

Note for Capacitar Website

Capacitar and Laban Dance for Peace and Wellness in Peru and Colombia 2013: Contributing to Trauma healing of communities affected by violent armed conflict and political tensions.

Last September and October, Patty Abozaglo, Capacitar Tutor and Laban Guild Leader travelled to Peru and Colombia and facilitated over ten workshops or 66hrs of Capacitar and Laban Dance in Colombia and Peru. 253 men, women, youth and children participated in the numerous workshops, including Afro Colombian women affected by gender based violence, Staff of a Church Organisation based in the Amazonian Jungle in Colombia. In Peru, men, women and children, some of them affected by Down Syndrome, of all ages attended the lively sessions in Cajamarca and Celendin, Northern highlands of Peru. Orla Quinn, Capacitar Facilitator joined Patty on this trip and played a very important role supporting and accompanying Patty on this trip.

In Colombia, two host organisations made this trip possible. In Colombia, Vicaria del Sur in Southern Colombia and Fundación Santa Rita (FUNSAREP) in Cartagena gave us a warm welcome. In Peru, Lynda Sullivan, Irish writer and activist organised events in Peru. Participants of the various workshops experienced the benefits of Capacitar and Laban Dance. They felt relaxed and energised by the practices.

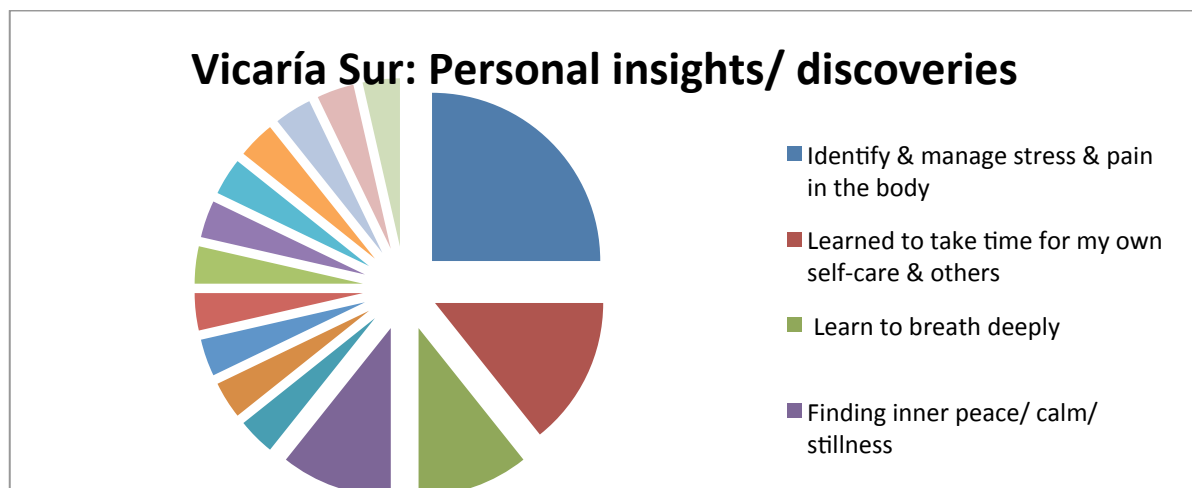
Participants views about their Learning and Personal Discoveries:

"I learned various ways to deal with stress and pain, the value and function of various body parts and that work can be done smoothly, and not to become too stressed out, so that I can love and enjoy my work"

"I learned to acknowledge and value myself and take time for my own self-care as well as the importance of mapping the body and self-care"

"I understood why people suggested these tools to improve my own health"

"I discovered new ways that can help me to manage my own life, improving my physical, emotional and mental help so that I can change my attitude/way of thinking about all these".



A Capacitar session was also held at the Latina American Congress of Mining women which gathered 60 women from 8 Latin American Countries.

Insights from Women participants in Cartagena:

"Learned that the body is like an engine that needs maintenance".

"All practice helped me to relax and overcome fear"

"All Capacitar techniques were useful"

"Overcame fear using easy techniques"

"Found the dancer in me"

"Discovered my strength"

"Acknowledged the importance of leadership, my interests and needs".

Participants of all workshops showed great interest and felt the need for more training in order to go deeper into the practice, learn more about each approach, and feel more confident in replicating these to their groups/programmes. In Cartagena, practices will be incorporated in Funsarep's women's programme and Sandra the psychologist in Funsarep will be responsible for doing this. In Vicaría Sur, the team will make sure the two approaches are used for self-care and programme purposes. In Peru, Lynda Sullivan who attended all sessions in Cajamarca and Celendín has started running monthly sessions. In all these cases, follow up and further support will be needed. I have committed myself to send Lynda some Capacitar literature in English which she will be able to read as English native speaker. In all the other cases, materials would need to be prepared and translated which would imply a good amount of work. A possible visit in the coming six months was suggested in order to do follow up and consolidate the practices and enhance replication process.

A Facebook page was created and would be used to share comments from participants and leaders regarding their experiences in using the two approaches. Find the link and like us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Capacitar-and-Laban-Dance-for-Peace-and-Wellness-in-Colombia-and-Peru/567001286695035>

Opportunities for future work: Two levels of training were identified: 1) at team level, Team Staff willing to undertake further training to become facilitators and integrated Capacitar and Laban Dance in their own work 2) At grassroots level: more training was requested to own the practice, address trauma issues and continue the healing process at individual can collective levels.

There was also recognition of the relevance of the issues addressed by the methodologies practices proposed. Participants acknowledged the fact that these practices would be really useful and necessary in contexts of conflict or social tensions where the level of stress and trauma could get really high. At individual level, the need to address stress as a self-care issue and the acknowledgement that relaxation and wellbeing are needed in order to enhance productivity at work and relate better with colleagues and families.

Patty is hoping to continue with this process but I would need further and support advice from Laban and Capacitar International/ Capacitar Ireland to do so.

Big Thanks to Capacitar Laban Dance and friends for giving us this wonderful opportunity to share these two programmes for the benefit of people in most need in South America!