



# **EUPHRATES INSTITUTE**

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Annual Report  
2019-2020

# LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER

**A**s I write this, fires are raging across the west coast of the United States where I live and smoke is darkening the sky. The fires are in many ways emblematic of 2020's raging calamities—from the global pandemic COVID-19, to international racial uprisings, to the increasingly violent clashes of this election year in the United States. I look at my children and often wonder what world I am handing to them.

What can we do in the face of these despairing trials? Do we join the fight and blame the 'Other' for our problems? Do we content ourselves with prayers that bypass the discomfort? Do we retreat into cozy homes and binge on Netflix? I can answer yes to all those things, and yet I know in my heart there's another way.

John Lewis, the iconic civil rights leader, wrote in a letter to be published after his death: "I urge you to answer the highest calling of your heart and stand up for what you truly believe." It's a powerful message to pair the deep personal reflection with the outward action. Both the inner and outer are needed for true change to occur. It seems that the times we face today are demanding this heart-centered action, not just from the venerated luminaries in our midst, but from every single one of us.

The Euphrates global community is leaping right in and taking this challenge to the next level. Our first ever intensive peacebuilding training brought together 17 changemakers from 8 countries for a powerful six-month online program that focused on cultivating peace from the inside out—listening to the calling of one's heart—and then taking action on it in the world. Our peace ambassadors are staring down hunger and feeding their communities amidst pandemic-destroyed economies in Liberia and Uganda, connecting women and youth to mentors in India and Afghanistan, and caring for children in Tanzania, just to highlight a few.

Our team is expanding to support the growth—with new programming staff giving wings to community members' cherished ideas. In addition Katy Lunardelli has stepped into the role of Executive Director while I will remain strongly connected to the organization as Founder.

In these times, you're invited to keep "choosing the river" along with us—right in the midst of the fires and rage—choosing peace, choosing life, choosing Oneness.



INSPIRING HUMANITY TO CHOOSE PEACE

# Our Year in Review

**T**his year our global interconnectedness has been further exposed and there is no turning back to positions outgrown. For Euphrates, we have spent this past year growing into newfound clarity of our vital mission to equip, connect, and uplift emerging peacebuilders worldwide. This transformational work has never been more relevant. Here are some highlights.

- We completed months of strategic planning and reimagining, emerging with more clarity and resolve to support peace leaders worldwide.
- Our mission has unfolded a groundbreaking new program that focuses on cultivating peace from the inside out - the Peace Practice Alliance.
- We have met the need for humanitarian assistance for our peace ambassadors and their communities amid lockdowns and uncertainty.
- Our community calls have grown exponentially as we've sought new ways to connect and inspire each other.
- We have welcomed a new leadership team and adopted a collaborative, relational leadership model for the organization and community.

# Our Leadership Team



## **Natalia Garvey, Administrative Director**

Euphrates helps me stay grateful and cognizant that we are all part of a global community. In divisive times such as these, I think our work is more important than ever in helping inspire people to choose peace and to strive to understand different perspectives. Through equipping peacebuilders and starting conversations, Euphrates is planting the seeds of peace and building bridges in communities around the world, and for that I am proud to be a part of Euphrates.



## **Katy Lunardelli, Executive Director**

“Peacemakers aren’t starry-eyed dreamers. They’re clear-eyed realists — they see the toll that war and violence and injustice take on the world. They don’t ignore it or accept it as inevitable. Instead, they try to transform it with the power of love.” This quote from minister Joe Kay is the reason I am called to work for Euphrates. I am exceedingly grateful for our community of peacebuilders who, against great odds, transform our world through love.



## **Sylvia Murray, Head of Programs & Strategy**

Euphrates transforms conflict to connection, strangers to community, individuals to everyday peace leaders. This transformation entails deep, authentic, and vulnerable connection with accountability, equity, and justice. This transformation opens us to live in nourishing relationship with ourselves, each other, and the Earth. This transformation acknowledges, actualizes, and amplifies the humanity, value, and worthiness of all. This transformation calls for collaborative action, creativity, dedication, and practice. It is commitment to this community-led, courageous, and ongoing learning and transformation that grounds me to work with Euphrates.



