

Welcome to our eleventh Newsletter



DESPITE COVID OUR WORK GOES ON

There have been lockdowns and difficult times across the world. Despite being slowed up, Children and War has continued to train others to use TRT (Teaching Recovery Techniques) to enable them to run the groups helping traumatised children and young people.

FUNDRAISING

Lots of ideas were floated as to how we could raise more money, so that we could expand the help we offer. Alas, most plans have had to be put on ice. Luckily, in London, our CaW Champion, art Historian and artist, Lydia Bauman, offered a special on-line event. Lydia was already well set

up – but now even larger numbers could watch her on Zoom. So, on Thursday February 25th almost 150 people attended her illustrated talk on children as portrayed in Art over the centuries. Lydia avoided the sickly sweet Victorian pictures (with the exception of Thomas Webster's *Frown* - see above), but instead showed us how children were used to reflect society with its focus on social status, racism, poverty – but also love and parental care. Attendees – and others who couldn't make the talk - were very generous, and a sum of £4,662 was raised to help Children and War projects worldwide. We thank everybody – and especially Lydia who created this fascinating experience for us. (See also the latest fundraising offer – a Sunday Stretch Class – on page 6.)

Trainings in the Middle East

Dr Masa Al -Kurdi has been very busy, despite Covid restrictions, offering a training to a charity, Hurras Network, involved in helping children who were caught up in the fighting in Idlib, Northern Syria, and then co-ordinating TRT training and also training a group of Lebanese volunteers to help children traumatised by the Beirut explosion in August 2020.

For the Hurras on-line training, there were 11 psychosocial workers. Techniques developed for

this training included WhatsApp group discussions and video recordings spread over four days. This approach enabled the trainees to role-play and be corrected as they were taken through the manual.

To co-ordinate a response to the Beirut explosion, more training took place at the Al-Makan Centre, and since this was during the time of Covid, masks, sanitisers and social distancing were required too. Shortly after this everything was set

up to run the parents' and children's groups. Also in response to the explosion, a group of Lebanese Scouts volunteered to be trained. A large-scale response was made possible by a generous donor, UNDOC, enabling Aala El-Khani and the University of Manchester team also to be involved to monitor and manage. Six separate trained Scout groups were able to cover six different areas for their work with affected children, which was a truly fantastic effort all round.

TESTIMONY FROM SYRIA

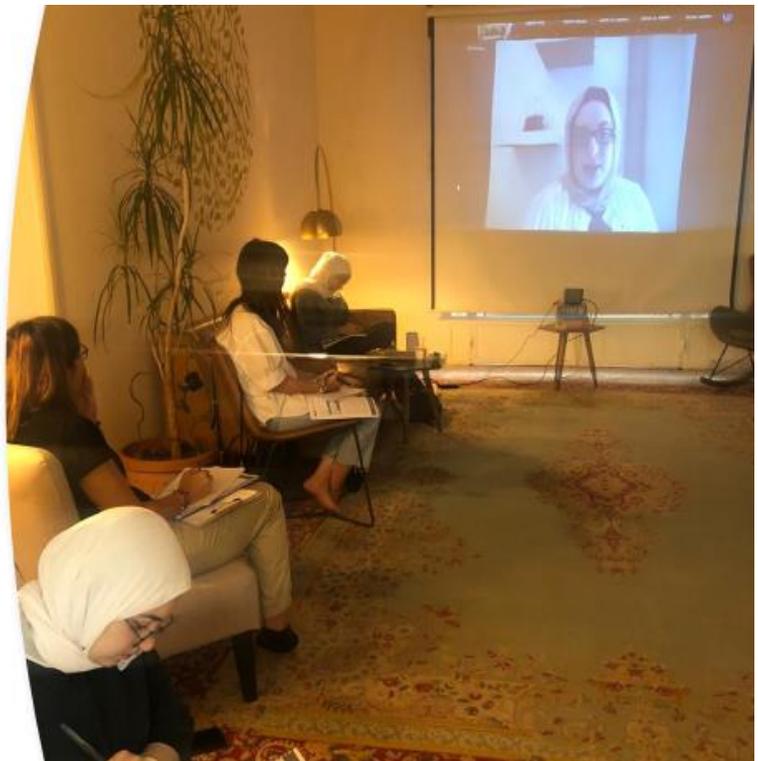
“My name is Joumana. This is the first training I have taken that I felt has given us real useful information for our psychological department so

that we can provide psychosocial support to children. This is the first manual I have felt that offers children real help, children who have suffered war and have had no one to help them. The techniques that we have learnt in the manual have enabled us to feel that we have a box of tools to help us work with children who might have difficulties after trauma incidents due to war in Syria. I want to thank Children and War for this project and for the training that they are offering us because it is really going to help Syrian children to overcome difficulties that are facing them during the war.”

As told to Masa Al-Khurdi.

