



# Initiatives of Change statement on South Sudan

Since a political crisis sparked the outbreak of fighting in South Sudan last December many of the gains of last year's reconciliation project have been lost, as well as thousands of lives. Initiatives of Change remains part of the international effort to restore peace and achieve a new start through negotiation between the country's leaders. A cessation of hostilities agreement was signed in Addis Ababa on 9 May but the parties in the conflict are far apart on virtually all substantive issues. Negotiations resume there on 4 June.

From Australia David Vincent has just been in Juba reconnecting with some of the 200 peace mobilisers trained by IofC in 2013 as part of a national reconciliation program. Mike Brown, who was IofC's project manager in South Sudan, and Nyok Gor of the South Sudanese community in Melbourne have travelled to Addis Ababa to offer their support to people involved in the negotiations. The following statement was published on the Initiatives of Change international website on 8 May 2014:

## Statement on the Crisis in South Sudan

The continuing crisis in South Sudan is a tragedy of massive proportions. The death toll keeps rising and over three million people impacted by the fighting are now at risk of famine and disease as the approaching rainy season makes relief efforts ever more urgent.

An intervention is needed. We believe it can come from individuals courageous enough to move beyond sectional interests and search for the inspired response, motivated by the suffering of their fellow South Sudanese and the vision of a healed, renewed South Sudan. We appeal to leaders on both sides to show that statesmanship.

### Lost opportunity

As a partner in the effort to establish a process for national reconciliation last year, Initiatives of Change grieves the opportunity that was lost to build the trust between personalities and parties, tribes and regions, which could have prevented this conflict. The cost has been huge.

The need of reconciliation is even higher now. But an end to the violence and massive humanitarian relief are the first priorities. Then an unimpeded revealing, under proper independent authority, of the truth of what happened is vital so that impunity is ended. Only then can healing start.

In the long-term work of

reconstruction, Initiatives of Change International seeks to make its particular contribution, along with other groups, authorities and networks already working, including the Committee for National Healing, Peace and Reconciliation and the Peace and Reconciliation Commission of South Sudan.

### IofC South Sudan

Initiatives of Change South Sudan, which was registered as a non-governmental organization under the Ministry of Justice in February 2013, ceased to function when fighting broke out in Juba last December. It has not been possible for its board to meet or to hold elections for a National Council, in accordance with its constitution, and is therefore in a state of suspension.

As and when a reconstituted membership forms, they will need to rebuild the structure and activities of Initiatives of Change South Sudan as a movement 'independent of any and all political or economic authorities, entities or organisations', as specified by its constitution.

### Peace network

Among the volunteers who came together under Initiatives of Change South Sudan in 2013 were a number of the 200 'Peace and Reconciliation Mobilizers' trained last April by Initiatives of Change International in partnership with the Peace and Reconciliation Commission of South



South Sudanese president Salva Kiir (L) and rebel leader Riek Machar (R) hold the hands of two clergymen during the opening prayer of the signing of a cessation of hostilities agreement on 9 May 2014, in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa (Photo: AFP/Zacharias Abubeker - from Sudan Tribune)

Sudan, under the Office of President. Many in this network of South Sudanese across all ten States remain active and committed to building peace around them, continuing to apply the ideals and skills they learned to their home situations. They serve no political agenda, and hold a vision bigger than sectional or tribal interests.

Initiatives of Change International will give them whatever support is possible in their work for trust-building dialogue and genuine reconciliation, as they encourage all South Sudanese to be part of building peace through personal forgiveness and healing relationships.

Signed: Dr Omnia Marzouk,  
 President, Initiatives of Change International

Edward Peters, Executive Vice-President,  
 Initiatives of Change International

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[www.iofc.org/statement-crisis-south-sudan](http://www.iofc.org/statement-crisis-south-sudan)

# Training for the Asia Pacific future

The Training Of Trainers (ToT) held in Cambodia 29 March-6 April was a timely event which has lifted IofC work in Asia to a new level of capacity in terms of training and facilitation.

It brought together 24 people representing IofC teams in 13 countries around the Asian region. For people like myself who had never taken part in a ToT before there was a huge amount of learning involved and a certain amount of mental indigestion at the end of each day!

Days began at 7am with a “tone setting” session taking five “c’s” - character, calling, competence, context and commitment - and including a personal example and time for reflection and sharing. The rest of the schedule was largely about the design, development and delivery of training.

