



Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS)
Faculty of Development Studies
Center for Research and Action towards
Sustainable Peace and Development (CRASPD)



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**Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS),
Center for Research & Action towards the Sustainable Peace & Development (CRASPD),
at PIASS, Huye, Rwanda
Alternatives to Violence Program (AVP)
Basic Level Workshop August 9-11, 2022**



Facilitators: Linda Balola Sylvine (DRC), ISHIMWE Olivier (Rwanda), IRAKOZE Yves (Burundi) LOPIR LOKITOE ABEL (South Sudan)

The Center for Research and Action towards Sustainable Peace and Development (CRASDP) at PIASS organized an ‘Alternatives to Violence Program’ (AVP) Basic Level Workshop sponsored by GIZ. 13 participants (3 females and 10 males) attended it; 12 of them were PIASS students from Rwanda, Burundi, and DR Congo, and the students from DRC and Burundi are refugees from the Mahama and Mugombwa refugee camps; one student came from the University of Rwanda. The workshop took place from August 9-11, 2022 (three days) in PIASS Campus Huye.



Session I: opening

Before allowing participants into the room, the team asked everyone to have a covid test which was delivered by a medical staff from one of the local clinics in Huye, and a team of interviewers conducted base line interviews with every participant to provide the basis for monitoring the effectiveness of the workshop.

Once everybody was tested and interviewed, the team of facilitators invited everyone into the training hall, and they introduced themselves. The workshop started with a welcoming of the participants to the workshop and defining what AVP is. Participants were communicated rules of preventing Covid-19 (as a requirement of holding a workshops at that moment): to wear face masks all the times/ to keep one's own chair throughout the workshop/ to observe at least 1-meter distance between people/ to sanitize hands every time we enter the training hall.

In the Opening Talk, the participants were introduced to the history of AVP which started in Green Haven Prison in New York in 1975, before spreading to other groups and countries and its philosophy: Everyone is important and valuable and everyone has something good in themselves. They were told that AVP is an experiential-learning workshop where participation is voluntary and confidentiality is encouraged so that the workshop is a safe space for expression. They were also told that the workshop is held in English but that people were free to express themselves in languages they feel comfortable, such as Kinyarwanda or French, and that there could be translation into English as we had speakers of multiple languages in the team. In an introduction round, including participants' expectations, participants and facilitators introduced themselves by telling their names, nationality, and faculty. Then participants were asked what they were expecting from this workshop.

The following are the different expectations that emerged:

- learn from each other,
- learn different alternatives to resolve conflict,
- have fun,
- Cooperation between us
- gaining more friends,
- learn from each other,
- learn different alternatives to resolve conflict,
- gain knowledge how I can live in harmony with others,
- learn more about Alternatives to violence program,
- gain more experiences,
- learn more about Nonviolent communication,
- having fun,
- how I can deal with conflict in the society,
- how to be a good mediator,
- gain more skills which will improve my carrier,
- satisfied my curiosity,
- how to prevent violence.



These expectations were looked at again on the last day of the workshop to see if some of them were at least met during the workshop.

To come up with Community Agreements, the facilitator put participants into small groups where they discussed on behaviors to observe during the workshop so that people could feel comfortable. When they come back to the plenary, all the group agreed on ways to behave in a way that would make the workshop safe and enjoyable for everyone present:

- learning more from each other,
- respecting logical ideas from participants,
- keeping confidentiality,
- members to open in sharing,
- Avoid unnecessary movement during the sessions
- punctuality/time management
- Raise up your hand for asking questions/
- Respect everyone's opinion/
- limit the use of phones/
- respect each other/
- avoiding harsh messages
- being sober when coming to the workshop
- Confidentiality.

Session II: Affirmation

The second session started by a gathering in a go-around, where participants shared something they like about themselves.

