

The International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life



**Global  
Partnerships  
for Education**

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**Brandeis University**

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Waltham

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Massachusetts

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# Global Partnerships for Education— An Overview from the Director

In the summer of 2001, Brandeis University faculty and students worked with partners in Haifa, Grenada and Chelsea, Massachusetts on the Global Partnerships for Education. This project builds on a simple premise: coexistence between divided peoples depends not just on dialogue, but also on a shared understanding of cultural diversity.

The concept of exchange is the foundational idea of this partnership project. We felt that Brandeis University could benefit by bringing educators from several communities around the world to our campus, to share their thoughts about education and the transformation of society. We felt that Brandeis faculty and students could venture abroad to the same communities, sharing their expertise and enthusiasm. And we believed that together, students and educators from inside and outside the “academy” could develop powerful ideas and methods for creating change in their respective communities.

Jane Sapp's vision of cultural work provided the inspiration and the method. Her powerful leadership of the project's 10-day institute in June 2001 inspired participants to believe in the possibility of change and introduced concrete techniques to achieve this ideal. Songs, stories, and reflections were brought out of the air and became bright and solid building blocks for the structure of a small community. When participants headed out to do the practical work of reaching others in Haifa, Israel, the island nation of Grenada, and Chelsea, Massachusetts, they found that they had developed the strength to carry those blocks with them to shore up foundations in distant places.

The “education” that this project nurtures is not, primarily, about classroom learning. It's about the ways that people of all ages learn from one another through the careful cultivation of expression. To write and sing a song, to make your family's story a part of a community's narrative, to work together on a multi-lingual mosaic; these activities strengthen the heart, the mind, and the soul.

We can be unified by acknowledging difference. It's not a matter of agreeing to disagree. It's a matter of using art, heritage, and tradition to develop and strengthen one of the most powerful bonds known to humankind: mutual respect.

This cultural work is education based on an ancient conception of ethics, an idea that puts the development of character and community at the forefront, and acknowledges that people have different means to reach similar ends. If there is such a thing as “global education,” we hope that it includes a commitment to this principle.



**Daniel Terris**  
Director  
International Center  
for Ethics, Justice,  
and Public Life

**For more details and photos of the  
Global Partnerships for Education, go to:  
[www.brandeis.edu/ethics/  
partnerships\\_and\\_projects](http://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/partnerships_and_projects).**

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*Global Partnerships for Education was funded by the Coca-Cola Foundation, with additional support from Morton Meyerson, the Meyerson Family Tzedakah Funds, and the Alan B. Slifka Foundation.*

# Global Partnerships for Education— Cultural Work Institute, June 2001

The Global Partnerships for Education held a ten-day Institute at Brandeis in June 2001. Participants from Brandeis, Haifa, Grenada, and Chelsea, Massachusetts, learned how Jane Sapp's method of cultural work uses intellectual, historical, and aesthetic inheritances to strengthen communities and relationships.



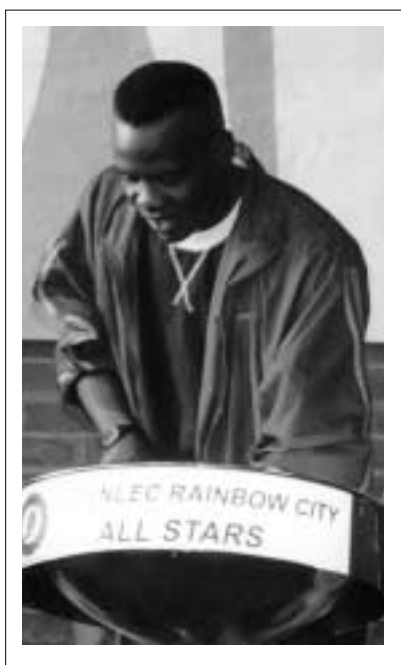
“The first goal of cultural work is to help people **reflect on** their own **experiences** and **values**. They have a collection of knowledge from many different sources within their own communities that can become a powerful resource for change.”



Participants explored “cognitive drama” in a workshop led by Dr. Shifra Schonman of University of Haifa.

“Last night we had ice cream and sang the **song we wrote** together. I know when I’m in Israel I will think about that song and the process we went through together to create it. We came together from so **many different cultures**, and we have different opinions, and different ways of believing. The **music** you brought us, Jane, is one of the things that **kept us together**. We are so grateful that you chose to share your knowledge, and to share you –your being Jane – with all of us.”

