Our aims

• To engage women in their role as creators of peace at every level of society
• To promote the transforming dynamic of a change of heart, starting with oneself
• To pre-empt violence & despair by addressing the roots of conflict, in & around us
• To encourage & connect existing practitioners of peace building
• To raise awareness of the moral & spiritual prerequisite for effective social action
• To build just, caring & inclusive communities for all.

Creators of Peace was launched in 1991 at the Initiatives of Change conference centre in Caux, Switzerland by the Hon. Anna Abdallah Msekwa of Tanzania, a respected politician and leader of her country’s women’s organizations. In her inaugural speech, she urged everyone to create peace wherever we are. To begin, and to build peace throughout society, we all have to remember that someone else is the stumbling block… Could that someone be myself? Creators of Peace is now a global network of people working on different continents through Creators of Peace Circles, workshops, personal encounters, community building activities and international conferences.

“The Creators of Peace Circle is a place of coming into alignment with your personal convictions, but it does not leave you with nothing to do after ‘venting’ – it empowers you to join in fellowship with other women attempting to fulfill their role in society to combat injustice and take on the issue of inequality – bringing in inspiration, fresh ideas, presents, planning and management.” – Anil Bhardwaj, Peace building & International Relations, United Nations Resident Coordinator in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 2003-2006. I joined a group called ‘Women of Peace’ which engaged with their own abilities, convictions, and passion to make change in the communities at every level of society.” – Ashley, UK

Creators of Peace is a programme of Initiatives of Change which is a worldwide movement of people of diverse cultures and backgrounds who are committed to the transformation of society, through changes in human motives and behavior, starting with themselves.

Without peace, no one will live in peace. So it’s everyone’s interest to work in this direction.”
In August 2016, we celebrated a long-anticipated major event: the commemoration of the Silver Jubilee of Creators of Peace. This event, to which the international co-ordination team of Creators of Peace had focused most of its energies since its inauguration in 2013, concluded our strategic plan of 2012–2016 in a beautiful way.

What have we celebrated? A story of an international network whose members are body and soul engaged in the promotion of a global peace that begins in oneself and in the transformation of conflicts. We have worked with a predominantly feminine touch and sensibility, sharing our experiences and our stories of life, reflecting our worldwide outlook, and offering our members the opportunity to contribute to the creation of a new story, out from the history of trauma, into another story of reconciliation, from truth to life, from the secrecy of the taboo to the light of honesty and transparency. To live peace is to act as peacemakers that call everyone to the vanguard of peace in our world.

2016 was a year for us all to live our passion for the world as it presents itself, with its turbulence and divisions. Our world demands us to be the change that we want to see in transforming conflicts and communities, upholding the dignity and humanity of all. To live peace is to be peacemakers that call everyone to the vanguard of peace in our world.

Daphrose Ntarataze Barampama (Switzerland/Burundi) was President of Creators of Peace 2013–2016 and from August 2016 continues in role of Ambassador for the Creators of Peace network.
**Highlights 2015 - 2016**

Creators of Peace Circles have now taken place in 43 different countries. Each has a national co-ordinator and a team of women responding to the needs of their own communities.

* Australia
  Ginn Fourie of the ‘Beyond Forgiveness’ documentary gave a Q & A of three very successful fundraising events in Adelaide, Melbourne & Sydney with film screenings to help raise funds for women to attend the Living Peace conference, raising more than $1,100.

* Brazil
  renewed commitments to putting peace in practice and continuing to provide peer support for individual participants in their journeys of empowerment and commitment.

* Burundi
  pursued integration of individual healing through the Creators of Peace Circles with development programmes around skills development for cassava processing and dry composting toilet construction, as well as providing the launch pad for social enterprises and community self-help initiatives.

* Canada
  has worked with interns from the local university, whilst exploring future Creators of Peace Circles with First Nation women.

* Kenya
  has continued to invest heart and soul into one region to support women from two tribes in their journey of forgiveness & reconciliation over land disputes and retaliatory violence.

* Mali
  have hosted dialogues to enable women in exile from the civil conflict to heal and plan for future reconciliation journey as part of a collaboration between Creators of Peace, WADAP / L’Ile in partnership with UNHCR on funding of the Human Security Division of the Swiss Cooperation and Development.

* New Zealand
  and Fiji have enjoyed facilitator trainings and working together to host Creators of Peace Circles in a local mosque and with the Multicultural Council.

* South Africa
  has designed follow-on programmes to encourage skills development for everyday family and neighbourhood needs dealing with domestic violence, financial management and assertive communication whilst continuing to support healing post-apartheid.

* Switzerland
  has prioritised multicultural hospitality to build friendships between women from different backgrounds and faith traditions.

* Taiwan
  has linked Creators of Peace Circles with supporting parenting skills for local women through a regular group.

* Uganda
  team members have been visiting women prisoners and their children, as well as counseling participants through specific relationship conflicts.

