

# October News

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## Disaster Can Strike Anywhere

Everyday brings fresh news of another disaster that threatens our lives, our homes and our communities. Many of our readers have been affected by recent disasters (fires, floods, tornados, earthquakes, collapsing bridges), or know people who have been so affected. If you have been affected by a major disaster or emergency in your area, please pay attention to how you are coping and reach out for help if you need it.

Immediate and initial reactions, as upsetting as they may be, are normal, natural and necessary. They affect us physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually. How we cope with these reactions and the choices we make going forward can make all the difference in coming through crises, stronger and more resilient than before.

In our Virtual Library (<http://www.globalfacilitators.org/VirtLib.htm>), GFSC has workbooks for adults, children and facilitators to help individuals and groups learn about effective ways to get through the long-term readjustment after crisis. We share these publications as a public service.



Disaster & Crisis Intervention Workshop. 19-20 Oct. 2007

## ~~~ RIPPLES ~~~

### NOLA Network\* News

*\*The NOLA Network is composed of individual practicing facilitators, the Loyola University Twomey Center; the Southern University School of Social Work; Tulane School of Continuing Studies; Facilitative Leadership Institute; and Turning Point Partners, with assistance from Shell Exploration and Production.*

Despite getting stuck in the flood (his neighborhood had six inches of rain worsened by the debris from gutted houses blocking the street drains) Dr. Al Alcazar filed this report. Thank you Al and everyone else in New Orleans for your indomitable spirit and resourcefulness.

Anyway, we had a great workshop Oct. 19-20. Ted and Mike were at their usual inventive, enthusiastic, and brilliant selves. I enjoyed working with them and am grateful for their continuing mentorship. Fifteen people participated, 8 from "Louisiana Spirit" (a state funded program offer crisis/trauma intervention), 2 from NASA, a family counselor from the Red Cross, 2 from "Options for Independence" (privately funded and headed by Rev. Joseph Johnson, Jr.), 1 from the Central City and another with Worldwide Consulting Services.

*"This workshop should be required for all agencies and organizations who deal with trauma/disaster recovery."*

Shea Normand , LA Spirit

*"After just a day we have created a strong bond."*

Richard Bordner,  
Worldwide Consulting Services

In summary,  
Al's (17 syllable) Haiku:

"More blood and more air  
Now flow to GFSC's  
Connective tissues."

## **You Can Create Ripples, Too!**

What are your experiences with actual crises, chronic community trauma or disaster? Where do you think preparation is important in your community? Our work with the Disaster Preparedness Unit and the Community Health Councils in Los Angeles and multiple organizations in New Orleans are helping these organizations in their crises. Let us know where you see GFSC can provide support. Contact BJ, [info@globalfacilitators.org](mailto:info@globalfacilitators.org) or Marieann, [sec@globalfacilitators.org](mailto:sec@globalfacilitators.org).

We look forward to sharing more examples of how you are building community resilience and self-reliance within your community, agency or organization. Write to us at Editor, GFSC News.



## **Solutions-Focus to the Rescue**

By Viv McWaters,  
Beyond the Edge Pty, Ltd.

September 21st, 2007

I'm grateful to my colleagues Sharon McGann and Paul Jackson for introducing me to the solutions-focus (SF) approach - as yet again, SF has saved the day!

In my last post I talked about some of the challenges of facilitating in Armenia - a post-Communist country where new ways of engaging the community and taking an active citizenship approach are still being explored. I helped deliver a week of training/facilitating where the participants took part in a couple of community meetings concerned with improving services at a local health clinic and primary school. In both cases the community defaulted to the known paradigm of identifying problems and saying nothing could be done without money and/or government intervention.

As this approach is centred around empowering local communities to take responsibility for local reforms - the end result was a bit disappointing, although somewhat predictable.

The participants in the training were quick to 'blame' the process saying that it just wasn't suitable for Armenia. Maybe. I thought I'd try something.

After a very interesting presentations and discussion about governance, citizenship and social accountability in the Armenian context - and all the ramifications that they entail - I introduced a solutions-focused worksheet for participants to consider their next steps.

This was all done from memory as this wasn't a planned part of the workshop. And that's one of the benefits of the SF approach - it's straightforward, robust and easy to remember.

I prepared a flip chart for each working group. In the centre was a circle that asked: "What is a problem that you are facing in relation to governance, citizenship and social accountability - AND what would be the benefits/payoff of solving this problem?"

At the top of the sheet was Future Perfect: "Imagine you went to sleep tonight and while you were asleep a miracle occurred and this problem was solved. What would you see people doing differently? What would they be saying?"