— Sigalit Slubski  
University of Haifa



Joseph Date “Squares,” who leads a steel drum orchestra of sixty young people in Grenada, added Caribbean rhythms and tambres to the musical mix.



A Photo Essay  
by Jane Sapp

## Cultural Work— A Powerful Resource for Change



“A key aspect of cultural work is its focus on the people first, rather than a focus on the issues. The issues will always be with us, but it is the people who will make a change in those issues.”



“Cultural work reminds us that there are **always possibilities**, that there are no dead-end streets if we have the **will** to **create** a new world and to create **changes** in our communities.”

“I have a vision of people **seeing** their communities **with new eyes**, actually seeing the inheritances that were there, seeing the history of the community, seeing the intellectual tradition and aesthetic inheritances, and seeing their communities through the lens of those inheritances.”



“Cultural work focuses on **what the community has**, rather than what it does not have. People have their songs, stories, histories, cooking styles, and ways of being together. My work has been to take all the ways in which people have fashioned a life together and **use it as a mirror**. People can look in this mirror, look at themselves, and say: ‘This is the way we have created our lives together. Can we not continue to do that today? Can we not continue to be active participants in our own lives?’”



“It was really rewarding to see how seriously people took the exercises. The quality of what they did is just excellent.”

*Excerpt of Presentation  
by Jane Sapp at the  
Global Partnerships  
for Education Institute*

## Cultural Work, Folklore, and Community Knowledge

**I** was born in Augusta, Georgia, and grew up during a period of segregation in the South. I've just never forgotten segregation; I think that my work around social justice is to make sure that it doesn't happen again. No one should ever feel that kind of assault on one's dignity, intelligence, community, and sense of humanity.

... I always wanted to hear people's stories... I decided to minor in folklore because it allowed me to continue to hear the people's stories and struggles and at the same time study music. After I got out of graduate school I went into communities, as folklorists do, with my tape recorder. "I'm going to listen to your story, I'm going to look at your quilt, I'm going to analyze your basket, I'm going to your church service, and I'm going to document your food and how you made it." I was working on the Sea Islands in South Carolina in an area people think of as the Gullah area, and everywhere I went there were issues. I would go in with my tape recorder, but people didn't want to talk about their history, they wanted to talk about their own struggles, how there was racism in their own community. They wanted to talk about how people were trying to hold on

to their land, because the 1970s marked the beginning of the "theft" of the land of the Sea Islands in South Carolina and Georgia. I was thinking, how could I go in saying "tell me your story" when their real story was about their struggles?

At the same time I felt that when I WAS able to hear people's stories, I was learning a lot of history, I was learning a lot about the cultures. It didn't make any sense for one person to walk into a community and walk out with all that richness, because when I left, the community remained the same. People's lives didn't change. I didn't feel right going into a community, and leaving with the people still poor, feeling that their schools were inadequate, that they didn't have jobs, and that the land was not theirs. I began to think there must be a way to do this work in a way that could have a positive consequence for the people.

After several years of working with the Smithsonian, I went to a meeting of folklorists. I raised the issue: How can you walk into a community of people who are poor and struggling, who feel their lives are being assaulted from all different directions, and just walk out with your research and feel like that's ok. One folklorist said to me, "If people become literate and educational level rises and their economic level is developed, then we won't have this rich folklore anymore. We won't have the songs or the stories and they won't be creating those dances anymore because they'll become a part of [mainstream society]."

It was clear to me that this way of thinking *had to change!* We could not equate a people uplifting themselves with the end of their culture. Culture is not static: as the people grow, so does the culture. I went back into that work with a new realization – people had





*“The song was a real highlight for me. It was very special and exciting to see the fruits of a collective effort in the development of this beautiful song. When you work with other people and share your stories openly, you ultimately come together, even with your differences in inheritances and experiences, to find a common humanity, a common will. We couldn’t have written that song on the first day or even the third day. It was possible only after we took part in a process in which people came together and saw each other in different ways.”*

—Jane Sapp

to know the knowledge that they represented. If anthropologists and folklorists could go into a community and extract stories and knowledge for use in courses, then why can't we? It's our knowledge, our wisdom, our energy, our experiences, and our creativity. I returned with a passion to go into communities in such a way that people would begin to document their own stories, collect their own experiences and acknowledge their own wisdom. Then, they are able to look at what they know, and to know that they know. They can know how to take that knowledge and recognize in it, the building blocks for the future and for change.”

