



ANNUAL REPORT 2018

Dear SoH Forum's friends,

The year of 2018 was a great year of spreading the seeds of the SoH Forum, where the Regional SoH Forums blossomed and we welcomed new supporting partners. It was wonderful to witness the work of our teams in the UK, Argentina and Iceland, who planned beautiful regional events and volunteered all their work with just one desire: to bring core human values like love, compassion, respect, peace and empathy to the forefront in the world.

We have decided that our next theme for the 4th International SoH Forum in Reykjavik will be 'Discovering Harmony in a World of Difference – spiritual resilience in practice'. We feel that this theme is very relevant now when we are witnessing increased polarization in the world and unprecedented environmental threats that threaten our existence. How can we (re)discover the harmony in the world, harmony with nature and harmony amongst ourselves? To sustain harmony requires us to develop our inner capacities of compassion, resilience, peace and wisdom, to engage with and connect with the energy of love that transcends difference and gives rise to deep interconnectedness. We also need to think of the higher values that we serve, listen to others, try to understand where they come from and where their views come from, have dialogue and build bridges.

The Spirit of Humanity Forum encourages leaders and change-makers to apply core human values like love and compassion in life and work, and to explore how our consciousness is reflected in the state of the world. If the world is going to change, we need to start our own transformation. That takes practice and support and inspiration from others travelling the same path. And that is exactly what we are doing with our work in the Spirit of Humanity Forum. We give leaders and change-makers a safe space to share, inspire and listen, to support each other in their work for a better world and to maintain hope as we move towards a new future. This work is now more important than ever. Work, where the main focus is on the inner work of personal transformation, and on deepening our awareness through reflection and dialogue.

Jóhanna Vilhjalmsdóttir
Director

Thórir Barðdal
Chairman of the Board



Organising team meeting in Lighthouse Retreat Centre, Worthing, UK

We started 2018 with a wonderful, rich and purposeful mutual meeting of the Executive Circle, Board and Annual Meeting in Worthing. For us, who are working together in different corners around the world, it makes all the difference to meet, connect and experience the power of the team. We welcomed new members to the EC, Catherine Allinson and Óttarr Proppé who is returning to the EC again. Also Pia Hanson from Reykjavik's Peace Centre was with us for the first time and then our Social Media expert Tom Chick was so generous in being with us the whole time. We are all delighted to have them in our team, and they brought fresh air and motivation into the group.





This time we visited our roots by reflecting on what the SoH Forum had to offer that is unique and this was the start of the planning for the 4th International SoH Forum in Reykjavik 2019. The EC decided on the theme of 'Discovering Harmony in a World of Difference – spiritual resilience in practice' for the Forum 2019. In a world of increased polarization, the EC found it important to bring forward the question of whether we can bring about a shift in human consciousness towards a rediscovery of harmony as an innate property of our being; a shift that can help us to perceive difference not as a threat, but as a creative driving force for collaboration and harmony. Harmony has spiritual qualities such as love at its core, which enables us to bring parts into an integrated whole and make systems work constructively, benevolently. So it was decided that at the 4th International Spirit of Humanity Forum we would seek ways to

rediscover harmony in a world of difference by inviting leaders at all levels to explore how spiritual qualities can strengthen our resilience and sustain us in an inner state of peacefulness, despite pressures and fears.

Program group

A programme group was formed for the 4thForum. It consists of Maureen Goodman, Scherto Gill, Miriam Subirana and Óttarr Proppé. The group created a wonderful draft programme with themes and questions for the panels, and guidelines for the workshops.

It was decided that the next SoH Forum should be held in Reykjavik in the spring of 2019 and we should aim at 250 – 300 participants. Considerable work went into looking into different venues. Taking everything into account, it was decided to hold the next Forum in the venue for 2017, Háskólabíó (The University's Cinema), and at the beautiful new Institute of the former president of Iceland Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, Veröld, which is adjacent to Háskólabíó.