* United Kingdom
  have developed new partnerships with specialist peace centres in London, Coventry and Oxford offering Creators of Peace workshops as part of programmes for women from different communities.

* Zimbabwe
  has held a new round of Creators of Peace Circles and dedicated their attention on women in poverty by enabling small projects to help families with school fees and family food provision.

Common themes for participants in Creators of Peace Circles over the last 12 months have included:

- deepening understanding across divides of generation, culture and religion
- healing hurts caused by violent conflict, civil war and land disputes

Story from Sri Lanka

Creators of Peace Circles in Sri Lanka were able to bring together women of different ethnic and religious communities to share their experiences and build trust and friendship. In one, women who had been widowed during the war shared moving stories of losing sons, homes and of being displaced several times from conflict zone and having to live in very poor camps. It is only in the last two years that they have been able to build new homes on the restored land.

Minachiamma, alone now, still lives in her tin shed while her house is being constructed. At our first meeting she had said, “There is no happiness in my life, only pain”, but the big smile with which she welcomed us to her home the day after the Circle was evidence of a new story in the making. She was 72 years old, but the past no longer held her back.

Stella, their group co-ordinator who lives with her 12 year old daughter shared: “I need to develop qualities of peace. I never thought of peace in this way. We have to show by example.”

“I feel I am stronger. I can be a creator of peace.”
Training with Creators of Peace

"The training of facilitators was a new and unique learning experience for me. I have learned not only about how to be a facilitator for Creators of Peace Circles, but also how to empower women by my example by telling my story and by sharing the challenges I have come through. I learned to the fact, that facilitators are equal to participants in the sense that they would share their own stories and do some exercises along with participants. Looking at them and hearing from them gave me hope and power to move on. I have learned how as a facilitator I can contribute to the personal development of other women."

"I felt empowered in terms of having learned new communication skills and practical tools and developed in terms of how to manage a challenging situation that may arise. I also gained precious insight on the importance of co-facilitation."

Between August 2015 and July 2016 we ran Facilitator Trainings in Australia, with participants also from Japan and Philippines; Burundi; India, with participants also from Afghanistan, Mali; New Zealand, with participants also from Fiji; Romania and United Kingdom.

All women who participate in our Facilitator Training process have taken part in at least one Creators of Peace Circle, and thus have experienced the process they will be inviting others to engage in.

Facilitators are expected to be in good relationship with the Creators of Peace team in their own country and to be deepening their own practice and values as a Creator of Peace. They also acquire knowledge of the Creators of Peace Circle process and develop specific skills in facilitating conversations, sharing personal stories and accompanying others in taking next steps into forgiveness, reconciliation and in putting peace into practice in their local communities. The training includes a 3 day workshop, plus ongoing support and accountability.

During 2017, we will be prioritising the expansion of our teams of CoP Circle Facilitators and Trainers of Facilitators so that we can respond to the many requests we have for Peace Circles in new countries and for Facilitator Trainings. The training of trainers will be done through a hands-on apprenticing process with practice and observation. We will also offer Facilitator Refreshers for experienced facilitators to share their learning, get expert input on challenges and build up good practice.

Creators of Peace circles

"The Creators of Peace Circle is like a pilgrimage for me. It cleansed me of all impurities to deal with new directions."

"Following child abuse and verbal abuse suffered of my orphaned childhood, I had only hatred towards others especially women but also towards myself. With the Creators of Peace Circle, I learned to know myself, to value myself in love and to love others by finding inner peace."

Creators of Peace Circles are small gatherings of women of different backgrounds within a community who work together with trained facilitators to understand their peace creating capabilities. They go through specially designed material over a period of time to build bridges of understanding, healing and empowerment to living in the community with potential for conflict, and resolve to take common action to prevent wars, with women's voices. A special feature of the Creators of Peace Circle is the space for each participant to share caring of her life story with others.

New Creators of Peace Circles took place in 2015-2016 in:

- Afghanistan
- Armenia
- Fiji
- Malaysia
- USA and
- Zimbabwe.

"Through this time I found peace, understanding and freedom in my mind and my heart."
 Strategic Plan Progress

2016 saw the conclusion of our 5-year strategic plan which set out our framework for outreach and organisational development. Since 2012, we have worked with a multitude of organisations and individuals to promote and create a world of peace and reconciliation.

1. Expand Creators of Peace Circles
2. Provide Creators of Peace Circles in new countries and regions where they are needed, including in educational and other institutions

We have continued to build a CoP network with several thousand CoP circles operating in countries like Cameroon, Burundi, Nigeria, Egypt, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Lebanon, Syria, Romania, Taiwan, Armenia, Afghanistan, Fiji, Trinidad & Tobago, Egypt, New Zealand, Australia, Cameroon, Burundi, Nigeria, Egypt, New Zealand, Solomon Islands, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Lebanon, Syria, Romania, Taiwan, Armenia, Afghanistan, Fiji, Trinidad & Tobago.

