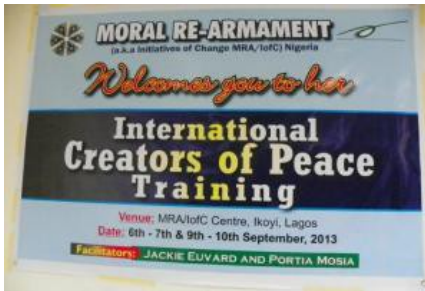




Initiatives of Change

Being a light of change in Nigeria



Creators of Peace (CoP) was introduced for the first time in Nigeria in mid September. Two Peace Circles were facilitated in Lagos State by

Portia Mosia, an international co-ordinator of CoP and Jackie Euvrard. They were invited by the board of MRA/Initiatives of Change Nigeria, co-ordinated by Benedicta Opara.



*Participants at one of the Peace Circles
(Photo: Jackie Euvrard)*

Nine days in Lagos was fairly short when trying to absorb, discover, understand life's challenges in a city of 21 million. Travelling on the highway one caught sight of the expanse of Lagos- housing as far as the eye could see. Some of the participants who live on the outskirts of the city had left home at 4.30am in order to be in time to start the Peace Circle at 9am!

'The Peace Circle process is transformative and unique', said one of the 19 participants who is active in MRA/Initiatives of Change. 'Some of the things we knew about but did not know how to apply them.'

This is a group of women who could definitely make a difference wherever they are. Participants went away ready to put into practice decisions they made, new perspectives they found and to carry out an opportunity to work together in groups on different projects.

A political activist found it a new experience to put her mobile phone on silent during the work sessions of the Peace Circle out of respect for those she was



*Second group of participants
(Photo: Jackie Euvrard)*

meeting with. She mentioned afterwards how refreshing it was as not many people had challenged her to be disciplined in this way!

One young caterer thought the time together was going to be about women's rights. Then she began to realise it was geared to assist with personal transformation in order to be a peacemaker. She expressed how determined she was about wanting her own way and fought hard to get it. She went away with the thought to be willing to listen to others and their points of view. Another said Peace Circles had touched an inner core on forgiving that she did not realise was still there.

An engineer said that she knew she was a bad listener. She wanted to communicate more effectively with the contractors. The next day she went to work and met with them. She was able to exercise the skills she had learnt and the contractors were amazed by the change in her. She feels she can avoid conflict by listening to them.

Be the light of change to others

An older participant felt the need to apologise to her daughters for not always being there when they needed her.

On the last day of the Peace Circle each person held a lit candle and was given an opportunity to blow it out and let go of any hurt or painful memory that had held them back. Many decisions and choices were made during this ceremony. One lady said she wanted to let go of bitterness and be the light of change to others. Being a 'light of change to others' expressed well what the 19 women left with.

by Portia Mosia and Jackie Euvrard

Distinguished German Peace Award for Imam Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye



Imam Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye

The board of trustees of the Hessian Peace Prize, granted by the Albert Osswald Foundation, has selected Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye as the recipients of the 2013 Hessian Peace Prize. The board of trustees wishes to honour their significant, impressive, exemplary and continued involvement in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. The Hessian Peace Prize and its Foundation was established in 1993 by the former governor of Hessen, Albert Osswald, and is endowed with 25,000 Euros.

The members of the Board of Trustees of the Hessian Peace Prize are representatives of the most influential German institutes for peace research.

The ceremony took place on 30 October in the Hessian Parliament Wiesbaden, the capital of Land Hessen, one of the 16 federal states of Germany.

Beyond Forgiving Screenings

[*Beyond Forgiving*](#), the documentary film which depicts the journey of two South Africans, Ginn Fourie and Letlapa Mphalele to bring healing and reconciliation to their country post-Apartheid.

The film was officially selected to be screened at the UNSPOKEN annual human rights film festival Utica, USA, which is held in October each year. It was chosen as an exemplary film that seeks not only to give a voice to human rights violations but also highlights that peace and reconciliation is possible and gives hope to the future.

