

Befrienders Worldwide: The New Organisation

In March 2012 Befrienders Worldwide was registered as a separate charity, marking its independence from Samaritans UK & Rol.

The Board of Trustees made up of five appointed members and a delegate representing the Regional Co-ordinators. The Trustees are:

- Martin Taylor, UK, (Chair),
- Brian Mishara, Canada, (Vice-Chair),
- Len Jones, UK, (Treasurer),
- Peter Barker, New Zealand, (Secretary),
- Robert Paris, Brazil, (Task Force Lead),
- Gary Beckmann, USA, (Regional Co-ordinators representative)

You may remember Robert and Peter as Regional Coordinators for Latin America and Australasia.

Liz Try, who was the Chair of the Befrienders Worldwide Steering Group for five years, has been invited to participate in meetings of the Trustees as an observer. In addition, Vija Shunmoogum, who worked for BW at Samaritans as the International Programmes Manager, has been hired to work with the new Befrienders Worldwide.

The Regional Co-ordinators are volunteers from the eight Regions;

They are:

- Mela Paronavitana: India/ Sri Lanka
- Merab Mulindi: Africa
- Pornthip Yoskittipat: East Asia
- Kevin Crombie: Australasia/ Oceania
- Tanja Bokun: Eastern Europe
- Neville Milner: Central & Northern Europe
- Luiza Del Vechia: South America & Caribbean
- Gary Beckmann: North America

In June the Regional Coordinators and the Trustee board came together to consolidate the new governance structure, with the Chair of Regional Coordinators, Gary Beckmann, also taking part in Trustee meetings as a co-opted Board member. At this meeting the aims of the organisation was discussed, the membership criteria was reviewed and plans were developed for how best to support all our member Centres and to grow as an organisation.

It is the intention of the Trustee board to build an organisation that will offer

the best support to their members, through the development of BW training materials and accreditation, to raise the profile of Befrienders Worldwide across the globe growing the brand to voice the views of their members in global suicide discussions. The Trustees also wish to harness the incredible knowledge that is within our network to help the network develop innovative service practices and be the basis of biennial conferences that will become a part of the Befrienders Worldwide structure.



Trustees and Regional Coordinators, London - June 2012

L to R: Mela, Neville, Peter, Vija, Martin, Pornthip, Gary, Liz, Len, Tanja, Kevin, Merab, Robert, Brian. Liz Try was invited to attend the meeting as a facilitator.

To contact us:

To submit articles or information for the Newsletter, please contact the BW Secretary, Peter Barker (pbarker@iconz.co.nz)

Contact information for the Chair of the Trustees is:
Martin Taylor (martin@mltdirections.com)

All other enquiries should be addressed to Vija Shunmoogum (international@befrienders.org)

Our Work So Far

Website

The BW website (www.befrienders.org) is a resource for suicidal persons and people in distress around the world to locate Centres who are members of Befrienders Worldwide and obtain information. A new BW website is being developed to also increase communication between Centres and with the Trustees. The new website will launch the new charity later this year. It will also have a robust member's area that will allow each Centre to develop their own Centre page, to tell the rest of the network about their work. Each Centre will also be able to upload their own publications, have access to the materials in the member's area and leave posts on a forum to message another volunteer in the network directly. This website will be available to use from November 2012, new logins will be assigned for each Centre.

Training

Befrienders Worldwide has developed a Training Task Force group, with Head of Task Force, Les Rowley from the UK. This Task Force is developing new training materials for the network and hope to have these available for use early 2013. In order for this to be a success they would like to synthesize the current training materials in our membership to make global materials.

If you have any non UK training material please send them to your Regional Coordinator so that we can start building these materials.

From The Regions

Adoption of National Strategic Action Plan for Suicide-Prevention, Malaysia

In a landmark development for suicide prevention efforts in Malaysia, The National Mental Health Promotion Advisory Council, established by the Ministry of Health, Malaysia (MOH) officially adopted a National Strategic Action Plan for Suicide-Prevention on 4 July 2012.

