



## Annual Report 2022



Exploring the Depths:  
From Doing to Being

# Exploring the Depths: From Doing to Being

Foreword by Stefania Ólafsdóttir, Chairman of the Board

For more than a decade, the Spirit of Humanity Forum has grown organically, creating a nurturing space for the vital energies of life to help shape the direction of humanity during times of major transition. In 2022, we embarked on a journey of reflection and transformation, delving into profound depths and fully embracing the Essence of Being.

In the past, people have often associated Being with individuals and groups who are especially spiritually inclined meditators committed to a life of simplicity and renunciation of worldly matters. On the other hand, there have been politicians, activists and change agents who have committed to acting on the issues that they felt unacceptable, focusing less on individual transformation and more on collective change through Doing. But the world as we know it today, with severe crises on many levels and challenges that may seem impossible to solve, needs our holistic approach. As Albert Einstein wisely phrased it, “We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them”. Rather than choosing between the Being and the Doing, from being either spiritual or activists, we need both elements to come together so that our approach to problem-solving is no longer fragmented and narrow-minded but embraces our human existence in a wholesome way.

By Being, we don't simply mean the practice of meditation but, more than that, embodying universal values in our governance and decision-making on a small and large scale. Meditation and reflective practices can help with this as they facilitate and encourage us to look inward and reflect deeply on what we, as individuals and as humanity, stand for. We then need to translate that state of Being into our governance and attempt to find sustainable responses to the world's challenges from the core of our Being, rooted in universal values rather than born out of anger and frustration. The answer to hatred and war needs to be peace and compassion, not in a passive way but filled with inner strength

and the courage to respond to the need of each moment fearlessly, from a place of universal values.

2022 was a year where the organising team took the time to reflect deeply on the aim of the Spirit of Humanity Forum and its unique contribution to the world. It was a year of much learning. The world after the pandemic seemed so drastically different, as if nothing would ever be the same again, and we felt the urge to step out of our comfort zones, taking nothing as given. In that process, we permitted ourselves to envision the SoH Forum almost as if from scratch, revisiting its purpose: *What do the leaders of today's world need to be able to stand spiritually solid and true to their values during the turbulent times we are living?*

More than ever before, the members of the Executive and Planning teams of the SoH Forum felt the urge to walk our talk. Our way of working together shifted as we attempted to step into the sometimes-uncomfortable territory of staying aligned with the actual need of each moment rather than sticking to old ways of thinking and planning. We invested our energy in exploring how we could work together with authenticity and bring it into the 6th SoH Forum. Integrity and vulnerability were very much present within our processes; it was as though the essence of the Spirit of Humanity Forum's purpose kept becoming more apparent to us.

During the current phase that humanity is going through, where Authenticity and Love seem to be the real treasures of our times, we feel that the work of the Spirit of Humanity forum has never been as relevant. The organisers of the SoH Forum are committed to aligning the Forum with the actual needs of the time so it may continue to serve and nurture an enlightened community of the conscious leaders and change agents of our world.





### **A global platform for leaders and change-makers**

The Spirit of Humanity (SoH) Forum offers a global platform for leaders and change-makers seeking to contribute to a lasting transformation in the world. We believe that such change requires a shift in our way of being to embrace higher values intrinsic to humanity, such as love, compassion, solidarity, and peacefulness. Hence the task of the SoH Forum is to support this emergent new paradigm through exploring core values in governance and decision-making. It provides a safe space for dialogue, sharing, and co-authoring a new and compelling narrative about who we are, how we could be, and what we can do to create a promising future for all. As far as possible, the Forum intends to model this new paradigm as it unfolds by creating opportunities for silent contemplation, deep listening, mutual presence and an experience of 'we', a spiritual harmony amongst all.

