Building trust across divides

Building bridges of trust within and between Canadian communities continued to be a principal focus of IofC Canada programmes through 2010, whether it was the Caravan of dialogues for peace in Quebec, Peace Circles in different parts of the country, Hope in the Cities in Hamilton, Calgary and Vancouver or interfaith initiatives in Saskatchewan. Often it involved fruitful partnerships with other organizations. Opportunities were also provided, both in Canada and at Caux, Switzerland, for Canadians to acquire skills in the art of building trust and facilitating dialogue.

Trustbuilding: an honest conversation on race, reconciliation and responsibility, a new book by Rob Corcoran, one of the founders of Hope in the Cities and National Director of IofC in the USA, was featured at a number of events in Toronto, Vancouver, Calgary and Edmonton. At the launch of the book in Toronto, the author commented on the city’s amazing diversity, adding, “I believe in Canada’s great role as a trust builder in a world that must deal with diversity as never before.”

The book tells the story of the role played by Hope in the Cities, launched in Richmond, Virginia in 1990, to address the deep healing needed to redress the painful legacy of the slave trade.

In Vancouver, speaking to students, community and faith leaders, civic staff, activists, educators and the general public, Corcoran told how Hope In The Cities models honest conversations and sustained partnerships across traditional boundaries. The theme of trust building in the community resonated with his hearers, who shared their own longing to bridge divisions in society.

At an interactive workshop in Calgary, Corcoran talked about the lessons learned through a 20+ year process, referring to the invisible backpack of privilege that he as a white male unconsciously carried. His emphasis on the need to heal the wounds of history was echoed by subsequent remarks from two First Nations people who spoke of colonization, trust, truth and reconciliation.

In Edmonton, a diverse group of individuals, including representatives from First Nations, Métis, Inuit and inner city service agencies, came together to discuss the possibilities of building new relationships and networks. The event was hosted at Native Counselling Services of Alberta by the staff of The National Day of Healing and Reconciliation.

Dialogues for Peace across Quebec

The Caravan of Dialogues for Peace was designed to create opportunities for dialogue between communities and individuals across Quebec. In the first phase, started already in 2009, organizers answered requests for preliminary visits from several regions. In June, 2010 it was decided to discontinue the project as originally conceived for an indefinite period for lack of the necessary human and financial resources. However, activities related to reconciliation, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, using the film of The Imam & the Pastor, have continued.

In Sherbrooke, Quebec, over a one-week period in March, the IofC team facilitated two series of workshops on the theme of forgiveness, attended by four classes of secondary V and CEGEP students.

On May 22, the Council of Religious Leaders of Montreal North, of which IofC is a supporting member, held their annual Caravan of Peace. The fifty or so participants were welcomed at a Mosque for prayers followed by open exchanges between participants and leaders and members of that Muslim community. The format was repeated at a Catholic Church and an Evangelical Church. Most participants marched together from one venue to the next. At the end, the documentary The Imam & the Pastor was shown.
Peace Circles

Peace Circles are small, localized community gatherings of women who together work through material designed to deepen their friendship and understanding of each other and their peace-creating capabilities. One aim is to identify issues in the community with a potential for conflict and then resolve to take common action.

In Toronto, Calgary and Richmond, women of all ages, differing backgrounds, cultures and faiths have taken part in Peace Circles. Ami, a young woman from Toronto writes, “We shared tears, joy, laughter and an understanding which has helped me to learn more about myself.” Two training weekends will be offered to train facilitators for Peace Circles in 2011.

Emerging Leadership

A growing number of young men and women from across Canada, who have engaged in training with Initiatives of Change (IoC), are putting their skills into action by taking leadership roles in Canada and overseas.

**Keitoum Boumedjane**, Regional Project Coordinator in Montreal, focusing on cross-cultural and interfaith bridge building, youth capacity building, and communications upgrades for the IoC web site in French.

**Vanja Hodzic**, while busy on her Master’s, is including younger people in Quebec City in her intergenerational and intercultural vision based on IoC values.

**Ignacio Koudoglo**, trained in Administration and Project Management, has taken a role in bookkeeping and administrative duties. His experience in human rights in Togo is a great asset in IoC’s work with the film *The Imam & the Pastor*.

**Shaneeza Nazseer** from Toronto spent three months in the summer of 2010 in Geneva and Caux, working closely with experienced IoC trainer Alice Cardel to implement workshops and assist with designing future training programs.

Former Caux Scholar, **Aron Tegenfeldt** from Vancouver has initiated a health project on HIV prevention education in China on the border with Burma. Refugees and a migrants from Burma and are also being reached through this project. [www.peaceandhealth.org](http://www.peaceandhealth.org)

A World Journey remembered

Fifty years ago, in 1960, Chief Walking Buffalo of the Nakoda First Nation and Chief David Crowchild of the Tsuu T’ina First Nation, with members of their families, undertook an historic World Journey “to build unity between nations by changing the hearts of people.” After attending an MRA (IoC) conference at Mackinac Island in 1958, Chief Walking Buffalo said, “I put away all bitterness, pride and fear and took up the work of my blood brother Frank Buchman.” To celebrate the 125th anniversary of the founding of Banff National Park, the Whyte Museum in Banff has featured the story of Walking Buffalo’s life and, from July 1, held public screenings of the film of the World Journey. The exhibit includes photos by Bob Fleming, now living in Kingston, Ontario, who took part in the World Journey.

