

SHALOM EDUCATING FOR PEACE

In Rwanda: P.O. Box 6210 Kigali . Tel. +250 0840 3868 . basajd@yahoo.fr

In South Africa: 629 Saponaria Street, Pretoria . Tel. +27 82400 2505 .

General Inquiries: shalomeducatingforpeace@gmail.com

Website: www.shalomeducatingforpeace.org



RWAMAGANA PREST EVENT REPORT

Jean de Dieu Basabose
Corianne Wielenga

July 2009

Introduction

From 26 to 28 June 2009, Shalom Educating for Peace organized a pilot Peace and Reconciliation Education through Songs and Theatre (PREST) event in Rwamagana District, Eastern Province of Rwanda. This report presents details of the seminar on the 26th, the PREST event on the 27th and the church service on the 28th. Please note that although Shalom is an inter-faith organization, in the Rwandan context many events take place within the context of the Christian church.

Acknowledgements

SEP is deeply grateful to the many organizations and individuals who contributed to the success of the event. Among them, SEP is grateful for the support and significant contribution from Graham Dyson of the Centre for Peacebuilding and Conflict Management in Norway, Prof. Geoff Harris, director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies, Mr Heli Habyarimana and Mr Emile Adjibi from the UNDP. Further, Shalom would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions: Richard Gunton, Debbie Garner, Anne van Es, and Nina and Manfred McKenzie. Within Rwanda, Shalom would like to thank the Rwamagana District Authorities, the Rwamagana Pentecostal Church/ADEPR, and the Intumwa Choir.

Also, SEP reserves thankful recognitions for moral support and messages from Prof. Ada Aharoni, Founder-President of IFLAC (the International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace) in Israel, Susana Roberts, Vice-Director of IFLAC in Argentina, Dr. Leo Semashko, president of the Global Harmony Association in Russia and Dot Maver (Co-Director) and Mike Abkin (Director of Organizational Development and Operations) of the National Peace Academy in the United States of America.

A. Seminar on Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Date: Friday 26 June 2009

Participants: 35 members of the Reconciliation Forum in the Rwamagana District

Venue: Ikambere Motel, Rwamagana

Objectives:

The specific objectives of the conference were:

- Gathering the members of Reconciliation Forum around the theme of reconciliation
- Helping them understanding the concept of reconciliation which is most of the time misunderstood and confused with the concept of cohabitation
- Dialoguing on ways to reinforce the efforts made to move Rwandan society towards sustainable reconciliation

Presenters:

Jean de Dieu Basabose, Executive Director of SEP, holds a Masters degree in Conflict Resolution and peace studies and has five years experience as a peacebuilder.

Penine Uwimbabazi is Board member of SEP. She hold a Masters degree in Conflict Resolution and peace studies. She is interested in Leadership and peacebuilding. She is part time lecturer at ULK- Gisenyi campus.

Corianne Wielenga is co-founder and co-director of SEP. She is currently completing her doctorate in peace studies and is working on a project for Nonviolence in schools. Her current research is on Story telling as means of healing and reconciliation in Rwanda.

Seminar Timetable

| Hours | Activities | Responsible |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 8:30 – 9:00 | Installation and registration | SEP |
| 9:00 – 9:30 | Opening session Basabose Jean de Dieu presented the mission of SEP and the idea of organizing the event Madam Brigitte Murekatete, Responsible for the Good Governance Unit in Rwamagana district, presented its intervention in the domain of reconciliation and the situation of the recently established Reconciliation forum. She officially opened the conference. | SEP, Rwamagana District and NURC |
| 9:30 – 9:45 | Tea/Coffee break | Motel |
| 9:45 – 10:30 | Presentation 1 : <i>Concepts of Forgiveness and reconciliation</i> | Jean de Dieu Basabose |
| 10:30 – 11:10 | Presentation 2: <i>Leadership that fosters sustainable reconciliation</i> | Penine Uwimbabazi |
| 11:10 – 11:50 | Presentation 3 : <i>Storytelling as means towards healing and sustainable reconciliation</i> | Corianne Wielenga |
| 11:50 – 12:30 | Questions, complements and observations | Participants |
| 12:30 – 1:10 | Testimonies | Invitees |
| 1:10 – 2:10 | Lunch | Motel |
| 2:10 – 3:15 | Responses to questions and exchanging ideas | Presenters and participants |
| 3:15 – 3:40 | Evaluation | Participants |
| 3:40 – 4:00 | Closing session | SEP, Rwamagana District and NURC |

Summary of the presentations

Jean de Dieu Basabose: *Concepts of Forgiveness and reconciliation*

The presenter helped participants understanding the concept of forgiveness as an inevitable step to reconciliation. He underlined the necessity of reconciliation in Rwandan society considering its historical background marked by multifaceted divisions, wars and genocide.

