4......W&W INTERNSHIP - Polish your writing skills

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8......LIFE SKILLS for building communities

ICA India and US-based Emerging Ecology are collaborating on a training project focused on the latter's mission of promoting "Eco-Futuric Communities".
BEHIND THE SCENES

Welcome to this issue’s peek at the team which produces Winds and Waves magazine three times a year.

I am new to Winds and Waves but not to producing a magazine. Between 2008 and 2013, I was a member of the European team of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) and edited the IAF Europe Newsletter monthly. My aim was to explore how facilitation was used in Europe to create social change. Authors wrote, for example, about Technology of Participation (ToP), Future Search, Open Space Technology, Appreciative Inquiry, and Art of Hosting. Facilitators shared techniques, tools and tips. I became interested in ToP while I lived and worked in Yellowknife, in northern Canada, in the mid-1990s. I remember my first ToP workshop. It seemed magical, and still does, that a diverse group could share ideas on a question so quickly, discuss, and then organize them into a clear and multi-faceted answer. I used ToP in my work with a women’s organization in Yellowknife, and then internationally - in Serbia, and then in a range of locally led peacebuilding projects in Africa and Asia.

In recent years, I have become interested in what some Dutch thinkers call “Society 3.0” and others the “sharing economy.” It is the next phase after Society 1.0 - our agricultural era - and Society 2.0 - the industrial era. They call it Society 3.0 because it involves much greater change than just how we manage information. Social media, collaboration through open source thinking, and collective self-organization is reshaping how we organize ourselves. A more interdependent economy is evolving, in which access is as important as ownership, and value is created as much through reciprocity as through money. Networked self-connection is outpacing multi-million-dollar companies and creating challenges for how governments manage societal infrastructure.

In this Society 3.0, those who understand and use facilitative strategies are key players in helping us redesign our communities. Facilitators have been ahead of the curve in doing this. In multi-lingual Europe, environmentalists long ago developed signs that conveyed meanings in large groups; Occupy showed us how.

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In this issue, you will find a diverse collection of stories illustrating how ICAs and colleagues of our global network are applying such a facilitative approach in a variety of settings, from local to global, often in peer-to-peer collaboration with each other.

A rehabilitation project of ICA Nepal brings hope to those affected by that country’s earthquake, supported by ICA Australia. ICA Tanzania builds a learning community through “Truth About Life” dialogues. ICA Chile partners with the Ministry of Social development and with Global Facilitators Serving Communities in leadership development work with disabled people. ICA Peru supports comprehensive community development programmes in high altitude mountain communities affected by climate change. Emerging Ecology USA and ICA India develop a capacity building curriculum, building on ICA’s original Human Development Training Institutes of the 1970s.

Ann Epps of LENS International Malaysia reflects on the Certified Professional Facilitator (CPF) programme of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), founded in 1994 by 70 ICA ToP facilitators including Ann herself. Winds & Waves editor Rosemary Cairns reflects on the role played by facilitation in turning volunteers into a social movement through a Community Revitalisation project in Lebanon following the NATO bombing of 1990. I share a reflection on how facilitation, and ICA’s ToP Participatory Strategic Planning process in particular, helped Oxfam in Lebanon last year embark on a complex and challenging change process in the midst of a complex and challenging unfolding Syria crisis.

Meanwhile, ICAI members continue to step up their peer-to-peer support and collaboration through online and regional ICA gatherings, and ICAI global working groups as well. ICAs in East & Southern Africa met in Zimbabwe in March, ICAs of the Americas are now preparing to meet in Peru in May and ICAs of West Africa, Europe MENA and Asia Pacific are making plans for their own regional gatherings later in the year.

To enhance the reach and impact of our ToP facilitation approach worldwide, the ICAI global ToP working group is busy developing proposals to support the implementation of the global ToP policy agreed last year, drawing on insights gleaned from responses to a recent global ToP survey. The ICAI Board is pleased to have agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding with IAF to promote and support greater collaboration between our two organizations, our respective members and our local groups around the world.

