THE INTERNATIONAL TRUSTBUILDING PROGRAM IMPACT REPORT 2019-2020

Building trust across the world's divides
I humbly took on the position of Program Manager of the Trustbuilding Program in July 2019. In the short time since then, the world has drastically changed. The global pandemic has revealed cracks in our relationships and systems – locally and worldwide. The time is ripe to build trust across the world’s divides.

The work of Initiatives of Change International (IofCI) draws on over eight decades of trustbuilding and peacebuilding work, demonstrating tremendous commitment and tenacity despite the challenges. The work of IofCI to build trust is clearly of critical importance – perhaps now more than ever.

The work of trustbuilding is highly challenging. We all know it is easy to break trust and much more difficult to re-build it. This is true especially when that trust involves not only networks of peoples, but systems, policies and practices embedded in our institutions. The world needs what IofCI endeavors to offer. This is where the Trustbuilding Program (TBP) comes in.

The TBP has come a long way since its conception in 2018. After two years of careful planning and researching, IofCI established the Program in June 2019, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). The Program brings together the best of our expertise to situations where there is conflict or tension.

The last year has been a journey of learning, developing and empowering local IofCI teams and communities where they work to overcome divisions, and to build social cohesion and equitable societies based on the transformation of individuals.

I want to express our deepest thanks to our principle partner, the Fetzer Institute, our project teams and committed volunteers for going above and beyond in making the TBP a reality.

I am proud to share with you our 2019/2020 Impact Report, which consolidates our results and projects of year 1 of the Trustbuilding Program. We look forward to continuing our work to bring trust and healing to divided communities around the world.

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WHY TRUST

At a time of increasing fragmentation, trust is diminishing around the world. Communities face racial and religious divides, inter-generational conflict, the rise of extremist attitudes, as well as social divisions and the legacy of war.

The concepts and tools we use in the TBP support efforts to overcome racial, ethnic, class and religious divisions, and to build social cohesion and equitable communities. The Program illustrates critical components for real dialogue, trust building and healing.

“Building trust is the essential foundation for building healthy communities. I believe social action and legislation without accompanying changes in individual lives and relationships are unlikely to be effective over the long haul. The most-needed reforms in our communities require levels of political courage and trust-based collaboration that can only be achieved by individuals who have the vision, integrity, and persistence to call out the best in others and sustain deep and long-term efforts.” — Rob Corcoran

Start with yourself

Those of us who are impatient for change need a consistent set of values that are reflected in our personal lives and our public actions. Without this, there is loss of coherence and breakdown of trust. How can we ask others to make costly and courageous choices if we are not prepared to look in the mirror and put our own house in order? Put simply, we must model the change we expect of others.

Engage everyone in honest conversation

Open and inclusive dialogue is at the heart of trust building. In honest conversations, all stakeholders come to the table and remain engaged. The unflinching self-examination increases our ability to discern underlying factors and concerns. Identifying underlying issues and creating safe spaces for formal or informal dialogue, where participants can listen deeply to others and ask themselves hard questions, is crucial in uniting divided communities. This deep dialogue moves individuals from simply an exchange of information to an experience of transformation.

Acknowledge history

An essential part of the trust building process is understanding the power of history and memory in shaping community narratives. Acknowledging historical wounds and honoring different stories are necessary steps in creating new shared narratives and building movements to address legacies of inequity. The ability to appreciate shared history and to view the story from the standpoint of the other side is a key to creating a new narrative.

Build a diverse team

A team working effectively for broad community change is constantly expanding its circle and building collaborative networks that transcend the usual boundaries of politics, class, ethnicity, and geography. Diverse teams composed of representatives of all sectors create the most effective force for change. A team promoting trust must demonstrate authentic relationships in its daily life.
TRUSTBUILDING PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In 12 months, we have built, whilst operating, a complex program which delivers projects in multiple countries. Much has been achieved in this short time; from establishing the Delivery team, the Program Steering Group, a structure and policies, to implementing powerful activities in targeted communities whilst developing the capacity of local IofC teams.

