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**COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE REPORT TO
GLOBAL COMMUNITIES**

Feminenza's 5 day Trauma Counselling/Healing Workshop

RFP-KTU-15-02

for

USAID's Kenya Tuna Uwezo Program

8-12, 15-19 June 2015

FINAL REPORT

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

In April 2015, Feminenza Kenya was invited by Global Communities to facilitate a two week trauma counselling capacity building workshop for 60 beneficiaries of the USAID funded Kenya Tuna Uwezo programme from the informal settlements of Nairobi. Global Communities sponsored the training and mobilized local partner organizations to identify the 60 participants ranging from Non-governmental Organization networks, Community Based Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, Self-help Groups, Youth Organizations, District Peace Committees, Community Policing Initiatives, Residence Associations, Uwezo Fund, Youth Cohesion Champions and Individual Community Volunteers. Participants were from both Muslim and Christian faiths.

Background – Violence and radicalisation in Kenya

In January 2008 conflict erupted in Kenya. The causes were long standing and complex, brought to a head by the same catalysts that had previously led to the Rwandan genocide in 1994: (i) politicians manipulating ethnic tension into ethnic violence (ii) the mass media broadcast ethnic intolerance on a large scale (iii) militia and youth gangs were encouraged in that climate to organize, bypass civil society's checks and balances and, as a new, invigorating rite of passage, progress carnage and looting into play. This in turn provided the climate for warlords and youth gangs to expand conflicts from small scuffles into unprecedented destruction, looting of private property, gang rape, kidnapping and bloodshed.

Since then, the risk of violence has further significantly risen because of the global rise of violent extremism, and the radicalisation of disaffected youth, leading to tragic events such as the Westgate Mall attack in 2013 and the Garissa University massacre in April 2015. As Kenya's war on terror and al-Shabaab increases, a potent mix of communal tensions, corruption, poverty and radical Islamism has produced a fertile breeding ground for militancy. Nairobi feels vulnerable to al-Shabaab attacks not least because of the large Somali community, many of them refugees from the country's long-running clan warfare, who live in the Eastleigh district. Known as 'little Mogadishu', Eastleigh is now home to an estimated 250,000 Somalis. Al-Shabaab is well established there, raising money, finding recruits and setting up safe houses. Its ally is the militant Kenyan group al-Hijra, the most potent outgrowth of the training of Kenyan militants in Somalia. Reports state that police and Kenyan security forces are bribed to stay out of Eastleigh, Mathare and Majengo, allowing al-Shabaab and al-Hijra to operate and recruit with impunity. Meanwhile, heavy-handed police operations to crack down indiscriminately on the whole Somali community have led to further disaffection and radicalisation.

In response, international efforts to assist Kenyans to reduce the risk of further violence have been mounting, along with the recognition that another approach is also needed – a more long term 'soft' approach to capture the hearts and minds of these youths, help them to grow the inner resilience to resist violence and radicalisation, actively engage in efforts for reconciliation and stand against any attempts to incite hatred among religious communities.

Al-Shabaab and the Exploitation of Kenya's Religious Divide

One of the major challenges being faced in Kenya is the attempt to create conflict between Muslims and non Muslims. Every attack by Al Shabaab in recent months has been characterised by singling out Christians for execution.

Yesterday's brutal execution of 36 non-Muslim quarry workers in Kenya seemed to follow the same horrific script as was seen on November 22, when a passenger bus en route from the northeastern town of Mandera to Nairobi was ambushed on a stretch of highway near the settlement of Omar Jillo. The heavily armed assailants, who were later confirmed as members of the al-Shabaab group, commandeered the passenger bus and attempted to drive it across the border to neighboring Somalia. After the vehicle became stuck on a section of the waterlogged highway, passengers were ordered to disembark and were subsequently divided into two separate groups. Those who were perceived to be Muslim were released unharmed. A group of 28 passengers, all of whom were Christian, were ordered to lie face down and were executed.

Speaking to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), Kenyan Presidential Adviser Abdikadir Mohammed provided his government's assessment on the Mandera bus attack.

"The aim is to create conflict between the Muslims and the non-Muslims in this country. The aim is to create a religious war, religious strife, in Kenya."

IPI Global Observatory December 2014

Acknowledgements

Feminenza wishes to thank USAID and Global Communities for the funding of this consultancy, Kimberly Tilock, Country Director of Global Communities, Selline Korir, Director of the USAID/Kenya Tuna Uwezo Program, and all the staff of Global Communities who generously offered their support and advice.

Thanks also to the dedicated international team of Feminenza facilitators: Monique Weber, Eileen McGowan and Peter Small, and Mary Lagat and Agnes Mwamburi who helped to facilitate the program in multiple ways, including counselling participants, translating materials into Swahili and report writing.

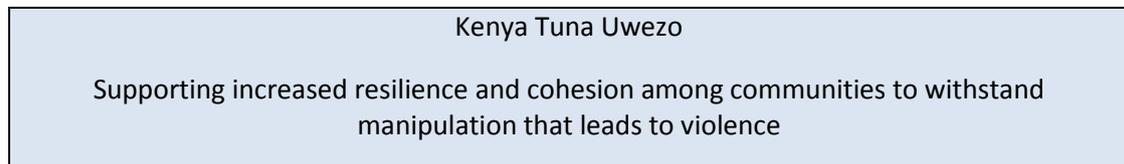
We also wish to acknowledge all the participants who took part and were willing to share their stories with us.

Mary Noble
CEO Feminenza International

Chapter 2: The Consultancy

Feminenza's approach to the challenge

This consultancy focussed on supporting Kenya Tuna Uwezo's objectives, by equipping men and women with the inner tools of transformation to counter violent extremism, and help individuals rebuild their lives and make more constructive choices about their futures.



