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Inspiring Agents of Change Through Music and Dance: A Documentation of My Facilitative Journey Through Five Countries with Dance4Life

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Inspiring Agents of Change through Music and Dance: A Documentation of my Facilitative Journey through Five Countries with Dance4Life
by
Tańia A. Plascencia

An Abstract of a Project
in
Creative Studies

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

December 2008

Buffalo State College
State University of New York
International Center for Studies in Creativity
ABSTRACT OF PROJECT

Inspiring Agents of Change through Music and Dance: A Documentation of my Facilitative Journey through Five Countries with Dance4Life

This master’s project is a documentation of my journey as a Dance4Life facilitator in five countries and a reflection of the insights and learnings I discovered from the experience. A history and background of the Dance4Life project is provided, along with current trends in the field of HIV/AIDS. My rationale, as well as personal inspiration and motivation for this work is also outlined. Specifically, I discuss my learnings as it pertains to managing group dynamics and working with groups across diverse cultures. In addition, I reflect on the knowledge gained about what it means to be a facilitative leader and how the methodology used throughout the trainings has influenced both my learning and facilitation style. Daily journal reflections, debrief notes, participant evaluations and a series of photos from the different countries are provided in the appendices we well.
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A Project in Creative Studies

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December 2008

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Table of Contents

Dedication ................................................................................................................................. 1
Acknowledgements .................................................................................................................. 2

Section One: Background to the Project
  Purpose .................................................................................................................................. 3
  Description ............................................................................................................................. 3
  Rationale ................................................................................................................................. 4
  Creative Contribution ............................................................................................................ 5
  Humanitarian Contribution .................................................................................................... 6

Section Two: Pertinent Literature
  Introduction ............................................................................................................................. 7
  The Current Global Reality .................................................................................................. 7
  The Effects of Culture on Creativity .................................................................................... 9
  A Vision of Hope .................................................................................................................... 11
  Inspiration from Around the World ...................................................................................... 12

Section Three: Process Plan
  Introduction ............................................................................................................................. 16
  Planning and Preparation ...................................................................................................... 17
  Country Overview ................................................................................................................ 19
  Serbia .................................................................................................................................... 19
  Moldova ................................................................................................................................ 19
  Ibiza ....................................................................................................................................... 20
  Turkey .................................................................................................................................... 20
  USA ....................................................................................................................................... 21
  Final Project Timeline .......................................................................................................... 22

Section Four: Outcomes ......................................................................................................... 23

Section Five: Key Learnings
  Overarching .......................................................................................................................... 27
  Group Dynamics .................................................................................................................... 27
  Cross-Cultural ....................................................................................................................... 32
  Personal Growth and Development ....................................................................................... 35

Section Six: Conclusion .......................................................................................................... 37

Section Seven: References .................................................................................................... 39

Section Eight: Appendices
  Appendix A: Country Evaluations ....................................................................................... 40
  Appendix B: Debrief Notes .................................................................................................... 54
  Appendix C: Daily Journal Entries ....................................................................................... 68
  Appendix D: Concept Paper .................................................................................................. 120
  Appendix E: Photos .............................................................................................................. 129

Charts and Graphs
  Chart 1 ................................................................................................................................. 26
Dedication

To my family for their unwavering support of any goal I dared to dream and allowing me to believe that anything is possible… to my mother for always encouraging me to follow my heart, inspiring a love of travel and showing me the importance of giving back and helping others… to my father for planting the seeds of curiosity, a thirst for knowledge and the confidence to pursue both… and to my brother for his unconditional love and positive encouragement during those moments when I was ready to give it all up! I love you all and thank you for helping me grow into the person I am!

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To Glo: Thank you for seeing something in me that I never knew existed, for introducing me to the world of creativity and for guiding me on this incredible journey of growth and development! You are the person I aspire to be!

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To Jesse Wallace, Elizabeth Cisneros: Thank you for going on this journey with me and trusting that our purpose would guide us to a successful end.

To the HCT Teams from Serbia, Moldova, Ibiza, Turkey and Washington D.C.: Thank you for your commitment to the HIV / AIDS cause and being the change you wish to see in your countries! You are such and inspiration!!

To Doug and Judy Reid: Thank you for hearing the ramblings of a lost and confused soul, making the connection to the ICSC and truly planting the seeds that set me upon this amazing journey!
SECTION ONE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Purpose

My project was a documentation of my experiences and learnings working with young people in five countries as a Dance4Life facilitator. Through daily reflections and debriefs, I aimed to discover insights for working within different cultural contexts in order to develop my skills as a facilitative leader. I focused on increasing my awareness of the skills necessary to manage group dynamics, problem-solve challenges and work through difficulties in diverse cultural environments.

By documenting this journey, I was able to reflect on the facilitator tools and techniques that I am implementing well, and also identify areas that I needed to focus on for improvement. The daily summaries also enabled me to compare and contrast the techniques necessary to effectively facilitate across unique cultural boundaries. As a result, I was able to improve my overall skill competency base, learn ways to embrace cultural sensitivity in my facilitation work, and build my confidence as a cross-cultural facilitator.

Description

Dance4Life is an interactive global schools project that engages young people around the world to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS. Through the universal language of music and dance, the project aims to inform, inspire and mobilize youth to protect themselves and others, and to combat ignorance, which can lead to stigma and discrimination. Utilizing the influence of music and dance, the Dance4Life campaign seeks to unite the world’s youth and empower them to change their future.

My organization, RedZebra, is one of Dance4Life’s original global partners, having choreographed the drill, and designed and implemented the 5-day Heart Connection Tour (HCT) trainings since the project’s inception in 2003. The HCT workshop is the first of four components in the Dance4Life Schools project and often is also the first Dance4Life interaction that most students have. The workshop is approximately 90 – 120 minutes in length and serves to:

- Inspire by sharing the past, present and future vision of Dance4Life
- Empower with basic HIV and AIDS facts and figures on a global and local scale
- Unite students worldwide by teaching the drill
- Encourage dialogue around a difficult subject
- Promote personal responsibility for our choices
- Mobilize youth through music and dance to change their future and become ‘Agents of Change’ in their schools and communities

My charge as a Dance4Life facilitator was to conduct 5-day trainings in Serbia, Moldova, Ibiza, Turkey and the USA with teams of youth and peer educators. The purpose of the training was to lead them through the process of creating a dynamic HCT workshop, which they would then implement in their country. It was through my association with RedZebra that I was contracted to facilitate the five countries documented for this project. This opportunity was based in part on my expressed interest and desire to be a part of the project and also on a mutual decision with my Director that this was the next step in my growth as a RedZebra facilitator.

**Rationale**

I began working for RedZebra in April of 2004, just a few months after the first Dance4Life pilots in South Africa and the Netherlands. I remember being inspired by the vision of the project and knowing with absolute certainty that it was something I wanted to be a part of in any capacity. I eagerly took on a supportive role and provided organizational structure to a quickly growing project. This enthusiasm grew to a deep passion for a cause that has affected me personally, and has been integral in my decision to continue to grow and develop as a facilitator.

When exploring potential topics for a master’s project, there were two driving factors that guided my decision to focus on the work with Dance4Life. The first was logistics based—since I recognized that a significant amount of time would be dedicated to the project during the fall semester, it made sense to find an overlap. The second was an awareness that developed during the Change Leadership course over the summer that helped me to realize that the work I was embarking on with Dance4Life was the perfect opportunity to cultivate some of the leadership qualities that I hoped to embody.

Another factor influencing my decision was an awareness of the global repercussions of continued apathy towards this issue. Youth under the age of 25 currently number over
3 billion worldwide and are the generation that has most significantly felt the impact of HIV and AIDS. Despite this, they lack the knowledge and resources to protect themselves. Dance4Life and its partners recognize that the only way to stop the spread of HIV and AIDS is to engage and motivate young people to become involved, and inspire them to take personal responsibility for their choices, decisions and lives. Ignorance, indifference and lack of information and resources have continued to fuel the growing threat of this global killer for over two decades. The state of HIV and AIDS worldwide is one of monumental proportions and has significant impact to current and future generations. HIV and AIDS do not discriminate and therefore can, and will, affect each and every one of us if we don’t do something about it.

Having been a part of this project since its first official year of inception (2004) I am personally vested in the success of the program—both from an intellectual perspective, as I have put in a lot of time and effort, and most importantly, from a heart perspective. In addition to my personal experiences with the disease, I carry in my heart the story of each and every person that I’ve met that has been touched by HIV and AIDS. Too many people are apathetic to this growing problem and I refuse to be one of them.

My overarching rationale for bridging the passion I have for this work with the educational endeavor of this Masters Project, stemmed from a desire to improve my skills as a facilitator while helping others to inspire, motivate and realize the potential within themselves; to help them work effectively and collaboratively; and to realize Dance4Life’s vision of uniting one million young Agents of Change worldwide in 2014 to end the spread of HIV and AIDS.

**Creative Contribution**

Through the work with Dance4Life this semester, I was able to further develop my problem solving and facilitation skills by guiding teams through a process that enables them to take ownership of the Dance4Life HCT workshop in their country. To begin, I needed to utilize what I had learned about leadership and creativity to help build a training plan that had enough structure to ensure definitive outcomes, yet enough flexibility to enable each team to contribute unique elements to the workshop. A secondary, yet equally critical task was to create a foundation of trust that would enable
the team members to learn and work collaboratively. In addition, as the lead facilitator in four of the five countries, I needed to encourage and develop the skills of my co-facilitators to continue to build the capacity of our internal team.

Although I prepared a framework for the training, documenting the successes and challenges, as well as the overall experiences of each day, allowed me to step back and re-examine the methods we were using and adapt accordingly. As a result, I was able to see that certain creative thinking ideas either did not carry the same meaning in different cultures or were not normally utilized in peer education oriented training sessions. This enabled us to develop new, more effective activities and/or alternative explanations of certain concepts that were more culturally relevant.

**Humanitarian Contribution**

I have previously stated that my original motivation for entering the Masters program was to gain the skills necessary to empower and enable individuals to help themselves (Plascencia, 2006). Yet, although I had clarity of purpose in that vision, I was not sure how I would be able to physically manifest that desired objective (Plascencia, 2008). Embarking on this journey helped me recognize that working and documenting my experiences as a Dance4Life Facilitator was an ideal opportunity to realize that goal because it would enable me to learn, grow and develop as a facilitator. In addition, the application of my learnings would be something I could share and carry forward thereby continuing to reach others on a global scale and making a difference in the fight against HIV and AIDS worldwide. Not by conventional means, but rather by guiding and empowering committed teams of individuals to be clear on their purpose and take ownership of this global endeavor.
SECTION TWO: PERTINENT LITERATURE

Introduction

The pre-training preparatory phase of this project was the most labor-intensive aspect of my facilitation experience. With the HIV/AIDS situation constantly changing with the discovery of modern advancements in science and research, the development of new drug and treatment methods, and the implementation of better reporting practices, I needed to familiarize myself with the most current statistics and trends in the field. Along with expanding my personal knowledge on the subject, this would enable me to prepare up-to-date resource documents to share with the teams. Since it would be the responsibility of each Dance4Life National Concept Owner (NCO) to provide a local perspective of the HIV and AIDS situation in their country, I focused my literature search on the global perspective. In addition to the most current statistical data, I also explored research on the social impact of HIV and AIDS worldwide.

In order to deliver the most effective facilitation, I wanted to gain some perspective on utilizing creativity methods across different cultures as well. My hope was to derive some insight into potential motivators and barriers with regards to creative practices, and specifically how societal norms and customs can influence perceptions about creativity. I felt that overcoming the common taboos associated with discussing the subject of HIV and AIDS would be one of the more frustrating aspects of facilitating these trainings. In order to prepare myself mentally, I also sought re-inspiration by revisiting some of the past HIV and AIDS campaigns and initiatives that have been influential in this cause.

The Current Global Reality

Although HIV and AIDS statistics vary from study to study, and are largely influenced by the accuracy of reporting techniques, the most comprehensive and up-to-date information that I have found is in the yearly UNAIDS reports (www.unaids.org). The UNAIDS reporting delves deeper to discuss global trends and the factors that influence infection, prevention and treatment, as well as the economic repercussions of the pandemic.

The most recent statistics reported indicated an estimated 33 million people living with HIV worldwide (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 5). According to the UNAIDS 2008 report on
the Global AIDS Epidemic, although the percentage of people living with HIV worldwide has stabilized since the year 2000 “the overall number of people living with HIV has increased as a result of the ongoing number of new infections each year and the beneficial effects of more widely available anti-retroviral therapy” (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 5).

Women continue to account for 50% of people living with HIV (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 7). And although “injecting drug users, men who have sex with men and sex workers” (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 7) still represent the groups with the highest rate of HIV infections, lack of information and resources continues to put other groups at risk for infection as well (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 9). Gender inequality, stigma and discrimination are some of the social factors that also continue to impede an effective, evidence informed and rights based response to the epidemic (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 10).

Unfortunately although we have been battling this epidemic for three decades, one third of all countries worldwide (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 11) still lack laws that protect individuals living with HIV from discrimination. Furthermore, those countries that do have legal protection to prevent discrimination often do not enforce these laws (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 12).

As previously stated, young people, ages 15-24 years old, account for nearly half of all new HIV infections worldwide (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 13). According to the UNAIDS report, “survey data from the 64 countries indicate that only 40% of males and 38% of females [in this age bracket] have accurate and comprehensive knowledge about HIV and how to avoid transmission” (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 14). Although this is certainly an improvement from the past few years, it is not nearly enough. This data also illustrate the disturbing reality that these figures are “well below the global goal of ensuring comprehensive HIV knowledge in 95% of young people by 2010” (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 13). In fact, recent studies show that “young females are notably less likely than young males to have an accurate, comprehensive knowledge of HIV” with more than 70% of young males stating condoms as way to prevent exposure, versus only 55% of young women (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 14). It is also important to note, particularly for this country that has continued to push abstinence only sex education, that public health evidence
suggests that “such strategies are ineffective and counterproductive” (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 16).

As a testament to global HIV/AIDS health care initiatives, access to services has increased drastically in the last six years, “with the number of people receiving antiretroviral medicines in low and middle income countries increasing tenfold and reaching almost 3 million people” (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 17). This achievement is attributed in large part to the increase in advocacy and promotion by actors (UNAIDS, 2008, p. 7) and other popular world figures living with HIV. For me, this speaks volumes to the success of Dance4Life, which continues to engage musicians, actors, sports figures and other high-profile individuals to help spread our message.

**The Effects of Culture on Creativity**

I knew that delivering the HCT tour training in five diverse cultural settings would inevitably impact the effectiveness of several of our creative processes. Lubart (1999) believed that environment can stimulate and support creativity and also noted that “cultures may vary in the relative importance given to creativity” (p. 340). Prior to beginning the trainings, my instinct was that in some of the countries where religion and social norms did not support gender and/or socio-economic equality, there might be some difficulty engaging all team members at the same level. I felt that we needed to be prepared with tools for promoting creative thinking on the most fundamental level as I assumed many of the participants we would be working with had never been encouraged or stimulated to think creatively.

Lubart (1999) compared the Western conception of creativity, widely defined as “the ability to produce work that is novel and appropriate,” to the Eastern conception of creativity which seems “less focused on innovative products and rather involves the state of personal fulfillment” (p. 340). This idea lent itself perfectly to the training approach we wanted to take which was focused on personal contribution to the greater whole. We emphasized to each team that to effectively deliver the HCT workshop they would need to work together and support each other, and that to realize success, it would require each of their individual contributions.
Lubart (1999) also explored the effects of language on creativity “as a vehicle of culture” which can be expected to shape creativity (p. 344). While I fully expected language to impact creativity in our workshops, Lubart offered a viewpoint, which I had not considered. He discussed the creative advantage of bilinguals who, in his opinion “may have a greater diversity of associations to the same concept because it is situated in different linguistic conceptual networks” (p. 344). He also added that bilinguals are more likely to have a greater tolerance for ambiguity because “they are comfortable with situations in which one basic idea being may have different nuances depending on the linguistic community” (p. 344). This challenged my preconceived notions of how language would impact the creative processes in our workshop. Whereas I originally saw the language barrier as a potential hindrance to creativity, I realized that we could, in fact, use it to our advantage, particularly with divergent thinking.

Lubart (1999) duly noted that “creativity may be stimulated or hindered by cultural features such as worldview and the value placed on conformity or tradition” (p. 345). He also stated that in “cultures where there is a belief in progress and optimism towards the future, these beliefs empower people to work on improving the world and apply a cultural acceptance of change, growth and movement from the status quo” (p. 345). What I observed was that, particularly with younger generations, the desire to move away from the “status quo” can outweigh the influence of cultural tradition if supported. This was especially evident in areas where there was a large Muslim influence. In these cultures, women are often not encouraged to have their own opinions and their contribution is not valued the same as a man’s. However, whereas on day one these women might have been less open to exploring creatively, by day three they were very often the most eager to approach a challenge.

In many of the countries we visited, the effects of HIV and AIDS weighed heavily on the young people we worked with. What was most difficult is that they lived in a society that did not allow them to talk openly about the subject. They could not comfortably ask questions or seek the knowledge that would enable them to protect themselves. Many, although they knew the devastating effects of HIV and AIDS worldwide, were surprised to realize the impact it is having on their generation. Most of them also acknowledged
that the current stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV and AIDS came from the fear and misconceptions that their parents and grandparents embraced and inevitably imparted on them. What inspires hope though, and what Lubart (1999) proclaimed, is that these same individuals recognize that their beliefs have been shaped by their culture, yet are empowered “to work on improving the world” and promote “cultural acceptance of change and growth” towards a different future (p. 345).

Lubart (1999) aptly concluded that “creativity is context dependent” (p. 347) and that the culture that influences it is “dynamic and changes over time” (p. 339). With that in mind, I aim to use the context of our workshops to begin to change the shape of those cultures, and provide the encouragement that stimulates creativity, so as to help these young people realize that different future.

**A Vision of Hope**

In this intimate narrative, Jenna Bush recounts the story of a young woman named Ana, whom she met while working with UNICEF in Latin America (Bush, 2007, p. 3). Ana’s story, as told in this biography, is unfortunately not an unfamiliar one, yet it inspires with a vision of hope and empowerment that allows the reader to realize that HIV and AIDS are no longer a death sentence.

Ana contracted HIV from her mother through childbirth, something she does not learn until the age of 10 (Bush, 2007, p. 20) and does not fully comprehend for years to come. Having lost her mother at a very young age due to complications from AIDS, and later her father to the same disease, she is subsequently raised with her young sister by her paternal grandmother and her abusive husband who sexually abuses the young girls in his charge (Bush, 2007, p. 18). She later learns that her mother suffered a similar fate, having contracted the virus as a teenager from a male family member who raped her (Bush, 2007, p. 33).

The notion of hope that Bush (2007) imparts in Ana’s story comes from her non-relenting effort to break away from the cycle of abuse and overcome the fear of shame, stigma and discrimination instilled by her grandmother—“Ana, this is a secret that you must never, ever tell anybody. Not even your best friend or other amigas. Never” (p. 21). Fear, I believe, fueled by ignorance, is the greatest driver of stigma and discrimination
against individuals living with HIV and AIDS worldwide. Consider the fact that for decades, HIV and AIDS has been a subject that is not discussed, perpetuating ignorance around the topic, it is easy to see how it can propel this vicious cycle.

What I particularly admire about Bush’s (2007) set-up of Ana’s Story is that it takes a step further to emphasize that each one of us can do something to make a difference (p. 249). The author emphasized the importance of educating one’s self and encourages her readers to become involved. A large portion of the book is also dedicated to information on a range of topics from becoming actively involved, to seeking help for someone in an unsafe or unhealthy family environment, to websites and contact information to find out more about HIV and AIDS (Bush, 2007, p.p. 249 – 273). The author also provides a discussion of ten common misconceptions about HIV and AIDS, (Bush, 2007, p.p. 275 – 279) which I chose to include as a resource appendix in the 2008 HCT training pack. Although, Bush’s account is less of an academic approach to the effects of HIV and AIDS on young people, I chose to review this literature because of the wealth of resources it provided and because it offered a very real account of what it can be like growing up with HIV.

**Inspiration From Around the World**

After my initial exploration of literature in the field of creativity across cultures failed to yield resources that I felt were truly pertinent, I was left feeling frustrated and discouraged. I struggled to find a focus for my literature review because my project was much more application rather than research based. I subsequently consulted with my advisor, Cyndi Burnett, who suggested that I also consider resources that have helped me to prepare for working in the field of HIV and AIDS. This motivated me to step back and reflect on what it was that had originally inspired me about this work. I remembered one of the first books that I had read when first joining RedZebra and learned about the work that was being done with Dance4Life. *How 2B AIDS Aware* offered a critical analysis of various African case studies that focused on AIDS awareness projects in Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, Zambia, Cote D’Ivore, and South Africa. I particularly recalled the section on a young woman from Nigeria named Ngozi who realized that the HIV and AIDS education in her country only targeted high risk groups and subsequently left out a
very large portion of the population who were equally uneducated about the risks of infection (Conlon, Clark, Deane & Atwell, 2004, p. 119). She also recognized that discussing sex was something that many people already found difficult, which made them especially resistant to communicating with complete strangers at information seminars organized by the local government (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 121); thereby rendering those seminars ineffective. Ngozi had also seen though the efficiency of her community and its ability to organize and take care of itself in times of need and decided to utilize this same strength to help educate her people by empowering them to help themselves (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 122).

I recalled that this particular initiative struck a cord with me because it was a lesson that I had recently learned in my personal life—that in order to truly help others you needed to empower them to help themselves. What I admired further about her work was how she approached the community and asked questions that invited them to find their own solutions and create ownership. The three questions that Ngozi posed to community groups that she engaged in her mission were:

- What do you want to know about HIV?
- How do you want to learn more about it?
- How do you want to spread this information? (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 122)

The result of Ngozi’s Community Life Project was that it gave the people “some control over their own HIV education, which in turn enabled them to learn more” (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 122).

With any HIV / AIDS initiative there are always obstacles surrounding this controversial issue to overcome. In Nigeria, as in many countries, there were some community and religious leaders who opposed the idea of discussing safe sex for fear that it promotes sexual promiscuity (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 124). Ngozi also faced moral and ethical battles including men that felt that it was perfectly within their rights to cheat on their wives with prostitutes as stated by one community member who claimed—“Let’s be realistic. If my wife gives birth and I’m asked to wait six weeks to have sex, I won’t wait. How many of you men would? I don’t say it’s right to go to a prostitute. But if you can’t help yourself, all I say is go, but take your condoms with you” (Conlon, et al., 2004, p.
125). However, Ngozi stayed true to her cause and acknowledged that if she could get these men to at least start using condoms, it “would be a small victory in the battle against HIV” (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 125). Despite her successes and failures, Ngozi has maintained her faith that communities will always find ways to solve their problems and that her efforts help a community to see how HIV is one of those problems (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 126).

The concepts that Ngozi embraced are some of the same ideas utilized in the HCT training and I feel have been instrumental in its success. In order to implement the most effective training, we would need to find a balance between guiding the team members to find the vehicle of education and delivery that worked best for them while still operating within the structure of Dance4Life that makes the project so unique.

How 2b AIDS Aware (Conlon, et al., 2004) also provided one of the most comprehensive and user-friendly overviews of HIV and AIDS that I have found. It discussed the meaning of HIV and AIDS and their relationship, as well as details about the effects on the body at a cellular level. It covers the forms of transmission and both the ways you can and cannot become infected. It also summarizes the different ways to protect oneself including the less commonly addressed female condom alternative and the risks of using both male and female condoms simultaneously.

How 2b AIDS Aware also provided some interesting cultural perspective, which helped me to prepare for some of our work in other countries—particularly in those countries where women are not afforded the same rights that I have become accustomed to in the U.S. In Uganda for example, a research study determined that young boys and not young girls were the ones primarily making decisions about sex (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 109). The same study determined that most young people believed that becoming infected with HIV was inevitable (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 109). The researchers concluded that “although it seems unfair, the reality is that if boys are in control then we have to focus on educating them first” (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 109). Having determined their target audience—boys between 15 and 19—the project focused its message on abstinence, using condoms and fidelity (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 109). To help communicate this message, an organization called Hits for Hope engaged the youth
through music, much like Dance4Life, and held a contest for local bands to produce a song that would help deliver that message (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 109). Follow-up interviews with the target demographic showed that their message had been effective, with one in three young men stating that the song made them want to abstain from sex altogether, and one in five stating that it persuaded them to start using condoms (Conlon, et al., 2004, p. 113).

How 2b AIDS Aware also included a summary of RedZebra’s original “We Can Beat It!” South African HIV/AIDS Awareness workshop campaign. This campaign, which was founded on the principle that music can unite people to work together and achieve great things, sought to involve individuals to beat drums together creating the metaphor to help those same individuals find ways to beat HIV and AIDS together. This workshop was also the inspiration for the original Dance4Life vision and helped me to step back and acknowledge how far we have come in our efforts to affect change on a global scale.

Most importantly, reviewing How 2b AIDS Aware allowed me to ground myself in the original purpose of our work. While I had begun with frustration, this enabled me to come full circle with a renewed passion and motivation—remembering that music has the power to unite and communicate across all boundaries.
SECTION THREE: PROCESS PLAN

Introduction

The learning goals which I set forth for myself for this project, served to help me focus my reflections on areas that would help me be the most effective facilitative leader. This enabled me to help deliver a rewarding and successful training experience for the participants in each country, and allowed me to share the valuable insights and knowledge gained with RedZebra’s internal team. These learnings goals included:

- Honing my ability to be fully present to the energy of the group so as to be more deliberately guided by the needs of the group and less by the schedule.
- Demonstrating shared leadership by letting go of personal need to control the process and trusting co-facilitators to utilize appropriate, and possibly different, means to achieve the same outcome.
- Pushing myself to practice active listening 100% of the time so as to be able to ask the right questions and fully understand the needs and realities of the participants and NCO in order to be able to problem solve effectively.
- Being deliberate and consistent about debriefing, reflection and documentation so as capture learnings and insights and be able to implement changes, builds and improvements to subsequent trainings.
- Embracing leadership principles that will allow me to guide and gently steer the participants to learn and discover insights that will lead to success and empowerment.
- Implementing at least one new, adapted or different creative process or technique in each training. (Plascencia, 2008)

In order to realize these goals, I focused on applying certain practices that I have learned from my mentors. This included intention setting to reflect on the personal and professional intentions I wished to manifest for each one of the trainings. Having clarity of those intentions, I then share them aloud so as to speak them into existence, thereby allowing them to guide my decisions throughout the day and week.

The second practice I concentrated on was deliberate personal reflection at the end of each day, including an open dialogue with my co-facilitators to determine what had
worked and what we wished could be better or different. This allowed us to immediately implement and apply any changes, additions or modifications to the training process.

As the value in this project would be gained from the day-to-day documentation of my experiences, I was also consistent about journaling on a daily basis and capturing all of my observations, feelings, learnings and insights (See appendices B and C). In addition, I focused on remaining conscious and open to the diversity of each team and worked to nurture and foster that diversity so as to create a unique experience in each country, both for my co-facilitator and myself, and for the participants as well. Finally, I tried to maintain awareness of the verbal and non-verbal communication cues I was projecting and to be mindful of how the local culture and/or customs might interpret those cues.

