

Planting the seeds of change

Annual Review 2011-12



Initiatives of Change – vision, mission and values

Our vision is of a transformed society that has:

- the courage to do what is right and face what is wrong
- the will to establish moral and spiritual values
- care for individuals and the environment
- trustworthy leadership that brings purpose, unity and hope

Our mission is:

- to live by our values and inspire others to do the same
- to equip people to play their part in building a better society
- to take focused action alongside others who share our vision – locally, nationally and around the world

We will advance this through:

- training that enables people to find a vocation and develop the skills they need
- support for committed individuals and teams
- engaging the Initiatives of Change network from time to time around a single action or campaign in which all have a part

We will be open to new insights, seeking divine guidance and prepared to shift our resources and goals accordingly.

We commit to:

- moral standards of absolute honesty, unselfishness, love and purity of heart and motive as guidelines for daily life
- listening in silence to the inner voice as a source of truth, renewal and inspiration available to all
- honest conversation, undertaken in an open spirit, to build trust and enable healing, partnership and common action

Planting the seeds of a new culture

The overall mood of Britain seems pessimistic. For the first time I can remember, the next generation is widely expected to be poorer than the present one and there is little sign that we are addressing the threats to our climate and natural resources. Human nature just doesn't seem to be up to the challenge.

But perhaps we are looking in the wrong places. Answers to seemingly intractable problems tend to begin on a small scale and multiply as their validity is recognised. The point comes where conditions exist for them to take off and become part of a new prevailing culture. If these conditions do not yet exist, can we at least see where the seeds of solutions are being planted?

Of course we can. They are all around, and this review highlights just a few of them. Change is needed in many areas and the charity has set itself some specific priorities over the next few years:

- Helping young people with leadership potential to find and follow their vocation;
- Building trust and integrity in business and economic life;
- Creating sustainable communities.

The stories on the following pages illustrate how Initiatives of Change is making an impact in these areas, often working with partner organisations. They also show how many of those who have made a lasting impact on their situations began by seeking change within themselves. That is the challenge we each face, as individuals and as organisations, if we are to be truly effective in planting and nurturing those seeds of hope.

Christopher Evans

Chair of Trustees

June 2012

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Finding a vocation

Over 70 students and young professionals took part in the 2011 School for Changemakers, a joint venture between Initiatives of Change, Liverpool Hope University and i-genius, an international community for social and environmental change. This leadership development programme for 18 to 30-year-olds consists of a four-day residential course with year-round mentoring and alumni reunions at Greencoat Place, the lofC centre in London.

Professor Gerald Pillay, Vice-Chancellor of the University, described his vision for the course as 'Caux on campus', referring to the Initiatives of Change conference centre in Switzerland, where working and living together is as important as the meetings and workshops. So shared responsibility for practical tasks was a key part of the Liverpool programme.

The course equips participants with the tools to enable them to harness their energy and ideas in order to make a difference. It helps them identify career choices in an increasingly dynamic job market. And it gives participants the chance to learn from the professional, social and spiritual motivation of leaders from different walks of life.



A positive experience



'The community groups were my favourite part of the day. I felt that everyone within the group bonded and were our own little community. I overcame many barriers through the community and we shared great things. I got to know each and every person within my community in depth and was inspired by everyone.'

'What I very much like, was the political plenary, when that politician came. He certainly is a different kind of politician. The way he expressed his opinion and his beliefs was extraordinary. He didn't give us a political speech, but he told us stories of life, full of meaning. I liked his power of keeping the audience fresh and his sense of humour.'

'Whereas before I would have been likely to harbour grudges against those who had treated me badly, I now know that forgiveness is the better path. While I am not always successful, I now try to pause, reflect and then strive to do what is right in a situation and not just what appears to be best for me.'

Contributors to the course included Paul Moore, former head of group regulatory risk at Halifax Bank of Scotland, and Professor Gerald Pillay, Vice-Chancellor and Rector of the university.

The programme comprised quiet reflection, plenary sessions with guest speakers, workshops and learning in community groups. Evening programmes included talent shows, debates, films and discussions.

At the reunions in September 2011 and March 2012, the School for Changemakers alumni were able to compare their experiences and the outcome of decisions they had made following the course, as well as meeting members of the Initiatives of Change community.



"I did not know that there were so many people who cared and listened to people like us. This event is a rebirth for me."

Riot offender



After the riots: from blame to positive action

A young person who had taken part in the riots that shocked Britain in the summer of 2011 commented on an event at lofC's centre at Greencoat Place in London: 'I did not know that there were so many people who cared and listened to people like us. This event is a rebirth for me.'

