
Initiatives of Change
International
Trustbuilding Program
IMPACT REPORT
2024-2025
Building trust across the world's divides

Table of contents

Message from the Program Manager 1
Why trustbuilding matters 2
Our Theory of Change 3
Our approach to building trust 4
Our results and reach to date 4
Key learnings 5
Our numbers at a glance 6
Our independent evaluation 7
Impact story: When activism meets healing 9
Nepal 10
Indonesia 12
India 14
Cameroon 16
Burundi 18
Nigeria 20
South Africa 22
The Americas 24
Impact story: From grievance to understanding 26
Impact story: Love beyond division 27
Looking ahead: 2026 and beyond 28
Where our funding comes from 29
How we invest what we raise 29



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Message from the Program Manager

“There is a piece of the peace puzzle that is too often missed. Before negotiation can succeed, before mediation can hold, before any formal peace process can take root, something more fundamental has to be rebuilt: trust.

Trustbuilding is not a substitute for these approaches; it is their essential precondition, the groundwork that makes them possible to sustain.”

This is the conviction that has driven the international Trustbuilding Program (TBP) for the past eight years, and it is the thread that runs through everything in this report.

Since 2019, the TBP has worked in 14 countries. Today, our international team channels its support into eight active project teams, and it is their work that this report is proud to highlight.

I want to begin by commending them. The team members leading trustbuilding work on the ground make real sacrifices to keep this work going, with limited resources and in complex, difficult conditions. Their patience and their commitment are the reasons this program exists, and I don't think that can be said enough.

Trustbuilding is slow work by nature. It does not move at the pace of a project cycle, and results can be hard to see in the short term. What we do see, again and again, is individuals who are transformed, who choose difficult dialogue over silence, who carry new skills back. Over the years, this has led to communities that have changed and renewed. That pattern, repeated across different contexts, is what gives me hope.

This past year, that hope was reinforced by evidence. Our independent evaluation ratified the work we are doing. It confirmed that we are on the right path and deepened our conviction to continue, giving us not just encouragement but a clearer evidence base for the road ahead.

At the international level, our focus has been on supporting our teams to continue their work, and on developing a model of financial sustainability that can carry the TBP into its next phase. Alongside this, it was a year of increased visibility and thought leadership. The TBP was featured in Swisspeace's A Propos magazine’, in an Indonesian academic journal, and in a new book on Healing Collective Trauma. The TBP Manual is now available in four languages, with a fifth on the way. We also saw real momentum on the ground, with several projects expanding their reach.

Overall, this has been a period of resilience, recalibration and learning, laying the groundwork for TBP's next phase while maintaining continuity through uncertain conditions.

My thanks go to our teams, to our volunteers who make this work possible, and to our supporters, who continue to believe in what trustbuilding can achieve.

Trust, once broken, can feel impossible to rebuild. Yet the stories in this report tell us otherwise: one conversation, one relationship, one community at a time, it is being rebuilt.



Talia Smith
Trustbuilding Program Manager

Why trustbuilding matters

Trust is quietly breaking down across the world, and the consequences are not abstract.

They show up as communities that no longer speak to each other, as families fractured by inherited grievance, as police forces and citizens who view one another with suspicion rather than partnership, and as young people who inherit conflicts they did not create and divisions they did not choose.

This breakdown is happening against a backdrop of rising polarisation, shrinking civic space, and growing pressure on the institutions that once held divided societies together. Migration is reshaping communities faster than social systems can adapt. Long-running conflicts in places like Ukraine and Cameroon continue to displace hundreds of thousands and harden generational hostility. Even in countries with no active conflict, historic wounds, from apartheid in South Africa to ethnic violence in Burundi and Nepal, remain unresolved beneath the surface of everyday life.

Most peacebuilding work focuses, understandably, on visible structures: policies, institutions, infrastructure, services. Far less attention and funding go towards the quieter, harder work of helping people trust one another again. Yet without trust, even the best-designed institutions and policies struggle to hold. Trust is the foundation of sustained peace. Trust is the foundation that makes negotiation possible, that allows divided communities to cooperate, and that gives young people a reason to believe peaceful coexistence is achievable rather than a naive concept. This is the gap the Trustbuilding Program exists to fill.

It does not attempt to resolve political conflicts or replace formal peace processes. Instead, it does something more fundamental, and we believe more lasting: it equips individuals and communities with the inner capacity and practical tools to rebuild trust where it has broken down, one honest conversation at a time. The evidence gathered over the past year, and across the life of the program, continues to show that this quieter work produces real, durable, and often unexpected transformational change.



Our Theory of Change

If diverse stakeholders participate in a sustained process of facilitated dialogues, training, and outreach activities,

then participants will increase trustbuilding competencies (deep listening, empathy, dignity, resilience, team building) and willingness to collaborate across divides,

and if participants engage in values-based reflection and demonstrate increased acknowledgement of historical wounds and personal responsibility,

so that they will initiate or strengthen cross-group relationships, joint actions, and public narratives that support social cohesion.

