



Creators of Peace



Initiatives of Change

*transforming,
empowering and
engaging women in
peace creation*

Creators of Peace conference, Sydney 2009: Rita Lindsay sr and
Rita Lindsay jr of the Ngarrindjeri people, Australia.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2016



CREATORS OF PEACE

OUR VISION

WOMEN CREATING PEACE ACROSS THE WORLD'S DIVIDES

A world where every woman embraces her value as 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.

Women have a unique role to play in creating peace. The United Nations has recognised in Resolution 1325 that women, often marginalised from formal settings, must be fully integrated in all peace processes to ensure sustainable peace. Women contribute significantly to the stability of communities in conflict and are at the forefront of recovery and rebuilding efforts post-conflict.

As the movement of peoples increases – due to conflict, climatic changes and economic disadvantage – the fabric of societies is profoundly challenged.

Under the surface lies all the explosive potential of the unhealed grievances, unresolved histories and un-faced prejudices of the newcomers as well as those already existing within the host community.

True peace is not just the absence of conflict but the addressing of all the needs of human security: from hospitality to food provision, from friendship to shelter, from a recognised identity to stable jobs. Women are ideally placed to engage with these needs from the grass roots in market place and office, home and boardroom.

Creators of Peace is a movement to transform, empower and engage women in this challenging task of our age.

Creators of Peace, whilst being a women's initiative, seeks constructive partnerships with men and the restoration of the respect and trust necessary for joint action.

“

Filomena Dos Reis grew up with her country in conflict – We would smile, but with bitterness inside. My husband disappeared in 1991 during the Indonesian military occupation. I have taught my daughters to forgive and respect. If you live with your hatred and anger, you block yourself off from others. Peace has to start with me. I have to embrace my enemy as human beings, they are also victims.

TIMOR LESTE



OUR WORK

Engaging women in the work of creating peace

Creators of Peace challenges women of all backgrounds and beliefs to discover their unique potential to create a culture of peace in their homes, communities and the wider world.

We aim to:

- prevent violence and despair by addressing the roots of conflict – the internal ones within us and the external ones around us – and to promote a change of heart and attitude as a primary tool of peace creation;
- build bridges of forgiveness and friendship across racial, religious and social divides, especially in post-conflict situations;
- create a global solidarity network for women engaged in peace building around the world;
- raise awareness of the personal ethical prerequisites for effective social action;
- build just, caring and inclusive communities.

“

There are no words to explain how important this experience of Creators of Peace is in my life transformation.

CANADA

I could not speak because I felt I would be a hypocrite. I needed to forgive and be forgiven. I decided instead to share my Peace Circle experience. I forgave my brother-in-law in the presence of the congregation. This opened an avenue for other people to give and ask for forgiveness between each other.

KENYA



Stars indicate Creators of Peace activity.

CREATORS OF PEACE

OUR PRIMARY METHOD

Creators of Peace Circles

Creators of Peace Circles are small gatherings of women representing the diversity of the village, town or region in which they live. These women, with one or more facilitators, commit together to work through specially designed material over a 6 week or intensive 3 day period in order to uncover their own unique peace-building potential.

The focus is on trust and friendship building through sharing personal stories and on understanding the nature of peace and the role of each one in destroying or creating it. As a group they will identify areas of concern in their respective communities with the potential for non-peace.* They can then resolve to take joint action to address these issues.

Training is offered to those who wish to become facilitators, most of whom are volunteers.

Creators of Peace Circles provide women with a transformative space for inter-personal, inter-ethnic and inter-religious dialogue in more than thirty countries as at 2011.

OUR VALUES

Healing the past, transforming the present

- Peace starts with me. An individual can be a powerful agent for positive change in society once she has begun building peace in herself, her family and her community.
- We value diversity. Creators of Peace is open to all women everywhere.
- Local people, and local women in particular, are best equipped to know the needs of their own situations. We affirm the importance of grass-roots peace building work that supports and complements local initiatives.
- Where cycles of hatred and resentment are perpetuated, acknowledgement of past wrongs, restoration and forgiveness can bring inner freedom and heal the wounds of history in divided communities.
- Universal ethical values of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love offer a practical framework that guides our peace building



efforts and can be used to evaluate our individual and collective behaviour.

- Inner listening enables us to choose to live reflectively instead of reactively. Listening to the inner voice, to conscience, or for God's leading – according to each person's own faith or philosophy – is an essential source of inner freedom, discernment and direction.
- In a world that is often quick to assign blame, honest conversations and the readiness to accept our own responsibility can unite people for action across barriers that have historically divided them.



