



Bringing Integrative Somatic Trauma-Informed
Trainings to Individuals, Organizations
and Communities in Need

2020 Annual Report



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Note: This is our latest annual report (2020). We did a multi-year project in Nepal in 2018 through 2020. We have been unable to travel to India or Nepal since then due to COVID. We are currently working on new projects with our partner organizations for 2023 and 2024.

A Letter from our Executive Director

January 1, 2021

Dear friends and supporters,

In January 2020, just before the global COVID pandemic hit in March, Lotus Circle International completed the final module of first Somatic Experiencing® Trauma Resolution Training Program for Sexual Trafficking, Exploitation and Abuse certificate program in Kathmandu, Nepal. The three module pilot program, which started in 2018 and was attended by 26 women from 12 NGO's, was very successful and proved that working somatically with trafficking related trauma is effective and easily adapted to other cultures around the world. It also offered NGO staff and survivors of trafficking the opportunity to overcome the post-traumatic effects of being trafficked, and to rediscover and expand parts of themselves that may have been long forgotten or disempowered. Participants learned skills to bring balance to their nervous systems and how to help survivors do the same. They learned and discovered skillful ways to feel the strength and power inside themselves so they can continue their difficult work in the trafficking recovery sector. Many told us they finished the training feeling "more like themselves again."

As we celebrate this success, we know that this pilot training is just the beginning, scratching the surface in bringing trauma-informed somatic training to the thousands of NGO staff and survivors worldwide who want to recover from and end slavery. It is my hope, after the pandemic ends and it is safe to travel, that we can continue to bring this training program to other NGO's and countries around the world. By offering more trainings, we can grow a sustainable network of highly skilled somatic trauma-informed therapists and NGO staff that can more competently help survivors become thrivers. And for those that desire, to become activist leaders who can make valuable contributions to the movement to end slavery once and for all.

It is with sincere gratitude that I thank all the donors and partners who have made this work possible in the last few years especially. Thank you to the Art to Healing founder, Atira Tan and their volunteers who joined with us to present this training. Atira's years of experience in the Kathmandu area of Nepal, her coordination efforts, evaluations and report writing, and her sincere dedication and love for the Nepali people helped make this training possible. And a very special thank you to Chhori Director, Hira Dahal, for her tremendous organizing efforts, wisdom and care as she brought together the women from organizations who participated in the training. It is only with the support of partners like these, and with a committed community of donors and board members that our offerings of trainings around the world are organized and funded, and remain operationally sustainable.

If you are new to our organization or the anti-slavery movement, it is my humble wish that you join us in this movement. Any way you can help, be it with your time, your donation, or your voice, please do what you can. Our suffering world needs change and this is one way that, together, we can turn the tide.

Sincerely yours,

Beth Nielsen

Founder and Executive Director

Lotus Circle International

Our Mission

Lotus Circle International is dedicated to assisting disempowered, traumatized and underserved individuals and communities affected by violence, disasters, and adversity. Our highly trained therapists and assistants work around the globe providing Integrative Somatic Expressive Arts Trainings (ISEA), program development, and consultations, as well as healing retreats and treatment sessions. Our work is integrative, gentle, and empowering, fostering nervous system regulation and reparative Self-development.

We are committed to helping survivors recover from the trauma they suffered, to regain their strength and sense of safety, and to build inner resiliency so they can live lives free from fear and further exploitation.

With limited resources and proper support, many survivors cannot recover and are vulnerable to further harm. We are committed to bringing the best trauma-informed somatic care to those who need it. Only by learning and supporting self-regulation and recovery from the cycles of trauma, violence and harm, can people can live freely, empowered and resiliently. We believe every human has this capacity and that with the right support, those that are traumatized can access this capacity and heal.



"Personally SE has helped me for self healing. I also became aware of the effects of my childhood trauma. I also received the support to heal. I feel that I am empowered."

