



International Coalition of
SITES *of* CONSCIENCE

IMPACT REPORT 2022



Remembering Is a Radical Act

A Note from Our Executive Director



Cover Photo Credit:
Sharni Jayawardena, The Herstories Project

Dear Friends,

As we finalize this report, a battle between democracy and authoritarianism is raging across the globe. Autocrats are drawing on well-honed tactics to undermine the rule of law, subvert truth, and avoid accountability. This is not a new struggle; indeed, it is a course of action taken throughout history by dictators and strongmen who pursue power at the expense of a vibrant civil society, human rights, and social justice.

And yet, this is a moment unlike any other.

As I write these words, there are new voices rising – young and old, victim and survivor, activist and artist, indigenous and new arrival – in a collective demand that their stories be heard and their truths remembered as the foundation for equality, justice, and peace. These voices, ascendant in city centers and distant villages, the global North and global South, emanate from Sites of Conscience that serve as the bulwark against those who seek to rewrite the past.

In the pages that follow, I invite you to explore in detail how Sites of Conscience are preserving and amplifying memory the world over, how memory is catalyzing truth-telling, and how truth-telling is leading to accountability and justice.

We are so grateful this report has found you and welcome you to join us in the radical act of remembering.

ELIZABETH SILKES
Executive Director

Memory



Justice Fleet, USA

The Justice Fleet, a Site of Conscience based in St. Louis, Missouri (USA), is a mobile network of experiences that foster community healing through art, play, and dialogue. Housed inside of box trucks, each mobile exhibit ventures into various neighborhoods to engage community members in discussions about implicit and explicit bias, social justice, and empathy.

WHO WE ARE

A Site of Conscience is a place of memory – such as a historic site, place-based museum, memorial, or memory initiative – that provides communities with space to remember even the most traumatic events and with the tools to take action on related contemporary human rights issues.

Often Sites of Conscience are physical places directly connected to the histories shared there – a former detention center, an immigration station, or a killing field. When physical sites have been destroyed or are inaccessible, Sites of Conscience use innovative digital techniques and other platforms to reimagine these spaces and share their lessons. In countries in or emerging from conflict, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC), through our Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR), supports survivors in collecting, preserving, and sharing their experiences through a variety of initiatives, including oral histories, body-mapping, and traveling exhibits, until permanent archives, memorials, or museums remembering these histories can be erected.

No matter what form a Site of Conscience takes, each is a testament to the power of place and memory to transform histories of exclusion or trauma into cultures of peace.

“Since joining the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, the Justice Fleet’s opportunities for expansion, scalability, and impact have grown tremendously. We have access to a large consortium of people with international and transnational expertise around healing, justice, and the role of art, play, and dialogue in social change. I have a circle of companions and mentors I can check in with, share ideas with, and be in community with!”

- AMBER JOHNSON (pictured), Founder, Justice Fleet, Missouri, USA

Our Approach: The Power of Truth-Telling



Photo Caption:

A survivor of the Colombian conflict contributes to a truth-telling activity sponsored by ICSC

WHO WE ARE

For over twenty years, we at the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience have partnered with communities the world over to shine a bright light on the truth, past and present, harnessing memory to expose injustice and counter impunity.

By documenting, preserving, and confronting histories of violations, affected communities can emerge from conflict and other traumatic events equipped to demand accountability, to advocate for systemic change, and to actively engage in violence prevention.

How do Sites of Conscience support this transformation, this movement from memory to truth-telling to lasting peace?

Our approach is never one size fits all – we work hand in hand with our member museums, archives, victims groups, and civil society organizations to build new capacities grounded in specific local needs. We facilitate peer-to-peer collaborations among our members who have faced similar challenges and can share lessons learned; we provide direct financial support for innovative local projects that promote memory, truth, and justice; and we provide community engagement and advocacy trainings as well as technical expertise, all while positioning local community members to take the lead when they're ready. Through our singular survivor-centered approach, we garner trust at all levels of society, allowing us to work both top-down and bottom-up, strengthening grassroots networks of survivors and activists while simultaneously equipping government representatives to carry out inclusive and transparent national truth and justice processes. It is in this unique – and uniquely effective – way that ICSC supports communities to emerge from traumatic pasts to create just, equitable futures.

