



InterChange

InterChange For Peace

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

Message from the President

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

It has taken us a while, but I'm thrilled to introduce the first edition of the InterChange newsletter!

Our theme is Storytelling.

In the article "Storytelling in Action", Erin Novakovich talks about what she has learned about storytelling and about herself as a storyteller. In "A Web of Connections Across the Ocean", I write about how stories connect us, no matter the distance.

In "Peace at a Glance", Weswala Umar describes how a radio programme is being used to build peace in Uganda by allowing people to share their stories over the air.

Our member profile, featuring Cathy Stubington, highlights a theatre project that brought two communities together using stories. We've also include additional resources



about how stories can be used to build peace.

We have included articles about how InterChange is developing as an organization. We're delighted to present our new logo and tell you about how it developed. And we share how members of our local centres in Kenya, Uganda

and Canada are moving InterChange's mission forward.

On the back page we invite your feedback on a number of issues, including a name for the newsletter.

Thanks for being a part of this exciting time! We look forward to hearing from you.

August 2010

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The InterChange Logo

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

Many of you will remember when, at the end of 2009, we revealed our logo. The day was a milestone; it had been two years in the making since we had held our initial logo brainstorming session at a meeting in Toronto, Canada.

After that meeting, words to inform the logo were clarified; draft designs were sketched; members contributed ideas from around the world; and

many draft images were prepared and rejected. Some of these were too similar to existing logos, others had inappropriate cultural references, and others just didn't fit.

Through the process we reaffirmed that InterChange stands for solidarity, growth, possibility, continuity, interdependence, equity, and strength. Our logo reflects these, our interconnectedness and our

basis in relationships.

Thank you for all your feedback during the process. Together we achieved a better understanding of our purposes and identified a unique symbol to reflect our ideals.



Image - Draft Logos

Peace at a Glance

Weswala Umar, Kampala, Uganda — uweswala@gmail.com

Every Sunday from 10:00pm to 11:00pm, peace lovers in Uganda tune in to 94.1 Bilal FM, to listen to Peace at a Glance, a radio program dedicated to peacebuilding.

Founded by Mr. Issa Kirarira, an InterChange Board member, and hosted by Umar Weswala, a member of InterChange, Peace at a Glance has gone a long way in educating listeners on how best they can live in harmony with each other.

The purpose of the show has grown to encompass what true peace is. Guests on the program put emphasis on the fact that peace is not only possible, but inevitable.

The program is popularly known as the peace hour, symbolizing the one hour dedicated to the program by the radio management. It sends a message to listen-

ers that during this hour, they should desist from any form of action that contravenes the values of peace. We would like to take the show to new heights, sharing the ways in which we can build cultures of nonviolence in our communities.

The program has also brought together peace activists from different parts of Uganda, creating yet another community of peace lovers in the form of listeners.

During the program, 15 minutes are dedicated to calls from the listeners. This is one of the special moments of the program where listeners get to share their feelings and views with each other.

The topics discussed cover all aspects of life but with a connection to peace.

Many thanks go to the management of Radio Bilal which has even promised to increase the time from one peace hour to two peace hours.



Weswala Umar is a member of InterChange Uganda and the patron of The Rhomu Care College Peace Club. This picture was taken during the recent annual music festival organized by InterChange Uganda Local Center and the Peace Club.

Storytelling in Action

Erin Novakovich, Toronto, Canada — enovakovich@rogers.com

Am I a storyteller?

Only six months ago I would have said no. I struggled with disclosing my memories, feelings and thoughts, especially concerning the adverse situations of my life.

My outlook changed last December after my father passed away and I needed a way to understand my feelings and grief. I turned to storytelling. I soon realized the benefits of sharing my story. I could reflect on my experience to better understand myself and my situation. I felt less isolated and more connected to others. I was able to explore my feelings to bring about healing and finding peace with my situation.