Nepali Training Participant

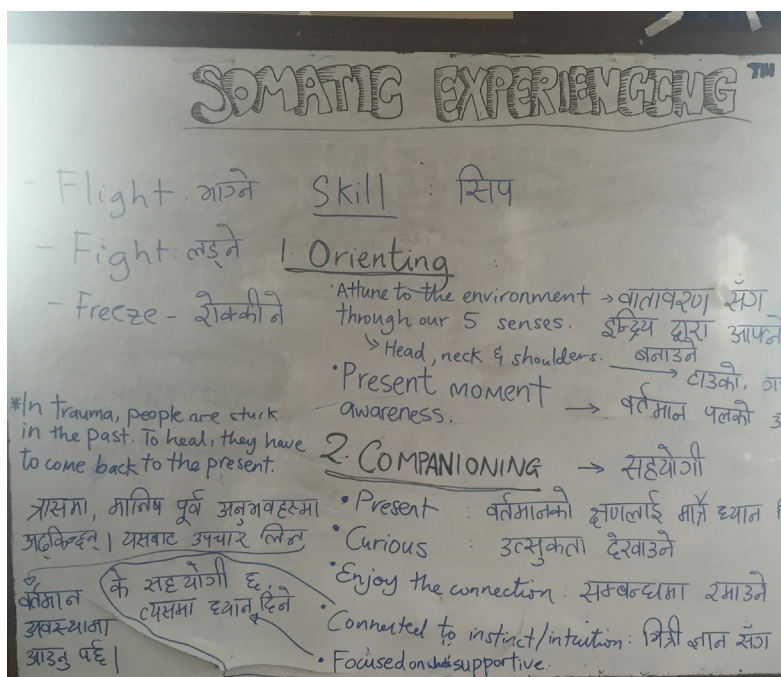


What We Do

Lotus Circle International offers underserved people around the world that have been abused or exploited, the opportunity to learn about and recover from the effects of trauma so they can live empowered and peaceful lives free from harm.

We focus our support on helping mostly trauma survivors, including mostly women and children, to heal from trauma and to live more fully by offering trainings and trauma treatment informed by Somatic Experiencing, Poly Vagal Theory, expressive arts therapies, developmental and attachment theories, mindfulness practices, and awareness-based movement practices such as mindful yoga and Dancemeditation.

Our method is a holistic, psycho-physiologically based approach which supports nervous system regulation, and is based largely on Somatic Experiencing. This awareness based approach focuses on accessing one's inner wisdom, resources, and strength, helps transform trauma, builds capacity and power, and leads to a more authentically lived life, thus minimizing the risk for further exploitation.



Activities: 2018 Through 2020



Training: In January 2020: Lotus Circle International and Art to Healing, completed the first ever Somatic Experiencing® Trauma Resolution Training Program for Sexual Trafficking, Exploitation and Abuse certificate program in Kathmandu, Nepal. The 3-module (18 month) pilot program was attended by 25 women counselors from 12 anti-sex trafficking NGO's from Kathmandu, Sindupalchok and Pokhara. Chhori Director, Hira Dahal, (www.chhori.org) was the our local coordinator.

Participants included organization leaders, psychosocial counselors, and social workers who work closely with survivors in shelter homes and drop-in centers. 60% of the participants were also survivors of trafficking and sexual exploitation. Many are also survivors of sexual abuse.

Key learnings and practices: Effects of trauma on the nervous system (Poly Vagal theory), awareness-based skills for trauma & regulation, self-empowerment & boundary work, expanding resources, fight, flight & freeze responses, healing sexual trauma, ethics of touch & consent, and building ego-strength with Somatic Experiencing®. Teaching methods included guided mindful-movement practices, lectures (with translation), group discussions and reviews to ensure understanding and cultural awareness, dyadic somatic skill practices, art/somatic therapy exercises, skits and role plays, and clinical supervision groups.

Individual Treatment Sessions: During the training, participants received Somatic Experiencing sessions from teaching assistants and the facilitator who are all expert trauma therapists. Additionally, participants engaged in somatic awareness-based "practice dyads" and group regulation exercises where they were able to receive the benefits and begin to heal and regulate their own nervous systems.

