



Initiatives of Change
Australia

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

Building trust across
the world's divides

CONTENTS

Initiatives of Change (lofC) 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 our own, as a basis for working for a just, peaceful and sustainable world.

lofC (pronounced 'eye of sea') is active in some 60 countries under the umbrella of lofC International, which is incorporated in Switzerland and has Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

Initiatives of Change Australia (lofCA) is a public company endorsed as a charity by the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission. Our mission is to empower leadership for peace and trust building in communities in Australia, and overseas where invited.

lofCA acknowledges the traditional owners of country across this ancient continent, and pays respects to elders past, present and emerging. Consistent with their wisdom and traditions, along with those of others making up our multicultural and multi-faith nation, we seek to contribute to healing and transformation in our society through awakening the spiritual and moral impulse within, between and among people.

Recognising that it will take more than human reason and ability to solve the problems of the world, lofC places the search for inner wisdom at the heart of its approach. When people listen to what is deepest in their hearts, insights often come which lead in unexpected directions. Many understand this experience as guidance from God, others as the leading of the divine, of conscience, or of the inner voice. The regular practice of silence can give access to a source of truth, renewal, inspiration and empowerment.

This annual report covers activities and financial statements of lofCA from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

Read more about lofCA on our website:

www.au.iofc.org

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Cover image: Participants in the Spiritual Ecology Leadership Program at the opening retreat in the Otways, Victoria. Credit: Sudarshan Suresh

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FROM THE CHAIR



Regardless of the time of year, how do we engage with each opportunity for transformation when it presents itself? How can we understand each year as the chance for rebirthing ourselves as individuals, as communities and as an lofC movement, setting our direction in the light of society's big challenges so

that we can best contribute to creating a new world?

It has become clear that, in addition to structural changes in our societies, we need profound healing and spiritual transformation on a personal, community and global level.

Our old ways of living through a lens of 'others need to change' are not working. Now, more than ever, our approach of change 'starting with ourselves' must be taken on with more awareness, commitment and boldness. So, in the next year, lofC Australia has grown and consolidated a whole new thinking and capability for governance and operational leadership. At times, we struggled to reach a balance between process, performance and our deep human-centred values of love, honesty, unselfishness and purity of intention.

To tackle the big questions of sustainability, the Board has made six high-level commitments to ensuring our long-term financial health, ongoing program delivery and the re-enlivening of our network.

We initiated an objective, scenario-based review of our financial assets to ensure lofC Australia has a viable working platform into the future. We have approved a five-year strategic plan, after a six-month 'listening and gathering' process with our members and operational teams. This framework will position us to take part in shaping the future and creating momentum for action, rather than only reacting to shifts in external conditions.

We are looking forward to taking this journey together with you and seizing every opportunity to transform.

Paul Ntoumos
Chair of Board

FROM THE EXECUTIVE OFFICER



'Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive, and go do that, because what the world needs is people who have come alive.'

Howard Thurman, civil rights leader

2019 was a year of growth for our lofCA team, with five new

programs delivered and a host of new partners to learn alongside. The collective scope of programs, which ranged from spiritual ecology to local social change actions, finding purpose, and peacebuilding, all share the outcome of vivacity. Program participants came alive, and in doing so, changed their relationship to our world, in various ways.

The reciprocity of living through learning was powerful over the course of the year. As we delivered an exchange program with program partners from Zimbabwe, India and Indonesia, we learnt about our norms, organisationally and culturally, and how to co-create opportunities we all need. In delivering a campaign and vision for Australians Sharing a New Story in Blacktown, we learnt about grassroots partnerships and story sharing.

This lived experience and learning served us well for the development of a strategic plan to guide our contributions over the coming years. As we navigate the complexities and uncertainties of life, currently illuminated by a global pandemic, we seek to hold onto that feeling of coming alive. As we grow and continue to face the struggle of changing a complex world, we are able to flourish through new stories and new answers for ourselves, our communities and our nations, and through service, inner reflection, and living values.

I want to thank our partners, we are grateful to work alongside them, as well as our Board and team of staff and volunteers for their care and commitment, and to all those who connect with us.

Athalia Zwart
Executive Officer

WHO WE ARE

Initiatives of Change (lofC) has been active for over 80 years. The movement grew out of the work of Frank Buchman (1878-1961), an American Christian minister of the Lutheran denomination.

Buchman believed that moral and spiritual renewal would be the foundation for social change. He encouraged leaders and ordinary people to look inward and to their own conceptions of the divine, to discern areas of personal responsibility in which they could be effective in building a just society.

