

Befrienders Worldwide

volunteer action to prevent suicide

Newsletter – April 2017

Introduction and note from the Board

Dear friends and colleagues,

On behalf of the Befrienders Worldwide Board I am delighted to introduce our latest newsletter.

Member Contributions

This time we have inspiring contributions from India, Mauritius, Kenya, Thailand, Malaysia and Morocco which again demonstrates the splendid mix of cultures and the sheer diversity of our organisation. We hope that you enjoy reading their news.

BW Projects

This is also a good opportunity to inform you about the main projects which the Board and central organisation have been focusing on in recent months;

- Firstly you are probably aware that we have upgraded the look and content of our directory of help services and contact details, which can be found on the BW website. We hope that you like this but please do not hesitate to let us know if you have any comments or changes that you would like to make regarding your own organisation.
- Our Twinning/Mentoring Co-ordinator, Sue Trinder, has prepared a plan to re-launch the Twinning Programme and this has been approved by the Board. Sue is preparing a special communication to all of you about this and explaining how you can participate.
- BW has signed an agreement with an international shipping company to provide a dedicated multilingual telephone and email service for the benefit of their employees who need emotional support.
- Our team is working with a number of organisations in various countries which plan to set up new help centres and to become members of BW. At the present time this involves specific projects in Gibraltar and Lebanon. More information will be provided about these ventures in our next newsletter.

Membership Fees

After a 'holiday' in 2016 we are now sending out our request for the payment of membership fees for the year 2017. There is no increase or change in the fee scale compared to the last fees levied in 2015. These fees cover just the general running cost of the charity including accountancy, insurance and website management. We continue to operate centrally without any permanent employees in order to keep running costs to a minimum. Thank you in anticipation for your support.

New Trustees

We have eight Trustees on the BW Board and four of us were founding Trustees when we became an independent charity in February 2012. We are therefore very keen to strengthen the Board with new blood. If you are reading this newsletter and interested in the possibility to join the BW Board then please do not hesitate to contact me personally by email at: chair@befrienders.org and I will be happy to provide you with more information.

Future Newsletters and Contact

We would like our newsletters to be as dynamic and up to date as possible. Please do not wait to be asked for contributions - just send any articles of interest or details of special events as and when they arise to your Regional Co-ordinator with a copy to the BW secretary Peter Barker. We will then make sure these are included in the next edition.

Please also feel free to contact any Trustee or Regional co-ordinator if you have any other comments or requests for the BW Board.

With Best Wishes,

Martin Taylor, Chair
chair@befrienders.org

18th National Conference of Befrienders India



The 18th National Conference of Befrienders India was held from February 3 to 5, 2017 at Gulmohar Golf Park in Ahmedabad. The theme of the conference was 'Share, Care and Dare'.

Out of a total of 16 member centers, 14 centers participated in the conference. The delegates also included team Sumaithryo from Sri Lanka. Discussions were held on the qualities of a good Befriender like the ability to empathize with the suicide or the potential victim, care for the callers and the daring attitude required to challenge the stigma associated with suicide. Practical sessions were conducted on email befriending by Cochin member center Maithri. Presentations were organized on topics like the 'importance of voice

modulation and tone during befriending', 'reality check on the appropriate paths to befriending' and 'connecting with people during outreach programmes'. Psychiatrist Dr. Lakshmi Vijayakumar presented a paper on 'Suicidal Brain' which elicited significant response from the participants. Other discussions included burning issues like the factors influencing students' suicide and the role of schools in the matter. Topics also included ways of handling sexually demanding callers. A public awareness program on mental health related topics, involving dignitaries, was also conducted by SAATH, the host center from Ahmedabad. More than a thousand people participated in this program.

