



Healing Trauma, Empowering Wellness—Patricia Mathes Cane, Ph.D., Capacitar Founder/Director

Capacitar recently published its research and reflection report, *Healing Trauma, Empowering Wellness*. The report describes Capacitar's multicultural popular education approach to trauma and presents theory, research, outcomes and case studies as well as program applications in various fields. The project, directed by Special Projects Coordinator Joan Condon, represents 2 years of work, including numerous meetings of core staff and teams, 210 videotaped interviews from 12 countries, focus groups and questionnaires. The project, supported by Trocaire (Catholic Development Agency of Ireland), studied the impact of Capacitar's trauma healing work on individuals, organizations and systems. The following summarizes main themes of the report. (*An e-copy or a printed version are available on our website www.capacitar.org.*)

Trauma Theory

Trauma is no longer an individual experience, it is also a societal and a global experience. In many places where Capacitar works people have little access to medical or psychological care to heal the wounds of their traumatized lives and often a therapy approach is not appropriate. Through popular education methods, Capacitar gives people tools to empower the "instinct to heal" in themselves, their families and communities. Many people suffer anxiety and depression not only from their personal traumas, but also from crises in the larger world. In many families and cultures, trauma is often repeated from generation to generation. To stop societal and intergenerational trauma requires that we heal the legacy of attitudes, beliefs and mores that affect the whole system.

If we can move beyond depression and despair, the global trauma that we see daily in the mass media is gradually pushing us to a higher and deeper level of awareness and a growing recognition of our interconnection and interdependence. Individual and collective traumas can become catalysts, empowering us to heal and transform our wounds into wisdom. As people heal their traumas and transform their lives, they are empowered to reach out to bring peace and healing to their families, communities and societies.

Individual Impacts and Outcomes

Capacitar teaches "body literacy". Participants learn to identify where their body is tense, and then they learn simple effective practices they can do for themselves to be in charge of their own self-care and healing. With use of wellness practices, participants typically experienced a diminution of physical symptoms related to stress and trauma. They also reported improved emotional states, more energy, less fatigue and less anxiety. These impacts were not dependent on culture or country.

The use of Capacitar practices leads to significant change in people's lives. One hundred percent of the people interviewed who had participated in the in-depth trainings reported significant change. For some it was improved family and work relationships or leaving situations or jobs that were unhealthy. Many reported finding new meaning and a new way of looking at their life and life experiences. Personal change descriptors often reported include: "I am peaceful; I think before I react; I accept myself; I can manage conflict; I can take care of myself; I am!"



Joan Condon leading a trauma healing workshop for the development organization AMURT during an assessment visit to Haiti—October, 2011

CAPACITAR's

Vision is
Healing
Ourselves
Healing
Our World.

CAPACITAR

means
to empower,
to encourage,
to bring each
other to life.
We are an
international
network of
empowerment
and solidarity.

Capacitar teaches
simple practices
of healing,
team building and
self-development
to awaken people
to their own source
of strength and
wisdom so they
can reach out
to heal injustice,
work for peace
and transform
themselves,
their families and
communities.

Using a
popular education
approach,
Capacitar works
with grassroots
people in over
35 countries.

Capacitar Research Report

One of the impacts of using Capacitar practices that people often report is the ability to manage their emotions, especially fear and anger. One Guatemalan said: "Capacitar has changed my life. The violence is still inside me and it is a continual battle to change. When I am angry, I breathe deeply. It helps me realize again that I don't want to react or harm others." In Ireland a boy of ten was angry all the time and getting into trouble at school. One day he came to his counselor and said that someone on the playground had kicked a football at him on purpose. Instead of reacting angrily, he said he turned away and held his finger. In Ugandan schools where it is still common practice for teachers to beat their students, many are now learning the fingerholds and the tapping exercise to clear their anger and frustration before starting their day in the classroom. They are also teaching their students the practices to help them manage their behaviours.

