlands. In this open country I try to give the best of myself and use all of my talents to contribute to others in Rotterdam, the city where I live now. And I already feel surrounded by nice people here. This gives me hope and energy. WE can create a better future together. Where everyone can flourish and be well.'

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/adel-albaghdadi/>



One participant's story about radically (re)connecting.... to himself

"I came to the summit after a period of working very hard in the job that I had started two years ago. Very determined to make it work, I was giving it everything. I see lots of opportunities in this very commercial business to make more room for individual and team learning in my role as internal HRD consultant. A topic that I feel very strongly about: I think it is important that everyone has opportunities for developing his or her talents to the full potential – whether you work on the shop floor, in the back office or in senior management. Learning is living....

So the summit felt to me as a kind of breathing space in busy times, a place where I could meet with like minded spirits, to work on meaningful new plans, work out some novel ideas. Things took a different turn, however."

Listening...

"Monday afternoon, I almost immediately found myself in a deep and meaningful conversation with another participant about what truly matters to us. We found a lot of similarities. And the way in which he spoke about them, and gave examples of his work inspired me. And it sort of hit me... Am I also still working on what truly matters to me? Or am I slowly but surely, drifting away from that, being busy and trying so hard to change the organization I work with?

So I decided to slow down even more and use Tuesday to really listen to all the stories that people shared, their dreams, the new ideas that popped up – to let them sink in and use them to restore my own internal compass and remind me of my own aspirations and values. What is truly important to me? It was an intense day for me."

Taking stock

"In the evening I took a long walk through the city, on my own. Pondering what I had heard and felt. Taking stock. I decided then and there to leave my current job and organization. The whole context is simply too far away from my ideals on how to run a business and balance performance with learning & human development. In my efforts to make a difference there, I hadn't seen that I wasn't changing anything, but rather: I was becoming part of something that I didn't want to be part of. I ran the risk of the context changing me."

Decision time

"On Wednesday morning I didn't join the big group but found a quiet place in the city where I organized my own action planning phase I wrote a motivational letter outlining my ambitions and learning goals for the next period, outlined a profile of the type of company I would like to work for, updated my resume, and even replied to a concrete job opening!

I left Rotterdam with a renewed focus and energy that I didn't even know I needed. Where I expected to connect to others, I radically (re)connected to myself."

