

## FIELD REPORT #2 HAITI EARTHQUAKE RELIEF PROJECT (HERP) MAY 2010

We have just completed our time in Port au Prince. We offered a 3-day TRM-C training to 37 individuals followed by a half day of fieldwork in which the trainees used therapeutic games with the children at a camp for displaced persons and taught stabilization skills to adults. TRI team members supervised the fieldwork activities. The total number of people trained during our time in Papaye and Port au Prince is 94. This is 34 more than we had planned for originally. The demand for TRM-C training is high and it is very hard to turn anyone away. Every trainee was hard-working and eager to acquire the skills.

The trainees represent a wide range of agencies in Port au Prince as well as including 4 graduate psychology students and 2 social work students all from the Universite de Haiti. Also attending were 3 faculty of Human Services psychologists. The agencies represented at the TRM-C training included: COZPAM (a victims' rights agency), Komfit Femme Sage (KFS, an agency representing women in two impoverished neighborhoods in PaP), Saj Veye Yo (serving two slums in PaP), Centre Oskar (a camp for displaced persons with more than 3,000 people), KoK (a human rights centre), a centre for malnourished children and APOSIFA (an organization for people living with AIDS). All the trainees are earthquake survivors and many are living in tent camps.

It has been very disheartening to travel throughout PaP and see no change since we were here in March. All the debris is still as it was and the tent camps are everywhere. The only efforts we see to clear debris are small teams (4-8 people) of Haitians armed only with shovels. Tons of concrete crashed to earth on January 12, much of it in huge chunks, and the shovels can remove only a tiny fraction of what is there. It is clear that many of the 600,000 survivors who fled to the countryside have returned and the sidewalks and streets are jammed with people and traffic. One day it takes us 2 ½ hours to get across town. It is very hot (usually 100 degrees) and the frequent afternoon rains leave the city muddy and muggy.

Our 3 days of training use a combination of song, dance, and movement, didactic presentations, demonstrations of skills, and 2 practice sessions per day. TRI's goal when working in post-disaster settings is to increase capacity of local responders to use and spread the use of TRM-C's skills for stabilization. Therefore, there is an emphasis in Day 3 of the training on the trainees teaching the skills they have learned in front of small groups. It is heartwarming and very exciting to see the competency among the trainees as they teach the material they have learned. They critique and offer suggestions to their fellow trainees following each teaching module. They are full of enthusiasm and creativity...occasionally interrupting "the teacher" with questions they think might be asked by the public. This especially happens if the trainee has forgotten to define terminology such as "trauma" and "resilient zone."

The trainees are reimbursed for their travel to and from the training, receive 2 healthy snacks each day, as well as an abundant lunch. This is greatly appreciated since most have lost houses,

jobs, and possessions. They are very enthusiastic about the materials we provide...all in Creole...especially the small laminated pocket cards that are easy references when working in the field. We have worked very hard to make our materials suitable for low-literacy trainees and also to provide a solid foundation about the biology of trauma. We evaluate all of our international trainings using the Training Relevance, Use, and Satisfaction Scale (TRUSS). Each trainee rates our training on a number of dimensions using a 5-point scale. There is also an open-ended question that gives us information in narrative form. The TRUSS results from this training indicate the highest ratings for all dimensions of the training.

HERP is a multi-phase project, thanks to funding from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee (UUSC). TRI teams will return in July and September to provide additional training to these same trainees that we have worked with in Papaye and Port au Prince. The return visits will offer additional skills reinforcement, new material, and additional teaching practice. There are some major differences between the Papaye trainees (rural) and the Port au Prince trainees (urban). It makes sense to keep the trainings separate as we go forward to be able to fit the training format to the needs and abilities of each training group.

The last half of day 3 in both training sites we have individual interviews with each trainee to help them develop a plan for how they will use and spread the TRM-C skills for their own self-care, with family and friends, and in their communities. This helps insure that they stay active in their use of the skills. It also promotes greater resiliency in our trainees and communities.

The last morning at Agathe's house we sit down to breakfast. It is a beautiful Sunday in PaP. Breakfast is fruit, cheese, toast, and soup. Agathe tells us that this is a very special soup...freedom soup. She tells the story of how when the Haitian people were enslaved by the colonialists they only received watery soup while the slave holders ate soup filled with meat and vegetables. More than 200 years ago when the Haitians' revolt against the colonialists was successful and they created their own nation they began a tradition of serving soup every Sunday that is rich with squash, carrots, potatoes, pasta, chicken and spices. On the Haitian Independence Day (January 1) they also go all out and make fantastic soup to serve to family and friends. Haitians eat freedom soup regardless of where in the world they are living. We realized that the Sunday we were in Papaye this soup was also served but no one told us the story. It was a deep blessing to be included in this freedom ritual...and to hear Agathe tell the story of how the Haitians have a weekly ritual to remember one of the pleasures of freedom and the struggle that is so often needed to win it.

As we conclude our second time here in Haiti we are very grateful to UUSC, Agathe Jean-Baptiste (our outstanding Project Coordinator in Haiti), and our wonderful interpreters: Marie Claude Edwards, Maheeda Edwards, Juliette Edwards, and Evens Mary. The interpreters have been unfailingly supportive and enthusiastic, have been our voices and ears, and have shown great skill themselves as TRM-C practitioners. We are looking forward to working with all these fine people again when we return in July and September. We are becoming a big family!