Coordinated TRT Beirut

- 16 volunteers trained online in October
- Al Makan centre; AUB volunteers initiative & Social Support society
- Online training & 1 practical day for role plays
- Whatsapp groups: management and trainees
- Co-trainer from Bekaa valley, past TRT team



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newsletter@childrenandwar.org

helenlikierman@btinternet.com

Donations can be made via our website

<http://www.childrenandwar.org/make-a-donation> or through

www.JustGiving.com/cwf

Trainings from the UK

Three remote trainings were implemented from the UK over lockdown, two in 2020 (one with an Australian group and the other a general “open training”), and one, more recently, for Unaccompanied Minors.

Australia Over four days in July 2020, Bill Yule, David Trickey and Laura Tomlinson were connected from the UK with South-East Australia to train a group planning to work with children who had suffered as a result of the extensive bush fires. Many children had been displaced from their homes and communities and had to attend new schools miles away. Timing of trainings in different time zones was of course tricky, but starting at 9 a.m. UK time, which was 6 p.m. in Australia, with each of the four sessions lasting for three hours (with short breaks in the middle) was found workable. The feedback was good and the training very much appreciated. The publicity from the charity partnership involved in helping the children features on page 5.

Unaccompanied Minors Following an influx of unaccompanied minors in Europe and requests to help, TRT trainers from Sweden, Germany, Norway and the UK met in Bergen and pooled experiences to help revise the manual to meet the more complex needs of this group of youngsters.

A newly-tailored training (by Atle Dyregrov in Norway and Bill Yule in the UK) was drawn up and delivered to representatives from the London Boroughs of Merton, Sutton and Islington. Invitations were extended to previous trainees from the charities National Youth Advisory Service and BACA. It was quite an undertaking, but around 16 trainees participated in the new training, done remotely over two days in November 2020 and involving four trainers, Bill Yule, Kimberly Ehnholt, Maria Callias and Sara Marques. This new training and manual pave the way for more help for unaccompanied minors in the future.

Open training Many of the groups we train come at the request of a particular organisation or as a result of a specific disaster, but we like

to hold regular “open trainings” for individuals or small charities interested in learning new approaches to helping children. Our recent such training in October 2020, had delegates from the Middle East, including Jordan, Syria, Libya as well as Greece. Zoom brought its own problems such as intermittent internet and restricted access to Zoom in certain parts of the world.

A TRT training for June 22nd and 23rd

Contact training.uk@childrenandwar.org if you'd like to join 4x3 hour sessions (on ZOOM) over two days. You don't need a background in mental health, but some experience with children and young people is helpful.

News from HOPE, BACA and Australia – how our training cascades down

1. HOPE

Great work has been done by the “HOPE worldwide Ukraine” Charity Foundation. Professor Bill Yule from the UK and Elin Hordvik from Bergen (who sadly died earlier this year) initially trained 20 people in Lviv. Bill returned more recently, in 2018, with Laura Tomlinson and Denis Ougrin to provide booster training and were delighted to learn of HOPE's large-scale implementation of new programmes. They have written a very graphic piece about how people have been affected by the war there (see next page).

The charity has been well organised and doing exactly what Children and War trained them to do – to cascade further the trainings so that more children could be helped. A project “Helping Hand for Ukraine: Psycho-Social Support Program” is offering a training program to school psychologists, social workers, and pedagogical students from March to September 2021.

There is a great YouTube 7-minute video about TRT in the Ukraine – and the picture on page 3 has been taken from this film.

<https://youtu.be/gL02dA2GWYA>



HOPE's quote in their brochure on how children have been affected is true for many of the children our TRT trainees are trained to help, so is well worth reading:

“During these difficult times, many Ukrainians suffer from military actions in Eastern Ukraine. They face the loss of their close ones, loss of their own homes, forced migration, anxiety and worries. These events are especially traumatizing for children. Children witness artillery bombing and shooting, watch the destruction of their native city or village and their own homes. Such experiences can cause different psychological traumas. Children traumatized by war are easily scared by loud noises, some of them are afraid to go outside the house. Many of them become depressed; they often cry, exhibit anxiety and worry. Others become nervous, inclined to sudden irritation and anger. Many children face problems with sleeping: they wake up in the middle of the night crying and speak of awful nightmares. Thoughts about the past cause such sadness that they try to force out those memories and avoid any reminders of the past events.”



The achievements of this charity are considerable. As it relates to Children and War their records state that over the last few years:

- Over 500 practicing psychologists, social workers, emergency service employees, and volunteers went through the 3-day Children and War Teaching Recovery Techniques training in 24 regions of Ukraine.
- Over 3000 children and over 800 parents went through 7 sessions of the Children and War rehabilitation therapy course in Kyiv region, Zhytomyr region, Odessa region, Dnipropetrovsk region, Kharkiv region, Donetsk region, and Luhansk region.
- 3 rehabilitation-recreation camps for 64 children from Maryinka (Donetsk region) have been held within the Children and War program.