Our approach to building trust

Contextualisation - local culture, history, and circumstances

The Trustbuilding Program empowers community leaders to apply the principles of Initiatives of Change to address divisions rooted in race, ethnicity, class, religion, and other areas where trust has broken down. Rather than imposing a fixed model, the methodology is contextualised by each local team according to their own culture, history, and circumstances.

We start with the individual

What distinguishes this approach is where it begins. Most peacebuilding work starts by bringing opposing parties together. The TBP starts earlier than that, with the individual. Before a trustbuilder can help others examine bias, hurt, or division, they are asked to examine their own. This inner work, often uncomfortable and rarely quick, is treated not as a preliminary step but as the foundation on which everything else depends. Communities consistently tell us that this distinction matters: conversations that begin with vulnerability and honesty go further than conversations that begin with positions and demands.

Our methodology is owned and reshaped locally

The Trustbuilding Manual, used by all program teams and developed by Abigail Ballew and Rob Corcoran, draws on Initiatives of Change USA's decades of experience in trustbuilding and racial reconciliation, beginning with the Hope in the Cities program in Richmond, Virginia.

The manual has been adapted into Indonesian, French, and Spanish by local teams, evidence that the methodology is being genuinely owned and reshaped by the communities who use it, not simply delivered to them.

Our results and reach to date



26,068+ total reach



1,952+ trustbuilding events



4,321+ trustbuilders trained



90,964 volunteer hours

Five key learnings

No program working across 14 countries and cultural contexts gets everything right, and we do not believe a credible impact report should suggest otherwise. The external evaluation, alongside our own internal monthly reflection process, surfaced several important learnings over the past year that are shaping how we work going forward.

We share these learnings not to undermine confidence in the program, but because we believe they are evidence of an organisation that takes its own evaluation seriously, and one that funders can trust to use feedback constructively.

1. Funding the training function properly matters

The evaluation found that the TBP's training and facilitation infrastructure was underfunded in the program's early years, which limited how much we were able to draw on our full network of international trainers. We are now building stronger, ring-fenced budget lines for training and mentorship into every new team's onboarding process, rather than treating it as a cost to minimise.

2. Contexts shift, and our projects need flexibility

In both Kenya and Indonesia, the original focus on interfaith tension has become less central as local realities have changed. Rather than treating this as a departure from our model, we now build periodic context reassessment directly into how teams plan their work, so that strategic pivots, like Indonesia's recent integration of mental health support or Kenya's shift towards the growing divide between youth and government, happen by design rather than by accident.

3. Securing major new funding requires a different model

Early in the program's life, dedicated fundraising roles did not generate the scale of additional funding we had hoped for, in part because fundraising for a young, multi-country program without a long track record is a fundamentally different challenge than fundraising for an established one. We have since shifted to a leaner, research-led model, and are now building fundraising capacity directly into national teams, who are proving more effective at securing local and regional support than a single centralised role could be.



4. Measure long-term change, not just immediate impact

Some of our evaluation data is captured immediately after a workshop or dialogue, when participants are reflecting in the moment. This tells us a great deal about immediate impact, but less about whether that change holds over time. We now follow up with participants six to twelve months after their involvement, so that our data speaks with more confidence about lasting change, not only initial transformation.

5. Sustainability must be built from the beginning

Several of our most resilient teams- Indonesia, South Africa, and Nepal- built income generation and local ownership into their model early. We are now actively applying these lessons across all teams through a structured sustainability plan, rather than waiting for funding gaps to force the conversation.



Our numbers at a glance

The TBP has been implemented in 14 countries across six continents and has reached more than 26,000 direct beneficiaries and delivered nearly 2,000 trustbuilding events since its founding. Over 4,300 community members have been trained to lead reconciliation and trustbuilding efforts in their own communities.

According to an independent external evaluation completed in 2025, 71% of participants report that the TBP has led to measurable change in their community, and 66% would absolutely recommend the program to others.

One in three participants had never heard of Initiatives of Change before joining the TBP, showing the program is reaching new audiences beyond IofC's existing network.

Local teams have contributed over 91,000 hours of voluntary work, the equivalent of more than $1,000,000 in in-kind support, reflecting the deep community ownership the program has built over time.

"The TBP has increased and enhanced IofC engagement in several countries; it has brought more people in more places into contact with IofC and the methodology; it has supported a new and much younger generation of individuals to engage in IofC."
-Independent External Evaluation, 2025



Our independent evaluation

The figures and findings referenced throughout this report draw substantially on an independent external evaluation of the Trustbuilding Program, completed in 2025 by two external consultants, Randall Puljek-Shank and Valary Perry, with extensive professional backgrounds in peacebuilding evaluation.

