



May 2014

Newsletter of Initiatives of Change USA

Issue No. 27

Greetings!

In this issue we bring you news from the **Indzaba** which proved to be a valuable time for community building and it also brought fresh momentum to the work of IofC USA.



A group of participants at the Indzaba (Photo: Karen Elliott Greisdorf)

We are excited about the opportunities ahead and invite you to participate. There is information about all these possibilities in this issue and on the website.

- If you are in the greater DC area don't miss the special fundraising event for the [Caux Scholars Program](#) and the chance to meet some of the class of 2014.
- There is still time to sign up for one of the conferences at [Caux, Switzerland](#) this summer. This could be the experience of a life-time!
- Become part of the 2015 [Community Trustbuilding Fellowship](#). The program starts this October and runs on five weekends through March 2015.
- There is a new [study guide](#) and toolkit available for Rob Corcoran's book [Trustbuilding](#). Get a book group together!
- A new film from South Africa [Beyond Forgiving](#) has been released and is an important conversation starter. Order copies from our office.

And, stay tuned as plans develop for a further conference on [Healing History](#), the theme explored at Caux last summer, that is being planned in Richmond, VA, in April 2015.

In this issue

[What shape is your bridge in?](#)

[An integrated approach to community change](#)

[Hear their stories. Launch their journey. Be inspired](#)

[Discovering different approaches to conflict](#)

[Bridging the community divide](#)

[In England, at least](#)

Please consider a gift to Initiatives of Change!

Sixty percent of our support comes from people just like you! No gift is too large or too small.

DONATE

Become a sustaining donor with a monthly gift!

Please give online or mail a check to our office.

Reflections from the 2014 Indzaba

[A welcoming space for difference](#)

by Rob Corcoran from his blog



It takes courage to reveal your true convictions when you feel you may be alone in your beliefs among a large and

Report from the 2014 Indzaba

What shape is your bridge in?

By Susan Corcoran

"If you describe yourself as a bridgebuilder, what shape is your bridge in?" This question was posed by Chris Breitenberg, a US member of the international council of Initiatives of Change (IofC), at the start of the 2014 Indzaba. The theme of "bridging the gaps" ran throughout the weekend forum that brought together more than 70 people from diverse communities, different parts of the country and several generations, including whole families.



Photo: Rob Corcoran

The peaceful beauty of the Airlie Center in Virginia provided the space needed to "deepen roots, extend branches and nourish the community." For many of the Caux Scholar alumni present and others it was a "mini-Caux experience."

Alex Wise, chairman of the IofC board, welcomed everyone as "friends and fellow seekers, to this first ever IofC Indzaba. I suspect we share an expectation that something extraordinary will happen during this time, in this place. And it certainly will if we'll engage with one another and the program, as the musicians say...vivace, con brio...with Spirit." He emphasized IofC's "compelling" vision and its "timely" mission to inspire, equip and connect; and throughout the weekend, in small groups and large, people found the freedom to reflect, to dialogue and to share the gifts they brought to the table.

Maggie Noble, an artist from the UK, illustrated through her paintings the importance of following one's heart and the soft inner whispers with no apparent agenda: "It is for God to know the point of it all." Five years ago her husband was told he might only have two years to live. It was only after a life-saving operation that Maggie discovered the emotional toll this had taken on her. Depleted of energy, she began to paint again. "I emerged from that time wanting to paint from the heart: paint what stirs me, delights me, inspires me in the hope it will register similarly with others." A recurring image of a sea eagle was inspired by the well-known verse, "they shall mount up with the wings of eagles; they shall run and not grow weary." Maggie concluded, "It embodies my experience of personal healing."

vocal group. It is doubly hard in the polarized political climate of the US today where we so quickly form stereotypes around words like conservative and liberal.

Listening to our community

by Ismaila Ceesay (CSP 2011)



The anti-racism session highlighted the reality that this place that I call home still struggles with racial injustice.

As a father to biracial boys, I find it disconcerting that the Trayvon Martin and Jordan Davis cases are still possible in this day and age.

I strongly feel that honesty is a must in addressing the concerns raised in these sessions.

These reflections are available on the website

A new film from South Africa

Beyond Forgiving



He ordered retaliatory massacres. Her daughter was killed. This award winning film depicts the true story of two South Africans trying to move beyond their pain towards forgiveness and healing.

Order the DVD from our office

Closing the gaps

The next day the focus shifted to the glaring divisions in US society. Mike Wenger, senior research fellow at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, was actively involved with the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s. Rhonda Fitzgerald, managing director of the Sustained Dialogue Campus Network, engages students in conversations about race. Together they discussed the current state of race relations in the US from the perspectives of different generations. Mike Wenger said the issue today is more "subtle." In the 60s it was easier to generate anger and passion. "Today much is hidden behind the prison bars and the school house door." He said, "We have achieved desegregation. We don't have integration. There is no meaningful communication and interaction."

