



Wisdom for Our Time

2025 ANNUAL REPORT





Illustration by Sirin Thada for a recent Insights essay, [Contemplative and Ecological Education](#).

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

A Letter from the President

Every page of this report is, at its heart, an expression of gratitude for the researchers, donors, and partners who make this work possible, and for the extraordinary legacy we have the privilege of carrying forward.

Their contributions deepen an inquiry that began nearly four decades ago when three visionaries—Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama; neuroscientist Francisco Varela; and entrepreneur Adam Engle—convened the first Mind & Life Dialogue in Dharamsala, India. There, they asked a radical question: What might become possible if science and contemplative wisdom entered into genuine dialogue?

Nearly four decades later, that question continues to shape a global field of research, inspire new generations of scholars, and bring insights about the mind into the wider world.

This past year, we had the profound privilege of honoring the man whose vision started it all. On July 6, 2025, His Holiness the Dalai Lama turned 90. For Mind & Life, it was a year to celebrate not just a milestone birthday, but a living legacy—one that has shaped the field of contemplative research and touched millions of lives.

In September, Board Chair Thupten Jinpa and I had the privilege of hosting *Bridging Buddhist Wisdom and Modern Science: The Dalai Lama at 90*, an online conversation that has reached more than 27,000 people worldwide. The response moved us deeply—a reminder of how many people feel connected to this vision and its relevance for the world today.

The questions that inspired Mind & Life nearly four decades ago have only grown more urgent. As advances in technology reshape lives, societies become more polarized, and humanity confronts unprecedented environmental challenges, understanding the mind—and the qualities that cultivate wisdom, compassion, and ethical action—has never mattered more.

That same spirit of inquiry animated everything we did in 2025. In partnership with our friends at Mind & Life Europe, we convened the 39th Mind & Life Dialogue in Dharamsala, India—the first held without His Holiness' direct participation—to explore one of the defining questions of our time: how artificial intelligence can be guided by wisdom and ethics. We also convened emerging and established researchers at our 22nd Summer Research Institute on contemplative education; advanced new work in earth awareness, depolarization, and systems change; and shared actionable insights with global audiences through our podcast, *Insights* essays, and Digital Library.

"The most important thing Mind & Life can do in the future is understanding how the mind works because life is underpinned by [the] mind, consciousness."

—His Holiness the Dalai Lama



And we crossed an important threshold—one that speaks to both our history and our future. By the close of 2025, the Mind & Life Endowment in Honor of His Holiness the Dalai Lama reached \$20 million—a collective act of faith in this work and in the generations who will carry it forward.

The close of 2025 also marked an important leadership transition. We celebrated Thupten Jinpa's extraordinary 14 years as Board Chair and warmly welcomed Sona Dimidjian, a distinguished contemplative researcher and longtime Mind & Life Board member, as our incoming Chair. Their shared commitment to this work gives me great confidence in what lies ahead.

As I reflect on this extraordinary year, what strikes me most is not any single event or achievement, but the quality of presence I witnessed again and again—people showing up with open minds and full hearts, asking hard questions, and listening with care. That is the spirit His Holiness brought to this work 38 years ago. It is the spirit I see alive in this community today.

This report is a reflection of that shared work. I hope it fills you with the same sense of possibility I carry with me as we look to what comes next—together.

With love and gratitude,



A stylized handwritten signature in black ink.

SUZANNE BOND
PRESIDENT

OUR REACH AND IMPACT

10 grants; **\$233,358** in catalytic funding

96 participants convened at the 39th Mind & Life Dialogue

10,000+ people engaged with the 39th Mind & Life Dialogue online

68 scholarship recipients from **8 countries** attended the Summer Research Institute