The Council, established in August 2011 is chaired by the Minister of Health, Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai and is made up representatives and consultants from WHO, Welfare Department, Education Department, mental health professionals and NGOs. Ganga Sinnadurai, President of Befrienders Malaysia and Datin Seri Rubiah, Chair of Befrienders Kota Kinabalu, were appointed as council members in recognition of the significant contribution made by the organisation towards suicide-prevention in the country.

The media has reported a marked increase in suicides and great concern had been expressed by the public, particularly over a spate of recent suicides among teenagers and young adults.

The 5-year Plan will focus on the following 8-points:

- Increase public awareness for suicide-prevention.
- Education of mental health gatekeepers and the public.
- Identification of high-risk groups and outreach to the affected communities.
- Improve monitoring of suicide through the National Suicide Registry.
- Inter-sector collaboration – Government, NGOs, private sector, educational institutions, and religious organization.
- Capacity building for those in high-risk groups, i.e., youths
- Promotion of responsible media reporting
- Restricting of access to methods

Befrienders Malaysia played an important role towards the adoption of the Plan that was formulated at a 4-day workshop held in Kota Kinabalu, State of Sabah. The Plan has recognized and given credit to the Befrienders for pioneering suicide-prevention efforts in the country and for its contribution towards emotional support services and outreach programmes to communities at high-risk to suicide. The Plan also adopted sections of the Befrienders training manual for its public education programmes.



*The National Mental Health
Promotion Advisory Council,
Malaysia*

Befrienders Japan

Miyazaki – Issuing a booklet commemorating our 5th anniversary of NPO in late October, 2012.

The booklet will include our five years' history, a supporting activity for bereaved families by suicide, an enlightenment activity for suicide prevention, Trainings, articles contributed from befrienders and analysis of 8,000 contacts from the beginning.

In August we held a "Life Lantern Concert 2012". This included a talk by Mr Shinya Hagio (Volunteer of BW Tokyo Centre) and mini-concert.

Mr Shinya Hagio has won the Japan National Press Club (JNPC) award for fiscal 2012 for his coverage on victims of the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami titled "Sanriku Monogatari".

Especially for the World Suicide Prevention Day in 10th September, 2012 we will have extended hours of operation.

From October, 2012 we will increase our hours of operation from:

At present: 3days/week (Sunday/Wednesday/Friday) 20:00 – 23:00.

In October to: 4days/week (Sunday/ Monday/ Wednesday/Friday) 20:00 – 23:00.

Kumano – Held a "Gathering for bereaved families" on 14th July, and "Seminar for Suicide Prevention" on 1st September. Special Helpline for Suicide Prevention Week from 10th to 16th September and Initial Training for potential volunteers at the end of September.

Osaka – We are planning "Seminar celebrating the 35th anniversary of Osaka Centre" inviting a famous psychiatrist as well as a musician on 9th February, 2013.

The purpose of the seminar is to make an appeal to public an importance of Suicide Prevention Activities and to join volunteer of Suicide Prevention Centre.

Tokyo – The second Befrienders Worldwide Japan Conference is going to be held in October. The theme of the conference will be improving the quality of our training activities. The training activities are to meet the level of our interest in the basic training manuals.

Toll-free phone service with all the centers of Japan.

Samaritans Bangkok

Last March, the Director, together with 4 trainers and a psychiatrist (Samaritans Honorary Adviser), had an opportunity to pay a visit to a prison north of Bangkok where we also conducted a "Listening" workshop for a selected group of prisoners. This was the first time in our Centre's history of over thirty years that we were given opportunity to do such activities, part of which was sponsored by AIS mobile telephone company.



Samaritans Bangkok; First, third, fourth, fifth, seventh, eighth from left Norrawee Phoomchan (M.D.), Panomporn Phoomchan, Amornwan Sirikhet, Pornthip Yoskittiphat, Sriaroon Thanarattikanon, Kiradit Sachdev, the other two are wardens at the prison.

