Message from the International CoP President, Daphrose Ntarataze - Burundi & Switzerland

2014 has come and gone with a lot of joy and challenges in the field of peace. I pray that in 2015 we each, and all together, as artisans of peace, will continue to plough and progress in our attachment to the love of truth, justice and peace—with a desire for perfection in what we are and what we do to help build a better world. We know that the peace and happiness of the world that we seek must start with, and within us. To quote the refrain of a well-known song, “Peace, it will have your face. Peace it will all ages. Peace will you, will I, will be us. Yes, peace will be all of us.”

Being a peacemaker is not easy in our times crossed by opposing currents. But women of Creators of Peace believe strongly in making it our reason for being, putting our own base on a solid foundation of the absolute values of honesty, purity, selflessness and love.

A dear friend told me that peace in societal contexts of turbulence is accompanied by the twin sisters: justice and love. If, during this year, we can continue to commit to the frequent exercise of introspection and we ask ourselves regularly the question: “Am I, or was I, right and good and kind to me, my family and my community?” If we each assess to what extent he/she grows in the daily practice of this demand for justice marked with uprightness, fairness, impartiality, integrity, respect and dignity, we will continue to be there for the wellbeing of others.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT to the 7th CoP AGM held at the Lumko Institute, in Benoni, South Africa, 21st September 2014.

“Our mission is to spread peace and love which is not easy to measure since it happens in the intimacy of our hearts. But we can rejoice at the peace that is taking place in the hearts of so many. It gives me great pleasure that our AGM is being held on the same continent from where the founder of Creators of Peace, Anna Abdallah Msckwa, came from. South Africa symbolises those who have passed through apartheid, colonialism, people who have gone through the fire but still symbolise hope. There are many models of Peace for the world from South Africa, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko.

CoP can rejoice that our programme is growing. People are affected from every walk of life. It is generated by women, growing from the inside, growing globally. CoP is in countries like Syria, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Crimea—what a great achievement!

Requests are coming from Mali, Niger, Chad, Libya, and from men more than women! We are very strong and ready to go anywhere. We are not just spreading peace. We ARE peace.’ I thank my fellow International Coordinators team made up of myself, Secretary: Pari Sanyu (Melbourne, Australia), Treasurer: Kate Monkhouse (UK), Trish McDonald-Harrison (Sydney, Australia), Jean Brown (Adelaide, Australia), Portia Mosia (Johannesburg, South Africa), Shoshana Faire (Sydney, Australia), Iman Al Ghafari (Damascus, Syria) and Tanya Fox (Sydney, Australia), for their direction, passion and dedication. We all meet once a month by Skype. Our focus has been on bringing to fruition the Strategic Plan which runs until 2016 which is CoP’s 25th anniversary.”

(See back pages for this Report in French)
**“A letter to Syria”**

This letter was written by Iman Al Ghafari, a CoP Facilitator living in Damascus, after attending an IoFC Training-Of-Trainees (ToT) gathering in Lebanon. Iman shares her reflections after attending the training.

Hello ‘Syria’,

The ToT experience has filled me with so much energy, joy and excitement.

I've come back to you holding many wonderful skills and love about building a better humanity and society.

1. I've gained more sisters and brothers there from different religions, denominations and nationalities.

2. Values, understanding and perspectives have been added and deepened:
   - Raging hatred, feeling as a victim, blaming, ignoring our responsibilities, and calling for wars are nonsense and will lead to nowhere but to disasters.
   - I can have different opinions with you, and see life and certain issues from different perspectives yet there is a great side in you I have to look at and search to find a space for both of us so we can dialogue and erase resentment.
   - We need countries and organizations that give us a space to find peace and build skills for creating peace. Thank You MRA/IofC and thank you MRA Lebanon for giving us this chance. I admire the cooperation and trust you share.
   - God doesn't change nations till they change what's in their hearts.
   - Quiet time and inner listening are essential
   - We always need to rebuild our knowledge and skills and gain deeper information. Thank you David for teaching us great skills. I learned a lot from your character, kindness and the way you treated us. A real teacher is not only who offers information but also who makes change in people’s life.
   - Each one has something to give and offer. I need to listen to the other with humbleness. Each participant shared a wonderful exercise mixed with his own experience and character. That was awesome.
   - Sharing stories is a skill and need because it is powerful.
   - Youth have great potentials and wonderful ideas. We need to encourage them and give them opportunities to shine.
   - Everyone is a wonderful planet created by the Almighty and perfect God so we need to be united to create a perfect universe. We all have God's touch in us.
   - Interfaith meetings and prayers that are based on respect and acceptance sooooooo powerful. It was such a great prayer meeting.
   - Diversity is a blessing. Thank You God for creating us different so we learn about each other and love each other for who we are.
   - Nature can participate in healing our broken hearts and confused minds. We need to keep it beautiful. The location was amazing.
   - Setting rules, needs and expectations can teach us about who we and others are. Also it can strengthen relationships.
   - Love, honesty, unselfishness and purity are standards meant not to burden us but to re-modify us.
   - We can never be perfect and it is not about being perfect ... It is about learning from our weakness and downs so we choose what we want to write in our book of lives. I believe this is the important task that man (women) has accepted to carry on.
   - There should be a time for fun and enjoyment every day. Playing games, and singing together was like magic. It refreshed our souls. My soul.
   - Kindness, hospitality, help and support deepen the bond and trust among people.

I am in the right place - Initiatives of Change/Moral Re-Armament and Creators of Peace. Thank you IoFC everywhere—in Canada where the blessing has started, and now in Lebanon where it has been a star shining on us in the Middle East.

