



# Initiatives of Change

## United Kingdom

08th July 2019

## Peace talks to tackle the knife crime epidemic in London borough of Islington drawing on lessons learned from Glasgow.

Islington Councillor Michelline Safi Ngongoof will join the international peace building charity, Initiatives of Change UK this week at the annual Caux Forum in Switzerland. She will be leading and participating on intergenerational dialogue and knife crime workshops.

Councillor Michelline said: “With London’s knife crime epidemic reaching unprecedented levels, with more than 30 fatal stabbings in the capital since the start of the year; I am passionately involved in this programme that aims to respond creatively and non-violently to conflict and crisis.”

Violence against the person has become Islington’s second most-reported crime, with 27% of the borough’s total crime according to Verisure security.

Councillor Michellin will be joined by Ian Monteague Chair of the grassroots voluntary Glasgow charity FARE (Family Action in Rogerfield and Easterhouse) and Sakira Suzia, Metropolitan Police Officer working in youth violence in London and across the globe. Participants will hear about how Glasgow managed to beat youth violence and the knife crime problem after being branded European murder capital in 2005.

Panelists will discuss how to develop a common action plan drawing on Glasgow's initiative of adopting a public health approach to violence - treating it like a disease and dealing with the causes rather than the symptoms. “Despite the fact that violence has always been present, the world does not have to accept it as an inevitable part of the human condition,” says Monteague. Scotland’s police force worked together with community leaders in tackling youth violence. The factors that contribute to violent responses – whether they are factors of attitude and behaviour or related to larger social, economic, political and cultural conditions – can be changed. “Violence is preventable, not inevitable.”

Building trust across

the world’s divides

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Initiatives of Change UK is facilitating a three-day peacebuilding workshop at the Towards Inclusive Peace conference at the Caux Forum organized by Initiatives of Change Switzerland. The workshops are part of Initiative of Change UK's community outreach programme.

Paul Gutteridge, National Director of Initiatives of Change UK, will facilitate discussions on new approaches of intergenerational dialogue and the rising knife crime epidemic.

“The UK is a divided nation” says Gutteridge, “With rising right wing supremacy, Islamophobia and knife crime, the time is more pressing than ever to respond to the current crisis. Towards Inclusive Peace provides a valuable process to explore wide ranging cultural issues from small grievances, growing internal conflict, to unconscious cultural bias. It looks to explore issues of identity, belonging, and racism as examples of family and community conflict that may grow in tension and yield in violent extremism”.

“We must ask ourselves what are the steps that each one of us can take in being positive role models and influencers. How can we develop safe spaces for open dialogue on the prevention of youth radicalization? What are the critical success factors for developing resilience, identifying the risks and red flags in building trust in the community?”

Amina Khalid, Head of the Sustainable Communities Programme will deliver an intergenerational dialogue workshop during the three-day conference. She said: “Peace Begins at Home, intergenerational dialogue, centers on respect-based and facilitated dialogue across generations, shared storytelling and other forms of case study exploration. For community leaders and social policy makers; local councillors, politicians, and security enforcement at grassroots, it serves as a catalyst for building bridges across divides. It can help develop a framework that can be applied in the home and in the community towards an inclusive peace.”

The annual Caux Forum, a programme of conferences, training and dialogues, aims to inspire, equip and connect individuals, groups and organizations so that they can build a just, peaceful and sustainable world. The Forum is held at the Caux Palace, a former Belle-Époque Grand Hotel overlooking Lake Geneva and the Alps, provides a unique and inspiring setting.

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Each year around 1,500 people attend the Forum to address the burning issues of our time and to find innovative, creative and sustainable answers together. Participants and speakers are drawn from civil society, government and business. A safe space of trust, care, solidarity and respect provides them with the opportunity to discuss openly and in-depth a variety of issues.

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### Notes to editors

Towards Inclusive Peace is running at the Caux Forum at the Caux Palace, Caux, Switzerland. For more information about the conference and the Caux Forum please visit: <https://www.iofc.ch/experience-caux-forum/main-events/towards-inclusive-peace>

When: 08-12 July 2019

Where: Caux Conference and Seminar Centre, Rue de Panorama 2 CH-1824 Caux

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### About Initiatives of Change:

- Active in over 60 countries, including the UK, Initiatives of Change (IofC) is a global movement and NGO dedicated to building trust across the world's divides.
- IofC encourages conscience-based decision-making that generates positive change across society, with its programmes centred on ethical leadership, sustainable living and trust-building.
- The UK team undertakes activities in the UK and around the world, in collaboration with other IofC national or regional bodies plus other partner organisations. Current programmes include:
  - Refugees as Re-Builders™, a training programme aimed at refugees who want help contribute to the rebuilding of their country of origin. Subjects include dialogue facilitation, ethical leadership and sustainable livelihood.
  - Creators of Peace, which has been empowering women to be radical peace-builders and powerful agents for positive change within their own communities since 1991. Its workshop and conference-based activity addresses the roots of conflict, providing tools to build bridges of forgiveness across racial, religious and social divides.

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- A national Sustainable Communities programme, formed in 2012 in response to the UK riots of August 2011. The work focuses on strengthening community initiatives and providing practical support that equips people in disadvantaged areas to become agents of change.

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