peaceXchange

ANNUAL REPORT 2019-2020

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DIRECTOR'S LETTER

From the Desk of:
Martin Widzer, PhD
1201 Larimer St.
Denver, CO. 80204

April 14, 2020

Just over a year ago, two ambitious and highly tenacious young women walked into my office and pitched an idea – why don't we create a resource center for less privileged high school and college students focused on teaching and creating opportunities for careers in peacebuilding? Their passion, enthusiasm, and clarity of vision were indisputable. It soon became contagious as well.

Following our mission statement –Act Local, Impact Global—over the past year Esther Bellinsky, Olivia Fambrini, and I worked diligently to create PeaceXchange, an organization dedicated to providing young adults the resources needed to forge peace in their communities and around the world.

With the support of the Rotary Club, the University of Colorado, and community leaders along the Front Range we have been able to assemble a team of dedicated peacebuilders. To date, PeaceXchange has hired six employees and we look forward to expanding our numbers over the next year. We have also used financial contributions to PeaceXchange to produce a logo and other marketing materials as well as a website that we aim to have ready for public access by the end of the month.

I am proud to note that our successes have gone beyond the organization. During this spring semester, we embarked on the community outreach mission of the PeaceXchange as well. These pilot projects included the mentoring of a high school student and a Career Day event. The latter was attended by the Executive Director of Amnesty International and the Founding Director of Civil Society Transitions. The warm reception and unqualified success of these beta projects has instilled a great deal of confidence, enthusiasm, and desire to move forward among our staff and myself.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to our staff members, our benefactors, and those community members without whose support and dedication we could not have attained the level of success that we have had thus far. As we move onward, I look forward to another year of grand achievements and the expansion of the PeaceXchange network.

Martin Widzer
Founding Director, PeaceXchange

OUR TEAM

DR. MARTIN WIDZER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Lecturer; Political Science, International Security, Peace & Conflict Studies.

ESTHER BELLINSKY
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

BA International Studies; Peace, Human Rights & Security

OLIVIA FAMBRINI
LEAD RESEARCHER

BA International Studies; Political Science, Immigration Studies

SERA JONES
RESEARCH ASSISTANT

BA International Studies, Poltical Science; Philosophy

JOHN MAZZETTA
CONTENT EDITOR

BA International Studies; Spanish

KHALID HAMAD
RESEARCH ASSISTANT

BA International Studies, Public Health

INTRODUCTION

Societies at home and around the world are experiencing increasing levels of division and conflict across political, ideological, religious, and cultural lines. Now more than ever, it is imperative to equip the next generation with the tools of dialogue, negotiation, mediation, and communication. Despite this need, young adults most likely to benefit from peace building tools often have the least access to program resources, information, and mentors in the field. Many lower income students lack the means they need to contribute to an understanding of conflict although statistics show that these youth are more likely to experience conflict firsthand. Now more than ever, it is critical to equip these young adults with the information and resources that will allow them to contribute to the peaceful development of their communities and to moreover foster these skills to work towards the cause of peace around the world.

MISSION & VISION

PeaceXchange is committed to the education of youth in peaceful dialogue, negotiation, and conflict resolution. Providing online and in-person resources, PeaceXchange assists in the education of the next generation of peace builders. By educating youth on conflicts and methods for sustainable conflict resolution, PeaceXchange aims to increase the number of youth participating in their communities, leading dialogue sessions and working towards a common goal of a more peaceful world.

TARGET AUDIENCE

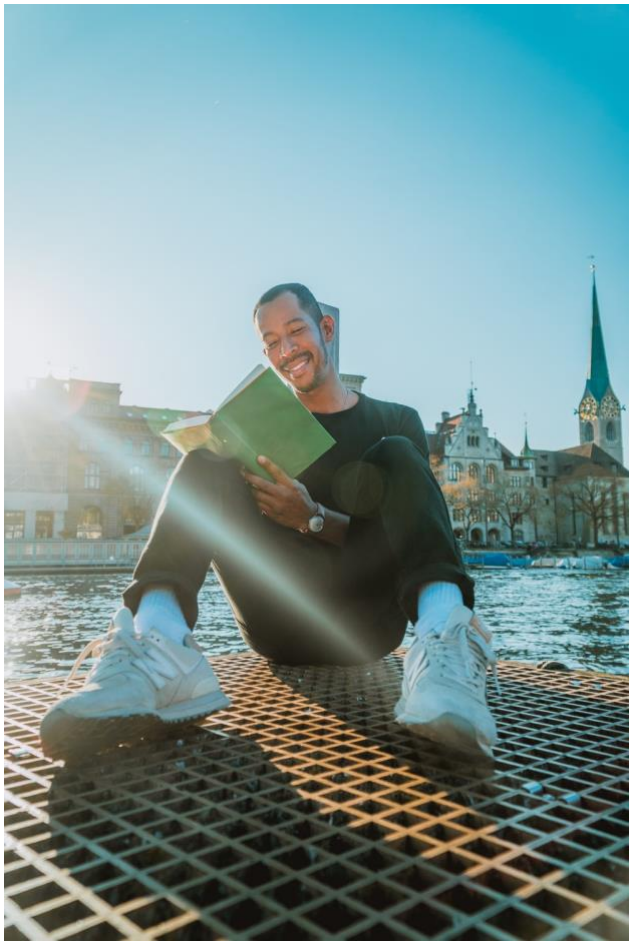
PeaceXchange is geared towards high school and college students who can utilize this resource in their academic research while simultaneously learning ways in which they can impact real change in their communities. While the information may prove more helpful to those studying in fields such as International Studies, Political Science and Communications, the overall goal of PeaceXchange is to increase the number of youth engaged in world affairs while creating connections between the field of conflict resolution and other fields of study including but not limited to engineering, global health, and the arts.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

In order to succeed in the PeaceXchange mission, the organization utilizes online resources to provide a platform for youth to learn about conflict, connect with peers and learn from professionals in the field of peaceful dialogue and conflict resolution. Specifically, PeaceXchange employs three paths to achieving their mission:

1. EDUCATE STUDENTS ON INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS

As an organization dedicated to providing youth with access to the peace-building field, **education** and **informational resources** are the primary way we provide value to students. On the PeaceXchange website, there is a wealth of information that assists students in understanding the history of conflicts, current conflict dynamics, and opportunities to implement peacebuilding strategies.



