

Strengthening Resistance:

The use of narrative practices in working with genocide survivors

**A workshop facilitated for Ibuka:
The National Survivors' Association in Rwanda**

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On behalf of Dulwich Centre Foundation and Evanston Family Therapy Center

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BACKGROUND

From April to July 1994, a genocide perpetrated against the Tutsi people in Rwanda claimed over one million human lives. It is now 14 years later and the survivors of the genocide continue to face profound hardships in relation to housing, health, education, extreme poverty, and security. The vast majority still live in great suffering and with the nightmares of the traumatic past.

The genocide aimed to eliminate the Tutsi, and this entailed the elimination of families – fathers, mothers, and children. After the genocide, the survivors regrouped on the basis of kinship, friendship, or just kind-heartedness of spirit. Associations fighting for victims' rights are constantly committed. Ibuka is the national survivors' association in Rwanda (Kaboyi, 2007a).

about this document

In November 2007, a team from the Dulwich Centre Foundation and the Evanston Family Therapy Center (David Denborough, Jill Freedman, and Cheryl White) headed to Kigali, Rwanda, to provide support and skills training to the workers at Ibuka. Over five days, this team offered training in narrative approaches to responding to trauma to a group of 34 trauma counsellors and assistant lawyers, all of whom are themselves survivors of the genocide. The facilitators also provided a structure for the workers' knowledge and ideas to be shared and documented. The work of these trauma counsellors and assistant lawyers includes visiting, counselling, and offering legal support to those who lost family members, those who were assaulted and raped during the genocide, and those who are HIV-positive as a result of these assaults.

This document describes ways in which narrative approaches can be used to respond to individual and collective trauma. It also includes the words of the workers from Ibuka and documents some of the initiatives, skills, and knowledges that they, and other survivors, are engaging with while living in the shadow of genocide.

Another version of this document has been produced for the local workers in the language of Kinyarwanda. This version has been produced in English in order to raise awareness about the work of Ibuka, the experience of survivors in Rwanda, and narrative ways of responding to communities who have experienced significant trauma and hardship.

the continuing effects of genocide

The workers of Ibuka have a great deal to respond to. Here they describe in their own words the continuing effects of the genocide:

The effects of the genocide that took place in Rwanda in 1994 are not over. Many people still live with the effects of the extreme violence, killings, and degradation that took place here during those one hundred days. So many of our loved ones are no longer with us. We are a group of trauma counsellors and assistant lawyers who work for Ibuka – the national survivors' association in Rwanda. We work around our country to support and assist survivors of the genocide.

The people with whom we meet are often dealing with many different effects of the genocide. They may be having nightmares and be unable to sleep. They may experience powerful feelings of despair and hopelessness. Often they have profound sorrow, fears, or anger. Some may not know whether they wish to live or to die, which means they are negotiating with death. Some survivors experience severe headaches. Others have difficulty swallowing and may feel as if they are choking. Many survivors are very isolated, very alone. When you have lost so many people it is sometimes very difficult to have relationships with others again. Some women who were raped during the genocide are now HIV-positive and are living with the consequences of this. And then there are the problems of memory. Some survivors have lost their memories and therefore have lost aspects of their past. Others have painful memories that return again and again. What is more, some survivors may feel guilty for being alive. The genocide has made them doubt that they have a right to live. These are all effects that the genocide is still having on survivors.

There are also circumstances in the present that are very difficult to deal with. Some survivors are living in the same villages as those who killed their relations and family members. These survivors are sometimes living with continuing threats and violence to try to intimidate them not to speak of the past, not to seek justice. And when survivors do seek justice, when they do speak up, they must deal with other people's reactions. There is hostility and hatred that they have to deal with every day. Many survivors are also living in severe poverty. These are continuing obstacles to dealing with the effects of the genocide.

Children and young people are also living with the effects of the killings. Even if they were not born at the time of the genocide, they are living with the effects that these events had on their parents and relatives.