Erin Novakovich is a member of InterChange Toronto

My experience with storytelling coincided with the desire of the Toronto InterChange group to develop a series of workshops for our members and the general public. Our first area of focus was storytelling.

The workshop Storytelling as a Healing Art was developed and first presented after the Toronto InterChange AGM on April 18, 2009. The workshop was developed by Anne Goodman, Regine King, Amy Cross and me, with the intention of enabling participants to appreciate and understand storytelling.

The following learning components were included: a guest storyteller who would share their healing story with the group — for our workshop this guest was Regine King, an InterChange member, PhD candidate and Rwandan survivor; an educational component to explore the functions of stories, why we tell stories and how stories can be healing; and small sharing circles to enable participants to share their own stories with each other.

The workshop helped participants discover the relational aspect of stories and how our stories are connected through history. Those present also embraced the trust and comfort created within the group

and the deep connections that were made through the process of sharing our stories.

The workshop's success led to our group's desire for more storytelling. A second event called "Web of Connections", as described by Anne in her article on page 3, was held to enable participants to come together in a storytelling circle. We discovered that while our stories and experiences seem different, and that we come from literally very different worlds, at a deep level we are united.

InterChange has had great success with storytelling. Participants have expressed positive reactions and a desire to experience more.

I now feel that I am truly a storyteller.

As for me, I now have a different answer to that question 'am I a storyteller'. By allowing the storyteller within myself to be free, I have started a journey of healing, self discovery and building deep connections. I now feel that I am truly a storyteller.

A Web of Connections Across the Ocean

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

Haney Mussa, a Somali-Canadian living in Toronto and a former student of mine, spoke in class one day, describing the importance of storytelling in the traditional culture of her homeland.

Haney's grandmother, a revered storyteller in the community, used a simple but effective way of revealing the connections between people. Everyone would gather around the fire in the evening to share their personal stories, with the speaker holding a ball of yarn. As each speaker finished, the ball would be passed to someone whose story connected to the last one, while the speaker held onto the thread. By the end of the evening, the patterns created by the strands of yarn gave a graphic picture of the relationships within the group.

Inspired by this simple, yet evocative, image I applied this technique on several occasions — for the last class of the Community Healing and Peacebuilding course I teach and when the InterChange Toronto



Storytelling at PHARP Training in Kenya

group used it for a memorable evening of telling personal stories amongst ourselves (which we called "Web of Connections").

So when Jennifer Ball and I were planning a module on trauma healing as part of the PHARP training on "Indigenous, Biblical and Modern Approaches to Conflict Transformation", held in Nairobi, Kenya, in July 2009, we decided to end the module with a similar personal storytelling activity.

There's not much preparation needed — just set up a circle of chairs and bring a ball of yarn. In Nairobi we decided to hold our activity out in the garden. There was a buzz of anticipation as members of the group took their places on the heavy metal lawn furniture.

The group had already discussed storytelling and its role in peacebuilding and we felt confident that everyone understood the activity. I began by describing the circle we'd held in Toronto and reiterating the importance of storytelling in healing and peacebuilding. Each person was then invited to tell their own story, and the ball of yarn was placed in the centre of the circle to be taken up by the first person to speak.

However, as the first and then the second participant told animal stories, which are common in the African context, we realized that we had made the assumption that there was a common understanding among the group. In fact, there are many different cultural understandings about the use of the term and concept of stories.

One of the participants voiced what others were feeling: that this somehow didn't

sound like what those leading the activity were anticipating. This allowed us to clarify that we wanted people to share their own personal stories. We were then able to take up the activity as envisaged.

Just as had happened in Toronto, no one knew what they were going to say until they started speaking. As each person ended their story, another participant in the circle was ready to take up the yarn because there was no difficulty seeing the deeper connections between the stories.

The two participants who had told allegorical stories at the beginning were eager to tell their own personal stories and the activity ended as it had in Toronto —with the web of yarn reminding us of the deeper connections between everyone.