Rhonda Fitzgerald talked about how powerless people feel to "structure a movement beyond blog posts and Twitter" as evidenced by the Trayvon Martin case. "We are shocked but do nothing." Rhonda, who facilitates dialogue groups with students, said she finds in them a mixture of ignorance and cynicism.



*Rhonda Fitzgerald and Mike Wenger
(photo: Karen Elliott Greisdorf)*

Their parents have been silent and have taught them it is "rude" to talk about race. Mike Wenger added, "We have racism today without racists. It is often unconscious bias. It is important, if we are to build bridges, to call out the behavior but not label people as racist." As Rhonda noted, we need to give people an "on-ramp" to engage and "become comfortable talking about uncomfortable things."

Two young men came from Mexico as a follow-up to the "Encuentro of the Americas" held in Colombia in February. Juan Carlos Kaiten has extensive experience in business and social entrepreneurship, and Rodrigo Martinez Romero is head of research and development for the Oxford Leadership academy, a consulting firm. Using a conch shell, Juan Carlos sounded a call to the community. In the context of the politicized immigration debate in the US, a working group explored how the US and Mexico can be better neighbors. Participants considered some of the many gifts Mexico can share with the US, including culture, social innovation, family-life values, connection with the cosmos and celebration. US contributions included stable institutions, appreciation of diversity, innovation and human rights. The frank discussion opened the possibility of greater teamwork and ideas began to emerge for a joint training project at the University of Monterrey, Mexico.

Another group, led by Zeke Reich, currently a student of social work at Catholic University, Washington, DC, met on the theme "Red States, Blue States, Wounded States: Healing American divides." This is a topic we often avoid because it sows such discord. Zeke grew up with a Jewish father in New York among a

Dialogue in Romania

Skills applied in international context

In the context of a divided society with a long standing history of prejudice and marginalization of the Roma (formerly referred to as Gypsy), the Initiatives of Change team in Baia Mare, Romania, organized a two-day dialogue between representatives of the Roma and non-Roma communities.



Diana Damsa, one of the organizers who interned with Hope in the Cities in 2012 writes, "Many of the things we've done were applying what I've learned over the years from Initiatives of Change, and not the least, what I've learned during my internship with HIC in Richmond." [Read more ...](#)

Caux Conferences 2014



Caux: the door is open

This short video by Karen Elliott Greisdorf introduces you to Caux.

set of people with liberal, even radical, views. But his mother was from Memphis, and when he spent time with her family in the summer he discovered the paradox of opposing views existing in one loving family. As the group spoke honestly about how they would explain to a visitor from abroad who asks, "What is this red/blue divide?" it became clear that in this sound bite culture, where the media plays up and manipulates conflicting views, we can choose to exacerbate divisions or to bridge them.

Sustaining the energy to lead

Dr. Mel Dowdy, a leadership development specialist whose consulting career spans more than 30 years, led the final plenary of the Indzaba on "Authentic Leadership." In sharing his own journey of discovery of the power of "quiet time" as a participant in the first Connecting Communities Fellowship class, he brought us back to a theme woven throughout the weekend, beginning with Chris Breitenberg's question, "When was the last time you took time to be quiet?" As Mel framed it, "How well do you listen to the 'inner voice' and learn to live in harmony with it?" The serenity of the Airlie conference center and the space offered in the program for rest and reflection underscored this basic need to sustain changemakers as trustbuilders.

We were reminded in the concluding open mic session that we come with different beliefs, viewpoints, perspectives and experiences. Nobody should be made to feel excluded or that their voice isn't heard or wanted. A greater respect and sensitivity in all of us is needed if we are to bridge the gaps. The presence of children brought joy to the gathering as they made new friendships, joined their parents at meals and explored the great outdoors together.

Ken Noble, company secretary of Initiatives of Change UK, who had traveled specially to be at the Indzaba with his wife, Maggie, summarized the take-aways from the weekend: 1) Take time in silence, 2) Live an authentic life, 3) Take in and give out, 4) Find a close teammate, 5) Nourish others, 6) Challenge and inspire and 7) Enjoy the ride!

Community Trustbuilding Fellowship

An integrated approach to community change

Beginning this fall, Richmond will host a unique program to increase the capacity of communities to overcome divisions of race, culture, economics and politics. The Community Trustbuilding Fellowship creates a network of skilled facilitators, capable team builders and credible role models.