Adjective names/ AVP names

AVP names were introduced as a way of affirming ourselves, and it helps in building people's self-esteem. An AVP name must be something positive which can be a quality, or something you aspire to do or to be. It starts with the same letter as the first letter of one's name. Participants were given five minutes to think about their adjective names or AVP names; and in a go-around, they introduced their names and the reason why they chose those names.

Later, one of the facilitators explained that these AVP names will continue to be used in the workshop to affirm each other, as well as in any future AVP workshops that people would participate in. The names were written on name tags and stickered on our clothes in a way others could see and affirm you with.

Affirmation exercise

The affirmation exercise started by dividing participants into pairs. Then, in a first round, each pair of two people would begin by sharing with the other person all the good qualities s/he knows about themselves, and / or good things s/he did in his/her life, and/ or what others tell her/ him what is good about her/ him. When one person would be talking, the other one would be a listener only - and vice versa. for 6 minutes.



The second round was a group of two pairs combined (4 people then); that time, each one shared to the rest of the group members what his/ her colleague had talked about when they had been in the pair.

In the debriefing of the exercise, participants shared that it was tough because it was not easy to tell positive things about oneself. One participant said “I feel impressed during the discussion”, another added “We should believe that after participating in this exercise all of us know that we have something positive in us”. Another participant shared: “When I listened to my colleague sharing my good things, it made me feel overwhelmed because I find that we have something in common and it was enjoyable” yet another remarked that “Body language is important in listening.”

Violence Tree and Nonviolence Tree

The session started with a brainstorm of what is violence, where participants shared different ideas like torture, Harm, Harassment, Danger, Biting, Killing, Confrontation, Hatred, Injustice, war, offending, rape, kidnapping, racism, discrimination, denial, xenophobia, genocide, apartheid. After this they brainstormed on what is nonviolence where they shared tolerance, agreement, harmony, love, justice, peace, unity, happiness, empathy, solidarity, good governance, development, fairness, right, security, respect, truth, forgiveness, reconciliation, mediation, negotiation, conciliation, arbitration, satisfaction, and passivity.

Two trees were drawn: one of violence and another of non-violence. The participants were divided in two groups and each group was assigned with 15 minutes to explore the causes and effects of the violence/nonviolence. The methodology used in this session was World Café: after the group has finished exploring their assigned tree, they switched with the other group and complement the previous one on the explored tree for five minutes (i.e.: if one group worked on nonviolence, it will switch and work on violence tree, and add on what the other group has explored). To make the exercise easier, secretaries will remain in the assigned groups for plenary presentations.



On causes of violence tree, they mentioned: injustice, incompatible goal, hatred, intolerance, bad government, corruption, access to weapons, beliefs, influences of one's peers, impoliteness, selfishness. In terms of effects of violence, there is loss of lives, suicide, war, discrimination, divorce, shade of blood, human sacrifice, genocide, poverty, development, disabilities, self-underestimation, human sacrifice, rebels, trauma and apartheid.

On causes of Nonviolence, there is cultural, education, security, democracy, security, honesty, respect, fairness, forgiveness, harmony, humility, good governance, and unity.

In terms of effects of Non-violence, there is reconciliation, peace, freedom of speech, development, love, friendship, happiness, justice, peace, good values and norms.

Then, we had a discussion on lessons from trees of violence and nonviolence. The general ideas were that, as human being, we always choose violence first as the alternative to resolve our conflict, that is why we have so many causes and effects of violence. But as we know that violence is a choice, let us uproot it into nonviolence by avoiding violence and making these nonviolent causes stronger and affect our ways of living together.

Session III: Communication

Gathering

In a go-around, participants shared one thing they always carry or wear with them and why? The prompt was: "Something I always carry is.....and why...." and everyone completed the statement with one thing they always wear or carry. For example: "Something I always carry is my phone because it helps me in communication and knowing the updates."

Active listening

The facilitator asked participants to brainstorm what is a good listening?

