Dear Readers,

“The old order changeth, yielding place to new.” These words from the poet Alfred Tennyson embody a dying King’s courageous acceptance of change as inevitable and a bulwark against stagnation.

This edition of Canadian Initiatives documents some important changes for IofC Canada. Janyce Konkin moves on from active service as IofC’s Regional Coordinator of Programs in Alberta. Janyce’s dedication, her life-changing trustbuilding workshops, and her mentoring of young people will be greatly missed.

Elaine Gordon, having worked diligently as IofC Canada’s volunteer archivist for seven years, is now winding up that chapter of her life and is passing on the torch to whoever is willing to undertake the ongoing work of documenting IofC’s history. Elaine’s helpful presence at the Ottawa office will be sorely missed as well. With these changes come challenges to our reserves of adaptability and creativity.

However, IofC’s message to the world and its role as a catalyst for positive change will always endure. These pages also tell stories of another kind of change. Rachneet Randhawa’s story is a wonderful example of change from within inspired by IofC.

So, let’s move forward with honesty, purity, unselfishness and love as our guiding light. Have a great summer!

Susan Korah, Ottawa

Letter from Outgoing Board co-chairs

The board is a group from among our network in Canada whose task is to provide direction and oversight for our work. As we gathered on retreat in Neuville, Quebec last November, we spent time getting to know each other better and sharing our desires for the work.

One of the decisions at the retreat was to focus our work in Canada on trustbuilding. This also aligns with the shift of IofC International to focus its work under the umbrella of trustbuilding.

We are excited to be one of three countries – along with Sweden and Kenya – to be participating in a pilot of a new Trustbuilding programme that promises to attract new people and new funding to Initiatives of Change.

This past year has been one of change. After considerable analysis and consultation, we have made the difficult decision to end the contract with Janyce Konkin effective June 30, 2018 and close the Calgary office. We are grateful for the years that Janyce has devoted to IofC work and wish her well in the future.

Staffing our Ottawa office has stabilized, with Mary Ella Keblusek ably taking on that work. Volunteers continue to play a large role, both supporting the work of our staff as well as serving on various committees, including communications where Susan Korah works on newsletters. We are grateful for Leonard Ishimwe, Joy Newman and Alessandro Anifowose, who volunteer as webmasters. In Québec, Lucie Pagé and Marie-Émilie Lacroix provide regular support to Quebec provincial coordinator, Joseph Vumiliya. Elaine Gordon has worked on IofC Canada archives, with transcription assistance from Andrew Drake, providing a legacy record which is much appreciated.

Beyond that, many people take initiative as they follow the prompting of their own inner voice. As individuals we try to live out the values we espouse. In doing so, we have a collective impact.

The needs around us are great, with many living in fear and without hope. But we know that the root causes that build mistrust can be addressed. Coming alongside people can help rebuild trust. Fulfilling our mission requires action. All of us can make the commitment needed for change to take place.

We have appreciated the opportunity to serve as co-chairs of IofC Canada, and look forward with you to a year filled with the promise of a better future.

Lorne Braun, Richmond BC and Jean-Noël André, Neuville QC
Co-chairs of IofC Canada Board (2017 / 2018)

Introducing new Board members for 2018/2019

Two new board members were elected at the May 12, 2018 Annual General Meeting.

Jacqueline Chenje

Montreal-based Jacque Chenje has more than 20 years of experience in international development, environment, peace and security, most of it working with the United Nations.

Much of her career focus has been in environment and climate change, addressing the associated vulnerabilities
and opportunities for people, particularly the marginalized. She has contributed to many multilateral processes, the most meaningful for her being the negotiations leading to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Paris Agreement in Climate Change.

Jacquie’s educational background is in Political Science as well as Environmental Security and Peace Studies. She hopes to use her knowledge and experience to contribute to IofC’s community transformation efforts.

Hüstin Laku, Sr.

Ottawa-based Hüstin Laku is a native South Sudanese, educated in South Sudan, Sudan, Egypt, Germany and Switzerland. He helped create the Sudan Health Care and Education Project to improve public health and the education system in South Sudan.

