



BEYOND VIOLENT EXTREMISM & ARMED CONFLICT

IAHV TRAINING AND PROGRAMS



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Executive Summary



The impact of non-state armed groups and violent extremism affects hundreds of millions around the world, threatening to generate widespread instability, undermine social cohesion and economic development, and increase levels of militarization. Today, extremism has moved beyond the battlefield alone, becoming an attractive call to action for communities and creeds across the political, social and religious divide such that it now appears a disease at the point of contagion.

Aside from labeled or self-proclaimed militant groups, this epidemic is now spreading into local communities, refugee groups, youth populations, as well as affecting trained combatants returning from war.

These global developments are a clear priority on the agenda of international institutions, national governments, think tanks and civil society organisations. Fortunately, there is increasing evidence and acknowledgement, even from within security circles, that military and criminal justice responses are insufficient at best and counterproductive at worst to tackle the challenge, let alone contribute to prevention and transformation. While the gap in understanding how to counter extremism is closing, policy makers and practitioners still struggle to develop effective responses and bring them to scale.

IAHV Peacebuilding addresses gaps in both the analysis and practice of countering violent extremism, broadening a focus on prevention and interdiction to include effective transformation of individuals, groups and wider conflict dynamics involved in or affected by radicalization.

Applying a strategic peacebuilding approach, we analyze and attend to conflict drivers across different societies, broadening our understanding of and responses to extremism. Informed by this analysis, our programs transform attitudes, mindsets, well-being and behaviour, inspire and train participants to use nonviolent means to achieve legitimate needs, and mobilise them to become effective peacebuilders in their own communities.

Working inclusively across populations, we offer four programs including: (1) Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism for those at risk, in the earlier stages, or seeking re-entry from periods of radicalization (16 to 22 hours); (2) a Youth Leadership Peacebuilding Training, or intensive program to empower and mobilize youth as effective, local agents for peace (7 to 10 days); and (3) Rehabilitation & Reintegration of Ex-Combatants and War Veterans (16 to 22 hours); and (4) Healing, Resilience and Empowerment training for survivors and affected communities to resume a life with more vigor and optimism (8-12 hours). Each program is supported by a tailored 3 to 12 month follow-up period, in which participants engage in ongoing learning, and implement local peacebuilding projects guided by experienced peace workers.

Beneficiary Populations Include: Potential, Current and Former Extremists, Ex-combatants, Prisoner Populations, High-Risk and High Potential Youth, Survivors of Violence and Extremism, Relatives, Refugee Communities and Host societies, and Communities At Large.

Background: Addressing the Current Paradigm



The Challenge: The choice of non-state armed groups worldwide to use violent means to address real and perceived injustices and grievances, create political and social change, bring about a new religious or ideological order, gain legitimacy, control territory and resources, or act in self-defense, is a global challenge to governments and communities alike, threatening to generate widespread instability, undermine social cohesion and economic development, and increase levels of militarization.

In the midst of this development, extremism of different sorts is becoming an attractive call to people of varied ideological, political and religious creeds, such that it now appears a disease at the point of contagion. The challenge of violent extremism does not just concern extremist fighters on the battle ground or terrorists attacking civilians, but also well trained combatants returning home, radicalisation among youth globally, extremism among "host populations" rising from ignorance, fear of the other and perceived scarce resources, and "extreme" responses of governments and security services that violate human rights.

These global developments are a clear priority on the agenda of international institutions, national governments, think tanks and civil society organisations. Fortunately, there is increasing evidence and acknowledgement, even from within security circles, that military and criminal justice responses are insufficient at best and counterproductive at worst to tackle the challenge, let alone to contribute to prevention and transformation. While governments and intergovernmental institutions have developed a wide variety of strategies to tackle the root causes of extremism and terrorism in a more comprehensive approach, such as reducing poverty, improving socio-economic situation and providing education, these efforts rarely reach the inner lives of the people targeted and clearly remain insufficient. At the same time, practitioners on the ground seem to struggle to bring effective responses and good practices to scale.

