

Grassroots Transformation AND THE ROAD AHEAD



Global Grassroots
CONSCIOUS SOCIAL CHANGE FOR WOMEN

2010
Year-End Magazine

Global Grassroots is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization founded in 2004 that supports conscious social change, driven by and for vulnerable women and girls at the grassroots level worldwide.

Global Grassroots' goal is to catalyze the development of conscious communities of change agents who will work independently, collectively and systemically to advance social change for vulnerable women and girls. Our work is guided by

3 theories of change

Our Academy for Conscious Change is a 12-18 month incubator offering social venture development skills, leadership training, personal transformation practices, seed grants and high-engagement support to help disadvantaged women initiate their own non-profit organizations to solve social issues facing women and girls in their own communities.

We call this intersection of personal and societal transformation Conscious Social Change.

We embrace the potential for every person to become an agent of change, and we invite you to join us in creating a just, compassionate and conscious society worldwide.

Deepening personal consciousness and contributing towards the common good are both essential to social change.

When an individual chooses to serve as a change agent, the experience of making a unique contribution to a greater whole can be deeply meaningful, even healing, especially from the trauma of war, disaster, genocide and sexual violence. Survivors demonstrate they not only have value to their community, but also have the power to address the failures of society. In turn, when a change agent chooses to deepen their self-awareness, they have a greater likelihood of making mindful decisions in advancing social change. This simultaneously deepens individual growth, community healing and post-conflict reconstruction.

The world's most vulnerable women are those most invested in their community's wellbeing and in the greatest need of support to manifest their solutions.

We contend that wisdom exists at the grassroots level among those directly impacted by certain social issues. We target underserved women in post-conflict countries, because it is our experience that women traditionally have the least access to the support they need to advance their own ideas. We believe one of the most effective levers of social change is a woman who has the capability, resources, power, courage and inner commitment to initiate positive change for herself and others.

The architecture necessary to support the advancement of conscious social change is underdeveloped.

In seeking to support inner-driven social change, we realize there are certain systems, tools and support structures that can help catalyze and accelerate this process, such as social financial services, forums for ideas transfer, access to healing practitioners, access to technology and other services. Global Grassroots is thus working to build the support structures necessary to facilitate the work of conscious social change agents.

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Dear friends,

As I look back on this past year, 2010 has been a turning point for Global Grassroots. We have endured hardship with the economic downturn throughout the last two years, but we have survived and are emerging leaner, more creative and more strategic. We've evaluated our social impact and refined our core program model. We've analyzed our internal capacity to create transformation, repositioned our training program as the Academy for Conscious Change and integrated new mind-body practices for trauma healing. We've brought these holistic practices to earthquake survivors in Haiti and, by request, to American relief workers serving in disaster zones. We've doubled the number of civil society organizations our Academy has helped launch in Rwanda, and are investing in technology and partnerships to expand our reach. Today, our 300 Rwandan change agents have established 16 non-profit organizations, which are working at the root level of a social issue facing women and girls, benefiting an estimated 10,000+ people each year.

As we move forward into 2011, we have over 100 women's groups in 40 countries requesting our programs. In response, we are expanding our hands-on approach into Northern Uganda next and embarking upon a web-based eAcademy for Conscious Change to reach women worldwide through local internet cafes. We are developing new courses, based on our core curriculum, for a range of new audiences, including students, donors and practitioners. And we are preparing to package and license our program model for partner organizations to implement in regions we have yet to explore.

But we are still a grassroots organization ourselves with a current team of only 10, many of whom work part-time or as dedicated volunteers. Indeed, we are embracing the opportunity to grow. But mindful of the last few years of stretching, we will carefully leverage our assets – our curriculum, our methodology, our partners and our graduates' successes – to maximize impact, while ensuring sustainability. As we expand, we endeavor to create transformation in all aspects of our work, "walking the walk" inside and out – from engaged partnerships to a conscious work environment. We are also taking our commitment to participatory development another step further, inviting our advisory council of our Rwandan change agents to help examine our impact and refine our support of their work.

Global Grassroots needs engaged investors to join with us and our change agents in a three-part-partnership to actualize the possibilities in front of us. I invite you to learn as much as you can about our theory of change, our program model, the work of our teams and our collective impact. If you feel aligned with our commitment to conscious social change, driven by and for vulnerable women at the grassroots level, please consider a gift to help enable our work.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Gretchen Steidle Wallace
Founder & President



Non-violent action, born of the awareness of suffering and nurtured by love, is the most effective way to confront adversity.

- Thích Nhất Hạnh

5 Principles & Supporting Practices of Conscious Social Change

Conscious Social Change

A Definition

Conscious Social Change is a process led by responsible and ethical change agents, who engage in their own practice towards deeper self-knowledge and personal transformation, while striving to advance positive change for the common good. These two components of inner and outer transformation are integral and essential for a whole, just and compassionate society.

The process of cultivating presence invites a balance of engagement with both the outer world, which provides opportunities for learning, and our inner world, which allows us to integrate and utilize each lesson.

Principle ONE

Cultivate Presence

The overarching practice of the path of conscious change is being fully present in every moment. The more we look deeply into ourselves, we come to understand with clarity the underlying reasons for our anxiety, pain and fears. As we begin to see the root of our anxiety and the path of change in ourselves, we can find compassion for the challenges of change in others.

Principle TWO

Seek Wholeness

The second principle involves being proactive in addressing our own wounding, fears, limiting beliefs and shadows that can distort our perspective and cause us to harm others unconsciously while protecting ourselves. The unexamined self has been at the root of many activist movements that have turned violent as well as leadership attained through oppression and prejudice. As institutions become ever-more integrated with cultural practice and dominant culture, they too can come to reflect the unconscious shadows of their members and the very imbalances of power that they were established to upset.

Principle THREE

Restore Balance

The third principle is using presence for balance and self-care. By committing to ongoing personal transformation practices, we can more easily attend to our own need for balance so that we avoid burnout and stay whole, grounded and completely available to do our work in the world.

Principle FOUR

Stay Attuned

The fourth principle is using presence to stay attuned to the changing needs of those we aim to serve, so we do not stay stuck on our own agenda or abuse our power. This transformational paradigm is inner-driven with a focus on serving the highest common good.

Principle FIVE

Listen Deeply & Leverage Inner Purpose to Create Social Innovation

The final key principle in initiating conscious social change is to listen for an individual calling and then to learn how we can leverage it to create social innovation. Bringing presence to our social justice work allows for radical creativity. Clarity among conscious change agents allows for personal agenda to make room for the best ideas to move forward. As an inherently interconnected and systemic approach, conscious social change invites collaboration with both the target population and the perpetrators. Finally, it ensures those working together are inspired by a common cause and energizes collective efforts by honoring individual needs for renewal.

2010 → 2011

SOCIAL IMPACT | STRATEGIC GROWTH

8 ANNOUNCING THE LAUNCH OF NEW SOCIAL VENTURES IN RWANDA



Have a Good Life:

This water venture began construction in 2009 and began water delivery in late April 2010. The project is addressing the issue of sexual exploitation of disabled and other vulnerable women who cannot collect their own water and must trade sex in exchange for water delivery. The project also aims to combat the health implications of a lack of clean water access and sexually transmitted diseases due to exploitation, and to educate the community about human rights.

Throughout this year, the team has provided clean drinking water and education about the importance of sanitation to 200 hundred families in the Nyarugenge community. A few months ago, Have a Good Life began to distribute soaps to the 12 poorest of these families. They have also helped women form small groups to share the expenses of soap and other hygienic supplies. In addition to encouraging their target population to boil drinking water and improve general sanitation, the team has focused recently on educating their community about women's rights and violence facing women. Analysis of baseline results from a survey they

administered before operations, Have a Good Life has adjusted some of their programming to fulfill unexpected needs. For example, the team discovered that 81% of the surveyed community had traded sex for water delivery at least once and 100% said they knew someone who had contracted HIV while exchanging sex for water, yet only 25% of survey participants had taken HIV tests. As a result, the team decided to emphasize the necessity of frequent HIV testing during their educational trainings. This month Have a Good Life prepared a follow-up study, which they will soon administer. They expect its results to confirm their project's impact; discussions with their target population over the past year have revealed a decrease in school skipped by children fetching water, a decrease in violence faced by women during the (much shorter) journey to the water point, and an increase in families' personal and domestic sanitation.

Light in Our Home

This social venture led by a local headmaster who also ran for Parliament this past year, is working to fight against all forms of gender-based violence. The project is educating local leaders about the causes and consequences of violence and forming anti-violence clubs in each local neighborhood. The venture, launched in late March has already conducted its first training with local officials from 33 different sectors, including high school principals, District advisory council members, and the head of security in the Ruhango District, about the causes, consequences, relevant laws and forms of gender-based violence (GBV). Consequently, two schools created anti-GBV clubs. The clubs are mobilizing students to report GBV cases that occur at school and are then following up on the cases. At the government level, the district advisory council members who received training successfully advocated for funding, and the Ruhango District distributed 1,800,000 FRW (\$3,076) for fighting GBV in nine sectors. In October, Light in Our Home trained another 164 people including 127 local authorities, members of the National Women's Council, members of the National Youth Committee, eight local representative members of the President's Advisory Council and eight Executive Secretaries at the local government level. They are working to develop new anti-GBV clubs and strengthen existing ones. They also recently conducted a survey of their beneficiaries and are in the process of analyzing the data.



Association de la Promotion de la Femme et l'Enfant Rwandais

APROFER's mission is to fight violence against women associated with managing family property through training, exchanging of ideas, debates and encouraging further mobilization amongst couples, widows, children, other family members and local authorities. APROFER is an established group of women who have worked together for several years. They sought training and funding from Global Grassroots to improve their efficacy. The team is concerned with the issue that women face in being responsible for almost all cultivating and household tasks, yet have no right to speech or to control family wealth. The project will provide training for a new group of 70 people, and then identify community focal points to serve as advocates for women locally.

After receiving their first tranche of funding in August, they worked with Global Grassroots' fellows to create a survey to assess knowledge of women's rights among community members. The survey results will influence the curriculum of their training program for widows, couples, and adolescents. These individuals will then train others in their community, spreading knowledge in a true grassroots fashion. The trainings are slated to begin in a few months, with plans for community dialogues shortly thereafter.



Construct the Family

This project's mission is to fight and reduce problems related to violence against married women and domestic workers. They have seen how domestic and sexual violence leads to broken families, physical disability, HIV infection, ignorance, poverty, children without fathers, and women having multiple children who face malnutrition, neglect or abandonment. The project will target domestic workers and couples to provide sensitization trainings. They will also provide skills training and help organize workers into associations so that they can better demand their rights and have more economic opportunities to leave abusive employers.



Construct the Family received their first stage of funding this August. During the past two months, they have put tremendous effort into creating an issue survey that will assess the reality of – and beliefs concerning – domestic violence in their community. The survey will inform their project's programming and set a baseline to help measure their impact and their progress toward goals for their community such as: women understanding and claiming their rights; domestic workers protected against abuse from employees; women empowered by learning technical skills like sewing and thereby obtaining economic independence. This month, the team is administering the survey and will use its results to select 15 domestic workers, 15 women victims of domestic abuse and their 15 husbands for this year's training program on gender equality, women's rights, and the consequences of domestic violence. The 30 female victims of violence will also receive sewing skills training to give them the economic independence necessary to change their abusive situations.

Let Us Build Ourselves: Kanombe

This project will fight the issue of violence against women related to women's limited access to water. Women living in mountainous areas travel long distances to collect contaminated water from valley streams. Young girls often miss school to help their mothers. Not only do women experience the risk of violence at these remote water collection points, but their arduous journey can also trigger domestic violence when they return home late, delaying their husbands' baths or meals. Kanombe will build a pipeline and water distribution center to bring clean water access to 100 village families (approximately 800 – 1000 people) and offer trainings to men and women about women's rights. This past November, the team purchased the land on which it will build its water project and has just begun construction.