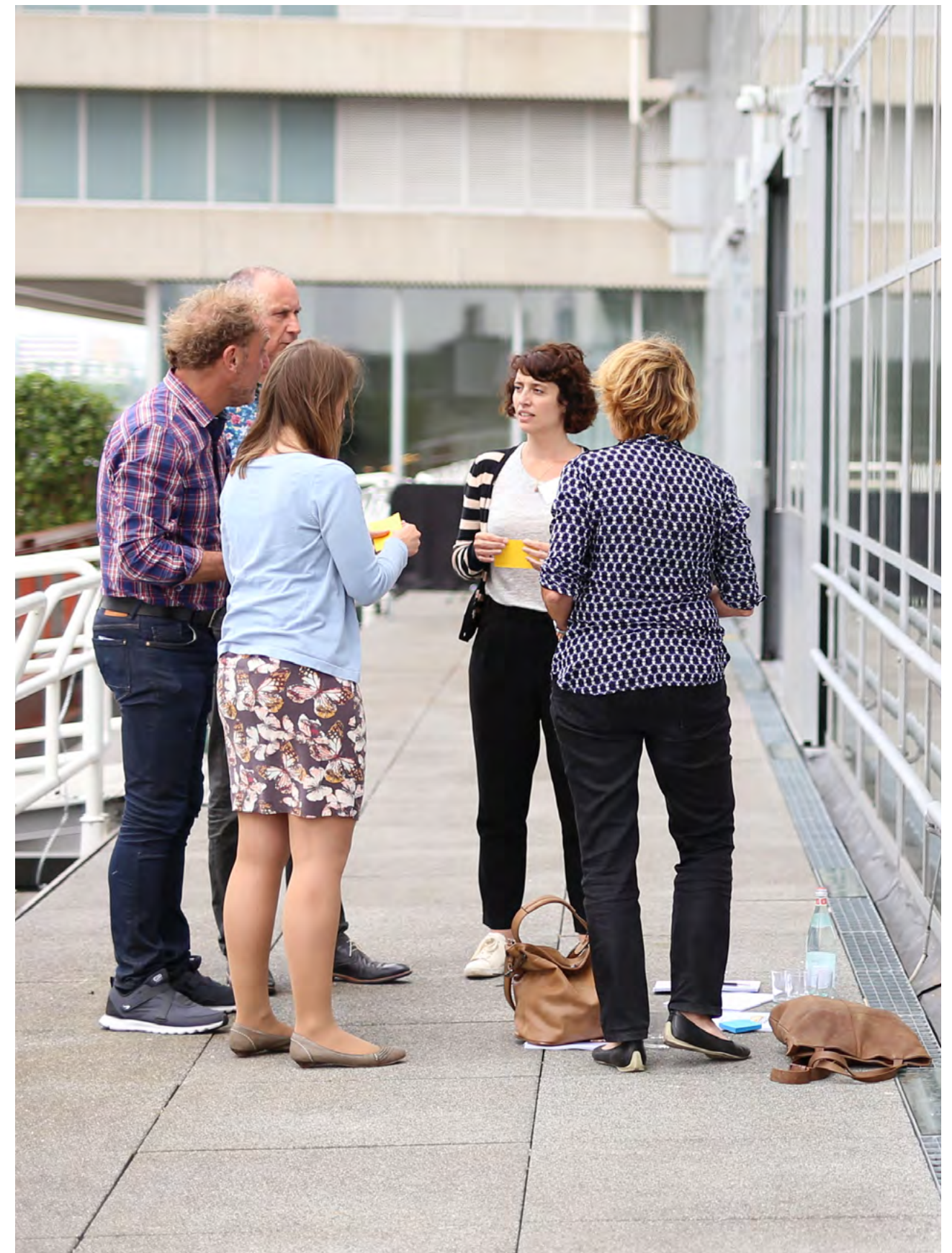
I DECIDED THEN AND THERE TO LEAVE MY CURRENT JOB AND ORGANIZATION

One of the design topics that emerged on Tuesday was 'creating time and space for reflection in organisations'. Triggered by that question, a subgroup was formed that specifically wanted to work on 'how can we create a more natural rhythm of living by working and reflecting in sync with the changing of the seasons?'

Peter Fest explains what happened in their enthusiastic group: 'An important source that we used is the book 'Living and working with the seasons' of Jaap Voigt.' But more important than the content was the fast pace in which an atmosphere of trust and flow developed between the people. 'We started sharing brief stories and felt touched by each others words, images and visions. Somehow, everything resonated. All that we shared was ok, also the shadow sides of life. We could be who we really are and felt calm and connected. A natural flow emerged. We trusted to proceed, although at first there was no clear objective.'

That changed later on, in the prototyping phase. The group, which consists of 8 Belgian and Dutch practitioners with different professional backgrounds, chose a name for itself: Komorebi, which briefly means 'the sunshine filtering through the leaves of a tree (or trees).'

They formulated an affirmative topic. Still in draft, but it now reads: "If we as individuals, teams and organisations honour the seasonal changes within the year, we'll reach creativity, improve our ideas, and achieve results in a balanced and healthy way." Peter: "We have decided to appreciatively inquire into and elaborate on this topic. We consider founding an organic movement to share and examine our findings. As a first step we already planned a first two-day workshop retreat for ourselves in September, in a natural and inspiring setting."



“I WORK WITH STUDENTS IN CARE EDUCATION EVERYDAY. NEVER BEFORE MADE I REALISED SO CLEARLY THAT I AM ABLE TO MAKE THEM KNOW THEY ALSO CAN BE THE CHANGE THEY WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD! THIS INTENTION, AND MAKING IT REALITY IN EVEN THE SMALLEST THINGS YOU DO ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS, MAKES THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.”

 **Liselotte Libbrecht**

“AS A COMPANY YOU CAN CELEBRATE YOUR 40ST ANNIVERSARY IN SEVERAL WAYS. YOU CAN CHOOSE TO GIVE EVERYONE A BONUS, OR GO ON AN EXOTIC TRIP TOGETHER, FOR EXAMPLE. KESSELS & SMIT CHOSE TO SHARE. YOU CREATED A VERY BIG CAKE AND DIVIDED IT IN 250 PIECES. THANKS!”

