

SEEDS OF RADICAL EDUCATION AT THE COADY INSTITUTE

An Anthology of Personal Essays

EDITORS AND ESSAYISTS

natalie (natty) abdou

I am a community facilitator who for the last 15 years has connected with community-based organizations in the Middle East and North America, cocreating environments that are value-based, creative and embodied for learning that is holistic and healing. I first worked in community development in Yemen and Jordan doing advocacy and mine-risk education work with local grassroots and global lobbying organizations. I inadvertently ended up in the Youth Programs Coordinator position at the Coady International Institute in 2008 (a story here about track changes and many faulty applications just prior to this application — miracles do come from accidents sometimes!). New to Antigonish and the Coady, I quickly became immersed in and fell in love with the teachings of the Antigonish Movement, participatory learning, and collaborating with the broader community. I supported the growth of the Youth Programs at the Coady (2008-2011), then continued as an Associate, co-creating the *Skills for Social*

Change youth certificate (2012-2015), and later collaborating with David Fletcher and Sam Madesi in offering *Facilitation and Training Approaches for Community Change* (2015-2019). Concurrent to my time as an Associate, I completed the Master of Adult Education and Community Development degree at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), became immersed in the practices of Theatre of the Oppressed and InterPlay, and established Weaving Connections (a facilitation consultancy) — blending elements of creative, embodied and ancestral forms of transformative learning. I also collaborated with Branch Out Theatre and Bloom consulting and seeded lifelong connection and collaborations with groups in my ancestral home in Egypt. I was always so grateful to return to the Coady annually to cross-pollinate and learn alongside my colleagues and participants.

Sue Adams

The Coady International Institute came into my life when I was just a teenager. My family joined CUSO (Canadian University Service Overseas) with a posting to the Caribbean, and a pre-departure orientation for volunteers was held in Antigonish. Coady staff members Joe and Audrey Chiasson were kind and helpful advisors to my parents, and I was deeply inspired by what I learned about the work of the Coady. After two years in Jamaica, I was drawn back to Antigonish and to StFX for degrees in Science, Education, and eventually Adult Education. Captivated by this place, I found work as a library assistant at the StFX Library. Later, after completing a degree in Library and Information Science, I was delighted to become the librarian at the Coady. I was inspired by the opportunity to connect information work with its role in development. Fifteen wonderful years in the Marie Michael Library sped by and I passed responsibility for this work into the capable and experienced hands of Catherine Irving and

Cathy Sears. In retirement I've been able to contribute more of my time to local economic, social and environmental justice organizations, and to advocate for truth, peace and reconciliation with the Indigenous Peoples of this land. In all of these areas I'm especially grateful for the many lessons I learned from Coady participants and from other staff members over the years. As I recall an Egyptian participant saying, "I carry you in my heart."

Wilf Bean

My life has been filled with people and experiences teaching me deeply that life is a learning journey. Before the Coady, I lived 10 transformative years in the Northwest Territories working with Dene people as they struggled for their rights. I experienced profoundly how we are transformed through social movements and that it is an illusion to see ourselves as separate from the social, cultural, economic structures which create us, and which we in turn help shape. In my doctoral work at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, I was lucky enough to study with a group of committed social change academics — professors and fellow students — who challenged me to a deeper analysis. It was there where I met and studied with Paulo Freire, whose work continues to inspire me. At the Coady I found a home in the Moses Coady/Jimmy Tompkins tradition of adult education for social change. With others I helped design and facilitate introductory, community-building workshops and courses in adult education theory and training of trainers. I also facilitated and taught many overseas programs — again, experiences which changed me! After the Coady, I was director for several years at Tatamagouche Centre, a space for transformative learning for social justice individually, socially and spiritually. Now retired, I am involved in the Maritimes-Guatemala Breaking the Silence Network and locally in Sustainable Northern Nova Scotia, a community group that opposes the

exploration for gold in our local Tatamagouche watershed and attempts to point towards alternative, sustainable futures.

