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EDGES

NEW PLANETARY PATTERNS

Working to make a difference:
we value the human factor



ICA
CANADA

Making A Difference:

A Note from the Editor

Happy New Year everyone!

In this edition of *Edges: New Planetary Patterns*, we continue to explore stories that give meaning to the Canadian Institute of Cultural Affairs' eight values. We embark on a journey to delve into our fourth value, *"in working to make a difference, we value the human factor"*.

Travel with us around the world! Start in the Maasai community of Il Ngwesi, Kenya and learn about their remarkably successful HIV/AIDS intervention project; turn the page and find yourself back in Toronto at one of ICA Canada's LISTEN TO THE DRUMMING programs' awareness and fundraising events that help make projects like that of Il Ngwesi's possible; spill some coffee on the story of village development projects in India; and run your fingers carefully over Murambi, a genocide memorial in the village of Gikongoro, Rwanda. Somewhere between the places, the people, and the storytellers who have brought their words to us, discover what holds all of us in common in working to make a difference, the human factor.

Leah Taylor
Editor

Leah Taylor is the Chair of the Edges Committee and the director of ICA Canada's Youth as Facilitative Leaders program. Interested in writing an article for Edges? Contact Leah at ltaylor@icacan.cavav



The Human Factor

BILL STAPLES

As a facilitator I work with different groups of people all the time—nurses one week, car dealers another, government directors a third, and then neighbourhood residents a fourth. Sometimes I get to meet staff or past staff of ICA from Canada, U.S. or overseas whom I have not seen for a decade or even more. I immediately sense a connection that goes beyond what might seem reasonable given the lapse of time. I meet new younger staff or volunteers with ICA in Canada or from overseas, and hope that they will be able to experience that same type of connection ten years from now.

In working to make a difference, we value the human factor—an intangibility that goes with us and marks us. For me, part of that intangibility is a sense that I am in over my head. But since everyone else is too, I can move ahead. Another part of the intangibility is that I can never really know enough. But as long as I am ready to live with and work through the consequences, that is all I can expect of myself and others. Another part is, just when I get a project or initiative the way I want it, the human factor plunges me and everyone else into greater demands than we previously recognized. And finally just when we are knee deep in alligators, the floodgates open, everything is renewed, and we enjoy the ride down the sluice.


What is the human factor? While historians and social scientists may say “human beings are the only ones to do this ...or that,” the human factor is really four complementary capacities which are shared by humanity. One is the capacity

to contemplate the mystery of the universe and of life. Another is the capacity for self-awareness that makes us free to make new decisions and choices at every point in life. The third is the compassion and love which recognizes no barriers and reaches out in care to all other things. And the fourth is the tranquility experienced at times of great expenditure, tragedy or hope, that gives us a sense that life is unfolding the way it should.

In the late seventies when I was involved in village development in India, I liked to watch the water buffaloes. You can stop within feet of these two thousand pound, eerily still creatures, upon whom people depend so much, and look into their enormous brown eyes looking into yours. What thoughts are there? What mental processes are going on? It is an otherworldly experience—the same type as watching through a window in Rankin Inlet as a two day blizzard howls outside.

There is a land of mystery, another world in the midst of this world just waiting for us to sense its presence. It is as ethereal as a spider's shadow moving slowly across the wall. It is as real as an army marching in perfect unison on parade. It is as personal and unfathomable as that vibrant dream you struggle to remember as you wake up. This land of mystery can be entered into in the blink of an eye, and you can stay as long as you want. But there are dangers if you try to live in this constant state of awe. This mystery serves to remind you that as a human being you are often just moments from oblivion. It is a wakeup call to the real world around you. This land of mystery is the real land, and you are just a visitor.

*There is a land of mystery, another world in the midst of this world
just waiting for us to sense its presence.*



An event occurred to me recently in an inner city area. I was there on two trips working with about 20 folks who wanted to create a better neighbourhood. Most of these people had HIV/Aids or HepC, or had been previously incarcerated, or had drug or alcohol dependencies, or were LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender). Most of them came from different cultures than me. Being a white, western, late-middle-aged male I was out of my depth. But someone had told these people that I had something to offer, so they spent time with me. One fellow in particular, whom everyone respected for his seriousness and toughness, had three additional barriers; homelessness, narcolepsy, and illiteracy. Standing together during a break one afternoon, and drinking pink juice from paper cups, he told me that the reason he was doing this community work was because he had a son and daughter. They were at the age that they needed a role model, so he decided he was going to try to become that person they needed. I found myself standing in the presence of personal integrity that was overwhelming. I was totally caught up in my consciousness of his decision, the absurdity of it all, and the implications it had for me and my own life. A wild river of consciousness had caught me in its swirls and I was nearly swept away. It almost made me weep, and it still does just thinking about him.

