



Forage Center for Peacebuilding and
Humanitarian Education, Inc.

2019 Annual Report

April 2020



Forage Center Board and Staff
September 2018

Table of Contents

From the Forage Center President	2
About the Forage Center	3
2019 Highlights	4
Training and Education Programs	5
Financial Statement	8
Organizational Profile	10
The Way Ahead 2020	11
Contact Us	12
Annex	13



Role players and participants in simulation at a program
September 2018

From the Forage Center President



Thank you for taking the time to read our 2019 Annual Report. The Forage Center for Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Education, Inc. is proud of its efforts in advancing humanitarian and peacebuilding work in the U.S. and overseas. From our beginnings working with the late Dr. Paul Forage at Florida Atlantic University and then at Indian River State College, we have built a reputation for offering relevant and rigorous programs that provide students and professionals with the opportunity to build and hone the skills and aptitudes needed to work in complex emergencies in the U.S. and abroad. Our over 150 alumni are working globally to alleviate the suffering that comes from human-made and natural disasters.

In 2019, a major emphasis of our efforts was applying for grants and exploring other sources of funding that would support our programmatic efforts. We received grants from groups such as the United Service Foundation and the JDS Fishing Foundation. Several board members also generously funded our efforts. We worked with a professional grants consultant to develop a strategy to raise funds.

We also explored new programmatic strategies in 2019. In the past we have focused on large-scale multi-day programming. In 2019, we did not offer a multi-day program, rather we chose to focus on shorter programs including day programs at George Mason University and Allegany College of Maryland. This coming year, we will continue offering shorter programs, but also plan for a multi-day program later in 2020.

In 2019, we were pleased to welcome two new board members, Kathryn Rzeszut and Matt Collette. We also said goodbye to board member Abigail Slenski, who made significant contributions to our efforts. We are looking to add new board members in 2020.

With nearly 71 million displaced people around the world including in the U.S. (consider the impact of wildfires and hurricanes), the work of training humanitarian and peacebuilding workers is more important than ever before. The present COVID-19 pandemic demands all humanitarian groups to redouble their efforts in alleviating suffering.

Preparing humanitarian professionals starts early on, including sparking an interest in high school students. At the college and university level, students are starting to formulate their career aspirations. The Forage Center's role in providing them with a realistic view of the work in the field is critical to career development. Professionals already working in the field need to be provided with opportunities to learn about best practices in the field. And finally, the general public needs to be kept aware of the important need for responding to humanitarian crises.

We look forward to the opportunities and challenges that 2020 presents. Please join us in our journey to prepare the next generation of humanitarian and peacebuilding professionals.

David J. Smith, JD, MS

President

April 2020

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.



Forage Center Board and Staff
November 2017

2019 Highlights

The year 2019 was a productive one for the Forage Center for Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Education, Inc. The Forage Center offered several short programs; worked with a grants consultant to develop a case statement and strategic plan to be used in fundraising and promotion efforts; applied for and received several grants; and welcomed two new board members.

In July, we offered a day long program at George Mason University and another shorter program at Allegany College of Maryland in September. We also had the opportunity to put on a short program as part of the Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Conference sponsored by Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic.

In 2019 we used a grant from the JDS Fishing Foundation to hire a fundraising consultant, Windmill Consulting, LLC. Along with a fundraising plan, the Forage Center's work with Windmill Consulting yielded a case statement. The statement develops and explains our core values and goals. We hope to use it in our promotional material, both for potential donors and students.

The Forage Center applied for grants throughout 2019. The Forage Center was awarded a grant by the United Service Foundation for scholarships for participants. The Forage Center raised funds through Amazon Smile, Facebook, GoFundMe, and a yard sale. We also received several donations from individual donors. (In February 2020 we received a \$2,000 grant from The Phase Foundation).

This year the Forage Center welcomed two new members, Kathryn Rzeszut and Matt Collette. Matt Collette was appointed for a three year term and Kathryn Rzeszut for a two year term. Matt Collette is a partner at Massey & Gail LLP after serving for many years as Deputy Director of the Appellate Staff of the Civil Division at the United States Department of Justice and Senior Counsel to the Associate Attorney General. Kathryn Rzeszut is a conflict and stabilization specialist and holds the position of Senior Expert MEL at Integrity Global. The board bid a fond farewell to Abigail Slenski for her three years of service as secretary and board member.

