



2019-2020 Impact Report



THOUGHT
PARTNERSHIPS

Thought Partnerships is a non-profit initiative housed within NEO Philanthropy.



Thought Partnerships is dedicated to advancing nonviolent, just, and inclusive societies. We create collective impact by building effective Communities of Practice.

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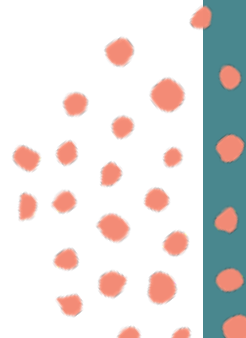
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Dear Friends,

It is such a privilege to be sharing this impact report with you, and personally it has allowed me to deeply reflect on the extraordinary journey that led to the creation of our Community of Practice and to Thought Partnerships as its permanent home.

In the summer of 2014, in Yangon Myanmar, as I sat in a room of practitioners from all around the world working to counter dangerous rhetoric and hate I was struck by the magic of what happens at those meetings when a rich diversity of issue expertise, tactics, lived experience and working from the heart come together to mutually reinforce one another. In those moments together ideas expanded, perspectives broadened, tactics sharpened, best practices are shared and friendships are formed. In the subsequent regional convening I attended the same richness occurred, it felt transformational. What remained unanswered was how to sustain that rich exchange, collaboration, relationship building and opportunity to learn and implement together when everyone went back to their own countries, busy schedules and lives. The creation of the Community of Practice to Counter Hate and Division and eventually the launch of Thought Partnerships has been a 6 year quest to fulfill this vision.

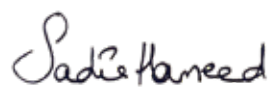
In this report as we share the collective impact and scope of our work, I hope that it offers you a glimpse into the importance of cross-sector communities, made up of exceptional ideas, strategies and methodologies coupled with deep issue and context expertise, rich and direct lived experiences and open and generous hearts. Thought Partnerships' Community of Practice is not only a serious and continuous workshopping of real time strategic analysis and interventions across borders and contexts, it is a genuine support system to nourish those working in extremely difficult circumstances, often at great risk to their families and selves facing trauma and burnout at every turn.

Our mission, values and ways of working seek to allow each person we engage with, including our own team, to show up as their whole self without shame or apology to the messiness of the human experience, to vision the best version of the societies they hope to live in acting as both changemakers and beneficiaries, to talk about very sticky and complex problems in a safe space knowing when they join our events and gatherings they will be respected, appreciated, fully heard and nourished. This commitment transcends differences in perspective and background and is rooted in values of dignity, inclusion and a commitment to life long learning and self evolution.

I believe successful organizations, networks and movements are made up of committed people. When those people feel connected, inspired, supported and able to harness their full life experiences to create change in mutually reinforcing rather than competitive ways, their potential for impact is maximized and the ability to catalyze change is fully ignited. Thought Partnerships seeks to hold space for this potential to be realized through offering robust community learning experiences that are completely free of cost and always opt-in for all its members.

I hope at the end of reading this report you feel a little more hopeful about our ability, together, to create more just, inclusive and nonviolent societies through consistent, real time and long lasting learning, exchange and collaboration across contexts.

With gratitude,



Sadia Hameed
Executive Director



A Growing Team

In the first year of TP's existence, we had the opportunity to add essential staff capacity to our core team. This has provided the chance to lay the foundation for long-term organizational health, including: putting into practice an organizational culture of equity, balance and wellness; the collaborative creation of a 3-year strategic plan; the development and implementation of an adaptive annual evaluation, learning, and reflection framework; the onboarding of a full advisory board; doubling our program offerings and membership; and, the development of robust communication systems.

What does community mean to you?



Karin Attia

Program Officer, Countering Hate & Division

Growing up I've always been surrounded by a warm and vibrant community, but my professional life never had one. I can't thank the Thought Partnerships Community of Practice enough for providing a constant space for inspiration, collaboration and hope for a better and brighter tomorrow. My professional and personal life are all the richer from being afforded an opportunity to be part of this group.

Lindsey Platt Ojok

Program Officer, Strategy, Learning & Design

To me, the TP community is a place where I can turn to for inspiration and new ideas and to learn more about how others are navigating the world and issues around them. It is a place where I can lean on the collective support, knowledge, and wisdom of a group of people willing and dedicated to figuring out how the power of a collective network of folks working toward similar goals, with an alignment of values, can fundamentally transform the systems we interact with and, ultimately, the world we live in.



Althea Middleton-Detzner

Senior HUB Manager

For me the TP community provides relationships, connections, connectivity, and the possibilities that "the collective" can create. It includes both the intentionality of community as well as the serendipity that life paths unfold. Like other communities we belong to, the TP community is shifting overtime just as our identities, locations, and priorities do. And yet the feeling and spirit of community continues even if we move on from this group. Being a part of the TP community is about being a part of something bigger than ourselves. A spirit of collectivity and action. We are held by the collective and we are "in it" together.



