



Initiatives of Change

Initiatives of Change Global Assembly

Cleopadia Mohlaodi reports: “The annual Global Assembly of Initiatives of Change (IofC) was held at the international conference centre at Mountain House, Caux, Switzerland from 1st – 4th July with representatives from 53 countries serving as IofC full members, Associates Members, programme coordinators, and special delegates. It was an opportunity to review the hard work of IofC bodies over the year 2014/15 and an opportunity for planning for the year ahead.

“As the report of the past year's activities was read, it highlighted that there is a stronger regional coordination between IofC bodies. The importance of reporting by IofC bodies around the world, and partnering to help each other master the new era of restructuring was highlighted. One conclusion was that we need to have a portfolio for Fund-raising.

“Extremism in the world was discussed and it was clear once more that IofC has a unique gift to offer the world as we attempt to eradicate extremism (see piece by Barry Hart below)

“One role of the International Council is to help with the integrating of our work, serving the network and giving clear directions to capacitate members. This year's Global Assembly had to elect new members to the International Council of IofC.

The following persons were elected: Olena Kashkarova - Ukraine, Stephen Kimaru - Kenya, Wadiaa Khoury- Lebanon and Camillo Villa - Colombia. Current International Council members Kiran Gandhi - India and Mohan Bhagwandas - Australia/Sri Lanka were elected to extend their terms of service for another two years.

“I feel honoured to have been a delegate at the Global Assembly. To have focused dialogue with people on how best to move the organisation forward, was very inspiring. I am very grateful for the experience and the trust the team has shown in me. I am motivated to connect people to address the world's needs, and in this case, the needs in my beloved South Africa.

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“Thank you IofC South Africa for support given to me to attend the Global Assembly on behalf of the team.”

Exploring the Root Causes of Extremism

Understanding the complexity of extremism requires us to define it and find ways to address its root causes. Initiatives of Change's International Council chose to prioritize 'Addressing the root causes of extremism of all kinds,' as the movement's overarching [strategic priority for 2016-2018](#). At its annual ‘[Global Assembly](#)’ in July, a workshop was offered by **Dr Barry Hart** to begin to tackle this complex issue. Here follows an edited version of the workshop:



With extremism of all kinds on the rise, it is important to ask why this is happening. Are we at a point in history that is different from other complex times? Is the

news of terrorist acts, along with multiple other expressions of discontent, being hyper-reported in ways that make us feel that our current circumstances are worse than ever before? Whatever the case, extremism in its most negative form is impacting our sense of safety and challenging our beliefs about what is right as well as who is right.

Workshop participants began with the understanding that multiple forms and levels of extremism exist, and that it can arise:

- When individuals, groups and systems polarize and exclude others;
- Where exploitation, manipulation and being intolerant become the norm;
- When ideology or a value system is deep enough to give people a sense of belonging and purpose;
- Where a single, absolutist or fundamentalist, idea overrides and controls others;
- When stereotyping of ‘the Other’ spills over into humiliation and even elimination.

Desmond Tutu defined extremism this way: 'when

you do not allow for a different point of view; when you hold your own views as being quite exclusive, when you don't allow for the possibility of difference' (Davies, 2008). For many it is a structural issue related to wealth distribution and related classism. Others make the distinction between violent and non-violent extremism, where the former is linked to terrorism and the latter in many cases linked to social justice interventions—interpreted as positive and transformative.