Have Pity and Compassion

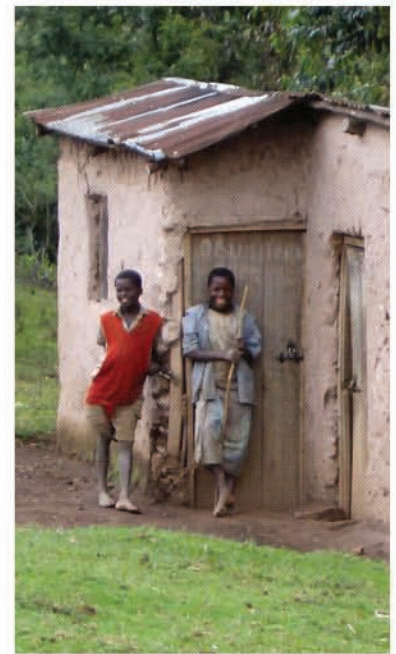
Launched in late October, the mission of this venture is to reduce conflicts within families, including physical violence and lack of shared economic decision-making, by teaching family members about women's rights to own and access property. National laws give women the right to own and manage property, but often widows have conflicts with their husband's families who come to take their son's property after death. In its initial year of operations, Have Pity and Compassion is expected to serve over 550 people, targeting couples, in the rural area of Mutara. Utilizing couples counseling, community theater, public debate and educational films, this venture is fighting social norms that accept violence against women. The project is also working to form youth clubs, debate groups and widow executive committees to work within their communities. Since receiving their first round of funding last month, the team has begun to establish partnerships with local authorities and to work on a baseline issue study that will inform their programming and allow them to measure their impact.

Relax

Also launched in late October, this team of 10 is working in the rural Mwendo sector, where up to 50 percent of women are victims of domestic violence, including denial of property rights, marital rape and physical abuse. Relax is teaching women about their rights and selecting local representatives who are given cell phones to report cases of domestic violence when they occur. When not in use for emergency purposes, the phones act as village phone businesses to help support the project's operating expenses. The team is working closely with the police and local authorities to improve the legal protection of women who experience violence, and seeking to change community norms that tacitly condone domestic violence by shifting stigma toward the men who abuse their wives. Relax aims to serve approximately 815 women in its first year of operations. To date, the team has begun dialogue about their project with the local authorities and is currently drafting questions for a baseline issue survey that will assess their target population's beliefs, problems, and needs concerning gender-based violence and property rights.

Kind People

Kind People, an additional venture from the class of 2008, is expected to launch by year-end 2010 or early 2011. Kind People is working to protect women's property rights and promote legal marriages, training 400-500 men and women about the laws protecting the family and the mutual benefits of legal marriage. As a follow-up to these trainings, advocacy clubs will be created within each local neighborhood to act as a resource for women who may still fall victim to continued domestic violence.



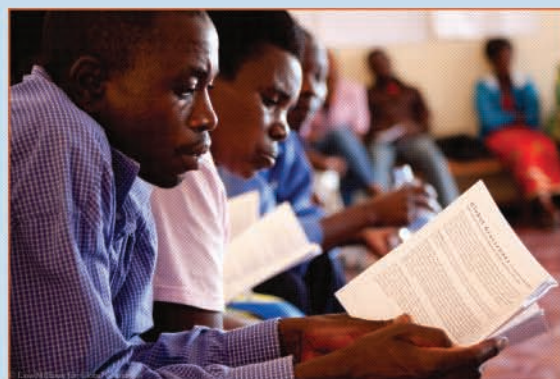
2010 ACADEMY FOR CONSCIOUS CHANGE



7 NEW SOCIAL VENTURES UNDER DEVELOPMENT

In June Global Grassroots hosted our 2010 Academy for Conscious Change in the rural village of Byimana Rwanda, inviting 7 new teams represented by 34 women and 3 men into the program. The teams are now in the project development phase, which involves 3- 6 months of hands-on high engagement support from Global Grassroots staff before the venture plan meets our social impact and sustainability requirements for funding. The 2010 teams are expected to be ready for launch in early 2011. They are working on the following issues:

- Violence and discrimination against mothers of handicapped children
- Violence, exploitation, disease and other issues facing women associated with the lack of access to clean water
- Domestic violence
- Violence against and rejection of single mothers
- Malnutrition
- Teenage mothers with unwanted pregnancies (age 12-14)
- Education of girls, especially children of prostitutes



photos by Laya Millman

6 EXISTING VENTURES PROSPER & EXPAND

Global Grassroots continued to provide ongoing high-engagement support for our existing ventures in Rwanda. We've been delighted by their commitment to their organization's social change work and their efforts to expand their operations or apply their social venture skills for creative problem solving in repeated iterations to refine their project impact. In 2010, with the support of the J.A. Charitable Trust and Jewish Helping Hands, we established a Mezzanine Fund for providing second phase grants to existing Global Grassroots ventures for organizational sustainability or expansion. Following is an update on the progress of six of our ventures, trained and launched in 2007 – 2008, which have received growth funding:

Achieving a Better Life

Using Theater and Film to Fight Violence Against Women

Achieving a Better Life continues to be a model social change venture. In the last six months they hosted eight theatre performances, each about a different face of domestic violence or the undervaluing of women. The team continually strives to improve their program, distributing evaluations after performances and surveying community members, then responding to criticism and modifying their programming to tackle the most prevalent issues. This year, the ABL actors participated in the Arts for Peace and Human Rights conference as well as a Pan-African conference on strengthening creative industries through entrepreneurship. ABL's founder, Charlotte, recently received training in documentary film-making and the team is currently working on their next documentary film. **To read more about Charlotte and Achieving a Better Life, see our special profile on page 12.**



Community Vocational Training Program

Teaching Prostitutes, Widows & Orphans Sewing & HIV/AIDS Awareness

CVTS graduated its fourth group of at-risk women this September. Dressed in suits, skirts or dresses they themselves had made, 24 widows, orphans and former prostitutes received diplomas after completing an internship at a local design business. While they seek jobs as seamstresses, they continue to sew using the school's machines and to help complete larger orders that will benefit the school, such as special buttons requested by a Spanish shop-owner. CVTS is in good position for financial stability due to several upcoming international orders. In order to increase their employability, the recent graduates are now learning English from two of Global Grassroots' US Fellows. Despite the fact that none has more than five or six years of formal schooling, the students are eager learners and after only two weeks could carry polite conversation and ask and answer simple questions related to fulfilling a tailoring order. The venture's vision is that armed with these skills, the women will land jobs and fully support themselves in the near future.



Hard Workers

Providing Clean Water to Fight Sexual Exploitation for Basic Needs

In their third year of sustainable operations, Hard Workers continues to provide clean, affordable water directly to their community, where sexual exploitation of vulnerable women in exchange for water delivery was once common. The Hard Workers venture has enabled children to attend school on time, rather than spending their mornings trekking downhill to a dirty creek, and has protected an average of 150 households from diseases caused by contaminated water. Working with a new partner organization, the team recently obtained horticulture training that they will use to educate their community. They are in the process of getting their national level legal registration as an association, and they plan to expand their operations dramatically to reach more households. This expansion involves discussion with the primary municipal water company about Hard Workers managing seven new water access sites throughout their region, and the purchase of land to construct a new water venture to serve another 1000 – 2000 people. Last month, Hard Workers' president Seraphine Hacimana was invited to speak at an upcoming faith-based conference in Kenya about her woman-led, grassroots water venture, and Hard Workers was recognized by President Kagame as an example of women helping other women.

Invincible Vision 2020

Teaching Women Reading, Writing & Financial Literacy

Invincible Vision 2020 educates women with the goal that they will become independent and active participants in society. They teach students how to read, write, and do accounting, educate them about their rights, and give them the skills to take charge of their own development. In 2010, their second year of operations, they enrolled 197 women, 47 of whom will graduate in December. These 47 students gained skills related to planning and managing an income-generating project, and they learned about laws regarding family protection, succession and inheritance. (Many women are not aware that they have a right to inherit their parents' or husband's assets and are cheated out of property by male relatives.) Invincible Vision 2020 received a grant in May that provided the capital for starting a new fundraising project. The venture invested in pigs and rabbits, which its students raise and breed. Half the offspring is shared with the students as compensation, and the other half is sold to raise funds for the organization's operating costs. Inspired by Invincible Vision 2020, one previously illiterate woman used her new knowledge to apply for a bank loan and started her own business of raising pigs. Invincible 2010 plans to enroll another 150 illiterate women in 2011.

Let Us Build Ourselves

Literacy Training for Vulnerable Women

In the last year, Let Us Build Ourselves graduated their first class of thirty women from its literacy program and enrolled a second class of twenty. They continue to hold trainings on women's rights and the importance of education for girls. During the past few months, Let Us Build Ourselves students re-enrolled eight of their daughters in school and have themselves become ambassadors for female education, testifying at local meetings about the importance of literacy and the value of young girls' studies. Last month, the students began to learn about financial literacy with the eventual goals of managing their own financial affairs, opening a bank account, and planning a small business project of their own. Let Us Build Ourselves is also tirelessly working toward financial sustainability. Thanks to the advisory support of our Rwandan staff and Rabbi Soffin of Jewish Helping Hands, the team is exploring several new fundraising strategies, such as making pin-on buttons to sell as accessories or wedding party favors. In addition, Let Us Build Ourselves has nearly completed their very own project profile to fundraise on GlobalGiving.org! We've been so impressed by the team's diligent desire to learn tough new skills (creating online donation options; bookkeeping in Excel) and try new strategies (curriculum changes; visiting students' homes to talk about their daughters' educations) in order to improve their sustainability, efficacy, teaching abilities, and holistic impact on the lives of their community's least educated women.



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photos by Laya Millman

Think About the Young Girls

Building Latrines for Girls to Avoid Sexual Assault and Keep Girls in School

Think About the Young Girls is a project run by a group of school teachers and administrators who seek to reduce rape, violence and discrimination against girls. In 2010, they constructed six latrines and two bathing rooms for female students only. These provisions enable girls to feel more comfortable and continue attending school during menstruation. They also purchased sanitation materials and shower supplies to improve the girls' hygiene. They further trained 1000 people about reproductive health and gender-based violence, including parents and students at their school and over 100 out-of-school youth. In addition, Think About the Young Girls started at least two local anti-violence clubs, which work to educate community members— particularly youth— about reproductive health, gender-based violence and the importance of separate latrines.

A DAY ON THE GROUND | Caitlin Clements

Caitlin Clements and Christina Hueschen are recent college graduates living in Rwanda for one year and working as Global Grassroots US Fellows. They meet with teams to offer insight and guidance, when sought, about improving the efficacy and financial sustainability of local projects.

In an unlit market stall converted into an office, I peer behind Innocent Baguma's computer. "Here!" I say, locating the blue ledger where he tracks the expenses for *Let Us Build Ourselves*, an organization that teaches women reading and financial literacy. The venture has fallen short of their financial goals the last few months, so we are reviewing their fundraising strategy,

which includes monthly raffles. In perfect English, Innocent explains how passersby purchase an unknown object (tomatoes, carrots, etc.) in a covered basket, paying more or

less than the market value for the unknown object. I note the raffle idea and jot 'cell phone?' in the margin. Later, I will help him think about how he could make the raffles more lucrative by throwing in one highly valued item to drive up the price of every unknown object. I'll be careful, though, of how I broach the topic; I want him to drive the brainstorming process so that the resulting idea is practical, and he feels full ownership of it.

