



Nigeria

IofC Africa commits to actions across the continent in 2019

Fifty delegates from 14 African countries, meeting in a seaside resort in Lagos, Nigeria, under the umbrella of the Africa Coordination Group, committed to meeting an important challenge - to take on planning and getting under way one project in each of their countries by the end of September 2019.

“This will be a test of our commitment as a relevant force in Africa,” said one of the delegates, “that we do deliver on this commitment, because it will make a difference - perhaps beyond even where we come from.”



The Pan African Consultation, hosted by IofC Nigeria, was also attended by two members of the International Council, Cecilia Silundika and Mounir Beltaifa. It took place from 27 to 30 March.

At the start of the four days, the delegates put their expectations clearly. “We want four specific outcomes,” they said:

- To improve IofC’s impact in Africa through concrete actions and promotion of IofC values
- To launch a joint action across Africa and speak with a unified voice
- To have better overall governance of IofC bodies in Africa
- To tackle the critical political issues emerging in Mali and Cameroon.

As the Consultation wrapped up, some of these desired outcomes were indeed tied down. Besides the “concrete actions” to which the delegates committed their national teams, support in principle was given to an imaginative Pan African initiative that is being pioneered out of South Africa by a digital learning

expert. This is the creation of a portfolio of skills learning material that can be downloaded on any 'Smart Phone' wherever there is connectivity in Africa.



This is still in the early stages of development, based on the design and material developed by the late South African, Antony Trowbridge who bequeathed its use to IofC and institutions who would use it freely in the service of humankind.

Another proposal put forward, but still to be tied down, is the staging of a conference on good governance in Africa in the course of 2020.



Anthony Duigan (South Africa) talking with Amina Dikedi Ajakaiye,, Nigeria/United Kingdom

Over the four intensive days with lots of exchanges between delegates and presenters, a range of key issues were covered:

- The essence of IofC and getting to the heart of transformation
- Visioning - the new IofC strategy emerging from the global consultation held in January at Asia Plateau
- Fund-raising and how to engage business as a vital constituency in the endeavour to bring absolute values into society

- Leadership and team-building
- Tackling project management, which included a case study by Cleo Mohlaodi, National Coordinator of IofC SA, on the Creators of Peace programme she and her team are running for the City of Johannesburg.

The end of the four days was a re-energised group who departed for home, grateful for the excellent and most helpful hosting by IofC Nigeria.

Anthony Duigan, who, together with Cleo Mohlaodi, represented IofC SA at the Consultation

Creators of Peace Circles Continue Durban Deep

From 12th - 14th March, Creators of Peace (CoP) visited a community in Durban Deep, a former mining area east of Johannesburg. Thirty-two women and one man entered into the process of the Peace Circle (PC) coming from as far afield as Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Free State and Mpumalanga. CoP had the help of a social worker from the Department of Social Development and she offered to assist with referrals for professional counselling and mentoring should there be a need.

The group had several expectations from this workshop: to be empowered to find peace; learn how to forgive; to discover what inner healing means; learn how to deal with anger and conflict and how to communicate.



One of the participants shared that she was abused and had lost her personal values. She could not even walk on the streets because she felt the community would see her shame. She was also not comfortable playing with other kids, until she had dealt with the abuse through counselling and slowly regained her values as a woman.

The values that the participants were expecting to practice are: awareness of what is happening around them; learn to be honest about how they feel; attentive listening with empathy and learn to be patient. Most of the participants are keen to communicate with and motivate their community members.

Makgotso, one of the participants said, “Attending the programme made me realise that this is what I want to do namely, to change the world and I feel that Creators of Peace is the best platform for me to do that.” Another participant mentioned that she had not been able to sleep properly for a very long time until going through the first day of the programme. That night she had slept like a baby.

At the end of the three days, these young adults decided that they will now take practical steps to go back to school and enhance their education. They have, through the PC, learnt to be independent and better parents to their children. Great progress was made in their lives with communication skills, with realising the importance and power of sharing, forgiveness and to accept things that they cannot change. Many thanked CoP for going to their area of Durban Deep.

Report Cleo Mohlaodi and Phumzile Mogola

Follow-up in Durban Deep

A follow-up conversation was held with 12 young women in Durban Deep on March 27th. The purpose for this visit was to see where they are at in their new journeys and to form a support group to sustain the relationships that have been built during the Peace Circle (PC). Several of the former PC participants could not attend due to work commitments – employment that they had found since attending the PC earlier in March.

Some of the participants had taken practical steps. Neziwe, had mentioned at the PC that she couldn't forgive her grandmother for keeping her away from her father. However, since then had she called her grandmother and told her that she forgives her and the granny did likewise. They have agreed to meet in the June holidays to spend some time together. Some still want to continue restoring broken relationships with their families and the forming of a support group that they felt would help them with those steps. A date for a meeting of this newly formed support group was set for a two weeks later.

Reported by: Mantwa Mabe and Lucel Snyers

Alexandra, Johannesburg

With the run-up to the national elections, South Africa has been experiencing many community shut downs with demands for basic services and needs for housing, electricity, water, sanitation, jobs and people anxiously hoping for new leadership.

