



## Technical Note

# “Reconstructing the Social Fabric of Communities after war Trauma”

(based on the **Introductory Workshop; Geneva, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012**)

Lichia Yiu<sup>1</sup> and Raymond Saner<sup>2, 3</sup>

## **Preamble**

This technical note is meant to capture the key points made during a workshop held in Geneva on 25<sup>th</sup> June in Geneva. The note summarizes the objectives and activities of the workshop and gives also background information on what led the co-convenors to design and hold this workshop. The insights gained from the exchanges during the workshop will be useful for future workshops of a similar kind. References and citations used are supported by literature in order to allow readers to go further with their own study if so desired.

## **The Origin and Intent of This Workshop**

The idea for a introductory workshop on rebuilding social fabric sprouted from conversations between Lichia Yiu, Norbert Apter<sup>4</sup> and Raymond Saner in 2011 when they queried each other on how can internal and external resources be used to rebuild the social fabric of war-torn societies. Norbert’s experience working in UNPKF in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Raymond and Lichia’s experience working with different humanitarian organisations such as ICRC, UNHCR, UNICEF etc. provided the reference points for the initial thinking about this workshop.

Raymond and Lichia invited Vivien Marcow<sup>5</sup> and Philip Speiser<sup>6</sup> to join the group. The group’s work experience in Israel and Palestine added another dimension to this workshop idea and content. Their experience brought to the front the complexity when one attempts to address underlying causes of entrenched conflicts and attempts to identify the need to develop institutions strong and agile enough to be used as a base to

---

<sup>1</sup> President, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development, Geneva. [www.csend.org](http://www.csend.org)

<sup>2</sup> Director, Diplomacy Dialogue, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development, Geneva. [www.diplomacydialogue.org](http://www.diplomacydialogue.org) and Titular Professor of Organisation and International Management, Basle University, <http://wwwz.unibas.ch>

<sup>3</sup> Thanks to Lené Viculin for her assistance and contribution to the initial drafting of this technical note.

<sup>4</sup> Director, The Institut ODeF, Geneva. [www.odef.ch](http://www.odef.ch)

<sup>5</sup> Professor and Director of National, International and Collaborative Programme, Lesley University, Boston. [www.lesley.edu](http://www.lesley.edu)

<sup>6</sup> Director of Arts Therapy, Whittier Street Health Center, Boston. [http://www.wshc.org/arts\\_therapy.html](http://www.wshc.org/arts_therapy.html)



contain and resolve conflict at *infested areas* and to sustain peace building and related social and economic development initiatives.

The central theme which emerged after initial discussions related to the question on how to facilitate the social transformation process and rebuild communities suffering from intra-community and/or inter-community conflicts. Another related question was how can humanitarian workers cope constructively with their own stress. The workshop theme further evolved into the question how can the interface be best understood and managed between the humanitarian worker and his/her “beneficiaries”. This first workshop held on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2012 dealt with the last question as the start point for future work.

This note is structured into five parts. Part I presents a theoretic review of relevant literature related to the topic of the workshop. Part II describes some case examples from field then followed with action based practices in various cultural contexts (Part III). Part IV summarises the lessons learnt linked to the workshop. Reflections in this technical note has also been informed by the discussion that took place during a Dialogue Forum at the launching of the first publication on Humanitarian Work Psychology on 4<sup>th</sup> May, 2012 in Geneva.<sup>7</sup>

## **Part I: Grounding Theories**

*Presented by Prof. Dr. Raymond Saner and Dr. Lichia Yiu  
Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development*

### **Reconstructing the social fabric – The basis for overcoming war trauma**

An introductory discussion took place in which participants identified the *problématique* of the topic in regards to persons suffering from emotional trauma, being victims or aid workers. The theme of this workshop for instance applies to situations where people are held in refugee camps, live and try to survive in war torn communities, or attempt to re-adjust their lives after post conflicts when they need to rebuild their lives through collaborative efforts. Aspects of this workshop could help individuals cope with the situations they are in and help them take charge of the context they live in regardless on which side of the fence they might be.

The scope of psycho-social reconstruction after war trauma needs to span from large system, organizational change/redevelopment to local communities and on to the realities of individual victims. A multi-layered and holistic approach best leads to a sustained momentum for reconstruction based on collective will and resources. The external “helper” needs to provide the context and enabling conditions for the disempowered individuals and the affected social systems to pick up the pieces and find the strengths

---

<sup>7</sup> Summary of the Dialogue Forum can be accessed at <http://www.csend.org/conferences/csend-dialogue-forum/item/312-humanitarian-work-psychology>



from within to re-generate the individual and collective systems. Equally essential is the fact that “helpers” lay the ground work for larger system transformation which, when successful, helps achieve a minimum level of sustainable livelihood could be rekindled from disrupted social economic processes. Similarly, conflict resolution needs to be considered at multiple systemic levels and to explore the use of a holistic and integrated approach in order to achieve sustained resolution.

### **Three Socio-Psychological Perspectives on War Torn Society - Social Anomie, Social Capital and Social Cohesion (Presentation)**

*Prof. Dr. Raymond Saner, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development, Geneva*

Three established social theories offer norm based interpretation needed to cope with the experience of displacement, bereavement and helplessness of individuals in their social contexts.

#### **I. Social Anomie: A brief history**

“Anomie is a sociological term meaning ‘personal feeling of a lack of norms; or put differently, a feeling of normlessness’. It was popularized by French sociologist Emile Durkheim in his influential book *Suicide* (1897)<sup>8</sup>. During the time of industrialization, large numbers of people moved to cities for jobs, which lead to a loss of familiar background and cultural practices. As farmers moved to cities in search of work, they were unable to find jobs which lead to moral corruption or maladaptive behaviour, such as stealing, prostitution, etc. Durkheim would attribute these occurrences to the presence of anomie in the adjusting population.