The evaluation ran over six months and used a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative survey data. In total, 56 individuals were interviewed, including project team members, IofC leadership, board members, and external stakeholders such as peer organisations in the peacebuilding sector. The evaluators also conducted detailed case studies of three national projects, Australia, Kenya, and Indonesia, and reviewed dozens of internal programmatic documents alongside the program's original funding agreement with the Fetzer Institute.

The evaluation assessed the TBP against three central questions:

- What evidence exists of its impact at the individual, community, and societal level
- How well the program is designed and managed to achieve its goals
- How well it aligns with the broader mission and values of Initiatives of Change

Overall, the evaluation found that the TBP provides a useful and coherent structure for teams to engage communities, work as part of a global approach, and fundraise, and it makes a strong case for the program's continuation.

It has also helped bring a new and younger generation of individuals into IofC, and its broader appeal is reflected in additional secured funding and substantial in-kind contributions, including close to 55,000 hours of volunteer time. The Fetzer Institute, the program's funder, expressed full satisfaction with the work.

Participants themselves reported high levels of value from the program: 66% said they would absolutely recommend it, and 71% reported that the TBP had led to change in their community.

As one participant put it, their community had become more open and tolerant, which in turn reduced tension and prejudice between believers and non-believers.

On the program's structure and effectiveness, the evaluation highlighted its adaptability and flexibility, along with a distinct focus on both localisation and trustbuilding. It also noted the TBP's distinctiveness in its values base, particularly its spiritual emphasis on beginning with inner reflection, and in its position within and connection to IofC as a global movement.

*Request the independent evaluation report here.



When activism meets healing

Hanny, Indonesia

When Hanny began her master's studies in Religious Studies at Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta, she was already deeply committed to peace. She had joined interfaith programs, worked in youth empowerment, and advocated for minority rights. But a question kept returning to her: why do harmful narratives persist, even when people know the truth?

It was not until she joined the TBP that she found an answer, and it was closer than she expected. During a session on Healing Historical Wounds, the facilitator posed a question that stopped her: "Is your activism rooted in love, or is it a reflection of your own unhealed wounds?"

"That question hit me hard," Hanny reflected. For the first time, she recognised that her drive to create change was intertwined with her own pain, pain she had not yet faced. As she examined her past experiences and emotional scars, she began to see the conflicts she had been fighting not just as political or social challenges, but as deeply personal ones, rooted in experiences passed down and left unaddressed.

Through the TBP, Hanny came to believe that healing, personal and collective, is not only possible but essential. She stopped seeing herself only as an advocate for peace and began to become a facilitator of it.



She now initiates dialogue sessions in her community focused on personal stories rather than abstract theories, creating safe spaces where people can share, listen, and understand one another's experiences.

"The path to peace doesn't always start with solving the world's problems," she says. "It starts with the courage to face our own."

Nepal

The project started in 2023

Nepal is a country in flux. Since 2015, it has had multiple governments, seen large-scale protests, and faced persistent tensions between the Madhesi and Pahadi communities. This divide has at times turned violent and continues to shape who has a voice in public life. In a context where media bias can actively inflame community tensions, the TBP in Nepal is working to build bridges between Madhesi and Pahadi communities.



Focus of the trustbuilding work

The project brings together young people, local government, and community leaders through youth camps, national and regional dialogues, and media-focused training sessions. A core emphasis is on inner reflection and honest conversation as the foundation for outward change. Uniquely in the sector, the TBP begins with the trustbuilders themselves,



equipping participants to examine their own biases and experiences before facilitating change in others.

How the trustbuilding work is going

Despite political challenges and unrest, the team has remained active and found new openings. A standout moment came when the Madhesh Media Council, a government body, approached the TBP team to organise a three-day dialogue for 30 young media professionals. This is a significant marker: official recognition that the trustbuilding methodology has value beyond the NGO sector. The team has also hosted dialogues with participants



from Pakistan, India, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Azerbaijan, largely self-funded by participants, and has secured inclusion in a local government budget, one of only a small number of civil society organisations in Nepal to achieve this. Both signal a project that communities and institutions are choosing to invest in themselves.

Impact to date

A network of youth trustbuilders now conducts outreach independently across communities in Madhesh and beyond, carrying the work forward without requiring ongoing project funding.



One young journalist who participated in the media dialogue shared that it provided "a rare opportunity to pause, reflect and reconnect with their purpose and their responsibility to be ethical journalists." In a country where biased reporting has contributed directly to inter-community tensions, that shift in a journalist's practice has consequences that reach far beyond one individual.