- Eye contact
- Nod (shake the head)
- Rephrasing and get the deeper meaning
- Avoid any disturbance
- Not on pressure of time
- Being attentive
- No judgement
- No interruption
- Summarizing what I said
- Ask questions
- Show some interest and empathy
- Take notes depending on the situation
- Use gestures
- Interacting

The participants were put in two groups, and one group was led outside by one of the facilitators who told them to think of an exciting story or an annoying or painful experience they had had and would like to tell someone about. The group inside, meanwhile, was given the instruction not to listen at all when the participants in the other group would be coming back and want to tell them something. In the second round, the other group was led outside and told to think of a story that they wanted to share, while the group inside was instructed to listen attentively and actively, not only to the facts that the other person would tell them, but also to emotions the speaker might have experienced when the story happened.



In a debriefing of the exercise, participants shared how it was hard to speak and not be listened to” Some of them expressed that “When I shared my story, I felt bad because my partner was not listening to me attentively. I was uncomfortable, I felt bad because she was doing different things while am talking to him, another said I was sad because my colleague could not listen to me ,I was very upset enough when he could not listen to me ,I was angry enough to her because of her behavior , another hand said I felt afraid because my story was personal because she was a stranger to me but I trusted her and she gave me empathy so I felt happy, I felt released when I shared my story, at once I was nervous because I was afraid that she will judge me about the action I took to solve that conflict but she was a good listener, it was a good exercise, I felt good when she was giving me attention, I felt good listening to her, it was interesting.”



I-Message

The facilitator challenged participants by asking them what comes to their mind when they hear about I-message, they shared “positive means of communication; is a better way of solving conflict.” Then a brief scenario was shown where two facilitators were in conflict and using “you messages” in communicating.

After some minutes, participants were invited to share how they thought could be the end of the conversation. Some said it could end in tears, fights, mistrust, judgment, disrespect, quarreling.

Then, the two facilitators replayed the scenario again, using I-messages, and the conflict ended resolved peacefully. Participants choose the second option over the first since they found that the issue was well resolved and the relationship still is there. There was then the introduction of a way how we can share what went wrong for us and what we want to be changed in a non-threatening, non-blaming and connecting way that inspires cooperation rather than confrontation using the I message formulation. We can say:

- 1) what we observed – what actually happened: things we could see or hear – without mixing in interpretation, judgment or evaluation; e.g. “When I sat alone in the restaurant, waiting for you for 30 minutes”, adding
- 2) how we feel about it; e.g. “I was feeling frustrated”, and immediately add
- 3) what we need at that very instant – this way making ourselves vulnerable and opening our heart to the other person -, e.g. “because I need consideration of my time”, and
- 4) what, exactly, we want the other person to say or do right now – thereby offering her or him a chance to serve one of his/ her most beautiful needs, namely to contribute to wellbeing and fulfillment of needs – e.g. “would you be willing to come on the agreed time for our next meeting?”

Session IV: Transforming Power

Gathering

In a go-around, participants talked about a time or things they do and they feel then powerful. We did that by formulating the statement “I feel powerful when...” and all the participants shared their views.

Transforming Power Talk

This session started with the explanation of transforming power as a central philosophy of AVP. Then, there was a definition of Transforming power as an ability to change a violence situation into a Non-violence situation.

The following points were then mentioned about Transforming Power:

- ✦ Transforming Power is able to transform violent and destructive conflict into cooperative behavior
- ✦ Transforming power is always in us
- ✦ It cannot be manipulated; it can only use us.



The elements of Transforming Power using a “Mandala” were assembled in the center of the circle explained: respect for self, caring for others, expecting the best, thinking before reacting, and asking for a nonviolent solution. The facilitator then shared a story of how transforming power was used between a father and his child. And each participant was given a mini-mandala as a handout.

Participants were then asked which element of transforming power was easy for them and which one was difficult.

