CoP has celebrated 25 years at a Conference like no other…

**The Living Peace Conference**

Nearly 200 delegates from 43 countries attended at the Caux Conference Centre in Switzerland from August 4 -10 2016

The Creators of Peace (CoP) initiative was launched in 1991 at the Initiatives of Change (IoFC) conference centre in Caux, Switzerland by The Hon. Anna Abdallah Msekwa of Tanzania, a respected politician and leader of her country’s women’s organizations.

In her inaugural speech, Anna urged everyone to “create peace wherever we are, in our hearts, our homes, our workplace and communities. We all pretend that someone else is the stumbling block … Could that someone be myself?”

At the start of the Conference, all delegates were invited to:

♦ SEARCH FOR CLUES TO ‘LIVING PEACE’;

♦ OBSERVE HOW A ‘NEW STORY’ FOR THE WORLD could result from us and our communities if we apply those clues to our own lives through the practice of ‘living peace’.

Jean Brown, the Living Peace Conference Convenor said, “We all have the power to change our story; from hurt to healing, from frozen to forgiving, from callousness to compassion. One of the insights that informs the approach of Creators of Peace is the awareness of the power of the story that every person, every woman, lives out of. It’s what shapes her world view, her values and relationships, that she passes on to her children and grandchildren. These stories are what shapes who we are and how we think…. ….Change your story and you change the world”

At daily plenary sessions, we were moved, privileged and humbled to hear brave personal stories shared by Keynote speakers with stories of survival from violence and despair, and how their ‘new story’ has evolved. Some have answered a calling to take the lead in addressing global and communal issues, and profoundly inspiring initiatives that are making a difference for social change and human rights

Some of the Speakers were:

**Gill Hicks:** Globally known as a survivor of the 2005 London terrorist bombings, is now considered as one of the most thought provoking life affirming public speaker in Australia and UK. In spite of having lost both legs from below her knees, she is now operating a not for profit initiative ‘M.A.D. for Peace’ communicating to the general public the importance of our individual responsibility in creating a world in which extreme conflict and its human consequences are ended. www.gilltalks.com

**Dr Maryam Bibi:** Founder of ‘Khwendo Kor’ improving the education, health and economic well-being of women and children in Pakistan. www.khwendokor.org.pk

**Amy Peake:** Founder of ‘Loving Humanity’ a non-profit organisation installing machines that make sanitary towels and incontinence pads in refugee camps. www.lovinghumanity.org.uk

**Jin In:** Founder of 4GGL ‘4Girls GLocal Leadership’ tackling the atrocities inflicted on girls worldwide, and transforming a new paradigm of empowered girls to be a force for change. www.4ggl.org

**Dr Rosina Wiltshire:** Has an extensive career in International Development, Leadership Development & Gender Equality Justice & Peace; is the first CARICOM Advocate for Gender Justice, is a Distinguished Fellow of the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social & Economic Research, and lectured for 20 years in International Politics & International Development. www.caribbeanfutureforum.com

**Marina Cantacuzino:** Founder of ‘The Forgiveness Project’ an award-winning secular organisation that collects and shares real stories of forgiveness, and through a thought provoking exhibition, builds understanding, encourages reflection and enables people to reconcile with pain and move forward from trauma in their own lives. www.theforgivenessproject.com

**Jo Berry:** Founder of ‘Building Bridges for Peace’ dedicating her life to transforming her pain into action for peace enabling divided communities and the general public to explore and better understand the roots of war, terrorism and violence. www.buildingbridgesforpeace.org

**Dr Lillian Cingo:** Selected as a South African ‘national icon’ and founder of ‘The Health Train’ the world’s first primary health care train to South Africa’s poorest people. www.trainofhope.org

...the Living Peace Conference
Every morning we met at 7.30am for quiet time and then sharing of the daily Community Circles were most helpful. My community circle members of CoP International. Thank you for your love and support. Ratna Wahyuningsih and Venny; the board members of IofC and all their guidance, the core CoP Indonesia team; Siti Aminah, Siti Zaetun, my special gratitude to Ibu Jean Brown and Ibu Barbara Lawler for our story, helps us to face life and let go of the past.,

With positive thinking and forgiving other people who became part of deep sadness at the loss of my  mother. The experience has helped greatly in my struggle with cancer and the believe that we never live alone. It strongly helped my self confidence. Listening to their stories energized me to gain new spirit of life. I a gate opening to find new hope in my life. Meeting new people and influence for my personal turning point that I have been through. It is stronger and emboldened.