### **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 in maintaining hope as we move towards a new future

### **Ethos**

The Forum is participatory, and spaces are co-created for open conversation, dialogue, and silent reflection. We seek to explore the essential question: "How shall we be?" rather than, "What can I do?" Participants are encouraged to share, from the heart, journeys of inspiration, more profound 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. We hope 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 each one's contribution in bringing about transformation, acknowledging that any organisation reflects the individuals within it.

### **Community of values-based practitioners**

The Forum encourages the practical application of spiritual values or 'core human values' in different fields and parts of the world where participants are active. We hope that the SoH Forums can spiritually encourage, empower, inspire, and nourish participants. To begin or deepen their spiritual practice, sustain the experiences they have received, develop friendships, and maybe collaborate with other participants to support and inspire each other spiritually and perhaps even establish practical work together. The SoH Forum wishes to support an emerging community of practitioners by sharing success stories of applying spiritual values or 'core human values'.

## Historic Support from the Prime Minister's Office



**Government of Iceland**  
Prime Minister's Office

For the first time in our history, the Icelandic Prime Minister's Office decided to support the Forum officially in 2023. This endorsement is a testament to the Forum's growing significance as a meaningful change and dialogue platform.

We were also deeply honoured that Katrín Jakobsdóttir, Prime Minister of Iceland, accepted to be among our distinguished contributors at the 2023 Forum. Her involvement underscores the importance of our collective mission and vision for a more compassionate and harmonious world.

## New Strategies

### **The 6th Forum, a new experience**

The planning of the 6th Spirit of Humanity Forum was an extraordinary journey that unfolded through profound conversations and shared visions. We departed from the conference-format of previous forums to create a more intimate and immersive experience.

Our planning began with a day-long online conversation with the SoH Forum Global Circle and some of our close community friends. We came together in a 'Council of Aspiration and Inspiration'-exercise to co-create an Inclusive Appreciative Inquiry around the central question:

**How can we support leaders in maintaining their pure motivations and staying resilient during these challenging times?**

Through deep, honest, and nourishing exchanges, we reached these essential agreements:

1. Planning the 6th Forum with a focus on authenticity and love.
2. Strengthening connections with and nurturing high-level leaders.
3. Keeping the spiritual torch alive by integrating more spiritual practices into our work and the Forum's programs.

Our friend and colleague Cees Hoogendijk facilitated our conversation. Cees is an international AI practitioner, a thinking partner, and a professional companion to managers, leaders, OD professionals, and students striving for stakeholder well-being, organisational health, and human flourishing. He is also a future-forming researcher in organisational generativity.

We engaged in generative conversations in pairs and small groups and collectively identified opportunities that we could integrate into our personal and professional lives to support the purpose of the SoH Forum.

## A Council of Aspiration and Inspiration





# The Vision



## Spiritual Retreats becoming a norm for leaders

In our conversations, we envisioned a world where leaders regularly engage in spiritual retreats. That it is not only accepted but it is expected of our leaders to do sincere inner work and be well-grounded in self-awareness.

We are prepared to transition to a new phase, moving beyond conferences for leaders to immersive retreats. We want to allow leaders to delve deep into their inner selves, nurturing their spirituality.

## Bringing artists together to co-create and be instruments

Incorporating the arts could transition participants from the realm of the mind to the heart. Art has the power to change the way we see the world, awakening us to new perspectives, ideas, and values. We decided to bring spiritually inclined artists together to co-create something powerful and meaningful at the Forum as instruments of our collective expression, a creative collaboration allowing artists to inspire the spiritual awakening in leadership and governance that the Forum advocates.

## Zoom as a Platform for Meaningful Connections

While in-person meetings are our preference, embracing online connections is also very important. We should explore creative ways to maintain close relationships with and offer spiritual nourishment to our community.

