



Creators
of Peace



Peace in Practice

Annual Report 2017

Transforming, empowering
and engaging women in
peace creation



By 2017, over 7,000 women in 50 countries have taken part in a Creators of Peace Circle, a community gathering for women to explore what it would mean for them to become a peace creator.



“ It is my first time that I am opening my heart and sharing my story with a group of women and it's probably the first time I ever feel free, completely, of societal constraints. — Zahra, Afghanistan

Our World

Our world today might feel increasingly fragile with natural disasters, political instability, divided communities, increased migration, violent extremes, climate change and land disputes. In any community, there is a need to create spaces for listening, to question negative narratives and find new ways forward. We all need help with trust-building to realise our own potential and enable one another to contribute to peace and human security.

As women, we have a part to play in responding to these shared challenges. We have a role in changing the story we live: from fear to trust; from distrust to honesty; from neglect to compassion and care. Alongside others working for change through movements such as #MeToo, which was created to expose and change the narrative of the widespread prevalence of sexual assault and harassment, our contribution brings women together to transform the consequences of violence and unresolved conflicts. Our Creators of Peace Circles for women explore which conversations are needed in our communities to help this larger healing to happen and which practical actions we can take together.

Our response

Our team in Burundi continue to run 6-day residential Creators of Peace Circles combining valuable dialogue for healing and reconciliation with practical cross-community teamwork on development projects building dry composting toilets and processing cassava roots.

Creators of Peace women in Syria continue to gather despite the challenges of everyday life in the midst of civil conflict. They support one another through Creators of Peace Circles and supportive activities designed to build trust between generations and prepare for peace across denominations.

The second Creators of Peace Circle in Afghanistan took place in Kabul in combination with training in human rights. Topics explored by women participating included mental and emotional harm from decades of war and instability, as well as stress management and parenting.

About us

OUR VISION

Women creating peace across the world's divides

A world where every woman embraces her value as a peace creator in family, community and nation: creating peace in her own heart first, she reaches out to others and to the needs of the society she lives in.

OUR MISSION

Empowering women as creators of peace

Creators of Peace empowers women to be radical peace-builders, starting with themselves. We believe that women have a distinctive role to play in creating peace.

Creators of Peace is a global movement that encourages women to give leadership for peace. We are a women's initiative that works to restore the respect and trust necessary for joint action with men and in the community.

OUR AIMS

1. To challenge women of all backgrounds and beliefs to discover their unique potential to create a culture of peace.
2. To promote a change of heart and attitude as the first step in peace creation.
3. To prevent violence and despair by addressing the roots of conflict – within us and around us.
4. To raise awareness of the personal ethical prerequisites for effective social action.
5. To create a network of friendship and solidarity for women across racial, religious and social divides.
6. To build just, caring and inclusive communities for all, including in post-conflict areas.



“ We are working for a change of mentality and transformation of hearts to promote a positive and inclusive peace. — Daphrose, Burundi

Creators of Peace around the world...



Creators of Peace Australia

continued to run Creators of Peace Circles for women and join wider community efforts to welcome refugees in urban areas

Creators of Peace Brazil

hosted a follow-up gathering from the "Peace in Practice" programme to transfer newly learned skills to the whole team

Creators of Peace Cote d'Ivoire

ran their first facilitator training for 15 women, with 2 learning training skills for the first time, then going on to co-lead a training at Caux

Creators of Peace Mali

used learning to contribute to the national reconciliation process and to form a cross-community delegation to the Just Governance conference

Creators of Peace Taiwan

organised Creators of Peace activities as part of their contribution to the student programme at their local community college

Creators of Peace United Kingdom

took part in the annual International Women's Day Festival with an afternoon workshop introducing new women to their peacebuilding potential

In 2017...

- Creators of Peace Circles took place for the first time in Trinidad & Tobago and Afghanistan and Facilitator Trainings were held in Australia, Cote d'Ivoire, Malaysia, Nepal, Uganda and Zimbabwe.
- We ran our first "Peace in Practice" programme in Switzerland for 35 women from 17 different countries, with a skills refresher for experienced facilitators and workshops on topics such as safe space for dialogue, fundraising and social media.
- Our first French-speaking regional gathering took place in Cameroon with women from Cote d'Ivoire, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. We celebrated International Women's Day, developed action plans for each country and generated a shared vision for peacebuilding in the region.