**Planning and Preparation**

In addition to identifying the facilitation and group management skills I would need to be successful, I also had to prepare and plan all the details of the trainings prior to my departure. This included logistical details such as booking airfare and accommodations, securing visas where applicable, and arranging for meals and transportation. The next step was to ensure that the necessary training arrangements had been prepared in each country—including finding participants with appropriate background, interest and experience; booking a venue for the training; securing proper audio/visual equipment; arranging for “live” pilot workshops on the final day; and organizing meals, refreshments and transportation/housing accommodations for participants if necessary. Although the local NCO was technically responsible for the local arrangements, they often turned to me for guidance, as in all but one of the countries, this was their first time planning a Dance4Life training. As a result I decided to create a checklist that local NCO’s could utilize in their own planning and preparation. Each NCO had additional administrative deliverables that needed to be forwarded to me prior to our arrival, which included a local perspective and assessment of the HIV and AIDS situation in their country, and complete profiles of all training participants. Although helping organize the NCO’s on a local scale was not part of my scope of work, I quickly realized that helping them with coordination would inevitably make my responsibilities easier.
Planning and preparation communication for the trainings occurred mostly via e-mail and Skype. Contact with each NCO and the local Dance4Life Coordinator was established anywhere from 2-6 weeks in advance depending on the efficiency of Dance4Life International—the umbrella, non-profit organization in the Netherlands that coordinates all the Dance4Life projects and events. Once contact had been established, I would spearhead organizing all the details and arrangements. On average I spent 6-10 hours per week in the two weeks prior to departure for the first country communicating with the local coordinators. In each country, I arranged for my co-facilitator and I to arrive at least 2 days prior to the training start. This allowed us to get settled and acclimated and more importantly, enabled us to visit the training venue and meet with the coordinators face-to-face to discuss any additional questions and sort out any last minute details. Although technically the local NCO was not our “end client,” I felt that this face-to-face meeting was a critical aspect of planning and preparation and served to build the relationships that would ultimately help us be successful.

The final planning detail that I needed to focus on was the training materials and resources. This was a two-fold endeavor and included both the agenda and templates we would be using to deliver the training, as well as a training pack for the participants. The HCT training pack included background information about the Dance4Life project, details of the training week, necessary materials to deliver the HCT workshop, and a wealth of information about HIV and AIDS. Although planning for this project took a lot of up-front work, having all of these materials prepared and ensuring detailed organization enabled me to focus solely on the team and facilitating the training once we began.

Having been in a supportive role for this project for the last three years and having been at the forefront of all the preparation for this year’s Dance4Life’s trainings, I had the advantage of being fully immersed and knowledgeable of all the background and details of the project. Although this project would be a chance for me to grow and advance as a facilitator, I also recognized this as an opportunity for me to embrace the leadership qualities that I admired in many of my mentors. In order to continue to build the capacity of the RedZebra US team and accommodate the growing number of countries joining the
Dance4Life cause, this 5-week training tour also served as an opportunity to integrate and coach two RedZebra facilitators that were new to the project. Building on my previous experiences, I wanted to utilize my role as the lead facilitator to guide and engage them in the process, thereby create a truly collaborative co-facilitation experience. To aid in this endeavor, I spearheaded the creation of a HCT training manual for facilitators prior to our departure. Although the purpose of this manual was to help my co-facilitators become familiar with the tools and techniques we would be using, re-immersing myself in the content enabled me to facilitate the processes more instinctively and fluidly. The result was that by supporting my co-facilitators in this way, I was able to focus instead on group dynamics and my own self-development and challenge myself in this new realm of facilitative leadership.

Country Overview

The following is an overview of the demographics and training specifications in each of the five countries:

**Serbia**

The Serbian team in 2008 consisted of 25 participants from four cities—Beograd, Novi Sad, Novi Pazar and Loznica—with 6, 5, 7 and 7 team members from each city respectively. The team was comprised of 11 males and 13 females ranging in age from 15 to 26.

The training was conducted in English and translation was limited to major concepts only as the entire team could understand English and about 92% (23 of 25) could speak it fluently. Training was held in Beograd from August 18-22, 2008 at a local youth cultural center in the city and co-facilitated with Jesse Wallace from the RedZebra U.S. team. The team met for 8 hours each day with one hour for lunch.

The Youth Peer Network is the National Concept Owner (NCO) for Serbia.

**Moldova**

The 2008 Moldovan team was comprised of 24 participants from two cities—Chisinau and Balti—with 19 and 5 team members from each city respectively. The Chisinau team had 4 members representing the local Romanian team and 15 that would
comprise the local Russian team. The team consisted of 7 males and 17 females ranging in age from 15 to 24.

The training was conducted in English and was translated in its entirety—sometimes into Romanian, other times in Russian and a few times into both. Training was held at a camp about 90 minutes outside the capital of Chisinau from August 25-29, 2008 and was co-facilitated with Jesse Wallace from the RedZebra U.S. team. The team met for 8 hours each day with one hour for lunch except on the first and final days, which were cut by one hour and two hours respectively to allow for travel time.

The Aids Foundation East-West (AFEW) is the National Concept Owner (NCO) for Moldova.

Ibiza

The Ibiza team for 2008 included 11 participants from the city of Eivissa and outlying communities. The team was comprised of 3 males and 8 females ranging in age from 21 to 40.

The training was conducted entirely in Spanish and was held at a cultural center in the city from September 1-5, 2008 and was co-facilitated with Gloria Williams and Elizabeth Cisneros of the RedZebra U.S. team. The team met for 8 hours each day with one hour for lunch.

The Alas Aids Organization is the National Concept Owner (NCO) for Ibiza.

Turkey

The 2008 Turkish team included 13 participants from the cities of Ankara and Istanbul. The team was comprised of 4 males and 9 females ranging in age from 18 to 26.

The training was conducted in English only on the first day and then translated into Turkish for the remainder of the week to accommodate a few participants that did not understand English well enough to grasp the concepts of the training. It was held at the Kent Otel in Ankara from September 13-17, 2008 and was co-facilitated with Elizabeth Cisneros of the RedZebra U.S. team. The team met for 8 hours each day with one hour for lunch.

The UNFPA is the National Concept Owner (NCO) for Ibiza.
USA

The USA 2008 team included 10 participants from the Washington DC metro area, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Portland and Brighton, England. The team was comprised of 2 males and 8 females ranging in age from 15 to 42.

The training was conducted in English only at the Joy of Motion Dance Studio in Washington DC from October 13-17, 2008 and was co-facilitated with Jesse Wallace of the RedZebra U.S. team. The team met for 8 hours each day with one hour for lunch.

Student Partnership Worldwide (SPW) is the National Concept Owner (NCO) for the USA and Regional Concept Owner for Washington D.C.
## Final Project Timeline

### August 2008

- **Pre-trip Preparation:** 16 hours
- **Aug. 18-22:** Serbia HCT Training
  - Field Prep: 2 hours
  - Training: 32 hours
  - Pilot Presentation: 8 hours
  - Debrief, Reflection & Prep: 7.5 hours
- **Aug. 25-29:** Moldova HCT Training
  - Field Prep: 2 hours
  - Training: 32 hours
  - Pilot Presentation: 8 hours
  - Debrief, Reflection & Prep: 7.5 hours

### September 2008

- **Weekly SBP Chats:** 1 hour
- **Monthly Advisor Check-in:** 30 minutes
- **Sept. 1-5:** Ibiza HCT Training
  - Field Prep: 2 hours
  - Training: 32 hours
  - Pilot Presentation: 8 hours
  - Debrief, Reflection & Prep: 7.5 hours
- **Sept. 6-19:** Concept Paper
  - Draft: 10 hours
  - Revised Draft: 2 hours
  - Final Concept Paper: 3 hours
- **Sept. 13-17:** Turkey HCT Training
  - Field Prep: 2 hours
  - Training: 32 hours
  - Pilot Presentation: 8 hours
  - Debrief, Reflection & Prep: 7.5 hours
- **Sept. 27-28:** Literature Review: 3 hours

### October 2008

- **Weekly SBP Chats:** 3 hours
- **Monthly Advisor Check-in:** 30 minutes
- **Oct. 3:** Synthesis by Country: 5 hours
- **Oct. 6-7:** Draft Sections 1-3: 5 hours
- **Oct. 13-17:** USA HCT Training
  - Field Prep: 8 hours
  - Training: 32 hours
  - Pilot Presentation: 8 hours
  - Debrief, Reflection & Prep: 7.5 hours
- **Oct. 18:** Angel Chat: 30 minutes (flight)
- **Oct. 26-30:** Sections 1-3
  - Literature Review: 3 hours
  - Draft Sections 1-3: 10 hours

### November 2008

- **Weekly SBP Chats:** 4 hours
- **Monthly Advisor Check-in:** 30 minutes
- **Nov. 1:** Angel Chat: 3 hours
- **Nov. 1-17:** Sections 4-6: 15 hours
- **Nov. 21-30:** Revisions: 10 hours

### December 2008

- **Weekly SBP Chats:** 2 hours
- **Monthly Advisor Check-in:** 30 minutes
- **Dec. 1-8:** Revisions/Appendix Prep: 8 hours
- **Dec. 1-8:** Prep CD & Elec. Files: 4 hours
- **Dec. 6:** Angel Presentations: 6 hours
- **Dec. 8:** Final copy prep / bind / ship: 4 hours
SECTION FOUR: OUTCOMES

The objective of documenting my experiences with Dance4Life was to develop my overall facilitative leadership skills. The areas of focus I chose to concentrate on for personal development were managing group dynamics and increasing cross-cultural awareness. This project successfully lent itself to both of these endeavors as it provided me with a variety of unique scenarios within the same facilitative context (Specific reflections, debriefs and evaluative outcomes from each country may be found in the appendices).

Although each country and team presented its own unique obstacles and challenges, my co-facilitators and I effectively completed the objective of creating a unified team in each country capable of delivering the HCT. Of the 83 participants we trained in the five countries, we successfully engaged and integrated all but one person into the Dance4Life program. In spite of our best efforts we could not overcome the lack of interest and indifference that this person exhibited towards the group, the program and us as facilitators. I have since learned that this person works as a facilitator and a peer educator and so it is possible that a more experienced facilitator or even a different approach might have been more successful. I can confidently say that despite my personal disappointment at not having connected with that one person, the five trainings were a great success. The training evaluations provided by the team members, while providing valuable feedback on areas for improvement, also indicated that we successfully achieved the objectives set forth for the training sessions (See appendix A for complete evaluative results).

Specifically with regards to their confidence in being able to deliver the HCT workshop and personal assessment of having accomplished the workshop objectives—on a scale\(^1\) from 1 to 5 the average rating given by the participants fell in the “Agree” to “Strongly Agree” range (see chart 1). In Ibiza, where the ratings were slightly lower, I believe this was due in part to scheduling and punctuality issues that prevented all team

\(^1\) Rating scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree
members from being present for the full workshop training. Evaluation of the training workshop design also fell in the “Agree” to “Strongly Agree” range indicating that our methods and implementation were stimulating and effective as well (see chart 1). The participants similarly responded that we, as facilitators, were well prepared and helpful throughout the week (see chart 1). Whereas some participants indicated that they would have liked more time for practice to feel more confident, this was sometimes limited by the constraints of juggling multiple teams or sub teams, as the current 5-day workshop format is designed for working with one team only. However, the growing reality of needing to accommodate more than one team within the 5-day workshop constraint has led us to implement some changes to the workshop design. Some of these changes include providing scripts, so as to allow participants to focus their energy on how they will deliver the message versus what content they will deliver, and assigning roles a day earlier to provide one more day of personal practice for their specific role(s). Communication with Dance4Life International about extending the training time in countries where multiple teams will participate has also begun. However, this is not currently an applicable solution due to budgetary constraints.

The less tangible outcomes of the trainings that we witnessed were of equal, if not greater, importance to the success of the week. Specifically, I am referring to the passion and inspiration imparted on the team for the Dance4Life movement and the personal transformation that the team members were able to experience.

- “This made me feel fantastic. I got to know myself in a new way. I learned a lot.”
- “I am certain that all these 5 days changed me a lot. My mind got a lot of information about the world where I live. I'm sure it will help me to change the world for a better future.”
- “This is what I needed at this moment in my life. It has helped me to improve my self-esteem and my desire to struggle to keep on with life. Thank you.”

In general, the games and techniques used to build trust, develop the team, and convey the key concepts and information necessary to deliver the workshop were well
received by the participants. They both recognized the value of the activities and appreciated the interactive and ‘play’ aspect of the training. Comments and areas for improvement included the following observations:

- Extending the length of the training to provide more time for practice
- Using culturally appropriate terminology specifically as it regards to delivering the Positive Voice component and avoiding negative messaging as a result of literal translation.
- Providing more video and perhaps creating a brief summary of clips from the HCT workshop so as to give participants the opportunity to see it in action.

Deliberate documentation of these trainings also helped my co-facilitators and I to reflect on areas for improvement both for the workshop design and personal facilitative skills. Some of the workshop changes that we implemented based on our daily debriefs included:

- Using the ‘pass the ball’ name game technique to internalize workshop leadership hand-off sequence.
- Utilizing the ‘blind clap’ exercise as a metaphor for working as a team.
- Moving the Creative Message development to the morning so as to avoid effects of afternoon doldrums.
- Delivering the HIV/AIDS information by modeling the techniques the team will need to use with the students.

Observations and key learnings related specifically to facilitation skills are discussed in Section Five.
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<th>Ibiza</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
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<td>4.09</td>
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<td>3.91</td>
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<td>4.56</td>
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<tr>
<td>The workshop activities stimulated my learning</td>
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SECTION FIVE: KEY INSIGHTS

Overarching

Perhaps the single most profound insight that I gained from this project was that, most, if not all of the learnings I discovered, could also be applied to other disciplines besides facilitation and/or to life in general. With that in mind, one of the most critical learnings of my experience working with such a diverse spectrum of teams was not to fall into the pattern of being so focused on the group as a whole that I lost sight of the individual. I have realized that no two groups will ever be the same, regardless of contextual similarities, as they are defined by the individuals within them. And although these individuals may be influenced by origin, language, race, religion, gender and many other cultural factors, they are a dynamic entity with the single unifying element of inconsistency. I have also learned that while a technique may work in one situation, this does not guarantee it will work in another despite the similarity between scenarios. In other words, I must remember to remain present to the needs of the individuals that make up the groups I work with (See appendices for further information and references in this section).

Group Dynamics

Each country’s training offered a new set of challenges and learnings as we continued to adapt to the needs and realities of each team. The groups that we worked with ranged in size from 10 to 24 participants and I quickly discovered that there were advantages and disadvantages to working with both small and large groups. Whereas on the one hand you could provide more focused attention with small groups, the larger groups offered greater creative input. Large groups, however, resulted in the added challenge of managing sub-groups within a larger team dynamic. This was the case in both Serbia and Moldova, where we had to manage four and three sub-teams respectively. Although the goal was to build a sole unified team to represent the country, there was also the need to create independently functioning groups that could operate autonomously in their respective cities or regions. To this end, we had to work to find the right balance of when to integrate them all together and when to divide them into pertinent sub-groups.
Working within such a diverse dynamic also brought specific personality challenges that we had to manage. However, I discovered that when managing difficult participants, active listening and compassion go a long way. Thus, in most situations we were able to redirect what could have been disruptive behavior and utilize it to our advantage.

In one country, for example, we had two young participants who were particularly verbose and liked to be the center of attention. Unchecked this would have continued to discourage less confident individuals from contributing to the growth and development of the group. However, an easy solution presented itself when we learned we would need full-time translation and that the interpreter who had originally agreed to translate for us would not be available every day. As these two energetic individuals were fluent in both English and their native language, we utilized their abilities to translate for the group. This solution satisfied their need to be the focus of attention, yet also served a beneficial purpose for the group as a whole. Given the task of interpreting for the team members also created the space for others to speak up and contribute. An additional unexpected benefit was that it created internal support and accountability. Instead of relying on a third party to translate for them, they were instead filling this need from within their own group.

Another behavior concern we successfully overcame was that of a young woman who initially challenged every idea, comment or decision offered by members of the group. Although she would consistently negate others’ ideas, she very rarely offered an alternative perspective or solution. Upon reflection at the end of the first day of training, my co-facilitator and I discussed the potentially detrimental effects of this behavior on the group, as we had both observed that her challenges had intimidated others to the point of refraining from offering their perspective and ideas. Neither of us wanted to alienate her either by calling her out on this behavior as we felt that her actions stemmed from a deeper insecurity. Building on the learnings from our previous experience with the two team members we utilized as interpreters, we decided to try and focus her energy and give her a specific sense of purpose within the group. We determined we should encourage one of her strengths—in this case—dancing. I approached her the next morning and shared that I was really impressed with how quickly she had picked up the
drill moves. I also asked her to help us work with some of the other team members that were still trying to learn the dance during the breaks. I further encouraged her to, when the time came, sign up for a lead dance role as I felt she would be one of the strongest members for this role. I could tell that she was genuinely taken aback by my feedback, however the shift in her behavior was immediate and in the end she was one of the greatest contributors to the group.

In addition to illustrating the importance of listening compassionately, these scenarios also taught me that the more I focused my energy on fostering the strengths of these individuals, the greater chance I had of achieving a successful end. However, I must also acknowledge that sometimes no matter what I do, I may not always be able to reach everyone. Therefore I must simply adapt the best I can without compromising the other individuals in the group.

Despite our best efforts though, overcoming the personality challenges we faced was not always as smooth or successful. One of the more difficult personalities we encountered was actually the Director of one of the countries we worked in. This individual would ultimately test every conflict resolution and leadership skill I’ve ever learned and pushed me to the very edge of patience and compassion. In all fairness, the circumstances surrounding this particular training were quite unusual. In every country, save one other, RedZebra has always conducted the initial HCT training in the first year of the country’s Dance4Life involvement. This is generally then followed by a Training of Trainers (ToT) in the second year of the country’s involvement in the program. After a country has received a ToT they have the option to either implement their own future HCT trainings or bring in RedZebra to conduct additional trainings if they do not feel they have the capability to successfully implement it on their own. In this particular case the country had joined Dance4Life in 2007 as a region of a larger neighboring country that had already received HCT and ToT trainings. As a result, they had already taken one team through the HCT training in the previous year—though not with RedZebra. After successfully appealing to Dance4Life to be recognized as their own country, they were then required to fulfill the agreement of implementing HCT and ToT trainings with RedZebra. The biggest challenge this created for us was that there was already a
workshop program in place that was significantly different than the one we would be creating with the new 2008 team.

After our first face-to-face meeting with the Director, we realized that because so much hard work and effort had been put into creating the first program, there was resistance and an unwillingness to consider changes or improvements, despite the indication that the school workshop program they had implemented was not as successful or effective as they had hoped. The other difficulty we faced was that the Director was admittedly very obsessive about wanting to maintain control over every aspect of the program. Since the Director would not be able to fully participate in the training, he informed us that he would be sending his two assistants to observe and take notes in his stead. Up until this point I had simply listened and remained open to how we might strike a balance between his articulated desires and what I felt would need to happen in order to successfully implement this training. However, given the very personal nature of the work we would be doing and the difficult subject matter of HIV and AIDS, I expressed that this was not a training environment that was conducive to “fish-bowl” scrutiny and that our experience indicated that participants would be less willing to be open and share their opinions or personal experiences if they felt they were being watched and/or judged by outside observers. We proposed that his assistants could instead participate as full members of the team and observe from within to which he responded that he would want the other team members to know that their role was different and that they should be “respected” as authoritative figures. I quickly challenged this solution by pointing out the potentially detrimental effects of establishing a hierarchy within a group that was suppose to work together and support each other as a team of equals. A problem, which he had already indicated, had been one of the more difficult challenges he faced with the 2007 team because it had led to internal discord and which he hoped would not be the case with the new 2008 team. In the end, we helped him to realize that some of the problems he had encountered with the 2007 team were a direct result of the decisions he had made and he ultimately acquiesced to our suggestion that his assistants participate as equals with the team. As it turned out, this would be one of the smaller hurdles we would overcome.
Quite possibly the single greatest challenge I faced on this facilitative journey was how to tell someone that is passionately dedicated to what their doing, has worked so hard, and who clearly also likes to be in control, that their format may not be as effective as it could be. This would be the ultimate test of our abilities and was a concern that we mulled over constantly the first few days of the training. Luckily, as the first couple of days of the training were focused on building the team and imparting fundamental knowledge that would enable them to deliver the workshops, it was something we had a chance to really think through. My co-facilitator and I met every evening to not only discuss the outcomes of the day, but also generate ideas and strategies for how to approach the Director and enable him to see that a great majority of the past year’s challenges could be overcome by implementing some changes to the workshop flow which he had worked so hard to create. Our approach shifted from one of righteous indignation—we were hired as the experts and therefore it should be done our way—to one of openness to compromise and collaboration based on compassion and an understanding of the unique realities he faced implementing this program in her country. In the end, our approach consisted of determining what aspects we felt could not be compromised; having him walk us through the workshop flow and truly listening to why he had chosen the particular method or activity; asking pertinent questions that would allow him to see the correlations between the challenges and the approach; and, ultimately holding the space for him to generate the solutions and changes that would lead to success. After days of being weighed down by the anxiety of this dilemma, our three hour session with the Director resulted in the creation of a new workshop flow that integrated the criteria we had set forth with most of the practices and techniques he had implemented the year before—the success of which I felt was a true testament to our genuine commitment to grow and mature as facilitators.

While I learned that when working with groups flexibility is critical to success, I also realized that it is important, as a leader, to stand by what you know to be in the best interest of the group. Although I recognized and embraced the need to work collaboratively, I was also conscious of making choices that would ultimately support the
group as a whole. More importantly, I was able to clearly express ideas and concerns in order to confidently guide the decisions that would impact the teams.

As a result of observing first-hand the dynamic nature of teams, I discovered that although it is essential to have a structure or framework to lead from, it is equally important to recognize that facilitation is an organic process. Just as no two groups will ever be identical, neither should a good facilitative leader expect any group session to be a cookie-cutter duplication of a previous experience. Quite simply, a facilitator must adapt the tools and techniques utilized so as to satisfy the specific needs of the group. To this end, a facilitator should remain open to what they can learn from the group and if appropriate, seek ways to create a forum for team members to contribute to the process. Specifically in the training sessions conducted for Dance4Life this enabled my co-facilitators and I the ability to infuse subsequent sessions with techniques shared by previous groups thereby further developing our own facilitation toolbox.

**Cross-Cultural**

From a cultural perspective, I felt that language was the greatest obstacle we faced in countries where English was not the native language. The language challenge was two-fold, as it included difficulties such as translating ‘facilitator speak’ into culturally relevant words, as well as stymied our ability to offer input to their creative processes. Although most teams, out of respect for us and our inability to understand their language, would initially try to conduct their discussions in English, we found that this slowed the process considerably, so ultimately we encouraged them to simply dialogue in their own language. The downside of this was that we could not follow the conversations or offer any real-time feedback. Although for certain activities this was simply an inconvenience, in other instances such as the delivery of the positive voices, or personal stories about HIV and AIDS, this was really a significant problem. In these particular situations we ended up working closely with the interpreters to try and offer as much feedback as possible. However, as we were not using professional interpreters, there was still quite a bit lost in translation. In Turkey, for instance, the inability to understand what was literally being said, resulted in the use of certain words and phrases that are considered ‘politically incorrect’, something that was not caught until after the first school workshop.
With regards to working with individuals from different cultures, I discovered that language, more than cultural influence, could be the single most critical factor for a successful facilitation experience. Consequently, I have determined that it is absolutely essential to take the time to accurately verify relevant translations of key vocabulary concepts and ideas prior to beginning a session and whenever possible, utilize a professional interpreter. In addition, I rediscovered that people, regardless of background, on the most fundamental level simply want to be heard and understood, and if properly nurtured and supported, are capable of finding solutions within themselves. And although this may sometimes be difficult for them to impart, one of my roles as a good facilitative leader is to help them find their voice.

Another cultural challenge we faced in many of the countries was overcoming the societal norms that prevent members of certain cultures from being comfortable voicing their needs. We quickly learned that despite the number of times we encouraged, pleaded or prodded the participants to speak up if they didn’t understand a term, phrase or let us know if a certain need was not being met—it simply didn’t happen. At the end of the training in our first country, Serbia, which was conducted almost entirely in English, we realized that what we had mistaken for shyness in some of our participants was actually an inability to fully comprehend English. Although every person had repeatedly reassured us that they could understand English well, we realized after the fact that this was not the case. From that point forward, if there was even one person we thought could not understand completely, we used an interpreter, as it simply defeated the purpose of the training if not all the participants could follow along.

In Turkey, and with some of the participants from the Muslim region of Serbia, we found that some of the female participants were less willing to contribute to the conversation or voice their ideas at first. I attributed this to the fact that we had mostly very confident and outspoken males in our groups and possibly the cultural notion in some Arabic influenced cultures that a man’s opinion carries more weight than a woman’s. However this actually shifted quickly after the first day and by the afternoon of the second day most of the females were just as eager as the males to jump into the different creative processes. I would like to think that the ‘Talking Circle’ process that
we used to close the first day of each training had some bearing on this as its deliberately used to ensure that each person is given the opportunity to have a voice on the first day. Its also interesting to note that the younger female participants in both of these regions did not have any reservations about voicing their opinions, so it was really a pattern I witnessed in the older females.

Ironically, in the situations where I expected cultural influence to impact participation, it actually didn’t. In Turkey, for example, where I fully expected to have the males of the group be more reserved—particularly because I was a female facilitator conducting trainings during the holy month of Ramadan—aside from our lone, apathetic participant, this was actually the opposite. In the specific case of that one participant, I do believe that it was the result of cultural bias related to gender as we were facilitating in a heavily male dominant culture and both my co-facilitator and I were female—a situation that might have made him uncomfortable or simply unwilling to participate. In Serbia as well, although we had been warned that the participants from the Muslim region of the country might be less willing to talk openly about HIV and AIDS, this was again not as critical as we had initially anticipated. Instead I found that these individuals were incredibly sensitive and vocal and quite willing to share their experiences as it related to HIV and AIDS and more importantly very eager to impart change. I attributed this in part to the fact that because it brings energy to the difficult subject of HIV and AIDS, Dance4Life attracts individuals who are, in my opinion, more socially conscious and aware and therefore desire to make a difference.

Another important learning that I had was to be aware that even positive intent might be interpreted differently from one situation to the next. In one country specifically we had a participant that consistently viewed situations from a glass half empty or ‘negative’ viewpoint. In an effort to help the person start to see things from a more positive perspective I would often ask how might we approach the problem positively instead. While my intention was to help change the perspective in an encouraging and affirmative manner, what I learned from feedback was that it was construed as constantly being corrected or doing something wrong, which had not been my intention at all. I realized that because I personally operate and thrive in an environment that aims to always focus
on the positive perspective it never occurred to me that this kind of feedback could be interpreted negatively. This learning gave me an even greater appreciation for being culturally conscious when it comes to interpreting intent.

I believe one downside of having worked in such a wide array of cultural contexts, which I didn’t expect or prepare for, was the impact it would have on my work with the U.S. Dance4Life team. The training in Washington D.C was not only the last team we worked with this year, but also the smallest. As a result, I believe I might have been too comfortable at first and therefore took the language and small size of the team for granted. Whereas in the other countries, I was conscious of needing to provide individualized attention in large groups or being extra attentive to non verbal communication with teams who were not going to voice their needs no matter how much I encouraged them, I assumed that with the U.S. team I wouldn’t need to take those extra steps because we could communicate with ease. My mistake was brought to light on the second day of the training when one of the team members pulled me aside to express her need for individualized attention as she didn’t always feel comfortable voicing her concerns in front of the whole group. This led to the important awareness that I could not allow myself to become complacent or make assumptions simply because I was familiar or comfortable with the language and/or culture.

I have also realized that preferences and learning styles span all cultural boundaries, therefore it is imperative that I am aware that the influence of culture may or may not have any bearing on an individual’s ability to verbalize their needs. To that end, I need to continue to hone my skills at reading non-verbal cues, which may or may not differ across cultures.

**Personal Growth and Development**

One of the initial learning goals I set for myself was to demonstrate shared leadership by letting go of personal need to control the process and trusting co-facilitators to utilize appropriate, and possibly different, means to achieve the same outcome. I believe that I effectively embraced collaborative leadership skills throughout this project that enabled me to experience the realization of a successful outcome via alternative means. Most
importantly, I came to understand how truly powerful the gift of collaboration can be to personal growth and development.

