

2023

ANNUAL REVIEW

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



**FOCUSING
INITIATIVES**
INTERNATIONAL

Letter from the Directors

What an amazing, busy, fulfilling year 2023 was!

We continued most of our programs, as well as creating new ones. We greatly increased the number of children in both our Ugandan refugee camp and Pakistan child workers projects. The Afghan Women's group met regularly with deeply meaningful activities. Our online free webinars continued, with some past participants even becoming presenters of their own webinars.

In October, we held a very successful Psychological First Aid On-line class, and immediately started preparing to launch two 2024 Community Wellness Focusing Certification Courses. As always, we responded to numerous requests for help from all parts of the world. For example, Anna Willman and Massimo Zarghetta met weekly with an incredible group of community workers in Cameroon despite the technical issues that made such connections difficult.

And although all of this took place in an environment of economic and funding problems, we found ways to support and enable home-grown, on-the-ground, projects to start and then grow organically. What is exciting for us is the way each of these have been locally recognized. In Uganda, Daniel received a service award for his project, Better World for Kids. In Pakistan, local government departments have approached Wajid for help in replicating the Brighter Tomorrow program model in various communities. In the USA, our successful, collaborative project with Catholic Charities and the University of Massachusetts to help Afghan women refugee women has received local notice and donations that allow it to continue.

We look forward to the coming year with excitement and hope you join us so that we can continue this work.

Warmest wishes



Melinda Darer



Patricia Omidian

From Wendy Robinson, our new board member



I always thought I was not only a good listener, but also a good talker.

As a volunteer, I worked with medical teams in Guatemala, serving many of the poorest and most discriminated-against Mayans. For more than twenty years, I represented state agencies in Oregon as an attorney.

I met Pat Omidian and Nina Joy Lawrence through the Quaker Meeting in Corvallis. We discussed the training they provide and the skills necessary to really listen to people and to allow them to figure out their way forward after trauma and loss. FII provides training in those skills and mentorship to people providing these listening processes.

I look forward to contributing my time and skills to FII in its mission, advising in areas such as legal, financial and organizational, as well as learning more about the importance of listening for my own growth.

Better World for Kids



Better World For Kids has achieved significant success in its Psychosocial Support project for grandparents and children in Nakivale refugee settlement, Uganda. Against the backdrop of ongoing conflicts, humanitarian crises, and climate change impacts, Uganda remains a crucial sanctuary, hosting nearly 1.7 million refugees, making it the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa and the third largest globally.

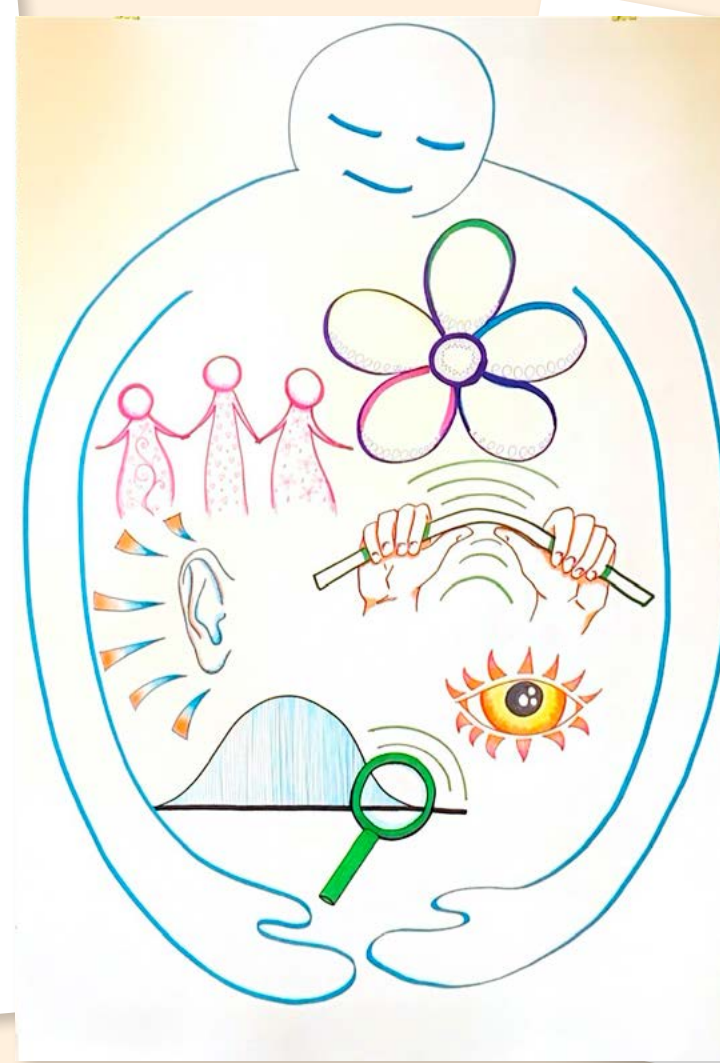
In 2023, this project supported community wellness for refugee children and their caregivers, as well as for at-risk and isolated grandparents. Daniel's innovative inclusion of older persons in story-telling sessions has proven impactful, promoting positive discipline skills and psychosocial well-being for about 1,000 children and 800 caregivers. Feedback sessions with children show profound changes in their lives, empowering them to overcome behavioral challenges that have resulted from displacement, hunger, and a lack of parental guidance.