## **James Offuh, Programs Facilitator**

The Highest calling of my heart is to continue serving humanity as a peace leader. I choose the “River” because the river has no enemy, it flows to all directions, it receives all without exclusion, it’s a living space, it’s a good analogy of Human Interrelatedness. The river shows that for true Human Relationships to heal mutually, it must be a natural flow from the heart. Positive Peace is that “River!”



## **Hollister Thomas, Head of Community Engagement**

A current that has flowed through my life is the deep desire to find purpose, connection, and transformation. Euphrates holds up a community grounded in purpose, awake to our interconnectedness, and inspired to serve individual and collective transformation. Working alongside soul-driven peace leaders from around the world, I am daily humbled and awestruck. I’m so grateful for the opportunity to know and serve this incredible community of peace leaders.



# Purpose

Inspiring humanity to choose peace.



# Vision

We envision a future in which all humanity lives from oneness with each other and the earth.



# Mission

Euphrates equips, connects, and uplifts emerging peacebuilders worldwide.

We ensure each of our programs integrates the practices and values of equipping, connecting, and uplifting peacebuilders. Through this foundation, Euphrates cultivates community for peacebuilders who partner, advocate, and deeply connect with and for each other towards the shared goal of ending violence in all forms, from the personal to the global.



**connect** to a global family for ongoing support, learning, and care in our peace journeys

**equip** with practices and resources to thrive in our work of peace leadership

**uplift** to amplify grassroots models of peace and inspire others to engage in social change



# peace practice alliance

Euphrates recognizes the need for international and intersectional collaboration that acknowledges and embraces the interconnectedness of all living things. At the request of our community, we launched a new program this year to provide deeper connection, resources, tools, and certification to emerging peacebuilders.

The Peace Practice Alliance pilot program ran from May-October 2020. A cohort of 17 grassroots leaders from 8 countries journeyed together through an intensive virtual learning and community building experience exploring and developing peace leadership theories and practices. Together we deepened our personal, interpersonal, community, and global peace practices, and how to practice peace leadership in our daily work and lives as peace influencers.

As the world increasingly divides along political, religious, and national lines, it is imperative we equip, connect, and uplift the next generation of peacebuilders. The Peace Practice Alliance program provides space for current and emerging leaders to learn from, be supported by, and thrive with a truly global community grounded in the pursuit of positive peace and social change.

## *call to action*

*Apply for our 2021 Peace Practice Alliance cohort! Begin to cultivate or deepen your own personal, interpersonal, community, or global peace practice. Create a self-care plan, deeply listen to another, complete an act of kindness in your community, do one thing to clean up the environment.*

### GLOBAL PEACE PRACTICE *THE SYSTEMS SPACE*

We build and share collective knowledge to engage and amplify a diverse realm of practices, support, and collaboration.

### COMMUNITY PEACE PRACTICE

#### *THE COMMUNITY SPACE*

We understand systems and structures in place around the world impacting peace and how we interact with, navigate through, and collectively change them.

### INTERPERSONAL PEACE PRACTICE

#### *THE RELATIONSHIP SPACE*

We understand theories and cultivate processes to effectively and nonviolently interact with others in our work towards peace.

### PERSONAL PEACE PRACTICE

#### *THE INDIVIDUAL SPACE*

We learn and practice skills to honor one's self, to grow as an artisan of peace, and to develop internal practices for empathy, mindfulness, courage, forgiveness, reflection, and self-love.



# THE 2020 COHORT



Martin



Shabana



Pamela



Sohini



Sarah



Teri



Afeefa



Jeremia



Becky



Ankita



Nicholas



Hudson



Maria



Victor



Emmanuel



Ahmadshah



Farah

“ Most importantly I learned the concept of interbeing; the interconnectedness that binds us all together in the network of life. I did not know that inner peace and interpersonal peace practices are so crucial to my dream of building a better community. I learned deep listening skills and was able to identify my own deficits and thus began my self-improvement...I feel the journey from personal to global has given me a meaningful presence in the scheme of things. I believe I am all set to start the same journey which was taken by great peace leaders... ”

