



## Initiatives of Change

# South African Newsletter

Jan/Feb 2016

### Nigeria

South Africans, **Cleo Mohlaodi, Nombulelo Khanyile and Portia Mosia** flew to Lagos to take part in an Initiatives of Change training and retreat time with other members of IofC Boards from around Africa.



**Cleo reports:**

On Lagos Island, the high temperatures in Ikoyi welcomed the 22 representatives from 11 countries in Africa excluding Nigeria, the host country. These delegates had a common goal; how to practice good governance and the sustainability of the work of Initiatives of Change Africa. This time together from the 11-14<sup>th</sup> February 2016, was spearheaded by the African Coordination Group (ACG).



*African Co-ordination Group together with Chief Mrs Felicia Odeteyinbo (third left) From left to right: Abiodun Owoseni (Nigeria), Aldalbert Otou (Cameroon) Azeb Girmai (Ethiopia), Roy Ncube (Zimbabwe) Amina Dikedi-Ajakaiye (UK-Nigeria), Stephen Kimaru (Kenya)*

This training-cum-retreat in Nigeria was the ACG's follow up to the Ethiopia consultation that took place in March 2014, in an attempt to capacitate the IofC bodies in Africa and see how far these bodies have implemented the Strategic Framework adopted on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

The key note address was given by **Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa-Onochie**, who has 20 years experience with the United Nations (UN) which has taken her to work in such places as Lesotho and Rwanda. She is currently the UN Development Programme Resident Representative and UN Humanitarian Co-ordinator in in Ethiopia. Ms Eziakonwa-Onochie shared, "I am where I am today because of the experiences I was allowed to have when I worked with this organisation (IofC), learning to make a choice between inspiration and temptation. I also learnt that change is possible. Africa has gone through much mutilation; hence it holds the answers for the world. Africa is no longer a charity case but an opportunity base for the world. We are the generation to end the painful past and develop our continent."



With honest conversations holding the spirit in the room, some topics explored were; Good Governance, Fund Raising, Project Management Cycle, Living IofC Values and Financial Management.

At the opening of this assembly, the President of IofC/MRA Nigeria, **Chief Mrs Felicia Odeteyinbo**, warmly welcomed everyone and said, "We must not make these gatherings theoretical but practical because we want to improve our Africa."



The message from the International Council members present and the ACG, was that IofC is no longer just a movement but it is an entity that needs to follow good governance practice, be accountable and grow, for the world needs our unique essence.

**Ron Lawler**, Treasurer of the IofC International Council and a member of IofC Australia repeatedly used the phrase, "what is in the way is the way" as an encouragement to teams to deal with the governance issues honestly and fairly.

From the bodies represented (i.e. Cameroon, Kenya, Egypt, Uganda, Ethiopia, South Africa, Rwanda, South Sudan, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Nigeria) various challenges were highlighted, namely: manpower, financial transparency, skills development, fund raising strategies, active teams. The conclusions were that all IofC bodies represented have evolved from a movement network to developing good governance structures while retaining the essence of reflection and listening to God's guidance.



*Participants from 11 countries*

Profound times for soul nourishment were the reflection times in the morning. I was really moved to see life as a positive paradox and not a negative one, and was challenged with the question, 'Do I need pruning in my life?' - Yes indeed I do, and some of my pruning may mean that I need to be ready to let go of some people and circumstances, because when God speaks man listens.

I can safely say that the ACG did its best to start conversations on topics which included in-house capacity training of Boards, fundraising strategies and the values of IofC, challenging the mind and heart to build a better future. This encouraged me to continue serving the Lord through the work of IofC and caring for His people who everyday seek that we can all be human to each other.

As a collective some of the decisions we took about the way forward were:

- as teams we will use the Living Differently programme to help with nurturing and creativeness ("Living Differently" is a creative and challenging network-wide campaign focused on supporting local IofC teams in both spiritual and professional development)
- the national bodies to report back to the ACG with how their work and teams are progressing in the next three months
- doing our best to keep IofC Africa and its programmes alive

I pass my gratitude to IofC South Africa for supporting us to attend this training retreat. Thank you to the ACG for keeping the flame of development and hope alive in Africa.

**Portia Mosia** adds: I am grateful for the opportunity to have gone to Nigeria. It was an intense week,

connecting with friends I know and those I met for the first time. There were many highlights for me. I will share a few. I appreciated how one of the IofC International Council, **Mohan Bhagwandas** (Sri Lanka-Australia) gave his presentation on Africa. He felt that Africa has a potential to stand on its own and achieve all that it hopes for. It was clear that if we can stand together as a continent and support each other IofC work can make a contribution in Africa.

I also learnt that cultural differences can be a very important factor in building teams, because missing some detail can influence how we relate with each other.