As military buildup took place before World War II, Buchman inspired thousands of people with the thought that moral and spiritual rearmament, rather than military rearmament, was needed; thus, the movement he had started became known as Moral Re-Armament (MRA). Practices of daily individual 'quiet time' to discern the voice of the divine, reaching out to former opponents, and making restitution for past wrongs became hallmarks of the MRA approach.

After World War II, many people associated with MRA engaged in reconciliation and rebuilding efforts in Europe. International centres for peacebuilding opened at Caux in Switzerland and Panchgani in India. The centres were used for retreats, training, and meetings between former adversaries. With its emphasis on lived experience rather than doctrine, MRA provided a space in which people of different religious and political persuasions could seek common ground for solving problems, without compromising their own beliefs.

See more of our history here:

au.iofc.org/history

MRA in Australia

Australians were exposed to the ideas of MRA through overseas service, personal encounters, books and musical revues that promulgated the values of personal honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. In the post-war years, many dedicated their lives to the ideals of the movement, working for change through writing and publishing, performing in roadshows, and organising retreats and conferences.

Australians associated with the MRA movement were active in mediating industrial conflict, seeking reconciliation between Indigenous Australians and the wider community, promoting trust-building exchanges with neighbouring countries, and strengthening the foundations of a multicultural society.

lofC Australia today

Still working for peace In 2001, MRA changed its name to 'Initiatives of Change' as better conveying its modern-day mission and practice. lofC Australia programs focus on trust building and peacebuilding,

equipping individuals to address difficult relationships in their daily lives, and to counter social ills such as racism, corruption and youth radicalisation. This work takes place through personal development and life skills training, women's Creators of Peace circles and, more recently, environmental action.

Since the 1990s, the organisation has worked with Cambodian, Vietnamese, Afghan, South Sudanese and other communities in Australia, and has increasingly developed a multi-faith character.

lofC Australia today is both an organisation working for social change and a wider fellowship of people supporting each other to live out our values and to model the heart of a just, humane and compassionate society.



Life Matters workshop participants at Armagh in Melbourne, November 2019

OUR PLACE – ARMAGH

lofC Australia's office and Australia-Pacific Centre operates out of a property in the Melbourne suburb of Toorak, which was generously gifted to the organisation in 1956. The building serves as a thriving hub for residential courses and meetings of all kinds, while a small caretaker community lives on site.

Besides providing a venue for activities associated with lofC Australia's core programs, during the year the centre hosted film screenings, book launches, quarterly network dinners, and an annual celebration and national meeting of the movement.

As our programs and relationships grow so does the demand for space at Armagh. However, original parts of the building are now more than 100 years old, and the building needs to be maintained to the level required for hosting gatherings. To generate funds for upkeep, lofC Australia offers the use of the premises to like-minded community groups and individuals.

Over the past year, groups actively working towards peacebuilding and reconciliation among the diaspora have used Armagh for convenings and conversations. We also offer our space as a unique venue for board meetings, planning sessions and workshops.

Outdoors, Armagh offers an urban food garden in a corner of the property, with support from environmental consulting firm Earth Systems, who contributed seedlings and biochar, a high-grade charcoal that can improve soil quality. The group of volunteers who maintain the garden plan to expand the planting of vegetables as its contribution toward strengthening urban food systems and putting its land towards productive use.

In 1956, Melbourne industrialist Cecil McKay donated Armagh to Moral Re-Armament, seeing the movement as 'a force for good in a troubled world.' At its height, the live-in community comprised up to 25 residents who, besides engaging in MRA programs, cooked meals together and shared in daily 'quiet time,' a space for prayer and reflection drawing on various spiritual traditions. Armagh has welcomed people from all backgrounds and cultures through its doors, including visiting political leaders, waterside workers, refugees and people from the Indigenous community.

**Interested in
hosting an event,
workshop, or
retreat?**

Contact our team to find out how
you can use our centre!



CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY

lofC Australia works across the country, and sometimes across the globe, with a range of different people and partners, to build bridges where there are gaps and create a community where everyone feels included. So, what does this community look like and what makes it special?

What makes lofC really special is the strong sense of belonging and purpose that can be found here. It is a community of hope, as you are surrounded by people working towards creating a better world with purity of intent, honesty, unselfishness and love. It is also a place where people genuinely care about your development to your full potential. I can say with absolute certainty that being involved with lofC has positively transformed my relationships, my lifestyle and the quality of my life.

Sudarshan Suresh



Others are drawn to work with us because the appeal is less about us personally, and more about the resonance with them of the ideas we express, promote and live. This is how we build lasting, authentic, effective connections across communities. Nineteen years ago after 9/11 I decided to get to know Muslims in my Sydney neighbourhood, with the idea that Australia was meant to build bridges of trust and friendship with our nearest neighbour Indonesia, the largest Muslim country in the world. This, with a team here, has indeed been happening.