Organizational Impacts and Outcomes

Many people trained by Capacitar International have introduced the practices into their organizations. They recognized the impact the practices had in their own lives and believed sharing them with staff would improve staff relationships and the culture of the organization. In some organizations the practices are totally integrated into organizational culture and in others, Capacitar is used at staff and program levels. Staffs trained in Capacitar practices report improved relationships with each other and better relationships with clients: more unity and support among staff and more welcoming and accepting behaviors with clients.

One of the positive things about Capacitar practices is how they can be adapted to fit many different programs, providing added benefit to program clients. In addition to the primary goal of a particular program, clients learn empowering self-care techniques to help them heal their own stress and trauma. Programs that include the practices serve children, families, seniors, prisoners, students, HIV/AIDS patients, caregivers, single parents, immigrants, refugees, human rights activists, widows, etc., in a cross section of countries and cultures.

Larger Systems: Impacts and Outcomes

Capacitar methods and practices model openness to new ideas and ways of thinking and doing. In our age of chaos and upheaval due to war, political unrest, economic crisis, natural disasters and pandemics, entire populations are traumatized. It is critical for larger systems to embrace new ideas and new ways to work with people within systems so that those systems are not, in themselves, traumatizing but instead foster empowerment, respect, justice and peace.

The Capacitar model, based in popular education which embodies a cycle of reflection and action for change, expects training participants to share what they have learned within their families, communities and organizations. This multiplication, or spillover, is critical in the work to change societal systems. When people are able to manage their personal stress and trauma, self-perception and behaviors change. As individuals change—become less stressed, less angry, calmer, feel more in control of their own lives—family and community relationships are positively impacted. This helps create more caring and humane systems within families, communities and organizations, which then impacts the larger society. This, of course, is a long-term process.

Larger systems can be changed from the top by identifying and training decision makers, from the bottom by training people in programs and program delivery or a combination of both. But the key is to train individuals. People change and changed people change other things. It is like tossing a stone into a pond and the impact ripples out. When Capacitar has been integrated into an organization's or system's program, it has been as a result of actions taken by individuals. Part of Capacitar's training is to help people identify where and how they can begin to introduce Capacitar. Based on the experience shared by people in this study, it is often easier to integrate it into programs than to engage higher decision-making staff in large organizations who have many tasks.

There are many examples of how Capacitar is being integrated into larger systems and programs. The Office of Restorative Justice of the Diocese of Los Angeles uses the practices for self-care of staff, as well as for ministry in the jails and work with family victims' groups. Presentation Learning Center in Watts has incorporated Capacitar methods throughout their programs for Latinos who deal with street violence and the daily challenges of life in a poor immigrant community. In El Paso, Texas, Capacitar workshops are being offered by refugee services chaplains in a Homeland Security detention center. In Northern Ireland the Southern and Western Education and Library Boards have incorporated Capacitar methods in their programs of Critical Incident Response in Schools.

Challenges and Recommendations

As a result of this study Capacitar can report that the practices and methods it teaches have had a positive impact on individuals and organizations and in institutions and systems where it has begun to be used. However, it is critical to look at challenges Capacitar faces as it seeks to help alleviate the suffering of traumatized people in our world.

Individual Challenges: When people come to a workshop and learn the practices, they feel better. But the practices are not a one-time cure-all. To have longer-term positive results a person must make a commitment to integrate practices into their daily life. A young Rwanda genocide survivor who after learning Capacitar was able to move on with her life says that if she neglects her practices the fear comes back. She has learned the value of disciplined practice. For Capacitar this is a challenge: how to motivate people to begin to build practices into their daily life in order to benefit from the daily and longer-term positive effects.

Cultural and Systemic Challenges: These include issues such as, language, cultural adaptation of materials, understanding of energy work, and gatekeepers of institutions. For example, regarding language, it is important to develop appropriate vocabulary to convey the concepts within the context of a culture. If wrongly translated, words like "energy", "healing" or "spirit" can have negative connotations in some cultures. Because Capacitar works in so many countries, translation of materials into native languages is critical, yet securing the resources to do this is also a challenge. And the greatest challenge Capacitar now faces is how to bring the findings from this study to reach the larger actors in organizations and systems—health, mental health, education, justice and development—in fulfillment of our mission to heal ourselves and heal our world.