The Living Peace Conference was an incredible opportunity to connect with something wonderful and inspiring. In a world that is often coloured by despair, women came together united in the belief that empowering women can change the world. This belief was embodied by every woman there. Being there I saw it, I felt it, I heard it, in every story: like Elizabeth from Baringo county Kenya a widow from a poor village who is not afraid to push the governor of her county in the cause of peace building; and the two Lebanese women one Christian one Muslim holding hands to create a new paradigm of peace. From them and every women there I came away feeling stronger and emboldened.

Ros Kennedy—Sydney, Australia
The Living Peace Conference was an incredible opportunity to connect with something wonderful and inspiring. In a world that is often coloured by despair, women came together united in the belief that empowering women can change the world. This belief was embodied by every woman there. Being there I saw it, I felt it, I heard it, in every story: like Elizabeth from Baringo county Kenya a widow from a poor village who is not afraid to push the governor of her county in the cause of peace building; and the two Lebanese women one Christian one Muslim holding hands to create a new paradigm of peace. From them and every women there I came away feeling stronger and emboldened.

The journey of joining the Living Peace Conference had a big influence for my personal turning point that I have been through. It is a gate opening to find new hope in my life. Meeting new people and listening to their stories energized me to gain new spirit of life. I believe that we never live alone. It strongly helped my self confidence. The experience has helped greatly in my struggle with cancer and the deep sadness at the loss of my mother. Stories from our past are our reminder to reach out for a better future. With positive thinking and forgiving other people who became part of our story, helps us to face life and let go of the past.

My special gratitude to Ibu Jean Brown and Ibu Barbara Lawler for their guidance, the core CoP Indonesia team; Siti Aminah, Siti Zaetun, Ratna Wahyuningsih and Venny; the board members of IofC and all members of CoP International. Thank you for your love and support. Indira Haridas Nair—Malaysia
It wasn’t possible to get to know all 200 participants within a week, so the daily Community Circles were most helpful. My community circle was a diverse community from many different parts of the world. Every morning we met at 7.30am for quiet time and then sharing of our thoughts and experiences which helped to get to know each other intimately.

At the morning plenary sessions each speaker spoke from their personal experiences and their efforts at a personal cost to bring peace in whatever areas they were involved in. Each and every speaker was an amazing individual, their stories impacted me greatly.

Dr. Lillian Cingo of the primary health care train that goes into remote areas of South Africa, shared how she negotiated with a man who was determined to kill some of the African health workers, with a broom and a pillow cover as a sign of peace.

Dr. Gill Hicks from Australia touched me deeply being a survivor of the London terror bombings and losing both legs from the knee. In spite of this, after her recovery with prosthetic legs, she has launch her non-profit organisation called M.A.D (Making a Difference).

Maryam Bibi from Pakistan, who lives on the border of Afghanistan shared about her work with women and children in education, health and economic well-being through collective efforts of men and local leaders. Having personally experienced great difficulty as a young woman this motivated her to help alleviate the suffering of other women in her area.

Jo Berry from the UK shared her continued work in building bridges between adverse individuals and communities by sharing her own personal experience of finding peace by forgiving Patrick Magee, the bomber from Northern Ireland who killed her father. Now Jo Berry and Patrick Magee both work together building bridges for peace.

I’m not able to mention each individual who touched and inspired me. It was not just from the stage but also the individual conversations were most precious. I came back having made real friends with young and not so young women from across the globe, with whom some conversations still continues.

