



# Mediators Beyond Borders™

Partnering for Peace & Reconciliation

## Peace & Reconciliation Report

July 3, 2008

Dear Member,

Welcome to our bi-monthly membership newsletter. We encourage you to share your reflections, news items, and experiences with others in the MBB community via this newsletter.

To submit information or corrections for the next issue, please e-mail [batokova.mbb@gmail.com](mailto:batokova.mbb@gmail.com) by the first and third Wednesday of each month.

All links in the pdf file are active unless otherwise noted and you can access all web pages directly from the pdf file.

Sincerely,

Barbora Batokova  
PR Report Editor

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## Mark Your Calendars

### August 14-16

5<sup>th</sup> Annual Colombian National Congress for Mediators  
Cartagena, Columbia

### September 4-7

3<sup>rd</sup> Annual International Conference on "Engaging the Other:" The Power of Compassion  
San Francisco, California, USA

### September 22-26

Designing Peacebuilding Programs (DPP) Training  
Cluj-Napoca, Romania

### March 6-8, 2009

2<sup>nd</sup> Annual MBB Congress  
New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

## In the Field

### The Nepal Initiative

#### June & July

FM C. J. Larkin, St. Louis, Missouri

### The Liberian Initiative

#### June & July

FM Ginny Morrison, Kentfield, California

FM Tom Oswald, North Stonington, Connecticut

Ann Sanders, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

#### September

Prabha Sankaranarayan, Pittsburgh, Penn.

Richard Walker, Kennesaw, Georgia

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### Newsletter Questions & Corrections:

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## What's New at MBB

### New Members

#### New Mediator Members

Todd Gardner, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA  
Steve Gorman, Lincoln, California, USA

#### New Student Supporters

Sara Hamoudi - University of Pittsburgh School of Law, USA  
A. Marvin Kandakai, Sr. - University of Liberia, Monrovia

#### New Citizen Supporters

Jerry Godu, Monrovia, Liberia  
Samuel Nyaneor, Liberia  
James Tucker - Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA  
Deroe Weeks, Paynesville, Liberia  
Barbara Weinstein, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

### New Student Member Sara Burhan Abdullah (Hamoudi)



Sara Burhan Abdullah (Hamoudi) was born in Iraq in the Kurdish region and came to the United States in 2005 to join her husband, whom she met at the University of Suleymania in Iraq while working as a research assistant. Her husband is an Iraqi-American professor at University of Pittsburgh.

“When Saddam Hussein was governing the Kurdish region I was 10 years old. One of the things

I will never forget is that Saddam’s regime destroyed our house. A bulldozer came to destroy our house. A bulldozer still reminds me of that. My father was then fired from his teaching job because he wasn’t part of Saddam’s regime.”

Sara, her mother and her father, who was in hiding, then earned money by sowing clothes. In 1990-1991, when the Kurdish region was assaulted, Suleymania became deserted for a month, but Sara’s family had to stay.

“We couldn’t run away . We were eight people and my little brother was less than a year old at that time. We stayed in an empty city for a month. A lot of times we had to collect rain water to drink that was black because of the fires.”

“After the last village was destroyed and after my house was destroyed for the fourth time, my father ran away so he didn’t have to join the army.”

In 2003, Sara got her Bachelor in Law from the University of Sulymania and became a research assistant. She remembers the day the United States declared war on Iraq. “It was March 18, 2003. I was in my last year of law school in Suleymania. The school was closed for a month. If America hit Baghdad, then there was fear that Saddam’s regime would use chemical weapons towards Kurdish region,” Sara remembers.

“At the beginning, people were happy when Saddam was gone. There were people who lost four family members during Saddam’s regime, so people brought flowers to US the soldiers. They would come to the university to talk to students and hang out, but [the school administration] prevented them from coming afterwards.”

