

Annual Report / 2014-2015

*Celebrating 50 Years of Ecumenical
and Interreligious Scholarship and Activism*



**DIALOGUE
INSTITUTE**



**JOURNAL OF
ECUMENICAL STUDIES**

50



Dear Friend,

As we reflect back on this past fiscal year, it is our pleasure to share with you some highlights of our work.

We concluded celebration of 50 years of ecumenical and interreligious scholarship and activism with our **New Steps in the “Cosmic Dance of Dialogue”** event in April (page 7), featuring a lively conversation with Sr. Joan Chittister, Paul Knitter and JES Co-Founding Editor and DI President/ Founder, Leonard Swidler. The evening included presentation of a special issue of the **Journal of Ecumenical Studies**, a festschrift in honor of Professor Swidler’s ongoing legacy.

At the same time we were excited to launch a **brand new website**, featuring a fresh look and a renewed commitment to make online resources available to our ever-growing international network of interfaith activists and scholars. Check it out at **dialogueinstitute.org**.

Through our flagship program—the **Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) on Religious Pluralism** (pages 3-4)—we hosted 20 students from the Middle East in the summer of 2014 and another 20 from Southeast Asia this past winter. It is such a privilege to work with so many outstanding young people as they prepare to engage this critical work in their home countries, many in contexts marked by religious-based oppression and violence.

In November, the DI co-sponsored a **groundbreaking leadership conference for Muslim and Jewish women** (page 5), and in December we launched a unique three-year project with Hong Kong Baptist University called the **Asia Interreligious Development Network** (page 5). The DI also hosted a group of **scholars from Saudi Arabia** for a training in March, part of an ongoing series of seminars begun in 2008 (page 6). And in April, we hosted a unique program—in partnership with **The Philadelphia Orchestra**—reflecting on interfaith relations through the lens of Leonard Bernstein’s MASS (page 6).

The DI’s global reach was further highlighted by co-sponsorship of the **Interfaith Youth Forum in Indonesia**, a now-annual event initiated by one of our SUSI alumni (page 8), and our **hosting of Iraqi Member of Parliament Vian Dakhil** for a U.S. tour to draw attention to the plight of Yazidis in Iraq (page 8). Efforts like these represent the ongoing and ever-expanding ripple effect of our impact around the world.

As we look to the coming year we are especially **grateful to those of you who have provided critical financial and in-kind support** (pages 9-10), and to all of you for your interest and support of the DI/JES. We look forward to the next 50 years of interreligious/intercultural scholarship and activism!

With gratitude and hope,

Majid Alsayegh
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PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) for Student Leaders on Religious Pluralism

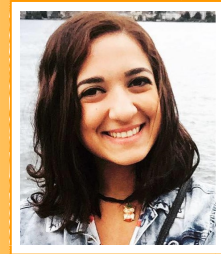
SUSI is an intensive five-week program focused on religious pluralism and democracy in the American context. The DI hosts select groups of students from the **Middle East** and **Southeast Asia** in Philadelphia twice a year. Since 2010, nearly 200 students have participated in the DI's program. Visit dialogueinstitute.org/study-of-the-us-institutes for more details.

Summer 2014 - Middle East
July 6-August 9, 2014



"My participation in the SUSI program added to my experience an international perspective that I've never dreamt of having. It made me leave my comfort zone and seek to know more, to understand more and to ask more. The fact that we also wrote action plans there encouraged me to start taking action. The SUSI program pushed me to test my limits, to break stereotypes and take immediate action!"

- Ana Maria Nabil Daou,
Summer 2014 SUSI participant,
Lebanon



NOTE: As a result of the action plan Ana Maria developed during her SUSI experience, she applied for and received a grant from the Small Grants Program of the American Embassy in Beirut to implement her project, "Intercultural Dialogue through Sports."