As I listened to the speakers who took steps to start conversations with people they felt divided from, I thought of Malaysia. Are we having conversations with people we feel divided from? I began to dream of groups who feel they are marginalised who might be able to express their grievances so that together we could find solutions. How this could be done, I am not sure, but I want to keep pondering on that thought.
Delegates reflect on their experience of the Living Peace Conference

Yara Zgheib - USA
CoP showed me that to live peace is not to live passively. Peace is not a state. CoP is a movement of wonderfully different people reaching out to one another, to create something good. I saw women talk, forgive, heal, and brainstorm together, truly listen, truly look at one another, truly care. I felt connected to every one of these ladies from all over the world, who inspired me to live and spread my own peace, wherever I am.

Maria Cristina – Brazil
My experience at the Conference was very strong. The example of women who turned into wealth their own and others’ tragedies, selfless delivery of facilitators in the middle of shortcomings, difficulties and/or armed conflict, the beauty of cultural and linguistic diversity; all this made me realize the overall dimension of our work, which has worked in me to overcome situations that I believed I had already forgiven.

I was inspired to contribute to the International Coordinating team, even without speaking English. We will be sharing some of the stories we heard, in our third general meeting of CoP in Brazil, and use the speaker’s phrases in our Quiet Time.

Elizabeth Devine - Australia
A particularly thought provoking moment for me from the conference occurred when a speaker from Syria questioned why we always need to find commonality and whether we should instead acknowledge and celebrate our differences. Another powerful moment took place when a male speaker from Colombia apologised to women on behalf of all men for the poor treatment of women by men across the world.

The many stories told throughout the conference demonstrated the remarkable resilience and courage of women and how much we need to actively support and celebrate one another.

Thierry Nkurunziza - Burundi
The motivation to rid myself of the hatred I’ve held for many years before becoming a creator of peace came when I learnt in a CoP Circle that hatred is a passive weapon of destruction, and a massive cause of mental health and social issues. This led me to realise that when the flames of love give light, the ice of hatred melts.

I was inspired by CoP workers from Latin America, and those of the Muslim and Jewish religions, seeing their engagement in peace building in conflict zones.

Glenys Wood - New Zealand
Taking time to mature like a good cheese was my experience of the conference. As an older person I felt I was constantly running to keep up with the stimulating programme provided. It wasn’t until I arrived back home that I processed all that I heard. I realised, like some lovely cheeses that have holes, I could relax and let some of my worries slip through the holes!

I find I’m letting my inner compass guide me, and I’m living the peace that I hope to share. My new story lies in trusting and not living in my own doubts.

Faina Katito - Zimbabwe
The Conference was a challenge as it introduced a new concept for us from Zimbabwe. All the key speakers inspired us as they spoke of their experiences that easily went to our own hearts. They inspired us with new and refreshing ideas for the challenges in our local situations. We’ve found new confidence to open up and share our own personal experiences during our Peace Circles.

The inclusion of younger participants inspired hope for the future of CoP.

With the help we receive from IoFC Sweden our CoP program is set for an adventurous future.

Iman Al Ghafari - Damascus
The Conference was an experience that allowed me to see the big fabric of peace that exists in different corners of the world where work on peace decorates this fabric and gives it light. It helped me to see how we are united in our fear, pain, mis-judgment, love, hope and peace, no matter what place we come from. I saw the importance of story telling—we were all inspired by each other's story and connected by the great work each had done abroad, which encouraged me to share my work.

I didn't go to bed until after 1am each night because I didn’t want to waste the opportunity to spend time with wonderful women and interestingly I wasn’t tired, I was filled with life. The magnificent surroundings of the Conference Centre, combined with the well directed programs and the energy of the great intentions and love of the organizers who worked hard to produce such a great conference, all helped us to connect with each other and the goal of the conference. We all now have a responsibility to be advocates of Living Peace.

Thank you Jean Brown and the international team, I have brought home a wonderful supply of support, encouragement and love. Thank you for including me in your team and for the guidance you always show me.

Peace be upon you all

Lydia Ebude - USA
I was impacted by the message of the Founding Mothers, in which they explained the idea behind CoP. They said it was a quest for universal peace, not necessarily the absence of war, not just where guns are firing, but making peace in our hearts, our homes, our bedrooms, our classrooms, etc. An idea not just for women, but men are also part of the problem and can as well be part of the solution. In its universality, CoP should not be just an event during a conference but a movement for ‘men’ and women to dialogue on this idea.

