

iac Berlin

On Learning



ACTIVITY REPORT 2024

CONTENT

- 01 Editorial**
- 02 How we understand and practice learning at iac Berlin**
- 05 Fostering learning and innovation in a fragmented ecosystem**
- 08 Supporting trans-disciplinary thinking through grantee networks**
- 10 Navigating transformation—networks as catalyzers for future skills and providers of emotional support**
- 12 The Bosch Alumni Network at a glance**
- 14 How to shift from an organizational survival mode to focusing on the health of a field?**
- 16 Channeling regional knowledge into international diplomacy**
- 18 Peer Learning—reflections on the evolving role of a Learning Facilitator**
- 20 Our commitment to sustainability**
- 22 Finance & Accounting**
- 24 General Information**
- 25 Impressum**



DEAR COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS,

At iac Berlin, we often engage with complex challenges for which there is no ready-made solution—no established path to follow or predefined method that guarantees success. We meet these situations with a mindset of knowing that we don't know. Our interventions are deliberately explorative and experimental, allowing us to gradually gain a deeper understanding of the problem and its interdependencies.

On this journey, we stay open to serendipity. Being in community with other learners, and sharing our questions and insights with peers, creates the conditions for rapid learning—and yes, fast failing too.

For us, learning happens in the in-between spaces, where active tensions exist:

- between having a clear direction and remaining open to change;
- between the courage of an individual or team to explore and the embeddedness in a collective;
- between the structured rhythm of doing and the emergent nature of becoming.

These tensions don't demand resolution. Instead, they are the fertile ground where meaningful learning takes root and flourishes.

We see learning as an adaptive, continuous process—one that can shift direction, narrow or expand in focus, signal the start of something new, or the close of a cycle. Throughout, our aim remains constant: to ensure that what and how we learn develops our personal capacities, strengthens our collective practices, and informs how we approach complex challenges together.

While these ideas aren't new, we still asked ourselves: how are we doing?

That's why this year's Activity Report looks at our 2024 work through the lens of learning—highlighting what we tried, what worked, and what we could do better.

The report opens with a look at how we approach learning at iac Berlin—individually, within teams, and across the organization—and how a culture of experimentation is embedded in our work. Widening the lens, we then ask: how can we foster learning within an ecosystem? We explore this question in conversation with three key drivers of EPIM—the European Philanthropic Initiative for Migration—as we embark on a new five-year collaborative journey.

From there, two contributions from the Bosch Alumni Network offer hands-on perspectives, showing how networks can build transdisciplinary capacity while also creating space for emotional resilience and peer exchange. In our new project, “Culture in the Civic Space in the MENA Region: A Learning Journey for Field Supporters”, we continue this thread by examining how to shift the focus from organizational survival toward the health and sustainability of a broader field.

After ten successful years, we are saddened to announce the conclusion of the Global Diplomacy Lab as a public-private collaboration. Yet this is not the end: GDL members are actively working on an adapted structure for its future. In this report, we share outcomes from last year's research cooperation with Germany's Federal Foreign Office on how regional knowledge can inform and enrich international diplomacy.

Finally, we shine a light on the specific role of the Learning Facilitator—a role that has helped advance learning within our organization and in other contexts like the Wasan Network, and one that may offer inspiration elsewhere as well.

Our work is made possible through the support, insight, and collaboration of so many colleagues and partners. We are grateful to be in community with all of you—connected through shared ambitions and a commitment to continuous learning.

With warmest regards,

Darius Polok, on behalf of the entire iac Berlin team

HOW WE UNDERSTAND AND PRACTICE LEARNING AT IAC BERLIN

In dynamic systems, change is nonlinear. If we are to truly embrace this in our work, we must rethink how we approach learning, since no matter how much we learn from the past, these lessons may not necessarily serve us in the future. The belief that collecting and analyzing enough data and knowledge will allow us to anticipate and control future outcomes is not appropriate in complex environments. Instead, we must engage in a far messier and more uncertain process with continual learning at the core.

At iac Berlin, we see learning as an ongoing, adaptive process—comparable to a dance with some prepared steps coupled with the openness to improvise on new tunes. Rather than focusing solely on ‘what we learn’, which is always contextual and subject to change, we ask ourselves: how can we build our capacity to learn and adapt in ways that prepare us for unknown futures?

Shifting how we approach learning

Learning at iac Berlin happens on multiple levels—individually, within and across teams, through collaborations with partners, and in networks. It reverberates through how we develop our organizational culture, experiment with new approaches, and embed shared values and principles in our work. As we (re)design and implement our learning practices, we are intentionally shifting away from a more traditional, outcome-focused understanding of learning towards an approach that emphasizes process, curiosity, and capacity-building. This is not a shift that can happen overnight. Instead, we are continuously reflecting on why and how learning happens within our organization and partnerships.

In this article we will shed some light on where we are in this never-ending journey: sharing examples of where a shift in how we approach learning is underway and already affecting the quality of our work and highlighting areas where we would like to pay more attention to how we practice and incorporate learning into the future.

Towards an understanding of learning as:

From an understanding of learning as just:

Centered around the What

Focused on outcomes and efficiency

Extractive and insular

Taking a narrow lens and examining pieces in isolation

An afterthought

Geared towards fixing and reporting

Centered around the How and the Why

Focused on process, capacity, and understanding

Generative and interconnected

Taking a wide lens and building collective awareness

A cyclical process

Informing adaptive action and developing our capacity to learn

Embedding experimentation into our organizational culture

Prototyping is part of iac Berlin’s DNA. Since 2017, we have been continually deepening and testing our understanding around relational approaches through lab-style formats and by creating spaces of incubation both for ourselves and our partners. Adopting a “prototyping mindset” lowers the barriers to getting started, allowing us to avoid overplanning and to instead engage in a cyclical process of learning by doing. To create space for emergence and serendipity, we work with long-time horizons, explore multiple futures, and reintegrate our learnings through regular feedback loops.

One experiment we began in 2024 was to explore the role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in supporting and optimizing our work as well as how the use of AI tools can flow back into the development of our organization. How might AI change or even disrupt our established ways of working? Does it entail adding a few new dance moves or will we be dancing to an entirely different tune?

We started by ensuring responsible usage and creating containers in which to experiment with e.g. Large Language Models for text feedback, concept development, Excel support, knowledge management, text analysis, or meeting wrap-ups while maintaining strict GDPR compliance. One such experiment has been the Activity Report you are now reading which has been supported at various levels by AI as a critical companion. The promising and the underwhelming results as well as the critical considerations around AI usage have been fed back into the team to improve our understanding and implementation of these approaches. Conducting these experiments required time and effort but we see this learning process as an investment in our future capacities.

Prototyping goes beyond tangible, time-bound interventions—such as the use of AI in this Activity Report. It represents a core principle of our approach to organizational learning. As we develop our 2030 strategy, we’re putting this principle into practice by combining clear intent and direction with an openness to potentials and emerging opportunities. How might this approach influence the way we navigate both everyday decisions as well as long-term considerations around organizational culture and structure?

While adopting a prototyping mindset helps us stay open to serendipity and emergence, it also brings with it a set of

tensions that can’t be overlooked. In our experience, one ongoing challenge is leaving enough buffer capacity to regularly integrate what we’ve learned and design meaningful next steps after each experiment. To truly learn through experimentation, we also need to continually nurture an organizational culture where we feel safe enough to try new approaches—and to openly share both the successes and inevitable “failures” that are a natural part of the process.

Dedicating roles and resources to care for learning

Since 2023, we have embedded learning more intentionally into our organizational structures by introducing the role of a Learning Facilitator. This role integrates learning into both our internal culture and external collaborations. Within the organization, this involves:

- » Facilitating reflection spaces for teams at key moments in their work cycles.
- » Supporting colleagues in designing workshops and learning formats.
- » Taking stock of our learning practices and identifying areas for growth.
- » Offering new perspectives on how we might approach learning.

Whilst we see the role of a Learning Facilitator as an asset, it also entails the risk of centralizing the responsibility for nurturing learning in a single person. Instead, our intention is that the Learning Facilitator supports the development of collective learning practices and strengthens the distribution of learning across the organization.