The title for this article can be understood at several different levels. A "web of connections", an activity originally held in Toronto, was replicated in Nairobi. However, the idea was sparked by someone we have never met, across time and space.

As other InterChange local groups initiate similar activities and as we all share our stories through this newsletter and our listserv, it will become ever more evident that we are all connected to each other as peacebuilders and as human beings.

Anne Goodman is the President of InterChange and is a member of InterChange Toronto

Of Interest

- InterChange has more than 120 members around the world including in Canada, Croatia, Ireland, Kenya, Nigeria, Palestine, Rwanda, Serbia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, UK, and the USA.
- More than 350 individuals are on our listserv.
- InterChange local centres in Canada, Kenya and Uganda have been meeting regularly and initiating local peacebuilding projects.
- To join our email newsletter, learn more about InterChange events, find out about our projects, or to become a member go to www.interchange4peace.org.



Canadian members get creative at our November 2009 Peacebuilding Show-And-Tell Symposium

InterChange Local Centres



While InterChange is an international organization, much of our work is local and Local Centres are the way we bring the work of InterChange to life! Where we have a concentration of InterChange members, we work to establish local centres and we were very excited to be able to launch local centres in Nairobi, Kenya and Kampala, Uganda last year. Both Centres had their inaugural meetings in July and have been holding regular meetings and activities since then.

Local centres may look different in different places, but they all work in line with the Vision, Mission, principles and policies of InterChange. To guide the centres we've developed a local centre manual and a process to approve local centres.

The Nairobi Local Centre provides a place for its members to share experiences and build each other's work. The Centre is also interested in promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue between people from diverse backgrounds.

The Quaker Church compound has been supportive in providing meeting space and some of the meetings are held in the home of the centre's co-ordinator, David Macharia.

Concerned about a repeat of the post-election violence that occurred in 2007-8, the Nairobi centre proposed a project that would engage in preventative peacebuilding work in advance of Kenya's upcoming election period.

InterChange has since adopted this as an international project with a week-long *Training of Trainers* workshop on peacebuilding and healing. The event is scheduled to be held in Nairobi in October 2010 with facilitators from Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Croatia and Canada.

We will aim to have 20-25 participants from various parts of Kenya and surrounding countries in the region, mainly Uganda, which is also facing elections in the near future.

The Nairobi centre has proposed engaging in preventative peacebuilding in advance of Kenya's upcoming election period

Contact: David Macharia
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The Uganda Local Centre holds monthly meetings in a space provided at the Busabala Road Nursing Home by its director, Dr. Edward Ssemabatya. The centre is registering as a Community Based Organization (CBO) and has a comprehensive programme of activities which includes:

- Projects run through peace clubs at local schools and colleges
- Media partnerships with newspapers and radio stations
- Sharing ideas and capacity building among members of the local centre
- Peacebuilding campaigns in partnerships with local council and religious leaders
- Events to mark UN international days of peace and tolerance
- Participating in conferences and events to reduce tribal, political and religious tensions
- Working with the Nairobi centre to plan the Train the Trainers pre-election workshop
- Relief work to help the victims of a landslide affecting 3 villages in the Bududa district

Lack of funds for computer access and transport, especially for student members, pose a significant barrier for the centre.



A neem tree is planted in Uganda at the Local International InterChange Day, September 2008

Contact: Issa Kirarira
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The Toronto Local Centre has also had a very active year. Patrick Habamenshi, a member of the Rwandan diaspora community, has played a leadership role as the group's co-ordinator.

The centre balances its activities between those that deepen relationships between its members and those that provide outreach and education to the broader community.



Participants at the Toronto, Canada Peacebuilding Show-and-Tell Symposium, November 2009

A highlight of the year's work was the *Peacebuilding Show-and-Tell Symposium* in November in which participants shared an overview and sample activities of peacebuilding education and training, and then discussed where and how these activities could be used. The 2-day symposium closed with renewed direction and leadership for the centre. The proceedings from the symposium are posted on the InterChange website.

