CHAPTER 17

Promoting Reconciliation After Genocide and Mass Killing in Rwanda—and Other Postconflict Settings: Understanding the Roots of Violence, Healing, Shared History, and General Principles

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In the aftermath of genocide, mass killing, or intractable—persistent and violent—conflict between groups, how can members of these groups continue to live together and build a nonviolent future.[1] How can they create reasonably harmonious relations? Increasingly, research and observations have shown that when violent conflicts end, even if they end by a peace agreement—rather than one party defeating another as in Rwanda, which will be a focus of this chapter—violence is likely to recur (de la Rey, 2001; Lederach, 1997). The peace agreement may not fit the interests of all the segments of the population or elites. Even more importantly, the end to the violence is not likely to change the hostility that gave rise to violence in the first place, and has become more intense in the course of and as a result of the violence.

I will describe here an approach my associates and I have developed to promote reconciliation between Tutsis and Hutus in the aftermath of the horrific genocide in

Rwanda (Staub & Pearlman, 2001, 2006; Staub, Pearlman, Gubin, & Hagengimana, 2005). We believe this approach is widely applicable in postconflict settings. I will describe the approach, the research we have conducted to evaluate it, and the varied uses of it, or of aspects of it, in the course of our work in Rwanda. I will describe the use of the approach in seminars/workshops/trainings with people in the community, with journalists, with national leaders, with community leaders, and in weekly and monthly radio programs. My purpose is to advance both theory and practice. To fulfill the former purpose I will stress the importance of both healing after group violence, and understanding the roots of violence as avenues to the prevention of new violence and to reconciliation. As a background, before I describe our approach, I will briefly discuss general principles of reconciliation.

Reconciliation is a change in attitudes and behaviors toward the other group. We define it as *mutual* acceptance by members of groups of each other, and the processes and structures that lead to or maintain that acceptance (Staub & Pearlman, 2001). Reconciliation implies that victims and perpetrators do not see the past as defining the future. They come to accept and see the humanity of one another and see the possibility of a constructive relationship. However, while the essence of reconciliation is a changed psychological orientation toward the other, political and social processes, and structures and institutions that serve reconciliation are important both to promote it, and to solidify and maintain the progressively evolving psychological changes that result from it. Our definition is consistent with others, for example, Kriesberg's (1998), which focus on the relationship between parties. It is consistent in content but different in approach from the definition of Broneus (2003), who includes not only changes in attitude and behavior between parties, but also processes important in bringing them about (e.g., mutual acknowledgment of past suffering) in the definition of reconciliation.

Following great violence, reconciliation is a difficult, long-term process (Staub & Bar-Tal, 2003). Theory, research, and practice are in their early phases, and it is an important challenge to develop effective procedures that promote reconciliation. Since in many postconflict settings hostile groups continue to live next to or intermixed with each other, it is also important to explore ways to speed up reconciliation.

The Impact of Violence on Survivors, Perpetrators, and Passive Bystander

Genocide and mass killing—the latter often an aspect of intractable conflict, lasting conflict that resists resolution and is violent—deeply affect survivors, their perception of themselves and of the world. Being the victims of such violence

makes people see the world as dangerous, and makes them feel diminished and vulnerable (Staub, 1998). Victimization may give rise to trauma symptoms, and disrupt survivors' worldview, identity and relationships to people (McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995). Since identity is rooted in part in-group membership (Tajfel, 1982), even members of the victim group who were not present when the genocide was perpetrated may be greatly traumatized (Staub, 1998). In Rwanda, this means *returnees*, mainly children of Tutsi refugees from earlier violence who came back from neighboring countries after the genocide to devastated families and community. Since they now rule the country, the impact of the genocide on them (and the earlier experiences of their families who fled Rwanda in response to mass killings and were refugees in other countries) is likely to have significant political consequences.

The psychological consequences of victimization include great sensitivity to threat (Herman, 1992; Staub, 1998). When new conflict arises, this makes it more difficult for survivors to balance their own needs and the needs and concerns of others. Without corrective experiences that help in psychological recovery, they may believe that they need to forcefully defend themselves even when violent self-defense is not necessary. In response to new threat or conflict, they may strike out, in the process becoming perpetrators (Staub, 1998; Staub & Pearlman, 2006; Volkan, 1997). Healing from psychological wounds is important both to prevent such defensive violence and to enhance the openness of the group for reconciliation.

Perpetrators also carry psychological wounds. At times, their earlier woundedness is one source of their violence (Mamdani, 2002). In addition, to engage in their violent actions, perpetrators have to distance themselves from their victims, so that they see their humanity less and feel less empathy, which is likely to generalize to other human beings. This may partly explain why violence by one group toward another tends to spread to other victims as well (Staub, 1989). Recent research shows that people who engage in varied forms of violence against others are psychologically wounded by their actions (MacNair, 2002; Rhodes, Allen, Nowinski, & Cillessen, 2002). Passive bystanders, members of the perpetrator group who have witnessed the evolution of hostility, discrimination, and increasing violence that usually precedes genocide or mass killing, are likely to be also deeply affected. To reduce their empathic suffering and maintain their sense of connection to their own group, which is perpetrating this violence, they progressively distance themselves from victims, in part by increasingly devaluing them (Staub, 1989).

The extent, moral meaning, and nature of psychological woundedness of these different groups is obviously different. However, addressing the woundedness of all of them is important to promote reconciliation. When violence ends, both perpetrators and passive members of a perpetrator group tend to

go into a defensive stance, without empathy for their victims and without the willingness to assume responsibility for their own or their group's actions (Staub & Pearlman, 2001, 2006). Addressing their woundedness may diminish their defensiveness and increase their openness to and capacity for reconciliation. Together with other processes of reconciliation it may enable them to see the humanity of the victims, to feel empathy, regret, and sorrow, and to become capable of apology, which is important for both forgiveness and reconciliation (Staub, 2005a). In summary, healing by deeply wounded survivors, as well as by perpetrators and passive members of a perpetrator group who are also wounded, respectively by their violence and passivity, seem important requirements of and contributors to reconciliation (see also Montville, 1993).