Capacitar is grateful to Trocaire and the Governance and Human Rights Team for their support of this project.

2011: New International Outreach



Panama workshop for United Nations UNFPA team working to heal gender violence



Training for teachers, psychologists, carers and social workers--Belfast, Northern Ireland



Kenya training led by Aine Campbell, RSM and Genevieve van Waesberghe MMM



Ballygriffin Multicultural Wellness training at Nano Nagle Centre, Ireland

• **Maine: Penobscot Nation**

Capacitar trainer Joan Condon facilitated a workshop for the Penobscot Nation in Indian Island, ME in June. It was sponsored by the Penobscot Nation Health Department and twenty-eight people attended including Nation's elders.

• **Utica, New York: Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees**

A new in-depth training for 2011-2012 is being hosted at the Center of Many Cultures, One Community in Utica, New York. Participants will come from many organizations serving refugees in the area. Joan Condon will facilitate.

• **New York: Workshop for Survivors of the Floods and Hurricane**

Maureen Jerkowski, SSSF, facilitated a workshop for people whose lives and homes were devastated in the recent hurricanes and floods in New York.

• **Haiti: Assessment visit for Trauma and Earthquake Recovery**

Joan Condon, in collaboration with Trocaire, offered introductory workshops for 13 organizations including: CRS, Cordaid, Trocaire/Caritas, Viva Rio, Concern Worldwide, Justice and Peace, Caritas Haiti, AMURT and other groups.

• **Kenya: HIV/AIDS and Trauma Training**

A new Capacitar training is being offered in Nairobi at Mater Hospital for counselors and those working in HIV outreach facilitated by Aine Campbell and Genevieve van Waesberghe. Aine reports that the needs are great in Kenya since the recent devastating fire in a nearby slum in Nairobi.

• **Southern Sudan: Woman Planting Seeds of Peace**

Dr. Genevieve van Waesberghe, MMM, facilitated the third module of training for women from six dioceses in Southern Sudan. Cathy Arata, SSND, coordinated the solidarity program and shared how one woman danced her way around the labyrinth then threw up her arms and cried, "I have found my Mother." Stories followed from people about connecting with Mother Earth, stories of dying soldiers mixing a bit of earth with water and drinking it.

• **Panama: Multicultural Wellness Training**

Capacitar Panama inaugurated its first in-depth training led by Pat Cane. Workshops are being offered by Panama coordinators, Alibel and Isali Pizarro, for persons and organizations working with refugees and gender violence.

• **Ballygriffin, Ireland Training**

Thirty women from all parts of Ireland are participating in the new training hosted by the Presentation Sisters at Nano Nagle Centre.

• **Edinburgh, Scotland: Trainings and Team Formation**

A second cycle of in-depth training and a team formation are being led by Pat Cane and coordinated by Ali Newell and James Kirk of Capacitar Scotland.

• **Hammersmith, London, England**

A fourth in-depth training, coordinated by Margaret Wilson, RSCJ, and Paula Nyunt is being offered by Pat Cane in Hammersmith.



New training group for Capacitar Scotland—Edinburgh

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Gifts Made In Honor of

Val Bengal • Joan Condon • Mary Littell • Pat Cane • Helene Isherwood

Gifts Made In Memory of

Vernon Bengal • Tom Condon • Tonie Redican

REMEMBER CAPACITAR IN YOUR ESTATE PLAN

Requests made through your will may be for a specific percentage or sum of an estate.

Gifts of Life insurance - Transfer ownership of a life insurance policy to CAPACITAR.

FREQUENT FLYER MILES

Support our outreach to areas of conflict and violence: We need airline tickets.

If you can help us with miles for tickets, call the Capacitar office at 831-471-9215.