Through an innovative and technologically advanced conflict map students can interact with and learn about conflicts around the world. They also have the opportunity to learn about many major conflicts in the world in an easy-to-understand “bite-size” manner. Additionally, by virtue of the interactive nature and the information’s strategic placement on a world map, students will be better prepared to identify regions of conflict around the world.

2. CONNECT STUDENTS TO EXTRACURICCULAR OPPORTUNITIES

Many students in the International Studies and Political Science programs continue to work in other fields because of the disconnect between their future goals and the reality of their degree. PeaceXchange aims to bridge this divide by providing a comprehensive resource list for high school and college students. Specifically, these resources include links to academic opportunities, scholarships, fellowships, grant funds and experiential learning opportunities that will allow them to put the skills they have gained throughout their studies to use and contribute to positive change in the world.

3. ENGAGE STUDENTS WITH PROFESSIONALS IN THE FIELD

Often the disconnect between academia and the workforce has a lasting impact on students' eventual career choices. In turn, PeaceXchange works to connect students to practicing professionals in the field of international studies, international relations, political science, conflict resolution and communication through professional development events, workshops and conferences. These events will be varied in their content, attendees, and style but the ultimate objective for all is to connect students to the professional world of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. These events will provide an experiential learning focus to peacebuilding through a hands-on learning approach.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Statement of Funding Needs

PeaceXchange 2020-2021

Societies at home and around the world are experiencing increasing levels of division and conflict across political, ideological, religious, and cultural lines. Now more than ever, it is imperative to equip the next generation with the tools of dialogue, negotiation, mediation, and communication. It is in the name of such a resource that we created PeaceXchange. In the effort to connect with our community and work to equip the next generation with the tools they need to work towards a more peaceful world, we present the inaugural event of the founding of PeaceXchange, titled Peace Launch. Peace Launch will be a scholarly and creative event that will bring together students and professionals to learn about peacebuilding. In a day-long event held on the United Nations World Peace Day (September 21st, 2020) CU Denver students will have the opportunity to connect with Denver professionals working on a variety of social justice issues and contributing to a more peaceful local community here in Denver. The event will focus on the seventeen sustainable goals set by the United Nations. Each Sustainable Development Goal will be represented by a local organization whose work revolves around that particular topic. Students will have the opportunity to interact with the community outside of CU Denver, conducting dialogue with professionals in the field.

In addition, this event will be an opportunity to connect students to internship opportunities in their fields of study (namely international studies, political science, and communications) while highlighting the thriving non-profit and social justice sphere in Denver. The event will take place in the Tivoli Turnhalle on the University of Colorado Denver campus, and will be open to the public- although the target audience is primarily international studies, political science, and communications majors. In the months leading up to the event, PeaceXchange will be reaching out to local nonprofits, community organizations, local businesses, and other establishments to take part in this celebration of peace. By developing connections with these local teams, PeaceXchange aims to connect students on World Peace Day to working professionals that can serve as a resource to them throughout their academic career and beyond.

The possible benefits of the "Peace Launch" event are numerous; students can expect to gain a detailed understanding of the UN's seventeen sustainable development goals to transform our world. Attending students would also have the unique opportunity to interact with local organizations and nonprofits in conjunction with potential employers. Conversely, participating organizations with booths in the Tivoli Turnhalle would have the ability to display their mission statements in relation to each of the respective UN goals. Finally, entry and exit surveys will be conducted at the event in order to gain an understanding of students' perceptions and opinions. For example, students would be asked to consider the effectiveness of the event in regard to

their eventual career pursuits. The participating organizations would also be given surveys on the viability of the event, and the possibility of their support in the future thereby creating a relationship between PeaceXchange and the aforementioned organizations.

In order to effectively reach our goal of engaging 100+ students at the Peace Launch event, we intend to utilize all of the resources at our disposal. In particular, we intend to utilize a local Denver designer who will create flyers and other promotional materials for the event at a discounted rate of $500. Moreover, 50 branded tote bags will be provided as prizes at the event for $120. This merchandise is integral to the promotion of the event as well as the furtherment of the PeaceXchange student organization as a secondary goal. Additionally, we will be providing a nutritious lunch at the event to the participants to provide an incentive for students to join and participate in the event. According to the catering company Serendipity, catering expenses will cost approximately $1200-$1300. Those expenses will cover a delivered lunch with beverages and a small dessert for 100 people. Finally, we aim to host the event at a room in the Tivoli which will cost approximately $300 to rent for four hours.

Purpose	**Cost**
Tote Bag Printing	$300.00
Tote Bag Purchase	$120.00
Promotional Materials	$500.00
Delivered Lunch (beverages/cold lunch/cookie dessert) and tax delivery fee	$1,400.00-$1,500.00 ($10.00-$12.00 per person)
Tivoli Room Rental	$300.00
Total	**$2720.00**

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JOIN US!

ACT LOCAL. IMPACT GLOBAL.

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