### If Only We Believe

—Written by participants in *Global Partnerships for Education* with Jane Sapp

The sky is full of dreams  
The ground is full of struggle  
Our voices set us free  
If only we believe

The nightmare seems endless  
And shadows fill our hearts  
But we reach for possibility  
And the courage to break free

CHORUS:

Through struggle we reach the sky  
Together we dream of joy  
With courage we give our voice  
For justice! For peace! For life!

Within us all we have the power  
To make a better future  
To go forward for our children  
We can learn! We can grow! We can love!

—CHORUS—

The sky is full of dreams  
The ground is full of struggle  
Our voices set us free  
If only we believe...  
If only we believe...  
If only we believe...



By Gordon Fellman,  
Team Leader

## HAIFA—Toward a New Conversation

Despite escalating tensions in Israel, the Brandeis Global Education team partnered with the Center for Jewish Education at the University of Haifa to begin a new conversation among members of both the Jewish Israeli and Palestinian Israeli communities. The Global Partnerships for Education project, which combined Jane Sapp-inspired cultural

*“I met warm, open and realistic people, which gives me more hope that if we believe strongly enough, a dream can come true.”*

—Issa Malshy  
University of Haifa

work with University of Haifa-sponsored intellectual work, allowed members of often adversarial communities to share their personal and community narratives in a more substantive way than they ever had before. The ten-day

workshop at the University of Haifa introduced Jane Sapp's innovative process and initiated a course of sharing and relationship building. The Center for Jewish Education at the University of Haifa plans to continue this work at an upcoming conference on education in Israel, and the Brandeis Ethics Center plans to integrate it into continuing education and coexistence work.

In Haifa, four members of the Brandeis community joined with several Jewish and Palestinian Israelis from the University of Haifa to participate in a 10-day workshop that followed the June institute at Brandeis. Our goal was to introduce cultural work to Jewish and Palestinian Israelis as a new tool for exchanging stories, building trust, and creating new relationships.

Our work in Haifa increased our awareness that people are products of their personal and community stories, or narratives. If we are able to tell our own stories and truly listen to the stories and narratives of the other, we can build mutual understanding and respect in ways that political confrontation and argument never allow. Cultural work



encourages people to tell stories that reveal crucial aspects of what they've inherited from their families, communities, and cultures. Cultural work also asks participants to discuss incidents of their lives, personal hurts, fantasies, and aspirations.

In this way, cultural work encourages participants to allow themselves to be vulnerable, the exact opposite

**Professor Hanan Alexander, director of the University of Haifa Center for Jewish Education, and Professor Gordon Fellman, chair of the Brandeis University Peace and Conflict Studies program and professor of sociology, led the Haifa ten-day workshop, “Toward a New Conversation.”**

**Partner Organization:** Center for Jewish Education, University of Haifa, Israel

**Brandeis University Participants:**

- Gordon Fellman,  
*Sociology and Peace and Conflict Studies*
- Pamela Blau,  
*Violinist and Jungian analyst*
- Stephanie Gerber, Ph.D. student,  
*Modern Middle East Studies*
- Maisa Khshaibon, '03

**University of Haifa Participants:**

- Hanan Alexander, *Center for Jewish Education, Department of Education*
- Sarah Melzer, *Department of Education*
- Issa Malshy, *Department of Education*
- Ari Burzstein, *Department of Education*
- Sigalit Slubski, *Department of Education*
- Shifra Schonman, *Department of Education*
- Fakhira Halun, *Reut Sadaka Counselor*



**Ali, a Palestinian Israeli music teacher, introduces the group to the 'oud (Arabic lute), and Nibal Malshy (right) sings traditional and modern Arabic music.**

condition of the certainty and vehemence that so often accompany political argument. When participants listen to others' stories and empathize with their vulnerabilities, they begin to build trust and personal relationships that allow them to discuss painful and contentious issues in a more productive and positive way.

While political discussion often divides people, cultural work provides a way of opening people up to human realities different from their own. It gives people from different communities the opportunity to empathize with each other. Empathy, an unwelcome intruder into most political altercations, is a central aspect of this method.

By offering exercises that elaborate upon personal narratives, cultural work allows participants to see themselves and the other on a human level, and avoids the accusations, blaming, and standard political rhetorical devices that serve to distance people from each other and oppose them to one another. Instead of self-righteousness, defensiveness, and offensiveness, cultural work offers the possibility of real empathy, understanding, and successful effort toward meeting the needs of all parties to a conflict.



