

Winds and Waves

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Networking: building relationships, sharing resources, sustaining spirit, inventing the new, developing technique, responding to the need

Chicago's sustainability
leaders network

Inspiring women
in Nepal

**Also
Inside
and more...**

The journey to
accredited ToP

Canoeing up
the Congo

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Editors' Note

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the 8th issue of "Winds and Waves" – the Institute of Cultural Affairs International magazine.

First published in October 2011, it aims to be a forum for a range of people and groups, both within the ICA and without, to highlight our accomplishments and engage in a dialogue that may bring fresh perspectives on our work.

While the editorial committee has worked hard to solicit articles, edit, lay them out and put them online, it is the insightful articles and reports from readers like yourselves that give this magazine its substance.

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Winds and Waves

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Co-Editors

Dharmalingam Vinasithamby (Malaysia)
email: dvinasithamby@yahoo.com
John Miesen (Australia)
email: johnmiesenhome@optusnet.com.au

Internet Format Design

Peter Ellins (Canada)
email: peter@icai-members.org

Content Coordinator

Robyn Hutchinson (Australia)
email: hutchinsonsydney13@gmail.com
Content submissions are most appreciated. Please include any (print quality) photos or graphics with your submission as attachments to your email. Text files should be in Word.

Regional Content Assistants

Isabel de la Maza (Chile)
Catalina Quiroz Niño and Mane Arratia (Spain)
Seva Gandhi (USA)
Voice Vingo (Zambia)
Gerald Gomani (Zimbabwe)

Proofreader (English)

Julie Miesen (Australia)

Correspondence – Please direct all magazine correspondence to one of the following:

Content Coordinator

Robyn Hutchinson (Australia)
email: hutchinsonsydney13@gmail.com

Letters to the Editor

Dharmalingam Vinasithamby (Malaysia)
email: dvinasithamby@yahoo.com

Co-Editor

John Miesen
(Australia)
email: johnmiesenhome@optusnet.com.au

ICA International President

Martin Gilbraith
email: president@ica-international.org



From the President

Welcome to this latest issue of *Winds & Waves*, the online magazine of ICA International.

While many international NGOs have shifted from a more centralised to a more networked approach to their operations in recent years, ICA has operated globally as a network of autonomous and independent national NGOs for over half of its 50 years. Many member ICAs themselves operate as networks, both nationally and internationally, and many individuals around the world remain connected and involved with ICA in various ways long after they have moved on from a formal role within an ICA organisation. Such loose and diverse structures with such 'leaky boundaries' can be challenging in some respects, not least in terms of governance. However, they can also enable greater local relevance, responsiveness and self-reliance in conjunction with greater global connectedness, learning and mutual support. Networking is one of the ways by which these advantages can be realised, and so supporting networking among ICAs and ICA colleagues is central to the role of ICA International, and networking makes a fitting theme for this issue.

Within these pages you will find stories and reports from individual ICA colleagues and from national ICAs, on their work of research, training and demonstration to advance human development worldwide. Networking and a networked approach feature strongly in many of them.

Terry Bergdall in Chicago reports on the Sustainability Leaders Network of ICA USA's Accelerate 77 programme, empowering community leaders from across the city by supporting them to connect, align and produce together. Lorraine Margherita in Paris reflects on the role that networking has played for her as she has established herself as a professional facilitator within the emerging ICA network there. Larry Philbrook in Taipei reveals the findings of a recent research initiative conducted through ICA networks, online and face to face. Gerald Gomani in Harare reports on ICA Zimbabwe's work helping communities fight HIV/AIDS. This work has been supported over many years by ICAI network partners in the USA, Canada and the UK among others, and networks people living with HIV with each other and with local health and social service resources. Charles Jago Australia writes of an online networked approach to holding government and politicians accountable by 'asking real questions'. Ishu Subha writes of the network power of a local women's group that grew to a leading financial institution. Teresa Sosa in Caracas writes of how principles and values she has learned from ICA have enabled her to gain strength from networks to strive to re-create a country in times in chaos.

The global network of ICA International now comprises member ICAs and related groups and organisations in 40 countries



worldwide, and we welcomed ICA Ukraine as our newest statutory member at our ICAI online General Assembly in December. I have been privileged these last few weeks to serve as a mentor to one of ICA Ukraine's ToP facilitation trainers, Natasha Karpova, and to learn something of how she and ICA Ukraine are working to network diverse factors in Ukraine, another country in a time of some chaos, to re-envisage and rebuild their country's future together. It was a privilege also (and fun!) to help to network ICA Ukraine's facilitators with Russian facilitators attending the Moscow Facilitators conference, by exchanging real-time Facebook updates between my post-conference ToP strategic planning course in Moscow and Natasha's simultaneous ToP strategic planning course in Lviv. Meanwhile ICA Ukraine's initiative connecting mentor ToP facilitators from ICA's global network with mentees in Ukraine prompted Larry Philbrook of ICA Taiwan to adapt and apply the model globally, attracting so far 25 mentors and 36 mentees – just the sort of peer-to-peer initiative within the ICA network that ICAI seeks to support.

The ICAI Board updated its Business Plan for 2014 in the last month, in light of the experience of 2013 and discussions and decisions at the December General Assembly, and supporting peer-to-peer networking for mutual support and collaboration remains at the heart of our approach.

Whatever the extent and nature of your relationship to ICA or ICAI, if you share our collective concern with 'the human factor in world development' then please join in networking with us. Please share this issue of *Winds & Waves* and consider contributing to the next, please connect and share with us online via [ICAI on Facebook](#) and [@ICAI on twitter](#), and please connect directly with whichever national ICA of [the ICAI global network](#) is closest to you in your geography or in your passion. Enjoy this issue.

Martin Gilbraith - London, UK
president@ica-international.org

ICA News Briefs from around the world

Compiled by
Dharmalingam Vinasithamby

LATIN AMERICA

ICA CHILE

Work with disabled people

Our work with the disabled continues. We have started a new course for youngsters nearing the end of their stay at the Institute for Child Rehabilitation in Santiago to help them develop self-esteem as they return to work and social life.

Mapuche leadership course

We are developing a course for leaders of the Nahuén Corporation Inclusion Net-Araucanía at the Araucanía Region in Temuco. This body includes 33 organizations of disabled people from the Mapuche ethnic minority. The course, funded by the Ministry of Social Development, aims to give them tools to strengthen their organizations and better the quality of life of their associates.

TRADUCCIÓN A ESPAÑOL

Las personas con discapacidad

ICA CHILE ha seguido trabajando apoyando a personas en situación de discapacidad, ha comenzado un curso para jóvenes en la ciudad de Santiago, en el Instituto de Rehabilitación Infantil. Los objetivos del curso es que los y las jóvenes que terminan su rehabilitación puedan desarrollar su autoestima y se contribuya a su inserción socio laboral.

Curso de liderazgo mapuche

El otro curso de liderazgo que se está desarrollando es en la Región de la Araucanía, Chile, en la ciudad de Temuco, dirigido a líderes de la Red por la Inclusión Corporación Nahuén – Araucanía. Esta organización reúne 33 organizaciones de personas en situación de discapacidad que viven en zonas donde se encuentra población de origen Mapuche. (una minoría étnica de Chile). Se busca entregar herramientas que permitan fortalecer la gestión de la organización y que permita mejorar la calidad de vida de sus asociados. El Financiamiento para el logro de estos cursos son del Ministerio de Desarrollo Social del Gobierno de Chile.

ICA PERU

Leadership formation

We are seeking new colleagues and contacts for the next phase of our work. Our foci are leadership formation, particularly among women, training of private and public sector functionaries, and assisting the movement to eliminate violence against women. We are also looking forward to ToP methods training offered by ICA Taiwan's Larry Philbrook.