Regional Forums

In 2018 the SoH Forum continued to spread its seeds with regional Forums. Our SoH regional forum team of Catherine Allinson, Mark Milton, Maureen Goodman, Miriam Subirana and Thorir Barðdal have been leading and supporting the different SoH regional events. It has been great to witness the work of our teams in Argentina, England and Iceland planning beautiful regional events with such heartfelt commitment, volunteering their work motivated by love and compassion for bringing core human / spiritual values to the forefront in the world.

Regional Forum in Iceland

On 22 September, a very successful regional SoH Forum in Icelandic was held in Reykjavik on the importance of core human values in leadership under the theme 'Caring for a World in Transition'. It attracted over 50 leaders and change-makers from different fields, and has strengthened our roots in Iceland. It was also an important step in the planning of our next International SoH Forum in Reykjavik 2019. With beautiful music, meditation, plenaries, silent reflections and dialogue groups, it was a wonderful day with rich conversations which inspired and strengthened us in our journey to connect to values like love, compassion and respect, and live them in our life and work.



Regional Forum in England

On 4th October, a regional Spirit of Humanity Forum event in collaboration with The Schumacher Institute took place in Bristol, UK, under the theme of 'Sacred Activism and the Freedom to Love – the relationship between science, spirituality and sustainability'. It turned out to be a very warm, friendly, stimulating, meaningful and thought-provoking meeting. Our SoH team in England, led by Catherine Allinson and Maureen Goodman, organised the event with Tom Stedall and Jenneth Parker from the Schumacher Institute who have both attended the SoH Forum in Reykjavik. It was hosted by the Central Quaker Meeting House, which serves the community in extraordinary ways, even offering shelter to house the homeless at nights whilst upholding the four Quaker values: peace, truth, simplicity, equality. It was an honour to meet there. Catherine Allinson, who took the initiative in organising our first regional SoH Forum last year in London, welcomed everyone, underlining her purpose of being involved in the work of the Forum: "When we transform ourselves, we can make change in the wider society."



Patagonia Forum

The Argentinian team worked with unwavering conviction since their dream emerged after the Reykjavik International Forum 2017. With a leap of faith, they took on this big task of creating a replica of the programme in Iceland. Their trust in being instruments for a purpose higher than themselves and their devoted work is now coming into blossom. A wonderful three-day programme in the Spanish language took place in Patagonia in October under the theme of 'Transformative experiences for a world in Transition'. It attracted over 150 participants. All the material is available in Spanish on the website: www.foroedh.com.ar



Alan Gegenschatz, one of the founders of SoH Forum and part of the Patagonia SoH Forum organising team

"I am so happy that the SoH forum, which started in 2012 in Iceland, will have its first Latin American Regional SoH Forum in Patagonia with more than 140 confirmed participants, and amazing panellists and workshops. It has been a lot of teamwork, filled with love and care that has allowed us to bring this regional Forum into life after more than a year of design. We have participants from different countries from the South American Region and we have also added more than 20 local workshops to the programme for the community. The whole Forum and workshops are free, funded by the voluntary support of participants without any major sponsors, which shows that the co-creation is simple and possible if the belief and will are aligned with our purpose, passion and offering of service to humanity. Thanks to the SoH Executive Circle for their trust and support. Thanks to Sara, Myriam, Moira, Javier and Juan for making these dreams come true. Also thank you to the many volunteers who have supported the organisation of the Forum at Villa La Angostura, Patagonia, Argentina."





In sweet memory of one of the founders: Our guardian angel, Sigrún

In April 2018, Sigrún Olsen departed after a brave battle with a long-term illness. Much more than Chairman of the Board, she was the founding seed of the Spirit of Humanity Forum finding its base in Iceland. As leaders of the Brahma Kumaris centre in Iceland, Sigrún and her life companion and husband Thor Barddal have supported the Forum in very big ways, giving a lot both in terms of practical help in connection with the Forums and planning meetings in Iceland, sharing resources generously and also supporting us in terms of unshakeable faith, encouragement to continue and to think bigger. Sigrún was always very engaged and practically involved in the Forum at every step, protecting it as its special guardian angel and Thór continues this mission with even more intensity now. We all owe Sigrún and Thór, and the faithful supporters in the BK family in Iceland a very big thank you for all the help they have given and continue to give. Without their support, the Forums would not have been the same. The BK centre has also played a crucial role in creating a spiritual and light atmosphere through their angelic presence at the Forums, carrying out many incognito tasks in the background. As we proceed, it is evident that Sigrún's spirit remains with us. Thank you Sigrún.