Barbara Lawler

It is inspiring to be welcomed in to a community of curious and careful changemakers who aim to step back and explore the art of the human mind as well as how we can work together to find a collective voice and make positive change.

lofCA's magic is in its ability to create a safe space where we are invited to explore our purpose and feel that we have a place in a larger jigsaw puzzle, that we are individuals but that we all share the common experience of humanity. That can bring us closer together and make us stronger.

Alex Childs



lofC is like a home where people's stories get heard and diversities are embraced. It is a place filled with courage and kindness, where people are not afraid to say 'sorry' or 'how can I help?' lofC is special because it wants to bring positive change to the world by starting with oneself - me!

Natalia Teguhputri



OUR PROGRAMS

Life Matters Workshops

Life Matters offers participants the tools and motivation to make positive change in their lives and communities. The program centres on a three and a half-day workshop, followed by opportunities to connect, develop skills and grow in community.

lofC Australia offered two Life Matters workshops in Victoria during the year, involving 30 participants, as well as a Sharing Day in South Australia that engaged 12 participants in exploring the theme of 'seeking purpose and meaning.' The follow-up events equip participants with the guidance and support they need to put into practice the heartfelt decisions they made during their Life Matters workshop—grounded in the lofC philosophy that great societal shifts begin with personal growth. A highlight of the year was a workshop on team building and life skills with counsellor and youth justice worker James McIvor in Victoria, which attracted 30 participants.

Through the year, more than 100 participants engaged in follow-up activities, including reunions, planning meetings, and a 'taster' event in Blacktown, New South Wales. More than 50 volunteers offered their skills and abilities during the year to make Life Matters the vibrant, inclusive network that it is, contributing more than 3,000 volunteer hours.

I have gained a joyous appreciation of the fact that there are people like me in the world—people who want and value the things that I do. Not in all my life have I felt such commonality with my fellow-human beings...and with this faith now properly instilled, I feel I can move mountains to begin my work to make the world a better, more inclusive place.

Bek Worsman

Peace and Leadership Training

This year, lofC Australia partnered with Trinity College, a residential college at the University of Melbourne, to offer a new program in peace and leadership education. The program, which runs throughout the academic year, trains Trinity residents in peacebuilding, culturally intelligent leadership, and practices for wellbeing and resilience. The program is led by Heather Cetrangolo, an Anglican priest and chaplain at Trinity College. A PhD candidate and former Caux Scholar with Initiatives of Change in Switzerland, she is currently developing a Franciscan pedagogy of peacebuilding.

The evidence-based Peace and Leadership curriculum has three focal areas: peace in one's inner life, peace in relationships, and global peacebuilding. The program works with students of all faiths, and provides a multicultural learning experience aimed at building community. During teaching weeks, students attend weekly classes and serve as interns for the planning and delivering of an annual peacebuilders' conference. Students also participated in two weekend retreats. Feedback has been positive, and the program has plans to expand in the coming year.

The growing partnership between Trinity College and lofC Australia has provided a special platform for international students to experience the 'family life' of Initiatives of Change. This has included the opportunity for shared meals at Armagh, tennis games, shared stories, as well laughter and sing-alongs with long-term members and residents of the Armagh community. One student from Bangladesh was invited to a special open-house Christmas lunch, which was the 'highlight of the year', he said. Such experiences are priceless to international students, who deeply desire friendships and belonging with local Australians. Partnership with lofC provides an exceptional ability to build and sustain intercultural community.

Heather Cetrangolo



Life Matters workshop at Armagh, November 2019



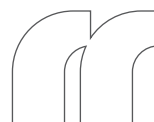
(L-R): Abidha from India, Tinotenda from Kenya, and Rera from Indonesia. Credit: Simone Richardson

PeopleCraft

Through the PeopleCraft program, Abidha, Rera and Tinotenda from lofC India, Indonesia and Zimbabwe engaged with the lofC Australia network and local communities in an enriching exchange of culture, knowledge and skills. Over a nine-week period, PeopleCraft partners stayed at the Australia-Pacific Centre in Melbourne, received ongoing mentorship, and experienced homestays across the country. Partners immersed themselves in lofC Australia programmes and engaged with community leaders, while hosting events and sharing knowledge and experience from their lives and contexts. In collaboration with their country teams, partners developed project plans to take forward with their local lofC teams upon return home. This program, built on our incredible global network, enabled the magic of shared passion, purpose and values as well as the opportunity to learn from different cultures, experiences and perspectives.

