

Canadian Peacemakers International

CAL AFRICA NEWSLETTER

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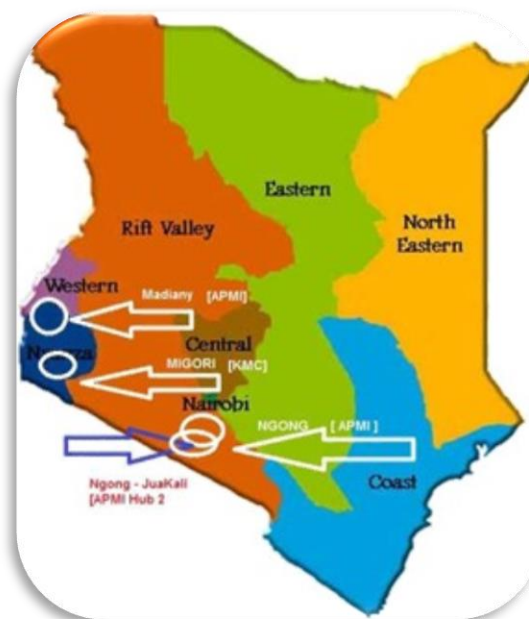
Farewell Events and Appeals

CAL Education Program spreads to East and Central Africa

CPI is transplanting to Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) its highly successful CAL program from Honduras, where there are now more than 6,200 graduates. SSA includes more than 5,000 Anabaptist - Mennonite congregations.

As heard from Patrick and Pamela when they visited Alberta, it is their passion, ambition, and commitment to facilitate the spread of the Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) Education model to at least twenty (20) Sub Saharan Africa countries in ten (10) years. This year, 2023, marks the First Implementation Year of this ambitious mission and goal.

CPI is already experiencing an overwhelming invitation from African Anabaptist-Mennonites and other community groupings for the CAL education program. CPI is excited to witness how what started as missional peacemaking conversations with leaders from Africa has quickly turned into a fast-spreading CAL education program with the establishment of six (6) digital community hubs in DR Congo, Kenya, and Rwanda.



Map of Kenya showing 4 locations of Digital Education Community Hubs.

CAL Africa Leadership - Who are Patrick and Pamela Obonde?

CPI engaged Patrick J. Obonde to provide leadership for the SSA. After graduating from Kenyatta University with a Bachelor of Education in Science, Patrick began his professional career as a high school teacher.

While serving on the side as a branch leader with National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), Patrick realized he had a natural gift for accounts and social development. This led him back to postgraduate studies and into a new consulting career, spanning more than 25 years in finance and organizational development management.

In the years before 2017 Patrick's consulting clientele variously consisted of Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), including faith-based and international development agencies such as CIDA, USAID and European Union-funded partnerships across East and Central Africa. Patrick, who is also an ordained and licensed church minister with Kenya Mennonite Church, has extensive network of contacts throughout Sub-Saharan Africa.



-Patrick Obonde-
Africa CAL Education Program
Representative

Like her husband Patrick, Pamela Obonde also has a distinguished career in the NGO service sector in Kenya. Pamela has worked with women, youth, and children in various aspects of rights advocacy and development. Pamela's work in Kenya has focused especially on girls' child-education and women's socio-economic empowerment toward the elimination of Early Forced Marriages [EFM] and Female Genital Mutilation [FGM]. A significant achievement is her founding leadership in the ACDC/APMI Centre (Now Africa Peace Missions Institute). APMI has become a lead CPI partner agency in East Africa.

Inspired by the many challenges in their working contexts, in 2017 Patrick and Pamela decided to take a leap of faith to dedicate their remaining years to build the Kingdom of God by becoming involved in full-time service of their fellow human beings.

The couple therefore resigned from their professional pursuits and enrolled in further graduate studies in North America. In 2018, Patrick enrolled at the Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary (AMBS) in Elkhart, IN., where he obtained a Master of Arts in Theology and Peace Studies.

In 2019 Pamela registered in Canadian Mennonite University (CMU) in Winnipeg, MB. The couple chose Winnipeg because they wanted their children, Sembi and Geno, to also get a Canadian education and experience. In 2021 Pamela graduated with a Master of Arts in Peacebuilding and Collaborative Development. She was the valedictorian for her 2021 graduating class.