A New Paradigm: IAHV advocates for a radically new paradigm of how we understand and deal with violent extremism, which is fundamentally human, situated in a broader peacebuilding framework and tackling the psycho-social roots of the challenge. IAHV Peacebuilding programmes bring about a profound, self-sustaining transformation in attitudes, mindsets, well-being and behaviour of people involved or affected by violence and extremism, inspire and train participants to use nonviolent means to achieve legitimate needs, and mobilise them to become effective peacebuilders in their own communities. IAHV's expertise combined with identified best practices from the field in an inclusive, integrative approach, can lay a strong psycho-social foundation to complement and strengthen ongoing initiatives and bring about a crucial shift in a challenge that now affects every citizen of this world.

Programmes & Trainings



Our programmes and trainings include:

1. **Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE)** for young people (ages 16 to 35, though this can be extended) at risk, in the earlier stages, or seeking re-entry from periods of radicalization (16 to 22 hours).
2. **Youth Leadership Peacebuilding Training (YLPT)** providing intensive training to empower and mobilise youth and young adults (ages 16 to 35, though this can be extended) as peace workers in their communities (7 to 10 days).
3. **Rehabilitation & Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (REX)**, including current and former extremists as well as war veterans, into society (16 to 22 hours).
4. **Healing, Resilience and Empowerment (HRE)** training for survivors, relatives and affected communities (8 to 12 hours).

Ideally, each training program is supported by a tailored 3 to 12 month follow up period, in which participants engage in ongoing learning, and implement local peacebuilding projects guided by experienced peace workers.

Strategy & Operations

IAHV **designs bespoke trainings and programmes**, formulated to meet the elicited needs of partner agencies and organisations as well as beneficiary communities. In this way we are committed to **providing complementary and collaborative services** that can increase the impact of existing capacities and programming, and we welcome suggestions from interested parties. In order to deploy a **comprehensive, systemic approach**, IAHV Peacebuilding seeks to cooperate for initiatives such as early warning, identification and detection, building trust-based relationships, engaging counter-narratives addressing issues of injustice and discrimination, and creating employment opportunities.

Furthermore, we are committed to **knowledge sharing across organisations and networks**, researching best practices in the field, as well as developing new **monitoring and evaluation** methods to advance our collective impact and strengthen the growing body of documented expertise. Related to this, IAHV actively participates in the development of networks—including partnerships with ex-combatants, networks of formers and survivors, and researchers—that **advance the analysis, policy and practice of CVE in a broader peacebuilding framework**. Similarly, we **provide speakers and trainers for global fora** of practitioners and decision makers to further advance awareness and build capacity in best practices.



Preventing & Countering Violent Extremism

The minds and hearts of youth and young adults are often quite malleable to external influences in their environment, both positive and negative. In both the contexts of war, where direct violence is occurring, as well as other conflict settings, where inequality, injustice, and violence enabling narratives may abound, these populations are affected by high levels of stress, including emotional and physical health problems such as aggression, depression, alienation and addiction. It is, therefore, crucial to work with these age groups (16-35) in order to develop responsible, value-based citizens and leaders as well as prevent and provide alternatives to radicalized narratives and destructive behavior towards themselves and others.

The PCVE program provides a 16 to 22 hour training offering participants practical tools and life skills to release stress, master their emotions, withstand radicalization and peer pressures thereto, and solve conflicts using nonviolent action. Working at both personal and interpersonal levels, PCVE addresses several different types of change, including physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and interpersonal outcomes, transforming the attitudes and behaviours of youth and young adults from at-risk to high performing, responsible, confident and empowered populations. Follow up programming and support, from 3 to 12 months is designed to create long-term, sustainable change.

Youth Leadership Peacebuilding Training (YLPT)

Youth and young adults (ages 16 to 35 with possibility to extend) are critical stakeholders for mobilizing communities in support of peacebuilding. The Youth Leadership Peacebuilding Training (YLPT) is a visionary project aimed at the physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and social empowerment and the professional peacebuilding skills training of the youth to take responsibility for the transformation of their communities into more peaceful societies and become effective and skilled peace builders in their own communities. The YLPT provides 8-10 days of hard and soft skills development, focusing on individual empowerment and locally informed and owned peacebuilding strategies.

Working at both personal and interpersonal levels, YLPT addresses different types of change, including physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and interpersonal outcomes, transforming the attitudes and behaviours of youth and young adults from at-risk or high potential to high performing, responsible, confident and empowered citizens. Its comprehensive set of tools and techniques build and enhance: stress management, trauma-relief and healing, resilience, self-knowledge and self-management, creativity and innovation, communication skills, value-based leadership, team work, decision making, dynamism and entrepreneurship, interpersonal skills and volunteering spirit.