Thank you to all who contributed to this latest issue of Winds & Waves. Enjoy it, and please share it and encourage others to do so.

Martin Gilbraith
president@ica-international.org

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the April 2016 issue of Winds & Waves, the online magazine of ICA International, on the theme, “Excellence in Facilitation”.

The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) has for decades employed facilitation as a core strategy in its mission of “advancing human development worldwide”. When I first trained with the ICA in the UK, I was sent as an international volunteer to one of ICA’s human development projects in India in 1986. A core element of that training was in “ICA methods” - what is now known worldwide as ICA’s “Technology of Participation” (ToP) facilitation methodology. Facilitation remains central to our approach to doing human development and to being a part of the ICA.

This facilitative approach is more critical than ever today in enabling the human family to address the great challenges and opportunities facing us and our planet. We argue, in an ICAI statement submitted this month to the UN Committee of Experts on Public Administration (CEPA), that facilitation has a key role to play in moving from commitments to results, transforming public institutions and leadership for the implementation and monitoring of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

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DESIGNING A STRATEGY PROCESS FOR OXFAM

By Martin Gilbraith

Oxfam, a confederation of 17 organisations engaged in over 90 countries, is one of the world’s best-known international NGOs. It now goes through an organisational change process: a “One Country Strategy (OCS)” to consolidate the work of all affiliated staff in Lebanon, which has five national Oxfam affiliates and a Middle East regional office. The process design meetings with large and small groups of staff of Oxfam affiliates took place in Beirut and two field offices. An OCS “Orientation day” was held for a cross-section of around 45 staff. A project steering committee of six to eight staff was created.

In December, we held an OCS Launch Week. The four-day event kicked off with a “Consultation Day.” It began with a morning session for key staff and external stakeholders. The afternoon featured a World Cafe, during which 150 staff of Oxfam affiliates in Lebanon focused on three questions linked to Vision, Relationships and Strategies. We drew on the ideas harvested from this session in the next three days, which involved extended and adapted ToP Consensus Workshops for a cross-section of 45 staff.

During my third trip to Beirut in January, we switched the focus to facilitation support. I worked with key stakeholders in three programme areas to apply the new strategic framework to tailored planning implementation. I also conducted ToP Group Facilitation Methods training for 30 staff and partners from across the world teams and affiliates.

Although an OCS framework could have been developed without such intensive engagement, the process generated clarity, confidence and commitment that are central and critical factors in achieving such an ambitious goal.

Martin Gilbraith, a certified professional facilitator, is president of the Institute of Cultural Affairs International

Creating Collaborative Client Relationships
Create and Sustain a Participatory Environment
Plan Appropriate Group Processes
Guide Group to Appropriate and Useful Outcomes
Build and Maintain Professional Knowledge
Model Positive Professional Attitude

from the IAF Certified Professional Facilitator assessment process, www.iaf-world.org

Cocodies are drapers made from coconut fibre - a “green” Asian item that could sell well in the US market. This fictional baby product was the subject of a mock workshop I led on how to market an item in a new location.

I was being assessed on my competency as a facilitator during the workshop. I had invented Cocodies as part of my preparation. I had a lot of fun developing a storyline, props and procedures for the workshop. And even though I was an experienced and more-or-less competent facilitator at the time, the value and experience the assessment process provided was priceless.

The assessment by the International Association of Facilitation (IAF) was 13 years ago. Although I was an IAF founder and an experienced full-time facilitator and group facilitator trainer, I had decided to undergo the process so I could be a Certified Professional Facilitator (CPF). My husband thought I was crazy to prepare so long and so diligently. Besides preparing for the workshop, I spent months writing a five-page detailed account of one of the seven required facilitated events over a three-year period.

I took part in the CPF assessment process as though I was brand new to the profession. I thought through each detail and changed my workshop topic at least three or four times until I settled on one that I thought would be fun: marketing the Cocodies product. I was assessed by four people. Five fellow candidates also being assessed served as participants in my workshop. I in turn was a participant in their workshops throughout the day.