Organized jointly by Initiatives of Change, The Cordoba Foundation, burning2learn (a leadership training programme for young people) and the Civil Society Forum, the one-day event was unique in addressing the underlying moral and spiritual needs highlighted by the riots. It brought together nearly a hundred community and faith leaders and representatives of non-governmental organizations from across the UK.

Dr Peter Selby, formerly Bishop of Worcester and Bishop to HM Prisons, criticized a 'system of disregard' for the wellbeing of disenfranchised young people, which had led to the August 2011 riots. Emphasizing that he was never in favour of rioting, Selby said the riots were 'the result of the

economics of disregard that we have all created'. Too many young people had been marginalized, he said. 'I don't believe that the world will become a better place only by people becoming better people,' even though this was essential from a Christian perspective. There was a need for systemic change. It was important that we attune our consciences to a 'moral universe.... If you propagate a system of disregard you are acting outside the guarantees of a moral universe. Last August was a call to live for a system of regard.'

Several speakers told of first-hand experiences of bringing about positive changes in their communities – including some that are a watch-word for violence, youth crime and social problems. Participants recommended specific action to deal with the causes of riots.

Learning to take responsibility

Ian Monteague, from the grassroots Glasgow charity FARE (Family Action in Rotherfield and Easterhouse), said he had grown up in the Gorbals slum area of Glasgow. It had 'the worst housing



project with razor gangs' and there was a lack of hope and vision. As a teenager he had thought, 'I can't change them but I have to do something. Am I

my brother's keeper? Yes!' Going into education, he launched a community newspaper 'to irritate those who should be doing something'. Twenty years ago, the Council gave six flats to be used for a youth project. The young people took responsibility for this space. Eighteen months ago the entrepreneur Duncan Bannatyne, of the Dragons' Den TV series, contributed. They now had assets of £2 million. 'There is money and there is room!' commented Monteague. 'We have to find who has got it!'



Follow-up work to support participants in their own communities is underway, with the emphasis on allowing initiatives to grow locally rather than seeking to bring in external solutions, however well-meant. The distinctive contribution of lofC is to support individuals on their own journey of change.

Spreading the message of reconciliation

The impact of personal change and forgiveness are at the heart of IofC's message and this is reflected in the work of FLTfilms, part of Initiatives of Change, whose productions have had an impact in many countries.

In the 1990s, Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye led rival militias during clashes in Northern Nigeria between Christians and Muslims which cost thousands of lives. During the fighting Wuye lost a hand and Ashafa lost close friends and family members. The award-winning film *The Imam and the Pastor* tells the story of how they were reconciled and the impact this had on their community.

Today these two men are working together to bring unity in tense situations in Africa. The documentary film *An African Answer* gives a unique insight into their approach as they bring together representatives of the Kikuyu and Kalenjin people in Kenya, exploring the depth of their mutual distrust and developing strategies to help them work together for healing.

During 2011 the film was shown widely by a joint UK-Kenya team from Initiatives of Change in both countries and proved highly effective, especially in the Burnt Forest region where the film was made. The British High Commission in Kenya made 100 copies of the film available for free distribution at the launch and the audience spoke of their hope that the film would be used more widely.

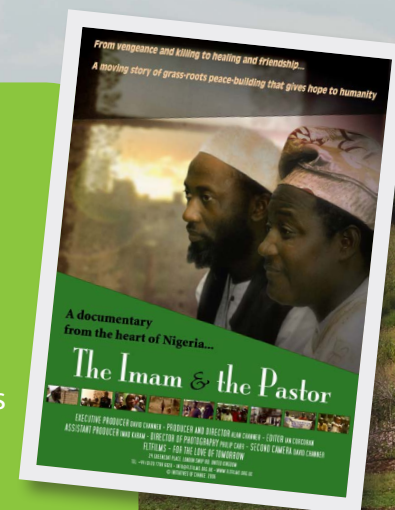
'Help us to become peacemakers not only for Burnt Forest but for Kenya and Africa,' said an elder.

You have walked with us till today. Many NGOs came, failed and left. Their approach was wrong. You came, brought us together and opened our eyes,' said a young man in his twenties.