In addition, YLPT includes training in professional peacebuilding skills such as effective communication, mediation and conflict resolution techniques with direct relevance to violent contexts. Through applied conflict and peace analysis and facilitated peacebuilding program design, focusing on the factors, actors and dynamics most relevant to the local context, participants will design a peacebuilding project that is context relevant, effective, feasible and scalable and will start implementing this project as part of their training. In addition, they will be trained to facilitate low threshold and accessible workshops on resilience and stress release in their communities to become multipliers of the benefit of the workshops.

IAHV's approach is to give beneficiary communities a 'hand-up' rather than a 'handout' by empowering dynamic leaders to become role models and the driving force behind the prevention and transformation of radicalization and violence and the development of a process of deep peacebuilding that is self-driven and self-sustaining. In order to make a significant impact in conflict dynamics, IAHV's programs suggest peacebuilding is most effective when guided by 'inside out' strategies, developed and driven from the inspiration, ideas and commitment of local empowered people themselves.

Rehabilitation & Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (REX)

Rehabilitating and reintegrating ex-combatants entails diverse challenges for ex-combatants, communities and other actors involved. Even where security, military, judicial, economic and social measures of a standard DDR process are implemented according to best practices, effective rehabilitation and reintegration may remain shallow if no attention is paid to more integrative, psycho-social issues. Given the varied and longstanding impact of armed violence, a more complete DDR process is necessary to help divided communities and returning combatants break cycles of mistrust and violence and ensure a sustainable peacebuilding process.

A 16-22 hour program, the REX program addresses psycho-social gaps in existing DDR infrastructure, focusing specifically on a range of challenges which are psycho-social, including but not limited to: post-traumatic stress; addiction; mistrust and alienation; depression, apathy, and perceptive disempowerment; victimization and an inability to take responsibility for past acts or current behavior; negative emotions such as anger, blame, and a desire for revenge; cognitive reliance on violence to achieve power or fulfill masculinities; and other identity challenges related to re-entry. In addition, the REX program empowers participants to identify and achieve their goals in a non-violent way, helping them re-enter society as contributing and peaceful members.

Moving beyond elite-driven agreements, conflicts are transformed as people are supported to reconcile with the past and envision a new, more secure and inter-dependent future. IAHV has delivered this program successfully to militants in Kashmir and Assam, Naxalites in India, the LTTE in Sri Lanka, warring tribes in Ivory Coast, the Kosovo Liberation Army, gangs in Panama, and Maoists in Nepal. For more details, please read our Case Studies below.

Healing, Resilience and Empowerment (HRE)



Indirectly involved in or affected by violence and other extremist activities, families of perpetrators and surrounding communities are often those most deeply impacted, leading to large populations living in fear and suffering from post-traumatic stress as well as other subsequent political, social and economic implications.

Our HRE program delivers effective and scalable healing and resilience building, leading to more empowered individuals as well as communities at large. Providing affordable and accessible trauma- and stress-relief tools to large populations and small groups alike in complex emergencies, IAHV Peacebuilding's 8-12 hour programs produce measurable results, including rapidly and significantly reducing the symptoms of PTS, depression and anxiety, and improving the quality of life for individuals and communities. In addition, rather than fostering humanitarian dependency and creating long-term resource dilemmas, trained participants and communities leave the program with keys to their own stress and trauma management and healthy coping strategies, which can sustain improvements in quality of life with continued practice and skills application.

Finally, a focus on empowerment aims to ensure participants understand the benefits of practicing non-violence in both conflict and post-war periods, and are inspired to contribute towards the betterment of the community, thereby reducing the likelihood of a return to violence.

Methodology & Approach

The challenge to prevent and counter violent extremism and reintegrate ex-combatants in society is enhanced by the fact that the individuals involved exhibit a diversity of social backgrounds, undergo different processes of radicalization and are influenced by various combinations of motivations. Our approach, based on universal values, and practical, non-religious techniques and processes, provides flexible programming that applies across personality types, ideologies and contexts.