Internationally, Hüstin was a member of the United Nations mission in Iraq, a member of the Canadian Mission in Ukraine, a former advisor to the Canadian Secretary of State for Africa, Latin America and Asia Pacific, and was a staff member with the former Canadian International Development Agency of Canada.

He is a founding member of the African Diaspora Association of Canada and a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and the Martin Luther King Dream Keepers Award.

Multilingual Hüstin is currently working on several projects. These include building partnerships between Carleton, Ottawa and St. Paul Universities in Ottawa, and the Juba and Catholic Universities in Juba; building a school for girls in South Sudan; and Seed for Democracy for South Sudan to train South Sudanese to adopt democratic practices.

New Board Officers Elected for 2018/2019 Year

At the May 21 meeting of the IofC Canada Board of Directors, the following new board officers were elected for the upcoming year.

Karen Bambonye (Co-Chair / Secretary)

As a senior project officer with the Canadian federal government in Ottawa, Karen brings a strong background in consulting and collaborating with diverse peoples, groups and teams.

She previously served IofC Canada in the capacity of Treasurer, diligently stewarding the organization during its financial transitions.

For the past fifteen years, she has been involved with IofC in various capacities, including as a member of the Quebec and Ottawa teams.

We welcome her skills, experience and expertise as Co-Chair and Secretary to the Board.

Firyal Mohamed (Co-Chair)

Born in Trinidad & Tobago and raised as a Calgarian, Firyal currently resides on the beautiful islands of Haida Gwaii, BC where she spends her days coaching and mentoring budding entrepreneurs to support a strong local island economy.

Firyal was a 2011 Caux Scholar, and supported many workshops and consultations in Calgary.

She first joined the IofC Canada Board in 2015, and her board activities have included AGM planning, annual board nominations, and the new trustbuilding pilot programme.

Firyal was re-elected for another 3-year term on the Board of Directors at the 2018 AGM. Last year she served as Secretary for the Board, and will serve as Co-Chair for 2018/2019. Firyal’s experience with communications, facilitation and leadership development will be greatly appreciated.

Lorne Braun (Treasurer)

Lorne lives in Richmond BC, and has extensive experience as a consultant to Canadian NGOs doing humanitarian work around the world.

Lorne’s upbringing in a Mennonite community in Canada gave him both grounding in faith and a reference point for refugee issues.

Lorne has been working with IofC since 1992, and he served as the Co-Chair of the IofC Canada Board from 2015 to 2018. He also served as the Treasurer of IofC International from 2008 to 2014.

Lorne was re-elected for another 3-year term on the IofC Canada Board of Directors at the 2018 AGM. We are pleased Lorne will bring his strategic planning, board development, leadership and financial management skills to the role of Treasurer for 2018/2019.
Janyce Konkin’s IofC work changed many lives for the better

The Board of Initiatives of Change Canada is pleased to recognize and celebrate the contributions of Janyce Konkin as she finishes her employment as Alberta Regional Projects Coordinator with IofC at the end of June.

Janyce’s contributions over the past thirteen years date back to her first involvement with IofC in 2005 at the University of Calgary campus. Immediately moved by the connection she felt with her own core values, Janyce has shared that discovering IofC was like discovering a home— somewhere she belonged. Since then, Janyce’s impact, passion and friendship have extended into the hearts of many communities and individuals across Alberta.

Perhaps, her most lasting impact is seen in the youth she has mentored, and who continue to be involved with IofC, in Canada and elsewhere, including: Melanie Klein (Ontario), Ashley Muller (Switzerland), Alana Labelle-Wahpooseywan (Morley Stoney-Nakoda First Nations), Shaista Hasham Sajan (Calgary), Agnes Mystik (Calgary), Deepa Suri (Berlin), Fiyal Mohamed (Haida Gwaii) and Rachneet Randhawa (Calgary).

We thank you, Janyce, for your service and steadfast commitment to Initiatives of Change Canada and wish you every success for the next chapter of your life.