See more at: <http://www.uk.iofc.org/beyond-forgiving-at-unsspoken-human-rights#sthash.GjnrFav8.dpuf>

Workshop for Africa

Many lessons were learned from the experiences of phase one of the Workshop for Africa (WfA) programme and these are being taken into the

planning now taking place for phase two - 2014. For a start, the programme will be regionalised (Southern Africa, East Africa and West Africa) so there is a greater focus on each region owning the programme. It will also be more cost effective and logistically easier since the costs of travel and cross-border visas will be substantially reduced. There are also efforts to build a partnership with Asia Plateau, the Initiatives of Change (IofC) centre in Panchgani, India, so that some WfA participants can take part in the internship programme run out of this centre.

Omarou Yayah from Cameroon writes:



Being in *Workshop for Africa* is a life time experience, which only few will be privileged to have. From the diversity of the team to the exposure, I can only say I am blessed to be part of this new found programme. I can say without the fear of any contradiction that the ten months of on the ground learning and fieldwork, is more

than two years of classroom work. The experience is practical. The focus was development, thereby preparing the programme for the next stage.

A spiritual and moral journey

Sincerely and personally speaking, being with *Workshop for Africa* was a spiritual and moral journey of a young man keen for change in Africa - who is not only searching for change in Africa and the world, but also for personal and team growth. Based on the IofC principles of absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love, I went through personal introspection, as I reflected over my life and motives during my inner listening.

In South Sudan and Kenya we saw a great deal of change happen in people's lives as their testimonials confirmed. I discovered that people are longing for change but what they need is a catalyst - we were just the right vector. The network created, the new found families and bonds of friendship are all indicators for a better future for WfA. Personally the international exposure into the heart of the African societies has given me an opportunity to see and to get first hand information of the challenges that millions of people in Africa face on a daily basis.

As we reach the end of the first phase of WfA, I just want to say thank you to all those who made it possible, financially, materially and all those who put in their time to see the success of the programme and for us to have this experience of a life time. Thanks too to Allah for his bounteous blessing.

Kenyan, Mediatrix Masava has this to report: I am an African but I knew so little about South Africa, until I had the privilege of visiting the country with the *Workshop for Africa* programme. I knew the words – Mandela, Bishop Tutu, Reconciliation and Apartheid, but I did not know the details.



Ubuntu is the African philosophy that Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu credited when asked how the reconciliation between blacks and whites could occur with so little bloodshed and without retribution. It is simple, they would say. We are all members of the human family, and we must work together to achieve a strong South Africa.

A human family travelling together

As apartheid came to an end, something unexpected and beautiful came to pass. The decades of apartheid did not end in bloody revolution, as history might predict. There was an ingredient in the African mindset that was large enough, wise enough, and compassionate enough to prevent such a harsh response. It is called Ubuntu. Ubuntu - the ancient African philosophy that draws on the fact that we are a human family. We are brothers and sisters, travelling this earth together.

In the month of April, May and September, I was privileged to be in the youngest nation in Africa, South Sudan. I was involved in the training of the 200 peace mobilizers, in the journey for national healing and reconciliation. I met many Ugandans, Ethiopians and Kenyans, who are working there and I realized this.....South Sudan was oppressed by war for so long. They finally got their independence on 9th July 2011 which ended up with the separation of South Sudan from the Republic of the Sudan. While they received freedom, many were not ready for the change.

My fellow Africans where is Ubuntu? Ubuntu is part of me- it is part of us all. It's not about the government alone but about how we all want to help each other in building our economy. The spirit of Ubuntu is found through community. Community is created when you find unity of purpose with others.

In Initiatives of Change we believe in change starting with me - that is recognizing and embracing the humanity, the equality, and the value of each person. You can't just 'do' Ubuntu, you have to 'be' Ubuntu.

Kenya is one of the most developed countries in East Africa, but when it comes to politics, mmh?! We are introspective about how we can help in good governance, and I realized the solution lies with me, the path to Ubuntu is marked by our humanity, and we follow the path from person to person. When I am greedy, it affects the other Kenyan, and where is Ubuntu then?

Being in WfA has opened my eyes for me to see how I am able to use the philosophy of Ubuntu in my life, place of work, community and not forgetting Mama Africa.

WfA action in South Africa

An early morning phone call from Nombulelo Khanyile, hastily arranged travel, a round robin of telephone calls and Workshop for Africa participants Estelle Lepad, Pierre Mbida and Umarou Yayah arrived in Pietermaritzburg on Saturday the 2nd November, 2013. Estelle writes:

“Redempta Rawebangira (Sima), a Tanzanian student in Conflict Studies and Peace Building, at the University of Kwa Zulu-Natal, had asked Nombulelo Khanyile if we could come and introduce her friends to IofC. Present were students from Malawi, Tanzania, Nigeria and Zambia.