After an overview of the two IofC training programs on offer - *Life Matters (LM)* and *The Heart of Effective Leadership (HEL)* - the trainees joined either a Life Matters or Heart Of Effective Leadership group and selected sessions from that program in which to practice what they had been learning about design and delivery. A couple of days later we



“ToT” in session

saw the results. While they were very different in style to the originals, they managed to convey the main message. So it was an empowering experience.

## Asian connections

The ToT also strengthened the connection between Asia Plateau (India) and initiatives in other parts of Asia. Kiran Gandhi, an Indian businessman responsible for training with our International Council, and I were in a group who went to see some of Cambodia’s “change-makers”. He has invited them to contribute to

the next *Just Governance* Conference at Asia Plateau. These people have much to offer in terms of the values and beliefs that have under-girded their struggle for genuine democracy, human rights and integrity in their national life.

I hope the ToTs on a semi-regular basis can keep expanding the pool of trainers with the resources to match the challenges and opportunities in the region.

*Rob Wood*

## Essence and framework

**Rob Lancaster** who helped organise the “ToT” analyses its approach:

The aim was to build the competency base of trainers and deepen their personal foundation in the spirit of IofC training.

One of IofC’s primary entry points is through “training” programmes that are neither wholly hard skills training, nor personal development, nor more entrepreneurial social labs. Rather, they invite participants into a journey of reflection that digs into the dynamic reality of transformation: the complex web between individual lives and global structures.

IofC programmes aim to create a framework for participants to make ever-deepening meaning out of life - in particular exploring the potential of a life purpose that extends beyond narrow self-interest to responsiveness to the needs of the whole.

A number of initiatives in the last

twenty years have been consistently feeding into a network, primarily of young people, in the Asia Pacific: over 100 alumni of the Action for Life programme, over 300 from Life Matters since its inception, the more recent development of the Asia Plateau Internship Programme and the regional Life Matters courses, as well as the now well-established annual Asia Pacific Youth Conference.

Interspersed with other activities and programmes, including those operating locally, there is a regional ferment among individuals and teams who are committed at a deep level to the values that undergird IofC’s work.

## Multiple intelligences

However, those organising this ToT had identified a shortfall of up-to-date design and delivery skills in much IofC training. The ToT aimed to weave some of this more technical

framework for effective learning and sense-making into the essence of IofC’s approach, moving its training to the next level in professionalism and depth.

Several sessions looked at the implications of different learning styles and the need to bridge the intent of the facilitator with the “multiple intelligences” in the room. Asked at the end of the programme what they had become aware of that they need to unlearn, one participant responded: “Not to make assumptions about ‘my style of learning’ being the only one that is valid and worthy of application.”

The effectiveness of training also encompasses the interior qualities of the facilitator, as has always been the focus of IofC’s methodology,

Read the full article at: [www.iofc.org/equipping-iofc-trainers-asia-pacific](http://www.iofc.org/equipping-iofc-trainers-asia-pacific)



# Life Matters report-back in Blacktown

The City of Blacktown, in Western Sydney, is the largest city by population in New South Wales. It is home for over 318,000 people, 37.6% born overseas. The median age is 32.

Two *Life Matters* workshops have already taken place in Western Sydney.

In January 2014 three young Sydneysiders attended the Australia Day Life Matters workshop at Armagh, the Initiatives of Change centre in Melbourne (see February *Newsbriefs*). They were two Ethiopian/Australians, Firaol Tujuba and Lydia Befekadu, and a Sierre Leone/Australian, Yarie Bangura.

On 6 April more than 40 people gathered at the Sydwest Multicultural Centre in Blacktown to hear back from them. They were welcomed by Assefa Bekele, Multicultural Community Liaison Officer with the NSW Police stationed at Blacktown. Ariya Chittasy, a graduate of the full

nine-day Life Matters Course, chaired the gathering. Young Sydneysiders who had taken part in this and other Initiatives of Change training programs around the world also spoke.

Firaol and Lydia, who have since married and will be visiting Ethiopia on their honeymoon and hoping to connect with the IofC team in Addis Ababa, spoke of the experience being life changing for them. Yarie called it “life-discovering”. She said, “You go to places that maybe you have tried to ignore. It also challenges you to free yourself.”

Emanuel Acuoth, originally from South Sudan, represented Mayor Chagai and Andy Kenyi who had

attended the first Blacktown Life Matters workshop in 2009. He shared how Mayor, using basketball, had engaged and developed many young Sudanese to the extent that two are now representing Australia in basketball, and stressed the importance of character training in this program.

