



The 2017 Life Matters participants.
Credit: Gabriella Harsanti

‘Everyone can be a change-maker’

They came from 15 different national backgrounds and different parts of Australia, for a workshop offering a way to find ‘clarity, direction and purpose in life’. Natalia Teguhputri, an accountant living in Melbourne of Indonesian background, tells what happened:

On the evening of Australia Day 2017 when my sister and I arrived at Armagh (the IofC Centre in Melbourne), we knew we would spend the next three days in a Life Matters Workshop but we don’t know what to expect. Looking back now, I am sure I speak on behalf of the others that we walked out from Armagh as changed people; with our hearts opened, our steps lighter and our minds refreshed. The long weekend helped us relax in each other’s company; and to learn the importance of understanding our identity, the power of quiet reflection, and the gift of diversity.

The 20 of us participants received our nametags and handmade folders containing our schedules, tasks and allocation into groups. Each group was given two facilitators to help with the flow of sharing.

Pari Sanyü, one of the Armagh residents, warmly welcomed us with us leaves from a tree planted in the Armagh garden 40 years ago by ‘Aunty’ Marge Tucker (an elder of the Ulupna people). We met in our various groups that night to share our hopes and expectations of what we want to see in the world, and to form our own operating rules. When other groups shared theirs, we quickly saw the rule common for all of us was respect, love and acceptance.

The next morning we had our first quiet time (a space for inner reflection), which spoke to me of the importance of gratitude. We then listened to a great talk from management

consultant James McIvor about identity and destiny – helping us see the importance of a healthy awareness of our own strength and skills, which can be like invisible antennae leading us to be aware of opportunities to contribute to making the world a better place.

After lunch we had the chance to go to creative workshops: music, art therapy and volleyball. I went to the music where we had fun learning an Aboriginal song. My sister was in the art therapy workshop where Judy Greenberg asked the class to draw what fear looks like; and, on a second page, to draw the antidote to that fear. My sister’s two drawings are now framed and hung in our flat.

In the afternoon we listened to thought-provoking stories about identity. One that stayed with me was told by Anam Javed (a 2015 Life Matters graduate who is currently Secretary of the Islamic Council of Victoria) on her decision as a Muslim to wear headscarf along with the sweet and not-so-sweet responses from people around her. I began to see that our identity is our strength. During tough times if we truly understand who we are, we then have all it takes to overcome obstacles.

On the second day, our quiet time focused on two questions: ‘What have I done that now I wish I had not done? And, what can I do to make that right?’ In my group we quickly found answers to the first question but the

second one was not so easy. As we began opening up, we knew that we would receive full support and zero judgement.

We learnt about tools of transformation: inner reflection, honesty, purity, unselfishness, love, and putting others first. We learnt that you don't have to do the extraordinary. Do what you can, when you can. There will be no time to do it

if we do not make the time.

The highlight of the day would have to be the entertainment evening: of music, drama, dance, poetry and stand-up comedy. It was truly a fun night, cheering the awesome talent amongst us. And to top it off, we danced to African music and were all sweating by the end of the night!

On the last day, we were sad to acknowledge that we would soon say

goodbye to each other. The friendship during the weekend was so sweet and the lessons we learnt are so valuable. We now realise that everyone can be a change maker – you don't need a special qualification. And the result will come: as I am, so is my country and the world! It comes down to the spirit of Initiatives of Change, to be the change you want to see in the world.



Gwendoline in group discussion.
Credit: Gabriella Harsanti



Gatluak (speaking) and Ayman (on right).
Credit: Gabriella Harsanti

Steps on a 'road to peace'

What things really matter in life? Not an easy question but precisely the one which IofC Australia aimed at opening up for 20 participants at Life Matters Workshop in Melbourne. Writer Luda Kedova asked three of them for their impressions. They were: Gatluak Puok Puoch, a South Sudanese community leader in Dandenong, VIC, Gwendoline Raban, an environmental scientist/consultant also living in Melbourne, and Ayman Qwaider a Palestinian academic and activist who joined the program from Perth:

Their reasons for the participation were similar despite differences in their backgrounds, past experiences and present-day occupations. Gwendoline said that she 'wanted to learn how to become a change-maker, how to transform inner reflections into concrete actions'. For Gatluak it was 'to start a journey into finding my place in life, understanding in what areas I am gifted, to seek wisdom, to learn how change can be brought unto oneself'. Ayman was eager for 'the opportunity to connect with other people, to look into myself seeing my strong sides and limitations, and learning how to proceed with change-making decisions.'