I am really grateful to you Marie & Asaad and Wadiaa for your hospitality and giving me a ride every time I visit you. Thanks Mr. Ramez, Rowaida, Sameer, for the kindness and support you always show too. (I appreciate you all a lot).

“Dear ‘Syria’, I am going to apply what I’ve learned there with every aspect of my life. Then I will share it with your kids so the chain expands. These kinds of programs can build our countries and heal our societies from all kinds of problems. Yes, tomorrow is a better day.”

Thank you all for making this experience just wonderful. Above all Thank You Almighty God for leading me to this great IoFC / Creators of Peace path and it’s wonderful people.

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**Here is just one of the many inspiring stories shared at a CoP Circle in Damascus**

Report by Iman Al Ghafari

In August 2014, five women in Syria got together at the Albushra Association for Development. In this gathering three women who had participated had lost their husbands and properties and had to move to Damascus to a new environment which was a good lesson for all of us to see the difference in perspectives among women from the same country. We’re all Syrians but the conflict showed how ignorant we are about each other. There was a time when I held my breath when some talked about their opinions, fearing the reaction. Simple sentences could hurt. What was unique about it was the new bond created among people; they could never have sat together or start a conversation due to the social level some belong to, but the CoP Circle gave us a chance to listen to each other, cry together and find a base to stand on. The combination of loss, pain, and anger for who's responsible and what next, all these made this gathering a different experience.

One participant Hasnaa said, “I don’t know how to start. All that I really know is that my heart always recites this verse “In each hardship there is ease” - this is what fills my heart with hope. My life was in constant feeling of loneliness and fear. I lived in a house where everyone was cautious about what we say (traditional) then I forgot about what I felt was more important. So I isolated myself. My room was the place where I lived sadness. Then I got married at 17 and had 2 children. My life with my husband was happy, quiet, and normal, based on respect and understanding one another. Everything went well till that sad day when my husband was killed by a rocket in a street in Damascus. I had lost the meaning of life. All I felt was pain, anger and sadness. My future looked vague and scary. Every time I thought about my loss I got angry about who killed him. All my family and relatives were worried about me.

I felt hopeless and helpless. I wasn’t able to think about anything. Until the day I attended a CoP Circle where someone came to hold my hand and take me to see another side of the world. I didn’t think I would ever be able stand up. When I was asked what peace meant to me I thought about a child laughing without fear. Then I felt there was a huge power in me needing to burst out. Through this circle I felt that I wasn’t helpless. I could create my own happiness. I needed to know who I am and what I wanted. I’ve learned about forgiveness and learned how I need to put a limit to my pain so it doesn’t control my life any more. When I contribute in spreading happiness I can own it inside me. I want to share this new power in me. I want to help other women who went through the same situation to be stronger.”
CREATORS OF PEACE CIRCLES AROUND THE GLOBE

Creators of Peace in Brazil ‘Build a Wall of Happiness’

On September 23, 2014, a CoP gathering was held in Rio de Janeiro with women who had attended at least one of the CoP Circles developed in Brazil. Not all of them could attend, but there were participants from all the Circles.

Some teamwork activities were developed to make us reflect on how we sometimes forget the little things that make us happy on a daily basis, mainly when we are immersed in our difficulties. Then, based on those things, we created our “Wall of Happiness”. The aim was not to focus on our problems, but on several solutions which could be applied for each problem. Not to focus on sadness, but on the things that make us happy. And we invited all the women to reflect during a Quiet Time on “Do not make your happiness depend on what does not depend on you”. The goal was to create a list of things that did not depend on them, but even so, these things were hindering their happiness. Thus, we made use of a different approach to work on something that had already been developed in the CoP Circles.

Then each one of us shared what the circle had added to our lives. Whereas one person learned how to say “no” to more people, another learned how to say “yes” to herself and meet more of her needs. Another said that now she thinks before reacting. We heard statements like: “I got to live better and I am happier”, “When I’m about to create disagreement, I think to myself: I am a creator of peace. ‘I will not do that’, ‘I do not know if I create peace, but I expect less from the others and accept their mistakes’, ‘I have improved a lot. Even being an old lady, we can still learn a lot!” . These statements were very striking and they motivated us for our next CoP Circle in November 2014.

Something Unexpected happened in that November 2014 CoP Circle:

During the four months preceding this circle, about fifty women were interested in participating, but at the end only three attended at least one of the CoP Circles held in Rio de Janeiro with women who had been working for IofC for quite a long time. Not to focus on sadness, but on the things that make us happy. And we invited all the women to reflect during a Quiet Time on “Do not make your happiness depend on what does not depend on you”.

The CoP Circle is a learning experience and fresh experiences highlight new pathways for growth and deeper learning.

A Solomon Islands CoP comes to Sydney for Facilitation Training

Report by Liz Weeks, photos by Shoshana Faire

The lighting of a candle by Rachel Abi from the Solomon Islands, launched the beginning of a three day CoP Training of Facilitators programme. Rachel was one of ten participants, with others coming from as far as Perth, Melbourne, the Blue Mountains, and mid-north NSW as well as several Sydneysiders.

The program was held in Shoshana Faire’s home from 15-17 November 2014.

Shoshana, a Facilitator for over several decades, led the three days with Liz Weeks as co-facilitator who was starting to learn the art of training facilitators.

Learning to be a CoP facilitator is to embrace the ideals of CoP; to engage very deeply with the methodology, approach, values and purpose of a CoP Circle; while developing the skills of facilitation.

As the days progressed, awareness grew that there is a “deeper why” to doing a CoP Circle and that a new realisation or transformation might occur that will have far reaching consequences, and see deep friendships and partnerships develop.