3,550+ direct beneficiaries

1,685+ people trained

108+ trustbuilding events

7,490+ volunteer hours

Indonesia

The project started in 2021



Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim-majority democracy, a country whose extraordinary religious and ethnic diversity is both a source of richness and of persistent tension. Minority communities, including those who follow Shia Islam, Indigenous groups, Buddhists, and various Christian denominations, face discrimination and social exclusion, and interfaith tensions which remain a live concern in parts of the country. In this context, building trust across religious lines is not an abstract goal; it is a practical necessity for social stability.

Focus of the trustbuilding work

The program works across four cities, Bandung, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, and Makassar, creating safe spaces for dialogue that go beyond discussion into genuine relationship-building. Through training of facilitators, camps, peace weeks, dialogues and community outreach, the team equips young people with the skills to hold honest conversations across lines of faith and identity.

A new Teachers for Change pilot is extending this work into Christian and Islamic schools, reaching the next generation before divisions harden. Critically, the TBP methodology begins with personal reflection, asking participants to examine their own experiences and perspectives before engaging with those of others. This distinguishes the approach from conventional interfaith dialogue, which often addresses the surface without touching the root.







Crucially, the program is moving towards financial sustainability: fee-for-service corporate training and the sale of learning materials now generate income that funds ongoing community work. A comparative academic study examining the TBP's work in Kenya and Indonesia was published in a peer-reviewed journal, finding that the emphasis on personal healing before societal reconciliation proved critical in navigating collective wounds, giving the methodology academic credibility alongside its grassroots impact.

How the trustbuilding work is going

2024 to 2025 was a year of significant maturity for the Indonesia team. They independently produced a full adaptation of the TBP Manual in Indonesian, the first team in the program to do so, making the methodology self-sustaining and locally rooted. The team delivered 43 trustbuilding events and gained 19 pieces of national press coverage.

Impact to date

The ripple effects of the program extend well beyond direct participants. One facilitator, inspired by his TBP experience, established an organisation focused on education for Papuan children, a community among the most marginalised in Indonesia. The program's Healing Historical Wounds publication gathered 91 personal stories of transformation, documenting impact at scale. And the model is demonstrably sustainable: with its own income streams, a locally adapted manual, and youth stepping into leadership roles. This is a program built to outlast external funding.

4,903+ direct beneficiaries

151 trustbuilding events

943 people trained

4,221+ volunteer hours

India

The project started in 2022



India is home to some of the world's sharpest inequalities, and few are as invisibly entrenched as the divide between urban and rural young people. Children growing up in cities and children growing up in villages inhabit almost entirely separate worlds, with different opportunities, different assumptions about each other, and little chance of meaningful encounters. Left unaddressed, these gaps become the prejudices of the next generation. The TBP in India works to interrupt that cycle before it takes hold.

Focus of the trustbuilding work

The Urban-Rural Connections project brings together students from city schools and rural villages for exchanges that go beyond visits into genuine, shared experience: working side by side on farms, collaborating in classrooms, and reflecting together on what they had previously assumed about each other. Teachers are central participants. The project invests in educators as multipliers, running professional development sessions and reflective retreats that help them embed trustbuilding values into daily classroom life. Newer initiatives extend this further, engaging parents and addressing shared environmental challenges such as plastic waste, building community ownership that reaches well beyond the school gate.

How the trustbuilding work is going

Now in its tenth cohort, the project has achieved something significant: urban

schools have begun paying for their participation, reflecting genuine perceived value and meaningfully improving cost sustainability. A forthcoming Young Trustbuilders Gathering will bring urban and rural young people together to share leadership skills and collaborative projects, an event that explicitly acknowledges the asymmetry in opportunities between these groups and sets out to address it.

Impact to date

The project's impact extends into families and communities. One rural student, having encountered the practice of inner listening for the first time, reflected on his struggles with smoking and alcohol and expressed deep gratitude for being given a space to share and seek change. Students are now leading their own exchange projects and citizenship initiatives. Urban schools are providing rural counterparts with resources, including selling rural agricultural produce on city campuses.





A student from an urban area shared, "I have been watching videos about our country being only for a certain religion. After reflecting, I realised that I was developing negative feelings about other religions. I have decided that I need to stop watching such videos and respect all religions." And a student from a rural area shared, “There is a girl from a lower caste at school whom we don’t include in our games or let her have lunch with us. After reflecting, I have decided to include her in our activities.”

1,012+ direct beneficiaries

61 people trained

87+ trustbuilding events

2,934 volunteer hours

Cameroon

The project started in 2023



Cameroon's Anglophone-Francophone crisis has killed thousands of people and displaced hundreds of thousands since 2016. It is a conflict rooted in colonial history, sustained by political marginalisation, and reproduced in the attitudes of each new generation, including students at the country's major universities, where the two communities exist in uneasy proximity but rarely in genuine relationship. The TBP in Cameroon starts here, with young people, on the conviction that breaking the chain of intergenerational mistrust is both the most strategic and the most hopeful intervention available.

