

**SEARCH FOR COMMON GROUND  
ISAW 2006**

**Your application needs to include:**

**1) Basic Data:**

a) Name of Organization (can be a division of a larger organization):

Search For Common Ground

b) Date of founding:

1982

c) Number of employees (NB: minimum of 60):

300

d) Nature and scope of business:

A international Non-profit dedicated to transforming the way people, organizations , and governments deal with conflict: away from adversarial approaches toward cooperative solutions.

e) Location(s):

Washington DC, Brussels, Angola, Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Indonesia, Jerusalem, Liberia, Macedonia, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Ukraine. Our Iran program is based from Washington DC for the time being.

f) Website address (if applicable)

<http://www.sfcg.org/>

**2. Contact Information**

a) Contact Person's Name:

Philip Hellmich

b) Position:

Co-Director of Individual Giving

c) Phone:

(202) 777-2202

d) Email:

[phellmich@sfcg.org](mailto:phellmich@sfcg.org)

e) Cell phone:

(703) 887-5636

f) Address:

1601 Connecticut Ave NW  
Suite 200  
Washington, DC 20009

Please provide full contact information for a back-up contact person in case we cannot make contact with you for any reason.

g) Backup Contact Person's Name:

Susan Koscis

h) Position:

Director of Communications

i) Phone:

(202) 777-2215

j) Email:

skoscis@sfcg.org

k) Cell phone:

(703) 399-0994

l) Address:

1601 Connecticut Ave NW

Suite 200

Washington, DC 20009

Note: It is essential that all this contact information be provided so that we can follow up with you.

### **3. A Brief Description of Your Organization:**

a) What are the vision and mission; philosophy and core values of your organization?

Search for Common Ground works to transform the way the world deals with conflict, away from adversarial approaches and towards cooperative solutions. We are now the largest non-governmental organization in the world working in conflict transformation, with 300 staff worldwide, and programs in 17 countries.

From 24 years of practical experience, we have developed what we call "The Common Ground Approach," which reflects our core values and operating practices.

With this in mind, we see conflict as a continuum from inner transformation to global transformation. We are now starting to make our methodologies available to people in the United States, helping them see the relationship between conflict in their own lives and conflict on the national and international level. By seeing the relationship between inner and outer, and by learning tangible tools, the same tools we use on societal conflicts, people are beginning to feel empowered to make a difference in shifting the global consciousness around conflict.

### **The Common Ground Approach**

The Common Ground Approach is a means of navigating through conflict and identifying possibilities that are not apparent from an adversarial mindset. It is a set of principles and practices that, when utilized, causes a fundamental shift in people's relationship with conflict – away from adversarial approaches toward cooperative solutions.

## Core Principles

- Conflict is neither negative nor positive.
- Conflict can be transformed.
- Common Ground can be found.
- Peace is a process.
- Humankind is interdependent.

## Our Operating Practices (for societal conflicts)

- Make long-term commitments.
- Use an integrated multi-pronged approach.
- Be social entrepreneurs.
- Become immersed in local cultures.
- Practice cooperative action.

## Key Practices (to be applied by anyone)

- Distinguish between positions and interests.
- Respect each other; face problems together.
- Listen to understand.

- b) How your organization defines "Spirit" or "Spirituality". How do you talk about the "vertical" and "horizontal" dimensions of spirituality?

The closest definition of spirituality that applies to Search for Common Ground is from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. "Spirituality I take to be concerned with those qualities of the human spirit – such as love and compassion, patience, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, a sense of responsibility, a sense of harmony – which brings happiness to both self and others."<sup>1</sup>

In our programs and everyday operations, we use universal language that is applicable for any of the countries where we work, primarily "common humanity and interdependence." Through the Common Ground Approach (our horizontal application), we awaken the soul qualities referred to by the HH the Dalai Lama as a means of transforming consciousness around conflict. With this in mind, our "horizontal" programs create the conditions for people to have a more direct or vertical relationship with "Spirit," "God" or "own divinity" – whatever language works for them.

The Common Ground Approach comes from the hearts and minds of people who are courageously choosing to focus on their commonalities with their enemies and to bring forth compassion, tolerance and understanding in addressing shared problems.

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<sup>1</sup> His Holiness the Dalai Lama (1999), Ethics for the New Millennium; page 22

While consistent with the spiritual underpinnings of many religions, the Common Ground Approach is not affiliated with any specific religion. It is an evolving road map of core principles, operating practices and tangible tools for people to capture, interpret and apply.

- c) How do you handle concerns about diversity of religions and what boundaries do you set around employees trying to convert each other, or in any way making others uncomfortable?