These are just some of the effects of the genocide that people are living with. These are the effects which we are responding to in our work.



Images from Bugesera Genocide Memorial Site (see page 41)

PART ONE

HOW DO COMMUNITIES REBUILD THEMSELVES?

Prior to the workshop, the facilitators consulted with the participants to gain an appreciation of which themes the workers of Ibuka would like them to address. One of the first requests from participants was to explore the question: How are other communities rebuilding themselves after terrible experiences?

This is a key question. From a narrative approach, within any community that is facing significant hardship, community members will be responding to these difficulties; they will be taking whatever action is possible, in their own ways, based on particular skills and knowledge, to try to address the effects of the difficulties/trauma/grief on their lives and the lives of those they love and care about. These initiatives that they are taking will differ depending on the context, the culture, and the history of the community. These initiatives may not be widely recognised, and they may not in themselves be enough to overcome all that is presently facing the community. But they are highly significant (see Denborough et al., 2006; Freedman & Combs, 1996; Mitchell, 2006; White, 2006).

Counsellors and community workers can make it possible for community members to identify these initiatives, and start to notice the ways people are responding to the hardships they are experiencing. Once these responses are acknowledged, it then becomes possible to identify the particular skills and knowledge that they are drawing upon. A range of different narrative approaches can then assist people to strengthen these skills, and to take further action to reclaim their lives from the effects of trauma.

linking stories between communities

In response to the request to hear about how other communities are rebuilding themselves, and to introduce the concept of 'noticing initiatives' within communities, the facilitators shared a document from Aboriginal Australians in Port Augusta. This document, entitled *Responding to so many losses* describes the profound grief experienced by the Aboriginal community in Port Augusta due to many recent deaths through violence and suicide:

Recently, there have been so many losses in our families and in our community. Some of these deaths have been particularly difficult as they have been deaths of young people, and death through suicide or violence. We have experienced so many losses, one after the other. It has been a real struggle to get through. There has been too much sadness.

The document then goes on to convey some of the special skills of the community, some of the particular ways in which they are responding to 'so many losses'. These special skills include:

***Dreams in which loved ones visit** ~ Some of us have dreams in which our loved ones visit us. Even though they have passed away, they come to us in our dreams. We dream of walking together again across the land. These images sustain us; they convince us that we will walk together again one day. Sometimes we also have a sense that our lost loved one is communicating with us – telling us that everything is all right. On the anniversary of people's deaths, sometimes our loved one comes back to us in our dreams to tell us they are going now and not to worry about them. This can lift a weight*

from our shoulders. We know they are now okay ... Even though they are no longer with us here on earth, they are still offering us comfort. Sometimes we also feel a touch on our shoulders and know it is our mother's touch. Or we feel her rubbing our back as she always did when we were children. Feeling the kindness of loved ones in our dreams or through their touch helps us to continue with our lives.

Spirituality ~ For some of us, spiritual beliefs and practices are what help us to get through. Faith that one day we will meet again with those who have passed away sustains us. Acts of prayer are also significant. Knowing that someone is listening and will answer our prayers can make a difference.

Crying together ~ When one of us is feeling low, others feel it too. We have skills in feeling each other's pain and suffering. In this way we share grief. I remember one time, I was sitting in front of a photograph of my mother and I was crying when my relatives walked in. They sat down beside me, put their arms around me and they started to cry too. 'What are we crying about?', they said. I told them and we sat in sadness together.

Remembering and staying connected to those who have passed away ~ We have developed special skills in remembering and staying connected to those who have passed away. There are many ways in which we do this. We do not forget them. We honour and respect our loved ones. Here are some of the different ways that people spoke about remembering and staying connected to those who have passed away:

'Certain smells always remind me. I seek out these smells sometimes and spend time to remember those who have passed.'

'There is one story that has always been very significant to me. This is of a particular woman here in Port Augusta. When her brother died, she used to carry his suitcase everywhere she went. This case had all his belongings inside, his clothes and other possessions, and she would carry this case with her throughout life – to the shops, to the pub, wherever she was walking. Wherever she went, this sister carried her brother with her. This was a way of honouring him. She also spent a lot of time at his gravesite.'