Focus of the trustbuilding work

The program trains Trust Ambassadors, students who go on to run their own trustbuilding activities within their universities and communities, creating a multiplier model that extends reach far beyond what a small team could achieve alone. Residential trainings, peace cafes, sports-based activities, conferences, and dialogues create



multiple entry points for engagement. The program has now expanded into two new regions, including one in a conflict-affected area, with activities planned at universities in Douala and Dschang.

How the trustbuilding work is going

In its first two years, the program trained around 100 Trust Ambassadors across the Universities of Yaounde I and Yaounde II-Soa. An evaluation found that all beneficiaries reported using the skills acquired in their professional and social lives, and that a culture of honest conversation has taken root across both university campuses. The program has attracted four national television features, including CRTV, the national broadcaster, extending the message to audiences far beyond direct participants. One of the program's most striking documented results: a participant used the skills and confidence gained through the TBP to convince fighters in his village to lay down their arms and pursue a peaceful path. In a conflict where violence is ongoing, that outcome is concrete and significant.



Impact to date

Trust Ambassadors have become an independent network of change agents, running their own activities without requiring support for each intervention. One shared: "Before, I had a lot of taboos about French speakers. But this program has shown me that it's just the trust you place in your fellow man that helps you analyse the emotional and physical aspects of the other person." Another described the program as transforming him "into an agent of change, ready to inspire and serve." The model is cost-effective, locally owned, and designed to grow, providing a strong foundation for expansion to ten universities across the country.

943+ direct beneficiaries

123+ people trained

25 trustbuilding events

2,353 volunteer hours

Burundi

The project started in 2022



Burundi's conflicts of the 1990s left wounds that have never fully closed. Violence between communities killed hundreds of thousands and displaced millions, and the trauma was passed directly to the next generation: children raised in displacement camps with a single narrative about who caused their suffering and who was to blame. Three decades later, those narratives remain largely intact, making Burundi one of the most challenging environments in the region for genuine reconciliation work. The TBP in Burundi works in this space because it is necessary, despite the hardships the team faces.

Focus of the trustbuilding work

The project works in displacement camps and surrounding communities, using dialogue, storytelling, and honest conversation to address the roots of mistrust. A central commitment is to bring together those who suffered and those responsible for past harm, not to paper over the past, but to face it together. Community development initiatives are integrated into the trustbuilding work, recognising that sustainable reconciliation must connect to the everyday realities of people's lives.

How the trustbuilding work is going

After a period of pause due to the severe economic crisis in Burundi, where sharply rising living costs made it impossible for team members to sustain voluntary work, the team resumed activities in 2025 with renewed energy and a restructured model. Their work continues to produce extraordinary results.







The story of **Emmanuel and Yvette**, a couple from different ethnic communities who met through the project's Honest Conversations dialogues and married in June 2025 against fierce family opposition, illustrates what becomes possible when inherited fear is met with sustained, supported courage. The team is actively fundraising to expand their work back into displacement camps, where the need is greatest.

Impact to date

Even during the funding pause, the project's influence persisted: community leaders who had participated in earlier dialogues continued applying TBP techniques in their own networks, ensuring the work outlasted the formal project. The project demonstrates that even in deeply fragile environments, where trauma is intergenerational and resources are minimal, trustbuilding is not only possible. It is transformative.

543 direct beneficiaries

45+ trustbuilding events

88 people trained

9,214 volunteer hours

Nigeria

The project started in January 2022



In 2020, the #EndSARS protests brought tens of thousands of Nigerians onto the streets to demand an end to police brutality. The protests reflected a fracture that had been building for decades: a profound breakdown of trust between communities and the police force meant to protect them. In a context where many people routinely avoid any engagement with law enforcement out of fear, rebuilding that relationship is both urgent and enormously difficult. The TBP in Nigeria, known as Police I Care, was built to do exactly that.

Focus of the trustbuilding work

The program works at police stations and in communities to create honest conversations that humanise both sides. Through workshops, dialogue sessions, and welfare outreach visits, where the team delivers cleaning supplies to stations as a gesture of goodwill, participants are invited to see each other as people first. The 4Ps exercise, Power, People, Purpose, Position, prompts officers to reflect on why they serve. What makes this approach distinctive is that it works with each group separately before bringing them together, allowing both police and community members to surface their concerns in a safe space before face-to-face dialogue begins. The program now operates nationally across four states, with a Training of Trainers program embedding local facilitation.

How the trustbuilding work is going

After years of consistent engagement, the program has reached a tipping point. Word of mouth is now opening doors organically: police commanders request visits unprompted, trained



trained officers are spreading trustbuilding practices to other commands without TBP involvement, and community members proactively accompany others to police stations to advocate for their rights. The deputy Divisional Crime Officer at one Lagos station suggested the TBP workshop be added to the national police training curriculum, an endorsement that signals the program is shifting institutional culture, not just individual attitudes.



