

IOFC/MRA NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE ZIMBABWE



14 – 19 December 2018

Foundations for Change and Development



lofC/MRA national youth conference, held in Gweru 14 – 19 December, aimed to promote 'foundations for change and development'. Young people came together to learn more deeply about MRA, how to build their skills and strengthen friendships to work together for a just, peaceful and sustainable Zimbabwe.

Day 1: Introductions

Participants arrived around 5pm and got settled in their rooms, had dinner and met after dinner in the Dotson Nyati Hall for official introductions to lofC team members, facilitators and information on house-keeping issues. The first day focused on the introduction of lofC as some of the young people were still unfamiliar about the core concepts of the movement.

"From the moment I arrived, I was immediately gripped with excitement! – Conference participant

Day 2: Foundations

The day began with drafting down the House Rules, Needs and Expectations, everyone participated in this exercise and these were clearly written on charts. The day was moderated by Tinotenda Nyota and Elizabeth Pilime who also helped the participants understand what lofC is and its principles.

As the day progressed, one of the facilitators Anthony Duigan led a session on Values and Foundations where he spoke in depth about being internally directed and externally open. He took a different stance on explaining the lofC values which helped to shed light on how important they are in an individual's life.

One participant felt like they became more aware of themselves and realised how to begin the path of change that they require in their life.



Anthony Duigan

My Journey, Your Journey, Our Journey, was an afternoon session led by Roy Ncube who shared his intriguing life journey alongside Tafadzwa Ncube, Abel Katito and Angie Katito. They shared their compelling life

stories of how they had to make sacrifices to hold fast their values of honesty, love, purity and unselfishness. In a country marred by corruption it was moving to know that people can live honest lives with integrity and this really moved the young people.



Roy Edward Ncube

Day 3: Change

The day began with morning reflection led by Sensewell Chingwaramusee. The session gave the participants the opportunity to reflect on the previous day's sessions. The moderator for the day was Socrates Katio.

Cleopadia Mohlaodi led a session on Inner Change where she engaged the youth in defining the difference between 'change' and 'transformation'. She explained how as individuals we need to completely transform and change is part of that transformation. Participants were led to address the challenges that they are facing that hold back their personal transformations.

*If I want to see the world different change starts with me. I am either part of the cure
or part of the disease.*



Cleopadia Mohlaodi

Cleo went on to share her story of how she grew up, the challenges that she faced and how she is still on the journey of healing. She introduced the model called Change Movement in which she shared how a person can address the different problems that they might be facing in life. The first step is 'Unfreeze' where you find out the root cause of the problem and this may be due to environmental or health issues. The second step is 'Change steps'. This entails how an individual is willing to take certain steps to change, in terms of morals, ways of thinking or how they respond to people. The last step is 'Freeze', this is the main focus that a person puts into that change. Most participants were motivated to apply the model into their lives.

Lucel Snyers shared her touching story of her personal life and experience with Creators of Peace. Participants were then asked to break into smaller groups, where they all shared their personal stories and compiled presentations based on their stories.

The session that followed was Healthy Living which was led by Abel and Angie Katito with the help of Tanaka Mhunduru. It included a discussion on the importance of eating a healthy balanced diet and exercise.

Day 4: Development

The morning reflection session was led by Nobuhle Nleya who spoke about peace and encouraged the group to look within themselves and try to figure out if their lives had been characterized by peace. Tanaka Mhunduru moderated the day and introduced the Inner and Self Development session led by Cleo. She further explained the importance of grooming the inner man and initiating positive change in one's life. It was a session that planted a different kind of thinking perspective in most of our minds and brought up thought provoking questions of what state our inner selves were in.

"Peace is the greatest weapon for development that any person can have" – Nelson Mandela



Anthony presented on project development skills. He taught the concept of project developments, using the logical framework approach. He gave us a step by step guide of running a project. This was followed by a test of how well we ran and arranged the youth conference. We had a practical session of project development led by Sensewell where people were split into groups which focused on two selected projects namely Women & Youth Empowerment and Environmental Management. To top it all off we ended the day with a spectacular talent show.

Day 5: Celebration

The youth and elder lofC members gathered for the final day of the conference. The graduation ceremony symbolized the end of the conference and the beginning of a team and programme relationship. The morning started with a reflection on what has changed in people's lives, minds and hearts over the five days.

Roy Ncube then presented an overview of upcoming events for 2019 and also gave an action plan for the youth group. Tanaka and Tinotenda spoke about their experiences at Caux in Switzerland. Certificates were then presented to every participant and this marked the ending of the conference.

Testimonials

"I learnt that you need to know what the inner you is saying so that we can be able to make decisions in our lives, to put important things ahead rather than rather than waste time on things that won't do you any good in the future, and not to be selfish. I also learnt that we need to change the world and all the damaged places so as to make the world a better place." – Adella Tevera, Student at Guinea Fowl High School.

"One of the main reasons why I'm so happy is that the conference helped me to discover my true self. I still remember from one of Cleo's presentations, I shared a very personal story, something I had kept hidden deep within me which was adversely affecting me, but sharing it somehow helped me. Socially, I benefited, I'd been someone who had been finding it hard to mix and mingle with people, but from the first day to the last I noticed a few changes which is a good thing. This was a great experience for me because it was an "all about yourself conference" which is different from what I had anticipated because I thought it would be about the organization. This turned out to be a turning point in my life." – Panashe Ndlovu, Student at Mkoba 1 High School.

"I like attending lofC conferences because they allow us to have quiet time and storytelling, this makes you relax and refresh, and to look back into your past behaviour and your progress. Storytelling creates a deep connection between every individual in the groups. I was challenged to make a projection towards being a creator of peace by Anthony. I also challenged myself to bring change in my community for 2019 and to fight to complete what I would have started." – Inzwai Murove, Student at Midlands State University

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