In Australia, I have been exposed to an lofC that is focused on hope and story sharing and I believe that it is this framework that makes their work sustainable.

Tinotenda



During the PeopleCraft program, I met a lot of the lofC Australia network, and it really changed my mindset about how to be a changemaker. I thank this program because [through it] I could explore who I am, find my direction and my role – as an individual, an lofC family member, and also as a professional worker... it sharpened my vision of what I have to be in the future and what I can do for lofC Indonesia.

Rera



Creators of Peace

Creators of Peace (CoP) is an international women's initiative that started in 1991. The program challenges women everywhere to take responsibility for their part in the perpetration of conflict and in its resolution; engage in the creation of peace at every level of society; break the chains of hate and revenge; and build networks of forgiveness and friendship across racial, religious and social divides. During the year, eight Peace Circles took place across the country, involving 63 participants. In total, there were 43 CoP-related meetings or gatherings, involving 180 women. Women across New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Victoria connected in 'communities of practice' to recommit and encourage one other in making choices for peace.

Eight women took part in a training program to learn how to facilitate Peace Circles, and took part in three 'practice circles' to develop confidence in their skills. More than 40 volunteers led and supported CoP events through the year, contributing 633 volunteer hours.

This year, we continued our partnership with the Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre (SMRC) in Dandenong, Victoria, to bring CoP to women in Melbourne's southeastern suburbs. The project works with women and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, new migrants, and refugees, to offer conversations, experiential activities, Peace Circles and other events that build friendships, connection and social cohesion. This work included a CoP 'first' of working with students in a high school setting. The work is supported by a two-year grant of \$120,000 from the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) for joint delivery by IofC Australia and the SMRC.

Creators of Peace South East on a visit to a local mosque.

The majority of SMRC clients are from a refugee or humanitarian background and their notion of 'peace' is not an entitlement. Through Peace Circles, SMRC in partnership with IofC Australia helps participants to recognize and to give themselves permission to feel peace in their current journey, allowing them to rebuild their lives with dignity.

Maryam Mohammadi
Creators of Peace coordinator

Creators of Peace facilitator training with Shoshana Faire (left), December 2019.



ASANS small group discussion at Griffith University, Queensland, on 14 December 2019. L-R: Lindy Drew-Tsang, Ronit Baras, Amiel Nubaha, Ippei Kato, Darryl Lingwoodcock

Volunteers set up for the Blacktown ASANS forum, May 2019. Credit: Andrew Flynn



Australians Sharing a New Story

Australians Sharing a New Story (ASANS) first took place as a three-day public forum in May 2019 in Blacktown, New South Wales, one of Australia's most diverse municipalities.

The event aimed to publicly hear and value the narratives of people from each community, their stories of struggle and achievement, as a way of breaking through barriers and building community, thus challenging the current narratives of fear, grievance and entitlement.

SydWest Multicultural Services partnered with IofC Australia on this project, which was also supported by the Blacktown City Council, local police, and several other community groups. Discussions at the forum engaged 300 people in small group conversations focused on two questions: What brought you and your family to Blacktown? What experience would you like to share that has made you who you are?

One youth worker affirmed how her young clients had related to older people at their session, sharing their life journeys and hope. Building on enthusiasm around the Blacktown Forum, IofC volunteers organized further ASANS events in September and December 2019 at Griffith University in Queensland, and in March 2020 in Mount Druitt, New South Wales.

ASANS is currently in a research and development phase as we create curriculum materials and handbooks that will support building of 'New Story Communities' around Australia.

When people have the courage to be vulnerable in their truth, it has a ripple effect that connects them. The desire to be heard and understood is something that all humans share, regardless of race, religion, gender, class and sexual orientation. When we provide opportunities for this to happen, we create a community that is curious rather than judgmental, respectful of difference, and united in our experience as human beings.

Participant, Blacktown forum



Elfa Moraitakis, CEO SydWest Multicultural Services, partner in the project, speaks at the opening of Australians Sharing a New Story. Credit: Mike Brown

Sprout Community

The Sprout Community program empowers emerging leaders to create positive impact through developing creative and innovative projects that meet local needs. Over a six-month period, participants take part in a series of monthly workshops on applying the Human-Centred Design (HCD) approach to a need they wish to address, meet with assigned mentors, and undertake reflective practices that help make the connections between sustainable living, leadership, and taking focused action. There were three projects that emerged from the process in 2019.

Dugald approached local councils and community groups to find out who could benefit from the wicking beds that he makes with recycled materials, including discarded building debris and even old nails. The result helped to launch his own company, Bowerbird Gardens.