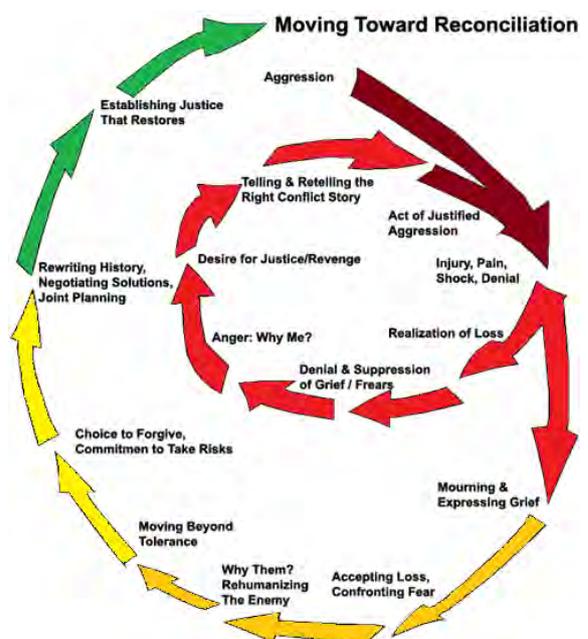
Objectives of the Consultancy

To equip 60 community/group leaders to:

- Understand the biology of fear, how it affects behaviour and encourages a cycle of violence;
- Manage their own fears more effectively; and thus be better able to forge constructive dialogues contributing to improved social relationships;
- Understand the basics of forgiveness counselling and its role in PTSD reduction.
In cases of severe violence, sexual abuse, trauma, being in a warzone, in combat – it is the invisible mental and emotional wounds that are often the hardest to heal. Without the balm of forgiveness, lives can be traumatised, frozen, functioning for years, but not really living.

The 5 day Program of this consultancy

The 2 day process on Understanding and Managing Fear - a self-directed, reflective, practical process - teaches the participants how to face and understand their fears, as a first step towards forgiveness and reconciliation. It has proven to reduce the symptoms of post-traumatic stress considerably. **The 3 day process on the Pillars of Forgiveness**, teaches the participants how to move themselves and others away from the cycle of violence, by 're-humanizing the other', fostering empathy and mutual understanding, building trust. In the longer term, this creates lasting relationships – firstly between the participants themselves and then extending these to their communities, to 're-weave the social fabric at the grassroots level in support of long-lasting peace'. It provides the initial knowledge, skills and attitudes to begin that transformation, to understand the role and purpose of forgiveness (within oneself, within the family, within the community).



Studies increasingly show that the

treatment of traumatized societies is necessary to break the cycle of trauma and violence.¹ Victims of violence are more likely to become perpetrators later on. At the same time, treatment of traumatized survivors is considered to facilitate forgivingness and reconciliation within the society.

The USAID Theory of Change² that this 5 day program is based on is Inside Out Peace Building – helping to cause a fundamental *shift in consciousness*. Vocationally driven local community leaders from vulnerable communities are introduced to a quiet reflective, inner transformation together, learning how to: understand and manage fear; develop understanding and empathy for ‘the other’; choose to forgive. Thus the 5 day process does not provide training in classical clinical trauma counselling, it delivers an internationally proven system, also previously tested and evidenced in Kenya, ensuring that participants can understand and manage fears; build the capacity to forgive and reconcile with others. This approach is proven in addressing trauma, reducing the clinical symptoms associated with trauma, lowering community risk and enabling women and youth in particular to be rehabilitated. The approach has been validated by independent psycho-social surveys of primary and secondary participants. It enhances the capacity of trauma counsellors and other community workers to help people move on with their lives.

This report describes how Feminenza and the 60 participants met the challenge.

Target communities

The 60 participants (38 men and 22 women), Muslims and Christians, both young and old, were selected by Global Communities from 9 communities in Nairobi most at risk of radicalisation: Kiambiu, Kibera, Mathare, Korogocho, Mukuru, Dandora, Kangemi, Eastleigh and Majengo. Representatives from PeaceNet and Global Communities also attended.

The chart shows the disaggregation of participants by location/Institution and Gender.

Location	Week 1 Male	Week 1 Female	Week 2 Male	Week 2 Female	Total per location
Kiambiu	1	1	2	2	6
Kibera	2		3	4	9
Mathare	3	1		1	5
Korogocho	2	2	2		6
Mukuru		1	1	2	4
Dandora		1	2		3
Kangemi	1	2	1		4
Eastleigh	5	1	3	1	10
Majengo	2	2	2		6
PeaceNet	1		1		2
TYB			1		1
Global Communities	1	1	2		4
TOTAL	18	12	20	10	60

¹ UNICEF (2001). *The state of the world’s children 2001*. New York, NY.

² USAID (2010). *Theories of Change and Indicator Development in Conflict Management and Mitigation*.

The Consultancy

A team of 5 Feminenza facilitators conducted two 5 day workshops for 30 community/group leaders at a time, from 8-12 and 15-19 June. The location was the Fish Eagle Inn in Naivasha.

Each 5 day workshop consisted of:

- A 2 day experience on Understanding and Managing Fear
- A 3 day workshop on the 7 Pillars of Forgiveness

The participants acknowledged at the start of both weeks that while they are working to help their communities, they themselves are carrying a lot of trauma, as conflict is the order of the day in their communities. Many of them were ex-criminals, gang leaders, who had been helped by the KTU Program to start to turn their lives around and become agents of change in their communities – but they still had a lot of unhealed issues in their lives.

The aim of the 5 day workshop was to equip them to handle issues facing their communities more effectively, by acquiring a methodology to start a necessary healing process in themselves. The sixty participants embraced the process; they found the process both enjoyable and productive. The opportunity to expand their minds, perceptions and re-approach their work in the community with fresh vision, vigour and focus was received with enthusiasm and gratitude.