Our programs and overall operations model the cooperative behavior we seek to inspire in people and entire societies. A cornerstone of our approach is to have people from the different ethnic, religious and political groups in any given conflict working side by side with one another. This means we have staff from all different religious traditions: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, etc. Our staff members are trained in the philosophy and methodologies of the Common Ground Approach. A natural result of our approach is tolerance and mutual respect.

The organization supports and encourages staff to explore their own spiritual paths:

- Many staff members have meditation, yoga and prayer practices, along with deep affiliations with their own specific spiritual traditions and communities.
- Staff members use organizational “education funds” to attend spiritual retreats and programs.
- Ongoing series of Brownbag lunches focused on spiritual growth.

SFCG supports the diversity of individual staff practices but does not encourage or advocate for any one practice, philosophical approach, or religion.

#### **4. Core Application:**

***The response to this section should be the heart of the application.*** What policies, programs, or practices **explicitly promote or enable spirituality at work**? “At work” refers to your workforce. For the purpose of this award, the Committee is more interested in how your workforce is treated. We also want to hear about your customers and clients. But if your practices do not include employees they will not be sufficient. Explain the nature and scope of the organization’s activities; when these practices were implemented and by whom; relevant background; public visibility; etc. Finally do you believe these programs will sustain over time? If so why?

- a) What has been the effect of policies, programs, or practices on stakeholder community? Stakeholders include employees, owners, customers or clients, suppliers, communities in which business has a presence, etc. ***A separate attachment with verbatim testimonials is allowed.*** Please email this attachment separately and limit to 4 pages (in addition to the maximum of 12 pages on the Application)

Search for Common Ground has had a profound effect on millions of people around the world. To fully appreciate the impact of SFCG's work, it is important to understand some of the spiritual underpinnings of conflict. Attached is an article that explores these underpinnings and how SFCG applies spiritual principles in very difficult places around the world. (Please see: *Spirituality and Conflict*)

In addition to the examples highlighted in the article, SFCG has had the following impact:

- **Supporting and advancing peace processes**  
In the Middle East anecdotal evidence and continuous follow-up with participants indicate that our activities have helped forge key relationships between influential decision makers in the peace process. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) our information-dissemination activities are reported to be one of the critical sources of public awareness of the peace process, helping to reduce suspicion and rumours that can lead to violence.
- **Reducing violence**  
In Burundi and in Sierra Leone surveys indicate that our radio programming is a trusted and credible source of information about events in the country, including peacemaking efforts. Such information reduces preemptive violence resulting from fear and misinformation.
- **Shifting attitudes and building foundations for peace**  
In Sierra Leone our community outreach programme is strengthening many people's participation in the democratic process - a key to the maintenance of a fragile peace. External evaluations in Burundi found that the radio programmes produced by Studio Ijambo have changed the way people feel about and relate to other ethnic groups in their society. Similarly, evaluations of the interethnic kindergartens we founded in Macedonia have shown them to have significant positive influence on children's views of other ethnic groups, particularly during periods of increased tension.
- **Equipping communities to prevent and resolve conflicts**  
Informal tracking and feedback show that many of the vast numbers of people we have trained - 10,000 internally displaced persons in Angola, for instance - go on to implement their new skills, through either establishing new organisations or personally employing the techniques learned. In Macedonia our evaluations show that the Nashe Maalo television series provides children with valuable skills for preventing or resolving conflict with their peers in diverse ethnic groups. We are committed to sharing fully the results of our evaluation and research in ways that will strengthen the field of conflict resolution.

While we work with people and societies in the midst of conflict helping them to learn tools and methods to resolve conflict non-violently, we also take seriously the notion that we must "walk the talk". In other words we recognize that peace-building starts with each one of us. This effects and informs the ways in which we deal with differences of opinions and internally handle our own conflicts. We know that the only way we can be

fully effective in our work in Burundi, the Middle East, and elsewhere in the world is to live by those same principals that inform our work.

- b) What has been the effect of policies, programs, or practices on nominee's business success? Please tell how you feel these programs have helped you. For example: Has it contributed to growth? Has it improved employee retention? Please provide statistics whenever possible.

SFCG has grown steadily since its founding in 1982. SFCG is now in 17 countries with an annual budget of approximately \$18 million, and with 300 employees.

As mentioned above, SFCG is now the largest non-governmental organization in the world working on conflict transformation. Our practical approach to bringing forth the human potential for compassion, tolerance and understanding has been recognized by the United Nations and European and U.S. government agencies. In 2005, John Marks and Susan Collin Marks received The Temple Award for Creative Altruism from the Institute of Noetic Sciences.

(Attachment : 1) SFCG Awards, 2) Skoll Foundation)

- c) How the organization has been a model or inspiration for others companies in your industry or outside of it? For example, is your CEO often asked to speak at industry conferences and does he or she speak explicitly about spirituality?

SFCG is considered the leader in conflict transformation field, in the recent past SFCG staff have given presentations at the United Nations; US Department of State; the World Bank, the International Finance Corporation; conflict resolutions forums and conferences; and at retreats and churches. SFCG 's founders John Marks and Susan Collin Marks are frequently requested to speak and conduct trainings at the Esalen Institute, Findhorn Foundation and most recently at Miriam's Well. In some settings, staff members use the "technical" language of conflict transformation while referring to the common humanity. In other instances, staff members fully bring forth the spiritual dimensions of our work. For example, on May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2006, one staff member gave a presentation on *Spirituality and Conflict* to the Pachamama Alliance in San Francisco, California. This same presentation has been given in other locations and is being scheduled around the country.

(See attached article: *Spirituality and Conflict*. )

## **5. Stakeholder References**

A minimum of two references are recommended. Stakeholders may be owners, employees, suppliers, customers, strategic partners, community representatives, or environmental representatives, who are not leading your Spirit at Work initiative but can attest independently and genuinely to at least one of these:

- Vertical and horizontal dimensions of Spirituality demonstrated at the organization
- The explicitly spiritual project, policy or practice being acknowledged

- Any impact this person/group has observed resulting from the organization's Spirit at Work program, policies, practices, etc.

Please include name, contact information and the relationship to the applicant.  
(Attachment: Stakeholder Quotes)

#### **6. Sources of additional information on the applicant:**

Here you may mention documents which you attached to the email containing this application but which are not part of this 12 page application. You may also list websites that can be accessed by the committee if needed.

Spirituality and Conflict article, SFCG Awards, Skoll award, Invitation for meditation, sfcg.org

### **IV. Submitting an Application**

Applications shall include the information requested above (see Items #1- 6) and can be submitted via email to: [elisa@spiritatwork.org](mailto:elisa@spiritatwork.org)

The Committee members reside on multiple continents and cannot share paper documents. For this reason only electronic submissions will be accepted. Additional support material, such as copies of the Mission Statement, descriptions of specific programs, or articles about the spiritual practices of the organization must also be submitted electronically.

By submitting the application the organization agrees that if selected, it will work with the ISAW committee to prepare simple case materials that can be used by other organizations who may wish to emulate the applicant's policies, programs, or practices.

### **V. Receiving the Award**

Organizations receiving the Award must be willing to contribute to some of the activities that promote and raise awareness off the award, such as:

- Agreeing to attend the 2006 International Spirit at Work Awards conference to receive the award and to offer a workshop presentation on their programs and/or practices. The 2006 Conferences will be held at Garrison Institute, Garrison, NY, USA, October 27-29, 2006. <http://www.garrisoninstitute.org>. You must attend the conference and offer a workshop in order to receive the Award and to be considered an ISAW Honoree.
- Providing a 1 page overview of your best practices for our Program Book and a 10 page overview of best practices for the attendees of the award ceremony and for the websites of the sponsoring organizations
- Signing a release form that grants permission for your case study to be included in ISAW publications
- Willingness to be contacted by researchers, journalists, and like-minded organizations to share what you are doing

### **VI. Application and Award Schedule**

**Due Date for nominations is May 14, 2006** for the 2006 awards. Decisions will be communicated to all applicants by the end of July. At the present time, we do not have enough funding to allow us to pay travel for honorees. However, we will waive

the conference fee and pay the retreat expenses for one representative from each of the organizations honored. Award recipients will be profiled in co-organizers publications and on their websites and at their conferences. In addition to a few former award recipients, the Selection Committee of the ISAW Awards is currently composed of members from following non-profit organizations:

- **The Association for Spirit at Work:** "The professional association for people involved with spirituality in the workplace" [www.spiritatwork.org](http://www.spiritatwork.org).
- **The Spirit in Business Institute:** "Ethics, mindfulness and the bottom line." [www.spiritinbusiness.org](http://www.spiritinbusiness.org)
- **The World Business Academy:** "Rekindling the human spirit in business." [www.worldbusiness.org](http://www.worldbusiness.org)
- **The European Baha'i Business Forum:** "Enhancing the well-being and prosperity of humankind." [www.ebbf.org](http://www.ebbf.org)

## VII. Who was Willis Harman?

This award was inspired by the work of Willis Harman, PhD (1919-1997) who was a visionary thinker, futurist and social scientist who continuously articulated the possibility for humankind to transcend the limits of out-moded thinking. He was the author of several books including *Creative Work: The Constructive Role of Business in a Transforming Society* (with John Hormann), *An Incomplete Guide to the Future*, and *Global Mind Change*. He was co-editor of *The New Business of Business: Sharing Responsibility for a Positive Global Future* (with Maya Porter). He was also co-founder of the World Business Academy (1988), president of Institute of Noetic Sciences from 1973 until late 1996, a social scientist and futurist with SRI International in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and a professor at Stanford University prior to these other affiliations. This award honors organizations who are living examples of Willis Harman's vision that business will play a major role in transforming social consciousness.

### For further information contact:

Elisa Mallis

Chair, Selection Committee, 2006 International Spirit at Work Award

[elisa@spiritatwork.org](mailto:elisa@spiritatwork.org).

## VIII. Frequently asked questions

### Q: Can my organization apply if it is faith-based?

A: You may apply as long as you are not promoting any one faith tradition. Honorees must respect all faith traditions and not use any Spirit At Work initiatives as a way to convert others to their preferred faith.

### Q: What kinds of organizations can apply?

A: For-profit, not-for-profit, educational, or governmental organizations may apply. Privately held companies may apply. Publicly held companies may apply. Universities may apply. Basically any group of 60 or more employees (or full-time equivalent) who meet the criteria listed in the application form can apply.

### Q: Can I count volunteers as part of my employee count?

A: Generally not, and here is why: Work is generally to make a living and pay the bills. Therefore this kind of work is done in return for pay. Work-for-pay creates the potential for inconsiderate treatment of workers who may feel trapped. We are trying to promote change in the workplace so that our time at work is nourishing to our Spirit. Volunteers who are mistreated can easily leave. Thus



our focus is on paid employees. However, if you have a special circumstance, contact us so we can consider your eligibility.

**Q: My entire organization at large is not yet involved with Spirit at Work initiatives, but my Division has a great program. Can we apply?**

A: Yes, as long as your Division has at least 60 full-time employees, has been in existence for 5 years or more, and has a reasonable degree of autonomy (decision-making authority) in regard to this project.

**Q: Our project has been a pilot project within our larger organization. Can a pilot project apply?**

A: Yes as long as your organization meets the other criteria and the leadership of your organization has approved this pilot.

**Q: Do some types of organizations or organizations in particular countries/regions have an advantage?**

A: Some types of organizations or organizations in particular countries/regions may be thought to have an advantage, both through having more experience of practicing spirituality in the workplace and where English is their first language. However, we have developed an approach that allows for all applications to be fairly considered in both the business and cultural context from which they are presented.

**Q: Are there any restrictions on the types of organizations that can apply?**

A: No – any organization can apply. We do not exclude from consideration any organization based on their product or service. If an organization's product or service could be considered harmful to society as decided by the Selection Committee, then there will be an obligation for the organization to demonstrate that their overall vision/mission/values are aligned with compassion for the concerns and needs of every stakeholder – including but not limited to employees, the environment and the community.

**Q: What could cause my organization to not be selected for an award?**

A: If you do not meet the criteria specified in this application OR If the Committee feels there is any inappropriate behavior in the organization, such as attempts to convert employees or unethical behavior OR If the Committee feels that the greater purpose of the International Spirit at Work Award is not served by naming your organization as an honoree

**Q: Can my organization be a sponsor (donate money or services) to the award in the same year as we apply for an award?**

A: No – we cannot accept donations in the same year as an application. If you have already donated in the same year, your contribution will be refunded. We want to avoid any conflict of interest – or even an appearance of a conflict of interest. Most of our donations for the awards and for the conference come from ISAW Alumni, so if you have received the award in the past, we welcome your support through donations or services.

**Q: Does my organization have to be present at the conference in New York to receive the award?**

A: Yes – since it represents a visible commitment of senior management to the Spirit at Work initiative. A photographer will be present, and possibly representatives of the press, so the Award Ceremony is a good opportunity for the organization to gain favorable recognition.

**Q: Can I see some applications from prior honorees to get an idea of what other organizations have done?**

A: Yes, several previous award recipients have made their applications available. Check the website [www.spiritatwork.org](http://www.spiritatwork.org) to see if they are posted. If they are not yet there, contact Elisa Mallis at [elisa@spiritatwork.org](mailto:elisa@spiritatwork.org) to request some sample applications.

**Q: Do I have to model my application after previous year's applications?**

A: No. We want to encourage a creative and authentic description of the uniqueness of your organization's policies, procedures, or practices that nurture the human spirit. We want you to tell your own story in your own words. However, you may consult previous applications to be inspired by the way Award honorees have filled out the application

**Q: Can I get some help as I am working on my application? I have some questions and I want to be sure I present the information you need.**

A: We are happy to help you complete the application process. However this is not necessary to be successful as an applicant. We will contact all applicants to clarify items in the application – so getting help in advance is available but optional. Contact the Chairperson and a Committee member will be assigned to help you through the application process. If you have a noteworthy program or practice we WANT you to apply! Let us help!

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