Friends of mine, a couple who worked in the villages of India at the same time as me started a business about two decades ago. Later they sold it, and have few financial worries as far as I know.

But rather than live a life of luxury which they could easily do, they have decided to take on an audacious enterprise related to improving health care in Africa. They regularly travel to Africa and get other volunteers to go with them. I am very proud of these people, and see them working as hard as they ever have.

Now, John, (his let's-pretend name) has an irritating habit. When he sees me he often says, "Hi Bill. How are you? You're looking great! When are you going to Africa?"

I lead a pretty full life, and I help out with a number of important causes. I might resent John's question, but I can't escape it. "When am I going to Africa?" The question looms like a mountain before me. Going to Africa is not a priority for me, but the slopes of that mountain of care are just there, waiting for me to start walking. "When am I going to Africa?"

At ICA, we value those mountains of care that lie before us, whether we decide to take the journey or not. The simple fact of being human confronts us every day with new requests. We see people in need, and we are drawn to them. We are drawn to them just as surely as we feel the need to protect ourselves from the demand they place on us.

Almost two years ago, Brian Stanfield, the founder of *Edges*, died in Australia. His wife Jeanette brought some of his ashes back to Canada, and a group of us stood on a beach in Toronto where he liked to bicycle and watched the wind carry the ashes. We all stood silent in a moment of reverence for one who had had an impact on our lives. Then we all took stones and skipped them on the

water like he used to do, and reveled in a few moments of joyous, childlike abandon. This is part of what we value in the human condition — the ability to engage in deep joy and deep sorrow at the same time.

How can it be that at the moment of difficulty and intense focus, like when I am standing in front of a hundred anxious or perturbed people in a facilitation event, that I can also be glad to be alive and connected with the whole world? Sometimes it doesn't matter what sort of storms and waves are lashing about on the waters; I experience myself living far beneath the surface in a sea of tranquility that sustains and nurtures me. What is more, I realize that this is true for every other human being. This is part of the human factor that we treasure. People do not need to be protected from the difficulties of living. They need to be fully engaged in challenges to the point that they can experience the tranquility at the core of life.

We suddenly experience the unbearable lightness of our being.

We know the potential of others because we know it in ourselves.

We gaze with compassion on the joy and pain of the other.

Without knowing how, we undergo a transformation and the situation changes with us. ❖

Bill Staples was a long-time employee of ICA Canada and is a principal of ICA Associates Inc. He facilitates conferences, strategic plans and special task forces for government and for the health sector. He is currently involved in neighbourhood community development training for the United Way, and lives with his wife Ilona in Toronto.

Reflections on the Human Factor in Rwanda

STEPHANIE POPE

Photos by Stephanie Pope



MURAMBI GENOCIDE MEMORIAL IN GIKONGORO, RWANDA

I am at the Toronto airport, going through the gauntlet of security and U.S. customs that will hopefully allow me to get on the first flight of my journey, to Washington D.C. “Where are you going?” the customs agent asks, studying my passport. Rwanda, I say, for six months. “What are you going to be doing there?” I explain that I am doing a Netcorps internship funded by the Canadian International Development Agency through the Canadian Society for International Health. I am working for an HIV/AIDS research and education unit at the National University of Rwanda. The customs agent studies me now. “What is the first thing you are going to buy when you arrive?” Surprised by the question, I repeat it aloud, trying to think of an answer. “I’ll tell you what you are going to buy,” he says. “An AK-47.” I laugh uneasily. “Don’t bring it back here of

I once read that freedom always comes from within constraints. When every social norm is torn apart, when the fabric of society is violated, humans form new kinds of social relations. When you hit rock bottom, the only place to go is up.

course, but make sure it’s the first thing you buy.” I smile and tell him I will, for sure. He looks at me like I’m crazy, shakes his head and adds, “Be careful out there”.

What comes to mind when we in the West think of Rwanda? I would suggest a few words: Genocide, Poverty, War. Of course, Rwanda encompasses these words, in its history and its present, but

there are also many other relevant words. This issue’s theme is “*in working to make a difference, we value the human factor.*” What is “the human factor” and why does ICA value it? To discuss this theme, I reflect on my internship experience thus far and bring you other words from Rwanda: words that invoke the human factor.

Hate/Prejudice/Fear

A month into my stay I visit Murambi, a genocide memorial in the village of Gikongoro. Fifty thousand people fleeing violence were assembled there, in a school, and told that they would be protected. They waited for a terrifying week, fending off attacks, then the genocidaires overwhelmed them and butchered them all. Their bodies were thrown in mass graves. The man who shows me around is one of the few survivors. He

lost his wife and five children. He has a visible dent in his head from a bullet that was lodged there, and he pulls up his pant leg to show me another large scar.