 **Erwin De bruyn**

MADE: EXTENDING THE GENERATIVE CONVERSATIONAL CAPABILITIES

Luc Verheijen

The intention of organising our Make A Difference Event was to do an Appreciative Inquiry into the meaning of our work as Kessels & Smit in today's society. It was an answer to what we believe is an important question to ask in organisations: what are we in service of? In our case: what is the purpose of our work as practitioners and researchers in the field of personal and organisational development? How do we contribute to a society we think is worth living in? How is it possible to do well as organisation by choosing to do good for society? More and more stories worldwide showcase that it is exactly this kind of 'purposing' questions that contribute to flourishing human beings and flourishing organisations. When people feel deeply connected in conversations and actions about a higher purpose, the very best in people comes alive.

THE EXPERIENCE OF AN EMERGING COMMUNITY

Since we had the feeling this is not only our question, but the topic of many people in our network, we brought together 250 people in a 3-day dialogue and process of co-creation. The invitation was to discover, dream & design around a central topic. The topic we put forward was: 'Radical connectedness for flourishing people, flourishing organisations and a flourishing world.' A human system develops in the direction of what it studies, is one of the core principles of appreciative inquiry. Applied to our event, it was exactly this experience of

an emerging community that was reported by many participants. A space for conversations that helped people to connect with them selves, with other participants, and with the contexts we work and live in. Connecting the world within with the world out there.

GENERATIVE ENERGY

In a society where so many are looking for new ways of organising, and in times where questions and challenges ask for new forms of acting and decision making, the Make A Difference Event has demonstrated the possibilities of multi-actor community development. To see both the efforts and struggles, as the generative energy in that process was hearthwarming, sometimes confusing, and above all hopeful. Around several topics new-formed groups have such a strong base that they will continue the work they set in motion. Other topics inspired participants to think about the possibilities of working further on them within their own organisations and fields of practice. And several topics share the interest of so many K&S colleagues that we can only imagine that we will pick them up in future work, innovations and projects. In organising the summit we also discovered what it means to be initiator of this kind of whole-system settings. An interesting perspective to explore further: what is our strength and potential role as Kessels & Smit in this?

EXTENDING THE GENERATIVE CAPACITY

How to extend the quality of conversations and relationships after a temporary space as this summit? That became an important question immediately after the summit, both for the larger summit group as within our own company. For the larger community, this MADE magazine is an experiment in that regard. Can we foster

the process going forward by capturing and sharing stories? We'll continue to follow up and see what works. Within our own company, where we don't see each other on an everyday basis (working with clients, working in different countries....) the question also presented itself. Knowing that we have a company meeting at the end of summer, how do we build upon what has been established now? Many people felt the potential and wanted to use that energy to continue creating and innovating, and to set a further process in motion. Moreover, we also found different types of conversation pop up. Next to exchanging stories of personal experiences, and sharing thank-you notes from participants, there were evaluation-type conversations, based upon mostly implicit questions as: 'Was this a good event?' or 'What went well and what could we have done better?'. Undoubtedly rooted in a big sense of responsibility, and a desire to make it a success. However, the effect of talking about these questions, was that people pointed to things they liked or disliked, to highlights or things that were 'not good enough'. It was remarkable how quickly this became a stream of conversation. And how it pushed back stories about moments, plans, people... As such we could see that this type of conversation literally stifles creativity and the spirit of co-creation: by judging an event that you were part of, it subtly becomes something that was 'out there'. It doesn't even matter if you judge positively or negatively.