Genocide in Rwanda

Starting in April 7, 1994, over a 100-day period, Hutus killed about 700,000 Tutsis, as well as about 50,000 Hutus who were politically moderate or regarded as enemies for historical reasons. The division between the groups had a long history. The Tutsis were dominant already before colonial rule. The Belgian colonizers elevated the Tutsis and had them rule in their behalf, increasing their dominance over Hutus. In 1959, there was a Hutu revolt, with about 50,000 Tutsis killed. From then on, continuing after independence in 1962, the Hutus ruled the country. The Tutsis suffered discrimination and periodic mass killings. In 1990, a primarily Tutsi military group, many of them children of Tutsis refugees from earlier violence, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), entered from Uganda. A civil war began. In 1993, after a cease-fire, the Arusha accords were signed, an agreement to establish a shared government. In 1994, the President's plane was shot down, and the genocide immediately began. The perpetrators in this government-organized violence included members of the military, young men organized into paramilitary groups, and ordinary people including neighbors and even family members in mixed families (des Forges, 1999; Mamdani, 2002). The community of nations watched while about 10,000 Tutsis a day were killed. The genocide ended when the RPA defeated the government army and took over the government.

Since then, the power has been in the hands of the minority Tutsis. The government has been promoting the idea of unity and reconciliation among Rwandese and has taken active steps to promote reconciliation. However, over the years the government has been increasingly intolerant of *divisionism*, at time applying the term, and also the more extreme accusation of propagating genocidal ideology, to individuals and groups it sees as potential opposition.

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The political context and societal processes affect reconciliation, and impact the kind of reconciliation efforts we have been engaged in. However, in Rwanda some processes continue to promote reconciliation, for example, the absence of discrimination in education.

Conceptual Elements and Practical Avenues in Reconciliation: A Brief Overview

I will review some elements of reconciliation that have been emphasized in the literature. These elements are conceptually/psychologically compelling, but as yet with limited evidence of their effects.

Two important elements are *truth and justice* (Gibson, 2004; Proceedings, 2003). Anyone who has worked with survivors of genocide, or engaged with groups that have survived genocide (e.g., Hovannisian, 2003) will know that survivors desperately want to have the truth of what was done to them be established and their suffering acknowledged. Acknowledgement, especially when it is empathic, is healing. When the world (other groups, one's society, other countries, the international community) acknowledge and condemn victimization of a group of people, this says that such violence is unacceptable. It tells survivors that the moral order is being reinstated and helps them feel safer. Truth and the acknowledgment of suffering may enhance diminished personal and group identity, by showing that the victims are innocent and not to be blamed for their victimization. Acknowledgment from the perpetrator group of their actions, expressions of regret and empathy, are of special importance to survivors. Unfortunately, as I have noted, perpetrators usually continue to justify their actions and to devalue and blame their victims. Healing by them may lessen their defensiveness. While truth is sometimes simple, in that violence is completely one-sided, it is often complex. In Rwanda, the genocide, according to most observers, was one sided. But Hutus refer to their *slavery* before 1959 (Staub, 2006), and also to violence against civilians by the RPA during the civil war (desForges, 1999), and subsequent violence against Hutus, for example, against refugees in Zaire, now the Congo (Mamdani, 2002). After conflict, groups tend to focus on their own suffering and blame the other. Reconciliation requires acknowledgment of suffering by both sides, even when substantially unequal. However, creating a mutually acceptable, shared history is extremely difficult (see below).

The importance of justice for reconciliation has also received substantial attention (Byrne, 2004; Gibson, 2004; Proceedings, 2002). Truth is a prerequisite for justice. Some regard justice as punishment as important for stopping

future perpetrators, which it may or may not accomplish. However, survivors of genocide probably also desperately want and need justice as a form of acknowledgement and to recreate a moral order. Justice can take varied forms, such as punishment (retributive), compensation, or perpetrators and their group making a positive contribution to building society (restorative). Just societal procedural (procedural justice) may be especially important (Tyler & Smith, 1998).

Firm empirical evidence about the role of truth is limited as yet (but see Gibson, 2004). However, the absence of truth and justice seems to make it difficult for survivors to heal, look into the future, and move on psychologically. The Armenian community has greatly struggled with the absence of acknowledgment of the Turkish genocide against them, both by Turkey, and as a result of pressure by Turkey, which has used its political and financial influence on other countries, also by other nations of the world. A great deal of the Armenian community's energy has focused on engaging with the issue of the denial of the genocide (Hovannisian, 2003). When acknowledgment and justice are not forthcoming, a community may need to create internal healing processes (Staub, 2003a).

While the justice discussed in relation to reconciliation usually refers to justice following wrongdoing by a group and its members in the course of violence against the other group, justice in terms of fair, equitable relations among members of a society is also very important. In Northern Ireland, the possibility of resolving the conflict between Catholics and Protestants greatly increased by the improvement of economic and educational circumstances of and opportunities for the Catholic minority (Cairns & Darby, 1998).

Another significant element in promoting reconciliation is *contact*, especially deep engagement by people belonging to hostile groups. Social-psychological theories of contact are highly relevant here. Meta-analysis of a large body of research on contact shows that it has positive effects (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). While research has shown that superficial contact, people living in the same area, does not help to overcome devaluation and prejudice, even that can have positive effects by making deeper contact possible (Tausch, Kenworthy, & Hewstone, 2006). People from different groups working together for shared goals can be especially valuable. In three cities in India where instigating events did not lead to violence, Hindus and Muslims belonging to and committed to the same organizations have been able to work together and act in response to instigating events in ways that prevented the flare up of violence. In contrast, in three cities where similar conditions did lead to violence, such organizations did not exist (Varshney, 2002).