News from Befrienders Mauritius

Befrienders Mauritius (established since 1995) is the sole NGO in Mauritius that provides emotional support to people who experience feelings of distress and despair with suicidal thoughts. Unfortunately, they are facing financial constraints due to Mauritius' Government New Policy on Corporate Social Responsibility Fund, which forces businesses and NGOs to devote a part of their income to this fund. Despite this, during the year of 2016, Befrienders Mauritius did outreach programs such as Trainings to New Recruits – Prison and Police Officers (nearly 600 new recruits), awareness campaigns in educational institutions, women centres, visiting the elderly, etc., in addition to attending calls, doing follow-ups and face-to-face sessions at the centre.



The President Mr. José Emilien attended an official function on World Suicide Prevention Day 2016 organized by the Ministry of Social Security, National Solidarity and Reforms Institution on September 10, 2016. He persuasively debated on Befrienders' project forwarded to Barclays Bank Ltd. On November 30, 2016, Befrienders Mauritius won the "Special Jury Mentioned Prize" for the Colour of Life Award 2016 organised by the Bank.

On December 7, 2016, Befrienders Mauritius was selected and awarded the (6th Edition) Africa Leadership NGO Awards 2016 for best practices in suicide prevention. The function was attended by the Vice-President Ms. Sheila Cheekhoory.

Since the beginning of this year, Befrienders Mauritius is fully involved in awareness campaigns on suicide prevention mostly in Secondary Institutions, women centres and youth centres.

On Saturday March 25, 2017, the organisation held its Annual General Meeting and Election of Office Bearers for years 2017-2019. Mr. Emilien and Ms. Sheila Cheekhoory were both re-elected as president and vice-president, respectively.

Befrienders Kenya

IASP Consultative Forum

Befrienders Kenya (BK) in partnership with the International Association for Suicide Prevention held a consultative forum on December 6, 2016 at P.C.E.A. Kikuyu Hospital in Kiambu County.

The forum brought together stakeholders from various fields: community-based organizations, teachers, community health workers, religious leaders, service providers within the field of mental health and general health to discuss suicide - an issue which is a challenge in the country yet is still regarded as a taboo subject and attracts a lot of stigma.

Among the activities of the day was a candle lighting ceremony in remembrance of those who died through suicide and standing in solidarity with those who have lost loved ones through suicide. There were also presentations from various professionals tackling integration of mental health in primary healthcare, the role of the church in tackling stigma associated with suicide, psychological first aid, the media monitoring project by Users and Survivors of Psychiatry, among other related topics. There were also group discussions covering various areas of interest such as sustainability and ownership of the project, creation of support groups, confronting stigma in suicide prevention, how stigmatization takes place, and how the community can change the way suicide survivors are treated and handled within the community.

International Association for Suicide Prevention representative, Ms. Wendy Orchard honoured Befrienders Kenya by visiting the BK office in Upper Hill, Nairobi on December 5, 2016. This was part of the proposed IASP Community Based Project Kenya initial visit. Ms. Orchard presented the strategic priorities of IASP for 2014-2020, among which figures the will to explore and develop culturally based interventions relevant to specific communities, regions or nations. In this context, Ms. Orchard presented the plans of her organisation to initiate a suicide prevention community based on the projects in the Kikuyu sub-county and Mutuini sub-county as proposed by BK. Her visit to BK office was therefore to assist IASP in assessing the viability of such a project in Kenya.

If Walls Could Talk

If walls could talk, they'd chew me up and spit me out. They'd tell all of my secrets and more.

These walls know everything. They've heard my private cries, whispered curses, and shouts of frustrations and anger. They've also heard my prayers.

If they could talk, I would be in a heap of trouble. I've splashed a lot of dirt on those walls.

- Anonymous



World Mental Health Day 2016

The theme of last year's World Mental Health Day, observed on October 10, 2016, was Dignity in Mental Health: Psychological and Mental Health First Aid for All. The events, which were organised by Users and Survivors of Psychiatry in Kenya and the Mental Health Department, Ministry of Health, were held at Mary Immaculate Catholic Church in Karatina, Nyeri County and at Kenyatta National Hospital, Nairobi County.