**-Pamela Obonde-
Founding Director of APMI Centre**

Passionate Team Leadership

Patrick and Pamela envision transforming the Religious and Community spaces in SSA into digital hubs for wholistic education and development toward shalom! In this they join with a dedicated Leadership Team of Dave and Henry Hubert, and Gloria and Theo Fumana to form the lead Administrative and Management Council for the development of The CAL Program across SSA.

Henry comes to this challenge after 35 years at Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops BC, where he ended his career as Dean of Arts. He subsequently moved to Winnipeg after his wife, Elsie, died and he found a new love in Connie Epp, a native Manitoban, whom he met during a Holy Land tour led by CMU. The Hubert brothers assert that the program in SSA could not have come up with finer persons than Patrick and Pamela Obonde.



**Henry Hubert – Team Leader
-Friends of CAL Africa in Manitoba, MB.**



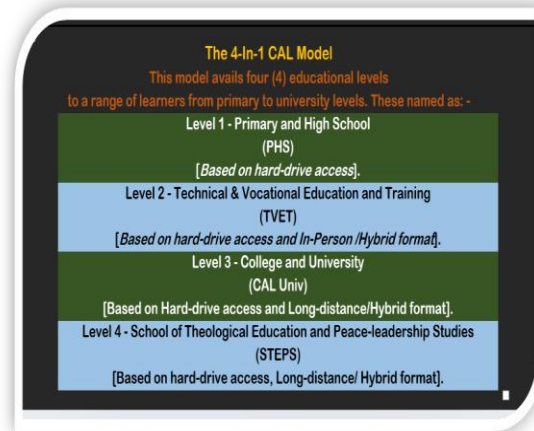
**Photo of Henry, Patrick, and Dave Hubert
During a meeting with Art Defehr @ WPG, MB**

Our Program Partners in East and Central Africa

CAL Kenya

Currently APMI Centre is CPI's lead partner in East Africa (<https://apmicentre.org/>). APMI facilitates community development and women in leadership programs and offers Technical Vocational Education and Trainings (TVET) in a variety of learner-centered CAL models. The courses offered include Tailoring and Dressmaking, Hairdressing and Barbering, Food Nutrition and Catering, Soapmaking and Cosmetology.

Since partnering with CPI, these programs have been digitized. APMI has also introduced a fulltime academic program that is based on the contextualized 4-In-1 CAL Model.



CAL Congo

The CAL Congo program is under the leadership of Theo and Gloria Fumana who are working with CPI. The couple has helped introduce the Computer Assisted Learning (CAL) program to the Democratic Republic of Congo; to develop and make materials available to help church workers study and become more effective servers and leaders.

Theo and Gloria are working alongside churches and local organizations to increase access to education and vocational training for youth and young adults. Currently CAL Congo is CPI's lead partner in D R Congo (<https://calcongo.org/>).

CAL Congo already operates school programs in Kikwit and Kinshasa. The Centres facilitate learning for Grade 1 to Grade 12 and a sewing/tailoring program with a tuk-tuk (small, 3-wheeled taxi) repair program currently being developed.



Gloria and Theo Fumana are with their three Children [L-R] Mathew, Giselle, and Gailynne.

CAL Rwanda

In Rwanda CPI is working with Grace Children's Ministry (GCM) to build a model Education Centre to facilitate a CAL program for vulnerable children, youth, and women (<https://gcmistry.org/about.html#>). The Rwanda ministry is lead by Evariste Semahoro, Fidele Ntagawa and Eric Muhire.



-Pamela, Friends of Rwanda, and Elfrieda Dick-Elfrieda is the lead supporter of the Rwanda Program



Pupils, single mothers, and widows in a meeting during Patrick's visit to Rwanda @ Agasaro Christian School In Bugesera District

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Gratitude to CPI Supporters

To support CAL Education in East and Central Africa, the CPI Edmonton Office invited Patrick and Pamela Obonde to visit longtime CPI supporters in ALBERTA.

The Obondes arrived at the Edmonton airport at 8:30 A.M. on August 28 and went directly to the home of Shyla Varghese to meet with Shyla and her cousin Preethy Thomas. Preethy had just returned from a mission trip to India.

