

Current projects applying —up to 2020

### **I. Trainings to promote psychological recovery and reconciliation, and prevent 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 genocide and other 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 healing and reconciliation, and prevent 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 my work and the work of Laurie Pearlman and 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 at first in Rwanda 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 Rwanda in May 2004, and as of the beginning of 2020 is continuing for the foreseeable future, which changes in content to make it relevant to progressive changes in the country. 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. The programs in the Congo were ended in 2018. 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 has been 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 started 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 most recent book, *The roots of goodness: inclusive caring, moral courage, altruism born of suffering, active bystandership and heroism*, Oxford University Press, 2015 ). The approach we have developed is expanding and used in new settings, under the leadership of George Weiss and LaBenevolencija.

### **III. Training students to be 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 harmdoing—bullying) by fellow students directed at other students. This training can be extended from schools to other settings. The original curriculum of the training is included on this website, and Chapter 16 in the book mentioned above, Staub, 2015, describes the project and an evaluation study showing positive results.

### **IV. Training police officers to become active bystanders who prevent or stop fellow officers from unnecessary harmful actions.**

After the Rodney King incident, in which police officers were beating Rodney King with their batons while more officers were standing around watching, I was asked by California POST (Peace officers standards and Training) to develop a training for police to make such events less likely. I presented the training to a mixed community police group appointed to make recommendations. They recommended that elements of the training, which they wanted to call intervention, be introduced into all police training courses in California. But POST decided to do this internally with staff already in place. However about 6 years ago, around 2014/15, under a consent decree between the police and city of New Orleans and the justice department, I, some other consultants, working with a consent decree monitor and in collaboration with the police department, introduced a version of the training in New Orleans, a historically problematic department. The training was quite similar to the original training, but with emphasis not only of the benefits to citizens who won't be harmed and to police community relations, but also to police officers who won't lose their jobs or be criminally prosecuted for unnecessary harmful actions or for passively witnessing such actions. While formal research evaluation was not possible, there have been many indications of the success of the training: many fewer complaints about police, anecdotal reports of low key but successful interventions, reports of better behavior by police toward citizens. In the training there is discussion of the research basis for active bystandership. work with elements of the training to develop both understanding and skills, for example through role playing, and examination of examples of successful interventions. The program has received substantial attention, in the media (NYT--<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2016/08/29/us/aneu-orleansprogram-teaches-officers-to-police-each-other.html> and New Orleans papers), and in police journals. Both in the summer of 2018 and 2019 there were large conferences in New Orleans, attended by high level police from around the country who expressed interest in using the training in their departments, to introduce them to it. I gave the keynote address at both of these conferences. The Superintendent of New Orleans police under whom the project was conducted was hired in 2019 to be the Commissioner of the Baltimore police, another highly problematic department. In 2019-2020 training in the program is being provided to police in a number of cities--D.C., Charleston, Clemson, Long Beach, Minneapolis, Richmond.

As an outgrowth 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, to active bystandership by police, I consulted to the University

of Massachusetts at Amherst, as they were developing their **UMatter** project. This project aimed 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.

**V. Raising caring and not violent children.**

Over the years I have engaged in working with teachers (and parents) to promote environments in the classroom, 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.

**VI. Working on an autobiography,**

describing my life ranging from surviving the Holocaust and living through communism in Hungary, escaping from Hungary at age 18, living in Vienna, and coming to the U.S., receiving a Ph.D. at Stanford, a long teaching career at Harvard and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and describing my research, and its applications in many real world settings to bring about positive change..