Global Assembly workshop participants began to address the complex range of root causes that energize extremism. The following were identified as some of the most important:

- Lack of purpose and belonging, isolation, hopelessness, marginalization;;
- Categorizing belief systems - and even races and groups - in black and white terms;
- Power seeking, fear, anger [leading to hatred], group thinking, and exploitation of the vulnerable; hopelessness;
- Long term poverty and realizing the other side has more than enough - reflecting an imbalance of wealth;
- Hatred stemming from a sense of historical injustice and marginalization;
- Humiliation and shame leading to violation of identity and lack of respect for the dignity of others;

Regarding the last point, psychologist, James Gilligan, says that shame is a major source of violence, if not the source. When shamed or humiliated, we experience an attack on our identity, a violation of our dignity and loss of self worth and trust in others - and in ourselves. We no longer feel a common bond with others, but often fear and hatred towards those who violated this bond. Though understandable, this condition too often leads to a desire to harm those who harmed us. Looking at history, we know this cycle of violence continues across generations and feeds extremism of all kinds.

What ways can we find to creatively and constructively speak to not only shame and humiliation, but to the many causes of extremism that destroy relationships, lives and hope? Global Assembly workshop participants named a plethora of possibilities – from creating safe spaces for deep listening and dialogue to take place, to acknowledging personal and institutional power that many of us have - the kind of power that is sometimes blind to the anger, fears and hopes of others.

Finally, being moderate in what we believe and how we act isn't enough. We have to act with courage

and wisdom, seeking inner guidance and strength to help us transform the relationships and structures that are part of our existence.

Barry Hart is Professor of Trauma, Identity and Conflict Studies in the Centre for Justice and Peace-building at Eastern Mennonite University. He was the Academic Director of this Centre from 2009-2012 and held the same position in the Caux Scholars Program, Caux, Switzerland from 1997-2010. He is a member of the International Council of Initiatives of Change-International.

25 Years of the Creators of Peace Programme



If there is one word that comes to mind to describe the Living Peace conference it would be 'collectiveness', writes **Portia Mosia**. Forty-three countries from seven continents were represented; 200 participants, men and women, ranging in age from a one year old to 80 years old. It was a time of showcasing the footsteps of the 25-year old Creators of Peace programme.

The delegates from different cultures, faiths and backgrounds explored living peace across the world's divides - in situations of communal conflict; in meeting the health and education needs of women and girls; in leadership and through forgiveness; can inform and transform personal and community narratives from the current inevitability of violence and despair to one of compassion and hope. Working through plenaries, workshops and in small community circles, participants also valued a shared silence in the search for that deeper wisdom.

Case studies from Burundi, Kenya and Lebanon described initiatives addressing communal divides through dealing with prejudice, the taking of personal responsibility and the power of apology. Daily there were inspiring stories of personal transformation from people who had chosen to embrace a new story in their lives of honesty and reconciliation.

Over the week, the conference provided a safe space for sharing stories and reflection on what it means to be 'living peace' both on a personal and on a communal level, as well as an exploration of what it means to tell a new story.

“We were like bees in a beehive,” writes Portia, “singing songs of peace, sucking nectar for the soul from amazing stories shared by speakers and injecting each other with hope and inspiration making sure we do not die of despair but come alive with hope.”

“Hearing the various speakers and what they shared made me feel proud to be a woman but more importantly, it highlighted the potential I possess to do more than I have been doing and as God leads me. Leading a community group of these phenomenal women participants, took my facilitation skills to new heights,” shared **Cleo Mohlaodi**.

Each of the six days had a theme, namely: Living Peace across the World's Divides; Living Peace in Leadership; Living Peace with Head, Heart and Hands; Living Peace through Forgiveness; Living Peace through the Telling of a New Story and Living Peace the Commitment.



Lillian Cingo, South African Icon and founder of the Phelophepa Health Train said, “The conference was one of the best I've ever attended. The speakers and the

programme were stimulating, moving, inspirational and painful, and everything gave hope and love with the end product of peace. Such depth.”

Portia writes, “I appreciated the daily space given to quiet reflection - a time for new perspectives and ideas to help make the programme realistic and relevant to the audience in South Africa. It was clear the programme has potential for a safe space for dialogues to promote, healing, communication, conflict resolution, leadership and counselling.