What was also shared is how 'close and connected we have become in the group' (Gwendoline), how much 'we have learned from others' (Gatluak) and 'how strongly I was reminded that we all, irrespective of money, religion, skin colour and ethnicity, belong to one community of just people' (Ayman).

The workshop was also the time

of personal story-telling, sharing, self-reflection and most importantly understanding other people better. As Gatluak put it, 'I reflected on what I had done wrongly in the past and have learned how to start to reconstruct my relationships with those with whom I differ... and that is the road to peace'.

A very important thing for Ayman was the realisation that without 'active listening' no meaningful dialogue could really be started. 'Active listening presupposes full concentration on what is being said and involves listening with all senses; it also teaches us patience, invokes a conscious decision to understand the message of the speaker. This is where mutual comprehension is reached.'

Gwendoline's personal 'discovery' was learning of ways how 'her dreams of change can be transformed into a concrete vision and what tools can be used to bring this vision to life'.

The Workshop has also enabled the participants to make a plan of future action and highlighted the

first steps to take. Gatluak is meeting with people from his community to share his experience and continue the dialogue on building peace in South Sudan. For Ayman (whose research and work supports traumatised children in Gaza) the first practical step will be deep reflection and the growing belief in the possibility of change in Palestine and also the belief that he is able to contribute strongly to this change. Gwendoline intends to expand IofC methods and dialogues to her area of environmental sustainability, paying particular emphasis on educating young people and sharing knowledge from the Workshop.

So what really matters in life? Three mature people from three different countries with successful careers and meaningful lives seem to agree: we reflect on ourselves, we are never satisfied with what is achieved, we listen to others, we understand what they saying, we share, we connect and, in this way, we help to bring about the change.

Sprouting partnership with Oaktree

IofC Australia began a new relationship with the Oaktree Foundation mid to late last year. Kirsty Argento reports:

Oaktree's main goal is to make poverty history. With an age cap of 25 and over 150,000 members, it is Australia's largest youth-run organisation. Since 2006 they have worked in and partnered with organisations in countries such as South Africa, Ghana, East Timor, Cambodia, PNG, India, Myanmar, the Philippines. Their work is continually expanding.

In December last year we were invited to run an IofC workshop - 'Map of the World' - to 15 of their department heads, with the idea if they found it useful, the workshop would be incorporated into their two-day trainings for teams before going to work in-country with partner organisations.

The workshop, designed and developed for the Caux Peace and Leadership Program (formerly Caux Interns Program) helps participants understand the internal mechanisms by which people perceive and understand the world, which informs the way they engage and act in the world and what they experience in the world. It explores how our internal diversity impacts our external world. The workshop aims to enable people to better understand

themselves, their internal workings, and to better understand others in order to work together cohesively as a strong team, or to provide leadership in different contexts.

We were invited back in January to hold the workshop for a team of six people about to head to Myanmar for eight days. This team had not worked together before. The workshop proved valuable for them to get to know each other, their working styles, their triggers, perceptions and expectations, and teaching the value of daily quiet reflection and sharing as a group to overcome any issues that may arise.

Oaktree often has representatives from their overseas partnerships coming to Melbourne for collaboration, skill-sharing and the cultural experience. Armagh is delighted to now be hosting their first visitors this year in April.

Neeru Malhotra works as the Programme Coordinator on Pravah's Youth Intervention team and has skills in program design and implementation, and youth engagement. She has also been the primary contact for Oaktree's partnership with Pravah for the past two years.

From Australia to the world's conflict zones

On 13 February nine years ago, Kevin Rudd made a historic apology on his first day as Prime Minister in the new Parliament. The Apology came after a decade of campaigning for it by the National Sorry Day movement.

It was a campaign which aimed to shift hearts and minds, not blaming or vilifying people but focusing on moral issues and appealing to humanity. It was founded, most of all, on the stories of the 'Stolen Generation' of Aboriginal children.

Some from IofC Australia were actively involved. Among them, John Bond was secretary of the National Sorry Day Committee. John, who

is presently visiting Australia with his wife, Mary Lean, is now based in Oxford, UK. For the last eight years he has been a coordinator of the 'Just Governance for Human Security' forums in Caux, Switzerland. With his former Sorry Day colleagues in several Australian cities, he has told of his work for reconciliation and justice among many people from conflict situations who have come to

Caux - from situations like Lebanon, Armenia-Turkey, Ukraine and the Sahel (in sub-Sahara Africa). The 2016 Just Governance conference focused on six 'windows on human security': Healing memory, sustainable living, care for refugees, food security, inclusive economics and just governance. A full report is available at www.caux.ch/jg-2016

Caux Forum 2017



Under the theme 'Developing human potential for global change', the 2017 summer programs in Caux, Switzerland, have been announced, including the dialogues and conferences listed below. Training programs are also scheduled.