12 guides to Transforming Power

After the introduction of Transforming Power, a facilitator introduced 12 ways to develop it in one’s life,

1. Seek to resolve conflicts by reaching for common ground: when the conflict is clear and understood by the parties, it gets easier to solve
2. Reach for that which is good in others: if we believe that the other person has something good in themselves, we can reach a satisfactory solution because there is no hatred
3. Listen before making judgments: listening to needs, perceptions, and experiences helps to meaningfully solve conflicts.
4. Base your position on truth: telling the truth and committing to it shows the willingness to solve the conflict
5. Be ready to revise your position, if it is wrong: If I find myself in the wrong, I would not hesitate to apologize and confess and change
6. Expect to experience great inward power to act: it is great to let act our inside power to do good nonviolently – even when we have fear.



7. Risk being creative rather than violent: being nonviolent does not take away danger. It is just a choice we make of being creative and nonviolent, instead of violent because we know how much violence is destructive
8. Use surprise or humor: they may transform violent situations in unexpected ways
9. Learn to trust your inner sense when to act or when to withdraw: with practice, we get better at knowing when it is dangerous or safe for us to act or not.
10. Be willing to suffer for what is important: when using nonviolence, there may be suspicion, hostility, rejection or persecution. However, nonviolence could help us achieve long-term, peaceful results.
11. Be patient and persistent: in the search for justice, we need to keep trying over and over again.
12. Build a community based on honesty, respect and caring: it is important to start with ourselves. With honesty, respect and care, we reach for the good in ourselves and in others.

Then, participants went into groups where they discussed how any of these 12 guides helped them to resolve a conflict in their life. When they came back, they shared some highlights they had heard from each other in plenary.

Session V: Cooperation

Gathering

In a go-around about “a quality I would like to see in my team members”, participants mentioned the following qualities: collaboration / communication / time respect / commitment/ understanding/ attention/ honesty/ active listening/ fun /flexibility/ good communication/ trustworthiness/ integrity/ tolerance/ respect/ good listening/ determination/ care/ creativity/ concentration/ love/ humility.

Animal cooperation exercise

At first the participants were told that we are going to do an exercise called animal cooperation exercise in 4 groups of 3 or 4 people in each. Each group have one sheet of flipchart; everyone in each group should draw any animal that he/she think but start with any shape like one curved line or straight one and then another person in the same group continue from the other’s drawing until they make a shape of an animal. Participants were given an instruction as follows: “Without talking, make an animal image”, and each group member had to contribute.

After they were done, each group was invited to present their animal and tell what happened in their groups.

After that, we processed this exercise by a guide of 3 questions:

How do you feel about the way the animal turned out?

How did you decide on the animal you were making?

How does not talking affect working together?

What did you learn from this exercise?



In the debriefing, participants said:

- The exercise challenged me a lot and confused
- if we could communicate it would have been simple
- I was annoyed
- I could think of making the animal, but my colleagues destroyed it
- It was fun and challenging
- There was no cooperation at all!
- I wonder if it could have been more nice if we communicated?
- The exercise made me to think a lot but nothing I could do without cooperating and communicating with my colleagues
- This exercise shows me that nothing can be done without communication
- I feel ashamed, I feel uncomfortable, I feel sad

In addition, they mentioned that cooperation and communication are very important for the people to achieve to their goals. The general purpose of this exercise was to see how our contribution to the group project affects the outcome.

Session VI: Conflict Resolution

Gathering

The participants and facilitators shared with one another how they solved conflicts in a nonviolent way.

The statement was to be constructed as follows: **“One day, I resolved a conflict nonviolently by...”**: forgiveness/ I-message/ apologizing/ keeping quiet/ negotiating/ refusing to follow an order I did not agree with/ calming myself and talking to my sister/ thinking before reacting...

Role plays

Participants were told that role plays intend to open our mind for different options of resolving conflicts nonviolently.