- Established the Program’s structure: the PSG and Planning Committee
- TBP started, partnership with the Fetzer Institute
- Program launched
- Delivered a 4-day training on the TBP’s methodology to the international group of 17 trainers
- Hosted a public event in London with South African trustbuilder Letlapa Mphahlele to explore the role of trustbuilding in collective healing and peacebuilding
- Delivered evaluation capacity building training for the Kenyan, French and Canadian teams
- Program team recruitment finalised
- TBP project & international team participated in ‘Towards a Humane World’ conference, India
- Established a process to deliver projects in three additional countries in January 2021
- Implementation of projects in Canada, Kenya and France began
- Launched ‘Building Trust in times of crisis’ webinar series featuring trustbuilders from around the world
- GAIN Program started
- COVID-19 adaptation plans in motion
- End of year 1 of the TBP

To date, the TBP has reached 1,318 people directly

2019 JUNE JULY SEPT OCT NOV 2020 JAN FEB APRIL MAY JUNE

2,312 Volunteer hours at the international level

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“There are more than seven billion of us in the world, but only one race. We constructed a different concept of race, developed during genocides and colonization. We have to deconstruct this idea.”
— Marie-Iris Légaré, Human Rights and Youth Rights Commission (Quebec, Canada)

75% targeted outputs Kenya project has achieved so far

75% targeted outputs Canada project has achieved so far

85% targeted outputs France project has achieved so far

“Our Trustbuilding Program brings the unlikely together in a journey to heal historical wounds and charter a common narrative”.
— Imad Karam, Executive Director IofC International
The goal of the project team in Canada is to diminish stresses over language, culture, immigration, and treatment of aboriginal people in Quebec.

“The training helped raise my own awareness, initiate personal change and strengthen my understanding of indigenous rights, histories, and reconciliation.” — Trustbuilding training participant

Why is there a lack of trust?

Canada’s multiculturalism has created a diverse country, but not without political, social and societal challenges such as racial tensions arising out of ignorance and fear, xenophobia, and religious acts of violence. The Province of Quebec is a microcosm of the wider Canada, with the added complexity of identity, nationalism, linguistic difference, illegal immigration, religious tensions, and the long-standing history of oppression and colonization of Canada’s first peoples.

The way that Europeans have treated first nation people since their arrival has left generations with trauma and negative impacts on their lives, livelihoods, languages, culture and spirituality. The deep wounds inflicted are still a source of social stigmas and strained relationships resulting in increased systemic marginalisation of the indigenous peoples. The discrimination and mistreatment have not changed with the passing years.

Tragedies like the 29 January 2017 mass shooting at a Quebec City mosque, previous political attempts to implement legislation limiting immigration and current legislation presented by the CAQ (Coalition Avenir Québec) Government limiting the wearing of religious symbols, highlight the existence of deep-rooted mistrust and intolerance in Quebec.

The trustbuilding project comes at a key moment in Quebec (and Canadian) history concerning the rise of Islamophobia and discrimination against indigenous, black and ethnic communities. The conversations that have happened and activities delivered respond to a need for a deeper understanding and better tools to hold spaces for those conversations to happen throughout society.

Impact in Quebec

Information Session

The first public event, the Information Session, was held in Montreal on 8 October. It explored the roots of distrust in Quebec and international methods of trustbuilding that could be contextualised for the local situation. A diverse group of 40 people attended, coming from interfaith and peacebuilding organizations, academia, government, business and the arts.

Round Table

On 7 December, the team organised a round table in downtown Montreal, exploring the question ‘How does racial discrimination manifest in Quebec?’ Close to 50 people gathered for this launch of the trustbuilding project.

The event played a unique role in getting a diverse group of participants and speakers together to address the issue of racial discrimination, filling a gap between initiatives from academics and activists.

Panellists shared their vision for racial justice and equality, and laid the groundwork for discussion amongst participants. In the afternoon, participants took part in ‘Privilege walk’ exercise - as an experiential activity that highlights how people benefit or are marginalised by systems in our society.

Throughout the project, these dialogues serve as the foundation for training leaders from diverse sectors of society to work towards healing the social and historical divides in Quebec.

The first trustbuilding residential workshop

During the weekend of 6-8 March, 14 people came together to connect with, and form a group of local trustbuilders, that started the collaboration process of bridging Quebec’s identified divides: racial, colonial, and linguistic (French/English). The group consisted of people from diverse backgrounds, Euro Quebecois people, a Muslim Moroccan recent immigrant, an Innu woman and a pastor of a Seventh Day Adventist Church originally from DRC, among others.

