



Initiatives of Change
Australia

newsbriefs

Building trust across the world's divides

FEBRUARY 2019 NO. 297

Learning, partnership, unity: these words sprang to mind as we put together this batch of stories about our activities in recent weeks..

In Melbourne, Initiatives of Change Australia (IofCA) partnered with the University of Melbourne to organise a conference of emerging leaders from the South Sudan community, united in the common cause of peace. In Sydney, it's been full steam ahead with preparing for a weekend of stories in one of Australia's most diverse localities. And in Malaysia, two young Australians at the Asia-Pacific Youth Conference found that leadership just might be something that grows from within.

At IofC, we see personal change as being at the core of our effectiveness and our capacity to build peace in our homes, communities and the world. So we're especially pleased that Jimmy Nguyen took some time to share with us his story of how he came to build an ethical fashion business.

Read on for all this and more. There is a full program of activities in the coming months, and we hope to see you around!

Newsbriefs is the bi-monthly newsletter of Initiatives of Change in Australia – part of a worldwide movement of people of diverse cultures and backgrounds who share a vision for a just, peaceful and sustainable world.

NEWS

Emerging Leaders Seek Peace at Home and Abroad

The 2013 conflict in South Sudan caused 'immense disunity' among Australia's South Sudanese community - but some brave souls have stepped forward to try and heal the rifts. At a four-day workshop in Melbourne, they explored their shared challenges and discussed ways to cooperate. [Read more.](#)



Finding the Power of Forgiveness at APYC

Two young Australians, Suzie Bol and Leela Gray, attended the Asia Pacific Youth Conference in Malaysia in December last year. They had hoped to meet other young people, have a good time and learn a thing or two about leadership. But they came back with so much more.

[Read more.](#)

Sharing a New Story in Blacktown

The word from Assefa Bekele is 'grateful.' Grateful for this country, and grateful for his friendship with Mike and Jean Brown of IofCA, which has birthed a new project in Blacktown, NSW. Here's why Bekele, a multicultural liaison officer with the NSW police, thinks a weekend of story-telling is a good idea for Australia.

[Read more.](#)



PERSONAL STORIES



Jimmy Nguyen

Jimmy Nguyen arrived in Australia with the clothes on his back and his thongs. Today he is the owner of two successful businesses - LCN Fashion which produces Australian-made, high-end female fashion garments and Essence Dry Cleaners with alterations in Yarraville. Read about his journey [here.](#)

EVENTS

Friday Film Series Returns to Armagh

The Friday Film Series at Armagh, the Australia-Pacific Centre of Initiatives of Change (IofC), will begin its 2019 season in May. The films to be screened one Friday evening each month span a range of concerns, from the neighbourhood politics around a



suburban Sydney park, to international refugee policy and Australia's detention of asylum seekers. More information about the films and the dates of screening are available [here](#). It's time to mark your diaries!



Creators Of Peace

Creators of Peace (CoP) is a women's initiative launched in 1991. CoP has grown to a global network of women working on different continents through Creators of Peace Circles (CoPC), workshops, personal encounters, community building activities and international conferences. For more information, contact [Kate Allison](#) in Melbourne or [Yara Vasina](#) in Sydney.

Friday 1 March to Sunday 3 March 2019 : Peace Circle in Melbourne. Places are now filled for this Peace Circle. If you are interested in joining the next Peace Circle, please register your interest [here](#).

Saturday 2 March: Auburn network meeting, NSW, 1.45pm for 2.00 to 4.00pm Venue: Youth Room at Auburn Centre for Community, 44A Macquarie Rd, Auburn.

Saturday 30 March 2019: Peace Focus Gathering in Gladesville, NSW, 3.15pm for 3.30pm - 5.30pm Topic: "Narrative of Women" - how the capacity for deep compassion, resilience, strength and courage show up in life stories, to bring about a more peaceful world. The session will be led by CoP facilitator Elizabeth Devine. Venue: 63 Monash Road, Gladesville. Bring your open heart, curious mind and big smile - and also a plate of food to share! RSVP appreciated but not necessary. Contact [Maria Moy](#) or call 0413 585364

Sunday 14 April: Hills Network meeting, NSW, 1.45pm for 2.00 to 4.00 pm. Venue: The Rowland Village, 301 Galston Road, Galston.

2019 Life Matters Workshop

Friday 8 March to Monday 11 March 2019: This residential workshop offers life direction and leadership skills to people from diverse backgrounds and cultures between the ages of 18-35. 'Life Matters' draws on the life learning of a range of people whose lives are committed to making a positive difference in Australia and the world. We offer a warm welcome to anyone who has a sense of adventure and would like to begin to learn how to be a change-maker in our global community. Come and meet others who share the same desire and want to live a purpose-filled life. The weekend will include panel presentations, workshops, story-sharing, team-building activities, reflective silence, group discussion, video(s) and an entertainment night. For more information and to register, please click [here](#).

Australians Telling a New Story - Blacktown Forum

Friday 3 May to Sunday 5 May 2019: Join a weekend of story sharing and trust building in Blacktown, NSW. The Blacktown Forum will acknowledge our colonial past and embrace our 'three-story' identity (in the words of Aboriginal leader Noel Pearson) of 60,000 years of Aboriginal culture, inherited British systems and today's rich multicultural reality. The forum is the first in a series of lofCA events encouraging people to engage with others from different backgrounds - breaking down stereotypes and uncovering the structures and systems that drive inequality in Australian society today. This public event is being organised in partnership with SydWest Multicultural Services. For more information, please see [here](#).

See all events

GET INVOLVED

Volunteer with us

Initiatives of Change prides itself on being a big family, nationally and internationally, and there are many ways to be involved. As a volunteer, you are welcome to join our bi-monthly social catch-ups and workshops. These are a great way to meet new people and also to get to know more about IofC. Volunteers also have access to the IofCA mentoring program, with experienced people who have worked for many years in peace and trust-building initiatives all around the world.

There are many areas you can volunteer in, depending on your skills sets and where we have a need. If you are interested, please contact our [Volunteer Coordinator](#) with an introduction about yourself, your motivation, and your area of interest. We'd love to hear from you!

DONATE



As we develop our community engagement work, we're excited to see your donations coming in. We value so much your support. Please know that your contribution allows Initiatives of Change Australia to sustain its trust-building and peace-building work.

Every donation, large or small, has a **direct impact** on the individuals and communities with whom we work. You can donate through our page [here](#) or contact the [Treasurer](#) to send a cheque or make a bank transfer.

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226 Kooyong Road, Toorak, VIC 3142, Australia, www.au.iofc.org.

Contributions, news and comments are welcome, and can be sent to delia.paul@iofc.org.