Fiyal Mohamed, Haida Gwaii (co-chair)

Janyce Konkin reflects on time with IofC

I joined IofC in 2005 while at University. I joined because there was something that seemed to fit very intrinsically with my own core values of how I believed we should be treating each other as human beings. It was a refreshing feeling to find people with whom I could relate on this important level, where I could feel so at home – like I finally belonged somewhere in the world.

Life-changing learning

There were growing pains, of course, as I learned to accommodate people of fervent religious persuasions into my worldview. As a person who had grown up seeing only the duplicitousness of purportedly religious people, I had developed my own spiritual beliefs outside of organized religion.

But I am grateful now that I had Keith and Joy Newman as local field workers. Through Keith, I was able to observe the impact of the lived-belief. Over the years he opened my eyes and heart to the fact that religions can, and still do, contribute to helping many people live better lives. This learning changed my life, and I believe, helped me to be a better, more open and accepting human being. I am now able to work comfortably with people of any religion because I also feel accepted for my own beliefs.

Caux Experience

The five times I traveled to Caux were instrumental in solidifying my commitment to the organization. Most importantly, IofC offered me the opportunity to develop my skills in designing and facilitating workshops to share our message with others: students at the University of Calgary; the South Sudanese community members; the Cambodian community; the North Sudanese community; the First Nations Community etc. Each trustbuilding workshop, each presentation, and each public display provided an occasion to meet new people, with new stories, new friendships, new potentials. The greatest gift I have received from IofC is the friendships I have developed within our multicultural world.

Unique workshops

I will always believe that our workshops: Trustbuilding, Healing and Reconciliation, Compass Program, and Creators of Peace Women’s Peace Circles, and dialogues and films are some of the best in the peace building community anywhere in the world because they get to the heart of people. The ability to network with so many other organizations to learn and share our IofC work has always been inspiring to me. I feel very blessed to have spent the past nine years working for the organization.

IofC Values forever

Thank you for these opportunities and for my time working with IofC. Now, a new journey begins, as I am now fully engaged in launching a new charitable organization, Peace Africa Alliance Consulting, Educating and Training Centre (PAACET) to address human rights, democracy and good governance, conflict prevention and social justice education and training with an African colleague in Sierra Leone. As we all know, when one door closes another one opens, and my IofC values will continue to guide my life and all that I do.

Janyce Konkin, Calgary
Thoughts on being accepted for Caux Scholars Program 2018

Editor’s Note: Each year, the Caux Committee of IofC Canada receives a number of applications to participate in this unique leadership program in Caux, Switzerland. Rachneet Randhawa, whose application was successful this year, tells the story of her own path to Caux, and gives some tips for future applicants.

I came across Initiatives of Change through the Serving Communities Internship Program. January Konkin, IofC’s Regional Coordinator in Alberta, had posted a position to assist at the Rajmohan Gandhi event she was organizing in Calgary in late October 2014.

What began initially for me as an internship later turned into a part time office assistant position.

IofC and change from within

Little did I realize that IofC contributed more to me that I did to it. As a youth that had left a security guard position at the YWCA, and becoming increasingly isolated due to late night shifts and taking university courses online, I think I felt a deep disconnect within myself and was living in between the lines.

I had forgotten how to live compassionately and with a growth mindset. But most of all what I required most was healing and a helping hand.

At the start, I actually hadn't thought of what all these tools at work meant, such as trust building, interfaith dialogues, women's peace circles, etc.

But what intrigued me the most is how much IofC conditioned my thought patterns and way of life. I hadn't realized that all those random conversations I had with January Konkin or reading educational pamphlets and papers lying around the office were actually having a profound impact on my rigid mindset.

I was beginning to be unfolded and moulded in new ways. I realize now that real, everlasting change and finding yourself, your true identity, happens inwards, not outwards.

Applying for Caux Scholarship

Over the years of my association with IofC, January has spoken often to me of Caux Scholars, and this year we finally decided I was ready, so I was excited to apply. It was attending IofC’s Youth Compass Program that led me to go back to University and finish a program. This enabled me to apply for Caux Scholars.

Application Process: Some tips for future Caux scholars

The application process, although it seems daunting, can be made less so if broken up into pieces! (Which totally would've put my mind at ease!) I would say don't rush things. But make sure you meet the application deadline!

