



Annual Report - 2012

Initiatives of Change Association (Canada)

Message from the Chair



We could easily say that the last year has been a year of challenges and transition. But in hindsight we must acknowledge it was a year of successes. Initiatives of Change (IofC) Canada has truly been a lighthouse for bridge building across divides. From the Citizen project in Quebec, building understanding and healing between First Nations and non-First Nations, to the Trust Building workshops in Alberta, which have initiated a long term reconciliation process within the South Sudanese in Canada there are remarkable stories of success. Also, there were women-specific dialogues and opportunities stemming from the Creators of Peace Circles and the Multicultural Women's

Friendship Circle.

I'm truly proud of what our teams have accomplished in the face of financial difficulty and an ongoing transition process. I want to take this opportunity to recognize and appreciate the lifelong contribution of our field workers, in particular those who transitioned from their full time field worker roles with IofC this past year. Infinite thanks to Anne Hartnell, Chris Hartnell, Richard Weeks, and Laurent Gagnon. It is no surprise that they continue playing significant roles within our organization. Also, a special word of gratitude to the donors who came through for us in a very generous way in the last months of 2012. Finally, I ask you all to take time in reflection to ask yourselves what we are called to do this coming year. Which bridges do we need to build together and what will be your contribution to building them?

Alex Ramirez ~ Chair, Council of Management, IofC Canada

Journey towards Reconciliation: From Solitudes to Partnership ~ A Citizen Project

A seed was planted at the IofC national gathering in Quebec City in 2008, by Bob Watts, Interim Executive Director at the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)*, to build reconciliation and cooperation amongst Aboriginals and Non-Aboriginals. Three years later, IofC and *Espace Art Nature* of Neuville partnered and presented a plan to the TRC, coupled with a request for a grant. After a positive response from the Commission, \$30,000 was granted by the *Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada* in 2011 and the nurtured seed began to bloom into Quebec's Citizen Project in 2012.

It aims to invite individuals and communities of all origins to gain awareness, with an open heart about the Indian Residential School issue, while creatively contributing to healing, building respect and trust for the survivors and future generations. Three well attended public forums were held during the span of the project between January, 2012 and March 31, 2013: in Victoriaville, in March 2012, organized by the dynamic team of the *Festival of Peace* of Victoriaville; in Montreal, during the *First Peoples' Festival* in August and the last in Quebec City on March 2, 2013. Each event brought together over 200

participants from 13 regions, 11 First Nations, and 28 countries of origin.

IofC is grateful for the passion, skills, and leadership of all those who supported to make this event a reality. Special recognition is given to Dominique Rankin, a survivor of the Indian Residential Schools and spiritual leader of the Citizen Project, IofC and *Espace Art Nature*. IofC is also thankful for financial contributions from the Secretariat of First Nations Affairs of the Quebec government, the Brian Bronfman Family Foundation, the Mennonite Central Committee, the cities of Montreal and of Victoriaville, and the support from generous individuals.



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To continue the momentum generated by the Forums, several smaller permanent Circles of Trust are now flourishing within these cities, to go deeper with what

participants have learned and make a fruitful impact in their communities and in the province. All this created the sense of togetherness envisioned in 2008: *Towards a community of communities: from solitudes to partnership.*

Creators of Peace ~ Women's Peace Circles

Creators of Peace Circles have proven to be a successful program over the 2012 year. Women come together, over a six week period or for a weekend intensive workshop, to build peace within themselves, their families, communities and global society. These workshops create a supportive and safe environment, where stories are shared with no judgment. A transformative and sharing space for the women allows for the building of trust while finding common struggles and experience. Women are equipped and empowered with tools such as peace building, communication skills, overcoming fear, living in love, and forgiveness. Anne Hartnell facilitated a Peace Circle in Surrey, B.C. early in 2012.



Encouraged by this success, Shaneeza Nazseer and Melanie Klein organized their first ever Women's Peace Circle in Toronto in November, co-facilitated by Janyce Konkin and Shaneeza Nazseer. IofC is grateful for the promotional film prepared by Tim Hall and Chris Hartnell which is expected to generate further interest. For more information, contact annehartnell@ca.iofc.org, the Canadian Coordinator for Creators of Peace Circles.

Susan Korah launched an innovative training program entitled **Multicultural Women's Friendship Circle**, inspired by Creators of Peace and Connecting Communities. The initiative was launched to create trust and friendship amongst new immigrants and established Canadians. Through use of English conversation, civic engagement, volunteerism, food and idea sharing, participants ease their transition into a new culture.

Healing, Reconciliation, and Trust Building

Much healing work with the Calgary South Sudanese community has taken place through Trust Building Workshops and Healing & Reconciliation. There is a higher level of commitment by the South Sudanese to "be the change within themselves" and to engage in healing & reconciliation both locally and within the IofC International Common Action in South Sudan.

Many events with the Cambodian Community have also strengthened our ability to walk alongside them on their journey of healing. Numerous public presentations through partner-led-events have increased IofC's visibility and message of changing the world by changing ourselves. Please contact Janyce at janyce.konkin@ca.iofc.org for more information.

Treasures from our Elders ~ Archives



Throughout the year archival materials in the form of interviews and contributions of historical data were collected by Elaine Gordon, who has been working in an unpaid capacity as IofC Canada's Archivist since June 2011. Elaine, who is from Ireland, is in Canada as a charitable worker at IofC's invitation.

