



InterChange

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InterChange For Peace

Publication of InterChange:
International Institute for Community-Based Peacebuilding

A Message from the President

Anne Goodman, Toronto, Canada — anne.goodman@utoronto.ca

Dear fellow peacebuilders,

Welcome to the newest edition of InterChange's newsletter. Our theme this time is:

Everyone can be a peacebuilder!

The articles in this edition emphasize that everyone has unique capacities; that problems can be opportunities; that we can help people see their work as peacebuilding and help them join the cause of peace; and that peacebuilding can be learned.

There are several articles about peacebuilding workshops. "Everybody Holds a Peace of the Puzzle", by Um'Khonde Patrick Habameshi describes a workshop that has enabled participants to discover and express their own contribution to peace, as well as to see how individual "pieces of peace" fit together.

Elsewhere in this edition, I report on exciting workshops held in Kenya and Toronto.



Writing from Kampala, Uganda, Umar Weswala describes how peace can begin anywhere and with anyone. In his story, it is with two children dancing. Umar also describes InterChange Uganda's efforts to educate youth in peacebuilding.

This approach is shared by InterChange Kenya, as is described in the article by Sacramento Ogina about recent youth forums in Kibera and Langata.

Stories by Charles Tauber

and Sandra Maric from Vukovar, Croatia, and by Tor Iorapuu, from Jos, Nigeria, describe peacebuilding and reconciliation in two very challenging environments.

Our member profile of Zora Ignatovic, written by Rosabel Fast, highlights that Zora's experiences in her war-torn homeland, Serbia, became the seeds for her unique peacebuilding work.

Carolyn Webb describes InterChange's wonderful new website and asks for

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your feedback and input.

That brings me to remind you that we'd also love to hear your ideas for the newsletter — themes, member profiles, resources, and that long-awaited comic strip from one of our Kenya members!

Thank you to everyone for your continued inspiration. Be well.

A New Website for InterChange

Carolyn Webb, Toronto, Canada — carolyn.webb@utoronto.ca

For at least two (or more) years we've heard from you that InterChange needs a new website.

Long ago we had developed a structure. Our logo gave us a colour scheme and feel. Members offered suggested features and ideas. We just needed to get to it.

In the end I sat down for a couple of weekends to learn

Wordpress. With a template in mind and good wishes sent my way I jumped in and surprised myself.

What you see now (at www.interchange4peace.org) is our new site profiling our events, projects and stories. Progress is being made.

We still have features to add including comment posting, sharing community stories,

posting testimonials, sharing what peace means to us, etc... These are slowly being added.

We want to thank those who have offered feedback so far! If you haven't already, get in touch with your ideas and suggestions and help bring InterChange's public face further towards one that widely shares our visions of a more peaceful world.





While InterChange is an international organization, much of the work is local. Local Centres are the way the work of InterChange is brought to life! Local centres may look different in different places, but they all work in line with the Vision, Mission, principles and policies of InterChange.

Peace Begins Everywhere

Umar Weswala, Kampala, Uganda
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My wife Zulaika had a little misunderstanding with a neighbour's wife. Then I invited the neighbour's wife to join us for an Eid party last year that I had organized for my family and a few neighbours.

After dining, my two kids Sarah and Abdul got excited and started to entertain us. They danced and everyone cheered. The next day my wife and my neighbour's wife were



friends again.

To me, this shows that peace begins everywhere. We do not have to always organize peace negotiations where people come with pre-determined positions. A single special activity that can bring the sides together all of a sudden can make the whole difference.

If peace begins everywhere or anywhere, then peace begins here. We should use every opportunity that we get to promote peace.

Peace begins here with two kids dancing. Peace begins here as I type this.

Peace begins there as you read this.

If everyone believes that peace begins right where they are, then peace will prevail.



Peace activists displaying a flag of peace



Umar, Issa, Beatrice and James sending a peace candle to Egypt.



Umar with Dr. Bishop Zac Niringiye, the Chairperson of the National Task Force for Peace and Conflict Transformation. Umar received a T-Shirt for representing InterChange in the ongoing activities of the task force that was established by the Inter religious Council of Uganda.



Observed learning is a theory that youth learn from what they see on television, at school, and in the family.

Thus, a child who grows up watching their parents form a cycle of escalating abuse will probably deal with conflict the same way. A youth who is sent to jail for crime is surrounded by harder criminals who may encourage even harsher forms of violence.

Overall, gun violence is not going to be solved by banning guns, or placing youth in jail. Guns will still be found and jail will provide criminal mentors.

