



Students observe a lesson on gender-based violence during a peace club meeting at Mancila Community School in Lusaka, Zambia. Dealing with traumatic circumstances, such as corporal punishment, bullying, early marriage or gender-based violence is commonplace for many teenagers growing up in Zambia. The project seeks to reduce corporal punishment in schools and empower teachers and students with skills in nonviolence, conflict resolution and trauma awareness. (MCC photos/Amanda Talstra)

## MCC Africa Peace Project Highlights

Like many things this year, COVID-19 interrupted MCC's peace work, but MCC staff and our partners found creative ways to spread peace or pivot peace projects to spread peace. Thank you for making peace work a priority and for supporting MCC! This report focuses and shines a spotlight on MCC's peace projects in Zambia. The concept of MCC peace clubs began in Zambia in 2006, and from there spread across the globe. Thus, it seems fitting to highlight the country where peace clubs began. We hope you are encouraged by the impact your gifts are having in Zambia!

### ZAMBIA: Building a culture of peace in schools and communities

Peace clubs were started in Lusaka, Zambia in 2006 to create a culture of peace within school communities. The concept of having peace clubs in schools has flourished with 32 peace clubs in Lusaka and Kafue districts as well as others in the southern province of Zambia. Through these clubs, it was discovered that students' behavior of violence is rooted in families and communities. Thus, the need to extend peace clubs into the broader community has become a priority, and there is a growing demand for peace clubs throughout the broader community. For this reason, this project not only focuses on peace clubs in schools but also focuses on peace training for parents and teachers.

Before school closures in the spring of 2020, peace work was actively happening in schools and throughout communities:

- An exchange visit was held for all peace club members and their teachers. 70 students and four teachers participated. At this exchange, 800 copies of the peace curriculum were handed out to use in peace clubs for the following year.
- 32 peace clubs were meeting regularly in schools.
- A workshop was held for parents and community members on trauma awareness. 20 people participated.
- A workshop was held for parents and community members on alternatives to corporal punishment. 22 people attended the workshop. Parents and community members requested that community peace clubs be formed.



(MCC photo/Amanda Talstra)

When lockdowns occurred in March 2020 and schools were shut down, staff had to find alternative ways to do peace work.

- They maintained regular communication with school administration and teachers, evaluating peace work and making plans for activities that could take place after lockdowns were lifted.
- Peace staff took part in several online peace trainings, while things were stalled in schools and communities.
- Once schools reopened in October, peace clubs began to meet again, and online peace training was offered.

# MCC Africa Peace Project Highlights



*Pictured are students from the Macha Girls Peace Club in Macha, a rural community in southern Zambia. (MCC photo/Amanda Talstra)*

## Peace clubs in Brethren in Christ Church Schools

Your donations also help fund peace clubs in 12 more schools in southern Zambia. MCC partners with the Brethren in Christ (BIC) Church to run peace clubs in each of their 12 schools in Zambia. The clubs discuss issues around conflict, violence, abuse and gender. Teachers who are trained as peace club leaders, work with students to develop healthy communication and mediation skills. Schools were closed during lockdowns due to COVID-19, but they are opened again, and peace clubs can resume.

## Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding Units in Zambian Correctional Facilities

A new peace project recently started in Zambia, bringing MCC peace work into Zambian correctional facilities. The project seeks to set up a Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding Units for 22,758 inmates in 65 facilities and is partnering with the Zambian government to do this. The aim is to decrease violence in the correctional facilities, establish peace clubs, help inmates restore relationships through the victim offender



*Brenda Tembo from the Macha Girls Peace Club displays her peace club t-shirt in Macha. (MCC photo/Amanda Talstra)*



# MCC Africa Peace Project Highlights

reconciliation process, and facilitate the integration of inmates back into their communities. This is an exciting opportunity and MCC thanks you for your support that is helping to make this project possible!



*From left, Hasting Siamoongwa, Namate Ndunda, Richard Mwangala, and Jessie Mwaanza, officers with the Zambia Correction Services, hold their certificates after completing a one-week course on peacebuilding and restorative justice with MCC in Kabwe, Zambia. (MCC photo/Daniel Talstra)*

This project had a pilot year in 2019 and bore much fruit. A three-year extension of this project started in the fall of 2020, with a two-day training in September for 54 officers from 12 facilities. The officers were trained on the following:

- To launch, establish and facilitate peace clubs in their respective facilities.
- To select inmates capable to facilitate peace club sessions and to train them to serve as peace club leaders.
- Develop new creative ways to ease facilitation due to high illiteracy levels in the correctional facilities, for instance drama, role-plays and videos.
- Facilitate victim-offender reconciliation processes.
- Support and empower inmates to transform their conduct to curb recidivism.

- Support and empower inmates in the re-integration process into their communities.
- Monitor and evaluate the progress of peace clubs and victim-offender reconciliation process.

## At the end of this three-year project, it is planned that:

- 1) 123 correctional officers will receive training in community service, restorative justice, peacebuilding and peace club management.
- 2) 58 peace clubs will be formed and supported by officers (plus clubs formed during pilot, for a total of 65 clubs).
- 3) 58 new Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding Units will be formed and established (for a total of 65).
- 4) A written module on restorative justice and peacebuilding will be completed for use at the Zambia correctional staff training college.
- 5) At least 1,300 (20 inmates per prison) cases of victims and offenders will be reconciled countrywide.