Feeding individual learning into the collective

As employees within the organization each on our own professional path, the responsibility for capacity building is shared between the individual and the organization. Alongside seeking out learning opportunities within our individual portfolios, we are supported by a comprehensive employee development concept that actively incorporates capacity building as well as different internal and external measures such as coaching, shadowing, and various training formats.

Beyond channeling our learnings from capacity-building activities into our particular role and tasks, we also try to feed our individual experience and insights back into

the organization. For example, offering a mini workshop to colleagues to share key insights from a training on organizational development or mental health first aid. The opportunity to share with others not only helps us to cement our own newly gained knowledge but it also turns relevant topics into an organization-wide conversation.

Tailoring learning practices to team needs

Across the organization each department has its specific portfolio and team constellation. Defining one way to approach learning simply would not work. Instead, each team has the freedom to develop their own practices tailored to their specific learning styles and needs. Here are just a few highlights:

- » One learning practice that the Networks in Philanthropy team has introduced more recently is a regular reflection designed to gauge the individual and collective well-being of the team. The intention is to widen the focus beyond what they are doing to include how they are finding it and what support they may need in the process. The assumption is that this regular exchange and the subsequent support will positively affect both the quality of their collaboration internally and the outcomes of their work externally.
- » The Bosch Alumni Network Coordination Team has shifted their approach to how they evaluate and learn from projects and activities within the network. Whilst it remains important to reflect on the outcomes, knowing that the conditions in which activities are hosted will be different every time, they have tried to move beyond simply determining whether something was a success or not and instead focus on what can be learnt from the process to inform future endeavors. This is very much a collaborative exercise that is undertaken with network members.

With the diversification of team practices, there is the risk that we develop distinct cultures of learning within the same organization. Here we see the need to design more connection points across teams so that we can learn from how we each approach learning, identifying both context-specific practices as well as common principles.

Connecting across teams

To ensure information flows and that we grow collectively as an organization, we have established various spaces for cross-team learning. These can be small interventions such as Wisdom Nuggets—short knowledge-sharing routines in our weekly team

meetings—but can extend into more structured formats such as reading clubs and entire team retreats. However, the everyday demands of our work can make it easy to remain within silos. During our last team day of 2024, we reflected on the need to strengthen learning across teams. To tap more into this potential, we intend to prototype several collaborative practices in 2025 and beyond, including:

- » Spotlight on learnings—rotating sessions where teams share in depth about recent insights and challenges.
- » Internal shadowing—immersing ourselves in different aspects of our colleagues’ work to learn through observation and hands-on experience.
- » Cross-team projects—identifying intersections in our work to foster deeper collaboration and create space for serendipity.

Learning with partners and in networks

As an organization that believes in the power of communities, networks, and ecosystems, we cannot limit the scope of our learning to organizational needs. Learning plays a vital role in leveraging the potential of relational infrastructure. This becomes palpable for example in our commitment to peer learning as reflected in initiatives such as the R&D Lab and the Wasan Huddles, which are introduced on pages 18 & 19.

In the constantly developing and maturing Bosch Alumni Network, we are noticing and responding to a shift in priorities—from focusing primarily on what we can do together to how we can support each other and learn together (read more about this on pages 8-11).

We trust that in creating spaces where we can “be” and learn together, we are laying the foundations for other desirable “results” to emerge.

So, how can we build our capacity to learn and adapt in ways that prepare us for unknown futures?

Through a continual, cyclical process of learning and unlearning, we are not only strengthening our individual capacity to meet emerging challenges, but also hold the ambition to cultivate learning as a quality of the system—one that expands our collective awareness and supports our ability to evolve over time.

FOSTERING LEARNING AND INNOVATION IN A FRAGMENTED ECOSYSTEM

A group discussion with Audrey Guichon, Raphaela Schweiger, and Janina Stürner-Siovitz

In November 2024, EPIM’s inaugural Forum convened 38 actors from across Europe’s migration ecosystem. The gathering was a social lab designed to explore new ways of relating and working together. It marked the beginning of a five-year journey, applying an ecosystemic approach to reimagining migration in Europe. The initiative is founded on the belief that improving the ecosystem requires a shared purpose, better collaboration, and a rethinking of relationships, power dynamics, and resource flows.

Currently, migration is heavily focused on securitization, often isolated from other societal issues. Consultation rather than co-creation remains the norm. Repetitive conversations and performative speeches are common, and spaces are often designed to reinforce binaries, such as viewing civil society and policymakers or funders and non-funders as opposing sides.

EPIM—the European Philanthropic Initiative for Migration—aims to do things differently. The ambition is to bring together diverse actors from across the ecosystem in a safe and brave space to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the issues the migration ecosystem faces and to create shared visions and solutions. The Forum thus serves to shape EPIM’s future directions and builds on the belief that, through a series of ripple effects, Forum members will amplify the joint visions, learnings, and approaches that emerge, spreading them throughout the ecosystem.

In the coming years, EPIM seeks to foster meaningful conversations, purpose-driven collaborations, and a shared understanding of key issues to enhance the ecosystem’s capabilities and tactics for positive change. Ultimately, it aspires to instill hope and nurture renewed visions for migration, democracy, and belonging.

This commitment to host the EPIM Forum offers a rare opportunity for a small part of the migration ecosystem to press pause, make sense, and learn amidst urgency. Feedback from the first Forum indicated that many conversations remained somewhat comfortable and at the surface level, as participants were still getting acquainted. The ecosystem’s siloed nature was evident, with deep disconnects in terminology, working cultures, and interests. While challenging, openly discussing these issues and bringing these conversations and ideas into other related ecosystems and subsystems should be seen as positive disruptions—steps toward more open and transformative conversations.



About EPIM and the collaboration with iac Berlin

EPIM, the European Philanthropic Initiative for Migration, is Europe’s largest and longest-standing philanthropic collaborative acting at the intersection between migration, democracy and belonging. EPIM funds and nurtures alliances and partnerships, curates the migration ecosystem, and cultivates a shared narrative for belonging and democratic resilience. In 2024, EPIM and iac Berlin embarked on a collaborative journey to co-design and co-curate the EPIM Forum for the next 5 years. This partnership aims to foster mutual learning and innovation through this unique experiment.

www.epim.info

What’s your perspective and professional experience of the migration ecosystem?

Janina: I perceive a dilemma as there is the idea and will to collaborate cross-sectorally and to coordinate across disciplines. Nevertheless, there is a lack of resources and therefore competition among actors for funding and ideas. It almost feels like there is one system for policymakers and another one for civil society and grassroots organizations, with very different understandings of what migration and displacement mean, what ways there are to address them, and what good visions for the future would be. There is a will for better cooperation, but we still live in a system that often inspires competition instead of cross-sector partnerships.

Audrey: By definition, our actions are not neutral in this ecosystem. Actors in philanthropy aim to provide ways to understand and interpret the ecosystem, how to engage with it, and in what ways to nudge it to evolve. There is a lot of internal and external influencing in this role. For a long time, I assumed there was more alignment than there actually is regarding which direction to go.

Raphaela: We also need to acknowledge that there is a lot of ‘othering’ within our professional space. For example, civil society often doesn’t put itself into the shoes of the dilemmas policymakers are facing—and vice versa. It’s not only a lack of trust but also a lack of shared spaces and conversations that we need to address to bring these experiences together.



RAPHAELA SCHWEIGER

How do you see the potential of the EPIM Forum to offer a different direction from what you described as challenges within the migration ecosystem?

Janina: I liked that there were no stars at the Forum. That might sound strange but quite often when you’re in workshops or meetings—whether in policy, research, or civil society—there are “stars,” participants who do a lot of the talking and get a lot of the attention. But this didn’t happen. It had a strong focus on creating practical ways to drive positive change in the migration ecosystem without ignoring ongoing negative dynamics. But it made a big difference that these discussions did not shift into

othering and questioning whose fault it is—which still happens way too often across the system, as Raphaela said. I believe the Forum can play an important role in breaking these dynamics beyond its boundaries.

Audrey: However large or narrow we understand the scale of the Forum to be, I think there is value in purposively engaging in the process and going with it. I don’t necessarily have a clear vision about how the EPIM Forum will evolve—I don’t have the recipe or the road map—but we’re definitely on the road to somewhere. There is value in engaging earnestly and fully with the process, knowing that we agree that the foundations of it are what needs to change to enable different approaches.