To move toward reconciliation, it is important to help people engage in the process of understanding the difference between reconciliation and cohabitation. It is true that peaceful coexistence significantly contributes to the process of reconciliation.

The presentation focused on the following:

- the concept of forgiveness
- the four stages of forgiving: hurt, hate, healing and coming together
- Why do we need to forgive?
- Repenting and forgiving: is repenting a sine qua none condition to forgiving?
- The concept of reconciliation
- Who should reconcile?
- Journey towards reconciliation

Penine Uwimbabazi: *Leadership that fosters sustainable reconciliation*

Good leadership plays an important role in the process of building sustainable reconciliation. The presenter took time to explain the concept of leadership and its evolution from the 18th century. Leadership is a way to bring together leaders and people in order to collaborate and

cooperate toward a clear objective. No one can reconcile people; people reconcile themselves. Also, it is impossible to force people to reconcile. Thus, the role of leaders is to prepare the ground for reconciliation and sensitize the community to undertake the process.

Corianne Wielenga: *Storytelling as means towards healing and sustainable reconciliation*



This presentation explored storytelling as a means to healing and reconciliation in the South African context, with relevance to the process in Rwanda. The presenter begin with sharing some stories from South Africans that illustrated the central place that a person's story plays in their own healing and reconciliation processes. Much of the conflict we experience interpersonally or on a global scale is related to issues of identity. As we share our stories we reveal our relationship to our own identity, the identity of others and even our national identity. As the source of much conflict lies with identity related issues, so the source of healing and reconciliation lies here as well.

Above: Corianne presents while Penine translates

Observations from participants

What they learned from the seminars:

- Understanding the process of reconciliation among Rwandans as a big challenge: although an appreciable work has been done much still has to be done.
- To analyze without partial emotions. The problems Rwandan society has is related to its historical background.
- The seminar helped to introspect in this journey towards reconciliation
- The seminar revives the willingness to make all efforts for reconciliation with fellow Rwandans
- Understanding the necessity and importance of forgiveness and reconciliation in order to live at peace
- Understanding that everyone, offender and victim, has a significant and irreplaceable role to play in the process of reconciliation.
- No one can be forced to forgive. It is and should be a free and voluntary engagement.
- It is possible to forgive even before offender asks for pardon
- The offender needs to forgive him/herself.
- Forgiving heals.

What should be done in order to strengthen the Reconciliation Forum:

- Periodically organizing such a seminar
- Organizing a workshop on the same themes but with sufficient time in order to allow participants to openly express their feelings and thoughts.
- Building the capacities of the forum to analyze conflicts
- Helping the members of the Forum to heal their emotional wounds and equip them with the capacity to help others healing
- Expend the training on forgiveness and reconciliation and reach leaders and opinion leaders at grassroots level.
- Learning from experience of other countries on how they are moving toward sustainable reconciliation
- Gathering offenders and victims and dialoguing on the necessity of repenting, forgiving and reconciliation for building a promising future
- Building the capacities of the forum members to positively resolve conflicts and make peace in their communities
- Getting different materials to help them educate their community for reconciliation and peace and sustain their work at grassroots level.
- Organizing a workshop or symposium on the role of economic development and poverty reduction in sustaining the process of reconciliation
- Organizing a workshop on the role of good governance in the process of reconciliation

- Establishing a platform on Rwandan history in order to read together the history and avoid divergences and different antagonistic tendencies.

What they realize are the obstacles and challenges to the process of reconciliation in Rwanda:

- Divergences on Rwandan history
- Lack of a platform where people can sit and speak truth to each other in their community, at grassroots level
- Many people disguise their feelings and thoughts on the way the reconciliation process is undertaken: some people seem they appreciate what is done whereas they are not convinced and satisfied of the process.
- Lack of educational resources materials
- Genocidal and divisionist ideology persists among some people
- Many of offenders who do not truly beg pardon
- Poverty hinders the process of reconciliation
- Silence, fear and suspicion
- Lack of capacity of doing monitoring and evaluation of reconciliation projects implemented at grassroots level
- Different versions and views (divergent versions) on the 1994 genocide
- Misconception of what reconciliation is (most of time it is confused with cohabitation)

What are the measures undertaken by the forum to overcome the challenges:

- Looking for how to frequently organize trainings and exchanges on reconciliation process at grassroots level (at village level).
- Organizing exchanges and dialogue on Rwandan history
- Frequent meetings of the forum members for sharpening the vision toward sustainable reconciliation and refreshing their efforts.
- Continually mobilize community for reconciliation and peace
- Create a dialogue space where offenders and victims wit their respective families could meet for redressing and restorative practices
- Establishing reconciliation forums for different categories including youth, women, political leaders, religious leaders, students, etc.

