The Centre for Community Organizations

ANNUAL REPORT 2020
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COCo’s office is situated on an island known as Tiotia:ke to the Haudenousaunee, as Mooniyang to the Anishinaabeg, and as Montreal to many others. This traditional territory of the Kanien'kehá:ka people has also been a historical meeting place for other Indigenous nations, including the Omàmiwinini or the Algonquin people. Today, Tiotia:ke is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect 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.
Who We Are

Different members of Tiotia:ke and what is currently known as Quebec’s grassroots and non-profit sectors make up COCo’s community. They help us learn and grow through their many insights and experiences, which makes us stronger, smarter, and better able to serve you!

Board Of Directors – Ariel Harlap (last term), Başak Büyükçelen, Diana Lombardi (last term), Flore Million, Julia Couture-Glassco, Patrick Yanga, Richenda Grazette, Samuel Raymond and Sara Kendall.

Staff – Emil Briones, Emily Yee Clare (resigned), Fabiola Mizero Ngitabatware (resigned), Griffin Payne, Jeneffer Ndahayo, Kira Page, Madeleine Cohen, Michèle Spieler, nènè myriam konaté, Parker Mah, Philippe Angers-Trottier, Sabrina McFadden (resigned), and Veronica Vivanco.

Affiliate Facilitators – Ainsley Jenicek, Alex Megelas, Cora Lee Conway, Frances Ravensbergen, Janie Janvier, Jess Malz, Johanna Tzountzourishas, Juniper Belshaw, Kevin Paul, Miatta Gorvie, Nadia Chaney, Pascale Brunet, Rehana Tejpar, Griffin Payne, Emily Yee Clare and Sophie Le-Phat Ho.

Contract Team – Adrienne Piggott, Daniela Pinto, Danièle-Jocelyne Otou, Grace An, Jessica Brown, Jessica Julian, Kama La Mackerel, Kit Malo, Luckensy Odigé, Lyne Leblanc, Manoj Chandarana, Mark Phillips, Patrice Blais, Percolab, Ron Amstutz and Sunny Doyle.

Members – We love our 169 organizational members and the individuals from the non-profit sector who are engaged in our work. We are grateful for their wisdom, their engagement, and their support of COCo.
Jeneffer, COCo’s Communications Intern, during one of our many Zoom meetings.
We are committed to building the skills, knowledge, and diversity required to meet the needs of on-the-ground organizations, facing the biggest challenges.

In 2016, we chose two areas of focus that we believe most effectively nurture an inclusive, social-justice oriented Quebec community sector:

• Bolstering the impact and amplifying the voices of grassroots organizations.
• Strengthening inclusion and diversity within the Quebec community sector, by stewarding dialogue and learning in partnership with other coalitions and training groups.

In addition to directly supporting grassroots organizations, COCo has been partnering with funders and other key actors in the community sector. Together, we work to foster an increase in diversity and inclusion practices in the sector. Through events and learning exchanges, we hope to help create the sector our communities deserve.
Our staff gathered on Zoom to welcome Griffin to the team.
Like community organizations around the world, throughout 2020, COCo has worked to address and adapt to the challenging conditions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to begin by saying that we were deeply impressed by the care and thoughtfulness with which the team at COCo reorganized and reoriented its work during this time. By transitioning to remote work, for example, the team was able to maintain continuous engagement with the organizations it serves.

In 2020, COCo’s team was also faced with an unprecedented number of requests for services, while simultaneously experiencing the impacts of the pandemic in their own lives. In recognition of these challenges, the Board sought to support the team by granting a bonus during the summer, and supporting two weeks of additional time off at the end of the year. As we head into 2021, this question has emerged as a key priority: how can we continue to support policies and practices that center the health and well-being of the people at the heart of COCo?

Beyond the pandemic, 2020 was marked by significant internal changes as well. Sabrina, Emily, and Fabiola stepped away from their positions; a special thank you to them for their work, and for the critical roles they each played in the organization! We were also thrilled to welcome four incredible members to the team: Griffin, Jeneffer, Madeleine and nènè. We are already witnessing the positive contributions of their presence!