In-person and online Group Supervision and Individual Consultations: Participants received group supervisions at their NGO offices with a teaching assistant or facilitator. Cases were presented.

Impact in 2018 to 2020

- 26 Participants completed the *Somatic Experiencing® Trauma Resolution Training Program for Sexual Trafficking, Exploitation and Abuse* certificate program in Kathmandu, Nepal (3 modules/15 days).
- 60+ Individual Somatic Experiencing Treatment Sessions were given
- 220+ Supervision hours provided to participants, who attended in person and online, Group Supervisions and Individual Case Consultations
- 750+ Human Trafficking Survivors will benefit from these Somatic Experiencing sessions offered by Participants this year



Program Results Summary

The *Somatic Experiencing® Trauma Resolution Training Program for Sex Trafficking, Exploitation and Abuse* was able to achieve its intended aims with a high level of success. As seen across the program data, trainees reported a substantial increase in knowledge, skill and application from the beginning to end of each module. Anecdotal evidence, art-based data and responses gathered via short-answer questionnaires, indicated significant positive impact of the program on trainee capability and confidence in working with specific Somatic Experiencing® theory and practice with their client groups.

At the end of the program's Module 3, 89% of trainees reported a decrease in psychological distress on their Kessler Psychological Distress Scales (K10). Additionally, overall, there was a 58% decrease in the level of depression shown through the Nepal Primary Care Depression Screening (NPCDS/ PHQ-9) over four months of individual therapy with specified clients of the program's trainees

Through Our Participants' Eyes

Feedback we received from participants in the *Somatic Experiencing® Trauma Resolution Training Program for Sexual Trafficking, Exploitation and Abuse* certificate program in Kathmandu, Nepal included

"I was lost in myself and my world. Somatic Experiencing® has taught me about "who I am" and that is why I am being able to teach others. I am enjoying myself looking toward my future, understanding my beneficiaries and also understanding my self-value."

"I have learnt expanding resources, orienting, touch work, grounding. It has helped with my self-care. After the session I felt more powerful and strong. All the exercises will be helpful during my sessions with clients who have fight, flight and freeze responses"



"Personally, I released a personal traumatic event and I feel much more relaxed. It helps that I can now track my body when these events happen. I am able to identify resources and I will now be able to support my clients to do that too. For me - a way to calm down, patience, confidence, love to be different (unique), ego strength. For my beneficiaries - aware about their own body sensations, internal and external resources, confidence, ego strength, self care and expanding resources. For them to cope with stress, anxiety."

"It has helped me in my personal and professional life. I have so far been focusing on the emotional part and leaving the physical and biological part of trauma recovery out. I had been conducting orientation and grounding but am now much clearer on how it works. I will be using these skills moving forward."

"SE training makes me realize that I can be aware and change my own feelings and sensations. How to neutralize my emotions. I feel more oriented than before and I have the power to handle all kinds of traumatic events."

"I take this course as one of the gifts of my life. This course has played a precious role to develop my personal and professional capacity. This has been very skillful and helped me to regulate myself. I also apply these techniques in my personal life. I am also more strong, empower and increase my capacity. Similarly, I also have increased my self-confidence to deal with my beneficiaries who went through trauma. Through this training, I am also healing."