A Community with Impact

From July 2019 to December 2020, with 3 full time and 1 part time staff, the TP team:

- Facilitated over a dozen new collaborations between members of our community
- Shared 170+ free resources on the HUB Open Resource Library
- Connected community members to over 92 cross-sector events

- Hosted 38 virtual convenings including:
- 16 Working Group Meetings
 - 7 COVID-Support Wellness Hours
 - 6 Technical Support Circles/Mapping Sessions
 - 5 U.S. Election-Related Community Hours
 - 4 public events

At the end of 2020, we reflected with our membership to ask them how they benefited from Thought Partnerships' community & offerings. The top four trends shared were:



Shared Value

Community members expressed they gain personal and collective value from their participation in the TP Community of Practice (CoP).



Strategic Connections

Community members expressed that their participation in the CoP has facilitated strategic connections they would not have otherwise had.



Deepened Impact

Community members expressed that involvement in the CoP supports them to more effectively implement their work and deepen their impact.



New Insights & Learnings

Community members expressed that the CoP is a place where they can review and learn from both successes and failures.

Unpacking Our Mission

Thought Partnerships is dedicated to advancing nonviolent, just, and inclusive societies. We create collective impact by building effective Communities of Practice.

Thought Partnerships celebrates difference and is not averse to conflict. We believe that resilient and cohesive societies are made possible by the commitment of the persons, institutions, and power holders within those societies to promote and realize a dignified and equal experience for all people in the face of conflict and difference. To realize this vision there are three fundamental pillars- Nonviolent, Just and Inclusive- that we have prioritized as a tangible pathway to build and sustain more cohesive, resilient, and equitable societies. These pillars are dynamic concepts, constantly shifting and changing alongside the complex environments of our world and planet, and so our own understanding of and engagement with them is also always evolving and iterating.

Together, we are working toward societies that are...



Nonviolent

Our vision of a nonviolent society is not one absent of conflict or disagreement; but rather the recognition that conflicts are part of the human experience and can be catalysts for positive transformation and change within a society. We see a nonviolent society as one where marginalizing, destructive and oppressive systems are actively disrupted and transformed as well as where the dignity and safety for all members of society is honored and upheld- by the persons, institutions, laws and practices-regardless of their real or perceived identity. In a nonviolent society, members of that society are committed to addressing and working through conflict and difference without resorting to or being met with acts of violence.



Just

In societies across the globe, identity, both real and perceived, greatly impacts the ways in which individuals are able to move through and interact with that society. Our vision of a just society is one in which the dignity of each member of a society is prioritized and that each individual can access services that underpin their fundamental human rights regardless of their identity. A just society is marked by its ability- through its persons, institutions and power holders- to deliver accountability, justice and rule of law for all persons in an equitable and fair manner, free from violence or discrimination.



Inclusive

Our vision of an inclusive society is one whose social and institutional structures are elastic, durable, and resilient enough to make room for the belonging of all persons, including those whom may deeply and fundamentally disagree with one another, without members of any part of society feeling as though their enjoyment of rights is undermined by the equal provision of rights for all people. Inclusive societies acknowledge the profound diversity of identity, thought, experience, and belief of its members and protect the space for it to exist. Inclusive societies welcome vibrant debate, dialogue, and civic engagement from all of its members, understanding that the health of a society comes from the ability for all people to equally participate and belong, free from violence and discrimination.

Our Core Values

We believe that lasting, positive transformation happens when each individual seeking to make change has a stake in the lived experience of their own society. As both stakeholders of our own efforts and active changemakers working to transform the very communities and contexts in which we live, we aim to infuse the following values in the work we do in the world, the way we operate as a team, and how we build relationships. This is a journey we are committed to. As a team we continuously strive toward the fullest expression of these values in ourselves, our relationships, and our work.



Collaborative Community

COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY | We believe that the problems we seek to address require collective solutions. Our approach to building Communities of Practice is rooted in a recognition that there is an interconnection between the experiences of violence, marginalization and discrimination across geographies and identities. Therefore, the solutions we seek are best identified through a community based approach where practitioners bring their diverse perspectives, approaches, and expertise together as an ecosystem to share, learn, and collaborate.



Holistic Wellbeing

HOLISTIC WELLBEING | We believe caring for oneself is fundamental to creating peace and transformation in the world around us. We acknowledge that the problems we are trying to solve are multifaceted, as are the people at the forefront of solving them. We are intentional about convening spaces that are safe, flexible, compassionate, and welcoming of the whole-of-self. We strive to embed opportunities for wellbeing throughout all we do to honor the humanity that we each bring to this work.



Trust Based Partnership

TRUST BASED PARTNERSHIP | We believe that trust and cooperation are key ingredients in building long term partnerships and facilitating thoughtful engagement. The members of our community are central to fostering collaborative, compassionate, and equitable spaces that build authentic Communities of Practice. We are dedicated to cultivating long lasting, strong, and trust-based relationships with every member and partner we work with. Through a consistent commitment to transparency, self-reflection, respect, and inclusion we strive to create opportunities for peer-to-peer learning amongst our members and our team.



