



**The Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention
(ATOP)**

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19 June – 30 June 2024

Meaningfulworld Humanitarian Mission to Uganda

Humanitarian Post-Trauma Healing and Working with academia, NGO's, prisons, women's centers, orphanages, religious centers, and the community at large.

Matthew Dos Santos, Romance Albarqawi, & Dr. Kalayjian

Pre-Press Release

Uganda is a land-locked country with continuous ongoing challenges and long term and chronic traumas. Ruled by the National Resistance Movement (NRM) and President Yoweri Museveni since 1986, Uganda is a country where freedom of assembly for political opposition is severely restricted. Due to economic stagnation, political unrest, ongoing difficulties from past & ongoing traumas, environmental disasters, and an influx of refugees from South Sudan and DR Congo, the challenges this country and its people face are numerous.

Currently, Uganda hosts the largest refugee population in Africa and 41 percent of its people live in poverty. From 1900 to 2018, Uganda has experienced 20 floods, 40 epidemics, 9 droughts, and 5 landslide events. These natural disasters took a toll, amounting to over 200,000 deaths and at least \$80 million in economic loss.

Moreover, half of Uganda's population of 47 million is under the age of 15 with only 53 percent of children completing primary education, literacy rate of 76% (2018). About 4/5 of the population practices Christianity, others Islam and indigenous practices.

The country's challenges range from a struggle to sustain peace in the region, in addition to the multiple economic, political, geographical, and most of all psychosocial obstacles. The country's issues manifest among its people in feelings of loss, frustration, and hopelessness. During the dictatorship of Idi Amin from 1971 to 1979, between 800,000 and 2 million people died, with the aftermath including civil wars, tribal killings, and famines. From 1988 to 2006, the rebel Lord's Resistance Army terrorized north Uganda. The government forced the closure of Internally Displaced Persons camps in 2007, but still an immense number of communities were destroyed, and their families killed, leaving many of these people in extreme distress. The ongoing conflict between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army continues to create humanitarian crises in Uganda.

From 19 June 2024 to 30 June 2024, ATOP MeaningfulWorld will be deployed to Uganda on a humanitarian post-war relief and trauma healing mission. We will be working with the community at large: academia, children, their families, women and prisoners, and populations deeply affected by trauma. Additionally, we will continue our campaigns to transform horizontal violence, generational

trauma, teaching Emotional Intelligence, ecological consciousness, and gender empowerment!

This is our first humanitarian mission to Uganda. Our mission team will consist of the following MeaningfulWorld members: Dr. Ani Kalayjian, Romance Albarqawi, and Matthew Dos Santos. We plan to focus on transforming horizontal violence and generational trauma, promoting mindfulness, 7-step Integrative Healing Model, meaning-making while peace building, teaching gender empowerment, post-traumatic-growth, sharing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Our team will work with refugees who are dealing with the challenges of resettlement, as well as their families and the community at large. We will train teachers, academia, and parents alike, our 7-Step Integrative Healing Model. The model incorporates and promotes self-care, self-healing, mindfulness, emotional intelligence, empathy, meaning-making, ecological consciousness, physical and energetic release, and meditation. We will teach how to incorporate the use of this powerful integrative tool into daily life so that it becomes sustainable.

Our team will also conduct workshops empowering young girls and boys as well as students in universities, to learn the UN Declaration for Human Rights, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. We have established collaborations with universities, counseling centers, orphanages, prisons, and other communities in Uganda. In response to these multiple challenges, our team has pledged to meet the following goals:

- 1.) To promote emotional healing and well-being
- 2.) To transform generational trauma and PTSD
- 3.) To transform horizontal violence
- 4.) To train in the 7-Step Integrative Healing Model
- 5.) To establish Peace & Forgiveness Gardens, and plant trees for ecological consciousness
- 6.) To research levels of trauma, meaning-making, forgiveness, HV, and Post-traumatic-growth.
- 7.) To train volunteers



I am Dr. Ani Kalayjian, President, and Founder of ATOP MeaningfulWorld, and Professor of Psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University. I received both master's & Doctorate degrees from Columbia University. We have volunteered in 7 countries in Africa, with a passion to also reach to Uganda. Uganda has been in our hearts and souls. We have a deep connection with the people, and we empathize with their suffering from the devastating wars, dictatorships, political dysfunction, horizontal violence, as well as the everyday human-made traumas. Our goal is to nurture a generation of conscientious Ugandans who are motivated with love, forgiveness, peace, and unity, always lifting one another up. As we say at MeaningfulWorld, "***When one helps another, BOTH become stronger!***"



I am Matthew Dos Santos, Outreach Coordinator for ATOP MeaningfulWorld and representing our organization at the United Nations. I am a junior at Fordham University, double majoring in Psychology and Philosophy. With a background in these two fields, I aspire to pursue a PhD in Clinical Psychology to attain licensure and start private practice. I am interested in research especially addressing different forms of trauma, PTSD, addiction-recovery, and youth development. By working with the communities in Uganda, my goal is to familiarize myself with their life challenges, and share tools designed to facilitate positive actions, healing, learning, and transforming. In this humanitarian mission to Uganda, I hope to gain experience and insight to be able to share with others and educate people on the vastness of life.



I am Romance Albarqawi, Intern Coordinator at ATOP MeaningfulWorld. I am a recent graduate from Rowan University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. I am also a post baccalaureate research assistant for the Social Acceptability and Functional Evaluation of Behavior Lab at Rowan University. I aspire to pursue my PhD in Clinical Psychology. My clinical interests include mental health growth with trauma/PTSD survivors, emphasizing post-traumatic growth for children in adverse communities, and working with children and adolescents with developmental disabilities. I want to be the change I hope to see in the world and dedicate my time to global communities in need.

Your continued tax-deductible donations are appreciated!

<https://meaningfulworld.com/get-involved/donation>

Founded in 1990, the Association for Trauma Outreach & Prevention (ATOP) Meaningfulworld, charitable organization affiliated with the United Nations Dept. of Global Communication, has achieved international recognition as a leader in training humanitarian outreach professionals as well as responding to three decades of global and local disasters. ATOP is committed to health and global education promoting state-of-the-art scientific theory, peace, forgiveness, consciousness research, internship, and the development of technical skills to train mental health professionals, teachers, psychologists, art therapists, nutritionists, alternative medicine practitioners, clergy, nurses, mediators, interfaith ministers, and lay persons committed to service the self and humanity. Meaningfulworld Humanitarian Outreach Teams have helped rehabilitate survivors from over 50 countries, making a daily difference in people's lives helping to transform tragedy and trauma into healing and meaning-making through post trauma growth, resilience, emotional intelligence, mindfulness, mind-body-eco-spirit health, visionary leadership, empowerment, and artful collaboration through a new world view.

Our Motto: When one helps another, BOTH become stronger