While being taken through an exercise to practise Inner Listening, one of the participants got unexpected clarity on action to take over an issue that had been a concern for sometime. Inner Listening being at the heart of the CoP Circle, it was a valuable experience for everyone.

All the women felt they want to share CoP Circles with others and to build it into their communities. Throughout the 3 days valuable insights were gained into further ways to improve and implement the training of facilitators.

The CoP Circle is a learning experience and fresh experiences highlight new pathways for growth and deeper learning.
In August 2014, CoP were invited to participate at the International Peace-Builder’s Forum (IPF) entitled “Connecting Personal and Systemic Change” at the IofC Conference Centre in Caux Switzerland. This was a collaboration of Caux-Initiatives of Change, the Institute of Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding (ICP), and supported by the Caux Scholars Program.

The IPF forum and exhibition was the first of its kind – a unique publicly accessible opportunity for individuals and institutions in the field of peacebuilding to connect with other actors in the field.

Shoshana Faire (Sydney) and Willemijn Lambert (The Netherlands), worked tirelessly with the IPF Conference team, contributing to the design and delivery of a wonderfully interactive, informative and successful IPF Forum. As part of the forum there was an expert panel session which included Professors Barry Hart and Carl Stauffer of the Eastern Mennonite University’s Center for Justice & Peacebuilding; Michelle Breslauer Program Manager of Institute of Economics & Peace in the Americas; Daphrose Ntarataze the CoP International President; and Diane Hendrick Trainer & Researcher in Conflict Transformation. To their credit, Shoshana and Willemijn also facilitated a well attended workshop on “Creating Safe Space and Story Sharing as Ingredients for Peacebuilding”.

Thanks to cooperative collaboration between CoP women in Switzerland and Sydney, CoP staged a well presented exhibition stand, manned by a cohesive core CoP team comprising Christine Al-Azhari (Switzerland), Patricia Garcia (Sydney) and Tanya Fox (Sydney).

As the CoP team engaged in one on one connections networking with the other participants, exhibitors and visitors, we were very encouraged by the interest shown in CoP, and pleased to learn of other peace-building work that is being done around the world. We met young women undertaking peace and security courses, masters degrees in conflictology and peace keeping training programs at universities in Switzerland, The Netherlands, UK and Pakistan. We met with NGO’s and professional men and women working in areas of human rights and international development. All of whom showed genuine interest in CoP acknowledging that it has an important role to play in connecting women to the personal and systemic approaches to peace-building.

By the end of the IPF exhibition, CoP received expressions of interest for CoP Circles from 32 individuals and organizations from 14 different countries, 4 of which are countries that we’re not currently active in as yet.

It was a clear consensus that there is a big calling for integrated and multi-dimensional approaches to peace-building, as is the Creators of Peace program.

Creators of Peace have a big task ahead to answer this call.

Report by Tanya Fox, Photo by Shoshana Faire
In August 2014, a call was sent out to the CoP network for donations to help cover travel and accommodation costs in the remote rural area of Baringo County to assist two Volunteer facilitators to run CoP Circles in the county.

The county is located in the former Rift Valley Province of Kenya, about 270km north-west of Nairobi. The dominant ethnic groups in Baringo are the Pokots, Tugen, Endorois and Ilchamus. Baringo county had recently been in the headlines for all the wrong reasons. Fresh violence had hit the area killing dozens of people and forcing many to flee their homes. Twenty-one police officers were ambushed and killed by bandits in Pokot - a very sad situation.

Livestock keeping, mostly cattle, is an important feature of the Baringo culture. It is a major source of wealth and serves as a form of traditional currency used to negotiate for wives and dowry payment. As such, it is common for Pokots and other ethnic groups to raid their herds. Most of the times, the cattle rustling results in innocent deaths.

In a difficult context of violence and cattle-rustling, a further three CoP Circles in Kabarnet, Sandai (Bogoria) and Marigat reaching 48 women from the Tugen, Endorois and Ilchamus communities addressed some of the root causes and equipped women to become peace-makers. After running the first CoP Circle in Baringo, the women requested that we keep their certificates and that we present them later to all the three groups we planned to reach out to so that they could all meet, know each other and see how to work together. We agreed and we can say that it was a good idea that we supported this because, besides the event bringing on board the Member of County Assembly (MCA) for Marigat, Mr Wesley, and some media houses, the women were able to come up with a way forward. As Coretta Scott King once said, ‘I am convinced that the women of the world, united without any regard for national or racial dimension, can become the most powerful force for international peace and brotherhood.’

One of the things that we have been doing in all the CoP trainings is involving the County Governments of the respective areas. In Baringo, Mr Wesley was present to issue the certificates to the 48 participants from all three groups. The 48 women, when they finally met, all agreed that insecurity, cattle rustling and killings were a major challenge in the area. In the presence of Mr Wesley, the women planned to visit the East Pokot area (the worst hit by cattle rustling) and interact with people there and seek a lasting solution to the unending conflict.

The women agreed on using a traditional, cultural approach to peace building which means they would wear their birth belts for all to see. These are belts worn after giving birth and have a special significance, and when women put them on for display it is a signal that all need to take them seriously and the men are cursed if they still get involved in cattle rustling. However, before taking this step, it was agreed that another CoP Circle be run in East Pokot so that some of the women there can experience what the other women had experienced and together they can hold hands for peace.

The MCA for Marigat, Mr Wesley, was very moved by what CoP is doing and he offered to take the CoP team and some of the participants to meet with the Governor so that the Governor could see how CoP could be supported to run more CoP Circles in the county. Sure enough, a meeting was scheduled and a small team of CoP met with the Governor of Baringo. He was impressed and asked the team to write a funding proposal for the County Government to consider. We are praying that something comes out of it.