Impact to date

The change in officers is measurable and documented. One officer reflected: "The 4Ps exercise changed the way I see my job. Nobody has ever helped me think this deeply about why I wear this uniform. I came in thinking I just had a job. I'm leaving here seeing that I have a purpose." On the community side, participants report a fundamental shift in their sense of agency: "This program gave me the courage to speak up respectfully and see the police as partners, not just enforcers." A former commissioner praised the TBP for its influence on officers and noted that those who participated are now spreading the practices to other commands.

2,327+ direct beneficiaries

47+ trustbuilding events

53+ people trained

2,971 volunteer hours

South Africa

The project started in January 2021



South Africa has some of the highest rates of gender-based violence in the world. Family breakdown, absent fathers, and unprocessed trauma from both the apartheid era and the realities of everyday poverty define the communities where the TBP works. This combination of strands working with men, women and children together is distinctive within IofCI's own programming.

Focus of the trustbuilding work

TBP South Africa runs four interconnected strands: Inner Healing workshops, Men's and Women's Forums, a commercial Trust in the Workplace program for the business sector, and a newly launched National Family Healing Campaign. The project works primarily in informal settlements in and around Johannesburg and Pretoria, partnering with faith communities and local organisations. The Men's Forums are particularly unusual in the sector, creating consistent, safe spaces for men to examine their role in family and community dynamics, in a country where male violence is both a serious public health issue and deeply culturally entrenched.

How the trustbuilding work is going

Over five years, the team has engaged over 2,000 individuals. In 2025, Inner Healing workshops reached 78 young people in Olievenhoutbosch, deepening a five-year community partnership. The November 2025 IofCI Annual Lecture and Trustbuilding Awards, hosted in Pretoria, provided the platform for the official launch of the National Family Healing Campaign: a multi-year national initiative developed in partnership with faith-based organisations and NGOs, aimed at shifting the conversation about family health onto the national agenda.

Trust in the Workplace, a commercial program for businesses, demonstrates that the TBP's methodology has value well beyond the NGO sector and can sustain itself through the market.





Impact to date

The project is producing results that reach beyond the workshop context. Three years of Men's Forums have led to concrete community outcomes: new processes for reporting gender-based violence, a volunteer network for victim support, and men publicly committing to change their behaviour. One participant shared: "I'm a better father through the guidance I've got from this gathering." The board chair of IofC South Africa observed that the TBP "has re-energised the IofC movement and has been a catalyst for a deeper approach to our work. It has given a focus and substance to IofC locally that was inherently lacking before the TBP came on board."





2,543+ direct beneficiaries

106+ trustbuilding events

99 people trained

9,050 volunteer hours

The Americas

This regional program started in 2025



Migration is one of the defining humanitarian realities of our time, and in the Americas it is intensifying. Millions of people from Venezuela, Haiti, Cuba, Central America, and beyond are on the move, many fleeing violence, economic collapse, or the effects of climate change. The communities receiving them are often under-resourced and unprepared, and the political environment has become increasingly hostile: with restrictive migration policies tightening across the region and millions facing forced returns or displacement, the social fabric holding migrants and host communities together is under serious strain. The Regional Trustbuilding Program for the Americas was launched in Brazil in 2025 and in Uruguay in 2026 to work directly in this space, not to manage migration, but to build human relationships that make integration possible and to help build a more cohesive society.



Focus of the trustbuilding work

The first regional trustbuilding program brings together migrants and local communities for dialogues, cultural exchanges, and facilitated workshops that create connections across differences. Activities like Walking in the Shoes of Immigrants, where participants listen to personal stories of migration through QR codes attached to shoes, and culinary passport exchanges that use shared food as a gateway to storytelling, make the trustbuilding process tangible and emotionally accessible. The team itself, drawn from seven countries including Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Uruguay and Canada, and with support from the USA, models the very intercultural collaboration it hopes to facilitate.



How the trustbuilding work is going

The program's in-person launch in Rio de Janeiro in October 2025 brought together 42 participants, including migrants from Angola, Congo, Cuba, Venezuela, and Colombia alongside government representatives, human rights organisations, and NGOs. Online, participants from across the region also joined the launch. In Uruguay, the Walking in the Shoes initiative reached 86 students, teachers, and school staff within its first months. The program has launched a trustbuilding process in Uruguay aimed at creating strategic partnerships with organisations such as the Uruguayan School of Social Psychology (EPSU), the Catholic Church's Migrant Pastoral Service, the social organisation UruVene, and the Association of Ecuadorians in Uruguay (ADEU).

