

Creating Cultural Change: Turning Negative into Opportunity

Challenge

When the International Potato Center got word of deep funding cuts it descended into scarcity thinking: layoffs, negativity on the Global Senior Leadership Team and uncertainty-induced anxiety. As the Leadership Team gathered for their annual Strategic Planning Meeting, they recognized they needed to create an optimistic perspective, a positive and shared vision for the future.

Solution

We integrated design-thinking methodologies into the meeting structure. The five-day session created a positive, strength-based approach to organizational development and stakeholder balance. Participants leveraged possibility thinking. We asked unconditionally positive questions such as, what would a five-fold increase in funding mean for the organization? This process moved the group toward vigor and productivity, the vital signs of a healthy business ecosystem.

Result

Because the meeting agenda combined presentations with interactive design sessions (creativity), the team felt included in the systematic discovery of optimistic outcomes. This focus carried the group on a journey of discovery, dream, design and destiny. It empowered the Leadership Team to see things differently. They drafted an Aspiration Statement and re-energized the Center's performance agenda. Together, the group co-created its future. Five Institutional Imperatives emerged: Communication, Innovation, Collaboration, Growth, and People. These transformed the future vision and focused it on planning for abundance.