THE CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

20 YEARS!

ANNUAL REPORT 2019
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In 2019, COCo supported 457 organizations and 1312 participants.
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, training, resource dissemination, research, and by strengthening the links between organizations, COCo helps to promote the vitality of the community sector in the province.

Developed in 2016, our organization’s Theory of Change sees us committed to nurturing an inclusive, social-justice oriented Quebec community sector, where grassroots organizations thrive and work to create a more just and equitable society.

There are two points of impact embedded within this theory, which we believe will lead us to that ultimate goal:

— Bolstering the impact and amplifying the voices of grassroots organizations across Quebec.

— Strengthening inclusion and diversity within the Quebec community sector by stewarding dialogue and learning in partnership with funders, coalitions, and training groups.

After four years, we are excited to see the application of our theory—and how it makes an impact—changing, as we evaluate, evolve, and learn. This year, we shifted focus away from coalitions as key partners in our inclusion and diversity work, and towards working with funders on this issue, as “key actors” in the sector. It is a significant shift for us, and we are excited to see where it takes us.
COCo is thrilled to be celebrating its 20th anniversary. Thrilled by what we have accomplished so far, and by how much life, vitality and energy still exists in the organization, as it moves into its third decade. We’re proud of our ability to change; to do new and newer, bigger and better things. We continue to challenge ourselves, always committed to improving our ability to support the work of community organizations and the social sector in general.

Working in the nonprofit sector, it sometimes feels like a small miracle that nonprofit organizations—with the challenges they face, and the lack of resources they struggle with—continue to exist and to thrive. In that vein, we would like to extend a particular note of thanks to our founders, Frances Ravensburgen and Michael Stephens, for believing in the idea of what we do. We would also like to thank everyone else who has poured their blood, sweat and tears into bringing this organization into the future. There have been so many of you, and we are grateful!

To celebrate this milestone, we’ve been sharing some of the insights we have gained as an organization over the past 20 years. Find them on our blog, at coco-net.org/blog.
2019 was, without a doubt, another year of growth for COCo. This growth was reflected significantly in the changes to the Board of Directors: we grew from seven to nine members, which has allowed us to more effectively support our growing team. We also increased our meetings to once a month, ensuring better follow-up, and redistributed roles and responsibilities within our hubs to benefit from the skills and interests of our new members. We are happy to have implemented these changes to our governance model, and are excited to see how it continues to evolve. Alongside the staff, we have been continuously learning, in particular how to better integrate anti-oppressive practices into our internal policies and decision-making processes.

Another major theme for our Board this year was collaborating with the staff to improve their working conditions. We supported the staff as they tackled the issue of overtime, working with them to develop strategies for achieving a better work-life balance. We also collaborated on the development of an impressive Pregnancy, Family and Community Support Leave Policy, ensuring employee support that is holistic, and based on a more inclusive understanding of family, community and care. We’re excited for this resource to be shared with COCo’s members!

COCo’s various projects—undertaken alongside the work we do directly with client organizations—continue to offer new opportunities for learning, innovation, and change. These projects, which this year included an anti-racism education program, one project on learning organizations, and another on website accessibility, have allowed us to evolve and adapt new tools for grassroots organizations. We’re excited to see COCo continue in its work to create spaces for anti-oppressive practices, and effect social transformation.

Amidst all this growth, we feel it is important to take a moment to look back on the 20 years of the organization, to appreciate the evolution of COCo. Growing from a small-scale organization, to one serving hundreds of community organizations yearly, we’ve undergone a major structural shift, becoming a horizontal organization. We’ve further developed our role as an advocacy group, and are now at the forefront of anti-oppression work in the province. These transformations have made COCo what it is today, and amply demonstrate the constant learning process that the team and board have undergone, in order to respond to the needs of the community sector.

We are so proud of the way COCo has grown, evolved and blossomed over the last 20 years, and we are excited to continue being part of this beautiful process.

Diana Lombardi and Julia Couture-Glassco
On behalf of the Board of Directors
ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

We bolster the impact and amplify the voices of grassroots community organizations.

A core part of our service in this area is to offer consulting services for individual organizations, in order to support their organizational health and development. This can include training on new skills, building communications and technology infrastructure, facilitating large or difficult conversations, creating a strategic plan, completing program evaluation, resolving conflicts on a team, coaching leadership, supporting organizations to deepen their practice of anti-oppression, and more. This is the fifth year in a row we have experienced growth in this area.