Courageous Exchange

COURAGEOUS EXCHANGE | We believe that deep change and impact is borne from being able to come together in community and courageously explore challenges, successes, and failures. We strive to create safe, trusting, brave spaces where difficult and sometimes unanswerable questions can emerge and be explored. We encourage and try to model humility, rooted in a willingness to learn and driven by curiosity, as we seek to surface a diversity of thought, perspective and experience, rather than consensus. We are committed to challenging one another, grounded in a spirit of respect, in pursuit of growth and learning.



Reflective Learning

REFLECTIVE LEARNING | We believe that the solutions we seek to implement in the world are best generated through cooperative and mutual learning across experiences, by engaging in consistent self-reflection, embracing a spirit of curiosity, and participating with a genuine desire to co-create durable solutions. In pursuit of collective learning, iteration and growth, we intentionally take risks, embrace new ideas and seize opportunities to evolve with our partners. We strive to be adaptive, resourceful, responsive, and accountable in our offerings to best meet the evolving needs of our community. We gather and leverage feedback in order to deeply examine the extent to which our ways of working live up to these stated values.

What are three words you would use to describe your experience participating in the CoP?

During a focus group hosted in 2020 as part of TP's annual reflection process, TP community members were asked to share 3 words that they would use to describe their experience of participating in the Community of Practice (CoP).



Member Reflections

Reflections from one of our newest member organizations: Parents Circle



"Thanks to the Community of Practice, we have been able to make so many positive connections and find like-minded people to work with on many levels. We appreciate that this community exists through Thought Partnerships in order to strengthen the work we all do, individually and as a group." -Dikla Tuchman

"We are so grateful to Thought Partnerships for opening a completely new world to our message of reconciliation and non-violence. We have already organized several Dialogue Meetings with people we met through the meetings." -Robi Damelin



Building Community

When the Community of Practice (CoP) was first initiated in 2014, collective learning and iteration was central to its vision. In early 2019, as TP was being envisioned as a permanent home for the CoP, we engaged in a robust consultation with our members. The learnings from this process were used to design the Thought Partnerships' model that was put into practice upon its launch in July 2019.



**We Work Full
Spectrum**



**Our Work is
Virtual**



**Our Community
is Decentralized**



**Our Programming
is Integrated**



**We Are Always
Iterating**

Full Spectrum

Many key social justice problems are experienced, in different levels of intensity, in countries all around the world and are often not challenges isolated to any one context. The transnational nature of these trends can be seen clearly in global trends of migration, climate change, increased xenophobia and intolerance as well as through civic engagement and good governance. Working across a full spectrum, from peaceful societies through to those experiencing genocide and mass atrocities, allows us to study and understand the range of factors that propel societies back and forth along this continuum and the possible solutions or interventions that help to move societies from targeted mass violence and heightened levels of identity based violence toward peaceful and inclusive coexistence and social cohesion.

Decentralized

To foster a truly inclusive and global community, we thoughtfully and intentionally design decentralized spaces that offer members of our Communities of Practice an opportunity to engage directly with one another at a pace that is best suited to their interests and needs. By encouraging one-on-one connection and by creating online spaces for member-led conversations and programs, our team models a decentralized way of working that motivates radical collaboration and actively shifts power away from traditional top-down models of engagement toward community-driven, inclusive participation.

Virtual

The problems that our organization seeks to tackle and the breadth of contexts across which we hope to source solutions require consistent, real-time engagement and interaction. In order to both keep pace with the rapidly shifting landscapes around us and to reduce the distance between us, all of our programs operate virtually, allowing diverse participants to work together without physically being together and leveraging technology to convene different spaces and conversations in which to do so.

Integrated

The effort to build and sustain an effective Community of Practice has many different channels and programs through which we convene conversations, learnings and engagement. Each of our streams of work are purposefully integrated to build upon one another to enhance the value and seamlessness that participants experience from being part of the Community of Practice.

Iterative

Since the world around us is shifting and changing, we recognize that our own model needs to be adaptive, flexible, and responsive. For this reason we embrace experimentation and piloting new approaches in partnership with the members of our Community of Practice and are always seeking to learn from our experiences, engagements, successes and challenges to improve and advance our model and programming.

Our Community

To achieve outsized impact, Thought Partnerships strategically operates through a distributive organizing model, welcoming members including individuals, institutions, networks, and organizations that are working as multipliers in their own contexts. This design allows TP's impact to expand beyond our immediate interactions with members of our own community to the thousands of individuals and institutions in the networks of our members. As part of our commitment to equitable and inclusive participation, TP actively fundraises so we can offer all programming free-of-cost to our members.



