Mind & Life bridges science and contemplative wisdom to foster insight and inspire action toward flourishing.

The watercolor “blooms” featured in this Annual Report are from 2021 Summer Research Institute participant Lígia Oliveira, a Portuguese artist. The event helped to inspire her recent work on the relationship between nature and the inner emotional landscape. We are moved by the beauty, light, and growth represented in her work—and we hope you are too.
President's Letter

At Mind & Life, we believe that change in the outer world begins with inner transformation. Our programs equip people with the values, insights, and practices that nurture their personal well-being so that they can play an active role in building more compassionate communities and protecting the earth—and all its inhabitants. Throughout this report, you’ll see how Mind & Life’s grantmaking, convenings, and digital offerings reflect our commitment to nurturing individual, societal, and planetary flourishing.

In 2021, dramatic growth in our global audience pointed to a profound yearning in the human heart for the knowledge and practices that have been a hallmark of our work for nearly 35 years. Our expanded digital offerings, launched in response to the pandemic, brought insights into the nature of the human mind to an audience of over 1.5 million who were called to a particular theme, an online event, a speaker, a podcast episode, an insight—and they shared their appreciation with us:

“I cannot wait to continue to engage with Mind & Life because it connects so deeply with what I want to do and how I want to show up in this world.”

—2021 Summer Research Institute participant

We began the year with an online conversation between the Dalai Lama, Greta Thunberg, and leading scientists on climate feedback loops, and closed 2021 with another timely discussion with the Dalai Lama on fostering resilience and compassion in times of crisis.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors and collaboration of our partners, in 2021 we shared a record-number of Mind & Life offerings: creating 11 online events, producing 19 podcast episodes, releasing a documentary film, launching an online course, and publishing a book. And we continued
on our journey to practice anti-racism through staff and board leadership trainings, and we brought our equity, diversity, and inclusion values into the field through our grantmaking, our speakers, and a new mentoring program. This Annual Report shares just the highlights of an incredible year. We’re grateful to the Report’s featured artist Lígia Oliveira and the way her work helps us compassionately come into the present moment.

This is a challenging time. It’s also a highly generative time when how we use our minds—and the actions we take—matter more than ever. With evidence pointing to the tremendous ripple effect we can have on those around us, my hope is that you will continue to glean valuable insights through Mind & Life’s offerings and engage others in your sphere of influence, as together, we work to create a more just, peaceful, and sustainable world.

Susan Bauer-Wu
President
By the Numbers

1.5+ million
REACHED

113,000+
ONLINE
VIEWS

1,247,000+
DALAI LAMA
EVENT VIEWS

155,700+
PODCAST
DOWNLOADS

12,000+
FILM
VIEWS

23
GRANTS AWARDED
Totaling $822,668

24
NEW MIND & LIFE
FELLOWS

80%
INCREASE IN
WEBSITE VIEWS

300%
EMAIL LIST
GROWTH

~300,000
SOCIAL MEDIA
REACH
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Since 2017, we have been looking deeply at how to advance the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within our organizational structure, processes, and programs. Below are examples of how we took our EDI efforts to the next level in 2021.

**LEADERSHIP**
Eleven members of the staff leadership, Board of Directors, and Steering Council completed the yearlong Mindful of Race leadership training with Ruth King.

**INTERNAL WORK**
In response to the pandemic-related rise in anti-Asian violence, in March we published a statement and our staff finished a Bystander Intervention Training to stop anti-Asian and xenophobic harassment. Each staff member had an EDI “SMART” goal for the year, and our staff EDI Committee met monthly to reflect upon and assess our work.

**MENTORING**
We shared our ongoing EDI work in a message from the President, including announcing the development of the Global Majority Leadership and Mentoring Program to support and grow the pool of Global Majority young investigators in contemplative research, launching in 2022. (Global Majority include those who identify as Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and/or have been racialized as ‘ethnic minorities’.)

**PROGRAMS**
In our programs, we highlighted diverse voices: Indigenous scholar Kyle Whyte spoke at our 2021 Summer Research Institute on “moving at the speed of kinship” for climate repair; mindfulness teacher and law scholar Rhonda Magee encouraged our Inspiring Minds audience to use their power rightly to combat injustice; and social psychologist Buju Dasgupta shared on the podcast how to counteract implicit gender bias.

**GRANTS**
Across the year, we awarded 23 grants. Grantees were 50% women, 57% BIPOC, and 22% international. Projects include Shin-Young Kim’s work on building compassion and interconnectedness during a pandemic, a Think Tank led by Anita Chari on embodying Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in higher education, and Erika Diaz-Almeyda’s study of Mayan Milpa biocultural heritage.
Personal Well-Being
Mind & Life seeks to better understand the role of contemplative practices in helping people develop **healthy mental habits—and resilience.**

As we entered the second year of a global pandemic with rising rates of anxiety and uncertainty about the future, Mind & Life’s online programs and digital offerings examined the impact of negative emotions such as fear, anger, and anxiety in our lives, and explored how to nurture positive emotions, including love, compassion, gratitude, and forgiveness.