121 organizations
161 accompaniments
818 participants touched

Through our Theory of Change, we have more precisely identified the group with whom we would like to focus our energy and time: grassroots organizations. We define grassroots organizations as fitting three or more of the following criteria:

- Having a social justice or radical mandate
- Racialized, Indigenous, or migrant groups
- Groups that face other forms of systemic discrimination: e.g. deaf community, LGBTQ2IA
- By & for organizations (led by beneficiaries)
- A language minority
- Off-island or geographically isolated
- Informal or volunteer based
- Generally under resourced or working with small budgets
We are excited to report that we have succeeded over the past two years in increasing the number of these “top priority” grassroots organizations, and they now represent 38% of organizations served.

46 grassroots organizations  
57 contracts

Kinds of Accompaniment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION &amp; TECHNOLOGY</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRAINING</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FACILITATION</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>COACHING</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFLICT MEDIATION</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Impacts

- Participants acquire new information & tools
- Participants gain new skills
- Participants gain awareness of strengths & challenges
- Groups understand root causes of organizational challenges & strengths
- Groups increase capacity to plan & implement change
- Groups improve inclusion practices

“The learning cycle and different learning styles will allow me to adapt my practice and training activities to reach more people in a more engaged and dynamic way.” — Training Participant
We strengthen inclusion and diversity within the Quebec community sector.

The second objective of our Theory of Change has led us to partner with key influencers in the community sector, to address issues of inclusion, diversity and, especially, anti-racism.

Three key explorations into inclusion and diversity in the nonprofit sector:

- Collaborating with Centraide du Grand Montreal to look at their inclusion and diversity issues
- Collaborating with Fondation Bombardier to examine inclusion and HR with organizations in their network
- Building the capacity of changemakers in the nonprofit sector, through our anti-racism education project

Key Impacts

- Trainers and facilitators have more anti-oppressive content in their training materials.
- Groups have improved their inclusion practices.
ANTI-RACISM EDUCATION PROJECT

Our Anti-Racism Education Project seeks to share tools and strategies for addressing racism in the community sector in Quebec.

In the fall of 2019, we offered a two-day training session for facilitators and community sector employees who were doing anti-racism work in nonprofits. We wanted the people who are already doing this work to be supported, connected to each other, and able to share and build on what they have been learning. We used the opportunity to clarify, solidify and share what we as COCo have been learning about doing anti-racism—our tools, our approaches, our successes and our failures. We're hoping to continue this work over the next few years, supporting an ever-increasing number of changemakers as they effect profound anti-racist change. The two day session was offered in collaboration with the ateliers/C, and was made possible through additional funding from the LUSH Charity Pot Program.

In total, we had 21 participants—18 of whom are Black, Indigenous and/or People of Colour—coming from 19 different organizations.

“The workshop humanized an approach to anti-racism. It doesn't have to be depressing to have a conversation about (anti)racism if people are willing to manifest joy.” —participant

“It is refreshing to be in such an authentic ‘come as you are’ space that allows me to shed my ‘shoulds’ and remain connected to the source of my intention. Welcoming compassionate yet authentic conversations helped me recognize my roles and responsibilities” —participant

“I learned new activities and tools to use in my training. It also allowed me to do an introspection on myself and my work team” —participant

As part of this project, we also finalized and published our revamped White Supremacy Culture resource, which became our most visited new tool of 2019.

Keep an eye on our blog posts, e-bulletins, and website this year, for:

— An animated video of the Woman of Colour in Organizations tool
— The french version of the White Supremacy in Organizations tool
COCo offers free information sessions by phone, email, and in person for nonprofits in Quebec. Our staff helps groups think through their problems, offering resources and information about a wide variety of issues and “small fires” community groups face every day. Groups can come to our office and consult a database of charitable funders.

In 2019, we provided 185 information sessions to 161 different organizations. This is an increase from the year before. The number of participants remained stable, at 205. In total, COCo spent 122 hours offering these free information sessions.

There was one noticeable change in this area in 2019: we received far fewer questions than usual about fundraising, and fewer organizations using our fundraising database. By contrast, the biggest increase was in Board, Governance, Bylaws, and AGM related topics, which made up almost a third of the information sessions.

### Key Impacts

- Groups increase their awareness of environment and context
- Groups acquire new information
- Groups have access to more tools
32,536 people used our online resources.