Understanding and Managing Fear

With 5 Feminenza facilitators (3 from the US and Europe, two from Kenya), each group of 30 participants were first taken through a two day Understanding and Managing Fear process. There are 3 distinct stages to this experience: the Field of Fears, the Domain of Courage and the Purple Path.

1. Stage One: The Field of Fears:

A process in which participants are guided through a sequence in which they identify fears that affect them, as a first step to not being controlled by them.



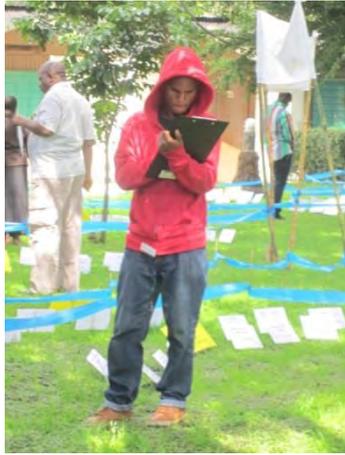
The Field of Fears, Week 1 – 8th June



Introducing the Field of Fears, Week 2



Field of Fears Week 2 - 15 June



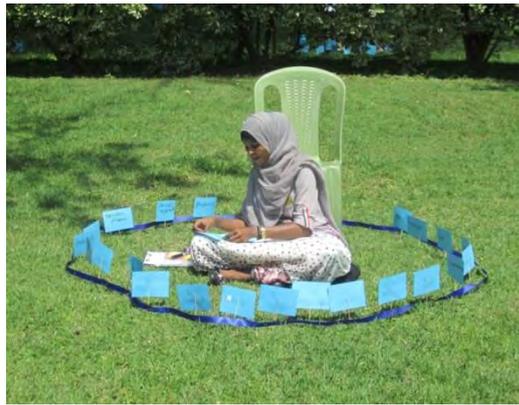
Identifying one's fears – Week 2: 15th June

2. Stage Two, the Domain of Courage.

This enables the participant to reflect upon the other inner influences in their life: their strengths, qualities and achievements.

Day 2- The Domain of Courage; identifying one's strengths, achievements and qualities





Reflections from the Domain of Courage process, week 2

The Domain of Courage allows participants to work through their own life story from a very positive perspective. In the preparatory session, they are helped to identify their strengths, qualities and achievements throughout their life, which for many is the first time they have ever perceived themselves in that way. The whole group support each other in this re-evaluation of themselves. As the importance of this sinks in, they begin to see themselves in a different light, and after they have done their Domain of Courage, they are encouraged to write down 'the story they now wish to tell themselves' about their life.

In Week 1:

One young woman from Majengo identified her main achievement as 'being a good mother', but at first could only attribute her success to the community and people surrounding her. It took the whole group to help her identify the qualities which had led to her success. They reflected back to her that it had taken gratitude, openness, being attentive, a nurturing instinct, being knowledgeable, informed and understanding, Love, Patience, commitment, confidence, accommodation, constancy, willing sacrifice, courage, warmth and sensitivity to be a good mother. As each reflection was given back to her, she would say "I did not think of that".

In Week 2:

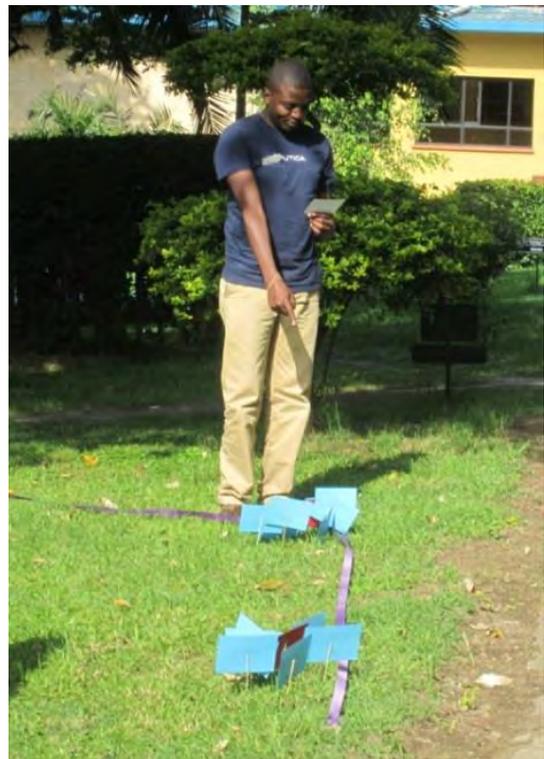
A young man from Kangemi identified his main success as changing from being a negative destructive person in society to becoming a positive person in the community. "I was a criminal and now I am a positive leader". With the help of the group, he was able to identify some of the qualities that had taken: Mental and self discipline, understanding the power of choice, Leadership, being open to receiving help, conscience, acceptance, commitment, dedication, determination, compassion, warmth, self awareness, courage, humility, patience, confidence, willingness and faith.



Stage Three, the Purple Path.

The participant reflects again about their fears, and discovers that they have the inner resources, strengths, to manage and overcome those fears.

Waking the Purple path: tackling one's fears



In Week 1, During the Purple Path process, one young man from Korogocho identified one of his major fears as the Fear of HIV AIDS. He surrounded his fear with his strengths and qualities: Respect, loyalty, self discipline, value, abstinence. He expressed his joy that he had realised he could be in charge of his life.



Counsellor supporting a female participant to face her fears



Sharing reflections

The 7 Pillars of Forgiveness

Participants were then taken through a 3 day process on the 7 Pillars of Forgiveness. The workshop included many practical demonstrations, cameos, film clips and small group discussions. There were a number of significant breakthroughs by individual participants, in relation to being able to talk about their own trauma, and see how they can move forward in a constructive way, and counsel their communities on how to move away from the cycle of violence and revenge, to a more constructive path of forgiveness and reconciliation.