We all have different ways of carrying our loved ones with us.

They are with us forever ~ Because we love them so much, we may grieve forever for those who have died. But we will never forget them. They might not be here with us but we have them in our hearts and in our minds. (For the complete version of this document see Denborough et al., 2006.)

These themes can be seen as skills of 'healing', of 'resistance', of 'response', of 'honouring', and so on. However they are named, these are significant skills that community members are engaging with in order to respond to the profound trauma and loss that they have endured. It's important to note that each of the special skills that community members are engaging with has a *history* in the lives of the individuals concerned and also in the life of the community. These skills are linked to history and to culture.

By exploring, acknowledging, documenting, and sharing these skills in various rituals, these acts of 'healing', 'resistance', 'response', and 'honouring' can become stronger. It then becomes possible for community members to put these special skills to more use in their lives. Community members also begin

to experience a greater sense of 'togetherness'. This is a 'togetherness' not only in relation to their experience of loss, but also a 'togetherness' in relation to their 'skills of resistance and response'.

After hearing the document from the Aboriginal Australians, the workers of Ibuka sent them a message:

A message from Ibuka to the Port Augusta Aboriginal Community

We are a group of trauma counsellors and assistant lawyers here in Rwanda. We work for Ibuka and for the survivors of the genocide. We would like to send a message back to the Aboriginal people of Port Augusta. We listened to your stories here in Kigali at the beginning of our workshop.

It was good to hear your stories, to share in them. While we were listening to them, some of us thought, 'This is our life'. Many things are similar between how you are responding to so many losses and how we are doing so here in our country.

We want to say to you that we are together with you in sorrow. Your sorrow is our suffering.

We want to say that we are both learning from our bad histories. We are finding ways to love each other and be committed together in powerful coalitions.

Life has to continue. We must build confidence in ourselves and in each other.

We hope that one day we will meet together, that you will meet the victims of Rwandan genocide. We must share our experiences to strengthen our power.

Listening to how you support each other makes sense to us. It is very powerful. We learnt from your words that you are like us. We also have very strong resistance to trauma.

Here in Rwanda, each year we have a mourning period. It is one hundred days long. We wonder if you also have a mourning period each year? If you do not then we would suggest this to you.

When the 7th of April arrives each year, we gather together at the places our loved ones were killed. We usually meet at the genocide memorial sites. There are different programs in different places but they often start with a mass. We also bring flowers to the memorial sites. And we hold many events, conferences, debates over the 100 days. We also bury our dead, those who were not buried in divinity during the genocide. We also visit each other, offer consolation and give testimonies. Our mourning period is significant to us.

Thank you for sharing your stories with us. We hope to meet some day.

noticing initiatives and special skills in rwanda

Having introduced the concept of noticing and acknowledging the ways in which communities *respond* to significant trauma, the Ibuka workers were then invited to consider the sorts of initiatives that they witness in their daily work with the survivors of the genocide. Time was taken to compile a thorough documentation of the sorts of skills of ‘healing’, ‘resistance’, ‘response’ and ‘honouring’ that the trauma counsellors and assistant lawyers notice in the lives of those with whom they work.

It’s relevant to note that different communities name these skills in various ways. The participants in the workshop were clear that the concept of ‘resistance’ was one that fitted very powerfully for them. Kaboyi Benoit (2007b), who was present at the workshop, has explained this eloquently:

... our people know how to live with suffering. In our culture, even if we are suffering, we find ways not to lose our integrity. Our motto in Rwanda is to struggle for life and not to lose our hope, or our way of living. Even at our lowest moments, we remember that the one who made us to be saved is still with us.

