

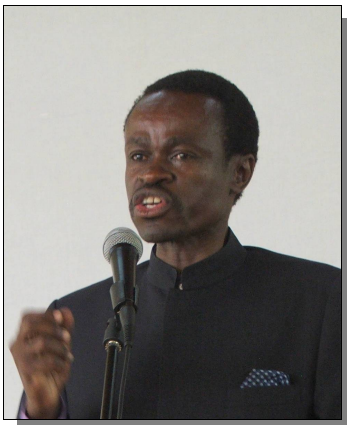


## *South African Newsletter May/June '10*

### ***Initiatives of Change***

#### ***Africa I Care!***

*Africa I Care!* was the title of an All Africa Conference which took place in Nakuru, Kenya, from 12-16 May. It came at a time when Kenyans are still trying to recover from the 2007 post-election violence. It was evident, writes Numbulelo Khanyile, one of the South African participants, that those who came “had a deep desire to bring about solutions to many challenges that face the African continent. During the six days of the conference, we were challenged to open our minds and hearts to the struggles and realities that face society today, and we were confronted with the need to bring about change in ourselves. We were also encouraged to strive towards moral standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love before we could fulfil the role of leadership and inspiration to others.



“Prof PLO Lumumba, Advocate of the High Courts of Kenya and Tanzania, and an Associate professor of Public Law, emphasised in his keynote address, that Africa needs, more than ever before, leaders, both young and old, who will understand that leadership is about service.

#### ***Professor Lumumba***

“He took us through the history of the African continent, highlighting all that we, as Africans needed to celebrate and be proud of”, reports Nombulelo. “As he challenged us to go out and make Africa great again, we felt energised, feeling that we were at the threshold of something very profound, that if we dared to avail ourselves, and did the right thing, we would begin to bring healing, peace and prosperity to our continent.”

Every afternoon there was a session on ‘Living Experience’ where the delegates listened to two personal stories – stories of what has made that person who they are today, of their challenges, failure, success. They were moving stories of great courage. Stories of turning hatred into love, struggles to forgive and love again, the painful experiences of wars. One remarkable thing that happened during one of these sessions was a public apology made by one of the participants from

North Sudan after one of the participants shared his traumatic experiences due to the effect of the North and South wars. ‘I am very sorry for what happened. I feel that maybe you may never forgive us for what we did to you. I am sorry’.

Another South African delegate, Pieter Horn, expressed that what had “encouraged me most was the key role played by the young people in running the conference. They have all participated in the Harambee programme either as participants or mentors and some also in the Action for Life programmes.” (see photos below)



Africa, at large, has been known and associated with a lot of evils – a place where people kill each other any time, any day. Serious conflicts are as regular as prayer days! No wonder a conflict resolution session is inevitable for anyone who cares about Africa.

To address this concern, we were very lucky to have a preview of *An African Answer* which is a sequel to [The Imam and the Pastor](#) by FLT production.

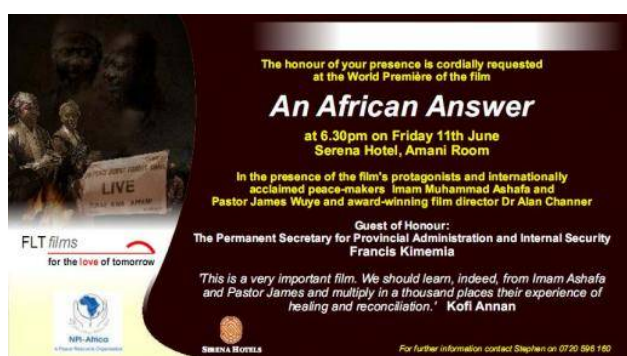
*An African Answer* was shot in Eldoret- one of the worst hit areas by the post election violence in 2007/8. After watching the film, people trickled on stage sharing what they felt and what they thought. ‘The influence of women in their homes is magnanimous, even unconsciously. If women become peace makers, the conflicts will stop’ a young mother commented.

‘We need to discover more peace makers. People who have suffered can use their pain and experience as a tool to create peace’ said another, referring to the impact that Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye's experience is having on people.

As James Mageria, Director of Karen Hospital said, Africa is the continent of the 21st century. But this will not be true if we don't sacrifice and work hard. And yes, Professor Patrick Lumumba was right that “it can be done and it must be done!” He challenged all to go and make Africa great!

