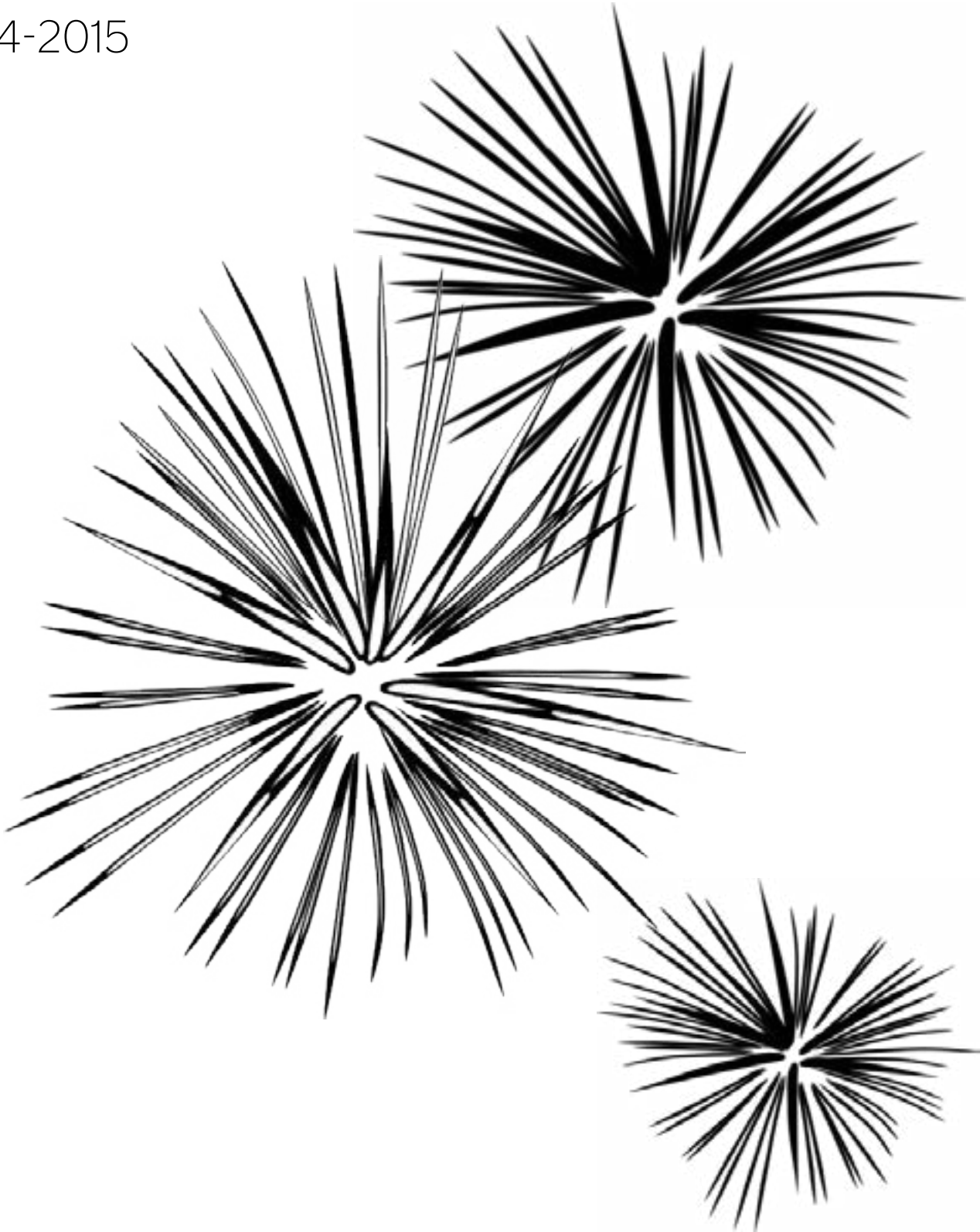


# QPIRG McGill

ANNUAL REPORTS

2014-2015



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# ABOUT QPIRG-MCGILL

## MANDATE

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The Quebec Public Interest Research Group at McGill (QPIRG-McGill) is a resource centre for students and community members working towards social and environmental justice. We strive to engage students in research, public education and action, and to support grassroots activism around diverse social and environmental issues. We seek to build campus-community alliances and inspire social change through inclusive and non-hierarchical approaches.

QPIRG-McGill is opposed to all forms of discrimination on the basis of: race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. QPIRG-McGill is committed to engaging in research and action that are rooted in an anti-oppression analysis and practice.