We continue reviewing his finances and Innocent describes another major source of income. He trains a group of street children in traditional dance and found a Christian NGO (African Evangelistic Enterprise) to pay their school fees. The children seem to really enjoy the dance classes, which also keep them out of trouble on weekends. The revenue from their performances at weddings and ceremonies supports *Let Us Build Ourselves*. I smile—Innocent really has become an

agent of social change. After a discussion about increasing the profit margin (Is there an alternative to renting costumes? Can the rehearsal space be shared with other dance groups?), he asks if we have any other ideas. Christina offers a few, including GlobalGiving.org. This website connects donors with grassroots projects in developing countries, and we just finished helping another GG team, *Achieving a Better Life*, create a proposal for the site. Innocent expresses interest but we schedule another session because it's been three hours today and he has to leave to teach a literacy class. It seems that in between each of our meetings he learns a year's worth of English, but it is actually



his confidence and comfort around us that is developing, not just his language skills.

I'm glad for a little break before we meet with the next team because it allows me to sneak a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. I learned during one of our first 10 a.m. consultations that the people we

work with often don't eat lunch. That meeting went straight until 3:30 so now I sneak guilty snacks on my way to and from sessions. No one on the next team speaks English, so Christina and I work with GG intern Josiane Isingizwe, a university student at the Kigali Institute of Sciences and Technology, who speaks fluent English as well as her native Kinyarwanda. Together with three members of *Construct the Family*, we design a survey to assess the prevalence and type of domestic violence in their community. They will use the information to create the curriculum for their program, which will train people about women's rights and the consequences of gender-based violence.

We will likely return in a few weeks to help them analyze their results, as we did recently with the water project *Have a Good Life*. In that meeting, we explained how to interpret the data and calculate a percentage. From there the team compiled useful statistics and determined that, while 81% of their community had ex-

Maybe sipping tea together on breaks and giggling at my botched Kinyarwanda built some sort of bond.

changed sex for water, only 25% had been tested for HIV. They are now expanding their trainings about water-borne disease to include HIV education as well.

After the session with *Construct the Family*, we pay 300 Rwandan francs (about 50 US cents) to take the bus an hour across town, transferring at the city center. We will cook dinner, experimenting with a new Kenyan recipe for beans. Before tucking in our mosquito nets to sleep, we will review some notes in preparation for tomorrow, when we will meet with a more rural team that is just getting started after completing the GG training program in June. Their venture, *A Friend Indeed*, hopes to decrease the stigma and violence against single mothers and their children. I'm looking forward to seeing the team again, which feels strange because we've never communicated directly; the translators were always occupied during the training program. Maybe sipping tea together on breaks and giggling at my botched Kinyarwanda built some sort of bond. Or, it might just be my general enthusiasm about the genesis of a new GG social change organization. Tomorrow, we will meet them in their home where they will articulate a mission statement for the first time and flesh out their goals. Meanwhile, their children will play on the floor around us and something will be cooking on the stove, their cell phones will likely ring several times and strangers will peer in their door at the Americans. Despite the many other demands on their attention, these women have decided to dedicate their time to improving the lives of marginalized women and children in their community. Those strangers in the doorway won't know yet that we're not the extraordinary ones in the room.

IMPACT

Achieving a Better Life



Svati Narula

Charlotte Nyiraneza is on a mission to end domestic violence in Rwanda, where, with the help of Global Grassroots, she uses theater to spread her message of change. Charlotte's project is called Achieving a Better Life, and since 2008 the group has been traveling from Kigali to other parts of Rwanda to perform small plays and engage in discussions about the causes and consequences of violence against women.

Charlotte says that, as a young girl, "my ambitions were to be a journalist and to get married to a white man, because I used to see films and realized that [Western men] have love for their wives, while here in Rwanda it was like an established law to beat your wife." She adds that, for men, getting married was about "finding someone to work for you."

According to Charlotte, one of the greatest problems Rwandan women face is violence and cruelty against them in their own homes. This includes both physical abuse, such as beating from husbands, and emotional abuse, such as infidelity. In an interview with Timothy Kisambira of AllAfrica.com in February 2009, Charlotte said that some traditional cultural practices in Rwanda can lead to domestic violence; she said that men believe that "women are not supposed to know their secrets, and if they do they are in trouble," and "many men still think that women are supposed to work like donkeys in their homes." In the interview with Kisambira, Charlotte also explained that this problem is not limited to a small segment of the population. Rather, she says that, based on her research, 75% of women in Rwanda are victims of domestic violence, and domestic violence even occurs in households in which the man is university-educated. Charlotte and her project team contend that most men have some ignorance in common that contributes to their attitudes and treatment toward women; when disrespect is the "norm" and no one tells them to change their ways, they don't think to do so.

By simply raising awareness of a social problem and facili-



tating open discussions about that problem, Charlotte is promoting conscious social change. When Achieving a Better Life performs for a community, the team acts out a play featuring the faces of domestic violence, its causes and consequences and approaches to resolving it. Plays include multiple storylines, portraying, for example, a woman who is overworked, an alcoholic husband who beats his wife, or a woman whose husband cheats on her with a prostitute. Sometimes characters include social workers or other conflict mediators, and there are often elements of comedy in addition to seriousness in the performance. Each play is immediately followed by a thoughtful discussion with the audience. These guided conversations are designed to encourage men to make better decisions and educate women about their rights and alternatives to violence.

Men who attend the performances have said that both the play and discussion afterward made them think more seriously about how they treat their wives. Many women have reported that the performances motivated them to seek help for domestic violence and to talk to their husbands about how to improve their relationships.

Charlotte, who earned her bachelor's degree in sociology and has five children, is extremely dedicated to her work as the leader of ABL. She says that it has been difficult gaining the full support of her husband, who thinks that she could be using her degree in a different way (with a job in the Rwandan Parliament, for example) and may not understand her passion for making change at the grassroots level.

Charlotte recently earned a spot in a "Peace Through Business Course" sponsored by the Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women. The Institute paid for her to come to the U.S. and receive specialized entrepreneurial training in addition to mentorship from a female American business owner. Of this experience, Charlotte says, "I learned a lot of things that can help me to expend my work, but the most important thing [I realized is how important it is to] recognize donors for whatever you do

and to give incentives to potential customers who manifest more interest.”

ABL’s progress reports show that the composition of audiences at each show is changing – at first, only women came, then more men began coming and now even couples come to the shows together.

As its performances grow in popularity, ABL now faces the challenges of evolving to accommodate larger, more diverse audiences. The group would benefit greatly if it had microphones to use or was able to utilize props and costumes in the plays.

Achieving a Better Life aims to see a reduction in husbands beating their wives, a decrease in husbands who seek the services of prostitutes, an increase in the number of girls sent to school and an overall improvement in women’s psychological wellbeing. While Charlotte conducted baseline research and gathered preliminary statistics before launching ABL, more resources are im-



portant for Charlotte and her team to continue to measure the impact of their campaign effectively. The group has begun conducting audience surveys in order to measure if these changes are actually occurring.

Emmanuel Tumusime, a 33 year-old working on his second marriage, attended one of the plays and afterward said that the performance was “very

similar” to his own life, and that it delivered a valuable message. He said he could tell that the performances were having a community impact because “people do not quarrel with their husband or wife. Now they sit down and discuss issues.”

Achieving a Better Life is one of the most successful projects to come out of Global Grassroots’ Academy for Conscious Change, as it has received widespread exposure through multiple outlets including National Geographic’s “Action Atlas” and World Pulse magazine.

Achieving a Better Life is also the first Global Grassroots initiative to create its own profile on GlobalGiving.org and Facebook. Since starting ABL, Charlotte has been nominated for a CNN Hero Award and won World Pulse

magazine’s second annual “Bold Ideas” Contest.

In February 2009, they performed the very first V-Day Vagina Monologues in Rwanda, adapted to a Rwandan context with mono-

logues of Rwandan women, tackling tough and taboo topics not often discussed publicly. On International Women’s Day in March 2009, the team was invited by the Rwandan Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion to perform one of their plays, which was broadcast nationwide three times, reaching at least 25,000 people. Also, Achieving a Better Life was commissioned by Intrahealth, an American



NGO, to perform during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence in late 2009. The director of USAID, the US Ambassador, and the Minister of Gender attended this event.

Achieving a Better Life has produced a film of one of its performances as well as a video documentary. This October, ABL began producing another documentary film. Three team members attended a script-writing program during the summer and Charlotte received training in documentary film-making through the American Embassy. Global Grassroots with its partners, the J.A. Charitable Trust and the Rebecca Davis Dance Company, has provided a camera to shoot with and funding to support production and distribution.

Magnifique Uwamahoro, a 23 year-old woman who saw the film recording of a performance, said that the most important thing she learned was that “girls should not be ashamed of talking about violence that may have happened to them.” Uwamahoro added that the actors “explain the topic in real life so you can see how it relates to your life... this is for the betterment of the community because people don’t usually talk about it. Men can go and take another wife and leave the first wife in silence. This happens too often in our community.” As Charlotte’s message reaches more people, hopefully communities will see a decrease in such behavior as men begin to think more carefully about how they treat women.

photos by Lauren Vopni

HAITI

Recovery & Relief | Water Purification | Trauma Healing

In January, one week after the devastating earthquake in Haiti, Global Grassroots founder Gretchen Wallace traveled to Port-au-Prince to volunteer and explore opportunities for Global Grassroots to support women in the healing of trauma and the rebuilding process. With field support from Knightsbridge and the financial support of Big Kenny's Love Everybody Fund and Jewish Helping Hands, Gretchen was involved in a range of activities. This included coordinating aid for urgent needs not being met by larger NGOs, serving as the information liaison between 50 families and the recovery and forensics teams operating at Port-au-Prince's Hotel Montana, and working via Twitter to help channel information about emergency needs to first-responders and the US military. Gretchen, who was called "a one-woman switchboard", and her husband, who focused on search, rescue and recovery efforts, were honored as CNN Haiti Heroes on Anderson Cooper 360 while in Haiti.

Global Grassroots also collaborated with Seldon Technologies of Windsor, VT to bring their WaterBox water purification device to Haiti for the first time. The Seldon WaterBox uses Seldon's unique nonwoven carbon nanotube material to absorb contaminants from ground water. The system produces drinking water to EPA Drinking Water Standards by removing bacteria, virus, cysts, spores and other contaminants without the need for heat, ultra-violet light, chemicals, electricity, or waiting time. Working in a poor community of 12,000 in the extended Boudon Valley of Petion-Ville, Port-au-Prince, the WaterBox was installed to purify and distribute water from a contaminated stream for area residents.



Finally, forging a partnership with AMURTEL, an international organization with a long-standing presence in the Boudon Valley, Global Grassroots held a social entrepreneurship workshop with women community representatives and initiated a mind-body trauma healing program for Haitian women and children living in local tent cities. The methods that Global Grassroots employed in Haiti, which are also used in Rwanda, involve a unique form of yogic breathwork clinically studied and refined by Dr. Richard Brown, Professor of Psychiatry at Columbia University, and Dr. Patricia Gerbarg, Professor of Psychiatry at New York Medical College, to treat post-traumatic stress. The program, called Breath~Body~Mind (BBM), integrates Qigong movements and ancient breathing practices that help restore balance to the nervous system. By combining modern scientific knowledge with holistic healing methods from many cultures, BBM rapidly relieves stress, anxiety, sleep problems, and other symptoms of post-traumatic stress. These techniques have been used with Tsunami survivors, Katrina survivors, 9/11 first responders and rape victims in Sudan. Gretchen Wallace and Barbara Johnson, both certified Integrative Breathwork Practitioners, taught the BBM program to over 150 earthquake survivors and relief workers over the course of two weeks. The technique was easy to learn, the impact was immediately felt by participants, and women's groups continued practicing on their own with the compassionate support of AMURTEL.