A further Life Matters workshop for youth from Western Sydney is being worked towards for 15-17 August - this time a residential one in Gerringong on the coast south of Sydney.

*Jane Mills*



Clockwise from top left: Lydia and Firaol; Yarie; Emanuel and Shoshana; James and Graeme; Ariya; Assefa and Nathan

## Journey of change follows the logo

Searching for a simple way to conceptualise what the journey of change involves, I thought of the IofC logo (as it appears on the *Newsbriefs* front page).

In a presentation on Australia at the Making Democracy Real conference in India this year, my theme was: “The path to our future passes through the past.”

A better future, personal or national, involves more than setting worthy goals and going straight for them. Following the path of the logo we go beneath the surface until at the bottom we are facing backwards towards our past, in the apparent opposite direction to where we want to reach.

This is the place where we identify and accept the wrongs we have been part of, where we become willing to forgive, to surrender the ‘big I’ behind our actions, even those which appear worthy.

Then we are free to reach our goals, to make a difference, to love without agendas.

*Graeme Cordiner*

# New Treasurer for IofC Australia



Ron Lawler

Initiatives of Change Australia's new Treasurer, effective from April this year, is Ron Lawler. He replaces Jonathan Lancaster, Treasurer since 1991. At the May IofC National Gathering tribute was paid to Jonathan for his many years of devoted service to IofC's administration.

Ron Lawler lives in Wagga Wagga with his wife Cynthia. His experience with Initiatives of Change includes fifteen years in Australia and

abroad as a full-time volunteer and twenty-two years as a member of the Australian Council of Management.

He is a graduate of the University of Queensland and has a Masters degree in Social Sciences specialising in local government and Aboriginal

communities. His current role in the NSW Department of Family and Community Services as Manager, Sector Performance, gives him responsibility for a budget of \$20 million. He and his staff plan and contract services provided by non-government organisations in the areas of family support, homelessness and other early intervention and crisis services.

In addition he manages the disaster welfare response in the Riverina; floods, bushfires, grain

silo combustion, tornadoes all have occurred on his watch.

Previously Ron and family lived and worked in central Arnhemland for four and a half years in the service of the Aboriginal Homelands people. Today his work includes building the cultural capability of his staff in working with Aboriginal clients, building the capacity for Aboriginal NGOs to deliver their own services and engaging their communities.

## Facilitation - a fine balancing act

On 18 May twelve of us, including two from Queensland, gathered for a Creators of Peace facilitators' refresher day at Shoshana's lovely home in Sydney. We revised how to cover topics such as "What is Peace?", "Circles of Concern" and "Putting Peace into Practice".

Trish went through resources that can be utilised in Circles, and Shoshana spoke about the fine balancing act that is involved in being a facilitator. We discussed activities, exercises and energisers that can be used in future. Participants shared their experiences of what has worked well for them in past Circles. It was a day immersed in ideas and discussion, as well as networking.

Zobra Aly

In Canberra eight Australian women from five different cultural backgrounds met through two Saturdays and one evening in a Creators of Peace Circle, the third to be held in our city. As the facilitator, I felt we moved from an intellectual discussion about "what is peace?" and questions like "where is this all going?" to a heartfelt understanding of the deeper issues in each of us as individuals. One participant described it as "very thought provoking and nurturing".

Rosemary Thwaites

<http://iofc.org/creators-of-peace>

## PROGRAMME OF CONFERENCES

### Caux 2014 Exploring the human factor in global change

27 - 28 June 2014

**Addressing Europe's Unfinished Business** Designing actions for a more peaceful, more united Europe

30 June - 4 July 2014

**Caux dialogue on land and security** Addressing the connections between poverty, conflict and land degradation

5 - 10 July 2014

**Trust and integrity in the global economy (TIGE)** Inspiring people and purpose for sustainable prosperity

12 - 17 July 2014

**Just governance for human security** Structures and personal qualities which foster ethical, inclusive governance

20 - 24 July 2014

**Seeds of inspiration** Diversity and Dialogue for Social Transformation

26 July - 2 August 2014

**Children as actors for transforming society (CATS)** Young advocates of change

3 - 8 August 2014

**Impact Initiatives for Change** Innovation and action for social cohesion

10 - 13 August 2014

**International peace-builders' forum (IPF)**

Details at: <http://www.caux.iofc.org>

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