



South African Newsletter

July/August, 2013

Initiatives of Change

Workshop for Africa in Kenya

Launched in January, 2013 with six weeks of intensive training for 11 people from seven African countries, the Workshop for Africa (WfA) group spent two months in South Sudan to assist with the training of 200 Peace Mobilisers. After a period of evaluation of the programme and further training, the group is now active in Kenya.

In welcoming the group to Kenya, Joseph Wainaina, Vice President, IofC Kenya, said, "The team will be a great resource to IofC Kenya and we welcome the idea wholeheartedly. We will work with you to enable the team to give its best as well as gain stronger roots."

WfA has been in Kenya since the beginning of July. They began their three month's visit in the Rift Valley and have just completed a 10-day programme in the coastal city of Mombasa.

During these weeks they have visited a number of towns across

Kenya, travelling by varied modes of transport, meeting a wide cross section of the communities, e.g. a former

Chief and County Administrator, farmers, business persons, civil servants, artists, university students, school leavers and housewives.



After one two-day dialogue facilitated by WfA in Subukia, 43 km north east of Nakuru, one participant who has been vying for political office

made a commitment to stop sabotaging local community projects and will from now on mobilise community members for progress rather than destruction as has been the case in the past. Another participant made a commitment never to steal working time again from her employer, the government. She and her colleagues had over a number of years taken

dishonest off-days away from work resulting in thousands of hours in lost production.

In Ndaragwa the WfA team met with about 200 internally displaced persons (IDPs). Originally displaced in the 2007 post-election violence, they were resettled into this camp in 2011.



Sam Muiruri a member of the WfA team started with the construction of toilet facilities for the camp with 'bricks' made from plastic bottles stuffed with soil and waste plastic rubbish - turning a plastic disposal problem into a solution.

In Subukia, as part of the WfA's contribution to *Needs based Development*, Roy Ncube gave a demonstration on the plastic Bottle and Circle Farming techniques. This method of farming is excellent in areas that have serious water challenges as it has an 80% efficiency water usage by plants. After the demonstration was



over, eight farmers committed themselves to adopting this method of farming as it has many advantages for the farmer. Money is saved on pumping costs with once a week watering regime and the farmer has more time

to attend to other farming activities. Another advantage is that even if the farmer has to go away on an emergency, even a small child can assist with watering to fill up the two litre bottle buried in the centre of the circle which provides water to the vegetables or maize planted in the circle.

On another occasion the WfA team spent the day in Simboiyon village in Waseges to meet up with 45 young men and women, comprising mostly of farmers, students and businessmen operating Boda bodas (motorbike transport) and the unemployed.



This meeting had been organised by two young men, Wilson Chariot and Mongi Murege, both previous graduates of the first two-day workshop held by WfA in Subukia. They were so fired up that they took the responsibility to make sure that their friends back in the village could also receive the same training that they had received themselves.

At the IofC office in Nakuru, the WfA group took time for a team-building exercise with 11 specific individual participants from the various areas reached. These



participants will continue the 'change activities' after WfA has left the country. The activity centred around answering questions to do with personal change that had happened to each member since their last encounter with WfA, what their own outreach plans were and how this network could be strengthened in order to keep the momentum of personal change going on.

In Bungoma County the team met with IofC friends Grace and Julius Khakula, and others. They also

They also had time with the County Commissioner, Mr Mohammed Maalin.



Mr Mohammed Maalin. (centre)

He resonated with the ideals shared by WfA and encouraged the group to meet up with all the relevant stakeholders in the county and motivate the residents for development, "if we all cared enough and shared enough, then no one will go to bed hungry," he said.

At the office of the Governor the WfA group met with Mr Wafula, the Chief of Staff in the Governor's office. He encouraged the team to spread the good message of transformed minds and people so that the quality of life for the ordinary man and woman can change for the better.

During these last days of August, the group has been in Mombasa County. There they had the opportunity to meet young men and women in a Mombasa suburb. One of the commitments from the participants at the end of the workshop was to make their town a drug-free zone.

