

PAPER CONNECTION

Newsletter of
THE INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS
For Personal and Cultural Growth

Winter 2004

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INVITATION TO A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY ***TRAINING FOR A CIVIL SOCIETY***

The Institute for International Connections (IIC) and the Azerbaijan Psychological Association (APA) invite you to be a sponsor or participant in this important project. Attend one or more segments of a training program to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan:

March 11-20, 2005 June 10-20, 2005 August 26-September 4, 2005.

Your experience will also include a home-stay with an Azeri family for several days following the training.

WHAT IS THE TRAINING FOR?

Mental health workers, refugee workers, human service workers, physicians, and other community leaders from Azerbaijan and Tajikistan will come for training in community building, group dynamics, working with victims of trauma, group therapy, leadership, and other skills needed to facilitate change in individuals and communities. The training will take place in a cross-cultural community of which you will be an integral part.

WHY SHOULD YOU ATTEND?

1. To help fund the training for those Azeris and Tajiks who cannot afford the fee.
2. To demonstrate your support for people of diverse cultures learning how to live in harmony.
3. To engage in dialogue about making world peace with those who live on the cusp of East and West.

4. To better understand people and life in another part of the world.

5. To experience the rich historical ambience of Baku, on the caravan route of the famous Silk Road.

This is a unique opportunity to experience a fascinating country little known to most of us. You will combine travel, learning, history, personal growth, international friends and first hand experiences of life in a former Soviet republic. You will be enriched by what you learn and experience.

WHAT WILL YOU DO THERE?

- Meet daily in a small cross-cultural discussion group with Azeris and Tajiks,
- Attend stimulating lectures and workshops by the faculty and be part of community-building gatherings that are an integral part of the training program,
- Visit refugee camps, orphanages, community centers and other settings as well as take a guided tour of the intriguing historical city of Baku,
- Meet with community leaders and others to learn about the culture, government, and life in Azerbaijan, and
- Be part of a process of shifting world consciousness: from a domination/submission model to a seed/growth model.

Continuing education units (CEUs) and group therapy CEUs will be available.

WHERE IS AZERBAIJAN?

Azerbaijan is a Western oriented, secular Muslim country located south of Russia on the western shore of the Caspian Sea, and is about the size of the state of Maine. The training will take place at a comfortable facility in or just outside Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. Home stays will be arranged in Baku following each of the three training sessions.

WHY IS THIS TRAINING IMPORTANT?

Working in partnership with our Azeri colleagues at APA, we have designed and begun implementation of a four-year training program that will serve the primarily Muslim Azeri and Tajik mental health workers. Central among the goals is to build skills for changing transgenerational patterns from reactive vengeance to constructive collaboration, and thereby plant seeds for a culture of peace.

Training participants include survivors of civil wars and human service workers whose clientele include internally displaced persons, victims of trauma and Afghan refugees. Mending these communities is a step toward healing conflicts around the world.

This training program is the outgrowth of a ten-day international conference, "Surviving Trauma With Dignity," held in Baku in July 2002. (That conference grew out of an earlier one in 2000, near Yaroslavl, Russia, co-sponsored by IIC and APA.) At the 2002 conference in Baku, people who work daily with refugees and other victims of trauma or oppression, some without much formal training of their own, were exposed to the

psycho-social concepts and experiences that we take for granted in Western culture. The conference opened new vistas for those who lived behind the Iron Curtain until 1991, and whose countries are still very poor. They have asked specifically for a several year, on-going training program so that they can learn and implement these new ideas.

The first segment of this training took place in August 2004; the next segment will be March 2005. We are of course, working against time and current circumstances; each step we take toward transformation of consciousness becomes more important.

CO-SPONSORS

The **Institute for International Connections** for Personal and Cultural Growth (IIC), is an American 501 (c) 3 non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and developing cross cultural understanding and partnerships. Its mission is to provide links, partnerships, programs and opportunities which lead to the development of strong cross-cultural networks in which human service providers can illuminate their practice, contribute to the healing processes in their communities, learn from each other about recovery from oppression, trauma and war, and explore the transfer of effective social strategies from one country to another through direct experience. IIC has co-sponsored numerous conferences, trainings, and projects in Russia and countries of the Former Soviet Union.