Forgiveness has also been proposed as important for reconciliation (Helmick & Petersen, 2001; Staub & Bar-Tal, 2003). Both theory, and research with individuals suggest that forgiveness, letting go of hostility, anger, and the

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desire for revenge, and developing a more positive attitude toward a harmdoer, can ease the suffering of those who have been harmed (see Worthington, 2005). An important difference between forgiveness and reconciliation in that that former is one sided, the latter mutual. Anecdotal information in Rwanda suggests that forgiveness by a survivor may lead to expressions of regret and apology by perpetrators. However, forgiveness is usually *facilitated* by expressions of regret and apology. Without them, after one group victimized another, with the groups continuing to live together, forgiveness can be problematic, maintaining or even enhancing the imbalance that the harmdoing has created between victims and perpetrators (Staub, 2005a).

A great deal of practical intervention to promote reconciliation is in the tradition of *conflict resolution* approaches (see Kelman & Fisher, 2003), involving dialog between members of the group who are parties to the conflict, often between influential members of these groups. Dialog groups can have different goals, from overcoming hostility and developing more positive attitudes, to identifying and working to resolve conflict, both material and psychological, to resolving practical problems in coexistence (Kelman & Fisher, 2003; Kriesberg, 1998; Volkan, 1998). Contact, significant engagement in working for shared goals, is an aspect of this process. However, whatever the goal, to be able to work together, participants need to move from blaming and anger, to some degree of empathy with each other, and the ability to accept some responsibility for their own group's actions. It is hoped and assumed that changes in participants will be transmitted to other people.

In describing our work, I will discuss further the role of healing and discuss the creation of a shared history of the past, in place of conflicting views of the past that can generate new violence.

The Role of Psychology and Structure

Our definition of reconciliation focuses on psychological elements—which we see as central and essential. However, societal structures have a great deal to do with promoting and maintaining reconciliation. By psychological elements, I mean people's perceptions, interpretations, evaluations, and attitudes (in relation to past and current events, other people and groups, current policies and practices), the resulting emotions, as well as affects associated with their own and their group's past history and expectations of the future. By structure, I mean policies and practices, the nature of institutions. Equality or equity that policies and institutions promote and create, in the education of children belonging to different groups, in access to jobs, in opportunities

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for contact, in the application of the justice system, in access by members of different groups to the public arena, make reconciliation easier and more likely (Cairns & Darby, 1998).

Our interventions focused on psychological change. However, we hoped that our work over time would have a progressively expanding influence, as we combine a bottom up approach, training people who work with groups in the community and creating radio programs that reach much of the population, and a bottom-down approach, working with members of the media, community leaders and national leaders, who can exert wide ranging influence on people and can shape policies and institutions. This was a progressively developing vision, as in the course of our work new possibilities became available to us.

An Approach to Healing and Reconciliation

We (see Staub & Pearlman, 2006) have developed an approach to reconciliation that we used with varied groups in Rwanda, ranging from the level of the community to national leaders. The approach is based in part on our own research and theories about the origins and prevention of genocide (Staub, 1989, 1996, 1998, 1999, 2003), informed also by others' work on genocide (for reviews of work on genocide see Chorbajian & Shirinian, 1999; Totten, Parsons, & Charny, 1997), as well as by work on reconciliation (see Staub & Pearlman, 2001; Staub & Bar-Tal, 2003). It is also based on our work on trauma and healing (McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995; Saakvitne, Gamble, Pearlman, & Lev, 2000; Staub, 1998), as well as the work by others on complex trauma (Allen, 2001; Esterling, L'Abate, Murray, & Pennebaker, 1999; Herman, 1992). I will review the central procedures of the approach in the context of describing our first project. In describing subsequent projects, I will indicate the further evolution of our interventions.

The approach focuses on psychological education, with experiential elements. In this approach participants, members of antagonistic groups, in our work in Rwanda Tutsi survivors of the genocide and Hutus who themselves were not perpetrators, receive information relevant to their experiences and engage in extensive discussion of this information (However, the radio project also targeted prisoners accused of perpetrating the genocide). They do not engage in dialog around the events of the past, about who inflicted harm on whom, about the feelings they have toward each other. Thus, the *process* is less emotionally charged than in conflict resolution dialogs.

The primary aims of our interventions were to prevent new violence and promote reconciliation. These aims are served by procedures to help people

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heal and to promote a more positive orientation by members of the groups toward each other. We provided information about the influences that lead to genocide, about the psychological consequences of victimization on people and avenues to healing, about the role of basic human needs—their frustration, and their constructive fulfillment. Participants in our first projects also shared their experiences during the genocide. These activities were expected to have the following effects:

- Reduce trauma, and thereby reduce feelings of vulnerability, and strengthen identity diminished by being either the victims of violence, or members of a group that perpetrated violence which the world strongly disapproves of (Nadler, 2003). We expected these changes to increase feelings of security and in turn create some degree of openness to the other group and thereby make the beginning of reconciliation possible.
- Create understanding of the varied influences that had affected perpetrators and thereby reduce the negative orientation to perpetrators among survivors, and reduce the defensiveness of perpetrators and thereby also their negative orientation towards the victim group. This would further increase the possibility of engagement with the other and with activities that promote reconciliation.
- Make people more resistant to both the conditions and leaders that instigate violence, thereby reducing the likelihood of new violence.
- Provide people with knowledge of what is required to prevent violence and promote positive groups relations, and empower them to take appropriate action by responding to events (as *active bystanders*) and addressing the conditions and cultural characteristics that produce violence.