170 attendees joined the Summer Research Institute via livestream

27,000+ viewers celebrated the Dalai Lama's 90th birthday with us online

\$20 million endowment secured—a foundation for generations

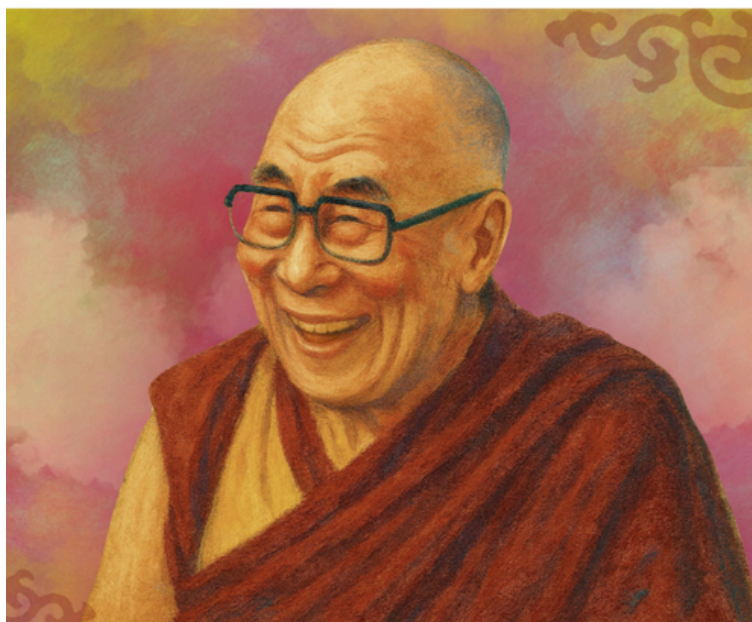
92,400 Insights readers across **100+ countries** since 2022

1.5 million people reached globally through the Mind & Life podcast

Honoring His Holiness the Dalai Lama: A Year of Celebration

On July 6, 2025, His Holiness the Dalai Lama turned 90. For Mind & Life, the occasion called for more than acknowledgment—it called for celebration, reflection, and a renewed commitment to the vision he has championed for nearly four decades.

From the beginning, the Dalai Lama recognized that science and contemplative wisdom each offer distinct yet complementary ways of exploring the nature of mind and reality. That conviction gave rise to Mind & Life in 1987, and it has animated every Mind & Life Dialogue, grant project funded, digital offering, and convening in the years since. His 90th birthday offered a natural moment to honor that legacy—and to ask, together, what it calls us toward now.



Bridging Buddhist Wisdom and Modern Science: The Dalai Lama at 90

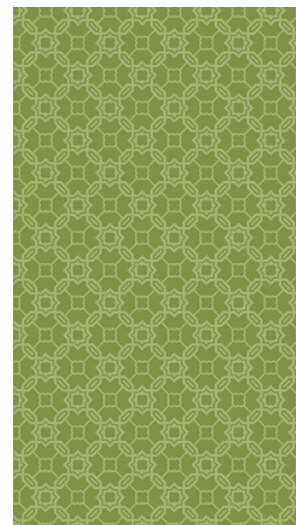
In September 2025, Mind & Life hosted a global [online celebration](#), “Bridging Buddhist Wisdom and Modern Science: The Dalai Lama at 90.” The event featured an hour-long conversation between President Suzanne Bond and Board Chair Thupten Jinpa—tracing the arc of His Holiness' scientific legacy and what it means for the field going forward. More than 1,200 people joined live, with the recording reaching over 27,000 viewers worldwide.



Throughout 2025, we also brought deep care and intention to planning *Wisdom for Our Time*—a celebration of His Holiness' 90th birthday held in Washington, DC in the spring of 2026, designed to honor not only the arc of Mind & Life's history, but the qualities His Holiness himself embodies—his infectious curiosity, his warmheartedness, and his lifelong conviction that understanding the mind and cultivating compassion are essential to human flourishing.

A Legacy Endowed

The year of celebration also marked a milestone in Mind & Life's long-term sustainability. By the close of 2025, the Mind & Life Endowment in Honor of His Holiness the Dalai Lama had grown to \$20 million—thanks to the generous support of donors who believe in the enduring importance of this work. The endowment provides a stable core from which everything else can spring: beginning in 2026, endowment investment income will support approximately one fourth of our annual operating expenses. We still need donor gifts, but this bedrock is insurance that Mind & Life is positioned to endure in perpetuity.