He leads us through many small rooms. Each one contains low platforms upon which are laid out rows of bodies, exhumed from the graves and put on display. They are basically just skeletons with a thin layer of flesh, totally white due to the lime that has been used to preserve them. Some wear the tattered remains of underwear or a dress. There is a whole room just of children. It smells horrible. I hold my breath and look around trying to picture these bodies as living, breathing, terrified human beings. A toddler, quite alive and unconcerned, watches me from the door. I don't feel as shocked or as sick as I expected; I find it difficult to fathom that these bodies were once like her.

Fifty thousand people! Can I conceptualize this number? The scale of the horror is alienating. "Parlez-vous français?" the curator of the site asks me as we walk back to the main building. Yes, I do. "D'où venez vous?" Canada. «Et votre explication pour ça est quoi?» What is my explanation? Is there an explanation? If there is I certainly don't have it. He nods. I wonder if other tourists have the nerve to suggest one when he asks.

A lot of people that have spoken to me about the genocide have referred to people acting "like animals", but it seems to me that genocide is a distinctly human activity. Maybe when the curator asked me for my explanation, "the human factor" should have been my response.

Change/Hope/Culture

Of course, humans are also capable of great acts of love, hope, bravery, and all of those qualities we look upon positively. After all, this genocide survivor faces his past every day, and with quiet strength guides visitors to bear witness to the horror – in the hope that it will not happen again. He tells us he has remarried and has two children. Other Rwandans are doing the same thing everywhere, showing the world what hope means. It is, no doubt, extraordinary, but it is also simply the human factor at work – life must go on.

My neighbours – four young guys, educated with good jobs – frequently invite me over. We watch TV, American



BUTARE, RWANDA

movies in French, and music videos of Bob Marley and East African hip hop. I eat with them – cassava bread, rice from Tanzania, beef in sauce, beans, potatoes. The guys enjoy telling me about Rwandan culture. Once they explain to me that it used to be a taboo for men to eat. Food was for women and children, beer for men. Men would eat their meals separately from their families, perhaps after their children were asleep. I laugh; I love learning these cultural quirks and this one is particularly interesting. I note that these men have no problem eating. Later, the other roommate arrives home from work and I explain what the guys told me. He scoffs. "No, it's not like that. That is not modern culture here. Since the genocide, people are somehow free."

I once read that freedom always comes from within constraints. When every social norm is torn apart, when the fabric of society is violated, humans form new kinds of social relations. When you hit rock bottom, the only place to go is up.

Conflict/Obstacles/Cooperation

I attend a meeting of an association of women who have learned the art of basket making in Rwanda's traditional style, under sponsorship from the Medical Students Association of Rwanda. The women have successfully created bas-

kets which will now be sold, hopefully generating some income for them. As I sit at the front of the room with the organizers, a medical student explains to me that most of the women have been surviving by working in the sex trade, and many of them have tested positive for HIV. They sit in rows on the benches facing us in their colorful flowing clothes, many of them with babies in their laps or strapped to their backs. It's easy to be cynical; a little basket-weaving project is certainly not going to change their lives drastically. But they have invested their time, as well as a small amount of their own money to learn this new skill. They are proud of what they have accomplished. Ambrose uses my camera to take photos of the event. One of the organizers, a woman from the school of public health, makes a speech about HIV/AIDS and the importance of getting tested and using protection.

At the close of the meeting, some of the women begin asking questions of the organizers and there seems to be a polite but pointed disagreement. As we leave the building the medical student explains to me that the women were arguing, both amongst themselves and with the organizers, about how much money they would all need to put into the project. This is a crucial question for those with little to spare and a lot to risk.



WOMEN'S BASKET WEAVING PROJECT IN BUTARE, RWANDA

Disagreement about what direction to take: different stakes, different interests. This is characteristic of the human factor and is directly relevant to facilitated learning. Any efforts at cooperation for change must recognize that in the end, none of us can see the whole picture. We are all constrained by our own subjectivity. But, didn't I already say, this is where freedom comes from? The partiality of our experiences and our knowledge must be viewed as our strength. Our subjectivity is not our weakness; it is all we have. Successful cooperation for change must involve this recognition.

Joy/Dynamic/Influence

I watch the 100th birthday celebrations of the capital city of Kigali on my neighbors' television. The events are taking place at the main stadium and obviously no expense has been spared. The guys are very impressed. East African, South African and Rwandan music artists perform for the crowd. What is most interesting to me is that most people in the crowd sit very stoically, not moving to the music. The camera pans to one girl, maybe 15 years old, who is on her feet, dancing her heart out while her friends watch. One of my neighbors laughs and tells me that this is Rwandan culture; they are very reserved, and it's difficult for foreign artists to understand the lack of reaction when they

perform. But it doesn't mean the people are not appreciative.