Training and Education Programs

In 2019 the Forage Center ran a day long program at George Mason University and a short program at Allegany College of Maryland as well as a short program at the University of Maryland as part of the the Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Conference sponsored by Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic.

George Mason University

For the third year the Forage Center participated in the Conflict Resolution Youth Summit at George Mason University (GMU) in Fairfax, VA. It is a one-week summer day program held for rising 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students interested in exploring some of today's toughest problems through the lens of conflict analysis and resolution. The sponsor is the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at GMU. The Forage Center participated on July 16, 2019.



Students at George Mason University July 2019

A commitment to youth education is at the core of Forage Center work. As we have done in previous years, we engaged students in the People in Flight Simulation. It is designed to sensitize students to the conditions of refugees (and other forced migrants). During the simulation, half of the students act as aid workers who are charged with interviewing refugees recently arriving from Syria to Italy by boat. The aid groups are divided into four subject areas: health, education, travel, and housing. The task of the workers is to elicit from the refugees (the other half of the class) information about their circumstances for purposes of placement and immediate service. The refugee role players are divided into four “family” groups: two traditional families (father, mother, etc.), one family of a single mother with two daughters, and a group of young boys traveling together.

Before the simulation starts, we spend time sharing with students basic concepts of migration including the difference between refugees, internally displaced persons, and asylum seekers. We share about the current crisis and the numbers of persons displaced worldwide and its overall impact. After the simulation, students are debriefed about their experiences. This year, several students shared how they developed a level of empathy and understanding for refugees and workers during the exercise. Still others came to appreciate their current situation, living in the U.S. A few even indicated an interest in pursuing careers in humanitarian work.

Allegany College of Maryland

On September 23, 2019 the Forage Center had the opportunity to offer the People in Flight Simulation to students at Allegany College of Maryland (ACM).

ACM is located in Cumberland, Maryland, located in rural Western Maryland. The Forage Center has worked for several years with the college. Students from the college have role-played in the Coastal Promise Simulation held in Swanton, Maryland.



Students at Allegany College of Maryland
September 2019

The People in Flight Simulation is designed to help students understand the experiences of families and individuals forced to flee their homeland because of war and conflict. It also seeks to have students appreciate the work of humanitarian aid professionals and what is entailed in working with refugees. In the simulation, students are assigned roles as either refugees or aid workers. After an introduction about forced migration, aid workers interview refugees upon their arrival to a refugee camp. Aid workers ask about health, travel, housing, and educational needs.

University of Maryland

On November 16, 2019 the Forage Center presented at the Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Conference sponsored by Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic at the University of Maryland, College Park, MD.

In the People in Flight Simulation, those attending role-played as either aid workers or refugees recently arriving from Syria. The aid workers were charged with interviewing the refugees in order to make appropriate arrangements for living, medical treatment, and educational needs.



Students at University of Maryland November 2019

In the debrief, students indicated a level of “stress” in the role-play activity as well as uncertainty and confusion. Role players experiencing these feelings are important because it causes them to reflect on the nature of the work. An important objective of the activity is to have students experience what it might like working as an aid worker or living as a refugee.

Financial Statement

The Forage Center had a productive year in 2019. Several fundraising efforts were conducted by the board members. In May 2019, several members of the board conducted a yard sale and collected items from members and friends to sell. A concerted effort was also done to raise funds through the Network for Good (on Facebook) and Amazon Smile. These activities will continue in 2020.

Forage Center received generous donations from board members in 2019. 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, 2019

Assets	
Total Assets	\$4,904
Liabilities	0
Equity Opening Balance	\$6,470
Retained Earnings	\$129
Net Revenue	\$24
Total Equity	\$6,560
Total Liability and Equity	\$6,560
Revenue	
Donations	\$5,912
Program Fees	\$2,268
Fundraising & Program Events	\$947
Grants	\$1,000

Other	\$5
Gross Revenue	\$10,132
Expenditures	
Advertising & Marketing	\$653
Financial Services	\$235
Programs	\$802
Contractors	\$2,658
Insurance	\$1,261
Legal and Professional Fees	\$250
Administrative Expenditures	\$849
Refunds	\$1,000
Other	\$21
Total Expenditures	\$10,108

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 Kathryn Rzeszut and Matt Collette. 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. The strategic plan was first adopted in 2016. Due to delays, it will continue one more year and be rewritten in 2020.

