

EDGES

N E W P L A N E T A R Y P A T T E R N S

Eight Core Values

ICA Canada has named eight core values for its work, one of which is:

“We value a comprehensive perspective that is history-long and world-wide that requires us to work with the whole system in any situation.”

Comprehensive you say? History-long? World-wide? Whole system? What do these words mean to you? What do they mean to ICA Canada? How might they be useful? How does such a value influence your life?

In this issue of *Edges* we let two people discuss these questions: , an archaeologist and an ICA Associate. And as the New Year rolls in we will be inviting reflections on all eight of ICA Canada’s core values. For the next eight issues, we will highlight one value per issue by inviting people of different perspectives to write on what that value means to them. Hopefully this will re-illuminate for ICA Canada the depth of these values for us in all aspects of our lives.

We challenge you to join us in this self-reflection and ask yourself the following:

- What has been your experience with this value or any aspect of it?
- What role does it play in your work?
- Where are you challenged by this value?
- Where has it inspired you?
- Where and when have you experienced being on the edge with this value?

Eight Core Values

We are also looking for contributors for the next two editions, focusing on the next two values:

1. We value placing energy where it will make the most difference.
2. We value the collaborative approach as a means to making a difference.

If you would like to reflect on either of these values in an *Edges* article, please email leaht@yorku.ca with the subject heading, “*Edges* Contribution”.

We hope you enjoy this new direction for *Edges*.

Happy New Year,
The *Edges* Team

Listening to the Youth

EOWYNNE FEENEY

Dec. 18: This past weekend marked the beginning of the Georgina Youth Mentorship (GYM) project. The GYM project is one of many initiatives to come out of the Youth as Facilitative Leaders (YFL) program at ICA-Canada. The YFL program was designed to enable youth to play a more meaningful role in planning and developing their communities, by providing them with training in ICA ToP[®] facilitation methods.

Every day I see the need for this program more and more, as youth communicate that they aren't being heard or valued in their community. The youth in Georgina are no exception. This past weekend the young people being trained expressed a need to be heard and have a stake in developing their community. On an evaluation form they were asked to name a high point for them in the weekend's workshop. More than one wrote, “Feeling like I was being

heard” or “When I could give my own opinion”, indicating that they often don't feel heard or able to share their opinions. There were other examples of this as well.

The youth in Georgina were also concerned with the amount of youth violence in their community. The other day I met a bright young woman who has started an abuse and violence prevention program in her high school. I asked her why she thinks young people are committing acts of violence, and she said, “I don't think any of them are being listened to, and for some violence is the only way they know how to express themselves”.

Much unrest results when people don't feel heard, and youth are no exception. The number of young people in the world has never been higher. In Africa the percentage of youth ranges from 36-55% of the population, depending on the country. In Georgina and around the world, youth

The Value of a Comprehensive Perspective

JONELSON

Value the comprehensive perspective that is world wide and history long that requires us to work with the whole system in any situation.

This value statement reminds me of something by the Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore: “*We cross the infinite with every step, and encounter the eternal with every second.*”

It also reminds me of the phrase “WIIFM”, or “What's in it for me?” — a phrase so common it has its own acronym. That narrow mindset which only looks for immediate, personal benefit is rampant in our society. It leads to unethical business behaviour where lying and cheating are expected, to people abandoning jobs and marriages because “it just doesn't work for me right now”, to daily work being just about making money, to cocooning to shut out an uncomfortable world. It leads to making personal choices that have short-term benefit but long term negative consequences, like using handy disposable plastic grocery bags time will not decay.

An antidote? Asking the questions, “What are the global and historical im-

plications of this action? Who does it affect? What ripples will jostle my friends, my community or my nation? What is the impact my action will have in 100 years?” These are uncomfortable questions. But if asked, they give us a sense of connection and responsibility. They remind us that our daily choices have the power, with others, to impact change on a global scale.

Peter Senge, Meg Wheatley, David Bohm, Peter Russell, many aboriginal leaders—even Al Gore—speak to us about the complex interrelated systems we are a part of in the universe, where everything we do affects others in ways we can't even imagine. The keen awareness of the cosmic impact of every action can be an overwhelming sense of power and responsibility. Our immediate response may be to avoid acting at all, or to reduce our consciousness to the immediate moment and place.