Imam and Pastor discussing issues of forgiveness



Building cohesion within the group

Crucial to the forgiveness process is creating a supportive non-judgemental environment where every participant feels safe enough to explore deeply sensitive issues. These may be things they have never been able to discuss openly, such as the shame and guilt associated with abuse, rape, or violent acts they have themselves committed. One of the challenges at the start of both weeks was how to build such an ecology considering the wide range of ages, backgrounds, and religious beliefs amongst the participants. The fault lines were clear: the gender/age divide (young women resenting the dictates of older men, young men feeling inhibited by the presence of so many elders); the social divide (ex-gang members sitting next to pastors and policemen); the religious divide (Christians and Muslims eyeing each other up warily).

To address this, a lot of emphasis was placed during each workshop on building a platform of support and empathy between all the participants, through a variety of guided small group discussions, bringing together different age groups and genders, and by consciously focussing on upholding the best of each other through various activities. For example, each participant was invited to write small cards to every other participant, reflecting on the qualities they had seen in them during the week. At the end of the week each person received an envelope full of these reflections.

From a male participant in Week 2:

“Receiving true reflections - that drives me, I see the cards are true (holding the best of the other), it has created a new bond.”

From a male participant in Week 2, from Eastleigh

“I find that the compliment cards give me strength. 24 people cannot all be wrong about me. This is a true reflection of me and encourages me every day.”

New bonds were forged between youth and elders. One young man, an ex-criminal, struggling to support himself and his young family on his own, had, by the end of the week, acquired a new adopted grandmother (an older muslim lady). The older participants saw that they had an important part to play in supporting the youth – helping them to release their trauma, tell their stories, without judgement or condemnation.

Other bonds were also strengthened: Christians and Muslims expressed support and solidarity for each other, sharing references from the Koran and the Bible about forgiveness, about our common humanity.



A young woman is helped to tell her story by two Elders

Chapter 3: Post Workshop Feedback: After Action Review

Feedback received during the after Action Review on 23rd June, at Global Communities.

A feedback session was conducted By Global Communities and Femenza at the Global Communities offices in Nairobi on 23rd June. In the morning, a representative sample of 20 participants (10 from each week) were invited to give their feedback. After lunch all 60 participants were present for a further feedback session.



Mary Noble, CEO of Femenza International asking: What did you learn?

The Participants were asked to reflect what they had learned. While much of the feedback related to the whole 5 day experience, certain specific reflections were a good indicator that we had met our educational objectives as outlined in the Project proposal.

What follows is a selection of responses. This feedback was captured both during the workshops and the After Action Review.

A sample of feedback related to the Understanding and Managing Fear educational objectives:

UMF Objectives	Feedback from participants
<i>The biology of fear in the human brain and its relevance to the cycle of revenge</i>	<p>“The 3 brains helped us understand fear is a process, I talked to my wife, and explained fear is inhibitive. We will create new leadership in the community and we have something tangible to give them.”</p> <p>“I learnt that my 3 brain parts work differently and that my brain has something to do with the concept of peace.”</p>
<p><i>Field of Fears: Knowing your fears enable you to take charge of your life.</i></p> <p><i>Identify it, do not identify with it.</i></p>	<p>“It was me being described, I found myself in most of the gates.”</p> <p>“I could also see these are world experiences, not just my fears. It was a humbling experience.”</p> <p>“When I entered each one of the gates I found the reality of myself.”</p> <p>“I learned fear can be classified, and how to control your emotions.”</p>
<i>Domain of Courage: Being able to identify, summon and value the many inner resources – achievements strengths and qualities – one already has</i>	<p>“It is not easy to understand who you are but when you sit down quietly to analyze yourself, you find the better you.”</p> <p>“The small things which I have done and I thought it is small; this is an achievement regardless of what I thought.”</p> <p>“Naivasha hotel was a rehabilitation centre for 1 week, a centre when we came out knowing our qualities and accomplishments we had achieved. We were helped to appreciate the little things we had achieved in life.”</p> <p>“Learning my own qualities, I realized we have more positive to offer, a lot to offer. It helped us explore our positive things and energies within us.”</p>
<i>Purple Path: Being able to identify the qualities which enable one to manage one’s fears</i>	<p>“The more we review fear and strengths, the fear become much lighter. The qualities are stronger than fears.”</p> <p>“This has enabled me to create a safety valve for my emotions”</p> <p>“The fear trigger comes up when a situation arises, but I am now in a position to make a better choice.”</p> <p>“Fear is natural. My consolation is the blue cards (describing qualities and strengths) are more than reds (describing fears) I can overcome fear.”</p> <p>“After the field of fears everyone thought we would need individual counsellors. Now I understand I am the best counsellor to myself.”</p> <p>“I had issues but I have found many qualities. I have taken an oath.”</p> <p>“Yesterday I had a lot of fears. Now I see the male part of me had the fears but the man part of me had all the answers.”</p>

Feedback related to the 7 Pillar of Forgiveness objectives:

Pillar 1: Understanding

Understanding the nature and ways of our common humanity allows forgiveness to grow; Judgement cause harm: (the labelling exercise)

Feedback from participants

“Everybody - we share the same. What you feel others feel..”

“We should learn how to see and say positive things to the offenders not labeling them but give good names. Stereotyping is not good.”

“The labeling exercise touched me a lot, we were labeled with shameful tags, later we were given an opportunity to have a good name and bad names went off. Despite our past we can walk with our new names and identity.”

“When you share something that is hurting, you get relief. I learnt from the facilitators; they shared their personal experience, which made us open up.”

Pillar 2: Freedom

The unforgiven parts of our lives imprison us in the past; Where there is no forgiveness, there is no freedom; Forgiveness releases the receiver as well as the giver; how to free oneself from one's past.

Feedback from participants

“When we went to Naivasha, we went there not knowing as people we are weapons to ourselves. Anger is damaging to everyone. It was a humbling experience, in the end I could see the good in every person. I wanted to come back to Nairobi to meet others who were not part of the process and see if I could have the same perspective. It works – I could see the good in them too. A good training to learn how to let go of the past.”

“I am grateful because I had been carrying not bags but sacks of potatoes, which took a long time to let go. Now I have learnt how to separate the memory and pain. I am light.”

“The bag of potatoes was harmful to me. Now I know there is the potential in me to remove the baggage.”

“I was acting emotionally before, the training was very important to me. Hate is the poison you give yourself expecting people to die.”

Pillar 3: Remedy

Forgiveness is a remedial balm that cleans and heals the wounds of the past.

Feedback from participants

“Forgiveness is a complex issue and if you really love peace you should also talk to your enemies. I have tested it. They thought I was going to revenge. You have made my life. It is transforming gangs, I am using it, I have been in the community, they are already feeling it. Thank you for touching my life.”

“I am pleased. I had a bag of potatoes, I removed them, I am light.”

“Every person has seen the sense of the training. I used to live a lie - I have off loaded them. We had been planning how to retaliate but when I came back, I called back my group. Some have portrayed me as a traitor. But forgiveness is more healing than revenge.”

“The training was very powerful. I was busy changing people, but I had not forgiven very many people in the world. e.g the police who killed my brother. The clips and videos showed us that everybody plays a part in conflict. People long for peace, I can now use remedy, and look at myself differently. If I really want change I must let go. People are saying, Rosy you have changed. It has healed me to understand values and respect people.”

“It was a healing process which has helped me to give up the hurt.”

Pillar 4: Warmth

Self forgiveness comes from continuous efforts of understanding, patience and compassion, and the willingness to give oneself a fresh chance each day.

Feedback from participants

“Instant forgiveness, the healing power of forgiveness, for me I deserve self-forgiveness.”

“To know that our facilitators have issues too, brought the classroom to be a home. When we went through the cycle of revenge it made me realize that we thought we were change agents but we were not changed ourselves. Instant forgiveness forgives our past.”

“My life is worth more than what I have been.”

Pillar 5: Enhancement

A person is not the act. To forgive, we must learn to separate the person from the act.

Feedback from participants

“Sometimes people close to you can hurt you deeply. After the training I was able to forgive someone who is close to me and hurt me deeply. I am a renewed person.”

“Peace starts with me. Forgiveness starts with me, I can now forgive my father. Thanks to Femienza and KTU.”

“The training was amazing, very simple but learning was quite confronting. The Field of Fears is where we live. I was listening to the young generation and what they have gone through. As the older generation we need to take care of the youth. What an experience - we have a challenge to focus on the youth, after the workshop I had to send a message of forgiveness to my own son. Patience is very important. You have armed us. Surely this cannot be end of our healing.”

Pillar 6: Hope

Where there is no forgiveness, there is no hope. How to hold the best of another.

Feedback from participants

“Complementing somebody has an impact, it goes through every day, from the morning, and motivates them. Everyone appreciates me.”

“Receiving true reflections - that drives me, the cards are true (holding the best of the other), it has created a new bond.”

“We bonded. I talked to everyone, people did not want to leave one another.”

Pillar 7: Continuance

A person, a community, a nation can become arrested by trauma. Without exercising forgiveness this can become a repeating, self-perpetuating state. What causes people to get arrested and where forgiveness may begin.

Feedback from participants

“I want to share my story. I was looking for pleasure in drugs and I became an addict and it made me drop out of school. I was married and still on drugs. My mother held me all those years. I have 5 children and all what I did was just drugs and I have never been happy with my wife. I stopped 3 years ago being on drugs. What I learnt there I never cared and I had left my wife and my wife suffered. I want to thank God I am here with you. Now I am a different person, if I go out there and talk forgiveness.”

“I am happier than anybody else, I know my history, I dignify feminine facilitation, I am now a new Jackiwa, in my heart I was transformed and healed. Forgiveness is a complex issue and if you really love peace you should also talk to your enemies. I have tested it. They thought I was going to revenge. You have made my life. Transformed gangs, I am using it, I have been in the community they are already feeling it. Thank you for touching my life.”

“Forgiving meant little for me before. People have asked questions as I have really changed. I no longer have bad blood. I am now aware the weapon is forgiveness. We are going to help our community understand what forgiveness is.”

Other general feedback from the participants

On two evenings, films were shown: the Imam and the Pastor; the Freedom Writers

The Imam and the Pastor is a documentary from Nigeria which records the reconciliation between Imam Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye, and their peace making initiatives which have endured. They were leaders of militant groups involved in conflict between Muslims and Christians in Kaduna, northern Nigeria. Pastor Wuye lost a hand while Imam Ashafa's mentor and two close relatives were killed in the fighting. Now they are taking bold initiatives to promote cooperation and resolve conflicts. The film shows that it is possible for the perpetrators of inter-religious violence to become instigators of peace. It is a story of forgiveness and case study of grass roots initiatives to rebuild communities torn apart by conflict. Imam Ashafa and Pastor Wuye are the joint founders and Directors of the Inter-faith mediation centre in Kaduna.

The Freedom Writers is based on the true story of a dedicated teacher, Erin Gruwell, in a racially divided Los Angeles school who has a class of at-risk teenagers, many involved in gang violence, and deemed incapable of learning. Instead of giving up, she inspires her students to take an interest in their education and planning their future.

Feedback:

"From watching the two videos of the Imam and Pastor and Freedom Writers, we learned that change requires tolerance, sacrifice, sticking to the common good, courage, a full commitment, managing negatives with positives, concentration on resourcefulness, appreciating other great ones, determination and forgiveness."

"We learned that many great Agents of Change came from humble backgrounds - we can all be great people. We can do great things and change our society."

"Freedom Writers taught me as leaders we have the potential and capacity to change our communities. We are the change in the community."

"Darkness cannot drive darkness away but Forgiveness can."

"The message of forgiveness is universal, and applies to every religion. Forgiveness messages belong to all of us. Many Muslims are ignorant about forgiveness in Islam, we need to teach them."

"As a Christian pastor I would like to propose a new initiative – a Muslim-Christian Fellowship."

Other general feedback

"This was the best workshop I have ever attended."

"The training took a natural course, it was like being injected with medicine - we became quiet without our knowledge; our hearts are melted."

"I never expected to learn so much."

"Acceptance from the society is important. If I notice, through non-verbal communication, any unforgiving - I will give them a hug."

"I am happier than anybody else, I know my history, I dignify feminine facilitation, I am now a new man. In my heart I was transformed and healed."

"Fear is real, a crosscutting problem, youths were overwhelmed by fear, it is a disease. It is reflection of the rest of populace. We would like to have 1 month of in-depth training. I hope Global communities will understand the seriousness of it."

Some more extended feedback from some participants

1) From one of the most hardened ex gang leaders, from Week One (Majengo):

"In the Field of Fears, the Fear of 'Attack by Others' left me. I offloaded baggage and I found myself different upon my return. I have worked with gang members in the last couple of days to go for forgiveness. I can laugh now at the enemy rather than react. We had well developed plans to retaliate against another group. I decided not to go through with it, not to revenge, but to go for forgiveness. My companions thought I was mad and a traitor, but in the end went along with me and no action has been undertaken."



2) Another ex-gang leader, from week 1 (Mathare)

"What I learnt is what is spoken about in the mirror exercise and the practice of that to be able to forgive. Facilitators, you are my mentors. Forgiveness is complex. I learned that if you truly love peace, you should also speak with your enemies. So after the training I spoke with my enemies, I said that I forgive them. They were very surprised, and they just stood there with weapons they no longer had use for.

I also realised that 'what others feel, I feel'. In an argument with my wife I said 'I forgive' you. She was very surprised."

3) A young man, also an ex gang leader (Kangemi):

"Peace starts with you. I had not been able to forgive my father for many years. After the training I travelled to visit my father in his village, and we forgave each other. My father shed many tears of joy in the process."

4) A young man in week 2 from Kiambiu (He had been wrongfully imprisoned some years ago over allegations that he stole a mobile phone. He was tortured badly whilst in prison).

'I was walking around with rotting potatoes (an analogy used in the workshop for unforgiven issues) before I came to Naivasha, but I was able to let go of them, I am a free man now and will travel to the village where I come from soon to have a process of forgiveness with the man who got me jailed years ago, whilst I was innocent.'



5) A young woman in week 1 from Korogocho.

An ex-gang member, who had seen both her brother and boyfriend gunned down and killed by policemen. *"Before, I hated every policeman on sight. Now I am ready to go and find the policeman who killed my brother and tell him I forgive him."*

6) A male ex gang leader in Week 2, from Kiambiu

A young man who had been one of the most notorious gang leaders in his locality described the psychological, emotional and physical healing impact of the 5 day workshop:

“For a long time I have been taking painkillers every day, to deal with the stress, the fear, the trauma, the things weighing on my conscience. By the last two days of the workshop I stopped taking the painkillers. I didn’t need them anymore.”

7) A male participant in Week 1 from Eastleigh.

After the Field of Fears process on day one, he had broken down and told us that, as a Muslim, he had believed for a long time that he was beyond redemption, as he had committed so many unforgivable sins, including being involved in violent criminal activities. His greatest fear, which he had buried deep down and tried to ignore, was ‘the wrath of God’ and that he would never be forgiven. He went through a profound process of letting go as the days progressed. When we were sharing final reflections on day 5, he read out the following poem:



*The bearer of flowers has fragrant hands, we came here each soiled and smelly from rots in our souls
that refused to clean, clinging and stinking.
Femienza came, Eileen, Mary and Peter, the fragrance of freedom in your wake, like magic
dissolving even the toughest stains on our souls.
In humility, softly, gently you reached into the recesses of our souls and gave us hope and self-belief.
We are forever thankful to you for this life-giving experience. We were like wilting flowers, poisoned,
slowly dying but your words gave us the belief to wake up and start pumping life into our dying veins.
An Elixir is what you guys are, a gift from God with a simple message of forgiveness yet with far
reaching impact on our personal lives.
You have taught me to heal, I will teach others.
You have given me belief, I will propagate that belief.
You have taught me forgiveness, I have forgiven, I will forgive, I hope I will be forgiven but it does not
really matter because I have let go, I’m a clean slate, I can write a new chapter.
Thank you - and thanks to USAID- Kenya Tuna Uwezo.*

Overall, participants consistently reflected that as a result of taking part in the 5 day trauma healing workshop, they felt they could now start to accept and integrate their past history and trauma into the narrative of their life, rather than i) trying to consistently bury it and ii) repeat the same cycle of violence over and over again. They could begin to see their traumatic experiences not just as bad and painful things, but as their story of resistance, survival, and thus future resilience. And they felt this was an important message they could take back to their communities.

Chapter 4: Conclusions and recommendations

Did we achieve our objectives?

The Outcomes and Outputs detailed in our logframe (see Appendix 1) were achieved with a high degree of success. We believe that this will lead, in the longer term, to a significant impact in the target communities in terms of increased resilience and cohesion.

IMPACT Increased resilience and cohesion among target communities
OUTCOMES: 1) Participants able to handle fears more effectively and understand the impact of fear on cycle of violence. 2) Participants able to adopt forgiveness more readily.
OUTPUTS : 60 participants (30 x 2) complete the 2 day Fear Management experience and 3 day induction into the 7 Pillars of Forgiveness

OUTCOMES

1. *Participants able to handle fears more effectively and understand the impact of fear on cycle of violence.*

During the workshops, a number of the female participants reported a significant breakthrough in facing their fears – which were mostly connected with living in abusive circumstances, or dealing with the trauma of a violent past, which included rape. They now felt they had the inner resources and courage to move on with their lives. Men who were ex-gang leaders reported going back into their communities after the workshop with a firm commitment to breaking the cycle of violence. All of the participants, after sharing some of their deepest fears, came to the realisation by the end of the workshop that they had the inner resources and qualities to manage their fears and not be stopped by them.

2. *Participants able to adopt forgiveness more readily.*

Virtually every participant shared, at some stage in the process, a traumatic or deeply troubling event in their lives which had left them in great need of healing. Some were ex-perpetrators who had taken part in and/or witnessed many acts of terrifying and brutal violence: seeing people being impaled, crucified, beheaded, were just some of the examples shared. Others were survivors of abuse, rape, horrendous torture, wrongful imprisonment. Many were both victims and ex-perpetrators.

Only a few days after the workshops, a number of participants, in their feedback, indicated that forgiveness was now something they could effectively and powerfully use in their life as a healing of themselves and others. Some had already made some remarkable changes in their lives, such as tracking down family members that they had not spoken to for many years, to seek reconciliation, or making plans to do so. Ex-gang members related how, in their past, revenge had been the only option – it was a way of life. Now they had gone back into their communities to explain how forgiveness is a better road than revenge, in some cases having to confront former associates in very difficult circumstances. In both weeks, Muslim and Christian clerics talked together of the need to offer the true teachings of forgiveness in the Koran and the Bible to their communities.

LONG TERM IMPACT

Increased resilience and cohesion among target communities

It is beyond the scope of this consultancy to measure the long term impact of this trauma healing consultancy - the indicator is *increased community dialogues, co-operation and reconciliation processes, within communities where there was conflict*. The initial results however are very promising.

At the feedback session at Global Communities, there was a potent sense of renewed hope and optimism, and the strongly enunciated desire to take some of these new understandings and insights back into their communities. One of the assignments given to all 60 participants during the day, was to write down one thing that they have taken away from this workshop, and what they intend to do about it (and that could be an immediate action or something they intend to do for the rest of their lives).

As the session went on, there was talk of meetings, community dialogues, personal/group reconciliations that had already been initiated or needed to take place. A notable feature that many participants commented on was that the whole group felt like a family. Everyone, young and old, offered to turn up and support each other when these dialogues and reconciliations would take place. Global Communities staff also pledged their support.

We hope that Global Communities will in time be able to collect relevant case studies to track some of these results.

This sense of empowerment and renewed energy also reflects the fact that healing of trauma/PTSD empowers survivors (both ex victims and ex perpetrators) to live more self determined lives in all aspects of their lives, including taking new initiatives to improve their circumstances. Contrary to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, suggesting that treatment for psychological problems not be addressed as long as the basic needs of nutrition and safety are pressing, the evidence, also from our previous pilot in 2010-2011³, is that survivors see their mental health as having the highest priority and their mental functioning is the pre-requisite for self-efficacy and meeting one's basic needs.⁴



³ Glover, J.A., (2011) Rebuilding Lives: http://issuu.com/julieanneglover/docs/rebuilding_lives_revised

⁴ Schauer, M., Neuner, F., Elbert, T.(2011). *Narrative Exposure Therapy*. New York, NY: Hogrefe Publishing.

Conclusions from the Surveys: Pre and Post intervention Assessments

Two surveys were conducted before and after the intervention, using internationally accepted instruments:

1. The Depression, Anxiety and Stress Survey (DASS)
2. The Heartland Forgiveness Survey (HFS)

The DASS was administered on Day 1 and at the end of each workshop. The HFS was administered on Day 3 (at the start of the forgiveness work) and at the end.

Appendix 2: What the DASS results tell us about the UMF workshop

The neurobiological basis of PTSD⁵

During a traumatic event, the mind and body become extremely aroused (rapid heartbeat, sweating, trembling). This emotional and sensory information is stored in an interconnected neural network which may establish a so-called *fear network* (which includes sensory, cognitive, physiological, and emotional experiences). In PTSD, the ignition of only a few elements in the network is sufficient to activate the whole structure, which can turn up as a flashback. Thus many trauma/PTSD sufferers learn to avoid cues – places, people, thoughts - that act as reminders of the traumatic event. This makes it extremely difficult to think about or come to terms with the experience.

The Field of Fears

The Field of Fears is a specially designed ecology, where the participants are guided safely through a process of identifying their fears from a very large selection of cards on which fears are written. They are prepared before they go in with careful conditioning – the mind-set being to ‘bring the fear to a standstill’, and ‘identify it, do not identify with it’. They are reminded that they are in control, and can enter or leave the Field at any time. All this helps them to remain conscious, and inhibit the activation of the amygdala (a part of the brain which is at the centre of the defence cascade involved in expressing fear, anger, emotion).

It is normal however that with traumatised individuals, the process of walking around the Field of Fears can lead to a reactivation of their individual fear/trauma network – but the whole nature of the process, and the careful way in which they are prepared, enables them to start the healing process of gradually reducing the effect of the conditioned fear. They have the security of knowing that there is a trauma counsellor on hand if they become overwhelmed.

In order to recover from the debilitating effects of trauma and PTSD, the mind and brain must begin to control or inhibit the fear response. By activating the fear/trauma structure in a safe environment, with new information, the fear will begin to lessen over time. It does however mean that the level of anxiety may initially go up – as painful memories are activated and no longer suppressed. The Field of Fears process causes them to get right up against the original causes of their trauma and that state can remain inflamed for some time, usually at least a month.