### **Creating Art**

Issa Malshy and Sara Melzer (above) draw the outline for the mosaic, the creative expression of the ten-day workshop. Sigalit Slubski, Hanan Alexander and Sara Melzer (top right) place the tiles in our group creation. A partially completed mosaic (lower right) attests to our progress "Toward a New Conversation."



In the Haifa workshop, we shared our stories and listened to others' through a number of illuminating exercises that focused on the personal, community, intellectual, and aesthetic inheritances of the participants. These exercises offered startling ways of revealing something deeply personal to others so that



**The workshop allowed members of the Jewish Israeli and Palestinian Israeli communities to share their personal and community narratives in a more substantive way than ever before. Pictured: Sara Melzer and Issa Malshy, both of the University of Haifa.**

they were able to appreciate our real human complexity. The exercises revealed who we were and where we came from, and showed the complex personal struggles that take place in the background of even the most public of conversations. The exercises precluded judgmentalism about what we exposed and encouraged sympathetic and empathic responses.

In addition to exercises that enabled us to tell our stories and listen to

others' (either verbally or visually), our exploration of cultural inheritances included a tour of the city of Haifa. While walking in various neighborhoods and sections of the city, we learned about both Jewish and Palestinian connections to the city and talked to members of both communities to hear their perspectives and understanding of the often controversial history of the city.

A further exchange of cultural inheritances occurred at the home of one of the Haifa participants. While sitting in a beautiful apartment and eating wonderful (cultural) cuisine, we were treated to a mini-concert. Ali, an expert 'oud (Arabic lute) player and Nibal, the 16-year-old daughter of a workshop participant, serenaded us with classical and modern Arab songs. Ali explained the

*“The interaction with Arab/Palestinian students and colleagues, listening to them tell their stories, and hearing of their families and collective history, was both moving and eye-opening.”*

—Hanan Alexander  
University of Haifa

history of the 'oud and shared some of his experiences as a music teacher in the Palestinian Israeli community. This evening proved to be a wonderful opportunity for Jewish participants to appreciate the Arab musical inheritance and for everyone to appreciate the warm hospitality and first-rate cooking that characterize both the Jewish and Arab communities in Israel.

Our entire week of cultural work found concrete expression in a mosaic the group created together. The medium itself is an ancient and extremely important one in both Jewish and Arab cultures. After coming to agreement on the mosaic's content, the Haifa and Brandeis partners created a piece of art that represented the exchange of inheritances that had occurred during the workshop. The mosaic features an 'oud and a Jewish ritual ram's horn, or shofar, and the words “Toward a New Conversation” in Hebrew, Arabic, and English.

Cultural work allowed us to probe deeply sensitive topics such as the Holocaust and the Palestinian Nakba (Catastrophe), as well as the roots of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. While the confrontational nature of these conversations was not completely eliminated by the methods of cultural work, participants found themselves able to listen to the perspectives of members of the opposing community and empathize with their pain for the first time.

During our seminar we worked with our partners at the Center for Jewish Education to combine Jane Sapp's profoundly innovative cultural work with a more traditional university-based commitment to intellectual analysis and discussion. As a result, the ten-day Haifa



## Touring Haifa

A highlight of the workshop was a tour of Haifa, where participants walked through Jewish and Arab sections of the city and spoke to members of both communities to gain multiple perspectives on the city's history.



*“Within a week we were not able to change our views or fully accept the other’s, but we were more willing to listen to each other and question the legitimacy of our own narrative.”*

–Maisa Khshaibon '03  
Brandeis University

workshop incorporated intellectual work along with cultural work and included lecture/discussions by five professors from the University of Haifa, including Ilan Gur-Zeev, a philosopher and educator; sociologist Devorah Kalekin; social scientist Majid Al-Haj; social scientist Freema Elbaz-Luwisch; and Israel Prize winner Gavriel Solomon, a Jewish educator and philosopher.

Certainly, workshop participants could not solve the intractable conflict between the Jewish and

Palestinian communities in Israel during this ten-day seminar. Nor were all participants convinced to uncritically embrace the narrative of the other. However, despite the ongoing violence in the region and the deterioration of relationships in the larger community, this new conversation and exploration of cultural inheritances allowed us to create new relationships, begin to empathize with each other, and commit to using the principles of cultural work in our ongoing efforts in education, coexistence, and personal interaction.