Relating to social norms, “For Durkheim, anomie arises from a mismatch between personal or group standards and wider social standards, or from the lack of a social ethic, which produces moral deregulation and an absence of legitimate aspirations. Though anomie is commonly associated with low regulation, Durkheim postulated that overly rigid (e.g. totalitarian) societies would also produce anomic individuals”<sup>9</sup> He states this in his book *Suicide*, by explaining that,

“...there is a type of suicide the opposite of anomic suicide... It is the suicide deriving from excessive regulation, that of persons with futures pitilessly blocked and passions violently choked by oppressive discipline...we might call it *fatalistic suicide*.”<sup>10</sup>

When certain conditions exist, the environment precipitates the emergence of anomie. For example, when rules fall apart and people are void of a social norm to adhere to, social anomie emerges. These occurrences of anomie, sometimes leading to suicide, also happen during times of economic hardships when the environment possesses a lost feeling of

---

<sup>8</sup> Slide 2. See attached powerpoint presentation by Raymond Saner; See attached PDF: by Emile Durkheim.

<sup>9</sup> Slide 2

<sup>10</sup> Durkheim, Emile. *Suicide*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1966. P. 276



powerlessness, helplessness, and hopelessness. He believed that anomie was possible not only during times of hardship, but during times of economic fortune as well. To him, anomie was possible “[whenever] a significant discrepancy between the ideological theories and values commonly professed and what was actually achievable in everyday life.”<sup>11</sup> In his book, *Suicide*, he explains that,

“if .....industrial or financial crisis increase suicides, this is not because they cause poverty, since crises of poverty have the same result; it is because they are crises, that is, disturbances of the collective order. *Every disturbance of equilibrium ..... is an impulse to voluntary death* (Italic added). Whenever serious readjustments take place in the social order, whether or not due to a sudden growth or to an unexpected catastrophe, men are more inclined to self-destruction.”<sup>12</sup>

For Durkheim, the social (and not individual) causes of suicide, are characterized by an absence or diminution of standards or values (referred to as normlessness), and an associated feeling of alienation and purposelessness.<sup>13</sup>

If an individual has no social structure to participate in, people cut corners in order to survive. Therefore, it can be said that social anomie leads to deviant behaviour.

Robert K. Merton also adopted the idea of *anomie* to develop his Strain Theory, defining it as the discrepancy between common social goals and the legitimate means to attain those goals.<sup>14</sup> In other words, an individual suffering from *anomie* would strive to attain the common goals of a specific society yet would not be able to reach these goals legitimately because of the structural limitations in society. As a result the individual would exhibit deviant behaviour.<sup>15</sup>

## Application

Refugees trying to integrate into a host community often experience deep isolation and rejection often resulting in anti social behaviour and Self-destructive behaviour which tends to follow if no timely intervention can be organised to help the group rebuild social structure to survive as a collective group..

## II. Social Capital- A brief history

In 1916, the term << social capital >> first used by educationist and social reformer Lyda J. Hanifan, and is most recognized in “a story of achievement” published in the *Annals of the*

---

<sup>11</sup> Slide 3

<sup>12</sup> Durkheim, p.246

<sup>13</sup> Slide 3

<sup>14</sup> Slide 4, ideas derived from pages 672-673 of Robert K. Merton's *Social Structure and Anomie*. (Merton, Robert. Social Structure and Anomie. *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 3, No. 5. (Oct., 1938), pp. 672-682.)

<sup>15</sup> Slide 4



*American Academy of Political and Social Science*<sup>16</sup>. Social capital can be defined as the good will, the community spirit, the compassion and the social exchange from which a social unit is made up<sup>17</sup> [In the] 1950s, Canadian sociologist John Seeley used the term with reference to membership of clubs and societies among career-oriented, suburban population<sup>18</sup> In order to discover how a society functions, the ingredients of a society must be explored and considered. Often times when subgroups are formed in refugee and prison camps, people who are unable to get into these subgroups experience social anomie and are deprived of social-psychological resources to move out of the experienced stuckness.

In the 1980s, a breakthrough by Pierre Bourdieu defined social capital as “... the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition...”<sup>19</sup>. He postulated social capital as being, “...made up of social obligations (‘connections’) which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility..”<sup>20</sup>

In 1988, James S. Coleman used the term social capital in consideration with game theory. He put emphasis on the word *capital* in the economic dimension; “companies within market economy use social capital in order to minimize the cost of transactions; social capital is a link in the chain of added-value”.<sup>21</sup> Emphases are also on resources, availability of networks, and how they are institutionalized. He identified social capital as being a tool used to sell products and maintain clients. Coleman stated that “[social capital] s not a single entity but a variety of different entities, with two elements in common: they all consist of some aspect of social structures, and they facilitate certain actions of actors- whether persons or corporate actors- within the structure.”<sup>22</sup>

The 1998 World Bank’s Social Capital initiative aimed to measure social capital and to assess its significance for regional cooperation and development partnerships. It also strove to strengthen the methodological and empirical foundations for measuring social capital through case studies and comparative studies involving 20 countries.<sup>23</sup> The preliminary conclusion of empirical studies is that social capital has both positive and negative affects in different areas. Positive affects occur in the areas of preventing violence, health and quality of life, economic development, and good governance. Negative

---

<sup>16</sup> [www.jstor.org/stable/4148167](http://www.jstor.org/stable/4148167). P. 6

<sup>17</sup> Slide 5

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.independent.com/news/2008/jan/31/john-r-seeley-1913-2007/>

<sup>19</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. (1986) The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, Greenwood), 241-258. Definition found on p. 248

<sup>20</sup> Bourdieu p. 243

<sup>21</sup> James S. Coleman. University of Chicago (1988) *Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital*. [onemvweb.com/sources/sources/social\\_capital.pdf](http://onemvweb.com/sources/sources/social_capital.pdf), Accessed 9 August 2012.

