



Canadian Friends Service Committee E-Newsletter

August, 2017



Healing and Rebuilding our Communities training, July, 2017, Musanzi, Rwanda.
Photo credit: Africa Great Lakes Initiative

Healing the deepest traumas

What happens in the wake of extreme violence like the Rwandan genocide? Many people who have been deeply traumatized must find ways to live together again. The Healing and Rebuilding our Communities (HROC) methodology was developed in this context, to address the incredible challenge of building community at the grassroots in the aftermath of massive trauma. HROC training is offered by long-time CFSC partner the Africa Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI). Canadian Friends have taken a great interest in AGLI's work and supported and participated in it in various ways over the years.

14 peacebuilders came together in Musanzi, Rwanda, in July 2017 for intensive sessions to become HROC trainers in their respective communities. Participants came from Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Chad, and various parts of the DR Congo. CFSC sent two members of Project Muinda, from Kinshasa, DR Congo. Project Muinda is a small and isolated group of Quakers seeking to build peace in their city through local conflict transformation and education initiatives. Participation in the HROC training will give Muinda a new set of skills to use in their work. More information about both Project Muinda and HROC can be found at: <http://quakerservice.ca/our-work/peace/africa/>

Indigenous representation at the UN

CFSC was in Geneva in July and supported the development and delivery of a joint statement on Indigenous Peoples' participation in the United Nations. The statement calls for new opportunities for Indigenous Peoples to be represented and to participate within the United Nations.

The goal is to increase chances for dialogue, leading to a more cooperative and constructive relationship between governments and Indigenous Peoples. The statement notes the strong opposition of many governments to such increased participation and dialogue opportunities.

The statement also reminds governments that they cannot decide who is or isn't Indigenous, because Indigenous Peoples have a right to self-identification. Read the full statement at:

<http://quakerservice.ca/IndigenousParticipation>

New position paper on synthetic biology takes on the tough questions

On August 2 a paper was published detailing how [powerful new genetic engineering techniques were used to edit human embryos](#). The vast issues raised by this research are now before us.

CFSC has authored a new position paper, [Synthetic biology: major issues of concern to Quakers](#). We've been tracking synthetic biology since 2012, and this paper distills our thinking, reflecting on the key issues we see in the field. Although the topic is synthetic biology, many of the issues are highly relevant to the way societies can safely deal with any innovation.

While remaining brief, the position paper doesn't shy away from the tough questions facing us as new genetic engineering techniques take shape:

- What is synthetic biology and why are Quakers interested?
- The approach to regulation: precautionary versus proactive
- Technology's uncertainties and range of potential impacts
- The relevance of spiritual factors
- Regulating synthetic biology: the public's essential role
- Key Quaker values and synthetic biology

No science background is needed to understand this paper. It is available at:

<http://quakerservice.ca/SBIssues>

Interested in the intersection of spirituality, ethics, and biotechnology? Registration is now open for a multi-day opportunity to discuss these issues together with an international group of experts, farmers, students, faith leaders and more. You can see the program and buy tickets at:

<http://redesigningthetreeoflife.eventbrite.ca/>

No Way to Treat a Child

Every child should be free from cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment. Yet one of Canada's closest allies is systematically mistreating children, and Canada is turning a blind eye. The United Nations reports that for a Palestinian child thought to have thrown a stone,

“[T]he common experience... is being aggressively awakened in the middle of the night by many armed soldiers and being forcibly brought to an interrogation centre tied and blindfolded, sleep deprived and in a state of extreme fear. Few children are informed of their right to legal counsel.” - UNICEF, *Children in Israeli Military Detention: Observations and Recommendations*, 2013, pp. 9-10

From there, children may experience threats and intimidation with no lawyer or parent present. Eventually the majority will sign a confession in Hebrew, a language they don't understand.

We do not support throwing stones, but no one should be subjected to this kind of treatment, whether or not they commit a crime. That's why CFSC has joined many other groups as founding members of the [No Way to Treat a Child](#) campaign in Canada. More information is available at <http://quakerservice.ca/NoWayToTreatAChild>

If so led, you can sign [a petition to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland](#). Please contact us if you'd like to be further involved in this campaign.



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