Shabana Anwar, India

“ Learning about and defining the peace-process takes time. For now the rhythm is to grow in our understanding of peace practices, practice these ideas, think, practice again, act, practice even more, REPEAT! It's a formula that encourages and rewards each participant by helping them to hone and internalize their peace practice and provide a platform for continued expansion of thought. This is peace in action! ”

Becky Hoskyn, United States

“ The opportunity to join Euphrates Family has been one of those rare things that has happened in my life, indeed life-altering. Meeting wonderful mentors and friends from around the globe is a blessing from heavens – something that I will always cherish...true friendship doesn't know any border, distance and other differences, they care for you and are there for you in moments of joy and sadness. Feeling blessed to have been part of this journey and will always treasure the learning and friendship experienced in the process. ”

Ahmadshah Karimi, Afghanistan

# VISIONARY OF THE YEAR

## AQEELA SHERRILLS

Euphrates recognizes grassroots changemakers doing extraordinary work, striving to make the idealistic realistic and the impossible possible. Visionaries are those whose fearless and indomitable spirit allows them to transform the hearts, minds, and actions of those around them and reveal solutions where others see despair.

The 2020 Visionary of the Year is Aqeela Sherrills, a powerful leader set to inspire and give hope and imagination to peacebuilders worldwide. Aqeela is a spirit-centered organizer and activist, working to promote healing in communities of color and build community-based public safety strategies. He has been an inspired agent of change, collaboratively forging a historic peace treaty between the Bloods and Crips in Los Angeles, launching The Reverence Project to provide healing support to victims of trauma, and reimagining public safety strategy as a leader in the Newark Community Street Team. Informed by his own life experiences, Aqeela encourages others to “discover the gift in the wound.” He believes transformative social change happens when we build compassion and understanding into systems and communities.

“ I believe we exist in a time where the heart has been prepared for a new movement where love becomes a practice as opposed to an idea, where vulnerability and humility become a strength instead of weakness. And I call this the reverence movement. ”



## NEWARK COMMUNITY STREET TEAM

The Newark Community Street Team (NCST) was founded by Mayor Ras J. Baraka as the city’s community-based violence reduction strategy. NCST draws upon an evidence-based, trauma informed approach to violence reduction. NCST envisions a public safety system that puts victims at the center of its public safety strategy and invests in healing services for the community and law enforcement partners. Safety is not just the absence of violence but the presence of well-being and systems that support the most vulnerable amongst us. “There is a point of entry for the public to play a key role in public safety,” shares Aqeela, and it is time to truly reimagine systems of public safety.



## THE REVERENCE PROJECT

As a peace movement, The Reverence Movement is focused on shifting world wide imagination by instituting a practice of authentic exploration of the wounds in the personal life as a means of accessing the gift of who we are. The Reverence Project (TRP) is a local organization with a global agenda, with a mission to provide innovative community-centric services to survivors of crime through healing centered engagement, shared safety advocacy, and community leadership training. TRP’s vision is to shift the current social philosophical culture of shame, guilt, fear and violence to a loving culture that embraces healing through truth, compassion, forgiveness, and a deeply internalized reverence for the spirit of humanity.

### call to action

We invite you to follow and support Aqeela and his communities’ powerful work. You can sign up for updates on our ongoing VOTY collaborations with Aqeela at [www.euphrates.org](http://www.euphrates.org).



# CHAPTERS & PEACE AMBASSADORS

Euphrates supports a network of individuals who work to deepen their personal peace practices and heal conflicts in their communities. Working as a Chapter group or as an individual Peace Ambassador, these inspired peace leaders steadfastly endeavor to close divides, build bridges, and end violent conflict in their communities. Endeavors this past year include peace camps in Cameroon, Circles of Compassion in India, nonviolent dialogue workshops between albinos and non-albinos in Democratic Republic of the Congo, reconciliation workshops for students in Tanzania, and community food distribution in Liberia.

## call to action

*In honor of the nonviolent dialogue our Chapters and Peace Ambassadors practice and facilitate in their communities in times of conflict, we encourage you to reflect on a situation in your life where you can introduce dialogue.*

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ellesse and Virginia have been transformative leaders in bridging relationships between albinos and non-albinos. They facilitate ongoing workshops to dismantle stereotypes and create healing relationships. Ellesse and Virginia serve as inspiration to dedicate ourselves to the long-term work of transforming conflict in our communities.