I was also impacted by the generous sponsors who made it possible for many participants to attend the conference and make it the huge success it was.

I’ve been empowered to be an advocate to walk the path of Living Peace. I am not rich in material resources but looking back on my life and my God’s abundant grace in my life, in gratitude I am giving back to others, living peace and sharing peace with those in pain by lifting them up in prayers.
Each day of the Conference had a theme:

The essence of the Conference was captured graphically (as below)

by creative thinker and graphic facilitator Willemijn Lambert from The Netherlands
Some 14 facilitators, members and close supporters of CoP Kenya were honored to be part of the historical 25th Anniversary Conference that brought women from all over the world to share, listen to each other's experiences and to recommit themselves to a peaceful future. The whole Kenyan team are very grateful to all those who gave financial support to make it possible to attend, in particular the eleven women involved in the CoP Baringo Project making it possible for them to be part of this celebration.

We are particularly grateful for the Swedish grant, which paid in full the accommodation and registration costs. We are also very grateful to the Living Peace Coordination Group that fundraised for the air tickets; the Friends of Africa fund for supporting with visa fees, insurance and train tickets; to the CoP Sydney team for taking care of local transport and even providing the team with some pocket money; to IoFC Kenya, and other well wishers who made contributions to support individuals in different ways. The women benefited a lot from the exposure and the experiences; for many of them, it was the first time out of Kenya and others the first time out of Africa. But even for those who had been to Caux previously, it was still a memorable, inspiring and refreshing experience.

**Njeri Kimanthi.** The conference couldn't have come at a better time for me. My life had been full with family, school and CoP activities among other things. Being at the conference gave me an opportunity to learn from women from all over the world. But most of all, it gave me space to re-evaluate and have an inner audit of myself as a peace practitioner. The wealth of knowledge and wisdom in the house was limitless, making me realize how little I know which was humbling. Listening to the life-transforming experiences, renewed my commitment to continue as a peace creator. I came back home refreshed, rejuvenated and inspired to keep on being a creator of peace wherever I am and in everything I do.

**Esther Inzekella.** It was wonderful going to Caux. I had a chance to meet and interact with so many people from different parts of the world, which was amazing. The sessions, ‘Telling a new story’ and the plenaries were awesome. Also some of the tools used to enhance our understanding of ‘living peace’ like documentaries (video from Burundi, South Africa and Palestine) and story sharing were very impactful and life changing for me. The whole experience took me to a whole new level of my understanding and knowledge of forgiveness.

**Rose Njeri.** The conference was the greatest thing that ever happened to me. I heard great inspiring stories of forgiveness and hearing people sharing their stories was so touching, encouraging and educational. It was clear that stories are powerful tools for healing. I connected with women from many countries but even more, I felt a sense of belonging, and experienced great peace. The experience made me feel like I had been born again, I was renewed, rejuvenated and ready to share my great experience with people in Kenya and especially in Baringo County where we have been focusing on.

**Annie Gitu.** The conference was very powerful, educative, and has added value to the CoP work I do in my homeland Kenya. There were inspiring speakers who shared their opportunities and challenges, especially Dr. Gill Hicks who lost both legs below the knees in the London bombings, who hasn't let this stop her to tirelessly work to assist communities; “it is good to be a bridge where others will pass through” she shared. Her story touched me and challenged me because, unlike her, I have all my organs and body parts functioning. I've made a decision to do as much as I can to create peace in society regardless of any challenges or hindrances that may come my way.

**Maryann Lekisemon.** The conference gave women from all over the world an opportunity to share their experiences and through that many people were able to share and get healed through story sharing process. I witnessed the conference transforming the lives of many women whose hearts were broken. But most important was when, together with my two sisters representing the warring ethnic groups in our country-Baringo, we made a commitment to remain committed to creating peace, regardless of the many challenges that are there.