The camera continuously returns to focus on this dancing girl. As the evening progresses and more artists take to the stage, her friends begin to join her. Soon there are many people in the crowd dancing, mostly the youth. Eventually, teenagers and preteens begin to jump onto the field of the stadium. More and more of them make the leap, grinning and looking wildly around to see if anyone is going to stop them. No one does. They dance and jump and mosh in front of the stage; this could be any North American concert. The camera pans to President Paul Kagame in the stands. Even he is on his feet, moving to the music. Children and teenagers populate Rwanda, and he leads this youth culture. My new friends seem happy to see people expressing their excitement. They tell me Rwanda is being influenced by other more expressive East African countries as well as the rest of the world, and they like that Rwanda is changing in this way.

Many of the Rwandans I meet speak at least four or five languages, a legacy of both European colonialism in the region, and the fact that many grew up in neighboring countries, as refugees. As the cars from Uganda that populate Rwanda's roads, built for left-side driving, the French Canadian music on the

radio, the American movies on television, and the myriad other cultural influences demonstrate, Rwandan culture is in constant flux.

Justice/Tradition/Struggle

My alarm goes off and I begin to reluctantly get up, but then I remember: it's Wednesday—Gacaca day for the town of Butare. I'm sure it's somehow deeply wrong to enjoy the opportunity to sleep in on the day of the weekly genocide trials, but I'm human too (the human factor—self-centredness?). I don't feel so bad because I know people who stay home or use the opportunity to get some work done. All Rwandans are supposed to be at the trials, helping to move along the massive amounts of justice that must be served upon those still waiting in the country's prisons.

At work, a co-worker shows me photos he took with my camera over the weekend when he visited his family's village. There is a photo of a wooden bed frame, and he explains to me that this was recently retrieved as a result of the Gacaca trials. It's an example of a unique Rwandan tradition applied to a contemporary problem. My co-worker's grandparents were murdered during the genocide and their house was looted. A witness at Gacaca told his family where to find the bed. He tells me it was found in a nearby house, and a woman had been sleeping on it, with no mattress! He laughs at the absurdity of that. I'm happy for him that his family got their bed back, but I think about that woman with no bed. There is still the giant problem of poverty in this country, and no quick way to deliver the justice needed to solve that.

Unpredictability/Universality/Partiality

As I reflect on the human factor and wonder what it is exactly that ICA is getting at, yet more words come to me. For example, the human factor can and often is characterized as "human error." When economists or social theorists make a model for explaining some system which involves people, and then reality fails to measure up to their model, "human error" is the explanation. We people have a tendency to act unpredictably and against what are assumed to be our best interests. So if this is what ICA means, I definitely agree that

the human factor should be valued and encouraged. If humans act as predicted by a model, where is the hope? It negates the very notion of change.

“The human factor” might also refer to some specific universal quality that we humans are thought to share. If this is the case, I appreciate the vagueness of the slogan! In vague terms it’s great to recognize all of our fellow human beings, but the line must be walked carefully – some general statements about humanity can unite us all, while slightly different ones can lead us to assume that some people are not human. That is how genocide is justified.

Finally, I also like how this theme suggests that humans are one factor in the equation of making a difference, rather than the product or the sum. It acknowledges that humans must always be considered in efforts to make change, and that we will always influence the outcome. Equally important, it implies that humans are not the *only* factors to be considered. As I said already, for me, recognizing the human factor involves acknowledging the inevitable partiality of our experiences and our knowledge. To help us all think about what the human factor might mean I have brought you words from Rwanda and my very partial reflections on them, to contribute to a discussion about what ICA values. I leave it to you to decide which of these words, in your experience and with your knowledge, make up the human factor. ❖

Stephanie Pope graduated from York University in June 2007 with a bachelor's degree in Anthropology and International Development Studies. Her first article for Edges was "A Graduating Student's Existential Crisis" in the Spring 2006 issue. She has not solved that crisis yet, but she is currently in Rwanda doing a Netcorps internship funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Canadian Society for International Health. Netcorps internships are focused on information and communication technologies in developing countries. She is an intern of the University of Ottawa's Women's Health Research Unit and her placement is with the National University of Rwanda's University League for AIDS Control.