**Funds are URGENTLY needed for CoP Circles in Zimbabwe and Romania.**

In ZIMBABWE women are at the forefront in the struggle for peace, financial security, health and education. For the vast majority these challenges are both domestic and social. There is need to continue conducting CoP Circles in rural and urban areas through 2015, to help women find the source of real strength to enlighten, empower and support them in their tasks as mentors, health care givers, bread winners and unifiers. All CoP Circles, run by volunteers in their spare time, require funding for travel, food and some-times facility rental. Please help this valuable trust building work for peace.

In ROMANIA CoP Circles have been used to build trust among women of the various communities especially with the Roma people. A further focus is the generational divide among women emanating from those coming out of the Soviet period and younger women experiencing different cultural values.

If you can help please go to www.iofc.org/creators-of-peace and click the Donate button ...Thank You
Creators of Peace facilitation training took place in Oslo, Norway over three days in August 2014. The 19 participants came from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and The Netherlands. The diverse nationalities represented were Greenland, Russia, China, Djibouti, UK, USA, and West Papua.

It was initiated by a request from Valerie Tikkanen in Sweden, coordinated by Birte Finken in Denmark, hosted by Torild Ostmo and the Norwegian team in Oslo and facilitated by Willemijn Lambert from The Netherlands and Shoshana Faire from Australia.

We wove together our varied levels of skill and experience. Some came with many years of background and experience with Initiatives of Change and Creators of Peace and some were very new, having recently participated in a CoP Circle. In the glorious house and romantic gardens of the IofC house at Sophus Lies Gate in Oslo we shared our experiences, and gained new friends, ideas and inspiration.

We were sung to, and ate freshly picked blueberries, cranberries and mushrooms and deliciously cooked moose. We also ate plums and apples off the trees in the garden.

Toward the end of our time together, the four country teams planned together, invigorated by their new skills and the sharing of ideas gained from hearing about what other CoP teams are doing.

Some of the comments were: "Altogether, the weekend gave me a renewed feeling for the importance and the power of the CoP Circle."

"For me what was important was to get the sense that I can do it and that I already do have tools and skills for running a Peace Circle."

"A wonderful, rich and full of learning weekend! What I try to apply after this weekend is to not assume, and to ask questions and not judge. I have a lot of work to do!"

Report by Birte Finken photo by Shoshana Faire

A CoP Circle was completed in Copenhagen, shortly before Christmas 2013. Their curiosity and eagerness to explore and share ways to live the life of a peacemaker in their family setting, as well as in the broader community, was very inspiring. Our group of 10, continued to meet monthly until May 2014, and also kept on sharing seeds from our faith traditions. As a result, the Malay/Chinese and the Danish/Somali woman from our group, alongside an Austrian and myself from Norwegian background, have initiated a woman-association to support orphans in Galkayo. Little by little, we train some Somali women to run such an organization.

Then in May 2014, a woman who co-facilitated a CoP Circle alongside me 4 years back, held a CoP Circle in Arapiquis, Ecuador. It was prepared with Skype-support from The Netherlands and Australia by two of our international program-team coordinators.

Four of us from Denmark went on to join the facilitator training workshop in August 2014 in Norway. We appreciated very much the broader Scandinavian bonding that took place. The two facilitation trainers Willemijn Lambert (from The Netherlands) and Shoshana Faire (from Australia) blessed the group with their skills. The absolute exotic peak experience was the Saturday night dinner, moose beef! In addition, the surroundings of Oslo and the atmosphere of the grand IofC home for decades, gave us a perfect frame for deep reflection and intense learning. We all felt the warmth and care of the broader team. And many of us felt a wish to dig deeper into the source of the vibrant Christian faith and experience of deep listening which we witnessed among us.

We are now preparing for a new CoP Circle where our aim is to start a process of deeper understanding between the Greenlandic women and the Danish majority. This takes us deeper into questions on the history and the present status of the Danish/Greenlandic relationship and it’s need for healing.

Report by Birte Finken photo by Shoshana Faire

In 2014, Joyce Fraser and I co-facilitated two different CoP Circles.

The first one was held on the grounds of a school which brought together some of the school mothers. They came from various backgrounds, including Australians, migrants, and a former refugee. The mothers came with little knowledge of CoP, but an open mind and willingness to share.

One mother wrote in her assessment: “I came here to make friendships and know more about peace. In the end, I got more than I expected. It helped me to find inner peace and understand the importance of forgiveness.”

All participants found listening to each others’ stories was inspirational. Joyce and I were delighted that collectively, the women wrote a letter to the Principal asking for the inclusion of the CoP Circle with similar topics for discussion for the high school students at this very multicultural school, to inspire them to become future peace-creators in society.

The second CoP Circle was held at a University, for the staff.

Time proved to be the biggest challenge for the participants, as we began with about 10 keen women, and finished with four at the end. Nevertheless, many interesting discussions came forth about current world and cultural issues that were of concern, and three of the women expressed an interest in doing a CoP facilitation training course.
"The Hills came Alive with the Sound of Peace" in The Hills District of Sydney

Peace resonated in Hebrew, Arabic and English at Sydney’s Creators of Peace 10th Anniversary Annual Celebration in Baulkham Hills on 24 September 2014.

The event started with guests invited to say the word “Peace” in their language. This highlighted the big multicultural mix of the 80 women present, and the 30 languages, including Arabic and Hebrew, from more than 20 different ethnic faiths and backgrounds.

A presentation of both the local and global achievements of Creators of Peace in 2014 reinforced the CoP message of ‘peace begins with me’. It helped encourage guests to engage in small group discussion about ‘how change starts with me’.