**Rachel Wamalwa.** I went to Caux thinking that I knew everything about creating peace, but during the Conference, I learnt that I knew very little and still had a lot to learn. I was challenged to take a step of boldness and confidence and tell my story without allowing myself to feel ashamed, frustrated, neglected or useless. I also benefitted a lot through the workshop on “Making friends with the enemy” where I learnt to always consider where empathy, compassion and forgiveness may be applied to heal fractured relationships and mend broken hearts. And from that session, I knew that I needed to let go and forgive the father of my children. As I left the conference, my heart was healed and I felt renewed.

**Elizabeth Kipsang.** It was a wonderful experience for me to join women from different divides across the globe. The most inspiring part for me was during morning sessions when women shared their touching stories and experiences. But my highlight was when together with my two other colleagues, Mary and Mediatrix, we were given an opportunity to share about our CoP work in Baringo county; it was a moving moment to share about the conflict and still be positive that with our work, there is still hope for peace.

**Mumbi Wambugu.** Being part of the Conference is an opportunity that I will never forget. It was a transformative one. The stories shared were just amazing and life changing. They have made me think bigger. Getting to listen to what other people are doing in their home countries was also so helpful as I borrowed a leaf of the amazing works. The small community gatherings were something to always look forward to because it was there that I felt like I belonged to one beautiful family, that was so warm and we shared a lot together with without fear, and when we volunteered in doing services together in the kitchen the bond was tightened even more (I miss them a lot).

**Mary Kuket.** I am very grateful for the opportunity to be part of the Living Peace Conference for it was a learning moment for me. I was inspired to first build a bridge within the divides in myself, my family and within the community where I come from. I also learnt that I have to be living peace through my head, heart and hands so that I can meet the needs of people around me. In addition, through the ‘telling of a new story session’ I was inspired and a new story of hope was born in me.

**Mediatrix Masava.** My heart wounded with joy as I received the visa to Switzerland; It was the day I had been looking forward to for a couple of years. I was excited to get on the plane to the most adorable country of chocolates. I was most inspired at the opening of the conference when Dr. Gill Hicks, shared some remarkable words which would run in my mind and will remain with me; “We are here united in our firm belief that we can make a difference, that we can bring positive change to the place in the world in which we live”. The Conference as a whole has been a powerful demonstration of the power of forgiveness and the ability of people to heal and love one another. A new story is being written and the world is a better place because of this. The Conference gave me a new lease of life.

**Wambui Nyago.** “Someone somewhere is feeling the effects of what you have said or done, and that’s a great responsibility” - this statement from a lady who survived the London bombing has stayed with me since the Conference. What I do and say has an effect on people. What we do in CoP circles has an effect on all those we reach. It was such an encouragement to meet with women from all corners of the world not only to celebrate our anniversary but to learn more of what they are doing to promote peace starting with themselves.
“LIVING PEACE”  
Copyright 23/07/2016 © Glenyce Durdin

Together we sing out our vision,  
Of a world that is woven in peace.  
Each thread reconciled to each other,  
Creatively living as one.

Chorus  
We are women of courage,  
Women of strength,  
Women of joy, living peace in our hearts.  
We are women of courage,  
Women of strength,  
Women of joy, living peace in hearts.  
Together we work to cease conflict,  
And nurture healing within.  
With compassion we build understanding,  
Collectively working as one.

Chorus  
We are women of courage,  
Women of strength,  
Women of joy, living peace in our hearts.  
We are women of courage,  
Women of strength,  
Women of joy, living peace in hearts.  
Peace... Peace... Peace

“The NEW STORY”  
Words: Glenyce Durdin/Jean Brown
Copyright 23/07/2016 © Glenyce Durdin

What is this brave new story?  
Revealing its way in our hearts.  
It’s healing the past, with new meaning,  
So the future of our children be free.

Chorus  
Singing out hope into the darkness.  
Singing out love into the pain.  
Singing out peace into the conflicts.  
Welcoming this new way to be-

So now this brave new story?  
Revealing its way in our hearts.  
It’s expanding our lives along pathways,  
We’re courageously inspired to walk.

Chorus  
Singing out hope into the darkness.  
Singing out love into the pain.  
Singing out peace into the conflicts.  
Welcoming this new way to be.