I believe that the greatest personal insight for me along this journey has been a new awareness that I truly understand the purpose of the work I am doing for Dance4Life. Prior to this experience, I was so overwhelmed by the weight of responsibility this opportunity provided, and aptly consumed by preparing the workshop content and framework for delivery, that I never stopped to acknowledge the depth of knowledge I already held. It was not until the third day of the first training that the proverbial light bulb switched on for me. While in the midst of delivering an unscripted dialogue whose purpose was to inspire the team for the work they would be taking on with Dance4Life, I asked them to lead with their hearts and trust that if they were clear on their purpose—then they could not fail. At that exact moment I realized that this same charge held true for me… I knew this material, I knew why it was important, I knew why I was passionate about it, I knew what to say, what needed to be done and why… I knew my purpose. And the profound depth of that realization was what finally gave me the confidence to let go of controlling the process. The shift that enabled for me was like a surge of upward momentum on my personal wave of development as a facilitative leader. The shift was physically evident for me as well as the new found confidence enabled me to stand taller and walk lighter knowing with absolute certainty that this project was my purpose and therefore I could not fail in this endeavor. And as such, I could trust the process and my facilitation skills to guide me and simply focus on giving my energy to the team and instilling them with the same passion I held for this work. Of course the initial “high” of this revelation eventually waned, however it helped me to embrace the reality that while my growth as a facilitative leader would be a continual learning process, I indeed had taken a big step forward and that even when I was faced with challenges and obstacles—knowing my purpose would enable me to keep that forward momentum.
SECTION SIX: CONCLUSIONS

“Tell me and I will forget.
Show me and I may remember.
Involve me and I will understand.”
- Confucius

Never have I understood this RedZebra philosophy quite as profoundly as I do now. The fundamental meaning of which has become infinitely clearer to me over the past few months. Although I have been intricately involved in the Dance4Life project for several years, I realize that until now, I did not fully understand the true depth and potential of this inspiring and collaborative mission to significantly impact history on a global scale.

While I had helped organize, design and write the HCT manual based on my initial observation of the workshop training, I recognize in hindsight, that I was not capable of internalizing the value of this experience until I had facilitated it myself. Whereas before I could accurately convey information, now, as a direct result of having been a part of the experience, I can effectively impart knowledge.

The transitions that I witnessed with the teams over the course of a week were also a testament to the validity of this ethos. Interestingly, I also began to see a correlation between Confucius’ words and Torrance’s incubation model of learning (Torrance & Safter, 1999) that both wove seamlessly into the overall tapestry of the training process.

Most of the individuals who chose to participate in their local HCT training had at least heard about Dance4Life and were given the project website to explore, thereby enticing their interest to know more and get involved. We further heightened their anticipation on the first day of the training with video, background information and of course the lure of music and dance. The result of which was that by the end of the first day nearly every participant expressed his or her eagerness to return the next day—“I am really tired, but I’m so happy to be here and I can’t wait for tomorrow” (see appendices).

Throughout the week, we continued to utilize techniques that would build the team’s connection, provide the skills and tools necessary to effectively deliver the HCT
workshop, and most importantly cultivate personal responsibility and accountability—thus deepening the expectations. The final and most personally rewarding experience for me though—the moment when I knew with absolute certainty that the learnings I had helped cultivate would extend beyond any reach I could possibly imagine—was always at the end of each, first live workshop presentation. To witness the relief, excitement and shift in the team’s awareness; to hear my inspiration become theirs; and to see them stand confident in their purpose, hugging each other and shouting elatedly—“Oh my gosh! I get it, I get it, I soooo get it now!” (see appendices). This is when I knew with utmost clarity that the gift of empowerment so eloquently embodied in the words—“involve me and I will understand”—would forever resonate through my learnings and influence my facilitation and leadership style.
REFERENCES


Appendix A – Country Evaluations
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Serbia Evaluations</strong></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>AVG</th>
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<td><strong>WORKSHOP CONTENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.79</td>
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<td>This workshop lived up to my expectations</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop activities stimulated my learning</td>
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<td>The activities in this workshop gave me sufficient practice and feedback</td>
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<td>The difficulty level of this workshop was appropriate</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>The pace of this workshop was appropriate</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>The trainers were well prepared</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers were helpful</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers was aware of the content of HIV and AIDS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4.83</td>
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<td><strong>WORKSHOP RESULTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>I feel that I accomplished the objectives of this workshop</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>4.91</td>
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<tr>
<td>I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SELF-PACED DELIVERY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop was a good way for me to learn this content</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How would you improve this workshop?*

- Provide better information before the workshop | 42%
- Clarify the workshop objectives | 21%
- Reduce the content covered in the workshop | 4%
- Increase the content covered in the workshop | 13%
- Update the content covered in the workshop | 25%
- Improve the instructional methods | 17%
- Make workshop activities more stimulating | 33%
- Improve workshop organization | 8%
- Make the workshop less difficult | 13%
- Make the workshop more difficult | 29%
- Slow down the pace of the workshop | 21%
- Speed up the pace of the workshop | 21%
- Allot more time for the workshop | 21%
- Shorten the time for the workshop | 13%
- Improve the tests used in the workshop | 21%
- Add more video to the workshop | 79%

*This was converted into the percent of total participant evaluations received for this training (24 for Serbia) that indicated this was an area for improvement.
**The following comments are written verbatim**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More days of training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More role play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prolongs the peer education (time for educating)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything was really great! Maybe more days for learning all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of this because it's very hard to wake it all best for 5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It should last longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More techniques (camera, light, sound systems)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organize them more often! :)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave the participants a chance to make a song or express</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>themselves to make this tour better and more fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More days for work. That is a little thing… everything is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excellent…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe more days to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just more and more dance. Nothing to change because all is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good. So, I think the best Dance4Life!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right now I can't remember any big improvements but really</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just some details because everything was almost perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would just recommend that the workshop should be longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and give a chance for participants to practice more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide more equipment for the shop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| What were the most valuable and/or useful aspects of this      |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>workshop?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Games that helps us connect with each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop about trust in team, drills, workshop when we were</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talking about ourselves and HIV/AIDS - Heartbeat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public speaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop about facilitation, peer education and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance, peer education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public speaking, creative message, the drill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer education, positive voice and dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer education, positive voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer education, positive voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with different people in many different activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>made good team and gave plenty of experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working difficult with younger than I am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer education, positive voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge from trainers, organization and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professionalism (in all aspects), good connection with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about HIV/AIDS are bigger than earlier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most useful aspect was preparing to lead the group, then</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>… learn how to be the best on a scene and in front of a group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to be one team, to work together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, professionalism, trainer, for all aspects… By the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>way, good moves :)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge which I would use in future HCT. Also, the trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commitment, because of that we were stimulated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most valuable is the whole workshop -every single thing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because it motivated me to make a difference and taught me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>how to motivate other people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything was very, very useful, especially parts where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participants have to think of something on their own to make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>choreography for example, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most useful aspect of this workshop was the facilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>knowledge that I received</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### What aspects of this workshop could have been improved to bring more value or usefulness?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What aspects of this workshop could have been improved to bring more value or usefulness?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More participation (young people) and more days to improve our skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative message</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe, workshop about leader dancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More education about HIV and AIDS, maybe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of dance4life members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's already on the top of usefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bit older peer educators or at least young educator with energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You could explain some parts better like creative message because for some of us like me this is the first experience of this kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that there should be a bit more teaching about HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just the HIV and AIDS info.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What other comments or observations do you wish to share?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What other comments or observations do you wish to share?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would love to be part of the people that trained us, to go on some global training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything that I learned!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You'll never know what you can do until you try :)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was shocked when Tania told us her personal story. It has been an experience which cannot be measured. I'm glad I'm part of this team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hm… Every morning was very hard for me to wake up so early but when I come in the center I thought: &quot;I will never miss any of training because I like it so muchhh!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This made me feel fantastic. I got to know myself in a new way. I learned a lot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything I learned here</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should cut workshops a little bit. For example, it is better 4 hours a day than 8, cause human cannot stand it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This was the hardest training I've ever been on… The strange thing is… that I can't describe how happy I am!!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was great really! It was hard training but I had fun really!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't have any comment about that project because all is perfect. Only positive comments in my heart. The heart never lies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just that the trainer were to provide updates, projectors, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think you guys are awesome. The manipulation thing you do is amazing, because I know is manipulation, but it still pumps me up and gets me motivated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You guys are the best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really enjoyed being part of this workshop, it was very hard but fun and interesting, and it motivated us even more to take part in Dance4Life project! And the trainers were GREAT!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would just like to say that the workshop was more than awesome (8), that means it was nine (devet)!!! :)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Moldova Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>AVG</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORKSHOP CONTENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>4.38</td>
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<td>This workshop lived up to my expectations</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content addressed all my needs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>448</td>
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<td>I feel prepared and ready to deliver the Heart Connection workshops</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>The workshop activities stimulated my learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>The activities in this workshop gave me sufficient practice and feedback</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>The difficulty level of this workshop was appropriate</td>
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<td>4.62</td>
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<tr>
<td>The pace of this workshop was appropriate</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers were well prepared</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
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<td>4.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers were helpful</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers was aware of the content of HIV and AIDS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORKSHOP RESULTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I accomplished the objectives of this workshop</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SELF-PACED DELIVERY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop was a good way for me to learn this content</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How would you improve this workshop?*

- Provide better information before the workshop: 62%
- Clarify the workshop objectives: 19%
- Reduce the content covered in the workshop: 29%
- Increase the content covered in the workshop: 14%
- Update the content covered in the workshop: 14%
- Improve the instructional methods: 19%
- Make workshop activities more stimulating: 24%
- Improve workshop organization: 0%
- Make the workshop less difficult: 19%
- Make the workshop more difficult: 5%
- Slow down the pace of the workshop: 24%
- Speed up the pace of the workshop: 10%
- Allot more time for the workshop: 48%
- Shorten the time for the workshop: 14%
- Improve the tests used in the workshop: 5%
- Add more video to the workshop: 81%

*This was converted into the percent of total participant evaluations received for this training (21 for Moldova) that indicated this was an area for improvement.
**The following comments are written verbatim**

### What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Give a chance to implement something</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I guess everything was great but I think it should be given more time as breaks. We all became a team even it would be better to spend more time here together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything was awesome here and I don’t have any objections. I guess that it'll be more interesting if some people from other countries will come with us at the training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think this workshop was good enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing. I liked the workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked everything in this workshop but I think that we should pay more attention to the drill. The rest was wonderful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is very good how it was but put some games for the time keeper will be better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything was fantastic!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked everything we did</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked everything and would like to spend some more time with such trainings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have no improvements to recommend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider that this workshop was A-MA-ZING!!! I've learned so much, we all became a family and had fun -- all this thanks to those who organized, who worked on and got involved as a trainer in this workshop!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was very fine and normal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What were the most valuable and/or useful aspects of this workshop?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I guess all these games for trusting and to remember names were the most useful and also very funny one :)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really liked all the games that we've played, it was so cool and everything was very useful for myself and my personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information, the games and the peer education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think the exercise about team building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked very much the work of the trainers. They were well prepared and they stimulated us to make all the workshop activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games, methods. Keep smiling - energy, reflection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talks, team work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really liked that trust games, the way the information was told to us and mostly I liked that teachers!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The most powerful aspect of this workshop was that everything was well organized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I really enjoyed all those exercises and games that helped all of us to become a family and I was amazed by how important it is to bring the spirit to those who haven't heard yet about D4L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games, information, team work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### What aspects of this workshop could have been improved to bring more value or usefulness?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better sound system!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The evening time I would be more interesting if we played more games and we had allowed music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't really know because I liked everything. Next time I have to be much more prepared for it. I liked everybody because they are the best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don't know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that we can dance more and pay more attention to positive voices because this is a very important moment of the workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get the whole team time to spend more time together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaks must be longer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would propose less but longer breaks and some more dancing (drill)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think that all other aspect of this workshop were of high level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider that this workshop is perfect! :D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What other comments or observations do you wish to share?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We had very good trainers, full of life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm sure all these 5 days changed me a lot. My mind got a lot of information about the world where I live. I'm sure it will help me to change the world for a better future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wanna thank you (Tania, Jesse and D4L Moldova) for giving us the chance and for supporting us. Everybody ROCKS!!!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything was very interesting. I would like to have another experience like that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm just happy that I was here. It was great!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop's organization was very good. I wish to meet again for another workshop and to allot it more time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything was great!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would like to say that I really liked our teachers, Jesse and Tania, and I really liked my team!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks so much for the work that the trainers have done -- This is an amazing project! Thanks for getting Moldova involved in this!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Ibiza Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>AVG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORKSHOP CONTENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This workshop lived up to my expectations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content addressed all my needs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel prepared and ready to deliver the Heart Connection workshops</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORKSHOP DESIGN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop activities stimulated my learning</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities in this workshop gave me sufficient practice and feedback</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The difficulty level of this workshop was appropriate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pace of this workshop was appropriate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORKSHOP TRAINER</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers were well prepared</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers were helpful</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers was aware of the content of HIV and AIDS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORKSHOP RESULTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I accomplished the objectives of this workshop</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SELF-PACED DELIVERY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop was a good way for me to learn this content</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**How would you improve this workshop?**

- Provide better information before the workshop **45%**
- Clarify the workshop objectives **27%**
- Reduce the content covered in the workshop **9%**
- Increase the content covered in the workshop **9%**
- Update the content covered in the workshop **0%**
- Improve the instructional methods **0%**
- Make workshop activities more stimulating **0%**
- Improve workshop organization **0%**
- Make the workshop less difficult **0%**
- Make the workshop more difficult **9%**
- Slow down the pace of the workshop **0%**
- Speed up the pace of the workshop **9%**
- Allot more time for the workshop **0%**
- Shorten the time for the workshop **0%**
- Improve the tests used in the workshop **9%**
- Add more video to the workshop **0%**

*This was converted into the percent of total participant evaluations received for this training (11 for Ibiza) that indicated this was an area for improvement.
**The following comments are written verbatim**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To give equal importance to all parts of the workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop can be longer, keeping the same intensity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personally, I would like more dancing time and less theatrical exercise or personal growth activities, but that's just my personal preference. Generally the workshop is very good. I suggest cutting down time for reflection and general opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is good the way it is now</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What were the most valuable and/or useful aspects of this workshop?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ones concerning how to set up the work team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities are exceptional and promote personal growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal growth and experience. To learn new dynamics to put into practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To tighten the HIV/AIDS content with music and dancing makes the learning more fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instructors' energy and motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The encouragement provided by the instructors. The impact that it has on young people. The enthusiasm and learning from the instructors and young people. The mix of meaningful information with a methodology adapted for young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group cohesion and specific tasks to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To have acquired a tool to take part of a team and a project that will help humanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning at every level, an incredible personal experience. I've never thought I will take part of something so big. Enriching!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities, the good atmosphere. In general, everything.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>What other comments or observations do you wish to share?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It's been a great honor and a great pleasure to work with you. You are very professional with very clear ideas. You have shown to be very human people and accessible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This workshop was very motivating and allowed for social learning while having fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like the way that the instructors conducted this workshop and the contribution made by my peers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is what I needed at this moment in my life. It has helped me to improve my self-esteem and my desire to struggle to keep on with life. Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank you!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Turkey Evaluations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORKSHOP CONTENT</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>AVG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This workshop lived up to my expectations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content addressed all my needs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel prepared and ready to deliver the Heart Connection workshops</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORKSHOP DESIGN</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>AVG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The workshop activities stimulated my learning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities in this workshop gave me sufficient practice and feedback</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The difficulty level of this workshop was appropriate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pace of this workshop was appropriate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORKSHOP TRAINER</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>AVG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The trainers were well prepared</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers were helpful</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers was aware of the content of HIV and AIDS</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORKSHOP RESULTS</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>AVG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I accomplished the objectives of this workshop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SELF-PACED DELIVERY</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree nor Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>AVG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The workshop was a good way for me to learn this content</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*How would you improve this workshop?*
- Provide better information before the workshop **15%**
- Clarify the workshop objectives **23%**
- Reduce the content covered in the workshop **8%**
- Increase the content covered in the workshop **62%**
- Update the content covered in the workshop **38%**
- Improve the instructional methods **46%**
- Make workshop activities more stimulating **15%**
- Improve workshop organization **8%**
- Make the workshop less difficult **8%**
- Make the workshop more difficult **8%**
- Slow down the pace of the workshop **8%**
- Speed up the pace of the workshop **31%**
- Allot more time for the workshop **38%**
- Shorten the time for the workshop **15%**
- Improve the tests used in the workshop **23%**
- Add more video to the workshop **69%**

*This was converted into the percent of total participant evaluations received for this training (16 for Turkey) that indicated this was an area for improvement.
**The following comments are written verbatim**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More knowledge about SH should be given to trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For positive voices session because of the translation problem, some negative message given for HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the positive voice because of the translation fact; some negative messages were given to us. We should update the terminological language and given message!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe we can try to reduce the drill time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To motivate the participants you can show all drill at first day because I couldn't image what are we trying to do. I need to see the big picture first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything was beautiful. I don't recommend for improve this workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The HIV/AIDS Education part can take more time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What were the most valuable and/or useful aspects of this workshop?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I just wanted to see the energy of change agent to believe this project because that was the most important thing to shape to fight with HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This workshop was good for me. I learned so much experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach youth and give right info, change behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS peer education part is most valuable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos, dance :) positive voices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning great team experience, learning dancing in a harmony, also learning the tips of the peer education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was the drill part first of all make youth energetic + positive voices in order to affect people and make people to act. Apart from that it was the peer education part that is giving useful info.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance, music, video, smiling face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of course the drill part :)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have learned about HIV/AIDS, I didn't know that much before the workshop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What aspects of this workshop could have been improved to bring more value or usefulness?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information about HIV/AIDS on the peer education part should be improved, revised for the country and their priority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCT Tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing time of workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe more peer education training can be good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open forum: more time + more info + more attractive. Materials, for example using projector more and look more technologic. Prewoking in workshop place. Increasing time of workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When we are in school and in action for motivating students and showing the big picture we should show them all drill first so they can feel the energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everything was very beautiful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe it would be more effective for students if we had someone in the team who is infected by HIV</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What other comments or observations do you wish to share?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I want to feed back from you about my educator and I'll write to mail to you and so I will visit to you. See u with love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Update the participants knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The team were so energized in the school and during the training. Actually, I was so concerned about the group because people were all from different backgrounds and NGOx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was hard for me to understand English but thank to Tania and Elizabeth that they let us translate it all the time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actually I'm so tired to make some comments but I think it was perfect and we'll be better gradually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This workshop should be widened with regards to peer educators, have a pilot school for -- + from different social levels as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be part of this workshop is amazing because of you!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington D.C. Evaluations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORKSHOP CONTENT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was well informed about the objectives of this workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This workshop lived up to my expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The content addressed all my needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel prepared and ready to deliver the Heart Connection workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORKSHOP DESIGN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop activities stimulated my learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The activities in this workshop gave me sufficient practice and feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The difficulty level of this workshop was appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pace of this workshop was appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORKSHOP TRAINER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers were well prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers were helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The trainers were aware of the content of HIV and AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>WORKSHOP RESULTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel that I accomplished the objectives of this workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will be able to use what I learned in this workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SELF-PACED DELIVERY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The workshop was a good way for me to learn this content</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How would you improve this workshop?*

- Provide better information before the workshop: 78%
- Clarify the workshop objectives: 67%
- Reduce the content covered in the workshop: 0%
- Increase the content covered in the workshop: 33%
- Update the content covered in the workshop: 11%
- Improve the instructional methods: 22%
- Make workshop activities more stimulating: 0%
- Improve workshop organization: 11%
- Make the workshop less difficult: 22%
- Make the workshop more difficult: 0%
- Slow down the pace of the workshop: 0%
- Speed up the pace of the workshop: 33%
- Allot more time for the workshop: 44%
- Shorten the time for the workshop: 0%
- Improve the tests used in the workshop: 0%
- Add more video to the workshop: 0%

*This was converted into the percent of total participant evaluations received for this training (9 for Washington D.C.) that indicated this was an area for improvement.
**The following comments are written verbatim**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What other improvements would you recommend in this workshop?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed it up some and make sure everything is clear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More flow of communication between facilitators and participants so that participants can express concerns, questions or issues on a more personal level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know how other people lead the workshop, but Jesse and Tania led a great one and I don’t have any specific improvements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speed up, less group work, rather learn about the cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less games, more production with the workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously none, I know that’s annoying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I must say this was the most energetic workshop that I ever participated in, so I am satisfied completely with the workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give a mock workshop at the beginning to set up a model for what is to be expected or maybe some video clips.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What were the most valuable and/or useful aspects of this workshop?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The facilitator's example of high energy, as well as their feedback during the rehearsal. Also, the personal connection between group members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The drill, the intro with mood clip and the positive voices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning about HIV/AIDS and what I can do to spread the message, even in casual conversations. And of course the dance part cause it makes learning the topic a lot more fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The day when we covered the specific information about HIV/AIDS. I didn't think I would learn anything new and more than half of the info was new to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in the group and dedication of the group to the cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The informative aspect, learning all new things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The third day, where there was a lot of team building and trust exercises and people really talked honestly with each other and learnt from people's personal stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For me it was the creative message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The movement/drill stuff is great. The mood clip is good. Trainer organization and delivery.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What aspects of this workshop could have been improved to bring more value or usefulness?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The 9am-5pm schedule - it is very difficult to find people who can afford to miss work/school. I think the team could be improved in years to come if alternative hours were considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More personal stories and/or more of a “show” aspect… maybe a more difficult dance performance to begin or end the show.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The…. hmmm. I can't think of anything, so I guess it was all valuable and useful! =)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maybe more than one day practicing for the workshop so people could practice their roles more or even try something new.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn more about HIV/AIDS, hear more personal stories so that we can connect more to the cause and work harder to prevent it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More stories &amp; positive choices to be shared.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm wracking my brain but I can't think of anything.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can't think of any, keep up the good work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A more visual presentation for the initial HIV / AIDS Data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What other comments or observations do you wish to share?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RedZebra facilitators were awesome. They made the workshop what it was.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This has been very rewarding and I have enjoyed getting to know everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I had a great time meeting new people, learning not only about HIV/AIDS but also about myself and things I needed to improve in so that I can become a better person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great job you two!! Thanks for a wonderful experience, stay in touch!! XOXO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great group of people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazing people in this group that I became close with and learned more about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'd like to be involved again and I hope Dance4Life does continue to become the movement it promises to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am so happy to be a part of this workshop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Its been fun. Looking forward to doing the workshops at schools!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B – Facilitator’s Debrief Notes
Serbia

Day 1:

What Worked:
- Utilizing the team members to trouble shoot the tech issues
- Time Management
- Extensive debrief after mood clip – very inspiring
- Reading the groups energy well
- Managing noise complaints
- Silent D.O.B line-up technique for dividing group
- Collaborative co-facilitation and support
- “Who’s Done It?” warm up game
- Commitment of the team
- Getting all the way through the drill
- Facilitators giving each other permission to build on the conversation as necessary

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- It would be great if we had hung up the drill lyrics so that everyone could see them if they needed to
- In what ways could we have synthesized the “why music & dance” segment better?
- In what ways can we paraphrase less and capture more accurately the participant’s own words—“What I heard you say is ‘X’, is that correct?”
- It would be great if we had clarified that everyone understood the directions for silent D.O.B. line-up before sending them off
- It would be great if we could use the ballet studio to practice the drill without worrying about noise complaints

Day 2:

What Worked:
- Learning new Crocodile Island team-building game; utilizing a different ‘pass the clap’ technique
- Laying the Foundation skits and debrief – very effective
- Integrating Serbian vocabulary – counting / getting together in a circle
- Setting up the easels and the rooms the night before
- Public spotlight technique – first time utilized – very effective
- Giving the team permission to dialogue and brainstorm in Serbian for different activities

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- It would be great if we had clarified on day one that the journals will not be read and are for their private thoughts so they would be more open to using them
- It would be great if in the future when we use the show size exercise to divide the group in half that we additionally count off by 2’s so that we don’t end up with all males or all females on one team
It would be great if when it's necessary to divide the group for public spotlight that we give them directions all together before splitting them up.

In what ways can we insure that during the public spotlight debrief the participants only discuss their own experience.

It would be great if we understood Serbian.

**Day 3:**

*What Worked:*

- Have a variety of rooms to work in.
- Finding the back room for the “heartbeat” exercise.
- Using the gym mats for the participants to lay on.
- Conducting ‘butterfly/leaf’ activities in the park.
- The ‘clear on your purpose – you can not fail’ dialogue – applying it to what we are doing as well.
- ‘One heartbeat’ dialogue – powerful and effective.
- ‘Pass the ball’ name game.
- The ideas that came out of the creative message.
- Good use of time and adapting based on the teams needs – focusing on the creative message.
- Pep talk about being responsible as it relates to Beer Fest.

*What Do We Wish Could Be Better:*

- In what ways might we trust the process more and give more time to the ‘butterfly/leaf’ exercise?
- What might be some of the ways we can facilitate the lap sit better—stand closer and tighter heel to toe?
- What might some creative ways to divide into groups of three better?
- In what ways might we explain what the creative message needs to look like better?
- How might we emphasize the importance of having sufficient refreshments throughout the training week.

**Day 4:**

*What Worked:*

- Splitting our time between the four teams.
- Conducting the first run through with two teams each – back and forth with feedback in between segments.
- Alternating which team leads off.
- Making the time for two full run-throughs.
- Working together to assign roles.
- Clarity of how roles were determined – explaining that these were the roles for Friday – and encouraging them for the tour to work together to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to try each role.
- Giving the ½ hour to work through role before starting run-through.
What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- In what ways might we better clarify that the final run-through needs to be as “live” as possible – no interruptions, no feedback till end, no breaks – utilize scribe to identify areas for improvement
- It would be great if the Training Pack included debrief guidelines and techniques
- It would be great if we could create a forum for sharing best practices for working with multiple teams among RedZebra facilitators
- It would be great if we gave the participants time to write down who they receive the leadership hand-off from and who they pass it on to
- It would be great if we could create copies of the role assignments to eliminate the time needed for everyone to copy it down
- It would be great if we had easy access to a copy machine
- It would be great if we had two video and sound systems for the final practice run-through

Day 5:
What Worked:
- Creating the space for each team to present once – not the most ideal – worked though
- The DJ / Techs stepping up and trouble shooting problems
- The teams supporting each other
- Working with Milos and Y-Peer
- Dividing our team to have one facilitator at each presentation
- The cultural center overall – and the director – very accommodating – fantastic space
- Serbian tomatoes – fabulous!
- Celebrating with the team at Beer Fest
- Performing the drill without music at the festival for the Beer Fest documentary

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- It would be great if we could have had live school sessions instead of simply having the teams present to each other
- It would be great if we would have had a better turn out of students arrive for the presentations
- It would be great if Milos had shown up more than 5 minutes before start-time with the second sound and video system
- It would be great if we could have had at least one extra day for the training so that the teams felt more prepared
- It would be great if we could have each watched all four presentations
- In what ways might we ensure in the future that everyone on the team truly understands English and/or utilize an interpreter if necessary
Moldova

**Day 1:**

*What Worked:*
- Our flexibility with the start-time
- Energy of the team
- Relating the ‘blind clap’ to working as a team to conduct the HCT workshop
- Trusting each other’s instincts and following each other’s lead
- Utilizing the different spaces
- Secret friend game
- Off-site venue for whole team

*What Do We Wish Could Be Better:*
- In what ways can we have D4L Int. better communicate that the first day needs to begin by 9 am
- It would be great if everyone spoke at least one language the same
- It would be great if we had use of an indoor space
- It would be great if the wind didn’t keep blowing down the easel sheets
- In what ways can we help the team to understand that its about integrating the students – not performing to them
- In what ways can we incorporate what’s being done with a format that we know works

**Day 2:**

*What Worked:*
- Our alignment – much more in sync
- Changing space and following the shade
- Redirecting the conversation when the skits missed the mark completely
- Managing the side conversations
- Understanding the language issues better
- Utilizing team members as interpreters
- Having clarity of ‘deal-breakers’ for the workshop flow

*What Do We Wish Could Be Better:*
- In what ways can we emphasize the need to turn off cell phones better
- It would be great if the sound system was set-up by breakfast so we can start on time
- In what ways can we stress the importance of supporting each other during the ‘public spotlight’ exercise even more
- It would be great if we could have everyone come back from breaks on time
- It would be great if the beds were more comfortable
- It would be great if there was more water during the breaks
Day 3:

What Worked:
- Managing when to have the Director translate and when to have team members translate
- Our co-facilitation throughout the day
- Heartbeat meditation – powerful
- New ‘lapsit’ method with chairs – very cool!!
- Adapting the schedule to the needs of the group
- Holding space for the participants to settle into the ‘eye-to-eye connection’
- Our meeting with the Director – listening actively, asking pertinent questions, holding space for solutions to arise
- Creative message – fantastic! Powerful!

