

# Grant Application to the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust for an Expansion and Quality Improvement Programme

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## **About Alternatives to Violence Project, Britain**

The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) is a registered charity (no. 1085709) with over 100 trained volunteer facilitators delivering intensive, low-cost group workshops for people from all walks of life who want to handle conflict well. Our workshops are 16-18 hours, take place in every region of Britain, and combine experiential learning with practical training in conflict awareness and skills. Using real-life conflict situations in a group setting, a diverse group of workshop participants locate the genesis of conflict in their relationships and the structures of society and develop skills and attitudes for dealing with it. Participants benefit by building better relationships and society benefits in healthier, less violent communities. In 2008-09 94% participants rated their workshop experience as excellent or good. All our volunteer facilitators are former workshop participants.

The vision of the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) Britain is a non-violent society. The benefits to one person of learning how to handle conflict are shared widely through their relationships and communities, thereby indirectly influencing a large number of people. In turn, the experience of handling conflict well can lead to a new appreciation of similar patterns of conflict operating in the social and political context (e.g. street violence, the war in Afghanistan). We therefore see the potential of our work to influence social values and build a culture of peace in the long-term.

The organisation is divided into a national office and six regions with one part-time member of national staff and two part-time regional staff, the remaining four regions are staffed by volunteers.

## **What we want to do: Expansion and quality improvement programme**

### **First phase (now complete)**

Although workshop participants have typically benefited greatly from their experience of AVP since it was established in the UK, historically the organisation has lacked the strategic approach, communications and staff capacity needed to realise its potential.

This is now changing. From 2008 we began working with Pilotlight, an organisation that teams governance experts with small, developing charities and we employed a new part-time national coordinator. This new input, combined with the continuing commitment of many volunteers, has allowed us to begin expanding and improving our work. The first phase of this took place through 2008-09 and 2009-10 and consisted in the extensive restructuring and re-energising of the organisation. During this period we:

- Clarified our vision, mission, aims and values and agreed new strategic priorities
- Restructured and refreshed our governance and established new working groups on three key areas of development: outreach and communications, workshop delivery/content and volunteer training/support
- Employed a part-time National Coordinator to drive strategic development

- Improved communications and support across the organisation
- Attracted a new patron, Baroness Vivien Stern, and five new active trustees
- Expanded our community of volunteers to over 145 including over 100 facilitators, of which seven are inmate facilitators at HMP Shepton Mallet (since August 2009)
- Achieved Open College Network accreditation for our Level 1 workshop in core conflict skills
- Became more financially efficient by increasing income from workshops.

### **Second phase of programme: 2010-11 and 2011-12**

Phase two of this change programme will expand and develop our work, aiming to improve our effectiveness as a community organisation building a culture of nonviolence. Based on an increase in national staff capacity, our objectives for this are as follows:

#### *Evaluation, quality improvement and accreditation*

- Develop the quality of our workshop content and delivery by
  - Overhauling our evaluation and reporting systems
  - Improving written support and guidance for facilitators
  - Building a quality assurance scheme using the Stepping Stones to Quality framework

#### *Training and volunteer support*

- Improve support and training for facilitators and other volunteers by increasing support and development opportunities including a mentoring scheme
- Recruit new volunteers to deliver an expanded workshop programme

#### *Communications, outreach and partnerships*

- Develop a new marketing and outreach strategy with new resources
- Develop the potential of AVP workshops and outreach resources to raise public awareness of nonviolence, aimed at changing social values
- Launch an improved website (in progress)
- Investigate new partnerships for working with under-18s and young offenders

#### *Governance and fundraising*

- Establish a sustainable fundraising programme
- Implement a consolidated national budget for the first time

#### *Regional development*

- Raise funds for part-time coordinators in AVP Scotland and Northwest regions
- Standardise and/or centralise some administration systems

#### *Workshop programme*

- Expand and diversify the workshop programme by developing two regions initially (Scotland and Northwest) and experimenting with new projects in London and Southeast Region
- Deliver the first tranche of AVP workshops accredited by the Open College Network (in prisons initially) and develop the AVP/OCN programme

### **Third phase of programme: 2012-13 and 2013-14**

The third phase will further expand and diversify our work; AVP will become a public voice and pioneer new ways of working, rooted in our values as a peace and community organisation.

## Why this work is needed now

### Violence in the UK

A United Nations survey in 2003-04 indicated that around 1 in 50 people in Britain are the victim of a violent assault each year, about twice the average for the industrialised world.<sup>1</sup> Violence is particularly widespread in prisons where around a third of AVP's work takes place. In 2008 there were 15,688 prisoner-on-prisoner or prisoner-on-staff assaults and over 8,000 incidents of self-harm; the prevalence of personality disorders among inmates is estimated at 57-64%.<sup>2</sup> These data indicate the urgent and long-term need for grassroots-based approaches to building a culture of nonviolence in the UK.

