

solution,” via a secret and unknown agreement between Germany and Bulgaria. Germany promised that if they won the war, Bulgaria would acquire Greece and Macedonia as territories, but only if Bulgaria gave Germany 20,000 Jews. Belev knew going into this agreement that there were only about 11,000 Jews in all of Macedonia and Greece, so he decided that the remaining 6,000 Jews would have to come from Bulgaria. One year later, this plan was put into motion.

On March 3, 1943 at 3:00 a.m. the police banged on the doors of the homes of the Jews of Bulgaria. They were all escorted to a nearby school playground, suitcases in hand. Families, friends, and colleagues, sat in the schoolyard all night long fearing for their lives.

As news of the deportation spread throughout Bulgaria, citizens were outraged and the Orthodox Christian church openly opposed the deportation. Four Christian men even traveled to Sofia to try and stop the deportation. They marched right up to the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of the Parliament of Bulgaria and Minister of Justice, Dimitar Peshev, demanding answers. He was outraged to hear what these men were saying since he had no idea that this was going on in his own country. The five men marched right in to the office of the Minister of the Interior, Peter Gabrovski. Peshev commanded Gabrovski to cancel the deportation of all the Jews of Greece, Macedonia, and Bulgaria or else Peshev would expose the secret deportation plan to the entire nation. Gabrovski refused. He said the deportation of the Bulgarian Jews would only be halted, however the Jews of Macedonia and Greece were sentenced to die at the hands of the Nazis.

Late the next day, the Bulgarian Jews who sat in the school playground were finally freed.

After the incident between Peshev and Gabrovski, Peshev was fired and the Bulgarian government exported all the Jews of Sofia to outer provinces “pending their deportation.” However, all the male Jews of Bulgaria between the ages of 20 to 46 were sentenced to work in labor battalions.

As Germany began to lose the war, the lives of the Bulgarian Jews slowly improved; for example, they were able to travel to Sofia with special permission. Finally, when the Soviet army reached Bulgaria in the summer of 1944, the deportation and all other anti-semitic laws were not enforced. Although the Jews of Bulgarian suffered tremendously, they evaded death.

The discussion after the film focused on how the film is a reminder of the perseverance of the human spirit. It evokes a sense of hope and freedom. There is a great deal of humanity in the saving of the Bulgarian Jews; it proves that even in the face of adversity, the human spirit, understanding and humanity prevails. It shows that humanity cannot and will not be lost even in the most dire of circumstances.

– Submitted by IAAP UN intern Jeannette Raymond

---

## ***Part 21***

# ***HAITI Rebat: Update on Activities Rebuilding Haiti through the Global Kids Connect Project***

The IAAP UN team continues to be committed to rebuilding Haiti. A previous issue of this Bulletin reported on ongoing activities of the IAAP UN team in post-earthquake Haiti up to that issue date. These included follow-up of students trained to help in the recovery, coalitions of agents involved

in the recovery efforts, and the development of cultural arts programming highly relevant to the indigenous culture. This article reports on recovery assistance activities since that time.

In the two years since the earthquake in Haiti, thousands of children are still suffering either directly from the loss of parents and homes or indirectly through fears of what happened and could recur. Similarly, in the aftermath of the tragic tsunami/earthquake in Japan, children in that country are also suffering. To offer comfort and to connect children in these countries and across the globe who experienced trauma, the Global Kids Connect Project continued its programming, under the leadership of founder and IAAP UN representative Judy Kuriansky with IAAP UN representative Wismick Jean Charles, a Haitian priest, and other partners.

Several events were organized involving psychosocial interventions for the children and training trainers, to create sustainability of the program. The intervention consists of four elements: (1) learning simple psychological techniques for stress reduction; (2) a history lesson about the various countries; (3) exchange of an object decorated by children; and (4) a cultural program (e.g. songs and dances from the various cultures). Two groups were trained: youth volunteers from a local organization in Haiti (who could carry out the program in various settings, like schools, camps or churches), and staff of a local hospital in New York.

The projects emerge out of ongoing work of the IAAP team in disaster risk reduction and recovery, including advocating at the UN about psychosocial issues, and dating back to a side event organized for a launch several years ago at UN headquarters in Geneva of the IASC Guidelines for Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings. The specific programming builds on Dr. Kuriansky's work providing psychological first aide after many disasters (including 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, the Asian tsunami, bombings in the Middle East, earthquakes in China and others) and her Clinical Toolbox for Cross-Cultural Counseling and Training, published in the book *Principles of Multicultural Counseling and Therapy* co-edited by Drs. Uwe Gielen, Juris Draguns & Jefferson Fish.