“I am filled with gratitude for having been part of such an amazing experience of listening to powerful stories of women who went through difficult times and still stood the test of time. Given the opportunity to share my story gave me a chance to reflect back on the healing journey I have taken since 2007. For the first time I felt separated from the pain while sharing my story. I believe, during this conference, a new story transpired. A story of moving from being a victim to being a victor.”

Parallel to the conferences, the annual General Assembly of Creators of Peace saw the election of a new team, including an elected coordination team, elders and ambassador. Delegates also made

changes to governance procedures and discussed how to move the Creators of Peace network forward.

Portia added, “I would like to thank everyone who entrusted me with the role of being part of the International Co-ordinators from 2013-2016. It has been a huge task, but a great opportunity to know more about IofC/CoP, link with other women who are having the same vision and be a support representing Africa. The role has inspired me to grow, learn and broaden my perspective.

“Thank you to the Swedish Fund, Initiatives of Change South Africa and Friends of Africa Fund for the support given in making it possible for us, Portia and Cleo to attend the conference.”

Report by Cleopadia Mohlaodi and Portia Mosia and excerpts from the Creators of Peace website

Initiatives of Change Panel of Elders

Nombulelo Khanyile was appointed to the Panel of Elders in 2015 and in that capacity participated in some of the conferences at Caux.

The mandate of the Elders is to be an informal ‘resource body’ supporting the world fellowship of Initiatives of Change and the International Council.

Nombulelo Khanyile writes: “The 'Living Peace'



conference brought together a diverse group of women from all corners of the world. High profile speakers included, among others, **Dr Gill Hicks**, who survived the London bombings of 2005, losing both her legs. I was deeply moved when she shared how she decided that she would honour the gift of life by doing all she could to give back, and making a contribution to the world and to live life to the fullest. Looking at her face that always had a smile, one could not help but notice a person who had decided not to be ruled by hatred and revenge.

“**Jo Berry** lost her father, Sir Anthony Berry MP, who was killed in the IRA Brighton bombing in 1984. She shared her journey of seeking Patrick Magee, the man responsible for the bombing, so that she could put a face to the 'enemy', and how those meetings have helped her to recover some of the humanity she had lost as a result of the bombing.

“Marina Cantacuzino, an award-winning journalist, made a decision to collect stories of people who had

chosen to honour life by breaking the cycle of revenge and hatred through forgiveness. These stories have been put together in a booklet.

“Although the programme was packed, with little time to digest all that was shared, I was filled with hope that our collective stories of forgiveness had the potential to bring about transformation that could lead to a better future.”

MRA/IofC Home Reclaimed in Zimbabwe

Roy Ncube writes: “It is with a great sense of happiness to let you know that as from the 2nd August 2016 the Moral Re-Armament (MRA) (Initiatives of Change) home in Alexandra Park in Harare, that has been occupied illegally for the past 11 years by Steven Sibare, has now been reclaimed. This was achieved with the help of a lawyer that we engaged in 2015 and with the help of some of you who contributed funds to help us with legal costs.



“We are grateful for this development which brings new responsibilities for the Zimbabwe team. The house is in a poor state of repair and will need some work to bring it up to an acceptable condition. Our intended use for the home in the short term is to let it out for at least one year so that we can raise cash to help finance our MRA/IofC outreach activities in schools and institutions. Our hope is that we can find a tenant to occupy the house by the first of September 2016! The decision to lease out the home is premised on our current poor financial position in which we find ourselves unable to put together the money to repair it.

“The repair bill for the Harare MRA/IofC home comes to \$5 000 which includes the City of Harare requiring that the house be rewired since there are new electrical wiring protocols which the old houses like this one does not conform to, dealing with termite extermination, replacement of damaged bath tubs and wash basins among many other jobs.

“We shall then review the lease after the twelve months bearing in mind the prevailing economic situation at the time. The long term plan is to use it as our centre and base in Harare for our Initiatives of Change (IofC) outreach activities. Our hope and prayer is that as we become more visible in our community due to our outreach activities we will be able to raise funds from well wishers.