FUTURE-FORMING QUESTIONS

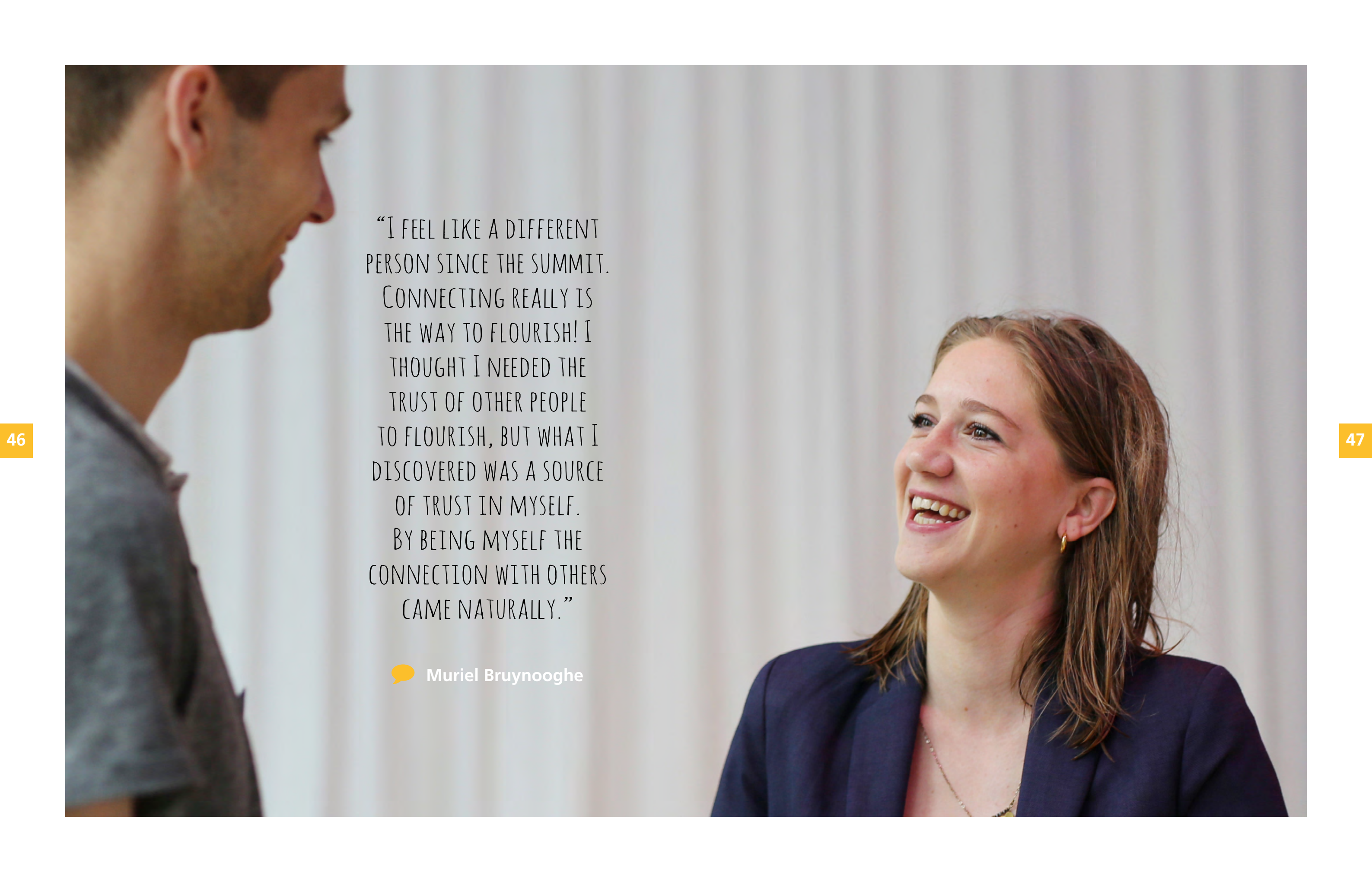
From a social-constructionist perspective, the organisational conversations both determine and are the realities we live in. So it was important to understand the dynamics and to play with them. To build on the

transformational potential of our summit, the choices how we speak about the event are fateful. So how do we choose to talk? We decided to try and influence the conversation. With the idea in mind that 'words create worlds, we invited colleagues to continue the conversation and to keep the dialogue going amongst each other with the following questions as guides:

- what is the gift from this summit you are most grateful for?
- which of the seeds would you like to help grow further?
- in terms of the question 'What are we in service of?' as Kessels & Smit community, what insight did you take with you from the event?