Winter 2015 - Southeast Asia January 10-February 14, 2015



"This program was an ultimate window of opportunity for me to look out across the diverse world with a pair of 'understanding eyes.' It taught me about the downsides to prejudgment on the different cultures and how to examine the roots behind the outer appearances. What I also learned the hard way through this program is that studying a certain culture intellectually is not enough. You have to sit down with people of different faiths and dialogue with them, bearing in mind that 'nobody knows everything about anything'. Above all, thanks to my amazing experiences in the U.S, it has dawned on me that each tradition has its own preferred path that is taken to reach the same goals of humanity."

- **Kyaw Myo Win**
Winter 2015 SUSI participant,
Myanmar





Leadership Conference for Muslim and Jewish Women

November 2, 2014

In partnership with the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom (SOSS), the Dialogue Institute hosted more than 100 Muslim and Jewish women leaders for a first-ever leadership conference.

The event, held at Temple University in Philadelphia, was part of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding's *Weekend of Twinning*.

This trailblazing conference brought together female leaders from Muslim and Jewish faith traditions to help equip them with the skills necessary to advance interfaith communication and engagement among their own communities.



"The Dialogue Institute proved an ideal partner. Our registration exceeded our expectations, the talks and workshops were engaging, and the positive energy of the women did not flag. There was such joy and excitement in meeting one another across the religious communities and the generations. We are grateful to the DI for being a part of this auspicious start for SOSS."

- **Rabbi Nancy Fuchs Kreimer**
SOSS Board Member and Director, Department of Multifaith Studies and Initiatives, Reconstructionist Rabbinical College

Asia Interreligious Development Network

December 10-12, 2014

The Dialogue Institute, in partnership with **Hong Kong Baptist University**, launched the **Asia Interreligious Development Network (AIDN)** in December, with an initial gathering in Hong Kong of 13 Asian scholar-activists from various countries/areas.

The three-year project is funded by the **United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia**, with participants from China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand.

Over the next two years (through the end of the academic year, 2016-2017),



participants will each launch and complete a pilot project (General Education course or other training module) in their home institution, in consultation with DI/HKBU staff. These projects will inform a final edited volume.





Saudi-American Symposium

March 19-20, 2015

As part of an ongoing series begun in 2008, the Dialogue Institute collaborated again with the Western Studies Institute in Saudi Arabia for a seminar on *Prophetic Traditions and Biographies*, focused on methodologies for learning in relation to sacred texts. Participants came from Imam and King Saud Universities in Saudi Arabia, and met with American scholars for two days.



Bernstein's MASS: An Interfaith Dialogue

April 22, 2015

Inspired by the exploratory nature of Leonard Bernstein's MASS* and the questions it raises about religion, faith and peace, the Dialogue Institute collaborated with The Philadelphia Orchestra for a unique interfaith panel discussion.

The discussion was moderated by DI/JES Board member, Ellen Frankel, and featured panelists from Muslim, Jewish and Catholic Christian traditions. A Temple University multi-choir concert followed the discussion, during which Temple's Concert Choir performed excerpts from MASS.

* MASS, which premiered in 1971, explores a Celebrant's crisis of faith through the eyes of a Jewish composer



"The Philadelphia Orchestra's collaboration with the Dialogue Institute brought a signature event of our season to life offstage. *Bernstein's MASS: An Interfaith Dialogue* added an important dimension to the Orchestra's performances of MASS - sparking important dialogue with religious leaders in our community. The Dialogue Institute was a key thought partner and facilitator of these discussions and we look forward to working with them again in the future."

- Allison Vulgamore
President & CEO,
The Philadelphia Orchestra





New Steps in the "Cosmic Dance of Dialogue"

April 24, 2015



The Dialogue Institute and *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* culminated its celebration of 50-plus years of ecumenical and interreligious scholarship and activism with **New Steps in the "Cosmic Dance of Dialogue."**

More than 100 people attended the event, featuring an engaging conversation on intra- and interfaith dialogue—past, present and future—with **Sr. Joan Chittister, Paul Knitter** and DI Founder and President (and *JES* Co-Founding Editor) **Leonard Swidler.**



Photos courtesy of James Graves Photo; additional pictures and video of the full event are available at dialogueinstitute.org/news/new-steps.