*Excerpts from an article by John Njoroge, Mbinyo Kimanthi and Ann Njeri*

The full article about the All-Africa conference with photos can be viewed on [www.iofc.org](http://www.iofc.org)



*An African Answer*, will be launched in Nairobi, Kenya, at the Serena Hotel on 11<sup>th</sup> June, where the national peace accord was negotiated by Kofi Annan in 2008.

Pastor James and Imam Ashafa are in Nairobi. They had a live television interview with one of Kenya's mainstream media houses. In the interview they shared their powerful and moving story of forgiveness and reconciliation. *An African Answer* trails their bid to bring healing and reconciliation in Kenya's largest province, the Rift Valley.

## ***Further Peace Circles workshops***

Two of the participants from the Peace Circle workshop held in Mossel Bay in February invited us back to conduct workshops for 26 volunteers and carers in the communities of this southern Cape town. They came from SANTA (South African National Tuberculosis Association), Piet Julies who cares for those affected and infected with HIV/Aids and the Thabita group who give fellowship to a congregation of the VGK (Vrye Gereformeerde Kerk).

Through the honest sharing a stronger bond was built between the carers. Each group went away with fresh commitment and new initiatives to implement. Some said they wanted to spend more time sensitively listening and caring for the needs of those they reach out to each day. SANTA decided to replace food parcels with a soup kitchen which seems to meet the need more effectively in the community.



*Participants at one of the two workshops*

For some it was the first time they had ever attended any kind of workshop, but despite that, there was good participation from most in the groups.

The majority of the participants were committed Christians. The workshop seemed to open new ways of applying their faith, giving a perspective and challenge which led to a lot of soul searching and deep sharing.

One young lady thought she had forgiven her ex-husband, but realised she was still planning to repay him for the hurt he had caused her. During the module on 'Forgiveness' each participant had the chance to blow out a candle as a symbol of letting go. As she blew out the candle she said she now forgave him totally and decided to let go of revenge.

Annarie had multi experiences of pain and hurt in her life. When given the opportunity to share she said afterwards a burden was taken from her shoulders. She's come through drug and alcohol abuse and wants to set an example for her children by letting go of hurt and hate.

Further workshops have been requested for October, including a Peace Circles Facilitators workshop so we can train the trainers who can then continue to conduct workshops where needed. SANTA will also network with other branches around the country encouraging participation in such workshops.

*Portia Mosia and Jackie Euvrard*

## ***'Bridge Model Way'***

Alice Cardel, originally from the Phillipines, is well-known to IofC in South Africa. In 1996 she worked with IofC in Bloemfontein where Moral Re-Armament (now IofC) held an international conference. She was one of the organisers of the event. She and the local team were instrumental in getting some of the political leadership of the Free State, the various ethnic and cultural groups, including her own Filipino community, to participate and to make the conference a success.



When Alice was appointed Director of Training for 'Initiatives of Change International' in Geneva we looked forward to seeing her programme. Last month, Alice was invited to Lesotho where she conducted a number of high-level training programmes. We encouraged her

**Alice Cardel** to give a similar training course in Cape Town. It was an outreach we could offer to the people we met during the Gandhi visit. She had an enthusiastic class and we appreciated her disciplined approach. We learned new skills and approaches which we are continuing to use in transforming conflict using the Bridge Model Way (BMW) – a model which Alice designed while studying for her Masters degree in Public Administration at Columbia University in New York. The basic idea is that one thinks of the needs and interests of the parties in conflict, asks the right questions and finds creative answers to the situation.

One of the guests at the home of Dr and Mrs Franklin Sonn, (former South African Ambassador to Washington), when they hosted a party for the Gandhis and their entourage, came to meet Alice. He responded to Alice's training programmes and methods, and together they plan to design and deliver a programme for September/October 2010.

Our friends in Cape Town were impressed by the quality of training Alice is offering through IofC and want to see more of it next time.

***Sam Mxolisi Pono and Vilma Maritz***

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## ***Global Consultation in Romania held a few surprises***

The April 2010 Global Consultation, attended by 40 people from 24 countries, was the first to be held in Eastern Europe. The venue - Cluj Napoca in Romania - was chosen to support the emerging IofC Team there

under Diana Damsa, who pulled off a beautifully arranged and hosted event.

And it was a memorable Consultation in more ways than one! First, the issues to be discussed - how to use Caux more strategically, a new organisational structure for Initiatives of Change (IofC) and the selection of new members for the International Council - were weighty and sometimes controversial.