Shannon and Anvita wanted to revive traditional wisdom around protecting nature. Their prototype project was a potluck dinner that posed questions to diners about their own connections with nature, that led to a workshop on 'Decolonising Nature', which in turn led to the establishment of their website, blog and podcast initiatives called 'Regenerative Roots'.

Ariane, Felicity and Albert wanted to address city people's lack of connection with nature. They came up with several project ideas before settling on 'shinrin-yoku' – the healing practice of taking in the forest atmosphere through one's senses.



Ariane, Felicity and Albert at the Sprout Community Showcase, 21 September 2019. Credit: Delia Paul



A young participant steps up as Shannon and Anvita run a participatory exercise to explore people's sense of connection with nature. Credit: Delia Paul

Spiritual Ecology Leadership Program

The Spiritual Ecology Leadership Program (SELP) supports and resources young people from diverse faith and cultural backgrounds to cultivate personal and social resilience through reverence for nature. The program aims to increase a sense of belonging and unity across different groups by offering participants an opportunity to explore and share how their faith and culture links with ecological action. Beginning with a four-day intensive retreat in the Otways National Park, participants then engage in four full-day training workshops to develop their own community action projects, guided by principles of Human-Centered Design. The 10 participants were each assigned a mentor who supported them in deepening their practice of spiritual ecology principles and developing their respective community projects. Community projects reached over 120 people, with most projects focusing on themes of environmental protection, as well as building connection and conversation between indigenous and non-indigenous people to protect the environment. Some of the projects that participants developed included:

- Justice for Djab Wurrung First Nations people, through awareness raising around the role of sacred birthing trees that were under threat from road construction
- Earth Afternoon, a nature connection workshop with a Christian youth group
- A traditional Malay dinner for 40 people from diverse communities, including a Malaysian Islamic youth group, which discussed community gardens in mosques
- A pickling and preserving workshop and discussion with 25 people, using rescued food waste
- Two workshops with newly arrived international students, using nature connection to ease feelings of stress and isolation.
- Production of a 'Seeding Stories' podcast series of interviews with First Nations people discussing connection to Country, and influence of colonization.



The retreat held the space for many experiences of wonder, warmth and resolve, in a fantastic community of like-minded

people coming from such crazily diverse backgrounds. I feel like I've found a practice, a framework and a community that values and prioritizes action and contemplation. I feel inspired to learn more and to serve more.

Charlotte Cameron, SELP participant



At CERES we have learnt a lot from how lofC values space for reflection, and have appreciated having the opportunity to share about how to create good governance that responds to changing times.

Sieta Beckwith
Narrative Director, CERES

INITIATIVES

In addition to our regular programs, lofC Australia works with community leaders to incubate and support emerging initiatives for a just, peaceful, and sustainable world. Australia's oldest and newest communities are the two pillars that support and give shape to this work. We cooperate with friends and partners among First Nations peoples for a reconciliation process that involves both truth telling and truth hearing, and we support community-based peacebuilding with South Sudanese communities in Australia and abroad. We also work with many other diverse communities.

First Nations

lofC Australia supports First Nations friends and colleagues in their calls for Treaty and Makarrata, a process of conflict resolution, peacemaking and justice. In August 2019, lofC hosted Australian Indigenous broadcaster and community leader, Susan Moylan-Coombs, at a Melbourne forum to speak about what Treaty could mean for Australia. Moylan-Coombs, a Gurindji-Woolwonga woman, presented the work of her company, the Gaimaragal Group, 'to break down the barriers and try to build trust between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Australia.' In November 2019, Moylan-Coombs also took part in a small working group session in Sydney that was supported by lofC to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians together to discuss and strategize on how to promote truth telling and healing in Australia. This meeting formulated some principles and objectives for future work, and heard from Paul Gray, a psychologist with the NSW peak body on Aboriginal child care, ABSEC. Gray spoke about a history that continues to play out in social disadvantage and systemic injustice.

NAIDOC Week

In the lead-up to National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week, the lofC community in Melbourne hosted Wiradjuri singer-songwriter Johnny Huckle and others at an evening to appreciate Australian Indigenous history and culture at Armagh.

Highlights of the evening were Huckle's performance of 'Spirit Man', among other original hits, broadcaster and football commentator Leila Gurruwiwi's stories, and historian Graham Jenkin's reading of original poetry and ballads capturing moments in rural and Indigenous community life.



Above: Susan Moylan-Coombs (front row, centre) with the working group in Sydney.

Left (L-R): Johnny Huckle (seated), Leila Gurruwiwi, Robyn Jenkin and Graham Jenkin. Credit: Andrew Flynn



There is a desperate commitment to reconciliation in some of the mainstream community but without truth. Therefore, there is a need for a different conversation.