We have created a “Pathways” framework to guide and support women on their facilitation journey and to ensure that we have recognised and experienced facilitators leading with new women.

We have continued to attract new CoP women and men from across the world, including from Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East.

We have developed a training process to enable them to support one another through further learning and to empower women in different countries and our Facebook page has become a learning platform for under-represented and wider women in peace initiatives. In 2016, we launched a “Living Peace” blog reflection series.

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Directions for 2017

Key elements for our global work that we plan moving forward:

• Encouraging participation in “Second Circles”, a follow-on programme to deepen the learning and encourage action.
• Developing the skills and experience of new trainers, so we have more trainers available to respond to requests.
• More partnership working, especially in areas where we can link CoPs with development initiatives.
• Regional gatherings to support teams with facilitation refreshers and capacity building.
• Working with Initiatives of Change to progress their new priorities, including tackling the roots of extremism.

Since the 25th anniversary Living Peace Conference in 2016, the following have also emerged with some energy:

• Investing in and mentoring younger women’s skills and leadership.
• Exploring “advocates for a new story” as a theme for a wider programme shared with IofC.

Challenges in 2017

Over the course of the next year, which we have designated as a transitional year to lay the foundations for CoP moving forward into the future, we will prioritise the following cross-cutting themes in all the strategic directions and areas of work listed.

• Capability-building: our skills & teams - Bringing more experienced CoP women together with newer colleagues (mentors and mentees) in each project we work on, to share knowledge, to help with succession planning and to make our activities more accessible to younger women.
• Capacity-building: our resources & finances - Increasing our visibility with an update of our communications material, improve impact evaluation, and support our core fundraising activities. Invest in new ideas. Develop and implement the CoP resource centre. Strengthen our links with the United Nations, especially the Global Counterterrorism Fellowship, to align our work closely with a wider agenda, and build relationships, with regional co-ordinators and staff teams, as well as Geneva outreach and summer programme.

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2017 is going to be an exciting and challenging year for Creators of Peace. We will be handing over from the hands-on leadership of Jean Brown and moving through the spirit of the Living Peace Conference. We want to maintain the friendship and organic grassroots initiatives that are a hallmark of CoP’s 25 years of global action. At the same time, we need to build a core team to help carry the responsibility for our international programmes and stewardship of our networks.

One way to visualise this is like a tree: the roots of CoP are strong (in our values, in our history, in our friendships and global network) and the branches stretch wide with many peace circles and projects. The work for the year ahead is to strengthen the trunk of the tree, build both peace circles and a strong support for future growth.

“I found our differences, I found our similarities, and I found that there was a part of me in everyone else and a part of them in me.”
Finance

Income and Expenditure 2015

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

Income and Expenditure 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
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All country programmes are self-financed by women locally through personal giving, social enterprise and grants or partnership working. These projects responding to local needs are not reflected within the figures above which include only the core running costs and one major programme. CoP fundraising comes from individual donors who give personally to support the work of Creators of Peace. We are grateful for grants to support specific projects in Kenya, South Africa and Burundi in 2015 from:

- Irene Pricechich Trust
- Republique et Canton de Geneve
- Ville de Genève
- Ville de Meyrin
- Ville de Meyrin

Governance

Creators of Peace has a group of elected International Co-ordinators who have the overview of our training, communications, and liaison with the 40+ national co-ordinators.

Serving from 2013-2016, our International Co-ordinators were: President – Stéphane Warratdoz (Burundi), Secretary – Tanya Fox (Australia), Treasurer – Kate Monkhouse (United Kingdom), National Liaison – Jean Brown (Australia), National Liaison – Portia Mosia (South Africa), Training & Programmes – Shoshana Faire (Australia), Communications – Yara Al Ghanemy (Syria)

The new International co-ordination team elected in August 2016 and January 2017 are: President – Amina Dicki-Akaajie (Nigerian/UK), Secretary – Anne Claire Frank-Seisay (Netherlands/USA), Treasurer - Gabriela Sebestyen (Romania), Vice-President – Diana Damsa (Romania), Luz Sikkensch Homescr Castro (Costa Rica), Maria Cristina Munoz (Brazil), Nighat Khursid (Pakistan), Shoshana Faire (Australia), Suzie Lehtonen (Switzerland), Yara Zghib (Lebanon/USA).

Our Elders are: Christiane Garin Al Azhari (Switzerland), Jean Brown (Australia) and Vijayalakshmi Subrahmanyan (India)

For more information, contact Kate Monkhouse, Executive Officer: creatorsofpeace@iofc.org

“It was a huge privilege... to gain experience and wisdom from such extraordinary women.”

Fundraising

"It was a huge privilege... to gain experience and wisdom from such extraordinary women.”

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