Imam Ashafa and Pastor Wuye

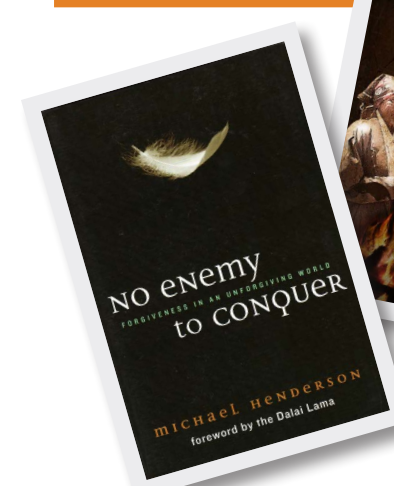
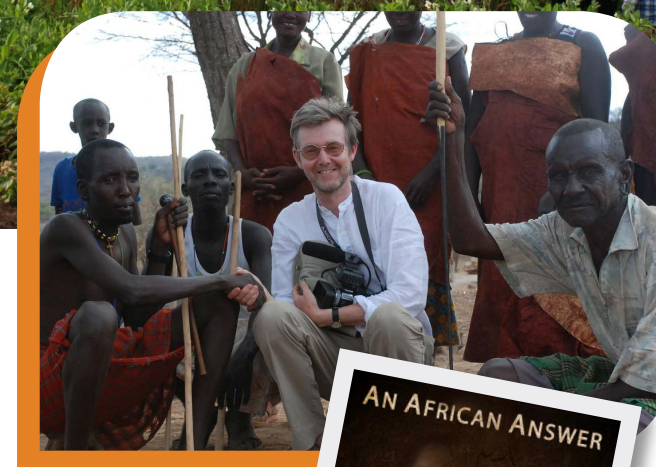
The story of Imam Ashafa and Pastor Wuye features in *No Enemy to Conquer* by Michael Henderson, who presents stories of men and women of different faiths and cultures reaching out to reconcile with others, previously deemed their enemies. A wide range of commentators includes Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, Rajmohan Gandhi, Benazir Bhutto, and the Dalai Lama. This book and the two films featuring Imam Ashafa and Pastor Wuye are available online at www.uk.iofc.org/books.



'This film must be taken to schools and colleges. I can't comprehend how Pastor James and Imam Ashafa managed to bring the two enemies to the point where they can share honestly in front of cameras. I congratulate everybody who played a part,' said a lady in her early thirties.

Ken Wafula, currently Chairman of the NGO Council of Kenya, said that *An African Answer* was 'an initiative at the grass-roots by grass-roots people for the benefit of the world'.

During 2011, a new DVD of *The Imam and the Pastor* with *An African Answer* was published with additional footage and interviews. Early in 2012 the Swahili translation was completed and another milestone was the publication of a Resource Guide for practitioners in peace building. As well as using the films extensively in Kenya, Imam Ashafa and Pastor Wuye carried out training missions in Egypt and Lebanon, invited by the Initiatives of Change teams in those countries. They also undertook a mission to Chad with the films' producer, Dr Alan Channer, at the invitation of the United Nations.



Looking forward, the proven effectiveness of these films has opened up many opportunities including a return to Chad, training of trainers using the Resource Guide and further tours in Kenya ahead of elections in 2013.

One of the goals for Initiatives of Change in Britain is to restore trust and integrity in business and economic life, qualities that have been found wanting in the recent financial crisis. The charity aims to provide a safe space in which people can engage with new ideas, in a spirit of 'honest conversation' without ascribing blame or seeking to judge a particular group.

Restoring trust and integrity

A series of public 'Greencoat Forums' has been held at IofC's London centre to explore the underlying causes of the crisis and develop possible solutions, led by a growing team of people in business and finance who aim to encourage integrity and conscience-based decision-making by individuals and organisations. Plans are now developing to take a 'road show' round business schools in the UK on the theme of 'Organising for Integrity', in partnership with the Civil Society Forum.

In July 2011, Texan business woman Margaret Heffernan, now living in the UK, addressed a forum on the theme of her book *Wilful Blindness*, an analysis of the root causes of the financial crisis. She told a story from her early career, when she worked on a low salary. 'One day, my boss had to sign my taxi expenses and told me: "This is not done this way. You have to add a couple more items." He taught me how to do it; we even filled in a new form - I still

have it. As much as I needed the money, that was the moment I thought: "I can't do this." We have to recognise the moral moment.' She spoke about the need for courage and a 'heroic imagination' to expose what is going wrong. Whistleblowers, she said, are not natural dissidents but are 'loyal employees who don't get taken seriously.'