Staff retrenchment

We laid off nine "next generation" staff members. That leaves us with the "old hands" we took on seven years ago and no clear base of support for long-term community development in the high Sierra. Many small NGOs face similar problems. Hundreds closed after an influx of large training and development businesses from the US drawn by the booming economy.

ASIA PACIFIC

ICA AUSTRALIA

Annual gathering

Our AGM and annual gathering were held at the home of John and Elaine Telford in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney, in February. Members came from Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney, Bathurst and Newcastle. President Karen Newkirk and member David Jago participated via Skype.



Sarah Ogilvy and her mother, Katrin, joined colleagues for the annual ICA Australia get-together.

We heard project reports and reviewed the criteria and process for assisting future projects. We held a dialogue with ICAI Board member Krishna Shrestha on ICAI's future direction and regional relationships.

Diploma accreditation

Our subsidiary, the Global Institute of Facilitative Leadership, won accreditation for its Graduate Diploma of Facilitative Leadership (10444NAT) and Diploma of Facilitative Management (10443NAT) by the Australian Skills Quality Authority in March this year. (See report page 20.)

ICA BANGLADESH

Training and facilitation

We held more than 20 public and five in-house courses on ToP GFM, PSP, Social Artistry, HIV/AIDS, Community Development Methods and Proposal Writing involving more than 300 people from government agencies, NGOs and communities. We also provided consulting service to five international and two local NGOs.

Projects

We carried out two research and advocacy projects on deforestation and religious terrorism and eight HIV/AIDS projects. We are initiating the Gabua Village Development Project, which will involve basic education and life-skills training, this year.

We are planning a street children project and Canada's Human Concern International has expressed interest in working with us.

Income generation

We are focusing on ToP faculty development and income generation from training and facilitation services this year. We have a plan for building a sustainable organization and have submitted a proposal to ICA Australia for help with capacity building. □



Empowering Chicago's community leaders

Accelerate 77

Karen Weigert, Chief Sustainability Officer for the City of Chicago, speaks at the opening of the Accelerate 77 'Share Fair' held in September 2012.

By Terry Bergdall

Networks are about connecting people. They involve diverse purposes, approaches, interests and forms. In Chicago, ICA-USA is creating a "Sustainability Leaders Network" (SLN) in a response to the urgent issues of our times. These include economic dysfunction and injustice, unsustainable consumption of natural resources, and the mammoth implications of global climate change.

SLN has involved 30 leaders from community groups across the city, continuing the "Accelerate 77" (A77) program launched by ICA in 2011. The success of the program led the Boeing Corporation to award \$90,000 to underwrite the creation of SLN over a two-year period. Direct work on this commenced in September 2013.

Highlights of the Accelerate 77 program, 2011-2012

- 800 community-driven sustainability initiatives documented from all 77

Terry Bergdall is a member of ICA USA

community areas of the city; this was accomplished by 220 students from DePaul, Loyola, Northeastern Illinois, Chicago State, and Roosevelt universities;

- a network website established and basic database of community initiatives made publicly available at www.accelerate77.net;
- city-wide "Share Fair" held on September 15, 2012, attended by 400 people with tables from 63 communities;
- three follow-up meetings – on the north, south, and west sides – held in February and March 2013;

Why SLN is important

Economic chaos, disparity between the rich and poor, unsustainable consumption of natural resources, and the extreme effects of climate change are realities across the world. Climate change is often referred to as a "super wicked problem". No one

knows for sure what will happen when the earth warms two degrees. It is important to "expand the table" with different perspectives and knowledge so that people can work together to anticipate impacts – and so that they know *how* to collaborate when problems arise. The importance of collaboration and "soft skills" is apparent in analyses of numerous disasters around the world. People cope with disasters more effectively when they have good social networks and connections.

The challenges of climate change are increasingly obvious. According to national weather reports this year, 11 of the past 12 years have been the hottest ever. Wildfires, hurricanes and other disasters have been increasing in number and size. Like other cities around the world, Chicago has prepared sweeping plans. They ultimately depend on widespread engagement of the people. Regional and municipal plans use a "top down" strategy to change behavior among city dwellers through a combination of education, promotion and incentives. Though important, such strategies have

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limited ability to release the creativity and innovation of citizens. Another approach is “bottom-up, building upon ingenuity and resourcefulness that emerges from, and is driven by, people’s interests, concerns and commitments. A third approach, which SLN advocates, is complementary action from the top and the bottom – and the nurturing of a space “in-between” where government and communities work together to analyze and solve big challenges.

In addition to strengthening these networks and connections for lateral purposes of mutual support, there is a need to empower them to make vertical relationships more effective. Community representatives are frequently included on special commissions and working groups but they are often token participants. While other members represent large powerful institutions (for example, government, businesses and funding foundations), community representatives typically come from small, independent, organizations. While their work may be exemplary, their voice is relatively weak. Their insights are often buried or lost amid the volume of inputs from more powerful members. This imbalance has a negative effect, for example, on community representatives, when feelings of marginalization are perpetuated, and on the effectiveness of working groups, when insights from a local perspective are overlooked.

What the network does

SLN’s goal is to increase the impact of local sustainability initiatives through lateral interactions and by developing a stronger public voice in vertical relationships. SLN does three things – connecting, aligning and producing.

Connecting – ICA’s facilitation expertise has ensured progress through an initial link up with community organizations identified during the A77 program. There is now a core of 15 leaders and three SLN working groups. One is identifying assets and exploring ways to “share knowledge” as peers. A second is thinking through issues of “community design” to strengthen organizations within the network. A third group is clarifying the purpose of the network through planning and through promoting potential benefits to get other community organizations involved. Because



SLN is new, much of this initial work is about conceptualization and planning.

Aligning – This involves establishing a common language and context through training events and workshops on sustainability innovation. This is still in an initiation phase. During the next year and a half, SLN will host activities involving facilitative leadership and community engagement skills in different parts or “hubs” of the city – the south, west, and north sides. Forums may also be organised on themes such as food, energy, water, waste management and recycling, transportation, and community resiliency. Such forums will link community organizations with experts who have researched and/or been involved in related work on a regional or municipal basis.

Producing – This is about coordinating local sustainability initiatives and is still in a planning stage. Communication and information sharing are an important part of future discussion. As more experience is gained with the hubs, SLN will act on high priority areas emerging from experiences and insights gained from the “alignment” phase. This could involve designing and testing a process to create sustainability action plans with clusters of communities.

Practical questions for the network

The SLN has been initiated by a core of leaders. Its aim is to multiply the impact of independent, and often isolated, sustainability initiatives. ICA, which plays a “backbone” role with the network, is now one of three highlighted co-sponsors of the Green Town Conference, along with the City of Chicago and Chicago Metropolitan Agency of Planning. This is company that would have been unimaginable for ICA prior to Accelerate 77. It is a result of growing recognition of the

importance of nurturing the “in-between” space connecting top-down and bottom-up.

ICA has been invited to join a consortium to respond to a US\$12 million request for proposals from the National Science Foundation to advance sustainability practices in urban environments. The consortium includes the University of Chicago, Northwestern University, Notre Dame University, and the Argonne National Laboratory.

While ICA and SLN are winning recognition, they still have many practical questions to deal with such as:

- What value does SLN provide to community sustainability organizations and how is it communicated?
- How does the SLN creatively relate to other networks?
- Who speaks for the network? How is it represented in its online publications?
- How are financial matters addressed? ICA has shared information about its grant from Boeing but there is the potential for people to feel like some are raising money for themselves based on the work of others. How can issues like this be avoided?
- How will SLN’s impact be measured? What should be tracked and reported?