<sup>22</sup> Coleman 1988 p. 5

<sup>23</sup> Slide 7



effects include, norms developing that are opposite the rules of state and can threaten its very being (e.g. Mafia, Klu-Klux Klan).<sup>24</sup>

### **Impact of Social Capital<sup>25</sup>**

If present, social capital may lead to the prevention, or at least reduction, of violence, better quality of life and better health. It can also lead to economic development in cases where buyers and consumers create relationships that are good for both social and economic development.

### **Elements of Social Capital<sup>26</sup>**

According to C. Offe/ S. Fuchs<sup>27</sup>, social capital is comprised of engagement, trust, and attention, with trust being the key aspect. Through social capital, the question arises of how do you get people to trust each other in circumstances where previous conflict(s) have occurred between them.

Application. Building, mainting and regaining trust – if trust was lost- are essential building blocks in reconstructing the social fabric of war torn communities or communities in conflict. Trust is vital to create a vibrant and inclusive social fabric.

### **Typology of Networks<sup>28</sup>**

Two types of networks are involved in social capital, they are formal and informal. Formal networks have three different aspects, primary, secondary, and tertiary. Primary network refers to immediate family and kin, while secondary network refers to chamber of commerce, friendship, and society. Finally, tertiary network refers to work associations, trade unions, firms, and labour unions.

On the other hand, informal networks prevail in all formalised social arrangements or organisations. Informal networks are what social capital focuses on. Informal networks are the invisible portion of society that is seen as a privilege or social advantage to belong to. Because membership is considered a privilege, members of these groups do not want to share their connections or practices. Such exclusion characteristic necessitates the need to find ways for regrouping in order to integrate individuals into an existing structure, rather than having a one versus all situation. Informal networks are also comprised of a primary, secondary, and tertiary level. The primary is focused on friends and clans, secondary is on the neighbourhood of the individual, and tertiary is focused on open events or creation of temporary grouping; all possible areas of intervening. These informal networks could be the entry points for example to initiate humanitarian assistance for the refugee groups.

---

<sup>24</sup> Slide 7

<sup>25</sup> Slide 8

<sup>26</sup> Slide 9

<sup>27</sup> Offe C, Fuchs S (2002). A Decline of Social Capital? The German Case, Published in Putnam, Robert D. 2002. Democracy in Flux: The Evolution of Social Capital in Contemporary Society. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>28</sup> Slide 10



## **Bonds and Bridges (Links)<sup>29</sup>**

There are different types of 'bonds' or 'bridges', that can either be used positively to built up a community or group with similar interests, or work to cause harm as a result of their tight bond. In order to better illustrate this idea, consider the network theory. In this case, links of different actors creates bonds and use as credits to keep members together. These links can sometimes lead to strong networks with a negative impact, such as the mafia.

People who are able to bridge bonding groups are key to social capitol. However, some instances occur in which an actor or individual is a part of two groups, which reduces the trust of each group towards this particular individual. It raises questions regarding the loyalty of the member, as well as whether or not the individual is still a part of the group. This in turn can create disfunctionality within the group.

## **Attempts at Operationalisation- Putnam (2000)<sup>30</sup>**

Putnam adopted a microsociological approach to operationalisation, which focuses on various networks. There is a distinction made between following dimensions: formal versus informal, extended versus limited, inward versus outward, and bridge building versus bonding. In formal versus informal social capital dichotomy, formal can be defined as belonging to an institution and informal as belonging to networks. It can be looked at as associations with memberships versus meetings with friends.

Extended versus limited social capital has to do with the frequency and exclusivity of contact versus engaging in fleeting acquaintances only. Inward versus outward-oriented social capital illustrates the difference between serving the members and protecting public assets. Finally, there is bridge-building versus bonding social capital, in which groups with different persuasions oppose groups with similar persuasions.

In his book, *Bowling Alone*, Putnam refutes the idea of the United States as being a social melting pot and instead presents the idea that it is turning into segregated sub-communities. Integration is then disintegrating., in that instead of the cultures of various communities integrating with each other, the communities are becoming more isolated based on culture and ethnicity and becoming focused within themselves.

## **What is Social Capital? A conclusion<sup>31</sup>**

According to Putnam's comprehensive empirical analysis, social capital is a blend of various factors comprising of following factors: degree of inclusion in the community, public commitment (as expressed for example in participating in voting), active participation in community life and voluntary life (an example being institutions, which are an enormous aspect of the social fabric in some countries such as Switzerland), informal society activities (e.g. visiting friends), degree of trust (which can be divided into

---

<sup>29</sup> Slide 11

<sup>30</sup> Putnam, Robert D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

<sup>31</sup> Slide 14



inter-personal trust- i.e. trust in ones colleagues) and general trust (i.e. confidence in political institutions and figures).

