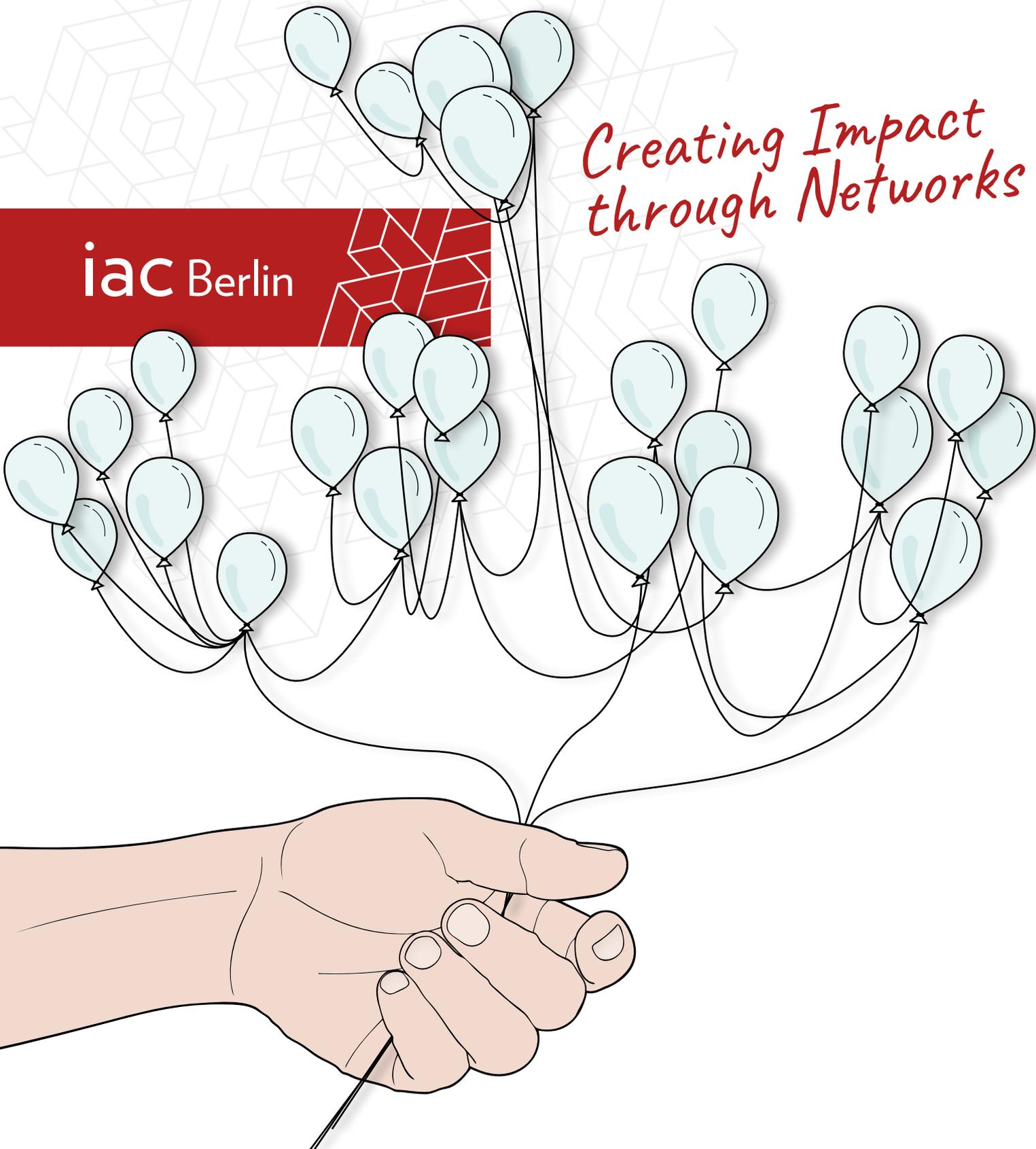




*Creating Impact
through Networks*



ACTIVITY REPORT **2021**

Learning from and with each other provides the basis from which we co-create knowledge, experiences and concrete initiatives with our partners.



DEAR COLLEAGUES, PARTNERS, AND FRIENDS,

The field of philanthropy has proven that it can work quickly, flexibly, and on a basis of trust. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine, foundations adapted their rules for giving, supported novel forms of collaboration across sectors, and invested in promising but uncertain outcomes. In doing so, they were able to pursue their strategic missions while laying the groundwork for their organizations to be more open to collaborative approaches.

But what works in response to crises has not yet translated into changes to the core practices and principles of most philanthropic organizations. Why do foundations struggle to embed and embrace these open and collective approaches in their everyday business? Part of the answer lies in the conventional understanding of philanthropy's role, which is bound to a transactional and causal impact logic that originates in a highly predictable world.

However, our sense of urgency today is bigger than ever. We have years, not decades, to change in order to avoid systemic collapse. We no longer need to talk about whether collective approaches matter—we know that they do. Collaboration engages all actors that are essential to addressing an issue, allowing them to build a common understanding of the interconnectedness and complexity of a challenge, to test and learn together, and to leverage invested resources in a highly efficient manner.

The question we face now is, 'How?' How do we apply open and collaborative approaches successfully, and how do we make them mainstream? Tim Draimin, senior fellow at the Community Foundations of Canada, predicts that an evolution of innovative, collaborative alliances and platforms will emerge in the coming years, and foundations will have a central role to play (read more on p. 11). This will only happen if we accept that at this transitional moment the need for rapid adaptation not only applies to our programs and approaches, but to the core of our organizations as well. At iac Berlin we are making our contribution through deep collaborations with colleagues and partners from around the world. The approaches we experimented with in 2021, the learnings and questions we collected along our journey, we would like to share these with you in this Activity Report.

Our work is made possible thanks to the financial support of the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt. Our achievements are a result of deep and trustful relationships with colleagues, partners, and our fellow network members. Thank you to all of you. It's a privilege to be connected with you through our shared ambition to build networks that matter.

I wish you an inspiring and enjoyable time perusing our Activity Report 2021.

With warmest regards,

Darius Polok
Managing Director, iac Berlin

IMAGE CREDITS

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WHAT WE DO & HOW WE DO IT

The iac Berlin was founded by the Robert Bosch Stiftung in 2017 with a unique double-mission: to establish a state-of-the-art alumni network of its grantees and to support the development of networks for social impact. Five years later, the iac Berlin and the Bosch Alumni Network are well recognized in the philanthropic field and have established numerous initiatives and activities. How did we start, where do we stand, and where are we heading?

For many years, foundations have built capacity, advocated for causes, facilitated connections, and offered a wide range of support. Yet few have found ways to empower individuals or organizations beyond the direct, time-bound support of their established programs. Spurred on by this observation, the Robert Bosch Stiftung – one of the major foundations in Europe – founded the International Alumni Center (iac Berlin) in 2017, which took up residence in a former industrial building in Berlin Mitte.



iac Berlin's mission is to be a center of expertise for impact-oriented networks that contributes to the global development of its field. iac Berlin gathers knowledge and tests methodologies, sharing their outcomes with the Robert Bosch Stiftung and other foundations. iac Berlin also uses this knowledge in the second branch of its mission, where it has been instrumental in the establishment, curation, and further development of the Bosch Alumni Network. The network brings together former and current fellows, grantees, and employees of the Robert Bosch Stiftung and its partners.

From the beginning, we strongly believed that networks can be a key asset and powerful tool for creating impact that is both effective and sustainable in the long term. The promise of networks lies in their:

1. Participation and integration
2. Innovation and resilience
3. Adaptability and openness
4. Efficiency

This belief defines the activities of iac Berlin as well as the Bosch Alumni Network. We work together with other organizations on equal footing – no one in the lead, no one following behind – to co-develop solutions for positive social change.

From the moment it was founded, our approach to the Bosch Alumni Network was contrary to the usual model of connecting grant-giver and grantee with the foundation as central steering entity that is predominant among foundations and universities – called the “hub & spoke” model in network theory – envisioning instead a multi-community network (see page 12 for an example of this approach). Since 2017, we have therefore strived to develop the Bosch Alumni Network in a way that allows for decentralized connections between its members and which values alumni as partners.