Answering these questions is crucial for the future as communities everywhere come to terms with the urgency of the environmental crisis facing us today. □



Meetings of the SLN are hosted by members on-site at their work, thereby allowing for in-depth sharing with one another about ways they are engaged in sustainability. An SLN gathering occurs here at the Rebuilding Exchange which collects materials from the demolition of old buildings for recycling into new construction.

How I got started in a new career

By Lorraine Margherita



When I heard that *Wind & Waves* wanted stories from around the world about networking, I knew I had to answer the call! Having moved and changed jobs several times, I kept hearing that networking is of the essence for professionals willing to create or expand a business, or for executives open to a change in their career. That was before I found myself in a position to find a new occupation in my hometown, Paris: then I really got the point. I'd like to share my experience and allow other professionals to benefit from it.

Building up my circle

At the beginning of 2012, I felt that I had a range of experiences, both in France and abroad, to offer to potential employers or clients. I worked with other professionals in the same position as mine on issues such as what I liked or disliked in my previous positions, what my strengths were, and how I managed my tasks or relationships. The small group that I worked with disbanded after eight months but we still meet informally to share advice, concerns and successes – a network in itself. I started contacting professionals. I used the phone rather than sending a cold e-mail. I had a couple of short sentences ready on who I was and why I was calling. I had conversations like this over the phone or in person. I realized

Lorraine Margherita is a facilitator in Paris. She was trained by Lan Levy (ToP).

that people were happy to have a chance to talk about their activities. I kept in touch with some of them and connected with others referred to me by my interviewees. By the end of 2012, I had identified the kind of projects I wanted to work on – transformation projects – and the small consulting firms where I could do it, had been hired by one of them – and had left it. It was only the beginning of my journey and networking became my map.

Digging deeper

In early 2013, I was again asking myself that same question: how could I take my experience and my personality to firms and help them adjust to their changing environment? What I had known all along was that I needed to be passionate about my work if I wanted to keep being interested in it and I had to be good at it. By that time, I felt that corporate agility could give me a reason to be passionate. I worked on identifying people mentioned in articles, and sometimes bloggers or twittos. And I started calling them. I now have a file with their names, positions and contact details. My favourite part of the file is the place where I write about my conversation with them and what it had taught me about the market. After a few weeks, researching and networking about agility and transformation allowed me to identify key actors: fa-ci-li-ta-tors. In France, the very word “facilitation” has hardly ever been heard: imagine the breakthrough!

The tipping point

Those I contacted then not only embodied the tipping point in my journey, they also remained my key correspondents. One in particular, Lan Levy, my ToP trainer, is a major reference figure in my network and in her field, and also my friend. I took the ICA's ToP Training program and later the Imaginal Education training. I received a call to host my first World Cafes as a freelancer and met the graphic facilitator who worked with me on these assignments. I joined IAF (International Association of Facilitators) an organization for facilitators established by the ICA. I established contacts with facilitators in countries where facilitation is a well-established profession – Canada, the USA, Australia, and Singapore, among others. I met facilitators from other countries in enrichment meetings – it is exciting to finally meet the people with whom I had been in touch on social networks or in virtual meetings!

Networking was the key to the launch of my small business as a facilitator in Paris. It led me to join another professional association which focuses on systems thinking and organizational learning. It will also pave the way for me joining a team of facilitators/consultants with whom I have developed great projects over the last few months.

I'm grateful that the people I contacted were more than willing to talk to me about their professional path and their wish to make an impact on the people around them and the world. I am happy to play that same role when I receive an e-mail or phone call from someone who wants to hear more about facilitation, the ICA or ToP training.

Networking brought me much more than just information or appreciation of a professional field or techniques: it gave me the fulfilment of finding a professional field where I can make my experience and my personality useful. All this has made me understand why and how networking is essential: it is the best way to find my place and it remains the best way to improve myself and be useful. □

Getting a



on the future

By Larry Philbrook

What is today's burning question for the world and for us? As a body dedicated to research, training and demonstration, the ICA is extremely interested in this. Over the past few years, we have seen uprisings and demonstrations of mainly young people and the disfranchised around the world – and at our doorstep. In our work with clients and communities of practice as well as in our personal lives we have experienced dysfunctional systems.

In a search for clarity, ICA Taiwan posed the following to a wide and diverse group of about 300 people:

1. The fast-changing world: Where do you experience the greatest need for transformation?
2. Leading the change: What is the new thing that you see is needed now in the arena of leadership, challenges and opportunities?
3. Things that have already happened: What is a recent event or change that you are pleased about?
4. The world and your organization: If you were all-powerful, what are the first changes that you would make?
5. Inventing from the future: What do you sense is coming that demands change now?
6. Not yet recognized: What other questions should we be asking?

These questions were sent to members of ICA International, ICA's list serve and the US

Larry Philbrook is director of ICA Taiwan

ToP Network, as well as friends, colleagues and clients. Most of them answered these questions and added comments. We read their responses and reflected on what they revealed from four perspectives – how the context has shifted; the challenges before us; the opportunities for the ICA; and the shifts in our way of being. The following is a summary of our findings.


What the data reveals

- Changes in context: The exercise raised questions for ICA Taiwan about authentic community, environment and ecology, and new forms of power. Our task is to constantly do an intuitive scan for possibility while reflecting on how that is different from what it was yesterday.
- Contradictions and challenges: Some people are changing or challenging the system, others are changing their way of being and their consciousness. The contradiction is that it cannot be either/or – it has to be transrational, an intuitive perception and embodiment of the new reality.
- Opportunities for the ICA: Given our global interconnectedness, we do not know what is next. It is clear that it will be participative and that the ICA has an opportunity to anticipate the future and continually recreate itself. The “not yet” just got here.
- The shift needed: We must reintegrate and recreate ourselves using our insights on facilitation, imaginal learning, participative development and internal spirit discipline, and also all the emerging wisdom that we have access to.

The questions they raise

- How do we live and work with a sense of authentic community? Consciousness and awareness of self have always been critical in development. Now the sense of Self and the Other has expanded to include a sense of We. How do we develop the discipline of reflection to the level that I and We are both revealed? How do we move from Exclusive to Inclusive – an operating style that supports each of the three – I, You, We – as a valued contributor?
- What is the environmental framework that will enable more effective decisions? Otto Scharmer of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology calls this shifting from Ego to Eco. Or, using an ICA idiom, what does it mean to operate “On Behalf of All” when the context now has a more inclusive ecological focus?
- What are the new forms of power? What is needed when hierarchy cannot handle diversity in every working group? A power shift from hierarchical control to the global infusion of a myriad of voices calls for new ways of being inclusive, creative, participative and responsible.

If you would like to view the input and comments made by those who took part in the exercise, please visit <https://sites.google.com/site/icataiw/home-page> and go to the bottom of the page and click on the link “Representative Selection of Data Elicited From Respondents....”

This exercise is a continuing one and we welcome further dialogue! If you would like to contribute, please send an e-mail to icamail@icatw.com 

Helping communities fight HIV/AIDS

By Gerald Gomani

In January 2013, ICA Zimbabwe, in partnership with ICA USA, launched a project to implement HIV/AIDS campaigns in 50 communities over five years. The ZIM50 or Zimbabwe 50 Communities HIV/AIDS Project will demonstrate that communities can manage the HIV/AIDS challenge effectively with minimal outside assistance and resources. Four communities were chosen as pilot projects: Whitecliffe, Crowborough North, Churu Farm and Granary, all near Harare.

African ICAs have worked on HIV/AIDS community prevention and management for a decade with ICA partners. Projects have evolved, beginning with training peer educators to counsel their neighbours, community planning to mobilize people and learning to care for and help those affected by AIDS to manage their disease. As testing and treatment came on line, they became key components of an HIV/AIDS management program. Programs such as Living Well and Self-Help Groups were developed to provide social and economic support for those who need them. Stigma was addressed.

