



# Canadian Initiatives

Fall 2015

## Editor's message



Dear Readers,

Tucked away in the mountains, above the city of Montreux, and overlooking the spectacular beauty of Lake Geneva, is Caux, a little village in Switzerland. The fresh mountain air and the tinkling cattle bells that pleasantly break the silence of early mornings there are evocative of scenes from *Heidi*, Swiss author Johanna Spyri's beloved tale of the little orphan girl who changes forever the life of her reclusive, embittered grandfather who lives alone in the mountains until her arrival. With her loving spirit, Heidi wins him over, melting his frosty heart until he makes friends with the villagers and becomes a well-liked member of the community.

The hundreds of young people who attend the Caux Scholars and Interns programs at lofC's conference centre, experience a change in themselves—not necessarily as dramatic as the one undergone by Heidi's grandfather—but nevertheless with profound, life-long effects.

Not for the faint of heart or for those seeking an easy holiday, these summer programs offer rigorous training to selected applicants in conflict transformation and principled leadership, preparing a new generation of peacemakers and trustbuilders.

lofC Canada is proud of the young people who travelled to Caux from Canada this year, and returned with new insights and a renewed resolve to effect positive change in the world. On their behalf, I would like to express deep appreciation to all those who supported their journey.

**Susan Korah, Ottawa**

## Board confirms AGM priorities, sets direction at Ottawa retreat

Ottawa, Oct.5, 2015--lof C Canada's Board of Directors met in Ottawa for two days with the goals of getting to know one another better, identifying key issues and strategizing on ways forward.

Our starting point was the material gathered at the 2015 AGM in Calgary. It both painted the picture of where lofC Canada is currently at and pointed the direction for a desired future as envisioned by the many people who contributed their prayers, dreams and hopes for what they see lofC Canada being and doing.

**Three priorities** that came clearly out of the Calgary AGM, and which the Board has confirmed, are:

- Follow-up to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Building bridges between groups
- Youth engagement and mobilization

The three aspects you will hear more about in the coming months are communications, finances and fundraising.

A **communications** strategy is being formulated out of which a communications plan for the coming years will be developed. We all have a responsibility to be timely, inclusive and clear in our communications with each other.

**Finance** continues to be an area of concern. We need to seriously address our future financial health. The options, as always, include reflections on both income and expenditure. The budgeting process has now begun for both 2016 and 2017.

**Fundraising** is an aspect of our work that needs attention. Fundraising success does not rely on only one approach or one small group of people. We all have the ability to share what we believe in with others. At the heart of fundraising is inviting people to join us in carrying out the work we value. We need to consider what efforts are needed nationally and what individual teams can do in securing funds for the projects they put forward. We honor the commitment and dedicated efforts of so many people in the past and present. What should we do now to secure the future?

We believe that the work we do together has value and needs to continue. We all have a role to play in helping build a healthy and relevant Initiatives of Change in Canada. Let us look forward together with confidence.

**Lorne Braun, Board Co-Chair, Vancouver**

## Canadian delegates challenged, inspired at Extended Global Assembly 2015

Caux, Switzerland, Summer 2015-- "We will be weaving together a picture of the real world needs, and the ways we are addressing them."

With these opening remarks from Initiatives of Change International President, Dr. Omnia Marzouk, the 2015 Extended Global Assembly began. It was a time of reconnecting, relationship building and sharing in each other's stories of building trust across the world's divides.



Peace bowl used at AGM to symbolize moving forward

A symbolic mural created by Camilla Nelson (member of the International Council) served as the stage backdrop. A tree growing solidly out of the core values of love, honesty, purity and selflessness welcomed birds from the five regions of the world. On the tree itself the pink blossoms represented Creators of Peace Circles, the apples represented Farmers' Dialogue and the leaves represented Foundations for Freedom. Finally a nest of baby birds served as the Caux interns, while a wise owl represented the listening ears of the elders.



Mural portraying IofC's core values

In the Americas, a strong desire was expressed to build partnerships between teams in South America and North America. The 2014 *Encuentro of the Americas* conference hosted in Colombia was recognized as the catalyst. With possibilities of further encounters floating around, members agreed to intentionally develop intercontinental relationships further.

By the end of the time together delegates left inspired, encouraged and ready to continue their grassroots initiatives.

"I was challenged and touched by the way that our movement brings people together from various background and situations, but with a common bond," said Lorne Braun, co-chair of Initiatives of Change Canada Board of Directors. "It was particularly moving to hear Iman Al Gafari speaking about her "home" being both in Canada and in Syria, and the support that people in Canada continue to provide for her as she experiences the daily horror of war."