What they recommend to:

| District Authorities | National Unity and Reconciliation Commission | Shalom Educating for Peace and other NGOs |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Educate leaders and citizen to speak truth to each other ➤ Recognizing that reconciliation is a voluntary process and no one should be forced to forgive or beg for pardon ➤ Strengthening the forum and explaining its role to district inhabitants. ➤ The program of reconciliation should be included in the performance contract of the district authority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Organizing workshops on reconciliation processes at grassroots/village level (Umutugudu) ➤ Helping the Forum to own the process and sharpen members understanding of the responsibilities given to them ➤ Availing educational resource material to use in educating community for reconciliation and peace ➤ Create dialogue spaces where victims and offenders could meet and speak truth with each other and build strong foundations for sustainable reconciliation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Technically and financially support local initiatives for reconciliation ➤ Organize training on recovery, forgiveness and reconciliation ➤ Avail educational resources material to use in educating community for reconciliation and peace ➤ Shalom should re-organize such a seminar, deepen its content and reserve enough time for dialogue (more than one day) ➤ Organizing frequent meetings and visits to the Forum in order to support its efforts toward reconciliation |

B. Peace and reconciliation education through songs and theatre

Date: Saturday 27 June 2009

Program: Shalom Educating for Peace and Intumwa choir organized a concert. The slogan of the concert was: WE NEED RECONCILIATION, WE NEED PEACE.

Attendance: Around 800 people attended the concert.



- **Songs:** Intumwa choir (pictured left) presented songs that call people to do good, commit to positive living and harmonious relationships, treat each other as they would like to be treated, and make efforts for sustaining the process of reconciliation in Rwandan society.
- **Theatre:** Intumwa choir presented the story of Biblical story of Joseph. Joseph's forgiveness of his brothers is a good example of the reconciliation process.
- **Teaching:** Jean de Dieu Basabose addressed the

attendees and based his preaching on Psalm 34:14. The verse says: *Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.* . He explained that if we want to live at peace we have to make peace by peaceful means. He called everyone to commit to positive practices and to do good to each other and they will live at peace: we reap what we sow.

- **Messages:** Messages from different peaceworkers around the world were delivered. Corianne Wielenga read the messages and Madam Josephine translated them into Kinyarwanda. The messages are presented below:

1. Prof. Ada Aharoni, Founder - President of IFLAC: The International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace, Israel

World IFLAC sends its deepest appreciation to the Shalom NGO Prest Project headed by Jean de Dieu Basabose, and our warmest wishes for your Peace and Reconciliation Education Event in Rwamagana, Rwanda.

We also commend the brave Rwanda people, who guided by Shalom, are making all efforts to reconciliation after 15 years of cruel wars and atrocious genocide. May you succeed in your noble and impressive efforts and may your reconciliation project be a great success. May it also be an example to the Middle East and to the whole world!

May you and the people of Rwanda see no more suffering but only joy, peace, health and creativity,

Sincerely, Ada Aharoni

2. Susana Roberts, Vice-Director IFLAC (The International Forum for the Literature and Culture of Peace), Patagonia, Argentina

Dear Jean De Dieu Basabose,

My message...with love and respect..

As a member of a community who is identified with the fight and the traditional processes of peace through the Literature in this world of globalization where any human being does not exist only as an individual; we all obtain sense and value as persons from our existential belonging to a human community that includes the rights to a quality of worthy life, the right to

the moral and cultural values, the right to the religion, etc, For this reason I'm sending my support for the recovery of the people of Rwanda and to Shalom NGO in its Project. I wish to give my moral help to intensify the efforts in this process of reconciliation encouraged by the value to the justice and the peace after fifteen years of the genocide suffered to more of 1,000,000 victims in this country.