The Way Ahead 2020

General

In 2020 the Forage Center plans to expand its catalog of shorter programs, with a focus on refugee simulations in colleges that offer courses on post-conflict or disaster development and humanitarian reconstruction. At the same time it is our intent to continue developing both the content and structure of the multi-day field training exercises that we offer, so that they reflect current best practice and the core humanitarian competencies framework.

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. Some 20 grant proposals have been submitted and although several have been successful, and we await the results of others. The board will pursue as many sources of potential funding as possible.

Marketing and Outreach

The new marketing materials that have been produced over the last year, specifically, a case statement which is in the Annex. Our newsletter will continue to be the primary means of reaching our supporters, alumni, and potential participants. We will broaden our potential audiences by targeted approaches to those organizations concerned with disaster and emergency response, emergency medics and public health professionals as well as those interested in humanitarian programs.

As part of this marketing effort, the website will be enlarged to present visitors with a better understanding of the center's offering of courses and their content.

Contact Us



Forage Center for Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Education, Inc.

A 501c3 not for profit

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Annex

Case Statement



Preparing the Next Generation of Humanitarians

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

COMPLEX HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES RESULT IN HUMAN SUFFERING.

BUT YOU CAN HELP.

Today—more than at any other time in history—the convergence of natural disasters and widespread violent conflict spur more humanitarian crises than ever before. As the number and magnitude of emergencies grow, so does the need for a community of trained relief workers poised to respond swiftly and effectively.

Every day, millions of people face the brutality of human-driven or natural humanitarian disasters—sometimes simultaneously. In 2017, more than 65 million people worldwide were displaced from their homes.



Famine brought on by the civil war in Yemen... Outbreaks of cholera, diphtheria, and measles sweeping Rohingya displacement camps in Bangladesh... Drought ravaging conflict-ridden

Somalia... Wildfires raging through U.S. communities facing economic disparity... The list goes on.

Each complex emergency triggers a systematic, global response ideally made up of teams of non-governmental organizations, first responders, health care professionals, aid workers, and security personnel mobilized from a host of countries. Cadres of highly-trained, experienced humanitarians dive in to set up camps, distribute food and supplies, and provide medical care. Each relief worker joins a massive, choreographed effort dictated by strict international protocols. But every crisis presents a new, uniquely complex set of challenges. And no amount of classroom education can adequately prepare burgeoning humanitarians for work in the field.

A complex humanitarian emergency is an acute emergency, large-scale natural disaster, or humanitarian crisis that afflicts civilian populations already vulnerable due to war, violent conflict, poverty, or displacement.

YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

**Now's YOUR
CHANCE.**

Every year, **160 million** people are affected by natural disasters.

The number of people affected by humanitarian crises **nearly doubled** over the last decade.

As deeply rewarding as peacebuilding and humanitarian work can be, work in the field can be risky. Humanitarian workers who go into the field ill-equipped for the chaotic reality of a complex emergency or without adequate cultural and situational awareness can thwart relief efforts—or, at worst, endanger themselves, their colleagues, and the people

they're there to help.

Existing educational programs teach important academic theory but often fail to prepare students with sufficient experiential learning. Prospective relief workers need practical training *in addition* to learning about the legal frameworks, public policy issues, civil-military protocol, negotiation needs, and evaluation methods. The few hands-on training programs that exist are expensive and often beyond the reach of those interested in participating.

The tragic reality of a humanitarian crisis, compounded by turmoil on the ground, can be overwhelming even for the most seasoned humanitarians. At a time when we face even more catastrophic crises around the world, authentic, experiential training opportunities are critical to preparing the next generation.

The Forage Center equips humanitarians to alleviate human suffering and better serve communities in crisis.

YOUR SUPPORT WILL STRENGTHEN RELIEF EFFORTS AROUND THE WORLD.

The Forage Center provides substantive, real-world training to empower a robust, humanitarian and peacebuilding community

"The Forage Center confirmed my dream of pursuing humanitarian work. Looking back, after working in the field, the simulation gave me a concrete, authentic experience representative of the variety of sectors and challenges that one can experience when working in an emergency context."