On a lighter note, guests were then invited to ‘have fun with words’, as a precursor to a live Skype interview with Kay Lindahl, founder of The Listening Centre who shared her wisdom on the Sacred Art of Listening. Following this, guests were invited to break into discussion groups and ‘practice’ this sacred art. This really tested our listening skills, or the lack thereof!

As a grand finale, the women formed a circle of understanding around the room as the 10th Anniversary Cake was cut.

One Muslim mother expressed her hope that the CoP movement will continue to spread, building hope and unity. She said, “Muslims are also scared of the extremists portrayed in the media, because they do not represent us or our values, or true Islamic values.”

Report by Tanya Fox

Auburn Creators of Peace Network plan the year ahead for their Regular Monthly Gatherings - Sydney, Australia

This was the Planning Session for our 3rd consecutive year at the Auburn Centre for Community. To ensure variety, our team of twelve agreed to take turns to facilitate the Regular Monthly Auburn Creators of Peace Network gatherings. Auburn is one of Sydney’s most diverse areas, boasting 226 cultures. Here, each month there is an opportunity to deepen understanding of skills of the different CoP Circle topics, like “What Destroys Peace and What builds It” and “Inner Listening”.

It provides a monthly meeting space for local women to meet, connect and support each other on their journey as peace builders, individually and collectively. It also offers a casual drop-in space to bring friends to give them a taste of what Creators of Peace is about.

The Network also gives women a place to think about what things they could do in the community, to expand on their own ideas and unify to work collaboratively on common objectives.

These meetings being based at the Auburn Centre for Community provides opportunity for CoP women to reach out and participate in other community programs, e.g. The annual Africultures Festival, and “Refugee Camp in my Neighbourhood”.

Report by Trish McDonald-Harrison

A Winter CoP Circle in London

Report by Su Riddell

We’d promised ourselves we wouldn’t do it again – organise a CoP Circle weekend in January. A few years back we held one in London and participants from the suburbs couldn’t get to it because of snow. Last year transport stopped due to floods across the country. However, when an old friend from Liverpool, who I have been hoping to include for a long time, said “how about the weekend 16 – 18 January in Oxford?” I couldn’t resist taking the chance. We gave it a think – and actually employed the inner listening skill from the CoP Circle Gathering Point 7 – and our small team thought it felt good.

For some time now, we’ve struggled to find people ready to commit to a CoP Circle. Everyone seems so busy, deluged by demands in their daily lives. In order to fill the 8 – 10 places on offer, we contacted everyone we could. Suddenly, by early December, we had a crisis – at least 16 people wanted to come! There was no way we could have that many, not having enough accommodation, chairs, nor time for all the stories. Graciously some of the invitees agreed to defer until the Spring, and finally we were 10.

In the end, the weather behaved perfectly. A light sprinkling of snow on the Saturday, enough to look pretty but not prevent transport. It was a wonderful time, as a CoP Circle always is, and we were glad that our ‘hunch’ to risk a winter weekend had worked out so well.

Creators of Peace UK held a ‘Women’s Well-being’ event at Greencoat Place, London, to meet up again, introduce friends, and make a start towards our new fund-raising aim to support training for CoP Circles.

To add an element from the Peace Circle, we had an activity to help us think more about the role inner listening plays in guiding us in our busy lives. On the interactive display, people posted comments on what ‘quiet time’ offers them: ‘Silence alone when I first awake often prepares me for the unexpected in the day ahead’; ‘I go to a peaceful place I call “Tagabo”, meaning “boost”, whenever I go into silence or stillness time.’ ‘If I sit quietly in the morning, the day goes better on the whole: clearer thinking, more energy, better listening!’ We asked people to tell us what they do to deepen the inner listening experience. Answers ranged from ‘Reflect, appreciate and count my blessings’. Some told us how they ensure that they make time to: ‘Have a ritual, ensuring there are few distractions,’ was one answer, and ‘Making a commitment with someone else, to ensure we both take time.’
Ada Mackay, Sydney Australia—CoP Facilitator and CoP Sydney Database Developer

My introduction to Creators of Peace came through Joyce Fraser. Joyce and I had been friends for a number of years and she would tell me about Moral Re-armament, but the name really put me off! Then one day Joyce gave me a brochure about an International Women’s Peace Conference to be held at Collaroy in 2009. I read the brochure and was really impressed so I put in my application to attend. The conference was wonderful, with women from many countries gathered together telling their stories, and the many workshops to attend. The women I shared a room with were fascinating women. I went home knowing where peace started from and that was ‘with me!’ I then attended a couple of Creators of Peace events and was most impressed with the women attending.

In 2010 I did a CoP Circle, attended a Creators of Peace Reunion and went to Africa where I met up with three of the women from the conference. One in Kenya, one in Johannesburg and another in Soweto. The following year I did facilitation training and have co-facilitated four CoP Circles. The inner peace and empowerment that comes from participation in a Peace Circle has added greatly to my quality of life. Yesterday I met with a group of Somali-Australian ladies at Auburn. They are just an example of the wonderful people I have met through Creators of Peace.

Editors note: Ada is a member of the Sydney Coordinating Action Group (CAG) who meet once a month to co-ordinate Sydney CoP events, and we’re so grateful to Ada for developing the Sydney CoP database, an invaluable tool to keep connected with all the women who have done a CoP Circle, and as well, to record names of women who have shown interest in doing a CoP Circle.