The message for the day was that psychological support is vital in dealing with mental health. There is a need to ensure that when crisis events occur, part of the humanitarian response is to provide appropriate and timely mental health support including psychological first aid. It was noted that just as the general health care does not consist of physical first aid alone, similarly mental health care system should not consist solely of psychological first aid. Investment in psychological first aid is part of a longer term effort to ensure that anyone in acute distress can receive support and that those who need more than psychological first aid will receive additional advanced support from health, mental health and social services.

The events, which brought together hundreds of people, included many prestigious speakers such as the USP-K Executive Director, Michael Njenga, Ms. Lucy Waititu, County Executive for Special programs Nyeri County, Hon. Mohammed Gabbow, Director and Board Member National Council for Persons with Disabilities, and more.

A Helpful Workshop for Samaritans of Thailand



On February 25-26, 2017, Samaritans of Thailand was honoured to take part in a workshop on “How to Provide Counselling to Clients with Suicidal Thoughts”, a project initiated and held in the name of the Faculty of Social Sciences of Kasetsart University. The two-day workshop was attended by 28 people who came from various professions, including college teachers, social workers from a hospital, post-graduate students in psychology and suicidal-related survivors, etc. Certificates were given to attendees by the Faculty of Social Sciences. Samaritans of Thailand is hoping to hold a follow-up course in the near future.

Numerous Public Events for Befrienders of Kuala Lumpur

In addition to continuing to give talks and workshops to university students and staff and to the general public, Befrienders Kuala Lumpur participated in numerous awareness activities. On October 16, 2016, Befrienders Day was organized for members and fellowship. This event featured a fashion show, games and a buffet with tea. The organisation also collaborated with YB Hannah Yeoh, Speaker for Selangor State Assembly, in putting up Befrienders KL banners all around Subang Jaya, and they published a full-page ad in SJ Echo, a community publication. And, on November 9 of last year, Befrienders KL was honoured to participate as panelist in the Forum on Decriminalising Suicide organized by the Ministry of Health in conjunction with Suicide Prevention Day. Finally, Befrienders KL invited Dr. Phang Cheng Kar to speak about mindfulness in a conference open to the public.



**MURUNG?
ANDA TIDAK BERSENDIRIAN.
DEPRESSED?
YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

Hubungi Befrienders.
03-79568145

Befrienders
Kuala Lumpur

Pengumuman Masyarakat oleh Pejabat ADUN Subang Jaya

Befrienders KL also wishes to officially welcome seven new emailers who have completed their probation and are now confirmed members of the organisation! The organisation recruited new volunteers in October 2016 and March 2017. The trainees are currently undergoing supervision.

Colorful Awareness Actions from Sourire de Reda in Morrocco!

On February 5, 2017, Sourire de Reda celebrated the Youth Suicide Prevention Day by leading a campaign entitled Stop to Silence in radio, press magazines, websites and social media, thanks to the free support of the media. Sourire de Reda realised: 1 press ad, with boy and girl versions, in French and Arabic; 5 radio spots in French and Arabic, each describing a common painful situation for young people (family violence, cyberbullying, anxiety, eating disorders, and school stress); and 3 video spots on cyberbullying, anxiety and school stress.



In February of this year, Sourire de Reda also sponsored 3 Moroccan graffiti artists to paint two Smill Walls in the center of Casablanca, one in the Marché central, the other in the Medina. The purpose was to give youth hope and a positive image of prevention. Art gives the opportunity to young people to express themselves and can help them to overcome their distress. In addition, Street Art is popular and able to address everyone and leaves a positive footprint in Casablanca city. The performance was filmed in order to produce two short prevention videos to be used on social media.



Preventive Actions

Sourire de Reda also organized two important conferences and one workshop in November 2016, with participation from Professor Brian Mishara. The first conference focused on suicide prevention. Organized in partnership with the Psychiatry Unit of Cheikh Khalifa Hospital, it was intended for psychologists and psychiatrists. The second conference was themed “Prevention and Intervention in Psychological Crisis” and was intended for medical students at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Casablanca. Finally, the workshop, run by Pr. Mishara, meant to explore new methods of assessment and intervention in case of suicidal crisis. It was attended by the psychiatric team of Ibn Rochd Hospital.