# Healing a World in Crisis

## Planning the 6th Forum



Stefanía Ólafsdóttir, Mark Milton, Thomas Bruhn, Lotta Arbman, Amit Paul, Maureen Goodman, Sylvie Berti-Rossi, Jóhanna Vilhjálmsdóttir

### Deep reflection over haste

In a world fixated on speed and efficiency, the planning team embarked on an unconventional exploration of deep introspection. Recognising the richness of diverse perspectives within the group, the value of genuine connections, and the wisdom arising from mindful being, the team consciously chose the path of deliberate reflection over haste.

### Embracing co-creation

We made space for reflection and introspection, embracing the concept of co-creation. Intending to keep our hearts and minds open, we avoided rushing the process. We often found that our differences became our strengths. We recognised that newness requires stepping beyond the boundaries of security and familiarity.

### Approaching challenges with openness and respect

As in life, we encountered challenges in our relationships. Diverse viewpoints and personalities sometimes lead to moments of tension and disagreement. However, by approaching these challenges with openness and respect, we learned how to navigate them, realising they were opportunities for personal growth.

### Invaluable lessons

Through patience and authentic conversations, we often found ourselves in an environment where

true innovation and transformation could unfold. It was an experience that exceeded our expectations. The lessons in mindful listening and embracing diversity were invaluable. This transformative experience reminds us of the profound impact that genuine connections and open hearts can have. The team is committed to carrying these lessons forward, both in professional endeavours and personal lives.

### Nurturing a Journey of Co-Creativity the work of the Geneva Circle

Following the 2021 SoH Forum, the Geneva SoH Forum Circle continued its work. While the Participative Urbanism group became autonomous and took its own path, the Media group held several meetings with key editors and journalists from Swiss French-speaking media. The focus was on the Media's responsibility regarding well-being and mental health, particularly in today's Swiss Public Media role. This development led to the preparation of organising a 2023 Media & Well-being meeting together with stakeholders from the sectors of education, mental health and ethics, including youth journalists.



## Spirit of Humanity Forum's 10 Years Anniversary



On the 2nd of December, a heart-warming gathering convened at the historic Höfði House in Reykjavík, owned by the City of Reykjavík, to celebrate the **10th Anniversary of the Spirit of Humanity Forum**. In the warm circle of close friends who have been instrumental in founding and supporting the Forum over the years, the Forum's managing team joined in reminiscing about its inception and envisioning the future.





## Celebrating 10 Years: A Decade of Reflection and Growth



The Spirit of Humanity Forum originated from a visionary group in the Gulf State of Oman. Given the region's role as a peacemaker, it seemed a natural hub for uniting leaders to explore the influence of spiritual values on decision-making. Iceland was also on the horizon, where the Brahma Kumaris and Education for Peace delved deeper into this work. The name "Spirit of Humanity Forum" was chosen to symbolise the profound exploration of the connection between our inner spiritual values and the world around us.

Those who played a crucial role in establishing Iceland as the home of the Spirit of Humanity Forum included Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, former Foreign Minister of Iceland; Jón Gnarr, then Mayor of Reykjavík; and the late Sigrún

Olsen and Thor Barðdal, who were directors of the Brahma Kumaris in Iceland. With the support of the City of Reykjavík, the first Spirit of Humanity Forum took place in 2012.

### **Notable attendees included:**

Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, former Minister of Foreign Affairs

Jón Gnarr, former Mayor of Reykjavík

Óttarr Proppé, Project Manager, Ministry of Education

Svanhildur Konráðsdóttir, Director, Harpa Concert Hall and Conference Centre

Kristín Vala Ragnarsdóttir, professor of Earth Sciences at the University of Iceland

Revd Hjörtur Magni Jóhannsson, Minister & Director of Reykjavík Lutheran Free Church

Alexandra Briem, President of Reykjavik City Council

## The Spirit of Humanity Global Circle

The Global Circle comprises the executive circle, former executive circle members, representatives of partners and collaborating organisations, and regional teams. Its primary role is to provide invaluable support to the Forum. Members of the Global Circle are consulted on critical matters, encouraged to share their innovative ideas, actively participate in

meetings, and initiate initiatives that propel the Spirit of Humanity Forum forward.