When we arrived in Rwanda, we were planning to hire people to work for us, train them to do an intervention and then conduct a study to evaluate its impact on groups in the community. However, faced with the evident tremendous need in Rwanda—many people on the streets with faces that seemed frozen in pain, and in a culture where people are legendary for not showing and sharing their feelings everybody telling us the horrors they have experienced—we revised our plans shortly after our arrival. We decided to work with people from local organizations, who then can continue to use the approach, if it proves effective, in their work with groups in the community.

It was important to focus on groups, even in promoting healing and much more to promote reconciliation. One reason is that in a country of eight million people, everyone was affected. In addition, the violence in Rwanda was a communal event. Rwanda is a communal culture; so healing in groups is likely

to be more effective (Herman, 1992; see Staub & Pearlman, 2006; Wessells & Monteiro, 2001). Further, one of the consequences of victimization is disconnection from other people (Saakvitne et al., 2000), and group healing can help people reconnect with others. Finally, reconciliation after mass violence is primarily a group, not an individual issue. In this first project we trained 35 people, both Hutus and Tutsis, who worked for varied local organizations that worked with groups in the community. The 2-week long seminar/workshop included brief psycho-educational lectures with extensive large- and small-group discussions after each lecture, and experiential components that included both people in small groups talking about their experiences during the genocide, and developing ways to use the information and experience in the seminar in their own work. The training had five elements.

Understanding the Effects of Trauma and Victimization and Avenues to Healing

Understanding psychological trauma, especially *awareness* of the symptoms that result (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) and of the profound effects of traumatic experiences on creating vulnerability and diminishing the self, on perceptions of other people and the world as dangerous, and in damaging spirituality, can contribute to healing (Allen, 2001; Rosenbloom & Williams, 1999; Saakvitne et al., 2000; Staub, 1998). The seminar aimed to help people understand the behavioral, cognitive, emotional, interpersonal, spiritual, and physiological squeal of violence. Realizing that the way one has changed, and other people have changed, is the normal consequence of extraordinary, painful experiences can ease distress, strengthen the self, and increase feelings of security. These in turn create greater openness to members of an antagonistic group.

Providing people with information about avenues to recovery is also important (Saakvitne et al., 2000). One of these avenues is people talking about their painful experiences. This can help overcome the avoidance that maintains trauma symptoms (Foa, Keane, & Friedman, 2000). While there is some disagreement about the need for survivors to talk about their traumatic experiences (Bonnano, Noll, Putnam, O'Neill, & Trickett, 2003), the preponderance of clinical and empirical evidence suggests that doing so is helpful for many survivors (Pennebaker, 2000). To generate community healing, we promoted understanding of the ways people in the community can help each other, by empathic listening and in other ways. All of our trainings (and our radio programs—see below), encouraged person to person healing in the community, promoting awareness, understanding, and sensitivity to other

people (our radio field research found that traumatized people in Rwanda have traditionally been seen as crazy) and attempting to empower people to acknowledge each others' suffering and support.

Understanding the Origins of Genocide and Mass Killing

People often see genocide as incomprehensible evil, and their own suffering as unique. Learning about similar ways that others have suffered and examining the psychological and social roots or influences leading to such violence can help people see their common humanity with others. It can mitigate negative attitudes toward oneself. Understanding the influences that have affected and shaped the actions of perpetrators and passive bystanders can also mitigate negative attitudes toward them, helping victims see them as human beings, in spite of their horrible actions or their passivity. This should make reconciliation with members of a perpetrator group more possible. Understanding of the influences on themselves can also ease the defensiveness of perpetrators and passive bystanders. We hypothesized that exploration of the influences that lead to genocide would contribute to healing and to a more positive orientation by members of the two groups toward each other.

According to the conception of difficult life conditions, such as severe economic problems, political chaos, great social/cultural changes, as well as persistent groups conflict, are starting points for violence. They frustrate universal human needs (see below). Groups tend to respond to such instigating conditions by scapegoating some group and creating destructive ideologies—visions hopeful for the group but identifying enemies who must be destroyed to fulfill the vision. Devaluation of members of some group, unhealed wounds from past victimization and trauma, excessive respect for authority and the absence of pluralism are societal/cultural characteristics that make it probable that instigation is followed by the evolution of increasing violence. The passivity of bystanders allows this evolution to unfold. In our lectures about the origins of genocide we did not discuss how these influences apply to Rwanda (see Staub, 1999, for such an extension to Rwanda). Instead, we presented the concepts, applied them to the analyses of other genocides (Staub, 1989, 1996, 2003b), and asked participants to apply them to Rwanda.

With the exception of national leaders, who in the end asked us to apply the conception to Rwanda (Staub & Pearlman, 2002), every group eagerly did this, and together with the leaders found the conception highly applicable. The leaders were hindered by their new ideology of unity, which proclaimed that there are no Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda. In this view the differentiation between these groups was not real but created by colonialists. In spite of the

recent genocide, the leaders said that if there were no groups, they could not have devalued each other—one of the elements that in most conceptions is a central contributor to genocide. In the course of subsequent discussion, we came to agree that while there may be no biological differences between Hutus and Tutsis, there have been psychological and social differences.

Understanding Basic Psychological Needs

Basic, universal psychological needs (see Staub, 1989, 2003b) have a role in genocide, trauma, and healing. Understanding these needs and their functions would, therefore, have significant value. Basic psychological needs on which we focused, which we found important in our previous work, include security or safety, positive identity and esteem, feelings of effectiveness and control, trust and positive connections to other people, a comprehension of reality and of one's own place in the world, and transcendence (or spiritual needs; McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995; Saakvitne et al., 2000; Staub, 1989, 1996, 2003b). First, the frustration of basic psychological needs by social conditions is one cause of groups turning against other groups (Burton, 1990; Kelman, 1990; Staub, 1989). It tends to give rise to scapegoating and the creation of destructive ideologies. Second, traumatic experiences frustrate or disrupt basic needs (McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Pearlman, 2003). Third, healing promotes the fulfillment of these needs (Staub, 2005b). It helps people feel safer, strengthens identity, helps people reconnect with others, and so on.