Participants shared that the weekend helped them raise their own awareness and initiate personal change. They appreciated learning about the situation around Canada’s history and those of the indigenous people.

5 key trustbuilding events

614 volunteer hours

14 key community leaders from different sectors equipped with trustbuilding tools

“The training helped strengthen my understanding of indigenous rights, histories, and reconciliation.” - Participant
The end of 2015, youth violence escalated in France and lasted several weeks as a result of this mistrust and lack of understanding with the police and institutions.

Radicalisation occurs due to youth’s unease, frustrations or failures in their own lives. They reject the society that makes them feel like victims and have chosen to confront this in a violent way. The desire to confront society can lead to radicalisation; several hundred young people have left France to join Daesh in Syria.

In Paris, these problems often occur with young people living in parts of the city identified as: ‘Zones d’éducation prioritaire’, defined by the government as areas with poverty and social problems.

Impact in Paris

The Oui Act project aims to reconcile young people with society through its core activity of delivering 13 trustbuilding workshops (one per week) in schools; it provides a rare opportunity for police, business leaders and authorities to connect with marginalised youth in the suburbs of Paris. Youth are empowered to express themselves and to develop critical thinking skills in order to find their place in society.

Workshop on racism

An example of one of the 13 sessions is on the topic of racism and discrimination. The idea is to help youth who have been deeply affected by racism to understand the mechanisms of discrimination, racism, and exclusion.

The workshop starts with a photo language activity: on a table are photos of people from diverse ethnicities, cultures, backgrounds, faiths. Students are asked to ‘imagine that you are in a train - who don’t you want to sit next to and why?’ The activity allows students to face and explore concepts of prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination. With this bigger picture in mind, the group is invited to share their personal experiences. ‘Have you been discriminated against? Have you discriminated others?’ and ‘Have you witnessed discrimination?’ Most students believe they have little influence in these matters. But a core part of the project is to empower students so that they believe they have a role in...
Meeting police

One of the key parts of Oui Act is restoring the link between youth and authority. A police officer is invited into the classroom to have an open conversation with the students and they have the chance to ask the officer anything they want. This session is a unique opportunity for these young people, since the relationship between youth and law enforcement is often put to the test by tensions, mutual prejudices and a lack of understanding on both sides.

Civic projects

At the end of the 13 weeks, the young participants are asked to develop a citizenship project that serves their local community. For example, a group of students created a school club to tackle racism and another made a video against homophobia. Another class opted to collect food for an organisation which support local people in need. They created posters to display in their school, set up a collection spot and gathered over 80 items for the organisation. These are just some of the projects that students are setting up and rolling out.

Taking ownership of the design and execution of these projects enables students to develop the skills to address the problems and injustices in their communities, so they don’t feel passive or dismissive about the social organizations around them. Such activities are an important part of making civics real for students and prepares them for their roles as citizens.
KENYA PROJECT

The project team in Kenya addresses the divisions between Christians and Muslims in Garissa and Mombasa.

“Most of the time the conflict between Muslims and Christians is caused by our pride, ignorance, and lack of knowledge in understanding the different religious cultures, as well as biased interpretation of the same information. For example, scriptures from the Bible and the Quran. We need to remember that humanity should always come before religion.”

— Dan Mugera, Program Manager Kenya

Why is there a lack of trust?

In Kenya, the team is active in two regions that differ from each other in the level of tensions. In Garissa, among the challenges is the breakdown of trust between Muslims and Christians, largely due to radicalism. There is a lot of tension between both groups, especially after three teachers were killed in January 2020.

Garissa is predominantly inhabited by Kenyan Somalis; it has the third largest refugee population in the country. Terrorism, firearms, and human trafficking are among the threats perceived by Kenya’s government along the border with Somalia. Various terror attacks have happened in the region causing deaths, fear and mistrust. People from other parts of Kenya, especially those who are not Muslim, have rejected employment opportunities in the area for fear of attack. The attack on Garissa University by Al-Shabab in April 2015 is a recent painful memory.

