

Insights

The Quarterly Newsletter of HMI's Conflict Transformation Team



Issue 3: October 2010

From the Coordinator's Desk ~By Varghese Chakkummootil

The last three months were an intense period for the CT Team. We conducted four workshops in the regions, taught classes for the *Post Graduate Diploma in Conflict Transformation (PGDCT)* program, attended a national convention organized by Ekta Parishad in Bhopal, planned and facilitated the much awaited three-week *South Asia Peace Workshop 2010* and designed the evaluation process for our EED project.

Upcoming Events

October

- EED Phase-II Project Evaluation
- PGDCT Second Term Begins
- Networking with National Council of Rural Institutes
- Meeting with South Asia Peace Alliance

November

- Workshop with All Manipur Christian Organization
- Workshop with Christian Youth Volunteers, Chandel, Manipur
- Networking with Ekta Parishad
- Networking with South Asia Peace Alliance

December

- PGDCT 2nd Term Ends
- Research in Gujarat



Varghese

The CT Team is full of energy and has a positive outlook, which is why I am very happy to work with such fun-loving and committed people with a deep passion for peace and justice. The Team's flexibility to adjust to any given situation makes it very dynamic. The CT Team provides opportunities for the personal and professional growth of each member while giving special attention to developing leadership

qualities. The CT Team also provides the space and team support needed to become skilled facilitators. During the last decade the Team has grown from two facilitators to six full-time facilitators and two associate facilitators. We work very closely with local organizations and committed individuals to envision and work towards a justpeace.

The Team spent several weeks in designing CT's Five Year plan 2010-2015. Every word of which was discussed, thought through and agreed upon together. In other words, CT's Five Year plan is all of our dreams together. Over the next five years we will expand our focus regions from the seven states that we are presently working in to over 13 states as well as a few countries in the Global South. Our network has also grown to more than 30 strong partnerships.

The Team has trained over 6000 individuals over the last decade and it is wonderful to see many of them now working in social organizations, leading NGOs, doing graduate level studies in related fields, mediating conflicts in their respective communities and promoting non-violence through their work and lives. The time, energy and commitment of the Team has resulted in creating a wave of change in peoples' lives. Seeing this transformation in others continues to motivate and inspire us to work for peace.

We are looking forward to strengthening various networks within Asia in order to bolster peace building in the region and to co-create pedagogies that are unique and contextual. In the last two years, the CT Team has spent quality time working with local partners from the regions to research and produce materials for advocacy work on various issues

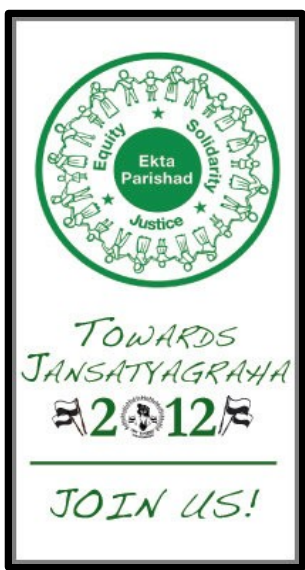




affecting local communities. We are always in the process of learning and growing in the field of Conflict Transformation.

We want to thank all the people in the regions in which we work who have motivated and taught us important lessons throughout the years, and we look forward to connecting with individuals, groups and organizations to work together to strengthen and sustain a justpeace. We need your constant support and partnership.

~Varghese Chakkummootil
CT Coordinator



Ekta Parishad Banner

Ekta Parishad Networking ~Bhopal, Madhya

Pradesh, 13th - 14th July
2010

Ramesh and Varghese Chakkummootil attended the *National Conference on India's Contemporary Freedom Struggle: People's Non-violent Responses to Conflict and Poverty* for two days in July. The conference was attended by many groups engaged in non-violent social action for the rights of the poor, landless, tribals and Dalits

especially focusing on land reform and rights to water, land and forests. One of the aims of the conference was to discuss if there was a third-way between silence and violence. Many Gandhians, social-reformers and activists took part in the conference and shared their experience of working non-violently for social, economic and political change and the need for concerted efforts to handle the alarming growth of poverty and violence in India. It was a blessing to meet with Gandhians, such as Dr. Lavanam, Dr. Subba Rao, Swami Agnivesh, and many others who have believed in and practiced non-violence for many years.