Developing the Bosch Alumni Network

We started with many ideas and a stack of lists with programs, contacts, and a plethora of additional pieces of information from over 50 years of philanthropy at the Robert Bosch Stiftung. As a first step, establishing the digital platform www.boschalumni.net quickly became the linchpin of this endeavor, although convincing people to actually use the platform was no easy task. We realized that personal connections needed to be established or reactivated. We

needed to build trust in this new system. We needed shared experiences to create the emotional bonds that a network needs to feel like a home. The value of this approach was reflected in all kinds of personal gatherings all over the globe: from informal one-on-one exchanges in local cafés to huge meetings with dozens of participants in Kigali, Bologna, Paris, New York, and Berlin.

With a growing number of members and activities, the platform became a lively go-to meeting place as well as a living archive of the fellows and programs generated through the foundation's philanthropic work over the course of decades. With ever growing momentum, members not only benefited from the network, but co-developed it as well. Within a few years, further decentralization and the self-reinforcing effects of member activities empowered the Bosch Alumni Network to facilitate unexpected connections, new sustainable activities, and innovative approaches.



In 2021, the network achieved much more than originally expected. The number of members steadily increased to 7,500, members assumed more responsibility and active roles as part of ongoing decentralization, and the network's outer edges became more permeable, which enabled it to build bridges with other networks. You can find examples of these strategies and activities on pages 12-13.

Connecting Networks: Building networks in the field of philanthropy

Around the same time that the Bosch Alumni Network was founded, iac Berlin also created Connecting Networks. This program brings together around 50 foundations and non-profit organizations that are working to strengthen and further develop their approaches to building networks. It offers network-builders a learning environment that functions on many different levels, offering regular training opportunities and peer exchange on topics such as shaping strategy, developing personal skills, solidifying organizational commitment,

and building a community of peers. The development of this network of networks was propelled by a kick-off workshop in 2017 and a strategy retreat in 2018. Together with its diverse community, Connecting Networks co-organizes up to two Learning Labs per year. After exploring the topic of "Impact of Networks" in 2020, a Learning Lab on "Impact Alliances" was held in Vienna, Austria, in 2021, convening over 25 members. Together, participants explored the theory behind Impact Alliances before delving into practical case studies of Impact Alliances in action. Participants were joined by Tim Draimin of Community Foundations of Canada, who provided the theoretical background as well as concepts to help bring innovation and systems thinking into the core of foundations. You can find an interview with Tim Draimin on pages 10 and 11.

The many roles of iac Berlin

For iac Berlin, working with partners does not stop at developing and discussing ideas. Rather, we work together to put them into action and create concrete initiatives as well. In this context, the iac Berlin assumes a variety of roles, ranging from host to incubator to adviser.

One of the earliest such activities was the Global Diplomacy Lab (GDL). Founded in 2014, the GDL aims to advance inclusive and agile formats of diplomacy and international cooperation to deal with cross-border and global challenges. It is an initiative of the Federal Foreign Office in partnership with the BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the German-American Fulbright Commission, and the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the iac Berlin holding the role of implementing organization since 2018. Since that time, the GDL has established a global ecosystem characterized by mutual accountability, respect, and inclusiveness, and has delivered positive transformational change. To maintain its effectiveness, the GDL has developed a new strategy titled, "GDL 2025: Diplomacy 4.0," which embraces a wide variety of ideas that represent the diversity of GDL members and partners. You can explore how they created this strategy with a members-driven approach on pages 16-17.

In 2021, iac Berlin assumed the role of incubator for the first two years of ANSTOSS DEMOKRATIE. This "strategic experiment" was initiated to develop and test new ways to effectively collaborate on a systemic level. The initiative brought together the ERSTE Foundation, European Forum Alpbach Foundation, Robert Bosch Stiftung, Stiftung Mercator Germany, and Stiftung Mercator Switzerland. With the shared goal of strengthening democratic culture in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, it tears down silos to bring together partners from politics, civil society, media, the private sector, and science. Find out how the organizations involved in this experiment perceived their participation, what they learned, and what challenges they had to face on pages 18-19.



The SDG Places initiative was also founded in 2021. The initiative works to complete the triangle between foundations, facilitators and inspiring spaces. SDG Places are driven by the conviction that every transformation at a systems level starts with individuals. These individuals need to step out of their everyday routines and comfort zones and open themselves to new perspectives and experiences in order to catalyze change. Therefore, spaces and inputs should appeal to all senses and invite exploration with open minds and open hearts. The BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt gave the first impulse for the initiative and was soon joined by the Robert Bosch Stiftung and the Porticus Foundation as partners, and the iac Berlin as its backbone. Discover more about how SDG Places enable sustainable positive change and can contribute to the future of convening on pages 20-21.

Peer-learning and consultancy

We believe in the positive, long-term effects of bringing together peers for exchange and cooperative learning formats. Similar to the Connecting Networks Learning Labs, we use commensurate approaches with various other partners who are often facing very specific and timely challenges. We balance the practical and cooperative aspects of the challenge with a sound theoretical framework. Pooling our experiences and networks, we learn from each other as well as with each other through consultations, workshops, and facilitated peer exchange, such as case clinics.

Providing targeted support that ranges from network analysis to strategy development, we host virtual, physical, or hybrid workshops and co-learning events. We are uniquely positioned, in that we can not only research promising methodologies to support network building, but can also test them first-hand, e.g. in the Bosch Alumni Network. We then make the knowledge and experience gained from this cycle of theory and practice available to foundations, academia, public institutions, and non-profit organizations that want to build networks with social impact.

As an example of this approach, the Kreisau Foundation did a 2.5-day workshop with us in 2019 that became a cornerstone for their strategic renewal and resulted in the successful reform of their advisory council in 2021. You can read more about this peer-learning workshop on pages 22-23.

A shift towards deep collaboration

Now, more than ever, we understand the global connectedness of major societal challenges. But any organization trying to solve them alone is bound to fail. Like these global challenges, the solutions must also be interconnected. We want to strengthen this understanding through all of our projects and collaborations.



After an interesting, inspiring, and intense first five years, the iac Berlin is now a well-established Do & Think tank for impact-oriented networks in philanthropy. We cooperate with other organizations on topics such as strengthening democracy, understanding the future of convening, and sustainability for non-profits. Likewise, we work on developing new governance structures, peer-learning situations, and much more.

These activities are either carried out by the iac Berlin itself or as part of joint initiatives like the ones described in these pages. We strongly believe in sharing knowledge and providing open access to our experiences. Therefore, if there is anything you want to know about these or any related topics, please get in touch!

www.iac-berlin.org

FIVE YEARS OF IAC BERLIN

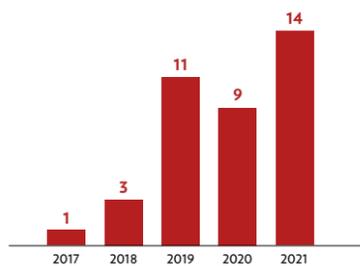
Our approach:

- ✓ We convene people across sectors and host communities.
- ✓ We incubate and coordinate networks and alliances.
- ✓ We support organizations and individuals.
- ✓ We learn with peers and share our knowledge.

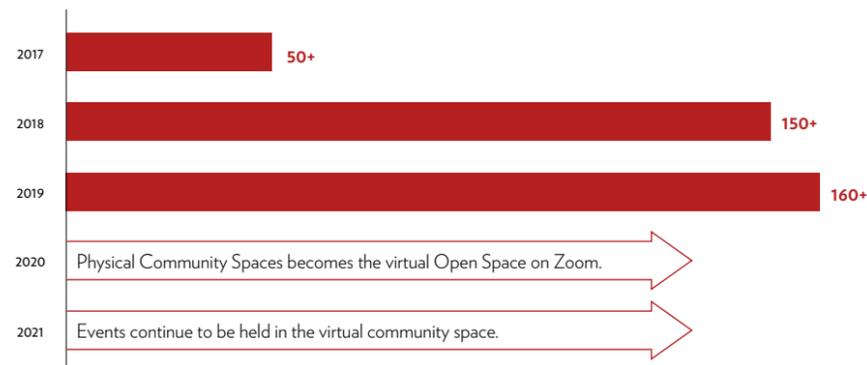
Active on:



Peer consultancies



Events and workshops hosted in iac Berlin's Community Space

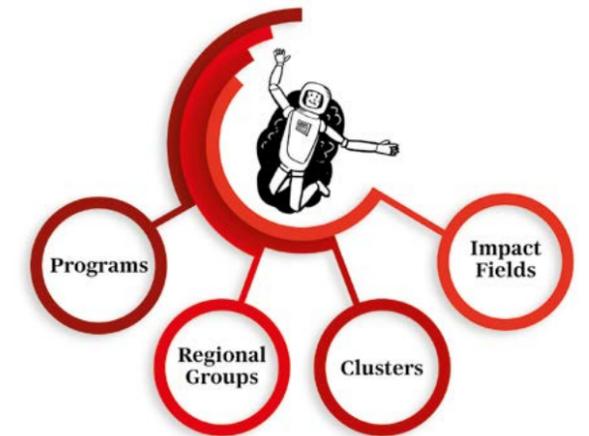


Implementing five networks and initiatives



THE BOSCH ALUMNI NETWORK AT A GLANCE

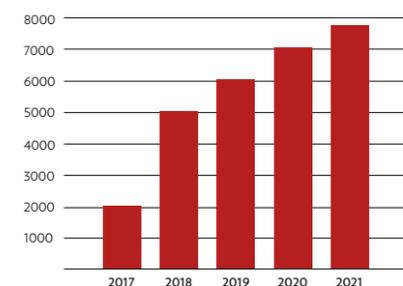
Various possibilities to connect



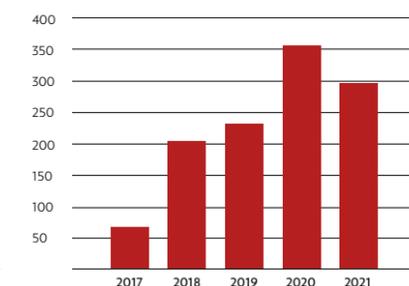
Guiding Principles:

1. We create safe spaces and trust
2. We work with openness and transparency
3. We self-organize around our mission
4. We contribute our commitment and responsibility
5. We team up to achieve impact
6. We use resources carefully
7. We share knowledge and skills gained among each other

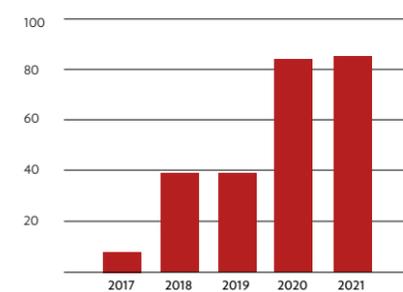
Members



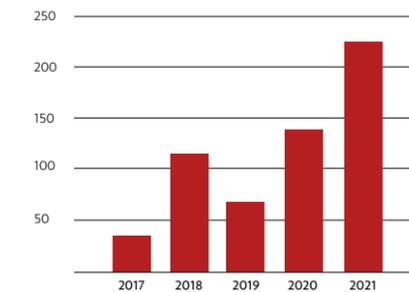
Events by members



Projects by members



Opportunities by members



In 2021, the network had:

- ✓ 7,500 members from 140 countries
- ✓ 150+ programs of the Robert Bosch Stiftung
- ✓ 150 groups
- ✓ 70 Regional Coordinators
- ✓ 65 Impact Fields
- ✓ 13 Impact Field Hosts

GUIDING QUESTIONS IN 2021



Progress and innovation start with an inquisitive mind: Spend sufficient time asking the right questions and the path to a potential solution unfolds. In the pages that follow, we are pleased to share with you the big questions that kept us busy in 2021.

At iac Berlin, we like to begin with the question “why” to define our purpose, followed by “how” to develop the process. These two questions have guided us as we’ve established and developed iac Berlin and the Bosch Alumni Network over the past five years. Although we have embarked on many deep explorations on topics such as collaboration, networks, and impact, we regularly step back from our daily work to ask the hard questions that can put our efforts into perspective and re-affirm our strategic direction.

In 2021, we asked ourselves many such questions, including: How exactly can Impact Alliances tackle complex social challenges? How can we achieve the shift from a centrally organized network to a decentralized one? And, why should organizations dare to embark on strategic experiments? Thus began our journey for answers, where we organized Learning Labs, incubated new initiatives, and moderated discussions with peers. In the following pages, we will share eight big questions guiding our work in 2021 as well as the paths we co-developed in order to find solutions.

Working in the field of philanthropy and beyond, many of us are faced with the same questions. However, the answers are never one-size-fits-all. This is where iac Berlin steps into its role as initiator and guide. If you see your own challenges, topics, or questions reflected in these pages, we hope to not only help you spark new ideas for solutions, but invite you to join us to discuss, collaborate, and find more answers together!

How can Impact Alliances be a powerful tool in solving complex social challenges?



IMPACT ALLIANCES: THE NEXT EVOLUTION FOR PHILANTHROPY

In November 2021, the Connecting Networks community welcomed Tim Draimin as the keynote speaker at its Learning Lab in Vienna, Austria, on the topic of Impact Alliances. With years of experience in developing and managing Impact Alliances, Tim worked with participants as they explored the potential of deep collaboration to address complex challenges and to drive social innovation.

Following up on the Learning Lab, Tim joined us for an interview to discuss the changing role of philanthropy, his experiences working with Impact Alliances, and the urgent need for deep collaborative efforts.

Challenges such as climate change or polarized societies are both urgent and overwhelming. How is the field of philanthropy currently positioned to take on such topics?

Tim: We are in an age of transition unlike anything we have ever seen, where we're facing both the existential threat of climate change as well as critical social challenges. Philanthropy has a huge role to play, but foundations have been so focused on their own goals as autonomous actors that they're only now beginning to realize that they need to operate in a much larger field to bring about change. Simply put, foundations cannot accomplish change at a systems-level while working individually. They need committed and diverse partners with whom they can create and unlock new impactful value that would otherwise

remain elusive to the single foundation actor. Today, they have a real opportunity to be catalysts for building problem-solving platforms that are capable of working at scale.

How far do you think philanthropy is from realizing that potential?

Tim: We still have got a long way to go. Deep collaboration – where foundations are capable of putting the interests of the collectivity at the forefront and are comfortable leaving their ego and their brand at the back – is a very hard thing to achieve. For the last half-century, foundations have focused on their role as individual grant-makers. Disrupting that pattern of behavior requires a new mindset around how foundations understand their role in social change. We need to build deep collaborative relationships with other organizations that focus on more than just shared program activities. The real challenge to unlocking new value is finding the capability to create continuous innovation together.

Many foundations are already engaged in collective impact. What is the difference between that and an Impact Alliance?

Tim: Collective impact is an early iteration of an Impact Alliance. It's where somebody already has a plan that they want to implement, and they reach out to the partners they need, divvy up the work and implement it – but all of the strategy is done a priori. An Impact Alliance is where you have a North Star goal of what you're trying to achieve and an initial hypothesis about how to do it. There's also a shared understanding that an Impact Alliance is going to be an iterative process of testing and fine-tuning ideas that are evolving. All parties involved need to be ready to commit to a long timeframe and the quality of the relationship needs to be very high to sustain this ongoing innovation capability. People refer to that as “emergent learning.”

Do you have an example of an organization that was able to do that?

Tim: I was the CEO of a national foundation focused on social-environmental change. Our signature project was an initiative that supported work with local populations and indigenous people. The goal was to create an ecosystem management plan to protect the old growth forest in Canada's Great Bear Rainforest. This initiative started as a result of individual environmental groups realizing that they could create more value if they worked in concert. Starting as a group of environmentalists, it ended up evolving into the creation of different platforms of collaboration between them and First Nation people, businesses, and government. Together, they created a large-scale forest management plan, and generated resources and new types of institutional support systems. Previously, success was only measured by the hectares protected. In this case, the alliance pivoted to an understanding that they needed to create a new model of conservation, where the social needs of the local populations are integrated into the conservation plan. What emerged was “integrated conservation.” This model of large-scale integrated conservation was later adopted by others, including the Canadian Boreal Trust.

These types of alliances take a lot of time to reach their full potential, but a lot of people feel a great sense of urgency. How can we strike a balance?

Tim: We can have a multi-track approach to how we're investing our time and resources. We can initiate collective endeavors with shorter-term activities to start testing ideas and connecting to the broader systems and networks that we seek to support and influence. However, we also need to protect our resources for the more long-term strategic goals. This does not need to be a conflict though, as the urgent things will end up generating knowledge that we can use while evaluating ways to develop our medium- and long-term strategies.