Two days later 39 young high school and college students turned up to a two-day workshop on the theme 'Discovering the hidden treasure in you'. It took place at the Pentecostal Assemblies of God church in the suburb of Mkomani. Some decisions made were: start a youth group; stop using drugs and work to stop the peddling of drugs in the community; start a new chapter 'in my life' based on the four moral standards; 'live honestly and control my anger.'

The stories above have all pointed to a realisation by all present that a new Kenya begins with each one committing to changing themselves first before expecting the other person to change.

Reports by Roy Ncube

Roy Ncube writes about his 8 months with WfA: "I have experienced a firmer grounding of my faith. By giving up my time to be a WfA participant, my family has received many blessings. Our needs were met in most amazing ways. Being away from my family made me realize the value of each one of the family members. Moments of uncertainty that we shared, all helped to cement my faith in God and what He can do in our lives if we accept the call to serve. Working with WfA the

value of teamwork came alive as we cared for each other and shared everything that we had. The new relationships and networks created during this period will have a long lasting impact on my life.”

Planning For Next Steps

Over the last weekend in August, the WfA working group, together with the participants took time to evaluate the programme thus far and plan the next stage. Already several invitations have been issued including an official invitation from Mme Angelina Teny, Chair of IofC South Sudan, for the group to return to South Sudan and follow up on the training given to the 200 Peace Mobilisers as well as visit several of the ten states where Peace Mobilisers are active.

Creators of Peace

Under the Creators of Peace (CoP) new governance model, a General Assembly (AGM) for CoP was held at Caux, Switzerland on July 9th and nine new International Coordinators were elected. Portia Mosia from Johannesburg is among those elected. Others come from Burundi/Switzerland, Nagaland, United Kingdom, Australia and Syria.

A feature of the new governance model is that the International Coordinators who administer CoP each have *Portfolio Working Teams* working alongside of them. Twenty-one women from 15 countries have registered as volunteers to serve as *Portfolio Working Team* members.

Initiatives on African Soil

One of the newly elected Creators of Peace International Coordinators, Portia Mosia, together with Jackie Euvrard, have just returned from conducting two Peace Circles (PC) in Mossel Bay, a southern Cape coastal town also spending time individually with each participant in subsequent days.

Jackie and Portia report, “It was encouraging that each one came with an attitude of learning and believing they could find a turning point in their lives.



Participants joining in a painting activity

This led to times of deep sharing about struggles within relationships, especially amongst family members. For some it was the first time they felt comfortable to share these experiences.

“One woman was able to talk of the hate and bitterness she has held for the last 18 years towards her ex-husband. As a result she lacked self esteem and had built a wall around herself.

As the PCs progressed she began to realise how her bitterness had affected not only those around her but also her health. The turning point came when she decided to open her heart again and let go of the hate and bitterness. She also wanted to apologise to those she had hurt and decided to invite friends she had deliberately shunned to visit her. When we saw her later in the week, we found the door to her home wide open. She said it was the first time in years that she felt she wanted to do that. She said, 'I now feel at peace with the world.'

“Another lady expressed deep concern about her son's irresponsible behaviour. Speaking to him made no difference to his life style which caused tension between them. The module '*What destroys peace and what builds peace*' brought her to the realisation that the manner in which she talked to him contributed negatively towards his stubbornness. She decided to step back and stop nagging him. A few days later they were able to have an open and frank discussion with each other which led to a new understanding between them.

“What stood out during the days in Mossel Bay was how people think they can live normally without showing the pain they are carrying. PCs seemed to break through the masks giving new hope and fresh beginnings.”

Since Mossel Bay Portia and one of the trained CoP facilitators, Maponto Nhlapo, led a PC for young mothers at the Sunshine Association for children with disabilities in Johannesburg.



Participants at Sunshine Association Peace Circle

Some of the participants were grateful for the opportunity to share deeply about their frustrations of not being able to provide for their families. One of the

participants shared, "Opening up and listening to your inner voice is important as there can be deep feelings that have been ignored but play a crucial role in my life." Communication is the best way to solve a conflict, she continued. Another lady said, "Now I can see light at the end of the tunnel."