HIV/AIDS Stories from the Field

Fundraising success for Listen to the Drumming

LIZ DONNERY

On November 13th, 2007, Stephanie Nolen, *The Globe and Mail* correspondent and author of *28: Stories of AIDS in Africa*, gave a special presentation on her book to ICA Canada supporters. The event, HIV/AIDS Stories from the Field, which was held in the beautiful St. Paul's Bloor Street Church was a fundraiser for ICA Canada's Listen to the Drumming campaign. This campaign supports comprehensive, community-based HIV/AIDS programs in 10 African nations. The evening was a monumental success with over 500 people in attendance and \$17,000 raised in support of HIV/AIDS programs in Africa. In addition to Stephanie's presentation, a panel of experts spoke about issues related to HIV/AIDS. This panel included: Anurita Bains, former assistant to Stephen Lewis, Dr. Philip Berger, chair of St. Michael's Hospital Family and Community Medicine Department and John Patterson, community development specialist and director of Listen to the Drumming. Anurita introduced Stephanie and shared of her experience working with Stephen Lewis and Graça Machel-Mandela. Dr. Philip Berger highlighted the uniqueness of ICA Canada's partnership with the Il Ngwesi community in Kenya and provided information on the situation in Lesotho where he worked for 7 months. John Patterson provided key insights into the importance of the work of local people on the ground in the battle against HIV/AIDS.

It was a wonderful and inspiring evening! We are so grateful to our many volunteers and to our sponsors: Steam Whistle, *Now Magazine* and *The Globe and Mail* for making the evening such a success. A special thank you to Northwater Capital Management, KPMG, and Havergal College for sending large groups to the event. ❖

Liz Donnery manages the Listen to the Drumming campaign at ICA Canada. She has worked in Canada and Africa doing HIV/AIDS related work for the past five years. To contact her, please email: ldonnery@icacan.ca

Interview with Saaya Tema Karmushu

HIV/AIDS Intervention in Il Ngwesi, Kenya

INTERVIEW BY DAVID BUWALDA, Toronto, September 19, 2007



Photo by David Buwalda

Saaya Tema Karmushu is 23 years old. He is the project coordinator of the Il Ngwesi HIV/AIDS Intervention, and he is from the neighbourhood of Nadurongoro, in Il Ngwesi, Kenya. Here he answers several questions about his work.

In your community is HIV a major issue?

Yes, it is a major issue because people don't have correct HIV information that they can use to make healthy decisions.

What kind of misinformation was there before the Il Ngwesi HIV Intervention began?

Well, the culture of the Maasai people has always been to live away from towns where people receive information frequently. As a result, for a long time people thought HIV/AIDS is a town disease. They also heard that women are more often infected than men, so some were saying that it is a women's disease only. Some would say that it is not a disease at all — just a way to get people's attention.

How about you? Are you personally very worried about the HIV health of your community?

Very, very worried one year ago, but now I am a bit better, because I know the majority have correct information. One year ago, according to a survey, they didn't have enough or correct HIV info, so it was

a very risky thing. Despite the fact that they are away from towns, away from the highly affected areas, there is a lot of interaction between the people from my community and other communities that wasn't there ten years ago.

Are you also worried about the other Maasai communities of Kenya?

It depends on the geographic position of the community. Some are closer to Nairobi, some are farther from Nairobi. Some are closer to towns, some are not. Most Maasai communities don't have access to the latest info about anything, so HIV/AIDS is a big, big problem to them. Some cultural practices of Maasai are also worrisome such as polygamy and male circumcision, using one knife to circumcise a couple of boys, which can spread HIV.

What led the community of Il Ngwesi to put HIV in their agenda?

I think the leadership put HIV/AIDS-control on a five year strategic plan because they saw how quickly it was becoming a problem. The interaction is increasing between highly affected communities and my community where people don't know much about HIV/AIDS. Many people can quickly be infected.

So, after HIV was put on the five year strategic plan what has the community done to address HIV/AIDS?

The community plan was developed in the year 2003, and in 2006 we established the Il Ngwesi HIV/AIDS Intervention with three main aspects: HIV/AIDS awareness and education, regular voluntary counseling and testing services, and care for the people infected with HIV/AIDS.

What resistance has there been in the community during the Il Ngwesi HIV/AIDS Intervention?

The resistance comes from the traditional way of life of Maasai. When we talk to women, they would refer to HIV/AIDS as an immoral thing and in-

sist that people and families shouldn't discuss it. That is a big obstacle to sharing knowledge, so we have to address it by creating culture-based approaches that reach everybody.

What is your goal in the HIV intervention?