Raphaela: To me, two things stand out as different. One is a systemic view on the migration ecosystem. We had many conversations that were moving us almost out of what migration is, because migration, immigration, and diversity are everywhere. So, how do you look at a system that is not a stand-alone system by itself? The second point is being able to have difficult conversations and think about things from a different angle. That’s the goal: To strategically gather people who are actively engaged in their spheres of influence, and to create a space to talk differently, think differently, and to create new visions and ways of working.

Janina: If we take an approach that addresses an entire ecosystem seriously, there has to be room for experimentation as well as for failure. If we dare to think beyond our own walls and to build new and unexpected partnerships, there are going to be so many effects that we can’t even predict now—that is the power behind this collective engagement.

Raphaela: At a certain point, it will be a question for the Forum of how far and how diverse the perspectives should be. This also relates to having an impact and having difficult conversations because otherwise we’ll end up in a comfortable bubble while the outside world is moving in another direction

Building on that and keeping the intention at heart: what are signals you look for to shape and lead this process forward with all the dynamics you already shared?

Audrey: It’s about bringing in those who are not currently in a comfort zone. That ability to sit with the discomfort and to acknowledge that this is what we can achieve is, for me, an indicator that we are doing the right thing. On a warmer note, I was very encouraged by the fact that everybody was much more positive and much more solution-driven than I was initially coming into the meeting. And that says something.

Janina: One of these signals would be a shift from the dynamic of competition towards a dynamic of looking out for each other. Another signal could be found in the way researchers, civil society, and policy-makers interact. At the moment, this isn’t working very well, there are a lot of misunderstandings, and on all sides there are people who feel like the others are not listening or do not understand what is at stake. In short, it would be a move from advocacy that is more of a one-way street towards joint learning and joint development of ideas. And then a third signal would be about narratives. We often talk about narratives and how to shape them but often we are not sure how to do that. Getting a better grasp on how to deal with narratives would also be an indicator that something is happening.



JANINA STÜRNER-SIOVITZ

Raphaela: The beauty of EPIM is that it’s not only the Forum. It’s the ecosystem, it’s the action that comes with the thematic clusters, it’s the pooled resources that we can invest to address core challenges that are jointly being identified. This includes some very tricky political questions. Moving from EPIM as an investor in civil society across Europe to an investor in the ecosystem and its core challenges is a big and important step.

Which role do you hope to play in the future and what do you think you still need to learn for that? Likewise, how does the migration ecosystem need to shift for you to be able to play that role?

Raphaela: For me, it’s about being able to have conversations with actors who have very different opinions of how the system should look like or what strategies to apply. It’s about being a platform in this space where such conversations can be held in a constructive way. And it’s about being able to test ideas and to radically think about how we move such an ecosystem forward.

Audrey: I hope to show up in earnest, both as a Porticus person and as a person within the migration ecosystem. I also hope to be brave in the way I show up and engage, especially with the more difficult conversations. I also want to use the diversity of views, ideas, and conversations that we are bound to have as part of the Forum to inform what I’m doing when I go back to my own organization.

Janina: One of the roles I find myself playing as a researcher and as a consultant, when in a setting with many different stakeholders, is to take different languages seriously: How do different actors speak about migration and displacement? What do they mean? It’s also about making sure they understand each other. It’s about keeping people at the table and getting new people to join these difficult conversations so that we can think beyond what each single actor considers possible and to drive positive change.

Raphaela: We always talk about multi-sector alliances and so on. But we are still bad at building these. We all need to experiment, to learn, and also to go bigger on some of the things that start as tiny pilots. It’s great, and it’s nice, and everybody likes each other at the end of the day. But how do we go big? These are very political questions. Having the Forum as a nucleus for these conversations and exchanges would be really valuable.



AUDREY GUICHON

Participants

Audrey Guichon (Portfolio Manager, Porticus)

Audrey has led Porticus work focused on people on the move for the past 4 years. Before that she worked with the Freedom Fund and has spent most of her career working at the intersection of migration, exploitation, and gender.

Janina Stürner-Siovitz (Researcher)

Janina is a consultant, researcher, and founder of the Equal Partnerships Project. With 9 years of experience in diverse migration settings her work focuses on creating multi-stakeholder partnerships and strengthening bottom-up migration governance in Europe, Africa, and at the global level.

Raphaela Schweiger (Director, Robert Bosch Stiftung)

Raphaela is a Director at the Robert Bosch Stiftung, leading the work on migration and immigration society. For more than a decade, Raphaella has helped build multi-stakeholder partnerships on migration and beyond. From 2021 to 2025 Raphaella was the Chair of EPIM and was an integral part of EPIM’s transition into its new phase.

SUPPORTING TRANS-DISCIPLINARY THINKING THROUGH **GRANTEE NETWORKS**

Each of us brings unique perspectives, routines, and resources to our problem-solving efforts. However, our individual viewpoints and capacities are always embedded in a larger context and influenced by the fields we are working in. To effectively address complex challenges, we must embrace this interconnectedness and look beyond silos—we need to upend our trans-disciplinary thinking capacities. Grantee networks with their wealth of expertise and connections can serve as platforms for fostering this approach.

The Bosch Alumni Network has long provided spaces for peer learning through a variety of events and opportunities. Yet, 2024 marked a significant moment in this ongoing development, as two juxtaposing approaches have been deliberately pursued:

- » Bringing together heterogeneous groups to explore diverse contexts and fields and to learn one specific method
- » Convening homogeneous groups to jointly gain insights from different fields.

The System Change Academy, held in November in Athens, Greece, and a workshop on Facilitating Transdisciplinary Research Group Meetings in Berlin, Germany, are examples of these approaches and showcase how embracing heterogeneity can unlock new capacities for trans-disciplinary learning and collaboration.

Systems Change Academy

Addressing complex challenges requires moving beyond isolated expertise as well as engaging with the interconnections

between disciplines, sectors, and societal structures. Therefore, the Systems Change Academy supported a heterogeneous group of 25 professionals from 19 countries in jointly developing a systems-thinking mindset—one that embraces complexity, fosters transdisciplinary collaboration, and provides practical tools for navigating transformation.

Held in Athens in November 2024, the Academy combined conceptual learning with applied practice. Through exchanges with experienced systems thinkers and work on real-life cases, participants deepened their understanding of systemic properties such as interconnectedness, emergence, and “nestedness”. A core element of the program was recognizing patterns and narratives that either sustain or inhibit change, allowing participants to identify leverage points within their own professional contexts.

Beyond theoretical insights, the Academy emphasized personal and relational work. Through facilitated workshops and peer learning formats, participants strengthened their capacity to hold diverse viewpoints, integrate different approaches, and engage in reflective practice. They learned to see connections across complex challenges, to explore how change unfolds over time and at different levels, and to apply structured frameworks from the field of systems change to their own inquiries.

As part of an ongoing Academy series within the Bosch Alumni Network, the Systems Change Academy demonstrates how bringing together people with diverse experiences and perspectives to learn one specific method can provide fertile ground for trans-disciplinary thinking. Previous academies focused on topics such as Democracy (2023) and Governance (2022).

Facilitating Transdisciplinary Research Group Meetings

To respond to the needs of a rather homogeneous group—researchers working in Germany on sustainability topics—a workshop was organized, focusing on facilitation techniques for transdisciplinary research teams. The focus was on supporting participants in establishing facilitation skills and methods in

their daily work that tap into diverse perspectives and collective intelligence—a trait that is not overly common in science and has the potential to significantly increase the effectivity and creativity of outcomes.

The initiative was started by a two-day workshop held in March 2024 near Berlin, where 25 participants established trust and a sense of belonging within the group while exploring the broader role of science in society and challenges of transdisciplinary collaboration in their field of work.

A follow-up workshop in October provided a more focused exploration of facilitation methods. The participants engaged in practical sessions on structuring meetings, moderating discussions, and fostering inclusive decision-making. Experiencing facilitation methods first-hand, they evaluated how these techniques—traditionally used in other fields—can strengthen collaboration in transdisciplinary research as well. By working within a homogeneous group, the participants were able to connect easily and to reflect on shared challenges.

The workshop created a new group of trust and support within the Bosch Alumni Network as well, that can help its members navigate challenges. Additionally, a workbook compiling the tools and skills explored during the sessions was also developed, receiving very positive feedback not only from the participants but from colleagues in the field as well.

