



Forage Center for Peacebuilding and
Humanitarian Education, Inc.

2020 Annual Report

February 2021



Forage Center Board and Staff
November 2017

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Alum Heather Payne sharing about her professional experiences during the 8th Annual National Community College
Peacebuilding Seminar
October 30,2020 held via Zoom

From the Forage Center President



Last year was a year like no other. Our hopes of offering programs face-to-face were dashed. Of course, we were not alone in the adjustment. Organizations that engage in experiential-based learning had to operate in a virtual space. We were successful in making the pivot, as you can read more about in this report. I am proud of our team for embracing the opportunities and overcoming the challenges of 2020. We truly made lemonade out of lemons!

With the start of the pandemic in March 2020, we halted all in-person programming and outreach efforts. We had considered offering a fall 2020 face-to-face program, but that could not take place. Moving to the virtual space, we utilized Zoom to offer virtual programming, meet as an organization, and engage in outreach.

Our major efforts this past year included holding five Forage Center Conversations via Zoom. We also co-sponsored for the first time the National Community College Peacebuilding Seminar.

Another major effort this past year was the reorganization and refocusing of our educational and training efforts through the Education and Training Committee led by Dr. Jess Bonnan-White. New committee members were added, and the committee was divided into three subcommittees to improve effectiveness, and develop a plan for post-pandemic activities.

In 2020, we were pleased to welcome a new board member, Dr. Ernest Ogbozor. Ernest brings to the Forage Center many years of humanitarian field experience including with the ICRC. He teaches at George Washington University and George Mason University.

Humanitarian work will be even more daunting once the pandemic is over. UNHCR estimates that there are now 80 million displaced persons around the world. The pandemic has exacerbated already tenuous conditions for vulnerable people around the world. The World Food Programme estimates that people facing acute food insecurity rose to 265 million in 2020, up by 130 million from 135 million in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic demands all humanitarian groups to redouble their efforts in alleviating suffering.

We look forward to the opportunities and challenges that 2021 offers. Please join us in our journey to prepare the next generation of humanitarian and peacebuilding professionals. Thank you for taking the time to read our 2020 Annual Report.

David J. Smith, JD, MS

President

February 2021

About the Forage Center

The Forage Center for Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Education, Inc. is a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation that provides educational opportunities for students, educators, and professionals to build capacity to work in environments where peacebuilding and humanitarian responses are needed. To accomplish this, the Forage Center:

- Develops and directs site-based experiential programs for educational and professional audiences designed to improve the skills and knowledge base of those working in conflict, disaster, and other complex emergencies.
- Consults with professional and academic groups, as well as with non-governmental organizations and governments, on the best practices for working in complex emergencies.
- Offers educational programs for college and university, public, and professional groups on peacebuilding and humanitarian education.



Dr. Keleigh Blount speaking at a Forage Center Conversation
July 1, 2020 held via Zoom

2020 Activities

During this past year, due to the restrictions because of the pandemic, all of our programming was virtual. Our primary efforts were in holding four one-hour virtual Forage Center Conversations. They were held on April 15, July 1, August 6, October 1, and October 28. Approximately 200 individuals in total attended these virtual events. A short summary of each is below.

Beyond the Checkbox: Make the Most of Your Training Exercises (April 15). At this webinar, Forage Center staff shared ideas on the importance of holistic emergency management and crisis response training.

The Power in the Peer: Peer Partnership Development in Humanitarian Education (July 1). Facilitated by program specialist Lena Choudhary, Will Muehl, Forage Center alum and Ph.D. student at the University of North Carolina/Greensboro, and Keleigh Blount of George Fox University shared their thoughts about appropriate peer relations during humanitarian experiences.

Humanitarianism is My Day Job: Finding a Career that Brings Meaning (August 6). David J. Smith was joined by Craig Zelizer of PCDN Global and Tammi Snedeker from the Lancaster (PA) Emergency Management Office. The discussion centered on career pathways in humanitarianism.

Making Social and Political Change Through the Application of Humanitarian Skills (October 1). David J. Smith hosted a conversation with Heather Payne, a Forage Center alum and former protection officer with Nonviolent Peaceforce and Eli McCarthy of Georgetown University and DC Peace Force on making peaceful change as humanitarians.

Developing Cultural Competencies for Conscious Humanitarian Work (October 28). Program specialist Christy McGuire was joined by colleagues Shallegra Moye and Dakota Garilli from the University of Pittsburgh in exploring ways to improve cultural consciousness in humanitarian work.

The Forage Center also co-sponsored the **8th Annual National Community College Peacebuilding** with David J. Smith Consulting, LLC. This program is the only national professional development program designed for community college faculty looking at peacebuilding, conflict resolution, justice, humanitarianism, and international affairs. It was held during October and November on three consecutive weekends. Close to 60 faculty and students attended the program that featured nearly 20 speakers.