Six interviews were taped with senior citizens, some of whose families became associated with the Oxford Group/MRA in the 1930s and who themselves participated in expanding its message. These interviews took place in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. Offers of help from volunteers, at the suggestion of Letty Berhe, have become an integral part of the archival project, one important aspect of which is team development and making IofC's history available for future generations. These included six Ottawa high school students who spent some of their community volunteer hours helping with this project.

"We need a power strong enough to change human nature and build bridges between man and man, faction and faction. This starts when everyone admits his own faults instead of spot-lighting the other fellow's. God alone can change human nature. The secret lies in that great forgotten truth, that when man listens, God speaks; when man obeys, God acts; when men change, nations change." ~ Frank Buchman, initiator of IofC.

Youth Engagement ~ Future Generations

A large focus of 2012 has been nurturing youth engagement within IofC to ensure the continuity of the movement. While maintaining respect, value, and the importance of the wisdom of our cherished elders, IofC has been working towards gaining momentum with youth.

Tanya Wood and Julia Stockdale-Otarola met at the IofC Conference Centre in Caux, Switzerland and upon return have set up a club at the University Student Centre of University of Ottawa and have been starting a dialogue on campus.

Firyal Mohamed, a Calgary University student, reignited interest in the IofC movement at the Student Union's Club Week. In March of 2012, the small group of dedicated and passionate university students, and other

Albertan members including Janyce Konkin and Joy Newman took part in the *Festival of Faith & Justice*.

Mathieu Pruvot, a French PhD candidate in Veterinary Medicine at University of Calgary, is committed to promoting peace studies in all forms of education. He has presented a workshop on the role of veterinarians in conflict resolution and peace building in collaboration with Initiatives of Change and the Calgary Centre for Global Community and is started a movement called *Peace Your Way* for students from other faculties to learn from his experience.

Elaine Gordon has been engaging a number of high school and university students to volunteer their community involvement requirements by working on IofC's archives. This is a lively program, which is helping to introduce young people to IofC. .

International Outreach

Caux Conference

The Initiatives of Change International Conference Centre in Caux, Switzerland has always been a special part of the IofC global movement. Many Canadians attended the conference in 2012 as Caux scholars, interns, participants, and others in support of international delegations from the African continent.

The themes included human security, multiculturalism, trust building, links of global and personal transformation, as well as change making. The conference continues to work at providing hope for the future, building spirit, healing and reconciliation, sharing of ideas and knowledge, and building peace.



Farmers' Dialogue in Africa

Thanks to the initiative and generosity of farmers in Alberta, IofC Canada was a partner in the delivery of capacity-building training offered to farmers in East Africa near Nyahururu, Kenya in November. The training was oriented mainly towards 'the empowerment' of East African farmers, with a focus on team-building, personal commitment and reconciliation (often a key to local development), in order to equip trainees with essential skills of rural development and agriculture. Each participant agreed to conduct two training sessions for farmers in their areas during the coming year. The training session was followed by the official launch of International Farmers' Dialogue Association.

Rebuilding Relations in Burma

In January, 2012 Richard Weeks undertook a six-week journey to India and Myanmar (formally Burma). He first attended the international conference *Making Democracy Real*, at the IofC Centre in Panchgani, India. Opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, from Burma, sent a message that democracy has to do with the whole of society, not just government.



Richard was able to re-establish links with people who have known IofC in the past, while making new contacts in Burma. As a result, a delegation of seven, each representing a different ethnic nationality, attended the Caux Forum for Human Security.

Richard Weeks was honoured in Ottawa for his work of more than 20 years with the Burmese.

Film and Dialogue as Tools ~ Maintaining Momentum in the IofC Movement

The documentaries *The Imam & the Pastor* and the sequel *An African Answer* are used as tools to express IofC ideals. The films were shown at the *Marda Loop Justice Film Festival* in Calgary in November and were successful in initiating and sustaining discussion and providing evidence of means of personal transformation. Imam Soharwardy and Pastor Hansen both participated in dialogue following the screening. Other presentations were held in various Canadian cities.



"Most people blame religion for division and wars and here religion was playing a role in bringing people together. It shows how religious people worked together to understand issues and build trust" – Imam Soharwardy

Governance and Finances

Initiatives of Change Association (Canada), incorporated in 1944, is a Registered charitable organization [Business No. 11904 5912 RR0001] and donations are tax deductible.

IofC Canada is indebted to many individuals for their financial contributions. This work has also been supported through grants from government, foundations and countless hours of volunteer help. A major fund raising campaign was undertaken in 2012 with positive results, in addition to serious measures taken to reduce overall costs by reducing staff positions.

Total revenue for 2012 from all sources including legacies was **\$306,929** against total **expenditures** and commissions of **\$375,437**, resulting in an excess of expenses over revenues of \$68,508. The total value of cash and investments held as assets in reserve by IofC Canada as of December 31, 2012 was \$345,716. These figures are from the 2012 audit report.

The 2012 Audited Financial Statements for the year ended December 31, 2012 have been circulated to the membership and are available, upon request from the Initiatives of Change office in Ottawa, or on the **website**.

Initiatives of Change (IofC) 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 IofC associations worldwide and has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

For more information contact the national office or visit www.ca.iofc.org

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