Caring for the Carers

A new collaboration has merged between the Non Governmental Organisation (NGO), PUSH, which stands for 'Push Until Something Happens' and the Creators of Peace (CoP) team in South Africa. For three weeks in May, the CoP team facilitated the Peace Circle programme for volunteers of PUSH with an expectation that it would help nourish and revive the spirit of service and care in the volunteers and further be reflected in the communities they work in.

Since 2001, PUSH based in Eldorado Park/Kliptown, Soweto, to serve and promote the knowledge of dealing with HIV/AIDS and model a future that's HIV/AIDS free. This is done through programmes such as feeding schemes, after-school and holiday programmes, mobile testing clinics and counselling and life skill workshops for the communities. The founder, Mrs Launa Fisher currently has over 40 volunteers from the surrounding area doing these great tasks.

Over three days in each of the three-week period, 39 volunteers participated. The diversity of our 'rainbow nation' and from neighbouring countries was apparent as the volunteers represented several faith traditions, were both men and women and covered a wide variety of ages. Although we all spoke in English, languages present were also Afrikaans, Sesotho, isiZulu, Setswana, isiXhosa, isiNdebele and Tsonga.



These community servers, from the onset, shared that the workshop was a great awareness tool of how easy a person can neglect the self due to caring so

much for others. One participant said, *“I was allowed to be open about things and issues I have bottled up for a very long time. It has helped me to listen to my inner me and I have found my inner peace.”*

As the programme provides a safe space for sharing and supporting each other, this was a gift to the participants to have the breathing space, reconnection to self and have someone to listen to them as opposed to being 'pillars' to the less fortunate. This time helped them connect as a team, live into one another's pain and together find how they can be of support to each other. One participant expressed, *“Having to speak about my unforgiveness, I see my faults too and this allowed me to start to forgive no matter how hard it is for me.”*

Another participant said, *“I have made peace with my past and realised that I had lots of anger and hatred for my father and it was not doing me any good. So I had let go and am moving on”.*

Yet another shared, *“I was made to visit my inner monsters, to see where I have a challenge. I saw how I had buried myself yet still alive. But now I know I have to believe, forgive and love myself. The sky is the limit as long as I still breathe. I have to forgive the past and move on with lessons learned.”*

Following such a life changing experience, a one-day follow-up workshop will be organised for all those who have been through a Peace Circle. The follow-up topic will be self confidence and anger management.

As the Creators of Peace team we wish to thank PUSH for collaborating with us in building a new era of service and care to our people and country's needs. We also thank Initiatives of Change South Africa and Edmee Botteron for financial assistance.

by Cleopadia Mohlaodi, Lucel Synayers and Portia Mosia

The importance of forgiveness

‘Before I met Creators of Peace (CoP) Circles, I was a stubborn young man who found it hard to forgive and let go of past experiences. Ever since I started the workshop I have opened up in more ways than I expected. The modules and process I went through has really helped me. I have learned the importance of forgiveness and how important it is to forgive in order for self growth. I have found my inner peace and a new approach to life,’ told Thylo, one of the

CoP Circle participants.

Nehemiah Restoration Home, in Florida, Johannesburg, is a centre providing care and services such as medical detoxification, residential, outpatient and sober living programmes for individuals suffering from chemical dependency.

The call to CoP was to facilitate a Peace Circle (PC) for 15 men, between the ages of 17 and 44 years from 6th - 8th June. They came from different Coloured (mixed race) communities in and around Soweto. The hope was that the PC could support their recovery and healing journey and equip them with methods and tools to help them to grow spiritually and to walk the talk.