Through these times of uncertainty, COCo’s staff and Board of Directors have engaged respectively in a process of internal reflection. Together, they aim to deepen the practice and integration of COCo’s anti-oppression values, to strengthen the effectiveness of our shared work (how we make decisions, how we maintain accountability), and to create a concrete culture of care.
Despite the pandemic, our nine-member Board held twelve meetings in 2020; as well as a Board/staff retreat at the beginning of the year, a collective self-evaluation at the end of the summer, and involvement in working hubs throughout the year. In total, Board members contributed 490 volunteer hours to the organization.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to our outgoing board members, for their remarkable contributions to the organization: Diana Lombardi, Ariel Harlap, Patrick Yanga, Flore Million and Başak Büyükçelen.

Finally, we would like to say that in light of the hard work of the COCo team during 2020, the Board could not be prouder to recognize the care, generosity, and commitment of each and every team member. This work continues to make COCo a flagship organization in the Montreal community and across Quebec.

Patrick Yanga, Samuel Raymond, and Sara Kendall
On behalf of COCo’s Board of Directors
Empowerment Award

This year, we were declared the winners of Centraide’s *Le Prix des Solidaires*, in the Empowerment category. The selection committee highlighted our work on *Diversité d’Abord*, which examines racism in the community sector, and *ateliers/C*, our series of co-learning events.

We are truly honoured to have our work recognized in this way alongside the other winners who are doing amazing work in the city!
Our newsletter subscriptions, social media communities, and website visits all increased in volume, while the number of articles and external resources we shared fell slightly.

The Year in Numbers

This year COCo served:

1 852 people from 468 organizations

We reached 111 616 people and organizations through our online presence in 2020. That’s 243 % more than last year!
Our “Problem” Woman of Colour in the Workplace infographic remained the most popular page on our website, garnering almost 12% of our web traffic (28,062 pageviews), and accounting for 16% of entrances to our website. This means more people entered through this page than through our home page!

Our Virtual AGMs tool accounted for almost 10% of COCo’s online traffic (12,190 pageviews in French and 11,669 in English). It was closely followed by our resource on White Supremacy Culture in Organizations, which contributed to nearly 6% of traffic on our website (13,653 pageviews).

This year’s online engagements confirmed a need for anti-racist and technologically adaptive resources in Quebec’s community sector.
COCO’s Online Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>Subscribers 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newsletter</td>
<td>2,482 (+110%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>3,760 (+15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>591 (+162%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“This was super useful – I am grateful to whoever took the time to put it online! Thanks”

– SAPICS on our Virtual AGMs tool
## COCo’s Website

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Quantity in 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New COCo online resources</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New external online resources</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles we shared</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Activity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Quantity in 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visits to our online resources</td>
<td>67 967 (+ 141%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits to our website</td>
<td>99 783 (+ 91%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page views</td>
<td>239 339 (+ 68%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“This is so helpful! Thank you for being so innovative with your AGM and documenting the experience so well. It’s going to make a huge difference for orgs like ours.”

– Centre d’aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel de l’ouest de l’île
Virtual Annual General Meetings

This year, the need for technical and organizational support grew exponentially, as community groups moved their AGMs online for the first time.

Organizations sought to address the following challenges:

• Ensuring real democratic participation.
• Enabling secure participation and online elections.
• Adhering to often out of date legal standards and requirements, while adapting to a new environment.

As one of the few community groups in Quebec offering support at the intersection of tech, organizational development and governance, COCo was able to go beyond simple Zoom tips and offer holistic support to groups seeking help. We combined our different services and skills to:

• Write a how-to guide for Virtual AGMs that garnered 23,859 visits on our website

• Offer 4 workshops on Virtual AGMs, attended by a total of 147 community groups
  • Our Information and Communications Technology team came together with ateliers/C in May to provide two francophone workshops around best practices for Virtual AGMs, both of which were so popular a third was added in English.
  • We collaborated with the Quebec Community Groups Network to offer a fourth workshop – The Ins and Outs of Virtual AGMs – to their members.