GDPR

For the SoH Forum, like any other organisation in Europe, 2018 was coloured by the new GDPR rules in Europe. A lot of work went into adjusting the SoH Forum's operations to the new rules and, as probably every organisation in Europe has experienced, our newsletter-directory was cut down considerably when we asked everyone on our list to actively re-subscribe to our newsletters in order to have clear proof of their consent. On the other hand, we of course approve giving everyone clear power over their own personal data and the benefit is that many uninterested addresses were removed. It is our hope that those who have lost the connection with the Forum, but are unaware of it, will realise and re-connect with us again. Here is a link to our updated [Privacy Policy](#)



The fruit of patience is very sweet

Social Media

We continued with our series '[Living from the Inside Out](#)' on our website. Also, we published parts from the SoH Forum's book Peacefulness in articles. We started new series on our website and Facebook, [Wednesday Wisdom](#), light and entertaining thought provokers to encourage and help leaders and change-makers to practice core human values in life. As well as celebrating the regional Forums in the UK, Iceland and in Patagonia on our digital channels, we also now look forward to continuing to increase awareness of Spirit of Humanity Forum 2019.

Reaching out to new collaborators

The year of 2018 we approached valued aligned organisations that had already been part of the Forum. We are looking for broadening the financial foundation of the Forum and at the same time, which is just as important, increasing the number of partners to work with us towards our common goals. So even though we were looking for financial contributions, we were also focusing on them in regard of holding mutual events, inviting colleagues and partners of those organisations to participate in the Forum.

New partners that joined us 2018



We were proud and delighted to welcome Icelandair and Icelandair Hotels in our team of partners. www.icelandair.com

Icelandair Hotels

Their support is most valuable in our quest to invite to Iceland leaders and also young leaders and change-makers from all over the world. www.icelandairhotels.com



Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha

We were also delighted that the Sikh foundation in the UK GNNSJ decided to become a supporting partner of SoH Forum Reykjavik 2019. Guru Nanak Niskham Sevak Jatha (GNNSJ) is a Sikh organisation (Jatha) based in England, UK which was formed by Baba Puran Singh, Kericho wala in about 1974. Their work spans the whole of the globe with special projects taking place in Africa and India. This organisation has various Gurdwaras in the UK, Kenya and India.

It is founded on the principles of selfless service to humanity (Niskham Sewa) in the name of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Maharaaj, the founder of the Sikh faith. A registered charity, the headquarters are in Birmingham, UK, with branches in the Indian subcontinent, where Sikhism first emerged, and in Africa, where GNNSJ was first established amongst a community of Sikh settlers by its founding Saint, Sant Baba Puran Singh Ji of Kericho. He was a Saint, but also a family man, who earned a living through honest toil and, through many projects, contributed selflessly to the welfare of those around him, irrespective of background.

To learn more, please visit: www.nishkamcentre.org



We were very pleased to announce that the Foundation for Self Leadership will especially support the 4th Forum, Reykjavík 2019.

Dr Toufic Hakim, Executive Director for Operations and Communications, writes on behalf of the Foundation:

“We're very pleased on behalf of the Foundation for Self Leadership to partner with the Spirit of Humanity Forum. Three of our board members have had the opportunity to attend the Forum and had profound experiences (two of us in 2014 and one last year) -not to mention Mark Milton, of course, who's been with the Forum since the beginning and whom we're fortunate to have engaged with us.

We embrace the Forum's ambitious vision and deep values. Hosting meaningful dialogues and shared experiences around topics critical to our common humanity is an effective model to energizing our collective work and sustain a movement that counterbalances undesirable forces around us.