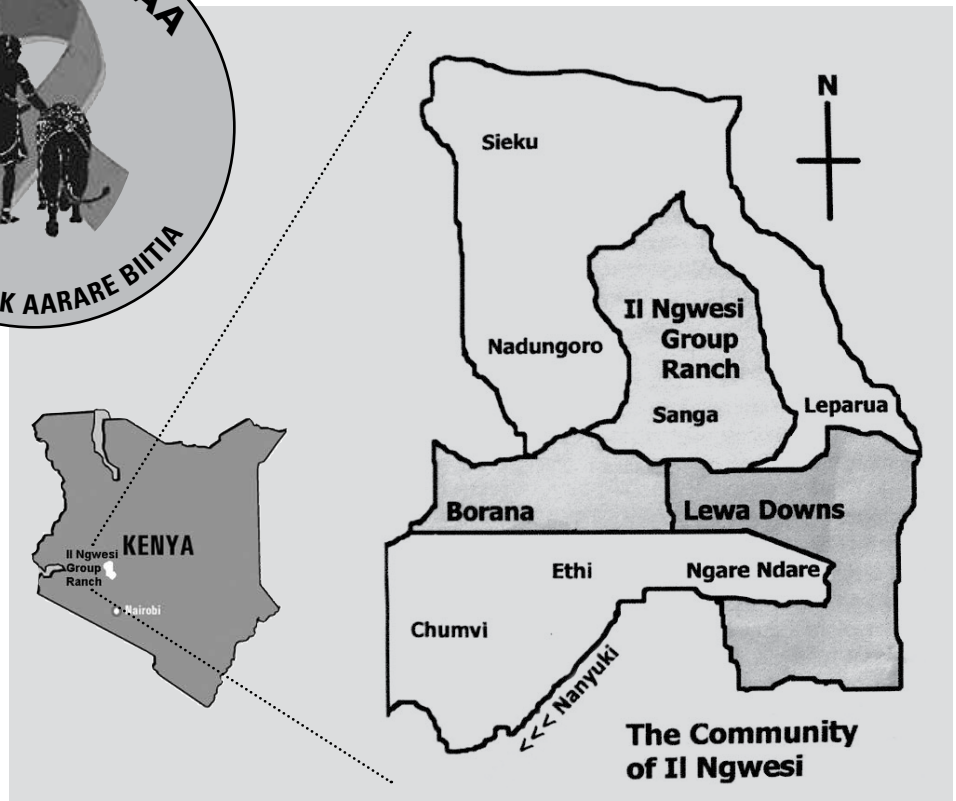
Our big goal is to put HIV/AIDS under control in the community as well as to create a model to address HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

What activities have you pursued in order to achieve this goal?

To make sure that correct HIV information is delivered at the household level; to train a diverse group of community members as peer educators; to train people who deliver home based care to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. So we created a community declaration statement, so that all community members should hear what the community is committing to regarding HIV/AIDS health. It is especially useful for fighting stigma. We also created a community symbol to show what our project is and how it is integrated in Maasai culture. To sustain our project we have partnered with many organizations, our key partner being ICA Canada, and we have worked closely with government. The Kenyan Ministry of Health is itself interested in integrating some of our HIV system into their own.

So what has made it difficult to educate people about HIV/AIDS in your community?

There are a couple of challenges that we faced along the past year, as well as some that we continue facing. That is, there are not sufficient roads to access all parts of the community. There are also other issues that related to HIV/AIDS such as food security. When someone tests positive, they need a special diet and their



needs should be provided for. We also need regular transportation for people to go from Il Ngwesi to the closest government services to get anti-retroviral drugs, or medical services if they are positive. It is quite a challenge.

How will the project proceed in the near future?

We have a team of sixteen people established and supported by Family Health International as well as ICA Canada, and the leadership will continue the work this year and onward, to integrate knowledge of HIV/AIDS in people's lives.

How have other Kenyan communities, institutions, and agencies responded to the project?

They have responded very well, especially the Ministry of Health at the district level. They want us to continue

working with them so that the gap can be sealed between government officials and the communities.

How has the community changed after this one year intensive project?

Of course they have changed a lot now, and they expect big change soon. A clear indicator is that HIV/AIDS can be discussed at the household level, by members without any problems; something that you never imagined that they can do.

Is HIV something that can be controlled in Kenya?

Yes. So long as you have indicators to explain what you mean by being under control. It is not to stop HIV being passed from one person to another, but to control how many people can be infected. If we want to do it, I believe it can happen. ❖



Mobile Voluntary Counseling and Testing in Leparua, IL Ngwesi

May 12, 2007

DAVID BUWALDA

We are squeezed into the back of a land cruiser, maneuvering through the rocky terrain of Il Ngwesi in Northern Kenya. There are thirteen of us inside, four ICA Canada facilitation volunteers, three HIV counselors, four HIV peer educators and a driver, Peter. Packed in with us are three-days of supplies including Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) kits, tents, and food – bins and boxes full of vegetables, condiments and tea. We are going to Leparua, the most distant and driest neighbourhood of Il Ngwesi.