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*The Brandeis/Haifa partnership was made possible by the generosity of the Morton H. Meyerson Family Tzedakah Funds ([www.tzedakahfund.org](http://www.tzedakahfund.org)).*

By Dessima M. Williams,  
Team Leader

## Grenada—Bring Back the Love

### Community Building Through Agency and Ownership

Grenada is a tri-island state of 100,000 with a per capita income of US \$3,410.00 and a poverty rate of 30%. As globalization proceeds, the agricultural sector has been steeply eroded and rural communities are economically stagnant or slowly transitioning into the tourism and high technology sectors. This has led to an increase in economic and social inequalities, a strain on volunteerism, and an overall erosion in well-being and the spirit of giving/sharing, which is the backbone of healthy rural life. This past summer, Brandeis representatives Dessima Williams, Nicole Murray, and Gardy Guiteau, as well as GRENEED representative Joseph Date, worked in rural Grenada and in Carriacou, implementing an experimental project, the Cultural Development Institute (CDI).

#### Goal

At a conceptual level, our goal was to mobilize positive meaning in Grenadians' lives and expand their agency, thus creating social good and building community. At the practical level, our objective was to help communities improve themselves while unleashing their creative and artistic expressions. We were to do all this in the present context of very rapid change in economy and society (globalization), in which meaning

**Partner Organization:** GRENEED, a community-based program in Grenada, devoted to youth educational programming

**Brandeis University Participants:**

- Dessima Williams,  
*Sociology and Heller Graduate School*
- Gardy Guiteau, '02
- Nicole Murray, '02

**GRENEED Participant:**

- Joseph Date, GRENEED

and social value (networks, volunteerism) are leaving their old moorings, and new ones have not yet been found.

Our process was simple but deliberate: emphasizing our role as catalysts, we came to know the community on its terms, creating bonds of trust, respect, and commitment. We let the community identify its strengths and challenges, and prioritize action to be taken. We put our intention on a huge banner hand-made by Nicole: "Learning Together, Helping Each Other: Raising Awareness with Action for Empowerment." We took it around Grenada, and at the end we hung it on a historic building in Grenville.



Could the CDI bring to bear the cultural strengths of villages, in order to marry cultural work/social meaning with community empowerment?

**Some of GRENEED's Summer Science 2001 participants who were taught to play the Berimbau by Gardy Guiteau (white T-shirt, upper right).**



**At the girls' school with Sister Dominique.**

### **Achievements: Marrying Cultural Work with Community Power for Empowerment**

What the CDI accomplished in La Potrie, and to a lesser extent elsewhere, holds a key to how this work can be successful. In La Potrie, where we spent the most time, upwards of 30% of homes are considered poor and about the same percentage of youth and women are unemployed. Yet, we were able to tap into the best of that community's legacies of leadership, goodwill, and vision. We saw the process and power of human agency unfold and we saw local people re-take ownership of their lives.

The CDI re-ignited the spirit of togetherness as community caring action, helping to bring back a core group of local women and men to lead much-needed start-up volunteer work. The re-igniting was a *willingness to try again*, in the face of dismal attendance at community meetings to address social ills. Only a re-seaming of the community, with love, could bring people back together, the La Potrie group initially concluded. A leader behind the re-seaming process was Angela, a mother, small-business woman, and staff worker in the Ministry of Gender Affairs. She was an optimist throughout:

"This community used to be so active, but now, we are so divided; everybody [is] just down. But we have to try again, we really have to try again. We have to bring back the love in La Potrie; if we

bring back the love, that will do it, that togetherness we used to have among us, that love."

After several brainstorming sessions, the CDI-La Potrie group agreed to conduct a base-line assessment survey of some 300 homes and to put up a community Roll of Honor of academic, sports, and other achievers as a way to cultivate pride and encourage new youth achievers. These ideas were presented at a launching of the "Bring Back the Love" campaign, a "community togetherness" which attracted a wide cross-section of villagers. Community leaders issued a call for people to become involved and to show concern for the village: we sang CDI songs, and indicated that GRENE and La Potrie would work together. The highlight was a performance of spirited singing and bamboo music by the local intergenerational Tambo Bambo Cultural Performers.