*“Our deep prayer is that our different activities and rich experience be an inspiration, a help, a model that all will discover. Some non-albinos discover the albino’s humanity and can touch them, give them a kiss, share with them food at the same table...”*

*-Ellesse*



In Burundi, Chapter Leader Oscar has steadfastly worked with youth groups to inform, inspire, and transform. Oscar believes “education of the youth in the path of peace will build a more stable foundation and end division and violent tendencies. Our chapter seeks youth engagement as peace ambassadors in their communities in order to turn other into brother.”

*“My focus this year was primarily working to support women to emerge in Community Leadership roles by training them to engage creatively with their daily problems and mobilize community support to problem solve and grow as individuals.” - Sohini*

In India, Peace Ambassador Sohini pursued her passion of working with young people and women. Understanding the value of deep listening, Sohini launched The Compassion Tribe: Online Circles of Compassion. Sohini also trained and facilitated sessions with the Santhals tribal women in Keshiary Block along the Bengal Jharkhand border with the help of Noah’s Ark (NGO) and Father Paul (founder of the tribal school).





# GRANTS

This year Euphrates awarded 14 small grants to support Euphrates Chapters and Peace Ambassadors. Grants are given to Euphrates Chapters and Peace Ambassadors as seed funding for peace initiatives or to hold local events that inform and inspire local communities. This year grants supported:

- Gatherings to heal the relationships between albino and non albinos and reduce the violence against albinos in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Events to promote peaceful elections in Burundi
- Launch of an institute in Cote d'Ivoire to provide social dialogue and peace education
- Launch of the Euphrates Uganda Chapter
- Event to promote awareness of climate change in Liberia
- Launch of a peace camp in Cameroon
- Bridging the digital divide through technology access for Peace Practice Alliance participants

In addition to the traditional grant making, the events of 2020 called on Euphrates to pivot and reallocate some of our resources to assist our community during COVID lockdowns. Thanks to the generous support of our donors we were able to provide funds for food and other essentials for communities in Uganda, Liberia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.





# COMMUNITY CALLS

***The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, a heart of grace, and a soul generated by love.***

Coretta Scott King



In challenging times, our interdependence and connection is a gift. We are able to thrive through community. We are informed. We are comforted. We are inspired. We are transformed. Together. This year we widened our circles of connection on our Community Calls as the number of participants more than doubled. Our virtual gatherings introduced guest speakers and provided a sacred space for honest dialogue. Themes included women in peacebuilding, exploring 'what is the highest calling of your heart?', finding light amidst the darkness, and cultivating personal peace practice. Hearts opened, connections deepened; we have been there for each other and will continue to be.

*call to action*

*Community calls are open to all. Share them with others and join when you are able. We hope to see you at our next virtual gathering!*

# WORKSHOPS & EVENTS

Workshops and events allow Euphrates to widen our reach and connect to our existing community as well as new audiences. Euphrates staff has been a part of a range of events in the past year, including the First Amendment Voice's National Symposium, Principia's Lifelong Learning trip to the Middle East, TAPS International Panel at Geneva Peace Week, and Gandhi 3.0 retreat, organized by Service Space in Ahmedabad, India.



Spending New Year's in the Holy Lands with Principia College's Lifelong Learning group, Janessa introduced this group to peace leaders in Israel and Palestine. Board Chair, Joy Schwentker, joined this transformative journey.

Elias Deis, Executive Director of Holy Land Trust, hosted a workshop for the Principia Lifelong Learning group. His powerful story of realizing that the conflict is not Israelis versus Palestinians, but rather that all those who believe in the equality and dignity of mankind are on the same side was deeply inspiring.



The 2019 First Amendment Voice National Symposium focused on bridging divides and polarizations through breakthrough conversations.

# HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Euphrates is ever-growing and evolving. As we imagine new creative, peaceful, and inclusive systems and ways of living, we aim to widen our circles to be truly intersectional in our efforts towards peace. We want to collaborate with you and look forward to what we can create together!

To launch your Euphrates journey and collaborate through any of the opportunities below, connect with a team member via email. Don't see something for you? Start a conversation with us and we'll explore new and exciting opportunities together.