Glenyce Durdin
Songs were written especially for the conference by Glenyce Durdin (South Australia)

At the request of Glenyce, some brave delegates formed a choir to lead all the delegates in song throughout the conference. As we sang, the words reinforced our vision for peace and the mission we were being inspired to embark upon: To write ‘A New Story’.

The Conference Team are to be congratulated on providing a well organised, thoughtful, inspiring, emotionally moving, energising, transforming, motivational, empowering, fun and professionally run Conference

Continue the Conversation about Living Peace  
by Kate Monkhouse, CoP Executive Officer

We all work for peace, but what does it mean to live peace?  
In an age of increasingly complex or fear-filled debates about gender and security, it might be easy to lose sight of what a living peace looks and feels like.

The CoP Living Peace conference was for us an extraordinary opportunity to hear and share stories from (extra)ordinary women around the world who are bringing peace alive. Throughout the 6 days together we were able to discuss what it takes to nurture and cultivate a vibrant and dynamic peace. On the last day, we each considered a change, a learning and an action for peace that we would take back home as a result of being part of the Living Peace Conference.

Since then, we have travelled back home, re-connected with family or friends and got back into our daily lives. Many of us have also held events, meals or gatherings to share the stories and learning we enjoyed.

We want to continue the conversation about Living Peace and share the stories, insights and joy of our experience with the wider CoP network, neighbours and colleagues. I believe we’ve been given the beautiful gift of ‘Living Peace’ and the Creators of Peace Circle experience, and we want to be as generous with it as possible.

If you haven’t already done so, do have a look at the lovely resource “What can I do?” that Shoshana Faire and Diana Damsa have put together to help us continue the Living Peace conversation with colleagues, neighbours and our wider communities. Do share what you get up to at: creatorsofpeace@iofc.org or via Twitter: @CreatorsOfPeace #livingpeace2016.
Burundi CoP delegates advocating Living Peace
by Daphrose Ntarataze - CoP Past President and Coordinator of Muntunuwundi Burundi

Thanks to the support of the OAK Foundation, the Burundian CoP team of 10 who attended the Conference are living peace and being advocates to help others write their new stories. We are all ready to qualify as peace-makers.

On 16 October 2016 a group of 12 participants (4 women and 8 men) decided to share their experience of the Living Peace Conference they had attended. They gathered in the province of Gitega in Nyabutusti district, in a modest simple and beautiful house. Beyond the fence is a hill which inspired their meditation and silence. The delegation, from Kivu region in the Democratic Republic of Congo, was captivated by the magic of peace in the CID (Centre Irenique et du Développement) in Gitega.

“The moments of silence and guided reflection started me on a journey: I lived in the past, present and future. And I asked myself – what is my real role in building peace? Therefore I have decided that, as long as I am a parent, I will make peace reign first in my family and then share it with all around me”, said Ruben Balolebwami, a member of the group.

For participant Maguy Masoka, the visit to CID was life changing: “I learnt to keep quiet, and to create moments of joy in my inner being. It is new for me but I love it. The times of story-telling have changed my life. I have been able to empty this bag full of anger, hatred, grudges and regrets which I have carried for a long time. I am now a flexible woman ready to live life full of the peace I have found here.”

There are those who say ‘Where there are men, there will be conflict.’ But can’t we defy this and choose the way of non-conflict? Germaine Manirarinya, a facilitator said: “Living the peace in our communities is not easy because there are many things which trip us up. Yet it is possible. One person imbued with the principles of peace lived whole heartedly, who doesn’t give up, has a direct effect on those around her. Apart from touching the ground, we need time, because there are many problems we encounter every day which slow down the process.”

So it is the magic want of the Muntunuwundi Circles of Peace and Development, piloted by Mrs Daphrose Ntarataza which has lit up the participants. Angelo Barampana project trainer was charged with putting peace into practice, is convinced there is no peace without bread and no bread without peace, and that the two go together. “Daisies are the little spring flowers at ground level. So when we talk of starting development at the level of daisies, that means starting at the grass roots.” It is here that we responded to the basic needs and concerns of the participants, which will be the same as in the general population. ‘So it can be said that it is the trio of peace, bread and development that represents new hope for all.’

