



COALITION FOR WORK WITH PSYCHOTRAUMA AND PEACE KOALICIJA ZA RAD SA PSIHOTRAUMOM I MIR

MONTHLY REPORT 2019 02

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Despite official protestations to the contrary, the situation in the region is not getting any better. The economy continues to be poor. There is no reconciliation. The psychological situation continues to be lamentable. Again, despite reports to the contrary, the Balkan route for migrants is not closed. There has been serious violence, poor conditions of living, and a lack of health care on the borders and in northwest Bosnia. No one is doing anything about this.

Internally, we continue to be concerned about our financial situation for 2020 and beyond. We have not yet found any solutions, although we continue to look fervently.

Clients, groups, and supervision continue. The problems that people are facing are those of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and poor self-image. The Split group continued. We also are supervising one person there. He is doing an excellent job. We also are having regular meetings with Board member Alphonse Kanda in Johannesburg, with whom we have a number of shared issues.

We are preparing to work together closely with the University of Belgrade on educating and supervising the internships of students, some of whom, at least, we hope will work with migrants. We also will give online seminars for the University of Olomouc in the Czech Republic. Further, we will give an online seminar on the psychology of genocide for a few students from various places. On the last day of the month, we received an invitation from the Psychology Department at the University of Osijek to give a seminar for students, as we did a year ago.

We continue to work with several local groups on a proposal for work on increasing capacity in Bukavu, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo.

We had an article on the situation in northwest Bosnia published in the Dutch Quaker magazine. We have received notice that our chapter on trauma and peacebuilding will be published by the International Leadership Association during the coming months.

SITUATION IN THE REGION

According to the latest Freedom House report, which says that the state of democracy around the world has declined for the 13th year in a row, Croatia is a free country, but democracy in Croatia is deteriorating.

<i>Mission to Croatia</i> M. Držića 12 32000 Vukovar Croatia Tel and Fax: +385-32-441975 Website: www.cwwpp.org E-Mail: cwwppsummer@gmail.com	<i>Office in The Netherlands</i> c/o Kupers Ds. S. Tjadenstraat C81 9663 RD Nieuwe Pekela The Netherlands Tel: +31-597-645790 Fax: +31-597-647029 e-mail: pabbv@telfort.nl
--	--

One indication of the economic and social situation in Vukovar is that one of our favorite restaurants closed during the last days of February. We regret this. The people were friendly and the food was good. It shows that there are not enough people with sufficient funds to eat out. This is true of the entire region. We constantly are seeing stores and other businesses closing. This is sad for a region that has this much to offer in terms of history and human resources. In our opinion, this has to do with the highly nationalistic, rigid, and unrealistic political situation here.

The Balkan route for migrants is said to be closed, but reports from the field in Bosnia are disturbing. For example, refugees now are being denied drugs in Kladuša. Police officers search refugees and migrants for medicines and take them away, preventing refugees from treating their illnesses. On the 26th of February, a pharmacy in Velika Kladuša refused to sell prescribed drugs to a young person from Afghanistan diagnosed by a local psychiatrist with two diagnoses. It all sounds like a final solution for the question of refugees and migrants in Bosnia. To say the least, the situation in Bosnia is chaotic, and long-term volunteers with knowledge and stability are needed urgently.

The head of IOM, speaking to the local media during the third week of February, announced that many of the problems faced in the camps are the fault of problematic camp residents, commenting that those who are making problems should be taken to the immigration center in Sarajevo, which is a closed facility. This was said after a large fight in which more than 30 people were injured. Fights like this are not uncommon, and often occur in camps. According to the IOM, however, it is the fault of a group of people, rather than because of the insupportable circumstances which exist in IOM-run camps in Bosnia, despite the organization receiving huge amounts of funding to provide safe and adequate accommodation.

Over the last couple of weeks, the level of hate speech has increased in local media, with some people becoming openly hostile towards refugees and migrants. Yet solidarity is still strong, and many locals are actively involved in establishing a strong network and providing help.

Media freedom generally in the region and with regard to gender violence in particular is critical. After non-governmental organizations reported violations of women's reproductive rights to UN human rights bodies based on testimonies collected in a campaign focusing on women's negative hospital treatment experiences, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights asked Croatia to take action urgently to prevent the violation of women's sexual and reproductive rights.

On the occasion of the World Day of Social Justice, Croatian Human Rights Ombudswoman Lora Vidović said that one in five Croatian citizens lived at risk of poverty, especially in rural areas, that welfare was not enough to meet the basic needs, and that the elderly are especially at risk.

Generally speaking, all of these negative factors are connected with the psychological state of the people of the region. Mental health and psychological traumatization are still undervalued and stigmatized and not recognized as relevant for development and wellbeing. We remain one of the very few organizations providing any assistance whatsoever.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Introduction and Summary

Clients and groups continue. We have several new clients. The problems seem to be those of physical, sexual, and psychological abuse and poor self-image. The Split group continued. With regard to our work on supervision, we find that Ivan Maslow is doing an excellent job in the Split area. We also are supervising Alphonse Kanda, much to our delight, considering his expertise. That work is as much sharing as supervision.

At the end of the month, we were at the stage of finalizing our relationship with the University of Belgrade for giving seminars and supervising internships. We also have agreed to give several seminars for the University of Olomouc in the Czech Republic in May. Further, we will begin a series of seminars on the psychology of genocide and its consequences. This is the result of a one-time online seminar on that subject that we gave in November at McGill University. On the last day of the month, we received an invitation from the Psychology Department of the University of Osijek to give a seminar, much as we did a year ago.