Participants together with Estelle, Pierre and Umarou

“The agenda for the weekend included, Sport as an avenue for Moral Values (Pierre Mbida); Building Trust Across the World's Divides - a presentation of the work of IofC and all its programmes (Umarou Yayah); and Determining your Major Definite Purpose, using the four absolute standards and silence. (Estelle Lepad).

“We showed the DVD *The Imam and the Pastor* - about reconciliation between Muslim and Christian communities in Nigeria. This evoked several comments: 'It is inspiring to see how people can cross over the religious line'; 'the statement “to have dialogue instead of saying we will deal with them” is very powerful. It made me realise that dialogue is important and it frees. It is the first step to reconciliation.'

“In the session on Building Trust across the world's divide, a presentation of the work of IofC and all its programmes generated great interest especially, WfA , the Caux Scholars Programme and the Caux interns programme. We encouraged those present to visit the website and apply if they felt strongly about it.

“During the evaluation it was clear from all present that the two days together were too short. Moses from Malawi indicated that the discussion points raised released his “phantoms.” Now they are running in his head with no place to go. He needs more time to process what was shared so that he could formulate a way to approach his emotional side to be able to deal with them.

“Ndubuisi Christian from Nigeria, felt that we were like missionaries, our message was strong. He was grateful to be part of the weekend.

Tanzanian, Irene expressed her gratitude for the time and would like to be involved in IofC Tanzania and to be of service.

We were asked next time to come on a Friday and leave on a Monday, or even to stay one week. Many thanks to Nombulelo Khanyile for arranging and covering the cost this weekend with these young people. They are an amazingly focused group, hard working, caring, philosophical and passionate about people and service to people.

Tiger Kloof Educational Institution

Portia Mosia, coordinator of the Creators of Peace programme, was recently invited by Mark Boobyer, Director of Tiger Kloof Educational Institution and his wife Cathy, to meet with the senior girls at the school. Portia writes: I was invited to spend a week at the school to help with counselling. I was humbled by this invitation and it was time well spent with the students and the staff of Tiger Kloof.

On my arrival I was introduced to two girls Boitumelo and Tiirisano, who were asked to show me around and that led to us having deep discussions. We reminded ourselves that every choice we make determines our destiny. We discussed the importance of studying, what the disadvantages are of having relationships whilst still studying and what happens when you have them when you are not ready.

On the second day I saw 12 students. I was puzzled that each one had lost one parent. They mostly came from dysfunctional families. This affected their performance at school. Some just needed to be listened to and be encouraged.

I was also invited to speak as a motivational speaker at the Grade 12 dance. I chose the theme *“Seven characteristics of a champion.”* I believe that young people are powerful when their energies are directed to right things. I am looking forward to being of help in Tiger Kloof, helping these young people find their purpose. I have agreed to give part of my time to follow up on everyone I have met.

Tiger Kloof, established in 1905 by the London Missionary Society at the request of three Batswana chiefs, closed down in 1962 by the Apartheid

Government and then re-opened again in 1995 through the initiative of former learners and local business people. The school was recently awarded the 'Investing in the Future Education' award by the Mail and Guardian newspaper. In an interview with the paper, Mark Boobyer said: “We view the development of the intellectual, physical, cultural and spiritual sides of the students as equally important.” For more information on the school please go to www.tigerkloof.com



In Memory of Angus Wilson

The Church of the Holy Spirit, Kirstenhof, Cape Town, was filled to capacity with family and friends of Angus Wilson, who passed away recently, aged 79. Angus was helping to put out a fire on the forested mountain of the farm belonging to his sister-in-law and her husband and suffered a heart attack.

Angus was himself a forester, having studied at Stellenbosch University with Dr. Chris Schutz who paid tribute to his close friend of 63 years. Angus' involvement with MRA goes back to his time with Chris Schutz at university and a visit to Caux. Since then he and his wife, Gillian attended many MRA (now IofC) conferences in South Africa and kept close touch with other MRA workers.

His strong faith, sense of adventure, gentle spirit and sense of humour deeply affected the lives of many, as testified by the pastor at the service. Gillian and their four children told stories of how Angus had cared for his family and the effect his life had had on their own lives. Angus will be greatly missed.

Ralph Travers

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