Impact to date

Though still in its early stages, the program is already generating the kind of responses that indicate genuine impact. One participant at a recent activity in Rio shared: "I'm leaving with the sense that this program is being built not from a place of 'I know what is best for you', but from 'I want to listen to you,' so that together we can break down barriers and open up possibilities." In a field where organisations frequently impose solutions on migrant communities, that distinction matters enormously, and it is deliberate.

After one of the sharing spaces, a participant shared, "I'm on the bus heading home, with homework. Today I realised that, as a Uruguayan, I need to fully open myself up to the communities around me. To leave behind that "habit" of observing from a distance and start embracing my identity as a global citizen. I wouldn't have truly grasped this insight if I hadn't looked at it from within."

560 direct beneficiaries

25 trustbuilding events

11 people trained

12,240 volunteer hours

From grievance to understanding

Bob Divine Omeke, Nigeria

Bob's relationship with the police began with anger. As a young man, he was manhandled and humiliated after confronting officers who were extorting a motorcyclist. Then they impounded his own bike, leaving him with no recourse and no remedy. The experience hardened into something fixed: a deep mistrust of everything the police represented.

What happened next was unexpected. A senior police officer offered Bob a room in a police barracks, closer to his place of work. It was a simple act of kindness, but it cracked something open. "Maybe they are not all that bad," Bob remembers thinking. It was the first time he had encountered an officer as a human being rather than a symbol of power and threat.

It was through the TBP's Police I Care initiative, however, that this tentative shift became a genuine transformation. Through dialogue sessions that brought community members and officers into honest conversation, Bob began to understand the pressures, constraints, and humanity on the other side of the uniform. He heard officers speak about their own fears, their frustrations, and their desire to serve with integrity.



"I now understand the act of storytelling and sharing instances where officers took responsibility for their actions, admitted mistakes, and worked towards building trust," Bob reflected.

"My views and experience with the police have moved from fear, suspicion, and division to one of empathy and understanding."

Bob's story is not one of forgetting what happened to him. It is one of choosing to see more fully and, in doing so, finding a path from grievance towards the possibility of change.

Love beyond division

Emmanuel and Yvette, Burundi



Emmanuel Nahimana grew up just a kilometre from a displacement camp where, decades earlier, communities had been torn apart by ethnic violence. Throughout his childhood, he was viewed with suspicion by those around him. Some community members believed he might one day seek to settle old scores.

Years later, Emmanuel fell in love with Yvette Irakoze, a young woman raised in that same displacement camp. Their relationship drew fierce opposition from Yvette's family. Marked by decades of intergenerational fear and mistrust, her relatives saw Emmanuel not as a partner, but as a potential threat. Under intense family pressure and amid serious threats, the relationship was forced to come to a painful halt for more than a year.

At the height of the crisis, Emmanuel was invited to participate in TBP Burundi's Honest Conversations, a series of dialogues designed for individuals to confront painful histories, engage in truth-telling, and begin healing across community divides. The sessions proved transformative.

"The honest conversations helped me see that love does not have to carry the weight of inherited trauma," Emmanuel shared during one of the sessions. "We are not born to hate. The past does not have to determine the future. Our relationship became a symbol of what is possible when we choose courage over fear."

With renewed clarity and support from the project team, Emmanuel found the strength to persevere. He and Yvette rekindled their relationship, this time standing firm in the face of continued resistance. Their determination eventually softened hearts on both sides of their families.

In May 2025, a dowry ceremony marked the formal start of their union, as both families witnessed the exchange of wedding rings, a powerful gesture of hope and unity.

On 15 June 2025, Emmanuel and Yvette celebrated their wedding, surrounded by community members who, not long before, had doubted such a moment could ever come.

Their story is more than a celebration of love. It embodies the deeper purpose of the Trustbuilding Program: to break the cycle of inherited mistrust, humanise former adversaries, and help individuals write new stories grounded in empathy, dignity, and shared humanity.

Looking ahead: 2026 and beyond

The Trustbuilding Program is working towards financial independence in 2026 and beyond, with a clear-eyed view of the opportunities ahead. Existing Bridge Funding has secured the program's current operating capacity through to Q3 2027, giving our international team the stability to plan and deliver without disruption. Looking beyond that point, we are actively shaping the conditions for the program's next phase of growth, which includes implementing a fee-for-service model (already active) and inviting funding partners to help shape the future with us.

We are currently exploring a range of scenarios for how the program could grow. Our preferred path is one of continuation with increased funding, allowing us to scale our impact and invest more deeply in the teams and countries already showing strong results. We are also building genuine resilience into the program more broadly, so that it remains strong and adaptable regardless of the funding environment. This means strengthening our sustainability model across several pathways: a growing fee-for-service training offer, built on the expertise of our teams in Indonesia and Australia, has been developed; an annual crowdfunding campaign that engages supporters and the wider Initiatives of Change network directly is in place, as well as expanded grant partnerships. We are also working with other INGOs to make bids to bilateral donors to work in post- and active conflict countries.