In post-modern societies, problems exists with the social capital formation in groups such as the virtual community. The virtual community lacks actual physical, emotional support in which little to no bonding occurs. This can lead to a lack of mutual commitment or empathy in relationships, meaning that one can walk away whenever it is convenient. Because participants in social exchanges are physically and emotionally separated from the events or happenings being observed over the internet. Another social problem is the lack of bonding with co-workers, which is often seen as an issue specific to young professionals who are working in difficult circumstances due to the wide use of internet and social media. Lack of in-situ social capital development leads low rapport in dealing with work stress at a deeper psychological level. This could also be a common issue confronting the humanitarian workers in the field. Instead of creating a sharing community with co-workers, intimacy is reserved for the “home” community and networks. Work relationships then remain transactional and insufficient to provide the emotional resources needed to face difficult challenges in the field when dealing with mass displacement, violence, despair and other human suffering.

The last cause of concern is the issues of trust in individuals. This issue raises questions such as how does one gain and keep trust? When is trust lost? etc. In relationships and social communities involving situations calling for trust, if an individual is unable to trust, they in turn cannot be trusted. Trust therefore must be recognized as a mutual relationship. There is also the challenge of how to help and enable victims regaining trust.

### **Application**

Social capital as resources needs to be redeveloped within a conflict torn community involving all of its actors and stakeholders. Aid workers who aim to affect constructive and positive impact need to facilitate and initiate the accumulation of social capital. Without minimum social capital, aid workers cannot mobilise a community’s energy and trust to put in their own effort of rebuilding their home, old and new.

For aid workers, social capital is also necessary for them to deal with the secondary trauma that they experience. Connected to their colleagues, co-workers and persons in the local context can help others reduce stress stemming from being an helper in a tragic circumstance.

### **Role Theory and Social Reconstruction**

*Prof. Dr. Lichia Yiu, Centre for Socio-Eco-Nomic Development, Geneva*

Role theory is a branch of social psychology that considers most of everyday activities to be the enactment of socially defined roles and related scripts. Roles such as mother, father, leader, teacher, subordinates, man, woman have a set of rules, norms, expectations, behaviours, rights and duties that the “player” has to face and fulfil. This theory is posited



in the predictability of individual role behaviour which is prescribed by specific contexts, social positions and other factors. Confucius teaching is a good example of this culturally defined role prescriptions that dictate individual choices and freedom of choice<sup>32</sup>.

Jacob Moreno (1889-1974) is a major contributor to the development of role theory and its application to education and psychotherapy. "Moreno viewed each person as a composite of the roles he or she plays. When Moreno discussed roles, he referred to a culturally recognized and agreed upon cluster of behaviors. What Moreno also noticed is that each role has both collective (shared) and private (individual) components." (Stenberg, 2000, p. 5)<sup>33</sup>. The collective component of the role is comprised of the aspects of the role that are similar to the ways others play it....The private component of the role is comprised of the aspects of the role which the person plays in ways that are different from how others play the role." (Stenberg, 2000, pp. 118-119)

When individuals approve a social role, i.e., they consider the role "legitimate" and "constructive", they will incur costs to conform to role norms, and will also incur costs to punish those who violate role norms. Changed conditions can render a social role outdated or illegitimate, in which case social pressures are likely to lead to role change.<sup>34</sup>

Moreno spoke of how children learn to assume various social or cultural roles by experimentation through role playing, role rehearsal, to role taking and role integration. Each survivor of armed conflicts or wars needs to be supported in growing out of the "victim" role and its related sense of helplessness, alienation and in many cases suppressed rage.

Underlying this approach is the recognition that "man is a role player, that every individual is characterised by a certain range of roles which dominate his behaviour, and that every culture is characterised by a certain set of roles which it imposes..." (Moreno, 1961).<sup>35</sup>

## Application

For the refugees, displaced or victimised individuals, the reconstruction of individual and collective lives involves rebuilding relationships and social networks; but also involves reconstructing their role scripts in a series of relationship contexts. These relationship contexts are related to reclaiming various roles in a post-war circumstances. Individuals need to find inner strengths for such exercise, but also need room for experimentation in a world that was turned upside down.

---

<sup>32</sup> An extensive discussion on this point is available in « Psychodrama and Sociometry. Works of Jacob Moreno », Lichia Yiu & Raymond Saner. *Contemporary*. 1990. Vol. 54, page. 14-37. (Chinese)

<sup>33</sup> Sternberg, P. & Garcia, A. (2000) *Sociodrama: who's in your shoes?* (2nd ed.), Westport, CT: Praeger

<sup>34</sup> Accessed 12.08.2012 at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role\\_theory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Role_theory)

<sup>35</sup> Jacob L. Moreno, (1961), *The Role Concept. A bridge between psychiatry and sociology*. In Jonathan Fox (ed.), *The Essential Moreno*, 1987, New York: Springer Publishing Co. p. 65.



By being able to let go of roles linked to “being a victim”, individuals eventually reclaim their previously acquired role repertoire and engage with their environment in a more productive manner. It is foreseeable and desirable that new roles and related scripts could also emerge through education and cultural adaptation and/or assimilation, such as female entrepreneurs. The role of the humanitarian worker is to design constructive interactions and support the transition from acting in the role of victim to the re-emerging role of resourceful and self-reliant individual.

## Part II: Practices

### Case 1: Project Place for Reconnect

#### Norbert Apter, M.Ed.

*Manager of the Institute of ODeF in Geneva, Training Director and Trainer in Human Relationships through the Use of Action Methods and Psychodrama*

Norbert shared his own personal experience in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as an example of problematique this work shop addressed -- the personal trial experienced by the humanitarian workers working in extreme conditions.

The idea is to help humanitarian workers to develop capacities of resolving conflicts of a day-to-day nature by which staff were feeling traumatized (Vivien identifies this feeling with the professional term “vicarious traumatization”<sup>36</sup>). The key is to help staff in finding “resources”, both internally and externally, in making new connections, and in solving the day to day trauma that they were asked to resolve when the psychological climate is both depressed and aggressive.