## Ways to get involved:

- Apply to the Peace Practice Alliance program
- Become a Euphrates organizational partner
- Become a Peace Ambassador
- Donate to Euphrates
- Follow and share on social media  
#weareallpeacebuilders
- Join a community call
- Join the Euphrates Personal Peace Days
- Publish on the Euphrates blog
- Share with us stories of peacebuilders you know
- Start a Euphrates Chapter

# CIRCLE OF HOPE

*as of November 2020*

The Circle of Hope is a community of committed donors who have significantly invested in Euphrates's work. We are grateful to these contributors who enable Euphrates to equip, connect, and uplift emerging peacebuilders around the world.

Circle of Hope members have annual giving (June 30 - July 1) totals of \$2400 or more. To seed Euphrates's sustainability, we invite a three-year commitment.

Vincent Campos

Joan and Theodore Hoffman

Susan and Jay Jostyn

Carol and Ken Rawie

Joy and Bob Schwentker

The Shift Network

Lori and Glenn Williams

Anonymous



# DONORS

Euphrates is an independent nonprofit organization that is sustained by individual financial and in-kind donations. Your investment enables this work of peacebuilding and local and global transformation to continue and grow.

- \* three years or more of giving
- ~ sustaining member (monthly donor)

## In-Kind Program Contributors

Amy Potter Czajkowski, Catalyst for Peace  
Betsi Shays, Worthy Missions  
Bao Ngoc Ho, Sarus  
Debra Myers, Artist  
Delaney Amonino, University of California - Irvine  
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Siobhan Brown, Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project  
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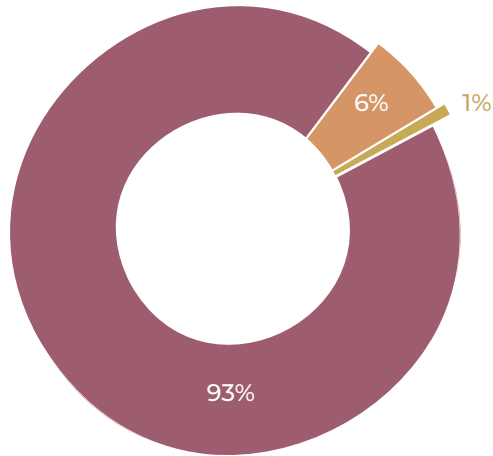
Thank  
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# FINANCIAL REPORT

Fiscal Year July 2019 - June 2020

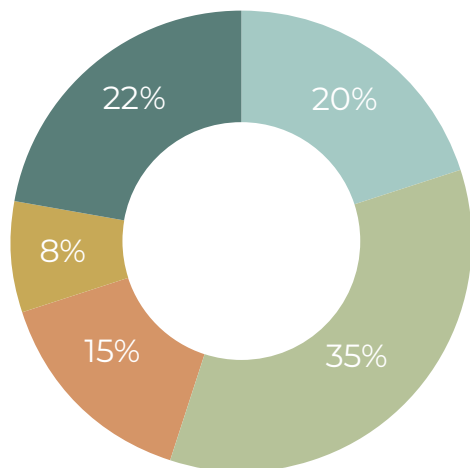
**Total Sources of Funds: \$303,454**

● Individual Contributions ● Pro Bono ● Other



**Total Expenses: \$264,911**

● Chapters and Grants ● New Programming and Strategic Planning  
● Education Workshop ● Fundraising ● Management General



Euphrates also received \$25,000 in a government issued loan as part of the Payment Protection Program, established by the CARES Act. In accordance with regulations, this loan was used for payroll.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Euphrates is supported by a team who has a heart for greater peace and understanding in our world. We are grateful to our Board and advisors for their commitment to the Euphrates mission and community.

## FOUNDER

Janessa Gans Wilder

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joy Schwentker, Chair

Katy Lunardelli, Executive Director

Kent Libbe, Chief Financial Officer

Rebecca Hoskyn, Secretary

Fran Faraz

Charles Wattles

With heartfelt thanks to Glenn Williams who served as Chair of Euphrates from 2017-2020

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Craig Hunter

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Euphrates Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which relies on individual contributions for its peacebuilding efforts.



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