Engaging with the Community

TP offers various levels of engagement across our Community of Practice (CoP). The broadest level reaches hundreds and offers the opportunity to participate in a number of public programs launched in 2020, including monthly expert events, access to hundreds of resources on our Open Resource Library, and connection across our membership via our monthly newsletter. Through a transparent process created in 2020, we welcome members to join a more focused community, the Peer Learning Community for Countering Hate and Division (PLC), made up of members who are seeking to consistently and actively engage with their peers across geographies substantively, strategically, tactically, and in solidarity. In its first year of operation TP nearly doubled the size of its PLC, which now represents the voices and participation of 90 organizations in 18 countries working collectively to counter hate and prevent identity based violence in over 50 contexts around the world.

Impact Spotlight

In reflections with the TP community in 2020, members indicated that, in addition to ongoing substantive learning and exchange around countering hate and division, the CoP is a place where they can:

- bring their whole selves
- gain from collective wisdom and knowledge
- expand one's viewpoint and break down silos
- explore difficult questions
- share their views and opinions
- build trusting relationships with peers
- engage in wellness practices
- review and learn from both successes and failures
- seek personal support and encouragement



Meet the TP
Community

Working Groups

Thought Partnerships convenes interdisciplinary Working Groups focused on connecting a diverse ecosystem of practitioners, researchers, funders, technologists, and activists. The Working Groups facilitate an exchange of knowledge, opportunity for peer review, feedback on challenges, and ongoing collaboration. We create a safe and vibrant space for participants across geographies and sectors to learn about new approaches and share analyses of current trends, effective methodologies, and lessons learned from their interventions.

Global Working Group



The Global Working Group was founded in March 2015 and has over a few short years grown to represent the voices and participation of 56 organizations in 16 countries working collectively to prevent identity based violence across 50 contexts around the world. The virtual meetings take place every other month and include a combination of substantive presentations on a country context or theme with time for participant updates on relevant threads of work and upcoming opportunities for collaboration.

U.S. Working Group



The U.S. Working Group to Combat Hate and Division was founded in June 2017 with the intention of bridging a conversation between international and U.S. practitioners. It does so by bringing together international conflict prevention organizations, who with the shifting socio-political environment wanted to examine the efficacy of applying their tools domestically, and U.S. civil liberties and anti-hate organizations who have spent decades working on creating a more just, peaceful, and inclusive society. By the end of 2020, this Working Group had expanded to encompass 44 organizations and was the first cross-disciplinary conversation of its kind. Throughout 2020, the Working

Group met every other month to engage substantively on tools and methodologies as well as to discuss emerging trends, challenges, and breakthroughs.

Themes We've Explored

Global Working Group

- Spotlight on Cameroon: Conflict Dynamics & the National Dialogue Process
- Communications Campaigns to Prevent Identity Based Violence
- Countering Online Hate & Creating Societal Resilience
- How COVID-19 is Impacting the Risks of Identity Based Violence
- The Role of COVID in situations of Armed Conflict
- What Pivoting Programming Looks Like in Practice: Tactics, Strategies & Lessons during COVID-19
- Annual Reflection, Trend Mapping & Future Planning

U.S. Working Group

To prepare for an upcoming political transition, meetings focused on:

- Escalating Instances of Violence Across the U.S.
- Mapping Trends and Risks during an Election Year
- Overcoming Political Polarization
- Mitigating Risks of Political and Identity Based Violence
- U.S. Media Environment - How to Tackle Misinformation/Disinformation and Fake News
- Support and Collaboration Amidst Crisis
- Preparedness Planning to Mitigate Political Violence
- Annual Reflection, Trend Mapping & Future Planning

Impact Spotlight

As part of TP's 2020 review and reflection, participating members said that the Working Groups were valuable because they offered the chance to:



Exchange



Learn



Discuss



Connect



Share

- **Exchange** insights and ideas with like-minded colleagues
- **Learn** about relevant tools, resources, approaches and/or methodologies from peers
- **Connect** with and find opportunities for collaboration with other organizations and individuals that they otherwise might not know
- **Discuss practical challenges** and **solutions** for their work in a safe environment
- **Learn** from the personal perspectives of peers across a variety of sectors and geographies
- **Share** their own knowledge, insights, and/or experiences with peers across a variety of sectors or geographies

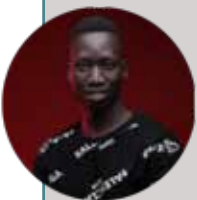
16

From TP's inception in July 2019 to December 2020, TP convened 16 Working Group meetings

80

Our Global and US Working Groups represent the membership of 80 organizations

Member Reflections



"One of the most valuable engagements I have had is the Global Working Group. It has given us the opportunity to come together, share experiences, and learn new approaches from one another on how we can build peace and counter hate in our respective contexts which is very powerful." -Samse Sam, TIDE South Sudan

"I am motivated to join the Working Groups because it offers a community of people engaging in work for social change and thinking about important issues from different perspectives. This provides a sense of collaboration when work can otherwise feel very siloed." - Anonymous CoP Member



The HUB Virtual Platform

Since TP's launch in 2019, working together without being together has been a core principle of the organization. We created TP with the understanding that harnessing technology across a decentralized community of practitioners quickly opens up avenues for more virtual connection and collaboration at a low cost and without requiring practitioners to leave the contexts they are working in to participate. For this reason and in order to keep pace with rapidly shifting dynamics in our global landscape, TP launched an online community campus and resource library to offer real time, accessible tools, connections, and exchanges so that the solutions and interventions to counter hate and division could evolve and seed impact as quickly as the challenges are manifesting.

