

## DIALOGUE IN NIGERIA: Model for Healing in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

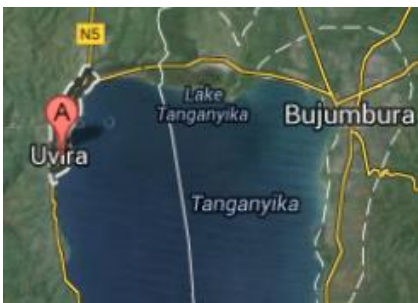
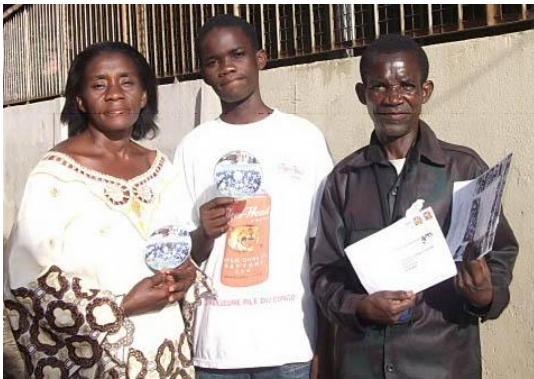


**Lumenge Jacques Lubangu** is part of the *Association Des Rescapes Des Massacres de Makobola (ARMMK)*, in English the *Association of Survivors of the Makobola Massacres*, in Fizi, South Kivu, on the far eastern border of DR Congo.

Using **principle-based, experiential education**, they hope to bring citizens face-to-face to reject violence and master tools of communication excellence and community-building for the good of all DR Congo and its neighbors.

In **March, 2013**, Lumenge, his family, and their colleagues requested and received the 65-minute film-on-DVD, [\*DIALOGUE IN NIGERIA: Muslims & Christians Creating Their Future.\*](#)

**First steps** were to (1) translate materials into French then (2) view the film among their families before (3) screening it in a local school classroom. These beginnings are documented in text and photos at <http://traubman.igc.org/vidnigeriadrcongoeast01.pdf> This foundation of these experiences led to initiating a larger public Dialogue.



**Wednesday, 14 August 2013**  
**The Great Hall of Baraza La Parokia**  
**Uvira, DR Congo**



## ***FACE-TO-FACE DIALOGUE***

*to prevent*

*Inaccurate Perception, Prejudice, Stereotypes, Discrimination, and HIV/AIDS*

### INTRODUCTION

In eastern DR Congo near the west shore of Lake Tanganyika, a visionary gathering diverse women and men was facilitated by the *Association of Survivors of Makobola Massacres (ARMMK)* in collaboration with the *Association "Bosse"*.

**Sixty-five participants** included 39 women and 29 men.

**In the spirit of inclusiveness**, invitations were sent to the following people, not all of whom were able to participate.



- Assistant Administrator for Administration of Uvira (prevented)
- Chief town I AMBA / Bangwe-Makobola (shown)
- Head of Service of Tourism Uvira (prevented)
- Chief city of Uvira
- Pastor of the Cathedral Parish of St. Paul Uvira
- Chaplain of St Paul's Cathedral youth of Uvira
- Representatives of all communities (BEMEBE , FULERU, VIRA, BANYAMULENGE, BASHI, others)
- Representatives of religious denominations (Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Muslim, others)
- Local NGOs (CEPROF, LUFED, UBAJ, GCS DI , CEPAC / FIDA , CCAP)
- The Network of Peace Builders DRC (RBPC)
- Associations of RBPC (FOCHI, PSVS, INIREC, ACODIF)

Moderation was provided by Ir KITUNZI Germain.

## METHODOLOGY

Successful, innovative methods demonstrated from the teaching materials included (1) gathering people in small Circles, (2) a Candle ceremony, and (3) Mask experiences, symbolically including:

- 3 Masks from communities COKWE - Shaba Province
- 2 Masks from communities KUMU - Eastern Province
- 2 Masks from communities NYANGA - Province of North Kivu
- 5 Masks from LEGA communities - Province of South Kivu
- 1 Mask from SONGOLA - Maniema Province
- 1 Mask from NKWAKA - Province of Equateur
- 1 Mask from MITUKU



For the work of this Dialogue, ARMMK manufactured 15 masks used by some local communities. Not finding enough resources for more masks to properly represent all communities, that task was reserved for the next time.