The challenge that violence presents cannot be met by policy change alone; it has social, cultural and personal dimensions requiring community-based approaches, yet few programmes are working with how adults handle conflict. AVP offers an accessible approach for all, including those with low literacy skills or mental health problems. Our belief that building stable self-esteem and strong relationships as protective factors against violence is also well supported in the research literature.<sup>3</sup>

### The need for AVP's expansion and quality improvement programme now

As we develop the quality of our work and implement our strategic priorities we can make a significant impact on society. We are excited by the possibilities but we need to put the organisation on a firmer financial footing in order to realise this potential. Without this we will not move beyond our current level of work.

## Impact

The main outcomes of this project will enhance our contribution to a culture of nonviolence:

1. Our contribution to a culture of peace and nonviolence grows as we work with more people, develop new online and paper-based resources for conflict/nonviolence awareness and seek opportunities to be a public voice [indicated by a) take-up/use of new resources, b) participant testimonials, c) workshop statistics]
2. More people develop skills in handling conflict as AVP Regions become better supported to publicise their workshops and build new partnerships (target: 20% increase in completing workshop participants in the first year) [indicated by workshop completion statistics]
3. Workshop participants' needs are met more effectively as the quality of workshop content, delivery and evaluation develops [indicated by workshop evaluation forms: a) satisfaction rates and b) learning self-assessments]

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<sup>1</sup> Van Dijk et al (2007): *Criminal Victimization in International Perspective: Key Findings from the 2004-2005 ICVS and EU ICS*. The Hague, Ministry of Justice, WODC, 78-82

<sup>2</sup> Hansard, HC:

\_\_\_ 23 March 2009: Col 180W, Prisoners: Mentally Ill;

\_\_\_ 30 March 2009: Col 1004W-1008W, Prisons: Crimes of Violence;

\_\_\_ 2 Apr 2009: Column 1467W-1468W, Prisons: Crimes of Violence;

\_\_\_ 3 June 2009: Col 529W, Prisoners: Self-harm.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. Wilkinson, R (2005): *The Impact of Inequality: How to make sick societies healthier* London: Routledge; Brent Donnellan, M et al (2005): 'Low Self-Esteem Is Related to Aggression, Antisocial Behaviour, and Delinquency' *Psychological Science*, vol. 16, no. 4, 329

4. Facilitators, regional coordinators and other volunteers are better trained and supported as new guidelines and support systems are established including mentoring [indicated by a) volunteer survey returns and b) trainee feedback on training courses]
5. We reach more people from vulnerable social groups, particularly people with a history of physical violence as victims or perpetrators or those with an enduring mental health problem, as we develop innovative and flexible approaches to our work and build new partnerships (target: at least 20% increase in such participants on 2009-10 levels by the end of 2011-12) [indicated by a) referral sources and partnerships (e.g. prisons and mental health charities), b) diversity monitoring forms]
6. The organisation achieves a more sustainable footing and begins to grow and develop [indicated by securing long-term strategic funding during 2010-11]

The work will be internally evaluated annually in the annual report and individual reports to funders. The lessons learnt will be passed on to AVP regional coordinators and thus effectively embedded in the institutional memory of the organisation. Once these improvements have been made and the organisation is on a more sustainable financial footing we would expect to continue to grow and develop, reaching more people and further enhancing our effectiveness.

### Who will carry out the work

The National Coordinator (David Gee) will work with Regional Coordinators and national and regional committees to meet the programme's objectives. A new National Administrator will be employed, at one day per week, to release the National Coordinator to concentrate on developing the organisation. The National Coordinator will line-manage the Administrator. The work will be overseen by the National Management Committee and ultimately the Board of Directors. Pilotlight has kindly offered to advise as needed.

### Budget

The national component of the organisation's core costs is £54,000. We are requesting a grant for 50% of these costs in 2010-11 and 25% in 2011-12.

<i>Income</i>	<i>2010-11</i>	<i>2011-12</i>
Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (sought)	£27,000	£13,500
Flapjack Trust (secured)	£3,000	£3,000
The Sir James Reckitt Charity (secured)	£3,000	£3,000
C B and H H Taylor Trust	£1,000	£1,000
Indigo Trust and/or Esmée Fairburn Foundation (approaches planned)	£20,000	Tbc
Other grant-making trusts (tbc)	NIL	Tbc
<b>Total</b>	<b>£54,000</b>	<b>£54,000</b>

[AVP 12/09]