A Brief History

1964:
Journal of Ecumenical Studies founded by Arlene and Leonard Swidler at Duquesne University

1966:
Publication of *JES* moved to Temple University

Leonard Swidler begins teaching at Temple and the newly created Religion Department

1978:
Institute for Interreligious, Intercultural Dialogue (now Dialogue Institute) founded by Leonard Swidler

Journal of Ecumenical Studies Festschrift in Honor of Leonard Swidler

Volume 50, Issue 1 of the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* featured a festschrift in honor of Leonard Swidler, Dialogue Institute Founder and President, and *JES* Co-founding Editor. Managing Editor Nancy Krody presented the issue as a surprise to Professor Swidler during the April 24th **New Steps in the Cosmic Dance of Dialogue** event.



GLOBAL REACH



"Following the previous forums held in Palembang (2012) and Bali (2013), IYF 2014 was an outstanding success beyond our optimistic expectations. Without the support of the Dialogue Institute, this program could not be accomplished successfully."

- **I Gede Pandu Wirawan**
Winter 2012 SUSI Participant,
Indonesia / President, Youth
Interfaith Community



Interfaith Youth Forum in Indonesia

November 19-22, 2014

The Dialogue Institute once again helped sponsor the annual Interfaith Youth Forum (IYF) in Indonesia, held in Palangka Raya, Central Kalimantan. IYF, started by alumni of the DI's Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSI) on Religious Pluralism, is now in its third year. The event for young Indonesian leaders focuses on building their capacity with respect to tolerance and interfaith dialogue.



Yazidi Awareness Campaign with Vian Dakhil

December 9-17, 2014

The Dialogue Institute, led by Board Chair Majid Alsayegh, hosted Iraqi Member of Parliament and Yazidi representative, Vian Dakhil, for a nine-day tour in the United States to help call attention to the humanitarian crisis facing the Yazidi people in Iraq.

During the tour, with stops in Philadelphia, New York City and Washington, D.C., she met with U.S. Senators, key White House personnel, members of the U.S. Department of State, USAID representatives and members of the media. A highlight of her visit was the opportunity to share testimony to the Senate Subcommittee on International Operations and Organizations, Human Rights, Democracy and Global Women's Issues (see full testimony at foreign.senate.gov/hearings/120914am).

The Dialogue Institute also helped raise more than \$6,500 in support of Dakhil's ongoing humanitarian efforts in Iraq.



"We are being slaughtered. Our entire religion is being wiped off the face of the earth."

- **Vian Dakhil**
Iraqi Member of Parliament





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Dialogue Institute / *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*

July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015

PLEASE NOTE: We appreciate all of our donors—financial and in-kind! We have made every effort to present an accurate listing of 2014-15 donors; however, if you believe your name is missing from the list, or we have inadvertently misspelled your name or otherwise misrepresented your information, please accept our apologies and contact us at 215.204.7525 or info@dialogueinstitute.org so we can make any corrections. Thank you.

\$250,000+

United States Department of State
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Enlightened World Foundation

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"I am involved in and support DI/JES because it gives unique expression to both ecumenism and its search for Christian unity, and to interfaith and interreligious relations and dialogue among the world's living faiths and religious traditions. The outreach the DI/JES gives to the next generation of ecumenists and interreligious interlocutors ensures a future for dialogue and cooperation."

- Sr. Lorelei F. Fuchs, SA
DI/JES Board member,
JES Associate Editor,
Ecumenical Liaison, Franciscan
Sisters of the Atonement



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"DI/JES earns my support by its clear vision of the importance of interreligious dialogue. I believe that such open and critical exchange is vital for the kinds of justice which will minimize tension and maximize cooperation. Dialogue is vital to clearing away the stink of suspicion that keeps us at the brink of war. Religion everywhere focuses our most profound values. For that reason it can generate abrupt and dangerous disagreements. Nothing is more essential to avoid such crises than the discipline of steady and critical dialogue."