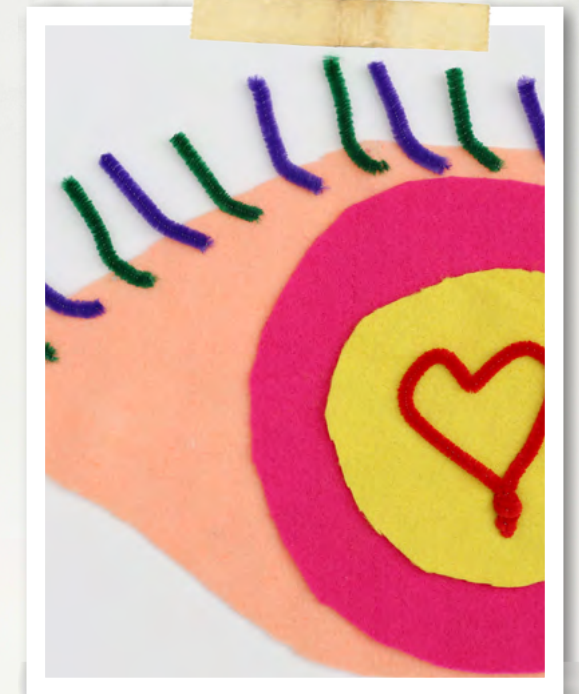
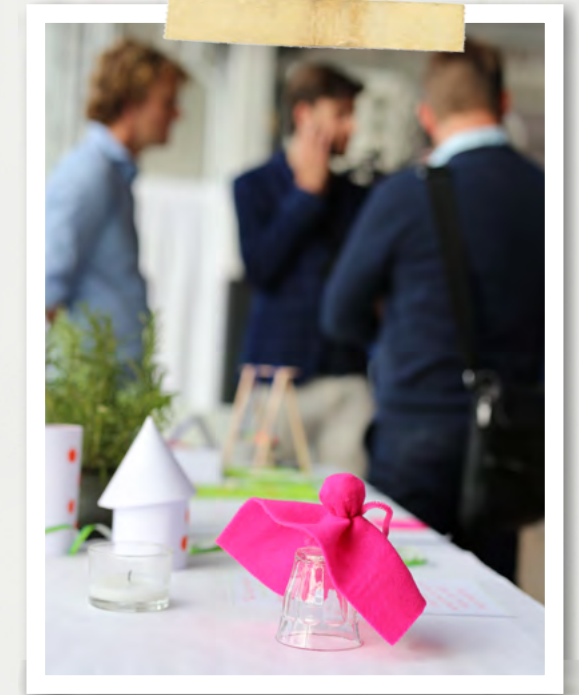
The effect of making these questions explicit and using them as invitation, was that we shifted from judging to meaning making, from evaluating to reflecting, and from 'looking at it' to 'staying part of it'. It is not about what is true, but about what can become true. The value of the event lies in what we collectively create based upon the shared experiences. In organising the Make A Difference Event, there was no other motive for us as Kessels & Smit than to embark on a deep generative discovery. It is exactly that capacity that will help us to keep on learning, connecting, flourishing and making a difference.

IT IS NOT ABOUT WHAT IS TRUE,
BUT ABOUT WHAT CAN BECOME TRUE.



“I FEEL LIKE A DIFFERENT PERSON SINCE THE SUMMIT. CONNECTING REALLY IS THE WAY TO FLOURISH! I THOUGHT I NEEDED THE TRUST OF OTHER PEOPLE TO FLOURISH, BUT WHAT I DISCOVERED WAS A SOURCE OF TRUST IN MYSELF. BY BEING MYSELF THE CONNECTION WITH OTHERS CAME NATURALLY.”

 Muriel Bruynooghe



POST-SUMMIT. HOW OUR STORY IS GOING TO CONTINUE

Esther Peeters

While all the energy and the radical connectedness was still buzzing around in the Cruise Terminal, a little group of enthusiastic people gathered in the little igloo to come up with ideas for sustaining the engagement of the participants, post-Summit.

We all felt the need to find a way to sustain the energy and engagement of everyone involved during MADE. Ideas like buddy systems, catching up over time and following the flow of seasons spoke to us.

RADICAL PROPOSALS

Our first radical proposal is to all block the **30th of May 2018**. On this day, we will meet each other again at a new Summit. Details to be worked out and hoping for someone with a venue to offer it for next year.

Our second proposal is a post-Summit design for sustaining engagement, that follows the seasons:

→ SPRING

This is the season we are in now. The post-Summit experience involves storytelling, getting to know each other via madesummit.com and making a connection with three other participants of MADE. By getting two buddies, we can follow each other's progress on the initiatives and cheer them on.

CALL FOR ACTION: who could be your buddy's? Who have you naturally reached out to since the conference? What might emerge if you spend some time this week connecting with people who you haven't had a chance to yet?



→ SUMMER

In summer we celebrate our successes up until then, and share them with the others. There will be a system of 'cartrackers'; per initiative there will be someone who shares the progression of the initiative with the other 'cartrackers'. The 'cartrackers' connect with each other and spread the word via madesummit.com

→ AUTUMN

Autumn is the time to catch up with your buddy's, to gather stories and share magic moments. Time for online and offline contact.

→ WINTER

In this season there is time for reflection. Via organizational journalism and madesummit.com we share inspiration, like interviews, books, movies et cetera.

Do you have other ideas to sustain the engagement of the participants, post-Summit? Feel free to share them [here!](#)

CRUISE TERMINAL ROTTERDAM