Between our newsletter subscribers (1,100), our Facebook community (3,280), and visits to our online resources (28,156), we reached 32,536 people and organizations through our online presence in 2019. We also started an Instagram account, which has 225 followers.

We brought 46 resources to our community this year.

This included: creating 17 new online resources of our own; adding five resources from external sources to our online toolbox; and sharing an additional 24 articles about nonprofits on our social media accounts.

This is also an increase from 2018. We are particularly excited about this for two reasons:

— We experienced a huge increase in 2018 because of a tool (The Woman of Colour in Organizations) that went viral. We expected a drop this year, as a result, however the number of people on our site has only continued to increase!
— The number of visitors to the French side of our website has increased by 50%! As COCo is more and more sought out by French-speaking organizations, we’ve been working hard to ensure that we have lots of French-language resources. This is proof that it is working!

Our top visited resources this year were both related to anti-racism in nonprofit organizations:

— The Woman of Colour in Organizations Tool
— The White Supremacy Culture in Organizations Tool

“Congratulations on that amazing article on your website. It really speaks to something that’s present in organizations and that seems hard for some people to address. Maybe due to misplaced “white guilt” or the sense that because organizations are usually pretty progressive they will be exempt from that kind of thinking, the burden of addressing this topic is placed on people of colour. Personally, I sometimes find it heavy and difficult to talk about, so I often prefer to let it go. Texts like this one help us reflect and raise awareness. It’s a subject that touches me deeply.” — Nonprofit Worker speaking about white supremacy culture in organizations

Key Impacts

— Groups increase their awareness of environment and context
— Groups acquire new information
— Groups have access to more tools
COCo’s information and communications technology services are in high demand, and it has been challenging for a single full-time staff member to get the job done. This year brought big news: we were finally able to secure a second full time position for this area of our work! Michèle became the co-coordinator of our tech program, bringing a wealth of tech savvy, leadership skills and community sector experience. We are grateful to the Trottier Foundation for being willing to jump on board with this project, which also enabled us to offer more holistic, long-term tech support to grassroots organizations.

With our team now having doubled in size, we not only increased our capacity to help our partner groups, we have also expanded our expertise into other areas—primarily, the importance and use of data in the community sector. We’ve refined our skills in data analysis and data visualisation, and took a deep dive into the ethical and political ramifications of using data. We presented the first part of this work as part of the ateliers/C, entitled, “Navigating Data to Maximize Your Impact”. We are excited, in the upcoming year, to bring new tools, training, and support in this area, to the community organizations we work with.

This past year, we have engaged more deeply with the question: how can we integrate anti-oppressive values into our approach to and the services we offer around technology? As a result, we have committed to developing our knowledge and skills around digital and web accessibility. Our fantastic intern, Hannah Payne, led the charge on this front, spending the majority of her 6 months with us researching accessibility standards and tools, evaluating our materials and website, and bringing this knowledge back to the team. Starting with our own site - which is getting an accessibility overhaul - we took steps in 2019 to move towards web accessibility, as part of the basic web services we offer.

Lastly, we have decided to do away with the name “Commun-IT”. While we love the name, the pun and the spirit behind it, it was beginning to feel like a symbol of the “separateness” of the technology work at COCo. This change is part of our commitment to really integrating the way technology affects every part of organizational health - and vice versa. It might be less ‘cute’, but calling it simply “the tech work” reflects more fully how ICT is part and parcel of anti-oppression, strategic thinking, governance, human resources, collaboration, and all the other work we do with community organizations.

Contract Topics

18 Website Maintenance
7 CRM Selection, Implementation, Support
6 Web Development
6 G Suite Implementation and Support
2 Website Support and Training

Please note that these numbers are included as part of the overall ‘organizational support’ numbers. There will also be a decrease in the number of technology contracts from this year, as moving forward, we are changing the way we report on organizations with whom we have multiple, overlapping contracts.

Key Impacts

- Groups acquire new information
- Groups have access to more tools
- Groups amplify their voice
- Groups increase their impact

39 contracts with 30 different Organizations
EVENTS & LEARNING SPACES

322 participants and 206 organizations

Ateliers/C Workshops

For a third consecutive year, the Ateliers/C project has created a series of learning events for community organizations to meet and learn from each other. This event, organized every three weeks around a different organizational health theme, aims to create spaces for knowledge exchange and transfer. Ateliers/C offers an opportunity to present new approaches and share inspiring tools.

