



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, JUNE 11, 2011

### Highlights of InterChange's work over the 2010-11 fiscal year

The past year has been an expansive and exciting one for InterChange. Many areas of the world where we have InterChange members faced major political changes, both positive and negative, thus creating challenges and opportunities for the work of community-based peacebuilding. In this context, we have developed our networks and deepened our connections, both locally and internationally, with an international Facilitators' Workshop held in Nairobi in October 2010 playing a key role. Our local centres in Uganda, Kenya, Croatia and Toronto, Canada, have been active, and we have seen the development of a new local centre in Western Uganda and interest in developing additional centres.

Our new logo is gaining visibility and has been used on business cards, in our newsletter, and on T-shirts developed by the Uganda chapter. We have a vibrant new website and a Facebook page, and we also launched our newsletter and are eagerly awaiting the next edition.

InterChange typically seeks to establish centres where there is the possibility of a university connection, and students have had an ongoing involvement with InterChange, especially through the University of Toronto and the Peace Unit Programmes (PUP's) in Kenya. I was surprised and delighted to learn that a student from my own university is working as an intern with InterChange Uganda!

InterChange has continued to work on joint projects with other organizations. Last year we partnered with CDPeace (Centre for Development and Peace Education) to do peace education projects in Sierra Leone and with Canadian Voice of Women for Peace to hold a conference entitled "Building peace; resisting war" to mark their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Of course, in an active volunteer organization with big dreams, there is always more work to be done than time to do it. Finding ways to stay on top of tasks like membership, as well as carrying through with our projects and education initiatives ideas on education, is always a challenge. To help us develop ways to set and move forward on our priorities, we have launched a strategic planning process designed to involve members and local centres all over the world.

My personal highlight for the year was the opportunity to meet so many InterChange members and supporters, both here in Toronto and also in Kenya and Uganda. David Macharia, InterChange Board member from Kenya, calls InterChange a family and I whole-heartedly agree! I hope to meet many more of my InterChange family in the year ahead.

*Anne Goodman, President*



**New InterChange Website**

## 2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Following InterChange's AGM, held on June 17, 2010, we held a storytelling circle for our members facilitated by Christie Jaggi and Erin Novacovich, given that storytelling has been a key focus of our work.

## 2010/11 INTERCHANGE BOARD

InterChange Board members worked hard over the past year, taking on responsibility for committees, various areas of governance, and local centre activities. The Board consisted of the following:

Anne Goodman (President) – Toronto, Canada  
Sarah Lounsbury- Toronto, Canada  
Tor Iorapuu- Jos, Nigeria  
Issa Kirarira- Kampala, Uganda  
David Macharia- Nairobi, Kenya  
Katie Meyer (Vice-President) – Toronto, Canada  
Charles Tauber- Vukovar, Croatia  
Carolyn Webb (Secretary) – Toronto, Canada  
Michael Wheeler (Treasurer) – Toronto, Canada

The InterChange constitution allows us to appoint Board members between elections, and two new members were added to the Board in December 2010: Erin Scuccimarri and Ezra Houser. Their names will be included in the slate put forward at the 2011 AGM. Katie Meyer and Sarah Lounsbury have decided not to run again for the 2011-12 term. We would like to sincerely thank them for their contribution to InterChange during their term on the Board.

## INTERCHANGE RESEARCH AND PROJECTS

We have defined an InterChange project as:

- One that crosses borders and boundaries
- One that has the potential to involve many people
- One that connects to the InterChange values and principles
- One that members are passionate about and are willing to take responsibility for

InterChange research and other projects emerge from our members' interests and integrate with education, action, and community building.

**Facilitators' Workshop:** A major project over the past year was a very successful *Facilitators' Workshop: After the referendum: Towards Sustainable Peace in Kenya*. This workshop took place in Nairobi in October 2010 and brought together participants from across Kenya and Uganda and also a contingent from Canada. The workshop was supported by the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi, and the Government of Kenya through participation of senior officers.