Building communities anchored in trust, mutual respect and a desire to be supportive and collaborative without needing to be in a physical room together has become a cornerstone of TP's work and comes to life on the HUB that was launched in March 2020. The HUB is unique from a concentrated conference model and allows our global community to come together more frequently and over longer periods of time to build trusting relationships that serve as the foundation for innovation, collaboration and courageous exchange. We could not have foreseen the ways in which this way of working would prove even more essential with the onset and spread of the COVID pandemic.

A Campus for our Community



Open Resource Library

This virtual library, containing nearly 200 open source resources, is a space for the entire TP Community of Practice to build and store collective wisdom, resources, and tools. You'll find everything from practical resources and training guides to more academic research and videos that support building new skills, knowledge, and practices to counter hate and address identity-based violence. The ORL is open and accessible to the public.



Peer Learning Community Center

In this dedicated virtual gathering space, TP's Peer Learning Community is able to connect and interact with each other through discussion threads and chat messages; stay up-to-date on upcoming events via the community calendar; and engage with content such as community interviews and wellness tips. The Community Center is limited to members of TP's Peer Learning Community and the TP Team.

Fully Integrated | Using the HUB Across TP

In 2020, in addition to curating the Open Resource Library and Community Center, TP also leveraged its virtual platform to run our organizational MEL process; engage with our advisors in monthly governance processes; offer a dedicated connection space for an incoming cohort of ten community impact leaders; and, for a modest fee partnered with a member organization to curate a dedicated space to host their virtual training program.

Impact Spotlight

From March to December of 2020, over the first 10 months of the HUB's launch, we've:

- Shared over 170 resources on the Open Resource Library
- Reached users from 149 cities across 19 countries
- Enrolled 140 users on the Open Resource Library
- Connected CoP members to 92 cross-sector events via our Community Events Calendar
- Welcomed 68 active participants on our Peer Learning Community Center
- Curated 12 active virtual community discussions

The image displays three screenshots from the HUB's digital platform. On the left is the 'Resource Categories' page, featuring a grid of resource thumbnails such as 'Featured New Resources', 'TP Event Recordings', 'Dangerous & Hate Speech', 'Democracy & Good Governance', 'Humanitarian Action', 'Inclusive Peace', 'Preventing & Countering Violent Extremism', and 'Refugees, Immigrants & Migrants'. The middle screenshot shows a discussion titled 'Using STORYTELLING as an approach to counter hate & division' by Sadia Hameed, with a response from vega williams stating, 'This is great initiative, I think this platform shall continue connecting many of us, share ideas and collaboration on which I will one be able to share my experience as a refugee.' The right screenshot is an event announcement for 'U.S. Practitioners PLEASE JOIN US FEB. 11TH FOR OUR U.S. POST INAUGURATION PLANNING MEETING' on February 16, 2021, from 12:00PM-1:30PM EST, titled 'MITIGATING POLITICAL VIOLENCE AROUND THE U.S. ELECTIONS: LESSONS LEARNED'. It lists upcoming events like 'Data for Peace Dialogues: "Hate Divided - Online Hate Speech and Violence Prevention" The Role of Emerging Technologies' and 'Thought Partnerships hosts Q&A with Nathan Stock on Lessons Learned from Mitigating Political Violence Around the U.S. Elections'.

Member Reflections



"As a young person working around peace and security working in a very insecure context in my country I feel that many more young people need to have access to such platforms and opportunities. There is a lot to learn, there is a lot to share and it is an amazing connection." - Achaleke Christian, Local Youth Corner Cameroon

"I get full access to resources that are useful to my work and I can download these for free and share with my network" Caleb Gichuhi, Build Up



Public Convenings

In 2020, TP piloted a public convenings program as a mechanism to elevate the work of our members and create more inclusive exchanges of approaches and ideas with organizations around the world who are working to counter hate and division. This pilot program quickly became a cornerstone of our offerings. In 2021, TP will offer these events monthly with a goal to deepen and broaden the reach of their impact.