The candid, specific feedback from my peer assessors was valuable. Even those deferred at the end of the process said they treasured the learnings. These insights come not only from the assessors (each candidate gets two assessors to work closely with throughout the process) but also from the fellow candidates one observes as a participant in their workshops.

The IAF was formed in 1994 by a group of facilitators from the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA). After discussing the various pros and cons, more than 70 of us signed an agreement and contributed $100 each. One of our concerns was to have a say in determining the professional standards of facilitation. That led to a draft of “core competencies” for acquiring CPF status. It has since evolved into a list of six major competencies with 18 sub sets and 72 sub categories. ToP methods; IAF certification focuses more on mastering the processes with different functions. ToP certification focuses more on mastering the core competencies with 18 sub sets and 72 sub categories. ToP certification focuses more on mastering the processes with different functions. ToP certification focuses more on mastering the processes with different functions.

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The process and assessors are rigorous. The candidate must demonstrate “pure facilitation” and not training or experiential learning or consulting. However, the philosophy is “asses to pass.” This means each candidate gets several opportunities to show evidence of the competencies. The written material, interviews with the assessors and the workshop all provide evidence of the assessors’ work. Many of those who are deferred often re-enter the process again.

The CPF assessment does not provide training. It merely scrutinizes one’s prowess as a facilitator, meaning that no one set of facilitation methods, for example, Technology of Participation (ToP), is favoured over another. It’s the demonstration of the IAF competencies that count.

When a facilitator asks whether he or she should go for IAF or ToP certification, I say “both.” They are different processes with different functions. ToP certification focuses more on mastering the ToP methods; IAF certification focuses more on mastering the overall competencies of an effective group process facilitator, and encourages a broad array of facilitator methods. Personally, I am passionate about both the ToP and IAF networks and have benefitted from and hopefully contributed to each of them.

Ann Epas, one of the founders of the IAF Asia Conference, is a full-time facilitator and group facilitator trainer in Southeast Asia and North America.

### FACILITATION

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FACILITATION

By Rosemary Cairns

Über the world, people are responding to various crises by showing up to help. One example are the volunteers who turn up in Greece and Serbia to work with refugees seeking sanctuary in Europe. Many don’t belong to any organizations but feel compelled to be there - in essence, they are self-organizing. Such responses are - by necessity - short-term. However, many of these crises situations need are larger, longer term responses.

Can self-organization be scaled up? That happened in Serbia where I worked as a community mobilization and development specialist. I saw how ToP-knowledge and strategies could help people work together on locally-focused goals across language, culture and political differences.

I had joined a US-funded project called Community Revitalization through Development (CRDA) in Serbia in late August 2001. CRDA aimed to help communities rebuild through local initiative and self-help. It targeted 60 communities in 13 municipalities. An “open town hall” meeting had to be held in each in a small scale project initiated by mid-October 2001. We invited local facilitators from the three parts of the region to help us plan these 60 meetings. Many of them became our “community facilitators”.

I did not speak Serbian and had a week to learn about Western Serbia before CRDA chose the first 60 projects proposed by communities. The second day of the selection, 21 November 2001, brought staggering news that planes had been flown into New York’s World Trade Centre. That triggered confusion in some cases about which projects had been approved.

My team grew to 10 people based in Belgrade, Valjevo and Sabac. Each unit worked with communities in its area. I invited Bospo, an ICA Brussels-affiliated organization across the border in Tužla, to conduct a ToP workshop and strategic planning for our team in December. Bospo did it in Serbian, using Serbian-language materials, with final reports produced for me in English. Having undergone the same training in English, I understood what was taking place. I sat at the back during the workshops, typing up reports.

To me, effective spending was to build a facilitative and problem-solving capacity in the region that would outlast our time there. People took easily to the ToP workshop and the participatory strategic planning methods. They were able to discuss ideas and differing views and plan activities. When their small scale projects got funded, their confidence in the method grew.