Creators of Peace resonates with me on many levels... And it has components I value deeply: the sacredness of each person's story, respect for all, sharing, listening, forgiveness.'

MALAYSIA

OUR STORY

A peace network since 1991

Launched in 1991, Creators of Peace now operates globally through Creators of Peace Circles, community building activities, workshops, and personal encounters.

We have held several international conferences in Switzerland (1991 & 1994), India (2000), Uganda (2005) and Australia (2009). Between '91 and '04, Creators of Peace women ran conferences, workshops and engaged with other programmes of Initiatives of Change as well as being active in their local communities.

In 1995 a delegation went to the UN NGO Forum in Beijing where they conducted a workshop and two members had official observer status at the UN's Fourth World conference on Women.



Participants from Rwanda, India, Australia and Kenya at the Creators of Peace conference, Sydney 2009.

In 2004, the first Creators of Peace Circle was launched in Adelaide and was quickly taken up in other Australian cities and then in other countries.

Since then Creators of Peace Circles have taken place in over thirty countries around the world from Sudan to Switzerland, Sweden to the Solomon Islands.

Creators of Peace is a programme of Initiatives of Change, an international movement for social and global transformation inspired by personal transformation since 1938. www.iofc.org

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[The participants] having lived for most of their lives in an authoritarian society at first found our fresh and engaging approach unusual and uncomfortable, but from session two we all started to be more open and more relaxed. Sharing their life stories was a big challenge – to be so open and vulnerable.

ROMANIA

OUR STRENGTHS

Commitment and experience

- A committed team of coordinators and facilitators, most of whom are volunteers, with over 20 years experience in peace activism and community building.
- A core international team, based on different continents, reflecting ethnic and religious diversity.
- The tried and tested methodology of Creators of Peace Circles over 6 years in more than 30 countries.
- Creators of Peace Circles – an effective and cost-efficient way of bringing women together for dialogue and action.
- Expertise in cross-cultural conference facilitation and transformative dialogue.
- The support of Initiatives of Change, a movement with more than 80 years experience in international social transformation.



Participants in Creators of Peace workshop, Sudan 2007.

OUR CHALLENGES

Organisational Capacity Building

- Sustainable sources of funding for:
 - Facilitators' travel and field costs to respond to requests for Creators of Peace Circles and training;
 - Employment of paid staff to coordinate and build the capacity of Creators of Peace internationally;
 - Subsidies to assist women to attend workshops, training and conferences;
 - Creators of Peace publications;
 - Production of films documenting Creators of Peace work;
 - Website management.
- Strengthening administrative capacity:
 - Communications strategy;
 - Streamlining processes to respond rapidly to requests for Creators of Peace programmes in new places;
 - Developing methods for on-going support for women impacted by Creators of Peace.



We must be careful not to sow the seeds of revenge in our children.

SUDAN

I've worked in peace education all my life, but I hate my brother. I've never seen the connection before.

KENYA

I always thought that peace makers had to go to college and have a law degree, now I realise that I too am a peace maker.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

OUR OPPORTUNITIES

Invitations and Partnerships

Invitations to introduce and develop Creators of Peace Circles and other programmes continue from women around the world.

We are excited by these opportunities to contribute directly to conflict prevention and post-conflict reconciliation by responding to these women who want to be more effectively engaged in the challenges of their countries.

Current requests from:

- South Sudan as they recover from 30 years of civil war and yet are challenged by unresolved inter-tribal conflict;
- Latin America where issues of corruption and violence constantly undermine civil society;
- Egypt struggling to rebuild after the Arab Spring;
- Lebanon with its on-going need for inter-communal harmony.

We seek to forge partnerships and connections with organisations, bodies and trusts with whom we share the vision of empowering women to create peace at all levels of society.



TRANSFORMING EMPOWERING ENGAGING

FIVE YEAR PLAN 2012-2016

Over the next five years, as we prepare for the 25th anniversary of Creators of Peace in 2016, we will pursue the following strategic directions identified as crucial to the effectiveness and sustainability of our work

Strategic direction 1: Expand Creators of Peace Circles

We are committed to the continued delivery of Creators of Peace Circles and to supporting participants as they seek to practically implement their commitment to peace.

In the next five years we will:

- Provide Creators of Peace Circles in new countries and areas where they are requested, including in educational and other institutions;
- Encourage the strategic expansion of Creators of Peace Circles in areas of religious and cultural diversity, especially where dialogue and reconciliation are needed;
- Train more Creators of Peace Circle facilitators;
- Produce a 'Train the Trainer' programme;
- Support regional Creators of Peace gatherings and facilitator retreats, refresher courses and international conferences.