**The morning introduction** by the trainer, Mr. Jacques LUBANGU LUMENGE of ARMMK gave thanks for the overwhelming response to the call for face-to-face Dialogue. He reviewed the small but historic achievements of ARMMK, and closed with a little history of conflict in the Southern and Eastern Hemisphere.



## OBJECTIVES OF OUR FACE-TO-FACE DIALOGUE

- Encourage people to know how assumptions and stereotypes can perpetuate ignorance about each other, and unnecessary conflicts and fear.
- Provide a practical experience of community dialogue to perceive each other more clearly, and prevent and resolve conflicts.
- Show how our public face and external appearance can deceive and confuse people, compared to authentic thoughts, qualities, emotions, and motives inside us.
- Experience how to change to better communication and understanding of one another, so the evil of ignorance will no longer keep us apart.
- Experience in the community that "an enemy is one whose story we have not heard."

### Theme:

**PERCEPTION, TORT, STEREOTYPE, DISCRIMINATION, HIV/AIDS  
as a potential causes of unnecessary conflict**



### 1. MASKS EXPERIENCE

#### A. PERCEPTION

Perception allows us to know the outside world with our senses of sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell. Using the practical application of masks, people's outer often baffled the other participants.



## B. PREJUDICE

Prejudice is one's opinion held in advance of authentic experience, incomplete knowledge, or face-to-face engagement. Prejudice may come from early life experiences, inherited narratives from family and community, or lack of authentic experience. In extreme examples of bigotry, people may not change prejudices even when presented with new evidence.



## C: STEREOTYPES

Stereotypes are generalized assumptions made opinions without authentic experience. The qualities, often negative yet sometimes positive, can be attributed to all members of certain groups. Examples include imagining all women as too emotional and men as aggressive. In some communities a woman who exaggerates her beauty is considered a free woman. Here we have an example of the mask Cokwe called Madeleine where the face of the mask has a certain aesthetic beauty as well as her hair.



## D. . DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is the act of separating a group of other people and treating them worse. This is what happens when a prejudice is translated into behavior at the individual and institutional level. We used the example of our communities, our families, our churches, and our mosques, where some people are still discriminated against.

## E. HIV/AIDS.

Some families and communities affected by AIDS are isolated from others, creating climate of distrust between all the disengaged people.



## 2. CANDLES

In our face-to-face dialogue, the ceremony and symbolism of candle lighting showed the position of the peacemaker in conflict resolution in order to facilitate a perpetual, peaceful coexistence within our respective communities when they are lit and radiating light.



## INTERPRETATION

You can have good and motives, yet you can still be misinterpreted, misunderstood, judged, and rejected by others if they stereotype and perceive you inaccurately.

Here the participants are communicating some words by passing a phrase around the circle from mouth to ear hoping for accuracy.

The beginning statement was "Man is born good."  
By the end of the circle it became "Man is good."

Inaccurate and distorted communication and interpretation can cause unnecessary, preventable conflict in our communities.



## LUNCH BREAK

Next, participants took time for lunch. They chose to continue working as they ate, to maximize their time together. This idea was appreciated by all the participants.

They assembled into 5 groups according to the theme topics to be treated.

Each group of 5 participants chose a facilitator with some experience with the theme.

Each group was to seek:

- **the cause**
- **the remedy**
- **recommendations for prevention and correction**



## SUMMARY OF THE SUBJECT BY GROUP

### Group I: Analysis of PERCEPTION

#### Causes:

- Wrath of nature
- Fear
- Imagination
- Ignorance

#### Remedy:

- Re-examine before making any decision
- Seek truth and accuracy of facts
- Frank, complete Community Dialogue
- Develop a love of neighbor

#### Recommendation:

- Create an oversight committee to ensure the implementation of these remedies within our communities, in partnership with churches, mosques, and local administration.