CAPACITAR Calendar—2012

2011

- Nov 19-24 Indonesia Trainings
- Nov 23-25 Training 3 Arusha Mental Health, Arusha Tanzania
- Nov 24-26 Training 1, Middle East Network, Kadarim, Israel
- Nov 28-Dec 1 Workshops in Israel and Palestine
- Dec Training 3 Mater Hospital, Nairobi, Kenya
- Dec 15-17 Nicaragua Dance Retreat, CANTERA, Managua

2012

- Jan 10, 11 workshops and meetings, Juarez, Mexico, El Paso, TX
- Jan 12-13 Training 2, Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees, Utica, New York
- Jan 21-22 Training 2, Sacred Heart School, Hammersmith, London, England
- Jan 28-29 Training 2, Edinburgh, Scotland
- Jan 30 Formation Day 2, The Bield, Perth, Scotland
- Feb 1-2 Workshop, Noddfa, Penmaenmawr, North Wales
- Feb 4-5 Training 3, Dublin, Ireland
- Feb 7-8 Training 2, Belfast, Northern Ireland
- Feb 9 Teacher Training, Armagh, Northern Ireland
- Feb 18-19 Training 2 Nano Nagle Centre, Ballygriffin, Ireland
- Feb 23-25 Training 2, Butare, Rwanda
- Feb 29, 30 Meetings Kampala, Uganda
- Mar 8-10 Training 2 Capacitar Middle East Network, Kadarim, Israel
- Mar 16-18 Training 1, La Casa de Maria, Santa Barbara, CA
- Apr 13-15 Training 2, Panama
- Apr 16-17 Panama workshops
- Apr 19-20 Training 3, Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees, Utica, New York
- Apr 20-26 Peru workshops and trainings
- May 5-6 Training 4, Dublin, Ireland
- May 12-13 Training 3 Nano Nagle Centre, Ballygriffin, Ireland
- May 15-16 Training 3, Belfast, Northern Ireland
- May 19-20 Training 3, Edinburgh, Scotland
- May 21 Formation Day 3, The Bield Perth, Scotland
- May 26-27 Training 3, Sacred Heart School, Hammersmith, London, England
- Jun 7-8 Training 4, Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees, Utica, New York
- Jun 8-10 Training 2, La Casa de Maria, Santa Barbara, CA
- Jun 14-16 Training 3 Capacitar Middle East Network, Kadarim, Israel
- Jun 30-Jul 1 Training 1 Transfiguration Spirituality Center, Cincinnati, OH
- Jul 13-15 Retreat, Christine Center, Wisconsin
- Jul 19-21 Training 3, Butare, Rwanda
- Jul 26-28 Training 3 Kampala, Uganda
- Jul 29-Aug 3 Teacher Trainings, Uganda
- Aug 11-12 Training 4 Nano Nagle Centre, Ballygriffin, Ireland
- Aug 24-26 Training 3 Panama
- Aug 27-28 Panama trainings
- Sep 14-16 Training 3, La Casa de Maria, Santa Barbara, CA
- Sep 22-23 Training 2 Transfiguration Spirituality Center, Cincinnati, OH
- Sep 29-30 Training 4, Sacred Heart School, Hammersmith, London, England
- Oct 6-7 Training 4, Edinburgh, Scotland
- Oct 8 Formation Day 4, The Bield Perth, Scotland
- Oct 10-11 Training 4, Belfast, Northern Ireland
- Oct 13-14 Tutor Training 1, Dublin, Ireland
- Oct 18-20 Training 4 Capacitar Middle East Network, Kadarim, Israel
- Nov 3-4 Training 2 Transfiguration Spirituality Center, Cincinnati, OH
- Nov 16-18 Training 4, La Casa de Maria, Santa Barbara, CA
- Nov 30-Dec 1 Workshop, Sophia Center, Holy Names University, Oakland, CA