What can individuals do to nudge an organization towards more collaboration?

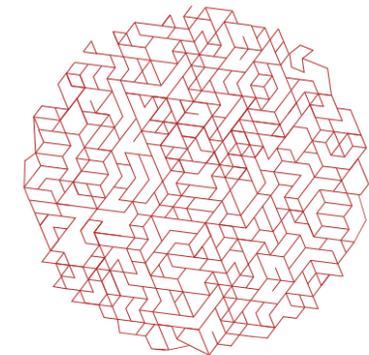
Tim: We need to share inspiring stories about successful Impact Alliances and how the scale of their impact eclipses what individual organizations are capable of doing alone. Even extremely large organizations are starting to move towards collaboration to get things done, exemplified by the CARE Fund or Tipping Point. This signals a shift, recognizing that lasting social change needs an ecosystem of actors working in tandem.

What's ahead for the field of philanthropy?

Tim: I predict that we are going to see an ongoing evolution in the type and sophistication of innovative, collaborative alliances and platforms that will emerge in the coming years. Foundations will be central to that, because they have the ability to bring together money, relationships, long-term perspectives, strategic thinking, and strategic foresight. Foundations are in an enviable position to provide leadership to this emerging field of Impact Alliances.

How can Connecting Networks and the iac Berlin support this?

Tim: The iac Berlin is working in one of the most important areas today. They are helping to garner recognition for the need for collaboration and Impact Alliances as well as undertaking capacity building, and creating the space for potential Impact Alliances to emerge. That is absolutely essential. If we want to achieve the impact that we're seeking, we have to help everyone recognize the value of deep collaborative work. And we need to recognize how urgent this work is now.



About Tim Draimin

Tim Draimin is a Senior Fellow at Community Foundations of Canada and a long-time leader in Canada's social innovation sector. He was the Executive Director of the Social Innovation Generation and founding CEO of Tides Canada Foundation, where he established Canada's first national support system for social entrepreneurs and supported BC's Great Bear Rainforest initiative, a world-renowned model of integrated conservation. Tim has worked and consulted internationally and serves on the board of various organizations active in social innovation.

The Connecting Networks Learning Labs

The Connecting Networks community offers a range of activities and learning formats for peer exchange and shared learning on topics ranging from network building and collaboration to strategy development and social innovation. Designed by the iac Berlin, Learning Labs are 2-3 day workshops that explore and advance dialogue around key themes and emerging issues.

www.iac-berlin.org/what-we-do/connecting-networks

How can we support the shift from a centrally organized to a decentralized network?



CREATING SPACE FOR INNOVATION THROUGH DECENTRALIZATION

A dynamic and resilient alumni network that can spark innovation needs space, member ownership, and trust. But this can be difficult to achieve in centrally organized networks. Most foundations develop their alumni networks in a “hub & spoke” model with a foundation-based team at its center. Our experience shows that developing towards a member-driven, multi-community network needs a clear strategic decision and the will to let go control. How can this transitional step be achieved? The Bosch Alumni Network shares some of its successful approaches.

A centralized network often relies on a “hub & spoke” model. Think of a bicycle wheel, where several spokes are connected by a strong central hub, or how airline connections are organized. This is also the model for many people-based networks, such as alumni networks. Here, a well-connected hub fosters strong ties to individual network-members and centrally steers communication and cooperation. This setup provides network “owners” with a strong sense of control, but they also squander a lot of potential creativity and innovation. A multi-community network is decentralized, connecting several smaller communities built around e.g., specific topics or fields. This model requires individual members to take ownership of the communities and provides the space necessary for experimentation and innovation. However, it

also leaves network owners with much less overall control and ability to plan outcomes, which is why many network owners instinctively shy away from this kind of model.

Empowering members as Impact Field Hosts

The Bosch Alumni Network uses various approaches to distribute ownership amongst its members and to drive decentralization. These member-organized communities include groups around the original programs of the Robert Bosch Stiftung, geographic areas, sectors, and collaborations around specific topics or fields of action. Within the Bosch Alumni Network those fields of action are called “Impact Fields” and serve as junctures for exchange and collaboration across the network. They can help build connections between members with different backgrounds but working on the same topic. In 2021, the new role of Impact Field Host was established in support of building communities of practice around certain topics.

Each Impact Field is facilitated by a hosting team of up to two members, who hold their positions for nine months. Together with the members working in that field, hosts are encouraged to shape the thematic focus, activities, and means of communication for their respective fields, thus building a sense of ownership at both the host and member levels. Activities developed by and for the members have the potential to strengthen the network in a sustainable way. When members can be co-creators of the network and see the network itself as a space for innovation, they are willing to contribute time, knowledge, and energy to the development of the network.

The Impact Fields of the Bosch Alumni Network range from “Climate Change” and “Diversity & Inclusion,” to “Migration,” “Participatory Governance” and more. Lilian Daphine Lunyolo, Lubor Jusko, and Greta Frankenfeld became Impact Field Hosts in 2021 and shared their motivations and hopes with us in regards to their new roles.

www.boschalumni.net



GRETA FRANKENFELD
Host of the Impact Field “Diversity & Inclusion”

Diversity & Inclusion

I didn’t have an “official” role in the Bosch Alumni Network before, but becoming an Impact Field Host sounded like a great opportunity to meet interesting people working on a subject that is fundamental to us all. Furthermore, it is a great chance to experiment with online Feminist Popular Education.

My aim is to facilitate an active, inclusive, and co-creative community experience, as well as to promote practical learning in self-care and diversity in caring. With that, I hope to generate reflections as well as systemic approaches, methodologies, and strategies to increase awareness about the importance of diversity. I hope that my contribution will help members’ develop a sense of belonging, and I see my role as an active facilitator in that. Even when standing in front of an open door, we sometimes need someone to invite us in before we can feel at home.

The Diversity & Inclusion community is growing, but it still needs a lot of nurturing. I think there is a real need and a real interest to work on this issue.

Climate Change

We both work on the topic of climate change. Serving as Impact Field Hosts enables us to not only share our professional experience with fellow members, but also to catalyze and facilitate cooperation to address climate change issues in communities around the world.

Impact Fields are a great way to help raise awareness about the many opportunities that the Bosch Alumni Network has to offer. We hope that the momentum and engagement among our members will also translate into impact in their own communities outside of the Bosch Alumni Network. We can already see how the community around the topic of climate change is growing within the Bosch Alumni Network. We hope that by the end of our tenure as hosts, members will have enhanced their knowledge about climate change, identified gaps in climate action, and are inspired to contribute to collaborative climate action.



LILIAN DAPHINE LUNYOLO & LUBOR JUSKO
Hosts of the Impact Field “Climate Change”

“Analyses show that perceived ownership and identification with the network as well as norms of accessibility, trust and reciprocity are important drivers of members’ engagement and the self-reinforcing nature of the network.

All of this is difficult to establish on top of a relationship that will unavoidably also reflect an uneven distribution of resources and tasks, principal-agent-problems, and limited legal and organizational opportunities for real co-ownership.

Given that power asymmetries are widely recognized challenges in the philanthropic sector, one can expect that such an approach will also be sensible for other philanthropic institutions that wish to engage in a network approach.”

From: “Impact-oriented networks in the context of philanthropy: An evaluation of the Bosch Alumni Network” (2020), Social Entrepreneurship Center, Vienna University of Economics and Business

How can a network support its members to become more effective agents of change?



MEETING NEEDS: TAILOR-MADE CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The Bosch Alumni Network connects around 7,500 members from across the globe and supports these potential innovators in their efforts to create positive social change. To provide specific capacity development, members work together with the coordination team to identify needed skills, knowledge, and experiences, and organize workshops and other learning opportunities.

The Bosch Alumni Network offers many opportunities for members to grow professionally and increase their impact. While members have repeatedly affirmed the benefits of interacting with peers, they have also voiced a need for targeted, in-depth learning. These assertions were substantiated in a 2020 evaluation carried out in cooperation with the Vienna University of Economics and Business which found that:

“The increased capacity of members helps improve their impact-oriented professional work. Against this background, they attribute 24.9% of their success and impact to the Bosch Alumni Network.”