• Hold 31 information sessions about virtual AGMs with individual organizations
• Provide tech infrastructure and support to 7 organizations for their virtual AGMs
• Present on best practices for virtual AGMs to an audience of 150 community sector workers, through a collaboration with Concertation Montréal, in June
• Advocate to funders for increased flexibility and understanding related to virtual AGMs
A screenshot from COCo’s first Virtual Annual General Meeting in March 2020.
Organizational Support

COCo offers made-to-measure accompaniments to community organizations seeking change in how they work and fulfill their missions. This can include:

- Training in new skills
- Introductions to new tools
- Multi year strategic planning, restructuring, and anti-racism projects

**This year, we executed 149 contracts with 113 organizations.**

The popularity of our accompaniment services has grown over the past five years, and we are learning to respond to this growth while honouring COCo’s capacity. In practice, this meant that we spoke with almost 250 organizations seeking support from us in 2020, while turning away many more. We are rethinking our processes, structures, and ways of working, with the goal of meeting more of these demands, more efficiently.
“Recently, we have undertaken a series of COCo-led training sessions (facilitated by Rehana), and they have been nothing short of life changing.”

– Theresa, Volunteer Coordinator at The Teapot 50+
Pascale worked through questions of membership engagement and the democratic life of Portail VIH/sida du Québec.
Kira, Fabiola and Janie have been working with Femmes du Monde de Côte des Neiges on a three year intensive strategic planning process.
Fabiola worked with Sayaspora, a platform for African women worldwide, to strengthen their organizational structure. Photo by Sayaspora.
Sophie worked with Verticale on questions of anti-oppression and anti-racism.
In 2020, COCo’s Information and Communications Technology team provided advice and accompaniment on remote working set-ups, best practices, and tools. We put some of our own tech projects on hold, diverting those resources towards the emerging needs of our partner organizations. These included:

- Providing captioning or translation in a virtual setting.
- Securely sharing files with a growing list of virtual collaborators.
- Adapting activities to provide equipment or resources to the community.
- Using websites and Contact Relationship Management systems.

The COCo tech team leveraged collaborative and video conferencing platforms to address these needs, operating in more places than ever.

In all, we worked on **51 contracts** with **35 groups last year** and offered **38 free information** and support sessions to as many groups. Almost 60% of these information sessions came within the first four months of the lockdown. We also presented a workshop on new tools for online collaboration with ateliers/C.

Overall, we witnessed a shift towards long-term technological contracts, which corresponded with the rising complexity of secure data management, changing infrastructures and an increasingly uncertain future. Our holistic approach has helped groups to slow down and recognize the importance of the technological aspects of their work, within their organizational puzzles.
Michèle, COCo’s ICT Co-ordinator, enjoying some fresh air and working on their laptop at the park.
Navigating the Dataverse

After a successful workshop on *Navigating Data* in the Fall of 2019, we continued to help community organizations with their data questions. We then paused this outward facing work for several months, to focus on other projects and improve our internal practices. We were able to jump back into this project in the fall of 2020 with the support of Centraide. Throughout this collaboration, we worked with organizations to better understand their data-related challenges and needs.

This year, we also included questions about data in our organizational accompaniments. Conversations with these organizations revealed that they face the following challenges:

- Too much data and a lack of clarity on what it is being collected for.
- Data in hard-to-use formats, requiring additional cleaning and preparation to become meaningful information.
- A lack of data management skills, tools and formulas, and apprehension about acquiring them.
- A lack of time and resources to dedicate to data collection.

We will be developing tools and building a service to address some of these challenges in the coming year.

**Engaging with the Sector**

We participated in the preparation and facilitation of the Techaide AI4GOOD Hackathon, at which we shared a list of resources on AI and accessibility, inclusion and diversity. Our participation helped bridge gaps between computer/data scientists and community organizations.

COCo was also invited to participate in the “AI for the Rest of Us” research project, which explores what it takes for non-expert members of civic society to build AI systems. This project received a SSHRC Insight Development Grant.
Walk with me
Our ongoing Anti-Racism Education project reached another milestone in 2020 when we published Walk with Me – an animated video adaptation of The “Problem” Woman of Colour in the Workplace infographic, which went viral in 2017. The video has experienced its own virality, with over 12,000 combined views on our YouTube channel and Facebook page.

Walk with Me was developed by a majority-racialized production team and based on a fictionalized composite narrative written by Emily Yee Clare and Kama La Mackerel. The video features our protagonist, Iman, a Black woman whose journey represents countless stories of Black and racialized women and femmes, who make change, provide care, and carry deep truths about the crossroads of race and gender in Quebec’s community sector. We wanted to make sure that Iman’s story spoke to how Black and racialized women and femmes continue to organize, speak out, and dream of hopeful futures.