So this value catalyzed ICA to create approaches, methods, and tools to help us strategically narrow our focus within a comprehensive context. The Historical Scan, or “Wall of Wonder”, creates a consciousness of the historical trends that affect us, and that we respond to. The Social Process

Triangles challenge us to look at human group processes in the most comprehensive way possible, and focus our strategies to have the largest possible impact. The Social Principles of our community development approach remind us to work with “all the people” and “all the problems”, to address the “depth human problem”, and focus all of that within a “delimited geographic area” so that we can see the impact of a comprehensive local focus. The Global Gridding process relates each local community to the whole planet in a widening circle of identity and belonging. The Comprehensiveness Screen is a personal tool which allows us to record all the things that occupy our thought and energy, and focus attention on the things that need to make a difference.

I find that this value catalyzes both a sense of belonging and responsibility for me. It reminds me that my daily choices have the power, with others, to make positive change on a global scale. ❖

Jo Nelson facilitates comprehensive societal change through her work with ICA Associates, Inc. She has a very long history with ICA world-wide. She can be reached at jnelson@ica-associates.ca

ICA CANADA BOARD MEMBER PROFILES

are taking a lead in addressing issues in their community. It is critical that we listen and support them.

A youth group in the Keta, which is the Southern Volta Region of Ghana, has been tackling issues from erosion (by planting trees) to HIV/AIDS (by conducting prevention sessions). But they need training and funds. Here, the youth spoke and we listened. ICA Canada is currently exploring a partnership with ICA Ghana to design a YFL program entitled “Listen to the Youth”, to help groups like the one in Keta.

Listening is often seen as a passive action. But as facilitators we all know it is actually one of the most active things we can do. The youth are the future of our global community, and they are expressing themselves with their voices, their work, and even with their violence. It is up to us to LISTEN so we can hear what is being said.

“History-long” is a looooong time

ANDY SCHOENHOFER

Of course that’s what we want: a true “world view” where we see the entirety of human history affecting our thinking whenever we do anything. I want to fit my actions here in my small part of this country into the vast puzzle of humanity that we’re living with right now. As well, I want my actions to fit into the sweep of human history from its bright beginnings in a green forest many tens of thousands of years ago, to its grey concrete one today.

A barrier to this kind of reflection is simply the length of human history. Most of us have difficulty thinking of our grandmother’s childhood and how she lived her life. When you talk to her you feel like she’s telling tales of the dim past of history, when fantastic things happened—she sailed across the ocean in a boat! It’s a story out of legend, the exotic past. But our cities with their roads and tall buildings made of glass and steel are only a few lifetimes old; our common memory is very new.

Archaeologists have to think of everything they find in the opposite way. In their search for the meaning of a few rocks or stains in the ground, they have to try to put themselves into the mind of the per-

son that used that very same piece of rock thousands of years ago. This is not easy, since the world was different in the past, in many more ways than just technologically—even ideas were different. I show a site visitor a small stone tool, and am often greeted with a shrug. So what? Just some old thing that got in the way of building a subdivision? Well, what could it have been? A knife, spear point, or something else? Had it been painted at one time? What colour? Why is it here, on this slight slope of a hill facing west? What season was it when it landed here? Was it lost, thrown, or buried? Did it have special powers? Was the owner proud of it?

Virginia Varley
Chair

JOHN SMITH

John Smith has worked for 15 years for the City of Toronto in Parks, Forestry and Recreation. In his career with the city he has developed recreation initiatives, programs, and special events for children, youth, and adults. He has worked on inter-sectoral as well as inter-divisional community committees that focus on youth leadership and development strategies. He has facilitated countless workshops with youth, recreation staff, and community groups.

John has recently been promoted to the position of Community Development Officer for the Social Development, Finance, and Administration Division of the City of Toronto. He will now focus his skills on community capacity-building, organizational development, and youth development strategies for one of the city’s 13 priority neighbourhoods.

John is currently enrolled as a part-time student at York University and plans to complete a Masters in Sociology. He enjoys playing the guitar and the djembe drum. He looks forward to working with the ICA Board as a contributor to youth initiatives and community engagement.