Brighter Tomorrow

In 2022, our Brighter Tomorrow program started with helping 50 male child workers. By 2023, this number had risen to 150 children, which included Afghan refugees displaced after the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. In 2023, almost half of the children were out-of-school girls, many working as domestic helpers or babysitters. The number of teachers also increased from one teacher in 2022 to four in 2023.

In addition, 2023 witnessed increased support from the local community. For the first time, the children were able to enjoy a picnic and a trip to the zoo. They also received gifts in the form of shoes and dresses for their Eid holiday. And the school itself was relocated to another facility because the old facility was going to be sold. This new location has more open space and better classrooms, although it has one major problem – no electricity.



Psychosocial Support

As our oldest initiative, and the basis for most of our work in communities, our psychosocial support programs are based on specific requests from communities for support and training. We worked with:

- Manka and her staff at Safe Home in Cameroon through weekly zoom meetings that covered PSS and Focusing skill-building.
- Banu Vaughn and her Turkish colleagues in Turkey, offering Psychological First Aid (PFA) to first responders and survivors of the devastating earthquakes in Turkey.
- participants from the US, Canada, Germany, Italy and Cameroon through an online PFA course.
- two North American Indigenous communities through PFA classes.

Refugee Resettlement

Refugee Resettlement Wellness is one of our new initiatives, strongly aligned with our mission of assisting communities in need and at risk. We work to help refugees find and learn tools to address cultural acclimation and emotional wellness, while ensuring that they retain their traditional core values. Through mutual support, practical teachings, and listening-centered focusing approaches, we provide safe spaces for them to thrive.

One such program is the Afghan Women's Empowerment tea, a monthly community wellness gathering for Afghan refugee women, in collaboration with the University of Massachusetts and Catholic Charities. This program in Western Massachusetts supports the women as they and their families adapt to life in the United States and find opportunities to share and incorporate their culture and values within their new community.



Other projects

Since 2020, we have provided a free webinar platform where our international colleagues offer no-cost workshops and training which empower people to connect with others, problem solve together, and recognize commonalities in the face of differences.

In its tenth year of association with FII, IFOT (Indigenous Focusing Oriented Therapy) completed a seven-module program in May 2023. Teachers, staff and participants met virtually, in both small groups and large circles. For the last module, our session was 'hybrid', with many participants actually choosing to travel across the country to meet in-person in New York.

Wholebody Focusing remains an important application of Focusing that we promote and support. Its monthly on-line community gatherings and listening spaces started in 2017.

We also developed and presented various trainings in the area of Interactive Focusing, assembling an international group of teachers and participants.

2023 Income and Expenses

Income			Expenses		
Unrestricted donations <i>General donations</i>	USD	108,249	Personnel	USD	84,000
Restricted donations <i>Project specific donations</i>	USD	65,732	Training <i>Stipends for teachers and hall rental</i>	USD	32,500
Training <i>Fees for classes</i>	USD	23,519	Projects <i>Pakistan and Uganda Fellowship Projects</i>	USD	65,000
			IT and WEB	USD	15,100
			Office and overhead	USD	3,500
TOTAL	USD	197,500	TOTAL	USD	201,000

THANK YOU!

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