Over that time, knowledge about the disease and its transmission became better known. Government health services were able to cope with the flood of sick people and have answers for what to do to help them – starting them on anti-retroviral (ARV) therapy. As the international community began to support drug therapy at the national level and drugs became more accessible locally, people were able to work again, alleviating their despair.

But there are huge gaps. Too many are outside the fragile systems. For prevention and management to be effective, they have to be local. They must be a part of the community's knowledge and culture base and of the social infrastructure. What is needed is a bold effort community by community to shift attitudes. Preventing and managing HIV is everybody's business – of each individual and of the community.

Gerald Gomani is director of ICA: Zimbabwe.



Crowborough North participant leading a workshop.

ICA's efforts to assist communities in this have worked well over the past decade but the pace of getting communities engaged and competent is too slow to meet the challenge. Think of all the villages, neighbourhoods, and young people who struggle with the disease.

Communities need tools and methods to prevent and manage HIV themselves. Their efforts need to be sustainable and the project template replicable and adaptable. The Zimbabwe 50 Communities HIV/AIDS Project kicked off with year-long campaigns in the four pilot-project communities, getting leaders and villages to tackle this problem themselves. The role of ICA was to provide a tool kit and train people to use it. Residents did the work in the way appropriate for their community.

We know there are activities and capabilities that can prevent and manage HIV as well as other diseases such as TB and malaria. They include:

- Testing – it is available and essential for individuals to make a decision about behaviour;
 - Testing also identifies those who are infected and need treatment and support, and the families that need assistance;
 - Living Well, Self-Help Groups and food security are useful programs for disease management and social and economic support.
- For these programs to be sustainable within the community, the infrastructure must include determined community leaders and a well-trained core of volunteers willing to spend the required time and energy. The basic attitudes and culture of individuals and the community must shift: It is our problem; we are responsible; we are the only ones who can make the changes necessary to manage this challenge. And we have to do it forever. Evaluating results leads to improved programs and infrastructure. The one-year campaign timeline adds urgency – to force the process. Among the first four selected communities, it has so far offered assistance and training to develop the knowledge base and implementation plans, change attitudes,

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ZIM50 KEY INDICATORS OF SUCCESS

December, 2013

Communities	Number of People Directly Involved in Community Interventions						
	Prevention Education	Tested	PLWA in treatment	Living Well Groups	Self-Help Groups	Home –Based Care	Nutrition Education
Crowborough North	720	98	38	80	60	48	
Churu Farms	1500	298	80	84	80	18	750
White Cliff	2910	159	89	150	130	5	15
Granary	1000	85	45	120	60	20	
TOTAL	6130	640	252	490	330	91	765

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create structures, and evaluate results to determine what is needed. ICA staff assistance will terminate at the end of one year although consultation will still be available.

The first year was a pilot. The results were encouraging. Communities selected their goals and key indicators of success. The evaluation in December showed the following achievements.
(See chart above.)

The campaign is under way in eight communities this year and will be followed by 12 in 2015- 2017. We hope to eventually have a prevention manual or tool kit that communities which wish to undertake a similar project can refer to and adapt. Staff



Women waiting to be tested.

training and consultation would be available to each new project.

From the perspective of ICA: Zimbabwe and its partner ICA: USA, we anticipate:


- 50 per cent reduction in incidence rate of new HIV infections
- 90 per cent of people infected and needing ARV therapy receiving treatment.
- Testing becoming the new rite of passage for all 16-year-olds.
- The number of mother-to-infant HIV transmissions dropping to zero.
- Every community involved says “This is our battle and we can do it”.

Some quotes from participants:

- “I have more knowledge about HIV/AIDS so as to help others particularly with nutrition.” – Tsungi
- “The training is effective and will transfer my knowledge to the community.” – Agnes

- “To have counselling skills.” – Eunice
- “To have knowledge to spread message about HIV/AIDS.” – Selina
- “I have new information about characteristics of community with HIV under control which I would apply in my own community.” – Sabina

We thank all those who have assisted in this project, particularly Louise Singleton, Robert True, Bruce Williams, Dick Alton and Seva Gandhi.

Zim50 is an Advance Special Project #3021526 of the United Methodist Church. If your congregation would like to support this project, please contact Dick Alton at richard.alton@gmail.com for more information. 



Moscow facilitators study the ToP Participatory Strategic Planning by planning ‘What can we do over the next 3 years to promote a culture of participation in our organisations?’

Asking Australia's Real Questions

By Charles Jago

Looking at politics in the world's democracies today, most voters find it difficult to effectively communicate with their political representatives. The issues seem to be decided largely by the major parties and the press, often without addressing significant concerns of the public. An example in Australia is the "refugee policy" on people arriving in boats to claim asylum. The government's treatment of asylum seekers has not achieved strong support across the electorate despite receiving a huge amount of airtime and attention. The government highlights the need for control of borders while others highlight problems in protecting human rights of asylum seekers. Other countries also have their own hot issues marked by conflict with outcomes which could be substantially improved by negotiation and consensus if governments were willing to do so.

Governments operate this way far too often. Policies are often difficult to determine due to vague policy statements, policy by press release and poor documentation. Politicians, parties and the press can conveniently obscure their actual policies and ignore local viewpoints while telling the public what they think is important. It makes it easier for them if we accept their agenda. This allows them to avoid talking about the inconvenient issues relevant to people, or alternatively to mention those issues but evade people's main concerns.

ICA Australia members, Charles and brother David Jago, are two of the founders of Real Questions (<https://realquestions.net.au/>).

Underlying these schisms is the fact that politicians are generally rewarded for supporting established norms and interests, even when they know that important issues remain unresolved. It takes a substantial effort to produce outcomes that reflect broadly based solutions, through greater political participation. Increasingly, new efforts to widen participation make substantial usage of technology and the Internet.

Each question is addressed to an individual politician and is tagged by the author according to its topic.

As part of this trend, the [Real Questions](#) website provides a cohesive platform for people to ask questions of political leaders, and maintains a record of what the public wants to know. The point here is political accountability. Anyone can write a letter or ask a question of a politician on social media sites but Real Questions provides a system which allows people to create and support good questions in order to receive serious answers. This system aims to highlight areas that people most want to know about. Each question is addressed to an individual politician and is tagged by the author according to its topic.


The "talk page" on the site allows people to interact through ratings and comments which can enable development of better questions by users on the site. Users review

their own and other questions on the site, showing support for the best questions. In an ideal situation, this kind of interaction would work best in a face to face environment with a facilitator. It's actually hard to do this on a web page, which is why we have built features to facilitate interaction toward better questions.

The system sends those best questions which receive a certain level of support through to the nominated politician for a response. Politicians can then log in and answer them. Initial conversations with politicians indicate that many will respond to questions where they can communicate their point of view to a significant number of people in a single response.

The site also includes a scorecard page that keeps track of the number of questions asked of each politician, their responsiveness in answering them, and the satisfaction of users with the responses. At this stage, it is specifically adapted to dealing with questions for Australian politicians, but could be adapted for other countries or other types of contexts. Currently, the site includes politicians from the Commonwealth, NSW, Victoria, Queensland, ACT, South Australia and Western Australia. In future we plan to broaden the scope to cover all elected politicians in Australia, with Tasmania and Northern Territory coming soon and local government progressively added state by state this year.

Real Questions is an independent non-profit organisation registered in Australia as a company limited by guarantee, staffed 100 per cent by volunteers. Real Questions is ultimately a questioning and answering system run on open source code which is accessible online. Our main focus now is to build a community around the site to ask great questions. By great we mean questions that contribute to real dialogue. Once many people begin to support a question, it becomes harder for a politician to ignore it.