Paul Gray, ABSEC

Samvaad in India

In December 2019, lofC Australia supported three people—Wiradjuri man Johnny Huckle, Wangkumara man Raymond Finn, and non-Indigenous Melbourne man Andrew Flynn—to travel to India.

For five days, the trio were guests of TATA Steel at the *Adivasi* (Aboriginal) Samvaad festival, organized on the theme of 'Tribalism Today.' Around 1,200 people from 28 states across India attended. Singer-songwriter Johnny was invited repeatedly to perform his songs for various festival audiences, while

Raymond, a former stockman from Anna Creek, South Australia, presented an overview of colonization and the process that Indigenous Australians have taken since colonization, leading up to framing the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart.

After Samvaad, the lofC team in the tribal northeastern state of Nagaland hosted Johnny and Raymond on a visit, after which Niketu Irалу, former Chair of the Naga Reconciliation Commission, expressed his appreciation for Raymond Finn's message that hate and violence can have no place in his fight for the rights, dignity and self-respect of his people.



If you
justify hate
and violence,
you simply
make things
worse.

Raymond Finn



Raymond Finn with
participants at *Samvaad*
in India. Credit: Andrew
Flynn

South Sudan

IofC Australia facilitates peacebuilding work in partnership with South Sudanese community leaders through various initiatives such as the South Sudan Australia Peace Initiative (SSAPI), a network of South Sudanese Australians and other supportive Australians. Friendship and accompaniment of community leaders are important parts of our work.

In July 2019, IofC supported two South Sudanese Australians to take part in Tools for Changemakers at the IofC centre in Caux, Switzerland. The program, for grassroots workers, unwraps the links between personal and collective identities, acknowledges collective trauma, and builds trust and cohesion among community.



Monica Deng, a pharmacist and community organizer with the South Sudanese Australian Youth United (SSAYU), was born in Nairobi, Kenya, of Dinka parents from South Sudan's largest tribal group. The war that displaced her parents lasted 21 years, until a peace agreement was signed in 2005. In 2013, conflict broke out again.

She said, 'To this day, we are getting reports of relatives losing their lives or becoming displaced from their homes...In June 2018, my mother learned of the brutal death of her young cousin in Juba, South Sudan. Photos of his brutal murder were sent to us in Australia. I was completely appalled by the images of his death and I decided not to think, hear or speak of it again....

During my second day at Caux, I was informed that a general from South Sudan would be coming to Caux for lunch, and I was welcomed to join in. This general is from the Equatorian tribe that was responsible for an uprising in Juba, which may have been linked to the death of my mother's cousin. Once I discovered the connection, I broke down and cried....

The meeting went for over five hours and I learnt so much from the general about what is happening in South Sudan, and why he has taken his stance. Afterward, during my personal prayer time, I recognized that the tribal conflict currently happening in South Sudan is having a direct impact on me. The emotional impact is still fresh in our hearts. I realized that I had bitterness and prejudices towards other non-Dinka South Sudanese, which I had to let go in order to move on.

I went to Caux not knowing exactly what to expect but I left feeling much more whole as a human being, as I was able to let go of hurts and pains in my heart that I was totally unaware of. I discovered how important it is to see everyone as equal human beings despite their religion, race, and tribe.'

Gatluak Puoch, an advisor to the State Government of Victoria and father of three young sons and a daughter, was separated from his parents during the war in South Sudan. Children were recruited into the army and so was he. He landed in a refugee camp in Ethiopia, then came to Australia on his own during his teen years.

He said, 'The civil war in South Sudan has claimed more than 15 lives from among my own family members and friends. The conflict has caused displacement among

my family, and most are wounded in some way – physically, mentally and psychologically.

Since the 2013 conflict in South Sudan, I was bitter. I supported ways which, I felt, would truly bring the murderers to justice. However, on 17 July 2019, while at Caux,



my view changed. With a military leader from South Sudan, whose armed force was actively fighting in the civil war, I watched a film, *Beyond Forgiving...* The film provided me with the courage to embrace the art of forgiving those who have wronged me, without justice having to be served. It encouraged me to reflect on my co-responsibility in a situation that went wrong.

Since my return from Caux, I participated in several conversations about restorative justice with my peers, community members, family members and friends. In those conversations, I have encouraged people to reflect on their own conduct that might have contributed to ongoing injustice in South Sudan.

Prior to attending the conference, I used to believe that changes and new histories are mostly initiated by rich or powerful people. In Caux, I learned that making history is not necessarily the monopoly of the rich or powerful. Anyone is capable of initiating change.'