The approach and setup of this workshop series underscores how insights from other disciplines can refine and strengthen collaboration within a specific professional community.



Diversity and heterogeneity as an asset in grantee networks

Heterogeneity, well facilitated, can be an asset in grantee networks that contributes to its overall impact and health. The approaches to creating learning spaces as tried out in the Bosch Alumni Network embrace heterogeneity from different angles. They require intentional structuring, thoughtful event design, and skilled facilitation to be effective. For Learning Facilitators (see page 18 & 19 for more on this), these formats offer valuable opportunities to apply different methodologies for leveraging the richness of diverse perspectives and for expanding participants’ thinking through exposure to unfamiliar contexts.

www.boschalumni.net



NAVIGATING TRANSFORMATION—NETWORKS AS CATALYZERS FOR FUTURE SKILLS AND PROVIDERS OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Grantee and alumni networks can serve as reliable resources in times of uncertainty, offering support, orientation, valuable knowledge and skills. As the needs of their members shift in times of crisis, networks must remain adaptable and flexible to meet these. Transformation literacy is becoming increasingly important for many who co-shape their networks and communities as it allows a focus on future skills to be combined with the need for emotional support and safe spaces for peer exchange. The Bosch Alumni Network (BAN) exemplifies how to provide opportunities for developing future skills as well as for experiencing emotional support.

Recognizing this wish for capacity building and strengthening personal resilience, the first ‘Call for Learning Formats’ was launched in the Bosch Alumni Network with the aim of reaching new target groups and exploring the types of formats that emerge when future skills, innovative learning methodologies, and personal development are prioritized. The initiative sought to create learning spaces where skills that are essential for transformation could be developed collaboratively, ensuring that members learn not just with each other, but from each other. A pivotal factor of this approach was not to ask for themes or topics to learn about—but for formats of learning.

The response was resounding. Many of the submissions underscored that members increasingly seek resilience, inner strength, and well-being as essential components of their professional and personal development. Mental health, relaxation, and emotional empowerment emerged as central themes, reinforcing the idea that the ability to organize and act effectively is deeply connected to personal well-being. In a rapidly changing

world, these elements are no longer ancillary but fundamental to sustaining the ability to learn, lead, and create impact.

Developing more holistic forms of support

This evolution has also been reflected in the types of projects and perspectives that emerged from the initiative. Several proposals for well-being retreats and peer-to-peer leadership formats gained prominence, leading to successful implementations for example in India and Kenya in 2024. These formats put emphasis on trust and the creation of safer spaces to discuss leadership challenges.

By fostering environments where members feel safe to share experiences, challenges, and aspirations, the Bosch Alumni Network acknowledges that deep learning happens when individuals feel safe and connected. By supporting members across diverse regions and sectors, the network not only enhances individual capacity but also strengthens the collective ability to navigate change. This shift towards a more holistic, emotionally aware learning culture is not just a response to current challenges—it is an investment in a more resilient, connected, and future-ready community.

Addressing emotional needs in complex times

Being active in various social initiatives, many network members experience that leading a civil society organization or social impact company comes with unique pressures. The demands of “new work” structures, the urgency of addressing societal crises with limited funding, and personal challenges such as health, parenthood, or shifting responsibilities can make leadership a deeply personal and often isolating journey. Balancing professional responsibilities with personal aspirations often leaves little time for self-reflection. These demands feature prominently in the two exemplified member initiatives.

Art of Leadership Retreat

To explore how leaders in civil society can navigate the complexities of their roles while maintaining balance and resilience,

network members initiated a multi-layered project that culminated in a retreat for reflection, exchange, and mutual support.

The initiative began with a series of online conversations that paved the way for an in-person retreat in November 2024, held in Nairobi, Kenya. The gathering brought together twelve CEOs, founders, and directors from small and medium-sized organizations—each facing the challenge of sustaining both their mission and their personal well-being. Through facilitated dialogue, case clinics, and coaching sessions, the retreat provided an opportunity to step back from daily responsibilities, reflect on leadership practices, and explore strategies for navigating uncertainty.

Beyond structured discussions, the retreat integrated well-being, nature, and culture-based activities, recognizing that resilience is not only built through professional skills but also through moments of rest, connection, and shared experience. By co-designing and facilitating the retreat themselves, participants quickly developed ownership of the process, ensuring that it was aligned to their needs and realities.

“It was such a life-changing week. The physical space and environment, the new connections across the sector, the conversations about how to change leadership—all of it. I’m so grateful!”

“It was wonderful! I think we all needed that kind of event—to have peers to share, to feel you are not alone in difficult decisions, to get some additional inspiration and ideas.”

Feedback from the anonymous participants’ survey

By shifting the focus of leadership development from purely strategic learning towards including emotional resilience and mutual care this initiative showcases how networks can create spaces that sustain not only professional expertise but also the people behind it.

Self-Clarity Retreat

The Self-Clarity Retreat was held in October in India and provided a space for impact leaders to step away from daily pressures, reconnect with their purpose, and develop a clear vision for their leadership journey.

Set in tranquil hills, the event brought together network members from different areas of life, seeking to deepen their



self-awareness and refine their aspirations. Through workshops, guided meditations, journaling, and group discussions, participants explored such fundamental questions as: What are my core values and motivations? How can I align my leadership with my personal vision? What strategies will help me sustain my well-being while driving impact?

Beyond individual exploration, the retreat fostered a strong sense of community among participants. Sharing experiences and challenges in a supportive environment allowed participants to recognize common struggles and offer one another guidance. The holistic approach reinforced that clarity is not only about strategic direction but also about cultivating the inner stability needed to navigate uncertainty.

Participants left with a renewed sense of confidence, actionable plans for their future, and a commitment to ongoing reflection and support. The retreat demonstrated how networks can create transformative spaces—not just for professional growth, but for the individuals who lead change.

Feedback from the anonymous participants’ survey

“The retreat was a transformative and deeply enriching experience. Not only did I gain many new impulses, I also brought incredible energy back to Berlin. I now want to put this energy into new projects!”

“The event gave me ideas on prioritization and decluttering my mind. It also highlighted the need to have a support system to bounce off thoughts.”

THE NETWORK AT A GLANCE

The Bosch Alumni Network brings together former and current grantees, fellows, partners, and staff members of the Robert Bosch Stiftung in their shared pursuit of an open, just, and sustainable world. The network is a trusted resource for members and the foundation, serving as collective memory and a safe space for exchange, shared learning, and experimentation.

Organized in a decentralized structure, the network connects about 9,000 members with common interests and different backgrounds from around 140 countries.

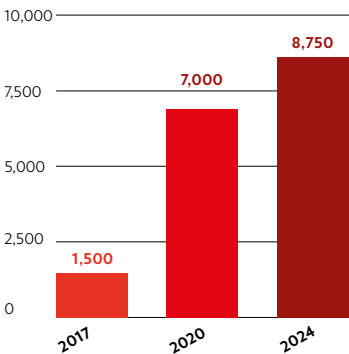
Through the network, the Robert Bosch Stiftung supports its fellows and grantees in their role as changemakers beyond the limited timeframe of a program or a grant. The Bosch Alumni Network strengthens the connections between members and the foundation, offering a role model for impact-oriented alumni networks.

The network is curated by network members acting as thematic hosts, project leads, or regional coordinators as well as a Coordination Team of the iac Berlin staff.