*On the ground in Haiti:* In early July, a team traveled to Haiti to implement the program. The team, who joined Father Wismick who was organizing the program in the field, consisted of Dr. Judy Kuriansky; GKCP member, Stand Up for Peace co-founder and international composer Russell Daisey; and students Rebecca Houran (Dr. Judy's summer intern from Smith College) and Tarah Midy (Dr. Judy's student at Columbia University Teachers College). A Japanese collaborator, Nozomi Terao, founder and Executive Director of HappyDoll Inc, joined for the workshop.

The events took place at St. Louis de Roi Church in Port-au-Prince, with the cooperation of Father Wismick and the Centre Bon Samaritan located in Haiti. The Good Samaritan Center is a ministry of hope involved in social services to improve living conditions, especially in poor rural communities.

Dr. Judy conducted a one-day training workshop where twelve volunteer youth from the Haiti Action for the United Nations came to the location a day before the workshop for the children. The youth were from Haitian Action for the United Nations (AHNU), a national non-profit NGO dedicated to enhancing the education of Haitian youth, promoting the UN system and its importance in the world, and facilitating more active participation and representation of Haiti in the UN, while being involved in the development of the Haitian people and the promotion of its culture around the world. Connections had been established through Dr. Judy's previous collaborations with the United Nations Association of the Dominican Republic (UNA-DR).



*The Global Kids Connect Project team with the youth volunteer trainers.*

The next day, Dr. Judy led the trainers in a review of how to lead the workshop. The group then welcomed over 100 children (and parents) who came to the church for the event, held in a large outdoor space on the church grounds. The children who participated in the workshop were mainly between the ages of 8–12, and were part of the extended church community. The workshop consisted of the elements described above.





In the comfort object-exchange segment of the workshop, the children decorated a muslin cut-out of a human figure stuffed with cotton (for substance), designed to be gender-neutral (to appeal to both boys and girls). The Haitian children received the figures that had been previously made by children in Japan, and they were then provided with the form and various colored magic markers in order to decorate figures that were later brought to Japan and given to Japanese children.





A celebration at the end included an original song written in Creole about rebuilding Haiti, as well as commonly known children's songs sung in the local language (French and Creole) as well as the languages (English and Japanese) of other children involved in the Project in their respective country. These were led by **The Stand Up For Peace Project** co-founder Russell Daisey, who has created and performed peace charity events with Dr. Judy around the world ([www.towersoflightsong.com](http://www.towersoflightsong.com)).



*Psychological Foundation:* The project is based on several sound psychological principles: (1) Survivors of trauma feel better knowing they are not alone, and that others support and care about them; (2) Children need safety and comforting; (3) Comforting can be provide by “transitional objects” which represent the parental/maternal nurturing figure; (4) A stuffed toy that can be cuddled offers “contact comfort,” further giving the child a sense of security (e.g. teddy bears were sent to children post-9/11); (4) Stress reduction techniques help children deal with trauma at all levels related to the event and their life in general; (5) Children respond to recreational projects, including arts decorating as well as music, dance and play. The cultural aspects of the program are healing, bringing the children in touch with their roots as well as developing appreciation of other cultures.

*Research:* Data was collected about the impact of the training program on the trainers, and results are being analyzed. Preliminary results suggest that participation in the program was a significantly positive experience, in terms of learning simple, unique and immediately applicable approaches to

helping children, and feeling useful, needed and valuable in their country's recovery. The two students who were part of the GKCP team (Becky Houran and Tarah Midy) expressed great appreciation for on-the-ground first-hand experience about trauma recovery. "Knowing the children's pain and being able to do something to help them was a very powerful experience," said Houran. "It's not possible from just reading a textbook or hearing about it. Being there is invaluable as a rare opportunity for a student who wants to be a psychologist and help people." Midy, whose family is Haitian, said, "I cannot express how meaningful it is to be here, helping in my country."

*The New York Connection:* In early September, in preparation for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center, the GKCP workshop and training was held at a local hospital in New York City. The New York children were included in the circle of caring since they were being affected by intense media attention to the terrorist attacks that had taken place 10 years before. Also, the New York City schools had been mandated to teach about the event. The Child and Family Institute Outpatient Department at St-Luke's Roosevelt hospital's Department of Psychiatry (where Dr Judy had done her internship) decided to integrate the GKCP and training in their annual Back-to-School event. In preparation, Dr. Judy gave a presentation to the hospital staff, and then held a training for the volunteers who would lead the workshops with the children.



*Dr. Judy Kuriansky training St. Luke's-Roosevelt hospital staff.*





*St. Luke's hospital staff trained in the GKCP giving geography lesson to the children in the workshop, about the location of the U.S.A, Haiti and Japan.*



*IAAP UN rep and GKCP founder Dr. Judy Kuriansky with children and hospital staff trainees at the New York workshop.*