### **Community Agency: Songs, Poems, Voice**

In a special school in St. George's for some 30 girls from disadvantaged homes<sup>1</sup>, the CDI achieved success in helping a community find its voice. A hard-working Catholic nun, Sister Josephine, runs the Grand Anse Special School for Girls. Sister invited us to "help empower these girls, help them build their self-esteem." We held a "crash CDI" of three hours and choose a participatory approach to raise their gender awareness and pride.

We began with a highly participatory analysis of gender values and roles in society that was based on their experiences as sisters, daughters, and females. They concluded that they "loved being female," "life was unfair" for females, males "had it easier," but "girls need to be proud of who they are." They wrote a

song to communicate these discoveries, this amazing arrival at gender equity. This was the girls' message:

*It's we who have the power, whether  
we're male or whether we're female  
So let's make a positive choice  
To play marbles or to cook  
To read book or to cook;  
So let's be happy, don't be sad  
Don't be mad —just be glad —  
whether you're male  
or whether you are female!"*

Grand Anse Social Development  
Center, July 2001

We repeatedly sang it with great joy and zest, accompanying ourselves with the shak-skak, a natural musical instrument that is an encasement of dry seeds from the flamboyant tree. We were amazed and thrilled at the passion unleashed in them; we could only hope there were structures to sustain this new beginning.

Our gathering with community persons from Mt. Carmel/Munich/Mt. Fam, held on a hot, early Tuesday evening<sup>2</sup> with the smell of mango in the air, was productive and delightful. GRENEED had gathered community development and cultural leaders to discuss "Old Time Days Today: What Can We Learn?"

Among the strongest messages heard were: have self-respect and give respect to others; live in a "Christian way," and contribute to a wholesome, sustainable lifestyle with local foods, good parenting, and reduced drunkenness, obscenity, and indecency. Above all, "live in love and unity."

GRENEED's administrator, Winnifred Teague, is also a Munich church and community activist and a calypsonian. After renditions of her old calypsos, she unveiled her call to community action, "The GRENEED Song," stressing love, empowerment, and autonomy for moving forward.

In Carriacou, the process revolved around mobilizing the moral leadership of Canute Calliste, an 87-year-old musician, painter, and one of Grenada's national living treasures. He played for Queen Elizabeth; thousands of his paintings are the subject of a book. A cultural compass for his community, Mr. Canute has been painting since age seven. Though taken up with his painting and music (and a new romantic courtship), Mr. Calliste offered to participate in our CDI. When we met with a group of community leaders in Hillsborough, Carriacou, they were excited about the proposed marriage between cultural expression and social development and were excited that "Papa Canute" and his group of musicians would play a leading role. Alas, the Carriacou Regatta prevented us



**(Left) Carriacou: Canute Calliste outside of his studio.**

**(Below) Calliste with his manager-daughter, with Gardy Guiteau, and with Nicole Murray.**





### Rehearsing for a performance in Tivoli.

are at different stages in their lives (one in his 20s the other in his 60s), were together celebrating their common ancestral roots using their musical instruments, was not lost on a most appreciative audience.

from putting on a community event. To visit Mr. Calliste's studio is to enter the world of music, paintings, and presence all meshed into one. Any community can be enriched with his work, presence, and leadership.

### GRENEDED's Fifth Anniversary

At GRENEDED's fifth anniversary celebration, we showcased some of what we had ignited or re-ignited, as our banner fluttered in the wind, hanging from the historic Old Church. The banner, (*"Learning Together, Helping Each Other: Raising Awareness with Action for Empowerment"*) fit into a fairly new practice of messaging words flying in the wind.

Our showcase included a variety of performers. A group of Summer Science students read their own poetry, played drums, and danced, displaying their newly found confidence, skill, and pride from their training with Nicole Murray and Gardy Guiteau. A contingent of 13 girls from the Grand Anse Social Development Centre performed a rendition of their song, *"Whether You Are a Male or a Female."*

Although timid at first, they eventually put forth the gusto of their gender equity empowerment identity. A community musician, Simon Welch, and Gardy Guiteau, performed a musical duet on their wood and string instruments. Gardy played the Brazilian Berimbau and Mr. Welch played the Grenadian cocoa lute, a close cousin of the Berimbau. Both instruments have their roots in Angola. The fact that the two men of African descent (one Haitian and one Grenadian), who

Mrs. Teague performed the "GRENEDED Song" backed up by Glenda Williams and Hermaine Baptiste, also of GRENEDED. Displaying youth talent, team member Joseph Date led 12 members of his steel-band orchestra in vibrating music at the opening and

### The GRENEDED Song

by Winnifred Teague, August 2001


CHORUS:  
 GRENEDED is an NGO,  
 Everybody must know.  
 Empowerment is our plan,  
 We want you to understand.  
 GRENEDED come to strengthen we culture,  
 Learning together helping each other,  
 Building community and living in unity.  
 Wow Wow, one love, wow wow.

