



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Initiatives of Change  
International

Building trust across  
the world's divides

# MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP

## A year for resilience

When we welcomed 2020, we expected change and knew that great potential was ahead of us, both as a global organization and as a community of people passionate about making a difference. However, very few could have predicted just how much our lives would change because of COVID-19; the impact of something too small for the eye to see was felt, heard and seen across the world. Change came to us all, quickly, and affected us in ways that we will continue to see in years to come.

When we reflect on how the pandemic shaped our thoughts, feelings and actions in 2020, one word comes to mind: resilience. As a community and as individuals, like everyone else in the world, Initiatives of Change faced loss and challenges. But our shared commitment to values-based living strengthened. Our personal change became global change, as we all faced the same crisis.

When many retreated and withdrew, others reached deep inside their hearts, drawing strength from one another, and displayed incredible resilience. All for the purpose of being the change they wished to see in the world.



**Suresh Vazirani**  
President



**Imad Karam**  
Executive Director



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The [International Council](#) provides leadership to the global network in line with the goals of Initiatives of Change International and the decisions of the [annual Global Assembly](#).

# INITIATIVES OF CHANGE INTERNATIONAL

Initiatives of Change (IofC) began as a spiritual and social movement more than 80 years ago, drawing on the idea that, by applying guiding values of honesty, unselfishness, purity and love in daily life and being open to the divine spark within, anyone could help create a better society.

Today, IofC International is a donation- and grant-funded nonprofit organization, registered in Switzerland, which serves as the central hub for a global network of both national teams and individuals who are leading community-based initiatives. Our grassroots approach encourages local ownership and focuses on accompanying, strengthening and empowering individuals to be the change they want to see in the world.

## What is Initiatives of Change?

Initiatives of Change (IofC) International is a non-profit organization registered in Switzerland, existing to represent and advance the work of IofC globally. The 36 national teams and international programmes, which comprise its voluntary association membership, each operate autonomously, but work towards taking focused action in one, or more, of these areas:

**Trustbuilding:** Peace and social cohesion through trust and reconciliation.

**Ethical Leadership:** Leadership based on integrity, compassion and selfless service.

**Sustainable Living:** Economic justice and environmental sustainability.

Our starting point is that creative social change depends on personal change. Everyone can examine their lives and align their actions with the values of honesty, unselfishness, purity and love; thus 'being the change' they want to see in the world.

**Our Vision:** a just, peaceful and sustainable world to which everyone, responding to the call of conscience, makes their unique contribution.

**Our Mission:** to inspire, equip and connect people to address world needs, starting with themselves.

**Our Flagship Programme:** The International Trustbuilding Program which aims to build trust across the world's divides by developing ethical and trustworthy leaders at all levels.

IofC International works worldwide through a network of individuals, groups and organizations. We have special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the UN (ECOSOC), participatory status at the Council of Europe as well as a seat at the International Organization for Migration (IOM).



# GLOBAL INITIATIVES

## CREATORS OF PEACE

The **Creators of Peace (CoP)** women's initiative was launched in 1991 at the Initiatives of Change conference centre in Caux, Switzerland, by the Hon Anna Abdallah Msekwa of Tanzania, a respected politician and leader of her country's women's organizations.

CoP is now a global network of people working on different continents through Creators of Peace Circles, workshops, personal encounters, community building activities and international conferences. Creators of Peace Circles aim to transform, empower and engage women in peace creation and have taken place now in 50+ different countries around the world.

## FOUNDATIONS FOR FREEDOM

**Foundations for Freedom (F4F)** was initiated in 1993 as a programme of Initiatives of Change in the UK and works primarily in Eastern Europe. The initiative is now officially recognized as an international NGO registered in Ukraine since 2009.

Foundations for Freedom aims to foster the development of truly free, democratic and just societies, where people live in commitment to their values, in particular honesty and personal responsibility. Supporting the development of responsible leadership, as well as establishing honest and transparent relations between citizens and governmental structures, has become a central focus of the organization's work.

## INITIATIVES FOR LAND, LIVES AND PEACE

Initiatives for Land, Lives and Peace (ILLP) promotes peace through land restoration and community trustbuilding. This programme seeks to be the bridge between international organizations and local communities, connecting individuals to create opportunities for positive change for people, places and the planet. In 2011 and 2012, at the request of Luc Gnacadja, then Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, dialogues on land restoration took place as part of the Caux Forum for Human Security. This led to a formal request from UNCCD to partner with IofC on tackling this issue.

ILLP creates synergies between local and global solutions. Its experience and expertise on the ground, for example in Kenya and India, builds on the existing capacity of local IofC bodies to address the confluence of environmental degradation and conflict. It links this experience with global thought leadership, particularly through the annual **Caux Dialogue on Environment and Security (CDES)**, in collaboration with IofC Switzerland.