We built a strong facilitative capacity over two years. Our community facilitators, who had taken part in the trainings, were able to lead many of the quarterly open town hall meetings. We introduced other participatory methods. One was an Open Space Technology conference on “What kind of Western Serbia would you love to live in in 2008?”. Another was a three-day Participatory Rural Appraisal session in a community in Monrovia municipality.

One program involved government officials and community committees. We brought health, education and social welfare officials in the 13 municipalities together to suggest social development projects which could then be reviewed by the committees. The committees felt they didn’t have the specialized knowledge to develop social projects while the problem for the health, education and social welfare officials was that they didn’t meet and so did not make municipal social plans together. Our participatory approach overcame both issues.

We also created and trained “cluster” committees of youth, women and Roma. They then reviewed and made recommendations on social development projects.

Looking back, I recognize how important shared context and knowledge was in supporting self-organization among individuals as well as groups and communities. Because of all of us - our team, our community facilitators and our community committees - had taken the same training, we had a common context for planning. I still hear from former team members who tell me that community people had called to say they are still using the methods we taught them. While projects come and go, the facilitative capacity we built in Western Serbia has remained.

Rosemary Cairns (nc1010@gmail.com) has worked with community organizations in Canada and Serbia, as well as with local peacebuilders in Africa and Asia. She helped to create the Serbian Facilitators Network. A Certified Professional Facilitator, she holds a Master’s degree in Human Security and Peacebuilding and currently lives in Victoria, Canada.

The Truth About Life experience

By Richard West

At the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), we see ourselves as “The People of the Question”. For me, the question was “How is the whole world going to live?” Being in farming, I helped raise corn and soybean. Then I became aware that countries like India were self-sufficient in food. My world opened to new possibilities of engagement. Questions clarify the gap between beliefs and what’s going on in life. They help us discover the change needed.

ICA Taiwan is hosting a series of dialogues called “The Truth About Life” Experience (TAL). It began as a monthly book study. It focused on coaching and mentoring, which many of us were doing. Our group has grown as well. Books and articles are a starting point. Anyone can suggest topics and questions. That keeps the dialogue fresh.

We want to reveal various meanings of community: making a difference; healing; well-being; context; political/economic/cultural systems; and power versus force: levels of consciousness. The underlying question is: “What’s the truth about life for you now in arena X that wasn’t true for you before?”

The 150-minute session begins with a provocative question. Each person gives a quick response as a way of checking in. The set the stage for the dialogue. Its direction is influenced by whoever comes. At the end, we pick a topic for the next session. Some topics generated so much energy that we continued them for months. We are never short of topics. The ground rules, from the Open Space Technology User’s Guide, are: “Whoever comes are the right people. Whenever it starts is the right time. Whatever happens is the only thing that could. When it’s over, it’s over. Be prepared to be surprised!”

TAL is a personal research event. Participants have varying contexts and reasons for coming. One said he felt free at TAL to talk about his thoughts and beliefs in other group, and that what he said was always accepted. We are diverse. We learn from the values and thoughts of each person.

So, how has the question “How is the whole world going to live?” changed for me, 45 years later? The difference has to do with new and changing relationships, experiences, context; political/economic/cultural systems; and power versus force: levels of consciousness. The underlying question is: “What’s the truth about life for you now in arena X that wasn’t true for you before?”

By Richard West (icataiw@gmail.com) is executive director of ICA Taiwan.
Life skills for building communities

By Nelson Stover

ICA India and US-based Emerging Ecology are collaborating on a training project focused on the latter’s mission of promoting “Eco-Futuric Communities”. Shankar Jadhav and Nelson Stover, the respective heads of the two organisations, plan to set up a Capacity Building Institute at ICA India’s training centre in Talegaon, Maharashtra.

The Capacity Building Institute curriculum will have three foundational components: a) community transformation through effective catalytic action, b) facilitative leadership through Technology of Participation (ToP) methods and c) personal resourcefulness through vitalizing interior practices. In addition, modules will be offered in specific application areas such as: 1) hi-tech, environmentally friendly farming, 2) small business management, 3) healthy lifestyles and nutrition and 4) women and youth empowerment. Once the basic curriculum is ready, other topics important to ICA around the world will be added to the offerings.