Youth violence will diminish when youth have been enlightened to rely on more positive ways of dealing with conflict.

Education needs to focus on positive reinforcement. This can involve a simple change — for example, having youth study peace in history class instead of highlighting war as the only important aspect of history.

InterChange Uganda has a youth program that engages youth in activities to help them embrace diversity. We engage them in music, dance and drama, sports, adventures, and indoor activities like half day worships and group activities.

Nonviolent methods include: protesting, non cooperation, and intervention.

If the current politicians in Uganda had been introduced to non-violent means for addressing issues in their youth, we would be seeing less armed men and women on the streets of Kampala.

Education is the Answer to Preventing Violence.

Working Towards Healing in Vukovar, Croatia

Charles David Tauber and Sandra Marić, Vukovar, Croatia — cwwppsummer@gmail.com

It is now 20 years since 1991, when the Balkan wars began and when Vukovar was almost destroyed. There were atrocities on all sides. When Charles came in 1995, few buildings had not been at least partially destroyed.

Vukovar's history dates back 6000 years. Before 1991, at least 25 ethnic groups and 10 religions were in the region.

Now, Vukovar has become an icon of nationalism. Politicians visit, manipulate ordinary people and do nothing. Schools, cafés, sports clubs, and health facilities are segregated. People living next door to one another frequently do not interact. Individuals are identified by their accents, which they call languages.

While two thirds of the town has been rebuilt, there has been virtually no social reconstruction and there is little healing and reconciliation work going on.

This fall, Vukovar is undergoing a long and difficult period of nationalism. Commemoration events happen. Politicians come, whip up nationalist sentiments, and

leave. This will continue until after the Croatian elections in December.

Compounding these challenges are a number of social norms that act as barriers to healing.

People are not used to the concept of civil society. Despite the reality that virtually everyone has lasting psychological trauma from the war, individuals believe that it is shameful to obtain psychological assistance. Drugs are the primary treatment sought.

The Coalition for Work With Psychotrauma and Peace (CWWPP) faces great resistance in addressing these challenges but has put in place a number of programs.

In line with our belief that "everyone can be a peacebuilder", we have started a program of sensitization / public education to encourage people to talk about their lives and work together.

Further, CWWPP is working on a Course for Workers in Areas of Regen-

eration (CWIAR). Charles has taught this course person-to-person since the late 1980s to people in The Netherlands and Croatia.

The course is highly participatory, lasts for 120 hours, and includes work on communication, psychology, civil society, non-violent conflict transformation, and human rights. The course gives people with little or no education in these fields sufficient knowledge, skills, and attitudes to work in their communities.

CWWPP is now completing a manual for the course. As each module is completed, it will be put on the CWWPP website (www.cwwpp.org) and sent to InterChange members.

CWWPP is also developing an online version of the course. We welcome the participation of InterChange members in this initiative that will enable everyone to see themselves as a peacebuilder.

To contact Charles and Sandra, email cwwppsummer@gmail.com (identify InterChange in the subject line)

InterChange Uganda Lauded Over Peace

Denis Cox Emuria, Kampala, Uganda

InterChange Uganda has been hailed for its peacebuilding efforts and services provided to the local community.

The Chairman of Lutengo Local Council, Kasasira Moses Matovu, appreciated InterChange Uganda's efforts during a function to bid farewell to Shannon Davis, a student of Peace and Conflict Studies at University of Toronto, Canada, and intern of InterChange Uganda.

InterChange Uganda is a community-based organization with offices in Lutengo village, Nama Sub County, in Mukono District, as well as in Kampala. It provides peace promotion, conflict resolution, promotion of human rights, helping orphans and vulnerable children (OVC), counseling and guidance, computer training and library service.

Kasasira Matovu urged InterChange Uganda officials to make Lutengo and the services offered by the organization a model that surrounding communities can learn from.

Issa Kirarira, Chairman of InterChange Uganda, thanked all those who attended the function and asked them to consider becoming members of InterChange because their presence meant their commitment. Kirarira also thanked Kasasira Matovu for having honoured the invitation to attend the function.

InterChange Uganda intends to expand its activities by putting in place a stationary outlet, printer and a photocopier because the area lacks these facilities. Kirarira thanked the Lutengo community for giving their children an opportunity to train



Shannon Davis and others after the farewell party.

with InterChange Uganda.

Shannon expressed that she was fortunate to have worked and associated with both InterChange Uganda and the Lutengo community. She noted that InterChange Uganda has a bright future because members are dedicated and new centres are being created.