Global Grassroots has integrated the BBM program along with yoga and meditation into its core Academy for Conscious Change program, especially to serve genocide survivors and vulnerable women in Rwanda who may still suffer from post-traumatic stress. This autumn, Gretchen also co-facilitated a week-long retreat at Kripalu retreat center for relief workers returning from Haiti. The course was taught in conjunction with yoga practitioners Sue Jones of YogaHope and Dave Emerson of the Trauma Center in Boston, who continue to collaborate to offer trauma exposure and stress management workshops for other relief organizations operating in disaster and war zones.

If your organization is interested in a custom-designed, mind-body, interactive program for trauma exposure or stress management, please contact us: info@globalgrassroots.org.

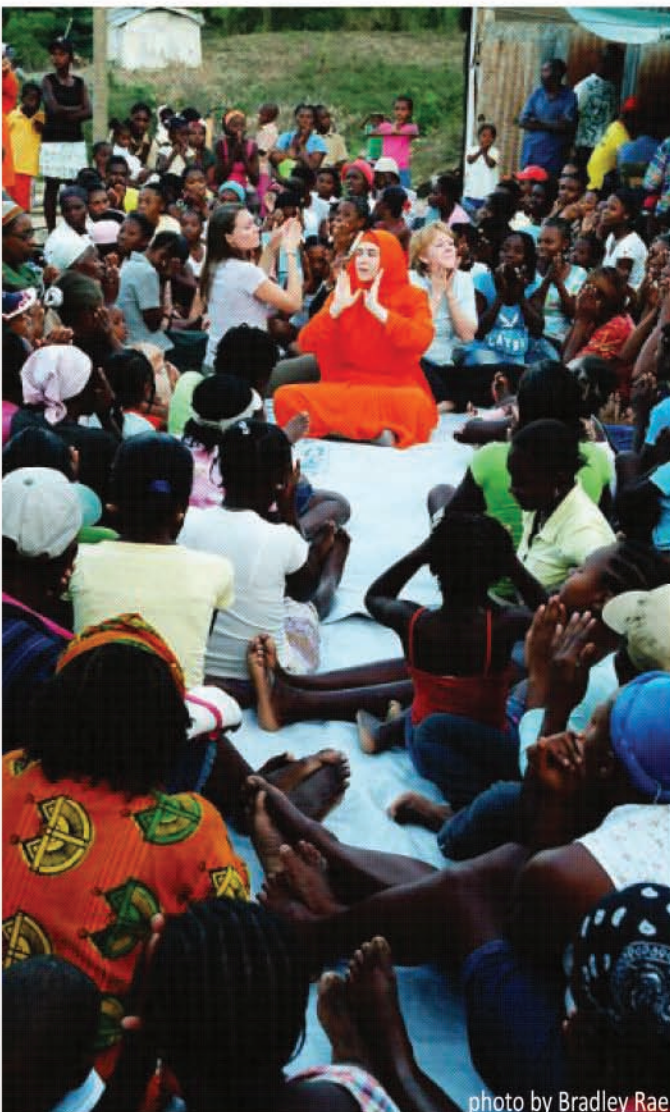


photo by Bradley Rae



photo by Brian Steidle

RWANDA

Post-Traumatic Stress | Alternative Healing Programs

Gretchen Wallace, Jamie Persons, Ariana DeToro, Isaura Zelaya Favila, Gillian Porcella

Global Grassroots began its exploration of post-traumatic stress in Rwanda with its first site visit during the genocide memorial month of April in 2006. Since that time, we have deepened our understanding through our direct work with genocide survivors supporting their ideas for social change. In early 2010, Global Grassroots undertook a more comprehensive look at trauma healing efforts currently operating in formalized programs throughout Rwanda, 16 years after the 1994 genocide. Our objectives in conducting this evaluation were to (a) gain a deeper understanding of the Rwandan cultural context with regard to post-conflict post-traumatic stress, (b) develop a landscape map of the methodology and scope of holistic, mind-body trauma interventions used by organizations on the ground in Rwanda, and (c) identify existing needs and evaluate best practices to inform recommendations for effective holistic treatment methods in a Rwandan context. Our evaluation draws upon a review of available literature and the most current studies in this field, Global Grassroots' four years of operations at the grassroots level, as well as formal and informal interviews with governmental organizations, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and practitioners in the field. The following is an excerpt from our upcoming report.

On April 6, 1994, a plane carrying Rwandan President Habyarimana was shot down, sparking the swiftest genocide the world has ever seen. One hundred days later, an estimated one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus had been brutally murdered by their own countrymen. The UN estimates that 250,000 - 500,000 women and girls were raped, 67% of whom, Amnesty International reports, contracted HIV. Countless children witnessed the slaughter of their parents, often by people

they had previously known as friends and neighbors. When the last machete was wielded, the country was left virtually destroyed.

Individuals who experience or witness traumatic events, especially war, genocide and sexual violence, very often undergo deep psychological stress, otherwise known in Western psychology as post-traumatic stress disorder. According to the definition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual IV:

The person has been exposed to a traumatic event in which both of the following were present: [a] the person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others, [b] the person's response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror...The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impair-

ment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

This can include an entire spectrum of symptoms including repression, denial, self-doubt, inability to plan for the future, hyperarousal, intrusion, dissociation, insomnia, nightmares, startle responses, amnesia, reliving experiences, suicidal tendencies, alterations in affect regulation, isolation, self-blame, disconnection, distrust and numbing, among others. Trauma-focused studies and surveys conducted in Rwanda leave no doubt as to the genocide's devastating psychological impact.

Each April, during the two-week national mourning period, the genocide becomes the focal point of conversations and public events. Memorial events are held throughout the country at local memorial sites; radio broadcasts exclusively play songs inspired by or related to the genocide; and TV Rwanda, the national broadcaster, telecasts documentaries and films that



photo by Brian Steidle

show images of the 1994 atrocities. Statistics indicate that 79% of PTSD patients are “more symptomatic during the genocide commemoration period when they are exposed to traumatic images that bring back memories of what happened during the genocide, while the rest suffer long-term symptoms throughout the year.”

At this year’s national commemoration ceremony on April 7th at Amahoro Stadium in Kigali, 200 cases of “traumatic crisis” were reported. Trained therapists were planted throughout the crowd to provide assistance, but intensely afflicted individuals were removed from the event and taken to local hospitals where they were sedated. The strategy is meant to guard against mass hysteria, intended to simply “snap people out of” their traumatic re-experiences. “People are taken out of the event and taken aside where they are allowed to express emotion; then they often sleep. When they wake up, sometimes they are encouraged to discuss their experience or to seek counseling”. The nature of April’s commemoration period forces survivors to engage directly and repeatedly with traumatic memories, often with volatile and troubling results; but there is little follow-up support in place to provide comfort, transition, or healing after the period ends for the year.

At commemoration events, traumatic re-experiencing is found to be more common for women than men. In years past, adolescents have been the demographic most commonly afflicted by crises during the commemoration ceremonies. In recent years, though, there has been a wider age range reported being affected. Indeed, the data indicates that secondary trauma is being passed through families to a new generation of youth, many of whom were not even alive during the 1994 genocide.

Sixteen years post-conflict, the demand for psychosocial treatment in Rwanda has also increased as Rwandese have become more “sensitized and aware” of traumatic stress as an issue. Whereas people used to think that symptoms

Into the Abyss | Gretchen Wallace

My first visit to Rwanda was in 2006 during the 12th anniversary of their genocide. I’m not sure anyone can completely understand what drives such atrocities. But what was painfully clear to me after just one day in Rwanda was the devastating emotional impact of genocide long after the violence ends.

It was mid-April and I found myself one of only three white Westerners surrounded by a mass of nearly 75,000 mourners who had just spent the last week exhuming the bodies of their family members for a proper burial. The remains of often up to 30 people, now safely occupying each coffin, had once been hastily hidden in shallow backyard graves or tossed by their killers into a local latrine. I followed the funeral procession slowly, feeling absurdly out-of-place, as a parade of rumbling pick-up trucks led the way carrying nearly 200 caskets neatly draped with purple crosses and dripping with tears from hovering family members.

Our destination was the Kigali Memorial Centre, a heartfelt, yet painful testament to the terror that drenched this tiny country, the size of Maryland, just over a decade before. Massive underground tombs surrounding the Memorial lay waiting for this year’s burials, offering some token of honor for lives so carelessly lost. Already nearly 50,000 massacred Tutsi rested below, nine coffins-deep.

As we snaked our way through village streets, I tried to imagine the sheer intensity of the fear one must face as a target of such hatred with nowhere to escape and no one to help. The magnitude and speed of the violence that reached every corner of this small, but beautiful country in 1994 leaving just under 1 million people slaughtered is still unfathomable. For a split second, relative to the country’s now everyday calm, the trauma of their 100-day nightmare erupts forth with the force of a volcano.

As the survivors assemble for each commemorative event or funeral, the quiet distress that must permeate every daily action of neighbors living side-by-side their family’s killers begin to flood the senses, standing hairs on end. Mourners crowd together under tents, seemingly pleading with nature to spare them this time from the same fierce rains that twelve years ago were unable to dissuade mobs from their vicious tasks. Suddenly a woman begins to scream – it is usually a woman, as it is so often the case that the women bear the greatest burden of such suffering as mothers who lost their children, as widows who lost their husbands and as precious souls whose bodies were claimed as the spoils of war by their captors.

Immediately trauma workers standing by in red first-aid vests dive into the crowd with refined skill. Within moments, the tightly-packed audience gives birth to the shrieking, gasping woman as she is led away arm-in-arm with her rescuers, dragging her feet, sobbing and screaming in a language you need not speak to understand. The fragile facade begins to crumble and the collective wound again expels grief, anger, sadness as survivors unwillingly relive or uncontrollably release their pain.

On a visit to the ladies room during this particular memorial event, I caught a glimpse of a back room full of the same women who had been extracted from the crowd earlier. Most were sitting slumped against the wall on grass mats. Attendees fanned them or sang softly while the women sobbed. Others had surrendered to sleep. I asked a museum staff person standing nearby what would happen tomorrow to support these women. “Nothing,” was the answer. “They go back to normal life. Like everyone else.”

were caused by poison, now they recognize them as signs of trauma. In 2000, 8,000 Rwandese were seen by professionals for mental health issues; by 2009, that number had grown to 34,500.

Current psychosocial interventions in Rwanda can be grouped into four methodological categories: individual talk therapy, support groups, group workshopping, and cultivating wellness. In conversations with representatives from all four of the methodological categories explored in this report, it was acknowledged that individuals do not heal in isolation.

While the Western model of individual counseling has emerged as the predominant method of treatment in Rwanda, the individualized talk-therapy approach has been identified by multiple Rwandan interviewees as lacking cultural relevance. Practitioners and participants consistently expressed the value of approaches that address individual and collective healing simultaneously.

Solidarity and community seem to be key elements of any effective healing process in Rwanda. "It is a cultural value to support those who are suffering". The majority of program representatives interviewed stressed the importance of using existing social networks to take advantage of resources, to disseminate information, and to share skills. Existing trauma healing initiatives throughout Rwanda are, thus, capitalizing on community engagement as well as the "multiplier effect," in which newly trained individuals are directly responsible for sharing the practices with others in their families or communities.

In Judith Herman's book, *Trauma and Recovery*, she explores the elements and stages of recovery from trauma, which include not only an individual process of healing but also one that involves "restoring the connection between survivors and their community," often through endeavors in which a survivor is empowered to identify her value within her community and to have a voice in the context of political or social change. This

is an element critical not only to individual psychological healing but also to the effectiveness of post-conflict reconstruction.

Additionally, more comprehensive interventions for "cultivating wellness" aim to help participants to develop habits and skills to rebalance themselves and foster self-care. Predominantly through group-based teaching and practice, participants



learn body-based skills that empower them to manage stress and emotions in a way that helps reestablish an inner sense of wellbeing. Healing from trauma is viewed in a holistic context where psychological and mental practices are used to "reprogram" the emotional part of the brain that is responsible for keeping people "stuck" on some level in the traumatic experience.