Strategic direction 2: Explore new programmes and partnerships

We are aware that many of the women involved in Creators of Peace live in communities experiencing or recently recovering from violent conflicts.

We seek to empower them further by exploring opportunities to develop new programmes and trainings to respond to specific needs and linking them with other peace building practitioners.

In the next five years we will:

- Develop training opportunities designed to support women following their Creators of Peace Circle experience such as leadership development, conflict resolution, and mediation;
- Support the use of Creators of Peace tools and methods as a strategic intervention for creating peace and building trust in divided communities;



Creators of Peace Circles in Nepal, South Africa, Sudan and India.



- Establish partnership with other practitioners and organisations trained to respond to the specific needs of communities in conflict.

Strategic direction 3: Build and consolidate our team

We are committed to further building and supporting our team around the world. This team is made up of coordinators, facilitators, staff and all those who have experienced a Creators of Peace Circle.

In the next five years we will:

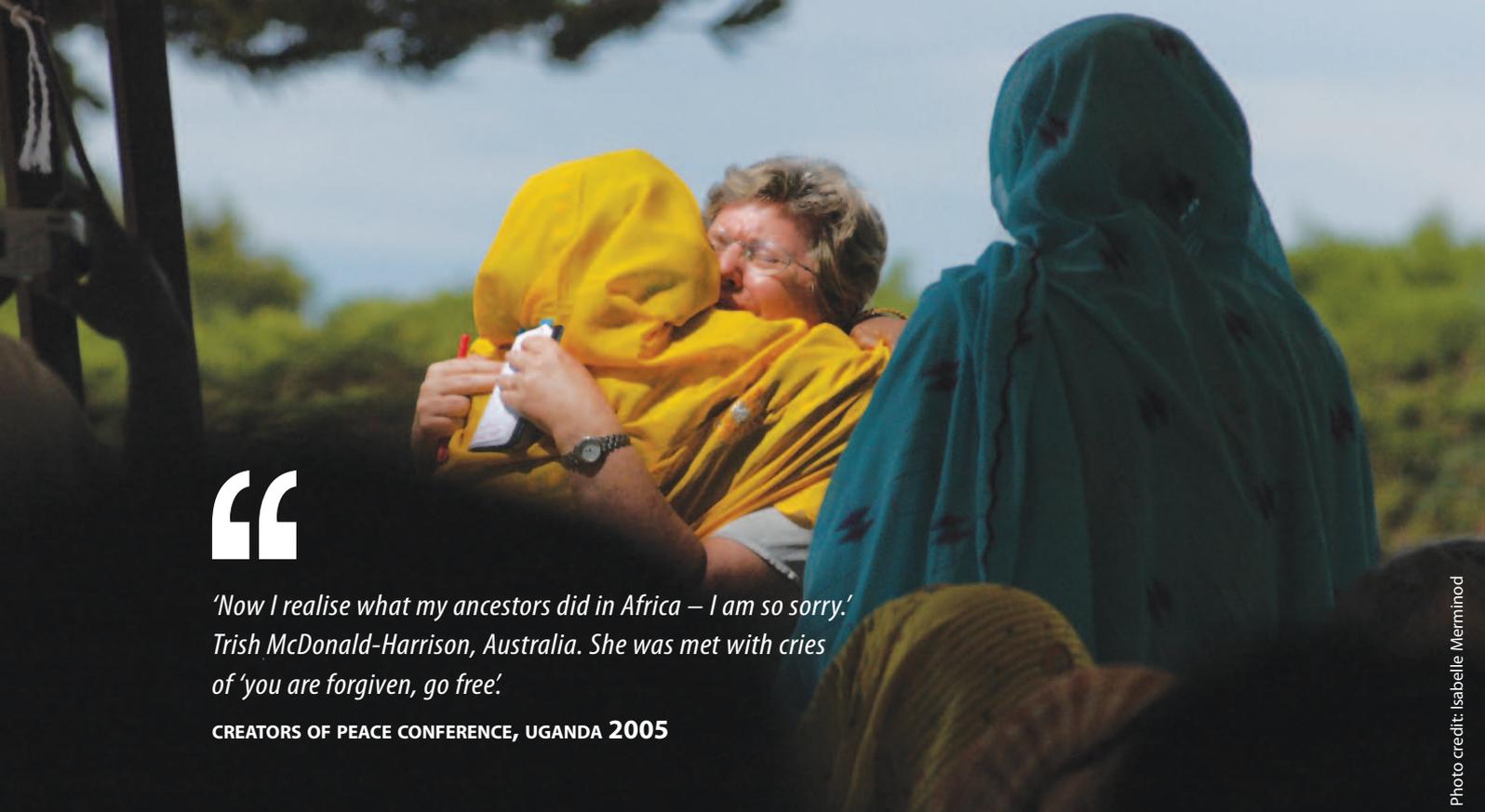
- Develop an effective communication strategy;
- Fund a team of staff to serve the work of Creators of Peace;
- Establish a mentor programme;
- Maintain simplified, responsive and transparent governance;
- Maximise our association and collaboration with Initiatives of Change.

