The Centre for Community Organizations
Annual Report
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COCo’s Mission & Theory of Change

COCo’s mission is to help build a more socially just world by supporting the health and well-being of community organizations in Quebec. Through organizational development and training, resource dissemination, research, and by strengthening the links between organizations, COCo helps to promote the vitality of the community sector in the province.

In 2016, we chose two areas of focus that we believe are the most effective ways for us to nurture an inclusive, social-justice oriented Quebec community sector: first, to bolster the impact and amplify the voices of grassroots organizations, and second, to strengthen inclusion and diversity within the Quebec community sector by stewarding dialogue and learning in partnership with other coalitions and training groups. This is the basis of our “Theory of Change”.

Over the last 15 years, COCo has maintained a unique commitment to prioritizing deep capacity-building and organizational change over technical or expert-based consulting. We have continued to be one of the only organizations able to offer support to organizations working in English and multilingually. As we move forward, we want to use these strengths to meet systemic oppression with systemic change. We are committing to building the skills, knowledge, and diversity required to meet the needs of the on-the-ground organizations facing the biggest challenges. We will find the resources so that we can partner with these organizations in the long term, to do our part to lift them up. We have also been increasing the amount of free resources, trainings and consultations to foster organizational health and effectiveness among these organizations.

In addition to this support provided directly to organizations, COCo has been partnering with coalition groups and other key actors in the community sector so that we can work together to foster an increase in diversity and inclusion practices in the sector. Through events and learning exchanges, we hope to help grow the sector our communities deserve. We have a lot to learn, and we look forward to doing it alongside our wise, long-serving, and brilliant peers.
In 2018, across all our services, COCo worked with 1,544 people and 421 community organizations.

We have 189 organizational members and 7 dedicated volunteers: our Board of Directors.
Who We Are

Board of Directors—Camerin Cobb, Cora-Lee Conway, Julia Couture-Glassco, Richenda Grazette, Ariel Harlap, Diana Lombardi, and Patrick Yanga.

Staff—Philippe Angers-Trottier, Emil Briones, Emily Yee Clare, Homa Khairi, Parker Mah, Sabrina McFadden, Fabiola Mizero Ngitabatware, Kira Page, Michèle Spieler, Veronica Vivanco.

A particular note of congratulations to our long time community technology coordinator, Parker Mah, on the birth of his first child! During his paternity leave, he is being replaced by Michèle Spieler.

Affiliate Facilitators—Juniper Belshaw, Pascale Brunet, Miatta Gorvie, Ainsley Jenicek, Kama la Mackerel, Uwayo Dushime, Sophie Le-Phat Ho, Jess Malz, Alex Megelas, Spencer Mann, Kevin Paul, Frances Ravensbergen, and Johanna Tzountzouris.

We work with dozens of contractual workers every year. This year, we would particularly like to thank our translators (Sunny Doyle, Alexie Doucet, Françoise Magne); our graphic designers (Sanjeevan Tharmaratnam, Karla Garcia, and Luckensy Odigé) our accountant (Manoj Chandarana), our auditor (Ron Amstutz), our lawyer (Mark Phillips), and our cleaner (Jessica Julian).

Our Board of Directors are our most engaged volunteers, and they contributed 251 volunteer hours this year.

We want to say a particularly special goodbye this year to Spencer Mann, who co-founded the Commun-IT program and has been working with it ever since. He is off now to new adventures. We are so grateful for everything you’ve done for the sector, Spencer!
Where We Are

COCo's office is situated on the Island of Montreal, also known as Tiotia:ke, on the traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka people. This place has also been a historical meeting place for other Indigenous nations, including the Omàmiwinini or the Algonquin people. Today, Tiotia:ke is the home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present, and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples in our work, and we are grateful to live and work on this territory.
Overall, 2018 has been a year of continued organizational growth for COCo, including welcoming new staff and new projects, diversifying our funding, and providing more trainings on anti-oppression.