Introducing the newly elected 2016-2019 Creators of Peace International Coordinating Team

At the 2016 AGM (held during the Conference) it was unanimously agreed that an organisation such as Creators of Peace with representation in 43 countries, requires a central contact point administered by an Executive Officer. The retiring International Coordinating team proposed that the coming year be a year of transition to trial such a role.

It was proposed that Kate Monkhouse (UK) has the knowledge, expertise and commitment to CoP to take on this role. The nomination of Kate to this role was accepted unanimously.

Kate agreed to take on the role of Executive Officer, outside of the international coordinator team, to support the president and others in their roles. She agreed to develop projects and take responsibility to coordinate the practical work of social media, newsletters, data base, fundraising, website management etc.

It was agreed that we would still need to work on fundraising to make this a paid role. As and when a salary for a paid Executive Officer role becomes available an interview process will be held.

We received eleven nominations from a fantastic group of women, of which 7 candidates were elected to the International Coordinating Team who are prepared to put their time and skills in to support the governance of CoP. The three executive roles of President, Treasurer and Secretary remained open, and it was agreed that Kate would canvas and interview candidates and then call an Extraordinary General Meeting to vote on suitable nominees who can offer the time and skills necessary to form the Executive Committee.

The International Coordinating Team are:

- Yara Zghieb (St.Lois Mis-
- Nighat Kurshid (Pakistan)
- Shoshana Faire (Sydney Austral-
- Luz Stella Camach Castro (Columbia)
- Diana Damsa (Romania)
- Maria Cristina Munoz
- Sylvie Lefran-

Creators of Peace Elders were appointed to share their wisdom, mentor and encourage the new governance team

- Jean Brown
- Vijayalakshmi Subramanian
- Christiane Garin Al-Azhari

Creators of Peace Ambassador

- Daphrose Ntarataze (Burundi) Ex-President

NOTE: Since the AGM in August 2016, three amazing women have been nominated for the positions of President (Amina Dikedi-Ajakaiye-Nigeria), Treasurer (Gabriela Sebastyen – Romania), and Secretary (Anne-Claire Frank-Seisay-USA). All three will be voted into their roles at an extra-ordinary General Assembly to be held on-line on Tuesday 9th January 2017.

A quorum of National and International Coordinators will link up to endorse the election of all three women to their respective roles. The next Global Connections newsletter will introduce the newly elected President, Secretary and Treasurer and share some words from the International Team as a whole.
A ‘Women of Peace’ event was hosted on International Day of Peace by Stand Up, a Jewish organisation committed to pursuing social justice for disadvantaged communities. CoP was invited to showcase the Living Peace Conference.

Four of the 11 Sydney women who attended the Conference spoke about their experience.

Yarrie Bangura who came to Australia as a child in 2004 from war-torn Sierra Leone, via a refugee camp, currently working at Stand Up, spoke about how her first foray into CoP in 2009 taught her to understand and forgive herself, and how visiting Caux has now inspired her to involve other young people to work towards peace.

Ros Kennedy shared how she had connected deeply with the Kenyan delegation at Caux and heard about their daily struggles. Particularly, she befriended a widowed mother of five, who belonged to a group of other widows. Ros asked her the question, ‘what one thing would make a big difference to your lives?’ and was surprised to hear the answer, ‘a milking cow’. Over a phone call back to her husband in Sydney that night, she informed him they had just bought a milking cow for the price of hosting one extended family dinner in Kenya.

Zohra Aly shared how she heard two Lebanese women, one Christian and one Muslim, speak about how they bring women across the religious divides together in their country by recognising our similarities but also our differences by simply accepting the latter. Zohra explained that in the Quran, God says he created us as diverse nations ‘so we may get to know one another’. She shared some of the words from the ‘Living Peace’ song that the delegates sang often at the Conference, and how ‘peace begins with me’ has been an important revelation for Zohra since she first found out about CoP in 2009.