Strategic direction 4: Develop our resources

We seek to develop resources and obtain the necessary funding required for our work to be effective and sustainable.

In the next five years we will:

- Actively search for new funding sources;
- Maintain an interactive website, which includes a mechanism for on-line donation;
- Produce printed and electronic material for Creators of Peace Circles and training programmes;
- Translate the Creators of Peace Circle manual into the languages of all of the communities using it;
- Produce a documentary film about Creators of Peace;
- Publish a book of Creators of Peace women's stories;
- Publish research that evaluates the impact of Creators of Peace.



'Now I realise what my ancestors did in Africa – I am so sorry.'
Trish McDonald-Harrison, Australia. She was met with cries of 'you are forgiven, go free'.

CREATORS OF PEACE CONFERENCE, UGANDA 2005

Photo credit: Isabelle Merminod

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION TEAM AS AT 2012:

- Jean Brown (Australia)
- Christina De Angelis (France/Australia)
- Amina Dikedi-Ajakaiye (Nigeria/UK)
- Christiane Garin Al-Azhari (Switzerland)
- Monica McIntosh (Jamaica/UK)
- Trish McDonald-Harrison (Australia)
- Kate Monkhouse (UK)
- Didacienne Mukahabeshimana (Rwanda)
- Joanne Nabbanja (Uganda)
- Tehmina Sigantoria (India)
- Vijayalakshmi Subramanyan (India)
- Ann Njeri Ndiangu (Kenya)
 – to view Ann on youtube go to:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=tymSgrUZZ70

Strategic plan prepared by: Jean Brown, Christina De Angelis and Trish McDonald-Harrison.



In March 2011, Solomon Islander Susan Kukiti led a group of women on a six hour canoe and four hour truck trip to the Weathercoast for a three day Creators of Peace Circle. Some participants walked for four hours through the mountains. All had suffered in the civil war. Throughout the Circle, Susan often repeated her conviction that 'Peace starts within, peace comes from the heart.' Susan's own brother had been beheaded in the violence. She spoke on forgiveness in every workshop, with ex-militants and with the victims of the violence. She was an eager advocate of Creators of Peace Circles as a healing tool for her country.

SOLOMON ISLANDS

I have treasured these meetings. It's such a gift to get to know individuals from communities you otherwise only see on the streets, but know very little about. Also, I have had time to reflect on difficult relationships and issues in my own life, which has already been fruitful.

NORWAY



GET INVOLVED

SUPPORT CREATORS OF PEACE

Creators of Peace is actively seeking support from and partnerships with individuals and organisations who want to have a stake in transforming, empowering and engaging women for peace at this critical moment in history.

Donations can be paid into the Creators of Peace bank account:

UBS Current account No 0279-205561.60E
Switzerland

The following should be used for any deposit or international transaction:

IBAN : CH050027927920556160E
BIC : UBSWCHZH80A



In an Australian Creators of Peace Circle where there were two young Aboriginal women, a white woman shared how she had grown up as the daughter of a police officer in a country town. He was referred to as 'pig' by the community and she was 'piglet'. One day Aboriginal people had laid siege to their home, she was terrified.

During one exercise in the Peace Circle she and one of the young Aboriginal women had been interacting and rolling on the floor with laughter. As she later shared her story she appreciated that this was the first time she had been so close to Aboriginal people and it was helping her to lose her fear. Later she apologised for her former prejudice.

AUSTRALIA

OUR THANKS

This Strategic Plan was developed in consultation with women involved in the Creators of Peace network around the world and with the International Coordination Team.

We would like to particularly thank Alan Bassal and Shoshana Faire for their help in the initial drafting of this plan, Mark Thomas for the design, and Initiatives of Change Australia for their encouragement and financial support.



Transformation comes as women turn the searchlight of truth on their own motives and prejudices and take the steps revealed. Through listening and change we build bridges of trust and friendship across the chasms of difference.

VIJAYALAKSHMI SUBRAHMANYAN, INDIA

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR OF CREATORS OF PEACE



CONTACT US

Interested in joining a **Creators of Peace Circle**?

Want to link up with **Creators of Peace** near you? To find out what is happening around the world with Creators of Peace, contact us by post or email, or check us out online.

Creators of Peace, Initiatives of Change International

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