Across our work, we supported conversations and research on topics like how our brains construct our realities, different understandings of self, the training of attention and awareness, strengthening our inner capacity to face challenges, and ways to nurture hope in difficult times. In addition to our grants, podcast episodes, and Inspiring Minds episodes, we offered our first online course *Illuminating the Mind* in partnership with Wisdom Publications in November 2021.

In December 2021, we hosted a livestream conversation with the Dalai Lama on “Embracing Hope, Courage, and Compassion in Times of Crisis” to inspire our global audience with messages of hope and actionable steps to foster joy and courage in these challenging times. The Dalai Lama was joined by emotions researcher Michelle (Lani) Shiota, stress scientist Elissa Epel, and moderator Buddhist scholar John Dunne, with translation by Mind & Life Board Chair Thupten Jinpa.

“The trouble maker is our own mind. When the mind thinks in the right way, even in difficult circumstances, you can keep peace of mind.”

—The Dalai Lama at our “Embracing Hope” conversation
"I am already a seasoned and long-term mindfulness practitioner and meditator but find my attention hijacked often by social media and using the computer and smartphone. I have recommitted to practicing awareness of the impulse to go on the smartphone/computer and while on it, click the next button, and the next...and lose the very reason I logged on to work...It’s challenging to keep focused on the task at hand. Your presentation helped not to personalize this or see it as a weakness."

—Participant at our April Inspiring Minds episode on “The Role of Attention and Awareness in an Era of Misinformation and Digital Seduction”
PODCAST

ZENJU EARTHLYN MANUEL
Identity as Path
(November 2021)

MINGYUR RINPOCHE
Awareness, Compassion, and Wisdom
(April 2021)

ERIC GARLAND
Mindfulness Approaches to Addiction and Recovery
(February 2021)

LISA FELDMAN BARRETT
Your Emotions Aren’t What You Think
(January 2021)

GRANTS

SHUFANG SUN
Developing and testing an internet-based mindfulness intervention for women diagnosed with gestational diabetes mellitus

MATTHEW SACCHET
Biological and psychological mechanisms of mindfulness meditation-based interventions for depression

DENNIS MUÑOZ VERGARA
The acute impact of yoga-based stretching on inflammation and its resolution: A pilot study

POLINA BELOBORODOVA
Effects and mechanisms of smartphone-based mindfulness training on emotional well-being in at-risk college students
ILLUMINATING THE MIND

Using archival footage from Mind & Life’s Dialogues with the Dalai Lama, we launched an online course in partnership with Wisdom Publications in November 2021. Across 8 lessons, 528 participants journeyed through a curated series of video presentations on the topics of attention, perception, and self. Presenters include B. Alan Wallace, Anne Treisman, Catherine Kerr, Matthieu Ricard, and more. Alongside the lessons, meditations are offered from Jack Kornfield, Willa Blythe Baker, and Tsoknyi Rinpoche.

“Mind & Life is for me a synonym of hope... I work as a contemplative researcher in Argentina and it’s tempting to give up. Yet again, I have found the strength to make it work, thanks to the conversations and sharing that occurred within this unbelievable community.”

—2021 Summer Research Institute Participant
Compassionate Communities
Mind & Life explores how the inner workings of the mind influence the formation of the views, behaviors, and social systems that separate us, and the role of contemplative practice in creating more compassionate communities.

Our efforts include taking steps to diversify the field of contemplative science through initiatives like the Global Majority Leadership and Mentorship Program, created by a working group of contemplative researchers guided by program development lead Kamilah Majied, a contemplative inclusivity and equity consultant.

In May 2021, we hosted our first online summit on The Science & Wisdom of Emotions in partnership with The Awake Network to honor the 20th anniversary of our "Destructive Emotions" Dialogue with the Dalai Lama. Reflecting growing interest in the cultivation of emotional well-being, over 100,000 people in 140 countries joined us for this free online event. Drawing from extensive scientific research, contemplative wisdom, and indigenous traditions, the four-day event made clear that the benefits of emotional awareness extend well beyond the individual, with the ability to address collective challenges from racial injustice to creating more equitable learning environments.

Our preoccupation with ourselves is the root of much unhappiness, emphasized the Dalai Lama: "The more we are able to think about others, the more we lay the foundations for our own personal happiness."

In celebration of the Dalai Lama’s birthday on July 6, we released Evolution of the Heart, a 37-minute documentary with a downloadable discussion guide. The film, chronicling conversations between the Dalai Lama, evolutionary biologist David Sloan Wilson, and social scientist Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, has been viewed nearly 20,000 times. It was recently used with the discussion guide by a large, multinational corporation to help foster a more compassionate organizational culture.

“...would like to share my experience and support after watching “Evolution of The Heart.” As the owner of two companies, as a British black woman living in Germany, with an African mother who was affected by war in Kenya, and as a mind and body healer who adores the philosophy of Buddhism, this was a life-changing and truly inspiring 37 minutes! Thank you from the bottom of my heart.”