Registration is open at www.caux.ch/ More details through the links below:

30 June	Official Opening
29 June - 2 July	Ethical Leadership in Business
4 - 9 July	Just Governance for Human Security
11 - 15 July	Caux Dialogue on Land and Security
17 - 21 July	Addressing Europe's Unfinished Business
23 - 26 July	Towards an Inclusive Peace
29 July - 4 August	Children as Actors for Transforming Society

Bringing 'a different tone to the public discourse'

While other news dominates the headlines, communities across the America came together on 17 January to celebrate a National Day of Healing. Events and proclamations took place in 19 cities, from Washington to Los Angeles, Selma to Detroit.

In Richmond, Virginia, IofC's Hope in the Cities program joined with three other organisations to hold an interfaith gathering 'to bring a different tone to the public discourse'. They committed to these 10 steps:

1. Talk with your neighbour; or someone of a different racial, religious, or political background.
2. Refrain from re-posting partisan social media posts.
3. Recognise your own biases – we all have them!
4. Focus on what is right rather than who is right.
5. Resist stereotyping and look for the good in each person.
6. Learn about our racial history... visit the museums that tell the story.
7. Read a book about the legacy of racism in this country.
8. Start a small dialogue group in your neighbourhood, organisation or workplace, and honour the life story that each person brings.
9. Analyse the racial diversity within your neighbourhood, workplace, school, house of worship... and initiate conversations about where and why there might be lack of inclusion.
10. Imagine what a healed metropolitan community would look like and commit personally to work for racial healing and equity...

For more, see <http://us.iofc.org/national-day-healing-0>

The Promise of Diversity

A book by this title tells the story of Jerzy Zubrzycki, 'the father of Australian multiculturalism'. In April it will be released in Krakow, Poland, translated into Polish and with a foreword by Jan Pakulski, Professor of Sociology at the University of Tasmania. This review of the English edition was contributed by Luda Kedova:

As recently as 70 years ago, there were only about seven million people in Australia, and the only migrants were mostly of Anglo-Celtic descent. According to the most recent data, 24,287,300 people live in Australia and approximately 29 percent are overseas-born residents. We now live in a multicultural Australia. On a Friday night we may find it difficult to decide whether we feel like Indian, Chinese, or Italian cooking.

This book tells an amazing story of how this profound transformation came to be, in part thanks to the untiring efforts of Professor Jerzy Zubrzycki, AO CBE.

Zubrzycki was born in Poland, during the WW II served with distinction in the Polish Army, the Polish underground and with Britain's Special Operations Executive. He arrived in Australia as a research fellow in sociology at ANU in 1955. It was a time of radical changes in the country's immigration policies after the Government had embarked on a huge immigration program with 900,000 people coming from Europe between 1945 and 1954.

Zubrzycki's work on the

demography and sociology of post-war immigration was of immediate relevance. At that time the government's policy was the so-called 'complete assimilation' into an 'Australian way of life', to which Zubrzycki responded: 'There is no equality of opportunity for non-British migrants. I am determined to promote the idea that people coming to Australia should be given recognition of their qualifications, should be able to maintain their differences and yet get along.'

From here it was a short step to the development of a radically new concept of 'cultural pluralism', or multiculturalism, as we know it today. This was introduced by a 'politically-involved minority' of academics, with Zubrzycki leading the way. The bureaucracy responded slowly but by 1964 the phrase 'mixing pot' began to replace 'melting pot'. The change in attitudes was slow but Zubrzycki found a lot of support from public service and political figures, including Malcolm Fraser, under whose premiership Australia saw the adoption of multiculturalism as national policy. With the strong

government support, public opinion shifted and by 1987 more than 100,000 Vietnamese, Laotians and Cambodians had come to Australia.

There have been some serious setbacks for multiculturalism along the way... But that didn't stop Zubrzycki. He was still out there, writing articles, addressing university courses, and doing all he could to offer an alternative to xenophobia. 'As in all reforming societies, the key to eventual acceptance lies in education. The old dogs in the population may not be able to learn new tricks. But the youngsters can. Everything will depend on the spirit in which the coming generations are raised.'

When Zubrzycki died in Canberra in May 2009, newspapers described him as the 'father of Australian multiculturalism'. He had an amazing life, had faced many challenges but his biggest was to take his sociological wisdom and turn it into political reality. Which he did.

'The Promise of Diversity', by John Williams and John Bond, available from IofC Australia at A\$15 plus p&sp.

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