Peacebuilding in Kenya

Anne Goodman, Canada, and Sacramento A.Ogina, Kenya

After the Referendum: Toward Sustainable Peace in Kenya

In October 2010, 25 participants from InterChange Kenya, Uganda, and Canada came together in Nairobi, Kenya, for a Facilitators' Workshop titled *After the Referendum: Toward Sustainable Peace in Kenya*. The workshop was planned in an effort to ensure that Kenya would not have to go back to a situation of suffering, hatred and mistrust.

This 5-day workshop used the heightened public awareness and engagement in Kenya in the period between the adoption of the new constitution in August 2010 and the general election of 2012. It brought together peace practitioners to explore how community-based peacebuilders and peace theorists could contribute to building comprehensive, sustainable peace.

The workshop featured:

- A keynote address by Julius Muia, Secretary, National Economic and Social Council.
- A peacebuilding framework looking at building sustainable peace.
- An emphasis on the sharing of skills and experiences.
- Opportunities for participants to get to know each other and develop a sense of their work as well as obstacles they faced.
- A participatory approach based on

adult education principles.

- Sessions that combined information sharing and education; practical training and sharing of experiences; action-planning and networking.



Proceedings from the workshop can be downloaded from our website:

<http://interchange4peace.org/?p=457>.

Meeting with Youth Leaders

In follow-up meetings, members of InterChange Kenya proposed focused discussion groups in the community to create awareness and support a peaceful election come 2012. It was agreed that Nairobi slums were accessible to InterChange members and that the first areas of focus would be the Kibera slums and Langata constituency.

In July 2011 members of InterChange Kenya held a meeting with youth leaders from Kibera to:

- Find out what challenges youth have faced in their peacebuilding efforts from the time of the post election violence to the present.
- Develop strategies to prevent recurrences of post-election violence.

Challenges:

Youth participants offered a number of challenges that they and others experience in their efforts to build peace in their communities:

- Joblessness and loss of income, as companies have been forced to close their businesses.
- Loss of friends because of tribal differences.



- Loss of tools of trade such as hand-carts that were taken for use in the riots.
- Lasting mistrust and grudges among community members who used to live in relative harmony.
- Family breakups and disappearance of loved ones.

Overall the main challenges put forward that prevent youth from maintaining peace and that encourage them to engage in violence are:

- Poverty and a lack of jobs (which is aggravated by the fact that youth are often paid to engage in violent acts).
- A lack of information and awareness about other ways to address grievances.
- Tribalism.

Recommendations from the youth:

- Kenyans need to look at themselves as human beings above everything else despite their different tribes.
- There is a major role to be played by and youth need to avoid involvement in crime and violence.
- Facilities such as the youth fund and Kazi Kwa Vijana should be made available to youth to keep them from engaging in violent acts.
- Youth need to desist from being used by leaders for their own interests.
- There is a need for awareness-raising and civic education to help youth address their issues in a more peaceful manner.
- Youth need to be brought into a greater number of peace discussions.

For more information contact Josephat Khamasi, Kenya chapter: khamasijosephat@yahoo.com.



Everybody Holds a Piece of the Puzzle

Patrick Habamenshi, Toronto, Canada — habamenshi@gmail.com

I have always loved puzzles — ever since I was kid.

As a child, puzzles taught me to be meticulous and patient. As an adult, I grew more and more fascinated by puzzles as a “concept” and not just a game. I like the idea of an intricate maze that you have to laboriously work your way through.

When you think about it, our lives are real puzzles; and, contrary to the traditional jigsaw puzzle, with our lives we have no idea in advance what the final image will look like.

We don't even know if there will ever be a complete final image as our lives are constantly shifting and changing shape. One second we're happy, the next we're sad; one day life is a beautiful and colorful rainbow, the next our lives are torn apart by a destructive emotional hurricane. Sometimes we overcome challenges and feel at our strongest, and a month later we're powerless and have no idea what the future will look like.

Our life puzzle also changes as we discover different cities or landmarks, live in different places, meet different people, love, laugh, leave or, sadly, are left.

For the last year, my own life journey took me to InterChange, where I met so many amazing individuals, all on their own individual life journeys, reunited by a common aspiration: to bring more peace into the world.



“I am a Peace-Builder – Peace Puzzle” Workshop at OISE, University of Toronto



The Circle of Sharing

As programme coordinator for Toronto's *Building a Culture of Peace* programme, my biggest question was:

how can we build a common Peace that everyone can identify with, when each of us has such a different idea of what peace is?