In Mombasa, the tensions are different and not as visible as in Garissa. People are receptive and ready to go out and engage with youth to talk about the issues of radicalization. Mombasa is a predominantly Islamic region with Swahili and Mijikenda people predominant.

Over the centuries, many immigrants and traders have settled in Mombasa, particularly from the Middle East, Somalia, and the Indian sub-continent. Radicalization of young people into terror groups has been on the rise, which has affected the tourism sector, which in turn has led to an economic slowdown and idle youth who become vulnerable to drug abuse, gangs and crime.

The TBP in Kenya is addressing these long-standing oppositions in the divided communities: fear from recent terrorist attacks in Garissa and vulnerability to radicalization in Mombasa, Kenya.

Impact in Kenya

The Kenyan team has organized several trustbuilding workshops and dialogues:

Team capacity building

On 11-13 October, eight men and eight women, mostly trainers from different IofC programs, learned additional skills to support their work on the ground. With this being the first national program in Kenya, a core part of the training was building the capacity in dialogue facilitation, trustbuilding theory and skills geared towards bringing conflicting communities/groups together.

Interfaith dialogue Garissa

On 26 October, the first interfaith dialogue and outreach activity was held in Garissa, with 33 participants (16 Muslims and 17 Christians). The four-hour dialogue had profound learnings and insights for the whole group, one being that conflict has been experienced even between tribes that share the same faith. Economic and cultural aspects have also led to differences that precipitated a crisis that people of other faiths were unaware of. For example, some participants felt that a Muslim of Somali origin is treated differently from a Muslim or a convert of Kenyan origin.

Trustbuilding activities Mombasa

On 8 November, there was an outreach at Mombasa Baptist High School in the form of a soccer match, with 36 participants of both faiths. Sport is a powerful tool for unity.
Before the game started, Joseph Wainaina told his story of how he transformed his eagerness for revenge towards an opposing ethnic group into his work for reconciliation.

An interfaith dialogue was held at Royal Castle Hotel on 9 November with participants from Mombasa. There was a discussion about the wounds that have been created, how they surface, and how the group can look to the future together.

**Trustbuilding activities in Garissa**

On 1-2 February, the team conducted the first ever history walk at Garissa University, where 148 students were brutally massacred by terrorists in April 2015. The walk passed the locations at the campus where these cruel actions took place, acknowledging history and remembering those that had passed.

**Online activities**

As COVID-19 prohibited in-person meetings, the team took their activities online:

- Interfaith prayers and sharing with groups from both target locations.
- Reflection and learning sessions between Christian and Muslims from Garissa and Mombasa.
- Sharing group for female students of Somali background from Garissa University, with Amina Khalid, Program Manager of IoC UK’s Sustainable Communities Program, providing mentoring for young female Muslim trustbuilders and sharing challenges and ideas.
- A virtual workshop on ‘Healing history’.

**14 key trustbuilding events**

**178** people have gained enhanced capacity and awareness of interfaith issues and deepened relations between different faiths

**80** participants equipped with tools and skills to conduct trustbuilding work in Mombasa and Garissa

**85** youth participated in an interfaith dialogue in Mombasa, the first time they attended such an event

“We walked through the classes and hostels where the students were massacred, and concluded our walk at the memorial garden with a reflective healing circle as participants and facilitators pledged to stay committed to building trust with people of different faiths. The Trustbuilding Program is a powerful tool that is helping this community of different faiths strive not only to live peacefully with each other, but also to trust each other.” — Dan Mugera, Project Manager
A DAY OF TRUSTBUILDING
BUILDING TRUST IN MOMBASA

On 5 and 7 March the Kenyan Trustbuilding Program team held an outreach, a dialogue, and a two-day workshop in Mombasa. What did they learn during their time together?

Outreach

33 Christian and Muslim students from Mombasa Aviation Training Institute gathered to discuss unconscious bias and stereotypes. Students asked questions and spoke about topics such as: clothing of Muslim people, family values and interfaith romantic relationships. The experience was a first for many to share in a safe, and open space.

Interfaith Dialogue

A two-hour interfaith dialogue took place at Koblenz social hall attended by 85 young people, of which the majority Muslim, with 12 Christians. The topic was trust (self, family, community and nation) and many questions arose about whether people really trust each other despite living peacefully together. This was a powerful dialogue that the audience agreed needs to continue.