"As a youth-led peace-building organization in Rwanda that was just starting back in 2019, we had the zeal and passion, but clearly, we needed mentorship to grow our capacity to be able to do our work efficiently. The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience took us on and has given us time and the resources to develop ourselves. We learned about memorialization from ICSC and it's becoming a very big part of what we do to educate citizens and to address genocide denial."

-DANIEL GANZA, *HopeLantern, Rwanda*

A Global Movement: Setting the Record Straight



WHO WE ARE

76 Countries | **322** Members
900 Communities | **30M+** Visitors

"Being an ICSC member has been an empowering and truly inspiring journey for us. We benefited a lot from the expertise and insights of the wonderful staff of ICSC during the development stage of the 23.5 Hrant Dink Site of Memory, and felt their solidarity and support at the most challenging times. ICSC not only contributed to building our skills and know-how but also promoted our work internationally. Owing to the efforts of ICSC we have met and collaborated with fascinating organizations from four corners of the world who are doing meaningful work turning memory to action."

- NAYAT KARAKÖSE (pictured), Program Coordinator, Hrant Dink Foundation, Istanbul, Turkey

Our Work: Preserving Memory Promoting Truth Pursuing Justice



Photo Credit:
Daria Krotova for Memorial

OUR WORK

Rewriting history is the tool of tyrants.

From Russia to Afghanistan to the United States, dictators, autocrats, repressive regimes, and white nationalists are rewriting the past in attempts to secure their own power. In doing so, they are preventing new generations from learning the hard-won lessons of history while perpetuating inequities and systemic injustice. Such efforts underway across the globe pose grave threats to democracy and social justice.

But such manipulation is no match for memory.

In 2022, countering revisionist narratives that seek to whitewash human rights violations and silence victims was a main priority for our members. In the following pages, we are honored to share several examples of how we at ICSC helped them with this mission – correcting false narratives that permeate even the most hallowed halls in order to foster new understandings of our shared history and our shared humanity.

To combat historical revisionism and build inclusive, rights-based futures, communities need dedicated spaces to collect and share their stories – in the fullness of their truths. Sites of Conscience are those spaces.

Memorial, Russia

Memorial, a long-time Site of Conscience and the leading voice for human rights in Russia, was a recipient of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize for their work amplifying victims' experiences of Soviet repression, and supporting free expression in the country today. In 2019, Memorial's offices were attacked by the Russian government, which in 2022 formally liquidated the site – a move condemned by ICSC in a statement signed by nearly 100 other Sites of Conscience.

"Memory always has a human dimension," Grigory Vaypan, a lawyer at Memorial, said in his keynote address at our 2022 GIJTR Annual Meeting in Cyprus. "Every victim has a name. They are not just numbers – they are human stories, human tragedies. We should see them and think about them as human beings."

Preserving Memory: Correcting the Record



Photo Caption:

Radhika Hettiarachchi (center) is the Founder of the Site of Conscience Herstories, a virtual collection of 285 oral histories of war-affected women from Sri Lanka, and the first women's oral history collection to be archived at the National Archives of Sri Lanka. Ms. Hettiarachchi served as a mentor for ICSC's 2022 Correcting the Record project.

OUR WORK

When a society remembers only selected histories and intentionally erases others, the stage is set for systemic exclusion and impunity that can last for generations. At the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, preserving and sharing the stories of the least powerful – victims, survivors, indigenous community members, as well as racial, religious, and ethnic minorities – exposes the forces that seek to dominate the marginalized and serves as a catalyst for truth-telling, accountability, and justice.

Building Inclusive, Equitable, and Engaged Societies One Narrative at a Time:

With support from the National Endowment for Democracy, in February 2022, ICSC launched “Correcting the Record: Building Inclusive, Equitable and Engaged Societies One Narrative at a Time,” a global peer-exchange initiative that strengthened the repositories of Sites of Conscience in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean by ensuring that their collections and policies are as equitable and inclusive as possible. Applying ICSC's unique expertise in documentation, oral history collection, and community engagement, the project confronted what author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has called “the single stories” – simplistic and often false narratives that exclude the memories, needs, and voices of minority groups, ultimately contributing to divisive rhetoric, negative stereotypes, discrimination, hatred, and violence.

In early 2023, a toolkit detailing the project's methodology will be published and shared with like-minded organizations seeking to correct “official” historical narratives and foster understanding and empathy toward those whose stories have been historically silenced.