Member Reflections



"This is like having a free online class where everyone is an expert in one way or another in one field or another and we are getting the best of everything for free. It has been an exciting learning process." -Prince Charles Dickson, Tattaunawa Roundtable Initiative

2020 Events



Psychology of Polarization Webinar in partnership with Beyond Conflict



U.S. Crisis Mapping and Resilience Training in partnership with the Bridging Divides Initiative



Countering Dangerous Narratives During COVID-19 Training in partnership with Over Zero

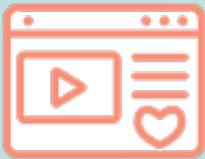


The Cure for Hate Book Talk in partnership with Tony McAleer

Community Support & Wellness

Based on one of our core values, holistic wellbeing, we have been intentional about infusing wellness and support practices into the DNA of how we build community with and amongst our members. We have experienced and heard from our members that the work of transformation is trying. Isolation, burnout, trauma, and risk are often factors for proximate leaders across contexts working toward the transformation of the societies in which they live. A key added value of our community, based on reflections from our members, is that it is a trusted space for people to show up as their whole selves to share both their fatigue, fear, and challenges, as well as their hope, inspiration, and success. We believe that providing the space to honor the humanity of each of our members, in its fullness, allows us all to show up more fully for one another and for the transformation we are seeking to create in the world.

In this spirit, there are a number of initiatives we have piloted over the past year:



Wellness Video Series

A video series highlighting techniques our members use to maintain balance and wellness while working amidst difficult circumstances. Themes that emerged from member interviews included music, the joy of nature and exercise, work-life balance, and company culture and self-awareness.



Community Coffee Hours

Open virtual gatherings offering a standing space for peers to come together over a cup of coffee or tea to share how everyone is doing and coping, respond to requests for support as a community, and share tips around maintaining wellness amidst the stress and shifts posed by COVID-19.



Responsive Discussion Spaces

Virtual discussion forums on the HUB providing the space for members of our community to come together and share openly and vulnerably about how they are striving toward wellness and balance during times of great difficulty and uncertainty.

Member Reflections



"Doing this work can be really taxing and can get kind of lonely especially if you are at a small organization. It is nice to hear about the experiences other people are having, the challenges, the struggles, and also the wins. A support group for people looking at both the worst and best parts of humanity." - Sam Owens, Project Over Zero

"I think this is a unique group - somehow the uniqueness arrives from the warmth that exists in this group and mutual understanding." - George Weiss, La Benevolencija





Community Crisis Response

Underpinning our model is the theory that building diverse, cross-sector communities of practice deeply engaged in peer learning and exchange not only supports practitioners and institutions and deepens their potential impact in times of stability, but also provides resilience that becomes particularly important in times of crisis and unforeseen circumstances. Throughout 2020, two of these circumstances proved particularly challenging to many members of our community:

COVID-19

The onset and spread of COVID-19 and its repercussions on identity based violence in societies across the globe

U.S. Elections

The unprecedented levels of polarization, division, and political violence surrounding the 2020 U.S. elections

In recognition that we are stronger together in our shared purpose, TP identified ways in which we might integrate existing organizational methods and mechanisms to serve as a vehicle during these times to help our members better navigate moments of crisis.

COVID Response

With the onset and spread of COVID-19, our team and community identified growing risks of identity-based violence (IDBV) in many countries around the world. The spread of the virus not only brought into plain view numerous historic fault lines within and across communities in various contexts, but also saw governments, media, and communities utilize the uncertainty of the pandemic to spread mis/disinformation, stoke fear about communities and populations being wrongly associated with the virus' spread, and proliferate dangerous and othering narratives about already marginalized communities. These risk factors, accelerated and exacerbated by the spread of COVID-19, resulted in increased violence and heightened risks of IDBV against increasingly vulnerable communities. Central to TP's model is its ability to remain iterative and responsive to the shifting dynamics of our world and needs of our members. Leveraging our virtual, decentralized, and adaptive model, we were able to cultivate a timely response that created space for our members to come together, surface common trends, and utilize the power of peer-learning to chart impactful ways forward to more effectively address the issues of IDBV being seen in their own communities.

Technical Support Circles & Mapping Sessions

We offered weekly Technical Support circles where members of our Community of Practice were able to come together to brainstorm solutions to better meet the emerging challenges of working under the pandemic and its accompanying threats across a number of contexts. In addition to the strengthened collaborations between practitioners across diverse contexts, our programs during COVID-19 strengthened the feedback loop between practitioners and funders as we shared all of the mappings resulting from these joint analysis sessions with funders in our network and beyond. This served as a way to further support and share perspectives and learnings to inform both practitioners and funders who were designing tools and supporting interventions.