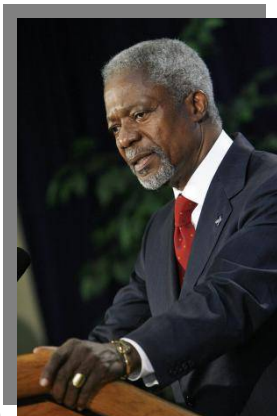
Portia summed up the occasion by saying that it is a fact that many women carry so much in their lives, but when given an opportunity to be listened to they are able to find solutions for their own challenges.

Portia and Jackie leave early September for Nigeria, invited by Benedicta Opara and the MRA/IofC Nigerian team to conduct a Peace Circle there. They will also be meeting with prominent Nigerian women during their weeks stay.

'One is never too young to become a leader'

On July 19th, Kofi Annan, former Secretary-General of the United Nations spoke at the closing session of the 'Trust and Integrity in the Global Economy' conference at Caux, Switzerland. His intervention, often humorous, was followed by a 45 minute session of animated Q&A.

He began his speech by saying how happy he was to return to Caux after his previous visit, in 2007. He then explored the challenges in human security matters posed by the economic environment, which evolved greatly these last few years. 'I travelled the World and have talked to people, he said. People are angry; they don't manage to pay their bills.' According to him, there is a need to re-establish trust in the authorities.



Kofi Annan

Kofi Annan particularly emphasized the importance of the younger generation, and on the best way to prepare them for their role: 'Getting degrees for what purpose? Wouldn't it be better to give them vocational trainings? We have to take care of the young who have to work to maintain the older ones. It's a real challenge protecting both.' He also encouraged them to launch themselves into action: 'Young people are determined to participate in civil society, to become young entrepreneurs, to become leaders. They just need help and advice. One is never too young to become a leader.'

He also evoked the situation in Northern Africa and in the Middle-East. 'People have taken their destiny in hand,' he noted. He nevertheless warned us against the

effects of the streets, by underlining it shouldn't overthrow real democracies: 'The streets are not equivalent to parliaments or to elections.'

About Syria, at the heart of the audience's questions, he noted especially that the conflict should not expand to the greater region. He concluded by mentioning the three pillars on which societies should build themselves: peace and security, economic development but also the rule of law and respect for human rights. The third pillar is often ignored: 'No long-term development is possible without them. Every group of people must be respected. We have to look out for each other and remain vigilant. Genocide begins with the humiliation of one individual.'

The Mountain House, Caux conferences closed for this year on August 11th with the last session entitled 'Seeds of Inspiration' thereby bringing to a close six weeks of sessions on a variety of topics. See more at: <http://www.caux.iofc.org>

BEYOND FORGIVING

'Beyond Forgiving' tells the inspiring journey of two



South Africans who bring healing and reconciliation to post-apartheid South Africa. Ginn Fourie and Letlapa Mphahlele form an unlikely team: a black atheist man and a white Christian woman. One has suffered directly from the actions of the other - both have been victims and risen beyond

their pain. What brings them together is a profound story of both tragedy and hope.

Beyond Forgiving has won the Golden Award for Inspiration at the International Film Festival for Peace, Inspiration and Equality - (See more at: <http://www.iofc.org/beyond-forgiving-documentary-wins-golden-award-inspiration#sthash.SmvmB1z6.dpuf>)

The DVD is now produced in South Africa under licence and is available at R50.00 per copy, including postage within South Africa. For orders beyond South Africa, postage will be charged. Please order your copy from Initiatives of Change, at the address below, either postal or e-mail.

Initiatives of Change newsletter compiled by Pieter and Meryl Horn

P O Box 11753, Hatfield 0028

Tel: 012 3431673 Fax: 012 3444425

To receive this newsletter by e-mail, send a message to: mhorn@iofc.org.za