Shoshana Faire spoke of story-sharing as being at the heart of CoP Circles, and how our story can change when we repeat it. She also spoke of how listing to the stories of ‘others’ helps to remove or change any assumptions we may hold about them. She also shared her own story of how she was able to re-tell her own connection with her Jewish background, when she discovered on her first visit to Caux in 2010, that her Hungarian grandparents who’s lives were saved when they were rescued from a concentration camp in Germany in World War 2 in 1945, were then housed as refugees at Caux in the very same building she was staying in for a conference.

The guests attending were then facilitated in circles to reflect upon the stories or beliefs that they might be holding which could get in the way of connecting with others, and one step they could take towards living peace themselves.

Sydney celebrates CoP’s 25th Anniversary
by Tanya Fox

The Sydney CoP network celebrated its 25th anniversary on Sunday 30 October at their Annual Celebration event. 7 of the delegates who had attended the Conference in Caux had the 75 guests mesmerised as they listened to the delegates reflecting on their personal highlights, share the key learnings from the Conference, and watched a power point presentation of photos taken during the Conference and the splendid views of the Swiss Mountains overlooking Lake Geneva seen from the Initiatives of Change Caux conference centre. They said it was a privilege to be in Caux and to bond with amazing women from so many different faiths, colours and societies, many living in the midst of conflict.

We then gave an overview of our activities (see below) both internationally and locally in 2016 which added up to the busiest year yet for CoP in Sydney.

Guests were asked to consider getting involved to support the wide range of CoP initiatives, and to register their willingness to participate in areas like promoting CoP in neighbouring countries, encouraging involvement of young people in CoP, and helping to coordinate CoP Circles.

Some of our activities in 2016 were:

- We ran 4 Peace Circles; 2 Peace Circle Facilitator Training, and 1 Facilitator Trainer Training;
- The Ginn Fourie ‘Beyond Forgiving’ major Fundraiser;  
- A Peace Focus Group has started; A CoP Sydney Facebook page was launched www.facebook.com/creatorsofpeaceNSW; 
- The Auburn CoP Network has continued to meet every month exploring a wide range of inspiring peace-building topics; conducted ‘Talking Circles’ at an International Women’s Day event; an intergenerational Peace Circle was held in Auburn; CoP and iofC together hosted a Sydney Alliance Table Talk event, ‘Changing the Conversation about Asylum Seekers’;
- The Auburn CoP network had a major Fundraiser, ‘Beyond Forgiving’;
- Presentations on CoP have been given to a range of organisations including schools, Rotary and interest groups; CoP women attended an Intercultural Competence and Diversity Education Training provided by the ‘Together for Humanity Foundation’; CoP was again represented with a stall at the Annual Africultures Festival; and, a memorial garden is being developed in memory of our departed sister, Trish McDonald-Harrison, in the grounds of the Auburn Centre for Community where Trish worked tirelessly to gain the support of the Auburn Council to provide a room for CoP to have our regular monthly gatherings.

The Conference delegates sang both the songs that were written for the Conference backed by the recordings, and invited the guests to join in which they did wholeheartedly singing as they walked out into the garden to gather for a group photo, a fun ending to an inspiring uplifting event.

where over a 100 people heard first-hand personal stories from asylum seekers and were challenged to examine their values and take action to welcome people seeking asylum on our shores; Presentations on CoP have been given to a range of organisations including schools, Rotary and interest groups; CoP women attended an Intercultural Competence and Diversity Education Training provided by the ‘Together for Humanity Foundation’; CoP was again represented with a stall at the Annual Africultures Festival and, a memorial garden is being developed in memory of our departed sister, Trish McDonald-Harrison, in the grounds of the Auburn Centre for Community where Trish worked tirelessly to gain the support of the Auburn Council to provide a room for CoP to have our regular monthly gatherings.

This issue of Global Connections was produced & published by Tanya Fox, and edited by Shoshana Faire, Sydney Australia.

Next edition will be produced as soon as sufficient news, stories, photos etc are received.

****Our readers enjoy reading your stories, please send your report and a photo as soon as you complete a CoP Circle****

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