Workshop

20 participants (10 Muslim and 10 Christians participants, plus an Imam and a Pastor) were selected from the previous dialogue that took place in November 2019 to join a Trustbuilding workshop. The two-day workshop was delivered in line with the Trustbuilding Manual.

Two modules were covered:

Change start with self

TBP Communications Officer & Trainer, Mike Muikia explained: ‘We looked at how to connect personal and social change. One exercise was around values - we asked participants to choose their top three values and share it with the group. Then we mapped the cohort and looked at what connections, opportunities and experiences each participant can contribute to local trustbuilding. Who are we? What do we bring to the table? What actions can we each take? It was a powerful day’.

Healing wounds of history

Day two started with a recap, a story of personal change and showing the documentary The Imam and the Pastor. An Affinity group exercise featured participants in their religious groups, with one group sitting in an inner circle discussing while the other group observed and listened without interrupting. They discussed two questions:

What have we done in our group that has contributed to the division that our community is facing?

What would we like to hear from the other group in order to begin to rebuild trust?

A historian came to explain how faith communities have always coexisted, and the cause of issues that have led to the current situations; specifically related to economy, human migration and conflicts. The group created local and international timelines that catalysed conflicts and how human relationships were affected.

After all the exercises there were reflection and healing circles, where participants shared what they felt, what they learned and what they were going to do. It concluded to be a profound weekend.
GLOBAL ALUMNI INITIATIVE (GAIN)

GAIN connects alumni from different IofC USA programs - The Caux Scholars Program (Caux and Asia Plateau), and the Community Trustbuilding Fellowship to the Trustbuilding Program and IofC network.

IofC USA’s Global Alumni Initiative (GAIN) launched in early 2019 to uplift the voices of our alumni by supporting their work, initiatives, and projects. The program’s goal is to build a collaborative community of IofC-trained international alumni who, rooted in their personal values, diversity of experience and perspective, professional skills and work across different local and regional contexts, can make up a global movement of changemakers.

GAIN stands for equity and equality, social justice, intersectionality, and the radical transformation of all forms of oppression through courageous action.

GAIN offers different forms of engagement to its alumni such as skill refreshers, small-grant projects, reunions, networking opportunities and more both online and in person. The program also connects alumni to the Trustbuilding Program and other IofC projects, a form of intranetwork weaving which will be intensified in year 2 of the TBP.

Alumni Mapping

To facilitate connections within the alumni network, GAIN initiated a web-based alumnus mapping. The data application identifies nodes of geographic and high-energy alumni presence which facilitates the connection among alumni across programs and cohorts, and between them and the TBP project countries. The mapping application is currently private, and a second phase of the project is under development.

Alumni Encounters: Migration & Joyful Resistance

To kick-off 2020, GAIN hosted an alumni brunch in Richmond, Virginia, for the USA-based alumni. The brunch was part of WAVES 2020, an event series which explored the complex layers of migration and how our human stories interlink. The event lifted up the creative systems of resistance and resilience, such as food and music, marginalized individuals and communities have developed throughout the years to be able to survive to past and current enslavement, (neo)colonization, and expatriation.

GAIN in India and Nepal

In February 2020, GAIN organized an alumni reunion in IofC India’s centre at Asia Plateau and hosted an alumni training in Nepal. The training on Heart-Centered Approaches to Peacebuilding, co-facilitated by Bruna Kadletz (Brazil), focused on humanizing migrants and the need to see the other in ourselves to build empathy and recognize our interconnectedness.

Both activities brought together 10 alumni from Nepal and members of partnering organizations, exemplifying the growth approach of the network.

“Ubuntu is about unity and harmony within our community. Where people care for each other and look out for each other, as if they were part of a great family.” — Tu’x Ka Binex, CSP

GAIN Alumni Needs Assessment

A community of changemakers can only thrive when the voice of its members guides the goals of the program. That is why GAIN conducted the first of a series of needs assessments to hear the voices of our alumni. 192 people, 20% of our alumni, responded to the survey.
Narrative change: How can we create new shared narratives to promote social justice and maintain equitable policies and maintain equitable impacts?

How can we maintain the status quo of cultural wounds and their legacy?

www.iofc.org/trustbuilding-program

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