ICA India (www.icaindiapn.org) has a long track record in conducting village development projects. Its cluster village project in Mushi taluka, Maharashtra, is based on ICAs approach to comprehensive grassroots development. Its training centre in Talegaon provides a location for conducting training programs in an environment that is acceptable to urban dwellers and non-threatening to people from villages. ICA India has staff experienced in the use of participatory methods and training others to do so. It has been receiving financial support through ICA Japan from bodies such as Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Japan Environment Corporation for several years. It plans to involve them in supporting the Capacity Building Institute as well.

In the United States, Emerging Ecology (www.EmergingEcology.org) has been exploring fresh approaches to grassroots social change. Their emphasis has focused on the context and outlook – the “worldview” – which leads to effective action in the 21st Century. Additional information about recent worldview research conducted by Emerging Ecology is available on its website’s home page. The image of working to build “Eco-futuric Communities” provides fresh impetus to people who have become frustrated with previous images based on over-consumption or friendly co-existence.

To move forward with the launch of the Capacity Building Institute, ICA India and Emerging Ecology are now jointly reviewing, updating and expanding the curriculum from various sources including the ICAs original Human Development Training Institutes. During the latter half of this year, initial pilot events will be offered both in India and the United States. Each of these events will involve a module of the overall project. A longer form of the Capacity Building Institute is envisioned for January 2017 in India.

Anyone with experience in ICA methods or Emerging Ecology’s programs or who shares a passion for their work is welcome to partner in the development and implementation of this project. To get involved, contact Shankar Jadhav at ICA India (icapune@icaindiapn.org) or Nelson Stover at Emerging Ecology (NStover@EmergingEcology.org).

This article was written in collaboration with Shankar Jadhav, director of ICA India.

Nelson Stover (nstover@emergingecology.org) is president of Emerging Ecology.

Studying sports and mind-body link in India

By Nelson Stover

Sports and exercise are vehicles that can be used to transform societies, says one North Carolina student who visited India early this year as part of his undergraduate studies. “I’m encouraged to assist in this transformation when I see others improving in their game of life, contributing to a healthy mind and body,” said Will Sands.

Will is one of six sports studies majors from Guilford College who spent four days at the Advai Ashram School in Chikhala village in January, along with their professor, Dr. Lavon Williams, and Nelson Stover, president of Emerging Ecology. Guilford, a liberal arts college in Greensboro, North Carolina, encourages its students to include international experiences as part of their education. The Advai Ashram School, managed by ICA India, provides a residential learning experience for 700 students in grades one through 12.

The Guilford students took part in physical fitness testing of the students in Chikhala, and joined in two days of sports competition among students from all grades. The school’s annual sports award celebration was the highlight. After the competition winners were acknowledged, all students joined in a three-hour cultural program of singing and dancing. The stage was lit and decorated for the occasion and people from the village filled the courtyard to enjoy the festivities.

“It was amazing to be able to connect with the kids despite having a slight language barrier,” said Lucas McCrory. “Another thing I would say is to really pay attention to the surroundings. Many of the things we read in the texts were things I noticed in everyday life situations. For example, the chapter in the text titled, ‘Anxiety over chaos’, I could really notice the chaos occurring in India and it seemed to be functioning in what we considered ‘chaos’. I thought it was fascinating to read and then actually see these concepts applied in everyday life scenarios.”

“Just when I needed a transformative experience in my life, I received it,” said Will. “Possessing a lifelong passion in sports medicine and enlightening the lives of others.

India’s a place one must experience first-hand. The Chikhala School held a sports week during our time there. The students displayed remarkable athletic abilities. Their happiness and intrinsic motivation derived from participating in games of India strengthened my desire to help others by improving performance. Much of my life has been devoted to sports and exercise, as well as the psychological benefits and medicinal value it offers. Regardless of culture, sport and exercise are vehicles that can be used to transform societies.”