Sara came to the U.S. in 2005. “When I came to the U.S., I couldn’t speak English at all, so I took a year and six months of intensive ESL course at Hunter College in New York,” Sara said. She has joined MBB after learning about MBB from MBB Secretary-Treasurer and Founding Member Robert A. Creo, with whom she is currently doing an internship following her LLM degree from the University of Pittsburgh. “I went and I decided to become a member and be helpful if I can,” Sara said.

Sara speaks Kurdish, Arabic and English. She works at the University of Pittsburgh’s Law School library by translating the titles of Arabic books and writing brief summaries so that the books can be entered into the library catalogue. She has been recently accepted into the J.D. degree program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Law, because her Iraqi law degree is not recognized in the U.S. She will visit her family in northern Iraq in July.

### University of Washington in Seattle Completes Analysis on Microfinance

Graduate students at the University of Washington in Seattle Ann Barcomb, Andrew Kim, Steven Lee, Kun Mao, Jennifer Mechem and Adrian Walter completed for credit their research to aid **The Liberian Initiative** titled “A Strategic Analysis of Microfinance Partnerships for The Liberian Initiative.”

The report can be downloaded from [www.mbbmembers.org/pdf/MBB.UWSTL.Strategic\\_Analysis\\_of\\_Microfinance.doc](http://www.mbbmembers.org/pdf/MBB.UWSTL.Strategic_Analysis_of_Microfinance.doc)

MBB would like to thank all volunteers who contributed to this analysis which was coordinated by Founding Member Narima Amin, Seattle, Washington.

## Member Action

### **CPR Names Four MBB Members as “Heroes”**

Each year, the staff of International Institute of Conflict Resolution and Prevention (CPR) acknowledges a group of people that have made extraordinary contributions in the field of conflict resolution.

**This year, four MBB members were acknowledged in the 2007 Annual Report:**

**Robert A. Creo**, MBB Secretary-Treasurer and Founding Member, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

**Marvin Johnson**, MBB Founding Member, Silver Springs, Maryland

**Jeff Kichaven**, MBB Founding Member, Los Angeles, California

**Judith Meyer**, MBB Founding Member, Haverford, Pennsylvania

Congratulations!

## Member & Supporter Reflections

### **“Conflict in Liberia” by Abdul Razack Sheriff**

The past political, social and economic order in Liberia subjected the population to violence, marginalization and exploitation. The 14-year armed conflict caused an estimated 270,000 deaths while over 800,000 Liberians were displaced internally into camps or as refugees. Many young people witnessed or participated in the gross human rights violations that characterised the civil war thus, creating a highly traumatized and militarized population of young people. Over 100,000 children and youth were formally disarmed and demobilised in 2003/2004 as ex-combatants.

The reintegration programme implemented over the last three years enabled some of the ex-combatants to acquire useful skills and legitimate living.

Evaluations of the reintegration programmes conducted in the country identified 85% success level. However, some of the ex-combatants could not access reintegration services. It also noted that the threat of the country being destabilised by the ex-combatants still exists. The command structures of the entities are either still operational or can be easily reinstated.

The ethnic and tribal tensions and alliances exploited during the civil war to gain political and social influence remain a threat to peace in Liberia. Ethnic tension still exists between the Mano and Gio tribes, the Krahn and Mandingo, the Loma and Mandingo. These are currently manifested by land and other property disputes in parts of the country such as Nimba, Maryland and Magribi counties.

A total of 13 deaths have been recorded in the past two weeks as a result of land dispute crises in Maryland and Magribi counties. These are occurrences that cannot be ruled out in other counties in the near future. The incidents are handled at national level as crime-related events without considerations made for local peace building initiatives which are meant to handle the root causes and the conflicts, thereby promoting sustainable strategies of peace building.

Can we find room for programming towards sustainable initiatives for peace building and conflict resolution in those affected communities? Who well is the Liberia initiative positioned to have a role in this?