Convening for Change

For nearly four decades, Mind & Life has cultivated dialogue across disciplines, traditions, and generations, creating the conditions for new ideas, relationships, and discoveries to emerge. Two signature gatherings in 2025—made possible by the generosity of this community—reflected both the depth of our roots and the urgency of the moment.



2025 Summer Research Institute: Reimagining Contemplative Education

In June, Mind & Life gathered researchers, educators, clinicians, and contemplatives at the Garrison Institute for the 2025 Summer Research Institute (SRI), *Reimagining Contemplative Education: Shaping a Collective Future*. The program advanced a timely and generative question: how might the integration of contemplative wisdom into educational systems help us rise to the challenges confronting us as a species and a planet?

Donor support allowed Mind & Life to livestream the SRI for the first time, extending participation to more than 170 people around the world. Scholarships also brought voices from eight countries into the gathering, as well as underrepresented researchers and monastics whose perspectives enriched the conversation. Participants returned home with new research relationships, practical tools, and ideas they are already sharing with educators, caregivers, and communities.

"I felt nourished both personally and professionally. I've already shared the insights with my team and they were deeply moved and inspired. Thanks to you, the impact of this experience is already expanding far beyond me—reaching educators, caregivers, and communities who are committed to building a more compassionate and conscious world."

—International scholarship recipient

The 2025 SRI also advanced the development of a measurement toolkit to be housed at Emory University—a concrete step toward ensuring that the insights generated at SRI translate into lasting impact in the field. Two edited volumes informed by the gathering are forthcoming: a special issue of *The Journal of Contemplative Studies on Contemplation in Education and Human Development*, edited by SRI co-chair Rob Roeser; and *Contemplative and Ecological Practices in Education: Philosophy, Science, and Research*, edited by Pooja Sahni and Philip Zelazo, published by Springer Nature.



A distinctive feature of the 2025 SRI was the participation of six Tibetan monastics who contributed to the gathering as researchers, teachers, and discussants. Monastics led contemplative practice sessions, modeled a Tibetan debate, presented posters showcasing their research, and participated in a panel discussion, *The Hundred Year Project: Exploring the Collaboration Between Buddhism and Science for a More Compassionate and Equitable World*.

"I learned so many new ideas from scholars with different backgrounds and educations—but all talking about consciousness and compassion. Now we can share the skills we learn and use the tools of science to share the importance of inner values and how we might cultivate them."

—Geshe Gelek Gyatso, Drepung Loseling Monastery, scholarship recipient

"We talked about selflessness and interdependence. If we can cultivate these two 'wings' together, we can address so many mental problems—from loneliness to discrimination."

—Ani Choyang, Jangchup Choeling Nunnery, scholarship recipient

39th Mind & Life Dialogue: Minds, Artificial Intelligence, and Ethics

In October, the 39th Mind & Life Dialogue convened in Dharamsala, India at the Dalai Lama Library and Archives, steps from where the first Dialogue took place nearly four decades ago. Donor support made it possible to convene 96 participants from across disciplines and traditions—and to extend the Dialogue's reach to more than 10,000 people worldwide who engaged with it online. The theme, *Minds, Artificial Intelligence, and Ethics*, brought together leading scholars, scientists, contemplatives, technologists, policymakers, and business leaders—all united by a shared conviction that the development of artificial intelligence (AI) must be guided by wisdom, ethics, and a deep understanding of the human mind.

The Dialogue marked a significant milestone in Mind & Life's history as the first convened without the physical presence of the Dalai Lama. Co-hosted with Mind & Life Europe, the event introduced a new format designed to honor our signature interdisciplinary approach while amplifying the voices of the next generation of monastics, strengthening the foundation for the Dialogues to continue and evolve in the years ahead. His Holiness joined participants at the conclusion of the event.