Heather Payne

14

Forage Center Alumna &
Project Coordinator, NAVTSS NGO, Lebanon

better poised to deliver services safely and effectively in the most challenging crises. We foster a safe, controlled setting for burgeoning humanitarians to test their readiness and learn from their mistakes. Participants hone critical problem-solving and team work skills, and complete our programs with the confidence to step into an emergency poised to ask the right questions and take action.

"The experience pushed the importance of a strong team with open communication and group cohesion, which showed that when in the field we have to act together as a team rather than as individuals."

Will Muehl

Forge Center Alumnus &
Graduate Student, University of North Carolina-Greensboro

We offer practical, experiential training that augments traditional academic learning. *With your help*, we'll prepare the next generation of relief workers with the confidence, awareness, and professional skills they'll need in the field.

TOGETHER, WE'LL CHANGE LIVES.
YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE.

"This is true education. We're not just talking about schooling. So much genuine education happens outside the classroom."

Christy McGuire

Forge Center Alumna &
Graduate Student, University of Pittsburgh

Diversity of professional and life experience is fundamental to building a strong humanitarian sector. Crises happen, often without warning, in all parts of the world. In order to enable effective, rapid relief, the humanitarian community must have trained relief workers

positioned globally and poised to mobilize.

We believe that building diversity in the sector will strengthen and enrich the humanitarian community. Forge Center programs attract U.S. and international participants interested in pursuing disaster relief.

WE'RE CULTIVATING FUTURE HUMANITARIANS.

Many of our programs are held at our training site in Swanton, Maryland. During an exercise, participants take on roles working for a mock humanitarian assistance organization charged with

"Our programs promote learning among a network of students and professionals from within the and around the world. Lessons learned across the globe promote best practices."

Dr. Jess Bonnan-White

Director of Education and Training

responding to a complex emergency in a fictitious country. During each exercise, students, young professionals, and humanitarians from the U.S. and around the world come together in a safe, constructive environment to learn state-of-the-art practice. Together, each cohort faces obstacles emulating the real, often unexpected, challenges that arise during a disaster—from access to shelter, food distribution, and clean water to disease outbreak, lack of safety and security, and information management. The breadth of diverse backgrounds and experiences of the participants enriches each exercise.

We also offer **educational programs, workshops, and field exercises** for NGOs, organizations, and institutions. We tailor each session to the needs of the group's staff and volunteers.

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, WE'LL DO EVEN MORE.

Since Dr. Paul Forage launched the first field simulation nearly 20 years ago, we've honed an effective model to build capacity in the sector. We've enriched academic coursework around peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and humanitarian relief with practical training. We've built a unique program anchored in experiential learning. We've engaged more than 500 students from 30 countries. We've cultivated a dedicated board of directors with the skills, expertise, and professional experience to position the Forage Center as a leader in the field. Our steadfast team of volunteers continues to make our programs possible. Now—at a time when effective humanitarian assistance is needed more than ever before—we're committed to building our capacity so that we can do even more to strive toward a more peaceful world.

"The impact is real. Becoming a humanitarian is a life decision. The Forage Center helps people decide whether to pursue a humanitarian life."

Sarah Forage Lough
Director of Communications

WE KNOW COMPLEX CHALLENGES REQUIRE A TEAM OF CHANGE-MAKERS.

AND, WITH YOUR HELP, WE'RE ALL IN.

Thanks to the critical support of generous individuals and foundations, and a team of committed volunteers, the Forage Center has charted the course for experiential training at a time when effective humanitarian response is more vital than ever before. We're ready to strengthen our organizational capacity so that we can make an even greater impact.

You can help.

With your support, we'll:

- Enhance our existing programs with **new, state-of-the-art training modules**
- Promote **career pathways** for our alumni
- **Broaden our reach** to NGOs and career humanitarians around the world and provide them with training programs to increase their effectiveness
- Create a **scholarship fund** to provide meaningful financial assistance to international participants

**THANK YOU FOR
INVESTING IN THE NEXT
GENERATION OF
HUMANITARIANS.**



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A 501c3 not for profit

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