Missional leaders sharing stories of passion and challenges.

A strong meeting of the minds regarding mission between Pamela and Preethy extended a planned two-hour meeting to over four wonderful hours. When Preethy asked for the program's greatest financial need, after some hesitation Pamela said that she had a selfish request. On Preethy's urging, Pamela explained that the Ngong CAL hub borders a large slum. Mothers attending school have no childcare, so they bring their little children along with them to the school.

Would it be possible to build a day care for these children and their mothers? When Pamela and Patrick estimated that the cost would be \$15,000, Shyla and Preethy said they would discuss the request with their Board. Patrick and Pamela felt greatly encouraged by the response given by Preethy and Shyla. After stopping at Dave's home, the three left for Coaldale. Pamela and Patrick were amazed by the vast and endless fields of cropland they kept passing.



Children playing @ CAL Central Hub Ngong while their mothers/parents are attending CAL Classes

Institutionalizing the legacy of a departed missionary – Helen Toews

On Friday morning Dave, Patrick and Pamela met with John and Dorothy Hubert. Besides a long and beneficial relationship with MCC, John and Dorothy have provided long term leadership in the Coaldale Mennonite Brethren Church. Discussions began about the possibility of this church financing a CAL CONGO school at the hospital in Kijiji in memory of Helen Toews.



**John and Dorothy with the Obondes
@ the Hubert home in Coaldale.**

Helen was a congregation member who spent 30 years training nurses at the hospital in Kijiji. The cost of setting up the school and running it for the first year was estimated at \$25,000 and operational costs thereafter would be about \$19,000 annually. John and Dorothy weren't sure about the church sponsorship but suggested potentials for other ways to realize the objective of a school in Kijiji.

Patrick and Pamela shared their personal journey of faith in missional work and commitment to see CAL spread from the Kenya Hubs to other East Africa countries.

John and Dorothy expressed willingness to consider support for a missionary family working in the CAL Program.

The Hutterite Colony - An Intersection of Faith, Technology and Agricultural Enterprise

Friday afternoon offered a delightful visit with Michael Waldner, the minister at the New Rockport Hutterite Colony southeast of Coaldale. Before touring the colony, the Obondes learned of the Anabaptist history of the Hutterites and the four centuries of persecution that have formed them into what they are today.

As part of lessons for his Ph.D. studies for *Leadership in Higher Education* with Andrews University, MI, Patrick was curious to learn whether Hutterites are facilitating any leadership mentorship ministry based on faith, innovation/technology, and business enterprise. Patrick and Pamela found the Hutterite practices fascinating, with their traditions being a rich resource for community life.

Dave and the Obondes later toured the farming area around Coaldale, noting how the cropping is supported by a highly developed irrigation infrastructure. The experience was highly instructive for Pamela, an official with the Canadian Food Grains Bank.



**Michael, Pamela, and Dave in Discussion during the
guided tour of the Hutterite Colony**

Witnessing Integrated Land Use – Thriving Conservation and Tourism Industry

Saturday, a travelling day, introduced Pamela and Patrick to the Rocky Mountains, which they had studied in school but never dreamed of ever visiting. Sunday was spent in the grandeur of Jasper - with a cruise to Spirit Island on Maligne Lake and a flight up Whistlers Mountain. Ask Pamela about being suspended between heaven and earth!



**Dave, Patrick, and Pamela viewing
Sight seeing @ Athabasca Falls**



**Pamela, Patrick, and Dave
on Top @ The Whistler Mountain**

...Pamela and Patrick were also pleased to see a huge bull elk with his herd of cows, a mountain goat and kid, a bear and bighorn sheep. Patrick noted that he had not had a day just to relax since Year 2014 and he immensely appreciated being just a tourist for two days in the Rockies. Monday morning offered breakfast with ten CPI supporters before a series of meetings with more supporters. Interspersed with these meetings Patrick and Dave discussed their work on a MEDA-MasterCard proposal.