### Group II: Analysis of (A) HIV/AIDS and (B) INTERPRETATION

#### (A) HIV/AIDS

#### Causes:

- Rejection and exclusion from the community due to sickness from the HIV virus infection
- Further psychological and spiritual pain caused by joking, condemning, and isolating

#### Remedy:

- Move closer to the person and give useful advice and affection
- Share food, clothes, and water
- Share the same bed but without sexual relations
- Develop a love of neighbor

#### Recommendation:

- Inform NGOs and the Government about deciding for psychosocial support.
- Raise awareness among health institutions to ensure appropriate care.
- Help the victims' families to enroll their children.



## (B) INTERPRETATION

### Causes:

- Poor communication -- listening and speaking -- can cause information and motives to be misinterpreted.
- Lack of information
- Further psychological and spiritual pain caused by joking, condemning, and isolating
- Bad faith
- Lack of reserves and self-control of emotions

### Remedies:

- Take sufficient time for meditation on the subject
- Inquire and explore each other for deeper understanding
- Develop the habit of seeking for better understanding
- Accept the answer to the question, and avoid the feeling of automatically rejecting a reply



## Group III: Analysis of PREJUDICE

### Causes:

- Lack of love
- Inclination to insult and diminish those who are not in our clan or circle
- Family and social education and inherited narratives
- Old customs

### Remedies:

- Increased awareness sessions on the well-being of communities that include everyone
- Organize community dialogues for communication skills and behavior change
- Circulate the printed documents about person-to-person communications to change attitudes
- Avoid whenever different communities to exchange and organize BARZA
- Monitor the implementation of all these remedies



### Group IV: Analysis of DISCRIMINATION

#### Causes:

- Family Education is at the base. It was found that in some families the girls are valued less than boys. Even at school, enrollment of girls is much lower than for boys.
- Traditional customs
- Economics where the rich tend to neglect the poor despite the space occupied by them in their progeny
- Some churches and mosques preach exclusion of women

#### Remedies:

- Educate parents about the non-exclusion of children and women despite their status of membership
- Show communities that success is not a game of chance or unfair discrimination, and the lack of status is not evidence of ignorance. Rather, everything and everyone has her time
- Refuse to discriminate in our communities, because unfair discrimination engenders humiliation, hatred, revenge, and even murder.



### Group V: Analysis of STEREOTYPES

#### Causes:

- Prejudice without authentic experience
- Lack of love
- Discrimination
- Ignorance
- Inaccurate perception
- Lack of patience and interest in others

#### Remedies:

- Disclosure of the law
- Develop the ability to analyze before judging
- Learn to love they neighbor
- Learn to reject violence to cohabitate



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Given the importance of this citizen-to-citizen experience and value of the teaching materials and activities, participants preferred that such face-to-face dialogues be held across the country and especially in our respective provinces.
- B. Participants expressed their wish to see the authorities at all levels and community representatives always present during future gatherings. The lessons learned are essential for everyone, because peace is the work of everyone. Every citizen and official can offer a stone for the construction of the building of peace in our country.
- C. The next face-to-face Dialogue seminars will be organized for Makobola, Baraka, Fizi, and Sange.

## DIFFICULTIES

Financial limitations prevented an ideal dialogue of two to three days. Limited finances for transportation also limited out-of-town participants, and prevented creating masks to represent all the important communities.

## CONCLUSIONS

The day together began at 9 h 45 and ended at 15 hours in an atmosphere of joy and prosperity. The seminar of face -to face -dialogue held great importance and concrete hope for our entire community in eastern DR Congo where we pay a great price for ongoing violent conflicts. We took a strong first step in the search for our conflicts' causes and cures for a sustainable peace in DR Congo and beyond.



## CONTACT

**Lumenge Jacques Lubangu**  
Bangwe-Makobola Seminar for Peace  
Association Des Rescapes Des Massacres de Makobola (ARMMK)  
Association of Survivors of the Makobola Massacres  
Fizi - South Kivu  
DR Congo  
[ARMMK2@yahoo.fr](mailto:ARMMK2@yahoo.fr)

MAIL TO NEARBY:  
c/o Box: 6273  
Bujumbura  
BURUNDI

**ARMMK-DRC** was founded in 2007 and focuses on  
developing inter-ethnic peaceful coexistence and  
conflict resolution at a grassroots level.

**Video** with more information is at  
<http://www.internationalpeaceandconflict.org/video/interview-with-armmk-a>

This document is on the Web at  
<http://traubman.igc.org/vidnigeriadrcongoeast.htm>