Colleen Cameron

My history with the Antigonish Movement began before I was born. My parents were married by Dr. Coady so growing up I was surrounded by stories of the Antigonish Movement, cooperatives and credit unions. It infused my DNA and set me on the path of working towards social justice and community wellbeing. My father started teaching at the Coady in 1961, and I had the opportunity to meet many people from around the world who inspired me at a young age to become a nurse and work in Africa. After living and working in Yemen, Ethiopia and Sudan, interspersed with studying, I returned in 1989 to teach at the Coady and in the School of Nursing at StFX. In my last three years, prior to retirement in 2016, I served as full-time Director of Education Programs at the Coady. I have Bachelor of Nursing and Master of Adult Education degree. My areas of teaching, research and writing have been focused on the social determinants of health, community development, gender, building resilient communities and community-driven health impact assessments. I became involved in the People Assessing Their Health (PATH) Network in 1997 and included the PATH process in the curriculum at the Coady. I have also assisted communities, both locally and internationally, in the PATH process to develop and use their own Community Health Impact Assessment Tool to assist in decision-making. I continue to be involved in a number of community-based, social justice organizations focusing on affordable housing, poverty reduction and food security.

Deborah (Debbie) Castle (Co-editor)

Trained as an adult educator, I now work as an organizational effectiveness

specialist. I facilitate groups who wish to explore their strengths and capacity for “doing the right thing” in their communities. I custom design unique learning interventions that respect the diversity within groups. As a founding partner in People Development Ltd. (www.pdltd.net), I have consulted with over a thousand groups since 1977, in more than 40 countries. Growing up in Nova Scotia, I knew about the work of the Extension Department, StFX, and the Coady Institute. My first contact with these institutions was while working in youth programming with Extension in the 1980s. I also completed the Master of Adult Education (MAEd) degree at StFX; then facilitated the StFX Diploma in Adult Education, and served on overseas assignments for the Coady in Indonesia and Egypt. In recent years I codesigned and cofacilitated certificate courses annually in *Learning Organizations and Change* and *Community Development Leadership by Women*. From 2012-2016, I coordinated a partnership project in Egypt that focused on Transparency and Accountability in Governance. I hold EdD and BPE, as well as the MAEd. My primary purpose is to inspire and reclaim the integrity and equality of human relationships within organizations so that people can thrive. I look back on my days at the Coady for the great gift of lasting friendships with development practitioners around the world.

David Fletcher (Co-editor)

It was at a bar overlooking the Benue River in northern Nigeria where I first learned about the Coady Institute. It was 1985 and I had just started my career as a community development facilitator. Five years later I joined the Adult Education Department at StFX to complete my Master’s degree, and then worked for over 20 years as a consultant, educator and activist in the Maritimes and on the African continent. During that time there were always threads connecting me to what was happening in Antigonish,

whether I was working in Nigeria, Zambia, the Gambia, Ethiopia, South Africa, or nearby in the Maritimes; or whether I was working in community health and nutrition, youth leadership, disaster management, rural development, anti-apartheid solidarity, or anti-racist education. In 2007, I joined the Coady full time as a senior program staff, became Director of Education Programs from 2009 to 2015, then stepped into leadership of the Building Resilient Communities theme area. While at the Coady, I also had the opportunity to lead numerous courses on campus (including the *Diploma Foundation, Gender and Power, Facilitation and Training Approaches for Community Change*) and to facilitate certificates in China, Ethiopia, Ghana, India and Kenya. I developed a special relationship with Ghana where I discovered some of my deep ancestral roots via my mother's Guyanese lineage. During this time, I completed my PhD focusing on community resilience with the Dagara people. In 2019, I decided to leave the Coady. I look forward to continuing to work in transformative learning, social justice and community change around the globe as a writer, educator and activist.

Olga Gladkikh (Co-editor)

As a training and facilitation specialist, I have over 30 years experience as an adult educator and development communications practitioner. I first learned about the Coady International Institute and the rich legacy of the Antigonish Movement while working the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation as a journalist in the 1980s. When I joined the Coady in 1987, I found a connection between my work as a journalist and the work of the social justice activists who attended its educational programs — we both sought the truth and spoke that truth to power. In my time at the Coady, my overseas work included training and consultancies with local, national and international NGOs in 21 countries in Asia, Africa, South Pacific, Caribbean, Europe and the Americas. I also served for 10 years as the

Director of Education Programs and developed and facilitated a wide range of courses and workshops in areas such as *Development Leadership, Communication for Development, Advocacy* and *Social Accountability*. Although I retired in 2016, I continue to contribute to social justice through my board involvements and facilitation work, and am frequently asked to consult on advocacy campaigns. I completed course work and research towards a PhD in Adult Education and hold a MA in Journalism, and a BA in Psychology. It is my honour to stand with so many Coady graduates, who I know as friends, who continue to advocate for social justice and human rights, often in the most challenging contexts.