June 30-July 4

Caux dialogue on land and security

July 5-10

Trust and integrity in the global economy

July 12-17

Just governance for human security

July 20-24

Seeds of inspiration

July 26-August 1

Children as actors for transforming society

August 3-8

Living in a multicultural world

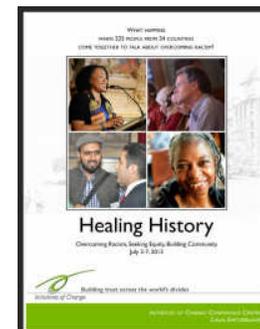
August 10-13

International peace-builder's forum

More information available at www.caux.ch

2013 Caux Conference Reports

Healing History conference July 3-7



2013 Caux Conference Report

What is it?

- Twenty-five participants representing a wide diversity of age, background and experience.
- Five residential weekend training modules based on the methodology of [Hope in the Cities](#)
- Experiential and innovative learning methods and case studies that demonstrate strategies for partnership building.
- A world class faculty of trainers, scholars and practitioners

Dates and topics:

1. **October 17-19, 2014** - Catalysts of change: authentic leadership
2. **November 21-23, 2014** - Healing history: creating a new narrative for communities
3. **January 23-25, 2015** - Dialogue delivery: keys to honest conversation
4. **February 20-22, 2015** - Creating a dialogue: addressing the underlying issues
5. **March 20-22, 2015** - Building & sustaining teams: strategies for engaging all sectors

On completion of the program graduates will be certified as Community Trustbuilding Fellows.

Venue: Richmond Hill retreat center, 2209 E. Grace Street, Richmond, VA 23223

Cost: \$2500 - (tuition, course materials and overnight accommodation)
Scholarship help is available

More information and application are on the website

Caux Scholars 2014

Hear their stories. Launch their journey. Be inspired.

If you are in the DC area, you have the opportunity to meet members of the Caux Scholars class of 2014 just weeks before they head for the program in Switzerland. Please support their fundraising efforts and help their dreams become reality.

Today's Peacebuilders. Tomorrow's World Leaders

June 5, 6:30 - 9:00 pm

McGuire Woods, 2001 K. Street, NW, Suite 400

Washington, DC 20006

RSVP to rsvp@us.iofc.org by May 30

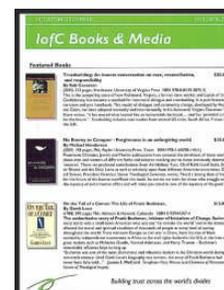
The honorary chairs of this event are Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes-Norton, District of Columbia; Daniel Hunn, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Switzerland, and Don King, Senior Partner McGuire Woods LLP.



Read online or order hard copies from the IofC office

Hope & inspiration

Check out the tools for change in our books and media catalog



Trustbuilding

by Rob Corcoran

A new [study guide](#) and toolkit provides questions for reflection, conversation and action.

The 2014 class exhibits a high level of motivation to understand and find ways to resolve conflicts and to make a difference in the world. We are equipping these young leaders to be bridgebuilders in our troubled world, and we are creating a network that supports and encourages them in their future work.

But, the majority of the class are in need of financial support in order to make their hope of participating in CSP a reality. If you can't join us in DC please consider contributing to the program.

Peacebuilding and non-violence

Discovering different approaches to conflict

*A workshop on "Approaches to Conflict" brought together a diverse group of more than 50 people at Busboys and Poets, a popular gathering spot in Washington, DC. It was the first in a series of events on peacebuilding, community building and non-violence presented by Initiatives of Change USA and 9/11 Unity Walk. The series aims to foster personal reflections on the lives and principles of Mandela, King and Gandhi. The workshop was led by Dr. Carl Stauffer from the Center for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University and Academic Director of the Caux Scholars Program. **Daniya Baisubanova** (CSP2007) shares her impressions:*

Held at Busboys and Poets, the aim of the workshop was to facilitate an exploration of different approaches to conflict, and to raise people's consciousness about their own response to conflict. Stauffer, a peacebuilder working in the field for 16 years, outlined the theory of conflict transformation, masterfully incorporating his own story.

Stauffer guided participants through the Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory to discover their individual approaches to conflict. The five conflict styles - directing, cooperating, avoiding, compromising, and harmonizing - are measured by the degree of focus on agenda and relationship. After participants explored their most common conflict styles, Stauffer asked them to discuss and share with others of the same style.