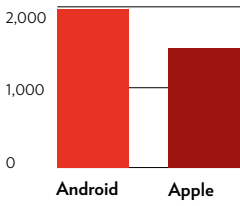
www.boschalumni.net



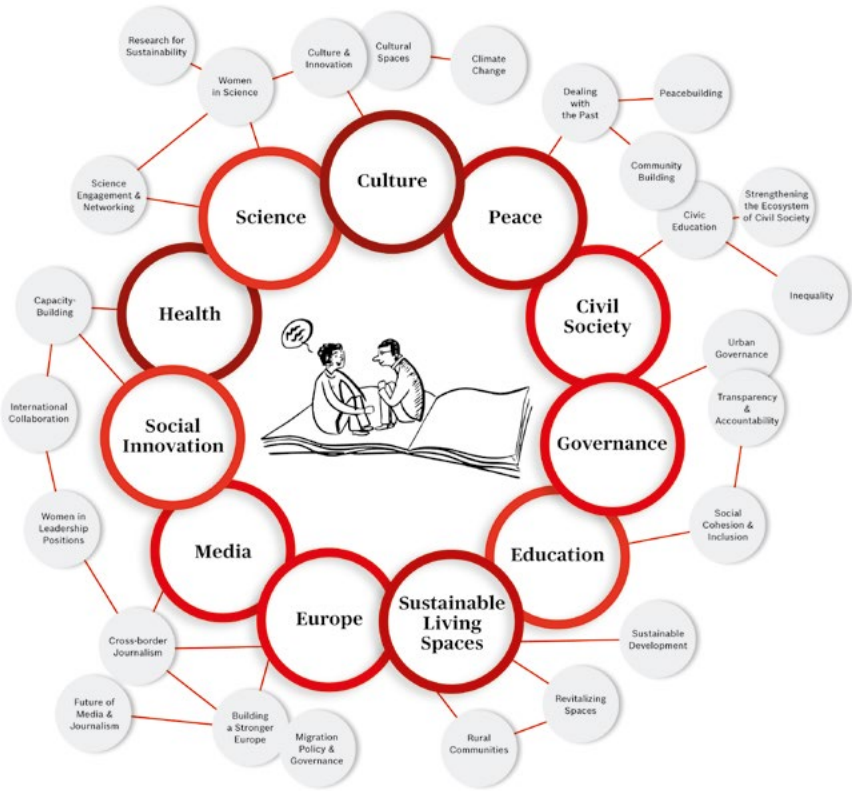
Various possibilities to connect



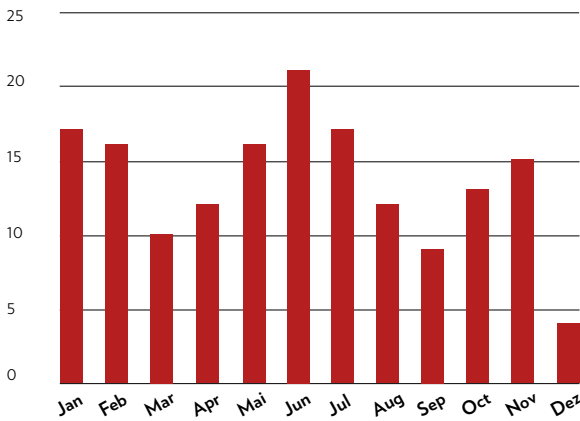
Network members connected on the platform



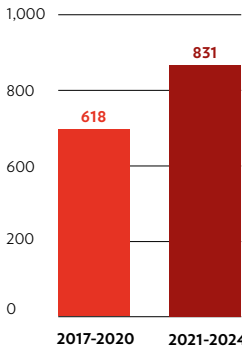
Installations of the mobile app



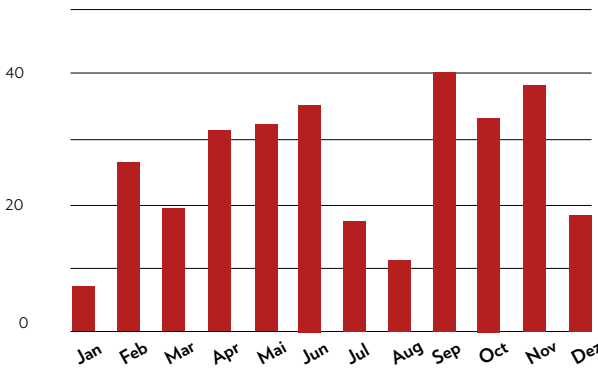
Clusters & Communities of Practice



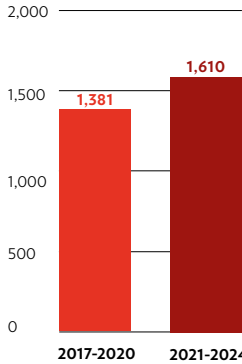
Opportunities created in 2024



Opportunities created overall



Events created by members in 2024



Events created overall

Approach

- We support each other to amplify our collective impact.
- We share perspectives, knowledge, and expertise.
- We learn together to develop skills for the future.
- We give and receive emotional support from each other.
- We take action and responsibility for shaping our network.

HOW TO SHIFT FROM AN ORGANIZATIONAL SURVIVAL MODE TO FOCUSING ON THE HEALTH OF A FIELD?

Phases in which the survival of an organization takes precedence over its goals and ambitions are likely familiar to many non-profit organizations around the world. Financial instability and political repression are some of the triggers for such dynamics. In some contexts, however, this is not merely a temporary phase but an ongoing reality—one that tends to worsen rather than improve. Financial scarcity, censorship, and restrictive legal frameworks often become the “normal” conditions under which these organizations operate.

While this combination of constraints may feel relatively new in parts of Europe and North America—where civic spaces are increasingly affected by authoritarian shifts and societal polarization—other regions have a much longer history of operating under such conditions. Countries in the Middle East and North Africa, for instance, have been more deeply impacted by the human-made polycrisis, with a decade-long economic depression and a series of past and ongoing wars. Working in the civic space under these circumstances also carries emotional legacies: the recurring and burdensome question of whether to continue resisting or to surrender—often by emigrating—is a reality many grapple with.

Culture in the Civic Space in the MENA Region

Therefore, shifting an organization’s focus away from the understandable aim of sheer survival toward caring for the field it operates in may not seem intuitive—but it is deeply relevant. This became clear in the responses to our invitation to join the program “Culture in the Civic Space in the MENA Region”, which placed at its core the intention to explore and strengthen solidarity, and to understand how such an organizational shift can take shape. In autumn 2024, twelve organizations working with arts and culture in the civic space in Morocco, Tunisia,

Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan accepted the invitation to join this learning journey.

To support this inquiry on both a conceptual and practical level, the program is shaped around several focus areas for learning and experimentation, including questions such as:

- » What role can the organization I work for play in supporting its broader field—and what is my individual contribution to that effort?
- » How is this field currently shaped, and what forms of support are needed to strengthen its health and move it toward a more desired state?
- » What alternative forms of collaboration and connection could help facilitate such a development?

Creating spaces for imagination and collective resilience

One of the key approaches of the program is to create spaces for imagination—spaces where participants can observe and listen without being overwhelmed by the crises surrounding them. These moments are also used to explore new or evolving roles that help sustain a field of actors working in resistance to dominant structures. A metaphor that resonated strongly with the group was that of a marine ecosystem, which helped participants reflect on and clarify the types of support they might test within their fields.

So far, the learning conversations have surfaced several directions that will guide the program’s evolution and experimentation in 2025. Some participants perceive the program as “an invitation to think beyond ourselves—to think about other people and entities—which expands ourselves.” Furthermore, different constellations of organizations will examine, for instance, alternative funding models and decentralized approaches to support field health. Others will explore how roles such as support structures or collaboration facilitators might contribute to healing, adapting, and growing spaces of action for a shared purpose. Inspired by conversations around keystone species—like the starfish in

marine ecosystems—another thread of inquiry focuses on the potential qualities of a resilience-building role that helps teams navigate and adapt to challenging conditions.

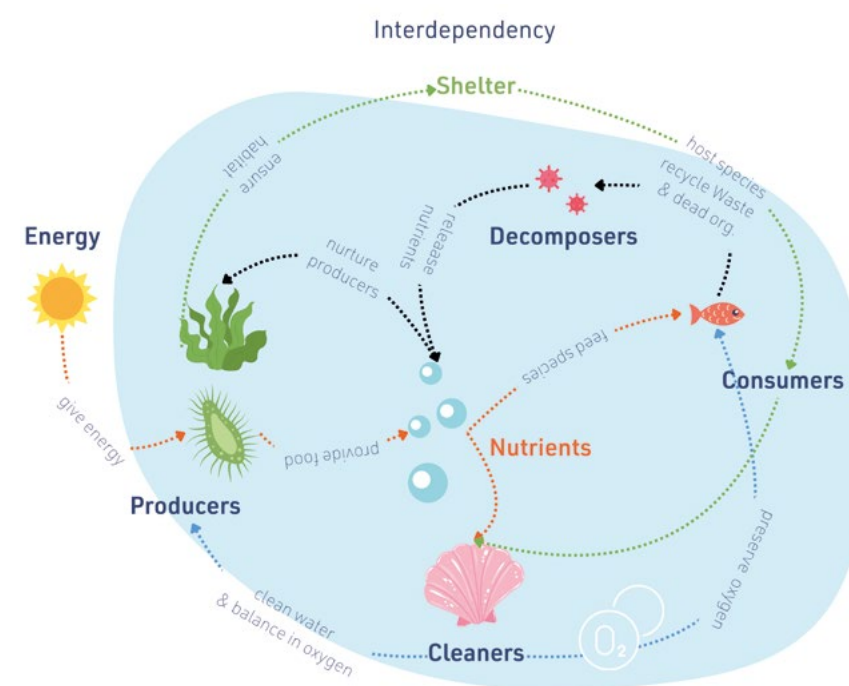
Prototyping pathways for field support

These explorations connect well to the organizational journeys that participants will embark on and that reflect the direction inspired by the Learning Journey so far. For example:

- » Hassala will explore ways to set up a “trust fund” for independent filmmaking in Egypt.
- » Al-Badil will experiment with participatory methods to map the arts and culture ecosystem in Tunisia and support the mobility of artists between rural and urban contexts through small-scale travel grants and gatherings.
- » Khidr is piloting cooperative and decentralized fundraising models to support ecological restoration and food sovereignty projects. Alongside this, Khidr is creating opportunities for collaboration between artist and farmers—using artistic practices to surface authentic relationships to land, highlight endemic plant life, and make ecological knowledge more visible. These efforts will take shape through community gardens, workshops, and public events, aiming to strengthen local food systems.

Together, these experiments reflect on the supportive roles that organizations can play in reimagining how arts and cultural ecosystems within the civic space in the region might evolve toward greater resilience. By placing imagination, purpose, and field support at the core of their work, each organization is deepening its own learning practice contributes to a broader, collective journey as well—one that opens up new possibilities for the future of civic space in the region.

www.field-supporters.net



The iac Berlin will run this program from 2024 to 2026 also with the aim to establish a caring role for Field Supporters which can be handed over to one or more organizations from the region in its final phase. The program is funded by the Ford Foundation.

CHANNELING REGIONAL KNOWLEDGE INTO INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY

In an increasingly multipolar world, where global frameworks are shifting and traditional alliances are under pressure, the role of networks and relational approaches in international collaboration has never been more critical. In a pursuit to identify leverage points in their international cooperation, Germany's Federal Foreign Office (GFFO) tapped into the Global Diplomacy Lab's (GDL) network capabilities and lab methodologies for actionable insights and recommendations that were rooted in regional activities yet connected to international strategies.

Climate change crises, economic disparities, and geopolitical fragmentation create an increasingly more interconnected, global crisis that requires international actors to rethink their approaches to collaboration—which is true for diplomacy and policymaking as well. A key challenge here is to ensure that multilateral systems remain responsive and inclusive, particularly in engaging voices from diverse regions and communities.

The cooperation between Germany's Federal Foreign Office and the GDL on a corresponding research task to advise actual policy-making was an unusual collaboration despite their institutional ties. At its core, the project sought to answer how a huge political entity could modernize its international partnerships to navigate a multipolar world effectively—preferring networked solutions to institutional or hierarchical ones.

Building on more inclusive, regional perspectives

The initiative examined the potential for change along three strategically important countries from the Global South, each representing different regional challenges and opportunities. The countries were also selected to explore perspectives that are often missed by established western policymaking—a gap the project sought to bridge by fostering a better understanding of the perspectives and needs of these specific countries by sourcing insights from civil society.

The GFFO selection of the three was based on key factors such as geopolitical interests and existing diplomatic relations to ensure alignment with the broader international strategy; feasibility of piloting projects which led to prioritization of stable regions with an enabling environment for cooperation; representation of active network members in those countries to facilitate the implementation of GDL formats and methodologies.

The selected countries were:

- » Colombia: The country's trajectory toward peace and stability after over 50 years of civil war requires addressing the inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly indigenous and rural communities, in decision-making processes. At the same time, Colombia's emerging leadership in the green transition offers an opportunity to foster environmentally sustainable partnerships that strengthen local communities and reinforce shared values of inclusivity and equity.
- » Kenya: Pressing challenges for the country include high youth unemployment, limited access to specialized vocational training, and underdeveloped entrepreneurial ecosystems. However, the country's dynamic and youthful population, coupled with its potential for economic diversification, positions Kenya as a regional leader.

- » Morocco: Intensifying drought conditions and water scarcity in Morocco are widening rural-urban divides and threatening the country's social and economic stability. Simultaneously, relevant technology transfer in line with regional adaptation mechanisms offer a way to mitigate these conditions.

A key component of the project was the use of the GDL's Lab methodology—a structured yet flexible approach designed to engage diverse perspectives and evaluate multi-dimensional challenges. In these Labs, co-creation processes take place as part of an interdisciplinary and intercultural undertaking in which participants interact in person and where new insights and networks are formed.

Actionable results for policymaking

In all three countries, specific Labs were organized by members of the network with local stakeholders that eventually led to a substantive final report called "Rethinking Global Partnerships: Navigating Multipolar Contexts" which outlines strategic opportunities to strengthen Germany's partnerships with Colombia, Kenya, and Morocco.

The recommendations focused on core areas with concrete actions:

1. Driving inclusive climate and energy partnerships
2. Empowering youth through skill-building and entrepreneurship
3. Strengthening dialogue and governance systems

The benefits of implementing the proposed actions would enable Germany to better address shared global challenges such as climate change, inequality, and unemployment in a way that is both context-specific and locally driven and these partnerships would engage diverse stakeholders—including marginalized communities and youth—to create scalable, inclusive solutions that align with frameworks such as the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This project demonstrates that even within traditionally hierarchical fields like diplomacy and policymaking, networked and participatory approaches can unlock new and more inclusive pathways for meaningful and lasting international cooperation. It underscores the importance of:

- » Context-specific solutions: Policies and partnerships must be shaped by those directly affected rather than imposed from the outside.
- » Flexible, adaptive collaboration: Traditional diplomatic frameworks often struggle to incorporate non-state actors and decentralized networks. More fluid, responsive structures are needed.
- » The power of unlikely platforms: Engaging with unconventional partners such as grassroots movements, local entrepreneurs, and civil society organizations can offer fresh perspectives and more sustainable impact.

Marking the end of a remarkable ten-year public-private partnership, the Secretariat of the Global Diplomacy Lab was concluded at the end of 2024. This extraordinary collaboration fostered a vibrant community of global experts committed to creating inclusive spaces for open dialogue on urgent local and global challenges.

Its more than 300 members will remain connected through the network's decentralized structure and additional exchange platforms, such as the Bosch Alumni Network. The GDL website will continue to serve as a resource, archiving the many Labs and initiatives and offering ongoing inspiration for the potential of inclusive diplomacy.

iac Berlin has proudly served as the GDL's implementing partner since 2018. We extend our deepest gratitude to all members of the GDL and to our partners—the German Federal Foreign Office, the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, the BMW Foundation, the German-American Fulbright Commission, Stiftung Mercator, and the Global Leadership Academy of GIZ—for their vision, dedication, and unwavering commitment.

www.global-diplomacy-lab.org



PEER LEARNING—REFLECTIONS ON THE EVOLVING ROLE OF A LEARNING FACILITATOR

At its core, peer learning is about the exchange and generation of knowledge and skills amongst a particular group of people. A peer learning initiative may arise organically from a collective, but often it is sparked by an individual person or organization. However it may start, it can only be sustainable when there is a sense of collective ownership with multiple people feeling responsible for the group’s development over time. So how can you grow a single spark into a shared fire for learning?

Throughout the year we initiated several peer learning formats to tap into our collective intelligence and to think beyond individual and organizational boundaries. You can read more about some of these formats in the rest of this publication. Through these experiences we learnt a lot about how the role of a Learning Facilitator evolves throughout the process of designing, initiating, and sustaining peer learning.

Two key formats—valuable not only for their content but for how they fostered peer learning—have been the “R&D Lab on Ecosystem Catalyzation” and the “Huddle on Learning in Networks.” Both were developed as prototypes to test different ways of deepening learning and exchange around relational approaches within the Wasan Network.