The Global Grassroots Academy for Conscious Change integrates both individual and community healing, using holistic methods and skills training. First, Global Grassroots utilizes a range of mind-body techniques that have had a scientifically demonstrated impact in addressing holistically the broad range of symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Mind-body techniques, such as meditation, Qigong, yoga, mindfulness and Coherent Breathwork are utilized for several reasons. They allow for a direct physiological benefit

that can be felt immediately when practiced by the survivor. When utilized over time, they have the ability to support autonomic nervous system self-regulation, which is one of the core physiological functions disrupted by trauma. Mind-body techniques are also easy to learn and to teach to laypeople across religious, cultural, and language barriers. They do not require a long-term therapeutic relationship as con-

ventional talk-based psychotherapy does, are accessible to communities with little cost, can be made available immediately post-disaster when the existing mental health infrastructure has been destroyed, and can continue to be practiced individually and on a grassroots level in families and in other community groups.

Second, Global Grassroots provides opportunities for women to form teams, which can also serve as support groups to survivors with similar experiences who have not previously had the opportunity to connect with others and discuss their circumstances. Since participants are gathering on the basis of creating their own non-profit, teams can avoid the stigma associated with participation in survivor support groups that stand alone in that purpose.

Third, in its issue diagnosis work and

creative problem solving skills training, Global Grassroots incorporates a process of identifying one's inner power and recognizing the assets and gifts that one can leverage to create social change. This supports the reclaiming of one's sense of agency for self-care and self-improvement as well as one's sense of value to others.

Finally, Global Grassroots provides a pathway for understanding suffering and designing a civil society organization that will advance one's own solutions from a place of inner strength. With funding and high-engagement support, participants launch their own non-profit organizations and engage in a direct experience of creating social change. This process provides a self-led opportunity to combat the failures of society, advocate change within and by existing institutions, create new programs to serve others in need and advance transformation. We believe that this dynamic and multi-pronged method, integrating personal and social transformation, offers an optimal and holistic approach to trauma healing and post-conflict reconstruction.

Due to the highly sensitive nature of working in the psychosocial field, there is the potential to unintentionally cause harm. In order to mitigate this possibility a set of guiding principles have been established. Many of the themes of this "Do No Harm" philosophy can be applied to the Rwandan context to establish some ethical guidelines and standards for establishing psychosocial programming.

Under the Do No Harm principles, some of the most frequently recurring themes have to do with the importance of local empowerment, capacity-building, and participatory engagement. These efforts serve to counterbalance the dependency often created by the appearance of outsider programs and aid. They also foster a spirit of self-reliance, honoring the ways in which local communities can act to sustain and support their mem-

bers, and provide opportunities for healing through participation in rebuilding efforts.

The field of trauma healing in Rwanda has undeniably been shaped by the assumptions, ideologies, and methodologies of Western psychology, brought by foreign aid workers, initiatives, and resources. As expressed by many of the organizations contacted throughout the course of this research, the assistance and guidance of international players has been unquestionably vital as part of the healing process for Rwanda. However, it is important to note that the nature of the trauma and devastation sustained by Rwandese during the genocide - and experienced in its wake - is incredibly unique. Approaches to

trauma healing must, therefore, be carefully tailored to the Rwandan context.

When dealing with the aftermath of trauma, perhaps especially in Rwanda, a long-term or lifetime approach to healing is key; it must be a continual process. There must be a commitment to sustained care, for oneself, for one's community, and for one's nation. As evidenced by the transmission of traumatic stress to a generation of children not yet born in 1994 and by the hundreds of cases of traumatic crisis during the Month of Mourning, for Rwandans, trauma is continuously sustained. Its treatment must be equally constant throughout the year -- and sustainable over many years -- if meaningful healing is to take place.

Dear Global Grassroots Friends,

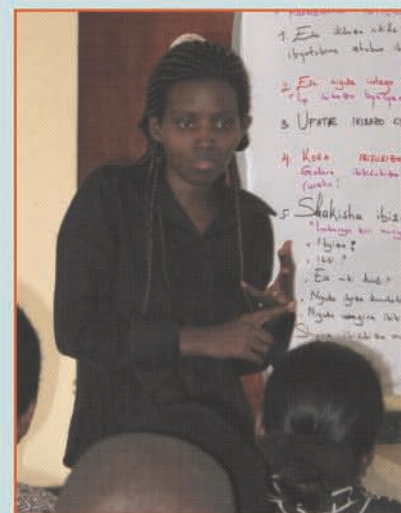
I have a short story to share about my experience of working with Global Grassroots. I started to work for Global Grassroots in 2006. It was only the second organization that I worked for in my whole life, and Global Grassroots was the first one which helped me in my life. For example, through working with Global Grassroots, I have been able to develop relationships with many people and learn how to manage many people who of course have different minds, ideas and lifestyles. Also, I have learned many things related to my professional work such as developing my language skills, learning about different cultures and different attitudes.

I have had a difficult life since I was 9 years old. If I had learned breathwork from Global Grassroots during that time, my life wouldn't have been as difficult to manage as it has been. Breathwork has helped to bring back my normal way of living in society, in my work, in my studies. I would say that breathwork has changed my whole life.

Also the problem tree analysis [that Global Grassroots teaches] has been very important to my life. Before I make a decision against anyone that I am responsible for, or for any mistake he or she has made, I remember to conduct an analysis and find out the reasons for his or her actions. Global Grassroots made me believe that people are not bad, but that the conditions of their lives can make them act badly. That has changed my daily life a lot.

I would say thank you to Gretchen, and to Laura Clauson who made our connection.

Thanks,
Gyslaine Uwitonze,
Rwanda Program Officer



REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN RWANDA | Stella Safari



Growing up in Bukavu-- Eastern Congo, I was never aware of my options as a young woman. I had no idea that there existed such things as birth control or contraceptives that gave women control over their sexuality and sexual health. Grant it, this could be attributed to my young age at the time or to the simple fact that the words 'sex' and 'women' never come up in the same sentence in my culture. Most women in the community had at least 5 children; usually very close in age and for the most part, the same women were the primary providers for all their children. I could never wrap my head around why women would keep having so many children if that meant more emotional and financial responsibility on them. As I got older the solution seemed quite simple to me. If a woman does not want to have or keep having children, then

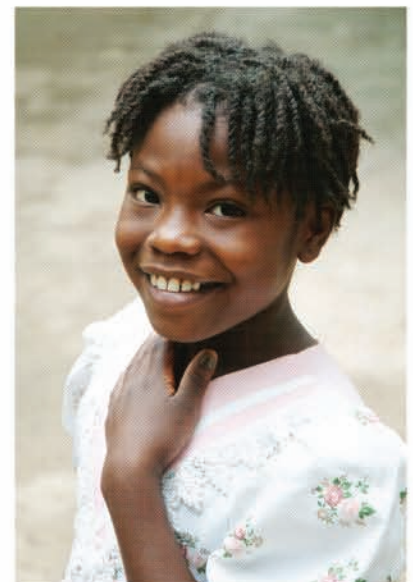
she should use birth control. But how realistic is it to actually provide birth control and contraceptives to women in such rural areas or even in the cities of a place like Rwanda?

Rwanda is a close neighbor to Bukavu and though we have different customs, our mentality and values are overwhelmingly similar. The topic of sex is still a major taboo and is usually avoided. With this in mind, let's consider a young woman in a rural village whose desire is only to have three children. She feels this will be financially and emotionally more ideal for her

lifestyle and happiness. She learns about this concept of birth control at a local clinic and considers giving it a try. She wants to tell her husband, but she is not sure of how he will react. She could ask him to start using condoms, but she heard that condoms promote infidelity and sexual promiscuity. She doesn't want to risk her husband's trust, so her other option is to get 'the pill'. How will she go into the clinic without an illness? The whole village is going to start talking once they find out the real reason she went there. Plus, her friend told her that she is going to gain weight and become severely ill during menstruation. Where will she get the extra sanitary napkins, which are already expensive? She can already predict that her husband won't be too happy about that extra medical bill either. So, she considers going to the clinic in the city to get the 5-year shot. This way she won't have to deal with taking the pill all the time. The journey to the city will take at least a full day and cost a lot of money, and she's going to

have to stay with a friend for the night. She knows her husband will not allow this. Especially after his friend told him that the shot sterilizes women forever. Taking all this into consideration, the choice does not seem too clear anymore. The solution is just not that simple.

In theory, making birth control available to women provides options when it comes to a woman's reproductive rights. However, there are social and cultural barriers that contradict the use of birth control that must be broken down first before handing out pills and condoms to women. Our Program Officer Gyslaine Uwitonze believes that an effective way to approach this issue is encouraging women who have had positive experiences with birth control to speak to other women who are curious about it. Women will listen and trust one another before doing so with outsiders. They have similar experiences and are in better positions to be change agents in their own communities. This is the only way that we can make birth control more accessible to women, marginalized or otherwise, who are seeking control over their reproductive rights and sexual health.



THE ROAD AHEAD: 2011

Expansion to Northern Uganda

In 2008 Global Grassroots conducted a feasibility study for expansion to Northern Uganda to target women and girls who had survived the reign of terror of the Lord's Resistance Army, which has included sexual violence, sexual slavery and forcing children to serve as combatants. We placed our expansion on hold during the economic downturn in 2009 and 2010. But in 2011 we plan to resume our expansion: we will make two site visits, revise our feasibility study, identify local partners, and implement a pilot program to initiate at least five grassroots social ventures serving women and girls in Northern Uganda.



Advancing Transformation

Global Grassroots remains committed to its core Academy for Conscious Change program in Rwanda. Over the next year, we will continue to provide our fellowship of change agents with support for greater impact and sustainability, and facilitate the launch of our seven newest ventures currently in development. To this aim, our objectives are as follows:

Program Objectives Global Grassroots' primary program objective is to accelerate the process of personal and societal transformation through training, resources, fellowship and on-going facilitation. Our general *social venture training objective* is to provide a team with all the hard skills needed to create a plan for a viable social enterprise that will address a core issue facing women. Our *personal transformation objective* is to help these future change leaders deepen their sense of power, expand their sense of self-awareness, develop tools for creating social change, and strengthen the capacity to initiate social change responsibly from a place of clarity, commitment and purpose. Our *social transformation objective* is to build the systems, tools, networks and support structures that will catalyze the ongoing growth of communities of conscious social change agents who will continue to solve grassroots social issues facing women and girls.

Outcome Objectives Our outcome objectives for each class of participants by the completion of 18 months are as follows:

- 75% of teams will have acquired advanced project planning and project management skills, deemed sufficient to launch their own social ventures.
- All participants will raise their sense of economic and perceived wellbeing by 50%.
- 75% of participants' will have a normalized sense of personal power.
- 80% of funded ventures will be operating sustainably.
- All ventures operating sustainably will have a measurable impact at the root level of the social issue they are designed to address, affecting women.
- Ventures teams will have applied their social venture skills to solve new community issues and/or replicated their work, maintained their commitment to personal transformation practice, and passed along skills, tools or practices to others within their communities.