As a background reading, the Guilford group studied Being Different by Rajiv Malhotra. The group also visited Aurangabad where they went to the Ellora Caves and the Daulatabad Fort. For more information about the Chikhala School or the Guilford College J-Term experience contact NStover@EmergingEcology.org.

Nelson Stover (nstover@emergingecology.org) is president of Emerging Ecology.

(Top) Guilford Students explaining the rules of “American” football. The Chikhala students couldn’t miss. I knew it would be good practice for my future endeavours in sports medicine and enlightening the lives of others.

(Left) Chikhala students dancing during the cultural performance.
Estando Presente  Escrito por Teresa Sosa Vegas

Que solo hay un tiempo importante y, es el presente. El momento presente es el único tiempo al que podemos controlar. Lo importante es la persona con quien te encuentras ahora, quien sabe si tendrás que estar con otros mañana?

- Thich Nhat Hanh

There’s only one important time and that is now. The present moment is the only time over which we have dominion. The most important person is always the person you are with who is right before you, for who knows if you will have dealings with any other person in the future?

- Thich Nhat Hanh

C uando vemos a este niño Gabriel Louis de 3 años, en una experiencia en medio de un inmenso campo de cereales y trigo del Sur de Francia, encantado y en asombro, sientes las palabras sabias del maestro Thay tienen significado. ¿Porque es esto importante? Su importancia está en la sonrisa natural, su quietud, respirar gentil, foco, no interpreta lo que ve, y no busca por qué, como si estuviese despertando, corporaliza (embody) y centra en ese presente, como su única realidad que puede controlar.

El niño viene al mundo con el cableado cerebral que necesita para sus tiempos, y retos, y convivir conectándose con nuevas experiencias. Viene con el lenguaje, conexiones interrumpidas y tejidas con lo que vive, sus emociones y sensaciones. Continuamente explora y aprende. Este niño refleja al adulto lo que tenemos que recordar: re entrenar nuestros cerebros. Permitirnos estar en control de nuestras mentes y no dejar que las emociones nos secuestren la vida. Nosotros a cambio deberíamos reflejar la serenidad, conocimiento, para que ese niño entienda y actúe, con sentido y humanidad. Para que desarrolle su potencial y crezca como una flor dando frutos y aromas de bienestar.

Si queremos ser innovadores, creativos en el presente, y vivir desde la sensación de la felicidad, en cualquier país o nación en el que nos encontremos realizando nuestro trabajo y acciones en bienestar de otros, debemos, para actuar desde lo sano, competitivos y efectivo de nosotros, estar en el camino, "track" o riel de la satisfacción y felicidad, tomando el control de nuestras vidas. El Stress es la causa de muerte #1 en el mundo. Tenemos que poner atención y acceder a la salud de nuestro cerebro. Cuando el stress y las preocupaciones dominan nuestros pensamientos y emociones, nuestro cerebro prehistórico entra en piloto automático, y maneja nuestras vidas del siglo 21. Existen ejercicios fundamentales que al practicarlos acceden al nuevo cerebro y garantizan salud y bienestar. Es un cableado dotado para funcionar en un mundo de retos, caracterizado por la incertidumbre, el caos, la complejidad y volatilidad.

Estos son:
- Estirarse con los brazos, cuello y torso 2 o 3 veces al día por 3 segundos.
- Reír
- Bostezar
- Dejar la mente se asombre y expanda, como el niño de la foto.
- Respirar lento y consciente.

Así de fácil. Sencillo y practico. Y cuando decides vivir cada día desde la activación de tu nuevo cerebro puedes generar soluciones, respuestas creativas, innovadoras, y frescas, con un nuevo mirar. Los viejos hábitos calcificados se diluyen y te estás preparado para un vivir en el presente de posibilidades y oportunidades en vez de dificultades, obstáculos, negativismo y limitaciones.