2012-2013 Trainings—Multicultural Wellness Education

- Santa Barbara, CA La Casa de Maria, Juliet Spohn Twomey 805-969-5031 juliet@lcmdm.org CEUs
- 2012 Training: Mar 16-18 Jun 8-10 Sept 14-16 Nov 16-18
- San Francisco, CA Mary Littell, Angelina Cahalan 415-592-2727 capacitarSF@gmail.com
- 2012 Training: Dates TBA
- Cincinnati, OH Transfiguration Spirituality Center, ctretrates@gmail.com 513-771-2171
- 2012 Training: Jun 30-Jul 1 Sep 22-23 Nov 3-4 2013: Jan 19-20
- 2013 Training: Apr 20-21 Jun 29-30 Sept 21-22 Nov 23-24
- El Paso TX/Juarez, MX: 2012 Training dates TBA
- Ireland Kathleen Day ijs cap.ireland@eircom.net
- Dublin Tutor Tr 2012: Oct 13-14 2013: Feb 9-10 May 25-26 toniryan@eircom.net
- England: London Margaret Wilson RSCJ, Paula Nyunt capacitarengland@gmail.com
- Hammersmith, London Training 2011: Oct 29-30 2012: Jan 21-22 May 26-27 Sep 29-30
- Hammersmith, London Training 2013: Feb 16-17 May 11-12 Oct 12-13 2014: Feb 1-2
- Edinburgh, Scotland Ali Newell, alinewell@aol.com James Kirk james.p.kirk@btinternet.com
- Training 2011: Oct 22-23 2012: Jan 28-29 May 19-20 Oct 6-7
- Formation 2011: Oct 24 2012: Jan 30 May 21 OCT 8
- Training 2013: Feb 23-24 May 18-19 Sep 28-29 2014: Feb 8-9

November, 2011

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate thanksgiving and the holy days of light transforming the darkness, thank you for your support of Capacitar's mission to bring healing to our world. With disasters, violence, economic crises, loss of jobs and homes and trauma in so many places, our times are indeed difficult. Yet hope and light abound everywhere, often in the poorest of communities. One woman in Europe recently said: "Thank goodness the crises have challenged us, because we were beginning to lose our souls! The Capacitar practices have helped us to reconnect with our hearts, so that no matter what happens around us, we have the tools and the wisdom we need in the moment."

During times like these it is important to compassionately care for ourselves and, as opportunities arise, to care for each other. After our new training in Scotland a few weeks ago, social worker Mary McConnell literally bumped into an elderly woman in distress at the Glasgow train station. Claustrophobic and very anxious, the woman had just backed off a train that was very full. Mary said: "She turned to me and asked if I was a medical person? I replied no, but that I could help her. I showed her how to do the fingerholds and how to press an acupressure point to calm her. Within seconds the woman said, 'Oh, I feel so much better.' I sat with her a few minutes and she said she thought I must be an angel for I was there just when she needed help. It was lovely to be able to offer this to her. How fantastic to have these new skills and knowledge in my tool kit!"

As we start a new year of outreach, your contributions will make possible Capacitar's work in the US and in other parts of the world. We invite you to help support the following efforts with your generous donation:

- Multicultural Wellness Trainings in 15 countries in the US, Latin America, Europe, Africa and the Middle East
- Work with Latino caregivers and health promoters in California and in border communities in El Paso TX/Juarez MX
- Trauma Healing Trainings for Palestinian and Israeli groups in the Middle East
- Trauma Healing & Leadership Trainings in Rwanda, Uganda, Congo DRC, Tanzania, Kenya, East Timor and Indonesia
- Trainings for groups in Southern Sudan and Northern Uganda to build peace after years of horrific violence
- In-depth trainings for development organizations and people working with earthquake survivors in Haiti
- New outreach to Native Americans and First Nations peoples
- Outreach to refugee communities and detention camps through Capacitar en la Frontera.

We cannot do this work without you. Thank you for your generous donations and prayerful support of Capacitar. Together we can realize our mission of healing ourselves, healing our world.

In peace and solidarity,

Pat Cane

Capacitar International Founder/Director



Blessings for a happy birth! Dublin, Capacitar Ireland Training



Capacitar Trauma Healing Training with participants from 4 provinces of Rwanda