Preserving Memory: Safeguarding Survivors' Stories



"We had been waiting for a chance to find a way to speak
to the world in our own terms about our past."

- Rohingya participant in an ICSC arts workshop

OUR WORK

Since January 2020, ICSC has been on the ground in Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh helping to establish and train a cohort of Rohingya documenters to credibly and professionally collect information about human rights abuses in a way that respects the dignity of victims, survivors, and witnesses, and can contribute to future accountability mechanisms. To date, the cohort has completed nearly 300 interviews. In June and August 2022, we led a "Training of Trainers" workshop to ensure that such documentation efforts can be sustained well into the future and continue to be grounded in Rohingya communities.

Working with community leaders, hundreds of civilians have also received training on human rights and accountability. Over 200 life stories of women and men - in equal numbers - have been collected in "dialogue circles" across the refugee camps and used to develop artwork, exhibitions, and books for wide dissemination. We are also working with Rohingya survivors from 10 camps and groups in Bangladeshi civil society to implement arts and truth-telling initiatives that assist communities in coming to terms with the past in a manner that promotes healing, accountability, and reconciliation.

More than 900,000 Rohingya fled to this region of Bangladesh after suffering targeted violence and persecution in Myanmar's Rakhine State. In 2022, Reporters Without Borders named Myanmar one of the world's 10 worst countries for press freedom.

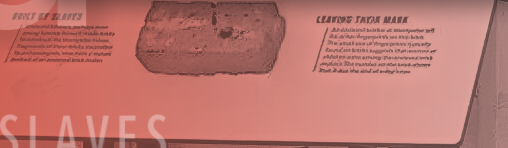
Promoting Truth: Correcting the Record in Hallowed Halls

America



BUILT BY SLAVES

Enslaved laborers, perhaps even young Sawney himself, made bricks to construct the Montpelier house. Fragments of these bricks, extracted by archaeologists, now form a mosaic portrait of an enslaved brick maker.



OUR WORK

Historic distortions that breed and sanction injustice proliferate because they are so often found in our most sacred spaces and institutions: our museums, schools, civic centers, and memorial parks. While righting such wrongs is never easy, it is a necessary component of correcting systemic injustice, helping communities to heal from traumatic pasts and creating more equitable, democratic societies.

To ensure that these historical inaccuracies are amended, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience trains and advises museum and historic site professionals at every level – from volunteer tour guides to board members – leading them to sustainable solutions that allow them to face the past with honesty and courage, and create meaningful connections with visitors at their sites. Our team tailors its approach to meet specific site needs, assisting it to foster empathy and understanding across racial, generational, gender, and ethnic divides.

Montpelier, USA

Sites of Conscience often face significant challenges as they attempt to “correct the record.” For over two decades, long-time member Montpelier – which preserves the former home of US President and slaveholder James Madison – was recognized as a leader among historic sites for its collaborative work between descendant communities, staff, board members, and scholars. In Spring 2022, however, the board voted to strip descendants of their power-sharing status, thereby drastically reducing their influence over the stories shared at the site, causing much frustration among descendants and Montpelier staff who overwhelmingly supported them. Having provided the site with training on external storytelling in programs and exhibits in the past, our team was perfectly positioned to support them during this crisis, facilitating internal conversations about relationships at the site, as well as publicly – and successfully – advocating for an immediate return to their equitable approach to power-sharing. Today, the descendant community’s representatives are once again vital and equal decision-makers at the site.



Promoting Truth: New Research, New Understandings, New Opportunities



OUR WORK

Few places in the world capture the magnitude and brutality of the slave trade like La Maison des Esclaves on Gorée Island in Senegal, the first UNESCO World Heritage site in Africa, and a founding member of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. Built around 1785, the red house on the Atlantic Ocean shares the history and narratives of the vast transatlantic slave trade. Since its founding as a museum in 1962, the historic site has welcomed thousands of visitors, including Nelson Mandela, Pope John Paul II, and Barack and Michelle Obama.

In recent years, a lack of resources posed serious challenges to both the site's physical structure and its program offerings, which did not reflect the most updated research about the site's history. With support from the Ford Foundation and the Senegalese government, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience oversaw a major revitalization of the site from 2017-2022, working with the local community and a Senegalese-majority scientific committee composed of archeologists, historians, and preservationists to update the site's interpretation and program offerings.