⁵ Schauer, M., Neuner, F., Elbert, T. (2011). *Narrative Exposure Therapy*. New York, NY: Hogrefe Publishing.

The Domain of Courage and the Purple Path

The next day, as the person goes through the strengthening stages of the Domain of Courage and the Purple Path, and discovers a new, positive understanding of themselves, the difficult memories no longer evoke such strong emotional reactions, confusion and fear.

This can cause, on Day 2, an uplift, a decrease in depression, as they begin to see that change is possible, and that they can start to take charge of their lives in a way they had thought was impossible. They are advised however that repeating their Domain of Courage and Purple Path over the coming weeks and months will be necessary before the new 'story that they tell themselves' is the preferred story that gets activated when reminded of the original traumatic event/s.

The DASS results, which measured the levels of depression, anxiety and stress in both groups of participants before the workshop, and at the end of the 2 day process, indicated that:

- Levels of depression noticeably decreased in both groups (Group 1 and Group 2).
- Levels of stress and anxiety increased, noticeably more in the 2nd group.

Based on experience, this is to be expected when the 'after' survey is done right after the workshop. If a more long term follow up can be done in a few months, this will have a huge impact upon the results. New perceptions have had time to become established, and the fear/trauma network has been modified. Owing to the constraints presented on the project we were forced to conduct the survey at the point, but we have no doubt that, based on the feedback just a week later, if it had been done in the same cohort a month later, we would have seen a significant shift.

There were some other observations to be made, regarding the fact that the levels of anxiety were higher in Group 2 than Group 1. Almost 25% of the second group were from Kibera, which could be a factor. Overall, more of the participants in Group 2 seemed to have deeper trauma issues which they found difficulty letting go of. This showed up in the considerable number of errors in their responses. In other words, those who scored high on anxiety and stress also had a significant number of errors in their response sheets, to the extent of making their entire response unreliable. This is indicated in the spreadsheets by the yellow boxes, which indicate missed or inconsistent data. There is a much greater amount of missed data in Group 2 than in Group 1.

Feedback 1-2 weeks after the UMF workshop

The initial DASS results were considerably moderated by the very positive feedback that was received a week later when the participants met together at Global Communities for the post action review session. This has already been shared earlier in this report.

Appendix 3: What the HFS results tell us about the 3 day Forgiveness workshop

The Forgiveness process

The effectiveness of Feminenza's program does not only rest on the release of the trauma during the Understanding and Managing Fear process. The Forgiveness process helps the participants to address, for example, deep issues of pain, shame and guilt, looking at them in a new light, enabling the participant to let go, to update the story that they tell themselves, to choose to live in the present and future, not the past.

Being able to forgive others

Participants who had experienced extreme trauma at the hand of others – rape, torture, abandonment – expressed a huge shift by the end of the workshop – from 'I will never forgive' to 'forgiveness is an act of empowerment, I deserve it so that I can be free to live my life again.'

Being able to forgive oneself

Many of the participants were ex-perpetrators as well as victims - so alongside being able to forgive others, self forgiveness and taking responsibility was also a major issue for them to address. It is what experts are coming to identify as 'moral injury': "perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations". In contrast to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which springs from fear, moral injury is a violation of what each of us considers right or wrong. It is like a bruise on the soul, akin to grief or sorrow, with lasting impact on the individuals and on their families.⁶

The Heartland Forgiveness Surveys

The HFS measured the participants' attitudes to forgiveness before and after the workshop – of others and of self. The real results of the 5 day process is most deeply evidenced by these surveys. They give a much more balanced position of the emotional state in all the participants in terms of the direction of their travel.

- The results from both groups of participants show a consistent and unequivocal major shift in attitude to becoming more forgiving of others.
- A shift towards forgiveness of self, as expected, was indicated more strongly in Group 1, less so in Group 2. In Group 1 for example, being able to let go of guilt and self blame was markedly higher than in Group 2.

These results are strongly reinforced by the feedback in the Post Action review meeting.

⁶ Wood, D. (2014). *Moral Injury and PTSD*

Recommendations

1. If this process were to be repeated, we would strongly recommend that time is allowed for a follow up session a few weeks after the workshops have taken place. There would need to be the time allowed in the project to do that and then to process the surveys to provide the evidence.
2. The trauma and underlying anxiety levels of this target group were so significant that five facilitators for a group of 30 participants proved to be inadequate to cover the full extent of counselling needed, in the time that was available. If this were to be done again with such a high risk group, we would recommend a more extended period with a larger team of supporting counsellors.
3. A number of the participants asked if there could be a follow up training. The 5 day workshop, whilst effective in terms of personal transformation, with the resultant impact on their communities, is not sufficient to produce Practitioners of Feminenza's UMF and Forgiveness programs. One recommendation would therefore be to consider, in the future, running a Practitioner Training program for a selection of suitable candidates.

Feminenza Practitioner Training program

Over the time frame of 1-2 years, the full Practitioner training program seeks the following key outcomes:

1) Participants able to handle their fears more effectively and understand how fear contributes to the cycle of violence.
2) Participants able to adopt forgiveness as basis for reconciliation.
3) Participants more able to initiate reconciliation between victims, perpetrators, their families and communities.
4) Participants more equipped to assist in the rehabilitation of offenders and victims, individually, or as communities
5) Partner organisations more effective in conflict mitigation and peace building.

To become a practitioner requires successfully completing the following Modules in Year One:

- 7 days for Understanding and Managing Fear
- 9 days for the 7 Pillars of Forgiveness
- 5 days on Project Planning and Media training

As well as participating in a mentoring program to aid in the delivery of this work into a community based project.