And

- We launched our "Change the stories and you change the world" booklet presenting reflections on courage and compassion by peacebuilders from Lebanon, Syria, South Africa, Romania, Kenya, Australia, Taiwan, Colombia and Burundi.
- We established our learning exchange online conference calls for women from different country teams to update one another on news, share learning and discuss focus topics such as evaluation, managing risk and caring for one another.
- We introduced our "Peace Focus Gathering" resource to help women establish Creators of Peace programmes in new areas and to encourage teams to strengthen their outreach with themed discussions, films or meals with other local women.



“ I have started a deeper journey of exploring self-care approaches and what it means to be at peace and to live peace, especially as a peace worker and activist. — Oksana, Ukraine

Introduction



From our President, Amina Dikedi-Ajakaiye

It is important that organisations and programmes are healthy structurally and statistically. Creators of Peace, in the last twelve months, is ensuring that this happens by reviewing our strategic priorities, web presence and proof for support. But I have been reflecting more on the true impact of the work of Creators of Peace on the lives of people and the application of IofC values in our programme.

"Peace in Practice" for us starts with how the executive committee and our international coordinators work together. I am grateful to be in a team where care is at the heart. Our monthly online meetings offer an opportunity to look at the needs in and updates from our communities and countries. We divide our time into looking at the structural and statutory requirements and spiritual nourishment on the other hand. This has been a very helpful balance. As international coordinators we are fellow travellers and catalysts of change.

We challenge ourselves to reach out and share learning between our teams. This last year, we have introduced regional conference calls as a new way to explore directly with different countries what is happening for them, their news, challenges or insights on how we can all work better together. It also gives the international coordinators opportunity to share ideas and any resources or developments. I am also glad that more and more regional face-to-face collaborations are happening, for example Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania; Nepal, India and Pakistan; Trinidad & Tobago and Barbados; Papua New Guinea,

New Zealand and Australia... we inspire one another through our stories and work.

Most importantly, Creators of Peace is about the women, and sometimes the men, who participate either through our Peace Circles or other gatherings. Over 3,000 women in Baringo region, Kenya, were inspired to find healing in their heart and have gone on to impact their communities; the women lawyers trained to facilitate Peace Circles in Uganda who are now influencing young South Sudanese women in a refugee camp; the recent training in Papua New Guinea that has helped to break a cycle of revenge violence in the community... our work continues into 2018 and we invite you to join us.



From our Executive Officer, Kate Monkhouse

Putting "Peace in Practice" was very much the theme for Creators of Peace in 2017. Most people are for peace, but do not necessarily know how to make practical steps within their own lives or communities. Creators of Peace, as part of Initiatives of Change, believes that we all have a role to play and that the change towards a more peaceful world starts with ourselves, as well as contributing to wider reconciliation efforts and advocacy for policy change.



Our Creators of Peace Circles continue to give women the opportunity to reflect on their own lives and where they might be called to act for peace locally or in response to a national issue. We take personal steps towards forgiving ourselves for the part we have played in conflicts. We take time to heal from the hurts we have received, then begin a journey towards family and community reconciliations. Then we undertake practical responses towards poverty, domestic violence, refugees in need, education for girls and engagement in democracy.

Organisations working for peace also need to take care of themselves too, so 2017 has also been a year of "peace in practice" for our Creators of Peace network. Our newly elected international committee has settled into their governance roles and looked at ways to give better hands on care for our national co-ordinators. We have invested time in exploring how we measure the quality and impact of our work, as well as managing the risks and challenges of working in areas affected by conflict.

We have renewed our fundraising strategy, re-framed our budget and upgraded our auditing procedures. We are learning too about how to deepen cross-cultural understanding within and between our teams. And we have improved our communications materials to support solidarity across generations and share positive examples of peacebuilding with our wider communities.

We do all of this to strengthen our personal and collective capacity to be able to give leadership for peace and create a surer foundation for us to be advocates for a new story for peace in our world.

