



# Annual Report - 2013

Initiatives of Change Association (Canada)

## BUILDING BRIDGES OF TRUST

A priority from coast to coast

### Collaboration with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The *Truth and Reconciliation Commission on residential schools* established by the Canadian government held a series of public events across the country in 2012 and 2013. Initiatives of Change (IofC) Canada committed itself to the goal of encouraging all Canadians, including newer citizens, to initiate a real dialogue with the First Nations based on humility, respect and active listening.

IofC teams, members and partners from different provinces supported the Commission's hearings from Halifax to Victoria, participated actively in events in their regions and took part in other sessions relating to problems facing First Nations communities. Relationships have been developed with many of these communities and other groups interested in defeating ignorance, taking a stand against racism and bringing people together—from solitudes to partnership—and promoting the teaching of history as it was truly lived.

In Québec, IofC opted for a three year process in partnership with *Espace Art Nature* of Neuville in proposing to the commission, in 2011, a Citizen Project for 2012 and 2013. It was accepted and was carried out thanks mostly to financial support from the *Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs*, the *Québec Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs*, some cities, foundations and organizations. Three one-day forums, each bringing together more than 200 people, were held in Victoriaville and Montréal in 2012, and the final one in Québec City in March, 2013.

These forums were followed, in their respective areas, by ongoing Circles of Trust gatherings that bear fruit by deepening the dialogue and rapprochement. Moreover, the theatrical presentation *Voix du Silence / Voice of Silence* is on tour in schools, colleges, aboriginal communities and other institutions.



From left to right: Dominique Rankin, Algonquin Grand Chief, spiritual leader of the Citizen Project; Jean-Noël André and Laurent Gagnon, initiators of the project.

#### Content of the forums:

- Opening ceremony with small pebbles brought by each person and the sharing of water.
- Celebration of the sacredness of life with First Nations representatives.
- Time of teaching by elders from different national origins.
- Stage presentation – Voice of Silence.
- Workshops leading to and sharing by many voices in a plenary.
- Sharing meals in intimate circles.

The response to these activities is promising for the future but the greatest challenge resides in the tangible actions by the political structure and in every life and heart.

## Canadians learning and sharing

Fifteen Canadians took part in IofC international conferences on the themes of “Just Governance” and “Healing History” in July and August at Caux, Switzerland. Marlene Orr, a Cree from Alberta, was touched by an experience shared by Joseph Karanja from Kenya, about tackling corruption in the electoral system in Kenya through the *Clean Election Campaign*, which he led. Armed with a video recording of this experience made by Tim Hall from Surrey, BC, she wants to encourage the participation of the Cree First Nation in the democratic process.



Canadian participants at Caux

Among delegates from Québec, were Mavis Etienne, a Mohawk elder from Kanehsatàke and negotiator during the Oka crisis in 1990, and Francine Lemay, sister of Corporal Lemay of the Sureté du Québec, shot and killed during the standoff. This unlikely duo shared with international delegates their message filled with hope, arising from their encounter in 2004 and subsequent experiences of forgiveness and reconciliation.

As well, young Canadians benefited from two leadership training programs: the *Caux Intern* and the *Caux Scholars* programs for conflict resolution.

A four-day workshop for people engaged in farming and in rural development took place in Bukavu, Democratic Republic of Congo from 18-21 November, 2013. The eighty participants, including many women being reintegrated into normal life after suffering trauma linked to the war, focused on the link between personal motivation and development. IofC Canada was a partner with FDI through financial support from farmers in Alberta.

## Multicultural and Interfaith Activities

Several IofC teams worked all year to enlarge their multicultural and interfaith networks, to deepen harmonious relations and to establish common ground with different communities and faith groups. This process is possible through sincere exchanges at public or informal meetings, in small groups or individually and by creating spaces where a deep search for higher wisdom plays a major role. True listening is key to understanding the concerns of others, their need for healing and peace.

In the fall of 2013, the Ottawa team hosted the second *Multicultural Women’s Friendship Circle* at the national office. Led by Susan Korah, the program consists of a series of weekly meetings of a circle of new immigrant and established Canadian women who share food, conversation and fellowship with the goal of building friendships and helping the newcomers integrate into Canadian society through personal connections and civic engagement.

Meanwhile, honest conversations take place in southern Ontario as an alternative to racism. In Québec, monthly *Circles of Dialogue* bring together around twenty people originating from three continents. In Regina, the interfaith dialogue continues. In partnership with the *Intercultural Dialogue Institute*, IofC showed “The Imam & the Pastor” video and led dialogues in both Calgary and Edmonton. The new video *Beyond Forgiving* is also now being promoted and used.

## Young People Work for IofC Canada Archives



Some of the volunteers

Ottawa University’s Centre for Global and Community Engagement retains its partnership with IofC. During 2013, five students assisted Elaine Gordon with the Archives Development Project. One student summed up her experience: “I was drawn to IofC through their philosophy that change must begin from within. I think that when change starts with the individual, it is lasting and genuine...I am thankful for the chance to be involved in an organization that encourages individuals to become agents of change in society.” Two high school students and a retired international development executive filed and digitized documents.