Foster the relationships you need and find the people that believe in you, whether that's someone from IofC, a mentor or even a professor. They can not only guide you on a path of self-development but also on writing some recommendations for you which will definitely come in handy.

I would also say create your purpose and find some causes you believe in through interning or volunteering. Your time will come when you are ready. Without these you are aimless.

For instance, I narrowed down some interesting root causes such as renewable energy and international development for my career goals of combining social enterprise with journalism.

Accepted!

I was surprised and thrilled when I received my letter of acceptance. I'd heard other people's inspiring stories of Caux, but now I am about to realize my own goal! It is an extraordinary feeling to be part of Caux 2018!

Rachneet Randhawa, Calgary
Quebec team links Buchman’s ideas of unity to poetry reading evening

At the launch of the book Poèmes en maquis by Royal Charbonneau, the IofC team of the Quebec region organized an open-to-the-public evening on April 17, linking it to the commemoration of the Declaration of Human Rights on the 10th of December of each year.

Moreover, in order to create an explicit link to IofC sources, we used the brochure What Frank Buchman Said, published in 1979 by Éditions de Caux. In the chapter entitled: “How to create Unity?” Frank Buchman associates unity to the grace of rebirth. He states, “The grace of rebirth provides change in its full scope, i.e., economic, social, national and international change rooted in individual change.”

In facilitating an encounter of inwardness and expression we sought experiencing unity from explicitly identified differences. From the Quebec region, eight persons generously offered to select and read a poem from the book during the gathering. Each one represented the following specific identities: Africa, elder, First Nation, Bosnia, Colombia, Islam, youth, Quebec.

During the gathering, each reading opened up a moment of inwardness and sharing. In the IofC fashion, a time of silence permitted each one to reread the poem and listen to how their soul was touched. Afterwards followed a time to express what the poem evoked and had birthed in them.

In a brief review of the evening, we heard this testimony: “In the presentation of the gathering, we were invited to use Poèmes en maquis to create a WE, to build unity. It’s difficult to create a WE from the I that we are. Tonight, I felt the unity, I felt the WE. It is possible.” The union between the question How to create Unity? by Frank Buchman and the book of poems Poèmes en maquis by Royal Charbonneau was a success.

Paule Charbonneau, Donnacona QC

IofC Canada involved in important Toronto conference on world religions

IofC Canada Board member Mercy Okalowe and staff member Mary Ella Keblusek will represent IofC Canada at the 2018 Parliament of the World’s Religions conference, to be held from Nov 1 to 7 in Toronto.

The mission of the Parliament is to ‘cultivate harmony among the world’s religious and spiritual communities, and foster their engagement with the world and its guiding institutions in order to achieve a just, peaceful and sustainable world.’ Typically held every 3-5 years in locations across the globe, attendance at this year’s Toronto conference is expected to exceed 10,000 persons of faith and conscience from 80 nations and more than 200 unique spiritual backgrounds.

IofC Canada will be partnering with the Charter for Compassion International, one of the key sponsors of the conference, which has chapters in many cities across Canada. We look forward to making contacts from across the country to increase awareness and visibility of IofC Canada, and joining attendees from IofC teams in other countries.

This should be an extraordinary experience, and we are fortunate the conference is in Canada this year. If you are interested in participating in our planning or attending the conference, please contact us at admin.CA@iofc.org.

Mary Ella Keblusek, Ottawa

IofC Quebec joins partners in taking an honest look at poverty

What logical link could be made between these three concepts— poverty, prejudice and pleasure? It is difficult to make the link without honest reflection and putting aside our own prejudices. Therefore, on May 8, Passerelle Interculturelle, an organization created by IofC, and Development and Peace (another NGO), hosted an evening open to the public to question ourselves on this topic. After taking time to look at every banner illustrating each of the prejudices held against the less fortunate of the city, we opened up the discussion.

Everyone was invited to share their thoughts on the most controversial and perplexing banners depicting attitudes towards poverty. To question ourselves, analyze and understand enables us not to judge too quickly. I don’t need to tell you that prejudices have their source in ignorance, fear of difference, of the one who makes us uncomfortable. That person bothers me because he or she calls into question my personal values and my comfort zone. It’s not easy to look inward, face and analyze this discomfort; it is easier to reject and forget.