One of the facilitators explained the instructions for the role plays:

- Each group chooses a conflict which happened to them – not fictitious
- No one plays their own role in the conflict – they may be director/spokesperson
- The spokesperson introduces what happened before the role play
- They play one scene
- Characters are given names – not AVP names
- Length: 5 minutes
- Facilitators end the role play by saying “cut”



Three groups were formed and one of the facilitators worked with each of the groups. We had a role play on a conflict between family members; Father with his two sons fighting about heritage; A wife who give a loan to her friend and have conflict with husband, conflict between boss madam with her houseboy.

All the characters were debriefed (asked how they were feeling after the role play), de-rolled (requested to get out of their characters and get their AVP names back).

A discussion followed each role play to know which processes of solving the conflict that the audience saw and where they saw transforming power being effective.



Lessons learnt from role plays

- Conflict is not always negative
- We act different during conflict
- Conflict escalation can lead to violence
- Think before doing any actions
- Conflict is not always distractive it can be transformed
- Conflict is inevitable
- Alternatives to de-escalate violence
- Asking for a nonviolence solution
- Unresolved conflict leads to violence
- Conflict is source of unmet needs
- Transform violent situation into nonviolence one
- Conflict is inevitable, be prepared to be a nonviolent person
- There is always an alternative to violence like peace and nonviolence
- As an observer know the good time to intervene in the conflict
- Always control your emotions
- There are still many victims who need our help
- There is always a need, position, interest behind conflict and violence
- Caring for others needs and feeling

Session VII: Closing

Open questions

Unanswered questions that had been on a posted dedicated to capture what had not been answered during the sessions were answered in plenary where participants and facilitators helped each other to find answers to those questions.

1. what can you do when you are in conflict with the person who does not want to talk?
 - Different alternatives were developed like to wait until the person is ready to talk, stop the process until the person cool down, do not force if he/she is not ready to connect. In addition, have an empathetic listening and ask if he/she is willing to talk to another person who can act as a mediator.
2. Why in affirmation exercise, we emphasize on what we do for others and we are proud of than looking at ourselves?
 - Behind our achievements, there is someone
 - once you do not that you have something good in you, you cannot help others
 - others also contribute to our achievements
 - it is a way of appreciating what others do
 - we always start from ourselves (respect for self)
3. What advices can we give to the person who was violated?
 - Approach nearby police station
 - Seek for justice
 - Accept what happened
 - Look for psychologists
 - No single way to help, but multi ways to do so depending on circumstances.



4. Can I- message be used even to the person who does not have any notion about it?
- Yes, it works since I express my feelings politely and make a clear request
 - It is a good way to solve conflict nonviolently
 - It works for everyone

Way Forward

In the way forward we talked about what comes after an AVP Basic Workshop. AVP has three levels: Basic level, Advanced level, and Trainings of Facilitators (ToF). The next level is an Advanced level workshop and by someone's choice, you can participate in an advanced workshop several times (for example, when there is something you want to learn again or because of the different topics each advanced workshop focuses on). After that, there is a training of facilitators of AVP. We had let participants know that AVP is present in many countries in the world and someone can do the next level in any country they may be located in, if AVP exists there. We also shared the AVP International website (www.avp.international) for more information about AVP, different countries where it is working in, and different materials.

Affirmation posters

We affirmed each other on posters made by each of us by writing only positive things to others' posters. After that, the posters were collected and they were handed back at the time of receiving certificates.

Evaluation

The participants were given printed evaluation forms to fill – the results of this evaluation are annexed at the end of this document.

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EVALUATION AVP Basic Level Workshop

PIASS CRASPD

August 09 – 11, 2022

Facilitation Team: Ishimwe Olivier, Irakoze Yves, Lopir Lokitoe Abel and Linda Balola Sylvine






Explanation of rating:

Not satisfied at all/ do not agree to the statement at all	A bit satisfied / do agree a little bit	Do not know/ depends	Moderately satisfied	Totally Satisfied
				

How satisfied are you with the organization and logistics of the training (e.g. times, training hall, food, etc.)?