From a Latin America that also carries with a memory of countries fights and from the Argentine coast Atlantic south close to the warmth of the group IFLAC we request for the people of Rwanda the constant reconstruction on the bases of a great solidity and human understanding

Susana Roberts

3. Dr. Leo Semashko, Global Harmony Association President, Russia

The genocide in any country is a deep national and cultural trauma for both parties. To eradicate possibility of repetition of genocide there is no the best way, than harmonious education since childhood through a science, culture, song, theatre and other art forms. The Rwanda culture, as well as any nation, is full of the harmony motives, which it is necessary to develop and inform to consciousness of each child and the young man to make harmony by a priority value of everyone Rwandan. I fully approve your PREST event, which bears harmony through education, songs and theatre. I wish to Shalom the greatest success in its PREST event.

*With love, peace and harmony wishes,
Dr. Leo Semashko*

4. Dot Maver (Co-Director) and Mike Abkin (Director of Organizational Development and Operations), National Peace Academy, United States of America

In this United Nations year of reconciliation, we thank our brothers and sisters in Rwanda and are with you in spirit as you gather in support of healing and creating a world that works for everyone. We are grateful for your courage and willingness to come together in unity and healing. We at the National Peace Academy are also educating for peace and celebrate the arts in all cultures as one global family. It is through education that we will help our children know themselves as peacebuilders. May we all learn to contribute our unique gifts to the world in the spirit of peace.

Dot Maver and Mike Abkin

Film: Around 1,000 people came to watch three excellent locally produced short films educating the community on forgiveness and reconciliation. After each film, Penine took time to discuss the content. It was discovered that visual media was a powerful method to teach communities, especially where a considerable number of people are illiterate.



Hundreds of members of the community attend the PREST event

C. Church service at Gatare Chapel, Rwamagana

Date: Sunday, 28 June 2009

Attendance: 300 people

Program: Jean de Dieu Basabose preached on reconciliation. He based his teaching on Ephesians 2:14-18. The verses highlighted during the preaching was verse 14 which says: “For He (Jesus) Himself is our Peace, who made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility”; and verse 17: “ He (Jesus) came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.” The preacher underlined the new mindset that should characterize the followers of Jesus Christ. It is inconceivable to see ‘Christians’ mistreating each other, a strong wall of hostility built between them, lasting enmity, hating each other, killing, etc, while they were supposed to love each other, support each other, and carry each other’s burden. He called the assembly to commit themselves to Christian life, reconcile themselves, bring down the hate between people and practice the gold rule which is: *do to others what you would have them do to you*(Matthew 7:12, Bible NIV)

D. General observations and lesson learned

Seminar:

- The Forum members represent different categories of the population. So, their observations and concerns reflect the reality of the society.
- People confuse reconciliation with cohabitation. On one hand, some people say that Rwandans reached the last point of the process of reconciliation. They justify this assertion by the fact that Rwandans across ethnic groups live together, work together, study together, and so on. On the other hand, other people, after understanding the concept of reconciliation observed that reconciliation among Rwandans is still a big challenge and much still needs to be done. These contradictory views justify the necessity of organizing such seminars.
- It would be good idea to create dialogue clubs at grassroots level where people could speak truth to each other, listen to each other and envision the future together.

Songs and theatre:

- In terms of community mobilization, the PREST project can reach many people, attract the interest of people and is cost-effective.
- Using stories, theatre and song reflecting the realities of people’s life could have more impact than using material presenting other realities from far away. Thus, it is necessary to produce local educational resource materials reflecting the reality of targeted community.
- Educating people through existing structures and usual practices like church activities, concerts and entertainment would be easiest way to reach people and could have a remarkable impact on the daily life of people.

E. Financial report

Rate: \$1 = Rwf 560

Income:

| Sources | Amount |
|----------------------------------------------|---------------|
| CMM Norway | \$500 |
| Donations from organizations and individuals | \$600 |
| Total | \$1100 |

*Please note that an additional amount of ZAR 600 was received that is not recorded in this budget, which was used for the auditing of Shalom’s finances in South Africa. A further Rwf8000 was received for a radio advertisement of the event.