Ramesh shared HMI's experience of working for peace, justice and reconciliation and its learning that in peace work it is necessary to include economic, social and cultural rights as much as political and civil rights. He shared that development should not exclude a vast number of people, or create more poverty and displacement. It should also not be based on the externalization of costs

and consequences onto other stakeholders to feed the greed for accumulation and concentration of wealth of the few. He emphasized the need for non-violent economics as many economic policies are blind to the violence and violations they cause.

Varghese and Ramesh met with Rajagopal and Jill of [Ekta Parishad](#) to discuss HMI's role in the training of *Dal Nayaks* (Leaders of the Ekta's non-violent social movement) in active non-violence for the 2012 *Jan Satyagraha* (people's nonviolent resistance). They also met with Vijay of the South Asia Peace Alliance regarding collaborative work on training peace activists in South Asia. This was an opportunity to engage with seasoned peace and justice activists and learn from their experience with active non-violence and the many strategies and tactics used in non-violent struggles. Some videos and resource materials related to non-violent social action were purchased for the Peace Library at HMI.

Naga Women's Union Workshop ~Liwa Changning, Manipur, 14th - 16th July 2010.

The CT Team conducted a *Basic Level Peace Building and Conflict Transformation Workshop* at Liwa Changning, in the Chandel district of Manipur. The workshop was organized by the Naga Women's Union, Chandel Unit and participants included 21 women and 14 men from five different tribes. During the workshop participants were given the opportunity to gain clarity on the concepts of conflict, peace building, conflict transformation, responses to conflict and conflict analysis. They were also able to enhance their conflict transformation skills and learn how to





Naga Women's Union Workshop

do team-building work within their own organizations. Suresh and Robin from HMI along with Ngamvar from Peace Core Team Manipur (PCTM) facilitated the workshop.

CRBC Workshop

~Zunpha, Nagaland, 22nd - 24th July 2010

A workshop on *Peace Building and Conflict Transformation* was organized with the Council of the Rengma Baptist Churches (CRBC) in Nagaland. Forty church leaders participated in the workshop including seven women and 33 men. For the Rengma tribe this was the first workshop of its kind. The participants felt the skills and knowledge they gained were extremely important because in their work as Church leaders they come across conflicts at the family, village and societal levels constantly. They also found a deep connection between conflict transformation and



CRBC Workshop Participants relaxing

what they believe as Christians. The workshop was facilitated by Robin from HMI and Angelus from Volunteers for Village Development (VVD), Manipur.



SHIDO Workshop Participants

SHIDO Workshop

~A. Changta, Manipur, 28th - 31st July 2010

The Self Help Initiatives Development Organization (SHIDO) and HMI organized a workshop for 47 participants, eight women and 39 men, on the theme *Peace Building and Conflict Transformation*. The participants were both staff of SHIDO and church, village, and youth leaders from the communities where SHIDO works. The workshop gave a basic understanding of conflict transformation and peace building along with conflict transformation skills and working in group settings. Since the participants came from various parts of society, including different age groups and socio-economic backgrounds, they realized that to truly resolve problems in their contexts it is important to include the voices from all these various groups. The villages from which the participants came were remote and thus they had not had the opportunity to attend a workshop like this before. Robin from HMI and Somi and Reishim from VVD facilitated the workshop. After the workshop heavy rains made the roads impassible so the facilitators had to walk for six hours to get back to Ukhrul, which came as a stark reminder of the difficulties faced by people living in these interior villages.

Gujarat Retreat/Workshop

~Mount Abu, Rajasthan, 5th - 8th August 2010

The Social Movement for Educational Thinking (SMET), based in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, and HMI organized a retreat/workshop for victims of the 2002 Gujarat riots.



Gujarat Retreat/Workshop

The intention was to bring together participants from Hindu, Muslim and Christian communities. Unfortunately, due to floods in the region many participants were not able to come at the last minute. In the end only 18 were able to attend, three women and 15 men, all of whom were from the Muslim community and who were working through their own process of healing and transformation. SMET member, Hakim Bhai, hoped that the workshop would help people that have experienced the worst of communal riots to actively work for peace and social justice and to give them an opportunity to reflect, have fun and think outside their comfort zones about interfaith relations and dialogue as tools for building peace between communities. Due to the intensity of the experience the participants had been through, the facilitators had to balance the deeply sensitive sessions with fun and relaxation. The beauty of Mount Abu helped to set the tone for participants, as well as the facilitators, to build relationships, learn new skills and reflect. The activities focused on team building, self-awareness, justice, love, mercy, the cycle of revenge, forgiveness, dialogue and conflict transformation skills. The workshop was facilitated by Varghese Chakkummootil, Robin and Jessica.