Resistance is a way of living here. If you read the history of Rwanda, every time there were wars, we were very brave. This is not to say that we love war, but we tried to save our loved ones, our security. We sought to defend ourselves even if we were suffering. There are ways of living, and ways of thinking about life that we draw upon in difficult situations. In fact, during times of life and death we start to see things clearly. Certain traditions of our people become all the more significant to us. Even if we are suffering, we use our cultural values of resistance.

There are also different ways of remembering. We do not remember in order to destroy our lives. We remember in ways that are in accordance with our culture, that assist us to face life.

Because the concept of ‘resistance’ was resonant for participants, this became the metaphor the facilitators used to highlight survivors’ responses. From the words of participants, the facilitators generated the following document:

Survivors resisting the effects of genocide

It is important to know that survivors are resisting the effects of the genocide. There are so many ways in which people are reclaiming their lives from what happened in 1994. There are also many ways in which they are resisting the hardships and difficulties that they face each day. Some of these acts of resistance may seem small at first:

One survivor encouraging another to keep going, to believe there is a future.

A worker refusing to see the effects of the genocide as an individual sickness but instead naming them for what they are – consequences of trauma.

Some survivors resisting through art, creating poems, and other artistic endeavours.

Seeking justice can be a form of resistance. A survivor who is alone in her community may receive threats or attempted bribes to stop her from testifying at Gacaca*. And yet she decides to stand up and tell the truth, to give testimony to what happened. Despite the pressure upon her, she decides not to hide the truth. Many survivors still have a language of hatred directed towards them and yet they continue to resist through seeking justice.

Parents deciding to care for orphans or even to take orphaned children into their own homes.

Working in memorial centres, honouring the memories of the victims of the genocide, and ensuring their dignity is maintained, are all acts of resistance.

Joining with others in dance, song and laughter – when you have lived through genocide, revelling and enjoying life has new meaning.

Parents naming their children after loved ones who have been lost – this is an act of love, of memory.

Survivors resisting the denial of genocide by talking about the past, talking about history, and analysing the factors that led to the killings. Resisting denial is a significant act.

Joining with others in religious activities is to resist isolation and despair.

When women have lost their husbands, learning new skills and taking up the men's duties are acts of resistance. For instance, if a husband had a car and was using this for a small business, for his wife to take up these skills and carry on the work is an act of resistance.

Wanting to learn, engaging in intellectual endeavour, is itself resistance.

Having children and caring for them is a way of looking to the future, caring about life.

When you are a victim of genocide, taking care of yourself, looking smart, and working on your appearance can be significant. It shows the perpetrators of the genocide that they have not succeeded in ruining your life. In this way, living with pride becomes an art in resistance.

Joining with others in co-operatives, in small-scale businesses, are practical acts of reclamation. They are acts of working for the future.

For those women who were raped during the genocide, and who are now HIV-positive, seeking treatment and being willing to publicly identify themselves and acknowledge what they were subjected to, are acts of resistance. They are making it easier for others who were raped to come forward.

For those who are lucky to find photographs of loved ones, having these enlarged and framed are acts of resistance. So are placing them in positions of importance. If you come to these homes, you see these photographs proudly displayed. That is a form of resistance. It says clearly, 'These people may no longer be alive, but they remain with us in our hearts and minds'.

Developing new forms of family, and caring for other survivors, is resistance too. For instance, students in upper classes act as parents to those in lower classes. Whenever there is a parental visit, the older students visit the younger; they encourage them. In these ways, survivors create new families and resist through caring for each other.

When there is only one survivor in a village and they are going to testify at Gacaca*, a survivor from another village coming to support them is an act of resistance. They stand together.

Singing can be a sign of resistance too. In South Africa, or during times of slavery, persecuted people have strengthened themselves through song. This is true in Rwanda also.

Finally, acknowledging resistance is also a form of resistance. This document is a testimony to survivors' resistance.

These are just some of the acts of resistance that survivors are making every day all across Rwanda. There are many others also. Different people have different forms of resistance. These acts of resistance can be starting points in our work. We can work together to make this resistance stronger.