Since We Were Founded

Places We Worked

Bihar
Cambodia
South India
Thailand
Nepal



Partner Organizations

Art to Healing
Auroville Village Action Group
Chhori
Free the Slaves



Trained 500 NGO Staff

Plus:
80 Village Leaders (women)
20 Village Leaders (men)
20 Medical Staff



We have trained Social workers, Psychologists, lay counselors, and field workers

Helped 1500 Women and Children



Women and children have been helped through our trauma healing programs

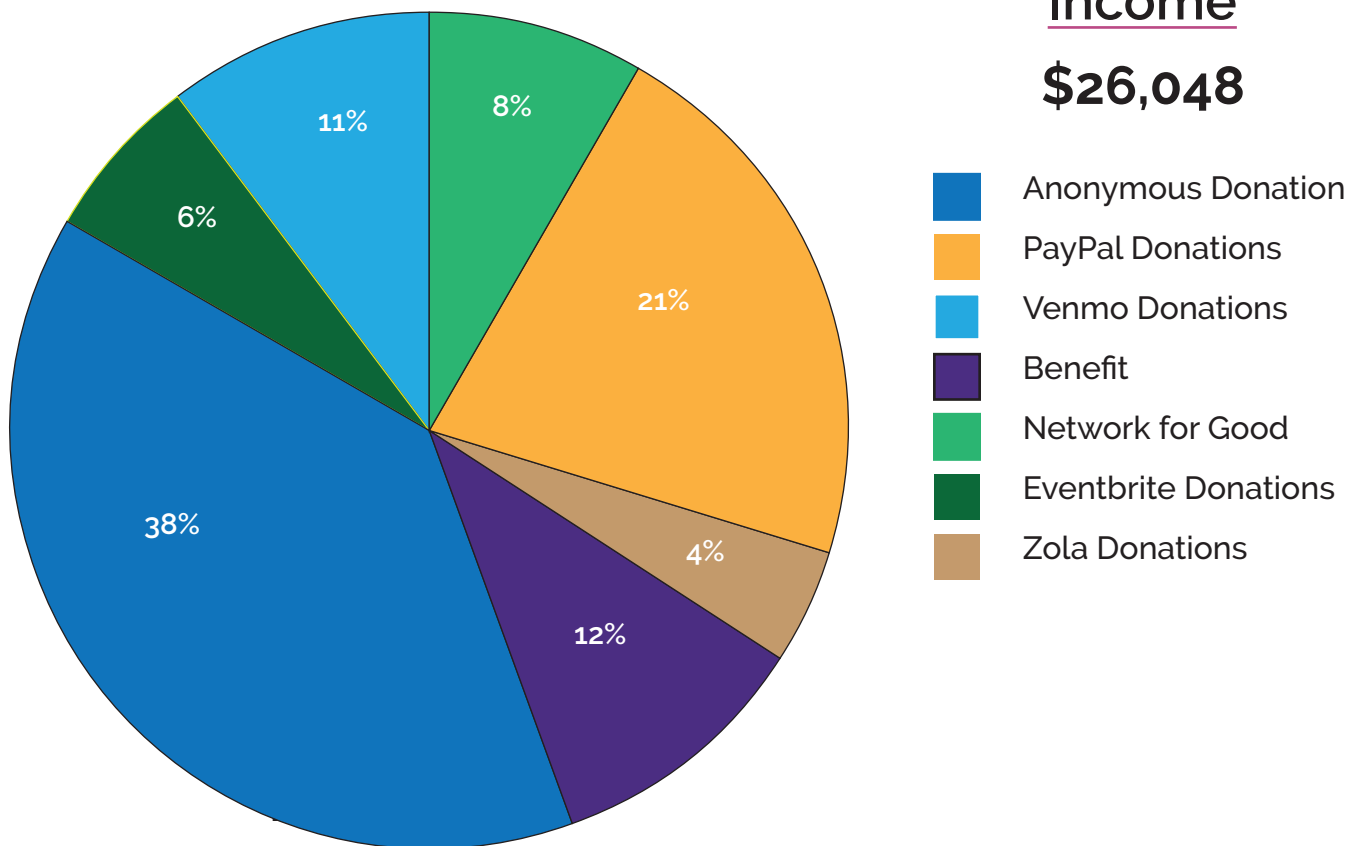
- ◇ Somatic Training for their staff
- ◇ Direct treatment sessions for PTSD
- ◇ Program development