Diversity is our aim,  
 No one should ever complain.  
 Meeting the needs in community,  
 To alleviate poverty.  
 Our programmes are very many  
 So join one of our committee,  
 Using education to change our island Grenada.

—Chorus—

For five years we have been trying  
 To enhance the life of our people.  
 With scholarship, mentoring, and writing  
 GRENEDED holds forum for debating  
 Lively Kids Radio Show  
 Children come to read out some more  
 Everyone and all support us now  
 and don't let us fall.

—Chorus—



closing. Indeed, some 200 educators, community leaders, and members of the press and general public attended the anniversary event. They were exposed to the CDI's record and potential. Future collaboration with them remains a possibility.

### **Observations and Conclusion**

For six weeks, we were able to engage and produce because of community richness in cultural resources and because we were open, "allowing" people to take ownership of re-discovering beneficial aspects of organized community action and acknowledging the traditional resources they brought: love for the saraca and music. We worked with community-based leaders, cultural workers, educators, activists, and heads of organizations. We found that the strong social networks, powerful community action, and a spirit of cooperation could be tapped. We worked *with people*, always letting them guide us, sharing responsibility, offering encouragement, and GRENED's resources.

### **Finding Meaning**

We searched for that which would culturally cohere the community and bring people back together and keep them working to improve their lives. Angela suggested the *saraca*, a three-day community sacrifice of African origin which obligates community members to take ownership and responsibility for "things to go well" in the village, including children's well-being and food production and support for the poor, sick, elderly, alone, and needy. Sharing food, continuous music, singing, and dancing are required as a way of satisfying the ancestors. The saraca also requires that the hosting families pass on responsibilities and festival items to the families hosting the following year. The families must work closely with each other until the next year's festival. Together, they must watch over the village and secure the planting and harvesting of special saraca foods, indeed a perfect way to re-seam, especially where differences may have existed. The saraca will be held this year.

People embraced the idea that cultural work can be at the service of community empowerment. Planning a saraca, writing songs and poems, linking musical talent and ethnic history to the learning of science, and bringing critical reflections to the state of affairs in the community through poetry and song are all ways (symbolic and practical interactions) in which a new relationship is being forged.

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

There remain, however, many challenges. The cultural terrain of the society is shifting away from community influence or control. Television is bringing new use of time and new recreation; people are not just disinterested in community life, but are busy working longer hours to stay afloat or get ahead, some commuting long, tiring distances. Village commons may be inhospitable to some because of the ubiquitous presence and drowning sound of disc jockeys playing dub music, ragga, and calypso at full blast.

Indeed, this kind of work has enormous potential in Grenada for re-igniting community development, putting ownership and empowerment back into people's hands. In the context of Grenada's economic transition and the global embrace of a rights-based, bottom-up development, a broadly defined cultural strategy makes sense if democracy and development are serious goals in Grenada.

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**NOTE:** Sincere thanks to our mentor, Jane Sapp and to all at the Ethics Center. Whether you are male or whether you are female, we owe you all a saraca. To the many fellow Grenadians who made this happen, we are "*plenty, plenty grateful.*" In a society where "*one cocoa full basket,*" GRENED's CDI was proud to be a 2001 cocoa seed.

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<sup>1</sup> *These were single and unemployed homes, girls who had suffered physical and emotional abuse, severe low-income immigrant girls, etc.*

<sup>2</sup> *At the St. Giles Anglican School, July 10, 2001.*

By April Powell-Willingham,  
Team Leader

## ROCA, Inc.— The Coming Together of People

The Brandeis University/Roca partnership brought the Global Partnerships for Education project home to the Boston area. Emerging out of the Global Partnerships for Education Institute, held at Brandeis University in June 2001, the Roca Culture and Social Justice Project (CSJP) creates a basis for teaching young people about their cultural traditions and “the coming together of people.”