What I retain from this rich event is that I can look at poverty with the eyes of my heart. I can be thankful for having had a journey with fewer burdens, and take another step to know and acknowledge a less fortunate person. It is a stranger who is my brother, my sister, a potential friend. It was our final suggestion.

Marie-Émilie Lacroix, Saint-Anselme QC
Elaine Gordon winds up role as volunteer archivist

Editor’s Note: Seven years after Elaine Gordon arrived in Canada from Ireland, she has completed her labour of love as IofC Canada’s volunteer archivist. Here she describes the current state of the archives.

The IofC Canada archive comprises chronologically and thematically arranged archival and reference material housed in the Ottawa office.


It provides a detailed account for numbered and described documents stored in 22 boxes.

It has been uploaded in PDF format to the office server along with other guides to the contents of a further 15 boxes.

In addition, the IofC archive consists of cabinets with chronologically organised hanging files for years 1978 to the present, and shelves containing an extensive library.

Elaine Gordon, Ottawa

Spiritual gathering marks third anniversary of Quebec mosque shooting

Quebec City, January 28, 2018—This date marked the third anniversary of the shooting at the Great Mosque in Quebec City.

A spiritual gathering was organized by Catholic, Anglican, Jewish and Muslim religious leaders, and members of the First Nations Innu community including Marie-Émilie Lacroix of IofC.

This gathering open to all, believers and non-believers, was led by Artistic Director, Cyrille-Gauvin Francoeur and hosted by myself and Eve-Marie Lortie. Members of IofC and Passerelle Interculturelle were present.

We witnessed four key moments:

- **Testimony of the families of the victims and the orphans:** We discovered the calm ordinary life of the martyrs, their attachment to the City of Quebec and their positive contribution to the society.
  
  Moreover, the testimony of Madga Belkacemi, widow of one of the victims, was both overwhelming and bold. With much resilience, she extends her hand to build bridges between communities.

- **Song from young musicians of the world:** Under the direction of Mr. Martin Racine, some youths composed a moving and inspirational song entitled: « Papa, tout bas ».

- **Prayers and religious songs:** Different religious and spiritual groups prayed with respect and fraternity.
  
  Prayers from the Innu community of First Nations, then by Mgr Louis Corriveau, followed by the Anglicans, the cantor of the Jewish community of Quebec City, Mr. Jacob Weil, and lastly by the Imam of the Mosque of the Capital, Mr. Mohamed Hafid.

- **Rallying song Nous Sommes Tous Ensemble (We are all together) performed by Nancy Lapointe and Daniel Moisan. During this song, every contributor went on stage, hand in hand.**
  
  We also had the honour of orphans of the shooting participating in the ceremony.

A total of 500 people were present at the Pavillon de la Jeunesse on the site of ExpoCité and lived this experience.

Khadija Said, Quebec City
IofC support brings Myanmar’s ethnic community reps to Asia Plateau’s 50th anniversary gathering

My wife Rosalind Weeks and I had the privilege of being among the 300 attending the 50th anniversary of the MRA/IofC centre, Asia Plateau in Panchgani, India in January. In view of recent events that drew the world’s attention to the terrible plight of Rohingya refugees fleeing from Rakhine State across the Myanmar-Bangladesh border, organizers offered to host a consultation on the situation in Myanmar on the sidelines of the main conference.

As a result, a delegation of 15, including representatives of the Shan, Karen, Mon, Kachin, Chin and Rakhine ethnic nationalities and of the Islamic Centre of Myanmar, gathered for five days. The majority Burman or Bama community was represented by Daw Than Than Nu, daughter of Burma’s first Prime Minister, who had previously visited Asia Plateau with her father shortly after the centre’s opening.

The group met daily in the inspiring setting of the ‘Ma Mi’ room named after Daw Nyein Tha from Burma, who met MRA in 1931 when principal of a school in Moulmein, and who died at Asia Plateau in 1968. Time was spent assessing the situation in each region of Myanmar, and strategizing on how to end the numerous internal conflicts and build a more effective democracy.