It seems like a dive into minutiae, but to understand the person who lived there, you have to know why he made and used that object in that place, in that way. If you understand that, you have gone some

VIKASH JAIN

Vikash is an investment manager with Northwater Capital Management in Toronto. However, some of you may remember him from back in 1993 when he worked as a marketing manager for ICA Canada. After a couple of years with ICA, Vikash left to pursue his first career as a journalist. He worked for CBC Radio News in Toronto and then later as a freelancer in Thailand and India. In Singapore, Vikash specialized in the regional oil industry and oil markets.

Through this experience, Vikash found his interests sliding more towards financial markets and investing. He enrolled in the National University of Singapore for a Masters in Finance and in the CFA programme. Eventually, that brought him back to Canada and to Northwater, where he has worked since 2001.

Vikash lives in Etobicoke with his wife, Sonali Verma, who is also a former journalist, and a recent candidate for Toronto City Council. They have two boys, Suryakant (3) and Amitav Raj (1).

As Board members, we are committed to the Mission of ICA Canada which reads:

The Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs exists to develop the capacity of all people to contribute to positive social change through research, education, development projects and publishing.

We look forward to Vikash’s special contribution to this aim, and we greatly appreciate his involvement in ICA Canada’s development.

way to understanding his society. The tool maker was led to making that particular tool because of many more reasons than its shape: economic, social, aesthetic, emotional. He had his entire life history pointing to that spear point.

Since that tool was made, humans have added to their store of experience, culminating in what we are doing today. Can we see that in our own actions, though? If we want to think “history-long”, we have to constantly imagine that history, and bring it into ourselves. We have to be able to bring the past with us to the present; to examine our thoughts or actions, and measure them against our entire history. Is our imagination strong enough?

Andy Schoenhofer is a former archaeologist and journalist now working at the Ontario Ministry of Culture.

Listen to the Drumming

ICA Canada's Listen to the Drumming has sent a team of four volunteer facilitators to Kenya to support a locally-driven plan to provide HIV/AIDS testing, education, and care to all 6500 residents of the rural community, Il Ngwesi. They have assisted in conducting a baseline survey of all households to assess current health issues and HIV/AIDS awareness, facilitated strategic planning, and developed action plans for the next six months. ICA Canada is working to fundraise for this effort--we need the support of our membership!

AGM

The AGM 2007 Committee is planning the event for April 14. Stay tuned for details and mark your calendars. ICA Annual General Meetings are always great opportunities to connect with like-minded individuals and personally contribute to our mission of "developing the capacity of all people to contribute to positive social change".

Membership

The Membership Task Force put in place a series of four nights focussing on the concerns of some of the "thinkers" of our day. Video presentations provided the launching pad for conversation. The series was well attended and evoked positive provocative thought.

Youth as Facilitative Leaders (YFL)

The Georgina Youth Mentorship project is in full swing. We have begun training a group of youth in the Georgina area to become YFL trainers. In the spring, they will start delivering workshops on ToP[®] methods to their peers.

Become an Individual Member of ICA Canada

Individual members form a valuable part of our network and at ICA Canada we depend upon and deeply appreciate your support. As an Individual Member, you will be connected to ICA activities all over the world. You will receive a copy of our quarterly newsletter *Edges* and you will be a part of a great group of people who are committed to social responsibility in Canada and elsewhere. To become an Individual Member, please fill in the form below and send it to 655 Queen St. E. Toronto ON M4M 1G4 or simply reply by e-mail to membership@icacan.ca

FEES: *individual* — \$50.00; *couples* — \$75.00; *youth* — \$20.00; *corporations* — \$100.00

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I enclose my payment for \$ _____ I enclose a cheque for \$ _____

(We no longer accept payment by charge cards.)

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Mission Statement: ICA Canada

ICA Canada exists to develop the capacity of all people to contribute to positive social change through *research, publishing, education and social change projects* that demonstrate positive social change.

Statement of Purpose for Edges

Edges highlights new cultural patterns and fresh approaches to participation and social change.

The opinions in *Edges* articles do not necessarily represent the policies or views of ICA Canada.

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