This joint project is the first step in a long-term collaboration between Roca and the Ethics Center. Since we envision the project as continuing throughout the year, we spent the summer laying the groundwork for our collaboration. We learned about each other and developed immediate and profound relationships. We began to identify points of connection between Jane Sapp’s cultural work and Roca’s philosophy. And we explored the elements of

our ongoing partnership. While we felt somewhat envious of the other teams, dashing off to Israel and Grenada to complete their summer projects, we also recognized that we had the luxury and privilege of proximity and time.

We agreed that the ultimate goal of our collaboration is to utilize various forms of cultural work to help young people to overcome the threats to growth, health, happiness, and hope. We believe that unprecedented numbers of people suffer from a chronic sense of displacement and loneliness due to the tremendous upheaval in the world. Therefore, we think it critical for people to come together to learn to live gently with each other and on the earth. This learning must evoke everyone’s cultural backgrounds, and the stories we tell must resonate with our collective memories.



Two Roca members, Amilcar and Edwin, at Roca, Inc.

By building young peoples’ capacity to tell their own stories and listen to others’, we can aid them in understanding their connection to their own and others’ stories, and help them to learn to view themselves as agents in the making of their own histories. We also believe that teaching young people how to critically analyze their immediate reality will help them to transform their lives. Our approach includes a thorough understanding of culture and the myriad creative opportunities encased within it, the

**Partner Organization:** Roca, Inc., a grassroots community development and leadership training organization in Chelsea and Revere, Massachusetts.

**Brandeis University Participants:**

- Lawrence Neil Bailis,  
*Heller Graduate School and Center for Youth and Communities*
- April Powell-Willingham,  
*Ethics Center and Heller Graduate School*
- Natalie Lukashovsky, '03
- Mike Feuer, *MA Student, Sustainable International Development, Heller Graduate School*

**Roca, Inc. Participants:**

- Sayra Pinto, *Youth founder and director of Roca, Chelsea Leadership Program*
- Keyse Angelo, *Roca, Inc.*
- Lisette Olivera, *Roca, Inc.*
- Victor Jose Santana, *Roca, Inc.*



**(Left) Michael Feuer and Natalie Lukashevsky create art that reflects their personal philosophies at the June Institute. (Above) April Powell-Willingham, Brandeis University project leader.**

significance of historical oppression, and the meaning of human rights.

One tool of achieving these aims is embodied in the peacemaking circle. This circle, an example of Roca's philosophy of transformational cultural work, is a method for communication used by indigenous peoples in North America as part of their efforts to reconstruct the social fabric of their communities. Roca utilizes peacemaking circles to promote youth multiculturalism and leadership development, as well as to reinforce its participatory model of community work. We spent much of our time together using the circle process, infused with the explicit cultural awareness of Jane's approach,

to build relationships, discover the strength of our similarities to each other, and celebrate and learn from our differences.

The immediate outcomes of this summer's collaboration are very exciting and inspiring. We began to identify the larger issues of university/community partnerships, specifically exploring the role of a university in promoting social justice for youth across cultural and socio-economic differences. We started to chart the course of our ongoing partnership, creating an analytical matrix of Roca and CSJP activities, which applies Jane's concept of cultural inheritances to Roca's activities and projects. Additionally, Larry Bailis began his process of evaluating the effectiveness of the peacemaking circle, and has joined Roca's Board of Directors. Overall, the Brandeis/Roca team developed a sense of interconnectedness, and deepened its commitment to this project over the long haul. We have built a developing sense of trust and cooperation, which is precious to all of us, both personally and professionally.



**Sayra Pinto, Roca, Inc.'s project leader, with Cynthia Cohen, Ethics Center.**

**Roca is a grassroots human development and community building organization in Chelsea and Revere, Massachusetts. Its mission is to promote social justice by creating opportunities for young people and families to lead happy and healthy lives. Roca strives to create communities where these young people and families are leaders for positive change. With this goal in mind, they have created an open institution with a variety of programs that bring together people of diverse experiences, attitudes, and cultures.**

The Global Partnerships for Education was supported by the Brandeis Initiative in Intercommunal Coexistence, a program of the Ethics Center. The Coexistence Initiative works to engage members of the Brandeis community in the theory and practice of coexistence. It also furthers scholarly work on coexistence issues and collaborates on action/research projects with international partner organizations. The Brandeis Initiative in Intercommunal Coexistence is funded by a generous gift from the Alan B. Slifka Foundation.

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## International Center for Ethics, Justice, and Public Life

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