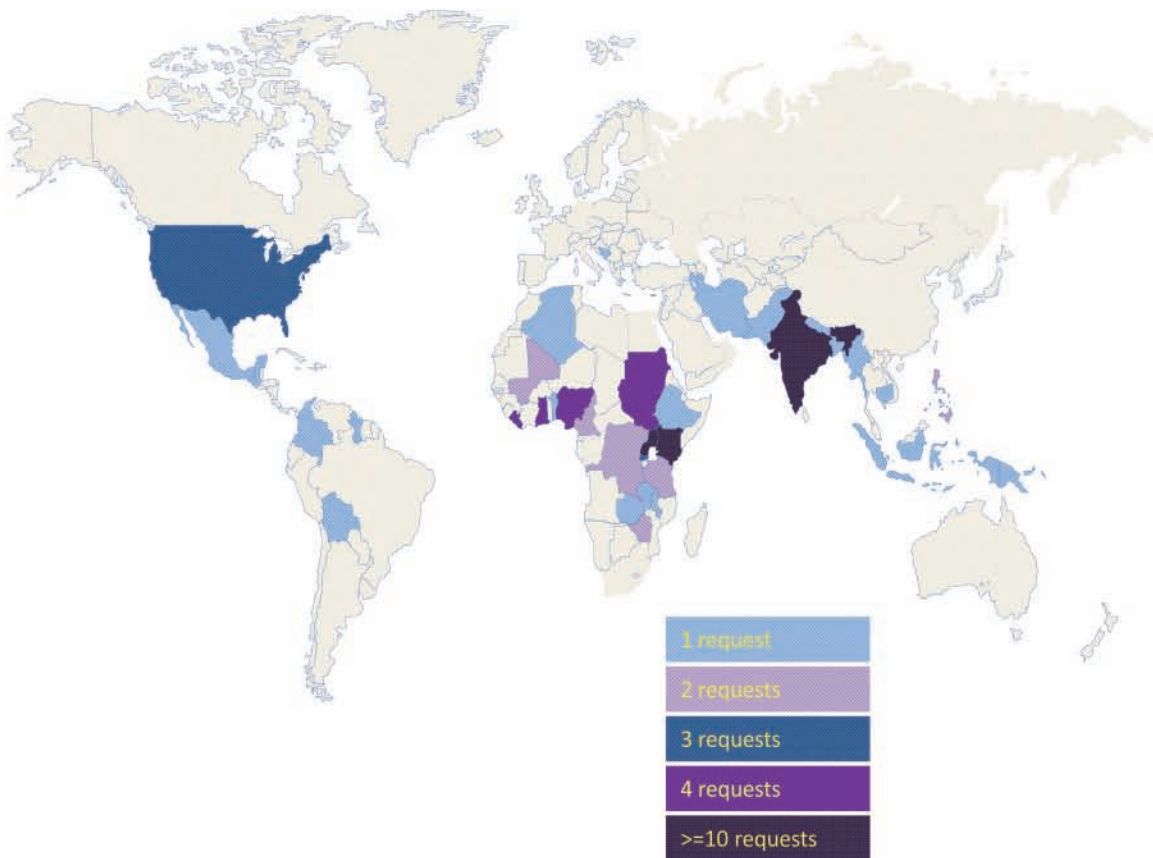
In 2009 we conducted a comprehensive impact evaluation, the details of which can be accessed on our website. In late 2011/early 2012 we will invest in our next comprehensive impact evaluation of our program and outcome objectives for all ventures launched in 2010.

GLOBAL SCALE STRATEGY

Global Grassroots' programs have now been requested by

100 women's groups in **40** different countries.

World Map of requests for partnerships/cooperation with GG



We also aim to build the architecture necessary to support the ongoing process of conscious social change. This includes convening teams working on similar issues, connecting teams with national and international organizations providing specific issue expertise and avenues for advocacy or marketing, creating new social financing mechanisms, collaborating with local officials, establishing mentorship opportunities between change agents, and developing opportunities for engagement in wellness practices. To this end, we have established a senior advisory council of graduates from Rwanda, who we hope

will begin to take on greater leadership roles among the fellowship in Rwanda.

As of year-end 2010, Global Grassroots has trained over 300 change agents who are currently operating a total of 16 sustainable non-profit organizations, which serve between 10,000 and 14,000 women and girls each year.

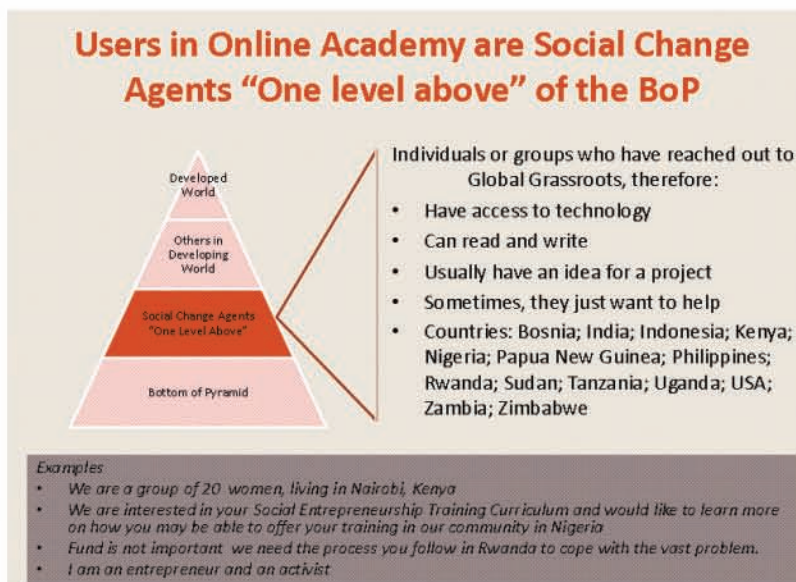
Tuck Business School at Dartmouth College First-Year Project

This past spring a team of five first-year MBA students and one faculty member at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth College conducted a semester-length consulting engagement for Global Grassroots. The team, which included students Vera Guerreiro, John Moran, Betsy Nesbitt, Julien Kervella and Hieu Le, evaluated a global scale strategy that will allow us to meet the demand for our programs over the next two years. Their recommendations, which we have begun to implement, include two primary strategies: a web-based elearning program that incorporates our Academy for Conscious Change curriculum and a partnership program that allows Global Grassroots to train and license its program model to other non-profit organizations.

eAcademy for Conscious Change

Global Grassroots is working to establish a web-based e-learning Academy, which will allow us to deliver our program via a free subscription service to grassroots teams throughout the developing world, accessible through internet cafes. The purpose is to provide training, skills and tools to support small-scale, grassroots-level social entrepreneurship among underserved women's groups in poor countries, who have no other access to the training needed to start their own non-profit and design their own solution to the social issues of priority to them in their communities.

On average, groups requesting Global Grassroots support are made up of moderately educated women in poor countries eager to establish social change ventures or micro-NGOs to address a critical social issue facing women in their communities. The eLearning Academy will thus be designed to be used by moderately educated groups, but who have a basic knowledge of computers and the internet, and can speak or request assistance with basic English. Once a roll-out in English is established, Global Grassroots will seek to develop versions in other languages. We are also in discussions with an Ashoka Fellow in India, who designs mobile phone platforms for international development, about a future smart phone application that will allow us to disseminate our curriculum to change agents at the Bottom of the Pyramid and establish a user-generated Idea Bank to help change groups share their own solutions.



Global Grassroots will require significant sponsorship to launch our eAcademy for Conscious change, and invite you to partner with us to make this innovation possible.

Global Implementation Partners & New Course Offerings

Global Grassroots is working to package our curriculum and methodology to train other NGOs with aligned missions to implement our program model for their target population. The program will involve a comprehensive training course, year-long field support consultations and curriculum license. Our goal is to generate revenue for our work while expanding our reach more broadly. As part of our strategic growth process, we are also developing several courses which will be offered independent of the partnership program. These courses include:

Personal Transformation: A year-long correspondence course for individuals

Conscious Social Change:

A two to three-week intensive trainer-training and executive education course for practitioners and partner NGOs

Three and five-day interactive workshops for emerging change agents and students

Conscious Philanthropy: A weekend retreat for engaged partners and donors

(See our story on conscious philanthropy on page 26.)

If you or your organization are interested in any of these opportunities, please contact us: info@globalgrassroots.org

FINANCES

Global Grassroots felt the intensity of the economic downturn in late 2008. In 2009 we contracted significantly in response to ensure our longer-term sustainability, more than halving our operating budget from our 2008 capacity. This unfortunately required that we reduce our core staff, place the launch of new projects in Rwanda on hold and postpone our expansion to Uganda. During 2009, Global Grassroots took the opportunity to engage in an internal evaluation process. This included investment in a comprehensive impact evaluation of its Academy for Conscious Change in Rwanda, a US-based appreciative inquiry process, a repositioning of its strategic focus, and the development of a new website to present Global Grassroots' work in the field we call "conscious social change". In Rwanda, Global Grassroots chose to invest as a priority in continuing education and high engagement advisory support for our existing organizations to ensure that they too could strengthen their capacity and sustain themselves over the course of the economic decline. As such, Global Grassroots' Social Venture Investment Fund represents the launch of only one new micro-NGO in Rwanda, a water venture called *Have a Good Life*, as well as additional operating grants to existing organizations.

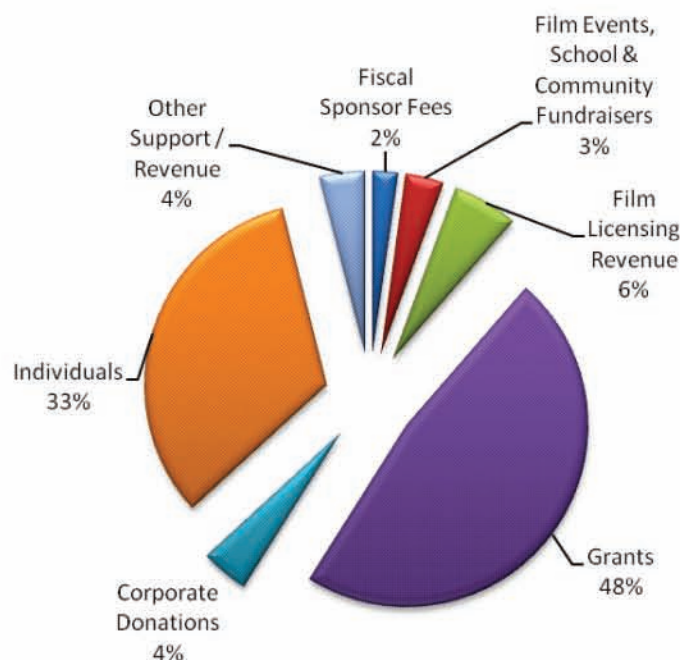


In May, Global Grassroots hosted the first annual LUNAFEST in its local community. LUNAFEST is a film festival of short films by and for women, sponsored by Clif Bar Co. Not only was LUNAFEST an opportunity to raise funds for and awareness of our work among our neighbors, but Global Grassroots also launched

its first annual local **Change Agent Award**.

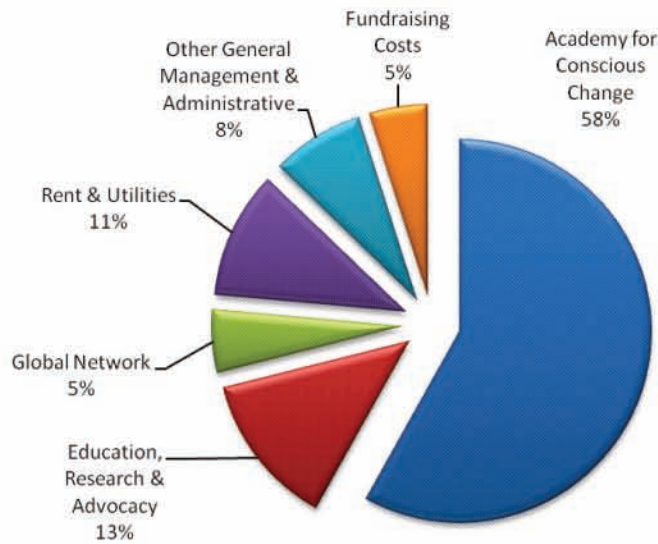
Our first honoree was **Wynona Ward, Esq., attorney and founder of Have Justice--Will Travel, Inc.**, a non-profit organization that brings legal and social services into the rural communities of Vermont. Ms. Ward, 58, who grew up in a home where family violence was an accepted way of life, was recently awarded the 2010 First Hero of the Week Award by CNN Television and is an Ashoka Fellow. Before entering law school, Wynona operated a trucking business with her husband.