## Message from the Chair



As we approach our 2014 AGM, I wish to draw attention to two significant anniversaries that we are marking this year. Initiatives of Change was first incorporated in Canada in May, 1944, which means we are celebrating 70 years of existence as an association. At that time, the main outreach had been through the wartime patriotic review 'Pull Together Canada'. Ten years earlier, in 1934, Frank Buchman was made a blood brother by Chief Walking Buffalo of the Nakoda people at a historic gathering in Banff. 80 years on, the effects of that relationship can still be seen in the participation of First Nations people in lofC programs and in the effort to engage Canadians of all backgrounds in the process of dialogue initiated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I want to express my personal appreciation for the very fruitful partnership with 'Espace Art Nature' that developed through the Citizen Project in Québec. In addition to their competent management of the project, they have brought a dimension of story-telling through music and drama that speaks to the heart in a way that is very true to the tradition of lofC.

As well as the program activities that have been highlighted in this report, we have also been pursuing some important organizational goals. This year we shall complete the process of bringing our charter and by-laws into compliance with the new Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act and we will also take steps to amend lofC Canada's purpose to reflect the increasingly multi faith participation in its membership and outreach. In this, I wish to acknowledge the dedicated and diligent work of the Governance Committee.

I would also like to pay tribute to all who have so generously contributed funds and volunteered time to forward the work of lofC Canada during the year. An attempt has been made to calculate volunteer time, but it has proved almost impossible! It certainly amounts to many thousands of hours. In addition to the work on programs and committees, there are countless individual actions and initiatives inspired by lofC's aims and core values.

In May, 2013, I had the rare opportunity to visit South Sudan in connection with lofC's international common action in support of national reconciliation. I was most encouraged by meeting a few of the 200 individuals who had just completed the four-week training as peace mobilizers. They represented – and still do - such a tangible hope for the future. We have all been shocked and greatly concerned by developments since then, which took a turn for the worse towards the end of the year. Our thoughts and prayers go out to friends in South Sudan and in the diaspora community in Canada, especially those who have chosen to become members of our association. The trust building workshops with South Sudanese in Alberta are very much a part of this wider effort. In teamwork with lofC International, we will continue to do what we can for peace and national reconciliation in South Sudan.

Richard Weeks

## Trustbuilding Workshops



Trustbuilding Workshop participants

This year provided many opportunities to continue building trust amongst communities in Alberta and beyond. Two trustbuilding workshops were facilitated for South Sudanese, and an introduction to trustbuilding was presented to the North America Jonglei Peace Initiative in Washington, DC. The Calgary Centre for Global Community included the half-day introduction to the workshop in their own nine-month Leadership Training program. Also, a North Sudanese development organization was so pleased with their participation in a workshop that they expressed the desire to repeat the experience for a broader participation.

Communication and participation in local Cambodian community events also continued with the goal to help overcome their collective historical trauma and to build trust. Partnering with the University of Calgary provided opportunities for eight students to intern with lofC in Calgary and organize a very successful trust building workshop and a Creators of Peace Circle workshop.

Following the Asia-Pacific conference in Indonesia, Peter Heyes, a Canadian working with lofC in that region, strongly encouraged lofC members from Western Canada to be more involved with the many refugees from Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos, who have fled violence in their countries to come to Canada, and who need healing.

## Tools for Reconciliation

Multi-media material is used by lofC to promote its approach and values. 2013 was particularly active in using new social media platforms for outreach to the public.

- The Canadian lofC website was modernized and updated.
- Two short promotional videos are now on the lofC YouTube site, featuring the *Trustbuilding workshops* in Calgary and the *Project citoyen* in Quebec produced in both official languages by the MRA Productions team of Tim Hall and Chris Hartnell from BC.
- The newsletter was renamed “Canadian Initiatives / Initiatives canadiennes” and is more electronically friendly.

**MRA Productions North America**, a division of lofC Canada

[Business No. 11094 5912 RR0002]

This enterprise, managed by Chris Hartnell, partners with lofC USA in developing film and video resources for North American distribution and with the Caux Foundation in a 3 year process of transferring and preserving in HD more than 200 MRA/lofC films made worldwide since 1931.

The new award winning documentary film from South Africa “Beyond Forgiving” is now available on DVD in the NTSC format with English/French/German/Arabic/Spanish and Portuguese subtitles.

## Finances

Initiatives of Change Association (Canada), incorporated in 1944, is a registered charitable organization [Business No. 11094 5912 RR0001] and donations are tax deductible.

	2013	2012
Revenue (including legacies)	\$187,377	\$306,929
Expenditure	<u>\$206,365</u>	<u>\$375,437</u>
Increase/decrease in reserves	(\$ 18,988)	(\$ 68,508)

The 2013 Audited financial Statements for the year ended December, 2013, have been circulated to the membership and are available, upon request, from the lofC office in Ottawa or on the website.

lofC Canada is indebted to many individuals, foundations and governments for their financial contributions without which its work would not have been possible. Our gratitude also goes to the many volunteers who together contributed more than 10,000 hours of their time and talents to promote our objectives.

### *Building trust across the world's divides*

**Initiatives of Change** (lofC) is a world-wide movement of people of diverse cultures and backgrounds, who are committed to the transformation of society through changes in human motives and behaviour, starting with their own.

It has been active on every continent for over 70 years. Initiatives of Change Association Canada is a member of Initiatives of Change International, which affiliates national lofC associations worldwide and has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

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