Financials 2018 – 2020

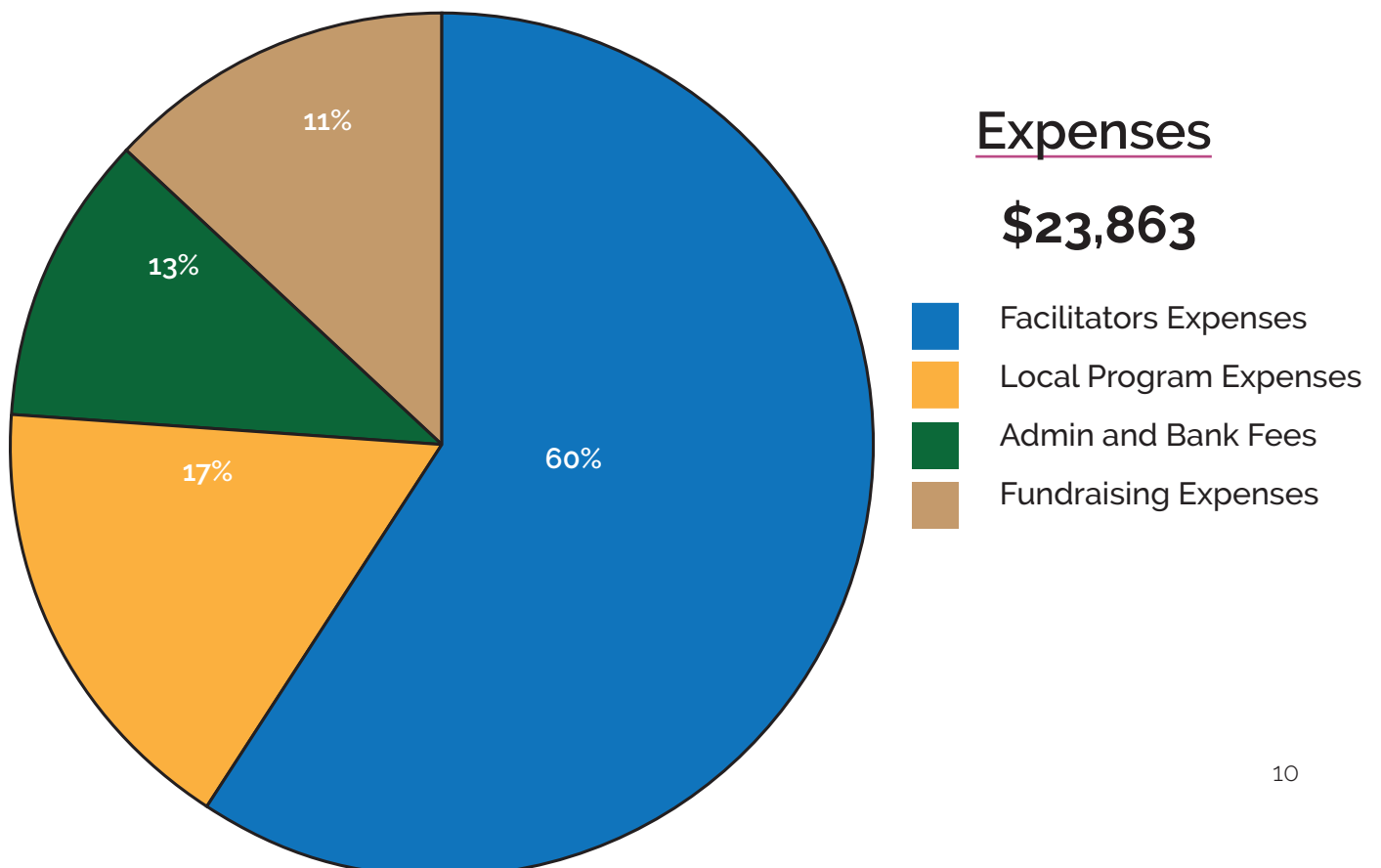
Income

\$26,048



Expenses

\$23,863



Our Board Members & Volunteers

Beth Nielsen: Founder and Executive Director of Lotus Circle International (LCI)

Beth founded LCI in 2009. She is also a California Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist (since 2000), Somatic Experiencing Practitioner, and Trauma Consultant. Beth maintains a private practice online and in Sunderland, MA (USA) and has been a Senior Assistant and Consultant with the Somatic Experiencing Trauma Institute (SETI) for over 22 years. She has helped train hundreds of therapists in Somatic Experiencing, a psycho-physiologically based method of healing trauma. Her passion for this work lead her into the field of Global Mental Health when in 2005 she co-organized a three-year post Tsunami trauma recovery project in Tamil Nadu with Trauma Vidya (www.TraumaVidya.org). Since that time she has participated in and led many trauma recovery training projects in India and Nepal.

