



SPIRIT OF HUMANITY
FORUM

NEWSLETTER

April 2017

Dear friends of the Spirit of Humanity Forum,

Now with less than a month until we meet in Reykjavik at the 3rd Spirit of Humanity Forum, every piece of the puzzle is settling in its right place and a beautiful Forum is taking shape. More than 180 participants from all over the world have registered. So many are contributing to making this Forum as rich and inspiring as possible - speakers, workshop holders, facilitators, volunteers, technical assistants, camera crew, interviewers and various Icelandic artists. Last, but not least, many hundreds of school children in Iceland will take part in creating a wonderful work of art at our Venue Háskólabíó (University Cinema) which will be part of the Children's Cultural Festival in Reykjavik.

Being a global platform for leaders and change-makers, one of the most precious things the Forum brings us is the possibility of meeting each other and the opportunity to make new connections. In our former forums, connections have been made that have led to beautiful and fruitful co-operation, and in this newsletter we present one of those inspirational stories from former participants Tasoula Hadjitofi and Kathy Barrett.

We, the organising partners of The Spirit of Humanity Forum, very much look forward to seeing you in Iceland and to make new connections. We welcome every idea on possible co-operation in the future and, with that in mind, we have decided to call our closing ceremony at the Forum 'A New Opening'.

New website!

We are proud to introduce our new beautiful website designed by our friends at Webspeed in the UK. With our new website and social media, we are hoping that we can slowly but surely build up an interactive community of SoH friends all around the world. www.sohforum.org

Follow the Forum on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Invite your friends!



Dr Rama Mani will facilitate a session called 'New Connections' at the 3rd Forum 2017



We have been taught for too long to fear crises. Especially in the West, people have bought into the Hobbesian notion that human nature is essentially brutish and egocentric, and the Malthusian notion that there is

not enough to go around. People believe crises inevitably bring out the worst in people, and aggravate or even justify inhumanity and selfishness. Today, as global crises worsen, people are terrified.

On the contrary! My direct experience, both growing up in India and working for the past 27 years primarily with communities on all continents ravaged by war and crises, proves over and over that the opposite is true. In the midst of crisis, when everything crumbles, ordinary people turn inwards. They transform their pain into power. Like Mandela, they radiate an inner power that is so much more potent than material power. They reach out to each other and create circles of solidarity infused with values; they share the little they have; they transcend obstacles together with creativity and humanity.

We know ourselves that it is amidst our deepest personal crises that the window opens within us to reveal our deepest humanity, our latent creativity, our inherent divinity. Our personal transformation becomes a portal to systemic transformation in the world around us.

We are living now through such a moment in human history where we are called, each of us, to build the bridge between personal and systemic transformation. We are called to recognise that the old paradigms have asphyxiated not only our institutions but the very possibility of life on earth. We are called to shape and enact new paradigms that are regenerative and infused with care.

It is imperative today to bring humanity and creativity to the centre of both political decision-making and public responses to the global predicament we face. This is the passion that drives all my work, and that suffuses the Theatre of Transformation Academy and our transformative community of change agents around the world. We show how simple and essential it is for us all to create transformative spaces for the public, youth, decision-makers, activists and academics to come together in circles of solidarity: to *witness what is* really

happening in our world; to *awaken what can be* as new possibilities for human and planetary life; to *envision the change* that is essential in our lives and our systems; and to *enact transformation* together to co-create a global community of care – an *OURtopia* of we, us and ours – of belonging and well-being for all.

This is why the Spirit of Humanity Forum resonates so profoundly with me. The Forum is grounded in a profound understanding of what the world needs today and a deep commitment to realising this. The Forum provides us with an invaluable opportunity to come together as transformative leaders from all sectors, to weave new narratives for our shared future, to shape new paradigms and co-create communities of care at all levels. It fills me with profound excitement to look forward to this unique gathering of visions and wisdom to shape a world of care.

Dr Rama Mani

Workshops at the Forum

We are happy to announce that a wonderful variety of workshops will be offered at the Forum:

[Thursday 27th](#) and [Friday 28th of April](#)

More love and compassion in decision-making!



Ambassador Ragnar Ängeby, a former Swedish diplomat and one of the founders of the Spirit of Humanity Forum, presents some thoughts behind the Forum.

“We need to give more space to a humanity that cares for compassion and love, honesty and respect, and other basic spiritual values which are part of our common human heritage.” [READ MORE](#)

Making of a grand vision



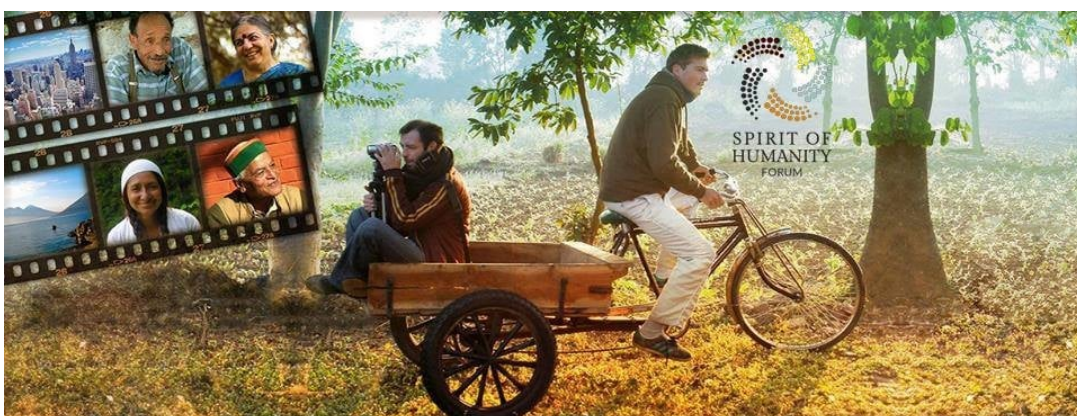
From our installation artist Linda Stefánsdóttir