Walk with Me was produced and created by: Grace An (animation and artistic direction), Emil Briones (production, screenplay, voice work), Emily Yee Clare (story, screenplay, creative direction, production), Kama La Mackerel (story), Fabiola Mizero-Ngirabatware (production, screenplay, voice work), Kira Page (publicity and creative direction), Adrienne Piggott (translation), and Daniela Pinto (sound and music).

This project was partially funded by the LUSH Charity Pot Program.
“Our work around anti-racism in the non-profit sector became more visible in the spring when we, once again, found ourselves speaking with organizations grappling with the legacies and realities of racism in our sector.”

– Kira Page, Contract Coordination & Facilitation
“Recent uprisings against police brutality have heightened the community sector’s awareness of technological bias and impacts of technology-enabled surveillance on specific communities. We hope to continue to develop strong foundational practices and values on which to build our tech work moving forward.”

– Parker Mah and Michèle Spieler, Information & Communications Technology
Since 2017, the ateliers/C project has been deploying an annual program of 12 workshops on different themes related to organizational development, interpersonal relations and organizational practices. This space promotes networking, learning and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing. The ateliers/C are carried out in partnership with Centraide of Greater Montreal in the hope of contributing to the development of a culture of learning organizations and communities within the Montreal community sector.

There were a total of 375 participants in the 12 ateliers/C produced in 2020:

- 3 face-to-face events and 9 workshops on Zoom
- 4 workshops in English and 8 in French
- 189 organizations participated in the ateliers/C in 2020
- including 160 organizations from the Centraide network of these 160 organizations, 64 are members of the COCo & Centraide network of these 64 organizations, 29 are members of the COCo network only.

This year’s ateliers/C dealt with:

- Communication and branding
- Collective and efficient decision making processes
- Coaching skills
- Virtual Annual General Meeting
- Deepening Resilience: personal resourcing practices for remote work
- Digital facilitation
- Remote teaming: collaborating at a distance
- Online facilitation and collaboration tools
- Learning to pause, to better bounce back in the face of the crisis
- Maintaining mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic
Participants in ateliers/C Workshops

- 160 members of Centraide’s network
- 64 members of COCo & Centraide’s networks
- 29 members of COCo’s network

“OMG... this workshop was so timely. I was discouraged, anxious, doubting my abilities. The workshop took my mind off it...I came out of the fog of stress and guilt of not performing as well as I usually do and returned to a much more functional version of myself. Thank you!!!! Continue your beautiful mission, COCo.”

– ateliers/C: Deepening resilience: personal resourcing practices for remote work
Through our programming, we have collaborated with organizations in the community network, including AQPAMM and the Centre de formation populaire to promote the sector’s expertise. We look forward to continuing this work through the renewal of a three-year agreement with Centraide of Greater Montreal to produce the ateliers/C until 2023.

**Many thanks to all our collaborators** for contributing to the success of this programming: Danièle-Jocelyne Outo, Lyne Leblanc, Nadia Chaney, Juniper Belshaw, Percolab and Jess Malz at Inbo. We also wish to thank all the members of the COCo team who stayed the course during this year’s upheavals, especially Jeneffer Ndahayo, Fabiola Mizero-Ngirabatware, Kira Page and Michèle Spieler.
Learning Organizations Laboratory (LabOA)

Born of a partnership between COCo and Centraide of Greater Montreal, the Learning Organizations Laboratory (LabOA) aims to reflect on the best ways to support and equip community organizations in the development of sustainable learning capacities and knowledge sharing.

At the end of a two-year action-research project that combined a literature review, interviews with specialists, experimentation, and a great deal of learning by doing, we have built a learning organization model that is adapted to the realities of community organizations. It will take shape during LabOA’s Social Innovation Hub, a project we developed in 2020.