Swetha Ayyagari Chopda:

Swetha is a engineer at a semiconductor firm in Silicon Valley. Born in India, and with her strong calling to give back to society, she aspires to volunteer with LCI to support our trainings in India.

Carla Garrett:

Carla has run her own company for over 20 years after teaching high school government and economics for 10 years, and practicing law for six. Through her nonprofit, The Center for Economic and Civic Education (CESQD), she writes and produces hands-on, classroom simulations and for teachers. Carla brings a wealth of business and practical experience to our board.

Louis Jumonville:

Louis is a California licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, as well as a six degree blackbelt Aikido Sensei Shihan. He is uniquely qualified with Transpersonal, Yogic and Aikido based therapy to heal the debilitating effects of physical, mental and emotional abuse, and trauma, and work with Spiritual Emergence. He has experience working in Child Protectives Services rescuing abused children, as well as in Adult Outpatient Mental Health serving severe and persistently mentally ill clients. He developed innovative Cross Cultural Healing Therapy Groups, which integrated tai chi, yogic breathing and healing Vedic mantras and meditation, with didactic process to reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and enhance immune system response.

Louis also specializes in Kundalini processes. An advanced student of Shri Anandi Ma, lineage holder of Kundalini Maha Yoga since 1989, he has studied intensively in Nikora, India practicing meditation and mantra sadhana. He is adept at many advanced mantra sadhanas, pujas and fire ceremonies to accelerate spiritual growth, activate healing, and reduce human suffering.

Board Members & Volunteers (continued)

Jacqueline Manalastas:

Jacqueline is a Flight Attendant for United airlines, as well Vice President of Lotus Circle International. Jacqueline has taught yoga for many years in both in Los Angeles and Singapore. In 2004, Jacque traveled to India with a Trauma Vidya team to photograph the team and their work aiding tsunami survivors with post traumatic stress.

Cynthia Merchant:

Cynthia is a Marriage and Family Therapist and Somatic Experiencing Practitioner, and has taught the Hoffman Process for twenty years. She has been a student and collaborator of Dr. Claudio Naranjo since 1989. A student and practitioner of Dr. Peter Levine, she engages in both the Seekers After Truth (SAT) and the Somatic Experiencing (SE) work in the US, South America, China and Europe. Cynthia invites people into a deeper more embodied authenticity and self-acceptance.

Christina Morrow:

Christina is a Bodywork therapist, artist and musician. She served on LCI's Nepal team in January 2020 for Module 3 of LCI's Somatic Experiencing® For Sexual Abuse, Exploitation, and Trafficking program team in Kathmandu. Christina has extensive training and experience in Somatic Experiencing, Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapy, and Massage therapy. She is a Certified Instructor in the Biodynamic Cranial work, which focuses on resolving traumatic history by working with the physiology of a client. Her specialized training is in Polyvagal theory, attachment, nervous system regulation, and Trauma resolution. Christina's private practice focuses on healing trauma and resolving symptoms of PTSD and the accompanying attachment issues.

Volunteer Team Members

Thank you also to volunteer team members Karin Ritchie, South Africa, and Annette Dilanchian, Los Angeles, CA, who assisted in Modules one and two.



Thanks to Our Generous Supporters

Paula Adduci	Vera Gassner	Tracy Nunnaley
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Allen Frishman	Mary Metz	Tammy Walsh
Tina Galordi	Radhika Miles	Mary Ware
Carla Garrett	Christina Morrow	Anthony Wheeler
Thomas Garrett	Alan Morton	Chau Yoder

Art Therapy Session



Contact Us

If you are interested in our vital work of ending the vicious cycle of child sex slavery, please feel free to contact us.

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Lotus Circle International is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization based in California. Contributions to Lotus Circle International are exempt from state income taxes in California and federal income taxes in the U.S.