**Abdul Razack Sheriff**, Citizen Supporter, Monrovia, Liberia

## University Chapter News

### **New MBB University Chapter Established at Woodbury College**

A new University Chapter was chartered at Woodbury College in Montpelier, Vermont, USA on June 1, 2008. Senior President is Mark Baril, Junior President is Linda Beitz and Secretary-Treasurer is Pat MacIntosh. This is MBB's fourth chartered chapter.

## Board Member Profile

### C.J. Larkin



C.J. Larkin has an extensive legal background as a public defender, appellate attorney, bank counsel, family lawyer and guardian ad litem. She has served as a lobbyist and as political staff for a county elected official and U.S. Senate party nominee and has performed over 400 mediations in the areas of family, land use, employment, personal injury, attorney-client, juvenile victim-offender, and community/neighborhood disputes.

In spring 2004, she was selected as a cultural competence trainer on Arab, Muslim and Sikh Americans for the United States Department of Justice's Community Relations Services. Currently she is the Administrative Director of ADR Programs and a Lecturer in Law at the Washington University in St. Louis. She also serves as the Vice-Chair of the Missouri Bar's ADR committee and as a trainer and mediator for the Missouri Bar Association. She is active in establishing community mediation centers in Nepal.

C.J. heads MBB's Nepal Initiative and is the Board Liaison for the Membership Committee.

To see her profile online visit: [www.mbbmembers.org/member\\_profiles/clarkin.shtml](http://www.mbbmembers.org/member_profiles/clarkin.shtml)

## Donors

### MBB Receives \$30,000 for The Liberian Initiative

An anonymous individual donated \$30,000 to MBB's Liberian Initiative. The funds will be used primarily in Liberia for reintegration efforts of former child soldiers. MBB is very grateful for the donation.

## Upcoming Events

### Designing Peacebuilding Programmes (DPP) Training

The **Israel/Palestine Information Research Center** will hold the **Third Peace Education Workshop** from **August 8-9, 2008** in Tantur, Jerusalem. The workshop will bring together peace educators, conflict resolution practitioners, mediators, and activists from academia, research sector, governmental and community organizations.

The workshop will raise critical issues and acquire new insights into the profound peace education developments in Israel, Palestine and around the world. The workshop will be

organized by four thematic tracks:

- Academic Track
- Experiential Track
- International Humanitarian Law Education Track
- Veteran IPCRI Teachers

Registration is open through July 31, 2008.

**More information:**

[gershon@ipcri.org](mailto:gershon@ipcri.org) or [www.ipcri.org](http://www.ipcri.org)

### 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Colombian National Congress for Mediators

MBB is preparing to attend the 5th Annual Colombian National Congress for Mediators in Cartagena, Columbia from August 14 - 16, 2008. MBB Founding Member Tom Fiutak will be leading a team to present MBB at the congress that will be held in the Hotel Almirante Cartagena Estelar. Spanish fluency is not required as limited interpreting services can be provided.

If you are interested in joining the team, please contact Tom Fiutak at [fiuta001@umn.edu](mailto:fiuta001@umn.edu).



### 3rd Annual International Conference on “Engaging the Other:” The Power of Compassion

An international, multi-cultural, multi-disciplinary conference examining concepts of “The OTHER” from a universal, cross-cultural perspective to promote wider public dialogue about concepts of “Us and Them.”

**September 4 - 7, 2008**  
**San Francisco (San Mateo), California, USA**

**Conference Details at:**  
[www.cbiworld.org/Pages/Conferences\\_ETO.htm](http://www.cbiworld.org/Pages/Conferences_ETO.htm)

**Sponsored by:** Common Bond Institute

**Co-Sponsored by:** International Humanistic Psychology Association, Institute of Imaginal Studies and Institute of Noetic Sciences

~ Registration is Open To Professionals and the General Public ~  
Continuing Education Units available.