Maison des Esclaves is now providing thousands of visitors every year with an enhanced understanding of the slave trade that specifically encourages them to look deeper and make vital connections between this history and its modern counterparts from sex trafficking to forced migration.

"There are more enslaved people right now than any other time in history... and the majority are women and girls... What you can learn from songs, from music, from history, from religion, from the whole planet, and especially from the youngest among us, is that we must do things together... We must all act together to create a more peaceful future. It's my belief that through music, through this museum, through Sites of Conscience, through all of us together, this can happen."

- YO-YO MA, Cellist



Pursuing Justice: Leaving No Stone Unturned

Colombia



"What really makes the difference with ICSC is that they leave communities with the tools and training to continue this work after they leave. In our case, we will be producing podcasts to unveil the truth for generations."

- **Henry Serna**, a participant in ICSC's community podcast project in Colombia.

OUR WORK

Silence and impunity are all too common after a conflict or a period marked by injustice. To counter this, Sites of Conscience not only preserve memory and promote truth, but they actively pursue justice. The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience supports them in this mission by connecting members with national and international agents, including truth commissions and global entities that seek accountability. In addition to facilitating these relationships, we help deepen them through a range of activities, including advising truth commissions on the best approaches for interacting with traumatized survivors; training Sites of Conscience and their community partners to document human rights violations according to international standards; providing toolkits and training to help sites most effectively advocate for survivors; and supporting sites in hostile settings to develop secure platforms to preserve evidence and testimonies for future accountability purposes.

Colombia

Since its launch in 2018, our GIJTR has advised the Colombian Truth Commission on tools for collecting, documenting, and sharing the stories of the survivors of the country's conflict, which killed over 200,000 people between 1958-2013. We have also built capacities in forensic techniques and human identification, training technical staff of the Search Unit for Missing Persons and over 200 representatives of victims associations.

In addition, we have funded and led 25 truth-telling projects in rural communities throughout the country, including a 2022 podcast series based on survivors' testimonies. Working directly with survivors to record their memories serves as an acknowledgement of their experiences, and also verifies facts related to violations. To ensure this information is widely disseminated, we partnered with seven civil society organizations to share their archives and findings in accessible formats. In partnership with our member sites, who are trusted entities in their communities, we have also provided opportunities for survivors to meet with members of the Truth Commission, and advised members of the Truth Commission on how to effectively communicate with survivors.

Pursuing Justice: Where Remembering Is a Crime

Nana-Jo Ndow, daughter of **Saul Ndow**, who, in 2013, was forcibly disappeared from Senegal. Her father was a Gambian MP. Witness testimonies revealed that they had been abducted and taken to a secret location where they were both killed by Jammeh's hitsquad 'The Junglers' at Jammeh's home. Nana-Jo Ndow says, "We want justice, and we will not give up until those who are responsible are held accountable."



OUR WORK

"Memory House is really a home. It's a place of collective strength, where victims can share their pain but also feel united. We have this space because of ICSC. They were the generator. Nothing like this has ever been done in The Gambia. People here have been robbed of so much, including closure, so to have this space is amazing - for victims, young people, and really all Gambians."

Nana-Jo Ndow (pictured), founder of ICSC member the African Network Against Extrajudicial Killings and Enforced Disappearances (ANEKED), whose father, Saul Ndow, was forcibly disappeared by the Jammeh regime



Gambian society was deeply traumatized by the regime of Yahya Jammeh, who used torture, sexual violence, and enforced disappearances to silence dissenters during his 22-year dictatorship (1994-2017).

Since 2019, ICSC's Global Initiative for Justice, Truth, and Reconciliation (GIJTR) has provided support for local civil society organizations in The Gambia to ensure that women and other marginalized groups are included in the country's transitional justice process.

Among our many activities, in 2022 GIJTR supported a "child-friendly" version of The Gambia's Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission's final report, and celebrated the one-year anniversary of the opening of "The Memory House," a memorial center founded by ANEKED, a Site of Conscience in The Gambia, which houses the exhibition "The Duty to Remember," originally a traveling exhibit funded by ICSC.

Remembrance. Resistance. Results.

Staff and family members of the Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization (AHRDO) were safely relocated to Canada in January 2022, following an advocacy campaign led by ICSC in which over 100 Sites of Conscience lent their support to their colleagues in need.

