



Gathering on Common Ground: Building Harmony through Diversity in Canada and India

Goodes Hall, Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario, Canada
June 25-27, 2017

A conference, *Gathering on Common Ground: Building Harmony through Diversity in Canada and India*, will be held at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, June 25-27, 2017. **The objective of the conference is to build on existing Canadian and Indian practices for addressing societal issues in an effort to develop innovative, effective approaches and solutions for moving forward.** 'Mutual Accommodation' has been a key practice in Canada whereas 'Nonviolent Action' has been used extensively in India. Both practices have enabled significant progress, but major challenges remain. Some, such as the state of Indigenous peoples, have been present throughout both countries' histories. New issues are emerging as our societies become more diverse. The conference will build on our foundational practices and harness our increasing diversity to identify new approaches to addressing societal issues.

You are one of a select, diverse group of about sixty Canadians and Indians who has been invited and has committed to attend. *Please note that it is important that you attend the entire conference.* Much of the time will be in 6-8 person workshops, and your continuous presence is needed to help develop approaches to the issues being addressed.

Conference Format/Schedule

Registration and all sessions will be held at Goodes Hall, 143 Union St. W., Kingston, Ontario

Sunday, June 25

- 12-1:30 PM Arrival and Registration (a light lunch will be available), Goodes Hall Lobby
- 2-2:45 PM Opening: Goodes Hall 118. Agenda Review by Paul Schwartzentruber. Welcome from Laurel Claus-Johnson (Indigenous Elder), Tom Harris (Vice-Principal, Queen's) and Arun Kumar Sahu (Deputy High Commissioner of India to Canada). Remarks and introduction of William Macdonald by Hugh Helferty.
- 2:45-3:45 Keynote 1: 'On Mutual Accommodation' by William A. Macdonald
- 3:45-4:00 Break
- 4:00-4:15 Remarks and introduction of Rajagopal PV by Paul Schwartzentruber
- 4:15-5:15 Keynote 2: 'Building Nonviolent Social Movements for an Inclusive Society' by Rajagopal PV
- 5:15-6:15 Panel Presentations and Discussion: Bill Innes, Heather Nichol, Jill Carr-Harris, Robert Lovelace, Bill Bhaneja (moderator)
- 6:15-7:00 Break to allow check-in at David C. Smith Residence (222 Stuart Street)
- 7:00-9:00 Dinner and Sponsor Recognition, University Club (168 Stuart Street)

Monday, June 26

- 9-10 AM Presentation: Goodes Hall 118, '*Gandhi's Political Vision and the World Order*', Ramin Jahanbegloo.
- 10-12 Workshops I: Identifying issues and each group selects one to work on.
- Indigenous Issues Roundtable Facilitators: Nicholas Barla (India), Terri-Lynn Brennan (Canada)
- Minorities Roundtable Facilitators: Ramin Jahanbegloo (India), Yusur Al Bahrani (Canada), Bill Bhaneja (Canada)
- Gender Struggles Roundtable Facilitators: Momin Rahman (Canada), Jill Carr-Harris (India)

Poverty and Economic Inequality Roundtable Facilitators: Joe and Stephanie Mancini (Canada), Paul Schwartzentruber (Canada).

- 12-1:15 Lunch (provided)
- 1:30-2:30 Panel Presentations and Discussion: Goodes Hall 118, Terri-Lynn Brennan, Reva Joshee, Rachel Laforest, Sumon Majumdar (moderator)
Report-out by each Workshop Group on the issue they have selected to work on.
- 2:45- 5:00 Workshops II: Working the Issues: How can Mutual Accommodation and Non-Violent Action be utilized to address them? How do we build on these two practices? What new, innovative approaches/solutions have the potential to accelerate the pace at which issues are addressed?
- 5:00-9:00 Free Evening (a list of local restaurants will be provided)

Tuesday, June 27

- 9:00-11:00 Workshops III: Assessing the Impact: Will the proposed approaches/solutions likely work? What could go wrong and how could that risk be mitigated? How could the proposed approaches/solutions be enhanced to improve effectiveness? Would the proposed approaches be effective in addressing other issues?
- 11:00-12:00 Workshop Groups Prepare For Report-Out to Whole Conference.
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch (provided)
- 1:00-3:00 Final Session: Goodes Hall 118, Reports from Workshops, Concluding Remarks, Adjourn.

