



This is “Cross the Lines”, number 28 May/August 2006, the newsletter of the Women Peacemakers Program.

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WPP Decentralizing: Empowering Women for Peace

Women Peacemakers Program (WPP) staff traveled throughout Africa and Asia earlier this year to consult with activists about WPP regional desks. Below are a few highlights from the visits. The number of women struggling for peace in these two regions, the creativity and commitment they bring to the work for security and development, and the ways women are transforming their communities was deeply impressive.

The WPP is committed to supporting women’s empowerment through active nonviolence. The WPP regional desks, which will begin their work next year, will conduct an annual training of trainers and provide seed money for gender-sensitive nonviolence trainings. They will also serve as resource centers on gender and nonviolence, and translate training materials into national and local languages—and produce such training materials themselves when needed.

In Africa WPP Regional Development Officer Dorothy Attema and WPP Program Manager Isabelle Geuskens first visited Jamii Ya Kupatanisha (JYAK), a branch of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation in Uganda. JYAK conducts many nonviolence trainings and works in particular in Uganda’s Northern Gulu area, where a vicious guerilla war has destroyed thousands of lives. JYAK also operates a vocational center that teaches peace skills to ex-combatants. In Zambia WPP met with the Youth Forum for Peace and Justice, which organizes peace clubs where youth can learn about nonviolence and gender equality.

Unable to meet in Zimbabwe itself, the WPP also talked with Zimbabwean activists about the worsening situation there for women.

The West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), based in Ghana, links peacebuilders in over 12 countries. Its Women in Peacebuilding Program (WIPNET) supports many innovative projects, including a training for trainers in the Niger Delta, a Rural Women's Peace Initiative; and women's community radio for peace in Gambia, Senegal and Guinea Bissau, as well as a new program in peace leadership for young girls.

The team then traveled to Kenya in order to learn more about the work of Family Mediation and Conciliation (FAMEC). FAMEC is a small women's group which has a big impact through its trainings for rural women and the urban poor. Leah, 25, explained how her life changed after a FAMEC training.

Leah's Story: "I Defied Customs"

"My father was a senior chief. It was very important that we uphold Maasai culture to the letter including rites of passage such as female genital mutilation (FGM). Later my mother converted to Christianity and did not allow any of her daughters to go through FGM.

"This marked the beginning of my tribulations. In primary school, I became the most talked and mocked about girl because I had defied customs. No one would play with me. Everyone in my class made fun of me and taunted me that I will never get married nor become a mother. I did not understand why my mother would not allow me to become like all the other girls. I was under so much pressure from my peers that I began to believe that my mother hated me.

"My relief began when I joined a boarding school where I met girls from diverse communities. After completing high school, my community began recognizing me and the fact that I had successfully completed secondary education, unlike my peers who had dropped out of school due to early pregnancies and marriages. However, one fear still lay inside me: I will never marry a Maasai man.

"But I married a Maasai man who has been very supportive. I gained boldness to speak about myself after attending women empowerment trainings from FAMEC. I have learnt to accept myself as an individual and still as part of the Maasai community even without the cut. I know the dangers of FGM and I am glad that I did not go through the rite.

"I openly tell women and girls that I am a Maasai woman who is not circumcised but married and with children. Whenever I give myself as an example it has had so much impact that sometimes participants break down into tears. I have seen changes among the Maasai community. We have also established peer clubs in

school where we educate girls on the effects of FGM and strategize on alternative rites of passage for girls.

“So far we have rescued 11 girls from early marriages and others from FGM. There is peer pressure from age mates of the girls who protest FGM. Some of them perform poorly in school due to the isolation they feel. Rescuing a girl is hard because she is disowned by the community. You have to provide for all her needs if the rescue centers cannot accommodate them. There is only one rescue center in Kajjado District but it has no more space.”

Keeping the Spirit Alive

The same sense of transformation was seen during the WPP visits in Asia. In the Philippines the IFOR group AKKAPKA works with urban poor communities in Manila and inside prisons to reduce violence. AKKAPKA trainings helped pave the way for the 1986 People’s Power revolution and members are determined to mainstream nonviolence in today’s Philippines—just as women within the group are determined to mainstream gender within AKKAPKA. Christian spiritual values inform AKKAPKA’s training. Trainers are successfully adapting AKKAPKA training materials to work with Muslim women in other parts of the Philippines.

Spiritual values—in this case Buddhist ones—also sustain the work of the International Women’s Partnership for Peace and Justice (IWP), which runs a nonviolence training center near the Thai city of Chiang Mai. IWP trainers recognize the importance of interfaith issues, especially in their work with the Burmese struggle for democracy. The military dictatorship inside Burma provokes tensions between the country’s Christian, Buddhist and Muslim communities in order to divide the democratic movement. IWP also organizes regional nonviolence trainings for women activists from Thailand, Cambodia, Ladakh and Sri Lanka.