I was grateful for such a space to share and exchange ideas of how we can improve our governance issues (within IofC teams), fund-raising and how we recommit ourselves to the ideas of IofC.

One realises that everything is possible if we are willing to let go of what is holding us back and be ready to embrace what is new.

\*\*\*\*\*

## ***Farmer's Dialogue*** ***Courage in Adversity***



*Pierre and Evelyne Lokeka*

Pierre Lokeka from the Democratic Republic of Congo is a man with a passionate commitment to his country, a person who cares deeply for those who have suffered. With Italian financial support, he and his friends started the Kitumaini Centre in 2003, to promote agricultural development for people in great difficulty, especially the women who lived through war, violence and rape. Those women left with the children and rejected by their families are the prime focus of this initiative. This story is a significant contribution to the fight against all forms of human evil in order to restore the dignity of human lives. <http://www.farmersdialogue.org/courage-adversity-drc>

## ***Kenya***

When the eight-minute film ended, there was complete silence. It lasted for almost as long as the film itself. The youths who had walked two hours to the screening, the church leader, the former administrator of the town, all were moved.



*Some of the IofC network in Eldoret with Joseph Wainaina (fourth from left) and peace-building filmmaker Dr Alan Channer (third from right)*

It was the launch of *The Road Back Home* in Eldoret, Kenya on 11 February, 2016. The film depicts the story of **Joseph Wainaina**, an Internally Displaced Person (IDP), whose home in Eldoret was burnt down, whose uncle was killed, and yet who decided to forgive. Joseph has worked full-time for peace and reconciliation with Initiatives of Change since the turning point in his life.

The cross-section of the community who came to the launch forged a strategy for dissemination of the film. The youth said it must be taken to schools and spread on social media, the church leader said it must be spread through church congregations and prayer meetings, the former administrator took a copy for the County Government. A lecturer in agricultural science said this film 'can be used in all conflict situations', and requested copies for her college. They all expressed a hope that it could be used in a pre-election 'peace caravan' later this year.

The following day, *The Road Back Home* was shown as part of Lenten reflections by the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission in the Diocese of Nakuru.

Ibrahim Ogeto, special advisor to Bishop Maurice Makumba of Nakuru, said: 'What I take from this film is that Wainaina went deep inside himself. Then he made a sacrifice. He went alone. He decided to forgive. This is the teaching of Jesus Christ. We do peace-building, we do reconciliation, but forgiveness is at the heart.'



## ***Creators of Peace***

**Facilitators of Creators of Peace Circles are trained for the role. In recent weeks trainings have taken place in three countries. Jean Brown gathers the stories:**

Trainer **Shoshana Faire**, from Australia, was invited to **New Zealand** to train a multicultural group of women who have already experienced participation in Peace Circles and want to be able to offer them more widely. Two came especially from Fiji. Following the training, members of the local Creators of Peace (CoP) team were invited to give an introduction to [Creators of Peace](#) in the Wellington Mosque.

President of CoP, **Daphrose Ntarataze**, with Burundian colleague **Elvanie Ndayemeye**, followed up on visits made by Daphrose last year to **Mali**, this time to give a facilitators' training to 12 women leaders from all parts of the country. They were responding to a request from Bintou Samake (Présidente de Wildaf-Mali), who is also national coordinator for Creators of Peace in Mali. One newly trained facilitator was so excited she planned to start some activity on the bus journey home! A Peace Circle, planned to be held in Timbuktu, was cancelled for security reasons.

In **India**, Sri Lankan women who had attended the Just Governance conference at the Initiatives of Change centre in Panchgani, stayed on to join others for a Peace Circle, followed by a facilitators' training run by Australian trainer, **Cheryl Wood**. This is part of a plan for a strategic intervention of Creators of Peace Circles in the post conflict healing needed between Tamil and Sinhalese in Sri Lanka.

Meanwhile Peace Circles were being run at the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at Sydney University, Australia, in Washington DC, USA, and through the Centre for Transformation in Baia Mare, Romania. When facilitators discover that a Peace Circle is happening somewhere else in the world at the same time as their own, an attempt is made to connect them by Skype for a brief Circle to Circle introduction!

See more at: <http://www.iofc.org/creators-peace-trains-more-facilitators-india-mali-and-new-zealand#sthash.ZFj8CtRn.dpuf>

Initiatives of Change newsletter compiled by Pieter and Meryl Horn  
 P O Box 11753, Hatfield 0028  
 Tel: 012 3431674 Fax: 012 3444425  
 To receive this newsletter by e-mail, send a message to:  
[mhorn@iofc.org.za](mailto:mhorn@iofc.org.za)

**[The film is viewable online](#)**

**<https://vimeo.com/155274142>- password: amani**