The **Azerbaijan Psychological Association (APA)** is a non-governmental organization established to develop psychological science, advance education, and provide psycho-social services to organizations and individuals, with special attention to refugees, women, and other vulnerable social groups.

AMONG THE FACULTY

Ivan Urlic, MD, a Croatian psychiatrist, group analyst and international specialist in Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Dr. Urlic is head of the Department for Acute Psychoses and Psychotherapy at the Clinical Hospital in Split, Croatia and Associate Professor at the Medical School in Split. He is well-known for his work with war veterans, refugees, and displaced persons.

Craig Barnes, JD attorney, negotiator of international agreements with years of experience in Azerbaijan and the Former Soviet Union, professor of international politics and law, former Congressional candidate, trial lawyer, organizer of citizen movements, author, essayist, playwright.

Barbara Jo Brothers, LCSW, BCD, CGP, psychotherapist, Adjunct Faculty Tulane University School of Social Work. Over 35 years of experience working with families, couples, individuals, and groups. Author of many articles about the work of Virginia Satir, mother of family therapy. Coordinator and group leader at previous IIC workshops in Russia and the Former Soviet Union. Co-chair, Baku Education Project.

Laura Dodson, MSW, PhD, Jungian analyst; founder of the Institute for International Connections in 1989. Initiated and led Satir-model cross-cultural family camps in Russia. Continuing to develop international community in response to requests from persons in Russia, Latvia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. Co-chair, Baku Education Project.

Linda Provenza, MA, Founder and President of Strategies for Change, Inc. Helps organizations, unions and communities build cooperation, leadership and member participation through: education, skill and community building; conflict resolution; facilitation of labor management partnerships, process improvement projects, and Theatre for Social and Organizational change. Worked throughout the USA and in Latin America, Azerbaijan, France and Great Britain.

Jeanne Reock, CRS, President of the International Association of Rubenfeld Synergists. Author of articles on integrating the body, mind, emotions, and spirit.

Alexander ("Sasha") Cheryomukhin, President, Azerbaijan Psychological Society; Co-chair, Baku Education Project; Coordinator, Caucasus Region.

COST

The fee for the training and the home stay for sponsor/participants is \$3000 per segment, which includes all expenses *except* for airfare, visa costs and personal purchases. This fee will be used in part to fund the program -- to make possible training for people in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

REGISTRATION

For additional registration forms and/or questions, contact Barbara Jo Brothers as listed below. A registration and donation form can be found on the final page of this brochure.

DEADLINE: January 5, 2005. Places are limited. Please apply early.

Barbara Jo Brothers, LCSW, BCD, CGP
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New Orleans, Louisiana 70115
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The Estonian Project 2004

April 14 to 23, 2004

Estonia, located just below Finland, is a country of the Former Soviet Union and is comprised of over 1500 islands. Tallinn, the capital, and Tartu, a college town, are its two largest cities. In 1999, Sister Mary Venard, a real fireball and 80-something year-old teacher of English in Estonia, discussed the possibility of doing a workshop with IIC Vice President Eleanor Kajeckas. Five years later the discussion became a reality.

Eleanor, a social worker, invited Rasa Bieliauskaite, a prominent Lithuanian psychologist, and Linda Hetue, an American occupational therapist (OT), to join her in creating a presentation for teachers, professionals, and parents at two schools in Estonia. Several U.S. companies donated books and materials for the schools.

The adventure began in Vilnius, Lithuania. Linda visited the occupational therapy program at the Vilnius University Hospital. The director, Ruta Dadelienė, and Alma Cirtautas, an OT professor, are physical therapists who had had an opportunity to earn an occupational therapy degree. They now run the program and are creating textbooks – there are none now in Lithuanian. They have made the most of their limited resources and hospital space, but are in need of textbooks, education for hospital staff, and seminars for OT students.

