

Centre for Trauma, Asylum and Refugees

Activities July - December 2010

13 December - 14 January Renos was in South Africa working in black townships. In Gauteng he consulted to staff of a school in Tembisa (near Johannesburg) and in the Cape Flats in Philippi and Khayelitsha (near Cape Town). In addition, he connected with groups and individuals working with refugees and other survivors of political violence, especially with Malika Ndlovu, an activist, poet and artist who staged (with musician Lodi Inga) a remarkable multi-media performance on 'Migrations' in Cape Town in December. In addition, on 10th January, Renos gave a seminar at the Jung Centre in Cape Town on 'Unipolar Archetype and Other Polarised Manifestations of the Psyche' where he explored phenomena that lead to political violence and ways of conceptualising them and addressing them. The seminar was attended by analysts, trainees as well as other interested social scientists.

22 - 24 November Renos was in Newcastle upon Tyne attending the "Dealing with Disasters International Conference 2010" (that had the specific title: "Linking Disasters and Development: the next 10 years") where he was invited to give a plenary presentation on "Trauma, Displaced People and Political Violence". The Conference was attended by specialists (academics, practitioners and policy makers) from many parts of the world and from a wide variety of disciplines and perspectives: from seismologists, engineers and political scientists, to geographers, agronomists and economists. Renos' contribution was on epistemological frameworks of intervention based on his experiences and reflections in working with survivors of political violence and disasters in different parts of the world.

16 - 19 September Renos was in Belgrade teaching on the course 'Analytical Psychology and Creativity' that is organised by the Institute for Mental Health in Serbia. The theme of his input was 'Images of home in clinical and field contexts from a Jungian perspective'. Renos is also the co-organiser of this two-year course that is the first of its kind in the Balkans.

9 September Renos participated in the International Closed Workshop on "Rehabilitation as a Form of Reparation: Opportunities and Challenges" that was organised by the Transitional Justice Network of the University. This important gathering that included world experts was held on the campus.

8 - 21 July Renos was in Haiti as consultant to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). This was the first time that the Memorandum of Understanding that had been signed between the University and the IOM had been activated. The IOM, that had been assigned the role of coordinating all psychosocial activities in Haiti by the United Nations, had already used Trauma Grid in their assessment of the needs of the earthquake survivors. During his work visit, Renos offered three intensive training programmes to a total of more than 120 persons: (a) to the local psychosocial workers that work in the camps of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), (b) to the local professionals that are supervising the psychosocial workers, and (c) to senior University students from relevant courses (i.e. psychology, sociology and anthropology). In addition, he consulted to the psychosocial team of the IOM in Haiti and contributed to the planning of post-graduate course that will be offered jointly by the IOM and the University of Haiti.

23 - 30 July Renos was in Wales at the residential conference of the Champernowne Trust entitled “Coming Home: psychological, mythological and community perspectives” where he was one of the main invited speakers. In his presentation on “Leaving Home, Coming Home: adolescents, refugees and disaster survivors” he discussed his recent consultancy in Haiti addressing the plight of the earthquake survivors and those working with them.

5 - 6 July Renos was in Rome participating in the final conference of the EVASP project that was attended by nearly one hundred people from most European countries. All participants were working in the field of asylum seekers and refugees in a variety of different disciplines (e.g. psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy, social work, anthropology, law, administration, policy, etc), work settings (e.g. academic/research, therapeutic, community, detention centres, NGOs, etc). Of particular importance was the attendance and active participation of staff from immigration departments of several European states as well of staff from relevant European central bodies from Brussels.

As the research lead of this project, Renos gave the key presentation of the conference discussing the findings that included the main instrument that was developed (the “Asylum Seekers” Protection Index” – ASPI). Essentially, the project proposed a new framework to understand vulnerability in asylum seekers that is not focused exclusively on negative and pathological dimensions but also acknowledges resilient and Adversity-Activated Development responses. Moreover, the new model emphasises the “contextual”, “relational” and “dynamic” (i.e. not static) nature of vulnerability.

The EVASP findings were then located within the wider context of up-to-date approaches introduced at the Conference by invited experts in on the second day. The overall response was extremely positive. Most participants conveyed the view that EVASP succeeded in proposing a new conceptualisation of this thorny issue that whilst avoided oversimplification, it provided a tangible way to grasp the complexity. The new framework is not only theoretically innovative but it also has actual practical application. At the end of the Conference, specific recommendations were drawn up in order to be sent to the relevant policy making bodies in Europe.