The situation of the D.R. Congo was such that the staff who were faced with a lack of resources needed to overcome the disaster that they were called in to help. Prolongation of exposure led to feelings of helplessness, powerlessness and loneliness. The UN employees came from all over Africa, however some of them seeking help were local. Their needs differ from those coming from further afar. The locals weren’t using the expats as a resource, and the expats were not using locals as a resource. The result was trauma big enough to prevent resolution from taking place. From the scenario, Norbert developed a coaching question of how to rebuild the person, to connect, to work together, etc.

---

<sup>36</sup> “...[vicarious traumatization] can be understood as related both to the graphic and painful material trauma clients often present and to the therapist’s unique cognitive schemas or beliefs, expectations, and assumptions about self and others.” quote from Vicarious Traumatization: A Framework for Understanding the Psychological Effects of Working with Victims. (1990) Lisa McCann and Laurie Anne Pearlman, *Journal of Traumatic stress, Vol. 3, No. 1*. p.1. accessed at [http://www.google.com/url?url=http://scholar.google.com/scholar\\_url%3Fhl%3Den%26q%3Dhttp://digilib.bc.edu/reserves/py846/gree/py84606.pdf%26sa%3DX%26scisig%3DAAGBfm3tEsbUXQxr3ssKf2oTvt9RwOaAA%26oi%3Dscholar&rc=t=j&sa=X&ei=60IaUJ2CIZKAhQewjoC4Cw&sqi=2&ved=0CFMQgAMoATAA&q=vicarious+traumatization&usq=AFQjCNHpa5EWk15Tao2k\\_uDLABKAZHvZrQ&cad=rja](http://www.google.com/url?url=http://scholar.google.com/scholar_url%3Fhl%3Den%26q%3Dhttp://digilib.bc.edu/reserves/py846/gree/py84606.pdf%26sa%3DX%26scisig%3DAAGBfm3tEsbUXQxr3ssKf2oTvt9RwOaAA%26oi%3Dscholar&rc=t=j&sa=X&ei=60IaUJ2CIZKAhQewjoC4Cw&sqi=2&ved=0CFMQgAMoATAA&q=vicarious+traumatization&usq=AFQjCNHpa5EWk15Tao2k_uDLABKAZHvZrQ&cad=rja). Accessed 2 August 2012



These unanswered questions lead Norbert to develop a “Project Place”, where instead of working with just individuals, the team would look together for ways to achieve “interworking” and interconnecting. This concept helps the members avoid the situation of isolation, which can lead to the problem of an individual not knowing what connection he/she wants and if continued, can cause feelings of social isolation and anomie.

## **Case 2: Partnerships for Integration**

### **Dr. Vivien Marcow Speiser described and analysed her work with the Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel**

*Professor and Director of International and Collaborative Programs, GSASS, Lesley University*

Vivient provided for the workshop participants a case example of her own experience working with a refugee population- the Ethiopian Jewish experience in Israel.

Approximately 1,000 Ethiopian Jews have migrated to Israel since the 1980s. They had been persecuted in Ethiopia and then fled to refugee camps in Sudan. From there, they were airlifted to Israel, and the problem of how to absorb them into the community was created.

Different groups of Jewish people have emigrated to Israel in its 64 year history. At the time of the founding of the state of Israel the pioneering generation of Ashkenazi Jews from Western and Eastern Europe established the state together with the Jews already living in Palestine. The Sephardic Jews from mostly the Arab countries came thereafter and an unequal hierarchy was established which has though remedied over time. There has always been emigration to Israel from Jews living around the world in the Diaspora- as these communities have arrived so they have been “absorbed” in a melting pot assimilationist model.

One of the greatest “equalizers” in the society has been serving in the Israeli army, which is obligatory for all groups except for the ultra-religious, which creates a different kind of problem. At 18, boys have to serve for 3 years and girls serve for 2 years in the army. The religious population in Israel retains a disproportionate political influence in the Country if so wished.. In order to form a government in Israel, all political parties have become dependent on the religious political parties joining their coalition to form a ruling coalition. This means that for Jews there are only religious possible and not secular marriages and matters pertaining to deaths, divorces and births are the affairs of the Rabbi, not of the state. The religious parties moreover have a disproportionate say in the “who is a Jew” debate which has fed into the Ethiopian issue. The last significant group to emigrate to Israel has been the Russian Jews who are highly educated. In contrast to the Ethiopian Jews, Russian Jews quickly formed their own political parties and have achieved significant influence as a fifth of the current population.



Today there are approximately 100,000 Ethiopian Jews living in Israel. They have suffered their own kind of 'holocaust' in order to get to Israel. From 2006 to 2009, Lesley University has piloted a program in the town of Nes Ziona in order to assist the Ethiopian people in better integration. Nes Ziona was chosen as the site since there were approximately 1,000 Ethiopian Jews living in the town. It was deemed that interventions might usefully impact the situation.

The type of intervention used was a network intervention, where representatives from Lesley University met with all of the stakeholder groups in order to ascertain what programs existed in the town for the Ethiopian community and which programs were effective or not effective and where the gaps existed. Meetings were held with the mayor's office and his staff, the education and health representatives, the ministry of absorption representatives and representatives of the Ethiopian community.