Other projects of the centre include the development of a digital storytelling activity building on previous work in this area and a diaspora component of the "Elections as peacebuilding" project.

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Member Profile: Not the Way I Heard It

Cathy Stubington, Enderby, Canada — cathy@runawaymoon.org

I have been asked to write about storytelling. Right away I ask, what is a story? Is it a relating of one's life experience? Is it a version of the truth? Is it a disguising of the truth, or is it something other than the truth? What would you write about?

I will tell a story about a play called "Not the Way I Heard It" that was performed on the Banks of the Shuswap River in British Columbia, Canada, in 1999, with a cast of 163 people from both Enderby and District and the Splats'in First Nation. People from age 3 to 83, and from all walks of life, took part in this collaboration that transformed relationships. Like any true story, each of the several hundred people who made it happen will have their own version. Here's mine.



Cathy Stubington, puppets, and children in Uganda, 2005

The Enderby and District Community Play Project began with a search for stories – stories people felt needed to be told about where they lived. I asked as many people as I could. Often I heard "Go to the Museum". But I was not looking for an official story, frozen in writing. I wanted a story that reflected the truth about the people that were in this place at this time.

What is the collective memory of a place where there are newcomers and multi-generational families both old and young? I recorded everything I was told including multiple versions of any story. I was told about the burning of the school and each time I heard it a different person took the blame! There were several versions of the Naming of the Town. I was told that there is a mermaid in the water, so my co-writer James F.Tait and I wove a fantasy from a

truth heard over and over again, of young people wanting to leave this place, as there is Nowhere to Go and Nothing to Do.

What became clear was that a profound truth was not being told. Enderby is situated in Secwepemc traditional territory, "settled" less than 150 years ago. Today the Splatsin Band Reserve borders the town of Enderby in two directions, but none of the people I met were acquainted with anyone from the Reserve. Many stories were shared from Enderby and surrounding areas, but I had heard no stories from Splats'in. Their stories needed to be told if the project was to be successful. But where should I start? And how do I ask questions without imposing?

People kept telling me "ask Rosalind Williams". A few months later we met. She had been immersing herself in talking to the Elders for many years and was searching for more artistic ways of sharing her knowledge with her own community. She agreed to be part of the process as long as the stories were to be told from her peoples' perspective.

From there we worked together but our search was riddled with obstacles. I learned the importance of being impeccable with one's word, and of the myriad sources for intercultural misunderstanding, and of the depth of the misconceptions that had been perpetuated through the mistelling of stories. While I was looking for tales that had been warped into folklore by inaccurate retelling, Rosalind needed to tell the stories with great accuracy to ensure that the history of her people continue into the future.

I was reading the journals of A.L.Fortune, Enderby's "First White Settler". He wrote that when he arrived, there were "No Natives here at all". I asked Rosalind if this was true. She answered "Of course we were here. We watched him for a long time before we let ourselves be known."

Rosalind brought forward the needed stories: a poetically composed Story of Origin (shared by her sister Cindy Williams), a re-enactment of the Creation of the Reserve using text from both oral history and carefully researched government documents. There was a story of her own childhood on the Reserve, playing with kids

from Town, and a gentle and beautiful metaphor describing the recent history of First Nations people that allowed us to put forward some very difficult stories in a way that laid no blame or guilt but opened up understanding. We wove them all together.



Cathy shows her puppets at an InterChange meeting in Kenya, 2005

Once written we spent three months working on the play, which eventually involved hundreds of people, each of whom has their own version to tell. As well as the 163 cast members many more took part by making puppets and costumes; at Rosalind's request, every member of the cast wore traditional regalia, sewn together at the Band Hall. The Enderby and District Community Play "Not the Way I Heard It" is an example of how storytelling and the Arts can contribute to breaking down century-old barriers, on personal, community, and institutional levels, both visible and invisible.