The Creators of Peace (CoP) team had to postpone their visit to the Alexandra community because the streets were closed and the vandalising of cars and buildings was taking place. However, between 10th - 12th April

we finally had the time in the midst of violence in some areas and heavy rains, to facilitate a group of 32 men and women in a Creators of Peace Circle at the community library in Alexandra, north of Johannesburg.

A number of expectations from the participants could not be met as we had to leave the venue before completing the PC. However, a follow-up is planned for May 9th.



Nompumemelo, one of the participants, mentioned that she is learning how to control her temper and that she does not feel as angry as she used to, because she had space to share the hurt that she has been carrying. She also said that the theme on 'what builds and what destroys peace' really opened her eyes to what contribution she was making in destroying her own peace and relationships with loved ones. Another participant, Sanele, said, "I have learnt how to communicate better with my friends in order for us not to have conflicts any more."

The group still wants to explore more and find another opportunity with the CoP programme to enhance the change that they discovered over the span of three days.

"For me," Cleo said, "as I facilitated these huge groups that ran parallel, I felt a growing commitment coming from community members, to learn more about themselves instead of thinking only that material gains can help them better themselves. I am growing as I pass on the benefits of my own healing journey which has opened up a lot of change in me and given me a spark of hope for my nation. Secondly, I am growing as a team leader and a facilitator coach. The team is gaining wisdom in how to tackle challenges on the ground and deal with people's reactions. We are developing the skill to listen to God to guide us in how to better ourselves and our nation. Change starts with me."

Reported by Cleo Mohlaodi and Lucel Snyers

Vlakfontein, Lenasia

'At the end of every dark tunnel, there is a light.' This statement describes the overall outcome from a Peace Circle (PC) with 16 men and 51 women - community

builders, volunteers and community members of the area of Vlakfontein, south west of Johannesburg. This took place from the 23rd to 25th April with the assistance of the City of Johannesburg Coordinator, Nthabiseng Setloboko.

Formerly a farm, Vlakfontein is now a residential area with daily challenges of abuse, suicides, gangsterism, hate, anger and children being orphaned.

The group's expectations included: to find healing from past traumas; to lead a positive and better lifestyle; have 'self-forgiveness' and acceptance as well as forgiveness for the perpetrators who have caused their pain; develop better communication skills; deal with anger and move forward in life and reach their dreamt-of goals. Ninety percent of the young men and women have gone through severe traumas.

As the first day concluded, the group already felt that they had gained worthwhile skills. They had learnt how to accept life's challenges and how to communicate better in order to build better friendships and strengthen family bonds. They also discovered the importance of loving oneself and not to wait on the outside world to love them. The most inspiring thing that one of the participants shared was that she had an opportunity to do self-exploration which was something she experienced for the first time.



At the end, the group started their new journeys of becoming Peace Community builders, uplifted, revived and refocused on their future goals. The first practical steps that the group took was to seek professional assistance to allow the healing process to actually take place. Some of them are excited to spread the work of Creators of Peace (CoP) within their community.

Nico, a leader of the youth desk at the University of South Africa (Unisa), shared that he desires students from Unisa to go through a PC process because they struggle so much with their studies due to the trauma they have been through. He is taking it upon himself to start a conversation with the management of Unisa regarding the CoP programme.

Another participant shared, "I have never before opened

up about my attempts to kill myself and my disabled son because I felt God had punished me by giving me a disabled son. However, I am now going to love my child even more as from today.”

The CoP team will have a follow-up time with the group on May 10th looking also at assistance with professional referral for those who have expressed the need.

Reported by Mantwa Mabe and Lucel Snyers

Creators of Peace follow-up ... Diepkloof, Soweto

Since the Diepkloof Peace Circle took place in February the Creators of Peace (CoP) team ran a follow-up meeting with participants. This took place at the Diepkloof Welfare Centre on March 6th.

As facilitator, Phumzile Mogola guided the first session, there were expectations from the participants, such as curiosity to find out about the process of forgiveness and how to implement it and let go of the past.

The session continued with the participants having to review and reflect on what hinders them from achieving their goals. Some of the barriers mentioned were anger, lack of forgiveness, not receiving the same respect that they give, not having the appropriate experience and qualifications to work, fear, negative thoughts, ‘self-doubt’ and holding on to the past.

Others mentioned that they are free from anger and will not allow it to get the better of them. Nothing is going to stand in their way of achieving their goals. They plan to instil this happiness and peace that they have found, in their children. They no longer blame their families and they have learned to understand that everyone is unique and different. Tsholofelo and Josephine said “We are very happy that you guys came and we wish to have more of these sessions.”

In conclusion Cleo Mohlaodi and Mantwa Mabe divided the participants into three units so that they could start support groups to meet once a month to discuss personal and family issues. They will send in a report to the PC facilitators every time they meet.

Report by Cleo Mohlaodi and Phumzile Mogola

News Bytes

Storytelling and Communications

On April 13th the four facilitators involved with Creators of Peace, and others gathered together to explore more on the theme of 'story telling and communications'.