A bigger puzzle started emerging in my head: a Community Puzzle that would not be a set “image” of peace but would rather be shaped by individual ideas of peace as we journey together.

I developed the workshop “I am a Peacebuilder - Peace Puzzle” to put that idea to practice.

Anne Goodman invited me to do the workshop in her class. I developed a giant jigsaw puzzle, and distributed puzzle pieces (or “puzzle peaces” as we ended up calling them) to each participant. I invited participants to reflect on their journey as peace-builders.

There were two simple rules: to be creative and to be true to oneself. The piece could be used in any way a person wanted. Imagination was the only limit.

People had one week to work on their puzzle peace. After this week we would do a Circle of Sharing and invite each person to present their piece to the “community”.

The process was amazing and humbling — to see how all the participants wholeheartedly embraced this idea and worked on their “puzzle peaces”.

Participants shared that they took time off from work to work on their puzzle piece, or were working on their puzzle piece in between house chores and running errands.

Each puzzle piece told a beautiful story — of love, of healing, of dreams, of questioning events happening in that person's life.

As we went around the circle, we weren't just taken into each other's unique world; we were seeing our common peace in the making through our respective search for spiritual, physical, family, professional, and social peace.

At the end of the session we assembled the Community Peace Puzzle, made up of all the individual pieces.

They created a beautiful imagery of how our individual lives and aspirations are intertwined with the lives and aspirations of other community members in ways we never really suspect.

Peace, once an elusive and sometime distant concept, came to life and took the shape we gave it.

Through the “Peace Puzzle”, Peace became an act of giving and receiving, a communion that at the end of the day was exactly what it should be.

Um'Khonde Patrick Habamenshi coordinated InterChange's *Building a Culture of Peace* Programme from September 2010 — June 2011



Pieces of the Peace Puzzle

Hope is Not Lost: Youth Working for Peace in Jos, Nigeria

Tor Iorapuu, Jos, Nigeria — tor_iba@yahoo.com

Over the past 10 years, the city of Jos, in Plateau State, Nigeria, has experienced increasingly violent clashes between Christians and Muslims. Efforts by the Nigerian government and numerous local and international groups have had very little effect. The hate and killings continue; trust in the police and army has eroded; and the entire city has become a militarised zone.

However, even in the most horrific situations, there are always stories of hope and inspiration and always opportunities to be a peacebuilder—as the following story illustrates.

In Dadin-Kowa community, a neighbourhood with a mixed population of Christians and Muslims, the Youth, Adolescence Reflection and Action Centre (YARAC) and the local Youth Community Development and Peace Initiative have been working collaboratively on a number of projects over the past 8 years, focussing on youth as those most involved in and affected by the persistent violence.

Recently one of the Christian youth leaders, Darlington Chime, was stabbed several times in a mob attack. Thankfully, he survived, and what has happened since the attack illustrates the valuable work the group has done, as well as the young man's character and integrity.

After his recovery Darlington remarked: "I have no doubt in my mind that the young people that attacked me are victims

of the lack of good governance we all are agitating for. I was going to school, but they were idle. What do we expect from such a group? I have forgiven them and I appreciate the Muslim woman that came to my rescue".

While the incident had the potential to be polarizing, the opposite happened: solidarity and support between the Christian and Muslim youth in the group was strengthened. This encouraged the organizers to begin a training program using some of InterChange's work, values and experience, including Nonviolent Communication, to promote healing and empowerment, combining this with their existing work using Development Theatre and Soccer 4 Democracy. Since doing the training, the Dadin-Kowa youth have begun engaging with groups in other communities and the outcomes look promising.

Darlington, meanwhile, is using his experience and the language of forgiveness in his ongoing role as a peacebuilder.



Darlington and the group that received the training (Darlington is third from left with a yellow shirt).

Everyone Can Be a Peacebuilder Workshop in Toronto

Anne Goodman, Toronto, Canada — anne.goodman@utoronto.ca

"Everyone Can be a Peacebuilder" was the topic of a creative and participatory workshop held on Saturday October 29 as part of the programme, *Building a Culture of Peace in the GTA*.

The idea came from an earlier discussion of creating a Peace Ambassadors' Workshop, and the title was inspired by this InterChange newsletter!

The workshop was organized around the theme of a Picnic, and it provided an opportunity to gather, reflect, learn, share and have fun. We used an actual picnic basket to represent our peace building toolkit. At the start of the workshop participants were asked to reflect on what they could contribute to the basket and what they hoped to have added to their own basket when they left.