The discussion on the strategic use of Caux in the future took up the greatest part of the Consultation and the following was agreed:

Caux belongs to the world and its effectiveness largely depends on the vitality of IofC Europe. As a result, much time was spent on re-looking at strategy for IofC Europe and the means to bring about closer teamwork between Europe's IofC teams.

There needs to be a greater focus on rediscovering and nurturing personal spiritual life

How Caux is used each year needs thorough rethinking.

The proposed new IofC structure - laid down in a well-circulated document, Towards A Simpler Governance - was approved with a few minor amendments. In essence, the new structure combines the International Council and the Executive Committee of the International Association in one body and provides guidance on mechanisms for streamlining management and administration.

This amended governance structure will now go before the General Assembly on 24 July for approval and incorporation into the Constitution. If this new structure is approved, the Global Assembly (name change from the General Assembly) will then meet on July 25 to consider those selected to serve on the International Council (IC)

Those selected at Cluj are: Nombulelo Khanyile and Andrew Lancaster (Australia), both current IC members who will serve for a further two years; then new members, Fabiola Benavente (Mexico), Chris Breitenberg (US) and Edward Peters (UK), who were all in South Africa in March with Rajmohan and Usha Gandhi; Shoufeng Hsu (Taiwan) and Omnia Marzouk (Egypt and UK). They will join Lorne Braun (Canada), Hennie de Pous-Lange (Holland), Antoine Jaulmes (France) and Rajmohan Gandhi, who ends his term as IofC President at the end of 2010.

The selection process went off very smoothly and produced what many believe is a well-balanced team in terms of age, gender and geographic spread.

***Report by Anthony Duigan, who attended the Consultation together with Nombulelo Khanyile***



## ***Club for Young Leaders in Romania welcomes international visitors***

Australian, Alexander Birnberg reports that Club Members in Baia Mare, Romania - [The Club for Young Leaders](#) (CYL) were perhaps secretly grateful for the eruption of the Icelandic volcano which meant that a plethora of international visitors came and spoke with them. It was a real privilege to have had guests from seven different countries, many having worked with IofC for many years. These guests had been attending the bi-annual Global Consultation of IofC.

The international guests graciously shared their stories and experiences, each one in their unique way, and each imparting a different gift on the young leaders.

The CYL in Romania was initiated in late January this year by Diana Damsa, an [Action for Life](#) alumni, who had seen the need for leaders in her country who would base their decisions on firm moral grounding rather than on self-interest. The Club meets twice a week, for training, support and encouragement. Members include students, mothers and people in the workforce aged between 18 and 31.

One of the planned outcomes for the Club is for each member to take on a practical project in their community to make a positive difference. Thus it was with interest they listened to Lorne Braun from Canada who gave a presentation on project management, speaking from his many years of experience as a business consultant.



***Diana Damsa (left), Carole Khakula (2nd from right) and Alex Birnberg (right)***

Grace Liu (Taiwan) presented her story of working on the issue that was the biggest need in her country: the issue of family reconciliation. One young man reported later that having talked privately with Grace, he was encouraged to try and approach his father and be more open with his feelings. The group also enjoyed the talks of Andrew Lancaster (Australia) who spoke about the wider work of IofC. Camilla Nelson (Norway) talked on the importance of silence in a world filled with the noise of constant information.

The energy of Carole Khakula (Kenya) was very infectious. Carole shared about the struggles of her country which resonated with the difficulties young people face in Romania. She talked about the feeling of pride in one's nation and how this can be a motivator for positive action.

This feeling of connected history was also evident in the sharing given by the two guests from South Africa, Nombulelo Khanyile and Anthony Duigan. They gave a public lecture at the library. Sharing from their hearts they talked about the struggle to build trust. Both countries have suffered, one from a class struggle, the other from a race struggle. It made the audience realise they are not alone in trying to recover and rebuild those much needed inner resources.

## ***The Voyage of Discovery continues....***

**Chris Breitenberg (USA) writes:** After a 20-hour journey by bus from Cluj-Napoca, Romania, the Voyage was welcomed to Kiev's [Taras Shevchenko University](#) by a traditional Ukrainian choir.



***Rajmohan and Usha Gandhi welcomed by a traditional Ukrainian choir outside Taras Shevchenko University, Kiev***

Speaking to the Media, Professor Gandhi said: 'Trust has a wonderful connection with yesterday. I have my version of what happened yesterday and you have your version of what happened yesterday. And when I say that I will have trust, it means that I'm putting yesterday behind. Yesterday belongs to yesterday. Today is a new day. Today I will trust you.'