Teresa Sosa Vegas, SOC., MSW (boulogne2010@gmail.com), es profesora de la USB Universidad Simon Bolívar, Post Grado en Ciencia Políticas, Caracas, Venezuela.

Being present  By Teresa Sosa Vegas

There is only one important time and that is now. The present moment is the only time over which we have dominion. The most important person is always the person you are with who is right before you, for who knows if you will have dealings with any other person in the future?

No one can water the plants in our inner house except us. The care and nurturing that we might give to a child can also flood the arid land of our inner lives. In that way, we can find a balance between our rigorous, structured mental world and the love, compassion and heartfelt presence within.

These are a few ways to engage with our deeper self:
- Laugh
- Yawn
- Breathe deep and notice your breath
- Stretch the arms, neck and torso for a few seconds an hour
- Let your mind wander or daydream as if you were the child in the photo
- Pray or meditate

These small efforts can create opportunities for personal change, for self-realization and for being present and appreciative of the self.

Teresa Sosa Vegas, SOC., MSW (boulogne2010@gmail.com), is a professor at Simon Bolivar University (USB) Post Graduate School of Political Science, Caracas, Venezuela.
ICA REPORTS – ICA NEPAL

REHAB PROJECT BRINGS HOPE TO QUAKE VICTIMS

By Binita Subedi

Occupants of a home for the disabled that was destroyed by Nepal’s earthquake now have a roof over their heads - the brand new Disabled Service Centre in Kathmandu.

The building, one of ICA Nepal’s rehabilitation projects, is located in Goldhunga, Balaju. It has six rooms, a training hall and can accommodate up to 25 people. There are separate dorms for men and women, a toilet, a kitchen and an office.

The inmates said they lost all hope after the quake hit their old shelter last April. “It almost completely damaged the place,” said one of them, looking up from her weaving that brings her income. “And even before that, the house was leaky and cold, affecting us both physically and mentally.”

“The new house has granted us a new life,” said Mr Lalit Shahi.

Residents say the Disabled Service Centre is airy, spacious and bright compared to their old shelter which was destroyed by the earthquake last April.

A resident making a stool with sticks and nylon strings, one of the community’s income generating activities.

ICA REPORTS – ICA PERU

ECONOMIC PLAN INSPIRES MOUNTAIN TOWNS

By Gloria Santos and Jesusa Aburto

Two mountain communities we work with in Lima Region have launched a comprehensive community development program. Madeán and Huangásarc, in Yauyos province, lie at an altitude of 2,500 metres and 3,500 metres above sea level. They are involved in agriculture and cattle farming, which are being affected by climate change and other factors.

Following a request from some of their residents, ICA Peru, in collaboration with ICA Australia, designed a two-year plan of action with the support of the local authorities. It has two phases. First, leaders from the communities get trained through an internship program and, second, they get the communities involved in implementing productive projects.

We held a five-day leadership skills training for 14 people from both communities at ICA’s training centre in Azpitia, Mala valley, in December. The next month, the trainees held “intervention” sessions in both communities. With help from ICA-Peru staff, they got residents to talk about their vision for the future at a workshop. They gave a presentation on how the communities could boost their economy by using their own produce such as potatoes, barley, corn and beans instead of goods from outside. They showed how to make potato chips and fried beans and thus add value to harvested produce. In Madeán, they installed a drip irrigation system. Farmers said it would be useful for cultivating avocado, peach and animal fodder and allow more water control. Another effective demonstration was on how the town’s avocado, peach and animal fodder and allow more water control. Another effective demonstration was on how the town’s water system. Farmers said it would be useful for cultivating avocado, peach and animal fodder and allow more water control.

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second phase of the project. We are also getting phone calls and visits from other communities near Huangásar who wish to send people to Azpitia to get trained. We met Lima Region’s General Manager, Dr Luis Custodio, to talk about the project and about sustainable Irrigation technology for Madeán and Huangásar. He has expressed interest in providing support.

Leaders demonstrating the use of a drip irrigation system in Madeán.

