Inspiring, equipping and connecting people to play their part in building a better society, starting with themselves.
The Initiatives of Change Canada (IofC Canada) Board of Directors met in Ottawa in early October and confirmed the three priorities that came out clearly from the June 2015 IofC Canada AGM held in Calgary:

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

The following pages describe some of the activities, successes and challenges as various teams across Canada focus their efforts to embody and promote lasting change.

Three aspects continue to take much of our time on the Board.

A communications strategy is being formulated and a communications plan for the year is being developed.

Finance continues to require reflections on both income and expenditure.

Fundraising allows the work of IofC Canada to continue. Whether through formal requests, one-on-one approaches, sales of our films and videos, or fundraising events, 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 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 (Co-Chair)
for the Initiatives of Change Canada Board

Jean-Noël André - Neuville, QC
Richard Batsinduka - Gatineau, QC
Lorne Braun - Richmond, BC
Augustino Lucano - Calgary, AB
Samrawit Mersha - Ottawa, ON
Firyal Mohamed - Calgary, AB
Sara Vassigh - Montréal, QC

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To Donate

Initiatives of Change Canada depends on the generosity of individuals and institutions to continue its vital work. Your donation can make a difference by helping IofC’s efforts to build peace and trust.

To donate online, please visit www.ca.iofc.org/finance

To donate by mail, please make cheques payable to “Initiatives of Change Association (Canada)”
101A-225 Metcalfe St.
Ottawa, ON
Canada K2P 1P9
Equipping Young Changemakers

Engaging and mobilizing young Canadians to create change starting with themselves continues to be a priority for IofC Canada. And local youth are catching on. The IofC Club at the University of Ottawa organized movie & discussion nights, even engaging in a workshop on Quiet Time. Back in Western Canada a number of young leaders and university students have stepped forward within IofC Canada to participate in local programs; some even helping to organize the 2015 Annual General Meeting.

Our Calgary office also engaged student and IofC Canada board member Augustino Lucano in a nine-month Social Work Practicum. Additional activities include participation in Calgary’s Harmony Café, a March Youth Workshop on “Peacing It Together: Youth Speak Up,” a very successful Compass Program in October, and finally the launch of a young South Sudanese woman’s first book of poetry in December 2015!

Follow-up to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

2015 marked the official end of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) mandate to acknowledge, witness and spread awareness of Canada’s Indian Residential School history. Members of IofC Canada joined the Reconciliation Walk and other activities at the events. Yet all acknowledge that the path of reconciliation must continue.

Within Quebec, reconciliation is gaining momentum, particularly through film screenings engaging participants in discussions about what comes after apology and forgiveness. Internationally, Marie Émilie Lacroix of the Innu Nation was one of a number of Canadians to be profoundly impacted by her experience attending a conference in IofC’s international centre at Caux, Switzerland.

Building Bridges

IofC Canada has also been active in building bridges of trust across divides. The team in Calgary continues the vital trustbuilding work among recent immigrants from diverse, and often opposing, ethnic groups of South Sudan.

Meanwhile, in Montreal the IofC team continues to develop partnerships and organize local peacebuilding activities. Celebrating International Peace Day in September, for example, the team engaged in ‘A citizen reflection on peace and solidarity’ outside the busy Mont-Royal subway station.

Initiatives of Change in Canada

2015 Highlights

Follow-up to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

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Lee Crowchild shares and Laurent Gagnon listens at the IofC Canada Annual General Meeting where discussions set IofC Canada’s three priorities.

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Janyce Konkin, IofC Canada Regional Coordinator, was awarded the 2015 Community Service Award by the South Sudanese Community Association for her work in trustbuilding between various ethnic groups.
Follow-up to Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Voix du Silence featured in closing events
Ottawa, ON

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) held several closing events in Ottawa between May 31 and June 3 to mark the release of its final report on Indian residential schools. Included among these events was Voix du Silence – a moving retelling of the residential school story through the words of survivors, evoking pain but also the hope of healing and reconciliation.

Produced by Jean-Noël André (Vice-President of IofC Canada and President of Espace Art Nature), this stage performance was a central part of the Citizen Project. A fruitful partnership between Initiatives of Change Canada and Espace Art Nature, this project and the Circles of Trust that have grown from it have raised awareness and brought Canadians of all backgrounds into the conversation.

The question for us all now is: How do we continue to walk together in an ever more meaningful way, recognizing that this ending is only a beginning?