"The optimism about AI emerges from a wrong view of human beings. A view that neglects our fundamental interdependence. Compassion is not something that can exist outside a relationship between two living, breathing humans."

— Molly Crockett, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychology Princeton University



Participants explored themes including entanglement and meaningful relationships in a digital age, collective narratives and possible futures, diversity and ethics, and the role of contemplative practice in education. The Dialogue was livestreamed to a global audience, with more than 10,000 people engaging with the event and recordings to date.



"If there's a take-home message that I would suggest for this meeting, it is first of all that we can co-create the future, but we have to get into action. It will not happen by itself."

— Luc Steels PhD, Professor Emeritus in Artificial Intelligence, University of Brussels

Grantmaking: Expanding the Field

Mind & Life's grant programs have always operated on a simple premise: that early, catalytic investment in bold ideas creates the conditions for new discoveries, new collaborations, and lasting impact to emerge. In 2025, we awarded 10 grants totaling \$233,358—supporting researchers at the frontier of contemplative science and refining our grantmaking approach to maximize long-term impact.

This year's cohort included seven Francisco J. Varela Research Grants, one Samuel B. Hanser Grant, one BESS Family Foundation Grant, and one Larissa S. Dill Legacy Award. Together, they reflect the breadth of contemplative science today, spanning resilience, mental health, education, and identity in underserved and vulnerable populations; AI and contemplative research; tracking and measuring contemplative practice; and climate resilience. We also refined our Request for Proposals to encourage systems thinking, inviting applicants to consider how their research might scale, benefit broader communities, and contribute to lasting change beyond the lab.

Grantees in the Field

Mind & Life grantees are doing remarkable work around the world. In 2025, we shared a few of their stories on the blog.



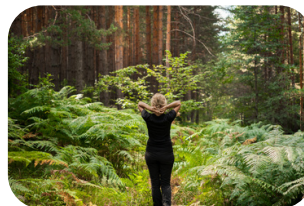
[Walking in Awareness: Indigenous Wisdom and Nature Connectedness](#)



[Cultivating Resilience: The Power of Mindfulness Training in War-Torn Ukraine](#)



[Reading and Repair: Tackling Social Division Through Contemplative Research](#)



[Connecting with Nature's Healing: Forest Therapy for Cancer Patients in Chile](#)



Tracking Person-Specific Neurophysiological and Mental Health
Inflection Points during Meditation Practice in University Students
JONATHAN CERNA
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS — URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



Development of a Phenomenological Scale of
Contemplative Practice in Early Adolescents
M. JENNIFER KITIL
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS — CHICAGO



Can Co-Designed Micropractices that Integrate Mindfulness and Identity
Affirmation Promote Resilience? A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial with
Unhoused LGBTQ Young People
ROB KLEIN
CORNELL UNIVERSITY



Developing Objective Measurements of Climate Resilience and Emotional
Adaptability in Youth
SATISH JAISWAL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA — SAN DIEGO

Developing a toolbox for AI-assisted contemplative qualitative
research: uncovering blind spots in AI models and humans
DANIEL LOW
CHILD MIND INSTITUTE



Contemplative Dialogues: A Photovoice Exploration of Mental Health through
Yoga, Mindfulness, Identity, and Belonging Among Black Emerging Adults
MARY MBABA
PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY



Regulation and Intentional Self-Compassion for Empowerment (RISE): Assessing the Feasibility
and Acceptability of a Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Survivors of Sexual Coercion
MORGAN PENBERTHY
PACIFIC UNIVERSITY



Discerning the Nature of Mind: A First-Phase Evaluation to Distinguish
Nondual Awareness (NDA) from Other Meditation-Induced Phenomena
JAHRED ROSA-SULLIVAN
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA



Cultivating Educator Mindfulness, Social-Emotional Competence, and Historical
Awareness in Addressing Racialized Academic Devaluation in Secondary Public Schools
LINDSAY ROMANO, DENNIS WILLIAMS II
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA



Contemplative Sleep Practices as a New Path to Counteract
Aging and Improve Immune Function
GABRIELA TORRES PLATAS
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

2025 Grantees

*Including the Francisco J. Varela Grants,
BESS Family Foundation Grants, the
Laurissa S. Dill Legacy Award, and the
Samuel B. Hanser Visionary Grant*

Digital Education: Amplifying Insights

Mind & Life's digital platforms extend the reach of contemplative research far beyond any single gathering—bringing insights from leading scientists, scholars, and contemplatives to a global audience.

Mind & Life Podcast

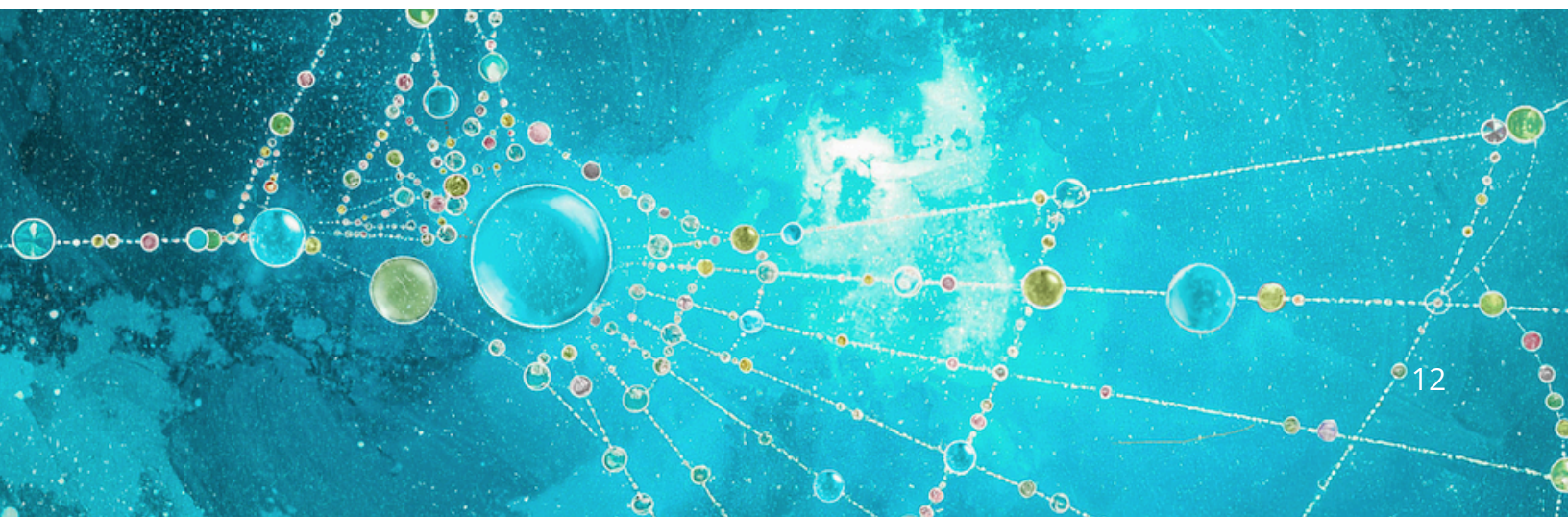
Hosted by Science Director Wendy Hasenkamp, the Mind & Life Podcast released eight new episodes in 2025, exploring themes at the heart of our mission—from systems change and interconnection to the inner dimensions of a life well-lived. Guests included:

- Molly Crockett—Changing the World is a Group Project
- Neil Theise—Everything is Connected
- Otto Scharmer—Changing Systems
- Melissa Rosenkranz—Mind, Body, World
- Tania Singer—The Power of Two
- Karen O'Brien—Why We Matter
- Christy Wilson-Mendenhall—Emotions in the World
- Liz Monson—Reclaiming the Magic



Three episodes were made possible through the generous support of the [BESS Family Foundation](#)—reflecting our growing partnership to advance scientific understanding of earth awareness and help people respond to the climate crisis with greater resilience, responsibility, and agency.