R&D Lab on Ecosystem Catalyzation

This four-day in-person Research and Development Lab brought together twelve peers who represent different perspectives and experiences of working with ecosystems: the practitioners, the coaches, and the observers. By bridging different roles and perspectives, participants sought to deepen their collective understanding of what it means to nurture and nudge ecosystems towards more desirable futures. The

goal was to prototype a format that enables participants to collaboratively generate insights more relevant and resonant for the wider field than could be achieved alone.

The lab design was guided by a balance between more structured facilitation and open exploration. As hosts, we held spaces, connected and invited participants into exchange, and supported the process towards more co-creation. At the same time, we participated as peers—bringing in our own questions, proposing topics, and engaging in discussions.

Throughout the event, we surfaced our collective experiences and understanding around working with ecosystems, explored points of convergence and divergence, and grounded abstract concepts through concrete examples. More informal formats, such as guided walks, allowed us to not only engage cognitively but also explore our shared theme more holistically. Open space sessions provided room for decentralized and more personalized learning.

More than a knowledge-sharing exercise, the lab became an experiment in facilitation itself—an exploration of how the interplay between structure and openness can foster emergent learning and spark new avenues of collaboration.

Huddle on Learning in Networks

Developed by Huddlecrafft, Huddles are purposeful, pop-up peer groups that explore a shared inquiry over a set period of time. In 2024, our Learning Facilitator initiated a 6-month online Huddle by inviting 8-12 practitioners to explore the essential ingredients for learning to flow effectively through communities, networks, and ecosystems. Rather than delivering predefined content, the huddle was co-created, with participants bringing their own questions, experiences, and perspectives, to jointly shape the learning journey.

The role of the Learning Facilitator in this journey was threefold:

1. As convener, initiating the exchange by sharing a question of personal interest and welcoming others into the exploration.
2. As host of the learning journey, guiding the overarching process while ensuring that responsibility for outcomes remained shared among participants.
3. As an active learner, following individual inquiries within the broader exchange.

The design of the series was intentionally flexible—beginning with a kick-off to build trust, surface the group’s peer learning potential, and co-design a curriculum, followed by bi-weekly meet-ups where participants took turns hosting sessions based on their own interests. One-on-one “buddy exchanges” between sessions provided further space for deeper reflection, personal support, and accountability. The journey ended with an event to share learnings with the wider community.

Insights and observations from facilitating peer learning

Our main reflections on the role of a Learning Facilitator can be distilled into several key insights that balance the need to provide overarching guidance and structure whilst also nudging towards more co-ownership and decentralization. Through our experiences of designing, initiating, and sustaining peer learning, we have learnt that there is no one way to “be” a Learning Facilitator. Facilitators navigate multiple tensions—from sensing when to invite more divergence or convergence to recognizing when to step out of one role and into another. The key is to remain open and to continuously engage in self-reflection. Finding ways to observe what is happening within the group while staying connected to their own intentions allows facilitators to remain present and responsive through each phase.

www.wasan-network.org

Key insight and its application
Crafting the invitation –Striking a balance between clarity and openness	The way an invitation is framed will influence who feels drawn to participate. A clear yet open starting intention provides direction whilst also allowing for co-creation. In the Huddle, participants were attracted by the initial learning question and then invited to shape their own questions within our shared inquiry.
Dedicating time to getting to know each other	In peer learning, the group itself is the most valuable resource. Prioritizing connecting and getting to know each other early in the process will make these learning potentials visible to the entire group. A combination of structured and informal exchanges such as sharing personal stories and motivations or connecting beyond sessions can help foster trust and an open learning culture.
Navigating the multiple hats of a Learning Facilitator	Navigating the multiple roles you may take on—while also managing the group’s expectations—is not easy. It helps to address these as clearly and transparently as possible. Throughout the R&D Lab, we reflected openly with the group about how our role was evolving, including moments where we experienced conflict between our duties as hosts (e.g. keeping to an agreed structure) and our interests as participants (e.g. letting a conversation flow).
Finding the balance between structure and openness	As a group is forming, there is a tendency to need more structure to find common ground. In this early phase, the role of the Learning Facilitator in guiding the group may be more intensive. Once there is enough clarity around the group’s collective knowledge, experience, and intentions, learning can transition to more self-directed formats like case clinics and open space sessions which allow for more organic exchange.
Recognizing how your role may shift over time	As the group takes more ownership for the learning journey, the facilitator may take a step back, allowing participants to take on more responsibly in collectively setting the direction. It can be liberating to remember that your responsibility is for the overarching process—not for the outcomes. Let yourself be surprised by what comes next!
Ending one cycle before starting another	Even if you sense momentum to continue, find ways to close a learning cycle before starting another. An intentional ending point can be an important moment to reflect on and appreciate the journey thus far before collectively deciding whether there is genuine interest and energy to continue in some form. A clear ending makes space for new formations where roles and structures can evolve naturally. This may be the moment to step out of your role as Learning Facilitator and take on a new one within the scope of whatever comes next.

The Wasan Network started in 2019 as a one-off gathering to explore the power of intentionally-designed networks and has now become a growing international community, driven by a shared interest in the power of relationships to advance social transformation. The network brings together community stewards, network builders, and complexity thinkers from foundations and social change organizations across the Americas, Europe, and increasingly beyond.

OUR COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

The iac Berlin wishes to actively contribute to the development of a sustainable society, learn about sustainability with other organizations, and propagate this knowledge in the wider field of philanthropy. In our view, sustainability is to be established as a principle that goes beyond individual organizations.

The iac Berlin is well-positioned to do this, as all people and organizations in our network address societal challenges through their activities in the public-good sector. Together, we can develop a holistic view of sustainability, implement ideas, and leverage results that contribute to a fairer and healthier world for future generations.

Target dimensions

In our mission to become a truly sustainable organization, we are guided by an established 3-pillar model:

1. Ecological sustainability
2. Social sustainability
3. Economic sustainability

We developed an action plan, choosing to focus on ecological sustainability first and social sustainability subsequently.

Ecological sustainability

We look at greenhouse gas (CO²) emissions in all three scopes: Direct emissions (scope 1) occur directly within the organization. Indirect emissions (scope 2) include heat and energy-related causes. We also included emissions created through business travel in scope 2. Emissions caused by our activities, but not under our direct control, fall under scope 3. Since the end of 2023, the iac Berlin has been considered carbon-neutral regarding scopes 1 and 2. We also intend to reduce our CO² emissions in scope 3, especially with regard to our global network, and to mitigate their ecological impact.

Concrete measures

- » Business trips: We have reduced our carbon footprint from around 46t in 2019 to around 32t in 2024. We consider this reduction of about 33 % to be realistic in terms of our economic sustainability and intend to maintain it.
- » Green Office: Office materials are purchased and delivered in a sustainable and climate-neutral manner; green electricity is used; processes have been digitized where possible; food is ordered locally and in organic quality, and much more. These measures also apply to events in our Community Space.
- » Handouts: To ensure the sustainable consumption of resources, guidelines have been created for colleagues and partners.
- » External services: Orders are only placed after a successful check for sustainability and low emissions.

We are aware that the travel-intensive work of the iac Berlin can lead to a discrepancy between the goals of social and ecological sustainability. We acknowledge that working with impact-oriented networks and organizations needs not only digital, but personal exchange as well. By quantifying the environmental costs of travel, we can better evaluate which—especially long-distance—trips are essential and identify opportunities to reduce unnecessary travel.

For trips that cannot be avoided, we aim to mitigate the environmental impact by supporting reforestation initiatives led by members of our network. Prioritizing these trusted, community-based projects over anonymous certified offsets reflects our belief in fostering sustainable and accountable practices within our established relationships.

These projects not only serve as a means of mitigation, but also provide full transparency into the use of funds and support the ecological engagement of our members:

- » 2024: €1,000 each to
 - BONAVIDA Sustainable Futures: Tree Planting and Vocational Training Project
 - Trees for Girls
 - Agroecological improvements Salice Salentino led
- » 2023: €1,500 each to
 - Women in Uganda (WIGS): One Million Tree Project
 - Ecovisio Tree Planting Initiative in Moldova
- » 2022: € 3,000 to the Ecovisio Tree Planting Initiative in Moldova

Social Sustainability

We consider social sustainability on three levels with respective objectives: **(1)** organizational level; **(2)** partner level; **(3)** network level.