* Gacaca is a traditional form of dispute resolution in Rwanda that is now being used to bring perpetrators of the genocide to some form of community justice. For more information see Omaar (2007).

This document was read back to participants (via translation) in what was a powerful collective ritual of acknowledgement. Participants had a chance to make any addition or alterations to the document. They also had the chance to offer their feedback on it. They declared:

'This is an important document. We would be honoured if you could send this to others, to your friends in other countries who are also dealing with difficulties. And to the United Nations!'

'It can be used to advocate for survivors. And we can also use it in our work with survivors. It can assist us to notice the many different forms of resistance that we as survivors are demonstrating.'

PART FOUR

HOW CAN WE SUSTAIN AND STRENGTH OURSELVES IN ORDER TO ASSIST OTHERS?

As the participants in the workshop were themselves survivors of the genocide, they specifically requested that the training consider the question, 'How can we sustain and strengthen ourselves in order to be able to assist others?' The following exercise was used to respond to this question.

In groups of three, participants interviewed each other using the following themes:

- Describe something (a special skill or knowledge of living) that sustains you through difficult times
- Tell a story about this – about a time when this special skill or knowledge made a difference to you or others
- What is the history of this skill or knowledge? How did you learn this? Who did you learn it from?
- Is this in some way linked to familial or cultural traditions? If so, how?

Each group documented the responses. These were translated and the following collective document was then generated.

Living in the shadow of genocide: How we respond to hard times

Stories of sustenance from the workers of Ibuka

We have gathered here stories about what sustains us during times of hardship. As we are living in the shadow of genocide, we have had to find ways to respond to great hardship. We have included here some of what gives us strength. We hope this document may be of assistance to others.

listening and learning from the lives of others

Listening to the stories of others helps some of us get through. In our work, we hear stories from people who are carrying on their lives even though so much has happened to them. I recall listening carefully to one widow in particular who is continuing to live and care for her three children. This idea of listening to people carefully came from my mother. She would always listen to me during my childhood. Listening is also a part of Rwandan culture. We have seen people overcome very difficult problems. Their lives serve as an example that problems can be solved, that many things are possible.

music and song

Music and song is the only thing that gets some of us through the times when memories of the genocide return. One of us described how 'When I'm tired or when I am sad, when I am not talking, when I am alone and the memories come, then the only thing that can sustain me is music. I listen to slow, soft songs'. Others of us join in spiritual songs and gospel music. Some of us listen for hours or we sing mourning songs together. These songs bring comfort. Music has a power, a very good power.

acts of prayer – talking with a strength beyond us

Some of us, whenever we have a problem, we pray. This makes it possible to unchain ourselves from the problems we are facing and come closer to God. One of us described how since he was very young he has believed that there was a strength beyond him. This knowledge brought reassurance. In times of hardship he could pray, talk with this strength. During the genocide, acts of prayer were very significant to many of us. We often turn to prayer and to God when we have troubles. This offers hope and takes away fear. Some of us pray for strength to do our best, so that we can try to do as heroes do. Others of us pray for comfort during times of sorrow. Acts of prayer are a part of Rwandan culture. Many of us talk with a strength beyond us.

new ways of carrying on traditions

There is a tradition in Rwanda that we respect the parents in our families. We see them as capable of everything, and we trust the answers that they give to us. We rely on their advice. Many of us lost our parents in the genocide and so we have to find ways to continue to stay in touch with their advice. One person said, 'When I have hard times, I write. I imagine that it is my father writing to me, giving me answers. I think these answers are the appropriate ones'. Some of us are finding new ways to carry on our tradition of seeking and respecting advice from our parents.

sports

For some of us, sports bring relief and happiness. Using our bodies, exerting ourselves. Whenever I do not feel well, whenever the memories are overcoming me, I turn to sports and they bring happiness.

making family

After losing relatives during the genocide, many of us have taken steps to make new family. These may be families of friends, or families of students, or families with mother, father, and children. Making new families, having people who love us and who will stand with us in front of any problems can be significant.