Making sense of and developing a story about their experiences, and creating meaning out of them, have been identified as important contributors to healing from trauma (Herman, 1992; Pennebacker, 2000). The conceptions of the origins of genocide and of basic needs and their functions can be important tools for both survivors and members of a perpetrator group to develop a meaningful story of their experience—and in that process help fulfill varied needs, including the need for a comprehension of reality.

Engagement With Experience

During the second week of the seminar, after people knew each other and were comfortable with each other, we had them talk about their experiences during the genocide. We discussed the importance of empathic responding to others' experiences, and provided demonstrations of less and more empathic responses: lack of response, inappropriate responses such as offering advice or immediately beginning to tell one's own story, as well as listening and support.

In small groups, participants then told their stories, and often cried with each other in this process.

Since the genocide was perpetrated by Hutus, with the Tutsis now in power, it is not surprising that although Hutus actively participated in the seminar, they did not tell the *stories* of their experiences during the genocide. Hearing the painful stories of Tutsis—stories that focused on what happened to the victims, only infrequently mentioning perpetrators—led, however, to the empathic participation of Hutus, which may have helped Tutsis (Jordan, Walker, & Hartling, 2004).

Integration

The participants in the training worked in organizations that varied in the way they worked with groups in the community. Some of them helped people who did agricultural work together to build community. Other groups met to promote healing. Some organizations had a religious orientation, others secular. A final aspect of the training was to help participants *integrate* the material from the training with their usual (*traditional*) approach in working with groups. We helped them conceptualize and practice how they would use information about the origins of genocide, basic needs, and so on, as part of whatever activities their groups engaged in—for example, in groups that used religious writings to promote healing, with the texts and discussion they would normally use.

Evaluating the Effects of the Approach With Community Groups: A Field Study

While there has been a great deal of research on the effects of contact between members of different groups in overcoming prejudice or devaluation (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006), the evaluation of interventions to reduce conflict between groups has been mostly informal, anecdotal, rather than systematic research (Ross & Rothman, 1999). We conducted a field study to assess the impact of our intervention—not on the people in our seminar, but one step removed, on members of community groups that the people we trained subsequently facilitated.

With the help of the organizations whose staff has participated in the project, and with the help of a Rwandan associate and research assistants, we set up community groups comparable to the type of groups our facilitators have worked with in the past (Staub et al., 2005). These again were mixed groups,

Tutsi and Hutu, their members people in the countryside, including survivors, women who were raped, a cross-section of the population in Rwanda.

We set up three treatment conditions, each including an equal number of different types of subgroups: community versus healing groups, with secular versus religious orientation. This provided a three by two by two design: here I will report the main findings only, the effects of treatments (see Staub et al., 2005). In one treatment condition, the *integrated groups*, facilitators we have trained (who integrated our approach and their traditional approach) worked with these newly created groups. In another treatment condition, the *traditional groups*, facilitators from the same organization whom we did not train worked with newly created community groups. The participants met for 3 hr, twice a week, for 3 weeks. Observers recorded the actual practices of the facilitators. The facilitators did use the varied elements of our approach, although in somewhat varying proportions.

Measures of trauma (traumatic experiences, symptoms, trauma related beliefs), and a measure we developed for this study that we named *orientation to the other*, were administered to participants before their participation, immediately afterward, and 2 months later. In *control groups* (whose membership was selected by the same organizations and the same way as of the groups in the other two conditions), participants received no training, but had the same measures administered to them at about the same time as in the two treatment groups (Staub et al., 2005).

We found that trauma symptoms decreased in the integrated groups, led by the facilitators who participated in our seminar, both over time and in comparison to the other groups. Symptoms increased slightly (not significantly) in both the traditional and control groups (Figure 17.1). The figures show the results for Tutsi participants. We did separate analysis of Tutsis and the whole group, which provided similar result. The number of Hutus in the sample was smaller, and while *t*-tests indicated the same effects as for Tutsis, we did not perform an analysis of variance on the Hutu only date (see Staub et al., 2005). We also found an increase in positive orientation by the two groups toward each group in the integrated groups, both over time and in comparison to the other treatment groups (Figure 17.2). The elements of this positive orientation included (a) seeing the genocide as having complex origins (rather than simply resulting from the evil nature of the perpetrators, or bad leaders), (b) expressing willingness to work with the other group for important goals (e.g., a better future), and indicating awareness that not all Hutus were the same and some resisted the genocide and some saved lives, and (c) expressing willingness to forgive the other group if its members acknowledged what they did and apologized for the group's actions—which we named conditional forgiveness (Staub et al., 2005). The orientation to the other measure might also be interpreted as an indicator
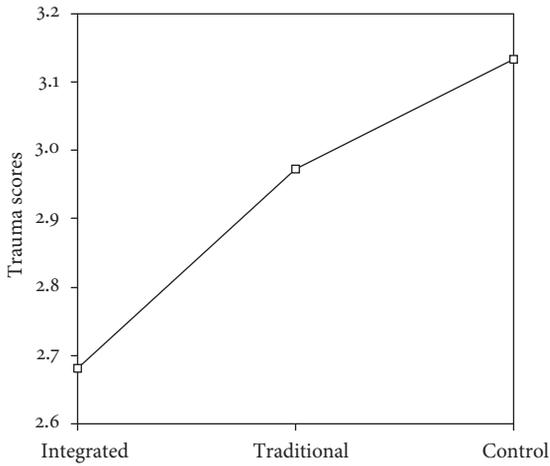
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FIGURE 17.1. Covariance analysis of Tutsi participants' trauma scores 2-months postintervention. Covariates: Trauma scores and traumatic experiences, both at Time 1. Reprinted from Staub et al. (2005). *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 24*, 297-334.
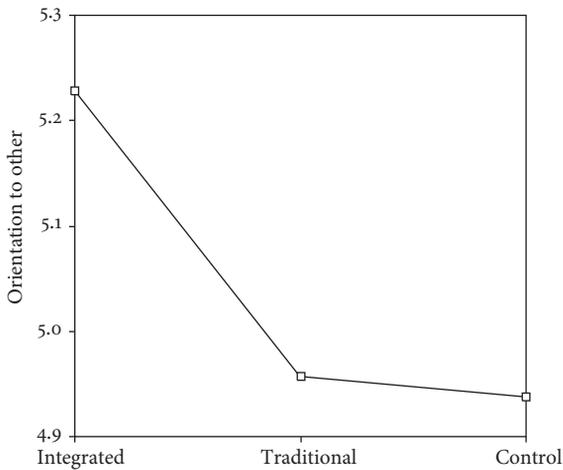