Technical Support Circles and Mapping Sessions explored the following themes:

- Moving Offline Programs Online
- How to Help Your Team Thrive Virtually
- How to Adapt to a Shifting Funding Landscape During COVID-19
- How to Best Support Local Partners During COVID-19
- Mapping COVID's Impact: The Media Landscape
- Mapping COVID's Impact: Political Landscapes

Member Reflections



"Participating in the post-COVID response workshop was extremely helpful to think about how we are newly challenged as well as to develop new strategies for continuing challenges in the work." -Jocelyn Getgen Kestenbaum, Cardozo Law Institute in Holocaust and Human Rights

"...none of us knew if we were doing the right stuff and we all sat at home worried about how we could continue the work. Just being able to talk about those things with people all over the world who were having similar questions, it was hugely helpful at those times." -Andy Fearn, Protection Approaches



Community Coffee Hours



One of the most important lessons we know from decades of peacebuilding practice is that people cannot be expected to propel change in the world around them if they are insecure, unsupported or burnt out. As 2020 unfolded, TP recognized it had a tangible role to play in supporting members and their ability to remain effective during moments of crisis. Our members expressed exhaustion and isolation as a result of the COVID pandemic's impact on their social, physical and mental wellness as they were simultaneously coping with personal grief, death and loss while also responding to the onslaught of repressive measures and policies emerging in a number of contexts around the world. In the midst of this intensity, we offered a series of Wellness and

Coffee Hours that provided a dedicated peer-to-peer space for solidarity and healing. These virtual gatherings offered an opportunity for members to come together and find personal support during a difficult time. Member reflections on these sessions reaffirmed the importance of holding space for the many emotions we each carry and offering each other tips and tools for wellness and balance amidst difficult times.

U.S. Response

In the Fall of 2019, the U.S Working Group members contributed to a TP-led forecasting of top level trends that could negatively impact social cohesion, democratic integrity, and risks of violence in order to identify potential strategies for mitigation. During the course of 2020, each of the identified trend lines played out almost precisely as the TP-led analysis had predicted.

These trend lines included:

- Escalating political polarization
- Risks of political violence
- Increased spread of mis/dis information
- Debates over constitutionally protected rights to freedom of speech and assembly
- Importance of the Supreme Court and Congress in preserving democratic norms
- An attack on the integrity of the election process itself

What we could not have foreseen in the Fall of 2019, however, was the global COVID-19 pandemic and the extent to which this would exacerbate the existing social, political and economic tensions while also stripping our members of their usual mechanisms for organizing, intervening, and advocating amidst lockdowns and economic instability.

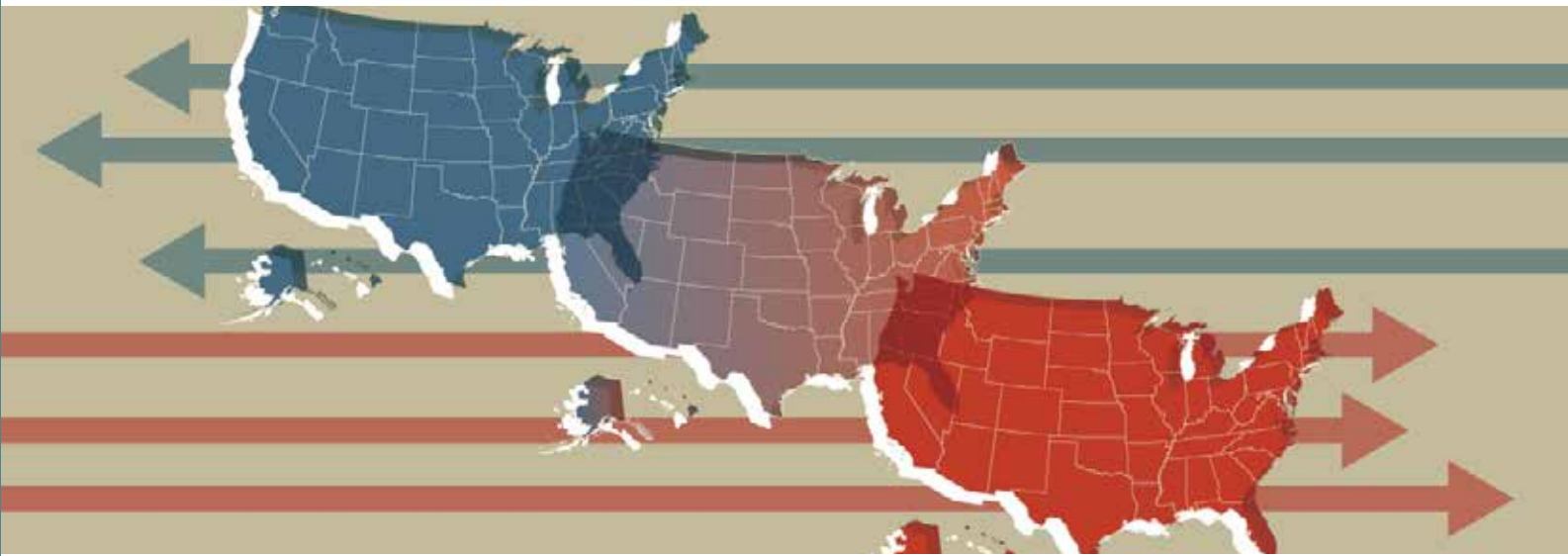


Photo Credit: Pew Research Center, November 2020

Where it began

In the summer of 2016, prior to the U.S. Presidential elections that year, a number of Global CoP members coalesced around the escalating risks for identity based violence in the country and joined TP's founder Sadia Hameed on a journey to connect international peace builders with U.S. social justice practitioners which led to the founding of the U.S. Working Group to Counter Hate and Division in 2017. Since then, all of the working group's conversations, reflections, exchanges and meetings were held in an effort to help prepare U.S. civil society and local communities for the possibility of political, and more broadly identity based violence, around its 2020 Presidential elections.

