

Married Couples Improve Communication Skills in Democratic Republic of Congo

June 2013



[Virginia and Ellesse Bafandjo](#) live in Commune de Lemba, Kinshasa, DR Congo. They dedicate their lives to helping local youth and adults receive adequate education, health care, social services, and communication skills to overcome violence in their culture.

In January 2012, they requested by e-mail and received by airmail their nation's first DVDs of the new, how-to documentary film, [DIALOGUE IN NIGERIA: Muslims & Christians Creating Their Future](#) . They wrote:



The film is a whole treasury...a mighty instrument to help the people of the nations emerge from danger. It's medicine for our "Human Relationship Deficiency Virus - HRV," to help our community, authorities, youth, families...for great changing. Spread it as far as possible!!

February 2012 to March 2013 in Kinshasha, with courage and creativity they used practices in the film to bring together diverse youth and adults for successful, face-to-face communication and relationship healing. Preserved online are photos and stories of [Steps #1-6 in Kinshasha: Learning Principles of Engagement](#) then their inspiring April 2013 [Step #6: Albino~Non-Albino Face-to Face Reconciliation](#).

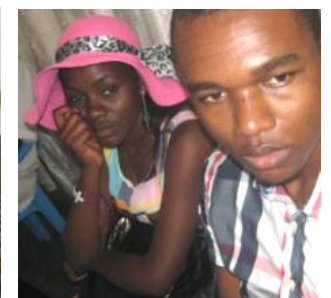


Step #7 in June, 2013, demonstrated [Face-to-Face Rival Football Fan Reconciliation](#).



Step #8: Married Couples Improving Communication Skills

Sunday, 27 October 2013 – Kinshasha, DR Congo



Marriage relationships in DR Congo sometimes end in divorce from lack of dialogue and it's art of listening-to-learn. A dangerous result is the SHEGE – children of the street and related social consequences and costs. Relationships and communication excellence are the foundation of the family and thus the neighborhood, institutions, nation, and global community. **Facilitators Elesse and Virginia Bafandjo** invited couples to this day of face-to-face skill building and inspiration.



We overcame the handicap of torrential rainfall that (1) prevented many couples from traveling to the meeting place, (2) deprived us of our technician, (3) damaged our digital projector for film screening, and (4) shut down Kinshasa city electricity all day. Later we were able to borrow a computer and use a portable generator.

Elesse welcomed the couples and described the history of the parent [Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Group](#) in California and its worldwide impact with principles and practices of inclusive community-building.

Dialogue in Nigeria film content

Screening [DIALOGUE IN NIGERIA](#) was prevented by rain and loss of electricity. Instead, with courage and clarity Elesse (to applause) verbally described the principles, events, and relationship healing of the 200 Muslim and Christian Nigerians in the film.

Participants answered two questions:

- A. What is the film touched you, had a meaning for you ?
- B. What new possibility or initiative was awakened in you ?

1. Fred Matundu

"All the violences and hate among us are fruits of our egotism and ignorance. In the life, sometimes we must forget ourselves and do our best to look for the happiness of others. The film helps me to know the importance other people and their equal humanity."



2 . Serge Isetshiko (attorney)

"From the contents of the film, I now understand that the conflict can make a man a wolf for another man. In Latin, it is HOMO HOMINI LUPUS – we prey upon each other. We can be as ferocious as wolves. We now have to reject violence and the idea of 'enemies' – old reasons for destroying each other and preventing creativity. My decision it to resolve conflict at its roots."

3. Gaby Namu

"We have to be accept all our differences, reject hate and war, and help the whole community move ahead together. I intend to love despite differences with others."



4. Lauriane Bompolonga

"Love is the basis of the dialogue. Let us refuse being enemies! From DIALOGUE IN NIGERIA, I appreciate the courage of the Christians and Muslims to dialogue, communicate, and exchange. I have decided to be courageous, to initiate dialog where there are differences, and also to love. Love is strength! All of this helps heal relationships of couples, too."



Face-to-Face, Heart-to-Heart, Knee-to-Knee

For 40 minutes each couple met in close communication to learn about each other's life story and humanity, and about their own relationship at home in marriage, "the gymnasium of the spirit." It was real Dialogue with listening-to-learn. They experienced that a sometimes-adversary, even "an enemy is one whose story we have not heard." It was a great moment of skill-building discovery, and healing within homes.



The event was so new to people as to be history-making in Kinshasa. The women and men were eager for communication and seemed to forgot the great rainstorm. Once begun, the delighted participants did like being stopped in the midst in their conversations.



In pairs, some couples shared their experiences with the whole group:

1. Gaby Namu

"I'm very touched. I thank Elesse, his wife, Virginia, and also the initiators of the DIALOGUE IN NIGERIA film for teaching dialogue's art of listening. Today I am experiencing the salvation of my marriage, I hope that this kind of activity will be held each week and everywhere in Kishasa and DR CONGO. My spouse reproaches me about two things:

A. I'm generally outside of our home. This attitude doesn't contribute to a sustained dialogue that must be a main activity of married life and our larger community."

B. I'm angry all the time. My negative attitude demonstrates that I don't know and practice the art of listening to myself or her. It is a danger!

I understand that with all these above attitudes of mine, I m really a danger, a problem for her, and our marriage and community."



B. Arnold Bompolonga

"Ha!! Elesse and Virginia, why have you kept all these good practices? My wife and I have made good discoveries today! We regret that many people don't know these things! We sincerely hope for a program that brings together more couples. During this unforgettable moment of face-to-face listening and speaking, we realized that we have been unable to dialogue during our conflicts. We have been in the 'hospital of relationships!' We have reproached each other with hate., and generally don't listen to the other with compassion. Today we decided to practice all the principles of sustained dialogue for harmony in our marriage and larger community. The notion of an "art of listening" has brought us light, opened a new path and moment in our marriage."



3. Marlene Ifeli

"My fiancée has reproached me for lacking the art of listening. I hear this with great interest and with a new, positive attitude! I now recognize that sometimes I exit the room and leave him when he is speaking. We both are decided to be engaged in sustained dialogue!"



4. Fred Matundu

"According to our exchange during the face-to-face moment, we realized that humility must have a place in within couples to make communication successful. We recommend HUMILITY."

5. Arsene Kinzomba

"I reproached myself a lot! I don't listen very well. I don't use dialogue. I decided to change because I felt that I have not been worthy to be in a couple. I'm a problem and often prevent good communication. I admit to everyone and intend to change after this helpful gathering."



6. Elesse Bafandjo

"My spouse reproached me and said I put the sustained dialogue in danger when I am late arriving home from activities in town."

7. Virginia Elesse Bafandjo

"My husband and I have encouraged ourselves to learn the art of listening, be responsible for our anger, and become more humble while listening to one another."



8. A strong statement was the presence of **Mboyo Losona Bafandjo and Ipala Clement Bafandjo**, Ellesse's mummy and daddy, **married for 50 years**. Each one has given marriage their very best, and they get high marks. They participated generously, and their attendance had great meaning for everybody.



Closing

The day concluded with modest refreshments and a family photograph of the participants.



Return to <http://traubman.igc.org/vidnigeriadrcngo.htm>

to see all their

Relationship-Building Steps in Kinshasa, DR Congo

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