Trustee Profiles

Martin Taylor

Martin Taylor was born in North London. He obtained an MA in economics from Cambridge University before qualifying as a Chartered Accountant. He then spent his early career in finance and consultancy, including a one year in Brunei, South East Asia.

In 1984 Martin joined Inchcape plc an automotive distribution and retail Group, based in London. He worked with the company for 25 years, firstly in finance and then as MD/ CEO/ Chairman of various businesses across Europe, Russia, Asia, South America and Africa (Ethiopia). For 18 years during this period he was based, together with his family, in Greece and Belgium before they returned to London in 2005.

He is currently a non-executive director of Pcubed, an international project management consultancy and also has his own consultancy business advising clients on strategy and marketing, business development, operational management and finance.



Martin Taylor, Chairman of Board

Trustee Profiles

Brian Mishara

Brian Mishara is Professor of Psychology and Director of the Centre for Research and Intervention on Suicide and Euthanasia (CRISE) at the Université du Québec à Montréal, in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. He is the past president of the International Association for Suicide Prevention, a NGO in official relations with the World Health Organization. He has been actively involved in research on suicide prevention, and particularly studies evaluating the effectiveness of intervention methods used by telephone helplines. Besides his university activities, Professor Mishara was a founder of Suicide Action Montreal, the volunteer-based Montreal regional suicide prevention centre and of the Quebec Association of Suicidology. He also was a president of the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention. Over the past several years he has been conducting suicide prevention training workshops for volunteers, professionals and community organizations in countries where there was little or no training in suicide prevention available. His most recent training activities were in Uganda, Guyana, Lebanon and Somaliland.



Brian Mishara, Professor of Psychology and Director of the Centre for Research and Intervention on Suicide and Euthanasia (CRISE), Université du Québec à Montréal

Consultation with Members Centres

Consultation with Members Centres

Many thanks to all the Centres who took the time and effort to complete the Annual Return and accompanying questionnaire. It is evident that a lot of thought has gone into your responses.

It is worth sharing some of the responses with you as you will then be able to see how they relate to yours. The question - What specifically does your centre hope for/ expect from Befrienders Worldwide - provided some interesting and thought provoking responses:

"Would like to have a team of people to whom we can turn for clarity and guidance."

"A sense of connectedness – sharing of ideas & best practices."

"The support and affiliation of an international, recognised organisation will add huge credibility to the separate centres around the world. A structure to bring together geographically connected centres – not to remove control or autonomy at a local level but to facilitate best practice sharing, research."

"From a centre point of view, we cannot expect Befrienders Worldwide to support members centre much as each centre has its own programme or funding or even training materials.

Befrienders Worldwide can consider looking into other areas of work which should not be a duplicate of what an existing centre have been doing. In this way, BW can focus on doing/carrying out activities within your financial means as well the expertise which the Trustee members might have."

"Development of a strong international brand that represents a consistent value system and form of practice would also benefit centres on a marketing and promotion level."

"One consistent brand?"

"It would also be helpful to have strong professional and organizational letters of support documenting the value and success of Samaritans work; projects, programs, research and other initiatives that demonstrate Samaritans successes working with and in various cultures and communities around the world (such as "Reaching Young Europe," for example); anything that strengthens our ability to prove what we do works, is needed and has proved to be effective in centres and locales throughout the world."

However, the provision of training materials was the item that Centres expect BW to provide. This was closely followed by "Opportunities to communicate, meet and share with other centres through international events/meetings - such as conferences & seminars". There was also an expectation that BW will be able to provide the latest research information from around the world.

The Board has a Training Task Force in place. They are now collecting all available training material with a view to producing a Befrienders Worldwide Training Manual.

The provision of information on Fundraising and Promotion was also high on the list of expectations.

Your responses will assist the Board decide what it's priorities for the next few years will be. To start this process a small group has been given the task of developing a Strategic Plan. Some initial work on the plan was undertaken by the Governance Group of the BW Steering Group. This work will now be combined with new ideas and goals. When the Board meets in Sao Paulo in October a considerable amount of time will be devoted to further developing our plans.