Chetan Peace Award

~HMI, Hyderabad, 26th August 2010

The first annual *Chetan Peace Award* was presented on the second anniversary of the death of Chetan 'Che' Sharma, an artist and cultural activist from Kakching, Manipur who

helped HMI to see the value of art as a medium for peace and reconciliation. His work reflects beauty, love, compassion, respect and tolerance, but also brings to light the social realities of oppression and human rights violations in a way that inspires creative responses to transcend apathy and cynicism.



Chetan "Che" Sharma

As a way to remember Chetan the hall was decorated with his art along with a floral tribute, sharing memories by his friends and the live performance of some of his favorite songs. The reflections highlighted Chetan's work for peace, justice and reconciliation and his long relationship with HMI. This relationship helped to deepen the work of the Institute, not only in use of art, but also in respectfully engaging with artists, musicians and many other social and cultural activists.

The first annual *Chetan Peace Award* was then presented to Shiva Shankari, a class nine student who won a drawing competition to



Shankari



Culture of Peace Logo

design the logo for HMI's Culture of Peace Programme. The logo was unveiled and Shankari received a certificate, cash prize, and drawing materials. The *Chetan Peace Award* will be given each year in recognition of an individual who uses art for peace, justice and reconciliation.

South Asia Peace Workshop ~HMI, Hyderabad, 5th - 26th September 2010

The CT Team organized the *South Asia Peace Workshop (SAPW 2010)* which was a three-week residential workshop conducted at HMI. The workshop contained a two-week basic module and a one-week advanced module covering a vast range of topics. The 31 participants, six women and 25 men, came from various regions of India as well as Nepal, China, South Korea and Tanzania. The CT Team wanted to utilize the incredible human resources of HMI and its networks. Therefore, along with eight CT Team facilitators, members of HMI's Academic and Community Development departments along with six visiting resource people working at the top of their fields were invited to facilitate. This brought the facilitating team to a total of 16. There are many institutes that provide quality short term peace building training, however, these are located outside of India and the region. The aim of the *South Asia Peace Workshop (SAPW)* is to create a competitive course that is

tailored to and located in South Asia, increasing the relevance to the region and reducing the financial and logistical barriers of international travel.



SAPW 2010 group photo

For more information on the workshop read the [Reflections on SAPW 2010](#) by Ramesh in this issues or check out the [brochure](#). If you are interested in applying for *SAPW 2011* keep an eye out for the brochure and application form coming soon to hmiindia.com.



International Peace Day

International Peace Day ~HMI, Hyderabad, 21st September 2010.

Participants from the *South Asia Peace Workshop* observed *International Peace Day* by creating posters and paintings expressing messages of peace and harmony. Suresh, the workshop coordinator, highlighted the importance of observing *International Peace Day* and led the group in a





creative exercise. The art work was displayed at HMI's interfaith devotion hall and participants sang "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace." The message of *International Peace Day* is to start with just one day a year of peace around the world... but to move towards 365 days a year.

Interns



Tom



Sathia

**Tom S. Russel and Sathia Rabbin Das
~HMI, Hyderabad, July - Sept 2010**

Tom and Sathia, 3rd year Bachelor of Divinity students from Serampore College, West Bengal completed their three-month practical field placement at HMI. They attended *PGDCT* classes, daily interfaith devotions, cultural events and the *South Asia Peace Workshop*. They both enriched the learning process by bringing their diverse experience, perspectives and skills to the classroom and workshop. The CT Team gave them the opportunity to grow, discover themselves and enhance their skills and knowledge in various areas. Sathia who has been writing rap songs for himself was encouraged to fulfill an assignment by writing and performing a rap song about the current water crisis. The song was a big hit with the staff and students and he was asked to perform it many times. He never imagined that this talent could be used to fulfill an assignment or that anyone would be interested in this form of expression. In his own words, "I am very thankful to the CT Team because I learned many things from them and they also recognized and acknowledged my talents."

**Watson Hanse
~HMI, Hyderabad, Sept – Nov 2010**

Watson Hanse, an intern from Karbi Anglong and a member of Karbi Human Rights Watch, started his three months internship with the CT Team



Watson

on the 5th of September. He was able to start his internship by joining the *South Asia Peace Workshop*, which gave him a strong background in conflict transformation. The Team hopes to use his artistic skills in various projects. While working with the Team he is also looking forward to enhancing his skill in documentation, proposal writing, planning and designing activities.