Credit: Paula Mariane/IofC International



Regional trust building

lofC Australia works with partners in the Asia-Pacific region to support trust building through friendship, dialogue, and shared projects. Our work includes working with lofC networks in the region. In this financial

year, Elise Collins and Nigel Heywood served on the lofC Asia Pacific Coordination Group and met with regional colleagues in the Republic of Korea and China, respectively, to plan future modes of engagement.

Above: Australians Francine Berabose, Elise Collins, and Mohan Bhagwandas at the Asia Pacific Regional Gathering in Seoul, Republic of Korea



Winter Films at Armagh

Community film screenings provide a space for the lofC community and friends to gather for pizza and conversation on some of the most pressing issues for reconciliation in Australia.

The films *Hope Road*, *Border Politics* and *Angels Gather Here*, each showcased a different aspect of Australia.

Viewers followed the stories of Zacharia, a refugee who undertakes a personal fundraising project that repeats his long walk out of Sudan; Aboriginal woman Jacki Trapman from Brewarinna, who reflects on how past injustices still affect her people today, and human rights advocate Julian Burnside, who examines the treatment of refugees.



Watching the film brought the impact colonisation has had on Aboriginal people into real human terms, and makes it impossible to walk away without feeling an intense need to be part of reconciliation.

Viewer at screening of *Angels Gather Here*

On the road with the Imam and the Pastor

In August 2019, Nigel Heywood from lofC Australia accompanied two renowned peace builders from Nigeria on a speaking tour organized by lofC New Zealand. The trip was a direct response to the Christchurch massacre of 15 March, in which a 28-year old Australian man massacred 51 people who were at prayer in the Al Noor and Linwood mosques in the city of Christchurch.

Pastor Dr James Wuye and Imam Dr Muhammad Ashafa once led youth militias in violent combat against each other. Through the conflict, Imam Ashafa's spiritual mentor and two cousins were killed. Pastor James lost close friends and had his right hand cut off. Both men were consumed with hatred and were determined to destroy the other. From this point of bitterness and trauma, the two men individually went through a powerful process of reconciliation. It took many courageous steps over three years but that transformation became the foundation of their 26 years of peace building within Nigeria and around the world. The duo have since risked their lives in peace work and have traveled to more than 70 countries to spread their message that the cycles of violence can be broken.

On their seven-day trip through Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington and Auckland from 21-28 August, the Imam and the Pastor put forward a vision of secular and faith communities working side by side to address the deeper needs of the culture from a moral foundation, learning to reconcile and build trust, in order to create a country where 'there is no room for hate.'



The work of the Imam and the Pastor is not about making us all one homogenous religion or culture, instead it directly faces the challenge of how to create strength out of diversity. Imam Ashafa and Pastor James were calling us beyond the easy answers of our good and well-intentioned organisational or theological responses, to the deeper actions of transformational faith. The call of 'love your neighbour' is the most radical and disruptive response there can be to extreme isolation or violence.

Nigel Heywood

TREASURER'S REPORT

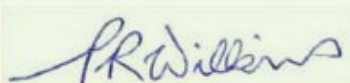
At the Annual General Meeting in June 2019, the Board presented the budget for the 2019-20 financial year with an overall deficit of just under \$470,000. Acknowledging that such annual deficits cannot be sustained in the long term, the Board also made a set of six commitments with strategies to return IofC Australia to sustainability within three years. Those commitments included an in-depth review of IofC Australia's property assets, with the objective of delivering a better return on capital value. A working group was established to research a number of options drawing on expert advice. IofC Australia members are now engaging in a consultation process regarding these options.

Given that background, many of the trends in the operating results for the 2019-20 year were better than expected. The net deficit of \$377,830 from operating activities was \$92,000 less than the budgeted deficit, although \$121,577 worse than the previous 2018-19 year. While income was almost 10 per cent below expectations, expenditure was nearly \$140,000 below target, despite a major increase in repairs and maintenance that included both planned and unforeseen work. The savings were possible through significant economies in our wages and related costs.

A major issue of current concern arose from the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought major reductions in valuation and dividend income across almost all financial markets, both in Australia and overseas. The market value of our liquid asset investment portfolio was reduced by \$894,950 over the 12-month period to 31 March 2020. Although this is a book loss only, it significantly affects the bottom line. Thus, the overall deficit at the end of this financial year, based on a comprehensive assessment of income, expenditure, and loss, was \$1,272,780, compared to the 2019 result of \$256,253. Generous Commonwealth JobKeeper and State Government subsidies for businesses and employees affected by the pandemic, received in the 2020-21 financial year, have enabled us to maintain our program and continue activities within our strategic planning framework.