Sponsors

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Conceptual Design of the Conference

1. The design of the meeting is a ‘working conference’. While there will be keynotes and one plenary presentation, the primary work of the conference will happen in 6-8 person roundtable workshop groups. *We will ask these roundtable groups, with the assistance of facilitators from India and Canada, to identify key issues in particular areas and then assess the likelihood of success of various approaches for addressing them.* We expect that the participation of a diverse group of attendees will enable the creation of effective approaches. These approaches will be developed further after the conference and lead to our second planned conference in India in 2019.
2. The conference has been carefully planned around two themes and four challenge areas. The two themes are ‘mutual accommodation’ (in the Canadian tradition) and ‘nonviolence/*ahimsa*’ (in the Indian tradition) as approaches to tackling societal issues and developing workable paths forward. The four challenge areas for the roundtable workshops are the issues of 1) Indigenous peoples; 2) minorities, religious and ethnic; 3) poverty and economic inequality and 4) gender-based struggles for justice.
3. With regard to the themes, the conference will begin with two keynote addresses by prominent advocates of the approaches from each country: William A. Macdonald and Rajagopal PV. This will be followed by a panel presentation in which members from both countries will amplify the themes. We urge all to do some reading in advance of the conference. William A. Macdonald’s writing on mutual accommodation can be found by downloading *Canada, still the unknown country*, found here: <http://wamacdonald.com/>. An introduction to Rajagopal PV’s Gandhian work on nonviolent empowerment can be found here: https://youtu.be/GFXKVj_LNtk and in more detail here <https://youtu.be/VgpaTLkDn-E>
4. There will be one plenary presentation during the conference to enhance the understanding of the themes. Specifically, Prof. Ramin Jahanbegloo will speak on Gandhi’s vision of nonviolent politics.
5. For the main work of the conference, the roundtable workshops, we have invited facilitators from each country who have detailed concrete experience in each challenge area. The facilitators will have the important and complex task of assisting the participants in their work. We expect the intercultural dialogue between Indian and Canadian participants to be key to the process of integration and to greatly enhance the insights which they generate. Each facilitator will be asked to work closely with their counterpart from the other country and then to help integrate and present their work to all conference participants. Facilitators will have primary responsibility for the process and outcome of the conference and they have been carefully chosen for this work.

6. It is expected that this process and work will spawn projects among participants between the countries which will generate ongoing dialogue and action leading to the next conference, proposed to be held in India in 2019.
7. The conference is expected to integrate participants from both countries in a way that will broaden and deepen their engagement. With this in mind, we are bringing together experienced and young people with backgrounds in academia, business, and social activism. It will be one of the strengths of the conference to foster a rich dialogue among all of these groups.

Co-Organizers

Hugh Helferty

Executive-in-Residence
Smith School of Business
Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario

Paul Schwartzentruber

Associate Member
Centre for the Study of Democracy and Diversity
Queen's University
Kingston, Ontario

Selected Participants:

Keynote Speakers

William A. Macdonald: <http://wamacdonald.com/>.

Rajagopal PV: <http://www.ektaparishad.com/en-us/about/messagefromrajagopal.aspx>.

Panelists (June 25th)

Bill Bhaneja (Moderator):

Co-Founder, Canadian Department of Peace Initiative; Canadian diplomat (retired).

Jill Carr-Harris:

<http://www.ektaparishad.com/UpcomingEvents/TabId/62/ArtMID/522/ArticleID/136/Creating-space-for-women-in-India%E2%80%99s-Ekta-Parishad.aspx>.

Bill Innes:

Co-Founder, Canadian Difference Project; President, ExxonMobil Research and Engineering (retired).

Robert Lovelace:

Adjunct, Global Development Studies Department, Queen's University, Kingston

Heather Nicol:

Professor and Acting Director, School for the Study of Canada, Trent University, Peterborough

Selected Other Speakers/Participants

Ramin Jahanbegloo:

Executive Director, Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Nonviolence and Peace Studies; Professor and Vice-Dean, Jindal Global Law School, O. P. Jindal Global University, Delhi.

Anamik Shah:

Vice Chancellor, Gujarat Vidyapith University, Ahmedabad

Panelists (June 26th)

Terri-Lynn Brennan:

Cultural Services Coordinator, City of Kingston

Reva Joshee:

Associate Professor, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, Toronto.

Rachel Laforest:

Associate Professor, School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, Kingston.

Sumon Majumdar (Moderator)

Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Queen's University, Kingston.