TRANSFORM >

Syria

Syria has been consumed by a civil war aggravated by international stakeholders since 2011. The stress of fear and the threat of violence continue to affect the daily lives of women living in cities such as Damascus in often untold ways. Normal relations between communities have become more tense and aspects of Syrian culture long held dear are lost as political constraints impact on trustbuilding. Preparing for peace is still made possible in the midst of conflict.

What CoP did

Creators of Peace Circles have gently been taking place in the midst of very challenging circumstances. Iman Al Ghafari has been able to facilitate Creators of Peace Circles or gatherings with teenage girls and women from different denominations and religions. These gatherings provide a lifeline and a space where it is safe to talk about peace.

Result/outcome

A key aspect of the gatherings in Syria has been for participants to find ways to reclaim their sense of inner peace while life around them is in turmoil, as one participant articulated: "I have learned the importance of inner peace in order to have a good relationship with others from different religions and backgrounds, also to have unconditional love for them. Listening to my inner voice is the way to deal with my daily life pressure. Being aware of my intentions, feelings, fear and motivations is a cleansing of my whole self in order to have pure intentions and to be able to serve the world well."

“ I want
my school
to be
dedicated
to building
a better
humanity

— Sabah, Syria



Profile

Iman, a teacher, has been supported by Marie & Lina, neighbours across the border in Lebanon, who have committed to accompanying her, in spite of the difficult history between their countries. Iman has brought Syrian women to Beirut for respite weekends. These breaks have been transformational for women who never thought they would be welcomed by Lebanese women. She says of one gathering in a school: "The Peace Circle was a gateway to new friendships. We had honest Christian / Muslim conversation which was filled with respect and debate. As facilitator, I was watching carefully, but I learned that it's important to raise deep and honest questions as long as our intentions are to learn and not to criticize, and that our tone and way of asking are based on mutual respect."

"By understanding my concerns and fear, I will be able to face the obstacles of building peace whether on a personal or global level and by doing that I will be able to be a peacemaker and forgiver. Being able to forgive others makes us powerful." — Zouhair, Syria



EMPOWER >

Nepal

Nepal continues to recover from its earthquake in 2015 which has put additional pressures onto communities already emerging from civil conflict, poverty and urban/rural divides. At the beginning of 2017, a Creators of Peace Circle took place with 14 women representing various development sectors such as education, mental health, media, women and youth empowerment, community development and peace building.

What CoP did

During the three-day Peace Circle, the group covered ten Gathering Points and explored issues of common concerns, including violent conflict between people residing in the hills and plains (*Pahad and Terai*) areas of Nepal; conflicts around norms related to menstruation, such as the common Hindu practice of isolating women during their monthly period; social obligations of women especially to take care of in-laws; identity crisis of different ethnic groups; the social prejudice against girls, early marriage and gender based violence.

Result/outcome

Participants in Creators of Peace Circles have included parliamentarians and political leaders, as well as teachers and students who are part of UNICEF outreach community peace-building programmes. Following on from our training, new facilitators plan to work together across their project priorities to introduce Peace Circles to teachers and then to students and parents. A pioneer organization against human trafficking, is planning to organize a Peace Circle amongst the staff and survivors.



“My own contribution is actually part of a much larger action.”

— Meena, Nepal

Profile

Creators of Peace was introduced to Nepal in the year 2011, through the invitation of an organization leading peacebuilding work in Nepal, Search for Common Ground (SFCG). Two Creators of Peace women from Sydney – Sussen Rix and Shoshana Faire, came to Kathmandu and facilitated a Creators of Peace Circle at SFCG for women leaders from various organisations and also conducted a short Facilitator Training for some of the participants. The team has grown to include women involved with diplomatic missions, local NGO leaders and community activists. You can read more about Meena Sharma, our CoP National Co-ordinator in Nepal in our latest [CoP Newsletter, Gathering Point](#).

“We women have so much social responsibility which drains out a lot of our energy. The society teaches us to please everyone first and does not talk about the concept of self-love and self-care. This experience with Peace Circle helped us to embrace our own needs and care for our feelings so that we can reach out better in love.” — Participant, Nepal

ENGAGE >

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's 2013 constitution identifies gender equality as one of the nation's core policies. Yet, much work needs to be done to bring women's rights up to date. Women do not always know about these laws which means they do not report violence, or get justice. Damaging practices, such as forced virginity testing, child marriage in rural areas and marriage by abduction, reinforce women's inferior position in society.