The problem definition started with the mayor who identified the most problematic group as the group of soldiers who had returned from the army where they had been well integrated but were finding it difficult to make their way in the world after discharged. An assessment was carried out to define which programs currently existed across the life span for the community and to develop a general consensus about what worked and what did not work. An issue that emerged was that the Ethiopian community itself wanted special status and the administration of the town did not want to treat them differently from anyone else or any other groups. This conflicting expectation manifested into one large problem. The Ethiopians had with the rest of the community, which involved a recreation centre. They very actively used the centre and wanted it to be named for them; however town policy would not allow this.

A three-pronged programme with a two-year duration was developed by representatives from Lesley University as an intervention to help the Ethiopian community properly integrate into the community. Three target groups were identified: Ethiopian young men who had previously served in the army, young/single mothers, and students from a problematic middle school. The following is the measures that were taken with each group in order to allow for better integration:

- 1<sup>st</sup> group: Ethiopian young men who had previously served in the army and now needed to integrate back into the community. This group was the one identified by the mayor as being the largest problem. After full integration in the army, these youths after being discharged from the army were experiencing difficulty in building an adult life and career for themselves. A drama and storytelling program was implemented for them, lead by a drama therapist from Lesley as well as a social worker from the Ethiopian community.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> group: Single mothers ages 15 or above who were shunned in community and were therefore unable to acquire necessary resources. For example, they would wait outside of the social worker's office all day but may or may not be able to see the worker. Therefore, it was nearly impossible for them to get the help they needed, that could have been provided by the worker they were unable to see in



most cases. Art therapy was used for these women, as well as their children. The women responded by making only functional objects that were not innovative in design and used only colours specified by their instructor.

- 3<sup>rd</sup> group: Middle school children that had a problem staying in school and staying motivated to learn. Art therapy was also used in this situation through exercising an art day at school for the children.<sup>37</sup>

## Discussion

Following Vivien's presentation, the following questions were discussed.

*So what? What can be done besides helping these individuals (aid workers and individuals or communities possessing anomie) leading to sustainable outcome?*

Deliberation was geared towards an approach that uses sociology, not psychology. This is because sociology looks at larger groups, not just the individual, and the social conditions that reinforce emerging social norms and behaviour.

Vivien pointed out the problem with delegates being that they are not trained in psychotherapy, which could be extremely beneficial to their cause. She stressed the need for building a model that focuses on resiliency and agility. This was second by other speakers.

During the discussion, Norbert brought up the idea that, "what's most personal is most universal"- (Carl Rogers<sup>38</sup>, cited by Marcia Karp in a personal discussion). That regardless of similar or different circumstances, people still can relate. Relationships occur in feelings, not necessarily in exact experiences. Norbert then pointed out that this may be the basis of the Internet's appeal to the individual. However, the problem with this is that the Internet is virtual, making it disconnected and leaving individuals with the possibility to be non-committed, nor facing behaviour consequences in any social interactions.

All parties involved in the discussion, were in agreement about the problem with Internet use and how much the weight of an individual gives the Internet in their life. It was suggested that one consider the here and now versus there and now. The two can be used against each other, as well as synergistically.

The over usage of social networking and media outlets raises issue in regard to what is contactfulness in human interactions. The unquestioned belief or perception is that humanitarian workers are supposed to be there to serve, and should not be too focused on their own journey. Hence, a legitimate concern within the "role" of humanitarian worker has been consciously left out by the role takers and abandoned by the humanitarian organisations. Lately this void started to be addressed by the humanitarian organisations in taking care of the "survival" of their staff. More remain to be done, Lichia commented.

---

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.lesley.edu/gsass/israel.html> (see video)

<sup>38</sup> Carl Rogers. For a greater understanding of his work, see *On becoming a person: a therapist's view of psychotherapy*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin (1961)



Norbert contributed a quote that was very applicable to the topics under discussion, “If I am not there for myself, who will be there for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?” by Hillel (1<sup>st</sup> century BC).<sup>39</sup>

### **Part III: Action Methods**

Humanitarian workers engaging in work with communities and refugee groups often lack effective communication due to language barriers, different world views and other diverging factors. Because of these multiple differences, social capital is hard to create and maintain between humanitarian workers and their beneficiaries. An action based approach, may it be by using art to express experience or feelings, or by non-language forms of self expression, can generate richer communications and foster deeper rapport between the aid worker and the beneficiary.

Action methods are mostly based on involvement of stakeholders in a collective “discovery” process. This “working together” experience can foster the coming together of diverging views and can legitimize diversity in norms, expectations and role scripts. In this process of making the unspoken be heard, an experimental approach creates space for empathy, social innovation and constructive interaction.

The following practice examples capture some of the action methods available to the humanitarian workers.

#### **Practice 1: Simulation Game (Norbert)**

Norbert prepared an interactive ‘simulation game’, which illustrated the trials and tribulations involved in resolving issues in these communities. The game shed light on the idea that what we do is different than what we say, and what we say is not as complex as what we show, and what one puts in is not as important as what the other sees. The simulation game proved that there is benefit from both what is put in, and from what is seen. It also illustrated a pseudo feeling of how it was to be in anomie and was important in explaining diverse roles. During the game, Norbert worked with a specific concept of the group defined as being “series of individuals putting together into different teams”.

#### **Practice 2: Breathing Exercise and Movement (Vivien)**

Vivien provided a unique exercise in breathing that allowed the group to experiment with and understand non-vocal aspects of communication. Experiments with movement are used as a way of looking at the individual and human development and as a way of assessing comfort and discomfort in conversations with traumatized populations.