I was in the group with Harmonizers. A musician said that as a professional artist, she prefers harmony in everything. After a few minutes of silence, which Harmonizers were reluctant to break, I admitted that for me this style, while preserving harmony in relationships, often results in resentment. My group-mates nodded in agreement. Dan said oftentimes he hesitates to voice what he feels and thus stays silent. Mohreen noted, "I might be silent but



The Imam & The Pastor

"The African model for finding peace amid the continent's warring communities" The Times (London)

An African Answer

The second film about the work of these two African peacemakers.

[Order the 2 DVD Packaged set](#)



Initiatives of Change, USA

is part of a diverse global network with an 80-year track record of peacebuilding, conflict transformation and forging partnerships across divides of race, class, religion and politics.

Our vision

We inspire a vision of community where a commitment to reconciliation and justice transcends competing identities and interests.

Our mission

We equip leaders to build trust in diverse communities through a process of personal change, inclusive dialogue, healing historical conflict and teambuilding

Our focus

We connect core values with personal and public action with a focus on racial reconciliation, economic inclusion and interfaith understanding.

For more information
www.us.iofc.org

it does not mean that I am calm; I am bubbling inside." As a group, we admitted how harmony is most important to us even at our own expense.

Each group shared with the other groups their characteristics. Directors told how they do care about others; they just think the relationships could be taken care of in a different time, not when the focus needs to be on getting things done. Cooperators want everyone to win and thus they are willing to take time and effort to sort things out. Avoiders do not hear others until things are calm. "After 26 years of marriage I finally discovered that my husband would hear me only when things are calm," said Kathy.

Stauffer emphasized that we need to be aware of our own conflict style while recognizing other styles. This will help us understand expectations and reactions to different styles. "All conflict styles have positive traits - understanding different styles makes it easier to deal with conflicts and not take things personally," said Dominique.

"For the best team you need people with different conflict styles," concluded Stauffer as the workshop was wrapping up. He encouraged professionals to address their differences in the workplace. Outcomes can actually be enhanced by differences when people understand how to use them effectively.

The Crowning Experience in Daytona

Bridging the community divide

Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955), African American educator, founder of Bethune Cookman University, founder of the National Council of Negro Women, and adviser to five US presidents, felt her encounter with Moral Re-Armament (now Initiatives of Change) in 1954 was so important that she wanted it to be recorded at her gravesite. As a result, in the small garden of the Bethune Cookman University in Daytona Beach where Bethune is memorialized, the only monument besides her gravestone is a stone bearing the words "Moral Re-Armament: To be a part of this great uniting force of our age is the crowning experience of my life."

The movie produced by Moral Re-Armament in 1960, *The Crowning Experience*, starring African American mezzo soprano Muriel Smith and loosely based on the life of Dr. Bethune, was shown on April 9, 2014, as part of a Mary McLeod Bethune Cultural Heritage Arts Festival in Daytona Beach.

Bethune's granddaughter, Dr. Evelyn Bethune, who told of first watching the movie as an eight



Dr. Evelyn Bethune, granddaughter of Mary McLeod Bethune and organizer of the festival

year old, said that it was screened every summer in Daytona Beach as she was growing up. At the end of the screening she said, "It tells us that it is 'we the people,' not our senators or congressmen or president, who have to make the changes we need in our world. And it tells us that there is something much greater to focus on in life than your independent self. If we want a world of peace and harmony, we have a responsibility to build it. This is what Mrs. Bethune believed also."

Margaret Smith, scholar-in-residence in American University's International Peace and Conflict Resolution program and possessor of the papers of Muriel Smith, introduced the film, telling of Muriel Smith's sense of urgency to do something for her people after the riots in Little Rock in 1957 and her decision to work with people of MRA to produce a play that would demonstrate a way to address differences and inspire people to build an inclusive future.

She told of the conference of Moral Re-Armament at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC, in 1954 that Mrs. Bethune addressed. At the end of Mrs. Bethune's talk, a senior white lady from Richmond, Virginia, Sudie Wood, had said from the platform, "I am glad to take the opportunity to shake hands publicly with someone of your race because I helped to build racial bitterness. I have decided to commit the rest of my life to building bridges between the two races." This moment of encounter between the two women is the basis for the climax in *The Crowning Experience*.

The Mary McLeod Bethune Cultural Heritage Arts Festival was created in order to hold events that would bridge the community divide in the region by focusing on social needs. Seminars addressed topics of equity in health care delivery, entrepreneurship and education. *The Crowning Experience* was the first of five movies that were shown during the festival.

Commentary

In England, at least

Ken Noble is company secretary of *Initiatives of Change* in the UK. He was brought up in Manchester and gained a BSc in physics at Imperial College, London. Ken has worked with IofC in several countries and has served as editor of various IofC publications in London including 16 years as editor of *For a Change* magazine. He and his wife Maggie recently attended the 2014 Indzaba in Airlie, Virginia.