2009 Sources of Funds



2009 SOURCES OF FUNDS	Total
Fiscal Sponsor Fees	\$ 2,550
Film Events, School and Community Fundraisers	\$ 4,057
Film Licensing Revenue	\$ 6,854
Grants	\$ 56,183
Corporate Donors	\$ 5,006
Individuals	\$ 38,801
Other Support/Revenue	\$ 4,642
Total	\$ 118,094

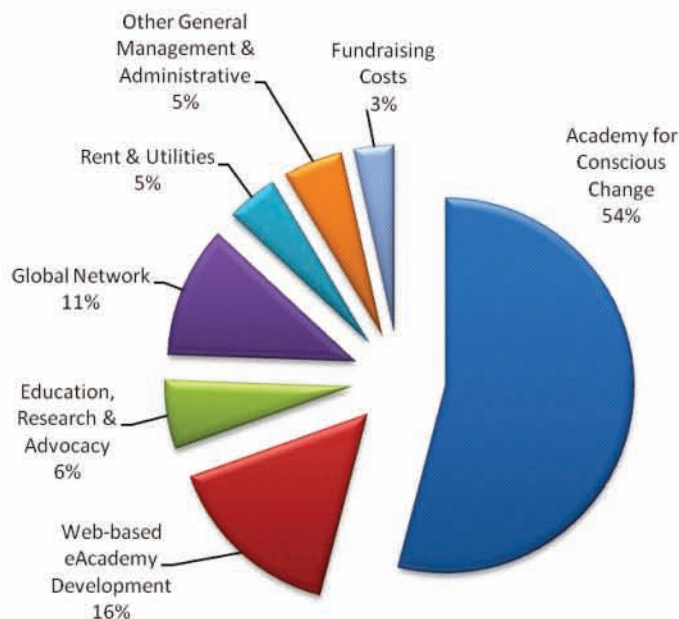
2009 Operating Expenses



2009 OPERATING EXPENSES	Total
Academy for Conscious So- cial Change	\$ 76,055
Education, Research, and Advocacy	\$ 16,991
Global Network	\$ 6,991
Rent and Utilities	\$ 14,116
Other General Management and Administrative	\$ 10,283
Fundraising Costs	\$ 6,461
Total	\$ 130,899

In 2010, Global Grassroots continued its strategic evaluation process, while investing in sustainable growth. We were able to initiate a new class of 7 teams into our Academy for Conscious Change, launch 7 new ventures and provide mezzanine funding to help with the expansion and sustainability of six existing ventures. Global Grassroots' operating expenses in 2010 are estimated to be just over \$200,000.

2011 Operating Budget



2011 OPERATING BUDGET	Total
Academy for Conscious Change	\$ 174,362
Web-based eAcademy Development	\$ 50,000
Education, Research, and Advocacy	\$ 19,331
Global Network	\$ 36,621
Rent and Utilities	\$ 14,400
Other General Manage- ment and Administrative	\$ 16,669
Fundraising Costs	\$ 11,117
Total	\$ 322,500

TRANSFORMATION:

CONSCIOUS PHILANTHROPY & ENGAGED PARTNERSHIP

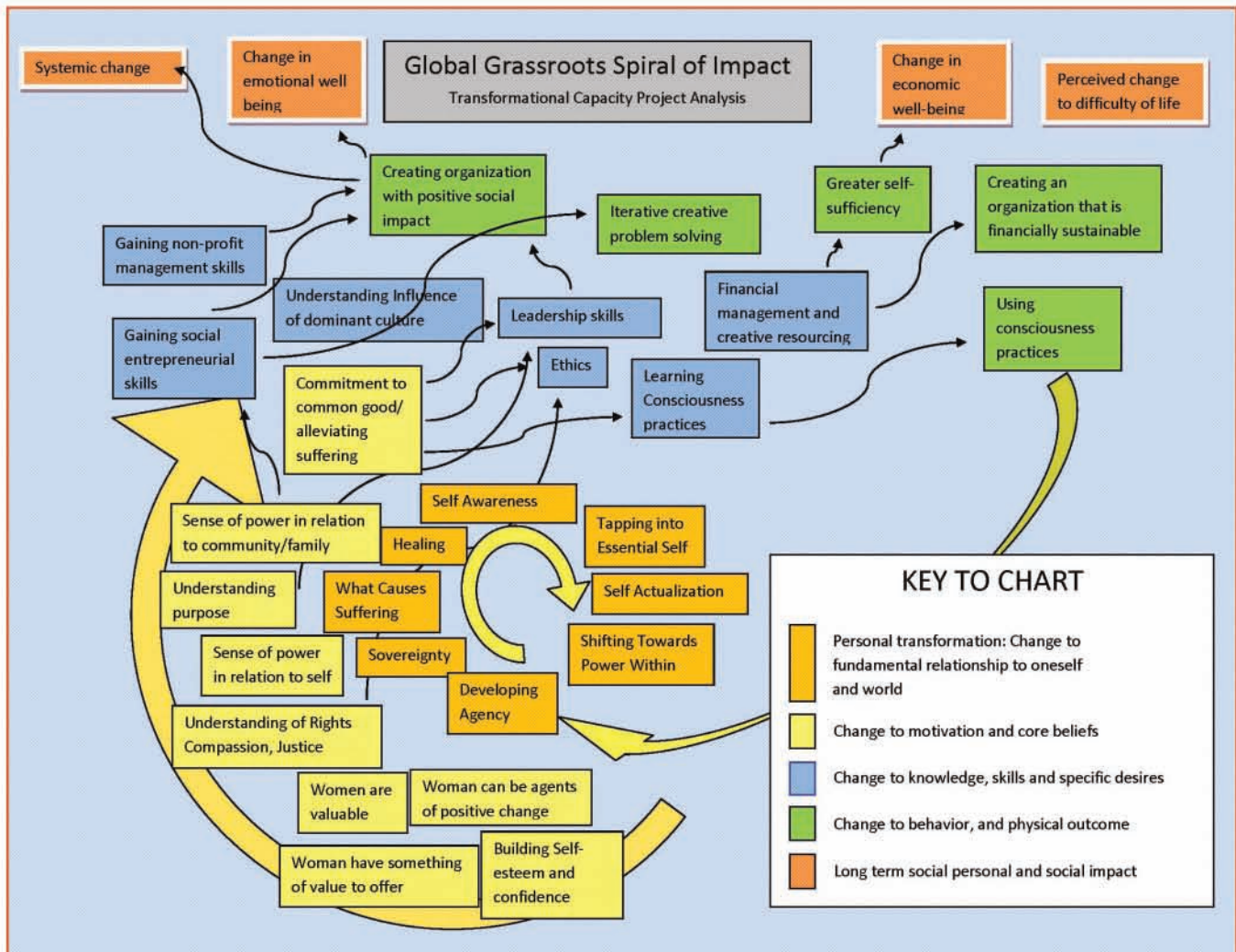
Over the last year, Global Grassroots has undergone a unique internal inquiry as part of an endeavor called the Transformational Capacity Project (TCP), led by Simon Dennis and Hink Herrick of White River Junction, VT. TCP provides “a framework and a method for bringing the field of transformational practice to non-profit organizations both for increasing their effectiveness at accomplishing their missions, and for increasing the sector’s ability to facilitate personal and social transformation.” Examples of transformational practice include meeting protocols that facilitate deeper dialogue, decision-making processes

that incorporate greater stakeholder involvement, and collective practices for helping volunteers, clients and staff connect with the deeper meaning of their work.

The frameworks utilized by TCP were in direct alignment with Global Grassroots’ work which we call *Conscious Social Change* and which we teach in our Academy program to underserved women in Rwanda. But this project challenged us to look more deeply at how we could “walk the walk” in embodying our own values of conscious social change in every aspect of our operations. One in particu-

lar was fundraising. Over the last year’s economic downturn we have faced challenges in meeting our own needs for financial sustainability. TCP inspired us to ask the question ourselves – how can our fundraising strategy be both sustaining AND transformational.

This has led us to invest in two new approaches: conscious philanthropy and engaged partnerships.



Conscious Philanthropy

We were first inspired by an engagement with a group of Hopi Indians in the summer of 2009, where they described their relationship with money. They placed an importance on the constant *flow* of money towards its most useful purpose. When money was held on to by an individual, they suggested it became toxic. This led us to wonder about the correlation between wealth and unhappiness, giving and meaning. Lynne Twist, author of *The Soul of Money*, states: "When we see money as something that flows through our lives and through the world, we realize that it doesn't really belong to anyone; or we could say it belongs to everyone and the opportunity we have is to allow this resource, just like water, to move through the world in a way that nurtures the most people and the highest purpose."

We began to notice that while life was very difficult at the so-called "bottom of the (socioeconomic) pyramid", often there was a greater sense of optimism, generosity and happiness among those most marginalized and impoverished in the world. As Seraphine Hacimana, one of our women change agents in Rwanda said: "We are not very strong because of what we have in the pocket, but it is because of believing, trusting, and even having consciousness. We do believe that one day our dreams will become a reality." As another powerful statistic of generosity among those of modest means, according to the *Giving USA Annual Report on Philanthropy*, of the \$200 billion given to nonprofits in the year 2000, 88 percent of that giving came from individuals, 75 percent of whom earned less than \$150,000 a year.

Within more privileged communities, we noticed that many of our human hang-ups about our relevance, identity and power would often be played out through our choices for how we contributed our money or time as volunteers. For example, we noticed circumstances where people felt guilty about their privilege and their giving seemed to be a method of self-soothing rather than a conscious investment. We felt empathy for the times

when people felt helpless about another's suffering and reacted with misguided efforts to "fix" or "save" rather than listening deeply to understand how to facilitate self-sufficiency. We attended well-meaning gala events where we came into contact with our common human desire to be seen, acknowledged and associated with an important cause, but which unintentionally upheld inequality and exclusivity despite giving directed towards the most marginalized. We saw fierce competition between non-profit organizations for resources

shops on Conscious Philanthropy that will allow individuals to experience the nature of our conscious social change curriculum through an interactive journey in personal transformation related to giving. These workshops are appropriate for family foundations, corporate foundations, community foundations, individual philanthropists and anyone interested in learning how to align their giving with their deepest sense of purpose and meaning.

If you are interested in our courses on conscious philanthropy, please contact us.



even when they shared a similar mission. And we saw manipulation of beneficiaries with strings attached to funding, rather than a deep trust in each other's wisdom and a vision for equal partnership.

We have compassion for the frustrations that exist in reaching a sense of meaning and real impact through philanthropy. And we see an opportunity to apply a new paradigm of transformation and inner-driven change for greater connection, intentionality, and attunement in giving. As such, in early 2011, Global Grassroots will be offering a series of retreats and work-

Engaged Partnership

We have also had the good fortune of participating in several engaged partnerships this year, which embrace learning and connection as much as channeling funding towards social change projects. This includes our partnership with Jewish Helping Hands, which recruited 6 volunteers to visit our teams in Rwanda to learn as much as possible about the social issues they are facing, to provide post-launch investments in long-term sustainability, and to volunteer to provide the expertise that had been requested by grassroots teams. Rabbi Joel Soffin writes of his experience:

With Alexi Gakumba and [GG Intern] Joseph Hitimana we visited the church memorial at Ntarama...Later we stood in a circle and we thanked Alexi and Joseph for letting us into their lives, the lives of their families and friends, and the history of their country. We recited our prayer of mourning and then hugged each other as tears flowed down our cheeks. We were one circle of caring, one human family.