"I valued getting a chance to see and meet the breadth of the Initiatives of Change network, and the depth that each member carries," said Tim Hall, a young representative with the Canadian delegation. "Future initiatives we take locally will benefit greatly from global relationships nurtured here in Caux."

**Tim Hall, Surrey, BC**

## Scholars, interns empowered by Caux experience

**Editor's note:** A number of young people from Canada participated this year in the Caux Scholars and Interns Programs, intensive multi-disciplinary training in conflict transformation and principled leadership held at IofC's conference centre in Caux, Switzerland. Space limitations did not permit the publication of their full reports, but here are brief excerpts. For their full reports, please visit our website.

<http://ca.iofc.org/news>

For information on the application process for 2016, please visit <http://us.iofc.org/caux-scholars-program-iofc/>

### Reconciliation needs dialogue

I not only accomplished my goals for the internship, but I learned so much more than I expected. My main goals at the beginning of the program were to connect with people from around the world and learn from different cultures. But what I discovered was that outside my door there is a community who is as committed and interested in social change as I hope I am, and that I have so much more to learn from them.

Each and every one of us understood that social change starts with oneself, and that, eventually, you can make big changes. The workshops taught me that reconciliation requires dialogue, and while it may not always result in a "happy ending" it still has a powerful effect.

**Corbin Girard, Vancouver**

### Enhanced skills to help South Sudan's peacebuilding

I have learned new concepts, which I look forward to implementing in South Sudan. An element of the course dealt with trauma healing. Trauma is real and requires treatment, and it can be treated. My hope is that the South Sudan Reconciliation process will advocate for trauma treatment. In the post 2013 conflict it should be put on its mandate.

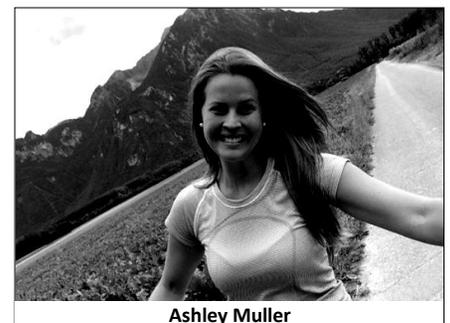
My hope is to work very closely or in partnership with IofC in the forthcoming South Sudan program design, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, and reporting. Further, I would be happy to offer IofC non-partisan advice on South Sudan's politics, and other issues.

**Justin Laku, Ottawa**

### Next step: IofC's Year of Living Differently program

The interns program was full of new learnings for me. During my time in Caux, I learned that trusting and believing in the unknown is risky but rewarding. This is because embarking on a journey where one has a foundation for life, built upon passions, values, goals, and purpose, can only be positive and can only lead to the next right thing.

The next step for me includes joining an IofC program called Year of Living Differently (YOLD). It is a year-long framework where I will be focusing on personal growth and



**Ashley Muller**

development while in active partnership with different IofC projects in the areas of ethical leadership, trust-building, and sustainable living. My first step will be moving to Oxford, UK to take up a role with the IofC Oxford team doing work for the Just Governance conference team and Creators of Peace circle, while getting involved with other local initiatives.

**Ashley Muller, Calgary.**

### **Building trust between Tibetan and Chinese Canadians**

With the diversity of scholars coming from all over the world, this unique program offered us a safe space to engage with the Caux spirit and develop ways to further the effectiveness of peace-building and conflict transformation in our communities.

I was particularly drawn to trust-building exercises, leadership activities and group problem solving, where scholars were invited to find a common ground to lay the foundation for a month-long peaceful "co-existence" on the mountain.

Participating in the Caux Scholars Program gave me a better perspective about my desire to become a positive change-maker in my community. I hope to conduct an informal forum between the second-generation Tibetan and Chinese students in Canada. This would allow me to promote peace and understanding by removing barriers due to a lack of social interaction and enhance communication between the two groups.

**Tsering Yangzom, Toronto**

### **IofC Calgary Compass program gives participant clear direction for future**

Calgary, Summer 2015--"You never know where life takes you," Janyce Konkin, Regional Coordinator of IofC programs in Alberta, repeatedly tells me.

Three months ago, when my life collapsed and plunged to the bottom, I met Janyce. After an hour's talk, she suggested that I might want to take the Compass Program. We agreed that I would do an internship and help to organize it. That was the best decision I made in my life.

As an intern, I luckily have been fully engaged in this program including talking to different people and sharing experiences. Janyce accepted my idea of adding a panel discussion at the end of the program, so I sought out two "successful" people with clear life goals to share their experiences. Listening to their stories inspired us profoundly.

