

# Shalom, Educating for Peace Newsletter, October, 2010

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## In brief

We are already in October and this is SEPs first newsletter for the year! It has been a busy year, with various activities, conferences, volunteer visits and fundraising events. Jean de Dieu Basabose has continued to broadcast his weekly radio show on peace, focusing on preventing electoral violence prior to Rwanda's national election which took place on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August. We're thankful that the elections went off without mass violence.

Between June and August, two volunteers from the US joined our team. Joseph Terrell helped Basabose in developing peace education programs through sports and arts and preparations with the World Peace Day celebrations which were held on the 24-25<sup>th</sup> of September, and Jess Engelbrecht facilitated a workshop on peaceful journalism and helped develop our brochure. News of the World Peace Day celebrations will follow in our next newsletter.

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## A volunteers account

Jess writes,

*I came to Rwanda in March 2010 as part of a fellowship, working on a project about the role of radio in promoting peace and reconciliation. During my stay, I shadowed four or five different organizations; Shalom was one of them. Jean de Dieu was kind enough to allow me to sit on the weekly radio show he runs through Shalom's Media Peacebuilding program. So, each Wednesday afternoon I would join him in the studio of Shalom's*



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Jess Engelbrecht, who volunteered with Shalom and other organizations in

*partner organization, Radio Umucyo, to listen in on the week's show. For my benefit, JDD translated the gist of his topic -- restorative justice, maybe, or preventing electoral violence -- and I'd follow along as he spoke in Kinyarwanda. It was a fascinating glimpse into a very grassroots radio initiative, and, now that I'm back in the US, I look forward to hearing about Shalom's expanding programs from afar!*

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### **Schools for Peace**

SEP and the Baptist Church Association of Rwanda (AEBR) are looking to implement the *Schools for Peace* project in Baptist schools in Rwanda. The project aims at developing peace education in schools and making schools catalysts of peace. The project targets students, teachers and parents. We believe that schools can offer a conducive environment to educate youth for peace and cultivate a new way of thinking devoted to nonviolent ways of resolving conflicts.

Basabose undertook some research in three of the selected schools which revealed that there is a deep need for education concerning conflict resolution, reconciliation, nonviolence and peace. This project is currently on hold due to financial constraints.

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### **Finances**

It's been a tough year for SEP financially. There is an enormous demand for our nonviolent communication training but we remain under-staffed and under-financed. This has caused some frustration but has also challenged us to think creatively about sustainable financial models. In the meantime, Cori Wielenga has successfully undertaken a fun fundraising event, through having friends and family sponsor her during the social sporting event that takes place annually in Johannesburg, called the 702 Walk the Talk. Some 50 000 people participated this year, including Nelson Mandela's wife, Graca Macel! If anyone would like to implement similar fundraisers on behalf of Shalom, let us know! We are thankful for the financial support we did receive from Australia Ministry for Peace, Western Tennessee Business College, Prof. Geoff Harris (South Africa), Carolina Binnie (Italy), and others.

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### **Academic Output**

Shalom would like to develop its research arm, encouraging academic output on Africa by Africans. Together with one of our volunteers, Joseph Terrell, we submitted a paper on *The Role of Spiritual*

Rwanda.

### **Shalom's 2010 Projects:**

- Peace through Radio
- Peace and Reconciliation Education through Song and Theatre
- Nonviolent communication training
- Peace through sport



Basabose Jean de Dieu in action, presenting a radio broadcast on peace at Umucyo Community Radio station in Kigali.

*Culture in Building a Resilient Human Society* for the the World Forum of Spiritual Culture to be held in October this year. Together with another volunteer, Mary Coffmann, we are working on a paper that looks at the destructive role that radio played during the genocide of 1994, and the way Shalom is using the radio today to educate for peace.

Cori Wielenga had the opportunity to represent Shalom at two conferences in South Africa. The first was on the Rwandan genocide, where she spoke about the role of narrative in reconciliation. The second was on violence in South Africa where she spoke on the role of storytelling in resolving conflict.

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