Risk Assessment & Violence Prevention & Mitigation

In an effort to both support our members to effectively mitigate violence around the elections and also to successfully navigate doing this work well in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, TP:

- Hosted 8 Working Group meetings to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and intervention strategies around each of the forecasted trends
- Ran a preparedness planning and violence mitigation meeting before the election
- Actively made connections amongst and across practitioners working at the national policy, state level and local community level on mitigation and violence prevention
- Alongside members of our CoP, TP's Executive Director participated in roundtable discussions, expert interviews and other forums to share the risk assessment and possible avenues for mitigation
- Curated a list of community resources on our Open Resource Library related to preparedness and building resilience around the U.S. election
- Alongside the Together We Remember Coalition and Over Zero, TP helped to convene an Emergency U.S. Forum that brought together over 100 atrocity-prevention experts, civic leaders, human rights institutions, and funders across the U.S. to discuss ways to foster resilience to identity-based violence before, during, and after the U.S. general election

Hosted public facing events on:

- Project Over Zero's guide for using communication strategies to address hate and division during COVID-19
- The Bridging Divides Initiative's U.S. Crisis Monitor that could be used for real-time crisis mapping, monitoring, and analysis
- Beyond Conflict's research on the psychological underpinnings behind polarization

Wellness & Safe Space

- Created a safe discussion space on the HUB to hear how each of our members was feeling and coping in the run-up to, during, and after the election process
- Hosted daily Open Community Hours to hold safe space for our members from Nov. 3-9 as we awaited the U.S. election outcome. These hours offered a time to come together as a supportive global community and share information, solidarity, hope and explore options for action

Member Reflections



"Thought Partnership has helped me build my network, deepen my analysis and explore new tactics. In the buildup to the election in the U.S., I found inspiration in the survival and the thriving of those who had endured political upheaval in other countries. I built relationships with others in my country countering identity-based violence. I learned about alternative theories common in international conflict resolution work that could be applied to my own domestic work for human rights." -Rachel Carroll Rivas, Montana Human Rights Network

"I think it makes me smarter, more informed, and more attuned to the perspectives and work of practitioners in my field or adjacent to my field. -Kiel Majewski, Timberwolf Advisors/Together We Remember



Offering Thanks

We share this impact report with deep gratitude for not only the partners featured throughout it and the full Community of Practice; but also for our advisory board, fiscal sponsor, and funders, without whom this work would not have been possible.

Advisory Board



Maegan Scott

Maegan Scott, founder and principal at Wayfinding Partners, is an organizational change and transformation consultant and racial equity specialist. She brings more than a decade of experience in philanthropy and nonprofit management, along with 15 years of experience in the field of equity, inclusion, and diversity.



Mona Chun

Mona Chun has over twenty years of experience in leadership positions in human rights, network-and field-building and civic engagement. Most recently, Mona served as Executive Director of the Human Rights Funders Network , a global network of funders committed to advancing human rights through effective philanthropy.



Nancy Payne

Nancy Payne is a communication executive, consultant and mentor who currently supports early-to-mid stage entrepreneurs and organizations to develop as leaders and communicate more effectively about the work they do.



Shukria Dellawar

Shukria Dellawar is a peace and security expert, human rights advocate and gender specialist. She is currently serving as the Policy Director for Afghanistan Peace Campaign, and the Legislative Representative for the Prevention of Violent Conflict at the Friends Committee for National Legislation.

Fiscal Sponsor

Thought Partnerships is a fiscally sponsored non-profit initiative housed within NEO Philanthropy. Passionate about its work as a funder intermediary, deeply committed to social justice and human rights, NEO Philanthropy has more than 30 years of experience helping nonprofit organizations and funders build movements for justice, equity and dignity.



Crystal Tsoi

Crystal Tsoi serves as our project liaison and is a Senior Project Manager of Donor Services and Special Projects at NEO. Crystal also serves as a non-voting member of TP's Advisory Board.

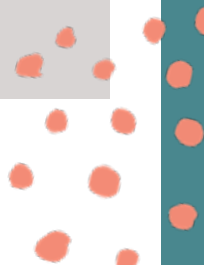
Funders



The Omidyar Group's Rights & Dignity Working Group: comprised of Humanity United, Luminate, Democracy Fund, Omidyar Network, and Imaginable Futures

Investment

The work outlined throughout this report was conducted with an annual operating budget under \$500,000 USD. Further information about TP's budget and operating expenses is available upon request. Please contact sadia@thoughtpartnerships.org.



When the wisdom and knowledge from individual interventions join together across geographies the potential for impact is magnified. Our team helps find and connect global peers confronting similar challenges everyday.



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