Beyond Forgiving film launch in Quebec encourages four solitudes to work together
Quebec City, QC

After several months of groundwork with five partner organizations, IofC Canada hosted a film screening in Quebec City showcasing Beyond Forgiving, a story of reconciliation in post-apartheid South Africa. An audience of 56 diversified participants gathered in the spirit of the evening’s theme: “To come out of our solitudes – Dare to build together.”

After the screening, participants representing each of Canada’s four ‘solitudes’ (aboriginals, French, English and immigrants) shared their testimonies, linking the film to the context of Quebec. Speaking from their hearts, each witness deeply moved the audience, giving hope as well as ideas on how to face their needs together.

Participants chosen to speak were: Marie-Émilie Lacroix, a First Nations Innu teacher and author. Denis Paquin, author and psychologist, Cynthia Patterson, deacon, wife of the Anglican bishop of Quebec City, and Olga Garcia from Mexico, teacher working with diverse immigrant communities.

After a long time of silence participants were invited to share their own deep convictions on the relevance of the film and its use in the region.

“You succeeded in gathering people of different backgrounds. Bravo! This remains the main challenge for the future.”

Audience member at the launch of Beyond Forgiving

NEXT STEPS...

As a fruit of this activity Initiatives of Change partnered with Development and Peace and others to create a committee: “Passerelle Interculturelle”. Since August 2015 they’ve met monthly to prepare a series of gatherings.

The first gathering was held on November 11. The forty-five participants highly appreciated the diversified program including an Aboriginal ceremony, diverse cultural legends, tasting traditional Innu bannock bread, and presentations on human rights and Quebec International Solidarity Days. The program also featured a time of silence, followed by a Circle of sharing.

Bridge building in Quebec continues with the launching of Beyond Forgiving in Montreal in April 2016 and the follow-up activities. To get involved please contact us at ic.montreal@ca.iofc.org
Multicultural Women reunite to view Beyond Forgiving film

Ottawa, ON

It was a joyful reunion as several women from IofC’s Multicultural Women’s Friendship Circle of Fall 2014 gathered at the new office for a multicultural potluck supper and a screening of the film Beyond Forgiving. “I can’t wait to see everyone again,” said Samrawit Mersha, a newcomer from Ethiopia and newly elected Director on IofC Canada’s Board, as she arrived at the door with a broad smile on her face and dishes of Ethiopian food in her hands.

The highlights of the evening were the screening of the film and the thoughtful conversation that ensued. “It’s an amazing story of forgiveness and reconciliation,” remarked one of the women. Another added: “When one thinks of South Africa, one usually imagines that Blacks were the victims (of apartheid) but this film showed that both Blacks and Whites were victims of the system.”

The Multicultural Women’s Friendship Circle is an IofC Canada program that seeks to build trust and friendship between newcomers and established Canadian women. It consists of a series of meetings where the women share honest stories of personal change, and with the help of guest speakers, discuss and exchange ideas for civic and community engagement.

Earth Care - A Growing Conversation

Vancouver, BC

In early May, Initiatives of Change – Farmers’ Dialogue supported two events that built meaningful bridges around a topic where ‘science’ and ‘faith’ are often pitted against each other. These events focused on the environment.

Farmers’ Dialogue is a grassroots network of farmers committed to feeding the world’s population and protecting the environment through sustainable farming. Bill Bocock, Farmers’ Dialogue member and farmer from Alberta, attended the conference. He shares his thoughts here:

As a farmer and member of Farmers’ Dialogue it was a privilege to attend the conference – Holy Ground: Answering God’s Call to Creation Care.

Benefiting from Chris Hartnell’s initiatives and networking, I met dynamic people and outstanding leaders, one being Terry LeBlanc who spoke on Creation’s Care and Us: An Indigenous Perspective. One of Terry’s perspectives is “We do not care for Creation, Creation cares for us.”

Speaking on climate change one speaker said, “In secular society there are people who know the problem, but do not have the solution. Faith communities have the solution, but do not address the problem.”

Bill Bocock (member, Farmers’ Dialogue)

Actions for Peace in Quebec

Montreal, QC

For over ten years, Initiatives of Change – Montreal has participated actively in public events with partners that promote peace. The team has also played a major role in organizing peacebuilding activities, especially on International Peace Day (Sept 21).