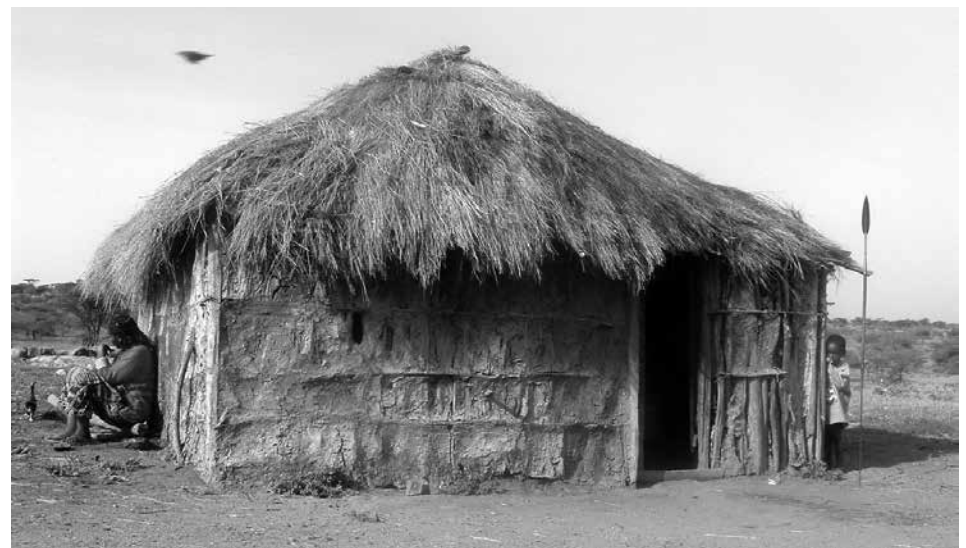
The mood in the truck is elated. The team has been working together for almost a month already and we know what we are doing; we have gotten comfortable with each other. The Maasai on board laugh as the Kenyan HIV counselors mimic some KiMaa (Maasai language) words. The counselors laugh as the Canadians try to speak Swahili. It is easy laughter, unselfconscious, and eases the effect of the steady bumping of the truck over the rocky path we are using as a road.

There is an extra stir as the truck suddenly comes to a stop beside a woman walking along the dusty savannah. She is dressed in an 'orange' shuka garment with a long dark skirt, and a baby slung across her belly. After a few words with the driver and a nod, she steps toward the back of the truck, her eyes searching

for a place to sit. Everyone starts to shift and within a minute we are rearranged and the Maasai woman and her baby are with us. The others still sound pleased but I am now feeling very cramped, with a large bag of rice across my knees.

Peterson, a Maasai volunteer, is beside me and sensing I am annoyed explains:

"It is a great thing. She has been walking here all the way from Ngare Ndare village. She missed the VCT there and wants to have it still. So she will walk all the way to Leparua. It is good that we can pick her up because she can be tested first and start walking home before too late. She really wants to be tested."



We have been unsure what the reaction would be to VCT out here; we don't know how many people have heard that we are coming and why. To meet this woman seeking VCT at great length, portends much for success - people are getting the message that it is important to know their status.

After arriving at our destination, we jump out, stretch our legs and start setting up the tents (in different areas to keep the testing confidential). While the counselors work, the rest of us meet to talk strategy. Mobilization teams are formed including Maasai and Canadians who will walk house-to-house raising questions and sharing HIV/AIDS information. After we've gone, two cooks are left behind to prepare lunch, which will be delivered to us in the field.

When we convene again as a team it is already dusk. We eat *ugali*, something like polenta, and goat stew with our hands and reflect on the day's events. Forty-six people have been tested, and four have chosen to only have counseling. The mobilization team has been to thirty-five *bomas* (households) and everyone they met along the way was invited to a drama the next day. We are assured the next day will also be busy.

A bonfire is started nearby and young moran warriors begin arriving out of the dark woods. We hear their whooping cries, communicating their arrival over long distances. They are attracted to the village, after a day grazing cattle, by the small spectacle of visitors.

When they arrive we talk to them about HIV/AIDS and about testing. Whenever the conversation mentions

condoms, big grins cross the warriors' faces. Reuben, a counselor, knows this cue and withdraws a box of condoms and a wooden penis from his bag. The laughter comes out roaring as he demonstrates over and over the proper use of a condom. I can still hear them laughing from my tent as I fall to sleep happy that their noise will keep the large animals away. ❖

David Buwalda has been a volunteer in Il Ngwesi with ICA organizations in Africa and a staff of ICA

Canada since 2006. He has a Masters degree in Urban Development from Tilburg University in the Netherlands. Prior to working on the LISTEN TO THE DRUMMING initiative, he worked with the South Korean Government on cultural management activities. He recently helped produce a short video about the Il Ngwesi HIV/AIDS Initiative and manages the website of the Il Ngwesi initiative at www.olosho.com.



BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

Derek Strachan



Some of you will know me as a chef extraordinaire, at least that's what Duncan tells people. Which is a reputation I continue to live down even though I have been

out of the biz for the past five years or so. While I still love to cook, which both Duncan's and my "poignées d'amore" will attest to, it is not just my passion for food and hospitality that I bring as skills to the board of ICA Canada.

I have to confess that I didn't know a thing about ICA before meeting Duncan in August 2003. I have a history of theological education and spiritual training, which was one of the areas Duncan and I share in common. It was not long before I was intrigued with the values that motivated the work of ICA Canada. Before I knew it I was volunteering at the office, as I had time on my hands and was more than willing to give Christine a hand. Introductions to the rest of the team were not long coming. Like in any good organization, if you have some time and a skill there is probably a task for you. It wasn't long before I was invited to participate on a task force.

The next thing I knew, I was being courted by Fred — "Was I interested in letting my name stand for the board?" And in my first year of a three-year term, it still feels like I am getting my feet wet.

What excites me about ICA? The future. The work and values of ICA speak for themselves. Working with the ICA

Canada team to vision into the next challenging phase of ICA Canada history: locally, nationally and globally.

What do I do outside of ICA? I work with the Spiritual Care Department at the University Health Network, specializing in the field of Transplant and Spirituality. I still cook, but only at home, and that is rare these days. This is one of my favorite recipes. Get a bun of crusty bread and a nice bottle of red wine. Some one special to share it with won't hurt either!

Mushroom Soup

If you really want to create a stir with your guests: stir in Truffle Paste before serving and garnish with Truffle Oil. Both Truffle Oil and Paste will lose flavor with heat, so add before serving.

Ingredients

- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- 2 cups sweet onions, diced
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 Lbs. cremini mushrooms, chopped
- 1 cup white wine
- 4 stems fresh thyme
- 3 bay leaves
- 4 cups vegetable or beef stock
- Kosher salt
- black pepper

Method

Heat a large soup pot to medium high. Add the olive oil and heat. Sauté the onions until translucent, add the garlic and cook 1 minute. Add the chopped mushrooms and sauté. When the mushrooms are wilted, add white wine and reduce. Add the stock with thyme stems and bay leaves. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat, and let simmer for 40 min. ❖

Institute News

New Website

Come check out our exciting newly redesigned website for the Institute of Cultural Affairs, launched late 2007 www.icacan.ca. Our website highlights the great work that ICA is doing and keeps visitors up to date on ICA events. It is easy to navigate, and has a great new colour scheme. A special thanks goes out to Alan Lo, website designer for his tireless work on getting this page ready for launch. Thanks also to volunteer site administrator, Peter Ellins, for helping us work out the kinks and managing content, and to Eowynne Feeney who dedicated many hours to coordinating this effort. Thank you also to Wayne Nelson who designed and voluntarily managed the old site for many many years.

Upcoming Annual General Meeting

We invite you to attend ICA Canada's Annual General Meeting and Research Day on April 12th at the 655 Queen Street East, Toronto office. Please see the new website for details on this upcoming event at www.icacan.ca.

Youth as Facilitative Leaders

The YFL program has been busy developing partnerships for a province-wide Ontario Trillium Foundation four year capacity building grant application to be submitted March 1st with a focus on Sudbury, North Bay, Toronto, Simcoe/York and surrounding areas. Local community partnership meetings were held in early December with much success. Local YMCAs in Sudbury and North Bay have agreed to be our Founding Partners for the project. There has been a great deal of enthusiasm from partners on how this project can benefit the growth of young leaders from all backgrounds in their communities. If you are aware of any youth or community organizations in these areas who would be interested in partnership or would like more information on this project, please contact Leah Taylor at ltaylor@icacan.ca

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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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Looking Back on the Major Events of 2007

On October 14th, 2007, 75 passionate runners and walkers joined in unity around a common cause—HIV/AIDS in Africa—and participated in the Toronto Marathon. Our dedicated walkers and runners managed to bring in \$20,000 toward youth HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness programs throughout the continent. Our African partners, many of whom are youth, have collectively trained over 4,000 young people in HIV/AIDS prevention, facilitation and leadership skills, gender issues and anti-oppression through a program called Youth as Facilitative Leaders (YFL). Funds raised through the Toronto Marathon will go toward strengthening YFL programs in six African countries so that our partners can train more youth and save more lives! This event would not have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers who worked for six months to recruit runners, design t-shirts, secure corporate sponsorship, and plan for race day. One volunteer in particular needs to be acknowledged. George Szabo, our marathon coordinator, donated over 200 hours of his time, energy and skills to help mobilize this event. We could not have done it without him. Thank you to our sponsors, runners, walkers and volunteers! ❖

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

I would like to become an Individual Member of ICA Canada.

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

(We no longer accept payment by charge cards.)

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

Is this your home address or office address?

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