Three Saturdays went quickly with Janyce's penetrating classes. Every Saturday I looked forward to meeting my "classmates" and curiously wondered: "What thought-provoking discussions will Janyce have for us today?" By sharing, listening, self-reflecting, and quiet time thinking, I am gradually growing.

Having entered the internship with doubt in myself, with confusion about life, with unclear goals towards my future, I finished the program with a confident smile and firm tone to explain my "future vision" poster. Now the "future me" poster has been taped on my fridge and will remind me every day what I want to attract to my life.

I can't show enough appreciation to Janyce, to IofC and to my "classmates".

I still don't know where life is taking me, but for sure I know what my passion is, how and where to start to change from within myself, to achieve a better world.

**Yi Tang, Calgary**



**Yi Tang**

### **IofC Quebec and partner organizations plan follow-up to *Beyond Forgiving* launch**



**Khadija Said, Laurent Gagnon, Marie Emilie Lacroix, Lucie Page, Joseph Vumiliya**

The launch of the film *Beyond Forgiving* in Quebec City on June 11 is still bearing fruit thanks to the promotion, the event itself, and follow-up phases built into the activity. The motivation of IofC's five partner organizations has been paramount to this success as they aimed to meet some needs in their region. Of the 56 participants who attended the screening that evening, the majority expressed a desire to engage in other activities in the same spirit.

On August 13, a follow-up committee made up of four representatives from those partner organizations and three from IofC was set up, and has been meeting every month. Each activity is planned to ensure the active participation of the 'four solitudes': Aboriginals, French, English and more recent immigrants. A first public meeting open to previous participants and to anyone interested will take place on November 11.

In the same vein, preparations for a film launch in Montreal in March 2016 are under way with partners and others who share the same convictions.

**Laurent Gagnon and Joseph Vumiliya, Montreal**

## Quebec participants find Caux a powerful experience



Marie Emilie Lacroix and Daphrose Barampama

A first experience in Caux is usually powerful.

It was the case for Marie Émilie Lacroix, a teacher from Quebec City. In the last year, she has been a devoted aboriginal representative for IofC's 'Four Solitudes' initiatives, including the launch of the film *Beyond Forgiving* in Quebec City on June 11.

"I had read a lot about IofC and I had acted on that," said Marie Émilie. "But there I was at Caux in July with my need for healing, my expectations in terms of training, interacting with very sincere and honest people. The Spirit had directed me to that centre and the Creators of Peace Circle who invited me to spend three extra days of training. Caux challenged us to change but mostly offered us a gift of liberation. I would go back. In the meantime, I will reinvest what I have learned in bridging gaps and mobilizing people."

Joseph Vumiliya from Montreal who has been working for a year as IofC's Project Manager in Quebec, also saw his dream come true last summer when he went to Caux.

"I had meaningful encounters," he said. "I heard very touching testimonies of people who went through dire situations in their countries. Also, I had the opportunity to hear from Burundians about their experience with the Circles of Peace in their home country and to talk about the IofC approach in Quebec with the film *Beyond Forgiving*. This journey has greatly inspired me and is crucial to my life and commitment to IofC Canada. I left Caux with deep gratitude and the desire to go back."

Laurent Gagnon, Montreal

### Calgary South Sudanese present community service awards at gala dinner

Calgary, August 16, 2015--The South Sudanese community here honoured Janyce Konkin, IofC's Regional Coordinator of Programs in Alberta and several other people at their second annual gala dinner and Awards ceremony on August 15. The awards and certificates, presented by South Sudanese Community Association President Khor Reat Top, recognized people who have made a difference and have helped bring the community together. Close to 100 attendees enjoyed ethnic food and a silent auction to raise funds for future events.



Janyce Konkin and Leila Reak Yat with their awards

### Calendar of Events

#### Quebec City

Public Meeting on the theme of the four solitudes *building together* as a follow-up to the launch of the film *Beyond Forgiving*. Nov.11 at 7:00 pm at 1073 Blvd. René Lévesque Ouest. **Contact Lucie Pagé 418-623-2217**

#### Calgary

A full program of events is being planned. Details of time and place will be posted on our website <http://ca.iofc.org/news> as they become available. Also, you can contact **Janyce Konkin 403-270-0975** if you would like to volunteer or participate in IofC Calgary activities.

**Please submit a list of your events from January to March 2016** to [susan.korah@sympatico.ca](mailto:susan.korah@sympatico.ca) for the January newsletter.

### Initiatives of Change

In Canada, IofC 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](http://www.ca.iofc.org)

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

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To submit articles, event listings and pictures, e-mail [susan.korah@sympatico.ca](mailto:susan.korah@sympatico.ca). **The deadline for the next edition is December 15, 2015.**

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