

# 2020

## ANNUAL REVIEW

**INSPIRING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES WORLDWIDE  
WITH A COMMITMENT TO RESILIENCE**



**FOCUSING  
INITIATIVES**  
INTERNATIONAL









## Letter from the Directors

***What a year!*** 2020 was a turning point for Focusing Initiatives International.

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged us all to cope with loss and repeated lockdowns for communities around the globe. Everyone has had to find new ways to be with a changed reality. Since most of our events and programs once took place in person, we knew that we would have to move quickly to connect in new ways.

Thanks to your encouragement and support, a 400% increase in small donations, we conceived and launched CoronaPlaza.LIFE - an online platform connecting communities all over the world. This has allowed us to expand our reach farther than ever before.

Wishing you good health and safety,



Melinda Darer



Patricia Omidian



# 2020: The Year of the Global Pandemic: Crisis and Opportunity!



Because of travel restrictions, gathering constraints, stay-at-home orders and other precautionary measures, we suspended most of our training, programs, conferences and retreats. Yet, people's desire to feel safe, connected and 'in community' grew dramatically. We realized people needed to find their resiliency and interact with each other even more than before the pandemic - but how could we enable that to happen?

*Our response was to launch CoronaPlaza.LIFE in March of 2020 in just three weeks.*

This was a "game-changer." Like the plazas of Europe, it provides an open space for people to come together: to meet, talk, share ideas, teach and learn.

CoronaPlaza enables community workers, counselors, medical workers, and professionals to share their wealth of experiences and learn from each other. Our international colleagues' workshops on CoronaPlaza.LIFE allowed people to explore community wellness activities, self-care, personal growth, creative arts, healing through movement, social justice issues, and the practice of Focusing in one-time online workshops and in multiple-session courses.

In total, there have been:

- 400 free on-line events
- 3000 participants
- 80 international volunteer teachers

# Initiatives

Our activities fall into different initiatives, each aligned with our mission. Some are quite universal in nature, while others are more specific. Many are launched in response to particular events or needs.

## Psychosocial Support and Community Wellness



Psychosocial Support and Community Wellness is one of our oldest Initiatives and is the cornerstone for much of our other work. We offer support, training and mentoring to front-line workers in communities stressed because of war, epidemics, and other disasters. By respecting each unique situation in its particular cultural context, our approach enables communities to discover their specific "right way" forward.

Based on over 30 years of international field experience, our heart-centered approach to Psychological First Aid (PFA) blends self-care with techniques for engaging communities in self-discovery that lead to individual and collective healing and resilience. Important components include:

- deepening the listening process at each step
- helping communities find their own solutions and paths to resilience
- self-care for responders and supervisors as they work in community
- discovering how a mind/body technique like Focusing can enhance empathy and resilience

In 2020, we expanded our online courses, targeting humanitarian workers and those wanting to learn wellness tools for themselves, their families and their communities.



# Wholebody Focusing

Wholebody Focusing offers a simple and powerful method for connecting us with ourselves and with one another, in harmony with our environments and life situations. The structure of this practice recognizes the underlying wisdom of human connection and relationship as a vehicle for healing and social change. It offers an experiential background field of support for community-based initiatives.

Since its inception, Focusing Initiatives International has included Wholebody Focusing, a key initiative offering in-person and webinar-based training, retreats, and conferences. We have offered monthly online community listening spaces for years, predating the pandemic crisis. This positioned us to move seamlessly into 2020 and continue to hold virtual gatherings.

## Social Justice

Our new Social Justice initiative, begun in 2020, is led by Soul Force Education. It provides diversity and equity strategic planning and leadership development, organizational training and educational services, and social change research gathering, facilitation, and analysis. Soul Force carries forward Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's vision of the beloved community. Dr. King wrote: "We shall match your capacity to inflict suffering by our capacity to endure suffering. We shall meet your physical force with soul force." This only happens through change that inspires inclusive cultures and equitable policies.

This initiative's leaders are passionate about helping others unlock the strategic benefits of organizational equity, diversity, and inclusion, presenting webinars internationally.



**SOULFORCEEDUCATION**  
BY FOCUSING INITIATIVES INTERNATIONAL



## RESILIENCE INITIATIVES

A JOURNAL OF FOCUSING INITIATIVES INTERNATIONAL



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# Resilience Initiatives

Our journal, *Resilience Initiatives*, emerged as an outcome of our workbook: *Reaching Resilience: A Training Manual for Community Wellness Focusing*, a collection of community articles and wellness activities. We recognized that people all around the world were doing wonderful, healing work in communities using their own practical, life-transforming tools and approaches. So we created the journal to provide a forum for them to share their work in a simple and easy-to-follow format, making them practical, accessible, and adaptable by front-line mental health workers throughout the world.

Our 2020 issue was the third one in the series, with articles such as "Dynamic Facilitation in Kenya", "Healing Through Art", "Who Will Care for the Caretakers?", "Focusing as Radical Inclusion", by authors from England, Greece, Lebanon, Pakistan, Spain, and the United States.

These professional accounts and creative activities applied the wisdom of body-based practices like Focusing to address a community's needs.

# Indigenous Focusing Oriented Therapy

This ground-breaking program, created by Shirley Turcotte, has been associated with Focusing Initiatives International since 2014. It offers healing work on complex trauma grounded in land-based Indigenous philosophy and community healing. Because this initiative uses a humanistic, person-centered approach to healing, it has been especially well-received. This reflects the core values of respect and non-interference, honors local traditions, and is extremely helpful in the face of collective cultural and economic genocide to bring healing to individuals, families, schools and communities.

Participants have included counselors, social workers, crisis teams, healers, therapists, doctors, nurses and teachers. Many work in or with public and private agencies, hospitals, community mental health centers, and educational settings, coming from various cross-cultural situations.

Because of the pandemic, rather than meeting in person, teachers, staff and participants met during 2020 in various virtual settings, in small groups and large circles.



# 2020 Income and Expenses

<i>Income</i>			<i>Expenses</i>		
Donations	USD	100,645	Personnel	USD	92,800
Programs	USD	31,135	Program costs	USD	33,900
PPP loan	USD	14,000	Websites	USD	13,100
Miscellaneous	USD	1,054	Office expenses	USD	4,614
			Miscellaneous	USD	3,575
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>USD 146,834</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>USD 147,989</b>

**THANK YOU!**

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