What CoP did

The most common issue we find women are dealing with in Creators of Peace Circles is family disharmony caused by the current economic situation. With Zimbabwe's unemployment at over 90%, many men are without a job so there is pressure on women to make ends meet. Discussions tend to focus on two topics - 'forgiveness' and 'what destroys peace', as there are many financial challenges which bring poverty, a key factor that destroys peace'.

Result/outcome

During the last Circle, one woman commented, 'after participating in a Peace Circle, I was encouraged to apologise to someone in the village (who was in the room), he accepted and now our renewed friendship has affected the rest of our community. There is now a clear difference in our behaviours', talking of an issue that was largely down to tribal divisions, also a major concern due to past conflicts between majority and minority tribes.

“Our renewed friendship has affected the rest of the community.”

— Participant, Zimbabwe



Profile

In 2012 two women, Angie Katito and Adelaide Mhunduru, developed a calling to take CoP to their home country Zimbabwe after going to a CoP conference in Caux, IofC International's conference centre in Switzerland. In 2013 the first Peace Circle was held in Gweru, their home town and hub of IofC activities. Angie and Adelaide have been members of IofC, commonly known as Moral Re-Armament (MRA) Zimbabwe, since the 1980s. Their conviction is now leading hundreds of women and men too, through Peace Circles, making ripples through the province. Angie is a former nurse and Adelaide is a pastor. The message spreads quickly about the two women who have been invited to more places to give Peace Circles and to support resolve family and community conflicts.

“You have given us wisdom which brings us healing. You have enlightened us to see the right way of living. Thank you for coming to our village and bringing your gift of training.” — Village Chief, Zimbabwe

“Delivering Peace Circles gives me great satisfaction, that we can impact our community for the good.”
— Adelaide, Zimbabwe

Growing Creators of Peace

Competency: our skills & teams

- We have added three new trainers to our list of twenty and now aim to reach a total of thirty trainers worldwide to add to our network of 100+ facilitators by 2020.
- We have adapted and improved the content on our facilitator trainings and have started to provide a greater focus on building sustainable local and regional programmes.
- We have begun to explore better practice in trauma management and will implement the steps identified in our new risk register to help our teams with care of participants.

Coming up...

- We have accompanied many team members, but have yet to shape this into a more structured scheme with mentoring for younger women.

Capacity: our resources & finances

- We have completed our branding refresh and have started exploring ways to build more interactive communications to support teamwork and learning exchanges.
- We have launched a new leaflet, presentation, newsletter and refreshed webpages to help spread the message of Creators of Peace to potential participants, partners and donors.
- We have updated our fundraising strategy and progressed work to make us more fitting for external grant criteria, as well as to build up a stronger community donor base.

Coming up...

- We will launch our new 'Giving Circle' for individual supporters to commit resources to support emerging projects and provide flexibility for grassroots activities.

Collaboration: our partnerships & stakeholders

- We contributed to 'Towards an Inclusive Peace' and interactive sessions for Caux Peace & Leadership Programme at the Caux Forum in 2017.
- We have continued to build more local partnerships, for example offering the Creators of Peace approach to support community reconciliation programmes in places such as St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace in London.
- We have represented Creators of Peace and Initiatives of Change as part of wider gatherings for peace, such as the Spirit of Humanity Forum.

Coming up...

- We have started local partnership building to see where Creators of Peace Circles could help strengthen NGO or embassy peacebuilding, education and development programmes.

“ I knew some women in the world created change but now I am seeing them.

— Anita, The Netherlands



Strategic Plan 2018-2020

The main programme themes for our work over the next three years are:

- **Being “Advocates for a New Story”** Working with personal and community narratives to support transformation and healing
- **Giving leadership for peace** Encouraging and nourishing women in their community, political and professional leadership roles
- **Restoring with Refugees** Accompanying and supporting women throughout and following violent conflicts

We will aim to hold a global gathering for women from the Creators of Peace network and beyond in 2020. Like our 2016 “Living Peace” conference, this will celebrate and equip women in their peacebuilding commitments.