Some results from CoP Circles in Burundi have worked miracles

(Read in French on the next page)

GERMAINE Manirariha As French is my second language since a young age, this comes from my heart, and what I share with you comes from my heart and honestly. I am so happy to share that since my participation in CoP Circles, the experiences build up every day. I now have peace in my heart, really. Having faced harsh situations, I’m now reliving the skills I learned, they have helped me to tap into the deep source, the necessary energy. Morally, I have become stronger and I now know my value. My new inner attitude reflects on my physique - I feel it. I feel more confidence toward any situation. I can now keep my head up even to someone who wants to humiliate me. A relative was killed by my nephew. A week later I had the strength to visit him in prison - I could reach out to him. I was able to grant my forgiveness (knowing the misunderstandings of some members of my family). I was able to offer my assistance to take care of his belongings in his house. The impact of Peace Circles on me has been a miracle.

ANNONCIATTE Nkurunziza: Previously I couldn't differentiate between the bad thief, but now I know that evil is still evil while the thief can turn into being. I could not say sorry to Him who has evil while the thief can turn into being. I couldn't differentiate between the good thief, but now I know that evil is always evil. As a psychologist, I find that I can use techniques from the circle in psychological treatment for myself and for other people. One technique was lighting of the candle in the middle of the stones representing our problems then we put it into a calabash filled with water, breaking down walls using our hands, forgiving and asking for forgiveness, and sharing our story. In a few words, I manage better to put my feet in the shoes of people who consult me. In addition, it has helped me to understand what made me to be who I am and not to confuse the evil villain. As the president of CFRKD, in late June 2014, I put peace in to practice and bought land for the construction of a kindergarten.

THIERRY Nkurunziza: CoP Circles have helped me to understand that when the flames of peace is illuminated, the ice of hatred collapses. As a psychologist, I find that I can use techniques from the circle in psychological treatment for myself and for other people. One technique was lighting of the candle in the middle of the stones representing our problems then we put it into a calabash filled with water, breaking down walls using our hands, forgiving and asking for forgiveness, and sharing our story. In a few words, I manage better to put my feet in the shoes of people who consult me. In addition, it has helped me to understand what made me to be who I am and not to confuse the evil villain. As the president of CFRKD, in late June 2014, I put peace in to practice and bought land for the construction of a kindergarten.

AEGIS Masunzu: I’ve learned that I cannot have peace until I am at peace with my neighbour. For peace I must give it to others and to give it to others, I have to be at peace myself first. I have learned the strategy of listening to others. When my neighbour has a problem I will try to listen in order to help them find a solution. We must draw close to our neighbours as brothers and sisters. I also learned how to help others to be reconciled when there are disagreements. In conclusion we need more CoP Circles since we noticed that it helps participants to reconcile their broken hearts, that so many participants have testified how they’ve seen the value of forgiveness of those who have harmed them, even if they don’t know.

ANNOUNCEMENT!!!

A new Creators of Peace Film is launched to support THE ‘GIVE TEN$’ CoP FUNDRAISING APPEAL

A new film has been released showing women who have taken part in a CoP Circle and what it has meant to them. See how each of them are using their personal experience by engaging in peace work, taking responsibility for peace in their own country.

For the past two years, film-maker Charlotte Sawyer and CoP International Co-ordinator Kate Monkhouse, have interviewed some CoP women from around the world expressing the purpose and power of the CoP Circle as a tool for grassroots peace-building.

The aim of the film is to portray the vision and values of the women of Creators of Peace, and also, to inspire viewers to donate to the GIVE TEN$ global FUNDRAISING APPEAL that will launch in March 2015.

The Give Ten$ Appeal will offer the 2,000 plus women of the global network an opportunity to pay tribute to the past 10 years of CoP Circles and acknowledge the benefits that we have each gained from our CoP connection.

Our network is totally driven by dedicated and passionate volunteer women. However, there is a calling for CoP Circles, particularly from conflict affected regions, growing by the day. We are now at a stage that we urgently need funding for the resources to answer this call and establish a solid base for our work to grow.

PLEASE VIEW THE FILM AND DONATE at:
www.iocf.org/creators-of-peace-film
www.iocf.org/creators-of-peace-donate
CoP Circles has profound impact of ‘Real Change’ in Burundi
Report by Daphrose Ntarataze

There is much evidence of the impact that the CoP Circle has made on women (as well as men) who have participated in three different circles in Burundi. Our hearts were warmed to note that at the end of each group circle, participants chose a new name that they can identify with, because they considered that they have been born to a new life. This naming was a common commitment as a group.

**Impact of the CoP Circle on IZUBA Association**

Before the CoP Circle, participants were members of the IZUBA Association, but after the circle, they felt connected as a team or even as one family. In short, the CoP Circle has brought us all closer to each other and strengthened our unity within the Association.

By sharing their personal stories in the CoP Circle allowed all the participants to get to know each other (their strengths and weaknesses) with no ethnic prejudice of the other. Before the circle, each one had their personal motives or vision, but today with the experience of the CoP Circles, they’re better able to share, and their understanding of the other is clearer than before. Sharing their personal stories has inspired them, and given each a new understanding of “WHO AM I”.

Having the program within the IZUBA Association, has allowed them to get to know each other even more than before, and better able to support each other’s personal and group transformation.

As members of the IZUBA CoP Group, they’ve made joint decisions that have led to commit acts of peace, justice, responsibility and personal transformation.

The Gathering Points addressed in the CoP Circle has given these men and women useful skills and resource within the Association, of intellectual means, and a common understanding of each skill (some topics provide basic life skills).

Silence and reflection has become a monthly program within the Association, and the IoFC principles of absolute honesty, purity, selflessness and love are now our compass, which allows us to make good decisions.

Civic engagement of some members of the Association is the result of their CoP Circle experience. The CoP experience has also been a place of opening for IZUBA, putting us in touch with members of other organizations including CFRKD (Circle Torches Nationals Kavumu for Development) and RJIC (Reassamblement Young Initiators of Change): Thanks to the wonderful support and example from each organisation and their staff, members of the CoP Association are now emulating the same values, and feel part of the IoFC/CoP network.