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- In would be great if we emphasize the importance of maintaining silence for ‘butterfly/leaf’ better
- It would be great if the sound system was louder to make up for outdoor venue
- It would be great if we could have an indoor space for the ‘heartbeat’ exercise – too much distraction outside
- It would be great if we could have had even more contribution from different participants during the face-to-face dialogue
- It would be great if we could convey the importance of breaking down the drill during the workshop even more

Day 4:

What Worked:
- Using the ‘pass-the-name ball’ technique to internalize leadership hand-off order!
- Continued high energy of the group
- Sunny weather
- Dividing our time between the two teams
- Integrating the half team with the larger Chisinau team
- Using ‘2007’ and ‘2008’ team versus ‘old’ and ‘new’ team
- Utilizing the Director’s assistants to bring the 2007 team up to speed
- Bonfire party

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- In would be great if we had two sound and video systems so that each team could practice
- It would be great if we had more than one positive voice
- It would be great if we had a professional interpreter so that we could understand what exactly was being said
- It would be great if we had one extra day for practice
Day 5:

What Worked:
- The teams being ready on time
- The 2007 team showing their support physically and emotionally
- The 2007 team sharing openly their feelings of apprehension from their first live run-through
- ‘Pass the flame’ closing activity
- Integrating the 2007 and 2008 teams with the blind clap
- Co-facilitators working together in the best interest of the team
- The delivery of the creative message

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- It would be great if we had real students for the ‘live’ workshop
- In what ways might we provide better coaching for delivering feedback
- It would be great if we had known that the group was not translating into Russian
- It would be great if all team members understood at least one common language
- In what ways might we help the Director understand the complexity of working with incomplete teams and major language challenges
- In what ways might we again emphasize the criticalness of having five, full, 8-hour days for the training
Ibiza

Day 1:

What Worked:
- Upgrading to the larger space
- Proximity of hotel to venue
- Contribution of everyone on the team
- Having three facilitators
- Getting through the entire drill
- Freestyle development

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- It would be great if I wasn’t feeling sick
- It would be great if there was some flexibility with the lunch break being less than 3 hours long – breaks up the day too much
- It would be great if we had everyone’s full commitment for the 5-day training

Day 2:

What Worked:
- Theatre experience for creative message component
- Extra time given to HIV and AIDS dissemination
- Adapting the agenda to suit the needs of the team
- Integration of new team members
- Collaborative leadership

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- It would be great if punctuality was of more importance
- It would be great if internet access was available at the hotel and not the venue so as not to be such a distraction throughout the training

Day 3:

What Worked:
- Having a drummer
- Flexibility with team members schedules
- Implementing games and activities learned in other countries
- Using music for the ‘butterfly/leaf’ activity
- Hearing a different version of the ‘heartbeat’ meditation
- Having my co-facilitators pick up the slack for my not feeling well physically

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- In what ways might I work through not feeling well and simply be more present
Day 4:

*What Worked:*
- Having only one team to manage
- Working through the positive voice
- Strength of the dancers and speakers
- Being able to provide individualized attention to team members who needed it
- The team’s openness to feedback and ability to implement changes

*What Do We Wish Could Be Better:*
- It would be great if we had some variety of space to utilize for breakouts
- It would be great if everyone had been present for the run-through
- In what ways might we ensure in the future that the strongest speakers are also the most confident speakers and / or find ways to build the confidence of the speakers

Day 5:

*What Worked:*
- Having the extra morning to run through the workshop again
- Support of local Dance4Life promoters
- Excitement and enthusiasm of the team
- Local media coverage
- Trouble-shooting success of the team

*What Do We Wish Could Be Better:*
- It would be great if the venue had been more privacy
- It would be great if the venue had better acoustics and set-up for video
- It would be great if there had been an even larger turn out for the workshop
- How might we ensure that each team receives their D4L shirts in time for the training
Turkey

Day 1:

*What Worked:*

- Having the local director participate in the training
- Excitement of team at the end of the day
- Space – big, quiet and private
- Week of rest leading up to the training
- Preparation of templates
- Snacks and refreshments provided by the hotel
- Having participants volunteer to mirror the drill from day one
- Explaining talking stick better so that its succinct

*What Do We Wish Could Be Better:*

- In what ways might we engage our ‘difficult’ participants
- In what ways might we minimize the negative influence of one participants need to act as a distraction
- How might we ensure that D4L International provides all the necessary materials to local NCO prior to our arrival – DVDs, t-shirts etc.
- How might we draw out analogies between and activities and team work from the participants themselves

Day 2:

*What Worked:*

- Waterfall analogy for making a difference
- Managing time
- Pep talk with ‘difficult’ participant and building on her strengths
- Modelling HIV/AIDS dissemination delivery
- Participant stating need for interpreter

*What Do We Wish Could Be Better:*

- In what ways might we ensure interpreters for future trainings
- It would be great if we had a better sound system
- It would be great if we moved the snacks outside so that its less of a distraction and we can have more well defined breaks
- How might we manage the side chatter better

Day 3:

*What Worked:*

- Continuously switching the ‘front’ of the room so that frame of reference for drill is always changing
- Moving role sign-up to pre-training time and/or break time
- Dedicating significant energy to cleaning up positive voices
- Shift in one difficult participant’s attitude and contribution
- Openness and honesty of everyone’s contribution to the face-to-face dialogue
- Having a non team member interpret the ‘heartbeat’ exercise
- Speaking our gifts as a way to integrate new members

**What Do We Wish Could Be Better:**
- How might we clean-up the freestyle – too many people doing it differently
- How might we elicit a stronger creative message than what currently exists
- It would be great if our ‘difficult’ participant had given his attention to his friends/team members during the face-to-face dialogue
- It would be great if we had had access to some outdoor space for some of the morning activities

**Day 4:**

**What Worked:**
- Having scripts! So much easier!
- Staying in the same hotel as the training
- Willingness of hotel staff to accommodate our needs
- Modifying the ‘pass-the-role’ exercise with eyes closed and changing positions of the circle
- Having only one team to focus on

**What Do We Wish Could Be Better:**
- It would be great if we could have found a way to engage our last ‘difficult’ participant
- What might be some ways we can further build the confidence of the key speakers
- It would be great if we could play a lesser role in trouble shooting technical issues
- How might we provide tips for giving more constructive feedback
- How might we encourage to team to work together to find solutions even more

**Day 5:**

**What Worked:**
- Working with UNFPA
- Amazing troubleshoot of video – synchronized sound and video
- The support of the school administration
- Team’s ability to quickly organize students
- The team’s enthusiasm and understanding of their purpose
- Team members stepping up to ground the team prior to starting
- Attention and focus of the students
- Returning to hotel venue for closing activities
- Travelling to the school together
- Having two ‘live’ workshops
What Do We Wish Could Be Better:

- What might be all the tips we can provide the team for effectively managing difficult students
- It would be great if we had a stage so as make it easier for students in the back to see
- How might we help the team to better communicate their A/V needs to the school administration
- It would be great if we had professional interpreters to avoid mistakes such as using politically incorrect terms in the positive voice stories
Day 1:

What Worked:
- The ease of co-facilitation
- New exercise – ‘get-to-know-you’ volleyball
- Having the djembe drum to use for teaching the drill and for added music element
- Speaking our gifts
- Great space – dance studio with mirrors
- Diversity of team

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- It would be great if my co-facilitator and I were staying in the same place
- It would be great if we had an even bigger group to work with
- How might we integrate ‘Agents of Change’ and other D4L lingo into the training even more so that the team will start using the proper terminology as well
- It would be great if there were copies of the drill music ready to distribute on the first day

Day 2:

What Worked:
- Having easel sheets done ahead of time
- 1-2-3 / Stomp-Clap-Snap as focusing energizer
- Having an A/V guru on the team

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- How might we move things around so as to have the creative message development in the morning when participants are freshest
- How might we better synthesize what topics the creative message should address
- How might we address the needs of those participants that need to see the bigger picture
- How might we remember that even with small groups there may still be participants that are not comfortable expressing their needs to the whole group

Day 3:

What Worked:
- Switching partners for ‘eye-to-eye’ connection exercise
- Having MetroTeen Aids come in and contribute to HIV/AIDS information session

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- How might we implement the role sign-up on the second day so as to allow time in the afternoon of the 3rd day for prep
- It would be great if this venue was more easily more accessible by Metro
Day 4:

What Worked:
- Scripts for roles and script for creative message
- Having one team to work with
- Have HIV+ speaker as team members
- Having time to fully run through workshop completely twice
- Strength of key speakers and lead dancers

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- It would be great if we could include lyric and HIV/AIDS info easel sheet templates for the team in the resource section of the training pack
- What may be all the tips and techniques we can provide to those team members responsible for warming up and engaging the students as they are walking in

Day 5:

What Worked:
- Team coming together to move quickly after trouble shooting mayhem
- Commitment and energy of the team
- Ensuring time to get grounded before starting
- Access to school’s great A/V equipment
- Having extra time in the morning to practice and clean up any last minute details
- Delivery of positive voice
- Having trainers present to help manage difficult school obstacles
- Traveling to school together

What Do We Wish Could Be Better:
- How might we incorporate the feedback of using more video to give team members a better overall perspective of what is expected of them on the first or second day
- How might we ensure that school administration members are explicitly clear on the workshop needs and constraints
- How might we ensure that this information is disseminated to all school administration involved with the project
- What may be all the ways to have a proper closing ceremony even if time and space constraints are limited
Appendix C - Daily Journal Entries
Serbia

Saturday 8/16/08: Lost Jesse, Lost Luggage…

Well – our first couple of days in Serbia have been wonderful and certainly not lacking in excitement and humor!

My flights were smooth sailing and proceeded without a hitch… Jesse – not so much… while sitting in Atlanta for my next leg he texted that his flight was slightly delayed and that he would be coming in very close to our connection time in Rome where we had planned on meeting up… well that would be just the beginning of his very long day. After being delayed by 45 minutes out of JFK he then sat on the runway for 2 hours while a thunder storm blew through – pretty much ensuring that he would not make the Rome connection – sure enough I confirmed when I arrived that his flight would land in Rome 35 minutes after our flight to Belgrade was scheduled to leave so I flew on alone and was relieved to arrive on schedule and with my bag seeing as that while I rode the airport shuttle in Rome across the tarmac to my plane I noticed a couple of random pieces of luggage strewn across the ground!!! Jesse’s sole lucky break unfortunately was that there would be one other flight to Rome out of Belgrade that same day which I of course assumed he would get on since it was scheduled for 3 hours after he should have finally arrived. Srdjan and Srdjan… easy enough to remember… (heh!) the Dance4Life Serbian Coordinator and one of his assistants were there to greet me and whisk me off to our hotel in downtown Belgrade replete with guided commentary of some of the local sights we saw along the way. I really wasn’t sure what to expect of Belgrade – the closest I have been to Eastern Europe is Prague in the Czech Republic (a city which I LOVED) so I thought perhaps it would be something close to that… its not. Unlike Prague which has the most amazing old world architecture Belgrade is a mish mash of old and modern – due largely in part to its efforts to rebuild after the NATO bombings of 1999. Many of these bombed out buildings have been left as they are as a reminder and a monument to those who died… having never seen a bombed out building – it was an intense thing to take in. What has probably been the most surprising thing about this city though is how much green space there is here! Belgrade is sooo green!! And unlike the guidebook stated – it is not overly polluted – in fact the last 2 days have been nothing short of perfect with the most wonderful weather and the bluest skies! And to my pleasant surprise – not everyone seems to smoke here! Also – contrary to the guidebook!

Anyway – after checking into our very old hotel with remodeled bathrooms, A/C (yay!) and the most hilarious old elevator lift which only pictures can do justice (I’ll try to take one tomorrow)… Srdjan took me out for refreshments and then lunch. Its really strange –
drinking and eating seem to be two different events here – you will go one place for 
refreshments – and then another to eat where they won’t serve you anything to drink 
unless you ask… and even then you get this weird look like you’ve just asked for 
directions to Mars! We also visited the venue for our training, which is a youth cultural 
center about 10 minutes walking from the hotel and an incredible space!! It has several 
large adjoining rooms and a ballet studio with a mirror along one wall – perfect for 
teaching the drill! The lady who runs it, Mikaela, is a wonderful woman who has given 
us the space to use for the entire week for free!! I must also add that the entire 26 member 
young team (more than half of which do not live in Belgrade) that we are training this 
week are volunteering their time and have paid there own way for this week’s training – 
including their own meals and hotel accommodations!!! Their commitment is mind 
blowing and I’m very excited to be working with them. Their ages range from 15 – 24 
years old – its really incredible.

So back to Jesse – we head back to the airport to pick him up and arrive about 10 minutes 
after he was scheduled to arrive. We wait and wait and wait and wait as everybody files 
out of customs – yet still no Jesse! I begin to worry a bit – thinking maybe he walked out 
before we got there – didn’t see us – and went straight to the hotel. We wait for an hour 
and a half – call the hotel – and still no Jesse. Srdjan goes up stairs to check with the 
desk agents and we learn that the flight was half Alitalia and half JAT Airways. He does 
not appear on the JAT roster and of course Alitalia’s computers are down so they can’t 
tell us if he was on theirs. Not sure what to do next - we get a lucky break when some 
airport attendants happen to open a side door that looks into the customs area and I catch 
a glimpse of a Jesse-like back profile standing in the lost luggage line! Sure enough he 
strolls out another 10 minutes later – looking exhausted but stoked to see us – and yes – 
they lost his luggage. Although we’re both tired we figure we should stay up as late as 
possible to adjust to the time difference – so our tour continues. Srdjan takes us first to 
the 2nd largest church in the world (the largest is in Moscow) and then to this fantastic 
boardwalk along the Danube where the river bank is literally lined with hundreds of 
floating bars – so we go for coffee and lemonade. We chat for awhile – drilling poor 
Srdjan about the youth we will be working with, the current AIDS / HIV situation in 
Serbia and of course random Serbian vocab words so we can at least make an effort to 
communicate with the locals. Next he takes us to go have the “biggest and best pancakes 
in the world.” Pancakes in the afternoon? Why not?! These pancakes aka Crepes are 
indeed the largest I’ve seen – and even better – come with any stuffing you could 
possibly imagine – seriously the list of preconceived options is 4 typed pages long!! We 
eat these standing up on the sidewalk as its much like the Pizza By the Slice late night 
joints on 6th Street in Austin or the Burrito Shop in OB… no seats – you just order from a 
window. Srdjan also informs us that late at night you can wait an hour just to order! We 
finally head back to the hotel for dinner – after stuffing our faces with stuffed crepes as 
big as our head I couldn’t imagine eating more – so I managed with a salad before finally 
passing out. Overall – despite Jesse’s travel woes – a great first day in an awesome city 
with amazing hosts!
Sunday 8/17/08: Showerhead battles & making our way through the Serbian language

So today Jesse and I were pretty much on our own as our hosts were very busy with not only the start of the training but also “Beer Festival” that starts on Wednesday. Dance4Life Serbia has received some major media sponsorship and will have a large presence there with a big booth and “chill zone” where they will have information about the project, provide condoms and also host various dance mobs. Looks to be pretty exciting – and yet we would be lying if we didn’t say we’re a bit nervous about our young team’s ability to maintain restraint on the first night which is Wednesday – Srdjan has ensured us that they will have a curfew though – so we’ll see! ;-

Anyway – having successfully forced ourselves to stay up till about 10:30 pm on Saturday we had no problem sleeping through the night and both slept in till about 9 am, which was heavenly after the long days of travel. Our hotel is conveniently located right in the center of all the hustle and bustle of downtown Belgrade. It is at the corner of 2 promenades which are lined with places to sit and have coffee, cocktails etc. – yet not really food… so weird! This couple of “bar lined” streets are called “Silicon Valley” – and that’s no relation to the tech industry of Northern Cal. It seems to have gotten that name because it where all the women with silicon breasts come to be seen with their gangsta thug boyfriends who all drive high end vehicles and wear sunglasses at all times of the day. Its quite a spectacle and certainly lives up to its name. Its definitely not boring around here and about a block away is a pedestrian promenade lined with shops, which we headed down to try and find Jesse some toothpaste and a toothbrush.

Having successfully found a drug store that doesn’t sell drugs (I was looking for allergy meds to combat the change in climate which inevitably sets me off for the first few days in a new city) we continued on to do some exploration and see where we ended up with our trusty Belgrade city map. We found ourselves in a great park and were amused by the many literal English translations that make absolutely no sense – our favorite was the “Victory” monument or as they call it - the “Victor” monument – a controversial statue with a sordid past who had been relocated because of concern over his frontal nudity. We also explored the very expansive Military Museum, which is housed in the ruins of a huge old fort. We briefly contemplated the city zoo until we peaked in and saw caged pigeons 10x the size of normal pigeons – even well fed ones in Central Park. We stopped at one of the many watering holes for coffee before heading down to the river to explore the southern end. We rented bikes for the equivalent of $1.20 per hour and found a great place to have lunch – on none other than a floating barge. This was the most entertaining meal so far as we were given a menu that was only in Serbian – we spent a good 15 minutes at least attempting to make sense of the menu and shrieking in delight when we thought we had figured out a word… my favorite – “Bistek Welington” with all the proper lettering of course – which I knew had to be Beef Wellington! Reading menus has been a blast as we try to commit the most basic of vocabulary to our memory banks. A brief rundown of the words we have learned – hello, goodbye, please, thank you, thank you very much, thank you handsome guy, thank you beautiful girl (all very easy to mix
up), the check please, bathroom, cheers, beer, festival, and various menu items. So far so good I say…

After lunch we headed back to do some prep work and get ready to meet the team at the evening’s welcome reception. Speculating that few people would know each other we created a “scavenger” game with a list of random who’s done it activities which would encourage them to mingle – for example – find someone who has ridden a motorcycle, find someone with a birthday in May etc. We had one kid come up and tell us that he didn’t know the names of most of the people there – to which I replied – exactly – good reason to introduce yourself! His eyes lit up as he grasped the concept and he then went on to win the game with the most slots filled in. Lots of fun and definitely served to hype the team for the next day.

We headed home to get some rest and I decided to attempt the shower contraption in my bathroom, after I had learned from Jesse that despite the postings on the bathroom wall, does come with hot water – it literally says – Bath – Hot / Shower – Cold. Well this was my first mistake… I turned on the shower head and was instantly pleased by what was obviously great shower pressure… so I slid it into the wall slot on the side wall of the shower (not your normal above the faucet location) and then screamed as the shower head started spinning around on the wall from the sheer force of the water pressure. I tackled the wall and threw the showerhead on the tub floor thinking that it would spray down or at least only across the length of the tub… that would not be the case… it shot straight up towards my face both with the direct stream from the center and from the 45 degree arc of water on the outskirts – I sputtered and struggled for a few seconds to try to catch the elusive showerhead and finally had the sense to just turn the water off… after which I surveyed the bathroom to see the mess I had made – there was water everywhere!!! I imagine that this may be why there is an “SOS” emergency pull string in the shower… I’m not kidding! I laughed for a good 5 minutes before resigning myself to another hot tub bath… Showerhead - 1 / Tania – 0! Oh well…

Monday 8/18/08: Caesar? Yes… “Seasoned”!

Monday at last! Although we’ve only been here for two and a half days – it feels like longer as so much has happened already. We were very anxious to get the training started and the team’s enthusiasm matched ours, which was fantastic! We are working with teams from four cities in Serbia (Beograd, Novi Sad, Novi Pazar and Loznica) including one from the Muslim area of the country, which has its own potential difficulties, as they are somewhat uncomfortable talking about sex – kind of an essential when dealing with HIV/AIDS issues. They are very open though and the rest of the team is very supportive so its been less of a challenge than I had anticipated and less of a challenge than Srdjan had originally indicated. We had a very successful first day and the team even succeeded in learning the Dance4Life drill in its entirety – something that does not always occur on the first day. I really like the ease of the first day since besides teaching the drill its purpose is really to get everyone acquainted with one another. We
used lots of techniques to break up the groups especially across cities since most of the people from the same city do know each other. I’m thinking that we should probably start a list of all the ways we can match / break-up groups. So far we’ve gotten quite creative – like silently lining up by what time you went to bed the night before. Once they’re lined up we usually have them count off by the number of groups we need. Two things that I’m very happy about from today’s training – the dialogue that occurred after showing the Dance4Life moodclip – I wish I could remember what I said – but Jesse assures me that it was quite inspiring… and the result of the freestyle development. Although I know I only really have the experience of one other country’s freestyle – I think the Serbian freestyle is unique, fun and easy to learn / teach. We closed the day a little bit early with a ‘talking circle’ so that everyone had a chance to share their thoughts and feelings from the day’s experiences. I must say - its quite rewarding at the end of the day to hear the youth tell you that they are exhausted, but happy and eager for day 2!

So - Jesse and I’s biggest challenge so far is names – and specifically enunciation! Learning 26 new names is hard enough – throw in a very foreign language and you have us squinting from the sheer force of concentration! :-) The youth tell us that Serbian is one of the most difficult languages so to just keep practicing – which we have – with gusto! New words and phrases that we’ve learned today: “Bring me water please”, Bon Appetit, “Its Nothing” (an informal way of saying your welcome), waiter, check please, good morning and good day.

We eat breakfast and dinner at the hotel because its part of our package so we’ve gotten to know the konabars (waiters) pretty well. They never crack a smile though so we can’t quite figure out whether we amuse them or simply make them role their eyes with our attempts to order in Serbian. Lucky for me, the Serbians do salads and cheese very well – something that makes me very happy considering my weird I-won’t-eat-meat-if-I-don’t-know-who-cooked-it mental disorder. All Serbian produce is organic (something else I learned today) and so far the tomatoes and cucumbers I’ve had are the most delicious!! Their food also seem to have a lot of Italian, Mediterranean and Greek influence and having scored big with the Caprese salad, I decided to order the special tonight – Caesar salad. What came was essentially the garden salad I had ordered Saturday with lots of dried green herbs on it. When I questioned - Caesar? He replied – Yes, Caesar! So I pointed out that it looked like the Garden Salad – to which he replied – Yes Garden Salad! I pointed to the menu and said – but I ordered Caesar – and he finally proclaimed – ah Caesar – not “Seasoned?” I guess I need to work on my pronunciation…

Well – my “Caesar” finally arrived – and was about as Caesar as the Seasoned Garden Salad – though it did at least have croutons – and was yummy none the less. =)

Tuesday 8/19/08: Learning to Adapt!

My biggest challenge today… electricity. All of my essential electrical items started running out of juice today i.e. laptop, camera, cell phone. And though I brought a
European adaptor – its totally whacked and only connects half way out of the socket at the perfect obscure angle, which, is nearly impossible to maintain for longer than 6 seconds. I struggled all day to try and charge things and was nearly at my wits end when I had the idea to wedge my flip flop between the socket and the adaptor, which just so happens to maintain the perfect angle! Creative problem solving at its finest! =D And I’m happy to report that I’m fully charged!!

Day Va (Two) has been another wonderful but extremely long day with the Serbian team. One of my favorite parts of this training is watching individuals, who barely know each other, if at all, come together as a unified team – and this team is no different. And I LOVE it! Today we did an exercise to create a dialogue about what good facilitation, peer education and professionalism look like. We started by having them brainstorm what these terms mean to them and then break them up into three groups and have them create skits that illustrate both good and bad examples of each term. Then we open the floor to discuss what we saw that was good and what behaviors we would want to avoid. Besides being really fun – its also a great way to get them talking about it. We had some trouble with the term facilitation – particularly distinguishing it from peer education and training. I quoted Ruth Noller’s concept of “guide by the side” and they were able to grasp the difference – this is an interesting learning for us though since this is probably not a commonly used term – at least not in the sense that we use it.

This was the first time we used the public spotlight exercise – overall I would say it was quite successful. It gave everyone the opportunity to stand in front of the group and experience what it was like to have to speak to a crowd. And even though we gave them the choice to speak in Serbian – which meant that we had no idea what was actually being said – we paid attention to body language and stage presence and it definitely served to give us an idea of who are the strongest speakers.

The only thing that I thought could have been stronger today was the HIV/AIDS dissemination. We decided to break them down into 2 groups and each work with a group – simply because of the number of participants. In hindsight – I would have liked to have kept them together for this part – especially since it was the first time Jesse was facilitating this section. I’m also really bummed that we didn’t have the local perspective to give them – I will have to remember to get this from Srdjan. Even my delivery of information was disjointed. I will have to think about a better way to convey this information, as I just don’t think it was as effective as I would have liked.

I love that this group has participants with lots of theatre and dance experience which makes every day much more entertaining – I’ve even picked up some new hip hop moves along with our latest vocab. I can now add fork, spoon, knife, good night, see you later, formal your welcome, circle (as in ‘please get in a circle’) and count to 10! I’m on a roll!!!! Hee hee!! Jesse was also thrilled to learn that ‘Dje ce’ (pronounced Jes-se) means “What’s up?!” in slang and the slang response literally translated is – “I am here!” So its become a great game for the team – they yell JESSE! And he responds in Serbian – “I am
here!” and they all shriek in delight, laughing and clapping! I love this team – they make everything fun and we are on track after another hard day of work!

**Wednesday 8/20/08: Breaking through the Barriers and Festivo Pivo!**

Today marked the half way point of the training when the energy really begins to shift into high gear in order to be ready for Friday’s pilot workshops. This day is generally one of the most emotionally exhaustive as well, as we dive deep into talking about the HIV and AIDS reality to make that emotional connection and determine with the team how we are going to deliver the Positive Voice component of the workshop. The Positive Voice is where the team has the opportunity to give HIV and AIDS a face, to encourage a dialogue with the students and not only create the Heart Connection with the students (for which the workshop is so aptly named) but also start to breakdown stigmas – to show their students that HIV and AIDS do not discriminate – that anyone can become infected regardless of race, religion, socio-economic status or sexual preference. This is one of the most powerful opportunities within the workshop to share that message and so it is one that we very deliberately focus on with the team.

In the morning we wanted to really create the space for this team to feel safe talking about such a taboo topic in their country. We took advantage of a park about 2 blocks away from our venue for some of the morning exercises and it was perfect for building their trust while keeping the feeling fun and enjoyable. It was also just nice to be outside after having worked 8 solid hours a day for two days already. One of the best things about our training venue has been the number of rooms available to our disposal and as we were setting up in the morning we stumbled across a new room that we had not yet seen. The youth cultural center has been like being in a fun house – every time we open a door we find something new and exciting or another space - just when you didn’t think there could be more room. Its simply huge and reminds me of the haciendas in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico that my friend rented once for a wedding – you were always finding new surprises and new rooms when you thought you had already seen it all. Well this new space we decided would be perfect for some of the really deep dialogue we would get into. It was cool (its been hot as heck here!) and most importantly – quiet!!

There has been on going construction outside the building and the saws and hammering are grating on me… yet its impossible to close the windows because its so hot! Oh yah – and by the way – there is also a Serbian movie being filmed a block away with one of the oldest and most famous actors – whose name of course I can’t remember – and since we have to pass the filming at least twice a day – Jesse and I very well may make it into some Serbian film some day!

Anyway – I have learned that the HIV/AIDS dialogue techniques require a very delicate dance between pushing the team beyond its comfort zone, yet not so far and not so fast that they freak out and shut down. I think this is one of the most critical aspects of facilitating – being able to read the group and adjust accordingly on the most incremental scale – kinda like trying to tune the radio in my office!! And I do believe that I channeled
each of my amazing mentors for this exact moment. I felt so hypersensitive to every breath and movement of the group – reading body language and signals as well as listening to what they said and maybe what was not said. I was particularly conscious of the Muslim participants, as Srdjan had given us feedback before we started that this would be the most difficult for them. In this country being diagnosed with HIV goes beyond discrimination – it becomes a life and death matter as people who come forth with their status often must fear for their lives or worse yet – are shamed to the point of suicide. We talked about this and many of the everyday realities in their communities and in their lives… and I was humbled by the realization that despite this, they still chose to be here with us so that they could start to change those realities – even if its simply one person at a time…”

In the end, the team agreed that the best way to deliver their Serbian Positive Voice would need to be, at least for now, by reading personal letters from individuals who were HIV+… and after hearing some of their stories – we couldn’t help but agree.