But I haven't yet told you the most incredible story of all, which ran through our play from beginning to end: the story of the salmon, which we told with two giant salmon puppets and a school of salmon fry puppets. The Shuswap River is one of the rivers where the salmon run takes place every year: thousands of fish swim an arduous upstream journey, all the way from the Pacific Ocean to the Interior, returning at the end of their life cycle to lay their eggs in the place where they were born. It is one of the wonders of the world. And that is the complete truth.

Cathy Stubington is the Artistic Director of Runaway Moon Theatre in British Columbia, Canada, and a member of InterChange.

Featured Project: Food Peace Book

Mary-Jane McKitterick, Toronto, Canada — food.peace@interchange4peace.org

The Food Peace Book is a project that every member of InterChange can participate in and include their friends, family and community!

Together we are creating a book about how food (and drink) is used to build peace in our communities. It will be a collection of stories, recipes, pictures, songs, poems and snippets of information.

Contributions can come from your culture, your family and community traditions, or your own personal experience. They can be about the sharing, preparation, and even growing of food as long as they show how peace was created in the process.

Three graduate students at the University of Toronto were so inspired by the project that they spent the 2010 winter term developing a toolkit on how to organize events to inspire participants to share food and tell stories about building peace.

Jenny Richmond, Crystal Randall and Nicole Degagne developed ideas for hosting a potluck dinner (a meal where every guest brings their own dish) with the theme of how food builds peace. Once the toolkit was complete they hosted the potluck at a local Toronto Interchange meeting in April 2010.

The students used an electronic recorder to record the stories that people shared at the meeting and will submit them for use in the book. This toolkit, which will soon be available on the InterChange website, was

developed for the Toronto chapter of Interchange but other Interchange chapters are welcome to make use of it.

We need everyone's help to make this project a success! Just like the Eastern European folk tale "Stone Soup", where all the villagers contribute food items to create a delicious soup, creating the book together and sharing it with others is part of building peace. Once we have enough submissions we hope to have the book published.

We will feature an example story in each newsletter to give you ideas of what we are looking for. We welcome your submission.



Fresh local pears at InterChange Canada's Peacebuilding Show-and-Tell Symposium, November 2009

AN EXTRA TURKISH-COFFEE CUP

To drink one cup of coffee together guarantees forty years of friendship
-- Turkish saying

Fildžan viška, or an extra Turkish-coffee cup, is the name of a Bosnian internet network for the promotion of friendship and tolerance in post-war Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For centuries, coffee has been an important ingredient of social life and culture in the Balkans.

The expression fildžan viška is a metaphor for the harmonious co-existence of the people of Bosnia, regardless of their nationality or religion.

This proverbial cup is always ready and waiting for an unexpected guest.

The peacebuilders from Fildžan viška believe that the ritual of coffee drinking will survive as a symbol of a tolerant society.

Submitted by Goga Sajinovic, Serbia

Contact Mary-Jane to make a submission, discuss your ideas, provide translations, or to join the Food Peace Book committee: food.peace@interchange4peace.org.

Mary-Jane McKitterick is a member of InterChange Toronto and the coordinator of the food peace project

Featured Resource: Our Stories... Our Strength

One of the Legacy of Hope Foundation (LHF)'s biggest projects to date has been Our Stories...Our Strength, a national education project whose aim is to collect, preserve and share the stories of Residential School Survivors.

With funding from INAC and Health Canada, the LHF has been working with Aboriginal communities and organizations from across Canada since 2006 to organize gatherings of Residential School Survivors.

These gatherings have provided a forum

for Survivors and their families to come together to share their experience, to learn about available counselling services and healing programs, to obtain information about issues related to residential schools, and most importantly, to have their residential school experiences recorded and preserved.

These experiences have been primarily documented in one-on-one interviews and are part of the growing collection of stories that will be a part of a publicly available archive on residential schools.