**Impact of the CoP Circle on RJIC**

The RJIC is a gathering of Young Initiatives of Change. It is open to all young Burundians who are ready for real change and radical inner transformation - for themselves, their loved ones, families, communities, nation, continent and the world. These young leaders from political parties and associations of civil society, to and fro their differences, and come together to propose and execute many creative activities and consolidation for peace in Burundi.

**RJIC Objectives:**
- Empowering Youth (by the intellectual and entrepreneurial knowledge and appropriation of funds)
- Educate youth in moral values and non-violence
- Resolve conflicts peacefully
- Contribute to the protection of the environment
- Contribute to the promotion of children’s rights
- Help create an environment conducive to free elections, transparent and fair
- Help youth change their mentality

**OUR VISION IS:**

“A friendly life beyond differences in a peaceful Burundi”

Our current partners are: Initiatives of Change International; Initiatives of Change Great African Lakes; Initiatives of Change Burundi via the project “Peacebuilding in Burundi”; Artisan of Peace International; Burundi Peacemaker; Diplomatic Corps; NGOs, all working closely with the RJIC Peacemakers International / ADP-Burundi.

**The impact of CoP Circles has been “Real Change”**

The CoP Circles in Burundi are a tool for young people (girls and boys) to exchange experiences and, therefore, to discover each other. The CoP Circle offers members of RJIC a spiritual training school to learn and strengthen them in the four IoFC moral values, and engage in spiritual activities. Each participant has already displayed a positive change in behaviour, which has engendered an overall cohesion (as a Brotherhood) within the RJIC.

At the organizational level, thanks to their CoP Circle involvement, members are involved in a spiritual capacity building and training school. They are truly displaying non-violent communication skills and have become true role models of Peace.

Given the positive impact made on the CoP RJIC Association, the value of our partnership with ADP-Burundi indicates that the number of CoP Circles has been favourable and needs to be multiplied to further fortify and ensure that their vision for RJIC can continue and is achieved.

**Editors Note:**

On her return to Burundi recently, Daphrose shared: “I go back to Burundi in solidarity with my wonderful TEAM. They are so courageous that It would be strange for me to stay here, in the comfort of my sweet Switzerland, when they are on the PEACE FIELD. You can’t imagine how my team appreciate that they can now live as ‘creators of peace’.
CoP Rapports français
Témoignages de l’impact sur les trois groupes qui ont participé à des cercles de flc. Notez que chaque groupe, à la fin du Cercle de la paix a choisi un nom qu’ils identifient avec, parce qu’ils considèrent qu’ils sont nés à une vie nouvelle. Le nom est également un engagement commun à chaque programme.

Impact du CdP sur l’association IZUBA
Avant le CdP, on faisait parti d’une même association, mais aujourd’hui nous formons plus une équipe ou même une famille, bref le CdP nous a rapproché les uns les autres. Ça a renforcé l’unité au sein de notre association. Avec le partage de nos Histoires personnelles, le CdP nous a permis de nous connaître mutuellement (forces et faiblesses de chacun, il n’y a plus des préjugés ethniques et autres), bien plus, avant chacun avait ses motivations personnelles ou sa vision, mais aujourd’hui avec l’expérience du CdP, nous partageons, nous les comprenons et c’est plus clair qu’avant.

Le partage de nos Histoires personnelles nous a inspiré un nouvel programme "WHO AM I" au sein des l’Association IZUBA qui nous permet de nous connaître encore plus et nous accompagner mutuellement à la transformation personne et groupale.

Pendant le CdP certains membres d’IZUBA ont pris des décisions communes qui mènent à poser des actes de paix, de justice de responsabilité et à la transformation personnelle.

Les thématiques ou points de rencontre traitées dans le CdP ont été des ressources pour notre association, un bagage intellectuel, et nous avons une même compréhension des ces points (certains thèmes sont des notions de base pour nous).

Le silence, la réflexion (un programme mensuel au sein de notre association) et les valeurs d’I&C sont notre boussole, ça nous permet de discerner pour prendre de bonnes décisions au sein des associations.

L’engagement de certains membres de l’association est le résultat du CdP. Le CdP a été aussi un lieu d’ouverture pour IZUBA, il nous a mis en contacte avec les membres d’autres organisations, dont CFRKD et REJIC et c’est des bonnes collaborateurs, des personnes de confiances car nous avons maintenant les même valeurs. Nous formons un réseau grâce au CdP.

IMPACT DES CERCLES DE PAIX SUR LE RJIC

JUSTIFICATION
Le RJIC est un Rassemblement de Jeunes Initiateurs du Change-ment. Il est ouvert à tous les jeunes Burundais qui sont prêts pour un changement réel et la transformation radicale de l’intérieur et du monde.

Il s’agit des jeunes leaders issus des parties politiques et des associations de la société civile qui, au-delà de leurs différences, se sont réunis pour proposer et exécuter ensemble des activités de création et de consolidation de la paix au Burundi.

OBJECTIFS DE RJIC

- Autonomiser la jeunesse (par les connaissances intellectuelles et entreprenariales et l’appropriation des moyens financiers)
- Sensibiliser la jeunesse aux valeurs morales et à la non violence
- Résoudre pacifiquement les conflits
- Contribuer à la protection de l’environnement
- Contribuer à la promotion des droits de l’enfant
- Contribuer à créer un environnement favorable à des élections libres, transparentes et justes,
- aider la jeunesse à changer de mentalité.