As we collectively call in the intention for this Conference, the energy of Transformation has started to awaken in the fabric of that which will become your magical surroundings this year. There is no purer, more dynamic energy than that of our children and yet again I, as an agent of this manifestation, am inviting the children of Reykjavik to come together in the making of a grand Vision. This installation will support all those attending in their Dreaming the new world into being.

In divine synchronicity, the City of Reykjavik is holding its Children's Cultural Festival at the same time as our Conference and so I have woven these two dynamics together. Workshops will be held within many different schools, concentrating on the making of Dreamcatchers, and creating Water and Butterfly Glass Art. In the days preceeding our event, the Children of Reykjavik will empower your space with the Transformative Energy of Water, Dreamcatchers and Butterflies.

Play and Power!

Linda



SoH Forum's Open Event

Háskólabíó, Reykjavík

Thursday 27th April at 8.00 PM

Screening of the documentary 'A Quest for Meaning' with the directors

The film tells the story of two childhood friends who leave everything behind to go and question the workings of the world. This incredible, life-changing journey across America, Europe, and Asia encourages us to reconsider our relationship with nature, happiness and the meaning of life. [TRAILER](#)

Dance premiere, composed for the SoH Forum 2017



We welcome the dance students from the Art Academy of Iceland. They are composing a dance inspired by the Forum's themes. We are delighted that they are taking part in the Forum and look forward very much to their performance at our open event.

Toots and Hanna are with us again!

Hanna and Toots both served the Forum in 2014 and did a great job. We are so happy to have these two very competent and caring women now working for the Forum again!

Toots Beckett our technical manager

Toots currently works as a medical co-ordinator in a large primary school in London where she helps refugee children, many coming from warzones, traumatized and injured. Toots has always been interested in the power of the human spirit, and how humanity expresses itself through a variety of culture and creativity. Toots has developed great enthusiasm for life's adventures, is fascinated by life's continuity, and loves to share her insights gained from her experiences as a meditator and developing a quiet mind. She is delighted to be supporting the Spirit of Humanity Forum for the second time.



Hanna Briem our event manager

Jóhanna Briem has an MA degree in risk behavior and prevention, she is a registered medical massage



therapist, cranio sacral therapist, consultant, lecturer and yoga Nidra instructor. Her interests lie within the field of mind body connection and spirituality. She loves nature, hiking and cross country skiing. She was an event administrator for SOH Forum 2014.

The venue - Háskólabíó

**The University Cinema,
Conference & Cultural
Center**

Hagatorg, 107 Reykjavík

[MAP](#) [Háskólaíó website](#)



An inspirational story



From our participants in 2012

My name is Tasoula Hadjitofi, founder of Walk of Truth, a non-governmental organisation designed to engage the public about the importance of protecting and preserving the world's cultural heritage. My experience as a refugee, due to the Turkish Invasion of Cyprus in 1974, led me to dedicate my life to the repatriation of looted cultural and sacred artifacts, and to raising awareness about the power of culture to connect us, and lead us towards peace and reconciliation.

I would be remiss if I did not share a wonderful story about what has come to be realised as a result of my attending the first Spirit of Humanity Forum in 2012. On the final day, during the last break before the Forum ended, I met Kathy Barrett who is the host and producer of the Internet radio show *Behind The Curtain*.

At the time, I was looking for a co-writer for my memoir and, although Kathy had not yet been published, she shared the same passion I had for getting my story out and into the world, and we immediately struck up a friendship. My story is about the impact that war and cultural cleansing has on the souls of people who are forced to flee their homelands. My personal journey of going from refugee to an Icon Hunter in search of justice for the cultural cleansing that occurred in Cyprus after the Turkish invasion led me to orchestrate the Munich operation, one of the largest art stings in European history since WWII. With the help of an art dealer-turned-informant and the Bavarian and Cypriot police, our efforts uncovered over five thousand looted artifacts from Cyprus and around the world.

During this time of my life, I faced many challenges and those challenges have led me to a spiritual awakening that, I am happy to report, I now have the privilege of sharing with the world. My memoir, *The Icon Hunter*, which was written with Kathy Barrett, will be released on April 18, 2017 by Pegasus Books. A friendship was born at the SOHF, one that was based on a soul-to-soul connection. We wanted to share this story with you in the hope of inspiring other attendees about what is possible when we join together in the spirit of being of service to the world.

We are unable to attend the Spirit of Humanity Forum this year because of the marketing requirements for the release of the book, but we will be there in spirit. We want to thank both you and the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University because, without you, making my dream a reality would not have happened.

Tasoula Hadjitofi

Kathy Barrett



Spirit of Humanity Forum

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