In 2015 one activity took place outside the Mont-Royal subway, a strategic space where thousands of people circulate. The chosen theme for the day was “A citizen reflection on peace and solidarity.” This was also an opportunity for peace organizations to develop relevant networks between them.
Equipping Young Changemakers
Empowering young Canadians to change the world for the better - starting with themselves

Engagement Canada-wide
Youth in Canada were very active across the country. At the University of Ottawa young people participated in many movie & discussion nights, even adopting Quiet Time as a practice to help guide them to rights-based living. In Alberta students and youth were heavily involved in organizing and activating numerous programs. Following is a small sample of what youth are finding out about IoFC and its role in their lives.

Compass Program gives participant clear direction for future
Calgary, AB

by Yi Tang, Compass Program Intern (August - October 2015)

“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 was fully engaged in this program, 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 gradually grew.

I 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. The “future me” poster has been taped on my fridge to remind me what I want to attract to my life.

I can’t show more appreciation to IoFC, to Janyce and to my “classmates.” I still don’t know where life is taking me. But I know what my passion is. I know how and where to start to change from within myself to achieve a better world.

University of Ottawa IoFC Club launches program of activities
Ottawa, ON

The University of Ottawa’s IoFC Club launched a program of activities to introduce students to some core values and practices of IoFC.

Inspired by the idea that “change begins in silence,” Karen Bamboyne and Viola Sebahana (IoFC’s office administrator) organized a workshop on quiet time. Beginning with founder Frank Buchman, the Initiatives of Change network has long used moments of silent reflection as a way of listening to one’s inner voice and finding spiritual guidance, including ideas for focused action.

Ms. Bamboyne introduced the workshop by explaining the importance of times of silence to IoFC as a starting point for personal and social change. The workshop was then led by Rachel (Bala) Freeman, a teacher of meditation and modern spirituality. Ms. Freeman then led participants through breathing exercises to relax the body and mind.

Another University of Ottawa IoFC Club activity was a workshop on discrimination presented in the context of Black History Month (February). The idea was to identify different kinds of discrimination, ask questions about the roots of discrimination and finally, to share the idea of forgiveness and apologies.

Yi Tang and fellow Compass Program participants work to create their Vision Collages.
Communications
Sharing the Initiatives of Change vision and values

In 2015 Initiatives of Change Canada welcomed Samrawit Mersha as the new Communications Committee chair. Samrawit holds an MA in Media, Communications and Public Relations. She has worked in communications with different organizations in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa and Stockholm.

A current IofC Canada Board Member, Samrawit is now helping steer IofC Canada’s communications committee in developing a strategy & work plan. This will set a direction for the future while building on achievements in 2015, including:

» An upgrade to make the website more mobile-friendly
» A re-issue of The Imam & the Pastor 2-Box Set, supporting Pastor James Wuye and Imam Ashafa at the Nobel Peace Prize Forum and more
» Quarterly releases of Canadian Initiatives & Initiatives canadiennes

Finances

Initiatives of Change Association (Canada), incorporated in 1944, is a registered charitable organization and donations are tax deductible.

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The Audited financial Statements for the year ended December, 2015, have been circulated to the membership and are available, upon request, from the IofC office in Ottawa or on the website.

IofC 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 several thousand hours of their time and talents to promote our objectives.

[Business No. 11904 5912 RR0001]
[Québec Enterprise Number: 1144459701]
Initiatives of Change (IoFC) Canada is part of a global 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.

What We Do
IoFC Canada inspires, equips and connects people to address local and world needs by starting with themselves and taking focused action alongside others who share our vision and values.

Approach
IoFC focuses on the link between personal change and global change. The key aspects of the IoFC approach are:

**Change begins in silence:** It will take more than human reason and ability to solve the problems of the world. When people listen to what is deepest in their hearts, insights often come.

**Start with oneself:** An honest look at one’s own motives and behaviour is often the starting point for personal transformation.

**Listen to others:** With its intergenerational, multicultural and interreligious diversity, IoFC enables honest conversations in an open spirit, building bridges of trust and community between people of similar, different, and even antagonistic, backgrounds.

**Take focused action:** IoFC’s people and programs address local and world needs by taking focused action in the following areas.

Focus Areas

**Follow-up to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission:** To engage First Nations, French-Canadians, English-Canadians and recent immigrants in healing the divides of the past for a better future together.

**Bridge Building:** Intercultural and interfaith dialogue to build community and establish trust across divides.

**Equipping Changemakers:** Enabling young people to discover leadership skills in their own vocation.

IoFC Canada is a member of IoFC International. Globally the movement has been active on every continent for over 70 years. Today, IoFC International holds Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.