keeping a distance

For others of us, we make our way with a little distance. There are times when we prefer our own company, prefer to be alone, prefer to keep a distance from the society. We have seen so much and some of us endure hard times at a little distance from others.

tears and then talking

Some of us are sustained by our tears. To cry, to shed tears, to allow them to fall, can make a difference. For some of us, there is a tranquillity that comes after tears that can allow us to sleep. After sleep, we may then take time to talk to someone. One person described that, 'When I am sleeping, the tears that I have cried give me strength. When I sleep after I have cried, I am tranquil. There is no noise, only calmness. This way of sustenance came from my mother. Whenever my mother was in pain, she used to allow herself to cry. After her tears had fallen she would go and talk to her friends'. Some of us are sustained by tears and then talking.

recalling good memories

Sometimes good memories protect us. During the war, I was fighting on the front when we ran short of ammunition. We were left with no options. We had nowhere to flee and no supplies. It was at this time that I started to think about how my life was going to end. I remembered then that my father used to say that a true man, a real man, is strengthened by the good moments in his life. And then good memories started to come into my mind. I started to think about my girlfriend who I had left in my village. And I remembered how my father loved me so much. At this point, I stood up and told the rest of the company to pull back. We did this and even though it was through bullets and fire we made it. We found safety. Sometimes good memories protect us. And some of us learnt this from our families.

bringing emotions and opinions out into the world

Whenever difficulties are starting to overcome me, I know it is time to make my opinions known. If I keep my emotions and opinions inside they may destroy me, so I bring them out into the world to discuss with others. There is a saying from my grandparents about this. I have remembered this and it helps me now.

realising I am not the only one to have that kind of pain

The experiences we have had are so extreme that we may think we are the only ones to know this kind of pain: the pain of torture, the pain of seeing your loved ones murdered, the pain of surviving when others were killed in your place. Now, though, we realise that others also know this kind of pain. When an old woman came to see me in counselling she told me a terrible story. At first I was not sure what to do, but then an idea came into my head. I decided to talk to some other old ladies and hear what happened to them. I realised that that old woman who came to see me wasn't the only one to have that kind of pain. Once we realise this, it is then possible for people to talk together. Now, whenever I have a problem, I talk to someone else to see if I am the only one to have that kind of problem. That's how some of us sustain ourselves. We consider not only what we went through, but also what others have endured.

respecting ancestors

Our respect for our ancestors enables us to have respect for life. We have learnt this from those who have come before. My father used to really respect his grandmother. My father has now passed away so it is up to me to carry on the respect. By respecting our ancestors we reclaim and honour their lives.

hard work for ourselves and for our loved ones

Some of us decided long ago that that we would work hard not only for ourselves but also for all of our people who have died. This gives our life and our work a special meaning, a special power.

finding ways to rest

During times of pain and fatigue, rest and sleep can be important. But sometimes, with all that has happened, it can be difficult to find rest. We have had to find ways to be able to sleep. Some of us

take a bath, pray, and then go to bed. This is a ritual that we may have learnt from our mothers when we were children. Others of us try to ensure that after we have had a hard day at work that we have enough time to rest, to sleep. We may have watched our fathers do this, taking care to rest. Some of us drink just one bottle of beer and this allows us to relax and to sleep. Others of us turn off the light and the radio and seek tranquility. We all have our different ways of finding rest.

turning to friends to seek company

Many of us seek support from turning to friends. Because we lost so many family members and friends who were dear to us, turning to friends now is all the more significant. We rely on each other. Some of our memories are so awful and they do not go away. Sharing them with others means we are not alone with them. Sharing problems with someone we trust can make a difference. This ability to turn to friends has long histories. It may come from our families, from fathers who always used to turn to neighbours and talk with them. It may come from our mothers who encouraged us to talk even when we were reserved. It is a trait for many Rwandans not to talk openly about our problems. But many of us turn to our friends and seek company in hard times.

