

May 2008 News

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Helping Myanmar and Chengdu

We received this e-mail from Sharon Tucci, Slingshot Media, www.ListCast.com, hosts of our GFSC lists and the technology that brings our newsletter to you.

On May 3, 2008, a devastating cyclone hit Myanmar. It is expected that the death toll will exceed 100,000. Millions of people are without food, fresh water and shelter. In some regions, 95% of buildings have been destroyed. Because of the difficulties communicating with some of the hardest hit areas, it may be a while before the true impact of this storm is known.

We felt compelled to do something and have launched <http://www.myanmarchallenge.org> to increase awareness of this dire situation in Myanmar and encourage support of the humanitarian efforts struggling to assist there. Please let your subscribers know, make a pledge, make a purchase from a participating company or something else. We will donate \$100 to Doctors Without Borders and give 2 months free service to every new client that prepays for a year of service.

Regards and thank you,

Sharon

GFSC's response

by Gil Brenson-Lazan and Lenny Diamond

Dear Sharon,

We greatly admire and appreciate your efforts. Gil has spent a good part of his life in disaster intervention around the world, and GFSC Disaster & Crisis Intervention workshops, materials and resources have been part of community recovery efforts in many places throughout the world. We would like to share some observations with you.

Be VERY careful where you donate money. Many high-profile NGOs spend a high percentage of their income on getting a high profile. Other organizations, through the years, spend the highest percentage of contributions in the field. One place to assess NGOs is Charity Watch,

http://www.charitywatch.org/hottopics/myanmar_cyclone.html.

The effectiveness of interventions and their timing is important to consider. **Relief** is the necessity for the first weeks and **redevelopment** is a much greater necessity for several years to come. Nearly everyone is driven to donate and spend on relief and unfortunately, precious few on redevelopment. Relief contributions are indeed key to meet survival needs during the first few weeks. However, because NGOs and governments often receive lots of donations for relief, this often continues beyond those critical first few weeks and then creates dependence and a "beggar" mentality in the community.

This is one reason why many countries like Indonesia, Banda Aceh and Myanmar do not want to ask for or receive help (although often political reasons are also responsible). That said, it is important to wait and see what Myanmar will and will not allow in. Right now many thousands of aid dollars and goods are sitting and spoiling on the tarmac and in warehouses.

GFSC is happy to work with you (pro bono) as a virtual consultant in any way that is convenient to help redevelopment efforts in those areas devastated by

the cyclone as well as those in areas affected by the May 12th earthquake near Chengdu, China and also those affected by the recent devastating weather in "tornado alley" in the USA. In all these cases, once communications is re-established, one very important function will be to keep people and aid/development professionals interconnected among themselves as well as with consultants and resources.

After the Tsunami, 100% of Global Facilitator Service Corps work relied upon the internet (listserves, WebEx conferences, e-mails, our web-based library with free workbooks, links to resources and other materials for adults, children and volunteers). Even in New Orleans, for the last two years, more than 60% of our work has been online.

Our experienced GFSC Disaster & Crisis Intervention workshop facilitators are being asked to be available for long-distance support and mentoring of those directly involved in longer-term social and community rebuilding efforts. As always, we are available to train facilitators working with communities and agencies in devastated areas, so that they can train local volunteers with specific facilitative tools and techniques particularly suited to rebuilding social and community after a disaster.

We look forward to working with you, Sharon, and with others, helping affected communities regain their strengths after these devastating events.

Best regards,
Gil Brenson-Lazan & Lenny Diamond
Immediate Past President and Current President of GFSC

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Visit Our Virtual Library

Please browse through our library any time. We have recently included a section on Personal and Community Resilience to add to our updated Disaster & Crisis Intervention resources.

Please let us know how you are using our materials. What is working well and what needs improvement. If you have articles or information you would like to share with GFSC and our visitors, please write to us at info@globalfacilitators.org

Crisis: Danger & Opportunity

When faced with a major change, crisis or disaster each person can choose to react in a way that is personally and interpersonally dangerous or in a way that brings about personal growth and builds stronger families and communities.

Any traumatic event can trigger a personal, family and/or community crisis. How we deal with a crisis is normal, natural and often necessary for life transitions.



Crisis intervention is a special field within the human and social sciences that applies knowledge from psychology, education, group dynamics and social work. It is not

psychotherapy – remember, grief is not pathological. Nonetheless, crisis intervention can be very "therapeutic" when an individual, family or community goes through an appropriate grieving process and come out strengthened.