The Board, in conjunction with our investment advisory team, is continually monitoring the performance of the market. With careful budget and asset management, the Board is assured that sufficient liquid funds will be available to settle all current and upcoming obligations as and when they fall due through this current financial year.

The Treasurer welcomes any enquiries about the financing of IofC Australia and all offers of support. The charity benefits from a legacy of generous and often sacrificial giving, which we trust will continue into the future.



Paul Wilkins, Treasurer

Email: treasurer.au@iofc.org

FINANCIAL REPORT

Statement of Profit and Loss and Other Comprehensive Income

For the Year ended 31 March 2020

	2020 \$	2019 \$
Income		
Gifts, bequests and grants	25,635	47,713
Investment income	325,178	354,252
Proceeds from sale of books and videos	779	557
Program and grant income	9,349	69,786
Property income	98,330	104,024
Profit/(loss) on sale of investments	25,571	(18,923)
	484,842	557,409
Expenditure		
Administration expenses	39,904	42,243
Consultancy expenses	49,338	22,225
Depreciation expense	29,044	29,416
Grants and donations	26,007	38,727
Property expenses	185,539	130,574
Employee expenses	401,122	404,839
Other operating expenses	131,718	145,638
	862,672	813,662
Surplus / (Deficit) from Operating Activities	(377,830)	(256,253)
Unrealised loss in market value of financial investments	(894,950)	-
Other Changes in Fair Value of Other Comprehensive Income	(25,879)	(22,573)
Total Comprehensive Income/(Loss)	(1,298,659)	(278,826)

Statement of Financial Position

As at 31 March 2020

Assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	868,051	1,185,905
Financial assets & receivables	3,596,099	4,644,096
Property plant and equipment	732,743	1,453,030
Assets classified as held for sale	693,383	-
Total Assets	5,890,276	7,283,031
Liabilities		
Trade payables and other provisions	121,624	103,207
Financial liabilities (non-current)	2,086,906	2,527,215
Total Liabilities	2,208,530	2,630,422
NET ASSETS	3,681,746	4,652,609
Equity & Reserves		
Retained earnings	3,353,950	4,626,730
Reserves	327,796	25,879
TOTAL EQUITY & RESERVES	3,681,746	4,652,609

These statements have been produced and extracted from the 2019-2020 audited financial report with permission from the Company's external auditors John L Bush & Campbell.

Join us

Do you want to make the world a more just, peaceful and sustainable place where all people thrive? Do our values resonate with you on a personal or professional level? Does our approach align with change you would like to make in Australia or beyond? Then consider partnering or volunteering with us!

Our achievements would not have been possible without the generosity of many individuals who have supported lofC through financial donations and gifts in kind. We welcome regular and one-off donations, as well as offers of goods and services.

In the 2019-2020 financial year, lofC Australia was supported by over **300 volunteers**, whose efforts totaled an estimated **17,207 hours**. The willingness of individuals and groups to dedicate time, talent and energy makes it possible for the work described in this report to happen.

Thank you!



Registered address

Initiatives of Change Australia
226 Kooyong Road, Toorak, VIC 3142

ABN 22 004 350 789

Board (as at 31 March 2020)

Paul Ntoumos (Chair), Paul Wilkins (Treasurer), Mike Brown, Andrew Lancaster, Jonathan Lancaster, Daya Bhagwandas, Quynh-Tram Trinh, Francis Halim, Ron Lawler, Laurence Gray and Siew-Fang Law.
Company Secretary: Elizabeth Lee.

Auditors

John L. Bush & Campbell
30 Blake St (PO Box 98)
Wagga Wagga, NSW 2650

Bankers

National Australia Bank Limited
445 Toorak Road, Toorak, VIC 3142



lofC Australia volunteers (L-R): Rob Wood, James McIvor and Andrew Flynn trace the global reach of lofC.
Credit: Andrew Flynn

Volunteering is never a one-way street. You always get something in return and often you receive more than you could ever put in. Volunteering has taken me around the world; from the most beautiful white sandy beaches of Somoa where I developed cricket and Special Olympics to discussions with the grandson of Gandhi in India about how change starts within. I have made incredible life-long friends along the way and set myself up professionally. When I stop to think about the power of humanity and what we can achieve, I feel we have only hit the tip of the iceberg.

Andrew Flynn





Photos from Australians Sharing
a New Story forum in Blacktown,
NSW. Credit: Mike Brown



www.au.iofc.org

Editors: Tracie Mooneyham and Delia Paul
Design by Mark Thomas
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