The initial workshop title was: *Looking to Kenya – Elections as Peacebuilding Opportunities* as Kenya and also Uganda were planning elections in 2011 and 2012 and it was felt that such a workshop would give them and others in similar situations useful lessons on how to prevent violence during times of political instability. When Kenya held a referendum for a new constitution in August 2010 that took place peacefully and left Kenyans feeling hopeful about the future, InterChange changed the focus of the workshop to *After the Referendum: Towards Sustainable Peace in Kenya*.

Members from Kenya and Uganda expressed that the workshop supported ongoing local peacebuilding efforts in those countries during the period leading up to and after the elections.

**Building a Culture of Peace in the GTA:** This is an exciting education and training programme that connects facilitators able to offer peace-building workshops with leaders and members of communities who want to foster a culture of peace in the Greater Toronto Area, Canada. The programme targets, amongst others, communities facing ongoing cycles of violence due to historic and current traumas, and systemic injustice. These include diaspora communities from conflict zones, women and youth.

A key element of this project is a series of workshops entitled *Peace begins at Home*, which has been piloted in 2 Toronto-area high schools. We are looking to expand it into more elementary and high schools.

**Tool-kit for peacebuilders:** This project was initiated at the InterChange symposium in Rwanda in 2005 but received new energy and far better definition during the Facilitators' Workshop. The intention is not to create an exhaustive list of resources, but rather to share models, tools and ideas that InterChange members have found useful. For each addition to the tool-kit, we plan to include information about: who has used the tool; where it can be obtained; in what situation people have found it useful; where it may not be suitable/advisable to use.

Over the past year, the **Food/Peace book** remained an area of interest and **Storytelling** received much attention, including as the focus of the first edition of the InterChange newsletter. Storytelling linked to identity issues was a key component on the Facilitators' Workshop, and the Toronto Local Centre initiated a digital storytelling project.

## COMMUNICATION

As an organization based on relationships, communication is vital to InterChange. We use technology in several ways. Because of the geographical distances that separate us, most of our communication is done over the internet through our listserv and our online organizing tool, Basecamp. We also use phone calls and Skype for our international Board meetings. We continue to search for better communication technology.

A key achievement of the previous year was the development of a new website, thanks to the efforts of InterChange secretary, Carolyn Webb. The website is designed to be visually appealing, easy to post information, and with capacity for interactivity that will be developed in the future.

Another success over the past year was the launch of the InterChange newsletter, with a second edition in the works. We also have a Facebook page, thanks to volunteer, Nico Koenig.

However, we have found there is no substitute for face-to-face meeting for deepening our relationships and helping members get a better sense of each other's realities. The Facilitators' Workshop was very useful in this regard. We are also pleased that members are taking the opportunity to visit each other and to do internships and independent study when possible.

## **EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

InterChange engages in several types of education projects:

- International projects such as the symposia and the facilitators' workshop
- Projects of local centres, such as the Building a Culture of Peace project in Toronto; the many formal and non-formal education and training activities in Uganda; and the core courses for Workers in Areas of Regeneration being done by the Vukovar centre.
- Involvement in university education, e.g. through the PUPs (Peace clubs) at the universities in Kenya of which David Macharia serves as patron; and in Toronto the link to graduate students, including those in the graduate Certificate in Community Healing and Peacebuilding.

In addition, there are education projects undertaken by individual InterChange members, such as David Macharia's work with Umtapo Centre in South Africa. Education convenor, Charles Tauber, sees InterChange as having the potential to do highly useful collaborative education work. For example, the Umtapo Programs and the CWWPP programs could be carried out in greater consultation with InterChange. InterChange local centres and universities in Toronto and Nairobi are working on a joint youth leadership programme.

## **INTERCHANGE LOCAL CENTRES**

InterChange is a Canadian charitable organization with members in different parts of the world. Our work is both international and local, and Local Centres bring InterChange's work to the local level. We seek to establish local centres where there is a concentration of InterChange members, recognizing that the form and composition of the centres may differ from place to place.

### **InterChange Kenya Local Centre**

Currently, the main concentration is the Nairobi Local Centre, but thanks to the efforts of Violet Yimbo there is also a nascent Local Centre in Kisumu, in western Kenya. In addition, university student Emmanuel Okuna, PUP Chairman University of Nairobi-Kikuyu Campus, is exploring the extension of chapter activities at the village level where real issues of peace need to be addressed.