LabOA’s Social Innovation Hub is an innovative, co-creative, generative learning experience that aims to foster the development of learning capacity and transformation at all levels of the community sector, from the individual to the ecosystem. This bilingual learning process anchored in Theory U will take place over 6 weeks in the winter of 2021, and will bring together 11 participating organizations, each represented by 2 people.
Community sector workers, volunteers and Board members often need to chat with someone outside of their organization about the issues they face there. COCo provides short information sessions on a wide variety of topics related to non-profit work, helping organizations and the people who shape them. In the past, information sessions took place by phone, via email or in person. This year our workplace became virtual and these services shifted entirely to emails and video calls.

As the community sector faced increasing uncertainty, many organizations turned to our online resources for support, and we experienced a slight (5%) increase in information sessions. This year, we provided 195 sessions for 166 organizations and 234 participants.
COCo is a learning organization that encourages its staff to engage in formal, informal, and team learning. 2020’s many challenges threw us into a state of constant learning, as we adapted to a global pandemic and sought to meet an increased demand for our services.
“This year, our team learnt to do our work totally virtually for the first time ever. In March, we established weekly one-hour meetings where we shared strategies, tips and tricks on creating meaningful spaces online. We also shared our challenges with each other, as many community organizations were facing extremely difficult situations and significant strain over long periods of time.”

– Kira Page, Contract Coordination & Facilitation
We held 35 of these hour-long sessions during which:

- We taught each other how to use new technology (Zoom, MURAL, JamBoard, Google Slides, Lean Coffee) and practiced transferring facilitation strategies to an online environment (peer coaching, deep democracy, privilege walks).
- We shared skills (evaluation, strategic planning, role clarifying).
- We talked about our challenges and triumphs.
“The global pandemic did not spare LabOA, which was initially forced to slow down in 2020, only to restart in the summer with renewed energy. In fact, in the face of the complexity and uncertainty associated with COVID-19, one thing has become very clear to us: now more than ever is the time to develop our organizational learning and experimentation capacities.”

– Griffin Payne and Philippe Angers-Trottier, LabOA

“This year’s programming led us to adapt to the context of a social and health crisis by offering online workshops. These delved into topics that were at the heart of the needs of groups in great upheaval in the face of the new health measures and reality of remote working.”

– Veronica Vivanco, workshops/C
Trainings

Data. Michèle completed Le Wagon Montréal’s *Data Science for Everyone*, a 30 hour training program that helped participants go further in data collection and analysis, to automate certain tasks or data processing.

Designing virtual experiences. Emil and Madeleine participated in INBO Design’s *How to Design Engaging Online Workshops with Agile Learning Design*.

Anti-racism. Kira attended *Your anti-racism training is doing harm. Here’s what you should be doing*, a webinar by the Canadian Council for Refugees and Quakelab.
Juniper, Kira, Emily, Fabiola, Michèle and Madeleine during one of our weekly Zoom check-ins.
Our Partners

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)
- Table régionale des organismes volontaires d’éducation populaire de Montréal (TROVEP)
- Communagir

Funding Partners

We are deeply thankful to the organizations who chose to support us financially in 2020: Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’enseignement supérieur (MEES), Centraide of Greater Montreal, Government of Canada (CEWS), Emploi-Québec and Trottier Family Foundation.
Finances

2020 was challenging on several fronts, including the organization’s finances. Fortunately, with the continued support of our funders and the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, and despite a slight decline in contract revenue, COCo pulled through. In fact, for the fourth consecutive year, COCo experienced an increase in revenue and expenses (9% increase from 2019).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous income (training contracts, coaching, facilitation and mediation)</td>
<td>142,631</td>
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<tr>
<td>Centraide of Greater Montreal – Operations</td>
<td>102,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centraide of Greater Montreal – Projects</td>
<td>141,727</td>
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<td>Ministère de l’Éducation et de l’enseignement supérieur (MEES) – Operations</td>
<td>186,826</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy</td>
<td>99,576</td>
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<td>Emploi-Québec</td>
<td>17,913</td>
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<td>Lush Foundation</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trottier Family Foundation</td>
<td>30,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2,445</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>723,263</strong></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and social security charges</td>
<td>617,277</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional fees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Travel and meals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Space and equipment rental</td>
<td>1,591</td>
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<td>Website - design and maintenance</td>
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<td>Office supplies and equipment</td>
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<td>Translation</td>
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<td>Professional development</td>
<td>2,507</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>741,579</strong></td>
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