“I love attending COCo’s Ateliers/C workshops because they fill me with ease and confidence, just like seeing family members who help me see more clearly, who listen to me and support me ;) a real joy!” —Amina, Liaison Officer for the Neighbourhood Table Parc-Extension

288 participations to 11 workshops during the year

175 different participating organizations, including 34 organizations from the COCo network

“A lot of new strategies, knowledge and advice were shared and COCo was able to humanize the approach and not make it depressing to have a conversation about anti-racism, especially when people are ready to do the work.” —Participant in our two-day workshop: Sowing the Seeds of Anti-Racism in our Organizations

We are particularly proud of:

— The co-creation of workshops with community groups to promote knowledge transfer and peer-to-peer learning.
— The creation of a language-inclusive workshop space, by offering workshops in English and providing bilingual participation.
— The creation of partnerships outside the community sector (La Pépinière, UQAM and Laboratoire d’Agriculture Urbaine).
— Offering workshops in different formats (1- and 2-day workshops).
— Offering a major one-day workshop bringing together 90 people from the community sector as well as institutional and academic sectors to exchange knowledge and experiences on urban greenhouses.
— Greater integration of the anti-oppressive approach in workshop design.
Topics Addressed:

— The Vivace pour développer des villes participatives! project
— Community-based indicators: what practices and issues?
— (Un)learning our colonial histories and repairing our relationships...
— Taking a closer look at urban greenhouses
— Burn-out in the community: helping others without burning ourselves out
— Working with complexity: how to act when everything is uncertain?
— Navigating Data to Maximize Your Impact!
— Focus: Innovative Collaborative Processes
— Two-day training: Sowing the Seeds of Anti-Racism in our Organizations
— How can I be a good ally of indigenous people/struggles?
— The Art of Listening and Giving Feedback / L’art de l’écoute et de la rétroaction

The Ateliers/C workshops were created in partnership with Centraide of Greater Montreal! Thank you for your precious support.

Diversity and Inclusion in Human Resources

In the fall of 2019, we offered a one-day training session called “Transforming Hearts and Shaping Power: The Leverage for Diversity and Inclusion in Human Resources” for 30 organizations that are part of the Bombardier Foundation network.

We deepened conversations on how to develop an equity lens for human resources. What are the practices that promote true inclusion? The workshop invited groups to develop a posture, to discover approaches, tools and practices to achieve greater diversity and better inclusion practices within our organizations.

Hackathon do_action

In October 2019, we participated in Do_Action_MTL for the first time. This event brought together volunteer web developers and local tech partners with community groups in need of a website. Parker was on hand to offer an organizational ICT consultation to the Centre des Femmes Solidaires et Engagées, and post-hackathon, we provided additional support and training. The hackathon had 14 participants.

Key Impacts

— Participants acquire new information & tools
— Participants learn new skills
— Grassroots organizations are more connected to other groups
— Groups increase awareness of environment & context
LEARNING ORGANIZATIONS LABORATORY

The main objective of the Learning Organization Laboratory (LabOA) is to reflect on the best ways to support and equip community organizations in developing sustainable learning capacities and knowledge sharing. This year, inspired by the learning organization model we developed during the first phase of the project (see below), we moved from research to action.

To achieve this, we co-designed, prototyped, tested and evaluated various tools, working methods and interventions with organizations and facilitators on topics such as flatter organizational structures, building trust, and documenting and sharing knowledge. We also organized a half-day brainstorming session with various stakeholders from the not-for-profit sector to deepen our reflections on the best ways to strengthen organizational learning capacity.

Finally, as a sign of the transversality between COCo’s work, our anti-racism values and the LabOA project, we collaborated on the document “White Supremacy Culture in Organizations”, in which the learning organization asserts itself as an antidote to this culture.

The coming year marks a turning point for the project, and we are aiming high! Stay tuned for the LabOA in 2020, we have a feeling you will be pleasantly surprised!

The Lab is a project supported by Centraide of Greater Montreal.
OUR LEARNINGS

As part of our commitment to being a learning organization, we try to encourage our staff to engage in formal, informal, and team learning as much as possible. We received many new ideas this year that are already influencing our work and the resources we bring to our members.

