



Capacitar Research & Reflection Project

Overview:

In March, 2009, with grant support from Trociare of Ireland, Capacitar International (CI) initiated a research, reflection and sharing process to more effectively develop leadership; offer programs; impact individuals, families and organizations; disseminate learnings; and ultimately to promote systemic change and transformation in organizations, communities and larger institutions—change that will result in a more just and peaceful world.

Capacitar researcher Joan R. Condon interviewed 210 people either individually or in focus groups. Each of the people interviewed had completed one of the Capacitar in-depth programs: Multicultural Wellness Education and/or Trauma Healing. The in-depth programs consists of either three two-and-a-half day sessions or four two-day sessions spaced over a year. Each participant also completed a practicum where they teach what they have learned to others. Interviewees were from the USA, Rwanda, Burundi, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Argentina, Brazil, Ireland, Northern Ireland, England, and East Timor. We also sent questionnaires to those we could not interview directly, including people from Honduras, Indonesia, Tanzania, Ghana, Canada, South Africa, England, and the USA.

Findings and Learnings

- **Individual**
At the individual level, 100% of those interviewed credited their use of Capacitar practices with positive individual change or transformation. One Timorese who works with an international organization serving children in Timor-Leste said, “It reduced my anger and fear. My behavior changed. I control my emotions better and I am more patient in dealing with other people.” A grassroots woman from Argentina said, “I have learned to take care of myself and manage situations so my health doesn’t suffer.” A woman who works on the US-Mexico border said, “When I do the exercises it makes a huge difference in my day. I can focus better; there’s a lightness and ease in how I face the day.” A therapist in Honduras said, “I am more in peace and harmony within myself. I’ve grown in acceptance of myself as I am, not as others want me to be.” A man who works in a Peace Center in Guatemala said, “Before Capacitar, I was simply living. After Capacitar I consciously live.” A woman from Ireland said: “I have embraced life at a deeper level. I am who I am, more than what I do.” And a woman from Rwanda said, “I am free and happy. I can manage whatever happens with ease.”
- **Organization**
At the organizational level where the practices have been integrated, staffs report improved relationships among members of staff and better relationships with clients: more unity and support among staff and more welcoming and accepting behaviors with clients. As one man in Guatemala put it, “we have a level of confidence and friendship that we didn’t have before.”

In organizations, people trained by Capacitar are integrating the practices into their social service programs for children, seniors, prisoners, students, HIV/AIDs, immigrants and refugees, human rights activists, widows, etc. In Rwanda, Capacitar is being used

with rural survivors of genocide. One woman reported that survivors say things like, “Now I can sleep like a child—I no longer have nightmares.” In New York, Capacitar methods are used in an afterschool children’s program, in anger management programs and in family weekends; in Massachusetts, in programs for the homeless. In Ireland, Capacitar is used in pre-school and school programs, public health and family service programs. In Timor-Leste, Capacitar is helping teachers and students improve their relationships and police and prison guards to help victims and perpetrators. In California it is helping war veterans and those who work in Restorative Justice programs.

- Spill-Over/Cascading Effect

Capacitar’s training methodology is one that creates spill-over. People trained are expected to share what they have learned. All those interviewed, at a minimum, have shared some practices with other people. The discussion of organizations above contains some examples of spill-over.

In Rwanda we were able to do a complete netmapping/pathway analysis of the 27 members of the leader’s training. These participants had received the 1.5 years of training at the time of the study. The results were impressive.

Summary of Net-Mapping/Pathway Analysis—Rwanda Leader’s Group Outreach 2008-2009

N=27 Participants—representing 17 organizations in 4 Provinces

Level of Influence Scale

3—Strong = use by participants, use in organizations and service programs and multiplied in groups and communities

2—Medium = use by participants and in their organizations

1—Small = use by some participants

Participants made 8,302+ contacts during 2008-2009:

1,619 Level 3 on the Influence Scale

2,962 Level 2 on the Influence Scale

3,721 Level 1 on the Influence Scale

Some of Capacitar’s global growth is also a result of the spill-over effect. CI’s work in Rwanda resulted from Sr. Antoinette Gasibierge’s attendance at a training in Milwaukee and Sr. Genevieve van Waesberghe’s receiving a manual from a friend and a training visit from Constansia Mbogoma, who was trained in Tanzania. The work in Ireland began after a Capacitar person in Chile told a friend in Ireland about the program. The work in Brazil is a result of someone trained in the Ireland program. In 2011, someone trained in Timor-Leste will facilitate training for HIV/AIDs groups in Myanmar.

- Larger Systems

CI will continue to dialogue with our partners and program participants about the reality in their countries and cultures for involving the larger social and political actors in Capacitar work. People interviewed basically had two opinions: to bring Capacitar into organizations and structures from the bottom up or, when possible, identify key individuals sympathetic to the program and institute it from the top down. This research shows that to-date, most work in organizations and institutions has been because people have integrated it into the program delivery level of organizations and not the administrative level.

However, in Northern Ireland leaders identified organizations and systems open to new things and were able to get people trained in organizations that are part of the Southern Health and Social Services Board. As one interviewee put it, "Capacitar is being offered at the institutional level. It became mainstreamed within the (Southern) Trust as a health promotion aid and is now used in overall health promotions with older people, carers, parents of children with disabilities," etc. Presently there are five members of the Armagh Library Board in the current training and they are applying the Capacitar practices to bullying in schools and to children with disabilities.

Centro de Mujeres Visitación Padilla in Honduras has worked to change key laws on domestic violence. In Timor-Leste Capacitar-trained folks hope to do a pilot project in two or three schools so they can present results to the Ministry of Education and suggest integration into the educational system.

The Office of Restorative Justice of the Diocese of Los Angeles California is beginning to introduce the practices in jails and detention camps and in El Paso, Texas, Jesuit Refugee Services has proposed a pilot project for a detention center for undocumented peoples.

Presently, CI is in discussions with the Conference for the Religious of Haiti and the Episcopal Peace Fellowship about development of programs for Haiti. We are also exploring a partnership for work in Haiti, Afghanistan and the Middle East with Glencree of Ireland.

Invitations have also come for 2011 from organizations that influence the larger systems. These include a keynote presentation for Pat Cane at the Spirasi 10th Anniversary Conference. Spirasi, a humanitarian organization in Ireland that works with refugees, asylum seekers and other migrant groups with special concern for victims of torture. She has also been invited to present the keynote at the Nurses Education Association Conference on self care for nurses in South Africa.

Important in each of these places to take the work to this level is identifying key individuals and key organizations that are open to the kind of work Capacitar does. Then finding the resources to train these key individuals and provide the necessary follow-up. It also implies that Capacitar must continue to develop its credibility through this kind of research to demonstrate the effectiveness of the practices at the individual, organizational, community and institutional level.