We have spent a large of 2017 getting ‘donor ready’ to help secure a stronger foundation to support our network into the future. Our global network is supported by one part-time staff member. We are exploring how to overcome the challenges of working with volunteers in different countries as well as raising core funds to create a core staff team to look after our communications, training and events management.

A significant project this year was to undertake an assessment of our 2016 ‘Living Peace’ conference to see how this global gathering made a difference in the lives of peace creators back home in their communities. We also invested time in a data collection exercise to create a map of Creators of Peace Circles around the world and are now exploring how we can improve our local monitoring and evaluation methodologies for our volunteer teams in future.

“It gave me the strength to face challenging situations and to empower others in the same way.

— Bintou, Mali





Our Teams

Our International Committee

Amina Dikedi-Ajakaiye (Nigeria/United Kingdom), President; Anne-Claire Frank-Seisay (Netherlands/USA), Secretary; Gabriela Sebastyen (Romania), Treasurer; Diana Damsa (Romania), Vice-President; Luz Stella Camacho Castro (Colombia); Maria Cristina Munoz (Colombia/Brazil); Nighat Khurshid (Pakistan); Shoshana Faire (Australia); Sylvie Lefrancois (France/Switzerland); Yara Zgheib (Lebanon/USA)

Our Elders

Christiane Garin Al-Azhari (Switzerland), Jean Brown (Australia), Vijayalakshmi Subrahmanyam (India)

Our Ambassador

Daphrose Ntarataze Barampama (Burundi/Switzerland)

Our Executive Officer

Kate Monkhouse (United Kingdom)

Our Freelance & Volunteer Team

Laura Jean (United Kingdom), Design; Lena Lepoullenc (France/Kenya), Impact Assessment; Mary Lean (United Kingdom), Editing; Judy Thomas (Australia), Accounting; Diana Topan (Romania), Social Media; Manu Granados (France/Australia), Data Collection & Evaluation, Neichu Angami (Nepal/Israel), Fundraising Support; Valerie Tikkanen (Sweden), Finance Support; Danielle Norgren (USA), Colgate University Placement in Geneva office.

Creators of Peace Circles have taken place so far in:

AFRICA – Burundi, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

AMERICAS – Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Guatemala, Trinidad & Tobago, United States.

EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST – Armenia, Denmark, Germany, Lebanon, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Ukraine/Crimea, United Kingdom.

ASIA – Afghanistan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Taiwan, Timor Leste

PACIFIC – Australia, Fiji, Guinea, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands.

Each country has a volunteer National Co-ordinator to liaise on communications and to link teams. Over 400 women have taken part in one of our Facilitator Trainings. We have over 100 active Facilitators and 20 Trainers

“Having the opportunity to meet women I would never meet normally was transforming.

— Ros, Australia



Finance

Our financial year runs from January to December. Our Annual General Meeting is usually in July, August or September of the following year. This account summary can be read in conjunction with our Profit & Loss, Balance Sheet and the full lofC Audited Accounts which are available on request. Initiatives of Change audit the accounts of CoP which are passed by the lofC General Assembly. CoP has a bank account in Switzerland.

Opening bank balance 2017

CHF 111,113 including restricted grants carried over.