Amidst the greater complexity of an organization that has effectively doubled in staff over the last three years, board and staff have collaborated to sustain a caring and anti-oppressive approach to the work. New HR policies, employee health benefits, and restructured work habits have been adopted to better support staff, particularly in recognition of the emotional and sometimes stressful nature of working in conflict resolution and in striving for anti-oppression. Meanwhile, staff and board have collaborated to diversify funding and to transition project-funded staff towards permanent staff positions so as to resolve the precarity experienced by project-funded staff.

COCo has continued or initiated several new projects which have provided new tools or learning opportunities for its members. Notably, the tools stemming from last year’s Diversité d’Abord project have been increasingly circulated through workshops. More recently its child project, Conflit à l’Oeuvre, saw the creation of new tools on better understanding and responding proactively to conflict in our sector. Ateliers/C has continued for a second season of practical workshops for community organizations to learn together, with a particular focus on anti-racism, conflict and organizational learning.

Looking forward, we have high hopes for several transitions we have only just initiated. Commun-IT will more closely integrate into COCo and see a greater focus on improving the accessibility of websites which COCo develops for its members. New board roles, more frequent board meetings, and a larger board size are also planned in order to better support the larger staff team and number of projects. We look forward to continuing to collaborate and support staff, equally in their work and in their approach to work so that we might continue, with many others, to steward anti-oppression in the community sector.

Lastly, we would like to thank outgoing board members Jasmine Rezaee, Camerin Cobb and Cora Lee Conway for their contributions!

Patrick Yanga & Ariel Harlap, on behalf of the Board of Directors
Resource Hub

By the Numbers

19,143 people reached

Between our newsletter subscribers (2,599), our Facebook community (2,621), and visits to our online resources (19,143), we can safely say at least 19,143 people were reached by our online presence in 2018.

95 Resources

We created 12 new online resources for community organizations, and added 18 resources from external sources to our online toolbox. We updated 5 legal information documents, and shared an additional 60 articles about nonprofits on our social media accounts.

133,677 pageviews

Our website traffic increased by about 55%, to 133,677 in 2018. This correlated with an increase in users, from:

26,007
Number of visits in 2017

43,101
Number of visits in 2018

By the Impact

Much of the increase in visits to our online resources are because, in March 2018, an infographic that we redesigned, “The Problem of the Woman of Colour in Organizations” went “viral”. This tool got 14,000 visits on our website, and was shared thousands of times on Facebook and on Twitter.

Many people shared their personal stories related to this infographic with us following its release. This tool is now being used by other anti-racist educators and trainers across the globe. It has also become a key part of our anti-racism facilitation approach.

The tool was initially created by the Safehouse Progressive Alliance for NonViolence, and was adapted by Emily Yee Clare and Kira Page as part of our Diversité d'Abord research in 2017. The graphic design was done by Sanjeevan Tharmaratnam.

You can find the infographic at: https://coco-net.org/problem-woman-colour-nonprofit-organizations/
Information Sessions (Info-COCos)

At COCo, we know that navigating non-profit law and organizational challenges on your own can be difficult, which is why we offer free information sessions by phone, email, and in person. Our staff provide referrals, offer resources and information, and help groups think through their problems. Often calling us in crisis or at times of significant change, community organizations find that the opportunity to talk something out and get crucial information in a pinch can be invaluable.

In 2018, we provided 125 information sessions to 135 different organizations and 243 people.

In total, COCo spent 132 hours doing information sessions with nonprofits in 2018. Following a trend that started in 2016, our information sessions are getting longer and longer. Whereas most of our information sessions used to last less than 20 minutes, we are spending 30-60 minutes on the phone with 34% of groups, and over an hour with another 34%.

COCo also offers a service where groups can come to our office and consult a fundraising database for Canadian charities. In 2018, 24 organizations used this service. Interestingly, the reasons people call us, and at what frequency, remain relatively stable across the years.