“It was such an inspiration for me to facilitate a Peace Circle of men only. It made me realise that when it comes to what builds and destroys peace, it affects everyone. As we engaged in one of the exercises, anger came out as one of the things that destroys peace and communication. I was moved as these men shed tears as they spoke about their role in destroying peace in those they love. Listening to their stories gave me hope that if men can heal, they can have a huge role in restoring the essence of family,” said Portia Mosia, a co-facilitator. *“For both of us, Cleo and Portia, this was a reconfirmation that Creators of Peace Circles are relevant for both men and women, young and old, in rehabilitation homes, community, schools, workplace and governing bodies.”*

Charl, a participant, shared, *“The Peace Circle really made me look into my inner self - reflecting on and letting go of my past. Before the workshop I kept most of my personal business to myself and it caused me a lot of pain and confusion. I learned here to be open and honest with myself and with others. I will be applying these concepts when I return to my community.”*

During the 'Peace in Practice' module, the group came up with plans to continue supporting each other

and forming strategies to help Nehemiah Home impact life around them. A request was made for more Peace Circles to be held.

We thank Initiatives of Change South Africa, Nehemiah Restorative Home and Edmee Botteron for their support and encouragement.

by Portia Mosia & Cleopadia Mohlaodi, co-facilitators

Returning to African Soil

We are excited to welcome Talia Smith's request to give service to the continent of her birth, starting with her birth country and to support IofC teams in Africa. She will begin her visit with three months in South Africa (20th October - 20th January), and then possibly visit Zimbabwe, Cameroon and Kenya while on a year's sabbatical from her responsibilities with IofC United Kingdom for a year.

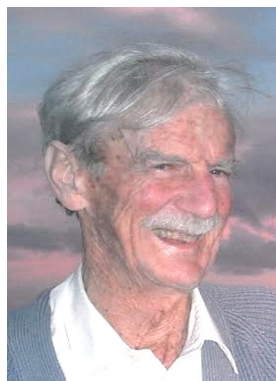


Talia will join the South African IofC team to help with programme support, administration, partnership development, communications, fund-raising and fellowship.

She has covered her travel costs to South Africa and will stay with her family. She will need assistance with work resources and travel expenses while in the country. We call for help from those who can assist while Talia is here with us. Thank you.

Cleopadia Mohlaodi

In Memory



Reg Barry Sr passed away on 19th August at the age of 92. Speaking at the funeral, his son Reg Jr said: "Dad was and is very special to my sister Lilian and me. He was also very conscious how special family and friends have been to us.

"He was a person who put other's needs before his own. The many moves (ten

different homes) we made as a family was mainly to

cater for our needs.

"He grew up in Calitzdorp (Western Cape Province). He had his own practice as a land-surveyor in the Oudtshoorn and Knysna areas. For family reasons we moved to Cape Town where he worked for a while in the Surveyor – General's office. After doing a Town and Regional planning degree, he became a planner with the provincial government. At one stage he was the acting head of the department.

"He was keen on encouraging initiatives that promote a sense of community - people showing interest in other people and doing something about it. "Dad enjoyed his involvement in an informal settlement in Knysna, also Youth for Christ and Moral Re-Armament – now called Initiatives of Change. More recently he has been involved with the Gideons, and missions group at the church.

"He agreed strongly with a Christian writer who said that the next worse thing to not having a personal faith was to have only a personal faith. Dad was keen on linking people up. When he met a new person he would often have some thought on who else that person should meet – particularly with a view to extending God's kingdom.

"A day before he passed on Dad mentioned to a visitor one of his favourite Bible verses- Romans 8: 28 - 'in everthing God works together for good with those who love Him.' For him it made it clear that God does not bring on the pain and suffering that is often part of this fallen world but He can use any situation to His glory.

"For Dad the sharing of God's love with others was his priority. Prayer was also a big part of his life. The last prayer he prayed with me was 'may the love and light of Christ be seen in all you say and do'- quite a challenge when I think how far short I come."

Please note the the change of our telephone number. Faxes can be sent to this number too if we are informed ahead.

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