## FARMERS' DIALOGUE INTERNATIONAL

Since 1994, **Farmers' Dialogue International (FDI)** has been mobilizing farmers committed to the production of food for everyone's needs, responsible stewardship of natural resources and advocating for policies/processes that facilitate sustainable agriculture. It aims to reinforce the values that make farmers everywhere partners rather than competitors, no matter their age, gender or cultural background. FDI actively demonstrates the link between personal change and global change, with agricultural community development as a common goal.

# TRUSTBUILDING PROGRAM

The **Trustbuilding Program (TBP)** teams in Canada, France, and Kenya were faced with great challenges when the COVID-19 pandemic presented itself at the beginning of 2020. In order to continue their trustbuilding work, they adapted their in-person events to online formats.

Each TBP project is uniquely designed based on local needs. What connects them is not the model of delivery but the principles – the importance of the social capital of trust and of people connecting with each other in meaningful ways. Each project articulates these elements in a way which engages their participants. As the projects exchange experiences, they are able to learn from each other and develop.

The TBP organized **several online events** and created a **Knowledge Hub**, to continue the important sharing of knowledge and resources. The new **Global Alumni Initiative (GAIN)** persevered in 2020.



## CANADA

**'Working with the TBP in Canada this year has been life changing for me.'**

– Trustbuilding Program team member

At the start of the year, the team organized a **residential trustbuilding training** which was the beginning of creating a local cohort of trustbuilders. After the restrictions were implemented, the team went online to deliver an activity every two weeks for the cohort, convening workshops such as 'Biases and Privileges' with UENA Agency, and the 'Philosophical Community of Enquiry - What is trust?' in addition to one-on-one sessions and group sharing meetings. The second trustbuilding training weekend, initially intended to be residential, was delivered online through five weekly modules on compassionate listening and dialogue skills.

## FRANCE

The project in France, known as **Oui Act**, rolled out in different schools, to touch the lives of young people, many of whom come from an immigrant background. In addition to delivering the project in schools and inspiring **youth to set up civic projects**, the team organized sessions for mothers in collaboration with two partner organizations. These sessions provided mothers with tools to support their children in what they had learned in **Oui Act**. Since the beginning of the TBP, the project has reached 922 young people directly, exceeding their target of 500!

## KENYA

The team organized 20 events (online and in-person) over the course of the year, such as **interfaith dialogues** and **trustbuilding trainings** delivered in the target areas of Garissa and Mombasa. At Garissa University they organized a **history walk**, remembering the 2015 massacre that took place on campus. When in-person meetups had to be cancelled, the team was able to **pivot to online events** such as a learning session between Christian and Muslims on Ramadan, monthly online sessions for trustbuilders, a workshop on 'healing history', and an in-person Training of Trainers weekend.

## GLOBAL ALUMNI INITIATIVE - GAIN

GAIN (Global Alumni Initiative), kicked off 2020 with an alumni brunch in Richmond, USA. During the global meetup in Asia Plateau in India they organized an alumni reunion and hosted an alumni training in Nepal. **The team organized a variety of online activities:** a Caux Scholars Program (CSP) and GAIN Restorative Justice course, training in online facilitation tools, and alumni webinar series on careers in social change with the Peace & Collaborative Development Network (PCDN).

**In 2021, four new teams will join the TBP: Australia, Indonesia, Nepal and South Africa.**



# OUR GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Our teams and programmes aim to be inclusive of all people and perspectives; we do not discriminate based on sex, age, race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, religion, culture, or individual political opinions.

Everyone, everywhere, has a part to play and a story to tell.

## Independent Teams

- African Great Lakes
- Argentina
- Australia
- Austria
- Brazil
- Cameroon
- Canada
- Côte d'Ivoire
- Denmark
- Egypt
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Ghana
- India
- Indonesia
- Japan
- Kenya
- Lebanon
- Malaysia
- Netherlands
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- Norway
- South Africa
- South Korea
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Taiwan
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- UK
- USA

## International Programmes

- Creators of Peace (CoP)
- Farmers' Dialogues International (FDI)
- Foundations For Freedom (F4F)

Initiatives of Change International is a global network active in over 60 countries, with 36 independent and/or legal organizations, listed above, as well as numerous informal teams and personal initiatives.

## International Centres

Throughout the history of our organization, hospitality has played a pivotal role in helping to build bridges across the world's divides. We own and operate buildings and conference centres across the globe.



# WHERE CAN I FIND INITIATIVES OF CHANGE?

Take a look at our global reach, indicated in dark green, where Initiatives of Change is at actively at work in the hearts, minds, and hands of local communities. Want to connect with us? Reach out to your closest Initiatives of Change Centre or [get in touch today!](#)

## GREENCOAT PLACE London, United Kingdom

lofC's centre in central London is the hub for lofC UK's work in empowering refugees, building trust between and within communities, and promoting ethical leadership. Public events take place throughout the year.