There are many other ways in which we also are sustained. Some of us take walks. Some of us share a beer or two with others. Some of us have good knowledge of patience. For some, children are a source of joy and relief. Some of us always try to speak openly with those with whom we have difficulties. For some of us, having an argument or dispute is better than staying silent. And for some of us, our work gives us strength. There are many different ways in which we draw sustenance.

This document is just a starting point in talking about and sharing the ways we are sustained during difficult times. We hope it may be helpful to others who read it. We hope you may add your own stories to it.



This document was ceremonially read back to participants before being translated and made available in the written word.

Generating and sharing this collective document enabled individual participants to:

- hear their own skills and knowledge acknowledged in a collective form
- link their own forms of sustenance to those of others
- learn from the words and stories of others
- recognise how their skills of sustenance can be traced to familial and cultural histories
- experience a sense of company with others in relation to how they are responding to the effects of genocide.

Significantly, the process also involved a collective inter-generational honouring. It demonstrated how the workers of Ibuka are continuing the legacies of those who have come before them.

By enabling the collective of workers to more richly know their own stories of what sustains them, this also provided a foundation for the future. It is hoped that workers may be able to turn to this document during any future difficult times and draw strength from it. It may also be used in their work with others. Workers may choose to read this document with those with whom they are working. They can then ask their clients if any aspects of the document seem relevant to their lives, or if they use similar methods of sustenance. If so, this can be the starting point for further conversations. Alternatively, their clients may then identify different forms of sustenance which can be talked about and collaboratively added to the document. In this way, this document can have a life well beyond the workshop.

Later in the workshop, participants also had the opportunity to practice making their own documents.



PART TEN

ABOUT DULWICH CENTRE FOUNDATION AND EVANSTON FAMILY THERAPY CENTER

Dulwich Centre Foundation is a not-for-profit association that supports workers and communities in different parts of the world who are responding to significant trauma. Over the past five years, people connected with the Dulwich Centre Foundation have been involved in work within Indigenous Australian communities as well as in Bangladesh, East Timor, The Palestinian Territories, Kuwait (training Iraqis who are setting up a trauma centre in Basra), Uganda, Rwanda, and Zimbabwe.

Our work involves training and capacity-building of local workers. It also involves collaboratively developing ways of responding to individual and collective trauma that are culturally and context-specific. For example, from our work in Zimbabwe, we jointly developed a way of working called the 'Tree of Life' (described briefly in this document) which enables vulnerable children to speak about their lives in ways that make them stronger. It also enables them to speak collectively about difficulties they are experiencing and share skills and knowledges in ways of dealing with these. This way of working is now proving very popular in a range of settings and countries (recent interest has come from workers in Nepal and Sudan). We have filmed and produced a DVD of Ncazelo Ncube (from Zimbabwe/South Africa) presenting this work in Uganda and this is now being circulated in different parts of the world.

Ideally, after providing training and support to local workers, we work with them to develop their own ways of responding to collective trauma which we then document and circulate to a broader audience. We have found this process to be considerably empowering of local workers and their knowledge and skills. For more information see: www.dulwichcentre.com.au/Foundation.html

Evanston Family Therapy Center (EFTC) is a not-for-profit organisation that has been providing training and consultation in narrative therapy for over twenty years, both locally and internationally. We have been invited to share our ideas in a wide range of contexts including Russia, Israel, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, many European countries, Canada, Mexico, Brazil and Cuba. Locally, EFTC has provided consultation to many community groups such as Chicago House and Bonaventure House (agencies for people affected by HIV/AIDS), The Cancer Wellness Center, The American Indian Center, Cook County Hospital, and several alternative schools. In 2003, EFTC sponsored the North American Conference on Narrative Approaches to Therapy and Community Work. We are currently working to extend ideas of narrative therapy and consultation into collaborative community work as is evidenced by the recent joint project between The Dulwich Centre Foundation, Evanston Family Therapy Center and Ibuka.



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For more information about the genocide in Rwanda, see the work of African Rights:

<http://web.peacelink.it/afrights/homepage.html>

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