The bus ride from Vilnius to Tallinn took 10 hours. Imagine crossing through 3 countries in 10 hours – by bus! A two-day presentation was planned in Hegari at a conference center that also serves as a retirement home. This was surprising and quite interesting, as is the story of how it came to be:

An Estonian man visited his mother-in-law in the US. He was impressed with nursing home care and wanted the same for his mother back in Estonia. For 10 years, he worked for this dream. However, there was little government support and he had to find funding and donations on his own. Finally, the home opened. The facility is home to 40 people and houses a small conference center with rooms on the third floor for participants. The dining room is used both by the residents and conference attendees. The building is nestled in a small village with houses and farms nearby, as well as a church next door. The décor is very homey with many “cubby” areas with sofas or chairs and traditional decorations.

Presentation topics included parent-teacher relations and ways to help them partner in educating the children; sensory integration and sensory techniques in the classroom; and Adler-based psychology of teens and power struggles. Rasa led group work on teen misbehavior. The groups were very talkative and did some wonderful role-playing. A few seemed naturals!

One teacher’s son (about 4 year’s old), came to the sensory table and began to play with the sensory equipment. He was a great addition and became our sensory mascot!

Presenters visited the Tartu Christian Home, which provides housing for several children, as well as meals and clothes for any child who chooses to come. On Friday nights, residents and staff search for homeless children. One was found living under a boat by the river. The children do not make fun of the “new” kids, many of whom may not know how to eat at a table, sleep in a bed or even take a shower. Older students often return after graduation and provide a view to the future for the current children. In order to stay at the Home, the children must attend school and learn life skills like cooking, cleaning, sewing, basic finance, etc.

The presenters spent two evenings with parents at each school. We used “self as therapy” and connected as both parents and therapists. One parent expressed doubt that sensory techniques could be used in the small classrooms. Ilena, a teacher, spoke up and said that she was already implementing some of the techniques into her classroom.

We give thanks to Sister Mary for beginning this project. Also, thanks to Sister Vojtecha, Sister Hyacinth, Sister Benedicta, Ingrid, Krista, and many others who made this a wonderful experience.

Sister Mary is not one to rest on her laurels; she and Eleanor are already discussing more projects for the future. Stay tuned!

Women in Afghanistan

December 2003

Literacy in the isolated, war-torn country of Afghanistan is less than 36% overall and only 21% among women. As the country struggles to recover from the oppression of the Taliban, women are emerging from the shadows.

Learning to read, in many cases together with their husbands, is a critical step toward their participation in social, economic and political life. In December 2003, IIC Vice President Eleanor Kajeckas and Board Member Valarie Thomas traveled to Kabul with pounds of donated books in both English and Dari. They also delivered monetary donations, which supported the teachers of the literacy classes, transportation to the classes for students, as well as propane heaters for the unlit, unheated classrooms.

In addition, Eleanor participated in a petition campaign for the inclusion of women’s rights in the new Afghan constitution. The culmination of this work was a groundbreaking conference in Kabul of women from all reaches of the country. For Afghans, the attendance of Eleanor and Valarie represented the interest of Americans in the creation of a vibrant, thriving Afghanistan for both men and women.

DONATION/REGISTRATION FORM

I am interested in the work of IIC. Please put me on the IIC email and mailing list:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Work phone: _____

Home phone: _____

I am interested in attending IIC's training for civil society in Baku (please select):

____ March 11-20, 2005

____ June 10-20, 2005

____ August 26-September 4, 2005

I am unable to attend, but would like to donate:

____ \$25 ____ \$50 ____ \$100 _____ Other

____ \$300 for an Azeri to attend one training session

____ \$1000 for a Tajik to attend one training session

____ I would like to donate frequent flyer miles to support attendance: _____

____ I would like to donate books or materials to IIC educational programs.

Checks should be made out to: IIC-Baku Project

Mail to:

Institute for International Connections

Linda Hetue, Treasurer

9 State Park Road

Hull, MA 02045

email: lhetue@iiconnect.org