Today also held one of those life-changing moments when you know your whole future will be different because of what you have experienced… it occurred in the midst of the meditation when I felt the presence of my mentors and knew I was being guided by something larger than myself. I explained to the team that quite simply – if they were clear on their purpose – then they could not fail… and at that exact moment I knew that for the very same reason… I would not fail either. It was like a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders with that knowledge and I could simply be free to do what I knew how to do… I didn’t have to think – I could just be and trust that my actions and decisions would be guided by knowing my purpose. It was an incredible feeling…”

Another observation that continues to strike a cord with me doing this work is the level of maturity that these youth embody – they are wise beyond their years and have seen and experienced things that no young person should ever have to and yet they are simply stronger for it… I think also about when I was 15, 16, 17 years old when my greatest concerns centered around what I was going to wear, who said what about whom, which boy I had a crush on and what I was going to do with my friends on the weekend… it gives me great satisfaction however to know that I am at least helping give these youth a voice now.

The remainder of the day was focused on practicing and refining other aspects of the workshop and signing up for the various roles of the workshop. For Jesse and I this meant a whole lot of homework, as it is our job to manage the difficult task of weighing the roles they want with the roles they are best suited for and in the best interest of creating the strongest team. Inevitably feelings get hurt… as almost everyone usually wants to be front and center on stage – which is impossible – and so we have the additional task of reassuring these individuals that as the team continues to grow together that they too will build their strengths and be able to successfully take on some of the roles they desire. We spent 2 ½ hours at the end of the day sorting out the roles for the
four Serbian teams – after which all we wanted to do was crawl in bed. However, being the opening night of Festivo Pivo and knowing that anyone and everyone who was involved with Dance4Life Serbia would be there we felt compelled to at least make an appearance.

After assuring Srdjan that I could find our way to the festival without an escort, as Jesse and I didn’t want to feel rushed to finish the team rosters, we finally set off in what I knew was the ‘general direction’ of the festival… I also have this ‘quirky’ habit of thinking I know where I’m going – when I may not always! I do have a good sense of direction and instinct though and so we continued with me repeating to Jesse – “no worries we’ll find it – how hard can it be?” and him repeatedly asking if I was sure I didn’t want to consult a map. I followed my instincts though and after a couple of wrong turns I turned to Jesse and said – shhhh – can you hear that? Lets just followed the music! A couple of blocks later – and sure enough we found the bridge that would take us across the river – and the music I heard… was indeed from the festival!

I’m not sure what we expected from Festivo Pivo but it went waaaaaaaaaay beyond our expectations. Imagine a venue the size of Coachella – or for the East Coasters – Bonnaroo! It was HUGE!!! AND FREE!!!!!!! With tons of really elaborate beer tents, an enormous stage / music area and a carnival midway. As we descended upon Festivo Pivo with the thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands of other people we quickly identified what was none other than a Serbian Iron Maiden tribute band! LOL! I was very bummed to learn that we had just missed the Serbian Red Hot Chili Pepper tribute band – though I am convinced that this must have been the music I heard that instinctively led me in the right direction! Hee hee! After a bit of meet and greet at the D4L tent we followed some of the team to the Midway where Jesse and I kindly said “hell no” to some of the rides they wanted us to go on – both of us thinking about the dinner we had just scarfed down and which we were certain would come right back up if we were either dropped, turned upside down or spun around too quickly. We did agree to the bumper cars though which was great fun considering I hadn’t been on one since… I can’t even remember!! Am I getting old or what?!

We headed back to the D4L tent and stopped by one of the Beer Tent monstrosities to try a local Belgrade beer… and I don’t care how many times I see it – it still seems so strange to me to drink beer with 15 and 16 year olds as if its nothin’… but I guess its our culture that makes it a big deal. My absolute favorite of the night – the two punk bands that followed Iron Maiden – one from Croatia and one from Serbia. Though I can barely spell the band names and can’t understand what they’re saying – I love them! Finally at about 11:30 - despite the protests - Jesse and I said our good byes and headed back across the river, passing the thousands and thousands of people still headed to the festival - and after only a couple more wrong turns and with Jesse’s full faith in my ability to get us home – even if it’s the scenic route – we found our way back to the hotel. I know we’re both looking forward to Friday night and being able to enjoy Festivo Pivo more – though
right now my biggest concern is what shape the team will be in tomorrow. We pushed the start time back an hour to 10 am – so we’ll see! Until tomorrow – dovidjena!

**Thursday 8/21/08: Validation & Politika Interview**

This morning – despite having only one beer – I woke up feeling a little fuzzy! I have no idea what the alcohol content of that beer was – but its got to be much more than what we have in the US – I’m simply not that much of a light weight! Of this I’m certain! Anyway – a cool ‘bath’ (I haven’t had the guts to take on showerhead again) pepped me right up – as did the extra hour of sleep!

Despite our worries, the team showed up on time and if not bright-eyed and bushy tailed – at least committed to the day ahead of them – which would be no walk in the park as it would be their last opportunity to practice delivering the workshop in its entirety. Jesse and I had decided that the best way to manage the four teams would be to take two each and have them practice side by side in the morning and then solo in the afternoon with us bouncing back and forth between them – I certainly got my work out today – though Jesse had the unfortunate set-up of having to run up and down the stairs too.

Working with four teams is an interesting challenge – and as far as I know has not been done before in any of the other countries. So Jesse and I are setting a precedent here. Although the ultimate goal is to simply make it work – I have to admit that I’m frustrated that we have to do it this way. First – it separates Jesse and I and so we can’t bounce ideas and feedback off each other – which I think is a loss for the team too since they only have one person to provide feedback. Two – it means that we don’t get to work with everyone and I’m sad that I won’t be able to witness everyone’s progress. Regardless of my personal disappointment with this set-up, I think it was quite effective. We started in the morning by having each of our two teams present simultaneously – stopping between component of the workshop to provide feedback. The nice thing about this is that they got to learn and build off each other. Basically one team would present the first component and stop – then the second team would present the first component and stop – and then we’d discuss some feedback and what was good about each team’s presentation. I also alternated which team started off each component so that not one team was ever having to always go first. After lunch – each team ran through the workshop straight through in separate rooms and I ran back and forth. Jesse used the same format with his two teams today also. Like I said – not ideal – but we seem to have made it work.

So today I also received a seemingly small yet enormous sense of validation for the work we are doing. Throughout the week Jesse and I have tried to at times to check-in with the team members individually and informally to address any concerns or questions they may have – especially considering the language barrier. Although we’ve conducted this entire workshop in English and they all basically understand it – there are a few that we’ve realized probably don’t understand everything. I noticed one of our Muslim team
members smoking on the patio so I went to see how he felt about the morning practice so far. This young man is 20 and probably one of the more conservative Muslims of the group. We talked briefly about how the team was coming together and then he turned to me and said that he was speaking to one of his team members about getting tested. Momentarily thrown off by the change of direction of the conversation I asked him to explain further. He says – “I just wanted you to know that I’m going to get tested for HIV – I have never been tested but I have done things and I think I should get tested. I am worried and scared but I want to get tested.” I smiled and thanked him for sharing that with me. He put out his cigarette and said “No, thank you” and headed back inside. And that was that… and it was the best gift I could have received… =)

The second surprise of the day came while we were walking to lunch. Jesse and I were discussing how our mornings had gone when Mikaela, the youth center coordinator, ran up behind us with another woman whom she introduced us to. Jesse and I have met at least two dozen individuals this week who are somehow related to the project – though were not always sure how – so we both assumed this was another such person. Well then she pulls out a tape recorder and says she is with the Politika newspaper – a local Serbian paper and would like to ask us a few questions. Jesse and I quickly looked at each other communicating silent “yikes” in our eyes – and his followed by a – “yah you’re taking the lead on this right?!?” So I took a couple of deep breaths and smiled and said surrrrrrrrrrr – what can I tell you? She asked us a bunch of questions about the project and the team and how the training was coming along and how we felt about our time in Serbia. We then suggested that she also interview some of the team members – which she did. So there’s another first! Jesse and I are going to be quoted in a Serbian newspaper! Nuts!!

And with that – I’m ready to pass out! Tomorrow is our final day – and the teams will each run the workshop live – hopefully with local students as they have been announcing it on the radio for the last week. I can’t wait!!

Friday 8/22/08: Celebrations!

I woke up this morning filled with anticipation and a little bit of trepidation simply knowing that there are always unforeseen obstacles that arise on the final day of the training – and with four teams instead of one – this could potentially be exponential. I was delighted to see that despite Beer Fest being in full swing - the entire team was there a full hour early as we had asked. Our first panic of the morning was about 10 minutes before “show time” and Srdjan had still not shown up with the 2nd projector and sound system. Luckily the waiting team was tech savvy and when he showed up a couple minutes later they wasted no time getting fully set up. Next came the notice that more than half the students that were suppose to show had cancelled… I blame this in part on Beer Fest. ;-) However with 4 teams we had a built in contingency plan and had the two afternoon teams sit in as participants as well for the morning teams. This was also a great opportunity for them to learn from each other. We ended up doing the same thing in the
afternoon when not all the students showed and in the end it worked out great as it was more than we could have hoped for when we started Monday that all four teams would actually get to even perform a live workshop.

Overall I would say that the teams did very well. Our smallest team – with only 5 people – was coincidently the strongest and did amazingly well! Although there was some apprehension and a bit of disjointedness at times – this is to be expected and I know that the teams will only continue to get better as times goes on and they have the chance to repeat the workshop over and over again. This is the first opportunity I have had to really step back and acknowledge what we have accomplished this week! We have successfully trained FOUR teams in one week. This is no small feat and considering that this is also the first time that Jesse and I have conducted an HCT training together (actually the first time he’s even experienced an HCT training!) I think we’ve done a phenomenal job. The exhaustion is finally beginning to hit me… we’ve put so much energy into this workshop! But I’m very satisfied with the outcome.

The afternoon was filled with a lot of laughter, celebration and emotion as we finally brought the training to a close… the only part that I do not like about this job. Saying good bye… which is so very hard after such a long week of intense interaction and connection and harder still when you realize that it is so difficult for these youth to leave their country and on the chance that they do get permission – to then attempt to visit our. And with that acknowledgment comes the awareness that I very well may not see these new friends for a very long time – if ever again… in the simplest terms… its not fair… it makes me cry every time… and this time was no different… We still had one night left though and so after distributing certificates, taking team pictures and sharing last words – we all headed back to our hotels, exhausted and happy and having agreed to meet later in the evening for one last night (at least for Jesse and I) of Beer Festivities!

Jesse and I went back to the hotel – both looked at each other and said – “I need a nap!” That settled - we headed upstairs and agreed to touch base “later.” About 8 pm Srdjan woke me up when he called to invite us to a pre-Beer Fest party at the Y-Peer offices. As much I could have very easily stayed in bed – I knew that we had to rally for this last celebration with the team so I woke up Jesse and we headed out for a quick dinner – another lovely salad with beautiful tomatoes for me – before finding our way to the Y-Peer offices. I think one of my favorite things about our experience in Belgrade is that everything has been within walking distance – the training venue, the participants hotel where we have lunch, beer fest and even the Y-peer offices… conveniently on the way to Festiva Piva! When we arrived Srdjan informed us that the film crew who was shooting a documentary on Beer Fest had called to ask if the team could perform the drill – he then of course turned to us and asked if we would organize that… “surrerrrrrrrrre – why not??” We fitted the team with t-shirts and all headed out to Beer Fest and when we arrived at the D4L booth the film crew was already there and the D4L Serbia PR Person was frantic! Why?? Well because the sound system wasn’t working… but of course!! Jesse and I laughed at the silly notion that we might have had that this would actually go
smoothly… so our solution… do it without music! Because we had been working with 4 teams and one sound system all week this was something the teams had been accustomed to – they would simply have to sing it. I turned to the strongest dancers and resident hip hop crew and asked if they felt comfortable being up front without music – to which they replied “hell yah… if you do it with us!” So much for sitting this one out! Jesse and I agreed that I would support the front while he backed up the middle lines with voice commands. We realized later that it was at about this moment that we each silently had the simultaneous realization that neither one of us had actually performed the free style portion of the drill before. The free style component of the drill is unique to each country and is developed by the pilot team of each country to be implemented in future Heart Connection Tours. And as it is “their” free style we usually just facilitate the development and then allow them to do the teaching to each other… meaning we don’t always pick it up. With the film crew antsy and the PR person bopping around wanting us to get started I thought to myself – too late for worrying about that now – you’re just gonna have to do it! And I quickly reviewed it in my head as we got ready to start. When Jesse and I talked afterwards we laughed as we realized that we had both gone through the same mental dialogue. Well – I don’t even have to tell you that the team was amazing – as I knew they would be! They sang and danced their hearts out while 100’s of people watched! It left me with goose bumps – or “chicken skin” as one of team members called it after one of the more emotional conversations of the week! I was so crazy exhausted and filled with joy! And yet that would not be the end of the night…

The team insisted that we go listen to this “awesome band” with them and at this point we were riding the same emotional high and were completely past the point of exhaustion that listening to some music and keeping up the dance celebration seemed like a fantastic idea! I am so happy that we did, as the “awesome band” was truly one of the coolest musical experiences I have ever encountered!! I struggle with how to describe them – short of phenomenal! Imagine traditional Balkan rhythms overlaid with electronic house and trance DJ grooves overlaid with brass horn and violin melodies! It was the seriously the coolest thing I’ve ever heard! And I’m pretty sure we danced the entire hour and a half set non-stop!! The band is from Macedonia and of course I can’t pronounce the name – but as soon as I get it – I will share it. Jesse and I were so blown away that we spoke to Srdjan and the PR woman about approaching them about becoming Dance4Life ambassadors and creating a D4L track for the Balkan nations similar to what Relax and DJ Tiesto have done for the organization. I really hope it works out, as they were simply incredible! And still the dance party went on as the next set took over – a Serbian DJ that kept us dancing till I thought I might fall over… I finally had the sense to check the time and was shocked to realize that it was nearly 2 am!!! I think that, along with the sudden comprehension that not only did we still have to walk home, but pack and get ready to leave the next day caused a full mental crash. Luckily Jesse and I were totally on the same “ready-to-go-home wavelength” and with that came the heavy weight of finally saying good-bye or as we preferred… Dovijeña… Till Soon… We completed our sad round of good-byes with those still left in the dance area we had overtaken and started to find our way out – totally bummed that we didn’t have the foresight to say good-bye to
everyone before people started wandering off and realizing that with 1000’s and 1000’s of people at a festival and it being so dark – the chances of running into those people was slim to none… Well – the universe must have heard our hearts breaking because against all odds we ran into not one, not two – but four groups of peeps from the team as we made our way out and even ran into the PR person was also on her way out and walked us home… ensuring that we wouldn’t need my scenic route. It was the longest day ever – but one that I will remember for a very, very long time.  And as we chatted with the PR woman on the long walk back to the hotel I found myself both grateful for the opportunities that I have as a US citizen and the freedom to travel… and also saddened that this is not a freedom shared by all and particularly not by those that I have met along this D4L path and taken into my heart!  I struggle with what to say when they express a desire to come visit us… each of us knowing that this will be a difficult dream for them to realize.  However – I know that I can say with absolute certainty that I will return to visit Serbia.

I know that this team will always… perhaps because they were Jesse and I’s “first” team… hold a very special place in my heart… And although I picked up and retained more Serbian vocab than I ever thought possible… my favorite Serbian phrase that I learned this week… and which this team perfectly embodies… Ja Sam Svetlost Moga Grada – “I am the light of my city!”

And so I lock the memories, feelings, experiences and emotions of this first week away… and take a few deep breaths… and get ready to do it all over again as we head on to the next adventure in Moldova!

**Saturday 8/23/08: Jesse and Tañia – the “invisible”**

This morning started hectic for me as I woke up groggy from less sleep that I was use to and realized that I had about 45 minutes to pack before check out.  After a hasty packing job I headed downstairs to meet Jesse for one last Serbian lunch before we wandered off to try and find a post office.  We had only a general idea of where it was and ended up wandering aimlessly for a few minutes before resorting to sign language and pointing to the empty square on our post cards to a few passerbys.  Having successfully completed our last item on the to-do check-list we headed back to the hotel to wait for Srdjan and head to the airport. It was a bittersweet good-bye as we turned to face the day of travel ahead of us.

Considering Jesse’s experience on the flight out… I’d say the day went relatively smoothly.  I successfully checked my bag with .5 kilos to spare on the weight limit – yay!  But then was bummed to find out that we wouldn’t be seated together – well at least I had a window so I would be able to sleep… or so I thought… I got back to my seat and found an enormous man literally wedged into my seat so that we was actually bending the armrest out!! I quickly weighed the pros of having a window to the potential claustrophobia I would surely endure being stuck between him and the window – and
wisely decided to stick with the aisle seat. All I can say is... thank goodness. The plane was small and hot – not a favorite combo of mine – and the turbulence for the first half left me nauseous and white knuckled. The large man next to me also succeeded in taking over half my seat – obviously not caring that I was practically in the aisle... I couldn’t wait to get off that plane.

We landed in Turkey and had a whole complicated list of to-dos. Luckily we also had 3 hours... First we had to purchase transit visas just to hang out at the Turkish airport. Then we had to pick up our luggage that had only been checked as far as Turkey. Once we had our luggage we wandered around trying to find the small and obscure check-in counter for Air Moldova. We wandered up and down aisles and aisles of check-in counters, most of which said TAV... must be a huge airline I thought... as we desperately tried to find Air Moldova. Finally we saw the international sign for information! “i” Woooohoooooo! So we get in that line to ask about Air Moldova when our invisibility cloaks must have activated. We are literally next in line and this guy just walks up out of nowhere and tries to cut us off!! Well – had we not been so tired and hungry and simply over dragging around our luggage – we might have let it slide. But Jesse and I looked at each other in disbelief and decided that this just wasn’t going to happen – so we shouldered our way past him and took our place at the counter. We ask about our obscure little airline and learn that they don’t actually assign check-in counters until about 1 ½ hours before the flight... however we were told that Air Moldova is usually D14. Turns out I guess that TAV is actually the initials for the Turkey Airport – heh! Soooo –With that settled we decided to go for food and coffee... when in Rome... eat Pasta... when in Turkey... drink coffee! And baklava of course! ;)

Dinner was mellow though shockingly expensive – two sammies, chips, water and dessert were nearly $50!!! The sammies alone were $14 each!! They were good – but come on! Anyway – we sat around for a bit just tired from the long last night in Serbia and trying to psych ourselves up for round 2. About 45 minutes later a quick peek at Counter D14 – which indeed was Air Moldova and we headed to check-in. Once again – we stand in our line waiting with everyone else and right before its our turn a lady comes and literally puts her bag right in front of ours! We laughed in disbelief and when the counter opened up I simply picked up her bag and moved it over so we could get ours through. I’m beginning to wonder if this is some odd custom... Anyway – bags checked – we headed back in and finally sit down to enjoy our Turkish coffee before the final leg.

The rest of the trip was fairly uneventful and we amused ourselves with the flight attendant who walked around in the demo life vest for half the flight... I’m assuming b/c she forgot and not b/c she knew something we didn’t!?:) and by reading hysterical English translations of Romanian text in the Air Moldova Magazine – just a snippet – from the article on the Royal Palace in Madrid – “The last construction was lasting from 1738 to 1764 after a next fire. It looks rather representative, even for the king. The palace is said to be the biggest royal palace in the world. One way or another, there are 2800 rooms, 240 balconies, 44 staircases and so like and so forth, everything in superior
numbers.” Maybe you had to be there – but Jesse and I couldn’t stop giggling! I certainly hope that our airlines don’t torture others this badly when we attempt to translate to foreign text. =)

Our flight landed in Chisinau (pronounced Quiche-i-now) around midnight – as did all of our luggage thankfully – and we were met by Peter – Alex’s (Moldovan Srdjan) assistant and we would later learn – brother too! It’s a family affair!

The difference between Belgrade and Chisinau was instantly apparent. Whereas Belgrade was always “on” – lights, traffic, noise, smoke – Chisinau was dead at the midnight hour with the smell of burning brush in the air and the sounds of insects. The sounds and smells reminded me very much of being in Latin America and this was strangely comforting and relaxing. It was also blessedly cool and breezy compared to the record high heat wave that Belgrade was going through – 38 degrees Celsius when we left – don’t know the conversion exactly but I think that’s around a 100 F.

Peter dropped us off at the hotel – literally called <<Mini>> Hotel – complete with brackets and everything – which despite our worries about heading further in to Eastern Europe was actually very nice! Peter’s English was limited and our Russian nearly non-existent so he left us with what we thought were instructions that he would be back to pick us up at 10 am. After an extraordinarily long day – there was nothing left to do but pass out – so we did!
Moldova

Sunday 8/24/08: Exploring Chisinau and Meeting the Team!

After a leisurely breakfast we finally met Alex who came to pick us up and take us to the AFEW offices. AFEW or AIDS Foundation East-West is the Dance4Life National Concept Owner in Moldova. D4L Moldova as we learned has an interesting history. After seeing the D4L Drill Performance at the International AIDS Conference in St. Petersburg, Alex pursued D4L Russia to find out more and try to get involved. They told him that if he could get the funds that he was welcome to come to an upcoming training and learn first hand what the project was about. Alex raised funds for himself and a couple of others to attend and then returned to Chisinau to start implementing D4L in Moldova. They created amazing promotional materials, got their team organized and started conducting workshops in the schools – yet for some reason, that is still not clear for me, D4L International did not want to recognize them as their own country – instead they wanted them to be a region of D4L Russia. Now the one thing that is apparent here is that this is a country struggling for identity. Having been traded back and forth between Russian and Romania for years the national pride is such that they want to move away from the Russian identity. Romanian is actually the national language and there is a campaign to phase out Russian, which has been difficult since half the country speaks Russian. In hindsight, I should have seen the potential difficulties the two languages were going to pose on our training. Anyway – you can imagine their frustration at being considered a region of the Russian D4L team. And long story short – Alex pushed and pushed until D4L Int’l finally agreed to make Moldova its own country. It is standard procedure that when a new D4L country comes on board that RedZebra conduct the Heart Connection Training – so their being accepted as their own country is what put them on our list of trainings for this year and hence the reason we were here… a little backwards I thought… but oh well – we were here now.

After visiting the offices and seeing all the cool things they are doing and have done we headed out to meet the Chisinau portion of the team in the park. We were greeted by the old, or what we are now calling the 2007 team, and they performed their drill for us. I immediately felt an awkwardness as the 2007 team was being “showcased” and the 2008 team, who we would be working with, was standing off to the side looking and feeling out of place it seemed – so I made a conscious effort to greet them first before introducing myself to the old team and Jesse probably sensing it as well – followed suit. This “new and old” dynamic would be something we would struggle with all week. After some brief introductions all around, and going over a few logistical details for the next morning, we set off with Alex for a walking tour of the city center and to get lunch.

Chisinau is centered around a park area and we saw one of the cathedrals, the flower market alley, the president’s house – which is nothing like a house but more like a large office building – parliament and many other government offices. The flower alley was beautiful to see AND smell! And also really expensive! When we arrived at the
restaurant, which was underground, we were greeted by a host with a tray of shot glasses. We were each handed one and Jesse and I just looked around in confusion as Alex and the host stared at us expectedly. He finally helped us out by telling us that this was a local tradition – to offer your guests a shot of wine before being seated… well alrighty – bottoms up then! Alex ordered us a sample of several traditional dishes – lots of them with cheese!!! My favorite by far – a polenta like dish called Mamaliga served with shredded goat cheese and sour cream. We talked more about what he had done with the 2007 team and we listened with a bit of trepidation as we realized the unique situation we were entering into. Since RedZebra normally conducts the first HCT trainings in each country we help them to establish a workshop program that is aligned with what other countries are conducting in their schools. However, since Alex had basically trained his team with little to no direct support from D4L Int’l (having been a region of Russia and therefore not a direct link) he had created his own program… which we were realizing was very different from what we have been teaching. They had also modified the drill – utilizing a professional choreographer – and professional dancers in their original team. Although I respected what they had done and why – I was concerned that their workshop had become more of a “performance” rather than a peer-to-peer educational and interactive experience FOR the students. He mentioned that they had had difficulty maintaining the attention of the students… however we could tell that he did not see the connection to the format they were using. He shared that they begin the program with the team performing their professionally choreographed drill to the students – and I just kept thinking that this is not what the Heart Connection Tour is suppose to be about. Jesse and I have developed a working rhythm over the last week and we seem to very much be on the same wavelength about most things and I could tell that he felt the same nervousness – how do you tell someone that is passionately dedicated to what he’s doing, has worked so hard, and who clearly also likes to be in control… that his format may not be as effective as it could be?

He shared that he also had experienced some of what he called “super star” problems with the 2007 team – individuals who lost sight of the “team” aspect of the workshop and wanted to always be front and center and treated differently because they were in such prominent roles. Something else I attributed to the performance-like delivery of the workshop. We both withheld any comments though and I was glad we both had the sense to not mention anything yet. My anxiousness shifted though as the conversation switched towards more personal discussions – sharing about our families and backgrounds and Alex sharing additional customs and traditions of his country. My fav… it is customary (like the shot of wine at the beginning of the meal) for hosts to give their guests a shot right before they leave. It is in this way that they measure their guests’ ability to get home safely – so if they’ve drunk too much – you invite them to stay. The logic in this boggles me still – unless the underlying goal is always to have them stay?! Hmmm… lets see… drink some more so that we can tell if you’re too drunk to leave… yep – drunk… ok - stay here! Works for me I guess! ;)}
Stuffed with cheese and wine – oh yah – did I mention that Moldova is known for its wine? It is their “National Treasure” and the main winery is actually in a cave under the city, which you have to have special permission to visit. The employees of the winery are paid bukoo bucks because of the level of confidentiality that is required. Their production methods are a heavily guarded secret and the jobs are usually passed down to sons and daughters of employees of the winery. Anyhoooo – Alex showed us back to the center, gave us directions to get to our hotel and told us that Peter would be by to pick us up at 9:45 the next morning to take us to the venue.

There was a random open market at the park selling things we totally didn’t need but being our only day to explore I think we felt inclined to wander around for awhile… Despite the 90 something degree weather – we bought sweaters… random and not necessarily cheap or of high quality… I’ll blame it on the heat, which I think had fried our brains. We sluggishly wandered back to the hotel at which point I decided all I could do to keep from melting was sleep – thankfully with A/C. I slept soundly and missed the thunderstorm – which Jesse was shocked hadn’t woken me up… but hey – when I’m tired, I’m tired. I reluctantly got up at about 8:30 and we headed out to try and find some dinner on our own – and whatdyta know –the temperature had gone down so much we needed sweaters!! Really exhausted, but knowing we needed to eat, we stopped at the first place we saw – an outdoor café. As the waitress handed us menus we had a bit of déjà vu from the restaurant in Belgrade without English menu translations. Though this was worse b/c we couldn’t make any sense of ANY of the words. I recognized at least my fav dish from lunch earlier – mamaliga brinza de oi – translation – really yummy stuff with cheese – so it was two of those. Oddly, the hardest part was ordering water. Although we thought we had learned the word for water (always one of our first vocab words b/c it seems like we’re always thirsty and no one else is drinking) the waitress did not seem to know what we were asking. Luckily – one of the gentlemen sitting at the table next to us understood what we wanted and ordered 2 waters for us. Interesting thing is – although our accent may have been off a bit – I know we were using the right word… guess we caught her on the wrong night. Finally fed we headed back to the hotel and right to sleep.