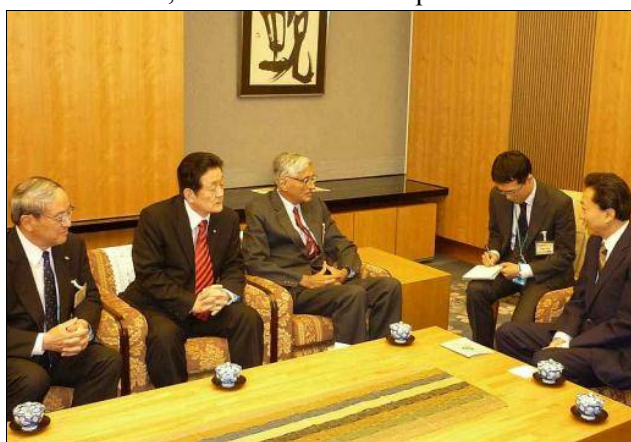
In response to a question from the audience about the limits of trust, Gandhi continued, 'There is a limit to trust. Yes. But there also must be a limit to mistrust. Today we must stand up and say we have met our limit of mistrust.'

The fast pace continued on the Crimean Peninsula, well-known for its diverse population and challenging history of integration. Gandhi expressed his views by encouraging dialogue in a region sometimes void of honest conversation between divided people. 'If my conscience is clear, it cannot be polluted by meeting with my Other; it will not be polluted by listening and

dialogue...The world is crying for stories of reconciliation. If we find healing from the past, this gives hope for the future. Can Ukraine find reconciliation within Ukraine? It would be a very powerful example for a world that needs such examples.'

## ***Gandhi Voyage in Japan begins by meeting with PM Hatoyama***

**Australian, Mike Brown reports:** On the day of arrival in Tokyo for a six-day visit Rajmohan Gandhi, President of IofC International, met for 30 minutes with Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama. He was accompanied by Yukihisa Fujita, a Member of the Diet, and by Hironori Yano, President of IofC Japan.



*(left to right) Hironori Yano, President of IofC Japan, Yukihisa Fujita MP, Rajmohan Gandhi, Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama*

At a time when the Prime Minister is wrestling with scandals in his government, severe economic problems and sliding support over unpopular decisions, Mr Gandhi commented that success or failure is determined not by media reports or opinion polls, but by our consciences and by history. He appreciated Mr Hatoyama's focus on understanding the moral roots of economic crisis.

The Prime Minister remembered speaking at the IofC international conference in [Caux](#), Switzerland, in 1996 and asked about the current programme. Mr Gandhi was able to update him on development of the [Caux Forum for Human Security](#), the next of which takes place in July.

Mr Fujita, who accompanied Mr Hatoyama on his visit to Caux, reminded Mr Hatoyama that his grandfather – when also Prime Minister in the 1950s – had supported and encouraged MRA (as Initiatives of Change was then known) in making its contribution to peace-building efforts in post-war Japan.

## ***International Farmers' Dialogue Conference in Kampala, Uganda***

The International Farmers' Dialogue Conference started on 5<sup>th</sup> May at Rest Gardens Training Centre in Bweyogerere in the Eastern part of Kampala. Delegates came from UK, France, Austria, South Africa, Namibia, Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Sudan, and different parts of Uganda.



*Julius Khakula (Kenya), Julian Swai (Tanzania) Jamil Ssebalu (Uganda) and Jim Wigan (UK)*

In his welcome speech **Jamil Ssebalu**, President of Farmers' Dialogue Africa, welcomed participants and introduced the theme of the conference **Responding to the Challenge of feeding Africa**. He explained that the role of the Farmers Dialogue was to get farmers and other stakeholders to work together, discuss issues of concern and find a way forward. He gave a presentation on Africa's potential, concluding that the competences needed can be acquired through training.

Participants later headed outside where an exhibition of farming products, inputs and implements were exhibited. Some exhibitors who were ready with their stalls such as **Ruth Kiwanuka** shared with the participants the Joint Energy and Environmental Projects (**JEEP Project**) referred to as the 1-5 Point programme for Uganda Wood Energy Conservation.

Three South Africans attended who are working together in an NGO called Amos Agrimin, empowering poor people to build up sustainable agriculture, following the rules of nature and the motto 'living and farming God's way', finalised the day's sharing.