Political violence and a ten-year long guerilla war have resulted in great suffering for women in Nepal—and an equally great determination for peace, the WPP team learned. Women in BIKALPA help educate youth and children for peace. New women’s peace groups like the Indigenous Women Peace Network are utilizing tradition to mobilize more people to reflect on the need for peace. In April, the Network invited the public to participate in the ritual Offering of One Hundred Thousand Candle Lights in order to “respect those who have sacrificed their lives, to help people to come out from the house during curfew, and to invite people to join People’s Mass Demonstration, called for by the seven political parties alliance. It was amazing to see thousands of people on the street for this,” said an organizer.

In southern India the team visited a few of the projects of the Cultural Academy for Peace (CAP). CAP is having a positive impact on the lives of many women through its shelter for battered women (called Sakhi, or Friend), its income-

generation projects for both rural and urban slum women, and its work in the area of sexual health, including HIV/AIDS prevention and intervention. CAP runs extensive trainings in mediation and conflict management skills for educationalists, police, local leaders, students and for women and men from all walks of life.

The visits to WPP partners was inspiring and provided just a sampling of the many ways women are struggling for peace. The WPP regional desks look forward to supporting and strengthening these efforts.

Exploring Nonviolent Living

What training manuals or courses do you find useful? We welcome short reviews on training manuals or materials that you find helpful in conducting gender and/or nonviolence trainings. The following review looks at a very worthwhile new training manual.

In a recent essay on globalizing nonviolence (see www.globalisingnonviolence.org), analyst Brian Martin writes about the need—and the pitfalls—of institutionalizing nonviolence.

One key way to spread the idea and practice of nonviolence is through training. Practitioners have a useful new tool in the form of the manual *Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living* (300 pages, 2005, USD 22) recently published by the Pacea Bene Nonviolence Service.

Pacea Bene also has a five-year campaign to Mainstream Nonviolence. In addition to publishing the manual, the campaign works to increase the visibility of nonviolent alternatives and to launch a Nonviolent Options Project, which will develop Nonviolent US public policy strategies.

The campaign intends to double the amount of nonviolence trainings it conducts, based on the new *Engage* 12-part study program. They offer one or two-day long trainings, and a ten-month long training of trainers program. Their excellent on-line nonviolence resource center offers support and suggestions for follow-up after the training (see www.paceebene.org).

Engage: Exploring Nonviolent Living is a revised and expanded version of Pacea Bene's earlier training manual *From Violence to Wholeness*. As with the earlier manual, the program aims to support participants in exploring the values around nonviolence and deepening their understanding of nonviolent principles and practice through small group discussions, role-plays, and individual reflection. The manual is an excellent and well-organized resource, with each chapter full of exercises, discussion questions, readings and contact information for further

resources. The last chapter includes articles on how to organize a group, facilitation guidelines and lists of relevant organizations books and videos.

The original source materials included throughout the book are one of its most valuable tools. The readings include personal confrontations with violence, from sexual to racial to economic violence, (the first reading is by a Muslim who was trapped in the World Trade Center on September 11) and important essays (including Bill Moyer's "Seven Strategic Assumptions of Successful Social Movements"). Key original source materials are also included, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Seville Statement by an international group of scientists challenging the myth that war is an inevitable consequence of human nature.

This wealth of material is well-organized and very accessible. While the majority of examples of nonviolence given are US-based, there is an international perspective and a good sense of the interlinking of many social issues (the manual has been used in trainings in a wide range of countries and among participants of different religions—and of no religious belief). Clear attention is paid to the violence women and girls face.

Two focuses are prominent throughout the manual: the need to develop a personal commitment to nonviolence, both in daily life and to challenge structural violence, and the need for action. *Engage* succeeds in showing the connection between spirituality and nonviolent action. For this alone, its creators—Laura Slattery, Ken Butigan, Veronica Pelicarić and Ken Preston-Pile, are to be congratulated on a job well done.

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New Resources

Iraqi Women Under Siege, by Marjorie Lasky, is a new 20-page report from the US peace groups CODEPINK and Global Exchange. Widespread insecurity, destruction of the infrastructure and restricted access to jobs and education have undermined Iraqi women's situation. Two main threats to women's progress are the US military occupation and the increasing influence of conservative Islamists: "The constant violence has trapped women and their children—particularly their daughters—in their homes. Fewer children brave the streets to attend school. Illiteracy is on the rise...despite initiatives to bring women in to the workforce, of the 260,000 reconstruction contracts in Iraq, less than 1,000 have gone to women." Available from www.codepink4peace.org See also the report *Windows of Opportunity: The Pursuit of Gender Equality in Post-War Iraq* at www.womenforwomen.org

Blossoms on the Olive Tree: Israeli and Palestinian Women Working for Peace by Janet M. Powers (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2006), with a foreword by Betty Reardon and introduction by Elise Boulding, is a mix of academic research, oral histories, and accounts of both Israeli and Palestinian women who as political moderates seek an end to the Israeli occupation. The last chapter calls for bringing women to the peace table as required by UN Resolution 1325.