We invite you to [have a look at the site](#) and get involved. For Australians, we want your questions, and we especially want you to help choose the best questions. For those around the globe, we encourage enquiries from people interested in implementing Real Questions in their own national setting. 



Ancient pathway to our dreams

By Christopher and Sheila Cooke

The risk today is that we choose to remain entrenched in irrational inertia. Our myopia leads us to naturally reject disruptive, functional ideas, and see them as irritations. We are meaning-making creatures who are ready to move beyond traditional science, medicine and business, to fulfil our pathfinder role in an emergent Kosmos. The sooner we can discern the full range of choices we truly have, the more reliable, effective and compelling will be the realisation of our dreams.

There really is no choice. The choice has already been taken for us by nature. Our species is equipped with the abilities to move beyond domination of the physical world, to discover how to exist with, and take responsibility for all life.

The good news is that as a problem-solving species we have experienced and survived multiple epoch changes. There is nothing to suggest that we cannot find a way through. When we examine our species from a perspective of human emergence, there is most certainly hope.

Our opportunity is to follow an emerging pathway illuminated by the 'seed minds' of the last 100 years; in other words, those individuals who have demonstrated a pioneering way forward by inspiring action that leads towards planetary and species viability.

There are three predominant Human Pathways defining our present situation and inviting our future. According to the stage development theory of Clare W. Graves, and latterly, according to Integral theory by Ken Wilber, the three pathways are differentiated by distinct biological, psychological, cultural and social attributes.

Culturally and socially, Human Pathway 1 is largely defined by the patterns of tribalism and feudalism; Human Pathway 2, by nationalism, scientific materialism and humanism. Human Pathway 3 is in formation, its integrative and stratified cultural and social patterns are still emerging. The pathways are woven together like a braid, as a meaningful story of the human journey, past, present and future.

Let us explore the seed mind-inspired field of microbiomic science, using food production as an example, to show a new way forward that will positively influence all three Human Pathways.

Since the late 1980s, the growing legitimacy of microbiomic science forces us to reframe our understanding of how all life works and how we manage everything from cleaning our teeth, to growing our food, to keeping hospital environments healthy. Hard science demonstrates the clear interrelationship between a healthy microbiome, the health of humanity and the vitality of all life.

Gone is the scientific imperative to be at war with the microbial world. So, why are we still at war with the microbes? Microbiomic science necessitates radical change across all aspects of commerce and society, and is a disruptive intelligence that triggers inertia. For example, the use of biocides, herbicides, pesticides and antibiotics continues to expand and boost the global economy, despite compelling evidence of dire consequences and the presence of new alternatives that are beneficial to all life.

Let us tell you the story of how we got to where we are now, and why we have certain hope.

HUMAN PATHWAY 1

For approximately 25% of global population, human interactions are defined by tribalism and feudalism. Both are effective forms of human interaction that, when exposed to the pressures of globalisation, may lead to an inability to cope, or to a reaction of extreme domination and control.

In Human Pathway 1, traditional methods of growing food are gradually being replaced by industrial agrochemical solutions, as the ways of the First World are propagated with the promise of financial and social security. The consequences of adopting First World technologies in agriculture have resulted in increased yields of questionable quality due to contamination, genetic modification and lower nutritional density; with unintended consequences of accelerated degradation of soil and ecosystem, and an increase in plant, animal and human ailments not normally found in Human Pathway 1 countries. In these life conditions, commercial operations are often challenging because of a cunning feudalistic power base that does not play by anyone's rules, and a general cultural inability to utilize procedures or follow instructions on the package.

Over the long run of time Human Pathway 1 trends towards a natural expression of order and purpose that handles previous excesses, and brings forth new forms of security. Once established, this new capacity for order provides the basis for Human Pathway 2.

HUMAN PATHWAY 2

For approximately 70% of global population, cultures are typically defined by nationalism, scientific materialism and humanism. Since the Elizabethan Period, the full spectrum of the core social systems that define Human Pathway 2 have been continually refined to define the global benchmark of social structure and lifestyle.

Who dares to challenge the established norms of industrial agrochemical agriculture? Food production and processing are largely manipulated to meet the commercial imperatives of multinational corporations. Well-meaning legislative frameworks attempt to protect the public good by enforcing scientific and commercial best practice. Many academics collude in the game through the provision of compelling scientific evidence of the size, colour and resilience of commercial crops, without reference to the loss of vitality and nutritional density, or the unintended ecological degradation. Across all domains, from the soil to the gut, the microbiome is under threat. Most especially under attack are the microbes that constitute at least 90% of the human being, and form the basis of biological and psychological immunity.

In Human Pathway 2, microbiomic science is being enthusiastically embraced by business-as-usual in a commercial drive to bring single-strain probiotic solutions and applications to market. The methods being applied are often reductionist, and do not exploit the full potential of the science.

Over the long run of time Human Pathway 2 trends towards a place of "overwhelm and stuckness", where the emotional and financial cost of caring becomes unsustainably high, coalition governance generates ambivalence, inner and outer chaos ensues, and the whole situation requires a fundamental reframing of thinking. Out of this cloying and stuckness arises the impetus to move to Human Pathway 3.

HUMAN PATHWAY 3


Approximately 5% of global population have successfully made a transition that equips them to conceive and apply innovations and solutions that lead to planetary and species viability. These minds have the ability to sustain healthy life conditions for Human Pathways 1, 2 and 3. For these individuals the acceptance of complexity, and the magnificence of existence are paramount. "All life is important, my life is unimportant," is their maxim. Here is the essence of the holographic thinking behind the seed minds of true microbiome science.

Human Pathway 3 legitimizes the pioneers of new forms of agriculture, forms that are beneficial overall and result in new social status and significance for all growers as they contribute to the fulfilment of the nutritional needs for biological and psychological health. The use of chemicals rapidly fades away, and is replaced by the use of natural biological inoculants that stimulate the regeneration and renewal of soil, plant, animal, and human immune systems.

Organic agriculture is an example of a transitional technology positioned between business-as-usual, and a new biological agriculture that is predicated upon the microbial health of soils. Human Pathway 3 solutions, such as biological agriculture, are able to uplift Human Pathways 1 and 2 through the provision of irresistible, life-affirming solutions that out-perform the earlier paradigms.

It seems natural that Human Pathway 3 science would rise to the occasion and lead; however, the irrational inertia promulgated by the success of Human Pathway 2 creates a social immune system that strives to annihilate Human Pathway 3 thinking. The contradiction, and clear evidence is that Human Pathway 2 thinking has outgrown its capacity to cope with the epoch-changing life conditions that we are facing. Rethinking what we legitimize is being invited. In essence, the change in thinking has already happened, and we are just learning to grow into it.

Our certain hope comes from the knowledge that the human capacity to value the continuance of all life, a form of thinking that is the basis of all Human Pathway 3 activity, has been stimulated, tested and refined for nearly 100 years. The seed minds and their followers have done their jobs. If we choose to look closely at the evidence, we find that 80% of all problems on the planet already have beneficial-to-all-life solutions. A key challenge is to get enough critical mass of these new ideas so that they outperform the antibodies of Human Pathway 2.

We invite you dear reader to step into this probability of a thriving future, by choosing to base all your decisions upon that which is beneficial to all life. In doing so you will activate Human Pathway 3 thinking that is latent within you. The resulting experience may oscillate from challenge to joy, but the overall flow will be one of certain hope. 

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Christopher (Christopher.cooke@5deep.net) and Sheila Cooke (Sheila.cooke@5deep.net) are pioneers in the application of Integral theory and practice. Since 1998, their organization, 5 Deep (www.5deep.net), has served public, private and commercial leadership in the pursuit of innovation and change.