At the Foundation, we envision a world in which striving for peace is the norm, not the exception; we hope to get there by promoting a path toward inner peace and resilience.”

The Foundation for Self Leadership, a global non-profit incorporated in the U.S., is dedicated to promoting emotional healing, health, and wellbeing for all. Its work revolves around research, advocacy and service to communities in need.

The Foundation catalyses and supports independent research around a modern view of the human psyche, based on multiplicity of mind and systems theory, which has been at the core of (1) a now-evidence-based psychotherapy treatment protocol; and (2) a practice of self-awareness and personal development that is reportedly intuitive and life-changing. Beyond research, the Foundation partners with the larger community to develop and implement programs to bring notions of self-responsibility and leadership to school teachers and students, corporate executives, military veterans and medical staff, among many. Its focus is on establishing inner peace as a critical step toward social harmony and global peace.

To learn more, please visit: www.FoundationIFS.org

Reykjavik 2019
The 4h International Spirit of Humanity Forum
Discovering Harmony in a World of Difference
- Spiritual Resilience in Practice
30 May-1 June

Plenaries and themes

THURSDAY 30th MAY:

HARMONY AND SUSTAINING PEACE

PLENARY I: HARMONY AND SUSTAINING PEACE

1. How should we understand the notion of harmony in the light of UN's vision of Sustaining Peace?
2. How might harmony inspire transformative practices of global governance?
3. What practical steps might global leaders adopt to inspire mutual trust, harmony and peace in the world?

Introduced and facilitated by Scherto Gill, Senior Fellow, GHFP

FRIDAY 31st MAY:

HARMONY IN OURSELVES, COMMUNITIES, INSTITUTIONS AND NATIONS

PLENARY II: HARMONY WITHIN OURSELVES, OUR COMMUNITIES AND OUR INSTITUTIONS

1. What does harmony within ourselves mean and feel like? How might our inner harmony contribute to peacefulness in our communities and institutions?
2. What practices might we foster to celebrate our differences, and deepen the interconnectedness between peoples and communities?
3. How might spiritual resilience help sustain generative relationships and harmony?

Introduced and facilitated by Mark Milton, CEO, E4P

HARMONY IN OURSELVES, COMMUNITIES, INSTITUTIONS AND NATIONS. continued

PLENARY III: HARMONY AMONGST NATIONS

1. How can there be harmony between the diverse national interests at a global level?
2. In what way might spirituality and human values help shift global political systems?
3. What practical steps might civil society take to enhance harmony amongst nations?

Introduced and facilitated by Jean-Christophe Bas, CEO, Dialogue of Civilisations

SATURDAY 1st JUNE:

HARMONY ON OUR PLANET

PLENARY DIALOGUE IV: HARMONY ON THE PLANET

1. How does it feel when we live in harmony with nature? How might we achieve that?
2. What can we do to take the practices of harmony to the economic, social and political dimensions of sustainable development?
3. What else might we do to shift our consciousness from one of living at the expense of Nature to one of living in harmony with Nature?

Introduced and facilitated by Nicole Schwab, Co-Founder, EDGE Certified Foundation

Concept Reykjavík 2019

Our world is characterised by diversity and interdependence. These are the virtues of healthy societies and harmonious ecosystems through which our world has flourished for millennia. However, in our current times the presence of difference can often engender dynamics of tension and anxiety. When people have divergent needs and interests, together with varying degrees of access to resources, opportunities and power, such dynamics can easily divide people and communities. Such divisiveness can lead to antagonistic relationships, and ultimately dehumanisation. Dehumanisation has been at the root of much institutionalised discrimination, inequality and injustice, resulting in poverty, exploitation, war and the violent displacement of communities. Such struggles and discords can render our world hostile.