The migrant situation continues to worsen. In northwest Bosnia, there has been violence toward migrants. They are being deprived of health care and are living under horrible conditions. Furthermore, there is an insufficient number of competent people working with the migrants on a long-term basis. We are doing what we can online.

We continue to put together a proposal and a coalition to work on increasing capacity in Bukavu, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo.

We had an article on northwest Bosnia published in the Dutch Quaker magazine. We have received notice that our chapter on peacebuilding and trauma will be published by the International Leadership Association in the coming months.

Clients

We had several new clients this month. We saw seven regular clients during the month. The predominant issues seen were those of self-image and sexual and psychological abuse. All clients seem to be moving forward.

Groups

We continue to have an educational and self-help group online with people from Split. The issues are the legacy of the war, trans-generational transmission of trauma, and personal issues.

We will discuss the group in Velika Kladuša when discussing the migrant situation below.

Supervision

The supervision with Ivan Maslow continues to go well.. We see him as a skillful therapist. He also is working with the body.

The work with Alphonse Kanda in Johannesburg is an exchange as much as formal supervision. Alphonse is doing a great deal of work with students and clients, and our meetings allow him the

opportunity to share his feelings and his work. We see quite similar issues. We are planning to work together on a number of projects.

Universities

Belgrade

During the month, we completed work on contracts with the Departments of Political Science and Psychology for the education and supervision students who then will work with migrants and other refugees in the region of Belgrade. Included in these contracts are provisions to work with the general public, in particular members of beneficiary groups, on these issues.

Olomouc

We also are further with plans to give several online seminars online to the University of Olomouc in the Czech Republic in May.

Osijek

On the last day of the month we received an invitation to give a seminar for students in the Department of Psychology at the University of Osijek. We gave a similar seminar last year.

We will prepare specific materials for each of these courses.

Finally, during the last few days of the month, we received the email addresses for people interested in the seminar on the psychology of genocide for students from the class on the Holocaust at McGill University. That seminar still is open if people want to join. There is no charge.

Migrant Situation

The migrant situation continues to worsen. We continually are hearing reports of violence at the Croatian borders with Serbia and particularly with those with Bosnia. We hear reports that the police are beating and torturing migrants on all sides of these borders. There are videos of this, which are available on YouTube and elsewhere. In one incident at the beginning of the month, a migrant was run over by a car. Despite repeated requests to do so, no one called an ambulance. The man lay on the road for an hour and a half and died. Also, as mentioned above, there was an incident during the last week of February during which pharmacists refused to fill the prescriptions of several migrants.

The situation with regard to assistance is chaotic, to say the least. Volunteers stay for very short periods of time, and certainly not more than two months. The large organizations, notably IOM, and governmental officials, are not letting volunteers into the official camps. This is particularly true of people attempting to provide psychological assistance.

We are working online with the SOS Team Kladuša, which is working in the northwest of Bosnia, in Velika Kladuša and Bihač. We will continue to do what we can. We are attempting to support people and to provide them with education. This will take persistence and patience.

With regard to Serbia, we are hoping that our association with the University of Belgrade will provide at least some student who will be able to work with the migrants.

We also are applying for funds to be able to provide in-person assistance in both Bosnia and Serbia, which we see as being desperately necessary.

External Groups

We continued to work on the proposal for work in the Bukavu region of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in particular the formation of alliances. The person working most on the project is Amos Malenga of the Evangelical Friends Church there. We also are contacting other groups in the Bukavu region to participate in the project, which will increase capacity by training “barefoot therapists”, also known as peer supporters.

Dixon Chibanda

This month, we have exchanged letters with Dixon Chibanda of the University of Zimbabwe, who is doing work with benches in which grandmothers give psychological assistance, much like our barefoot therapists.

Meeting with the Global Psychosocial Network

The meeting in February concentrated on gaining trust. We found it useful.

Psychology and Peace Meeting

We continued to speak about a pilot project on bottom-up capacity building, particularly in the Horn of Africa. Later in the month, we heard about the outrage in Mogadishu, which makes the kind of work that we wish to do even more imperative.

Publicity

An article was published in the Dutch Quaker publication “de Vriendenkring” on the situation in northwest Bosnia. Another article will be published in March on Charles Tauber’s motivation for his work on these issues.

We were notified that our chapter for the International Leadership Association’s book on leadership and peacebuilding will be published within the next few months.

Mental Health Innovation Network (MHIN)

We have been contacted by MHIN about having a listing there, particularly with regard to PET. We expect the listing to appear in March.

Interview with Ronna Haglili

Ms. Haglili is a student doing a PhD on traumatization and altruism. Charles Tauber gave her an interview as part of her research work.

PET

We have not gotten to work on PET this month because of other commitments. We are not at all happy with this.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Introduction and Summary

We are worried about our financing for 2020 and beyond. We are working very hard on this. We have been spending a great deal of time on writing reports this month. We also are battling constantly with the bureaucracy to do what should be simple things.

Finances and Fundraising

We are very grateful to our donors, whose contributions for 2019 we received this month. We are searching urgently for financing for 2020 and beyond.

Personnel

Charles Tauber and Sandra Marić continue to work a great deal. We need more personnel to complete all of the tasks that we would like to do. However, we cannot afford to have more paid personnel and long-term volunteers seem to be few and far between.

Reporting

We have spent a large amount of time this month working on the narrative and financial reports for 2018. We expect to finish both during the first half of March.

CONCLUSIONS, EPILOGUE, AND PROSPECTS FOR THE COMING MONTHS

It has been a very busy month, and it would seem that the coming months will be even more so.

We are concerned about the financial situation, particularly for 2020 and beyond.

We see our work as extremely necessary. Yet, most donors look more to top-down work and to policy work rather than fieldwork.

We somehow must find a way to survive.