We have strengthened our internal governance, clarifying decision-making across our leadership and operational teams, and we are reviewing our financial systems to ensure they can responsibly manage the scale of funding we hope to secure. This means any partner investing in the TBP can be confident their support will be well-stewarded, at whatever scale. We also continue to deepen, rather than only widen, our work: prioritising teams and countries where the conditions exist for genuine, lasting societal impact.

The need for this work has not diminished. If anything, the events of the past year - in Nepal, in Burundi, and in communities across the Americas navigating new and harder questions about migration - have only confirmed how urgently trust needs rebuilding, and how much is possible when communities are given the right support to do it. The Trustbuilding Program is well-positioned to meet that need at scale, and we welcome the opportunity to discuss how funding partners can be part of that next chapter.

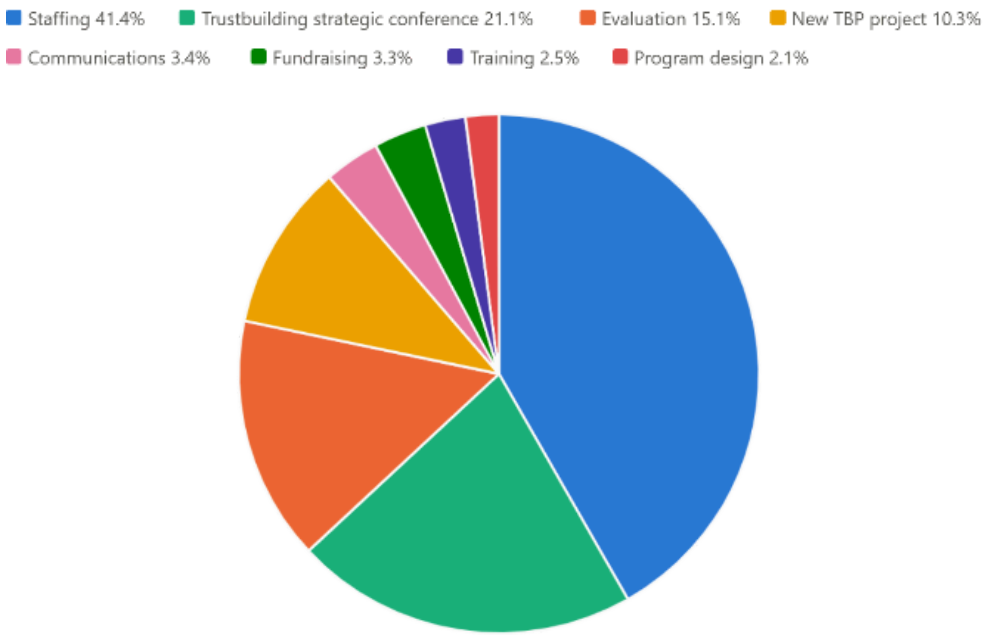
Where our funding comes from

The Trustbuilding Program is supported through a combination of institutional grants, individual donations, crowdfunding, fee-for-service income generated by local teams, and significant in-kind contributions from volunteers and partner organisations.

Across the life of the program, the TBP has raised funds from external funders beyond its founding support from the Fetzer Institute and has been strengthened by significant in-kind contributions through volunteer time and donated resources.

A growing share of project-level income is now self-generated: teams in Indonesia and Nepal in particular have developed fee-for-service models, sell locally produced learning materials, or have built sustained models on volunteerism and partnerships that reduce dependency on external grants over time.

How we invest what we raise



In 2025, the Trustbuilding Program allocated its expenditure across staffing, project delivery, and strategic development activities, with the largest share (41%) supporting core programme staffing to sustain delivery across active country projects. A significant portion (21%) was invested in a strategic conference to shape the programme's long-term direction, while 15% funded a comprehensive evaluation to assess impact and inform future design (this was a unique one-time cost).

The remaining expenditure supported the launch of new TBP projects (10%), alongside communications, fundraising, training, and programme design work that together strengthen the programme's reach, sustainability, and quality of delivery.

Trustbuilding Program
IMPACT REPORT
2024 -2025

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Photos © participating TBP teams

Where trust is lacking, polarisation tears communities apart. It fuels inequality, and even seemingly minor disagreements can escalate into wide-scale violence. Our Trustbuilding Program promotes just, peaceful and inclusive societies in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

IofC International is a donation- and grant-funded nonprofit organisation, which serves as the central hub for a global network of both national teams and individuals who are leading community-based initiatives.
Our grassroots approach encourages local ownership and focuses on accompanying, strengthening, and empowering individuals to be the change they want to see in the world.

https://iofc.org/en/trustbuilding-program
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Initiatives of Change International

With support from
Fetzer Institute