The aim of this gathering was to nurture the growing

number of volunteers in the Initiatives of Change (IofC) programmes and the need for more understanding of the aims and mission statement of IofC. All wanted to improve their communication skills so that they can be better understood and pass on to their communities what they have learnt.

Cleo Mohlaodi, Creators of Peace facilitator, explored the importance of ‘storytelling’. She said that sharing your story helps you to heal and also motivates the next person to persevere in becoming the best they can be.” She continued by asking the team to think of the audiences that they would want to share their stories with. Galetswane, one of the leaders in Diepkloof, Soweto, would like to use her story to influence change in behaviour and impact social change. Therefore she would like her church congregation to go through a Peace Circle in Diepkloof.

Reported by: Lucel Snyers

Freedom Art Dialogue

Change in Progress (CiP) organised the ‘Freedom Art Dialogue’ for artists and non-artistic youth in order to celebrate Freedom Day through uplifting grass-roots artists in communities. It was held at a Diepkloof Community Centre, Soweto, on the 26th of April.

The purpose of the day was to help the participants understand freedom and give the concept a new meaning in their lives. Secondly, to have people spend their day appreciating artwork from their fellow community members and hear their stories of how art



helped them free themselves and gain a new perspective on life. It was also an opportunity to share thoughts through fun activities and engage in a conversation about their freedom in South Africa.

Report by Karabo Radebe and Cleopadia Mohlaodi

Change in Progress at Oakdale

On March 11th, Initiatives of Change (IofC) and Gift of the Givers Foundation joined hands to give love and support to Oakdale Secondary School by answering the need for a hundred learners with sanitary-ware and stationery hampers.

Oakdale Secondary School is situated in Ennerdale, Ext 5, south of Johannesburg. The daily challenges are

conflict between teachers and learners, gangsterism, teenage pregnancies and lack of proper school infrastructure.

Having heard what the challenges are, one of the programmes of IofC, namely, Change in Progress started to have conversations with the school principal Mr. Marcus Heraldine. We received approval from Mr. Heraldine to work with grade10 learners for a span of three months to address character building.

The proposed programme, #RobinHoodmovement, will operate for three months and then be evaluated. The skills that will be developed will be Organising, Communication, Planning, Leadership, Basic Counselling, Time Management, Problem Solving, Business Etiquette, Anger Management and Emotional Intelligence. The variety of skills obtained will be practically applied, giving fresh energy to the lives of the young people.

Reported by Cleo Mohlaodi and Lucel Snyers

Ethical Leadership, Key to Better Nations

Fifty six young adults gathered in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania for the 6th Eastern Africa Youth Forum (EAYF6) under the theme '***Ethical Leadership, Key to Better Nations***'. The forum ceremoniously kicked off at the venue, Serene Hotel on 3rd April with the East African Anthem followed by the host traditional dance by a Tanzanian group of dancers. The Forum brought together young leaders representing seven countries from the Eastern Africa bloc, namely Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan, Uganda and Kenya.



Speaking during the official opening of the forum, Ms. Tike Mwabipile, head of the Tanzania Women Lawyers Association, said, "Youths in our nations should adopt the approach of 'thinking outside the box'. In the environments where over-recycled, sit-tight leadership prevails, the persistent approach of youths thinking outside the box would fast-track positive change in leadership."

The young delegates confirmed that their hope is to see a better led region with leaders who are fit to serve with leadership skills and capacity and not be hungry for power.

Kenyan, Ann Kimanthi, shared her thoughts on understanding self. In her words, "Self-awareness is a core leadership skill and self-leadership is key. It is

therefore very important to fill our hearts with morals and a good set of values so as to influence the society positively. Ethical leadership is a practice of appreciating humanity. For us to achieve good leadership, it has to begin with us being good citizens. Being self-aware gives you an opportunity to be a transformational leader."

Kenyan, Mr. Dan Mugeru, Principal Trainer of The African Centre for Public, in his response to a question posed by a participant on understanding the difference between management and leadership, said, "Managers ensures things are done right, but leaders ensure the right thing is done." He further shared that, "one can be a manager and not a leader." It is therefore very important for those in management to strive to be leaders. Leaders steer, navigate and show direction. They lead from the front. Mr. Mugeru shared the analogy of a ship. He said, "the one who holds the steering wheel cannot function without the navigators. Holding onto a position of power is not a show of leadership. We have had many in power but they have steered their nations towards the wrong directions. It is important to guide the people you serve into the right direction and that way, you are perceived to be a leader.

"To be an authentic leader you need to have purpose. To grow your purpose, you need to be focused, passionate, patient and courageous. Good leaders can be relied upon to deliver on their roles. Authentic leaders have compassion and are focused on promoting humanity. They have good character and always (strive to) do the right thing no matter the cost."

In a message from Suresh Vazarani, President of IofC International, he emphasized Mahatma Gandhi's quote, 'Be the change you want to see in the world' - be what we are meant to be, he said. He further challenged the young delegates to lead positive lives to see the change we want. If we all do so, it is the beginning of a new world, he said.

At the closing on April 6th, representatives from teams in different countries committed themselves to take up initiatives that will advocate for ethical leadership in their countries.

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