**Peace clubs in schools and peace work in Zambian correctional services are both amazing initiatives, reaching into the core of Zambian society and causing lasting change. Thank you for your faithful giving which ensures that these peace projects can continue.**

**Thanks to all at The Meeting House for funding peace work in Zambia!**



*Meegwetch (thank you) to The Meeting House for your support of the Indigenous Neighbours program.*

*Madeline, a Niska artisan, is grateful to share her culture through "A Mile in my Moccasins", a workshop where she shares stories and teaches the art of making moccasins.*

MCC Photo/Ken Ogasawara

## Indigenous Neighbours

### Highlights

- The Niska sale at The Meeting House in Oakville on Dec. 1, 2019 was a huge success despite the treacherous weather. **Your generosity provided over \$2,500 in sales!**
- **Seven** remote fly-in First Nations communities in northern Ontario increased their seasonal food production by planting gardens using donated MCC Community Garden Kits.
- **349** people increased awareness of the impact of colonization and the impact of Mennonite-run residential schools through participation in 12 Blanket Exercises from April 2019 to March 2020.
- **85** people participated in 5 Indigenous Neighbours Learning Tours to learn about the history and culture of Indigenous People and the legacy of colonialism across Ontario during the summer of 2019.

### Walking Together in a Better Way

Words cannot express our gratitude every time we are called upon to offer the Kairos Blanket Exercise (KBE). It is an honour to meet with participants who, for the most part, are on a journey of learning. We meet those who are shocked, angered and/or saddened that their country has hidden its atrocities. We hear the anguish of understanding why Mom/Grandma could not speak of the past. We sit with tears, giggles and disbelief. We learn along with the people we teach.

Stories are amazing tools. The KBE itself is story. When we bring our own stories, add them to the whole story, we add the present and the reality of today. I often remind Talking Circles that by sharing some of my story and you sharing yours, we

build relationship. By building relationship, we walk together in a better way.

Mim Harder, Blanket Exercise Facilitator

### Northern Food Security

In Timmins, Ontario and the surrounding area, MCC teamed up with the Timmins Native Friendship Centre to support 29 Indigenous at-risk families struggling with food insecurity. Many service providers have had to suspend services during the COVID-19 crisis, creating further strain on already vulnerable families.

Through this partnership, each family received a milk voucher and a \$50 gift card for groceries. Thank you for your continued support during these critical times so these gifts of hope can be continued.

### Responding to Floods

This spring, an emergency shipment was sent to Kashechewan First Nation as they prepared for what has become an annual flood evacuation out of the community. This year, COVID-19 has forced municipalities to close their doors to Kashechewan residents, so these families will spend at least three months in traditional family camps further north. MCC is a long-time partner of Kashechewan First Nation and responded to requests for assistance with 400 comforters and 2,000 hygiene kits.

**Thank you to The Meeting House for supporting the Indigenous Neighbours program in Ontario.**

# Restorative Justice



*“Circles is the only program I attend because I want to, rather than because I should or because I have to.”*

– CoSA Core Member

MCC Photo/Shoua Vang

## Circles of Support and Accountability

Thank you to The Meeting House for supporting the important work of Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA). Through this program, a Circle of three or four volunteers and staff meet regularly with an individual released from prison. From October 2019 to March 2020, 24 CoSA core members were supported through 145 Circle meetings and 364 volunteer hours in Kitchener, Hamilton and Toronto.

## Making a Difference

P.T. joined a Circle two years ago and struggled with staying on course. A few months ago, he tested positive for drugs, which became a turning point for him. P.T. called Carol, the MCC CoSA Program Associate, to let her know what his parole officer would find. Carol suggested he call the parole officer and share his remorse and explain why he felt he had breached his parole. Instead of returning him to a detention centre, the parole officer grounded him for the weekend. P.T. was impressed that the reaction was not to judge him as a bad person and rebuke him, but rather to hold him accountable for his actions. He is also grateful for the ongoing support of his Circle who continue to stand by him even through his struggles.

## COVID-19 Response

As many people move to virtual meetings because of COVID-19, CoSA has also had to adapt. With the help of MCC's IT team, we quickly set-up connections for program staff. However, for many CoSA core members, this change remains a significant barrier because of imposed restrictions on internet use.

*“If it wasn't for CoSA, I would be dead. I feel that Jesus is part of our Circle and all of you together are guiding me.” – P.T.*

One CoSA core member was incredibly withdrawn when he first joined a Circle. It took six months for him to speak in his Circle meeting. Slowly things changed. As we began to deal with the new realities of COVID-19, he was the first one to engage in a teleconference call. His new-found connections are important to him.

Another CoSA core member who, prior to COVID-19, set up a movie club with CoSA community volunteers and their friends, adapted to the physical distancing restrictions and is now facilitating the movie club using the teleconferencing line.

What we are learning is remarkable. CoSA core members are adaptable. They have survived the isolation of prison and the isolation of returning to a community with feelings of guilt and shame. Video games, reading and television help pass the time, but do nothing to foster a spirit of community. During COVID-19, some of them have shared how they cope with isolation, and, for the most part, they seem able to adapt to this new change and way of working.

**Thank you for supporting  
Circles of Support and  
Accountability.  
Your investment in this  
program is building safer  
communities in Ontario.**