**Reconcile
~By Ramesh Prakashvelu**

Evil
Not outside
But within

Fight
Therefore within
Uproot temptation

Transform
Thoughts, actions
Avoid transgression

Love
Within, without
Be reconciled...



Reflections on *SAPW 2010*

~By Ramesh 'Moon' Prakashvelu



Ramesh

What would some basic ingredients for a transformative learning experience be? Can learning be a social act, aimed at transformation of personal, relational, cultural and structural levels rather than catering to developing potentials of atomized individuals? I have asked this question many a time in the last decade as a peace practitioner. The *South Asia Peace Workshop 2010* experience helped me learn that helping participants construct meaning from their experiences is an essential process for coming to a more realistic perception of society, social relations, social tensions and imagining peace. It also helped me learn to take efforts in co-creating a more just and fair world, without having to impose a set of definitions or conclusions or laying too much of an emphasis on transmission or transference of knowledge and skills. The *South Asia Peace Workshop 2010*, helped me to see changes, shifts and transformations happening

over three weeks, as a result of the processes, activities, approaches, strategies, engagement and decisions taken and implemented.

During the workshop participants were asked to share some of the key lessons they learned from the workshop. The participants acknowledged and valued the importance of strengthening basics elements such as a) mutual respect and value for human life and equality, especially the need to overcome gender and caste-based discrimination and inequality, b) the need to look at structural and cultural factors that reproduce and reinforce exploitation, inequity and marginalization and to work on bringing positive changes at cultural, structural, relational and personal levels, c) the need for building trust between communities, taking efforts to understand the perspectives and experiences of others, and to take initiative in building relationships and networks with the aim of transcending the vicious cycle of mutual suspicion and sometimes even hatred and dehumanization, d) the importance and relevance of international declarations, covenants,



Fishbowl Process at SAPW 2010

conventions, treaties and norms related to human rights, indigenous peoples rights and economic, social and cultural rights, e) having informed discussions on globalization, and its costs and consequences on different stakeholders, f) the need for self-care, guidance and counseling for those engaged in conflict transformation work, g) the need to have more inclusive, participatory and consensus based decision-making processes that can counter the lack of democratic ideals and practices in planning and implementation of many development projects.



Using Art for Peace during SAPW 2010





What were a few things that the CT Team did that enabled such a rich set of learnings to emerge? The bringing together of a diverse set of resource people which included activists and scholars working for human rights, social justice, communal harmony and peace, feminists and practitioners of different faiths created the needed atmosphere, yielding very rich results. It also showed participants that peace cannot be built alone by any one individual or group, that it is a collective praxis. What I saw happen during the workshop was a transformative process aimed at self-discovery, self-expression and social transformation with “justice for all and being fair in dealings with all” as the framework to counter oppression, hegemony and marginalization. The concept “justice for all” is based also on the idea of equality and love for all. It helped me to re-confirm that this love for humanity is what makes us outraged when injustice is committed anywhere on anyone and propels us to reflect on where we have fallen short. It is the same love that also helps us to work in ways that instill hope and confidence that transformation is possible, despite all the horrors we have witnessed.

By focusing on both pedagogical and content aspects of the workshop I came to understand that “knowledge” is constantly generated, produced, reproduced, articulated and integrated and only a few pay attention to how knowledge is produced, by whom, whose knowledge is considered worthy and legitimate, which knowledge is reified and preferred by dominant groups, and which is ignored. Knowledge held by less dominant or subaltern groups is seldom valued by dominant groups. I felt that in this workshop it was possible to hold multiple realities together, to be able to use knowledge generated by different sets of actors and the efforts taken by them to shape the world while also being able to listen to others whose knowledge and insights have been ignored for very long and whose views have not been seriously taken into consideration.



Interfaith devotions at SAPW 2010

Efforts were also taken to crack the rigidity and hopelessness that is set in people as a result of episodes of negative and divisive mobilizations and counter mobilizations within and across communities. By creating safe spaces and fair processes for diverse people to have positive and nourishing experiences; and through



Team building activity at SAPW 2010

enabling people and organizations to develop capacities by creating such safe spaces, and the use of fair processes that helps thaw the frozen relationship - it was possible not only to understand the cycles of mobilization and counter-mobilization and the dynamics brought about by them through mobilization of bias, prejudice and power-play; but also to look at alternative approaches and basic ingredients that will beget different and positive outcomes.

Contact details:

henrymartyn.cr@gmail.com

Phone 04024014231 / 258