## CAUX CONFERENCE AND SEMINAR CENTRE Caux, Switzerland

In 1946, around 100 Swiss individuals and families bought the Caux Palace and transformed it into an international conference centre for Initiatives of Change. Immediately after World War II, hundreds of French and German people met there, creating a solid ground for further reconciliation efforts in Europe. Over the years, Caux's work of reconciliation and trustbuilding has continued through its summer conferences.

## IKOYI CENTRE Lagos, Nigeria

The Ikoyi Centre has brought together more than 2,000 participants of various programmes since it opened its doors in 2013. The space is well equipped to host training for corporation staff, teachers and community groups, with its own library, office space and a small events hall.



## ASIA PLATEAU Panchgani, India

Some 4,000 people attend programmes at Asia Plateau in India's western hills every year. Created in 1967, the lofC centre runs training courses in character development for people in industry, government, the armed forces and NGOs, as well as for school and university students and for families. Its rural development and environmental centre, Grampari, teaches communities to protect their water sources, reduce and manage waste, and to farm sustainably.



## ARMAGH Melbourne, Australia

Since 1956, the Australia-Pacific Centre for Initiatives of Change in Melbourne has hosted lofC conferences, events and training courses, notably the Life Matters workshops which draw participants from all over the Asia Pacific region. Indigenous Australians often contribute their culture, spirituality and stories to programmes at Armagh, which is situated on the land of the Wurundjeri nation.



# WHAT CAN I DO?

## Be the change

Initiatives of Change has a distinctive approach to generating change, which is rooted in our shared values of honesty, unselfishness, purity, and love. We believe that each person has the capacity to:

### REFLECT

An honest look at one's own motives and behaviour is where change begins. By placing people at the centre of our approach, and by linking personal change with global change, we believe that we can create sustainable impact built off of commitment and conviction.

### LISTEN

Honest conversation, undertaken in an open spirit, builds bridges of trust and community between people of similar, different, and even antagonistic, backgrounds. These enable healing, partnership and common action.

### ACT

We seek to strengthen the foundations of society and to bring healing where there is conflict. Use the insights gained from reflection to discern the next steps, consider volunteering for one of our initiatives, and/or sign up for one of our events to find your opportunity for action when personal change leads to global change.

### VOLUNTEER

Until the turn of the century, our operations were carried out entirely by volunteers, and that is still a large part of how our work continues today. Our teams rely on volunteers to advance the mission and provide support in their communities.

Tens of thousands of hours have been given in the spirit of service, by passionate and caring individuals like you. If you have time and talents you would like to give, then please reach out to us!



### DONATE

When you give to IofC, you are directly supporting change at work. Your gift enables our programmes and initiatives across the globe. Our teams are working tirelessly in their local communities to carry out the mission of IofC, and every donation provides them with the necessary resources to support their efforts. **Donate today to support change in action!**

### PARTNERSHIPS

Initiatives of Change International recognizes that change cannot occur in a vacuum. Partnerships across sectors and between organizations ensure that we can address societies needs in a more holistic and inclusive manner. Contact us if you're interested in partnering for change!

- Fetzer Institute
- Guérard-Hermès Foundation for Peace (GHFP)
- Spirit of Humanity Forum
- Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers

### AFFILIATIONS

As a part of the desire to inspire change at all levels, Initiatives of Change International seeks out relationships with like-minded organizations with an international focus. As an organization, we are actively engaged with:

- United Nations Economic and Social Council (Special Consultative)
- Council of Europe (Participatory Status)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM)



**SITIO SÃO LUIZ**  
Petropolis, Brazil

Sitio São Luiz, the conference and training centre of Initiatives of Change in Latin America, was acquired through the sacrifice of many people in 1965 and has offered a range of programmes and events over the years.

# OUR COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

No matter your age, income, or culture, if you believe in the power of honesty, unselfishness, purity, and love, then you have a community to support you in tough times.

In what turned out to be an exceptional year, the members of our global community found themselves unable to live, work, and play as they had previously. This also meant that physical gatherings where listening, sharing, and healing occurred had to cease for, in some cases, the duration of 2020. So, as an organization whose aim is to support and facilitate personal change, we changed our methods to accommodate our members and our mission.

Local, regional, and international events pivoted to serve the community through virtual gatherings. Supporting each other, as a group and as individuals, was our priority and resulted in the following initiatives:

## ILISTEN

iListen is the virtual version of the lofC practice of 'quiet time', an open invitation for participants to reflect on their lives and seek inspiration. This safe and inclusive space, where everyone can share what's on their heart, gives a chance to receive encouragement from others and help discern what changes may be needed in one's life. Initially developed in English, iListen gradually expanded to offer sessions in French, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic and Hindi.