My challenge was to work with Innocent and his team, Let Us Build Ourselves. I was to teach them fund-raising techniques, such as the ones I had created back home. The team of mostly women was unsure of me at first, but when I took their pictures and together we created large buttons for them to wear, their enthusiasm and wide smiles were wonderful to behold. They had chosen these words to put above each picture: GUSOMA = KUJIJUKA; Reading = Knowledge.

All of them went eagerly into the nearby marketplace to see what people would say. Everyone noticed the colorful buttons and wanted to know what the words really meant. The women explained their literacy program and then the others immediately wanted to know how they could get a pin with their picture on it...

The team called themselves Let Us Build Ourselves. I hope we helped them to continue to do so. I know that they did so for us. We will never be the same as we have become part of the Global Grassroots and the Rwandan family. Thank you so much.

Global Grassroots is grateful for its partnership with the Cherokee Elementary School in Scottsdale, Arizona. A group of young students, supported by their parents and teachers, engaged in learning about water issues in Rwanda. They designed their own water bottles which the children sold to raise funding for *Have a Good Life* water project in Kigali.



Educator and President of the Wisconsin Council of the Social Studies, Melissa Collum, visited Global Grassroots in Rwanda for the first time in 2009 as a Fulbright Fellow. She returned in 2010 with a colleague, her husband and her daughter, all of whom contributed their expertise to existing teams. Melissa conducted oral history interviews with several of our ventures as part of her doctorate studies and is now working on a K-12 service-learning curriculum based on Global Grassroots graduates.

In the year to come, Global Grassroots has been invited to create engaged partnerships with several other communities and schools. This includes a group of 4-5 families in New York whose children spearhead their local community fundraising efforts, the Global Action Club at Montgomery High School in California and Barnert Temple in Franklin Lakes, New Jersey. Barnert Temple has even considered constructing a rainwater catchment project to help kids learn directly about conserving and purifying drinking water. Each group is committed to learning, raising awareness and raising funds through creative projects. We are delighted to consider other such partnerships that integrate learning and engagement, while furthering our mission to facilitate conscious social change for women worldwide.

If your community group, faith-based group, school or family would like to consider an engaged partnership in sponsorship of a specific project in Rwanda, please contact us.

A sponsorship donation of \$10,000 enables:

- Tuition for 5 members of the venture's leadership team to enroll in the Academy program
- Seed funding grant for the venture's start-up
- 12 months of high engagement support and continuing education, marketing, networking and fundraising advice for the team



Global Grassroots embraces a method of participatory development in its partnership with grassroots change agents. We trust their priorities, their understanding of underlying social issues and their solutions. We believe that each of us, no matter what our economic, educational, social or geographical circumstances, has inherent and important wisdom to share based on our particular life experiences. And so we have begun to seek the personal wisdom of our Rwandan change agents. Inspired by a question posed by one of our long-time supporters, Sindee Ernst, we asked our 2010 Academy for Conscious Change participants:

What is one thing you know to be true?

There is no difference between love and compassion.

You can't succeed when you feel afraid.

Bananas take five months to grow from the flower.

Everyone thinks that animals are ignorant, but when you take care of them every day, you realize that they can recognize you outside and know when you are inside your house.

Love is more powerful than war. Forgiveness is more powerful than punishment.

You can be rich without security and peace of mind, but the poor can be free without stress.

Life is short. Don't pay attention to the problems you can't control.

The family of a drunkard never achieves progress.

Reflecting before reacting is better and can help you to have a better relationship.

There are no wild animals that will eat you if you go outside at night.

Women taking care of children alone are overworked.

Even if you are rich and can buy nice clothes, that doesn't mean you look good.

A well raised child is useful for himself/herself as well as for others.

Smile to make people happy.

Sharing your problem with someone else helps you in solving it.

Rich people never accept that they are rich.

"Utaranigwa agaramye agira ngo ijuru riri hafi" - Kinyarwanda saying which means that someone who has never been involved in something takes it for granted.

Willingness brings change.

Girls are the hearts of the family.

GRATITUDE

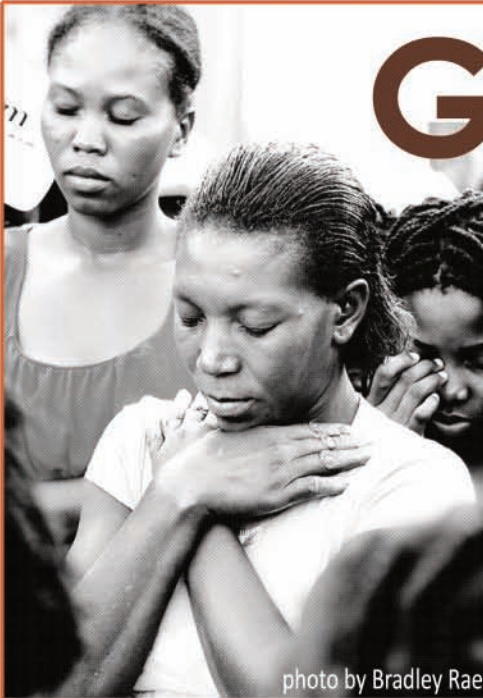


photo by Bradley Rae

Global Grassroots thanks its contributors who provide the sustenance that allows us to deliver on our commitment to social change for vulnerable women and girls. We are immensely grateful for their financial support and the work they do to spread the word about our Academy for Conscious Change and our graduates' ventures.

We also express our deep gratitude to the many individuals and partner organizations who provide the collaboration, mentoring, expert advice, volunteer time, networking, constructive feedback and encouragement that forms a collective web of support for our work. We feel enriched to be surrounded by and working alongside so many others who share our vision. If you are interested in joining the circle that sustains us, we are delighted to welcome you. We look forward to learning more about your interests and crafting a partnership together that will engender both meaning and social value.

The following list recognizes generous contributors who supported Global Grassroots between January 1, 2009 and November 1, 2010.

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Kinyarwanda Translation

CONVERSATIONS WITH RWANDA | Laya Millman

"So what was *Rwanda* like?"

Since returning, people often ask this question with a lift of the chin, a raised lip, squinted eye, and slightly turned face. I watch as they back away slightly before the question is fully asked, as if they don't really want to know.

When I tell them that Rwanda was lovely and utterly stole my heart, they pull their faces closer with disbelief. "Really??"

It's not what I would have expected either. As much as I tried to go in without preconceptions, I failed. I expected something completely different. I expected it to be emotionally trying, I expected to leave feeling somewhat drained and ready for a vacation, having spent two weeks with a population still angry about the world's abandonment in their darkest hour. Instead, I left looking like a girl who had just fallen in love. You know the type, starry eyed, bounce in her step, swooning and smiling all of the time.

The night before I left, I wrote Rwanda this love letter.

Dear Rwanda,

Remember the times we watched the sun rise over the Kigali hills together? And remember the time we hung out with all those barber shop boys and their Jessica Alba obsession? And the Francophone door-to-door Congolese mask salesman? The markets and the wrong-side taxi drivers, and all the beautiful women... Oh, and Rwanda, remember the long walks on dusty roads and the way you always smell like firewood.

Rwanda, I know I've only known you for two weeks, and that we don't even speak the same language, and I know you're much more complicated than I can understand, but Rwanda? I think I love you.

*Sincerely,
Laya*



You could accuse me of being naïve, sentimental and romantic. Go on, I can take it, and you're not wrong. I've done quite a bit of traveling, but Africa always seemed a little too intimidating to tackle. I had no idea what I was getting into when the propeller plane landed on the Kigali tarmac. They opened the door and the moist, smoky night air began to kiss my skin. I stepped down the stairs and into the strange but unshakable sensation that I was always coming here, and that my life was never going to be quite the same.

There was a moment at the Academy for Conscious Change when we asked our participants to share something that they know in the deepest part of themselves to be true. One woman responded saying that she knows that forgiveness will accomplish more than holding on to anger. This coming from someone who has likely seen first hand the worst horrors humans can perpetuate against each other.

Now home, I find myself signing up for classes about Africa, development theory and global women's health. It's a little like that phase of love when you want to learn everything you can about a person even though you know some of it won't be so pretty.

I never heard back from Rwanda when I left that first letter on her hall table before heading to the airport. I started to wonder if she even knew who I was. I reached out again, and this time I got a reply.

Dear Laya

Of course I remember you. You were that skinny chick with the shaved head taking photos of everyone and blabbering on about me like an intoxicated schoolgirl with a new crush. And yes, I know my avocados are so big.

Ok, I'll admit, all the attention was kind of flattering. But don't fool yourself, dear. It's not all rainbows and lollipops around here. As for your request, I won't make any promises, but I think that I wouldn't mind it if you wanted to come back and see me again.

Now tell me, what is it that you want from me, anyway?

Rwanda.

I've spent some time trying to figure out just what it is that pulls on me; why it is that Rwanda got under my skin. I keep thinking about what that woman said about forgiveness.

I recently came across a quote from Sam Keen that said: "The great metaphors from all spiritual traditions — grace, liberation, being born again, awakening from illusion — testify that it is possible to transcend the conditioning of my past and do a new thing."

It's a lovely quote that makes it sound so simple. But we all know how hard it is to truly transcend the conditioning of our past, to keep our hearts open once we've been burned, to put into action those ideals. But that's when I started to piece it together.

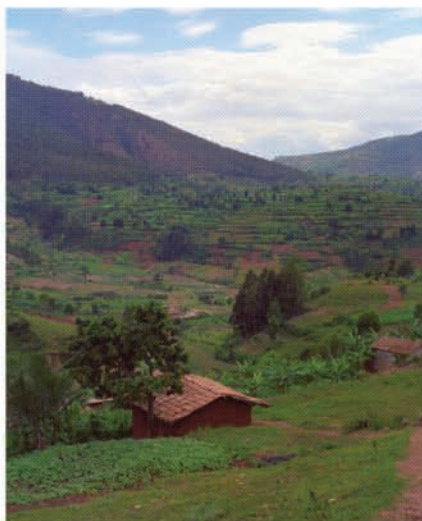
Dear Rwanda,

I heard that right after you-know-what happened, you came out and said to everyone "ok, from now on, there are no more Hutus, there are no more Tutsis. Starting today we are all simply Rwandans. And we will walk forward together to build a new future for ourselves, as equals."

How did you do it? You went through Hell. How do you let go of that identity? How do you wake up every day with that sense of curiosity and joy in your eyes? How do you not get jaded and disheartened? Teach me.

Thinking of the soft curves of your hills,

*With love and admiration,
Laya*



The way I see it, Rwanda is a macrocosmic paradigm of exactly what I want for myself - and for everyone; she's a living realization that the day is always new and a better future awaits us if we make it so. And this is what I tell all those who ask skeptically what Rwanda is like. Because she's nothing like you think.

This time, I didn't have to wait so long for a reply.

Dear Laya.

Yes, there is a lot of darkness in my past. I'll never forget that. But you always have a choice. You can live in that place of pain forever, or forge forward and create a better future for yourself. I just made the choice that no matter what came before, I will choose to love, to create, to build and renew.

I don't know how to tell you to do it, but I know it's not out of your reach. Keep on searching, kiddo. You'll find your way.

*Best,
Rwanda*

Just after my time with Rwanda I found myself at a beachside cafe in Zanzibar, talking to a well-educated Tanzanian man who was inquiring about my trip.

"What? Did you come here to *save Africa*?" he said with the snarky grin of someone who's seen it all before.

I know now he meant to offend and be antagonistic. But before my mind could process that my lips began to speak a truth I didn't even know was true at the time.

"No, sir." I replied. "Just myself."



photo by Laya Millman

Laya Millman is a searcher and a traveler. She's learned that nothing is ever quite what you think. To read her blog at Global Grassroots, go to: www.globalgrassroots.org/blog.



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