Bernard Guri

I am a development practitioner with over 30 years of experience in agriculture and rural development. I have special interest in Indigenous Knowledge (IK), culture and sustainable development. My passion for IK motivated me to found the Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Organizational Development (CIKOD) in 2003 where I am currently Executive Director. In 2008, I met David Fletcher who introduced me to the Coady. He was visiting Ghana to explore the possibility of research into the Indigenous systems of the Dagara people of the Upper West region of Ghana where I come from. Subsequently I was invited by the Coady on its 50th anniversary to make a presentation on the work of CIKOD on indigenous knowledge and community development. This relationship eventually developed into a formal partnership between CIKOD and the Coady in 2011. David and I then codesigned and cofacilitated a course on *Community Based Natural Resources Management* and later *Building on Local and Indigenous Knowledges for Community Resilience*. We cofacilitated the course up to 2017. It is no longer offered. As part of the partnership, we codeveloped

and implemented a five-year program called Empowering Women through Economic and Leadership Training (EMPOWER), with three civil society organizations from Ghana, Ethiopia and Zambia. CIKOD and the Coady also jointly organized a capacity building program named the *African Learning Institute* for participants from West and East Africa in Ghana and Kenya respectively. I am also a cofounder of the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa and the Regional Coordinator of COMPAS Africa. I completed the Master of Development Studies degree and a Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Policy and Project Planning from the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague. I completed course work for a PhD in Development Studies in Ghana, but abandoned it due to my preoccupation with practical development initiatives on the ground.

Anuj Jain

Life has been a series of wonderful accidents, and my arrival at the Coady in 2010 was no different. I joined the non-governmental organizations sector in India in 1987 without fully realizing what that word meant, simply to avoid joining the corporate sector after my MBA. Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) became my learning ground with Dr. Rajesh Tandon as my mentor, where I also learned about adult learning pedagogy and participatory approaches (also thanks to Dr. Om Srivastava). The opportunity to work in the initial years of the Self-Help Group Movement of India came with CARE in 1991. This posting took me to work in Zambia and to the USA to learn from CARE's global portfolio of programs in the economic sector. These experiences expanded my horizons to work in multiple sector programs in CARE's Asia office in Bangkok, Thailand. Joining the Coady was driven by the urge to become an educator after 20 years in field implementation. The Coady became home for the next nine years, where I led the *Community Based Microfinance and Financial Inclusion*

certificate, a program with its roots in the Antigonish Movement. I also cofacilitated the *Foundation* course in *Diploma in Development Leadership*, and codesigned three new courses — *Rethinking Partnership*, *Inclusive Urban Economies*, and *Market Systems Development* (with Oxfam as a learning partner). It has been a privilege and fun working with fellow Coady educators on essays for this book, asking me to reflect on my own experience as an educator, sowing seeds of change and imagining a different world.

Janet MacDonald

I am a lifelong learner! After graduating from university, I took a break from my career to raise seven sons and became an active member of my community. I was a 4H Leader at the community, county and provincial levels teaching public speaking, judging, crafts and other skills to youth 11-18 years old. I attended the Christopher Leadership course in public speaking and Antigonish Community Education night classes. I returned to school to attend Nova Scotia Community College. While working at the Coady I completed several courses in Development Studies and Women and Gender Studies offered by St. Francis Xavier University. I also attended the Equitas International Human Rights Training Program. With the Student Services team at the Coady, we are responsible for recruitment, admissions, and student services. An important part of our role is to ensure participants have a well-rounded learning experience as valued members of the learning and larger community. As a member of the team, I had the opportunity to interact with participants who attended campus-based programs and those offered off-site and online. My time at the Coady has given me the opportunity to learn from women and men from around the globe who are passionate about making positive change in their communities. They have inspired me to be a more active citizen in my community. I was a member of the Coady Advisory Committee and the

StFX Equity Advisory Committee, Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association Board of Directors, and am a founding member of a Fortunate Families group formed to increase awareness of issues affecting the LGBTQ community. I also belong to a feminist choir. My time with Coady participants is such a gift. Each has shared their experience and passion with such generosity and has high expectations that we do the same.