Canoeing up the Congo to Lotumbe



By Robyn Hutchinson

Lotumbe is one of 23 remote villages in the Equateur Province of Congo. Four of us made the 300-km journey to the village by canoe up the Congo River in March.

We were representing HandUp Congo, an organization promoting sustainable development in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Our team included ICA Australia members Lucy Hobgood-Brown and Robyn Hutchinson, and colleagues Jacky Gendre and Sue Bromhead. Lucy and Jacky are Rotarians and the trip was sponsored by the Rotary Australia World Community Service (RAWCS).

100 years of networking

Lucy's family has worked in the mainly Christian nation for more than 100 years

Robyn Hutchinson is a member of ICA Australia.

through the Disciples of Christ in Congo (<http://globalministries.org/congo-initiative/>) denomination. Her grandparents and parents helped establish the church's missional outreach in Equateur in the early 1900s and the Congo Protestant University (UPC), a leading institution (see www.upcongo.org and www.upc.ac.cd), more than 50 years ago.

Lucy, in collaboration with her sister Anne Zolnor and friend Betsy Brill, founded HandUp Congo (www.handupcongo.org). Since 2004, it has made various trips to the capital, Kinshasa, Goma in North Kivu province, Mbandaka, capital of Equateur, and Lotumbe, one of 23 remote "posts" the church serves.

The purpose of our visit to DRC was to help the Disciples of Christ Church in Congo (CDCC) and its 800,000-strong community move towards self-reliance and

sustainability. The church has made huge strides in this task and the HandUp Congo team, supported by Rotary, aims to help find partners that can build on its initiatives.

Networking in Kinshasa

After a brief stopover in Johannesburg, we flew to Kinshasa to work with UPC colleagues and students, Rotary and Lions clubs, and visit various projects.

At UPC, we introduced ToP processes during a workshop on sustainable community development with English-speaking students and young business professionals – all future leaders in Congo!

Another highlight was a visit to a Presbyterian-run backstreet clinic, where one of Lucy's childhood friends now serves as a nursing advisor. Ruthie Schaad works with Congolese health-care professionals

to transform access to public health for women and children, with minimal facilities and equipment.

Next, we flew to Mbandaka to join CDCC's leadership for brief discussions and planning. The event was graciously hosted by the multi-lingual President of the Church, Rev Elik Bonanga, and his wife.

River journey

The next morning, at 6.30 am on March 6, we began our long-awaited 300-km trip up the mighty Congo River and its tributaries to Lotumbe. Sent off with a song and a prayer, the pirogue, a small canoe-like boat, floated off with six church and community leaders and four Aussies! No, we weren't rowing – that would have taken us more than seven days. Instead, we splurged by renting motors, including a spare, to save time. We ran into a sand bar or two along the way. Everyone had to get out and push to get us back into the deep water channel. What amazing skippers we had!

We pulled into Lotumbe more than 18 hours later while it was still dark to the taps of a welcome message from the famous "talking drums of Congo" and the sound of wonderful African singing and prayers from the river bank.

After several days and following a huge, violent and spectacular storm, the 10 of us began the return trip – this time on a glassy black river and cool weather. The journey, thanks to the currents, took "only" 12 hours. In Mbandaka, we debriefed the CDCC leadership team and travelled on to Kinshasa for more networking and strategic meetings. We returned to Sydney after another networking stop in Johannesburg.

Stand up, Lotumbe

The theme of our visit was UPC's slogan: "Education that builds a nation". We introduced ICA's participatory processes to university students, young business executives and the community; and saw classrooms of mud bricks that had been rebuilt countless times after tornado or other violent weather. We toured two CDCC hospitals in Bolenge and Lotumbe with the pragmatic and resourceful local medical coordinators and rural health zone doctors and celebrated Lotumbe's new hospital latrines, made possible by Australia's Pink Umbrella Foundation. We shopped in Lotumbe's community store, a HandUp



Exchanging Rotary banners in Kinshasa.

Congo and CNEC Partners International initiative with a grassroots NGO. We saw two-year-olds born in local hospitals supported by Australian benefactors and enjoyed placing donated shoes on their feet. We held stimulating conversations with community representatives about the next steps in building a resilient Lotumbe.

In Lotumbe, we focused on discerning the community's priorities. This process began with visits and conversations and was followed by a "Wall of Wonder" exercise celebrating Lotumbe's history, its current situation and what the community envisioned for the future. At the conclusion, the community gave their "wall" a name – "Stand Up Lotumbe" – and created the following song in its Lingala language.

*Debout, Lotumbe (Stand up, Lotumbe)
Lotumbe telema (Stand up, Lotumbe)
Lotumbe telema (Stand up, Lotumbe)
Tokende liboso (Let's go forward)*

This session was followed by afternoon focus groups led by local leaders, with everyone clearly embracing the language and art of participation.

Four groups – children, youth, women and men – had the assignment of articulating "What is working well in Lotumbe? What do we want to improve? What can you/we do? What new or different roles are needed? Next steps?" as well as to create a song about their plans. The plenary session was marked by a wealth of ideas, will and joyful songs and dancing.



Facilitating Sustainable Community Development workshop at UPC, Kinshasa.

Proposals included women establishing or expanding their own crop plots; removing or rebuilding a cyclone-wrecked school building that is symbolically blocking the future; the possible production, implementation and distribution of sample Days for Girls washable feminine hygiene kits (www.daysforgirls.org/) and birthing kits (www.birthingkitfoundation.org.au/). Both projects have the potential to be income generating activities.

Central to village life is the church, which provides many social services that Congo's weak government does not. At a lively four-hour celebration, CDCC's Vice-President, Reverend Mputu Yonganga, delivered a passionate sermon based on the Biblical story of the "feeding of the 5,000" and the need for self-help. He challenged all to work with the given resources and to be part of the solution, not the problem. The Australian team presented gifts to the community. These included soccer balls, health-care equipment – and a computer and printer. To enthusiastic whistles and shouts, Lotumbe's supervising pastor, Rev. Boyaba, announced: "Lotumbe is now connected to the world! We are not forgotten!" The computer will be powered by the hospital's generator. Among its uses – reports to donors and other partners can now

(Continues ►)



Birth control clinic in a back street of Kinshasa.

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be downloaded onto memory sticks and sent by pirogue to Mbandaka, from where they can be e-mailed.

The renewed Lotumbe Community Development Team was presented to the massive congregation and challenged to be transparent and work hard for every sector of the community.

The choirs were spectacular and world class! What a resource and marvellous tool for helping tell Congo's stories.

Following the church celebration, strategic planning with the "new" Lotumbe development committee continued. Plans were made for next steps and strategies that the local community could work on, with support and capacity building to be facilitated by a skilled Congolese community development worker based in the provincial capital, but who has committed to visiting Lotumbe two times per year.

Challenges for Lotumbe

The challenges facing sustainable community development in Lotumbe are enormous: a remote location accessible only by pirogue compounded by high petrol prices; lack of road or river barge infrastructure; lack of electricity, Internet or phone towers – the link to the world is via two-way shortwave radio twice a day; limited visitor accommodation so volunteers have no place to stay without inconveniencing local leaders; working with the most basic of equipment; irregular and minimal wages for teachers; poor access to nutritious crops and animal husbandry.



Checking the demons at Sunday service in Lotumbe.

However, Lotumbe leaders hold the vision and have started strategic planning and networking with 10 of the 22 other remote villages. Following HandUp Congo team's visit, they agreed to add Lotumbe to the pilot program list, which will lead to further up skilling, networking and replication.

The HandUp Congo/RAWCS team visit achieved several things. It secured community input into identifying its needs and priorities. It reinvigorated the local development committee and made it more inclusive. It helped the community move towards a stronger and more effective reporting and accountability process with international donors. It secured a commitment to factor in local hands-



on involvement when submitting and implementing new community-designed projects. It explored the possibility of the community making and selling washable feminine hygiene kits and birthing kits. It also looked at how the talented Lotumbe choirs could be "taken to the world".