Monday 8/25/08: A new team and lessons in adapting on the fly

Despite the seer-sucker like sheets on my bed (not the softest) I slept like a rock and woke up the next morning ready to head out to Ghicocel – the “resort” we would be at all week. Now let me say that when I first started communicating with Alex’s other assistant – he mentioned that the venue was like a “camp” outside of the city. So my expectations of comfortable accommodations were not very high. However – when I spoke to Alex a few days before we arrived – he used the work “resort”. I tried to clarify that his assistant had told me it was a camp – he told me – well not really – it’s a place that people go for vacation. Ok! So resort it was! When I told Jesse this he started dreaming of pools, spas and massages – and though I told him that we probably shouldn’t get our hopes up THAT high – I also had visions very different than what was to be our reality.
The drive out was beautiful and took us through the Moldovan countryside. About 90 minutes later we pulled up to the Ghicocel “Resort”… and I must admit that “camp” was a much more accurate description. Having consumed much more water than I should have for the long ride I immediately needed to pee. I asked directions to the bathroom and I was directed along a path through the woods to an outhouse that you could smell from about a 100 yards out. The toilets were holes in the ground and I was a bit disturbed by the light coming through – meaning that all that waste was exposed – reminder to stick to bottled water. It was pretty disgusting – but I’ve still seen worse… like the port-a-potties at Beer Fest – ugh!

Anyway - we finally got checked in – the students to large bunk cabins – very camp like – and us to a house with multiple rooms – and thankfully – flush toilets. Though the tiny cots came in either “stiff as a board” or “sinkhole” models – that bothered me much less than the number of spiders I saw all over the place. Small spiders – but spiders nonetheless. This would be the hardest thing for me to cope with during the week and I had to remember not to look up – as the ceiling corners were the worst. I dropped off my bags and headed to the “mess hall” for lunch. Decent – but nothing exciting.

Finally settled in and fed – we were finally ready to begin. Normally we would have started the training at around 9 am on the first day – however the logistics were such that with travel and everything else – we wouldn’t get going till almost 1:30 in the afternoon. The training is designed to be 8 hours a day for 5 days – so it was going to be a lonnnnnng day.

Our next obstacle was space. Despite our requests for a room large enough to accommodate the team comfortably and ideally an additional outdoor space… what we got was a large outdoor amphitheater and a small open, but at least covered patio. We decided to start with at the patio – since we had lots of easels to hang up and the afternoon sun made the amphitheater too hot to work in. We got set up as fast as we could – and could only laugh as we battled high winds and lousy tape – but at least we were ready to go at 1:30.

One of the more amusing parts of the first day is trying to learn new names and new enunciations. If we thought Serbia had been hard – Moldova was harder as some wrote their names in Russian – and the letters were very foreign to us. They’re written names looked nothing like their spoken names – and even some that had written their names in English letters didn’t sound like what they had written. They were patient with us though and we were grateful for that. Besides giving the team opportunities to get to know each other better the first day is also dedicated to providing back ground info on the project and teaching the drill. Its always inspiring to see a young team so excited and revving to go – and this team was no different. Their energy was boundless and I was surprised at how focused and engaged they remained throughout the long afternoon.
One of the first and greatest hurdles of the week was a major language barrier. Although we had been told that the team all understood English it became clear to us that only half really comprehended English well – so we decided we would have to use an interpreter. If you ever tried to speak for any length of a time with a simultaneous interpretation you know that this is not easy at first. You have to train yourself to stop often enough for the interpreter to translate and this can be difficult thing to get used to when you have a flow going. As we made this decision to use an interpreter a very heated discussion erupted that neither of us could of course understand. When we finally stopped it to figure out what was happening we were surprised to learn that they were arguing over whether it should be translated to Russian or Romanian. This was a very new twist – as I’ve never had to try and work with two different languages. The problem was that not everyone could understand or speak English and… not everyone spoke Russian – though most understood it and… not everyone spoke Romanian and those who didn’t – also didn’t understand it very well… however those that spoke Romanian as a first language took offense to having to do it in Russian – as it is not the national language. Trying to translate into 2 languages would take waaaay too long so I had to figure out how to handle this quickly. I had those who could understand English get up and step aside – and with those left asked who could understand Romanian – most hands went up but not all. I then asked who could understand Russian even if it wasn’t their preference – and the remaining hands went up. I could tell that the Romanian speakers were disappointed and I felt bad – but I explained that this wasn’t a matter of preference but rather being efficient and effective and making sure we could communicate with everyone. That settled – it was going to be English and Russian.

Our next bump was teaching the drill. After watching them perform on the first day in the park – we realized that they were doing something different than what we were teaching. Jesse and I had discussed this and the overall flow of the workshop and decided that we needed to choose our battles and that the drill was really the least of our concerns – so we would teach it the way they had been doing it – or rather teach them the parts we knew and let them teach us the parts that we didn’t.

As we closed up the first day in the dark (we had limited electricity in the evenings) we were pleased to hear the team express their excitement for the next day. Considering it was now 8 pm – and some of the team had traveled for 3 hours to get to Chisinau that morning – this was good news. My favorite quote of the day: “I am really tired, but I’m so happy to be here and I can’t wait for tomorrow” – I guess you can’t get much better than that! =)

Exhausted – but needing to plan our strategy – Jesse and I headed back to our dorms to figure out the plan for the next day.

The newest wrinkle that we had to consider on top of everything else was the team composition. As I mentioned in Serbia – the HCT training is really designed for one team. It appeared that we had at least 2 and possibly 3 teams for this training. A piece of
cake after managing four in Serbia… or so I thought! ;-) The first team was the Russian Chisinau team – this would be the team responsible for the workshops at all the Russian schools in the city. The second was the 4 members that would join the 2007 team to conduct the Romanian Chisinau workshops and who were already familiar with the program – just hadn’t gone through the official training. And the last was the Balti (sounds like Beltz) team that would be a bilingual team conducting workshops in both languages in their city about 3 + hours outside of Chisinau. This was supposed to be a team of 10 – however 6 flaked and so we were left with 4.

To our advantage – Alex told us that he would be leaving in the morning to go back to Chisinau as he had to do some things at the office and that we could rely on a few of the strong English speakers in the group to translate for us. This was great news as we felt strongly that we needed to proceed with the training as is – even though it would result in a different workshop flow than what was currently be conducted. We hadn’t quite figured out how we were going to convince Alex that he should change his format so we were happy that we could put that off for another day. This was especially good because in one of the rounds of introductions where we all had to share something we liked – Alex expressed that he liked to be “the boss” – confirming our fears that he wasn’t going to just let us do things the way we knew we should. We would cross that bridge when we came to it though.

The final power struggle of the day was over the role of Alex’s assistants – whom he wanted to watch over things in his stead. This was one area I wasn’t willing to compromise on since my experience had shown that particularly in situations where your discussing delicate subjects such as HIV/AIDS it does not serve the team to have someone watching or critiquing them. I explained this to Alex and offered instead that his assistants participate as full members of the team and if needed – observe from within. He stated that if this would be the case he would want the rest of the team to know that they were not on the same level and needed to be respected as authority figures. I explained that that sort of dynamic would not be conducive to building a collaborative team and we simply didn’t feel comfortable with that set-up. Whether it was simply because he was tired or actually saw my point of view I don’t know – but he acquiesced to having them participate as normal members of the team. That battle won – I finally passed out.

Tuesday 8/26/08: Elements of surprise and learning to communicate in 3 languages

We have been blessed on this trip with the most perfect weather. Moldova has an added element of an amazing breeze during the day and cool, cool nights, which is such a welcomed change from Serbia. (We must have instinctively known this on the first day when we decided to buy our sweaters in 100 degree weather!) Despite the breeze though – the sun can get really hot during the day so we decided today we were just gonna have to chase the shade around. Our working space is really limited here at the camp. The covered patio is small and really only good for small circle activities – its also just not
that inspiring. The amphitheater is a great space – but we have to consider where the sun is to keep from frying – so we’ve decided to keep moving the benches around to follow the shade – and pray that we don’t get rain this week!

This young team keeps surprising me. Their enthusiasm is boundless – and one young lady in particular, who we’ve fondly knick-named our “little lunatic.” She is the most bouncy thing I’ve ever seen and is always smiling and talks a mile a minute. We decided to use this to our advantage, as she is also one of the most fluent in English – so since she’s a natural yapper – we’ve “hired” her as our interpreter in Alex’s absence. I’m thinking one of the wiser decisions we’ve made. We also realized that despite the decision that we thought we had made yesterday regarding limiting the training to English & Russian, most of the conversations are happening in Romanian…We’ve kind of given up on trying to manage this as we can’t tell the difference anyway and have just decided to let them translate back and forth amongst themselves. And when we feel the need to understand the inside discussions that are happening – we turn to our trusty “little lunatic” who is more than happy to fill us in.

So today we worked on the creative message portion of the workshop – essentially a component that allows the team to share additional AIDS/HIV info in a non-traditional way – and beyond the peer-to-peer speaking interaction. This is usually one of the more difficult areas of the training because it requires a balance of creative thinking with logistical manageability. The criteria that we give them are that it must deliver a clear message, it must engage the audience, and it must be carried out efficiently with a group of 100+ students. We normally divide them into smaller groups and have each group brainstorm some ideas and then they all present and we converge on the best ones to refine. Many countries use theater and some have used puppetry or created a game show etc. I was really quite impressed with what came up today. The first was a game that I’ve heard of before that usually is a long complicated process that involves distributing candy and who’s aim is to show how quickly HIV can spread. This team though figured out a really simple way to basically play the same game with a large group and deliver the same message using plain sheets of paper. They pass out paper to everyone and have 1-3 sheets that are folded (depending on the # of students). They ask the students with folded sheets to hold their sheets up in the air so they can count them. They then ask those with folded sheets to turn to the person on their right and show it to them and ask them to fold theirs. The second round now has everyone with folded sheets turn to the person behind them, show them the folded sheet, and ask them to fold it. This continues for 2 more rounds – to the left and to the front. They then ask everyone who NOW has a folded sheet of paper to hold it up. They reiterate that although we started with only a few “infected/folded” sheets of paper – that number has now quickly multiplied – the message being that “THIS is how quickly HIV can spread if you have unprotected sex.”

The second part of their creative message was also incredibly simple and amazingly powerful. They formed a line on the stage hand-in-hand and explained that the spread of HIV is like a chain – they start a ‘wave’ with their linked arms until one person breaks
lose and flips up a condom instead… indicating that the chain of infection can be broken with protected sex. I was so proud of them and even more thrilled when they showed it to Alex later on and he loved it. Since they currently don’t have a creative message component in the HCT workshops they’ve been conducting this helped us to sell him on the value of this component. Yay!!

So I’ve never done a training where we all spend the night at the venue – therefore I really don’t ever get to see how they interact on their own time. Here – since we’re all at the camp together and there’s not a whole lot else to do – we’ve gotten to spend a little more time with them during the evenings. I’m amazed, and slightly jealous of the fact that after a full 8 hour training day they can still go play soccer for an hour. This and volleyball have been the favorite after dinner past times – at least until it gets dark. The camp has this enormous fire pit and they decided tonight that it was time to light a fire. We built a huge bonfire and got yelled at by the grouchy groundskeeper. I say – why have a huge fire pit if you don’t want huge fires??? Anyway – we hung out for a couple of hours before finally heading to bed… another thing I’m jealous of… their ability to stay up till 3 am and still show up in the morning bright-eyed and bushy tailed… bastardos! ;-)

Two nights down with the crappy cots and spiders crawling all around me… I am soooo happy that I’m halfway through…

**Wednesday 8/27/08: Incredible breakthroughs!!!**

I have decided that Wednesday – or the 3rd day of training – since we don’t always start on Monday – is my favorite day of the training. I feel that it is on this 3rd day that we really begin to see a shift from a group of individuals to an empowered and cohesive team bound by a mutual respect for one another and aligned in its goals and focus. It is simply amazing to witness.

With the security and trust that develops by coming together as a team it is usually at this point that the participants begin to really open up and share. It is also for this reason that we wait till the 3rd day to really dive deep into the HIV and AIDS dialogue. Regardless of what part of the world we are in AIDS and HIV are still very much taboo topics accompanied by stigma and discrimination and resulting in misconceptions and myths. It is not an easy subject to talk about and we have found that even those who work in the field do not always openly discuss the topic. Dance4Life aims to help fight stigma and discrimination by encouraging youth to have those seemingly difficult conversations as a way to educate and protect themselves and others.

Well today in our dialogue we had one young man share something he had never shared before. He explained that when people asked him why he got involved in this project (he was one of the 2007 Romanian Team members) he had always said that it was because he saw the video and was inspired. “That was a lie” he said. He shared that he had grown
up in a small town and had been at a party one night where he got drunk and had unprotected sex with a friend who later divulged that she had HIV. He confided in his parents who discouraged him from going to get tested because then the whole town would know. He went against his parent’s judgment and got tested anyway and was thankful that his test came back negative. His parents however were so ashamed that they decided to move the whole family to the capital and he was forced to leave all his friends behind. He also shared that his parents became really upset when he decided to join Dance4Life but that he was committed to the project regardless and that it was his choice to make not theirs. I sensed that there might be more to the story – however it was enough for him to share at that point… and it was enough to help others begin to open up more as well. Alex later shared that although he had been working with this young man for over a year – he had never known that story… hurray for breakthrough #1!

Speaking of Alex - Jesse and I had finally come up with a strategy to acknowledge Alex for all the hard work he’d done while helping him to see the value in how we felt the workshop should flow. We’d also realized that we were going to have to compromise on some things and so we generated a short list of “deal breakers” – or areas where we felt very strongly that it needed to be done a certain way. Our deal breakers were that:

- The workshop start and end on a high note and with lots of energy (right now they start with a powerful but somewhat depressing video and end with a slow melodic song.)
- The drill must be broken up – they have been teaching it in one huge 30 minute chunk
- The performance aspect of the drill at the beginning of the workshop needs to be taken out – the performance works well for the big celebratory event – however is not appropriate for the workshop where its about approaching the students equally as peers and integrating them into the program
- All the components of the workshop that we had outlined be included in some way – in addition to or in place of some things they were already doing

We set a time to meet with him after dinner and being a firm believer in the power of intention – focused every ounce of my energy on helping him to understand that our intention was to help him create something even greater. We started simply by asking him to explain why they had chosen this format and we listened fully with open hearts and open minds. As he shared his learnings from the last year we really began to better understand his realities, which were not the best of circumstances… The Orthodox church, for example, is the ruling influence in Moldova and does not support the work they are doing. The local school administration does not really support them either and they are forced to conduct the workshops at the end of the school day when students are tired because the schools won’t allow them to conduct sessions during the day and have the students missing classes. Then – after the responsible school administrator lets them in – they go home for the day – leaving the team responsible for the students that are tired and not too happy about having to stay an extra hour and a half. In addition, it is a
cultural impropriety to sit on the floor - which means the students are left standing for the entire workshop.

I think that by giving him our full focused attention and truly hearing him out, Alex realized that we weren’t simply trying to force a format on him and as such he was really open to what we had to say. We talked for almost 3 hours helping him to brainstorm ways he could overcome some of the many obstacles he was facing and in the end – with less effort than I ever imagined possible – we were all 3 completely in alignment. And its not like he simply acquiesced either – he was completely enthusiastic about the new format and open to trying something new… hurray for breakthrough #2.

Jesse and I headed back to our rooms drained, absurdly happy and shocked at how seemingly effortless it had been! It was simply a good good day! =)

Tired but with more homework… we re-convened to lay out the roles for the two teams – we also decided that since it would be impossible for the ‘half’ team of 4 to run the workshop on their own – for the sake of Friday we would integrate them with the Russian Chisinau team. After the four teams in Serbia – sorting out 2 teams seemed like a walk in the park.

Lonnnnnnnng Wednesday – but a good Wednesday indeed!

**Thursday 8/28/08: Hit the ground running…**

We woke up tired but renewed because we had a clear format to move forward with that integrated the best parts of Alex’s original flow with the elements we felt needed to be included in the workshop as well.

We distributed roles and the teams wasted no time diving in as we walked through and practiced each stage of the workshop. Its funny – because I felt that having successfully managed what I felt was our biggest obstacle – everything else seemed easy and today’s new “bump” was no exception.

Alex had mentioned to us on Sunday that he would like the 2007 team to come out towards the end of the week so they could somehow be integrated with the 2008 team. We had suggested Friday as they could be there to support the 2008 team during their presentations and then we could do some closing activities that brought them together… well Alex with an agenda of his own - as usual ;-) - said that he wanted them to come out on Thursday so that they would “already be here” for the morning’s presentation. I said – “great – then they should come out Thursday evening because the teams will be practicing all day and we wouldn’t them to be a distraction.” Of course that wouldn’t be the case and he gave some reason why they needed to come mid day which he shared with us on Wednesday. He also shared at this time that he was a little concerned that his assistants who were participating in the training were not being singled out for the roles
they would have – which was basically as coordinators. Although I thought we had already worked through this – his concern was that the team was beginning to see them as equals and therefore wouldn’t respect their authority. I had to re-iterate that we weren’t here to support a hierarchy and that things had been working well with them participating as members of the team. I also pointed out that we had made sure to assign them with the roles we knew they would be responsible for on the team – basically school liaisons and scribes or note takers. Therefore, there should not be any concern that they would be in any role on Friday that would not normally be their role. I could tell he was not pleased with this – however I didn’t see the point of calling them out as authority figures when we’d come this far. So when the 2007 team showed up at 10 a.m. – the perfect solution presented itself! We would have the two assistants take the 2007 team to another area where they could introduce them to the new workshop structure, teach them the creative message component and run a practice workshop with them! This was the most ideal solution because it would keep the 2007 team occupied AND give the two assistants something to do in an “authoritative” role since they wouldn’t be participating in the run-throughs with the 2008 team… and most importantly – it would give the 2007 team a chance to become familiar with the new flow. The solution was so simple and perfect that I found myself doing a little happy dance in the corner… We really couldn’t have planned it better and I was glad that it also allowed us to maintain our focus on where it needed to be.

I think one of the hardest parts for the teams on this day is getting really comfortable with the order in which things happen and who does what when. We came up with a great little game to help them with this, which we modified from a name game that we had used in Serbia. We had them stand in a circle and start verbally walking through the flow so they could see who they receive and pass the leadership baton from and to. For example – DJ starts by saying aloud – “I press play on XYZ song as the students start to walk in” – the first person on the stage chimes in with “I do the warm up as the students are walking in and then pass it on to Susie Q.” – Susie Q. says “I acknowledge and thank Johnny B. and present the project overview and then pass on to Maria X.” – Maria X. picks it up with “I acknowledge and thank Susie Q. and teach the first part of the drill and then pass it on to ____” and so on and so forth. We had them go through several rounds of this, which helped them to become really familiar with the rhythm of the workshop flow in a quick and fun way. I love that we have been able to adapt and apply learnings along the way and in so doing continue to improve. I really like this new technique and am thinking that its one we can implement in all of the new trainings.

Jesse and I decided to try the same morning format we had done in Serbia for the run-through – and have the team present simultaneously with pauses for feedback in between each component. In the afternoon – we split them and each worked with one team. Since there is supposedly an affected person on the 2007 team that has been doing the Positive Voice we only had one person step up and agree to share his story about how HIV has affected his life. I really wish we had more positive voices for Moldova – however we
must adapt to what the reality is – in this case – one positive voice. He has graciously agreed to tell his story twice on Friday – during both the morning and afternoon sessions.

I ended up working with the smaller Balti team of five (we had a new person join us on Tuesday which was a huge blessing since five is really the minimum number of team members you can have to successfully implement the workshop) so I can only speak to how they did. Luckily – the oldest participant of training – a young man 24 years old – is part of this team as he simply gets it. Every time I turned to remind them of some small detail – he was already on it. He is very well organized and intelligent and he has quickly taken the lead in managing the small five-member team. They all respond to him though so its working and I was really impressed with how well they presented this afternoon!

The last night with the team was one of fun, relaxation and celebration. They specifically requested a ‘disco’ meaning they wanted Jesse and I to pull out iPods so we could all dance. As part of the group set up the music, another part went off scrounging for wood. Jesse and I couldn’t help but smile as we watched the ease in which they all interacted with each other… recognizing even the noticeable shift from our evening bonfire just 2 days earlier. I don’t think that it will ever matter how many times I witness it… I will always be in awe of the amazing transformation that occurs in just a few days…

The evening was incredible… we danced and played games… including Charades, which is even more hysterical when it happens in 3 languages simultaneously… we played limbo and as the night went on – someone started a game to see who could jump the highest over the fire. A little nerve racking at times but Alex didn’t seem to mind – so I let it go too. I did get some amazing pictures of the acrobatic and aerial feats though! And finally, at around midnight, with the ‘disco’ showing no signs of slowing down, Jesse and I wandered off back to our dorm to pack and pass out – gently reminding the morning team that they needed to be set-up and ready to go by 8:30 for their presentation.

**Friday 8/29/08: Frustrations and Successes**

I woke up Friday morning anticipating the excitement and satisfaction that the last day of the training brings. I’ll be honest… I was also very, very happy to be saying goodbye to spiders and lumpy bed.

I learned over breakfast that the morning team and mid day team had switched… at first I thought that this might be due in part to the festivities the night before – but then learned that one of the girl’s grandmother had passed away. She was crying and distraught when she told us and though we assured her that we would completely support her need to leave early – she insisted that she do her part for the team and then would leave right after (hence the switch). We hugged her and thanked her for her commitment and headed to the amphitheater to get started.
With the Balti team and 2007 team as audience the team got started. About 10 minutes into it I noticed Alex scowling on the bench so I went to ask him what was up. He looks at me matter-of-factly and states – “this is suppose to be the Russian team.” Confused I simply said “ok” and waited for further explanation. He then blurts – “they are doing it in Romanian.” Alright – now I understand… so I first ask him if they knew they were suppose to do in Russian? He exclaims that of course they knew – when they were recruited they were told they would be the Russian team of Chisinau as the Romanian Chisinau team consisted of the 2007 team. He was very frustrated that Jesse and I had not caught this - at which point we had to explain that we had no way of knowing what language they were speaking as we didn’t recognize the difference – they were both too foreign for us. He then expressed frustration that the team had not memorized the script and were reading from the prompts. At this point we had to push back and explain that since he had only provided the script the day before (though we had asked for it on Sunday) that it was simply unfair to have expected them to memorize it on top of everything else they had done the day before. He then blurted out “well the 2007 didn’t even have a script – we had to create it ourselves!” Jesse and I looked at each other in disbelief – he was like a little kid throwing a tantrum with his hands on her hips. Although we were trying to have compassion for the struggles he had gone through with the first team – his judgment was unwarranted and unfair. We reminded him that he had specifically asked that the new teams use the same scripts – insisted actually – otherwise we would have had them come up with their own. We left it at that and didn’t say anything else… we then shifted our energy to supporting the team on the stage… in Russian or in Romanian – they were still doing a great job.

I think our refusing to engage in the subject further allowed Alex to realize that his frustrations were coming from elsewhere (which he ended up sharing with us that evening). Although we worried at the time that he would vent those frustration on the team during the debrief – he had completely shifted when it came time to talk with them. When he mentioned to the team that they were suppose to have conducted the workshop in Russian – 3 immediately piped in that they were not aware of that – actually the specific quote was – “WHAT?! Since when??” Another two mentioned that they did not speak Russian enough to say their parts in Russian… Jesse and I said nothing…but it made us feel a little better that the breakdown of communication went beyond us. When the 2007 team joined us to offer their feedback – which I coached them to be ONLY positive – they had some really kind and supportive things to say – including that the first time the had presented they had struggled even more. This certainly helped bolster the team’s confidence further, which I was grateful for. We closed the debrief with them by talking about commitment and the work they would accomplish as they moved forward as a team. We equated it to lighting a flame and that they must keep that burning – their energy was incredible and I knew with absolute certainty that they were gonna be amazing come September 15th and the tour started!

After a brief break it was time for the 5-member Balti team to present… I don’t know what it is about our small teams, as the 5-member team in Serbia was also our strongest –
but they simply rocked it! (They also had the option of presenting in Romanian – so no pressure there!) Alex had seemed to do a complete 180 when he witnessed their presentation – he was practically giddy! He was excited that they were such a strong and fluid team and was quite impressed at their ability to juggle so many roles successfully… Jesse and I silently let out a sigh of relief.

Working against the clock (we had to depart at 3:30 to get people to the bus station on time for their routes home) we quickly moved into our closing session. We presented certificates, shared last words, took many pics, danced and made music together one last time as a united 2007 and 2008 team, we also danced a Russian hora, finally took more pics, and shared lots of hugs before getting in the vans to go home. I bid farewell to the spiders and lumpy bed and we headed back to the city!

As tired as we were Alex asked us to accompany him back to the office and then we would go to dinner and he would take us home. He also wanted to give us the things he had purchased for us as we didn’t have any time to do shopping… and with being 90 minutes into the middle of nowhere… he had offered earlier in the week to pick up some things for us. Jesse and I had had only 2 requests… one was wine after we learned it was the National Treasure. And the second was Moldovan soccer jerseys. Jesse had read a story somewhere about a man who makes a bet that he could beat the entire Moldovan football team in water polo (?!?!) and was successful… surprise surprise. This is actually the only reason Jesse had heard of Moldova… and we both still had to look it up on a map. Anyway – we thought – how many people can boast a Moldovan soccer jersey – cool right? Well when we first asked where we might pick up some Moldovan jerseys Alex and Peter looked at us as if we had just asked if could stop over on the moon on our way to the “resort.” They were completely confused as to why we would want these… so we tried to explain that we thought it would be cool and kind of rare. Well little did we know… that apparently the only people in Moldova with jerseys are the players themselves – there are none reproduced or sold to the public. Writing that one off, Alex had told us he would still ask – because he knew someone that worked at the Football Federation of Moldova. Can’t get much more “in” than that I guess. Anyway – so as were sitting at the office he tells us that he could only get two – and that the guy just gave him 2 retired players jerseys – but that we must not wear them or show them in Moldova as he could get in trouble b/c only players are allowed to have jerseys! We couldn’t believe our luck – totally authentic (and thankfully not stinky) Moldovan football jerseys. They are not the most impressive as far as jerseys go… very boring… but the story alone is awesome!

Finally we headed to dinner with Alex for one last mamaliga brinza de oi… (sigh). It was a great final time spent with him… and he actually apologized for how he had reacted earlier and thanked us for working so hard and being so flexible. He acknowledged that he knew it must have been hard. For some reason – he then started sharing about his family and the rest of the evening was spent talking about family – which was a nice way to end our time there. He wished us goodnight – and me being the
sap that I am – of course I started crying! Hee!! And then he stuck us in a cab and sent us back to the hotel with instructions that Peter would pick up at 5 am. Oy… I must admit I’m a bit sad because I will be saying goodbye to Jesse tomorrow as he heads back to NY and I continue to Ibiza to meet up with Glo and Elizabeth. Its been so wonderful working with him and we’ve become quite the duo! We finally have our rhythm and yet we must say goodbye… for now… although I’m fairly certain we will team back up in October for D.C. And with an early ass flight ahead of us – we crashed as soon as we got back.