Sam Madesi

I'm a conscientious and seasoned community development consultant with 18 years serving in both university and community settings. I'm adept in applied educational strategies and professional human development approaches and specializing in learner-centered educational pedagogy and citizen-driven development work. Throughout my teaching and learning career, I have developed a praxis in applied pedagogical and andragogical learning practices that creates a supportive, collaborative and interactive learning community. I'm a double graduate of the Coady International Institute and the Adult Education Department of St. Francis Xavier University with a Diploma in Community Development and a Master of Adult Education respectively. I joined the Coady Associates team in January 2006 and have since facilitated courses such as: *Advanced Adult Education for Participatory Development, Community Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding, Advocacy and Citizen Engagement, Gender Analysis for Planning, Facilitation and Training for Community Change, Cooperative Inquiries*, and supervised participants' independent research projects. I'm renowned for leading high-value project teams in matrixed institutions across different geographies and in organizations with various professional backgrounds. I cherish my experiences working in various countries in Africa, Asia and North America

as a lecturer, session instructor, facilitator, consultant, and coordinating multilateral cross border academic and community development programs.

Mary Ramsis

I am a facilitator and community development practitioner. With more than 20 years of diversified experience, I work with different community groups and grassroots organizations supporting them to discover their own power to lead change in their lives. I work with organizations for sustainable change through partnership strengthening and knowledge sharing. I am a 2011 Coady *Diploma in Development Leadership* graduate who experienced personal transformation through the program. I was influenced by the Coady's worldview of using adult education strategies for leadership and empowerment. I went on to do further research for a Master in Participation, Power and Social Change degree at the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex. This study, in addition to the Coady's reflective experience, inspired me to empower community groups using action research methodology to develop and appreciate their local knowledge. I am always learning, whether informally or formally, following my interests in leadership: advocacy, governance, conflict resolution and peacebuilding, learning organizations, gender analysis, partnership, adult learning, social accountability and power analysis. I also co-coordinated a partnership project involving Coady Grads in Egypt focusing on Transparency and Accountability in Governance, and as a research fellow helping pilot the Coady Connects platform. My experience at the Coady helps me to live and spread development values that put human beings at the heart of all the professional or volunteer work I do.

Emily Sikazwe

As an agronomist and adult educator, I have worked in community development since 1985, mostly in Zambia. However, my education as an advocate for social justice began when I was a child, through the examples of my mother and grandmother, who taught me that all are born equal; women and men. My relationship with the Coady was established through the United Church of Canada and Development and Peace Canada. In 2004, I joined the Coady as a student, partly to escape political persecution in my home country, leaving behind two children aged 12 and 14. My children are now both graduates of St. Francis Xavier University, and I also completed a Master in Adult Education degree at StFX in 2006. I joined the Coady in 2005 as an Associate to teach three certificates. I facilitated *Gender Analysis for Policy and Planning*, and cofacilitated *Advocacy for Citizen Engagement* and *Community Development Leadership by Women*. In 2018, 14 years after my initial contact with the Coady, I was informed via phone that my time with the Coady had come to an end. I will always treasure my association with the Coady, which served as a refuge in my time of need, and brought many rich and unique learning experiences in my time as a student and a facilitator. Above all, the Coady gave me friends and a new community of likeminded educators who will walk with me for a lifetime.

maureen st. clair

I am a community and relationship builder, artist, peace educator, activist and writer. Born and raised in Canada, with Grenadian citizenship, I have lived in Grenada, West Indies, for more than 25 years. The Grenada Revolution was an impetus towards finding my own path rooted in transformative popular adult education. I completed the Master of Adult Education degree at St. Francis Xavier University focusing on women's self and community transformation through participatory education. In 2004, I

was invited by the Coady to facilitate *Cooperative Inquiry Seminars*. For the next 15 years, I continued to facilitate various courses and workshops with the Coady such as *Women's Global Leadership for Change*, *Peacebuilding Workshops*, *Global Youth Leadership Program*, *Foundations in Leadership*, *Adult Education and Community Development*, and *the Community Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding* certifica