As an English person visiting the United States for the first time in 25 years, I am conscious that there is a lot of history between our two nations - some good and some not so good.

A sense of history is important. It

defines to a large extent who we are today. When we forget our place in history, we can easily be unreal about ourselves.

I am not a historian - but I do take an interest in history. We have a lot of good history programs on TV in the UK. Although, it has to be said, our media and many of our writers sometimes wear rose-tinted spectacles when viewing our past. You often find out a lot more about our achievements than about the places where we did wrong.

When William Hague, our Foreign Secretary (equivalent to the US Secretary of State), condemned Vladimir Putin for the annexation of Crimea, I couldn't help reflecting that there were considerable parts of the world where Hague's words must have sounded hollow. Not that I feel that the Russian action was right.

During what the British call the Indian Mutiny, for example, troops loyal to Britain killed thousands of Indians in their own country for having the effrontery to resist British power. The immediate cause of their unhappiness was that Indian soldiers were ordered to bite off the paper cartridges for their rifles which were greased with animal fat, namely beef and pork. This was against the religious beliefs of Hindus and Muslims, respectively.

Similarly, in China when the Chinese authorities resisted British merchants importing opium, the British used overwhelming force to remove the restrictions.

We rightly celebrate the fact that William Wilberforce and others successfully passed legislation to end the trans-Atlantic slave-trade in the British Parliament. Yet we too often neglect to feel shame that our forebears grew rich on the trade for the preceding three or four centuries.

There are, undoubtedly, causes for pride. It seems noteworthy to me that a case brought by five elderly Kenyans, who claimed that they had suffered torture under British colonial rule during the Mau Mau uprising, was allowed to be heard in the British courts. More than that, they won their case and over 5,000 Kenyan victims of torture and abuse were awarded compensation.

I read on 10th March in *The Times* of London that a coalition of the Heads of State of 14 Caribbean countries is considering bringing legal action against the UK and other European Governments asking for reparation for the slave-trade.

Their ten-point action plan seeks a formal apology, repatriation of any descendants of slaves to Africa for those who wish it, a land development program, and funding for health and education to eradicate illiteracy. The plan has been drawn up by Martyn Day, a British lawyer, with Sir Hilary Beckles, a Barbadian academic and historian.

Their report says: "Over ten million Africans were stolen from their homes and forcefully transported to the Caribbean as the enslaved chattels and property of Europeans. The trans-Atlantic slave trade is the largest forced migration in human history and has no parallel in terms of man's inhumanity to man.

"This trade in enchained bodies was a highly successful commercial business for the nations of Europe. The lives of millions of men, women and children were destroyed in the search for profit. Over ten million Africans were imported in the Caribbean during the 400 years of slavery. At the end of the 19th century less than two million remained."

Day and Beckles attribute chronic ill-health and illiteracy among the African descended population in the Caribbean to the "diet, physical and emotional brutality and overall stress associated with slavery, genocide and apartheid."

One cannot read *The Times* article and look at our history without acknowledging that we British have imposed terrible suffering on other peoples. Voices of greed and materialism have too often over-ridden more humane voices. We must find ways of ending the "unfinished business" of history. We need to try and persuade our European governments to put justice ahead of self-interest and the temptation to deny our mixed record.

It may not be the way to a wealthier future. But I believe that if we in Britain build our nation on the right values, we could be a greater positive force for good in the world. If that is true for our small nation, how much more true is it for the United States!

Admitting our past wrongs and doing what we can to put them right will be seen by many as a sign of weakness. Governments want to negotiate from a position of strength. Yet, when we choose to do the right thing, a new element comes into play. Many years ago, as a student, I made a decision to try and live my life by absolute moral standards - honesty, purity, love and unselfishness. I had to put certain relationships right - not least with my father. Difficult as some of those steps were, it was a very liberating experience. And I believe that it freed me to find my life's calling. Could this also be true for countries? That as we face up to our past misdeeds, we will be freed to play a humbler but more constructive role in the world.

Christians will be familiar with the words that St Paul believed came from God: "My grace is all you need, power comes to its full strength in weakness." We may need to be honest and humble enough to allow a greater power to work through us.

We hope you enjoyed this issue of *Breakthroughs*. Please share this newsletter with your friends and forward it to those you know have a passion for trustbuilding.

Thank you!



This email was sent to susan.corcoran@us.iofc.org by info@us.iofc.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Initiatives of Change | 2201 W. Broad Street | Suite 200 | Richmond | VA | 23220



Try it FREE today.