Saturday 8/30/08: Worst day of travel… and saying good-bye

Flights at the crack of dawn suck any way you slice it… and today was just not to be my day. We arrived at the airport at about 5:30 am – which is just inhumane. We head to the counter to check-in on good ol’ Air Moldova and after I’ve loaded my suitcase they look at my backpack and computer bag and tell me I’m only allowed one carry on. I tell them that I’ve traveled on every flight for the last 2 weeks with both of these bags as carry-ons and so I don’t see why it’s a problem. She tells me that it’s a small plane and that they are very strict about carry-on. Ok fine – so I’ll check the backpack. I put it on the belt and she tells me that I’m now overweight and so I will have to pay extra baggage fees. I look at her for a moment thinking that she’s joking… she doesn’t flinch. I’m like – wait – so first you tell me I can’t take my backpack, which I’ve been able to take on every other flight, including Air Moldova coming in, so I have to check it… and now you’re saying that because I’m checking it – I will be overweight and have to pay too. She says – yes I’m sorry – you can only take one carry on… to which I ask… but then I have to pay too?!? She says yes – because now you are overweight. There is of course only one check in line and its piling up behind me… and now I can feel the stink-eyes boring into my back! She tells me it will be 185. Still thinking in Moldovan money I don’t think its too bad… but its also 5:45 in the morning so I’m not fully processing – and as I walk away I realize that its actually 185 Euro!!!! That’s over $280 USD!!! I was infuriated!!! They’re not even in the E.U.!! What business do they have charging euros??!! I should have known that today would simply NOT be my day by with that sort of start…

Anyway – finally checked in and having paid an arm and a leg and just generally peeved that I had to check my backpack… I pass out it in the waiting area while Jesse tries to spend his last Moldovan money at the duty free shops. He comes back with a bottle of wine, a bottle of some other liquor and a Moldovan chocolate bar. I send him back to buy me a Moldovan chocolate bar – thinking that it would be a great gift for someone… hah! We finally board and take off on the relatively short flight to Frankfort. Air Moldova slightly redeems itself by serving a tiny, but deee-licious portion of crepes, which we gobbled while entertaining ourselves once again with Moldovan Air Mag English translations. A couple of hours later we land in Frankfort and with little time to catch our next flight and the complication of entering the E.U. and having to get new boarding passes for the next airline – we sadly and quickly say goodbye. I rush to my gate, which is, of course, in some totally obscure wing of the airport past immigration and
past security... I sit for what I think will be 5 minutes before boarding when they announce that our flight will be delayed!! Argh! And having burned off the crepes running through the airport... I’m now really hungry! I have no idea how long we were delayed – just that I was really tired, really hungry and feeling really cranky! We finally head off to Palma Mallorca and I’m bracing myself for the fact that I will probably miss my connection. To keep from passing out of hunger I eat the entire bar of Moldovan chocolate that would have been somebody’s gift... sorry! This is quite something as I do not really eat sweets and eating an entire double size chocolate bar is unheard of... but I was hungry... and Air Berlin does not serve me food. My only lucky break of the day is that since I was continuing on Air Berlin from Palma to Ibiza... and there were 9 of us on that next flight... they called ahead and held the flight. The Palma Airport is larger than expected and totally confusing – I’m trying to find my gate and I ask someone for help. I ask in Spanish and cannot for the life of me understand what he’s saying. I would later learn that he was speaking Catalan... which unless he didn’t speak Spanish at all... though I understand most people know both... and being an airport one would hope he’d speak a more common language than just Catalan... you would think he could have simply replied in Spanish - but he refused to answer me in Spanish! I finally found someone else, found my gate, and was the last one on board. At last I land in Ibiza and as I’m waiting for my luggage and the people are thinning out I have the overwhelming feeling that my bags did not make it... what with my 10 minutes to change planes in Palma... so I get a jump start on the lost luggage line and blessedly the ladies there were extraordinarily kind and helpful. They confirmed that my bags didn’t make it and asked me to call in later to check the last flight. I head out and find one of the local NCO reps for Ibiza – and she takes me to the hotel where I finally find Glo and Elizabeth.

Happy to see them, happy to be done with travel, we head out to meet with the organizers and do some exploring. I am exhausted beyond belief, fighting a sore throat and in general denial that my body is shutting down... but you just can’t help but adjust to Spanish time when you’re there. We check out the old city, come across a wedding, and just when I think I’ll die of hunger we head back to the plaza for a late dinner. I’m really trying to ignore the fact that my body is feeling more than just tired... that I feel like I’m getting sick. Its been a hell of a day – and with no luggage to unpack – I fall asleep with no problem.
Ibiza

Sunday 8/31/08: A day of rest… and still no luggage!

Today was a blessed day of rest… I slept in – which my body needed desperately and best of all – I had a relatively comfortable bed and no spiders to contend with! The only damper on my morning was the fact that my luggage has still not arrived! Argh! I called the airport last night and they have informed me that they know where one of my bags is – but not the other… what the heck?! I don’t know what I will do if my luggage doesn’t arrive. =(  

When we finally head out we stop to have some breakfast for – which I’m very happy for. My body’s defenses are down and it seems like sleep and food are my best bet. We wander around some of the stores on the plaza and I’m at least able to purchase a pair of linen pants. Being back in the E.U. – the dollar is no longer a strong currency – so I have to be conscious of what I’m spending and I’m just really hoping my luggage shows up soon – otherwise I’m going to have buy new clothes! After breakfast we decide to wander back up to the Old City and check out some of the areas we hadn’t seen the night before. The views over the Mediterranean are pretty amazing and we stumble across a lovely restaurant with a view over the city. It seems like a nice place to sit down so we stop and decide to have a second breakfast… twist my arm… heh heh! =) Its nice to just sit and relax and spend some time with Glo and Elizabeth and share the experiences of the past two weeks. I cannot believe I’m halfway through this journey. I’ve also recently learned that instead of going home after Ibiza – Elizabeth and I will continue on to Turkey. Four countries in five weeks!! No wonder I’m exhausted.

This being our only day to explore the island we call our local hosts to get some ideas of what we should do. They suggest visiting the town of San Antonio… so we hop on the next bus and head to this relatively famous area of Ibiza. I can only assume that our hosts suggested this area because we are tourists and they thought this is what we would want to see… personally though we were quite disappointed. Ibiza is, as we know, a party island and attracts mostly young people looking to get a bit wild. I would venture to say it’s the Las Vegas of southern Europe. And the area of San Antonio is pretty much the hub. The clubs of Ibiza are known for being the birthplace of techno/trance music and that seems to be what is blaring out of each and every club/restaurant along the promenade. It’s a fantastic view – but not really the scene we were looking for. Nonetheless we decide on a restaurant for dinner and the sunset. As we sit and enjoy the view we notice a local poster advertising the summer tour for DJ Tiesto – one of the more notable ambassadors of Dance4Life. We have the brilliant idea to try and arrange a meeting between the team and DJ Tiesto. It would be a great motivator for the team and an excellent PR opportunity as well.

After a leisurely dinner we hop back on the bus towards home and decide to stop off in the plaza for a late night coffee (not for me) and to check emails since we don’t have
access in the hostel we are staying in. I am pleasantly surprised to find an email waiting from one of the Moldovan team members thanking us for work we’ve done and the opportunity to make a difference in the community. With that simple reminder of the impact we are creating I say my good nights and head to bed… still without luggage.

**Monday 9/1/08: Adapting to the customs and luggage at last!**

I wake up Monday feeling less than rested and conscious of the fact that I now have a full-blown cold. My body aches and my head feels as if its stuffed with cotton balls – but try to ignore it as we head to meet our new team. I am quickly learning that time is a relative thing on this tiny Spanish island. People just move at a slower pace here and I’m pretty sure punctuality is not in their vocabulary.

We show up at the cultural center and to no ones surprise – it hasn’t been opened yet. So much for starting on time! When we finally make it in they show us to a very small room and we quickly protest that even with a small team – the space will not be big enough to accommodate our needs. As our host goes off to try and see about a bigger room we start to acquaint ourselves with the new team. It’s a much smaller team than what we had in Serbia and Moldova so I’m happy about the fact that learning names should be much, much easier this time around!

We work through the usual technical problems of the first day and try to sort out the A/V so that we can show the video. I am personally struggling with the news that several of the team members will be out at various times throughout the week. Having had everyone’s full commitment over the last 2 weeks I guess I had taken it for granted that participants would be available for the full training. With a limited number of team members though – there’s not much we can do but adapt. The morning proceeds easily and when we finally break for our 3-hour lunch (!?) they promise us that we can have the bigger room next door for the afternoon. So yes – despite our protests – the Spanish take siesta time very seriously… which means that the cultural center will be closed between 1 and 4 pm. This means that each day we will have a 3-hour break and then return for an evening session from 4 to 8 pm. Its less than ideal – but out of our hands – so we do our best to adjust to long lunches and late nights.

About the best news I receive today is the fact that my luggage has finally arrived! Yay!!! I am so excited and our hosts are kind enough to take me back to the airport at lunch to pick up my bags. I am so relieved I can only laugh when I realize that somehow my bags have traveled all the way to Madrid – pretty interesting considering I never even flew through there!! But who cares – at least I have them now!

Personally – I’m still feeling pretty awful – and have never been more grateful for the fact that both Gloria and Elizabeth are here to pick up the slack. Working with the two of them also offers a different leadership dynamic than what I’ve experienced in the last 2 weeks. Having many more years of facilitation experience under her belt Gloria relies
less on the agenda to guide her than either Jesse or I. Although we collaboratively designed the workshop flow in Mexico together this past May – this is the first time we have worked together for Dance4Life since then and it’s an excellent opportunity to watch her and learn. I trust that she will guide us to the same end and am happy that I can lean on her to take the lead since I am feeling less than 100%.

We confidently close out our first day and successfully get through teaching the drill and developing the new local free style components. It’s been a long day and I’m grateful when we finally make it back to the hostel so I can crawl in bed. I stop by a pharmacy on the way home and at least pick up some drugs that will hopefully help me get through this.

Tuesday 9/2/08: Integrating new peeps and clown antics

So as we will have new people joining us throughout the week we need to find ways to integrate them into the team. Gloria, having led us through an exercise the day before to identify our unique gifts, decides to have everyone introduce themselves by sharing their gift. It’s a great exercise which I’ve done in other workshops before – but think it’s a great addition to this training as well and will make note to add it to the agenda permanently.

One of my favorite things about this new team is that it includes professional clowns… seriously! You can only imagine how much more fun that makes everything! Today’s activities include the skits about facilitation, professionalism and peer education – as well as the creative message development. Well – lets just say – there was a lot of laughter involved! The creative message they have come up with is fantastic and one of my favorites thus far. Its basically a series of skits that outline the ways one can and cannot become infected with HIV. The best part though is that there are no words. Everything is acted out and a narrator provides commentary when necessary. The facial expressions of some our ‘clowns’ are priceless and I just know these guys will be a hit with the students.

After our three-hour lunch we come back in the afternoon and lead in with an in-depth discussion of the current HIV/AIDS situation both globally and locally. I am surprised to learn that Spain leads all of Europe with the highest rate of HIV infections and that the island of Ibiza leads the country with the highest rates of infection as well. The latter fact actually does not surprise me considering that it attracts people from all over the world and is known for its party atmosphere – something that is unfortunately also conducive to irresponsible sexual behavior. The participants have many questions and are eager to both learn and impart the knowledge they have. Having now conducted this work in various areas around the world I am still quite surprised at how little people really know about the current HIV/AIDS reality – a testament to the necessity of the work we are doing.
After a long day I am happy with our progress. Although the creative message still has some details to be ironed out it is a great concept with some good messages. I also feel quite good about the time given to discussing the HIV and AIDS facts. I am slowly adjusting to the longer days but am grateful to get to bed as soon as possible too. The medicines that the pharmacist sold me seem to be working as well. They boost my energy a bit throughout the day and have helped with most of the symptoms so that at least I’m sleeping well at night. Even though my room has A/C and it’s been pretty hot here I’ve resisted the temptation to sleep with the A/C on because I think that will only make me worse. So I guess I’m sweating this thing out! Tomorrow will mark the halfway point of the week and I must admit that I’m so happy that we will have a full week off before tackling the fourth training of this trip. I am tired!

Wednesday 9/3/08: New elements and surprises

So today brought in a couple of new people once again. For the most part this is an older group than what I’ve worked with in other countries and so to me it seems to make transitions a bit easier since we are working with a more mature audience. One of new people to join us today was a relatively younger woman in her early twenties with a lot of energy. I really appreciate how she has dived right in. One of the areas that we are still working to refine is the creative message. It is good – yet can still benefit from some fine tuning. After watching it today – the new participant offered a new idea of adding the role of the HIV virus – and a role, which she volunteered herself for. The “virus” would essentially be lurking around the actors and in situations where there was a high risk of the virus being transmitted she would act excited, gleeful and expectant. On the contrary when scenarios were posed that offered little to no risk of infection – the “virus” would act bored and disinterested in what was happening. I personally think it’s a brilliant addition and I’m loving how the skit has shaped up.

In addition to refining some of the workshop elements, today’s training was focused on building the foundation of trust that will help unify this team. Since we had conducted the ‘butterfly/leaf’ exercise in the two previous countries outdoors I decided to add a musical element to it this time since it was indoors. I used a beautiful instrumental piece and not only did it add a great aural element to the exercise it also served as a great timekeeper! We also made some changes to the eye-to-eye connection exercise that I think I will implement in the future.

My favorite part of this day is always the shared heartbeat exercise and the intimate dialogue about our personal experiences with HIV and AIDS that follows. I always feel so grateful for being privy to these individual’s very personal stories. Talking about how HIV and/or AIDS has affected our lives or the lives of our loved ones is never easy – however I think its critically important to breaking down the stigmas and taboos that surround this topic. And it is my hope that in addition to bringing awareness to the subject of HIV/AIDS, the work we do with these individuals will encourage them to continue to have these intimate conversations with their friends and families – so that
slowly we can move our society towards a place where it’s ok to talk about HIV and AIDS openly and honestly.

Tonight I go to bed exhausted but happy knowing that the work we do will continue to impact people for years to come…

**Thursday 9/4/08: Piecing it all together**

After having to juggle and define roles for four and two teams in Serbia and Moldova respectively, putting together a line up for one team seemed ridiculously easy by comparison! The only thing we struggled with was finding the right substitutes for tomorrow’s workshop since some of our key players will be missing.

We utilized the same ‘pass-the-baton’ technique that we implemented in Moldova so that the team could get comfortable knowing who they follow and who they pass the leadership baton to. It’s such a simple technique – I love it! I’m bummed that we won’t have everyone here for the first ‘live’ run-through tomorrow but the best we can do is focus on the participants that are with us now. We were also disappointed to learn that our drummer had to undergo shoulder surgery this week so won’t be able to play tomorrow either… oh well.

I would say that for the most part today’s practices went smoothly. I feel that the individuals we picked for the lead dance roles are really perfect. There were some mistakes due to nervousness – but this is to be expected and overall I thought they did quite well. It still amazes me how much participants pick up in three days!! I always try to assure them that the more times they run-through the workshop the easier and smoother it will become. It’s a lot of responsibility and a lot of material to cover in a short amount of time and I really have to acknowledge the team for how far they’ve come!

The only role assignment we kind of missed the mark on was the person we chose to provide the background information on the project… unfortunately a pretty critical speaking role. I’m not quite sure how we misjudged. She displayed excellent communication skills during the public spotlight exercise and works as a peer educator as well. Perhaps it’s that she’s still unfamiliar with the topic she is speaking about. Gloria and I were discussing that it might make sense to start providing scripts to the participants with speaking roles. This eliminates the need for them to work out the content and allows them to simply focus on the delivery. I really think that this is a good build for future trainings.

The young woman we chose to close out the workshop and lead the final full drill run-through is perfect! I’m really happy that we put her in that role. She is such a beautiful soul and has just poured her whole heart into this project. It fills my heart with joy to watch her and I do believe that the students will really be able to connect with her.
So the only element that is not quite defined yet is the positive voice. Although we have an affected team member who is more than willing to share his story about how HIV has touched his life – his story is not quite polished yet. I know that Gloria is planning on working with him on this later tonight though and I have no doubt that it will come together. I’m anxiously looking forward to tomorrow. We will only have one ‘live’ workshop in the afternoon and since once again – school is not yet in session – we are depending on a response from the community to attend this event. The good news is that since its in the afternoon – we will have the whole morning to run-through the workshop one last time.

**Friday 9/5/08: Closing out a 3 week run!**

Wow! I cannot believe I have now completed three of these trainings back-to-back-to-back! Its no wonder I’m exhausted! Sheeesh!

We had a great practice run this morning, which enabled our positive voice speaker to share his story once again. Although I could tell he was nervous, the effects of Gloria’s coaching was definitely evident. After packing up our materials since we wouldn’t be returning to the cultural center we headed to have lunch with the team. A first for the week… unfortunately since we’ve had these three-hour breaks all week we’ve also managed to pack in as much work and running around as possible… I guess we haven’t quite mastered the art of relaxing during siesta time yet. Anyway – it was nice to spend time with the team outside of the training space. The atmosphere was light and humorous and camaraderie among the team was palpable. For me of course there was also a lightness in knowing that our job is essentially done. The rest of the afternoon would be up to the team. In acknowledgment of that I actually even snuck in a nap before we headed towards the gymnasium that would be the sight of the ‘live’ workshop.

When we arrived the team was deep in action trying to trouble shoot difficulties such as poor projector space for the video and a small sound system that barely filled the gym. They worked through it though and for me – I always feel that its healthy to have a good dose of problems to sort through on the first day. It always leads to an even greater sense of accomplishment when they successfully work through it.

I was also pleased to see that the local Dance4Life PR person came out to show his support. The best part – when we shared our suggestion of having the team meet up with DJ Tiesto he thought it was an excellent idea and said he would make the arrangements for the team to meet with him! Woohoo!!

Although I would have liked to have seen an even bigger turn out – the workshop was still a great success. The only hiccup was about ⅔ of the way through when a basketball camp showed up for their practice on the other side of the gym – essentially drowning out
the already poor sound with screeching basketballs. To their credit though the team continued on without a hitch.

We closed out the training at the gym and distributed certificates before heading off to have a few final drinks in celebration. Another round of teary goodbyes to new friends and I’m finally ready for bed and our early flight to Barcelona. I am physically and mentally spent and desperately looking forward to the next week of time off to rest and recover.
Turkey

Saturday 9/13/08: Refreshed and inspired...

It has been wonderful having this past week to relax and recoup. We spent most of the week exploring Barcelona and communing with Ollie and Rachel (Director of the RZ UK office and his fiancé). It was a great opportunity to share some of the techniques we have been implementing throughout the training and also pick up some of the ideas that the UK team been using as well. One process that I will definitely being adding to the HCT workshop flow is called the open forum. It is a 5-10 minute segment towards the end of the workshop that engages the students to generate ideas about what they can start to do to become Agents of Change in their schools and communities. It is a simple but effective tool and though it will mean cutting time in other areas of the workshop I think its totally worth it. Having spent this time with Ollie, Rachel, Gloria and Elizabeth has left me feeling re-inspired as we embark on this training.

Elizabeth and I arrived in Ankara, Turkey a full 3 days before the start of the training so we’ve had time to properly explore this historic city as well. I am truly in love with Turkey – the people, the culture and the food! Although at first we tried to be conscious at first of needing to respect local customs and remain covered up, our hosts have reassured us that Turkey is very much trying to move towards a more western influenced culture and that there is no need to remain covered up – something I am quite grateful for since its fairly warm here.

I must also acknowledge how excited I am to be working with the UNFPA again! Having worked with the UNFPA in Mexico (UNFPA is the National Concept Owner in several Dance4Life countries), I am confident that all the small details will be covered and that this training will go smoothly. They have wisely put us up in the same hotel venue that the training will be conducted in as well. This is wonderfully convenient, as we only have to run downstairs at the start of each morning. All of our meals are eaten at the hotel as well which has a fantastic buffet for breakfast and dinner! Have I mentioned how much I love the food here!?

One of the D4L Directors from UNFPA will joining us for the entire week of the training, which is absolutely fantastic. It seems that the local directors never have enough time to devote to taking part of the training themselves, which is really a shame since regardless of what role they will play throughout the tour it only serves them to have gone through the experience with the team. So we are excited to have her joining us for the week. This also happens to be the holy month of Ramadan here in Turkey – luckily though we do not have anyone in the training that is observing the traditions. I attribute this to the age segment we are working with, as our participants are all younger. Although we would have certainly made proper accommodations, I am glad that we have avoided this complication. If I understand correctly, one of the observances of Ramadan is that males
cannot touch other females during this time – something that would have been a bit difficult throughout our workshop.

After the simplicity of the names in Ibiza, we are back to difficult with this new team in Turkey. They are a really excited group though and their enthusiasm is contagious. The males in our groups are incredibly outspoken and although I’m grateful for this, I believe this has discouraged some of the quieter females from contributing – something we will have to be conscious of.

We overcame our usual A/V obstacles this morning trying to share the video and though we had some difficulty converging on the free style dance moves – we did successfully get through the entire drill by the end of the first day. There are two team members that I’m a little concerned about. One is a young woman who seems to thrive on contradicting others. Although I fully support differences of opinion, she does not back up her rebuttals with any opinions of her own. Instead it seems her purpose is simply to negate without offering alternatives—something I’m not comfortable with as I can see that it is discouraging some people from speaking up. The second challenging personality we will have to work through is a young man who is trying to remain aloof and disconnected. He either does not engage in the activities – or if he does – he acts bored and disinterested. While this behavior certainly concerns me – what concerns me more is that he tries to distract others as well. Elizabeth and I will have to put our heads together tonight and see if can’t generate some ideas for how to work with these two. This team is extraordinarily energized though, and despite these challenges I’m really looking forward to what tomorrow brings.

**Sunday 9/14/08: Experimenting with some new methods…**

What I am enjoying about working with Elizabeth is how easily she gets on board with any new ideas. After speaking to Ollie this past week I’m really inspired and motivated to try some new techniques. I’ve felt throughout the last few weeks that our delivery of the HIV/AIDS information was not as effective as it could be and so I decided to try something new. Basically I decided to model the technique that we would have the team implement with the students. Although this method might have been a little too basic for some of the peer educators in our group – it served its purpose in that it conveyed the information and modeled a good technique for sharing that information with the students.

As in Serbia – we also had some challenges today with the terms for facilitation, professionalism and peer education. Nadia, the director who has been taking part in the training, helped us with these translations – however its clear that even translated – facilitation is just not a culturally relevant term.

We discovered this morning too not everyone is as proficient in English as we had originally thought. This was brought to our attention this morning when one of the young men voiced his frustration that he hadn’t been able to follow along with everything on the
first day. I am sooooooo happy that he spoke up about this because sometimes its
difficult to distinguish between a language barrier and general shyness when you’re first
trying to get to know a team. Thankfully he did say something though and so we have
decided to translate everything and will hopefully avoid losing some of the participants
through language.

Elizabeth and I also discussed at length last night (over a delicious Baklava dessert!) the
young woman who was challenging everyone’s suggestions and opinions yesterday. It is
clear that her reactions come from a place of insecurity so we decided its best not to call
her on this behavior and simply embarrass her more. Instead we’ve decided to try and
play on her strengths! She is an excellent dancer and picked up the drill quickly
yesterday. I pulled her aside this morning and spoke to her about this and actually asked
if she would be willing to help us out during the breaks and work with some of the
participants that were still struggling with some of the moves. I also encouraged her to
sign–up for one of the lead dance roles when the opportunity came. She seemed a bit
surprised by my request and I’m assuming that it wasn’t the usual response to her
difficult behavior – however so far it seems to have worked and now her energy is
focused on helping us make sure that everyone knows the drill well. We have had less
success with our other challenging participant. Both Elizabeth and I tried to engage him
directly today and he simply doesn’t seem to care. I’m not even sure why he is
participating in this training, as it seems he would rather not be here. Whereas we have
had less luck engaging him – we were happy to see that some of the quieter females of
the group were more active participants today. Overall though I would say it was a very
good day…

Monday 9/15/08: An emotional day of heartfelt sharing…

I cannot believe we are on the third day of this training already. It seems to be going by
quite quickly. As usual – this halfway point was one of my favorite days. I feel really
grateful for the openness of the men of our group as they quickly set the precedent for the
flow of stories and experiences today. Two of the men in our group actively volunteer
with one of the local HIV/AIDS support groups and they shared an emotional story about
an elderly man who had basically been left to die when his family learned he had become
infected with HIV. They shared how driven by shame and embarrassment this man was
outcast by his family and community and left to fend for himself in a small shack with no
electricity. When the man finally reached out to the support group he was nearly on his
deathbed and try as they might to get him the proper medicines that would help him, it
was simply too little too late and he passed away. The news of the man’s recent passing
came as a surprise to one of the young men and he excused himself as he tried to take
control of his emotions… stories like these are always the hardest for me because there is
simply no reason for this kind of loss. We live in a day and age where we have
medicines to treat HIV and suppress the effects of AIDS yet people are still dying
because they are too ashamed to come forward with their status and seek medicine and
assistance. It’s a sad, sad reality and one that I’m hoping Dance4Life can bring an end to.
As we continued to share our stories I found myself once again grateful for this amazing opportunity to help give a voice to those who can no longer speak for themselves.

Although there were many, many tears shed today I felt that it really did help bring the team together. For some participants the trust exercises really brought to light some insecurities that they held. One young woman in particular acknowledged her discomfort at being led around ‘blind’ in the ‘butterfly/leaf’ exercise because she felt that since she had accidentally caused her partner to stub her toe while she was leading her around she thought that her partner would try to retaliate. Her partner shared that she knew it had been an accident and would have never intentionally tried to cause her harm – forcing the young woman to really reflect on the deeper issues of mistrust that she felt.

The only dark cloud on my day stemmed once again from our disinterested team member. While I can handle him feigning boredom while I am speaking I was truly upset that he did not give his team members the respect they deserved while they opened up and poured their hearts out. I was very, very disappointed to see him during that exercise literally turn his back to the group. Had I not felt that it would cause more of a disturbance, I would have simply asked him to leave. His behavior was unacceptable in my opinion and I’m truly at a loss over what to do with this young man. We’ve tried repeatedly to engage him in different ways and he simply does not respond. I have a feeling that there are gender issues at play here and that he has a problem with having females as his trainers, but there’s not much I can do about that.

This day has left me emotionally and physically drained and I’m really beginning to feel the weight of this last month. As much as I am loving this work – I am also ready to go home. I am simply tired.

**Tuesday 9/16/08: Preparing for the big day!**

I am thoroughly confused by the days! I keep thinking that its Thursday but its only Tuesday. I know this is because I’m use to the trainings being Monday thru Friday and this time we started on a Saturday – but its really confusing! Luckily the team has been patient and understanding of my flubs! I keep referring to the ‘live’ workshops on Friday – that are really happening on Wednesday!

While assigning roles last night, Elizabeth and I made the difficult decision to not put our ‘difficult’ participant in any of the lead roles, despite his requests on the sign-up sheet. After our repeated failed attempts to engage him in the activities, and after his blatant disrespect for his teammates yesterday, I simply couldn’t justify putting him in any prominent role. We could tell he was disappointed today when we assigned everyone their roles but I honestly don’t see how he could have expected a different outcome.

That settled, we turned our attention to the task at hand – which was preparing for the ‘live’ workshops tomorrow. At long last – school is in session! So we will actually be
conducting the workshops at a local private school! I am very excited about this because no matter how well we adapted or compromised in the other countries – it simply doesn’t have the same effect as the real thing! So I’m very happy that they were able to organize that! (Yay! UNFPA!) The team was clearly nervous today but we had two solid run-throughs and even had time to work on some of areas that needed work. We split our time and while I focused on polishing the positive voices, Elizabeth worked on spiffing up the creative message – which I’ll admit is not as strong as it has been in some of the other countries. I’m beginning to question whether or not we should move the creative message development to one of the morning slots, as at least here in Turkey, the team isn’t quite as sharp in the afternoon as they are in the morning. I feel really good about tomorrow though… a certain kind of unexplainable magic always seems to occur on the 5th day and the team is standing in front of those students… they simply click.

**Wednesday 9/17/08: Seeing it all come together!**

Today was AMAZING! The school we went to was unlike anything I’ve ever seen! It was a huge private compound with thousands of students. The only thing that could have been better was the set-up of the space they gave us. They told us to expect about 100 students per workshop yep the room didn’t have a stage. This was going to make it much more difficult to reach the students at the back of the room. But the team rocked it – as I knew they would!

The two things I was most impressed with… first – when we arrived they took a moment to get grounded before setting up without any prompting from us… this was actually initiated by none other than our disinterested team member – I had to seriously keep my mouth from dropping to the floor – there’s hope for him yet! Second – was an impressive troubleshooting of an A/V challenge, which was so well done that I didn’t even realize how they had overcome the problem until the end of the first session! Basically, they didn’t have a cord long enough to reach both the laptop at the front of the room that would be showing the video, and the sound system, which was located on the side of the room. Their solution – they would play the video and audio tracks independently and just synchronize the start. Literally it was so perfectly synced that I had no idea they had done this! I was very impressed…

My favorite and most rewarding moment came at the end of the first session as the students were filing out… it warmed my heart to see the team overjoyed at their accomplishment – jumping up and down, laughing and hugging each other. One of the women on team literally came hopping over to me, gave me the biggest hug and shouted “oh my gosh! I get it, I get it, I sooo get it now!” I could only laugh and smile at their enthusiasm – because inside I was saying the same thing. =)

The second workshop proceeded without a hitch and received such a good response from the students that the school director approached the team at the end and requested for them to come back because she now had more students who were interested in being a
part of the program. It was so wonderful to have that kind of feedback and it simply boosted the team’s confidence even further. It also really made me realize that having ‘live’ workshops IN schools at the end of the training is so, so critical. I am really disappointed that the other countries didn’t have this same experience and I’m really clear that we have to make sure that next year’s trainings occur during the school year.