Our goal is to make a positive contribution to long-term social development and to strengthen solidarity and cooperation at all three levels. Our standards are in line with the principles of the European Commission's "European Pillar of Social Rights" and our structures and processes are regularly reviewed and developed with the whole team involved on an equal footing.

Organizational level

The iac Berlin strives to be an inclusive employer where everyone feels respected, safe, and comfortable and can contribute and develop their personalities, skills, and talents.

Measures include:

- » All employees are committed to acting ethically and legally in accordance with a code of conduct—compliance is supported by internal teams and external ombudspersons.
- » A "Policy to prevent violence and sexual harassment" is part of the employment contracts.
- » Shared values and principles provide guidance for behavior and decision-making processes.
- » Permanent and autonomous working groups include the Trust Team, the Wellbeing Team, and the Sustainability Team, as well as an external ombudsperson
- » Support for balancing work and private life includes flexible working hours, home office infrastructure, continued payment of wages when caring for sick children
- » Transparent salary structures and wages based on German public service pay scales
- » Internal and external personnel development measures
- » Encouragement and support of voluntary work
- » Transparent communication of and participation in decision-making and internal development processes
- » German and English as working language as well as support to learn German as a foreign language

Partner level

The values and measures established within our organization also shape our selection criteria for external service providers and our work with partner organizations.

Measures to apply these include:

- » A detailed guideline is being created to check existing and future suppliers, caterers, and lessors of event locations for their social responsibility efforts.
- » Due diligence checks for funders to align with our values and principles

Network level

To support the development of solidary and resilient communities, we design our network activities along jointly and continuously developed principles.

These principles include:

- » Avoidance of institutional or personal dependencies
- » Ensuring that we support change processes rather than trying to force them
- » Prioritizing the reputation and well-being of our partners and employees: In highly polarized contexts, working with us can become a personal risk for network members as third parties may interpret this as e.g. taking sides. We proactively address such risks.

Exemplified by the Bosch Alumni Network, concrete measures based on these principle include:

- » Support for socially relevant projects by network members through regular grants
- » High degree of personal responsibility and involvement of members in juries, working groups, as facilitators, and in central network coordination roles
- » Members-led Trust Team as first responders for conflicts in the network
- » Clear communication of shared values and rules of conduct
- » Efforts to reduce barriers, e.g. by using sign language interpretation, multilingualism, and plain language
- » The Impact Field "Diversity and Inclusion" promotes thematic exchange on social sustainability and serves as a resource for advice.
- » Project support on a basis of trust and without rigid timetables
- » Support for intercultural exchange between members

www.iac-berlin.org/what-we-do/our-commitment-to-sustainability

FINANCE & ACCOUNTING

The following section provides an overview of the financial structure of the International Alumni Center gGmbH.



Resource allocation

In 2024, iac Berlin gGmbH used a total of 2,710 (2,411 in 2023) in financial resources to achieve its charitable goals. Personnel costs accounted for 1,308 (1,117 in 2023) and material costs for 1,415 (1,296 in 2023). (All amounts are stated in Euro in thousand.)

In addition, the approximately 9,000 network members invested volunteer hours for the organization through the implementation of projects, local events, and the development of the network.

Supporters

In 2024, the iac Berlin gGmbH received institutional funding from the Robert Bosch Stiftung GmbH. The BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt, the Ford Foundation, and the Skoll Foundation supported the iac Berlin in the capacity of long-term cooperations.

The Global Diplomacy Lab was supported by the Federal Foreign Office, the Slovenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt, the German-American Fulbright Commission, and the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

The Democracy & Belonging Forum was supported by Porticus and the Robert Bosch Stiftung.

Accounting

The annual financial statements were audited in 2024 by the tax consultancy AIOS Tax AG, taking into account German commercial accounting regulations and the supplementary provisions of our bylaws. The audit of the 2024 financial statements was carried out by Ernst & Young GmbH.

Further planning

For the financial year 2025, we are aiming for a turnover of 2,941k Euro.

Overview of incomes and expenses

Position	2024 (€)	%
Incomes	2.709.725,88	
Robert Bosch Stiftung (institutional support)	1.750.000,00	64,58 %
Robert Bosch Stiftung (projects)	240.780,17	8,89 %
Ford Foundation	222.073,54	8,20 %
BMW Foundation Herbert Quandt	103.241,81	3,81 %
Porticus	92.411,96	3,41 %
German Federal Foreign Office	91.796,40	3,39 %
German-American Fulbright Commission	45.160,22	1,67 %
Own funds	54.169,67	2,00 %
Income from services	6.250,00	0,23 %
Income from asset management	45.576,36	1,68 %
Interest income	4.243,77	0,16 %
Other income	54.021,98	1,99 %
Expenses	2.723.207,73	
Programs	1.922.058,39	70,58 %
Administration	680.243,63	24,98 %
Communication	45.596,03	1,67 %
Services	3.600,98	0,13 %
Asset management	40.190,84	1,48 %
Other	31.517,86	1,16 %

This is not a publication that complies with the statutory form or format (§ 328 (2) HGB)

A detailed financial report can be found at www.iac-berlin.org/transparency.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Non-profit status

The International Alumni Center operates in the fields of international understanding; education and vocational training; science and research. In accordance with the separate determination of compliance with the statutory requirements pursuant to Sections 51, 59, 60 and 61 German Fiscal Code (according to section 60a (1) German Fiscal Code) the International Alumni Center gGmbH is entitled to issue donation confirmations.

Governance

The shareholders’ meeting is the central supervisory body of the International Alumni Center gGmbH. The permanent representatives of the sole shareholder Robert Bosch Stiftung are Atje Drexler (Senior Vice President, Futures and Networks), Silke Breimaier (Senior Manager, Futures and Networks), and Irene Weinz (Senior Expert, Global Issues - Peace).

Team

As of December 31, 2024, iac Berlin gGmbH has 22 employees, 5 student assistants, and 1 marginally employed person.

What we do

The iac Berlin was founded by the Robert Bosch Stiftung to support the development of networks with social impact and to coordinate the Bosch Alumni Network. As a Do & Think tank, we partner with foundations, academia, public institutions, and non-profit organizations to advise on alumni work, contribute practical solutions for the design of Impact Networks, and initiate new forms of collaboration.

Name	International Alumni Center
Registered office	Stuttgart, Germany
Foundation	2017
Legal form	Non-profit limited company
Register entry	Amtsgericht Stuttgart, HRB 759544
Contact	International Alumni Center gGmbH Linienstr. 65a, 10119 Berlin
Telephone	+49 (0)30 288 85 80 00
E-Mail	info@iac-berlin.org
Statute	Charter from October 31, 2019

IMAGE CREDITS

Cover: Tina Kron
P.1 iac Berlin
P.5 Carlotta Cataldi
P.6 Nadine Studeny
P.7 Global Forum on Migration and Development, Porticus
P.9 Georgee Vlachonikolos, Susanne Kitlinski
P.11 Sumit Arora
P.15 Momen Khaled Malkawi, Farah Makki
P.17 Framequest media

IMPRESSUM / IMPRINT

Veröffentlicht durch / Published by: International Alumni Center gGmbH, Linienstraße 65a, 10119 Berlin;
Tel. +49 (0) 30 288 85 80 0; www.iac-berlin.org; info@iac-berlin.org
Registergericht / Registered at: Amtsgericht Stuttgart, Germany; HRB 759544
Geschäftsführer / Managing Director: Darius Polok
Verantwortlich für den Inhalt im Sinne des Presserechts / Responsible for the content in terms of the press law: Darius Polok, Linienstraße 65a, 10119 Berlin
Chefredakteur / Editor-in-Chief: Tobias Gerber
Beitragende / Contributors: Audrey Guichon, Audrey Namdiero-Walsh, Dagmar Hovestadt, Darius Polok, Elizabeth Maloba, Farah Makki, Janina Stürner-Siovit, Lisa Richter, Lucie Menz, Mohab Saber, Naomi Martin, Raphaela Schweiger, Roland Volker, Sophie Ngo-Diep, Tobias Gerber, Vinzenz Himmighofen, Yana Oeser
Design: Tina Kron
Druck / Printing: Königsdruck Printmedien und digitale Dienste GmbH, Alt-Reinickendorf 28, 13407 Berlin

Stay connected!

www.iac-berlin.org

www.linkedin.com/company/iacberlin



natureOffice.com/DE-365-YH6BJGG