Next steps

Following its latest visit, Handup Congo identified the following as priorities:

- Continue working with all partners to ensure capacity building and up-skilling of local leaders. The train-the-trainer model could be used in many skill arenas, including participatory community development processes; income generation; IT training and support; health and education support; and effective land-use.
- Continue to source big and small partners to collaborate with the leadership in Mbandaka and the villagers of Lotumbe as part of the 23 "post" network, as well as with UPC.

If readers are aware of partners who may be interested in sustainable community development in DRC, please contact Handup Congo (www.handupcongo.org). □

Photos: Top Left - facilitating the planning workshops in 3 languages, in Lotumbe. Right - the children share their plans at the plenary. Bottom Left - celebrating Lotumbe village plans in song. Right - a day in pre-school in Lotumbe.

Inspiring women in Nepal

By Ishu Subba

Gender equality is the key to human development. Women shoulder the responsibility of nurturing the family, looking after its health and education, as well as off-farm and on-farm activities. Yet they face discrimination in education, nutrition and access to health facilities, and in opportunities to take part in politics and income generating activities. ICA Nepal, since its inception, has appreciated the need for gender equality in terms of sharing responsibilities and access to opportunities.



One example of a woman who has emerged as a leader is Ms Devaka Shrestha, 41 (pictured), of Changu village, Bhaktapur District. From a young age, she has had a strong interest in working for the community, especially in women's development. She came in contact with ICA Nepal when it initiated a literacy program, supported by ICA Japan, for women of Changu Narayan VDC (Village Development Committee) in 2001. She helped to promote ICA Nepal's women's empowerment activities and took part in its various training and facilitation workshops as well as the 8th Global Conference of

Human Development in Kathmandu in 2012. She says the program increased her enthusiasm for women's empowerment and development. "Through all these years, I got an opportunity to learn and grow as a person, to lead and to contribute in my own way with the support of ICA Nepal and its leadership facilitation," she says.


According to her, women in her village were illiterate, limited to their households and saw themselves as weaker than men. ICA Nepal's inclusive programs in areas such as capacity building, gender and leadership development, social mobilization and book-keeping brought about a change.

Women are now involved in community development activities such as taking care of the drinking water system, in income-generating projects and a savings and credit program. "Men in my village have started appreciating the importance of women and welcome their suggestions and participation. Women in Changu are slowly getting involved in various socio-economic activities in the household and community level," she says. They use ICA Nepal's training centre at Changu Narayan

to hold meetings and other women's empowerment activities.

With the support of ICA Nepal, they set up the Changu Narayan Progressive Women's Group in 2002. This led to the registration of the Chinnamasta Women's Saving and Credit Cooperative Society Pvt Ltd a few years later. Ms Devaka is currently its president. The society has more than 800 members, mainly women, and carries out about 30 million transactions annually. The cooperative is now a leading financial institution in the area.

The group's income-generating projects include making toys and food products such as pickles and candy, tailoring and farming. Its latest project is making sanitary pads to promote hygiene among young girls and women. Future plans include floriculture and an old-age home.

Ms Devaka and her group of women are an example of transformational leadership arising from ICA Nepal's activities over the last 15 years. A woman who had the desire to do more but not the direction is now an entrepreneur, social leader and an inspiration for others. 

Ishu Subba is an ICA Nepal staff member.

Poetry

TRAFFICKING HUMANITY

Makati, Quezon City, Manila ---
 Drawn by historical forces is a triangle
 Orchestrated by an abstracted nation-state
 Where Jeepneys, taxis, motor cars, and motorbikes
 Snake around roads directed by traffic lights that
 Hardly have a last say, their collaborating
 Star of a double-act stage street performance
 Are uniformed traffic marshal boys in black
 Spot-lighted by green, red, and amber.
 The vehicles of human intention manoeuvre
 Tactically between inches of space in a theatre
 Highlighted by a hand-eye gesture dance
 Automated by desire where audience applause
 is muted by Zen meditative reflection in the midst of
 chaos, strategically conceived thought chess piece movement,

Darwin's survival of the fittest, master craft
 Of the art of the possible, or breakthrough
 Of fate mingled with the constancy of faith ---
 Rosary beads dangling with finger-crossing
 On the driver's front-seat mirror view.
 Street noises voided by e-messages transcend
 Physical obstacles, ghosting the skill
 Of reading faces in the flesh, and read this with dread:
 To get anywhere in life, sheer survival means
 Negotiating between time and space, boundary breaking
 And nerve testing a world where being is becoming,
 Defined by a subtle move to break down
 The blocked road arteries of eternal spring.

----- Makati, Philippines, February 2014

Getting a 'fair go' for Australia's indigenous people

By John Telford

A key issue facing Australia is improving the health, wellbeing and employment opportunities for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander peoples (or "First Peoples") and this has to start with acknowledging past injustices.

The key parties in the national parliament have agreed to hold a constitutional referendum to acknowledge that the First Peoples had prior custodianship of the continent and to remove some racist clauses in the document.

Exploring Perspectives Forums

To educate the wider community on the issues to be addressed, a number of community groups are organizing "Explore Perspectives" forums. One such event was organized by the Women's Reconciliation Network, a body founded by ICA member Elaine Telford, in partnership with ANTAR Inner West, and Marrickville Residents for Reconciliation. Another ICA member, Robyn Hutchinson, augmented the skills of this group.

This forum opened with a musical interlude by Aboriginal singer and story teller Jacinta Tobin of the Darug tribe. Patricia Blackman, an elder and member of the Ashfield Aboriginal Consultative Committee, and Mayor Lucille McKenna of the Ashfield Council, welcomed the audience.

Professor George Williams, a constitutional expert from the University of New South Wales, outlined why the constitution should be updated and its racist powers removed.

Nicole Watson, a member of the Birri-Gubba People and senior researcher at Jumbunna House of Learning, University of Technology, Sydney, said there is a range of views on the issue within the Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander community.

John Telford is a member of ICA Australia



**Exploring Perspectives Forum - Ashfield, Sydney, Australia
26 March, 2014**

Row 1: Jacinta Tobin, Patricia Blackman, Lucille McKenna. Row 2: Peter Dixon, Professor George Williams, Nicole Watson. Row 3: Jeff McMullan, Helen Kearins. Row 4: Participants at the Forum.

Some accept constitutional reform as a pragmatic way forward while others believe it will make little practical difference and that a treaty should be the major focus of a campaign.

The general feeling as the discussion progressed was that both constitutional recognition and a treaty are needed, and are not mutually exclusive.

Muruwari woman Kirsten Gray, CEO of the New South Wales Reconciliation Council, then presented the "pro-constitutional change" position of the council and encouraged people to get involved.

Journalist and film maker Jeff McMullen wrapped up the discussion by highlighting the many things that constitutional recognition will not resolve and how far we have to go to have a just system in place. □

Join the conversation

There are Youtube links to the Constitution Recognition Forum, held in Ashfield, Sydney for you to watch, enjoy and learn from. This is in preparation for the forthcoming referendum related to Recognition in Australia's Constitution of the continuous culture of the First Peoples on our planet - the Aboriginal and Torres Strait peoples of Australia.

Youtube link for Linda Burney's very short and powerful call to the nation: <http://youtu.be/rnj67xUBSul>

Youtube link for the full event - the presentations by the 4 speakers are fantastic - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JiotkjWzK-Q>

RECOGNISE website: recognise.org.au

Weaving webs for a new Venezuela

By Teresa Sosa Vegas

"We must learn to live with uncertainty and not deny it. The only thing certain in the world is uncertainty and we need to learn to navigate with it". French sociologist and philosopher Edgar Morin wrote this in 2002 when defining the challenges we face in the world today.