The same evaluation described the goals of impact-oriented networks – the Bosch Alumni Network included – as covering at least three dimensions:

- » Supporting and encouraging individuals
- » Capacity building in the sectors and fields the members are working in
- » Addressing societal challenges

The Bosch Alumni Network is already very active in supporting and encouraging its members. Providing members with opportunities to develop their effectiveness as agents of change would not only meet their identified needs, but also increase members' potential to address societal challenges. Therefore, the network created strategic learning opportunities that capitalized on the interdisciplinary nature of the network.

Small interventions with strong impact

In 2021, the network's coordinators and partner institutions co-organized several workshops, including: “Systems Thinking – Cities as Transition Arenas,” in cooperation with the School of System Change (Forum for the Future), and MitOst e.V.; and “Cross-Sector Collaboration Learning Trajectory,” in cooperation with the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University.

Zoya Lukyanova of MitOst e.V., and Stella Pfisterer and Marieke de Wal of the Rotterdam School of Management explain the concept of their respective workshops and how these small-scale interventions directly benefit members while contributing to impact-oriented work both within and outside of the network in the long-term.

www.boschalumni.net

Systems Thinking: Cities as Transition Arenas

Highly intricate and complex entities in themselves, cities are also inextricably connected to the global system. Thus, cities are becoming “transition arenas” for exploring the radical systemic changes necessary to facilitate a just and equitable future. As agents of change, urban practitioners need new competencies and skills to meet this challenge, including seeing interconnections between complex problems, adapting to quickly changing circumstances, supporting healthy relationships, engaging people in collaboration, handling emergence, and supporting complex decision-making.

In recent years, systems thinking has gained momentum around the world as a promising approach to deal with the complex and intractable challenges of our times. It allows us to recognize and address the causes and dynamics of social and ecological problems that are perpetuated by interconnected patterns and behaviors, as well as to anticipate the impact of our actions on a wider system.

Our course brought together urban practitioners from 17 cities from across the globe to explore key concepts and approaches behind systemic thinking. A highlight of the course was working through five real-world challenges as introduced by the participants. These cases looked at the interconnectedness of urbanization and urban safety in Romania, increasing motorization in Egyptian cities, an approach to circular gastronomy in Vienna, economic and social circularity in Thessaloniki, and flourishing societal ecosystems in South Tirol. This provided us with ample opportunities to ground theory in praxis and to ensure horizontal learning across the group.

By the end of the course, several participants remarked that they were already starting to rethink their professional reality, to challenge their own assumptions, to look at patterns rather than problems, and to pay more attention to the relationships which exist in the current systems and underlying mindsets.



ZOYA LUKYANOVA

Deputy Department Coordinator,
MitOst e.V.

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Cross-Sector Collaboration Learning Trajectory

Cross-sector collaboration is becoming increasingly important for professionals. The most pressing societal challenges that we face – as captured by the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations – require professionals from different sectors to work together. Tailor-made for members of the Bosch Alumni Network, the Partnerships Resource Centre of the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University, offered a learning trajectory to increase collective understanding of cross-sector collaboration and to develop the corresponding skills. Topics included:

- » Success factors and dilemmas related to the process of collaboration, such as trust-building and interest-based negotiation.
- » How to navigate different interests and deal with power imbalances.
- » Skill clinics to learn and experience collaboration skills in a safe space.
- » Collaboration skills such as negotiation, brokering, facilitation, and navigating.

Combining knowledge, skill-training, and reflective practices, participants learned what is needed and experienced what it is like to work together, and how they can facilitate, stimulate, and support cross-sector collaborations. The participants learned that cross-sector collaboration requires stepping into the shoes of other professionals who work in different environments and cultures. They explored such necessary competencies as developing mutual understanding and a collaborative mindset. Finally, participants gained a better understanding of how their own assumptions can affect collaboration and how to deal with the tensions that are inherent to working in cross-sector collaborations.



STELLA PFISTERER

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MARIEKE DE WAL

Managing Director of the Partnerships Resource Centre, Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University

How can we create sustainable impact with a member-driven strategy?



Global Diplomacy Lab

CO-CREATING A STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE OF THE GLOBAL DIPLOMACY LAB

After two years of co-creation, the Global Diplomacy Lab (GDL) finalized a strategy to reach its overarching goal: creating Diplomacy 4.0. Members, the secretariat and the Elected Advisory Council realized early on that any strategy would only be sustainable if it drew from the creativity and experience of everybody involved. Their process showcases how sustainable impact can be created with a member-driven strategy.

In 2019, after five years of existence, the Global Diplomacy Lab organized a meeting in Accra, Ghana, to discuss the future of the GDL. Participants identified the need for a new comprehensive strategy to align members, partners, and the secretariat, and to help guide the GDL towards its intended impact. They created a strategy group consisting of five well-established members who were charged with creating the vision for Diplomacy 4.0. This vision now lies at the heart of everything the GDL does. The GDL distinguishes four levels of diplomacy:

- » Diplomacy 1.0 = government-to-government
- » Diplomacy 2.0 = track two diplomacy, i.e., government-to-government plus experts from relevant fields
- » Diplomacy 3.0 = people-to-people dialogues, i.e., NGO-to-NGO plus business-to-business
- » Diplomacy 4.0 = multi-stakeholder, i.e., bringing all actors together in a way that ensures full participation. This is the culmination of Diplomacy 1.0 to 3.0.

More than a strategy

The strategy group quickly realized that in order to truly make an impact, a strategy alone would not be enough. The world of traditional and non-traditional diplomacy is highly complex and more input, dimensions, and outcomes would be needed. Therefore, additional working groups were created to expand on parts of the overarching strategy in several key areas, including:

1. Developing the “impact tree” model, which illustrates the specific areas where the GDL and its partners intend to create impact and how concrete actions feed into the larger context.
2. Developing a PR and communication strategy.
3. Creating a financial sustainability strategy.
4. Drafting a member charter that outlines the ideals and values shared by members, partners, and the GDL secretariat. It serves as a guide for new and established members on how the GDL works.

Every group was entrusted with the freedom to develop their own work. The secretariat supported from the background as a sparring partner and additional resource. The groups were made up of new and established members from different continents and professional fields, each contributing her or his own strengths and perspectives. This exchange of experience was just as important for the process as it was for the results, provoking positive, creative tensions as well as constant opportunities for mutual learning. The diversity of the groups also mirrored that of the GDL itself and ensured a high sense of member-ownership in the results.

Putting strategy into action

After a feedback round with the rest of the GDL, the working groups responsible for implementation enlisted the help of more members – thus further boosting engagement – and looked for synergies to jointly design activities and solutions between strategic areas. Finally in January 2022, a meeting was held in Bad Belzig, Germany, to discuss the implementation of the various working groups’ outcomes. Over the course of three days, participants developed an action plan to maximize the GDL’s impact in alignment with the impact tree.

The action plan covers a variety of measures ranging from small tasks, like standardizing post-Lab impact reports, to large ones, such as the creation of task forces to further advance the GDL’s impact. The attendees of the workshop in Bad Belzig agreed that the members should continue to be responsible for the implementation of the plan.

As a result, two task forces were created to lead the way forward:

1. The task force for impact is responsible for ensuring that the GDL stays on track and achieves the impact outlined in the impact tree.
2. The second task force is charged with assisting the secretariat to reach financial sustainability goals and to support members with fundraising.

“Since the very beginning, the Federal Foreign Office has accompanied the Global Diplomacy Lab as a partner on every step of its journey. The initial consolidation was largely driven by members and very rewarding to observe. Questions such as “Who are we? What are we striving towards? How can we have more impact?” stem from deep within the community.

I’m very impressed with the members, as they don’t rest on past achievements and instead re-evaluate these questions at regular intervals. As a result of their continuous reflection, the GDL creates even more meaningful outcomes as well as impact, and I am glad to be part of this ongoing journey.”



ANDREA CHRIST

Head of Training
for International Diplomats
Federal Foreign Office

Because the systemization of the GDL’s impact is still in its infancy, the attendees of the workshop in Bad Belzig decided to hold an evaluation of the task forces after a pilot phase of six months. Although the GDL cannot foresee the challenges and obstacles ahead, they have developed a strong foundation built on the principles of co-creation and mutual support.