Certificates for all!

2. BACA

BACA Charity staff were trained to deliver TRT in 2019 and representatives invited to the Unaccompanied Minors training last year. This added to the skills they had already been equipped with but was more targeted to the special needs of the young people they work with.

BACA is named after an ancient place in the Middle East called the Valley of Baca (Bekaa). This place was a waterless and barren valley that pilgrims had to pass through on their long journeys to Jerusalem.



BACA training in 2019. Bill Yule with some of the trainees

At BACA “We believe each young person has a worth uncovering, talents worth discovering and a life worth living to their fullest of potential, no matter their past or their present circumstances. We enable young people 16+ in age who are seeking asylum, some of whom have been victims of trafficking, to achieve this positive future through providing specialist supported accommodation and holistic development training.”

3. Australia

The Royal Far West (RFW) and UNICEF Australia supported the recovery of communities affected by the 2019-20 bushfire disaster. Their program provided direct assistance to children (0-12 years), and the adults supporting them, to improve the resilience and wellbeing of children and decrease the likelihood of long-term adverse impacts. The multidisciplinary RFW Team comprised Social Workers, Psychologists, Occupational Therapists and Speech Pathologists. Team members were trained and experienced in the following areas related to trauma recovery and psychosocial support:

- Trauma Informed Practice
- Community Trauma Tool Kit (Emerging Minds)
- Storm Birds child group program (Good Grief)
- Trauma Recovery Techniques child group program (Children and War Foundation)**
- Birdie’s Tree social stories (QLD Centre for Perinatal and Infant Mental Health).

Feedback from trainings

Feedback from all the recent CaW trainings has been good but we still have things to learn about the new ways of working on line. People do get tired and lose concentration, so we need to schedule in breaks and opportunities to share experiences and network – all the important features in our face-to-face trainings. We continue to offer practical skills training and use ZOOM facilities such as “break-out rooms” and whiteboards to do this. And we are planning more mixed media and video sessions.

TRT training results in Austria (see previous issues) were published in a report by Dr Petra Krenn-Maritz from AFYA, an intercultural organisation, in 2019. The results confirmed previous studies on the effects of the programme and prove that it can be implemented with great benefit in the context of schools in safe asylum countries. The evaluation showed clearly positive effects for these children and adolescents.

Looked-after children

A query came from Bath University, asking whether the TRT manuals could be used to help looked-after children. Dr Rachel Hiller was funded to investigate the use of TRT to help ameliorate the effects of traumas experienced by children coming into the care of the local authority in Bristol. A research-based project was set up with Patrick Smith and Richard Meiser-Steadman from Children and War on the steering committee, and a trial in Bristol in a variety of settings was started. The study looks at the effects of training social workers to use TRT with children coming into care. Bill Yule, Laura Tomlinson and David Trickey gave the training. The plan is that, once Covid restrictions are lifted, these social workers will use TRT with children newly taken into care.

TWO STUDIES AND RESULTS

Evaluation of a school-based intervention to promote the mental health of refugee youth

In Sweden a recent study has been set up to evaluate the effectiveness of TRT versus a more general, “business as usual” approach to helping such young refugees in schools. The proposed study will use a randomised controlled method (the gold standard for evaluating treatments) to compare the effectiveness of training teachers to run the TRT programme with a course providing teachers with information on trauma and the refugee experience. The current study is in its trial phase but the authors Natalie Durbeej, Serena McDiarmid, Anna Sarkadi, Inna Feldman, Raija-Leena Punamäki, Reeta Kankaanpää, Arnfinn Andersen, Per Kristian Hilden, An Verelst, Ilse Derluyn and Fatumo Osman note that the TRT programme has already been used effectively in Palestine, Gaza and post-tsunami Thailand as well as in Sweden.

Pilot Randomized Control Trial (RCT): Efficacy of a Group-Based Psychosocial Program for Youth with PTSD in the Brazilian Favelas. 2020

In the Brazilian urban centres, young people have high rates of exposure to traumatic events, Ian

Barron, Fernando Freitas and Christina Anderson Bosch aimed to evaluate Teaching Recovery Techniques (TRT) delivered by Unni Heltner from Norway and Catalina Fracchia from Chile to Brazilian youths who had experienced drug violence in one Favela. Thirty children, 8 to 14 years, were randomly assigned to TRT or to a “treatment as usual” group involving boxing/martial arts. The young people were assessed for Posttraumatic Stress and Depression 2 weeks before and 2 weeks after they had taken part in the groups. Results showed an improvement on both PTSD and Depression. The study concluded that TRT is recommended for future help, and they also suggested a larger scale RCT is now needed in Brazilian favelas.

LATEST FUNDRAISING OFFER

<https://andreasstyllas.wixsite.com/stretchclass>



Follow link to join exercise scientist Andreas Styllas's Sunday 10:00 a.m. BST Zoom class and help CaW. What a champion!



The Smile (Miracles do happen!)