**Photo: The Bull Elk @
Jasper, AB.**



**Photo: Breakfast Conversations with CPI Supporters
@ Edmonton, AB**

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Tuesday morning saw Pamela to the airport to return to Winnipeg...before Patrick and Dave left for La Crete they met with Roy Berkenbosch, Professor Emeritus at King's University, and chaplain for World Renew, the Christian Reformed Church's counterpart of MCC. Discussion included the possibilities of cooperation with the Christian Reformed Church in SSA as well as the possibility of involving King's with the delivery of Pillar 3 on CAL Education goals at College/University levels for Long-distance courses on the APMI CAL Education Platform.



**Photo: Patrick with Roy
@ Edmonton, AB.**

Testimony of Faith, Technology and Business Enterprise

Dave and Patrick then left on the long seven-hour drive to La Crete, arriving late in the evening. On Wednesday they met with John Unger of La Crete Sawmills, an impressive operation opened in 1988 -- after Dave and Anne Harder, then the Chair of MCC, met with Leroy Fjordbotten, then the Minister of Lands and Forests, to get the La Crete Sawmills a timber berth. In 1988 Dave was the MCC Canada Director of Employment Development, and the large number of unemployed people in La Crete called for action, especially after the local forestry officials had refused John Unger's request for cutting rights for a sawmill in La Crete. The appeal to the Minister was successful, and when Unger started La Crete Sawmills, the welfare caseload in La Crete dropped from 65 to 5. Currently La Crete Sawmills employ 170 people and is by far the largest employer in La Crete and makes a huge contribution to the economic wellbeing of the community. In addition to the sawmill, John operates a large wood pelletizing plant that sells pellets worldwide. Patrick and Dave asked for a tour of the pelletizing plant to see if the pelleting process might be applicable to convert the huge amounts of invasive water hyacinth in Lake Victoria into fuel to replace the dwindling SSA forests, which are used as firewood. *"Could a business manufacturing water hyacinth fuel pellets use its profits to support education in SSA?"*

After the tour of the pelletizing plant, the group met in John's office to talk about education in SSA. Dave specifically requested John to consider a financial donation to support the Africa CAL Education program. On his part, Patrick expressed great appreciation of what John's leadership has achieved for the La Crete Community. He wondered whether John has considered an ethnographic interview and a researched publication on his business leadership and mission work.

Patrick sought further follow-up with John to enable the former to research on a thesis *"that many success stories of Anabaptist-Mennonite business leadership is a manifest embracement of Faith, Technology and Enterprise."* It was a good meeting and the duo asked John if he might think about the request for financial assistance to help grow the program in SSA. Then came the long trip back to Edmonton. Fortunately, there were two drivers.

... Below are photos of some of the business-line products that we were shown.



Photo: John Unger and Patrick
@ La Crete Office



Stock 1 - Yard of lumber logs



Stock 2 - Lumber packages
ready for shipment



Stock 3 - Packaged wood pellets

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Farewell Events: Martha's Gift of Hospitality - Food, BBQ, and Rich Conversations

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday were spent in planning and with meeting more CPI supporters, including Frieda Classen, the “mother” of CPI. The planning included two long meetings with Theo and Gloria Fumana to discuss programming in the DR Congo and French- speaking Africa and our partnership proposal to the MEDA-Mastercard Foundation.

This also marked the period in which Patrick was able discuss CAL Education over coffee sessions with several CPI members and supporters. Martha Hubert and Dave hosted a BBQ Dinner at their home for more than 25 people to bid farewell to Patrick. The gathering also featured a brief Q&A session with Patrick on Africa’s CAL Model and progress. He used the opportunity to express gratitude to supporters and friends of CPI. He appealed for their continued support to expand the CAL education program across Africa.



Photo: Wally, Dave and Patrick discussed WEB Integration



Photo: Frieda and Patrick @ Frieda's home



...Pictorials - Farewell BBQ and conversations!!



TO DONATE:- CPI is a registered charity and welcomes your donations. Tax receipts will be issued for all donations over \$20 in the next calendar year. (CRA#: 868063090RR0001)

Opt. 1) Send an e-transfer* to:
cpi.office.donations@gmail.com
 *Submit your mailing address in the message with the e-transfer to get a tax receipt.

Opt. 2) Send a cheque to:
 Canadian Peacemakers International
 P.O. Box 42123 Millbourne,
 Edmonton, AB, Canada T6K 4C4

Opt. 3) Visit canadahelps.org (fee charged, monthly giving can be arranged)
 Contact:
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