Another major effort undertaken by the Forage Center was a reorganization and repurposing of the **Education and Training (E&T) Committee**. In the past, the efforts of the E&T Committee were largely focused on delivering a multi-day in-person full-functional simulation humanitarian education exercise. Due to limitations introduced by the response to COVID-19, the Director of the E&T Committee, Dr. Jess Bonnan-White, took the opportunity to reorganize the E&T Committee to best address potential educational needs - particularly those regarding virtual or online learning. As a result, the E&T Committee (and membership) was subdivided into three subcommittees:

- 1) Exercise Sub-committee [responsible for strategizing delivery of simulation exercises - ranging from ½ day to 4-day - in both virtual and in-person contexts];
- 2) University / College Sub-committee [responsible for developing training opportunities for students and/or professionals that would be delivered in a context of a university/college classroom and/or short training session; these scaffold skills practiced in the functional exercises];
- 3) Virtual Engagement Sub-committee [responsible for developing “Forage Center Conversations” webinar series as outreach to contextualize issues facing humanitarian professionals and encourage reflection on professional skills].

The E&T Committee has also engaged in targeted recruitment of new volunteer members to contribute their notable expertise and experience to each of the subcommittees detailed above. Recent recruits include previous participants of Forage Center exercises and professionals in experiential education, global education and international studies, emergency management, non-violent community advocacy and engagement, and international humanitarian assistance.

Several **conference presentations and workshops** were made by FC staff including at the **Association for Conflict Resolution** conference which was held virtually in October by David J. Smith, for the **Matsunaga Center for Peace** at the University of Hawaii in November by David J. Smith, and Jess Bonnan-White at the **8th Annual National Community College Peacebuilding Seminar** in October.

In our effort to continue to communicate with our alumni and supporters, our newsletter, **Forage Center News** was distributed electronically to around five hundred people, three times during 2020.

Finally, **Dr. Ernest Ogbozor** joined the Board of Directors in April. Ernest is an adjunct faculty member at George Washington University where he teaches humanitarian practice and George Mason University where he teaches conflict resolution. He brings many years of humanitarian assistance experience working with the ICRC in Nigeria.

Financial Statement

Forage Center received generous donations from board members in 2020. These donations helped the organization conduct the needed programmatic activities as well as pay financial obligations. Forage Center operates on a small budget and spends all of its money on programmatic activities.

Financial Report

Forage Center for Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Education, Inc.
For the Year Ending December 31, 2020

Assets	
Total Assets	\$7,798.33
Liabilities	0
Equity Opening Balance	\$6,470.26
Retained Earnings	-\$687.60
Net Revenue	\$2,015.67
Total Equity	\$7,798.33
Total Liability and Equity	\$7,798.33
Revenue	
Donations	\$4,106
Program Fees	\$1,129.88
Fundraising & Program Events	\$764.10
Grants	\$2,000
Other	\$0
Gross Revenue	\$7,799.98
Expenditures	

Advertising & Marketing	\$276
Financial Services	\$0
Programs	\$0
Contractors	\$3,790
Insurance	\$1,261
Legal and Professional Fees	\$0
Administrative Expenditures	\$657.31
Refunds	\$0
Other	\$0
Total Expenditures	\$5,984.31

Organizational Profile

The Forage Center is a 501c3 not-for-profit corporation with a board consisting of seven members including; a President, David J. Smith; Vice President, Peter Reynolds; Director of Education & Training, Jess Bonnan-White; Treasurer, Doda Johnson, Secretary, Armen Gregorian; and board members Matt Collette and Ernest Ogbozor. Board membership cannot exceed ten members nor fall below three.

The board is governed by a set of Bylaws drafted at the establishment of the organization. New members are nominated and elected by existing board members and serve three-year terms. Board members hold an annual board meeting as well as regular board meetings four times a year. A quorum of at least 50% of the board is required to vote at meetings. The actions of the board are guided by a strategic plan which is updated every three years.



Dakota Garilli from the University of Pittsburgh speaking at a Forage Center conversation on October 28, 2020 held via Zoom

The Way Forward in 2021

With the COVID-19 crisis still ever-present, it is difficult at best to plan for 2021. Best estimates are that by early fall, sufficient numbers of Americans will be vaccinated allowing for face-to-face programming. As such, any planning is based on the ability to inoculate participants attending face to face programming. However, we have met success in offering virtual programming and will continue to offer opportunities virtually.

Fall 2021 Program in Western Maryland

There is the potential that a fall 2021 multi-day exercise could be held at our site in Swanton, Maryland. We have not held a program there since 2018. The responsibility to develop a program will rest with the Education and Training Committee and in particular the Exercise Sub-committee. A decision will be made by late spring. We would again reach out to partners such as Allegany College of Maryland and local Garrett County, MD businesses.

Virtual Programming

Per initiatives from the Education and Training Committee, we will continue to offer virtual programs using Zoom. The Forage Center Conversations will continue with the next one scheduled for February 12 and focus on women working in emergency management. It is hoped that a FCC can be held 5-6 times in 2021.

Strategic Plan

A major objective in 2021 will be to draft a new strategic plan. The last plan was drafted in 2017.

Administration and Organization

The Forage Center will continue to seek new Board members who are prepared to become fully engaged in pursuing and furthering the aims and objectives of the center.

The current Forage Center Board will review and aim to adopt updated manuals and staff handbooks which will be available on the center website later in the year.

Fundraising

Seeking financial stability will continue to be a priority and grant applications will be submitted throughout the year as opportunities are identified. The board will pursue as many sources of potential funding as possible.

Contact Us



Forage Center for Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Education, Inc.

A 501c3 not for profit

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