To colleagues in the ICA network, if you have links with institutions that may wish to support this type of project, please contact us at admin@ica-peru.org or glorias@ica-peru.org. We will be very grateful.

Gloria Santos is involved with community leadership programmes while Jesuss Aburto is the coordinator at the training centre in Azpitia.

\* lulu – grandfather (Broome Filipino term for grandfather; lolo – Tagalog for grandfather)

Manilamen: the ‘Outsiders’ within

By Deborah Ruiz Wall

Awakening…

with a touch of the soul of a race,

wave of mariners washed ashore to Broome and the Torres Strait,

who never returned from their homeland.

It was on the Island Continent from where their souls departed,

where their tawny remains were buried, mingled with the crimson soil and the turquoise sea in an alien place that they fully embraced and adopted like their own, for in the distant past,

they rode on the tide of fate that blessed them with generations of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander offspring; and two hundred years hence, two more waves of Filipino immigrants arrived onshore, yet the ancestral lines of those who dived in the depths for the pearl of the ‘west’ to explore a new life and livelihood had not been broken, their ‘lulu’ turned into fisher folk, food garden growers, missionary helpers, handymen, even pearl-irrigating masters, who in the emerging new nation, broke new ground, explored new trails, acquired new knowledge and new language, absorbed Western thought; their descendants subliminally felt the seductive glow of the pearl, imbued with traces and remnants of Filipino heritage implanted in Australia’s homeland from where they heard soft melodies from the songs of their forebears, like a tingling whisper in the wind reminding them never to forget their islands of old from where their forebears had sailed away.

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The Litmus Test Of Worth

By Deborah Ruiz Wall

Life collapses like an accordion once one has reached the phase of nearly bidding goodbye to earthly joys and travails,

and so the outlook of the third age embraces an encompassing view of life, realizing that some of our wants that once defined who we thought we were have lost their appeal.

Who within the web of relationships that visited our lives shed light onto what we have become or are becoming?

Meaning is something human beings seek — we construct our own world of meaning but what we create may limit or broaden the scope of boundaries.

Relating is not just a ritual; one has to work at finding the fabric that can be woven to bind diverse threads that create the best blend of character. Our walk needs space and time for us to grow.

We stumble, pick ourselves up, and learn from our follies and mistakes. Emotion becomes deeply ingrained in our memory like music that penetrates our life experience.

Perhaps our own sense of insecurity at any moment may colour our perception of the core of self-worth and our judgment of the worth of others who orbit our lives.

The storms and cyclones that befall our hearts sometimes blind us from recognising human frailty, even our own.

So we judge too harshly perhaps because we have been let down badly and are still reeling from it. Thus we nail our perception of travesty as the litmus test of worth.

What in the range of human behaviour is mortally wounding? What measure do we use to judge the worth of life? Is it the transgression of people who we love or who are supposed to love us? We can elect to sink in the quag-mire of defining the worth of self from travesty to make sense of an unfolding future.

Alas this posture will only make us sad, untrusting and lonely. Elevating ourselves as the judge of the worth of worthiness is a conflicted path.

What is worthy?

Our life’s work? Success? Reputation? The image we construct that we want people to see?

The future calls but not on a small footprint, for smallness does not provide much breathing space but suffocates the flowering bud that still needs nurturing, that is longing to find the glow of light that will bring potential to fruition.

We can transform challenge as an opportunity for re-creating ourselves: a union of opposites, a hybrid blending of dissimilar traits perhaps.

But we are not to know what lies ahead. The music of life keeps playing beyond our comprehension. We simply make an effort to follow the tune meant for us alone and to acknowledge, honour and respect the cloak of the mystery of creation.

If we were to believe in a God of compassion, we would not be too hard on ourselves, or on our expectations of perfection, for our calling is not to judge absolutely, but to learn, to grow, to become.

Embracing life with faith and love and compassion makes for a more joyous world.

Deborah Ruiz Wall, OAM (Medal of the Order of Australia), is a member of ICA Australia