After a short orientation to the role of individuals' positions, interests and

needs in peacebuilding, participants took part in a session on Nonviolent Communication with facilitator Henry Wai.

People then moved into a "World Café", rotating through 4 stations identified by picnic tables and blankets. At these interactive sessions, participants learned some core peace concepts and explored the idea of "peace literacy" using postcards with thought-provoking questions as learning tools.

The workshop embodied the InterChange principle of "working holistically, engaging heart, mind and spirit."

An ongoing peace mural activity provided both a gathering place and a way to explore concepts in other ways. As is typical in InterChange events, relationship building was key and food played a big role—especially since the event was a "picnic"!

An activity run by Michael Wheeler examined what role each of us can play in our own lives as peacebuilders, and a final closing round helped explore what each of us had taken from the picnic basket. The workshop ended with participants writing themselves a message that they will receive in the mail on an InterChange postcard.

Over the day everyone learned methods and activities to be peacebuilders in their day-to-day lives.



Interview of a Peacebuilder—Zora Ignjatovic

Zora Ignjatovic, Toronto, Canada — artdecos@rogers.com



Zora came to Toronto, Canada, as an immigrant from Serbia in 1993, two years into the war in the former Yugoslavia.

When her country was bombed by NATO forces, her world fell apart. Zora's young son's question: "Who is good and who is bad in this war?" led Zora to a constructive act of hope.

In 1998 she started a peace garden at the Jackman Public School in the Danforth Broadview area where she lived and where her son went to school. The garden gave Zora a sense of hope and made her feel she belonged.

The garden is an ongoing community project kept alive through the sense that the community members are keepers of the land. Each year new parents are trained as volunteers and signup sheets are used for watering schedules.

New Horizons Community Garden

One of Zora's projects is the New Horizons Community Garden, now in its fourth year. Julia, a friend of Zora's, who has worked for 22 years in social work at COSTI on College Street, was involved at the start of the project.

From Julia, a group of Bosnian seniors, who had come to Toronto as refugees and immigrants, heard about Zora's gardening. The group had organized the

Multicultural Association of Bosnian Seniors and wanted a garden.

Given Zora's training as a horticulturalist and her experience doing community work relating to food security and culturally appropriate food, she was able to help the group get started. She established the garden as a peace garden.

What makes it a peace garden?

Forty families, mostly Bosnians, garden together at Bloor and Islington in a public park.

The garden is a safe place with water supplied by the city for watering, a shed for garden tools and a place to drink coffee under a shelter. The seniors live within walking distance. When they face health problems they support each other.

To deal with the inevitable conflicts that arise, the group has drawn up a list of rules and regulations. More importantly, however, when conflict arises, Zora reminds the group about what the garden is giving them.

When she asks the group the question: "What is gardening for you?" the answer is "Life."

When she was asked to speak at a celebratory event while the group was en-

gaged in a conflict Zora was upset. She didn't speak but asked everyone to join hands and think about the land in the plots.

A desire for peace grounded the group and opened their hearts.



Learn more by visiting the New Horizons Garden website:

<http://www.newhorizonsgarden.ca>

Zora has been an active member of InterChange since the organization was founded.

She attended the inaugural symposium in Toronto in 2005, and, in 2007, was part of a delegation that visited an inspiring project using community gardening for reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

When Zora asks the group the question: "What is gardening for you?" the answer is "Life."

When Zora was asked about the six guiding principles of the Manifesto 2000 For a Culture of Peace and Non-violence that guide the work of InterChange, she said "Amazing!" She follows all of them to move her to a personal commitment.

This interview was performed by Rosabel Fast, Toronto, Canada



*A Publication of InterChange:
International Institute for Community-Based Peacebuilding*



Mission

To foster and make visible community-based peacebuilding around the world.

Vision

Community-based peacebuilders around the world sharing knowledge and supporting one another to nurture and develop dynamic, durable peace.

InterChange is a growing, united, and diverse group of community-based peacebuilders around the world who share knowledge, collaborate on educational and research projects, and support one another with the aim of nurturing and developing dynamic, durable and positive peace.

Peacebuilding may involve a multiplicity of actors -- community, academics, religious leaders, and policy makers -- both within and outside the immediate conflict zone. Our particular focus is the actors and activities based at the level of the individual, the family, the group, the neighbourhood and the community.



We offer our sincere thanks to Amena Zafar for her role in coordinating this edition of the InterChange newsletter.

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