People Called Us About

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Category</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>Board, Governance, Bylaws and AGMs</td>
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<td>24%</td>
<td>Funding Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Incorporation and Charitable Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>11%</td>
<td>Human Resources, Diversity and Inclusion</td>
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<td>9%</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>7%</td>
<td>Organizational Development</td>
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<td>5%</td>
<td>Financial Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6%</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CoCliCco— Social Media Training for Nonprofits

For the third year in a row, COCo and Centraide partnered to offer a four part series on social media for nonprofit organizations that were interactive, hands-on, and adapted to the needs and realities of community organizations. Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, and other social media platforms can be powerful tools for nonprofits to outreach, mobilize, and spread the word about their cause, but many nonprofits are at a loss on how to make social media work for them. CoClicCo teaches groups how to make this happen!

The series was offered twice, once in English and once in French. Both trainings were targeted especially to community organizations working in Parc Extension. In total, there were 8 training sessions reaching 28 organizations and 32 individuals.

“I was surprised to find out how much there was to learn. Even though I used Facebook I was shocked at how much you could do with it.”—Participant

Towards Greater Solidarity with Anti Racist and Indigenous Struggles in the Community Sector

Emil Briones presented as part of a panel at the Semaine nationale d'action communautaire autonome in the Fall of 2018, sharing observations and information from COCo's research on anti-racism in the community sector.

→ This event reached 40 attendees and a livestream audience.

Reflections on Tech Support in the Nonprofit Sector

Parker Mah spoke at a 5 à 7 of people responsible for communications in the nonprofit sector, discussing common issues around offering tech support to community groups.

→ This event reached 15 people and a livestream audience.

In 2018, COCo hosted 22 public events, reaching 307 people.
The Ateliers/C

The Ateliers/C is a workshop series that aims to create a “learning network” for community organizations, through discussion, training, and networking opportunities. It is a partnership with Centraide du Grand Montreal.

220 participants over 12 workshops

127 participating organizations across neighbourhoods of Greater Montreal

15 organizations participated from COCo’s network

Some Highlights of 2018 Included:

→ For the first time, co-developing a workshop with a community group, The Depot Community Food Center. This led to the creation of a short video telling the story of their “merging” experience!

→ We organized our first workshop of the series in English, called Conflict and Racism: Creating Inroads Towards Learning, Healing, and Transformation, based on our research on conflict and diversity.

Themes We Covered This Year:

→ Growing Governance
→ Horizontal Organizational Development
→ Emotional Intelligence
→ Strategic Communications
→ Anti-racism in the Community Sector
→ Legal frameworks for Nonprofit Employers
→ Agenda and Minutes
→ Complexity Science
→ Learning organizations
→ Merging and pooling resources
→ Coaching skills in team development
→ Conflict and Racism

“During the Ateliers/C, I developed as a person, learned and made discoveries in an enjoyable and agreeable environment.” —Comment from our focus group, July 2018

“I love the way you go from theory to practice. It leaves me very well prepared to back into my organization.” —Comment from Complexity workshop, September 2018

“I find all the workshops you offer to be good and responsive to the different situations that we live in the community sector. They support me and do me some good!” —Comment from our focus group, July 2018
Organizational Support

COCo provides support in the form of facilitation, mediation, training, coaching, and technological support to community organizations in Quebec. Together, we refer to these as our “contracts”. As outlined in our Theory of Change, we are particularly interested in supporting grassroots organizations with social justice mandates.

The support COCo offers can range from a short training session to a multi-year project aimed at creating long term organizational change. Each contract depends on the unique needs and context of each organization we work with.

In 2018, we had 150 contracts with 112 organisations. This is the fourth year in a row we have grown the number of contracts, and represents a 25% in the number of organizations we worked with since last year. Consistent with the past few years, we are also working with organizations for more time, looking at more complex issues. A single contract can include dozens of trainings, facilitations, or coaching sessions.

Of those 150 contracts

- 49 were for training
- 55 were for technological support
- 33 were for facilitation
- 08 were for conflict mediation
- 01 was for coaching
- 04 were for other forms of support
Over the course of those contracts, we worked with 971 individual people, and which constitutes 1628 hours of support. All of our services are offered on a sliding scale, and 6 of those contracts were offered pro-bono.