Another forum heard from Paul Moore, the former head of group regulatory risk at Halifax Bank of Scotland more widely known as the 'HBOS whistleblower'. He had exposed the culture of excessive risk-taking at the bank in order to meet sales targets, a culture that led to bad debts and an eventual bailout. Moore told the forum that banks and boardrooms

"Our addiction to economic growth has created a poverty of the soul."

Roger Steare



need 'iconic leaders' of personal integrity if the world is to avoid further economic crises. The financial crisis of 2008 was caused by 'failures in organizational culture and ethics' rather than technical failures, he said. Good banking and financial services were 'impossible without upright men and women; without financiers and politicians whose consciences are finely attuned to the requirements of the common good. ... You can have the best governance processes in the world but if they are carried out in a culture of greed, unethical behaviour and an indisposition to challenge, they will fail.'

This analysis was echoed by Lord Phillips of Sudbury, Chancellor of Essex University. He said that the financial crisis had been caused by a culture of 'materialist fundamentalism', insatiable acquisitiveness and widespread corruption. 'The tom toms of reputation no longer beat in the City, so as to curtail anti-social behaviour.' James Featherby, a partner at law firm Slaughter and May and author of *The White Swan Formula*, said that the issue was 'the idolatry of money' - an altar on which all other considerations were sacrificed.

In a compelling analysis, Professor Roger Steare, Corporate Philosopher in Residence at the Cass Business School of City University in London, added: 'Our addiction to economic growth has created a poverty of the soul that is corrupting our family lives, our friendships and our communities. This philosophy of growth for its own sake is as addictive as tobacco, alcohol and crack cocaine. It is also just as deadly.'



Creators of Peace

'Wherever my path will go to, this experience will have a profound influence on it. Spiritually I developed myself by allowing myself to be led by my inner voice, which speaks up in times of reflection and leads me on the way of my passion: working together with people to create a more peaceful society.'



"I learned not to hold a grudge or be angry with someone, but instead talk out the situation that made you so angry."

So wrote Willemijn Lambert, one of a growing number of women who have received training through Initiatives of Change to facilitate Creators of Peace Circles. Now based in The Hague, Willemijn is expanding Creators of Peace in the Netherlands.

Creators of Peace seeks to engage women in creating peace at every level of society. Its core activity is bringing together small groups of women to discover ways to overcome obstacles to peace in their personal lives and communities. These Creators of Peace Circles provide opportunities for women to talk about the deeper issues in their lives with the aim of building trust and mutually supportive relationships.

Normally, the participants meet once a week for six weeks. They benefit from new skills, new opportunities to understand people who are different from themselves and build bonds of friendship at a deep, personal level. Creators of Peace Circles took place in London, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Bradford and Oxford, building networks of trust across racial, religious and social divides.

One participant commented, 'I will take away the idea that I can make changes in my everyday life. These changes might be small to me, but of significant importance to others.'

Another said, 'I learned not to hold a grudge or be angry with someone, but instead talk out the situation that made you so angry.' Creators of Peace is a world-wide initiative.

Peace circles have taken place in countries as far apart as the Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Canada, Guatemala and Kenya. Following an international gathering, one of the facilitators wrote:

'The more diverse the group, the wider the understanding of "Peace". So with participants aged from early twenties to seventies, from the Baltic and Portugal, from Sri Lanka and North India, from Palestine and the UK, Hindu, Christian, Jewish and Muslim, we learned to listen to each other's pains and struggles, hopes and joys. We hope to continue meeting to share the friendship and to learn more skills relevant to peace-making in our communities. Times of silence, where we can search for God's will and inspiration, were practised, and gave a new sense of peace in individual lives.'



Getting involved

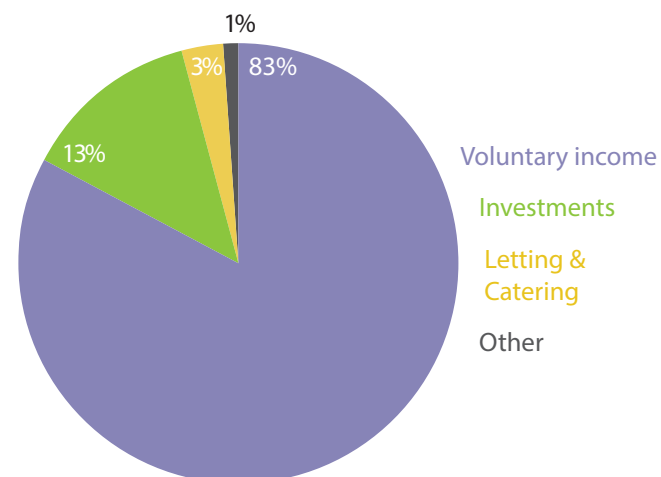
'If you change yourself you will change your world. If you change how you think then you will change how you feel and what actions you take. And so the world around you will change.'