How can we transcend these struggles and reach a state of acceptance and compassion? This requires a deep shift in human consciousness from fear and separation towards a rediscovery of the inherent harmony that is present within the wholeness of our own being, in our human relationships and also in the natural world. In fact, one reflects the other as we begin to see the profound connection between the state of human consciousness and the state of the world. This shift can enable us to understand difference in a new way: difference is what defines our very being in the world, rather than a source of tension and conflict. Celebrating this aspect of our existence enables us to look beyond that which separates us and to see difference as not only already constituted in harmony, but as a creative driving force for harmony. Indeed, harmony is the coming-together of divergent things, an on-going dynamic and fluid process of inter-dependence and collaboration, towards compassionate and generative relationships amongst all that is.

Harmony therefore has spiritual qualities such as Love at its core, which is the creative energy that has the possibility of binding all the parts in an integrated whole. To sustain harmony requires us to develop our inner capacities of compassion, resilience, peace and wisdom to engage with and connect to this creative energy that transcends difference and gives rise to deep interconnectedness. Equally, our spirituality can inspire us to act with care towards each other. The potential of harmony to transform our relationship with nature, relationships among ourselves, within institutions and societies, as well as between nations, is immense.

To reaffirm our deepest love for each other and our spiritual bond, and to reweave the broken threads of our communities and our world into wholeness, the 4th Spirit of Humanity (SoH) Forum, to be held from 30th May to 1st June 2019 in Reykjavík, Iceland, seeks ways to rediscover harmony in a world of difference.

The Forum invites leaders at all levels to explore, amongst myriad approaches to harmony, how spiritual qualities can strengthen our resilience and sustain us in an inner state of peacefulness, despite pressures, fears and disquiet that drive us towards the contrary. The Forum aims to do so by providing spaces for dialogue, listening, contemplation and experience. Participants are encouraged to share, inspire and be inspired, and collaborate in pursuit of harmony in our personal, communal and political lives.

The questions to be discussed during the SoH Forum 2019 include:

- What relational practices could we foster to deepen interconnectedness and how might our spiritual resilience help sustain generative relationships and harmony?
- How might leaders be, so that they actively nurture spiritual qualities in individuals, communities and institutions? What stories can we share to inspire our actions to transcend difference?
- In what way can spirituality help shift social institutions and systems towards greater harmony and peace?

The SoH Forum 2019 will feature a wide range of activities, including:

inspirational personal sharing, panel dialogues, experiential workshops, collective narrative and storytelling, case studies and exemplars, contemplative reflection, informal conversations, and rich Icelandic natural, cultural and artistic experiences.

SoH Forum 2019 particularly welcomes leaders, practitioners, professionals and thinkers from the following fields:

- Arts, Music and Humanities
- Business and Economy
- Education, Social Work and Health
- Politics, Peacebuilding and Conflict Transformation
- Science and Environment

Some of the contributors to previous Forums



Four Arrows

H.E. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir

Lungelwa Nothemba Makgoba

H.E. Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, President of Iceland

H.E. Vigdís Finnbogadóttir, former President of Iceland

H.E. Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson, former President of Iceland

Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson, Foreign Minister of Iceland

Dagur B. Eggertsson, Mayor of Reykjavik

The Lord John Alderdice, Centre for Democracy and Peacebuilding

Emmanuel Habuka Bombande, Peacebuilding Scholar-Practitioner; former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Ghana

Dr. Thabo C. Makgoba, Archbishop, Cape Town

Kul Guatam, former assistant secretary general, UN; deputy executive director, UNICEF