---

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.norbertapter.ch/?p=47&lang=en>



Movement<sup>40</sup> occurs in three planes, the sagittal, horizontal, and vertical. The sagittal plane involves back and forth movement. It is the *plane of intimacy*. The individual's instincts in this plane are to "attack and defend" and it is developmentally the most primitive plane, connected to breathing into the belly. The horizontal plane involves movement from side to side; it is the *plane of communication* and is conversational involving breathing into the side of the ribcage. The vertical plane involves movement that is up and down. It is the *plane of presentation of the self*, it is more distanced and breathing is in the upper chest. These movement preferences and patterns are manifested and present in every conversation therefore delegates could be trained to assess movement and non verbal behavioural patterns and learn to adapt themselves to the movement patterns of their clients. Through this mirroring a sense of being connected would evolve through the interaction.

A structure was used to create a non-verbal dialog between participants where communication can move towards, move away, or stay in place by both participants. These patterns manifest themselves as fight, flight, and freeze- as the three options in traumatic situations. Leaders tend to stay in the vertical dimension to separate themselves from followers

### **Practice 3: Living Tree Workshop**

*Dr. Phillip Speiser, Former Director of Arts Therapy at Whittier Street Health Center, Roxbury MA*

Dr. Phillip Speiser created an exercise called the "Living Tree", that is used in trauma cases for personal healing and for building community after. He devised the exercise after 9/11 attack in order to help the affected cope.

During the exercise, there is a painted tree that the group eventually contributes to. Each participant is given two pieces of paper. One piece of paper is for the trunk and is used to write/draw raw feelings of pain, relating to the theme being worked on, or word that is very meaningful to the individual. The other piece of paper is used for the leaves, to represent hopeful connections for the future. This exercise allows for individual expression within the group that one can visualize and maintain.

## **Part IV: Conclusion**

Working with communities suffering or having suffered war trauma puts a lot of personal stress on the humanitarian worker. This stress might originate from the harsh conditions of site location, the complexity of physical and psychological survival of affected individuals and communities, and from a personal sense of disconnect and helplessness.

---

<sup>40</sup> Classic human anatomy: the artist's guide to form, function, and movement. Winslow, Valerie L. New York: Watson-Guptill, 2009.



Professional burnout remains common among humanitarian workers<sup>41, 42, 43, 44, 45</sup>. Staying alive - both physical and psychological - need not be taken for granted in both cases- of the helper (humanitarian workers) and - the helped (the population affected by war and trauma).

“Empathy is about doing one’s best to try to understand. Sometimes, when one has the impression of having understood the other, one might realise that one has lost empathy after a longer process of trying to understand the other. It is a *process*, rather than an action with a result”<sup>46</sup>. Empathy lays the foundation for meaningful interactions and ensures therapeutic relationships.

A word of caution by Raymond Saner here. The process of empathising should not lead to projective identification, a term coined by Melanie Klein in 1946<sup>47</sup> to describe a process whereby parts of a person’s ego function are thought of as forced onto another person who is then expected to become identified with whatever has been projected<sup>48</sup>. In turn, “projective identification can become a *self-fulfilling prophecy* which inadvertently can limit the propensity for action of the other person. The role pair of the humanitarian aid worker and the aided victim carry risks of such projective identification. This process of projective identification increases when the aid worker suffer from prolonged stress and gradual dulling of his/her self-awareness.

Helping the helper is part of the process of helping the victims. An intervention in a post-traumatic situations requires both psychological *and* sociological interventions and support. Sociological support expands from providing immediate social services in a humanitarian relief situations to a realisation of the need to look at the undergirding social fabric within which the victim lives and gets survival support.

Assessments need to be made of the helper and the victim’s resilience and agility in engaging each other to help both move beyond the stuck place they might be caught in.

---

<sup>41</sup> Raymond Saner, 1990, « Manifestation of Stress and Its Impact on the Humanitarian Work of the ICRC Delegate ». *Political Psychology*, Vol. 11 (3), 757-765. Accessible at [www.diplomacydialogue.org/component/.../52-political-psychology](http://www.diplomacydialogue.org/component/.../52-political-psychology).

<sup>42</sup> Collen A. McFarlane, 2004, « Adjustment Risks of Humanitarian Aid Workers », *The Australasian Journal of Disaster and Trauma Studies*, Vol. 2004 (1). Accessed at <http://www.massey.ac.nz/~trauma/issues/2004-1/mcfarlane.htm> on 12.08.2012.

<sup>43</sup> Kenneth Chukwuemeka Nwoko, 2011, « Pursing the Mandate in Nigeria : International Committee of the Red Cross and its Challenges, 1967-2007 ». *Canadian Social Science*, vol. 7 (5): 215-222. Accessed at [cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/download/J.css...510/2013](http://cscanada.net/index.php/css/article/download/J.css...510/2013) on 12.08.2012.

<sup>44</sup> David P. Forsythe, 2007, « The ICRC : A Unique Humanitarian Protagonist », *International Review of the Red Cross*, vol. 89 (865), March. Accessed at <http://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/other/irrc-865-forsythe.pdf> on 12.08.2012.

<sup>45</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2009, « Managing Stress in the Field », accessed at <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/Health/managing-stress-en.pdf> on 12.08.2012.

<sup>46</sup> Comments made by Norbert Apor during the workshop.

<sup>47</sup> Melanie Klein, 1946, *Notes on some schizoid mechanisms*, in *The Writings of Melanie Klein*, vol 3. New York: Free Press, pp 1–24. In Robert t. Waska, 1999, “Project Identification, Self-Disclosure, and the Patient’s View of the Object: The need for Flexibility”, *Journal of Psychotherapy Practices and Research*, Vol. 8: 225-233, July. Accessed at <http://jppr.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/full/8/3/225#R83112> , on 12.08.2012.