FIGURE 17.2. Covariance analysis of Tutsi participants' other orientation (or readiness to reconcile) scores 2-months postintervention. Covariates: Other orientation scores and traumatic experiences, both at Time 1. Reprinted from Staub et al. (2005). *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 24*, 297-334.

of readiness to reconcile. While some of the items would have different meaning for Tutsis and Hutus, the treatment had similar impact on them.

Although we were unable to evaluate in this study the effects of specific components of the intervention, our observations in the course of the training

suggested that the information about the origins of genocide—which we regard as a new tool in promoting healing and reconciliation and therefore especially important to learn about—had striking effects. Some participants expressed the realization that they were not outside history and human experience, and the genocide in Rwanda was not God's punishment. Participants seemed to feel *rehumanized* by the understanding that what happened in their society is a human, albeit horrific, process. They came to regard the influences that lead to genocide as understandable, and therefore action to prevent future violence possible. By connecting the conception and examples from other genocides to their own experience in Rwanda, participants seemed to gain what I regard as an *experiential understanding* of the roots of the genocide—knowledge that is strengthened and confirmed by one's own experience.

In summary, relatively limited participation in groups led by facilitators who participated in our 2-week long seminar contributed to both healing, as measured by the reduction in trauma symptoms, and to a more positive attitude by Hutus and Tutsis toward each other. We used elements of this approach, and further developments of it, in subsequent work.

Working With National Leaders

We conducted two seminars with national leaders. A 4-day seminar in 2001 included about 25 government ministers, members of the supreme court, heads of national commissions (electoral, constitutional), the heads of the national prison system and of the main Kigali prison, an advisor to the president, leaders of religious organizations, and commissioners of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission that helped us organize these and other seminars/workshops (Staub & Pearlman, 2002). We conducted a 1-day seminar in 2003 with 69 national leaders—leaders like those in the first seminar, as well as members of the parliament and leaders of the various parties.

We discussed the psychological impact of violence on people. We extended the discussion of the origins of group violence, focusing on prevention as well. Using a table we showed some of the influences that contribute to genocide as one endpoint of dimensions on the left side of the table, and the opposing influences that can prevent the evolution of violence as the other endpoint on the right side of the table (Staub, 2004). Devaluation of the other, past victimization and psychological woundedness, a monolithic society and very strong respect for authority contribute to violence: humanizing the other group, healing group psychological wounds, promoting moderate respect for

authority and pluralism help prevent violence. The group members identified and discussed government policies and practices from the standpoint of these dimensions. For example, they discussed how new decentralization policies might diminish people's orientation to and obedience to authority. They considered what might be the impact, in terms of the above dimensions, and elements of reconciliation I discussed earlier such as truth, justice, and contact, of providing special help to needy survivors of the genocide, but given highly limited resources, not to needy Hutus. The leaders considered what they could do to shape policies and practices so that they would reduce the likelihood of future violence.

Creating a Shared History

We also engaged the group in discussing the creation of a shared history. Increasingly, coming to a shared view of history has been recognized as an important aspect of reconciliation (Bar-Tal, 2002; Cairns & Roe, 2002; Penal Reform International, 2004; Staub & Bar-Tal, 2003; Willis, 1965). Groups that have engaged in violence against each other tend to have conflicting views of the reasons for the violence, usually blaming each other, which makes renewed conflict more likely. While some people in the group argued that history is objective, that there is only one correct factual account of events, predominantly the group recognized that there can be different perspectives on historical events and that it was the important to create a shared view of history. As part of small group discussions in the 2001 seminar, a group of prominent leaders proposed a variety of ideas for how to create such a history, like each group taking the role of the other in describing history, and the recognition of earlier peaceful coexistence. However, in the end many participants expressed skepticism that it would be possible to create such a history at this time, in light of the feelings generated by the recent genocide.

In our subsequent seminars/workshops, we began to use, in an informal manner, *understanding the roots of violence* as an avenue to the creation of a shared history. By bringing understanding to how particular historical events and actions came about, we hoped to help people acknowledge their own group's blameworthy actions and begin to accept the other group in spite of its blameworthy actions.

For example, in the second leaders' seminar, one of the participants referred to the *genocide* in 1959. At that time, there was a Hutu uprising against Tutsi rule, with about 50,000 Tutsis killed. With regard to the actions of Tutsis before

1959, and the violence by Hutus toward Tutsis in 1959, and violent repression of Tutsis after 1959, we offered the following explanation:

> The Tutsis have long been dominant in Rwandan society. The Belgians, after they took over the country, ordered a reexamination of "race policies." The first expression of this was a "White Paper" on the relation between the races in Rwanda written by (white) church leaders in 1916 (Mamdani, 2002), identifying the Tutsis as a different and superior race. After this the Belgians intensified the differences between the Tutsis and Hutus. They elevated the Tutsis, had them rule in their behalf, greatly intensifying Tutsi dominance. They gave them more power and privilege, and boosted them psychologically as they emphasized their intelligence, physical attractiveness and similarity to Europeans. In contrast, they diminished the Hutus psychologically and in terms of their position in society and material well being. (des Forges, 1999; Mamdani, 2002)
>
> These actions by the powerful colonial rulers, given the preexisting divisions and a highly authority oriented society, would have been psychologically nearly impossible to resist by those so elevated. The resulting persistent injustice in social arrangements gave rise to the revolution and mass killing in 1959. The discrimination and violence against Tutsis under the Hutu rule that followed can be understood as the outcome of the psychological woundedness, fear and anger of Hutus. However, the policies and practices of Hutus after 1959 both created new, grave injustice, and interfered with healing by Hutus, further wounding them instead, and maintaining the focus on their chosen trauma. (The concept of chosen trauma was proposed by Vamik Volkan, e.g. 1997, to describe the focus of a group on a historical trauma and the psychological and behavioral consequences of that focus)

These and other efforts to use the *understanding approach* to create a shared, mutually acceptable history were surprisingly well received. Our use of this approach was experimental and ad hoc, but its seeming effectiveness makes it desirable to test its systematic use in helping groups develop a shared history.

Working With Journalists/the Media and With Community Leaders

We conducted a number of seminars/workshops with members of the media and community leaders. Here again, the focus has been understanding the roots of violence between groups and the impact of violence on

people, the psychological wounds violence creates, and avenues to healing. People in the media can make violence more or less likely by the way, they write about the members of different groups, about conflict between groups, about relationships between people belonging to different groups and about social and political issues involving group relations. They can humanize or devalue people belonging to different groups. As in Rwanda, where leading up to the genocide radio and other media were infused with hate against Tutsis, they can create devaluation and propagate destructive ideologies. Or as in Macedonia, where journalists belonging to different ethnic groups joined in interviewing families belonging to these groups and wrote joint articles about their lives, which were then published in the newspapers of each group, they can show the humanity of members of each group and promote harmonious relations (Manoff, 1996). Individuals who have leadership roles within their communities can have similar positive or negative influence. In our work, such people included advocates for survivors of the genocide, gacaca judges, directors of hospitals, and varied individuals who in some ways were intermediaries between the government and local communities.

One of the issues that we addressed in these seminars was the potential effects of the gacaca and ways of addressing them. The gacaca is a community justice system that was created to deal with the approximately 120,000 people who were in jail, accused of being perpetrators of the genocide, in a country where the justice system was completely destroyed in the genocide. About 250,000 people were elected to act as judges in gacaca courts in groups of 19, as well as to serve as administrative personnel. About 10, 000 gacaca courts were created. Later the number of judges to serve in each court was reduced (Honeyman et al., 2004; Staub, 2004).

The purpose of the gacaca was to establish what has happened and to punish perpetrators, and through truth and justice contribute to reconciliation. The proceedings of the gacaca courts are public events, which the members of the community in each location are expected to attend. However, there were intense concerns by leaders in Rwanda that as people gave testimony about what happened during the genocide, not only witnesses but also people in attendance will be retraumatized, and some, like children too young to remember events, will be newly traumatized. My associates and I were also greatly concerned that as Tutsis hear descriptions of the horrible violence against them, they will feel renewed anger. And that as Hutus who may not have participated in violence hear repeatedly the horrible actions by members of their group, they will feel personally accused and respond with hostility and anger (Staub, 2004; Staub & Pearlman, 2006).

For these reasons part of the focus of our work was to discuss what community leaders and journalists can do to help mitigate these consequences. We

stressed support that community members can provide each other, by their presence, empathic listening, and other ways. We stressed again how understanding the roots of violence may help in modulating thoughts and feelings, specifically how an *understanding orientation* in listening to and even in providing testimonies in front of the gacaca may lessen retramautization and anger.

We applied the understanding of general societal processes to the level of individual perpetrators. We discussed, for example, the psychological and behavioral evolution of a member of the Interahamwe, militia groups composed of young men who did a great deal of the killings (des Forges, 1999). We looked at how the societal processes that led to the genocide played themselves out in directly affecting these young men—for example, their exposure to the devaluation of Tutsis both in the society in general, and by the leaders of the Interahamwe in particular (see Staub, 2004).

The Radio/Communication Project

We were frequently asked in the course of our seminars and workshops to expand the reach of our work. In 2001 after our first seminar with national leaders the general secretary of the ruling party (now foreign minister) and the then justice minister specifically asked us to do so. We then initiated radio programs. Radio is the primary media that people have access to in Rwanda. While not every person has a radio, every village has radios and people listen together. In 2001, we invited a producer and his organization, LaBenevolencija, located in Amsterdam, to work with us to create radio programs that would communicate our approach to reconciliation to the larger community. We developed two types of programs.

One of them is a radio drama, the story of two neighboring villages, called Musekeweya—New Dawn. The story is about conflict and violence between the villages, but also about love stories, friendships, and family relations. We developed communication objectives, which summarize the elements of the approach I have described (see Table 17.1). These were to be embedded in the radio drama: the influences that lead to violence or can prevent violence, the traumatic impact of violence, healing and how people can help each other heal, the behavior of leaders, followers and passive and active bystanders. We developed an overall storyline. Rwandese writers trained in the approach write the weekly episodes, with material based on the communication objectives embedded in the episodes. The episodes are translated into English, edited (by Laurie Perlman, Ervin Staub, and other staff of the project), and then revised in the local language, Kinyarwanda.

TABLE 17.1 **Examples of Communications Objectives**

Message: "The Healing of Psychological Wounds Helps People Live More Satisfying Lives and Makes Unnecessary Defensive Violence Less Likely."
Prevention Objective: Healing of Past Wounds
  The listener is aware of the importance of healing and of participating in and promoting the healing process as a way of lessening vulnerability, changing the perception of the world as a dangerous place, and diminishing the resulting potential for unnecessary violence that the actors perceive as self-protective

Message: "Passivity Facilitates the Evolution of Harm Doing Whereas Actions by People Inhibit It."
Understanding Objective: Passive Bystanders
  The listener will understand that passivity in face of harmful actions encourages perpetrators
Prevention Objective: Positive Bystanders
  Listeners will be able to cite the actions that make someone a positive bystander
  Listeners will understand that acting as a positive bystander is important to stop the evolution of increasing violence that may end in genocide

Message: "Varied Perspectives, Open Communication and Moderate Respect for Authority in a Society Make the Evolution of Violence Less Likely."
Understanding Objective: Uncritical Respect for Authority
  Listeners will know the danger of not critically evaluating the words and actions of authority
Prevention Objective: Moderate Respect for Authority
  Listeners will know the importance of examining and evaluating the words and actions of authority
Prevention Objective: Pluralism
  The listener will understand the importance of respecting, expressing, and encouraging multiple perspectives
  The listener will respect, express, and encourage multiple perspectives

This radio drama began twice-weekly broadcasts in May 2004. A survey of general radio listening habits in mid-2005 found that in a country where over 90% of the population listens to the radio, the major media outlet, 89% of the women and 92% of the men who listen to radio listen to this program. Data collection in a large study to evaluate the initial impact of this program—the knowledge that results from it and the cognitive and behavioral effects of it (Paluck, 2007; Staub, Pearlman, Weiss & Hoek, 2007) was completed in 2005. Since changes resulting from radio programs take time, further evaluation has been conducted in 2006 and is planned in 2007. Initial results from 2005 indicate changes in both attitudes and behavior. After a little over a year, those who listened to the radio drama, in comparison to those who listened to a different program at the same time in a controlled setting:

- Believe more in the importance of trust
- Report increased trust in their communities

- Understand the importance of being an *active bystander*
- Believe in collaboration and deep contact between various social groups
- Understand the importance of talking for trauma healing

(*LeBenevolencija Newsletter*, January 2006).

They also show behavioral differences. At the end of the study, both treatment group participants and control group participants, who listened to an alternative program during the year, received tapes of the first year programs, together with an audio cassette. In this unobtrusive measure, treatment participants in 10 different locations in the country extensively discussed who will be in charge of the tapes and the cassette and decided that it will be the participants themselves. In the control group, with very little or no discussion they decided to give these materials to the local authority to be in charge of. The behavior of the treatment participants was in line with two of the aims of the program: supporting pluralism and in a very authority oriented culture moderating respect for authority (Paluck, 2007; Staub et al., 2007).

A second program, a monthly program that began to broadcast in September 2004 is a straightforward informational/journalistic program. In this, the elements of the approach are laid out, with the participation of local commentators, both experts and citizens with relevant experience. In January 2005, this radio drama also began to be broadcast in Burudi, which has the same language and where there has also been a great deal of violence between Tutsis and Hutus—although here, the Tutsis, who remained in power, were the primary perpetrators. In 2006, new programs of both kinds were created for Burundi, and for the Eastern Congo, where since about 1995 over three million people have died due to violence and its side effects, disease and hunger. In developing the programs for the Congo, elements of the theory especially relevant to a highly complex conflict situation and application of the theory to such a situation were guiding principles (Staub et al., 2007).

Concluding Thoughts

We have focused in our approach on psychological education that creates knowledge, develops genuine understanding, and can change feelings and lead to action. The content of the information we provided was about the impact

of violence on people and avenues to healing, especially person to person healing, and about the influences the lead to violence between groups and their implications for prevention. Our primary aims were to promote healing on both the individual level, and through people we trained to be trainers in our approach and through the activities journalists, community and national leaders, and radio programs also on the societal level; to promote a more positive orientation by Hutus and Tutsis toward each other; and to promote awareness of the importance of and ways to begin to create a shared view of history. These activities and processes can humanize both the self and the other, increase safety by helping people realize (through healing) that the present is not the past, and create a shared understanding of both the roots of genocide and of past history that makes it possible for people to engage with each other in ways that can further promote reconciliation.

Research, theory, and practices to promote reconciliation are in their initial stages of development. They are of tremendous importance, especially because of the overlap in the processes and practices involved in the prevention of violence after and *before* significant violence between groups. Research and the development of practice cannot simply take place in universities. To develop a science of reconciliation interventions in the real would ought to be further explored in laboratory settings, while principles and practices developed in analog research conducted in the laboratory, usually with individuals or at best small groups, must be applied and studied in real world settings.

It is of great importance to develop general principles of process and practice/intervention, such as healing, shared history, the importance of truth, and the role of understanding. However, whether they apply to particular settings given the idiosyncratic characteristics of groups, their culture, political processes, and past relations must be carefully considered before practices are introduced, and evaluated after they have been introduced. This applies to our work as well. While understanding the roots of violence and its implications, for prevention seems relevant to many and varied situations, the extent and limits of this applicability must be evaluated.

The circumstances under which prevention and reconciliation are needed vary tremendously, from before mass violence, for example, in a setting like the Netherlands, where violence producing conditions exist to a moderate degree and there has been limited violence between Muslims and the local Dutch population (Staub, in press), to the aftermath of a genocide. Procedures have to be adapted to each setting, with the proper combination of universal elements and uniqueness required by the characteristics of the setting.

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Note

1. This chapter draws on and extends our previous articles and book chapters on reconciliation, including the description of the approach we have developed and used in Rwanda (see Staub et al., 2005; Staub & Pearlman, 2001, 2006).

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