In our Theory of Change, we had given ourselves an objective of bolstering the impact and amplifying the voices of 50 grassroots organizations across Quebec over the next 5 years. With the data we have for 2018, we are already blowing this goal out of the water: we worked with 31 grassroots organizations on 37 contracts.

All this growth has meant that we have grown our roster of affiliate facilitators, who are being trained on the COCo approach. You can find many of their names on pages of this report.

“Learning about specific conflict styles gave insight on several perspectives I would have not thought about. People tend to be similar to each other in a segment of work and conflict styles may differ from team to team. It was important to know and note these differences to make sure everyone can collaborate...”—Participant in a workshop on conflict resolution

“The facilitators were highly skilled. Their ability to recognize problem areas, propose solutions, really made a positive impression on me. How they were able quickly pinpoint our tendency to waffle and then bring us back to the subject at hand showed me that these people know what they’re doing and care.”—Workshop participant
Anti-Oppression in the Sector

The second objective we set out for ourselves in our Theory of Change was to strengthen inclusion and diversity within the Quebec community sector.

We decided that the most effective way for us to do this was to partner with key players in the nonprofit sector, such as coalitions, training groups, and funders. In 2018, we had 3 opportunities to help move the needle.

→ In June, we did a half day training with the members of our own coalition of training groups, the COCAF (Coalition des organismes communautaires autonomes de formation), on anti-oppression and anti-racism in organizations.
→ In November, we did a full day training with a part of the team at Centraide du Grand Montreal on anti-racism in the community sector.
→ In June, we did a full day training with the Table de quartier Peter-McGill on anti-oppressive approaches in nonprofit organizations.

“I was able to deepen my comprehension of empathy. I learned about the necessity of trust in breaking down barriers and oppression.” —Participant at the Table de quartier Peter-McGill
Conflit à l’Oeuvre

From June 2018 to January 2019, we conducted a research and popular education project aimed at better understanding racism in the Quebec community sector, through looking at what happens in interpersonal conflicts in the sector.

A predecessor COCo-led research project, Diversité d’Abord (Clare et al., 2017), more broadly examined systemic racism in the sector. Conflit à l’Oeuvre dove more deeply into questions of racism and conflict in community organizations.

→ We created a research report, based on a literature review, interviews with 15 community sector workers, and participatory research with 3 community organizations.
→ We improved our ability to support conflict management and prevention in community organizations, primarily by participating as a team in a 5 day training on conflict mediation and anti-racism offered by St. Stephen’s Community House (Toronto, ON), and running follow up workshops to further our skills in this area.

So far, we have shared the results of this research publicly twice:

→ Panel presentation at the Semaine nationale d’action communautaire autonome in the Fall of 2018.
→ A full day workshop Conflict and Racism: Creating Inroads Towards Learning, Healing, and Transformation, which included presenting the research results as well as introducing participants to tools they can use to better understand their own situations. This was part of our Atelier/C series.

The final research report, as well as a new pedagogical tool, will be available on our website in the Spring or Summer of 2019. Existing research results are available at the CALO webpage. The project was carried out by Emil Briones, with the financial backing of the Ministère de l’éducation et de l’enseignement supérieur (MEES).

“I work in a similar field to COCo so it was very helpful to see evidence and findings that backed up and further amplified my own concerns and findings from working with organizations experiencing these patterns.”—Comment from the Conflict and Racism workshop

“Having experienced unresolved conflicts within my organization, I found it very helpful to name and discuss what conflict means, what it consists of, why it happens, and its impacts, which made me realize the challenges we still have in addressing conflict when it happens in our organization.”—Comment from the Conflict and Racism workshop
Learning Organizations Lab

The Learning Organizations Lab (LabOA) is a research and development project that began at the end of 2017 in partnership with Centraide. The goal of this project is to adapt the concept of learning organizations to the community sector; to identify the key elements of creating a learning culture in nonprofits, and identify ways of reinforcing the nonprofit’s capacity for learning.