We in Venezuela understand the sentiment. We are under siege, in disarray and in seeming collapse. But as another French philosopher Teilhard De Chardin said, groups sharing common relationships, connections and anxieties eventually lead to a "reawakening of a common force" and a "unified consciousness".

We watch as our hard-earned fledgling democracy is wrenched from our grasp. We know first-hand how easy it is to lose our freedom, democracy and standing in the world. Democracy is messy, difficult and requires a "unified consciousness" but that messiness has been turned against it. Our evolving participatory process has been hijacked and is being destroyed.

Many ask: "Have we become a democracy in name only?" The rule of law, the economic social and educational opportunities, and personal freedoms are being systematically undermined. Our once safe and democratic country has fallen into a dangerous proxy dictatorship. Civil rights, safe streets, freedom of movement and expression, a thriving economy and trust are all gone. Our natural resources are sold to the highest bidder. Businesses and the land is stolen and plundered by those drunk with power.

I have no words to express the experience of what is going on. There is no safe distance to observe from and no ability to be logical because our world is one of momentary

Professor Teresa Sosa Vegas teaches at the Post Graduate School of Political Science, University Simon Bolivar in Caracas, Venezuela.

survival. It is easy to assume from afar that things have a meaning but for us the meaning comes from understanding the moment, for all we have is the moment.

Our dream is to banish the chaos, corruption and usurpers and return to a safe and secure country where our freedoms – to speak, to travel, to question – are restored. What was once real – democracy and freedom – is now a dream. We worry whether a military crackdown is about to happen as it has in Syria. Where is the tipping point?

Those who oppose the current regime and are consistent in their vocal resistance are the students. They are the generation that is breaking through ideology, class, ethnic divisions and geographical self-interest. It is they who are creating "the common will" that De Chardin spoke of and attempting to rally around a unified consciousness.

Venezuela has become a place where ideology is used to mask corruption, greed and the insatiable desire for power. When lives are taken or threatened, when safety is ripped away, people seek resolution. Survival requires the creation of uncommon alliances, networks and webs of relationships. This is difficult, given the government's crackdown and its control and takeover of all major media outlets. It has even created a scarcity of newsprint to muzzle the ability to communicate.

Yet new technologies, which younger generations are adept at using, are creating virtual relationships, networks and webs of communication outside government control. This, much like the "Arab Spring", demonstrates the creativity of an opposition that is using wireless technology to share information, dreams and ideas with non-traditional communities.

These invisible networks encourage individual sharing of stories on the Web and other social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and

Whatsup. While witnessing the destruction on the ground, we have created a virtual community of resistance. We are hopeful that from this will come a new Venezuela. But the present leaves us wondering – what have we lost and what more could we lose? This is the age-old story of aggression.

In addition to these webs, I have found the ICA's book, *The Courage to Lead*, an invaluable resource. The facilitation processes, especially TOP and Focused Conversation, offer guides for creating structure out of chaos and practical approaches for personal and social transformation.

In these chaotic circumstances we do not have the luxury of attending a workshop or planning our next move in advance. I have found internalizing the principles, methods and processes of the ICA invaluable for framing, managing and directing social participation. During these moments you realize whether or not you have integrated the principles of caring and self-conscious reflection; are open to comprehensive perspectives; and understand historical involvement, the nature of responsibility and what constitutes social pioneering. It is in these moments that one asks: do I have the courage to lead?

ICA and personal principles and values are the foundation for living through this chaos. They provide a framework for establishing and maintaining our shared webs and networks. These principles are creation, development, expression, action and reflection. Only through networks can we maintain and strengthen these webs of relationship and information sharing. We hope they gather enough support to lay the foundation for a conscious citizenry willing to participate and become more fully engaged in local, community and civic activities.

Creating networks and webs, and forming communities based on commonality is just a start. People, interests, networks and webs are constantly being recreated. We understand that together we are the network, the web, and the foundation of our future. Through our common interests and humanity we strive to re-create our country, not one based on ideology but on the humanitarian needs of citizens, a system based on truth, respect, dignity, justice and freedom. To paraphrase Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a group of conscious, interconnected and articulate citizens can bring about change and transform any society". □



New ToP diploma recognised in Australia

By Karen Newkirk and Mark Butz

After much hard work and learning along the way, ToP Global Institute of Facilitative Leadership (ToP GIFL) has won an accreditation for a new diploma and renewed a graduate diploma.

ToP GIFL was established by ICA Australia in 2010 as a training entity to deliver the Facilitative Leadership Program. The program, developed by the Australasian ToP Network, has been providing an organising and unifying framework for ToP training modules for nearly a decade.

ToP GIFL applied to the Australian Skills Quality Authority to become a Registered Training Organisation and was granted that status after some arduous audits of its capability.

It gained accreditation for a Vocational Graduate Diploma in Facilitative Leadership in 2010. The award, granted in the state of Western Australia, is recognised across the nation and overseas. It was due for reaccreditation last December. ToP GIFL, which sees the need for a lower level qualification as well, sought reaccreditation of the graduate diploma and also submitted an application for a new diploma.

Following some intense developmental work, ToP GIFL was told in March that its 10444NAT Graduate Diploma of Facilitative Leadership had been reaccredited and that a new 10443NAT Diploma of Facilitative Management had been accredited. The new diploma is based on attendance at Modules 1 to 5 of the Facilitative Leadership Program and completion of four units of competency. The graduate diploma, which requires more project work at a higher level, is based on attendance at Modules 1 to 7 and assessment for six different units of competency.

The accreditations are a strong validation of the value of training developed by ICA and ToP networks over several decades and will bring recognition from the academic field and workplaces in the government, community and business sectors. These developments will spark widespread interest in both gaining a qualification and becoming an authorised provider.

ToP GIFL will continue to offer the seven face-to-face modules as public or “in-house” events. They are essentially the same as those taken by those pursuing a qualification. The subsequent processes for assessment make the difference. Those who have completed these modules in the past can opt for a Recognition of Prior Learning for the purposes of gaining assessment. The training and assessment are available across Australia and overseas.

For more information about ToP GIFL's programs, the people involved and how it all works, please visit its website at www.top-gifl.com. □

Karen Newkirk and Mark Butz are members of ICA Australia.

Passing breeze

*Like a passing breeze, I visited places, south islands
of Philippine memories, including worlds I have not seen,
away from the cacophony of Metro Manila's city sounds,
away from cars spewing grey smoke, away from pedestrians
weaving their leaden bodies between cars and trucks and motorbikes
enveloped by grey smog, but on these islands,
I found myself in tropical paradise,
reading peace on country people's faces,
their eyes clear as air, no discourse on happiness required
when I met the eye of joy in their souls.*

*Slash, slash that clears the land, making way for seeds of new life,
their umbrella huts protecting their heads from the burning sun,
I found myself communing with nature,
watching a happy team weed out wild ground to regenerate new life,*

*just like us when we leave our material horizon to regenerate,
and be one with the mother and father of our heart of hearts,
for in our earthly life, we bleed and ache, and seek the closing of the gap
of the seemingly unbridgeable chasm of our imagined incompleteness.*

*So in my flight, I heard my soul sing like a passing breeze
kissing the islands of my birthplace before returning across the seas
to the island continent, both ancient and novel,
that had been my nest for a long time —
my home in the autumn of my life where through regeneration,
my children and grandchild too will one day experience clearance
of their material maternal ground of being,
and it will be their turn to be transformed
into conscious dwellers of islands of sweet memories,
flying imperceptibly, visiting places
like a gentle passing breeze.*

*— Josefina, Ozamiz Mindanao, February 2014
Deborah Ruiz Wall*