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Preface to the Traumatic Stress Update

The staff of the Trauma and Transition Programme (TTP) at CSVr decided to produce a quarterly newsletter in order to share knowledge and let interested parties gain a deeper understanding of our activities.

This is the first newsletter and contains many exciting articles, as well as an indication of recent reports by South African No Torture Consortium (SANToC) partners. The articles include an update of the SANToC activities and an enticing article about the shift from individual counselling to community work at TTP.

The Traumatic Stress Update also includes an introduction to Monitoring and Evaluation at TTP, as well as a very exciting gender breakdown of clients using the services of the South African No Torture Consortium member constituencies.

The last article is a very interesting excerpt from an interview, which discusses nostalgia, loss and hope in the lives of a group of refugee women.

We hope you enjoy it, and we welcome any feedback.

Dominique Dix-Peek
Editor

The South African No Torture Consortium Activities

The South African No Torture Consortium (SANToC) had an exciting month of June. On 25 June the second Round Table was held with doctors, psychologists, religious leaders and lawyers who worked with torture survivors during Apartheid. Victims were also represented. The Round Table aimed to capture the expertise of the participants in order to develop a booklet and training programme for students and new practitioners in the torture field.

On International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, 26 June, a public commemoration event was held at Constitution Hill where victims and those who have assisted them were remembered and honoured. Testimonies were given as well as inspiring dance and poetry performances.

In the past six months SANToC has held rehabilitation training for members, worked on a strategy for setting up Monitoring and Evaluation systems in all member organizations and planned its advocacy strategy.



Photo: World Torture Day 26 June 2009

By Megan Bantjes: SANToC Co-ordinator

From Clinic Based Service to the Community

Trauma and Transition Programme (TTP), also known as the Trauma Clinic, has been in operation for twenty years. Its services are given to victims and survivors of violence. Naturally, all the clients were expected to come to the clinic if they needed to access these services.

But now TTP, in line with other programmes at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR), has embarked on a shift that has seen services taken to communities. This took off on a small scale, with the focus in the West Rand (Mohlakeng and Bekkersdal) and Mogale City (Kagiso and Munsieville) in Gauteng. These areas have a strong history of political activism. Unfortunately, attention was given to other areas in terms of services and recognition of roles played in the past, so many in the West Rand areas expressed disappointment for lack of recognition of their significant contributions to the liberation struggle.

The shift from individual clinical work to community work is also informed by conditions in these communities. TTP has chosen to focus its attention on the ex-combatants within these communities.¹ Many of these people are faced with various

challenges in their everyday lives. These include, among other things, unresolved trauma. Additionally, many of them were tortured by the apartheid police while they were in detention.

Many have expressed willingness to access psychotherapy services at the clinic, and some do so already. But there are those who, because of ill health, are not able to come to the clinic. These individuals get regular home visits by two fourth year Social Work students placed at the clinic, one psychology intern and a community facilitator. The objective here is to give emotional support to the individuals demobilized by ill health.

The feedback that TTP is receiving from these communities since embarking on this work has been positive. This shows the gaps that have been left open during the Demobilisation, Demilitarisation and Reintegration (DDR) process which needed to be addressed.

By Modiegi Merafe: Community Facilitator

⇒ **Number of people seen by TTP through community interventions and group work (January – June 2009): 234**

M&E Corner

HISTORY OF M&E:

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) of the work done at TTP began in 2007. The project has expanded from one consultant to the two people who currently comprise the research team.

The purpose of the M&E is to:

- Measure the impact of our interventions
- Use the information gathered to inform and improve our interventions
- Document our activities in order to look at contextually based model development

Gender breakdown of Torture Clients from January to June 2009 (Information partially supplied by SANToC):

1. Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation²

Total number of clients: 44

- Female: 23
- Male: 21

2. The Trauma Centre for Survivors of Violence and Torture³:

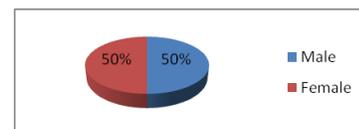
Total number of clients: 96

- Female: 62
- Male: 34

3. The Southern African Centre for Survivors of Torture³:

Total number of clients: 70

- Female: 20
- Male: 50



Graph: Breakdown of clients seen by SANToC members from January - June 2009

By Dominique Dix-peek: Researcher
Information partially supplied by SANToC partners

¹ For the purpose of TTP's work, ex-combatants are activists who belonged to Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), Azanian Peoples Liberation Army (APLA), Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA), Special Defense Units (SDU) and Special Protection Units (SPU).

² Only Individual counselling sessions included

³ Individual, group work and community interventions included

Nostalgia and Continuity in the Lives of Refugee Women

In the following article, Serena Thomas, an Anthropology Intern at TTP, interviews Marivic Garcia, a trauma professional at TTP about the refugee women's groups that she facilitated at Bienvenue Shelter from 2001 until 2005. This excerpt from the interview discusses some challenges of Marivic's work, the role of nostalgia and continuity for the refugee community, and challenges of reclaiming the multiplicity of their identities

Serena- Marivic, could you think back to activities or specific conversations that the women in the refugee women's group really connected to?

Marivic- They did not want to talk about trauma, they said, "No Marivic we don't want to talk about trauma, because we are living it already on a day to day basis." So during one activity we asked them to draw things they loved from back home, and they would of course always talk about food. Ohh food! Food is always a great theme to talk about [laughter]. It's something that they miss so much!

Serena- Hmm, interesting. What is the role of nostalgia, missing, and longing in the group?

Marivic- [Speaking in reference to the women in her groups] The person who I am right now, here, in Bienvenue Shelter, this quite helpless, powerless person, who can't do anything, who's almost like a child, actually had a life sometime ago. She had a good life, she had a home, she had resources around her, she owned stuff, she had power over how she used herself, she had power over deciding what she wanted to do in her life, she had power over what she ate, what time she slept. These things were not available at that point in time at the shelter. So it's about reconnecting to that self and looking at the possibility that that other self can be recaptured. It's about connecting with happy moments, so it's not just the depressive situations in the shelter and the hopelessness of not having a



Photo: The Refugees Women's Group

future that was weighing everybody down. So, giving that sense of hope works quite well.

Serena- So reconnecting with that other self, the self that's still inside you is a key theme. And you threaded this theme through the work you did with the food and art work with the women?

Marivic- Yeah. We talked about missing home, dreaming about the future, and how will you look 10 years from now.

Serena- Do you find that being nostalgic, going back to the happy past which is often very romanticized, and then going to the very exciting future is sometimes dangerous?

Marivic- Yes, yes!!! Because a big thing in the drawings was them on the airplane going to another country. It was a common theme of the drawings about their future. The perfect Canada, Sweden, America or somewhere else. That's a dream, and then what do we do about the present? The present has to be negotiated in such a way that you don't end up in jail; you don't get accused of drug dealing, prostitution. How do we negotiate the now because the now has a lot of problems?

**By Serena Thomas: Anthropology Intern
Interviewee: Marivic Garcia**

Recent Reports

1. A feasibility study on a Southern African Regional Anti-Torture Initiative. A report prepared for the Southern African Centre for Survivors of Torture by Shamira Botha, April 2009
2. Subliminal terror? Human rights violations and torture in Zimbabwe during 2008. Report prepared for the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation by Tony Reeler, 2009