VISION: Notre vision est: "Une vie conviviale au delà des différences dans un Burundi pacifique"

NOS PARTENAIRES: Nos partenaires actuelles sont: Initiatives et Changement International; Initiatives et Changement Grands Lacs Africains; Initiatives et Changement Burundi via le projet; Consolidation de la Paix au Burundi; Artisan de Paix International; Artisan de Paix Burundi; Corps Diplomatiques; ONGs. Dans le projet des CdPs, le RJIC collabore étroitement avec Artisans de Paix International / ADP-Burundi.

IMPACT: Sur le plan "Changement réel": Les CdPs au Burundi sont un outil servant aux jeunes (filles et garçons) d’échanger des expériences et, par conséquent, de se découvrir mutuellement. Les CdPs ont été une occasion, pour la plupart des JIC, d’être sensibilisés sur les 4 valeurs morales d’I&C.

Ainsi, les Cdps pour le RJIC ont été une école de formation spirituelle afin de promouvoir les quatre valeurs et renforcer l’esprit volontariste aux activités d’I&C.

Le RJIC a choisi un nom qu’ils identifient avec, parce qu’ils considèrent qu’ils cherchent à…” et cela n’a pas affecté pas ma perception de moi, mais j’ai pu lui tendre la main. Je lui ai dit deux choses: - je t’accorde mon pardon (quelle incompréhension de la part de quelques membres de ma famille !). - Dis-moi tout ce qui concerne mon ménage qui a besoin d’être rangé ou qui nécessite un suivi approché.

L’impact des cercles de paix sur moi a été un miracle


REPORTS OF CREATORS OF PEACE CIRCLES AROUND THE GLOBE

Creators of Peace "Global Connections" Newsletter - February 2015 edition
Histoires des Artisans de Paix au Burundi

Annonciatte NKURUNZIZA: auparavant je ne savais pas différencier le mal du malfaiteur mais, maintenant je sais bien que le mal reste le mal tandis que le malfaiteur peut se transformer en être bien. Je ne pouvais pas dire pardon à celui qui m’a fait défaut et maintenant je le fais facilement, je ne pouvais pas écouter les autres comme il faut mais maintenant je le fais facilement et attentivement, je ne pouvais pas partager une histoire qui m’a choquée avec les autres mais aujourd’hui je peux le faire sans ambiguïté. Avant le CdP je ne savais pas comment je peux orienter ma vie future, que je dois d’abord préparer mes préoccupations, les écouter quelque part, que je dois vérifier que mes préoccupations sont déjà faites ou pas.

Egide MASUNZU: J’ai appris que je ne peux pas avoir la paix tant que mon voisin n’a pas la paix. Pour que j’aie la paix, il faut que je la donne aux autres et, pour la donner aux autres, il faut que je l’aie d’abord. D’ailleurs on dit en kirundi « Ntwatunga ico adafise », se qui se traduit « on ne donne que ce qu’on a pas ». J’ai appris la stratégie d’écoute des autres. Si mon voisin a un problème, je vais essayer de l’écouter afin de trouver une solution au problème en cours. Il faut nous approcher de nos voisins qui auraient des questions, comme des frères et soeurs. On a appris la manière d’aider les autres à se réconcilier en cas de mécontentements avec leurs prochains. Comme conclusion, il faudrait multiplier les CdP puisque on a remarqué que ça aide les participants à réconcilier leurs coeurs brisés, étant donné que les participants aux CdP ont témoigné de ce qu’ils ont vu dans leur vie précisément pendant la période de guerre. Il y en a qui ont opté pour le pardon même si ceux qui leur ont fait du mal ne le savent pas.

Ferdinand MINANI: Les valeurs et pratiques acquises me servent d’outils dans la vie socio professionnelle de tous les jours. L’écoute intérieure, l’écoute des autres, le dépassement des accusations réciproques sont devenus comme une coutume au service et dans mon entourage. En face des situations diverses, le silence me permet d’agir efficacement. Convaincu que l’autre est l’autre moi-même, le fait de me mettre à la place de l’autre pendant les circonstances surtout douloureuses me permet d’apporter ma contribution pour l’aider à sortir de cette situation. En cas de prise de décision, cette pratique m’aide à prendre une décision favorable. Au cours de ces cdp, j’ai appris aussi à gérer la colère, ce qui est important dans la vie de tous les jours. A titre d’exemple, en août 2014, le réseau des jeunes de la commune Kanyosha (RAJEKA) en province Bujumbura auquel le CFDK fait parti a connu des problèmes de représentation provoquées par des soi-disant défenseurs de la loi au niveau de la commune. La pratique de la gestion de la colère a beau-coup aidé, sinon nous aurions réagi autrement et par conséquent provoqué des dégâts. Je qualifie donc les CdP comme un moyen par excellence de transformation sociale.

Thierry NKURUNZIZA : les cercles de paix m’ont permis de comprendre que lorsque les flammes de la paix éclairent les glaces de la haine s’effondrent. En tant que psychologue les cercles de paix m’ont appris des techniques nouvelles de prise en charge psychologique pour moi-même et pour les autres personnes (CAPACITAR, allumer la bougie au milieu des pierres représentant les problèmes mis dans une calebasses remplie d’eau, abattre les murs à l’aide des mains, pardonner et demander pardon, partager une histoire), en peu de mots, je parvins à mettre mes pieds dans les chaussures des personnes qui me consultent. De plus, les CdP m’ont permis de comprendre ce qui a fait que je sois celui que je suis et à ne pas confondre le mal du malfaiteur. En fin en juin 2014 le CFKRD dont je suis président a pu mettre la paix en pratique en se s’achetant un terrain pour la construction des locaux pour son école maternelle.