<sup>48</sup> Patrick Casement, 1990, *Further Learning from the Patient*. London: Routledge. p. 177



Assessments also need to be made of whether adequate external and internal resources have been mobilised through better social networking and purposeful socio-psychological bonding arrangements with meaningful others. Supportive institutional mechanisms need to be put in place ensure sustained transformation at both personal and communal levels.



Lovely start to a lovely group! - Phil





## References for further reading

### *Durkheim's Theory of Social Class*

*Prof. Timothy Shortell, Department of Sociology, Brooklyn College, CUNY*

### **Division of Labor & Social Integration**

Though Durkheim was a contemporary of Weber, his work was vastly different. Both Marx and Weber are usually referred to as conflict theorists. They understood that any social order involved the regulation of opposing interests, and, as a result, that conflict between individuals and among groups was an essential part of every society. Durkheim begins with a very different premise. His approach is usually called functionalism.

The functionalist view focuses on the *role* of social objects or actors, that is, on what they do. Durkheim believed that harmony, rather than conflict, defined society. He examines social phenomena with regard to their function in producing or facilitating social cohesion. He studied the division of labor, religion and suicide from this perspective.

Whereas Weber was preoccupied with rationality, Durkheim is primarily concerned with solidarity: *what holds individuals together in social institutions?* Durkheim believed that solidarity was the normal condition of society, and even though he recognized the turmoil associated with industrialization, he considered conflict abnormal or pathological.

### **I. Forms of Solidarity**

Durkheim identified two major types of social integration, *mechanical* and *organic*. The former refers to integration that is based on shared beliefs and sentiments, while the latter refers to integration that results from specialization and interdependence. These types reflect different ways that societies organized themselves. Where there is little differentiation in the kinds of labor that individuals engage in, integration based on common beliefs is to be found; in societies where work is highly differentiated, solidarity is the consequence of mutual dependence. The distinction reveals Durkheim's thinking about how modern societies differ from earlier ones, and consequently, how solidarity changes as a society becomes more complex.<sup>1</sup>

Societies of mechanical solidarity tend to be relatively small and organized around kinship affiliations. Social relations are regulated by the shared system of beliefs, what Durkheim called the *common conscience*. As a result, regulation was primarily punitive. Violations of social norms were taken as a direct threat to the shared identity, and so, reactions to deviance tended to emphasize punishment.

As a society becomes larger, division of labor increases. A complex organization of labor is necessary, in larger societies, for the production of material life (as Marx suggested). Because people begin to specialize, the basis for the collective conscience is diminished.



Solidarity based on the common belief system is no longer possible. Complexity does not lead to disintegration, Durkheim argued, but rather, to social solidarity based on interdependence. Since people are no longer producing all the things that they need, they must interact. Integration results from a recognition that each needs the other. Societies of organic solidarity are arranged around economic and political organizations. Their legal systems regulate behavior based on principles of exchange and restitution, rather than punishment.

## II. Anomie

Durkheim first mentions the concept of anomie in *The Division of Labor in Society*, but he develops the idea more completely in *Suicide*. The concept has been widely used by sociologists since. To understand the term, it is necessary to start with its context. Durkheim attempts to explain the function of the division of labor, and makes the observation that it creates social cohesion. The industrial revolution, of course, produced great tension and turmoil, and Durkheim recognized this. He resolved the contradiction by developing the notion of *anomie*.

Anomie is usually translated as normlessness, but it best understood as *insufficient normative regulation*. During periods of rapid social change, individuals sometimes experience alienation from group goals and values. They lose sight of their shared interests based on mutual dependence. In this condition, they are less constrained by group norms. Normative values become generalized, rather than personally embraced.

The developments in the division of labor associated with industrialization facilitated anomie. As work became routinized, broken down into dull, repetitive tasks, workers lose the sense of their role in production, and are less committed to the process and the organization. As a result, the norms of the workplace exert less influence on their activity.

Not all asocial behavior is anomic, however. Durkheim identified another form, which he called egoism. When the coercive influence of the social values and norms is lessened, excessive individualism can be the result. When individuals disregard norms in favor of their own interests, cohesion is impossible. The individuals themselves, Durkheim noted, often suffer too. Such self-centeredness is highly destructive to the individual's well being.

## III. Anomic Division of Labor

Whereas Marx saw social conflict as inherent in the manner in which labor was organized in capitalist societies, Durkheim believed that diminished solidarity was a pathological condition. He believed that modern societies would need to develop new means of reinforcing social norms and a shared sense of affiliation. Drawing on Alexis de Tocqueville's analysis of American society<sup>2</sup>, Durkheim suggested that social cohesion could result from action of occupations groups.



Occupational groups could replace the normative functions that were once exercised by institutions such as religion, local community, and the family. Relations between occupational groups would be economic, in the sense that they would have to work together to reach agreements about the conditions of labor, wages, etc. Relations would also be political. These groups would function like political parties. Durkheim distrusted mass democracy and worried about increasingly bureaucratized state. He felt that occupational groups ought to participate in government, thereby checking the excesses of individual passions, on the one hand, and oppressive bureaucracy on the other.

Occupational groups would also function as social organizations. Since they are based on the similarity of labor, Durkheim thought that individuals within them would naturally have shared interests and a sense of collective identity. Flowing from this, they could organize leisure activities and other social interactions, giving individuals a sense of belonging in the ways that primary affiliations, such as kin and religion used to.

#### *Notes*

1. German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies used the terms *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* to refer to the distinction between societies organized on the basis of kinship and tradition, on the one hand, and by specialization and self-interest, on the other. As modern societies become more urban and industrial, the former is replaced by the latter.