Banking on Change video

J.S. Parthiban is an Indian banker who has changed the lives of many poor people through giving small loans. His story is depicted in the new short film *Banking on Change* that was shown at an Indian-themed evening in White Rock, B.C. in June. Prakash Joshi (vocals and harmonium) and Roy Naidu (tabla) shared their music, while a local Indian restaurant donated snacks. The film was also screened in Toronto during the Regent Park Film Festival in November. [http://vimeo.com/9419926](http://vimeo.com/9419926)

Canadians energized at Caux’s ‘Home for the World’

Every summer, people from all continents have the opportunity to meet in Caux, the international conference centre for Initiatives of Change (IoC) in Switzerland. Caux has more to offer than conferences. It is a unique place where all parties, all cultures, all generations seek for answers and share solutions found in specific areas; where the personal is intimately bonded with the more global; where hope for a better world is always present and where one can recharge the batteries to continue one’s part in building trust, respect and honesty towards a responsible commitment. A place where country leaders and people at the grass roots meet, share visions for their countries as well as the practical work to help run the place.

This year, about 20 Canadians from four provinces took part: young people as interns or conference assistants; some representing Canada at IoC International’s Annual Meeting or the Global Communications meeting. They participated in four of the six sessions under the themes: *Learning to Live in a Multicultural World; Caux Forum for Human Security, Training by Initiatives of Change,*
and Trust and Integrity in the Global Economy.

**INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMES**

*Bridging the urban-rural gulf in India*

Run from converted farm buildings at the IoFC centre at Asia Plateau, Panchgani, India, the Grampari project builds capacity in rural society through thoughtful, community-led programmes in livelihoods, empowerment, health and environment, and local governance. “We endeavour to be the change we want to see in the world and to inspire others to become agents of change in this same spirit.” Individuals and organizations across the world, such as IoFC Canada, are partners in the programme. Canadians gave to this project in 2010 as a memorial to Phyllis Bocock from Alberta, who volunteered for several years at Asia Plateau.

[www.tippytap.org](http://www.tippytap.org)

**Action for Life**

In 2010, IoFC Canada continued its support for the Action for Life (AfL) training programme run by IoFC in Asia, through a donation from the Harvey Fund. AfL aims to mobilize a new generation of change makers equipped with integrity and faith.

**Messages from the Chair and Managing Director**

Forty one years ago I went out on a limb and decided to give my life to a God I wasn’t sure existed, to give up my job, and to sell my dearly beloved Austin Mini, in order to work with no salary for the idea that the Creator had a plan for my life and it was up to me to seek that plan.

Today, I have no doubt of a power beyond myself or that there is a plan for my life. What is it today that we are ready to leave behind for the sake of creating a better world for the next generation? Are we ready to work towards the world we want to see? What will that mean for you?

Over the last six years IoFC Canada has engaged a younger generation in the effort to ‘change the world’. This may be a high ideal but, for me, a challenge can only inspire if it is big enough. It may mean changing the world around each of us, or we may have a part to play further afield. Whatever it is that we are trying to change, it is clear that without change in ourselves first we are not going to change anything, and without personal change there is no long-lasting structural change.

Many thanks are due to the leadership, over the last two years, of Bill Parker, Eve Wojciechowska and Richard Weeks, who formed the Management Team and without whom the move of the administration from Calgary back to Ottawa would not have been possible. Now, to help us move further forward, we have enlisted Benoit Charlebois from Montreal as Managing Director.

Joy, Newman, Chair

True leaps of faith. My adventure with IoFC Canada began in 1987, on the eve of making one of the first true leaps of faith of my life. I was about to fly off to Colombia where I would further my studies in a totally different culture and end up unexpectedly meeting the woman of my life and experiencing the joy of becoming a father. Little did I know that, almost a quarter century later, I would take another great leap of faith, this time to lead IoFC into a new era of ideological battle and revolutionary remaking of individuals and the world. Together with Council and Fellowship members, I believe the time has come to revitalize IoFC Canada’s spirit by capturing the imagination of a new generation of young Canadians of all origins, those keenest to put Canada and the world back on the right track. This vision will require re-establishing a strong unity of purpose and re-injecting a more youthful energy into our approaches. This likely means many more challenging leaps of faith ahead, but we will confidently make them because I too believe the Creator has a plan for you and me. Let’s courageously take this next leap together!

Benoît Charlebois, Managing Director
Building trust across the world’s divides

Initiatives of Change is a global network open to people of all nationalities, cultures, religions and beliefs who work toward change locally and globally, starting with change in their own lives. 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 (ECOSOC).

For more information visit www.ca.iofc.org
or use the contact information in the column to the right.

Finances

Initiatives of Change Association (Canada), incorporated since 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 and countless hours of volunteer help.

Summary as at December 31, 2010

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<th>2010</th>
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<td>Revenue from all sources (including legacies)</td>
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<td>Expenditures</td>
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Audited financial statements are available on request

Publications, Video and DVD Resources

MRA Books, for the production and distribution of literature, is managed by Rosalind Weeks in Ottawa, Ontario. Business Number: 11904 5912 RR0002

MRA Productions North America, for the production and distribution of NTSC Video and DVDs, is managed by Christopher Hartnell in Surrey, BC. Business Number: 11904 5912 RR0003

Books and DVDs

Trustbuilding - an honest conversation on race, reconciliation and responsibility by Rob Corcoran - tells the story of the role played by Hope in the Cities to redress the painful legacy of the slave trade.

The Imam & the Pastor and AN AFRICAN ANSWER

Award winning documentaries from FLTFilms - From vengeance and killing to healing and forgiveness... moving stories of grass-roots peace building in Nigeria and Kenya that give hope to humanity.

To view and order all current resources visit: www.ca.iofc.org/resources/

aussi disponible en français