Accessibility. Our tech team attended a training session on making documents accessible; our intern Hannah created and led training for all staff on ways to make images accessible in our communications, and for the tech team, strategies to improve website accessibility within Wordpress.

Data. As we deep dive into data work, we’ve been reading and experimenting extensively; we also attended the AI4Good conference, and a seminar with Ruha Benjamin on Race after Technology.

Conflict and group dynamics. Emily attended a training session on the “deep democracy” approach to conflict and group dynamics, and has been bringing new tools and strategies back to the team ever since.

Collaboration. Kira graduated from the ‘Leadership Rassembleur’ program, and continues to be supported with a codevelopment group.

Colonialism. As we continue to read and write about the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, we’ve been meeting over lunch to talk about what we are learning.
PARTNERSHIPS

COCo is a 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-ESAC)
— TROVEP (Table régionale des organismes volontaires d’éducation populaire de Montréal)

In 2019, we also started participating in the “Experimental Capacity Building Project”.

FUNDING PARTNERS

We are thankful to all of the organizations who choose to support us financially. In 2019, those were the Ministère de l’Éducation et l’Enseignement Supérieur; Centraide du Grand Montréal, the Trottier Foundation; the Lush Charity Pot Foundation, and Emploi Québec.
**FINANCES**

COCo's growth over the past several years is evident in its financial statements. The year 2019 marks a new peak in terms of autonomous revenues and payroll expenses, both of which are up more than 20% over the previous year. In addition, new financial partners, such as the Lush and Trottier foundations, have joined us.

**REVENUE**

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<tr>
<td>Autonomous income (training contracts, coaching, facilitation and mediation)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centraide of Greater Montreal—Operations</td>
<td>88 000,00 $</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centraide of Greater Montreal—Projects</td>
<td>179 100,00 $</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’enseignement supérieur (MEES)—Operations</td>
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<td>Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’Enseignement supérieur (MEES)—Projet</td>
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<td>Emploi Québec</td>
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**EXPENSES**

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<td>Salaries and social security charges</td>
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<td>Professional fees</td>
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<td>Travel and meals</td>
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<td>Translation</td>
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<td>Maintenance and repair</td>
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<td>Photocopies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>665 887,00 $</strong></td>
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WHO WE ARE

Board of Directors—Başak Büyükçelen, Julia Couture-Glassco, Richenda Grazette, Ariel Harlap, Sara Kendall, Diana Lombardi, Flore Million, Samuel Raymond, and Patrick Yanga.

Our nine members of the Board of Directors are our most engaged volunteers, and they contributed 317 volunteer hours this year.

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

This year, we are saying a very difficult goodbye to Emily Yee Clare, our Human Resources and Anti-Oppression Coordinator, and the person who has led our Diversité d’Abord research. For the past 3 years, Emily has steered us towards more integrity, clarity and care. We will miss her deeply.

Affiliate Facilitators—Juniper Belshaw, Nadia Chaney, Pascale Brunet, Miatta Gorvie, Ainsley Jenicek, Kama la Mackerel, Sophie Le-Phat Ho, Jess Malz, Alex Megelas, Spencer Mann, Kevin Paul, Griffin Payne, Kristen Perry, Frances Ravensbergen, Rehana Tejpar, and Johanna Tzountzouris.

As the number of organizations working with us grows, so has our list of affiliate facilitators. They make us stronger, smarter, and better able to serve you!

Contract Team—We work with dozens of contract workers every year, who play a key role in bringing their expertise to our work. We would particularly like to thank our accountant (Manoj Chandarana); our translators (Sunny Doyle, Alexie Doucet); our graphic and visual people (Luckensy Odigé, Sanjeevan Tharmaratnam, Grace An); our auditor (Ron Amstutz), our lawyer (Mark Phillips), our cleaner (Jessica Julian), and Juniper Belshaw, who stepped in at a key moment for us this year.

Members—We are so grateful to our 163 members. Made up of community organizations and individuals who are active in the nonprofit sector, our members are engaged in our work and care about our future. We are so grateful for your wisdom, your engagement, and your support of COCo.
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.

This year, COCo has been working towards taking more concrete steps to support the well-being and struggles of Indigenous people, on the territory where we work and live. This has included taking the time to read and share our learnings from the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (which also includes discussions of violence experienced by 2SLGBTQQIA people) with our members. We have committed to donating a percentage of our revenue every year to Indigenous organizations.