

# Impact of activities of the King Center on social inclusion



*Picture by Joseph Redfield*

***By Prof. Dr. Maurice de Greef***

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*According to different studies citizens seem to benefit joining education and training. Most of these citizens seem to experience an increase on several social life-domains and experience among others a better labour market perspective and health situation in addition to a decrease of poverty and social exclusion (Berkman et al., 2004; De Greef, 2012a; 2012b; 2012c; 2012d; Department of Labour New Zealand, 2010; Dymock and Billet, 2008; Lupi et al. 2011; Reder, 2009, 2010, 2012; Tett et al., 2006). Education can be a lever in order to increase the rate of social inclusion among citizens. Based on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. the King Center develop the Nonviolence365<sup>©</sup> Education & Training for several citizens in the USA. This in order to increase their rate of social inclusion and besides this to give these citizens the opportunity to build on a community of non-violence. The UNESCO Chair on Adult Education of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel has been asked to evaluate the impact of this program.*

### **The need for investment in training and education**

Although investment in education and training seems to benefit several fields in our society the GRALE III report of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning shows that the system of adult education and training is still not adequate enough in order to realize a sustainable system of learning in order to increase chances for citizens. Still 35% of the countries show that collaboration between departments is poor and besides this 64 countries state that inadequate or misdirected funding is still an important hindering factor in realizing this (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2016). This seems to be a missing opportunity, due to the fact that education and training can contribute to the development of civic, social, cultural and economic capacities and can support community bonds, foster peaceful coexistence and strengthen social cohesion. The UNESCO Chair on Adult Education underlines the importance of education and training like being realized by the King Center. This supports one of the most essential Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations (United Nations, 2017), to mention: *Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning (goal 4): Obtaining a quality education is the foundation to improving people's lives and sustainable development. Major progress has been made towards increasing access to education at all levels and increasing enrolment rates in schools particularly for women and girls. Basic literacy skills have improved tremendously, yet bolder efforts are needed to make even greater strides for achieving universal education goals.*

## Methodology

In order to measure the impact of the Nonviolence365<sup>©</sup> Education & Training of the King Center a quantitative study has been conducted. The UNESCO Chair on Adult Education of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel in cooperation with Universiteit Maastricht already developed the SIT-instrument (Social Inclusion after Transfer) in order to accomplish this (De Greef, Segers and Verté, 2010). In a prior study this instrument has been developed and validated among 10.000 learners in more than 150 municipalities in Europe. The instrument consists of different scales in order to measure the impact of learning on different groups of learners. According to the instrument the impact of learning has been based on the increase of social inclusion (e.g. decrease of social exclusion, increase of network, increase of active participation in society in addition to increase of basic skills like literacy, numeracy and digital skills). The sample of this study are participants of the Nonviolence365<sup>©</sup> Education & Training of the King Center and they filled in a questionnaire at the beginning of the Nonviolence365<sup>©</sup> Education & Training of the King Center and at the end of the Nonviolence365<sup>©</sup> Education & Training of the King Center. Accordingly the trainers handed over the questionnaire to the learners at the start of the learning process (pre-test) and the end of the learning process (post-test). For the pre-test, data has been collected on individual trainee characteristics and the variables of social inclusion. At the end of the learning process (post-test) data has been gathered on the variables of social inclusion.

## Results of impact of the Nonviolence365<sup>©</sup> Education & Training of the King Center

The results of the study are promising. Based on the quantitative study it seems that:

- 61% of the participants experience to become more assertive (focusing on self confidence, resolving conflicts and making decisions);
- 50% of the participants experience to meet more people and to be more active outside the house;
- 30% of the participants experience a decrease of their rate in social exclusion.

According to studies in earlier times these figures seem to be pretty high, due to the fact that Taris (2007) report that other results indicate that 10% until 20% of the participants experiences revenue after joining training.

To sum up based on the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. the Nonviolence365<sup>©</sup> Education & Training of the King Center seems to contribute to the increase of social inclusion of adult participants and seems to have a contribution in giving citizens a better place in daily society.

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