- **Theodore Friend**
DI/JES Board Vice-Chair





FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

Statement of Financial Position (pending annual audit)

Fiscal Year 2015 (July 1, 2014-June 30, 2015)

ASSETS

CASH	22,674
INVESTMENTS	293,041
GRANTS AND PLEDGES RECEIVABLE	194,266
PREPAID EXPENSES	4,600
FIXED ASSETS	981
INVENTORY	6,641
TOTAL ASSETS	522,203

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	21,388
DEFERRED REVENUE	18,116
TOTAL LIABILITIES	39,504

NET ASSETS

482,699

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

522,203

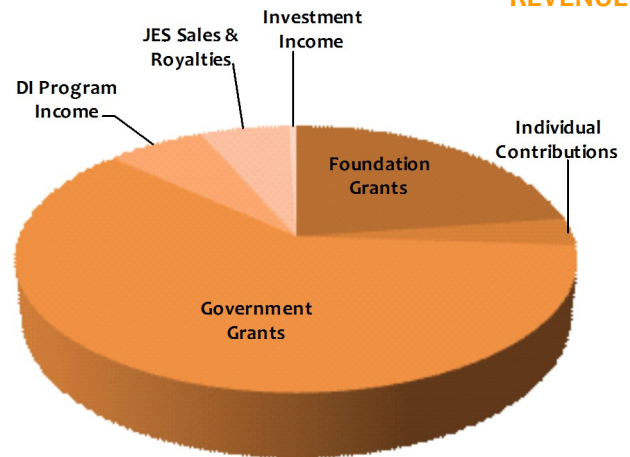
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More info at dialogueinstitute.org/donate

Statement of Activities (pending annual audit)

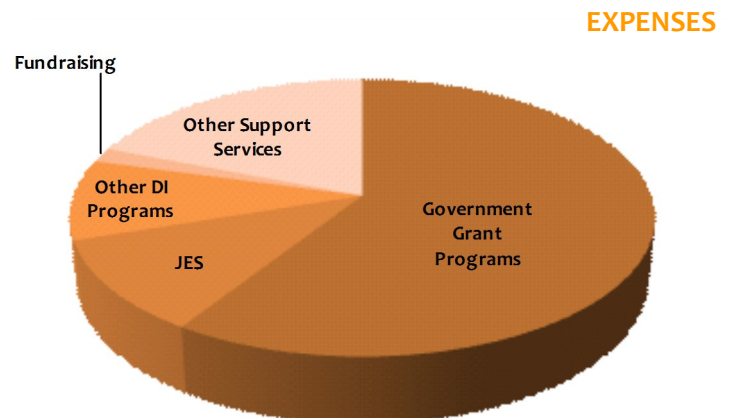
SUPPORT & REVENUE

FOUNDATION GRANTS	180,272
INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	25,979
GOVERNMENT GRANTS	480,800
DI PROGRAM INCOME	53,016
JES SALES & ROYALTIES	48,154
INVESTMENT INCOME	3,773
TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE	791,994



EXPENSES

GOVERNMENT GRANT PROGRAMS	496,061
JES	90,626
OTHER DI PROGRAMS	78,787
FUNDRAISING	14,158
OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES	159,792
TOTAL EXPENSES	839,424



NET OPERATING DEFICIT (47,430)

UNREALIZED LOSS ON INVESTMENTS (5,454)

NET DEFICIT (52,884)

MISSION / VISION



The **Dialogue Institute** engages religious, civic, and academic leaders in practicing the skills of respectful dialogue and critical thinking, building and sustaining transformative relationships across lines of religion and culture. It provides resources and creates networks for intra- and interreligious scholarship and action that value difference and foster human dignity.

Established in 1964, the peer-reviewed **Journal of Ecumenical Studies** advances critical awareness of the latest directions in ecumenical and interreligious research.

"I support the DI and *JES* because I believe that what all the faiths have in common is more important than their differences. The differences are also important and each brings a different perspective on life and our search for, understanding of, and connection to the divine. The only way to understand this is through genuine dialogue between the faiths."

- Sergio Mazza,
DI/JES Board member



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