In thanking IofC, they commented on the helpful atmosphere at Asia Plateau and expressed the conviction that the centre would continue to play a positive role for Myanmar.

Many thanks to those whose donations helped make it possible for the group from Myanmar to meet in Panchgani at this critical time.

Richard Weeks, Ottawa

IofC inspires member to revitalize basketball courts in hometown of game’s inventor

I joined IofC because I like being among people trying to find ways to make positive change in the world, as IofC inspires us to do. Here is my personal initiative of change.

A few years ago I decided to start a new project – replacing missing or torn nets on public outdoor basketball hoops. I chose this project because the inventor of basketball, Dr. James Naismith, grew up in a small Ontario community, Almonte, near Ottawa. And I like the fact that basketball is one of the least expensive sports to play, and can be played by one person or by many.

I bought a folding ladder, some tools, and 300 basketball nets, and set to work, often with my wife Mary Ella Keblusek. I first covered a 40 km radius around Almonte, and ultimately covered the entire Ottawa area.

Two aspects of this experience were particularly interesting.

First, several times while returning to check on nets we previously installed, we found that someone had obviously made more improvements, like painting lines on the court, or picking up litter. Sometimes taking the first step can inspire others to join in.

Second, often neighbors would come visit while we were installing the nets. When they learned we were volunteers from another town, doing it to improve their own community, they were astonished. Some shared that they had complained for years to the city about the nets, yet the thought they could do it themselves had never occurred to them.

So now in addition to having many more usable basketball courts in our region, it feels good that we have inspired others to take their own initiatives of change.

Andrew Drake, Ottawa
New award-winning documentary on Frank Buchman now available in DVD

**The Man Who Built Peace** is a new award-winning documentary film which shows how Frank Buchman, IoF’s founder, inspired a worldwide movement of changemakers which is profoundly relevant today.

The film shares a message of hope and conviction from a man who believed that everyone, and therefore anyone, can change the world—and that change starts from within.

This film was directed by Initiatives of Change International Executive Director Imad Karam, who also directed other award-winning films for IoC: *The Imam and the Pastor, An African Answer* and *Beyond Forgiving.*

Individual DVDs cost $25 each (plus shipping). Bulk pricing is available for orders of five or more. DVDs can be ordered by contacting the Ottawa office (email admin.CA@iofc.org or telephone 613-230-7197).

Note that the DVD currently has English and Spanish subtitles. A version with French subtitles will be developed as part of the IoC Canada Trustbuilding pilot project.

---

**Calendar of Events**

**Montreal**
- **Aug 5:** Fraternal gathering between First Nations, Francophones, Anglophones and cultural community representatives.
- **Sept 21:** International Day of Peace celebration at the Mont Royal Metro Station.

**Neuville QC**
- **Sept 22-23:** Intercultural and interfaith gathering in partnership with Espace Art Nature.

**Ottawa**
- **September thru December:** monthly Movie Night gatherings with potluck and discussion of IoC themes.

**Toronto / Hamilton**
- **August 12-13:** Team meetings and screening of ‘The Man Who Built Peace: The Frank Buchman Story’.

For more information, please contact:
- joseph.vumiliya@iofc.org (for Quebec)
- maryella.keblusek@iofc.org (for Ontario).

---

**Initiatives of Change (IoC)**

In Canada, IoC is officially registered as a charitable organization under the name Initiatives of Change Association (Canada).

Donations are tax deductible. For more information, and to donate online, visit www.ca.iofc.org.

By postal mail, please send a cheque (payable to Initiatives of Change) to The Treasurer, Suite 101A-225 Metcalfe St., Ottawa ON K2P 1P9.

**Canadian Initiatives** is published by Initiatives of Change Canada.

To subscribe, please email admin.CA@iofc.org

To submit articles, items for the calendar of coming events, and photos, please email: newsletter.CA@iofc.org.

The deadline for submissions for the next edition of Canadian Initiatives is October 19, 2018.

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

---

Building trust across the world’s divides  www.ca.iofc.org