Steve Killelea, founder and board director, Institute for Economics and Peace

Federico Mayor, former Director General, UNESCO

Irina Bokova, former Director General, UNESCO

Dr. Scilla Elworthy, Peace Direct and Oxford Research Group

Alexandra Asseily, founder, Peace Gardens in Lebanon

Dadi Janki, spiritual leader, Brahma Kumaris

Andri Snær Magnason, author

Hrund Gunnsteinsdóttir, founder, Kråd Consultancy – Young Global Leader

Prof. Kristín Vala Ragnarsdóttir, professor, University of Iceland

Gulali Ismail, founder, Aware Girls Pakistan

Four Arrows AKA Don Trent Jacobs, professor, Fielding Graduate University

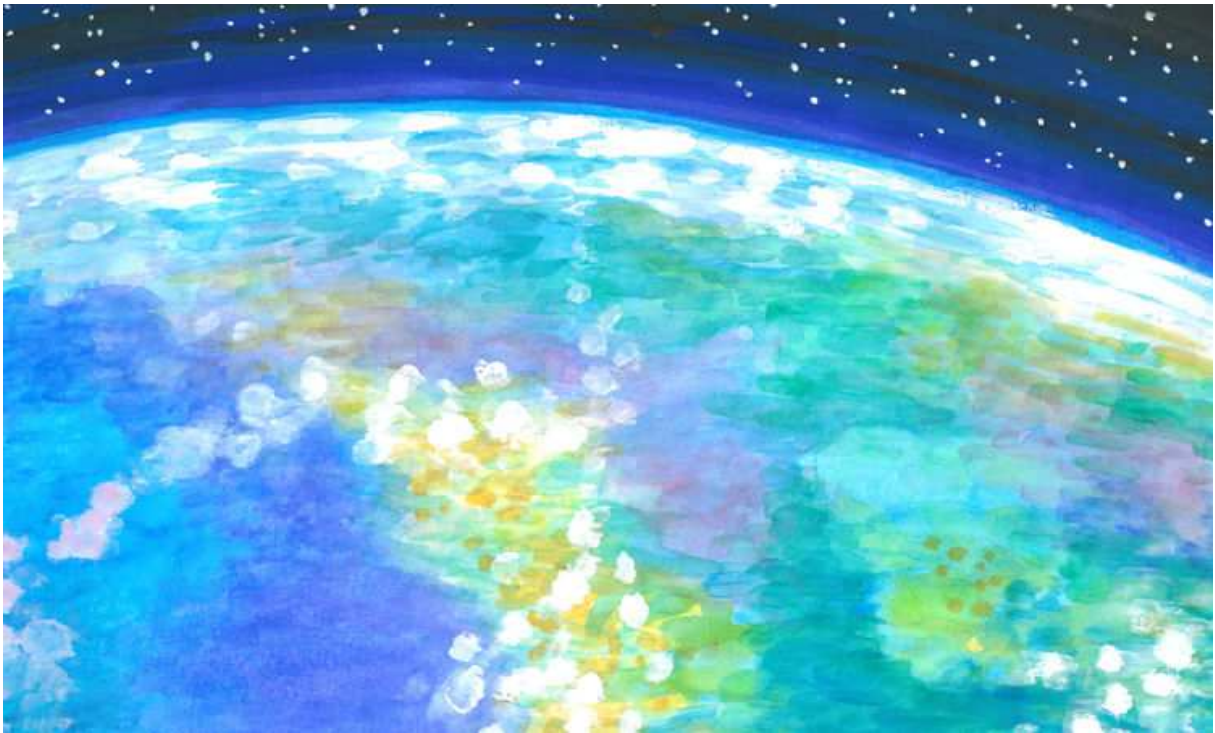
Dr. Rama Mani, specialist in peace and security, Oxford University; founder, Transformation Theatre

Dr. Michael Hardy, Professor of Intercultural Relations and Director of the Centre for Social Relations, Coventry University, Chairman, International Leadership Association

Dr. Jenneth Parker, director of Research, Schumacher Institute

Simon Xavier Guerrand-Hermès, founder and board director, Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace

A global platform for leaders and change-makers



Spirit of Humanity Forum is a global platform for leaders and change-makers to explore core human values in decision-making and governance, understanding that this can enable systemic change in organisations, communities and even nations.

In the words of Swedish Ambassador Ragnar Ångeby, one of the Forum's founders, *"The lasting improvements to the world's conditions require a change of consciousness that will strengthen our ability to live by the highest values intrinsic to our humanity."*

The purpose of the Forum is to explore:

- the process of change within the individual that enables transformation in a community or country
- the empowerment and sustenance of higher values, and their practical implementation in personal, family, community and work life
- how the deeper dimensions of our humanity affect the direction of society
- how we can hold onto our higher purposes despite the many pressures that can take us off course
- how we can support each other to maintain hope as we move towards a new future.