This project has resulted in a collection of Survivor stories in both video and audio format that represents First Nations, Métis, and Inuit experiences from coast to coast. This collection is the largest of its kind in Canada.

For more information see: <http://www.legacyofhope.ca/OurStories.aspx>.

An additional resource for stories from aboriginal elders in Australia: <http://www.laceweb.org.au/sty.htm>

Information and Communications Technologies for Peace

Carole St. Laurent, Canada — carole@fluidITsolutions.com

Without mutual understanding, peace cannot be achieved. Fostering such understanding can take place through good communication.

If communication is peace, then information and communication technologies (ICTs — i.e audio, visual, and online communications) are valuable tools to enable peace.

In both traditional and online communications, text plays an important role. However, text can only provide one dimension of understanding. Think about how many

Carole's website www.crypeace.org/ allows people to contribute stories for healing. Use the website to share your story of pain or forgiveness, confusion or anger, or steps towards reconciliation.

times you've misconstrued the tone of an email or conveyed unintended emotions through this means of communications.

In conflict situations, such misunderstandings are even more difficult to prevent.

Audiovisual tools allow the speaker to share her own words in her own voice and hearers can discern emotions that are difficult to convey in print. Sharing images evocative of the time and place allows viewers to visualize a scenario in greater detail. Even in face-to-face communica-

tions people share photographs, videos, songs and sounds to convey deeper understanding than words can alone. Audiovisual tools are particularly useful when the storyteller can not be present to answer questions and embellish understanding.

Especially in conflict situations, it is difficult to truly hear, let alone empathize with an adversary's position. Seeing and hearing the other's perspective through a multimedia message, with no immediate opportunity to defend one's own position, may allow deeper hearing to occur. For the speaker, the opportunity to share one's story offers a measure of healing.

Of course, dialogue must occur to move further into the peace process, but must this dialogue happen face-to-face? Time-delayed dialogues offer opportunities for reflection. Multimedia messages enable people to see and hear diverse positions from other points of view. Participatory media offer two-way communication with

politicians, leaders, and experts who cannot be present in person due to time, money, and geographical constraints.

ICTs allow greater numbers of people to participate in dialogues than could do so in person. They also allow us to communicate messages to a broad audience.

I invite you to share your stories broadly — particularly those moments in which you have pursued or reflected on issues of peace. These may include moments where you have understood yourself or others, stories of community loyalty or community betrayal, paradoxes of justice, or your views on anger, global action (and inaction) and individual choices to live in a more loving way.

Please share your stories at <http://www.crypeace.org>.

Carole St. Laurent is a member of InterChange Toronto



Basecamp is a tool being used by InterChange members to collaborate internationally. In this way we are using ICTs to facilitate our peacebuilding work.

Letter to the Editor

Susan Nye baza, Uganda

Dear Editor,

I appreciate the role InterChange is playing in making the world a better place.

The visit of the president of InterChange to Africa with a team of other two members of InterChange meant a lot to us. We were able to hold meetings to strengthen the local chapters and to make some important resolutions.

What Africa needs now is peace. InterChange is timely in Uganda since we know

that oil has become a curse in any area that it is discovered.

Look at Nigeria and the middle east. Recently, conflicts have taken shape in Uganda as a result of discovering oil. It is alleged that the recent conflict of Kabaka of Buganda (traditional leader of Buganda in Uganda) and the government was a result of resources discovered in the disputed area.

InterChange stands for a growing and united diverse group of community based

peacebuilders around the world who build relationships, share knowledge and experiences, collaborate on educational and research projects, and support one another with the aim of nurturing and developing dynamic, durable and positive peace,

It is everybody's responsibility - InterChange's and citizens of the world - to be active and take preventive measures to avoid conflict in our region. It will be a challenge for the president of InterChange and the InterChange board. We are looking to you as our organizers.