### Israeli-Palestinian Workshop on Education for Peace

Designing Peacebuilding Programmes (DPP) is a five-day advanced international training programme for staff of national and international organizations, the United Nations, and governmental and non-governmental organizations. The programme has been specifically designed to assist organizations developing / implementing programmes in peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

The program will take place in the International Peace and Development Training Centre in **Cluj-Napoca, Romania** from **September 22-23**. The deadline to apply is August 4 for applicants who need the Romanian visa and August 31 for applicants who do not need the Romanian visa.

For more information visit: [www.patrir.ro/training](http://www.patrir.ro/training).

### 2nd Annual MBB Congress - New Orleans, Louisiana, USA

We have started planning the second MBB Annual Congress, which will be held in New Orleans at the **Chateau LeMoyné** from March 6-8, 2009. The program will start at 3 p.m. on Friday March 6 and end on Sunday March 8 at 4 p.m.

There are several events that will take place before and after the Congress:

- Katrina Project -- March 3-4
- Board of Directors Meeting -- March 5-6
- Mississippi Mediation Project -- March 9-10

We have reserved a special block of 60 rooms at \$125 (30 double rooms and 30 single rooms). You may begin reservations at the hotel by calling 1-800-972-2791 or online at [www.hi-chateau.com](http://www.hi-chateau.com). To get the special rate, please indicate the group identification code, which is MBB. To register for the Congress, visit: [www.mbbmembers.org/congress/registration.shtml](http://www.mbbmembers.org/congress/registration.shtml). Early bird registration runs until January 3, 2009 at \$180. Regular registration fee is \$195.



# MBB Administration

## MBB Contact Information

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**Rebecca Nicholson, The Liberian Initiative Intern**  
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**Ann Sanders, The Liberian Initiative Intern**  
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## Member Dues

**Mediator Member** dues are a minimum of US \$1 per day payable annually or quarterly. Members are encouraged to contribute an additional amount if they have the ability to do so. Excess dues are utilized to sponsor members who otherwise would not be able to participate. A member has the option of designating a specific individual to be sponsored by the excess dues; otherwise MBB allocates additional contributions to those seeking financial support. For example, some of our members in Africa and South America are sponsored in this manner. The ability to sponsor participation is limited to the amount of excess contribution pool.

Each member is assigned a quarterly renewal date based upon the join date. Due statements are e-mailed February 15, May 15, August 15 and November 15 with due dates 6 weeks later, with quarterly participants paying each time. For administrative purposes, it has been determined this is the fairest, simplest and efficient manner. Please note that members have the option of paying online via PayPal, which is slightly higher as it includes the processing fee. Fees can also be paid by a check made payable to Mediators Beyond Borders to be mailed to the Pittsburgh headquarters.

**Citizen Supporters** make a minimum contribution of 10 cents per day – US \$36.50. Citizen renewal date is individual based on the join date of each supporter. **Student membership** period renews Oct. 1. The dues are US \$18.25 per year.

### Purpose of Membership Dues

Membership dues do not fund any projects or initiatives. They are solely used to support the administration of the office, and are used for salaries of staff, interns and expenses for website, office supplies and insurance.

## Overhead

Currently all administrative expenses and overhead are provided from membership dues and supporter donations. Robert A. Creo, MBB Secretary-Treasurer, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA and Sandi DiMola, MBB Director, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA, donate office space for MBB. All directors, officers and mediators serve as volunteers and do not receive any compensation for their administrative or professional services. Directors and members expend their personal funds to participate in conferences and activities on behalf of MBB. Neither the officers nor directors receive any reimbursement for travel or other expenses.

## Board of Directors - Financial Statements

Financial statements are issued quarterly for Board of Directors and distributed annually to membership. If anyone would like a copy of the most recent one, please e-mail Melissa Lefevre, MBB Administrative Assistant.

*Mediators Beyond Borders (MBB) is not a trade association of professional society. MBB is a group of volunteers providing training, capacity building and other peace-building services. MBB is a non-government public charity exempt under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Any funds will be used exclusively to further our mission. No party will receive any goods, services or any form of impermissible benefits. No contributions will be used for lobbying, political contributions or to support political campaign activities.*

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