Artwork by Sarah Hite.



Insights

The *Insights* web platform continued to grow as a destination for deep reflection on the field of contemplative research. In 2025, we added three new essays:



Bridging Buddhism and Science: The Dalai Lama's 100 Year Vision

Robin Nusslock & Park Krausen



Contemplative and Ecological Education

Pooja Sahni



Ecodharma: Loving the World as Our Own Body

David R. Loy



Illustrations by artist [Sirin Thada](#).

Since its launch in 2022, *Insights* has welcomed over 92,400 readers from more than 100 countries.

Mind & Life Digital Library

The Mind & Life Digital Library continued to grow in 2025, with four newly-produced event recordings added to the archive—bringing the total to 16. The library features video recordings of Mind & Life Dialogues between the Dalai Lama and leading scientists, philosophers, and contemplatives, and select Summer Research Institutes. It has now reached over 9,500 unique visitors. Work continued throughout the year on the painstaking review, editing, and curation of the remaining Mind & Life Dialogue recordings.

Exploring New Frontiers

Mind & Life's *new three-year strategy* calls us not only to deepen our core work, but to venture into territory where contemplative research has a distinctive and urgent contribution to make. In 2025, four exploratory areas began to take shape—each responding to the pressing realities of our time.

Artificial Intelligence and Ethics

The 39th Mind & Life Dialogue, “Minds, Artificial Intelligence, and Ethics,” demonstrated the depth of public interest in this emerging field—the event attracted more than 10,000 online viewers and sparked significant social media conversation. Mind & Life podcast guest Molly Crockett also addressed AI directly in her episode, arguing that enthusiasm for replacing human connection and knowledge with machines risks foreclosing on the full possibilities of human potential—and that contemplative and scientific ways of knowing are stronger together than either is alone.

Interconnectedness and Climate

In 2025, Mind & Life deepened its commitment to understanding the role of contemplative practices in cultivating an embodied sense of interconnection with the natural world—and in helping people respond constructively to the climate crisis. We are grateful to the BESS Family Foundation for its support of our work in this area, which included the formation of an 11-member *Earth Awareness Working Group*, dedicated grantmaking, and the sharing of insights via the Mind & Life podcast and *Insights* web platform.

Polarization

At a time of deepening social division, contemplative research has something vital to offer. In 2025, Mind & Life advanced its scientific understanding of polarization at the level of mind and body—including through the Summer Research Institute, grantee projects, and planning for the 2026 Summer Research Institute with its theme of “Depolarization: Cultivating Connection in a Divided World.”

Systems Change

Translating research into lasting impact requires working at the systems level. In 2025, Mind & Life took meaningful steps in this direction—through developing a *podcast mini-series* on systems change with guest host Jamie Bristow, participation in the Compassion in Finance Summit, and ongoing conversations with partners, including the United Nations, about the role of well-being and contemplative practice in institutional settings. These efforts reflect a growing conviction that the field's next frontier is not just discovery, but implementation.



"There is no shortage in good intention on this planet right now. What's not there is moving from that individual intentionality to shared intentionality, and from shared intentionality to individual and collective action."

— Otto Scharmer, PhD, Mind & Life podcast guest, Senior Lecturer, MIT, and Founding Chair, Presencing Institute

2025 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

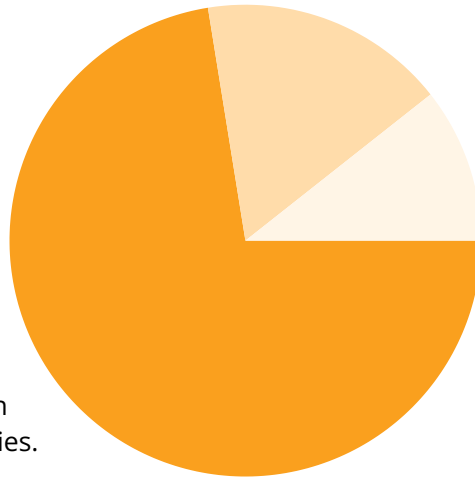
Your Support at Work

We are grateful to you for bringing our mission to life. Your ongoing generosity powers effective programs, and we honor your support through careful stewardship of every gift.