## LIVING HISTORY

Living History – Across Generations is based off of the Human Library concept created by two brothers in Copenhagen, and aims to connect people with the unique life stories and 'lessons learned' of those who have been involved in the organization for many years. Participants have the opportunity to engage with changemakers from across the globe and gain practical knowledge that can be applied to their personal journey as an advocate for change.

## BUILDING TRUST IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Unprecedented circumstances caused a ripple of disruptions to our daily lives and people became more stressed and afraid as trust reached a critical low point during the pandemic. In response, we offered a series of webinar style events featuring Rajmohan Gandhi, Jessie Sutherland, Suresh Vazirani and Shakiyla Smith, who shared their stories and reflected on how we can individually and collectively build trust in difficult times.

## THE IOFC HUB

The Initiatives of Change Hub took place from 20 July for three weeks, following the online Caux Forum events. Its aim was to enable the global community to share and connect through their common values, in order to discover how to make the best contribution to the welfare of humanity. A wide range of discussions, talks, films, trainings, music and other artistic events took place, at varying times, and led by people active with lofC across the world.



# 2020 FINANCES

## Thank You!

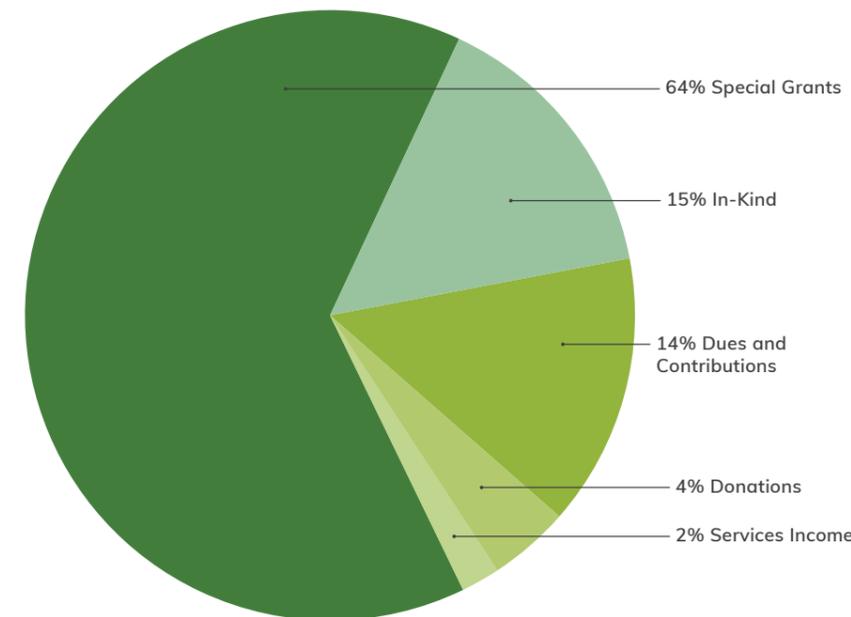
Initiatives of Change could not continue its work without the countless individuals, on all continents, who have committed themselves to be the change they want to see in the world. From the very beginning, our people and programmes have been supported by generous individuals – who have given accommodation, financial resources, or time – because they are inspired by our mission and our people.

We are grateful to all those who have contributed towards creating a lasting, positive impact. Thank you to everyone – past, present, and future – who has supported our vision!

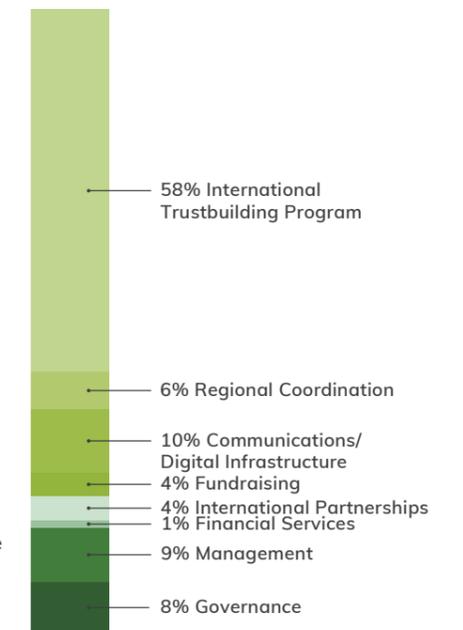
## ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES

Operational spending summary

### INCOME



### EXPENSES





Initiatives of Change  
International



Showing compassion and understanding during this extraordinary time gives us an opportunity to remember each other's faiths. We are all humans regardless of our faith.

Sister Evelyne, Trustbuilding Program - Kenya

[www.iofc.org](http://www.iofc.org)

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