Intervention in Morocco

Sourire de Reda is also proud to announce that three new listeners were hired in October 2016, which meant that Stop Silence is now open four evenings per week instead of three. Thanks to the relentless work of volunteers, the figures for 2016 are extremely positive:

- Opening days: 115 in 2016 vs. 76 in 2015
- Listening hours: 325 in 2016 vs. 245 in 2015
- Ch@t conversations: 330 in 2016 vs. 270 in 2015
- Average duration of a ch@t conversations: 59 minutes.

Stop to Silence

... Because young people should not be alone in their distress
 ... Because young people in distress need to talk about it
 ... Because talking about their pains helps to be better.

ART

Fresques urbaines en hymne à la vie



les performances de ces deux artistes par une capsule vidéo de chaque mur.
 «Nous sommes très heureux d'avoir des artistes aussi talentueux à nos côtés pour diffuser, à travers le Street art, des messages de prévention de manière originale», a indiqué la présidente-fondatrice de «Sourire de Reda», Meryeme Bouzidi Izaki.
 Le graffeur ED est né à Casablanca. Il est titulaire d'un baccalauréat en arts appliqués et, à 21 ans, il est graphiste de profession. Son style mêle portraits et lettres aux formes géométriques.

Les graffeurs ED et Placebo se sont engagés pour l'association «Sourire de Reda» et ont réalisé deux belles fresques urbaines sur le thème «Créer-Sourire-Vivre», l'une à la Médina et l'autre au Marché Central de Casablanca.
 «La roue de la vie», réalisée par ED et «Fleur de vie» exécutée par Placebo portent des valeurs de partage et de joie. Le réalisateur et photographe Actarus et les équipes de Sigma Production ont immortalisé

Révélation des quatre dernières années, Placebo a de son côté embelli les murs de Paris, Dubaï, Barcelone, Copenhague et Londres. Avec plus de 10 ans d'expérience dans le Street Art, il a été invité aux plus prestigieux festivals mondiaux et se concentre désormais à développer le Street Art au Maroc.
 Le fameux Guereb des deux graffeurs sur le boulevard Al Massira al Khadra et leur portrait d'Oum Keltoum ont marqué les esprits et les cœurs. ■



فنانون ينحرون بجداريات الشارع لحث الشباب على البوح بالأمهم

عزيرة بشار
 تلوّثي جميعا، بصمتنا راسم، صحتنا
 إيجابية ونصيحته حول القاص النفسية
 لدى فئة الشباب والتفكير والقدرة على
 ومساندهم المخلوقة دور إلهامهم على
 أساليبهم الجديدة
 وتضمن المصحة أنوارها مع المديح
 لوقفة هذه الفئة من مظاهر تطوّرهم في
 العزلة الصفة منهم أنه لا أحد يهتم بما
 يشعرون به أو ما يمرون به من مشاق
 صعبة
 وترتد أعمالهم المصحة على هذا التغيير
 هم مخطط فترات التواضع من وسائل
 إبداع وملازمة وسهولة وحرية والتعريف
 وغير القلاء الإيجابي لثقل كثره عند معادن
 من الفهمين
 كما يصاحب المصحة تنظيم المصحة
 خصبة لعينهم المصبرات الكيفية من
 طاق المصحة من الفهمين الكيفية
 وهو مخطط المصحة المصحة المصحة
 من خلال عمل بصحور حول الإبداع
 الإبداعية المصحة هم رسم لوحات فنية
 على جدران قمار المصحة
 والتي على الكبار، هذا المصحة
 الإبداعية والفنية بصيرتها وسيلة مهمة

We wish to thank all Befrienders centers, volunteers and staff worldwide. Together, we contribute to building societies where suicide is understood and where suicidal individuals receive the emotional support they need.