In many cases of war, violence and conflict, psycho-social factors—including anger, frustration, depression, pain, greed and intolerance—are either *internalized*, leading to addictions, depression and suicidal tendencies, or *externalized*, leading to aggression, violence and wars. Failure to address these powerful driving forces erodes the effectiveness of the massive efforts of mainstream peacebuilding. IAHV's trainings are especially geared to allow deep inner negative emotions to be released through special breathing techniques. Recognising that both external environmental and internal psychological factors are crucial in the prevention and transformation of violence and extremism, IAHV Peacebuilding programs focus, in particular, on personal and interpersonal aspects.

Sudarshan Kriya® & Accompanying Practices



Provided worldwide, Sudarshan Kriya® and its accompanying practices (SK&P) are time-honored stress management/health promotion techniques whose health benefits are being validated by modern medical science. Independent research has shown that SK&P significantly: reduces levels of stress (reduce cortisol - the "stress" hormone); supports the immune system; increases optimism; relieves anxiety and depression (mild, moderate and severe); Increases anti-oxidant protection; enhances brain function (increased mental focus, calmness and recovery from stressful stimuli); and enhances well-being and peace of mind. In conflict and war zones, SK&P are particularly helpful in relieving trauma and helping individuals overcome painful experiences and emotions. These simple yet powerful breathing practices have a unique advantage: they are free from unwanted side-effects, can cut health care costs, and are easy to learn and practice in daily life.¹

In addition to advanced and research-tested breathing techniques, other processes and tools are incorporated (depending on the program and target audience) into programs and trainings, including:

- ☐ Physical stretches and exercises to improve health and wellbeing
- ☐ Relaxation exercises to encourage a calm state of mind
- ☐ Experiential processes to revitalize human values such as responsibility, respect, kindness, belonging, honesty, enthusiasm and service
- ☐ Interactive processes to encourage pro-social behaviour, problem solving and cooperation
- ☐ Practical knowledge to encourage a positive mental attitude, increase self-confidence and inner strength to help youth handle peer pressure and make healthy choices when faced with life's challenges
- ☐ Practical non-violent tools on peacebuilding to equip participants with relevant skills to go back into their communities without getting caught up in old patterns.

Certified Trainers & Professional Standards

International Association of Human Values, in partnership with our sister organisation, the International Art of Living Foundation, certifies its trainers in centres located in three locations around the world including Germany, Canada and India. IAHV Facilitators have extensive experience leading workshops for prisoners (Prison SMART), trauma survivors (IAHV Trauma Relief), war veterans (Project Welcome Home Troops), gangs, ex-combatants, refugee populations, international institutions, state officials, security personnel, corporates and students. Personnel go through required, continuing certification every two years and vigorously maintain a balanced personal resilience and empowerment program guided by the organization. IAHV Peacebuilding, in partnership with leading peacebuilding professionals and institutions across the world, provides ongoing training in peacebuilding skills and encourages knowledge sharing to ensure high professional standards.

¹

Brown, Richard P., and Patricia L. Gerbarg. "Sudarshan kriya yogic breathing in the treatment of stress, anxiety, and depression: Part II-clinical applications and guidelines." *Journal of Alternative & Complementary Medicine* 11.4 (2005): 711-717. Additional resources may be found [here](#).

Integrative Approach



The strength of IAHV's programmes lies in the **integrative approach** through which our trainers empower human beings, addressing different individual and relational aspects such as:

Identity:

- Broaden identity and diversified understanding of oneself
- Foster self-esteem
- Foster sense of belonging, counter social isolation
- Foster positive inter-group contact through meetings/symbolic actions by “enemy others”
- Prevent and reduce fear of multiculturalism
- Prevent labelling and stigmatization, foster empathy and compassion
- Reduce perception of discrimination, reducing sense of victimhood

Empowerment and responsibility

- Address injustice, engage for action
- Foster self-confidence
- Stimulate acquaintance with positive role models
- Moving from blame to taking responsibility
- Strengthen action instead of reaction

Healing and emotional well-being

- Release of negative emotions (anger, revenge, hatred, frustration, loss, depression, etc.)
- Strengthen emotional resilience and coping capacity
- Healing and release of trauma
- Strengthen positive emotions
- Increase sense of security, social trust
- Reflections on the meaning of life

Mental training

- Breaking destructive cognitive patterns, counter dichotomizing, black and white thinking
- Foster broadened perception, open mindset
- Contribute to critical thinking capacity, question, discuss radical ideas
- Decrease worry and tension, increase inner peace and contentment

Physical Health and Stress Resilience

- Deep stress release and strengthening stress resilience
- Restoration of the neurobiological stress response system
- Increase sense of well being

Providing an Alternative



- Awareness raising and skills training on alternative strategy: the power and effectiveness of nonviolence
- Develop an alternative community

By applying this comprehensive set of tools, IAHV Peacebuilding Programs relieve PTS and other acute stress related issues, as well as support participants to release and positively transform negative attitudes, emotions, behaviors and relationships. These results support individuals to develop interpersonally and inside communities, creating more inclusive relationships and greater community resilience to radicalization and violence. Such tools also integrate with and complement efforts of current peacebuilding initiatives, and we welcome collaboration with interested parties. **Practical:** The programmes are generally offered over several consecutive days, with sessions lasting 3 to 4 hours per day. Programmes take place indoors and require very little office equipment.

Exclusive Ideologies and Universal Human Values

Ideologies play an important role in mobilizing individuals and groups towards peace- as well as violence-enabling action. Specifically, those ideologies that justify and exacerbate extremism, conflict and war have a tendency to demonstrate singularly binary viewpoints, deny the responsibility of one's own group and blame the others for suffering inflicted. This transference of responsibility to others goes hand in hand with processes of dehumanization, moral disengagement and collective identity building based on us-them paradigms. Indeed, narrow ideologies allow for cognitive restructuring, so that moral inhibitors are reduced and immoral behavior is considered dignified and necessary.

Alternatively, broader ideologies based on universal belongingness can play an important role in redefining moral and ethical boundaries, creating psychological resilience to dehumanization and providing a corrective, more peaceful lens through which identity and relationships are approached. IAHV Peacebuilding engages with contributing psycho-social factors to destructive ideologies, discussed further in Psycho-social Peacebuilding Approach to CVE, and fosters a strong, experiential foundation of universal human values to support more positive discernment and decision-making.

Core Operating Principles



Inclusive: Non-state armed groups, if not engaged, can undermine the prospects of sustainable peace for entire societies. Political labelling and condemnation often preclude the possibility of strategic engagement with such groups. Excluding them from peace processes, denying their claims and violating their human rights, has proven to be counterproductive, illustrated by the widespread radicalisation taking place in prisons or triggered by harsh treatment by security forces. Rather than resolve conflict, such an approach reduces complex phenomena to binary calculations that suggest punitive responses when a comprehensive approach is more effective. Rooted in a scientific, fundamentally human and non-religious framework, IAHV offers an integrated approach that engages people across divides on all sides of conflict.

Constructive: Emphasizing the core dignity and universal values shared by all people, our trainers have witnessed even the most hard-lined extremists renounce violence and transform into agents of peace. Our constructive approach begins by identifying the positive potential in every human being, and applies a scientific approach to the individual's inner world, through which negative manifestations in behavior can be released and transformed.

Full Spectrum: IAHV Peacebuilding addresses the full spectrum of radicalization, from recruitment to demobilization, including prevention, intervention, rehabilitation and reintegration.

Empowering Non-Violent Mobilisation: Recognising that many grievances, such as injustice, violation of human rights, exploitation, discrimination and unequal opportunities, are justified, IAHV Peacebuilding programs empowers stakeholders to address conflict constructively and bring about desired change through nonviolent means. We channel the inherent drive of youth and empower them with confidence and techniques to become self-reliant agents of non-violent, strategic peacebuilding. As such, the programs aim to provide an attractive alternative discourse, strategy and community to extremist ideologies, violent engagement and mobilisation.

Engaging Formers, Survivors and other Positive Role Models: Our programs leverage the proven strategy of engaging and integrating former militants and extremists, who themselves have transformed into peace workers, as positive role models and trusted insiders for participants. As such, we cooperate with relevant networks, organisations and individuals in this regard.

Addressing Individuals and Their Environment: We develop strong synergies and strengthen prevention and resilience by going beyond individual combatants and survivors to support relatives, friends and communities in creating cohesive CVE solutions. In addition, IAHV Peacebuilding assists professional staff, often working on challenging issues in difficult environments, to integrate effective techniques for stress management, personal resilience and well being into their work.