The GDL partners unanimously agreed that empowering members to co-create the strategy and manage its implementation was truest to the GDL’s doctrine of member-ownership. The framework to measure and achieve the GDL’s impact is now in place and will serve to keep the GDL on course towards greater impact in the future.

www.global-diplomacy-lab.org



ELSA MARIE
D'SILVA

Member of the GDL
Strategy Group

“The Global Diplomacy Lab is truly member driven. As part of the strategy team I felt a great responsibility to work diligently with my colleagues to first understand how the GDL has evolved over the years, its impact on members’ personal lives, and its impact through the various labs. Only then we felt it was possible to develop and design a strategic vision for the next five years where we could create more avenues for members to contribute and help the GDL grow and thrive. It was a listening and co-creation process, and I feel privileged to have been a part of it.”

Why should organizations dare to embark on strategic experiments?

ANSTOSS
DEMOKRATIE

THE TRUE METHOD OF KNOWLEDGE IS EXPERIMENT

The English poet William Blake once said, “The true method of knowledge is experiment.” The courage to experiment and diverge from established paths is crucial to innovation, and our need for innovation is urgent. The challenges facing democratic culture today are very complex, and traditional solutions – linear and driven by pre-defined outputs – are utterly inadequate. Designed to meet these challenges head-on, ANSTOSS DEMOKRATIE is a ‘strategic experiment’ aimed at fostering innovation and new forms of collaboration.

Initiated in 2021, ANSTOSS DEMOKRATIE is a strategic experiment to develop and test new ways to collaborate effectively on a systemic level. With the shared goal of strengthening democratic culture in Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, it tears down silos to bring together partners from politics, civil society, media, the private sector, and science. As part of its initial two-year incubation phase, the partners’ focus is on co-designing shared structures and a culture of collaboration. Partners are experimenting with new forms of cooperative governance structures, while gaining first-hand experience with the challenges and dynamics of this kind of collaboration – all of which will help to guide related projects in the future.

Representatives of three of the organizations involved in this strategic experiment share their perspectives, experiences, and lessons learned.

Internationale Bodensee-Hochschule (Schweiz)

The great challenges of our time can only be solved together. Thus, the difficulty – and the solution – lies in developing effective ways to collaborate across borders and sectors. From a strategic point of view, we saw that we needed to create open processes and learning spaces that allow us to challenge assumptions and break down silos. And that is exactly what ANSTOSS DEMOKRATIE does.

We wanted to participate in ANSTOSS DEMOKRATIE, because all of our work is driven by the question of how research can contribute to social innovation, fact-based decision-making in policy and society, and achieving social impact. We can share our perspective with a project that promotes democracy, and we contribute our experiences with transnational governance and cross-border alliances.

Just like foundations, universities face the challenge of how to develop their role as a social protagonist and how to respond to the complexity of today’s challenges. Engaging in strategic experiments, forging new alliances, and learning from other fields could be the way.



ALEXANDRA HASSLER
Deputy Managing Director

www.wissenschaftsverbund.org

ERSTE Stiftung (Austria)

We are all affected by the anti-democratic developments in society, and we need new ways to explore and take on these challenges. Through ANSTOSS DEMOKRATIE, we’ve realized that the critical issue is to bring together everyone who wants to protect, strengthen, and, hopefully, enlarge the reach of democratic culture and humane societies. We are developing ANSTOSS DEMOKRATIE as a strategic experiment, which is rather different from how foundations usually act. Instead of putting out a call for the best solutions, we are bringing together funders, recipient organizations, experts, and NGOs to define the best ways to make all of our efforts more efficient. Developing concrete actions through a collaborative process is definitely an experiment for many of us.

Through this experience, we’ve learned that such processes are not always the easiest way to define and reach strategic goals. Yet, if we want to stay true to our mission and build something that lasts, it needs to be done in a way that is open, inclusive, respectful, and democratic. It is not easy to get people out of their comfort zones, but once they do, new ways of thinking, working, and collaborating all become possible.

There needs to be more willingness to engage in strategic experiments, as our world is changing ever faster and the usual strategies and processes will no longer provide effective solutions. The philanthropic sector in particular, needs to step down from its exalted position of being the benevolent, but somewhat distant funder and enabler. It needs to engage more directly with those in the field. In this respect, I believe our shared efforts to develop ANSTOSS DEMOKRATIE could be a model for how people can come together to support societies in which people can live with dignity, happiness, and freedom.



FRANZ KARL
PRÜLLER
Senior Advisor
to the Board

www.erstestiftung.org



ELENA JUNG
Project Manager
MARKUS LUX
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Robert Bosch Stiftung (Germany)

Improving the culture of debate – online and offline – is of utmost importance to democracy, which is one of the reasons why the Robert Bosch Stiftung has long supported projects that promote a constructive culture of discussion. We also believe that trans-sectoral collaboration is crucial to strengthening democracy, and ANSTOSS DEMOKRATIE gives us the opportunity to explore systemic solutions to this issue in the German-speaking countries of Europe.

Compared to our usual funding methods, ANSTOSS DEMOKRATIE is clearly an experiment. Instead of defining exact outcomes at the beginning of the project, we started with a vision and strategic goals. Not having defined outcomes can be challenging, but at the same time, it opens up space for creativity and the freedom to continually modify processes. Also, as part of a cross-sector consortium, we are part of an intensive, two-year, co-creation process with representatives from different sectors involved at almost every step of the way. Not only are we exploring joint solutions, we have also learned that the pivotal challenges to democracy are similar across all three countries, and have gained deeper insights into the specific national contexts.

In a world of constant change, organizations should question their working culture from time to time. Through this experience, we’ve learned and are still learning about great projects, new civil society organizations, and unconventional ways of collaboration and funding.

About ANSTOSS DEMOKRATIE

ANSTOSS DEMOKRATIE was initiated by the ERSTE Foundation, the European Forum Alpbach Foundation, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the Stiftung Mercator Germany, and the Stiftung Mercator Switzerland. For its first two years, the iac Berlin has served as the project’s incubator. The Internationale Bodensee-Hochschule was one of the nine development partners that were supported as part of the incubation phase.

www.anstossdemokratie.net

How can physical places inspire positive change and contribute to the future of convening?



ENABLING SUSTAINABLE POSITIVE CHANGE THROUGH PEOPLE, PROCESSES, AND PLACES

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) provide a North Star for positive change on a global scale. But any transformation at a systems level starts with individuals. The SDG Places initiative works to close a triangle that brings motivated individuals together with expertise in facilitation and inspiring spaces.

The SDG Places initiative connects unique places and their hosts with organizations that are working towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The initiative supports these places to develop methodologies for gatherings that have the potential to positively inspire participants.

The SDG Places initiative is based on the hypothesis that even large-scale change always starts with individual people. Therefore, people need to make the journey from a “me-perspective” to a “we-perspective” and from there to a “system-perspective.” To achieve this, we need to step out of our everyday routines and comfort zones, and open ourselves to new perspectives, experiences, and approaches. We need spaces and inputs that appeal to all of our senses and invite us to explore with open minds and open hearts, and to establish deep dialogues. Only then can we tap into the collective intelligence of the many and benefit from diverse perspectives.

To facilitate this journey, a gathering needs to have:

1. **People:** An inspiring and diverse group of people
2. **Process:** Deep listening and dialogue instead of an echo chamber
3. **Place:** A physical resonance room

The SDG Places initiative connects these three elements of people, process, and place by bringing together a wealth of experience from the SDG Places team, partners, and hosts. In this way, they aim to achieve impact on three levels:

- » Me-level: Individuals experience resonance with themselves and reflect on their own roles.
- » We-level: Members of the group resonate with one another, connect with and inspire each other, and establish a common ground for collaboration.
- » System-level: Participants reflect on the meta-level:
 - In what kind of world do we want to live?
 - Where do we stand now?
 - What do we want to achieve?
 - How can we be part of the solution?

This journey of transition has shown to be effective for people from all kinds of geographic or professional backgrounds and therefore provides ample possibilities to initiate change.

Strengthening connections and scaling outreach

The SDG Places initiative was piloted in 2021 with five SDG Places: Pioneers of our Time (Spain), Bore Place (England), Sinal do Vale (Brazil), Casa Origen (Chile), and Mineralito (Mexico). In early 2022, they were joined by new places in Italy, the USA, Ecuador, Germany, Sweden, Romania, and other regions. While welcoming new places, the initiative has also been establishing learning trajectories to create shared resources and a digital platform to connect places and their hosts with organizations.

