

The 2010 OD World Summit

Report by Bea Kisszólosi

I am writing to report on The OD World Summit, 2010. It was organized as a unique gathering of members of the OD field, representatives of organizations and those who are new to and interested in OD. We invited key thinkers from the OD world to learn from them. Sandra Janoff, representing Future Search, was one of the inspirational leaders who actively contributed to the success of the Summit.

Several NGO, local government, local businesses were represented at the Summit. Helén Kincses shared the results of a Future Search Conference from 2001, which focused on finding more work opportunities for disabled people. More than 10 projects were developed and several work opportunities were created for disabled people in the region. Over the next 3 years, job opportunities for disabled people increased by 10%. The report about the FS was the basis for proposals that obtained EU Funds for new projects. Today, the results are still being used. Again, I got the reinforcing message: Future Search works.

We also organized eight Master Classes before and after the Summit. The Principles and Practices of Effective Meetings Master Class was held on the afternoon of August 21st and the morning of August 22nd, 2010. All together 20 participants attended the class and left the room with high satisfaction. People talked about what they liked the most...

- “Authentic facilitation, she walked the talk.”
- “The balance between history, theory, experiential group work, and questions and answers.”
- ”Sandra’s personal sharing of experiences, my interaction with colleagues and fellow professionals”
- ”Having a glance at such method”...

In attending the Master Class I hoped to gain deeper insights about FS practice from Sandra. I had discovered the FS methodology through a colleague, Alexander Dressler at IFRC in 2001, and had learned FS from Sandra and Marvin in 2004. One of my greatest pleasures has been meeting the Hungarian Red Cross Nógrád County Director; together, we co-facilitated my first Future Search. At this point, I have used FS in community development programs and in the business environment for supporting mergers and for annual planning.

Meeting with Sandra after 6 years gave me new ideas, and informed me about new discoveries in FS methodology, philosophy and practice. The most inspiring discovery was the power of FS principles for conducting successful meetings. I like Sandra’s saying: “You can hold meetings in many ways; to achieve successful meetings, use the FS principles.” I reinforced my belief that FS is a well designed tool for initiating and implementing change.

An additional expectation of the Master Class was that I would meet people who are interested in FS, and begin to build a FS Network in Hungary. This goal is in progress. I now have new friends among people who are interested in FS.

During the Master Class I was surprised by our differences in understanding, based on our experience with different approaches and methodologies. My preference is to follow my feelings and beliefs. Some of the Master Class participants asked for very detailed explanations for their questions, and held assumptions which I had not previously discovered or thought about. This helped me better integrate the learnings.

I believe in “facilitating the whole system in the room”. I am fully committed to participation, sharing and involving stakeholders to the creation of their future. During my work I see many processes, and some change initiations which are failing or going slowly because of lack of information about needs, requirements, resources within the organization or lack of understanding about the different interests of various departments. As a result of the Master Class I now stand more for the principles. I listen to what the client is saying, and highlight the importance of the principles in our work together.

I intend to use Future Search more and more in my work. Sandra’s support brought me closer to this goal. We had also invited our clients to the Master Class, and all who participated on the event came back to us with high enthusiasm; a number of them are searching for opportunities to work with us and use FS.

I would be happy to have more co-facilitation opportunities with colleagues in Europe and in other parts of the world. (I still do not know that many people in Hungary who use FS.) Until I find my next client who is ready to step into a development process via FS, I will use the practical tips and the principles for meeting facilitation in all of my work.

Finally but more importantly, I am thankful for the inspiring time with Sandra in Hungary. I feel as if friend came to visit me with love, appreciation, openness and support.