TOTAL EXPENSES*

\$2,954,799

62% Programs
\$1,831,634
Carrying out our mission through program activities.



23% Administration
\$689,443
Providing management, oversight, and operational support.

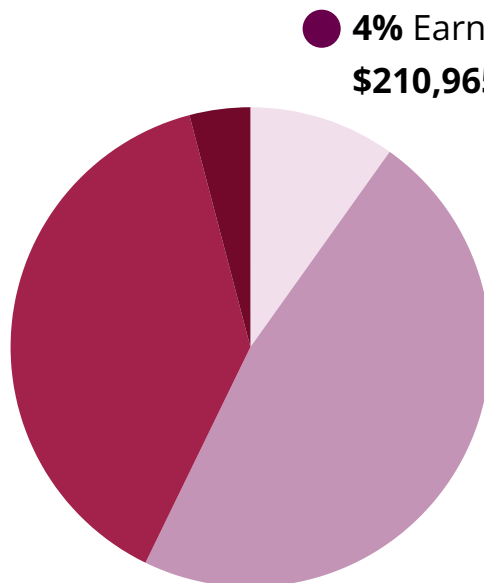
15% Fundraising
\$433,722
Building relationships and securing support for our work.

**Percentages reflect total 2025 expenses, rounded to the nearest percent.*

TOTAL REVENUE**

\$5,150,970

39% Other
\$1,831,634
Includes investment earnings and grant refunds.



4% Earned Revenue
\$210,965

10% Individual
\$507,874

47% Foundations
\$2,438,969

***Reported revenue exceeded expenses by \$2,196,171. The difference largely reflects funds intended for future years or restricted to specific purposes, rather than excess resources for current operations.*

[VIEW 2025 FINANCIAL AUDIT REPORT](#)

Together in Gratitude

As we reflect on 2025, we are filled with appreciation for the community that makes this work possible. A year of celebration also became a catalyst for the future, deepening our commitment to the vision His Holiness the Dalai Lama planted nearly four decades ago and strengthening our resolve to carry it forward with the urgency and care this moment demands.

To our donors, whose generosity sustains everything we do—from the grants that seed new research to the convenings that spark new connections—thank you. Your support made possible a year of extraordinary impact, and your belief in this mission is what carried the Mind & Life Endowment to its \$20 million goal. To our Board of Directors, our Research and Programs Council, and our staff—thank you for the wisdom, creativity, and dedication you bring to this work every day.

Most of all, thank you to this community—the researchers, contemplatives, educators, practitioners, changemakers, and lifelong learners who show up with open minds and full hearts, year after year. You are the reason this work matters. You are the reason we believe in what comes next.

Because building a flourishing future takes all of us. Join us.

What Your Partnership Can Make Possible Next

The work ahead is urgent—and it depends on you. Your partnership with Mind & Life makes it possible to fund research that wouldn't otherwise exist, open doors for emerging scholars who would otherwise be closed out, and bring the insights of contemplative science to bear on the defining challenges of our time.



In the year ahead, donor support will:

Convene and Catalyze—Bringing together the next generation of researchers, monastics, and contemplatives to explore the defining questions of our time.



Fund What Matters—Seeding bold, early-stage research that larger funders won't yet touch, and opening doors for scholars who would otherwise be closed out.

Amplify Insights—Completing four decades of extraordinary dialogue in the Digital Library and sharing contemplative science with a growing global audience.

To learn more, contact Susan Lane, Director of Development
advancement@mindandlife.org



MIND & LIFE
INSTITUTE

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