Psycho-Social Peacebuilding Approach to CVE



It is understood that violent radicalization happens at the intersection of an enabling environment and a personal trajectory. Our programs focus explicitly on the personal and relational aspects involved, and to a lesser extent on social, political, or geopolitical aspects. Among the psycho-social drivers of violent extremism, as identified through research of best practices and approaches, IAHV Peacebuilding addresses in particular the following:

Personal

- ☐ Frustration, sense of rejection, exclusion, isolation, humiliation
- ☐ Feelings in general (wish to provoke, despair, fear, hopelessness)
- ☐ Negative home/family background
- ☐ Idealism and strong sense of justice
- ☐ Fascination for violence and fights
- ☐ Disbelief in alternatives
- ☐ Identity questions or problems
- ☐ Lack of a meaningful purpose of life
- ☐ Search for simple ways to understand complex world

Relational

- ☐ Negative or lack of positive personal experiences with certain groups of people
- ☐ Interest in alcohol, drugs, certain music or other group-binding factors
- ☐ Wish to belong to a group
- ☐ Peer pressure
- ☐ Connection to charismatic leader

Societal/Political

- ☐ Fear of multiculturalism or of certain groups of people
- ☐ Us-them paradigms
- ☐ Lack of brotherhood, sisterhood or belongingness to a community
- ☐ Real and perceived injustice
- ☐ Lack of trust in others / society

Global/Geopolitical

- ☐ Rapid changes in society
- ☐ Resentment against Western supremacy
- ☐ Feelings of inequity and injustice on global level, and a sense of humiliation
- ☐ Encroachment of modernity on “traditional” values
- ☐ Highly symbolic conflicts on the global scene with broad repercussions

Key Performance Indicators



IAHV's Trainings and Programmes Demonstrate:

1. **A Proven Track Record**, including reintegration of ex-combatants, preventing and countering extremism, prisoner rehabilitation, bridging divided communities, and rehabilitation of war veterans. IAHV has worked to rehabilitate around 300,000 prisoners in more than 50 countries in addition to working with gang members, militants, convicted terrorists, and radicalized youths including:
 - ☐ Prisons worldwide (1992 - present)
 - ☐ Ivory Coast warring tribes (2004)
 - ☐ Kashmiri Hizbollah
 - ☐ Danish gangs (2006 - present)
 - ☐ India's Maoist terrorists (2002-Present)
 - ☐ Panama street gangs (2008)
 - ☐ Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers (2005-Present)
 - ☐ US War veterans (2006 – present)
2. **Measurable Results**, including renunciation of violence by thousands of militants and terrorists in India; reduction of despair (83%), resort to violence to protect one's honor (63%) and desire for revenge (67%) in HMP Thameside prison (London); significant and sustainable reduction in PTS symptoms of US army war veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan; up to 30% reduction of violent incidents in Los Angeles County Lancaster Probation Camp for juveniles; significant change of purpose in terrorists' mission from killing to living; restored community cohesion among warring tribes in Ivory Coast; and 85% suicide reduction rate in Kosovo prisons in 2 years time.
3. **Systemic Thinking**, whereby our approach complements the efforts of other peacebuilding organisations, including institutional, civil society, and grassroots initiatives and across sectors, creating a comprehensive strategy.
4. **Cultural Sensitivity**, rooted in universal experiences and integrative responses to trauma in the conflict and post-war context, allowing IAHV to operate in nearly every political, ethnic, cultural or religious context.
5. **Scalable, Efficient, and Inclusive Outcomes**, reaching large groups across divided societies, including survivors and perpetrators, low income to elite leadership, regardless of ethnic, cultural, religious or social background. While traditional therapeutic work is practiced on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, IAHV's programs allow for working with large groups while still effectuating deeply personal change at the individual level.
6. **Sustainable, Local Ownership of Peace Work**, as individuals and communities empower themselves to overcome trauma and build local resilience, creating self-sustaining change and reducing dependency on external support.

Case Study 1



Assam, India (2012): Rehabilitation & Reintegration of Militants

For many years, Assam has been a hotbed of militancy of varied kinds related to tensions between state authorities and the government, local people and immigrants, and among tribal groups. In 2012, IAHV offered a one-month rehabilitation and reintegration training to 240 militants, many of whom belonged to different extremist groups from an early age.

Participants practiced physical exercises to release accumulated stress and gain energy; powerful breathing techniques to release trauma and negative emotions of anger, fear and revenge; relaxation and fun processes to increase life-supporting emotions; discussion and reflection to broaden their perception and sense of identity; and vocational training and training in organic farming to earn their living in a non-violent way.