The past year has been an eventful year for the Kenya Local Centre as members have attempted to respond to gigantic events taking place in their country including the post 2007/8 elections violence and aftermath; the August 2010 referendum; and ICC indictment of Kenyans responsible for the 2007/8 post election chaos.

The **Nairobi Local Centre** did an excellent job in planning the Facilitators' Workshop and now intends to forge ahead with the planned local level training on peace issues and focus discussion groups with the purpose of strengthening communities' resolve to keep holding together. Much work remains to be

done on reconciliation and healing after the post-election violence of 2007/8, as well as preventing violence in the upcoming election. As coordinator of the Nairobi Local Centre, Khamasi, says: "We must play our part to create the Kenya we want that all of us are a part of."

The Facilitators' workshop brought in new members to the local centre and our Board member from Nairobi, David Macharia, tells us that they look forward to their vigorous involvement in all the activities for the growth of the Centre.

### **InterChange Uganda Local Centre**

The Centre continues to register breakthroughs in its peacebuilding efforts and membership has been growing. The centre held regular meetings during the year and took part in over 10 workshops either as joint organizers or as a participating organization. The Centre was actively involved in the Facilitators' Workshop held in Nairobi and since that time has engaged in active peacebuilding work that they felt played a key role in preventing the kind of electoral violence experienced in Kenya.

The centre registered as a Community-Based Organization (CBO). The Centre was denied NGO status and advised to reapply next year after fulfilling all the necessary requirements which include a strategic work plan. Having acquired legal status, the next step is to open an organization account early next year as one step towards harmonizing the financial management of the Centre. The Centre is also developing a 3 years strategic work plan which will be integrated into the InterChange strategic plan.

### **InterChange Kabale Local Center**

On November 16, 2010, the UN International Day of Tolerance, a new InterChange branch was initiated in Kabale, Uganda, a district in the southwest of the country, after a wonderful mobilization job by Susan



Ayebale, a member of InterChange studying nursing in the district. Issa Kirarira, Board member of InterChange and the Chairman of InterChange Uganda Local Center, attended the launch, and Bwogi Buyera, local journalist, was chosen to oversee the activities of the chapter on an interim basis.

InterChange Uganda members had a year-end celebration in Kabale with local Kabale members providing their homes and food. There were also InterChange T-shirts given to the children, as you can see in the photo!

The local Center received two laptops which were handed over to the Uganda team in Nairobi by Anne Goodman and Carole St. Laurent. The laptops have been used to develop an Internet café in Lutengo, a village in the Mokono region. Services include counselling, peace meetings, and Internet services with more plans to come. The Uganda Local Centre is also involved in training InterChange members in different computer packages and skills.

The Interchange Uganda Local center was also asked by IAESSEC, an international Internship organization, to host interns in 2011. The centre received an Intern early 2011, who turned out to be Shannon Davis, a student at the University of Toronto.



### InterChange Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Local Centre



The Centre holds activities that deepen relationships between its members and programs that provide outreach and education to the broader community.

Much of the focus of activities of the past year has been the *Building a Culture of Peace in the GTA* project. A grant from the Catherine Donnelly Foundation allowed us to develop a peacebuilding education and training project in Toronto and to hire our first ever staff person, Patrick Habamenshi.

The Local Centre remains interested in the development of a digital storytelling activity

building on previous work in this area.

### InterChange Vukovar Local Centre:

In Vukovar, Croatia, the Coalition for Work with Psychotrauma and Peace (CWWPP) serves as the local host of the Vukovar Local Centre of InterChange. We are looking to bring the 2 organizations closer in the future to enhance cooperation and joint activities.

After 15 years in the region, the CWWPP sees the needs of the population for healing, education and economic development as great. Activities of CWWPP are focused on therapy for mental health and on peace education programmes, the area where they see the greatest potential to work with InterChange. Educational programmes run at several levels:

- "Sensitization" or public education through pamphlets and short seminars
- A core Course for Workers in Areas of Regeneration at the Group leader level and at the capacity builder level
- Manuals and on-line courses
- Continued exploration of BA and MA programs

### Future Local Centres

InterChange members in **Jos, Nigeria** and **Somalia** have also expressed interest in developing InterChange Local Centres.