The SDG Places initiative is also embarking on a collaboration with the Porticus Foundation, which is contributing its vast experience with their Community Arts Lab (CAL). Artists from the Community Art Network (CAN) will create interventions to enrich the SDG Places initiative with the possibilities that art offers as a means of transformation. After assessing the effects, these interventions and formats can then be scaled in 2023.

Co-creating the future of convening

A prominent topic that has been of particular interest for the SDG Places initiative is the future of events. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the SDG Places built on long-standing experience and time-proven traditions in event-hosting to make the drastic switch from physical events to digital ones, and then hybrid events.

With its higher accessibility and smaller ecological footprint, will digital be the future of convening? Can such events still evoke the shared experiences of the physical world – experiences that can create the emotional bonds for sustainable connections? And what exactly is the role of a well-facilitated space, be it physical or digital? The SDG Places initiative is exploring these questions while experimenting to find the right balance, rigorously examining when and for which goals each format is most appropriate and effective.



A successful kick-off

In September 2021, the first SDG Places event was held in the vicinity of the Pyrenees in Spain. Participants and partners from various countries and backgrounds came together in the remote, but cozy SDG Place “The Home.” They discussed the future of convening and the concept of the SDG Places initiative, while experiencing first-hand the transformative effect of a carefully planned event with excellent facilitation in an inspiring place.

About SDG Places

We started the journey of the SDG Places initiatives with the following partners: the BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, and the Porticus Foundation. The iac Berlin served as the initiative’s incubator.

www.sdgplaces.net

How can we use the decentralized knowledge of a group to solve a specific challenge?



A PEER-LEARNING WORKSHOP HARNESSSES THE 'WISDOM OF MANY'

For centuries, the proverbial 'wisdom of many' has been honored as a valuable way to enable better decision-making. We believe that this adage also holds true in our present times and that carefully curated groups can provide paths to solutions for even highly specific challenges. In 2019, iac Berlin co-organized a peer-learning workshop with the Krzyżowa Foundation to reform their internal structures, a process that was successfully finalized in 2021.

Thirty years after its establishment, the Krzyżowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding had defined its offerings and had achieved a great deal. However, it faced many challenges in adapting to a rapidly changing world. The foundation's internal structures were too complicated, communication and coordination were cumbersome, and staff sometimes felt neglected.

"Too much energy was lost in internal processes. We devoted too little attention to the question: What do we want to achieve in society with our work? At the same time, we were always united by the conviction that our work for dialogue, the development of a democratic culture, and the coalescing of Europe is more important than ever."

OLE JANTSCHKEK

Ole Jantschek has been the deputy chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Krzyżowa Foundation since 2017 and also served as the chairman of the German-based Kreisau-Initiative e.V. from 2011-2020. Together with iac Berlin, he organized a peer-learning workshop in 2019 with a curated group of experts in order to tap into the decentralized 'wisdom of many' for his foundation's change process.

Wanted: Peer consultation

In order to gain an outside perspective on its change process, the foundation sought an organization that was familiar with the world of NGOs and foundations, fit with the Krzyżowa Foundation's guiding principles, and could draw on an appropriate network of external experts.

"It was important for us to build on an atmosphere of trust and understanding. In this context, iac Berlin seemed to be an ideal companion."

OLE JANTSCHKEK

Through existing personal contacts with the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the Bosch Alumni Network, and iac Berlin, a peer-learning workshop was co-organized in 2019. The iac Berlin took over the moderation and facilitation, and members of the Bosch Alumni Network participated as experts.

Case Clinics: Method and process

By 2019, the Bosch Alumni Network had already brought together more than 5,000 former and current grantees, fellows, and employees of the Robert Bosch Stiftung and its partners, making it an ideal cross-sector pool of expertise. iac Berlin assembled a group of 10 members of the Bosch Alumni Network that included executive directors of NGOs as well

as members with experience with volunteer advisory boards and organizational development.

After a casual dinner to lay a foundation of trust, the central challenge was presented in the form of a Case Clinic. This included time to facilitate a deep understanding of the case, followed by collaborative brainstorming of ideas and possible solutions. In their role as "Case Givers," representatives from the Krzyżowa Foundation selected ideas from this pool of suggestions to further elaborate potential solution paths with the group. At the end of these iterations, they were able to develop an implementation strategy.

Through the Case Clinic and input from the convened experts and participants, the group was able to address key concerns and feed the outcomes back into the foundation.

"In this group, we were able to identify our own blind spots. We had previously looked primarily at the structures of the boards, but then realized in the workshop that a central concern must be to strengthen the board. That was an important insight."

OLE JANTSCHKEK

Case Clinics are a tried-and-tested method that can be applied to a wide variety of issues and holds the potential to generate diverse, creative ideas, provide focus to find the most promising approaches, and transform recommendations into concrete action.

Outcomes for the foundation

Specific results of the reform process:

- » Two committees were integrated into the Foundation's Board and the governance structure was streamlined.
- » The interaction and roles of the remaining bodies (Executive Board, Supervisory Board, Foundation Board) were reformulated for clarity.
- » The Executive Board was given a central role in the organizational chart – a change from the previous structure.
- » For the first time, employees are represented by their own representatives on the Foundation Board.
- » The shared understanding of the foundation's current mission has been strengthened and translated into contemporary language.

The open and trusting exchange was central and subsequently brought together, among others, Prof. Waldemar Czachur and Ole Jantschek as the Presidium of the Foundation Board, Dr. Annemarie Franke and Dr. Benedikt Schneiders

for the Supervisory Board, Joanna Szaflik-Hohmann from the Advisory Board of the International Youth Meeting Center (IYMC), the Executive Director Dr. Robert Żurek, and Anna Kudarewska, the Director of the IYMC.

A starting point for long-term change

The change process was carried out and completed over the course of two years. With its new strategic focus and more nuanced understanding of internal roles and interests, the foundation was able to better process input from staff and volunteers, more precisely articulate challenges, and understand individual perspectives and reactions in a new light.

"In this process, iac Berlin played a crucial role, endowed with a great deal of trust: trust in expertise, but also in inviting the right people to the peer-learning workshop. With iac Berlin, a credible and neutral authority was also there in a moderating role."

OLE JANTSCHKEK

The reform is a key outcome for the Krzyżowa Foundation, while also serving as the starting point for a long-term process to further improve the impact orientation of its work. The inputs gained from the workshop will continue to be an essential part of this process in the years to come.

Ole Jantschek

Deputy Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Krzyżowa Foundation



About the Kreisau Foundation for Mutual Understanding

The Kreisau Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe is a Polish non-profit, non-governmental organization. It was founded in 1989-90 by individuals from Poland, Germany and other countries. In the spirit of the Kreisau Circle, the foundation provides spaces to develop European relations on a basis of mutual respect, dialogue, and a willingness to reconcile.

www.krzyzowa.org.pl

How can non-profits and civil society organizations overcome the challenges to becoming sustainable?



WIRKUNGSLOTSEN

A SHARED JOURNEY TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability can be difficult for any organization. However, civil society and non-profit organizations face additional challenges, ranging from restrictive fiscal policies to not being allowed to offset carbon emissions. To support these organizations as they strive to become more sustainable, iac Berlin organized a sustainability series for non-profits, consisting of three workshops held in 2020-2021 to co-create strategies, tools, and shared knowledge. Moderator Dennis Hoenig-Ohnsorg walks us through the concept and benefits.

The workshop series was intended to familiarize participants from the non-profit sector with the topic of sustainability in their organization. What exactly did you want to achieve?

Dennis: Being truly sustainable as an organization is challenging in itself. But it becomes even more difficult when you can't invest your profits in sustainability because you're not legally allowed to do so; when you have few employees and more volunteers; or when you're working with grants that explicitly prohibit you from, e.g., offsetting carbon emissions. There are so many reasons that make it hard for non-profits to seriously address the issue. On top of that, there are very few helpful resources available, like toolkits, consulting, or literature.

Why is there such a vacuum specifically in the area of non-profits?