As our network of close collaborators and partners expands, we aim to foster greater inclusivity within the Global Circle. Here is a snapshot of some of the esteemed members who have played a pivotal role:



Ragnar Ängeby, Pia Hansson, Óttarr Proppé, Miriam Subirana, Kurian Thomas, Barbro Esbjörnsdotter  
Catherine Allinson, Alan Gegenschatz, Sara Caputo, Eythor Gudjonsson, Sylvie Berti-Rossi, David Cadman  
Michelle Schiedt, Scherto Gill, Mark Milton, Stefania Ólafsdóttir, Jóhanna Vilhjálmisdóttir, Maureen Goodman  
Melissa Durda, Thomas Bruhn, Amit Paul, Henri Van Enghen, Michael Lunt, Krístin Vala Ragnarsdóttir,  
Imad Karam, Wendy Elliat, Rama Mani, Alexander Schieffer, Deepa Patel, Lotta Arbman



# Guidelines for Partnerships and Collaborations

Updated in 2022

At the Spirit of Humanity Forum, we have established clear guidelines for partnerships and collaborations to facilitate the initiation of meaningful relationships and enable confident cooperation. With these guidelines, we want to foster a strong sense of alignment and mutual benefit.

At the Spirit of Humanity Forum, we have established clear guidelines for partnerships and collaborations to facilitate the initiation of meaningful relationships and enable confident cooperation. With these guidelines, we want to foster a strong sense of alignment and mutual benefit.

## Partner Requirements:

1. **Alignment of Values:** Our partners must share values that resonate with the core mission of the Forum.
2. **Building Relationships:** We believe in nurturing relationships to develop a deep understanding of each other over time.
3. **Forum Participation:** The first step typically involves participation in a Forum event to assess the potential for a deeper, long-term partnership.
4. **Active Support:** Partners support the Forum through funding or in-kind contributions actively.
5. **Representation:** Partners should have a representative presence within the Global Circle.
6. **Possible Strategic Role:** Some partners may participate in the Strategic Circle, contributing to the overall strategic direction.

## Benefits for Our Partners:

1. **Network Expansion:** Partners gain the opportunity to expand and strengthen their network by connecting with organisations that share aligned values.
2. **Unique Contribution:** Partners can make a unique and valuable contribution depending on their expertise.
3. **Co-Creation:** Partners can actively co-create programs and engage in research projects with the Forum.
4. **Co-Publishing:** Collaborative projects may involve co-publishing literature that supports the Forum's mission.
5. **Member Engagement:** Partners are encouraged to invite their members to participate in the Spirit of Humanity Forum.
6. **Forum Presence:** Partners may be offered space and workshops at the Forum to engage with participants.
7. **Visibility:** Partner organisations are visible on all Forum materials as an official Partner.
8. **Smaller Events:** Partners can co-create, support, and gain exposure at smaller SoH events and Regional SoH Forums, contributing to the Forum's broader reach.

These guidelines are instrumental in fostering strong and meaningful partnerships that align with the Spirit of Humanity Forum's mission and values.



# Guidelines for Supporting Organisations

Updated in 2022

At the Spirit of Humanity Forum, we welcome the participation of supporting organisations that share our values and seek to contribute to specific events or Forums. These partnerships can evolve into long-term collaborations, fostering shared goals and values.

## Requirements:

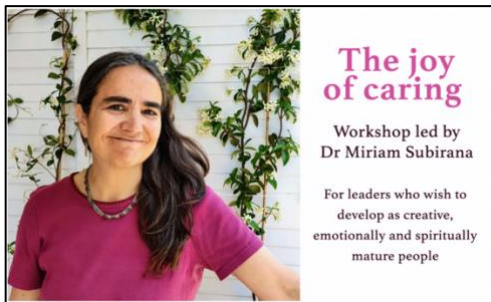
1. **Alignment of Values:** Supporting organisations must align with the core values and mission of the Spirit of Humanity Forum.
2. **Support for Specific Event/Forum:** Supporting organisations provide valuable support for a particular event or Forum, making a meaningful contribution to our shared objectives.
3. **Potential for Long-Term Partnership:** These supporting relationships may evolve into long-term partnerships as trust and shared values deepen.