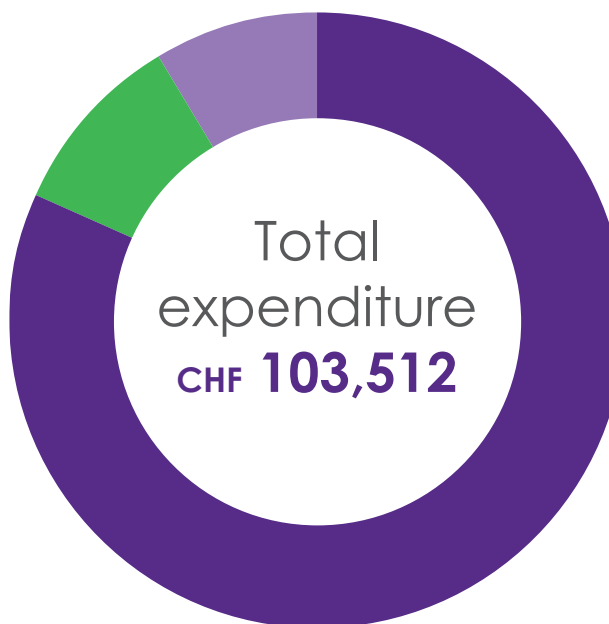
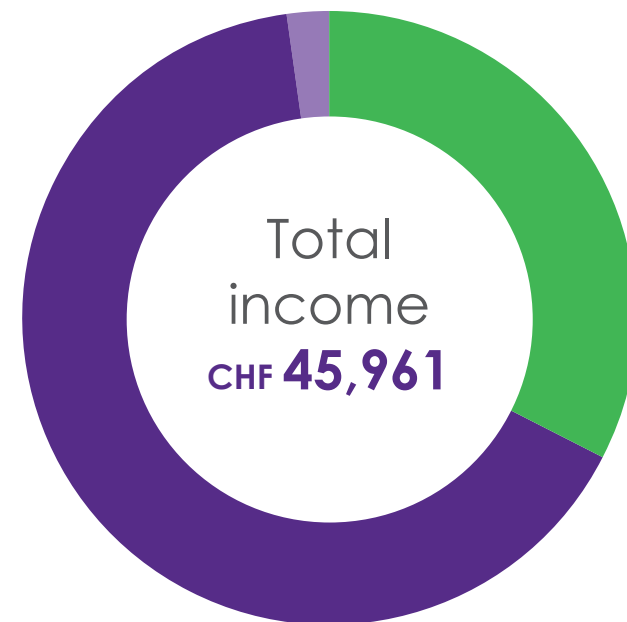
Closing balance 2017

CHF 53,569 including restricted grants carried over.



Where our funds came from

CHF 30,000	Grants restricted
CHF 14,899	Donations restricted
CHF 1,062	Training income



How we spent our money

CHF 85,535	Project expenses
CHF 9,447	Operational expenses
CHF 8,530	Personnel

Fundraising

All our Creators of Peace Circles are self-financed by Creators of Peace women locally through personal giving, social enterprise and partnerships. Trainings are supported by community fundraising and grants. Our running costs and core team are supported through bursaries and major donors. If you are interested in working in partnership with us or discussing fundraising opportunities, please contact us.

Our donors in 2017

- **The Barnabas Trust**
- **The Hahnloser Foundation**
- **The Oak Foundation**
- **Initiatives of Change Sweden**
- **Afrokids**
- **La Trace**
- **Republique et Canton de Geneve**
- **Geneve – Ville Solidaire**

Much appreciation go to our individual donors who give from their personal resources.

Donate

Your gift would make the following possible:

CHF 10 to pay for materials for a workshop

CHF 100 to cover travel expenses for a facilitator

CHF 1,000 to help put on a training programme in a country in conflict

To donate and support woman peace creators, please go to www.iofc.org/creators-of-peace-donate



Get involved

To find out about Creators of Peace Circles happening near you or for support in setting up a local programme, please contact us via creatorsofpeace@iofc.org

Keep up to date

Keep update to date with our news:
www.iofc.org/creators-of-peace
[@creatorsofpeace](https://twitter.com/CreatorsofPeace)
www.facebook.com/creatorsofpeace



Initiatives
of Change

Creators of Peace is part of Initiatives of Change.

Initiatives of Change is a worldwide movement of people of diverse cultures and backgrounds who are committed to the transformation of society through changes in human motives and behaviour, starting in their own lives.

www.iofc.org

Photos: Shoshana Faire, Nighat Khurshid, Kate Monkhouse, CoP Burundi, Initiatives of Change UK, Creators of Peace Kenya.

Design by Laura Noble

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Switzerland





CAMEROON

International Women's Day



AMBASSADOR

Media & Television outreach



COTE D'IVOIRE

Facilitator certificate ceremony



SWITZERLAND

International Gathering



CAUX

Contributing to community



AFGHANISTAN

What does peace mean to you?



TRAINING

Team building



BURUNDI

Quiet reflection



INDIA

Initiatives of Change consultation