100% of the participants felt their lives changed for the positive with many renouncing violence, taking up agriculture, and becoming willing to contribute to sustainable and peaceful development of their communities. Here are some of their comments after the program (names have been excluded for security reasons):

- ☐ "My fight was for the people. So maybe I have no regrets. But I realized that violence is not the path. I am now determined to build a strong harmonious community. I want to go back and resolve conflicts in my region, now that I am at peace with myself."
- ☐ "It's a new life for me. I find a lot of enthusiasm and determination to lead a new life. I had a lot of physical and mental strain but just after two days of doing the Sudarshan Kriya and other practices, I can sit on the ground, and sleep soundly at night. I have a new zest to live life."
- ☐ "Coming here, I feel a lot of belongingness and respect for others. It is because I was given the same respect and welcomed with belongingness. I now recognize the struggle I was going through mentally. It seems I have found a tool to solve my problems. I can now see a way ahead. I have some land back home. I would like to take up organic farming."

Case Study 2

Naxal, India (2002—Present): From Bullets to Ballots



The Naxalites, or Naxals, are a group of far-left, radical Communists in India, supportive of Maoist political ideologies and armed violence. What began as a revolutionary peasants movement in Naxalbari, West Bengal, 1967, evolved into an ongoing armed uprising of mostly tribal inhabitants. Militant activity became concentrated along state borders in an area known as the 'Red Corridor', which runs through West Bengal, Jharkhand, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. Districts within this region are among the poorest in the country and have large indigenous tribal populations.

This conflict between Naxal insurgents and the Government of India (GOI) poses a grave threat to India's peace and security. By 1980, disputing communist factions increased to 30 different militant groups with more than 30 000 official members. India's Ministry of Home Affairs asserts that more than 6,000 civilians died in the crossfire, during more than 20 years of violent conflict. Since 2002, IAHV's sister organisation, Art of Living Foundation (AOL), has delivered peacebuilding programming to engage different layers of Naxalite society in order to develop a culture of sustainable peace. Trainers have been actively involved in providing trauma relief, healing and reconciliation programming as well as conflict resolution skills training throughout Naxal affected areas of India.

From 2002 to 2010, more than 500,000 people benefited from AOL trauma relief techniques. This resulted in restored peace and security in more than 1,000 villages in Naxal affected areas throughout 9 states. In addition, our team facilitated the rehabilitation of war-affected relationships through highly effective trauma relief programs for all actors engaged in Naxal related violent conflict, including: Naxal militia cadre, members of the Central Reserve Police Force, tribal villagers caught in the crossfire of conflict, as well as tribal villagers living in Government Relief Camps who were forced to migrate from their villages as a result of the violent conflict.

AOL trainers facilitated the reintegration of ex-Naxal militia cadre into society, encouraging political participation and positive action. The implemented programs aimed to demilitarize minds, break down negative thought patterns and reconcile adversarial relationships thereby strengthening social cohesion and conflict resilience. Recurrence of violence was further prevented through human values based peace education that provided practical skills in conflict resolution and encouraged harmony in diversity. Results suggest that deeply embedded attitudes of hatred and fear dissipated and transformed into non-violent behavior.

This peace is largely sustained by selected AOL facilitators providing mediation between the GOI and ex-Naxal militants, facilitating high-level policy and peace agreement negotiations that seek a resolution to the ongoing Naxal insurgency.



Case Study 3

Curundu, Panama City (2008): Reintegrating Gang Members

Living in the ghettos of Panama City, the gang of Los Cicarios agreed to join IAHV's program for rehabilitation and empowerment. Gang members grew up in very poor living conditions in slums where families struggled to put food on the table and the lack of affection and parental love was prevalent. It became natural for members to bond with each other and form a gang in order to help provide income for their families and security from rival gangs. Often times, young members were forced into criminal activities against their will. Without proper education or parental support, their options were limited and many felt they had to comply. Violence, vandalism and robbery were an easier solution to get what they needed and to stay alive. Passing time in prison became a habit due to their ongoing illegal activities while venturing freely in the streets was not possible due to different gangs occupying different areas.