Supporting an emerging community of practitioners of core human values

The Forum encourages the practical application of spiritual values or 'core human values' in the different fields and parts of the world where participants are active. We hope that the SoH Forums can encourage, empower, inspire and nourish participants spiritually in such a way that they can:

- begin or deepen their own spiritual practice on a daily basis to sustain the experiences they have received,

- develop friendships and maybe collaborations with other participants, to support and inspire each other spiritually and maybe even develop practical work together.

In this way the SoH Forum wishes to support an emerging community of practitioners by sharing success stories of applying spiritual values or 'core human values' in decision-making in all levels of society. The meaning of Spirit, Humanity and Forum is explained.

Spirit

- Encourage spiritual values like peace, love, compassion, empathy, humility, caring, non-violence, trust etc.
- Encourage spiritual practices and experiences, especially silence, reflection, introspection and mindfulness which enhance self-awareness, personal integrity and responsibility.
- Encourage an understanding for spirituality beyond religious divides and dogma.

Humanity

- Encourage a universal, inclusive, diverse outlook. Encourage the awareness of being members of one human family and the value of being humane.

Forum

- Holding a space for listening, sharing, reflecting, discussing with openness and humility.

The Forum does not promote any particular project or ideology, but wants to showcase examples of personal transformation from any field or background which can inspire hope and courage in others for their personal transformation too.

ETHOS

Humanity is moving towards a new paradigm based on core human values, in particular, love, compassion and peacefulness. As far as possible, the Forum seeks to model the emergent new paradigm as it is unfolding, leading us to embrace the following principles:

- The Forum is participatory, and spaces are co-created for open conversation, dialogue and silent reflection.
- The essential question we seek to explore is, "How shall we be?" rather than, "What can we do?"
- Participants are encouraged to share, from the heart, journeys of inspiration, deeper meaning and purpose, and practical steps towards meeting the challenges, and personal and social transformation.
- The Forum does not apply a registration fee and sponsors all the costs during the event, including venue, refreshments, reception and all programme activities. Our hope is that everyone who is part of the Forum would be responsible for travel and accommodation as their commitment to sharing and learning through taking part in the Forum.

We respect and value the contribution of each individual in bringing about transformation, acknowledging that any organisation reflects the individuals within it.

Introduction material

[Introduction brochure](#)

[Video](#) – from the 3rd Forum, Reykjavík 2017

[Video](#) – from the 3rd Forum, Reykjavík 2017

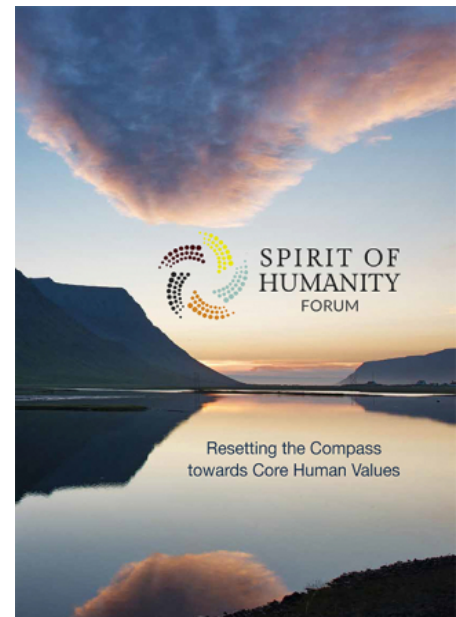
[Video](#) – produced by film school students, from 1st Forum, Reykjavík 2012.

[Article series – Living from the inside Out](#)

[Inspirational thoughts – Wednesday Wisdom](#)

[Website](#)

[Facebook](#)



Special thanks to our partners

We wish to extend a special thanks to our founding and long-term partners for their constant support and generous contributions, whether it is in terms of work or resources, or both.



Icelandair Hotels