—Film viewer
PODCAST

RHONDA MAGEE
Mindfulness, Interconnection, and Justice
(September 2021)

JON KABAT-ZINN
The Heart of Mindfulness
(September 2021)

SONA DIMIDJIAN
Bringing Relationship into Research
(March 2021)

GRANTS

LINDSAY ROMANO
Mindfulness and the reduction of racial disparities and disproportionality in school discipline

SAMUEL B. HANSER VISIONARY GRANT
SAM ROBERTS, PETER MALINOWSKI
Gratitude interventions, well-being and social networks: A 16-month longitudinal study

ROMUALD ADILI AMANI
Community Suicide Prevention Project for Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)
Human-Earth Connection
Mind & Life investigates how the union of contemplative wisdom and science can lead to greater awareness of the interconnectedness of all life—and action—to support and sustain both individuals and the earth’s living systems.

Areas of study include how contemplative practice influences how people experience and respond to climate change, and the role of earth-honoring practices in reawakening our collective responsibility as stewards of our planetary future.

In January, we hosted The Dalai Lama with Greta Thunberg and Leading Scientists: A Conversation on the Crisis of Climate Feedback Loops as the official launch of the film series “Climate Emergency: Feedback Loops”, narrated by Richard Gere. Joining the conversation were climate scientists Susan Natali and William Moomaw, moderator Diana Chapman Walsh, and translator Mind & Life Board Chair Thupten Jinpa.

In June, we held our 18th annual Summer Research Institute (SRI) on The Mind, the Human-Earth Connection, and the Climate Crisis, with gratitude to the Hershey Family Foundation for its longstanding support of this flagship program. The online format allowed us to welcome over 260 participants from 30 countries and 6 continents. To make the event accessible, we removed application fees and made scholarships widely available.

We also piloted the first Online Speaker Series to provide an expanded audience with an alternative way of accessing SRI content—designed for those who could not participate in the live, immersive experience of SRI. Over 685 participants representing 51 countries registered for the series. After the event, we developed a 10-hour, self-paced, online course featuring SRI recordings, reflection questions, and a live session with Vandana Shiva, which launched in January 2022.

“I am so inspired having connected deeply with extraordinary people from around the globe and from many diverse fields and practices. I truly felt a part of a very special community who were all equally committed to helping this beautiful planet we all share and its creatures large and small. Thank you so much for the scholarship which allowed me to fully immerse myself in the week despite being in Australia.”

—2021 Summer Research Institute participant
Beginning in 2021 and continuing into 2022, 17 members of the Mind & Life staff, Board, and Steering Council participated in the Council on the Uncertain Human Future, a small-group guided discussion time to explore the climate crisis: its root causes, future implications, and how to live in this present moment. Read more here.

2021 MIND & LIFE SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS
Elissa Epel and Bobbi Patterson

“Bobbi and Elissa are both bright lights who have generously served Mind & Life with their brilliance, heart, and time over the years. In 2021 they truly went above and beyond: together they were co-chairs for the program planning committee for the 2021 Summer Research Institute. They have profoundly impacted our organization and those who have attended our programs. From all of us who have been fortunate to know and work with them, we are eternally grateful.” Read more here.
—Susan Bauer-Wu, Mind & Life President

“SRI was so so valuable and returning to my volunteer work in food insecurity I simply gushed forward new ideas and renewed passion… I don’t feel so alone as I can rest assured there are so many SRI friends and family dotted about the planet doing the work with their hearts and minds focused on making a positive and gentle impact.”
—2021 Summer Research Institute participant
PODCAST

PETER WAYNE  
Ecology of Mind  
(May 2021)

DEKILA CHUNGALPA  
Human-Earth Connection  
(May 2021)

VANDANA SHIVA  
Earth Democracy  
(August 2021)

GRANTS

JYOTI MISHRA  
Merging mindfulness and climate change education

PAUL WAPNER  
Contemplative Environmental Mentoring Communities

YURIA CELIDWEN  
Master Plants and Mindful Medicine: Towards Reciprocal and Recontextualization of Indigenous Practices and Western Psychedelic Research
We express our deepest appreciation to the growing number of Mind & Life donors for their generosity, engagement, and belief in our mission.

“One of the things that makes Mind & Life unique is its intention to foster connection and creativity in addressing the challenges of today. It’s powerful and refreshing.”

—Jessie and Richard Benjamin, donors
Financial Summary

REVENUES
$4,063,751 *

EXPENSES
$3,222,964

* Excludes $1 million in restricted endowment funds received in 2021.
2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Owsley Brown III  
Lisette Cooper  
Martin Davidson  
Sona Dimidjian  
Raymond (Rip) Gellein  
Barry Hershey  
Carolyn Jacobs  
Connie Kemmerer  
Jack Kornfield  
Thupten Jinpa Langri  
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2021 STEERING COUNCIL
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Elissa Epel  
Amishi Jha  
Grant Jones  
Bobbi Patterson  
Robert Roeser  
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Our gratitude to featured artist Lígia Oliveira