Expenditure:**Before the event:**

| Items | Total in RWF | Total in USD | Comments |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------|----------|
| Communication | 23,635 | | |
| Transport | 19,385 | | |
| Refreshments | 5,600 | | |
| Printing and post | 2360 | | |
| Bank charges | | 42.2 | |
| Total: | 50,980 | 42.2 | |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Total expenses in USD: | 133.23 | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--|

During the event:

| Items | Total in Rwf | Total in USD | Comments |
|----------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Transport for participants | 84,000 | | |
| Refreshments and lunch | 123,000 | | |
| Gifts | 10,000 | | <i>Given to Mrs Brigitte Murekatete for her contribution to the organization of the seminar.</i> |
| Per diem | | 230 | <i>Per diem for Shalom members who organized the event: Ezechiel Rukema: \$50 Penine Uwimbabazi: \$80 Jean de Dieu Basabose: \$100</i> |
| Printing and Photocopies | 12,000 | | |
| Dinner | 19,000 | | <i>For the members of Shalom at Dererva Hotel, Rwamagana, 27 June</i> |
| Lodging | 26,000 | | <i>For the members of Shalom at St.Agnes Motel, Rwamagana, 27 June</i> |
| Breakfast | 10,000 | | <i>For the members of Shalom at St.Agnes Motel, Rwamagana, 28 June</i> |
| Lunch | 4,400 | | <i>For the members of Shalom at Rwamagana, 28 June</i> |
| Intumwe Choir | 78,000 | | <i>For the Intumwe Choir's administrative expenses</i> |
| Transport | 22,400 | | <i>For members of Shalom to and from the Rwamagana event</i> |
| Communication | 9,800 | | |
| Other Expenses: CD of the Joseph story | 5,000 | | |
| Total | 403,600 | 230 | |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--|
| Total expenses in USD: | 938.07 | |
|-------------------------------|---------------|--|

Total Expenses of the Rwamagana event:

| | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Total expenses before event: | 133.23 | |
| Total expenses during event: | 938.07 | |
| Grand total of expenses: | 1071.30 | |

Appendix

List of participants in the seminar on Forgiveness and Reconciliation:

| Name | Sector | Function |
|-----------------------------|------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Furaha Jean Claude | Kigabiro | Gacaca Jurisdiction coordinator |
| 2. Ndikubwimana Eric | Muyumbu | Agent in charge of 'Etat Civil' |
| 3. Ruramirwa Philip | Munyaga | Agent in charge of 'Etat Civil' |
| 4. Niyonsaba Aloys | Nyakariro | Agent in charge of 'Etat Civil' |
| 5. Dusabe Esther | Kigabiro | Student forum coordinator |
| 6. Cyiza Jean | Muhazi | Pastor, Pentecostal church |
| 7. Rutoke Martin | Muhazi | Coordinator, Club Never Again |
| 8. Munyekawa John | Rwamagana | Elders club |
| 9. Gatsinda Theoneste | Mwulire | Representative, Cooperative UYAGI |
| 10. Mukabarisa Erene | Kigabiro | Agent in charge of 'Etat Civil' |
| 11. Umurungi Mireille | Munyiginya | Agent in charge of 'Etat Civil' |
| 12. Butera Pius | Kigabiro | Intore (member of local civic academy) |
| 13. Sengorore Deny | Kigabiro | Pastor, Presbyterian church |
| 14. Nyiribambe Zahara | Munyaga | Auditor, Reconciliation forum |
| 15. Nshimyumukiza Donath | Karenge | Coordinator, Gacaca Jurisdiction |
| 16. Rukera Emmanuel | Mwulire | Vice-President, Reconciliation Forum |
| 17. Bimenyimana Audace | Rubona | Agent in charge of Social Affairs |
| 18. Mutegarugori Melanie | Gahengeri | Agent in charge of 'Etat Civil' |
| 19. kinyamahanga Jackson | Mwulire | Agent in charge of 'Etat Civil' |
| 20. Muvunyi John | Rwamagana | Social worker, NURC |
| 21. Ntirushwa Antoine | Fumbwe | Agent in charge of 'Etat Civil' |
| 22. Mugabo Egide | Kigabiro | Mediator, Cyanya Cell committee |
| 23. Makombe Aimable | Gahengeri | Representative, Ibuka (Genocide survivors association) |
| 24. Uwizeyimana Abdurikarim | Rwamagana | Coordinator, youth Counsel |
| 25. Mukiza Victor | Rwamagana | Administrator, Restoration church |
| 26. Mukabukuru Goreth | Rwamagana | Representative, Profemme Twese Hamwe |
| 27. Tugirimana Jules | Karenge | Agent in charge of 'Etat Civil' |
| 28. Nyiringabo Hamdun | Rwamagana | Imam, Islam |
| 29. Habyara Shauku | Musha | Agent in charge of 'Etat Civil' |



The Shalom staff: Penine Uwimbabazi, Prime Harerimana, Corianne Wielenga and Jean de Dieu Basabose outside the St Agnes Motel in Rwamagana.