## Benefits for Supporting Organisations:

4. **Reserved Spaces:** Supporting organisations can secure several spaces at the Forum, enabling them to invite specific individuals they wish to participate.
5. **Special Projects:** There is potential for special projects directly connected to the Forum in collaboration with the Spirit of Humanity Forum.
6. **Unique Contribution:** Depending on the expertise and interests of the supporting organisation, they can make a unique and valuable contribution.
7. **Prominent Visibility:** The supporting organisation's presence is displayed on all relevant materials, clearly defined in terms of where and how it is featured.

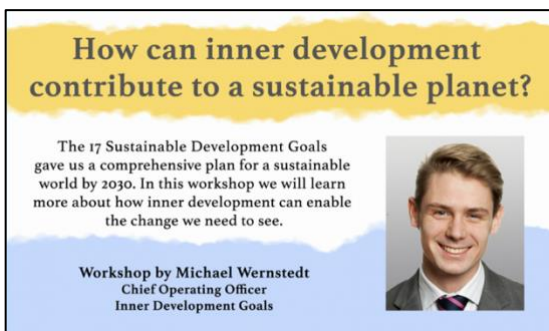
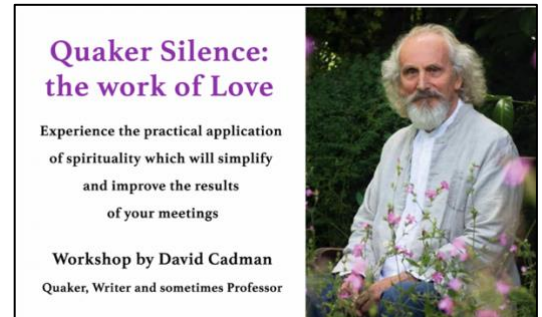
These guidelines enable us to build strong relationships with organisations that share our values and actively contribute to the success of specific events and Forums within the Spirit of Humanity Forum's broader mission.

## Online Programmes 2022



Dr Miriam Subirana, a long-time friend and one of the Forum's Founders, led a thought-provoking workshop on how we as leaders can co-create practices to nurture wellbeing through the joy of caring. We explored how we can make our relationships a genuine flow between us, releasing masks, guilt and defensive attitudes that separate and exhaust us.

Our long-time friend and colleague Professor David Cadman led a beautiful and profound online Quaker space on the work of love, the Quaker Practice of 'right ordering', about silence, what happens in silence and how it affects our lives.



Michael Wernstedt, a friend, and contributor to the SoH Forum, and at the time COO of the newly launched Inner Development Goals, took us through the One Question IDG Survey: What capabilities, qualities or skills do you believe are essential to develop, individually and collectively, to get us significantly closer to fulfilling the Global Goals? What skills do you feel you need or would like to develop as a person? What skills do you feel we would need to develop as a society? What can you do to make this happen?

Michael also joined a conversation with Golo Pilz and Sonja Ohlsson from Brahma Kumaris Environment Initiative in a hybrid associated event to the environment conference Stockholm +50 pondering on the central question: How can a shift in mindset contribute to a sustainable planet?



# Holding the Spiritual Torch through Spiritual Practice

As part of our commitment to hold the spiritual torch high and deepen our connection with core values and each other, we have embraced a simple yet profound spiritual practice—coming together in silence every week, inviting everyone to join.