Facilitative intervention techniques allow people to understand how traumatic events affect them; gives back a sense of control that seems to have been taken away in a traumatic experience; and provides the opportunity to express their feelings about their loss and not hide or avoid those feelings. For example, helping people to recognize that their reactions are normal, in the wake of an abnormal event, helps to validate disturbing feelings.

The vast majority of survivors and others hurt by the tragedy do not need psychotherapy or drugs. They need help understanding how crisis affects us as human beings and help finding new and effective resources within themselves to avoid the dangers, to be able to overcome their desperate circumstances, and to take advantage of the opportunity for personal growth.

From the introduction to the GFSC Facilitative Disaster & Crisis Intervention (DCI) Workshop.

GFSC Workshop at NCDD Austin, October 2008

**Join us at the 2008 National Conference on
Dialogue & Deliberation!**

GFSC will be conducting a Facilitative Disaster & Crisis Intervention Workshop, Oct. 6-7 post-conference. This workshop will be co-facilitated by Carol Fleischman, an international human development specialist and Timothy Karpoff, with 30+ years in community and organizational development, strategic planning, and multi-sector collaboration. Both are experienced, active GFSC workshop facilitators.

For a detailed description of the workshop and to register visit
http://www.thataway.org/events/?page_id=107.

While you can register for just the workshop, we encourage you to attend both the conference and the workshop. For conference information and registration, visit <http://thataway.org>

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Welcome CEF a New GFSC Learning Partner

The Creative Education Foundation (CEF) is a non-profit membership organization of leaders in the field of creativity theory and practice. CEF sponsors the Creative Problem Solving Institute (CPSI, pronounced "sip-see"), an interactive learning symposium. It is the source of many commonly-used group dynamics, problem solving, focusing, energy-building and facilitation techniques. Energy, movement, music, creative chaos, improv, group dynamics & dynamic interaction are common-place at CPSI. It is the world's longest-running and largest gathering of creativity professionals.

For more information about CEF, visit
<http://www.creativeeducationfoundation.org>.

For more information about CPSI, visit
<http://www.cpsiconference.com>.

CEF and CPSI are offering a 10% discount to GFSC members. For CPSI, register using code "GFSC10" (GFSC one zero) at
<http://www.cpsiconference.com> or call 413-559-6614.

Cutting Edge Civic Engagement By Local Governments

PACE (Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement), is collecting examples of "cutting edge civic/public engagement efforts by local government." The research is part of a two-year project supported by the Kellogg Foundation to examine new models of public engagement.

Towns, villages, cities and counties are rich sources of civic innovation, but many success stories and new models go unheralded outside the small circles of people who follow the ins and outs of local government. There is currently no central clearinghouse or database to identify and assess the scale and impact of these local efforts.

There are many novel initiatives going on at the local level under the umbrellas of civic engagement, conflict resolution, government reinvention, leadership development, strategic planning, opinion polling, urban design, and environmentalism.

Project director, Mike McGrath is inviting practitioners, community activists, public officials, etc. to send him descriptions of projects, programs and innovative practices by local government. If you have examples or references to share with PACE, please email Mike, at mcgrath.mike1@gmail.com so that these innovative solutions can be shared with colleagues, communities and funders.

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Join the GFSC Network

We encourage and support volunteers in their communities offering materials, mentoring, training and a forum to share ideas and techniques that build community capacity to address problems.

By [joining](#) the GFSC Network you agree to have your contact information shared with others in your region and/or in your designated areas of interest.

Let us know how you are building capacity within your community. Share your story with us at [Inspire: Share Your Story](#).

Learning Opportunities from Our Partner Organizations

Be sure to let our partner organizations know that you are a part of the GFSC network, for possible discounts and other benefits.

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

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

Creative Education Foundation,
<http://www.creativeeducationfoundation.org:80/>

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/>

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Events of Interest

Australia/Asia

IAF Asia
27 - 28 August 2008, Bangkok, Thailand

Africa

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

North America

[Creative Problem Solving Institute \(CPSI\)](#)
Pine Mt. GA (near Atlanta)
21-22 Pre-conference
22-27 June 2008 Conference

[National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation \(NCDD\)](#)
3-5 October 2008, Austin Texas

Support GFSC

You can help GFSC continue to build local community capacity. 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 costs, volunteers' expenses and the cost of developing and distributing materials.*

* * *

Gratitude/Gracias

Our continuing thanks to

Ximena Combariza for translating our newsletter from English to Spanish

Peggy Bushee Services for administrative support

Kiosk/Hot Conference for web hosting and conferencing services,
<http://www.hotconference.com/GFSC/partners1.php>

Slingshot Media, <http://www.listcast.com> for our newsletter distribution and email list service.

2008 GFSC Board

President: Lenny Diamond
Vice President: Tim Karpoff
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