Your comments (what can we make better?):

- I am moderately satisfied because sometimes, time was not enough
- Limited food at the hotel was not so nice
- things have gone well but I would like to add this so as the training beyond enjoyed
- At all I am suggesting if the days of training can be more like one week, precisely to go deeply to this Issues of evidence because it is matter of that
- everything was good and respected but some issues about food
- it should be better to put dust bin in the training hall
- I am moderately satisfied because sometimes, time was not used properly, food, & training hall are not bad

				
			4	9

“How satisfied are you with the facilitation and the methods the trainers used in the training (e.g. introductions/ exercises)? Your comments (what can we make better?)

- some of the exercise we were not familiar with them and you did not tell us before to prepare for them and I think it was possible
- I was totally satisfied during these 3 days of workshop and everything that I learned here will be helpful in the future

				
			3	10



Opening Talk (background and philosophy of AVP, ...)

- if it is possible you can use the projector to show some pictures and videos of those founders pictures and videos of those founders
- I wish for better understanding I wish you could provide visual animation to truly explain Different examples
- the time of discussing the things **or** questions was very little few time more explanations are needed
- It was really nice and interesting

			4	9

Affirmation (AVP names, affirmation exercise)

- It was amazing to have second Name of your choice (AVP name)
- I was really satisfied with my AVP names and help me to know other people
- AVP names try to give enough time to the participants to think about comfortable names
- it boosted up the spirit of seeing positives things in others as well as in myself
- for my view it was good ,but it could be better to provision of name issues ,when it could be an artistic way or gamble
- I have not understood it very,very well but make sure it self remind to me
- it was amazing to have a second name of your choice (AVP)

			2	11

Violence and Nonviolence Trees

- They explained well the concerning term
- wow! It was really good to see people brainstorming and every one ideas counted to understand more the session
- here as tree as request you can put more effort in order to explain more the violence means that to put more effort excellently
- It was good to see how we can uproot violence tree into nonviolence tree

			1	12



Good Listening – bad listening

- It was good to see how we can practice good
- some participant was not committed to that
- well delivery
- I wish it could be better, while it could be a programmed way to cause more dilemma during the play (game)
- this lesson may take a day and another but thank you for giving as foundation we can search for another materials

			4	9

I-message

- it is applicable and very helpful
- Awesome
- well delivered and received: by myself, it awakened another positive part of mine regarding to have I address people and make my request clearly
- show examples of how I message can be practiced so often as it is not easy for many people
- help us to understand how we can address problem and avoid violence.

				12

Transforming Power Talk and the 12 Guides

- I really like transforming power how was trained but those guides were many it was not enough time to memorize
- It was not easy to understand it but with the help of our facilitators we manage to understand

			4	9

Animal Cooperation Exercise

- it was very hard but may be learning materials
- let participant's discuss on what they are going to make
- it was very hard but may be learning materials

	1		1	11



Role plays & Lessons learnt

- *some are interested in playing role plays and cannot deny*
- *It was amazing*

				13

Open questions

- some participants are not satisfied (those who asked the question)
- because the time was very few to explain of discuss more means that as request you give more time
- debating time even if time was very limited

		1	1	11

Way forward

- *introduces to next step of the workshop*

			1	12

Affirmation posters

- *more explanation from facilitators are needed*
- *It was good to affirm each other*

			1	12

OTHER COMMENTS and QUESTIONS:

- 1.I have understood many things that I did not know specifically the ways in which you can transform and the ways in which conflicts can be resolved peacefully
- 2.you are good facilitators
3. in general the workshop had been so helpfully because I learned a lot of new things and it expanded my ability to respond positively to violence
- 4.I thank enough for the team for delivering all sessions well, keep going higher guys,I love you all stay heath
- 5.this training was good and we need more training in order to be experienced in peace and conflict studies
- 6.I just want to thank you for your job you did, the workshop was good at all because I learnt many lessons and I appreciate the way you used you are good facilitators, thank you
- 7.Thank you so much AVP was planned very well