Since August 2021, when the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan, AHRDO, which has been an ICSC member for over a decade, has continued to monitor and document human rights violations in the country. In June 2022, the organization completed documentation of over 150 cases of human rights violations, including murder, torture, arbitrary detention, forced disappearances, and extortion in five provinces in central Afghanistan.



Photo Caption:

In 2015, AHRDO received a Project Support Fund grant from ICSC that allowed it to expand its Memory Box project, which uses personal objects to document stories of conflict in Afghanistan and to create avenues for dialogue and reconciliation.

OUR WORK

Upon receiving the 2019 Louise du Pont Crowninshield Award - the National Trust for Historic Preservation's highest national recognition - ICSC founder Ruth Abram remarked, "If you doubt the power of history, consider the lengths to which governments go to alter or deny it."

In 2022, Ruth's point was proven time and again. From the war in Ukraine to debates about critical race theory in the United States, history today is a battlefield. But - as this report shows - these forces are no match for our collective conscience. In every corner of the world, millions are sharing the stories that would otherwise be silenced. They contain the insights and inspiration we need to build peaceful futures, free of discrimination and injustice. Sites of Conscience - sites of courage and conviction - are leading this great movement for memory, truth, and justice with your support.

"The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience provided crucial support to AHRDO's relocation to Canada by initiating an advocacy campaign urging the government of Canada to admit AHRDO as a group to enable them to resume their operation as a human rights and victims' museum organization after the fall of Afghanistan. ICSC has also provided essential support and technical assistance to AHRDO to carry out grassroots-level memorial activities with survivors of conflict. It has also promoted AHRDO's message and methodologies through artistic initiatives such as the production of *Shared Journeys*, a joint project conducted with other Sites of Conscience."

- HADI MARIFAT, *Co-Founder and Director of the Afghanistan Human Rights and Democracy Organization*



Revenue and Expenses

Expenses* FY22

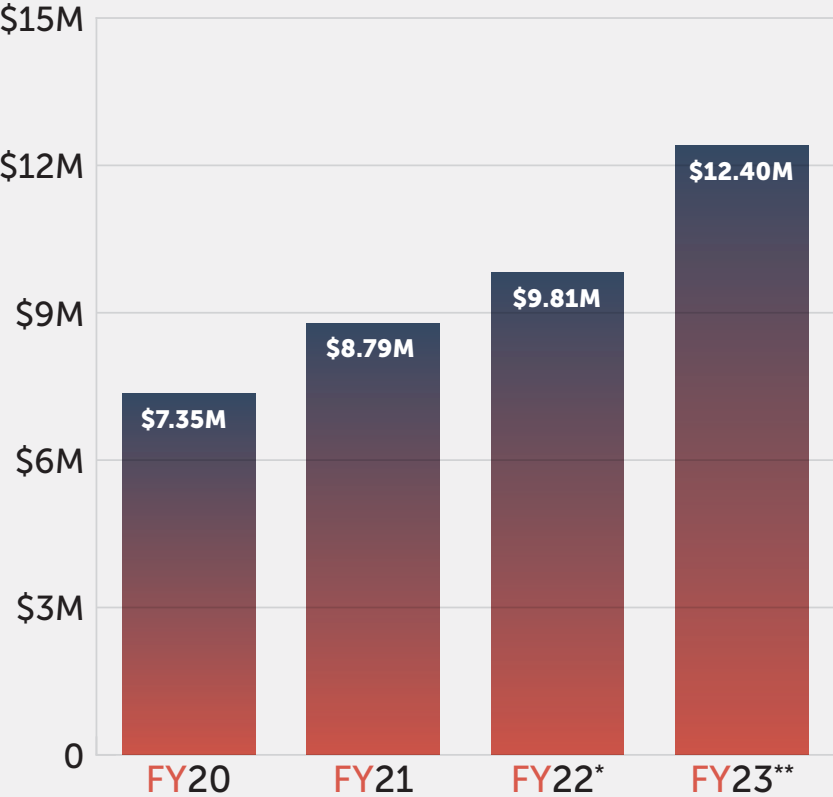
- 90% Programs
- 8% Management
- 2% Fundraising



*UNAUDITED

FY22 EXPENSES = \$9.520M

Revenue Growth FY20-FY23



REVENUE GROWTH FY20-FY23

*UNAUDITED

**PROJECTED



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Photo Caption:

Eloi Coly, Director and Chief Curator of
La Maison des Esclaves (Senegal), a founding member
of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience

