

Current projects—20014

I. Training to promote psychological recovery and reconciliation, and preventing violence and new violence, in Rwanda.

Since late 1998 my associates and I have been working in Rwanda on promoting reconciliation after the terrible genocide there, in order to prevent new violence. About 800 thousand people were killed there, mostly Tutsis, but also a much smaller number of Hutus, during a three months period. Laurie Anne Pearlman and I have developed an approach to promote reconciliation, and healing or psychological recovery as an important aspect of it. The approach is based on my work on the origins and prevention of mass violence and reconciliation and her work on trauma and healing. We have worked, using this approach, with groups in the community, community leaders, journalists, and with national/government leaders. (See publications in Vita and under downloads).

II. Educational radio programs to promote reconciliation and prevent violence, and new violence in Rwanda, Burundi and the Congo.

On the suggestion of many people in Rwanda, including government leaders, we initiated and developed radio programs to promote reconciliation. In Rwanda radio is the primary media people have access to. We invited George Weiss, a producer who lives in Amsterdam, to work with us. He created an NGO for this purpose, LaBenevolencija Humanitarian Tools Foundation. We together developed the prototype of a radio drama to promote reconciliation, and group healing/psychological recovery as an aspect of reconciliation, as well as an informational radio program. These were based on the approach we have previously developed.

LaBenevolencija has been producing a variety of educational radio programs since then, in three countries, Rwanda, Burundi and the Congo. One of these programs is a weekly drama series, which began as the story of two villages in conflict (and already in its first year just over 90 percent of the radio listening population listened to), in which the characters express and enact information about the origins of violence between groups, avenues to the prevention of violence, the impact of violence on victims/survivors, perpetrators and bystanders, and ways to prevent violence and promote reconciliation.

This weekly radio drama began broadcasting in May 2004, and as of the beginning of 2014 is planned to continue for the foreseeable future. Another program is an informational program on these topics, which began broadcasting in October 2004. A third program is a justice support program. The drama series started to broadcast in Burundi, which has the same ethnic groups, the same language, and has had serious problems with violence, in early 2005. We have begun creating new programs for Burundi in 2006. Since the beginning of 2006, we have been creating the same type of programs in the Congo, adapted to the specific situation and

culture there. In the Congo it is estimated that since 1996 between four and five 5 million people have died due to violence and its consequences, disease and hunger.

Our programs are well known, and LaBenevolencija is approached to create new programs to respond to difficult situations, such as intense hate speech and hostility in the Congo preceding the run off in the Presidential elections in October 2006. In 2012 we developed a television program in Rwanda, also aimed to promote reconciliation. In 2014, under a UNICEF grant, LaBenevolencija will start a new project in the Eastern Congo to promote the raising of inclusively caring and morally courageous children, using educational radio and the training of the staff in the schools of 12 school districts. This has been the recent focus of my work (with my new book, *The roots of goodness: inclusive caring, moral courage, altruism born of suffering, active bystandership and heroism* in press with by Oxford University Press).

III. Training active bystanders.

I have developed, with associates, a training for students in schools, to be active bystanders when they see harmful actions (verbal or physical, intimidation or actual harming—bullying) by students directed at other students. This training can be extended from schools to other settings.

As part of my work on active bystandership, ranging from experimental research, to the study of behavior in schools, to the study of the evolution and potential prevention of various forms of extreme group violence, I have been consulting to the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, as they are developing their U Matter project. This project aims to create a caring environment at the University for all members of the community. One of the central elements of the project is to promote active bystandership, to prevent sexual violence, alcohol problems, harassment, but also active bystandership in helping others and creating caring institutions and community.

IV. Raising caring and not violent children.

Over the years I have engaged in working with teachers and parents to promote environments and practices that lead children to become caring and not-aggressive. More recently, my concern has been to develop inclusive caring—which extends beyond the group to all people, even those traditionally devalued in the group—as well as moral courage, that is sometimes necessary for active bystandership.