After breaking down all the equipment and saying goodbye to the students and administration we headed back to the hotel exhausted and elated at the day’s successes. We held a brief and intimate closing ceremony to distribute certificates and say our goodbyes. I am overwhelmed by the number of lives that have been touched over these last 5 weeks and know that I’m returning home a different person than when I left. Despite all the amazing experiences – I am anxious to be home and sleep in my own bed. We have an early morning flight however our hosts have insisted on escorting us around town for some last minute purchases and a final meal. I truly love Nadia and the staff at the UNFPA for making our lives so much easier.

This has been an amazing journey and I can’t believe its really over… I look forward to meeting back up with Jesse in D.C. in a few weeks but in the meantime I’m simply relishing a job well done!
Monday 10/13/08: A new day, a new team, a new country…

Well after a year of planning and preparation Dance4Life USA is finally happening! Having worked closely with the NCO for the U.S. its exciting to see this training become a reality. My only frustration at this point is the lack of funding that kept this pilot training from being all that it could be. Dance4Life USA only secured funding for this training about 3 weeks ago so we have since been fumbling to recruit participants and schools. RedZebra personally recruited two of its own to take part of the training and the subsequent tour and even SPW (the local NCO) had to bring in a recruit from the UK office. The result… an interesting mish mash of team members. And although it’s a very small team – only 10 participants – I really like this group and think they will work well together!

The span of ages is wide – from 15 to 42 – as is the diversity of backgrounds. However, considering the melting pot of cultures and ethnicities represented in the U.S. – I think this is appropriate. =) I’m also excited to be working with Jesse again! I’ve missed my partner in crime and its good to be united… though due to financial circumstances Jesse and I will not be staying in the same location. I’m hoping this doesn’t disconnect us too much – but we will simply need to make due the best we can.

Today was a typical day one – getting everyone settled in, adjusted and generally finding our groove. With such a small team I feel like this group will come together quickly. We implemented a new game today that I just recently came up with – I call it “get-to-know-you volleyball.” Its kind of misleading because in truth it’s a soccer ball! Anyway – I took a soccer and wrote questions on each hexagon. The questions vary from as simple as what is your favorite color… to a bit more in-depth like – if you could switch places with anyone for a day – who would it be and why. The group stands in a circle and tosses the ball around. Whoever catches the ball answers the question underneath where their right thumb lies. I found that it’s a great space filler as we are waiting for people to come back from break as well!

This group is blessed with several professional and semi-professional dancers as well so this made coming with the free style a lot more fun! Have I mentioned that our training space is a dance studio as well?? Two of the walls are mirrored making teaching and learning the drill a lot easier.

The fact that everyone speaks English as his or her first language is thrilling and I’m so excited that we don’t have to worry about anything getting lost in translation. I feel like this week is going to be so easy by comparison! Overall it has been a great first day! I feel like the team is already coming together and I really love this team already. Its also kind of nice to be in our nation’s capital on the eve of hopefully some monumental
changes for this country – I think the final presidential debate even happens this week! Its going to be an exciting week with good things to come!

**Tuesday 10/14/08: Good things happening!**

The best part about this training is that it benefits from some of the things we’ve learned in the past four countries. Its nice to be able to not only implement changes but also incorporate new games and/or techniques that we’ve picked up in other countries. In a sense it helps me to feel connected to those past teams because I think of them each time we play a new game that we learned from them.

We covered a lot of material today and had an especially phenomenal HIV/AIDS information session. Our team is blessed with an HIV+ woman who has been more than forthcoming with the wisdom and knowledge she has. I really appreciate how open she is about her status and her willingness to field any questions. In addition we had a visitor from MetroTeen AIDS – the local entity that will be following up the Heart Connection Tour with a Life Skills program as the 2nd part of the schools project. This woman was also very knowledgeable and offered a great local perspective, as well as tips for how to field questions from teenagers – including some common questions we might except to hear. Even I learned some new things today – which was really awesome!

The only thing I wish would have been better today was the outcome of the Creative Message. I am realizing that although there are definitely some logistical advantages to working with small teams – there are also some disadvantages – including less creative brains. In general, our smaller teams have had more difficulty coming up with really strong creative messaging pieces. And this team is no different. Although there were some good starting point ideas – I’m not really wowed by what they have come up with. I have to remember though this is only the 2nd day and we’ll have more time to iron this out.

I had a big awareness brought to my attention today too. I was approached by one member of the group this afternoon who shared her discomfort of voicing her concerns in front of the group. This was a big eye opener for me because I had simply assumed that since it was such a small team and since I felt comfortable with everyone on the team that this wouldn’t even be an issue. It was a huge reminder that the needs of the individual have nothing to do with the size of the group. I am so grateful that this person at least felt comfortable voicing their concerns to me – as I believe I was becoming a bit too comfortable and complacent with this small team. I think I was even starting to take for granted that this one would be “easy” because it was small and familiar. Big wake up call for me!

I also wish that the local director didn’t have so much on her plate so that she could participate fully. Although I appreciate her committing to taking part of the training – the stress of her other responsibilities are really weighing on her and I can see it. Having
formed a special bond with her over the last year – it frustrates me to see her like this and not be able to help. I need to remember to stay focused on the group though and simply trust that she will participate as much as she can and we will simply need to adjust accordingly.

It's been a good long day – but now dinner is calling. I've been staying with my cousin and I'm a bit spoiled! Not only do I have a large comfy bed – but they feed me too! Heehee! Tonight… fondue… yum!!

**Wednesday 10/15/08: The halfway point…**

Another phenomenal day of sharing and bonding! With such a small team we get through some of the activities a bit faster, which has enabled us to implement more trust and team building games than usual. This has made the training a whole lot of fun… at least for me!

The group was really forthcoming with their personal stories of how HIV and AIDS has touched their lives. Having a team member that is HIV+ really reminds me of how valuable this component is to the HCT workshop. There are simply too many young people today that walk around thinking that HIV is not something they have to worry about… that its not something that affects them. Well the truth is that it affects all of us – whether we realize it or not. I am so grateful for those people who are able to come forward and talk freely and openly about their status and the events in their lives and the decisions they made that contributed to that outcome so that we can all hopefully learn from their mistakes. It truly helps us to understand the realities of this disease. For those of us who have also made unwise decisions that put us at risk, myself included, it’s also a reminder that we are not any different – we were simply lucky – this time. I am thankful for these reminders and thankful for the opportunity to bring this message to others as well.

I was really happy with the progress we made today on other components of the workshop. While I focused on the positive voices – Jesse focused his attention on sharpening the creative message and of course cleaning up the drill – though this team seems to have it down and that is really the least of my concerns. I am happy that we have both the story of infected person to share during the positive voice – as well as an affected story. Both of these women have really strong stories with an equally powerful message. This workshop is really coming together nicely and I’m quite proud of this small and diverse team for how well they have come together. I feel a lot of love for this team and really wish that it would have worked out for us to stay for the tour. I hate that we do all this work to create these really powerful teams – and then have to leave then just as they are spreading their wings… its the hardest thing about this job...

So tonight we are headed out to hear the presidential debates! I really, really hope that Obama wins and that Dance4Life has the opportunity to get his attention! Can you
Thursday 10/16/08: Passing the baton…

Well this is it… after weeks of hard work, many teams, lots of laughs and lots of tears… I sit here on the eve of the last day of my final training for 2008! This has been the most amazing journey of my life and even though I will continue to do this work I don’t think that any other experience will be quite like this one… my first one.

The team came together well today – as they always do. There is a sense of apprehension and unfortunately we will only be delivering one workshop tomorrow instead of two – but its better than nothing! We utilized the scripts again and though Jesse has suggested that they could be less detailed – I would rather give them more detail and let them decide what to cut out. I haven’t had a chance to wrap my head around all the resources I want to add to the training pack – but there are quite a few! Having the scripts makes life so much easier as they don’t have to stress about what they’re going to say! I was really happy to learn that the UK was doing this as well – and I’m curious to know whether or not SA is doing something similar.

I think everyone is well suited for their roles and I’m super confident in both the key speakers and the lead dancers. The only area I’m concerned about is the warm-up since there really isn’t a script for this – its simply ad-lib. I’m thinking that its worth it for Jesse and I to compile a list of tips and techniques for this area based on what we’ve seen in other countries. There’s simply too much anxiety around this role that I have to believe there is something else we can offer here… for being such a relatively simple task – this is an area that I’ve seen participants struggle with in almost every country save Serbia where we had our awesome hip-hop duo!

I’m a bit sad that this is all coming to an end… though in my heart I know that its really just the beginning. I don’t want to say goodbye yet again to another set of new friends… have I mentioned that I hate this part of the job?! ;)

Friday 10/17/08: Trouble shooting school administration!

Well – today started out nice and leisurely… we gave the team time to work on any areas they needed focus and had our closing activities since we wouldn’t be coming back to the dance studio. I was a little nervous at first when I thought everyone would be breaking for lunch and just getting to the school on their own – so I was happy when a plan was formulated to transport everyone in two cars and even have lunch together. Everything was going smoothly – until we showed up at the school…

Now normally I would encourage the team to trouble shoot their own problems so they could learn to manage the everyday obstacles of conducting this workshop however today
was a bit different with extenuating circumstances. I would even venture to say that today was the most difficult school encounter I have ever experienced…

So we showed up at the school and our shown to the auditorium where they have scheduled us to conduct the workshop… we walk in and its… an auditorium… with seats… that don’t move… and our workshop… well it requires space to move – obviously! My heart immediately goes out to the director’s assistant whose face just crumbles with frustration as she tries to explain that she specifically told her contact that we would need a space WITHOUT chairs. The school administrator is annoyingly nonchalant about the whole manner as he shoots down all of our alternatives… the gym – no its being used for basketball practice… and outdoor venue – we don’t have that available… the school cafeteria – perhaps but we have to check. Our set-up time is quickly ticking by as we struggle to figure out an alternative. The school administrators conveniently disappear and so I set off with the assistant to try and find someone that can gives us answers and help us find a solution. With now less than 30 minutes to go before our start time – even I’m stressing out! We finally track down the principal who apologizes for the confusion but states that the only alternative to the auditorium is to re-schedule… inside I am screaming!! But I try to maintain a smile as I mentally try to sort out how we can make this work in the auditorium. We decide that we’ll have them move out into the aisles for the dance part and though its less than ideal – it will have to do. Finally having a plan the team quickly moves into high gear to get everything set up.

Always prone to looking at the bright side of things I notice that despite having chairs that don’t move (grrrrr…. its really quite a state-of-the-art auditorium… with an awesome projector screen that puts our puny projector screen that barely stands up straight to shame. Seeing as that the team is already busy trying to get everything set up I take on this little project myself and run off to find someone who will give me access to that lovely tech room at the back of the auditorium and show me how to use that awesome projector. After laying on a bit of a guilt trip to the school administrator responsible for putting us in an auditorium with CHAIRS (sorry – a little bitter) I get a personal escort into the tech room… even for me – a non tech junkie – this room was impressive – I had to resist the urge to start pressing buttons. Anyway – the result was that the video portion of the workshop benefited from this big snafu!

Despite having started late and a smaller than expected turn out the team does an amazing job! Although we could tell they were a bit nervous – I am certain that the students couldn’t. The session ended with the students not wanting to leave and everyone enjoying dancing around and showing off their break dance moves! Many of the students stayed to find out more information about the project and the team agreed to come back the following week for another session – in a room without chairs – so that they could reach out to more students.

After packing up our equipment we proceeded through a round of hasty good-byes with those we wouldn’t be seeing again. Jesse was leaving early the next morning and though I would be staying through the weekend – my time was also committed to friends and
family… so it was time to say good-bye. My heart sank as I thought of leaving yet another group of wonderful individuals about to embark on their own amazing journey of discovery with the school tour…

Although this part of my journey has come to an end… I smile with the knowledge that I have touched many people’s lives over the last few months and that each of those individuals will go forward into the world and be able to affectively impart change in their communities because of the experience that we gave them… and so as much as my heart aches with the sadness of saying good-bye for now… it also rejoices simply knowing that they will forever be a part of me!
Appendix D – Concept Paper
Dance4Life
Inspiring Change Through Music and Dance

Name: Tañia Plascencia                  Date Submitted: September 12, 2008

Project Type: Develop a skill to improve the quality of life for others

What Is This Project About?

This project will be a documentation of my experiences and learnings working with young people in five countries as a Dance4Life facilitator. I will discuss what I discovered by working within different cultural contexts and how the journey has helped me grow as a facilitator. I will focus on the skills necessary to manage group dynamics and discuss the challenges and difficulties of implementing this work in each country.

Dance4Life is an interactive global schools project that engages young people around the world in the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS. Through the universal language of music and dance this project aims to inform, empower and mobilize youth to protect themselves and others and to combat ignorance, which can lead to stigma and discrimination.

My organization, RedZebra, is one of Dance4Life’s original global partners having choreographed the drill and designed and implemented the 5-day Heart Connection Tour (HCT) trainings since the project’s inception in 2003. The HCT workshop is the first of four components in the Dance4Life Schools project and often is also the first Dance4Life interaction that most students have. The workshop is approximately 90 – 120 minutes in length and serves to:

• Inspire by sharing the past, present and future vision of Dance4Life
• Empower with basic HIV and AIDS facts and figures on a global and local scale
• Unite students worldwide by teaching the drill
• Encourage dialogue around a difficult subject
• Promote personal responsibility for our choices
• Mobilize youth through music and dance to change their future and become ‘Agents of Change’ in their schools and communities

It is through RedZebra that I have been given the chance to be a part of this learning experience. This opportunity was based in part on my expressed interest and desire to be a part of the project and also on a mutual decision with my Director that this was the next step in my growth as a RedZebra facilitator. I will be co-facilitating HCT trainings for five new countries assigned to the U.S. office in 2008. And though I have participated in a supportive role in previous HCT trainings, this will be the first year I will actually be participating in a facilitator/trainer role.
Rationale for Choice:

I started working for RedZebra in April of 2004 just a few months after the first Dance4Life pilots in South Africa and the Netherlands. I remember being inspired by the vision of the project and knowing with absolute certainty that it was something I wanted to be a part of in any capacity. I eagerly took on a supportive role and provided organizational structure to a quickly growing project. This enthusiasm grew to a deep passion for a cause that has affected me personally and has been integral in my decision to continue to grow and develop as a facilitator.

When exploring potential topics for a master’s project there were two driving factors that guided my decision to focus on the work with Dance4Life. The first was logistics based—since I recognized that a significant amount of time would be dedicated to the project during the fall semester, it made sense to find an overlap. The second was an awareness that developed during the Change Leadership course over the summer that helped me to realize that the work I was embarking on with Dance4Life was the perfect opportunity to cultivate some of the leadership qualities that I hoped to embody. My overarching rationale stems from a desire to improve my skills as a facilitator while helping others to inspire, motivate and realize the potential within themselves; to help them work effectively and collaboratively; and to realize Dance4Life’s vision of uniting one million young Agents of Change worldwide in 2014 to push back the spread of HIV and AIDS.

By documenting this journey I will be able to reflect on which facilitator skills and tools I am using that are working well, as well as those areas I need to focus on for improvement. The daily summaries will also enable me to compare and contrast the techniques necessary to effectively facilitate across unique cultural boundaries. In this way, I will be able to both improve my overall skill competency base and embrace cultural sensitivity in my future facilitation work.

What Will be the Tangible Product(s) or Outcomes?

Between August and October I will facilitate and document my journey of five, one-week HCT trainings in five countries. A direct outcome of my facilitation journey will be 9 new teams and 100 new facilitators and peer educators capable of implementing the HCT workshop in their respective regions.

I will record daily summaries of my experiences during the trainings that will include notes from end-of-day debriefs with co-facilitators and pertinent details from pre-training discussions with the local entity in charge of Dance4Life. At the end of the three-month period I will utilize the summaries to reflect on overarching insights from this journey and how I have grown and developed as a facilitator. I will focus specifically on what I have learned about managing group dynamics and problem-solving within diverse and culturally unique environments.
What Criteria Will You Use To Measure The Effectiveness Of Your Achievement?

Throughout the three-month period, I will measure my growth and effectiveness by how successfully I implement learnings from previous trainings to subsequent trainings. The ease by which I can adapt to each new team will also reflect how well I have internalized what I have learned. My ability to be successful will be most dependent on the detail and consistency of my daily summaries. Another measure of how well I am utilizing the documentation of this journey will be reflected in each teams’ ability to collaboratively deliver an engaging, inspiring and effective HCT workshop on the final day of the training.

Who Will Be Involved or Influenced; What Will Your Role Be?

The individuals involved in my documentation of this journey will be my co-facilitators, specifically Jesse Wallace, Elizabeth Cisneros and Gloria Williams. The participants in each of the 5-day trainings will also play a key role, as my experiences working with them will be the basis of my reflections. These individuals will also be the focus of my facilitation practices and will therefore be directly influenced by my continued growth and improvement.

My role will be as scribe, since this will be a personal documentation of my journey as a facilitator and will focus on what I observe, learn and apply. In Serbia, Moldova, Turkey and the U.S. my perceptions will be that of a lead facilitator, which may differ slightly from my experiences in Spain where a stronger Spanish speaker will act as lead.

When Will This Project Take Place?

I will conduct and document Heart Connection Tour trainings in five new countries, over the course of three months. The 5-day trainings will occur on the following dates:

- Serbia: August 18-22
- Moldova: August 25-29
- Ibiza: September 1-5
- Turkey: September 13-17
- USA: October 13-17

Where Will This Project Occur?
The specific training venue will vary in each country and is dependent on resources and the size of the team. This project will take place in five cities as outlined below:

- Belgrade, Serbia
- Chisinau, Moldova
- Eivissa, Ille de Evissa, Spain
- Ankara, Turkey
- Washington, D.C., United States

**Why Is It Important to Do This?**

Youth under the age of 25 currently number over 3 billion worldwide and are the generation that has most significantly felt the impact of HIV and AIDS. Despite this, they lack the knowledge and resources to protect themselves. Dance4Life recognizes that the only way to push back the spread of HIV and AIDS is to engage and motivate young people to become involved and inspire them to take personal responsibility for their choices, decisions and lives.

Ignorance, apathy and the lack of information and resources have fueled the growing threat of this global killer for over two decades. The state of HIV and AIDS worldwide is one of monumental proportions and significant impact to current and future generations. HIV and AIDS do not discriminate and therefore affect each and every one of us. Music… dance… are languages we all speak and understand and it is through this medium that Dance4Life will unite the world’s youth and empower them to change their future.

Having been a part of this project since its first official year of inception (2004) I am personally vested in the success of the program—both from an intellectual perspective, as I have put in a lot of time and effort, and most importantly from a heart perspective. In addition to my personal experiences, I carry in my heart the story of each and every person that I’ve met that has been touched by HIV and AIDS. Too many people are apathetic to this growing problem and I refuse to be one of them. Indifference and failure to act is lethal and no longer an option if we wish to turn this global problem around.

My original motivation for entering the Buffalo State Master’s Program was to further develop my creative problem solving and facilitation skills so that I might empower and enable individuals to help themselves. However, at that time, I did not yet know how I might manifest that desired objective. I recognize this project as an ideal opportunity to realize that goal because by documenting my experiences along this journey and utilizing what I learn to grow and develop as a facilitator I can continue to make a difference in the fight against HIV and AIDS worldwide. Not by conventional means, but rather by guiding and empowering committed teams of individuals to be clear on their purpose and take ownership of this global endeavor. I can apply the problem-solving skills that I have learned to overcome obstacles along this journey and at the same time engage and involve others in the process so that they may also learn how to be more effective and achieve success.
Personal Learning Goals:

- Hone my abilities to be fully present to the energy of the group so as to be more deliberately guided by the needs of the group and less by the schedule.
- Demonstrate shared leadership by letting go of personal need to control the process and trusting co-facilitators to utilize appropriate, and possibly different, means to achieve the same outcome.
- Push myself to practice active listening 100% of the time so as to be able to ask the right questions and fully understand the needs and realities of the participants and NCO in order to be able to problem solve effectively.
- Be deliberate and consistent about debriefing, reflection and documentation so as capture learnings and insights and be able to implement changes, builds and improvements to subsequent trainings.
- Embrace leadership principles that will allow me to guide and gently steer the participants to learn and discover insights that will lead to success and empowerment.
- Implement at least one new, adapted or different creative process or technique in each training.

How Do You Plan to Achieve Your Goals and Outcomes?

In order to realize my goals and outcomes I plan to consistently implement certain practices that I have learned from my mentors. The first is intention setting and includes reflection on what personal and professional intentions I wish to manifest throughout each training. Once I am clear on those intentions I will share them aloud in order to speak them into existence and use them to guide my decisions throughout the day and week. The second is debriefing which consists of personal reflection at the end of each day and an open dialogue with my co-facilitators about what worked and what we wish could have been better or different. I will then be able to immediately implement and apply any changes, additions or modifications to the training process.

In addition, I am committed to journaling on a daily basis all of my observations and insights so as to capture as fully as possible the essence of the project and learn from it. I recognize that, as I will be working in different cultures, no two trainings will be alike. I believe that this is an important learning aspect because although I will be delivering the “same” training and imparting the knowledge, skills and values to achieve the same outcome—the reality is that they will be vastly different experiences.

It will also be imperative that I am mindful of both verbal and non-verbal communication and how the culture and/or customs might influence different interpretations. As I will have both a preparation call and face-to-face meeting with the NCO Dance4Life Coordinator in each country before beginning each training, I will be able to utilize these individuals as a resource for planning each session.
Evaluation:

My work and progress over the three-month period will be evaluated on multiple levels. Participants in each country will be asked to complete a training evaluation at the end of the 5-day trainings. This evaluation covers a spectrum of topics related to the training and includes questions specifically related to the trainers. The local NCOs are also required to complete a feedback form based on their observations of the trainings and the roll out or implementation of HCT workshops in the schools.

On a professional level my growth and success will also be evaluated during the final training in Washington D.C. where my Director will act as a monitor and simply observe and take notes to be used in an end-of-year feedback session.

In addition, personal assessment will occur on a daily basis throughout the trainings during end-of-day debrief sessions with my co-facilitators. My final end-of-year feedback with the U.S. Director of RedZebra will be precluded by a self-evaluation of my development throughout the year.

Prepare Project Timeline:

**August 2008**
- August 18-22: Serbia HCT Training
  - Pre-trip Preparation: 16 hours
  - Training: 32 hours
  - Pilot Presentation: 8 hours
  - Daily Debrief and Prep: 5 hours
- August 25-29: Moldova HCT Training
  - Preparation: 2 hours
  - Training: 32 hours
  - Pilot Presentation: 8 hours
  - Daily Debrief and Prep: 5 hours

**September 2008**
- Weekly SBP Chats: 1.5 hours
- Monthly Advisor Check-in: 30 minutes – 1 hour
  - September 1-5: Ibiza HCT Training
    - Preparation: 2 hours
    - Training: 32 hours
    - Pilot Presentation: 8 hours
    - Daily Debrief and Prep: 5 hours
  - September 6-10:
    - Concept Paper Draft completed and sent to SBP for feedback: 10 hours
  - September 11-12:
    - Concept Paper Draft revised and submitted on Angel: 2 hours
• September 15-19:
  – Final Concept Paper Revised and Submitted: 3 hours
• September 13-17: Turkey HCT Training
  – Preparation: 2 hours
  – Training: 32 hours
  – Pilot Presentation: 8 hours
  – Daily Debrief and Prep: 5 hours
• September 22-30:
  – Extensive Literature Research: 15 hours

**October 2008**

- Weekly SBP Chats: 1.5 hours
- Monthly Advisor Check-in: 30 minutes – 1 hour
  • October 1-7:
    – Outline Project: 2 hours
    – Country Write-ups: 10 hours
    – Draft Sections 1-3: 6 hours
  • October 13-17: USA HCT Training
    – Preparation: 8 hours
    – Training: 32 hours
    – Pilot Presentation: 8 hours
    – Daily Debrief and Prep: 5 hours
  • October 18:
    – Master’s Project Angel class chat: 3 hours
  • October 20-25:
    – USA HCT School Tour: 40 hours
  • October 26:
    – Finalize and Submit on Angel Draft Sections 1-3: 2 hours

**November 2008**

- Weekly SBP Chats: 2 hours
- Monthly Advisor Check-in: 30 minutes – 1 hour
  • November 1:
    – Master’s Project whole class chat on Angel: 3 hours
  • November 2-4:
    – US Country Write-up: 2 hours
  • November 6:
    – Self-Assessment and Director Evaluation: 3 hours
  • November 8-17:
    – Draft and Submit on Angel Sections 4-6: 10 hours
  • November 29:
    – Dance4Life World AIDS Day Satellite Event – Country TBD: 4 hours
December 2008

- Weekly SBP Chats: 2 hours
- Monthly Advisor Check-in: 30 minutes – 1 hour
  - December 6:
    - Angel/Skype class presentation: 6 hours
  - December 1-8:
    - Final CD and Electronic Files Prepared and Sent: 8 hours
  - December 19:
    - Final Bound Copy Prepared and Shipped: 3 hours

Identify Pertinent Literature or Resources**

**Note: As I started the research component of the project in mid-August, I have had very little time or Internet access to identify pertinent literature. This will be my main focus once I return in late September. I plan to research the history of each country to help to understand how that has shaped the landscape of the culture overall and specifically the perceptions of HIV, AIDS, Homosexuality and general Sexual Reproductive Health. In addition I will research literature on facilitation practices with different cultures.

Key Resources:
- Milos Stojiljikovic – Y-Peer Serbia / Dance4Life Coordinator Serbia
- Olga Osadcii – Foundation AIDS East-West / Dance4Life Coordinator Moldova
- Noemi Tur Mayans – Alas Ibiza / Dance4Life Coordinator Ibiza
- Nazli Moral – UNFPA Turkey / Dance4Life Coordinator Turkey
- Gökhan Yıldırımka – UNFPA Turkey / Dance4Life Coordinator Turkey
- Gloria Williams – RedZebra USA Director / Mentor
- Lynette McCormack – AH HA Consulting / Mentor
- Oliver MacDonald – RedZebra UK Director
- Mark Dodsworth – RedZebra South Africa Director
- Jesse Wallace – RedZebra USA Co-facilitator
- Elizabeth Cisneros – RedZebra USA Co-facilitator
- Randah Taher – ICSC Alumni
Appendix E – Photos
Dance4Life
Photo Key

a. Small group sharing
b. Freestyle development
c. Discussing the meaning of facilitation, peer education and professionalism
d. Butterfly / leaf – trust exercise
e. Positive voices
f. ‘Live’ workshop – watching Dance4Life moodclip
g. ‘Live’ workshop – teaching the drill
h. Dance4Life Serbia Team
i. Getting to know each other in pairs
j. Reflecting on the meaning of facilitation, peer education and professionalism
k. Practicing the drill
l. Preparing a skit on professionalism
m. Morning reflections
n. Lapsit – team building exercise
o. Creative message
p. Dance4Life Moldova Team
q. Discussing why music and dance
r. Illustrating why music and dance
s. Small group sharing
t. Butterfly / leaf – trust exercise
u. Creative message
v. Dance4Life Ibiza Team
w. Heartbeat meditation
x. Creative message
y. Discussing why music and dance
z. Getting to know each other in pairs
aa. Discussing the meaning of facilitation, peer education and professionalism
bb. A team united
c. Relaxed together
d. Creative message
e. ‘Live’ school workshop with 100 students
ff. Dance4Life Turkey Team
gg. Freestyle development
hh. Reflection of facilitation strengths and preferences
ii. Butterfly / leaf – trust exercise
jj. Sharing personal experiences with HIV / AIDS
kk. ‘Live’ workshop – HIV/AIDS peer education segment
ll. Celebrating with the students
mm. Dancing with students
nn. Dance4Life USA Team
Dance4Life Serbia

a. b. c. d. e. f. g. h.
Dance4Life Moldova
Dance4Life Ibiza
Dance4Life Turkey

y. z.

aa. bb.

c.

d.

e. f.
Dance4Life USA

gg. hh.

ii. jj.

kk. ll.

mm. nn.
Dance4Life

Why music and dance? Inspiration from around the world…