Mahatma Gandhi

Initiatives of Change is a bottom-up charity. That is to say, anyone can and does have a part by taking their own 'initiative of change' following their conviction. The charity exists to support these initiatives and, as described in our mission, 'equip people to play their part in building a better society'. Please contact us to find out more and get involved in any of the activities described in this review.

Reflecting this voluntary ethos, the great majority of our income and expenditure (over 80% in each case) are from individual voluntary contributions and are spent on campaigns and programmes. We are also fortunate to have some investment income, thanks to generous gifts and legacies in past years.

Sources of income 2011



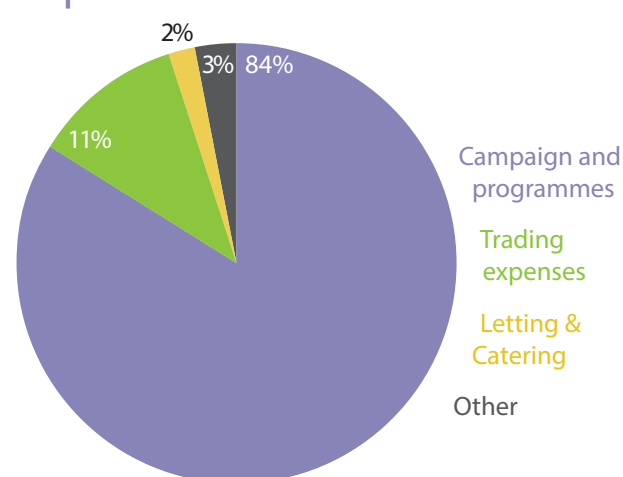
New funding is always needed to make possible new initiatives and programmes that can impact on people's needs and enable them to play their part in building a better world. Please consider making a gift online or by post, using the contact details on the back cover. Alternatively, please contact the Secretary, Ken Noble, with any requests or questions about donating to Initiatives of Change: 24 Greencoat Place, London SW1P 1RD or e-mail ken@london.iofc.org.



Information on Gift Aid (which boosts the value of your gift) and on leaving money to lofC in your Will is available from www.uk.iofc.org/donate or from the Secretary as above.

Greencoat Place, the charity's London base, is only ten minutes' walk from Victoria Station and offers a peaceful venue for events and conferences. There is a variety of attractive and comfortable rooms available, including the Barn theatre which seats up to 100 and has an optional raised stage and theatre lighting as well as modern AV equipment. Catering is also available, from morning coffee to a full lunch or dinner in the dining room. Please visit www.greencoatplace.org to find out more or contact the Centre Manager, James van Werven, james@london.iofc.org.

Expenditure 2011



Consider this ...

The enduring and ancient power of story-telling is imaginatively used in the new play *Consider This...* from LynchPin Productions, which captures real life stories of change from The Forgiveness Project, a global charity that explores issues of reconciliation and conflict resolution, and from Initiatives of Change. The narrative is interspersed with filmed interviews by acclaimed film-maker Lloyd Miller and original, live music by the talented composer Razia Aziz.

The dramatic play is written by LynchPin founder and director, Jack Lynch.

'I first came across The F-Word: Images of Forgiveness exhibit of The Forgiveness Project in 2004,' says Lynch. 'And I was deeply moved by its stories where both victims and perpetrators relate sometimes horrific acts, then in very simple terms explained how they managed to forgive the perpetrators or themselves and move on. Ever since, I wanted to devise a theatre event around the subject of forgiveness.'



'Some eight years on we're finally in the middle of rehearsals where wonderful things are happening and we're all very excited to be bringing *Consider This...* to life. We feel privileged to be able to tell these powerful, challenging, moving and inspirational stories. The next phase of the project is a national tour. It's exciting stuff.'

The first public performance was a play-reading at Greencoat Place. This had a powerful impact on the audience and encouraged LynchPin to take the next step, a full stage production at The Electric Theatre, Guildford, on 20-22 June 2012.

For Initiatives of Change, this is an important new collaboration that will complement films, books and online resources as a means of reaching new audiences in 2012 and beyond.

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Copies of the full Annual Report and Accounts are available on request from the address above or online at www.uk.iofc.org/annual-report