Dennis: In the non-profit sector, it is often the donors who decide how money is spent. Unfortunately, sustainability has not played a major role up until now. Strict fiscal policies were considered a good way to manage funds and everything should be kept as cheap as possible. Organizations, therefore, had a much harder time working on any kind of sustainability issues at all. They also do not have the reporting obligations – such as carbon emissions, supply chain transparency – that large companies do. Until recently, the only act of responsibility they were supposed to fulfill, was to meet the requirements to keep their non-profit status. But more and more donors are increasing the leeway given to organizations in how they use their funds. Slowly, non-profit organizations are allowed to consider not only price, but other criteria as well, such as regionality and sustainability. Now, even some government funds are allowing carbon offsetting for air travel. It's pretty hard to

understand why organizations in particular, which are trying to solve social problems, should face so many challenges to becoming sustainable themselves. At the same time, people's expectations are changing. Just working for something socially-oriented is no longer enough for many people. Often, it's the employees themselves who are driving this development as they demand improvements with regards to sustainability.

How far along the path to sustainability were the organizations that participated in the Nachhaltigkeitswerkstatt?

Dennis: I usually look at three core areas in the organizations that I work with: How the core business is organized; how the organization is managed; and in what areas do organizations assume social responsibility. Within the Nachhaltigkeitswerkstatt series, the represented organizations had already made substantial efforts, but in very different ways. One organization had already trained dozens of colleagues as internal sustainability ambassadors. Others had developed professional codes of conduct but had not yet done much in the area of environmentalism. These diverse experiences made for three exciting workshops with many different ideas and perspectives. The exchange between participants, in particular, proved to be very helpful for everybody.

The "sustainability compass" was a central concept of the workshop. What exactly is that?

Dennis: With the compass, we wanted to provide orientation for the people who are driving the issue internally. Many have a lot of enthusiasm for the topic, but don't know how to distinguish between what's urgent, important, effective, and possible. In the workshop, we tried to make room for both the quick-wins and the long-term strategic goals. The compass helped us to distinguish between the two.

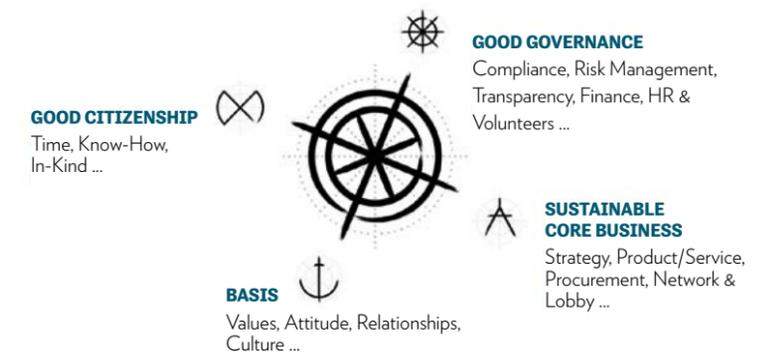
What were the most important learnings for the participants?

Dennis: A central revelation was that sustainability is more than environmental protection. Also, the participants came to realize that while there are many additional barriers for non-profits to strategically engage in this area, it also presents them with opportunities that large corporations are not as well positioned to take advantage of. But probably the most important thing was for them to understand that everyone is asking the same questions, that everyone is on the move, and that there is no competition. We all want to do the "right thing," and it's much easier to do that in exchange with each other than on our own.

Did you get feedback on how the learnings were implemented between the three workshops and after the series was completed?

Dennis: Yes, we did receive some promising updates. One team has developed and adopted an ambitious strategy for their organization, which operates on an international level. Others have implemented concrete projects. The medium-sized company that took part even created an initial position for the issue.

Sustainability Compass
for Non-Profit Organizations



In 2022, iac Berlin and Wirkungslosten will host the next series of Sustainability workshops. Once again, non-profit organizations will be invited to work together on the issue of sustainability, build on the lessons learned so far, deepen our shared understanding, and co-develop additional tools and strategies to achieve sustainability in our organizations.



About Dennis Hoenig-Ohnsorg

Dennis was responsible for the topic of sustainability at Zalando and its integration into their core business. He is co-founder and managing director of Wirkungslosten, an agency for social change and sustainability, and has been supporting social entrepreneurs, charities, NGOs, and companies in the development of sustainable models for impact and business for over ten years.

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

The following section provides an overview of the financial structure of the International Alumni Center gGmbH.

Resource allocation

In 2021, iac Berlin gGmbH used a total of 2,574 (2,276 in 2020) in financial resources to achieve its charitable goals. Personnel costs accounted for 1,012 (944 in 2020) and material costs for 1,562 (1,325 in 2020). (All amounts are stated in Euro in thousand.)

In addition, the approximately 7,500 network members and the Regional Coordinators invested volunteer hours for the organization through the implementation of projects, local events, and the development of the network.

Supporters

In 2021, the iac Berlin gGmbH received institutional funding from the Robert Bosch Stiftung. In addition, the Robert Bosch Stiftung provided the iac gGmbH with legal advice within the framework of a cooperation agreement. The BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt supports the iac Berlin in the capacity of a long-term cooperation.

The Global Diplomacy Lab was supported by the Federal Foreign Office, the BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt, the German-American Fulbright Commission, and the Robert Bosch Stiftung. SDG Places was supported by the BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt and the Robert Bosch Stiftung. ANSTOSS Demokratie was supported by ERSTE Stiftung, Europäisches Forum Alpbach Stiftung, Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Robert Bosch Stiftung, Stiftung Mercator, and Stiftung Mercator Schweiz.

Accounting

The annual financial statements were audited in 2021 by the tax consultancy AIOS Tax AG, taking into account German commercial accounting regulations and the supplementary provisions of our bylaws. The audit of the 2021 financial statements was carried out by Ernst & Young GmbH.

Further planning

For the financial year 2022, we are aiming for a turnover of 2,529K Euro.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Non-profit status

The International Alumni Center operates in the fields of international understanding; education and vocational training; science and research. In accordance with the separate determination of compliance with the statutory requirements pursuant to Sections 51, 59, 60 and 61 German Fiscal Code (according to section 60a (1) German Fiscal Code) the International Alumni Center gGmbH is entitled to issue donation confirmations.

Sustainability and compliance

The iac Berlin is guided by the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, by which the global community has committed to 17 global goals for a better future. All of our employees are also committed to upholding legal and ethical requirements in the form of a code of conduct. Compliance with these rules is supported by a dedicated team and external ombudsman.

The employees of the iac Berlin are developing a sustainability compass that takes economic, ecological, and social measures into account. As a contribution to reduce our carbon footprint, the iac Berlin's staff aims to minimize flights, use primarily public transportation, and organize events that adhere to ecological sustainability criteria.

Staff salaries are set in accordance with public sector salary scales. As an employer, the iac Berlin attaches great value to the compatibility of family and career through, among other things, flexible working hours. We support our employees' volunteer commitments as well as "shadowing" in other companies. In 2021, our team members took part in numerous professional development activities, including coaching as well as internal and external trainings.

Team

The iac Berlin gGmbH employs 14 full-time employees, 8 student assistants and 1 part-time employee.

Governance

The shareholders' meeting is the central supervisory body of the International Alumni Center gGmbH. The permanent representatives of the sole shareholder are Susan Pfeiffer (Senior Vice President ZSE) and Markus Lux (Senior Vice President Global Issues).

Name	International Alumni Center
Registered office	Stuttgart, Germany
Foundation	2017
Legal form	Non-profit limited company
Register entry	Amtsgericht Stuttgart, HRB 759544
Contact	International Alumni Center gGmbH Linienstr. 65a, 10119 Berlin
Telephone	+49 (0)30 288 85 80 00
E-Mail	info@iac-berlin.org
Statute	Charter from October 31, 2019

FEEDBACK FROM THE NETWORK

'Supportive environment' is the best definition of the iac Berlin and the Bosch Alumni Network.

Thank you for the open exchange and the presentation. The suggestions, ideas, and concepts provide a valuable basis for the upcoming discussions at our headquarters.

Constructive, competent, and warm. That is how the team at iac Berlin brings networking to life.

I could apply everything I learnt in the 'Podcasting for Beginners' course last year.

There was great input and a stimulating exchange. At the follow-up session, we were already able to tie in the topics and questions in the best possible way. Chapeau.

It was super motivating that the 'Deutschland' cluster started with this highly competent and knowledgeable speaker as well as this topic. With all this data, facts and figures, I now feel equipped to enter objective discussions again.

What a great session in the 'Social Innovation Lab'. I've only just joined the community, but it's great to see what's happening.

Since it was my first time at a Bosch Alumni Network event, I was even more excited about the projects and people.

I am still buzzing from the session yesterday.

The weekend was great. I came home very happy and full of energy.



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