In 2008, IAHV's sister organisation, Art of Living Foundation (AOL) was approached for a transformative solution to cyclical violence and crime. One full gang of 11 members joined a 20-month program, benefiting from intensive training and rehabilitation. Members, mostly youth, were disciplined into healthier habits including breathing techniques, yoga and practical life skills to reinforce self-esteem, open up their mind to new futures, empower them with renewed purpose of life and initiate volunteer-based programs to encourage service-oriented activities.

In partnership with local organisations, AOL participated in providing mediation between different gangs in the area, creating more peace in the area. Before long, Los Cicarios was known in their slums as the "boys that breathe," and for their service in orphanages, sharing the breathing techniques and yoga practices as well as for their mentorship to younger children. For this they became known as the "Youth for Change." Members organised weekly meetings to discuss and exchange ideas and solutions, giving them a platform to release newly accumulated stresses and reconnect with their inner space of tranquility and peace.

"I have found the same belongingness of a group here, but it's not for vandalism, it's a group to help others that need it and were in the same situation as we were before," remarked an ex-gang leader. "I want to move forward, I want to know more, and to learn more things that I don't know. That's what I want for my future, to have a good family, to be able to help my mom and my grandma because they deserve it. I am sure I'll be able to get out of the ghetto and many more of us are going to get out," said another ex-gang member about his experience with AOL.

Describing their work with the orphans, one ex-gang member poignantly remarked: "We used to behave even worse than them. Now we've changed and we come to teach them that there can be a change. All of them deserve a chance just as we had too. One of us could have died with all these problems, we could have gone to jail, I don't know, but if we can change and take advantage of that, I think everybody can do the same. We have to stretch out our hand to help other people who also deserve a chance. We can teach them to change as a person, and to shift their mind, to become a good person and not to fix things only with bullets but to see there are different ways."

IAHV Peacebuilding Programs

An Integrative Approach to Sustainable Peace



The International Association for Human Values (IAHV) is a non-profit, United Nations-affiliated organisation with consultative status at ECOSOC (UN). Founded in 1997 by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and other global humanitarian leaders in Geneva, Switzerland, its mission is to build a sustainable and inclusive peace by promoting the development of human values in both the individual and societies on a global scale.

The aim of IAHV's Peacebuilding Program is to increase the impact of peacebuilding and development efforts worldwide by effectively transforming mindsets, attitudes, wellbeing and behaviours of individuals and communities engaged in or affected by conflict. Cooperating with other organisations in a holistic approach, IAHV aims to strengthen the psycho-social foundation in which other peace and development efforts take root, turning personal transformation into greater peacebuilding impact.

IAHV's proven track record includes efforts to provide rehabilitation of victims as well as perpetrators, re-integration of ex-combatants, youth leadership and women's empowerment training, prevention of radicalization and leadership development initiatives in areas beset by conflict, including Iraq, Kosovo, Kashmir, Sri Lanka, Ivory Coast, Israel- Palestine, India and South Africa. Given this expertise, the IAHV Peacebuilding Program focuses on the following program areas: (1) Trauma Relief, Resilience and Empowerment; (2) Preventing and Transforming Violent Extremism – Mobilising Youth for Peace; (3) Bridging Divided Communities, Dialogue and Reconciliation; and (4) Training Professional Peacebuilding and Development Agencies.

Evidence of IAHV's holistic programs include significant and sustainable reduction in PTS symptoms of US army war veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan; significant reduction in PTS, anxiety and depression among survivors of the tsunami in 2003; a 30% reduction of violent incidents in several Los Angeles juvenile detention centres; reconciliation among warring tribes in Ivory Coast; prevention and renunciation of violence by thousands of militants and terrorists in India; and an 85% suicide reduction rate in Kosovo prisons in 2 years time.

Our human-centred approach lends itself to working across sectors and populations, including international organisations (UN, EU, World Bank), governments, managers and CEO's, social and community workers, women's groups, religious leaders, refugees, victims of violence, youth, terrorists and rebels, prisoners and children, bridging religious, ethnic and social divides. Together with our sister organisation, the Art of Living Foundation, our programs have reached over 20 million people in 150 countries.



"I wholeheartedly endorse the IAHV Peacebuilding Program that you are launching. I firmly believe that IAHV has the promise of bringing something unique and impactful to traditional peacebuilding efforts."

Sanjay Pradhan, Vice-President World Bank Institute



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