New offers from Zed Books include *Defending Our Dreams: Global Feminist Voices for a New Generation* (288, pages USD 27.50/GBP 17.95), edited by S. Wilson, A. Sengupta and K. Evans, with essays on the issues facing young women and the new era of women's activism; *Checkpoint Watch: Testimonies from Occupied Palestine* by Y. Keshet (192 pages, USD 25/GBP 14.95) with daily reports of the human rights situation at check points along the Separation Wall from an Israeli women's group; and *Islamic Masculinities* (288 pages, USD 25/GBP 18.85), edited by L. Ouzgane, with 12 essays from across the Muslim world exploring different aspects of male identities. Zed Books, 7 Cynthia Street, London N1 9JF, UK. Web: www.zedbooks.co.uk email: enquiries@zedbooks.demon.co.uk

A report on the December 2005 international consultation "Defending Women, Defending Rights", in Colombo, Sri Lanka, is available on the Center for Women's Global Leadership website www.cwgl.rutgers.edu. The consultation is part of a campaign for the recognition and protection of human rights defenders, particularly women. *Women Testify: A Planning Guide for Popular Tribunals and Hearings*, a comprehensive guide to organizing human rights hearings and tribunals, is also available as the CWGL's first online publication. CWGL, Douglass College, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 160 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8555 USA. Tel. +1 732 932 8782. Fax: +1 732 932 1180. Email: cwgl@igc.org Web: www.cwgl.rutgers.edu

Women, Quotas and Politics (304 pages, GBP65), edited by Drude Dahlerup, is the first world-wide study of the use of gender quotas in politics. Many different types of gender quotas are examined to learn under what circumstances gender quotas increase women's representation – and why they sometimes fail.

Communications Skills For Women In Politics, by Lesley Abdela, is a new 127-paged manual (in English, Greek, Hungarian and Bulgarian) from the KETHI Research Centre For Gender Equality. This practical tool-kit is for trainers to use in workshops for future women politicians and for training activists campaigning for a rapid increase in women's participation in politics, especially in emerging democracies. Email: kethi@kethi.gr

Engendering impact assessments in peace building and conflict, by Judy El Bushra, A. Adrian-Paul and M. Olson (International Alert, 2005) documents a workshop which brought women peace activists together to discuss how women implement, monitor and evaluate their activities, what monitoring and evaluation tools are used, and lessons learned. International Alert, 346 Clapham Road, London SW9 9AP, UK. Web: www.womenbuildingpeace.org

Calendar

June 24-August 20: Palestine Summer Encounter: volunteer with Palestinian nongovernmental organizations and learn Arabic. Middle East Fellowship. Email: travel@mef-la.org Web: www.middleeastfellowship.org or Holy Land Trust, email; encounter@holylandtrust.org Web: www.holylandtrust.org

July 23-27: Globalizing Nonviolence conference, Paderborn, Germany. War Resisters International, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, UK. Tel. +44 20 7278. Fax +44 20 7278 0444. Web: www.globalisingnonviolence.org

July 24-August 2: workshop Women Allies for Social Change: Buddhism and Peacebuilding. Also September 7-11: Mindfulness Meditation Retreat for Activists, Thailand. International Women's Partnership for Peace and Justice, PO Box 3, Mae Rim Post Office, Mae Rim, Chiang Mai, Thailand 50180. Email: info@womenforpeaceandjustice.org Web: www.womenforpeacenadjustice.org

July 30-August 12: Summer school on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Justice, University of Utrecht, the Netherlands. Email: l.vriens@fss.uu.nl or annukka@vanderborch.com

August 23-26: Know How conference on Weaving the Information Society: a Gender and Multicultural Perspective, for women's information services and centers, Mexico. J. Félix Martínez Barrientos, Torre II de Humanidades, piso 7, Circuito Interior Ciudad Universitaria, Coyoacán, DF, CP 04510 Mexico. Tel. +56 23 00 17 / +56 23 00 20 al 23. Fax +56 23 00 19. Email: felmar@servidor.unam.mx. Web: www.knowhow-pueg.unam.mx

September 24-26: Women Leaders Intercultural Forum launch of five-year process to support women leaders in bridging divides. Columbia University, New York, USA. Web: www.learningpartnership.org

October 8-18: IFOR quadrennial Council, Tokyo, Japan. International Fellowship of Reconciliation, Spoorstraat 38, 1815 BK Alkmaar, the Netherlands. Email: office@ifor.org Web: www.ifor.org

October 26-29: International Conference on War Tax Resistance and Peace Tax Campaigns, Woltersdorf, Germany (near Berlin). Web: www.cpti.ws

November 25-December 10: annual international 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. This year's theme "Advance Human Rights—End Violence Against Women". For action kit and more information: Center for Women's Global Leadership, Douglass College, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 160 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8555 USA. Tel. +1 732 932 8782. Fax: +1 732 932 1180. Email: cwgl@igc.org Web: www.cwgl.rutgers.edu

The Women Peacemakers Program is an initiative of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR). For more information about IFOR's Women Peacemakers Program, contact Shelley Anderson, IFOR, email: s.anderson@ifor.org), website: www.ifor.org/WPP or please contact the IFOR International Secretariat.

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