Over the past year, we conducted a thorough review of the literature on learning organizations, and interviewed key people in the community and social innovation sectors, as well as academics and consultants. Mindful of wanting to create a model of the learning organization that is both original and connected to the reality of nonprofits, we presented our ideas to other non-profit staff during an Ateliers/C in October 2018, and to a portion of Centraide’s staff a few months later.

The LabOA research report was finalized in December, and introduces a new model of the learning organization. We hope that is it both clear, innovative, and that it reflects some of the key values of our sector.

This model is based on four elements

01 A structure that supports learning
02 A climate that favors learning
03 An embedded vision of learning, innovating and working
04 A capacity to navigate complexity

We are very excited about the second phase of our project, which began in 2019. Based on our research findings, our mandate is to prototype, experiment and evaluate different ways of supporting the creation or the reinforcement of a learning culture within non-profits. We hope this will allow us, in time, to strengthen the learning capacity of many more organizations, including our own!
Our Own Learning

As we encourage other community organizations to learn and grow, COCo tries to model the same approach ourselves. This year, our team sought out a number of exciting learning opportunities, individually and as a group.

In August, the entire COCo team, as well as 4 of our affiliate facilitators and 4 partner organizations, participated in a week long training on conflict mediation, with an anti-racism approach. This training has significantly increased our ability to help organizations manage conflict, and we are taking on more and more conflict mediations.
We continued learning as a team over the course of four “learning and reflection” sessions that we organize for and with each other. This year, these sessions covered principle based evaluation practices in nonprofit organizations, best practices in assessing organizational needs, and tips and tools for strategic planning. We began hosting occasional “lunch and learns”; shorter sessions where one of our staff members shared something they had been working on or learning recently. We had two this year; one looked at recent tools related to anti-racist organization development, and a second one on using gender neutral language in French.

→ Kira participated in the Leadership Rassembleur program, an intensive collaborative leadership development program for community sector workers.
→ Fabiola finished her certificate in philanthropic management at the University of Montreal.
→ Over the course of the year, Sabrina continued her regular participation in a community of practice for coaches.
→ Frances participated in a training with Michael Quinn Patton and Mark Cabaj on “Principles-focused Evaluation” in Toronto.
→ Veronica participated in a training on Working in Complexity: How Do We Take Action When Everything is Uncertain?
→ Veronica and Philippe participated in a training called The Art and Craft of Designing and Facilitating Learning Spaces: Master Class from Kaos Pilot.
→ Fabiola participated in a breakfast chat, hosted by Fondation Bombardier, on questions related to collective management.
Coalitions

COCo is an active member of the following coalitions:

→ Regroupement Intersectoriel des Organismes Communautaires de Montréal (RIOCM)
→ Réseau québécois de l’Action Communautaire Autonome (RQ-ACA)
→ Comité Sectoriel de main d’oeuvre en économie sociale et action communautaire (CSMO-ÉSAC)
→ Coalition des organismes communautaires autonomes de formation (COCAF)
→ TROVEP (Table régionale des organismes volontaires d’éducation populaire de Montréal)

Funders
COCO has continued on our multi-year growth streak, and this is reflected in our financial statements. We have an increase in funding from our partners for a variety of projects, and a slight drop in our autonomous revenue. Our expenses have grown, particularly as we hire more staff and more affiliated facilitators and contractual workers.

### Revenu

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<td>Centraide of Greater Montreal</td>
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<td>Training, Facilitation, Coaching, Mediation, and IT Consulting Services</td>
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<td>Emploi-Québec (salary subsidy)</td>
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### Expenses

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<td>Professional Fees (Affiliate Facilitators and Contractual Workers)</td>
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<td>Rent</td>
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<td><strong>$576,792</strong></td>
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This graph shows the changes in autonomous revenue COCo has received over the last 15 years. This refers to revenue from services we offer to community groups.

2003: $74,385
2004: $54,788
2005: $84,335
2006: $37,167
2007: $53,611
2008: $26,663
2009: $58,256
2010: $14,845
2011: $28,937
2012: $55,214
2013: $68,310
2014: $46,913
2015: $86,341
2016: $91,195
2017: $129,299
2018: $122,210