

Peace, healing and reconciliation

To look at the place of healing and reconciliation. *by James Lamont*
Suitable for Key Stage 4/5

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Aims

To look at the place of healing and reconciliation.

Preparation and Materials

- For more details on this story see www.feedtheminds.org.
- Download pictures of war from the internet for the reflection. Add to these some pictures of gangs in this country/football violence. Use your discretion as to how your students will relate to this section.
- Bob Dylan, 'Blowing in the Wind' for the reflection (available to download).

Assembly

1. In early 2008, in the wake of a disputed election, violence erupted across Kenya. President Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner and the nation was then split into ethnic groups which were considered either pro-government or anti-government. Economic inequalities exacerbated the unease. Former friends and neighbours turned on each other as ancient and seemingly irrelevant divisions were resurrected. When the violence finally ended some 1,500 people had lost their lives and 600,000 forced to flee.
2. Alongside the loss of many hundreds of lives was the loss of community in Kenya, making reconciliation all the more challenging. How can you trust your neighbours if they turn on you because of your tribal background? A spree of looting accompanied the sectarian violence, and many businesspeople were reluctant to reinvest, fearing that they will be looted again.

This has burdened the nation's already flagging economy, struck down already by the violence and later by the financial crisis. In Britain, economic misery is a hardship. In Kenya, a nation that has made great steps to reduce its enormous poverty levels, it is a tragedy. It is clear that reconciliation must come between the peoples of Kenya, and it must be done soon.

3. The Peace-building Healing and Reconstruction Programme (PHARP) aims to do just that. It has recognized that women, who are not often belligerent in the fighting, make good bridges between communities. Women are trained in



mediation and peace-making techniques as well as in reconciliation and trauma recovery. Support groups are formed between ethnic groups, to recognize the common pain experienced.

The women of Kenya are in a unique position to both reconcile fighting men from different groups and provide support for victims of rape in the conflict. Moreover, peace-makers are tasked with training more peace-makers, and trainees receive instruction from peace-makers from other communities.

4. Although hate erupts frequently and can often be seen to be overwhelming all other emotions, that which burns brightest also burns fastest. The legacy of the horrific violence in Kenya in 2008 will not just be stories of kin turning against kin, but also stories of the hopeful reconciliation that followed.

Time for reflection

Play the music and display the pictures. Give plenty of time at the end.

Prayer

It's so easy to fall out with people
To think they are 'dissing' you
Or that they don't like you.
It's so hard to make the relationship work once more.

Help me to work for peace.
Help me to build relationships.
Help me to be a peace-maker in the world.
Amen.

Hymn

'He who would valiant be' (*Come and Praise*, 44)
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