



## **Antares Newsletter** **April – June 2010**

*Dear Friends and Associates,*

*Thank you for your interest in the work of the Antares Foundation. This newsletter is intended to update you on the various developments in Antares' work which have taken place during April, May and June of 2010, some work contributing to the further development of new projects initiated during 2009, others building upon long standing relationships with partners we have worked with for many years. More information about Antares is available on our website, [www.antaresfoundation.org](http://www.antaresfoundation.org), and if you have any questions you are more than welcome to call or email us:*

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## **Kosovo and CDC**

In 2009 the Antares Foundation started a new project in Kosovo with the support of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA. We will be collaborating in Kosovo with our long term partner organisation there, the Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims (<http://www.krct.org>). The project is designed to offer support to primary health care workers in Kosovo. The first stage of our work there was to carry out a detailed needs assessment in the form of a survey, which will then be used to form the basis of a training and support program which we will deliver. Throughout May, a team of researchers from CDC were in Kosovo to administer this survey to primary healthcare workers county wide. *Circa* 700 surveys were returned and data analysis is now underway. Once the results are available work will continue on fulfilling the design of the program, and training activities can begin. The Antares Foundation continues to try to identify additional funding to allow us to broaden our activities in Kosovo further. During the visit a representative from Emory University introduced compassion meditation to KRCT staff. Antares staff and associates enjoyed compassion meditation training during the first quarter of 2010, and it was very interesting to see it applied in the context of our work in Kosovo. The Antares Foundation and Emory University are looking into possibilities to carry out a pilot program on compassion meditation as a comparable method of mitigating stress. Funding for this still needs to be identified.



CDC and KRCT staff and primary health care workers filling out the Antares CDC questionnaire.

## **Jordan and Northern Iraq**

Since September 2008 the Antares Foundation has been conducting a program focused on local staff of NGOs working with Iraqi refugees in Jordan. The program is funded by the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM), US State Department. The program has three main components: stress assessment amongst local staff, psychosocial skills building of national staff and stress awareness training, and stress management training and developing psychosocial support programs for NGOs. This project was especially valuable for Antares, as its three components embrace three of Antares' core activities, and results from the Jordan project were used as input for our research program. Since September 2009, the program has been applied in Northern Iraq as well.

The Antares Foundation has been very active in this program during the second quarter of 2010. In Jordan, around 20 field staff dealing directly with traumatized refugees were given the first three blocks of a psychosocial skills building training cycle. Follow-up training was also given to last year's group, following an evaluation amongst them in March. This evaluation contributed to the adaptation of the curriculum delivered both in the follow up training to last year's group, and to the initial training delivered to the new group.

In Northern Iraq, a psychosocial skills building workshop was delivered to field workers who work with IDPs, returnees, traumatized children, sexual abuse cases and mentally handicapped people. Not all of the field workers come from a psychosocial background.

In all three of the trainings mentioned above, emphasis was placed upon stress management. All three training sessions were very well received.

### **Kiwakkuki, Tanzania**

Since 2008 the Antares Foundation has been engaged in implementing a self sustaining staff support system for staff and volunteers of Kiwakkuki, a Tanzanian organisation which was established to empower the women of the Kilimanjaro region in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The Antares Foundation has established an Intercollegial Consultation system, a method for intervention that can be used to help people to help each other in preventing psychological problems caused by the burdensome nature of volunteer work. This method can be practiced by groups after a short introduction, with minimal outside supervision and be exported to other groups. This system will gradually spread throughout the organisation, and the intention is that it will ultimately reach all 5000 of Kiwakkuki's volunteers.



In July of last year an evaluation of the system was carried out and it found that in a relatively brief period of time, Antares newsletter April –June 2010

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Kiwakkuki had fully and enthusiastically embraced stress management and intercollegial consultation, and was practising it in a helpful and valuable way. Feedback from participants was very positive. It was also noted, however, that supervision is needed to ensure that the intercollegial consultation method spreads throughout the organisation in the correct way, so as to be an optimum benefit to the participants. In June of this year Rolf Schwarz and Annemarie Thijs travelled to Kiwakkuki to undertake this supervision work. The mission was successful and received positive feedback from participants.



### **National Conferences**

Staff and directors of the Antares Foundation have attended the Conference on Transcultural Psychiatry in Amsterdam, and "7 minutes for 1325" in Soesterberg.

### **Antares Conference**

The Antares Foundation is planning a conference between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of September. This conference will consist of meetings of the Research and Development groups and will cover updates on the progress of the publication of the results of the longitudinal research and the national staff studies, meetings on programme development and on Antares methodology. The conference will be held in the yoga centre De Roos, Amsterdam. Delegates from our partner organisations will be present, along with national and international associates. Participation is by

invitation only. An update on the content of the conference will be forthcoming in our next newsletter.

A large scale Antares conference is also in planning phase for 2011.