## Fridays for Silence

Every Friday at 11 AM GMT, we host a 15-minute silent gathering on Zoom, complemented by a brief guided commentary. What began with the Global Circle as a practical spiritual endeavour to hold the spiritual torch has now blossomed into a community-wide invitation. We're humbled to witness between 20 and 30 participants attending each Friday, including contributors from past Forums who attend regularly.

## Saturdays for Silence and Sharing in Iceland

In collaboration with Lótushús in Iceland, the Icelandic SoH Forum Team has extended the concept, hosting a silent space in Iceland every Saturday on Zoom. During these sessions, a participant takes 5 minutes to share heartfelt thoughts about the human spirit. It's a meaningful gathering, with up to 70 participants joining each Saturday.



## Three Pillars - Silence, Listening & Dialogue

Three fundamental guiding principles emerged from our collective experience with past Forums. These three pillars are essential for creating and upholding the Spirit of Humanity Forum experience:

**1. Silence** In a world flooded with constant messages, our minds often dwell on repetitive thoughts. To break free from this cycle and open ourselves to new perspectives, we need to grant our minds moments of complete rest in between. In silence, we process experiences, let insights settle, and prepare to embrace fresh ideas.

**2. Listening** True listening transcends mere hearing. It requires us to set aside our interpretations, judgments, and personal agendas. When we listen deeply with a genuine intention to understand what others are expressing, we create an environment where meaningful dialogue and new understanding can flourish.

**3. Dialogue** is the art of exploring and understanding a subject collectively, free from the pressure to make immediate decisions or prove oneself "right." It thrives when we approach it with open hearts and from a space of silence. In this fertile ground, we can welcome and engage with the perspectives offered by others.

These three pillars are the bedrock of our work, allowing us to delve deeper into our shared humanity and inspire transformation through the power of dialogue and reflection.



## Free of Charge



The Spirit of Humanity Forum operates as a non-profit initiative. Our dedicated team has a shared passion for fostering a global community of practitioners committed to promoting love, compassion, inspirational leadership, and a novel governance paradigm across all societal tiers. We aim to instigate positive global transformations and foster meaningful connections.

Our work is made possible through the tireless dedication of our volunteers, who collectively help us establish an all-encompassing and transformative platform. However, without financial support our work would not be possible.

Support from our partners can take various forms, including financial assistance, voluntary engagement, knowledge sharing, and the contribution of their unique skills and resources. Our partners bring not only financial support but also a diverse array of perspectives and experiences to enrich our collaborative efforts.

The SoH Forum is committed to providing all its events free of charge. We encourage attendees and participants to contribute voluntarily, in alignment with their willingness and capacity. We firmly believe that this approach fosters inclusivity and promotes community participation.

You can support our initiative and help make it sustainable and accessible to a broader audience by:

- Sponsoring specific events.
- Assisting in the development of a global community.
- Contributing to the long-term growth of the Forum.

Any support you can offer in these areas, or any other innovative ideas you may have to further our mission, would substantially contribute to our work and outreach.

## Fostering Collaborative Connections for a Loving World

At the heart of the Forum's mission lies a profound belief in the power of collaboration. We view partnerships as the path forward and diligently nurture connections with like-minded friends and aligned organisations who share our vision for a more compassionate world. By uniting our efforts, we can provide mutual support, pool resources, collaborate on specific programs, and inspire and infuse hope into the world.

To achieve this goal, we have actively cultivated relationships with organisations that share our purpose and values. These collaborations strengthen our collective impact and reinforce our commitment to fostering a more loving and harmonious world.

### New Partners in 2022

We were delighted to welcome two new partners, Synergos and Global Humanity for Peace Institute - University of Wales Trinity St David



### Partners since before

Reykjavík City, Fetzer Institute, Guerrand Hermès Foundation for Peace, Education 4 Peace, Brahma Kumaris Iceland (Lótushús), Höfði Peace Centre, Heartfulness



### Associated Organisations

Initiative of Change, The International Leadership Association, The Lunt Foundation, Home for Humanity, Flourish Project