Then to the left of the 'problem' I introduced the 'scale' and asked them to identify on a scale of 1 - 10 (where 10 is Future Perfect and 1 is the opposite of that) to identify where they were at at the moment. On the other side of the 'problem' I asked them about resources: "What's helping you achieve this? What skills and resources do you already have?"

And finally, at the bottom of the sheet I asked them: "What practical steps could you take to move one step along the scale?"

Groups took away the prepared flip charts - after a whole group, very fast demo of how to use it - and came back half an hour later with some extraordinary work - focusing on what could be done, rather than what could not be done - and with quite a change of perspective and outlook.

SF didn't change these people straight away - but it certainly opened a door and gave them a way to look at their many challenges in a new and different way that just may be more useful.

You can visit Viv at <http://vivmcwaters.com.au>

## Help GFSC

You can help GFSC continue to build local community capacity, as we are in New Orleans, Los Angeles and Australia.\* Click on our donation page or mail a check to  
GFSC  
c/o BJ Diamond  
11 Sequin Road  
West Hartford, CT 06117

*\* Your donations offset program and workshop costs, volunteers' expenses as well as the cost of developing and distributing materials.*

\* \* \*

There are many ways to support GFSC and your communities. We are always looking for volunteers to help us with database management, web support, workshop and meeting planning, etc. as well as training GFSC Workshop Facilitator-Trainers and Mentors.

If you are interested, please contact us at [info@globalfacilitators.org](mailto:info@globalfacilitators.org) or register as a volunteer at the GFSC website: [www.globalfacilitators.org](http://www.globalfacilitators.org). Be sure to indicate how you would like to apply your particular interests and skills to serve with GFSC.

\* \* \*

## Improve Your Website

Hot Conference and Kiosk host our website, providing a variety of internet tools. With Hot Conference we can communicate with our volunteers throughout the world. They have 35 years of experience, operating in more than 119 countries.

If you host a website, want to reduce your long distance phone charges and/or improve communications consider Kiosk and Hot Conference. For more information or to sign up, click the link on the GFSC web site (<http://www.hotconference.com/GFSC/partners1.php>), and 25% of your Kiosk-Hot Conference fees will be donated to GFSC.

## Sharing GFSC Materials

GFSC offers materials to the public in our Virtual Library as well as other materials available to our GFSC registered Facilitator-Mentors. We also publish a monthly e-newsletter and provide e-conference rooms for worldwide communications. We invite our volunteers to participate in continuous learning and sharing through our Mentored Pathways™ program.

We continue develop new materials, as well as refine our existing materials. Your input is important to us. Let us know how are you using our materials. What is working well and what needs improvement?

If you use or plan to use GFSC materials, click here for the [permission request form](#). Remember, if you are getting paid for your work, then a token fee is paid back to GFSC to support the organization. If you are not getting paid (i.e., you are volunteering your time), the Use of Materials fee is waived. In either case, please complete the permission to use GFSC materials form. Thanks!

\* \* \*

## Other Organizations' Events

### Australia/Asia:

Australasian Facilitator Network & the International Association of Facilitators (IAF)  
[28 - 30 November, 2007, Adelaide, S. Australia](#)  
IAF Asia  
27 - 28 August 2008, Bangkok, Thailand

### Africa

IAF Africa "Imbizo"  
24 - 25 July 2008, Pilanesburg, South Africa

### Europe

IAF Europe  
[5 - 7 October 2007, Edinburgh, Scotland](#)

### North America:

The New School: Disasters: Recipes and Remedies,  
[November 1-2, 2007, New York City](#)  
IAF North America  
[10 - 12 April 2008, Atlanta, Georgia](#)  
National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation (NCDD)  
[3-5 October 2008, Austin Texas](#)

### **Learning Opportunities at Our Partner Organizations**

Amauta International, <http://amauta-international.com/>

Center for Strategic Facilitation,  
<http://www.strategicfacilitation.com/>

Community at Work,  
<http://www.communityatwork.com/>

Facilitator U., <http://www.facilitatoru.com/>

International Association of Facilitators  
<http://iaf-world.org>

National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation  
(NCDD),  
<http://www.thataway.org/>

### **Gratitude/Gracias**

Our thanks to Ximena Combariza for translating our newsletter from English to Spanish.

Our thanks to Peggy Bushee Services for administrative support!



#### **2007 GFSC Board**

President: Lenny Diamond

Vice President: Tim Karpoff

Secretary-Treasurer: Marieann Shovlin

Latin America Coordinator: Parcia Sansary Gomez

Mentored Pathways Program Coordinator:

Gil Brenson-Lazan

Executive Director: BJ Diamond

#### **Visit us:**

English: <http://globalfacilitators.org>

Español: [http://globalfacilitators.org/esp\\_index.htm](http://globalfacilitators.org/esp_index.htm)