## HISTORY

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In 1970-71, Ralph Nader, in the US, encouraged the formation of the first two PIRGs by university students and their organizing efforts and structures became the blueprint for the hundreds of groups to follow. By 1973, there were chapters on 135 campuses in 19 states across the US. In Canada, the first PIRG was set up in Ontario during the 1972-73 school year at the University of Waterloo. In Quebec, QPIRG has been an organization at both Concordia and McGill Universities since 1980. However, it was not until 1988 that a referendum was passed at McGill making QPIRG at McGill the first student-funded, autonomous PIRG in Quebec. Now, there are student-funded PIRGs at Concordia, McGill and UQAM.

Over the course of their thirty year development, Canadian PIRGs have diverged in important ways from their US counterparts. Most importantly, they are interested in encouraging grassroots organizing and changing public attitudes, rather than engaging in government lobbying. The PIRGs' mandate has been to provide a structure within which students and community members can develop the knowledge and practical skills needed for activism and community work. By providing a forum and training ground for people to be engaged members of their community, the PIRGs also provide a bridge between academia and organizing, by linking theory and practice. In the last five years, QPIRG McGill has been instrumental in promoting and supporting progressive movements on McGill's campus, through the formation of events like Culture Shock and Social Justice Days. As well, QPIRG regularly collaborates with other campus groups who are working for social and environmental justice.

Since 2001, QPIRG has adopted an anti-oppression framework, seeking to oppose all forms of oppression as they play-out within society at large as well as within our organizing work.

As of 1988, all McGill undergraduate and graduate students are automatically members of QPIRG-McGill and are entitled to all the organization's services by virtue of a refundable semester fee. Community members are eligible for membership if they pay the "community member" fee and complete 15 hours of volunteer work at QPIRG-McGill.

# QPIRG-MCGILL STRUCTURE

## QPIRG-McGILL BOARD

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A volunteer Board of Directors, elected at the Annual General Meeting, runs QPIRG-McGill. The Board is responsible for all the decisions pertaining to the operation of the organization. The Board defines the vision and direction of the organization, allocates the budget, and also organizes independent QPIRG events.

QPIRG-McGill's voluntary Board members gain valuable skills and receive hands-on, practical training in running a non-profit organization. This year the Board formed ten committees: Staff Committee, Popular Education Committee, Legal Committee, Finance Committee, Outreach & Media Committee, the Study in Action Committee, the Convergence Committee, Policy Committee, CURE Committee, and Accessibility Committee.

### STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS

Cadence O'Neil  
Addison Woolsey  
Nicholle Savoie  
Kai O'Doherty  
Azad Kalemkiarian  
Ella Belfer

SSMU REP: Kareem Ibrahim

### COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

Emily Yee Clare  
Cameron Butler  
Farin Shore  
Robin Reid-Fraser  
Brooke Nancekivell

PGSS REP: Isaac Stethem

### (SOME OF!) OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Anna Vail, Mayson Rain Miller-Thompson, Ali Cem Ertekin, Amedee d'Aboville, Pauline Sarah PFingsten, Samantha Capps, Noelle Dube, Zafer M, Alan Reed, K Wilson, Shea Betts, Dylan Reap, Veronica Bosco, Celia Robinovitch, Charlie Webb, Shaina Agbayani, Anna Tyshkov, Megan Shanklin, Arabella Colombier, Cath Wang, Vanessa Yan Lee, Leah Paul, Kiera Sheppard, Samia Marshy, Kevin Paul, Irene Dambriunas, Emily Sanders, Jaime MacLean, Wade Walker, Grace Face, Rae Dooley, Simmie Steinberg, Lucas Youmans, Dianna Chen, Natalie Liconti, Rhiana Warawa, Blare Coughlin, Tonie Miller, Leslie Anne St. Amour, Sevrenne Sheppard, Celine Garandeau, Alaina Boyle, Kelly Schieder, Rafaella Alegre, Annie Chen, Shannen Ciricillo, Caroline Copeman, Chris Gismondi, Rhiannon Jones, Sarah Mihuc, Ryan Canuto, Leah Paul, Allison Jones, Michael Baek, Vita Azaro, Ashley Hobson-Garcia, Erin Strawbridge, Viv Walz, Niyousha Bastani, John Hanchar, Saad Rajper, Allison Ebner, Pouya Behmaram, Christine Avery, Rosemarie Sarno, Agatha Slupek, Lucie Lastinger, Nina Hermes, Radney Jean-Claude, Leah Girardo, Chantal Petgrave, Mars Zaslavsky, Cinder Ikeda, Irene Dambriunas, Viola Chen, Dan Wolf, Anne Favory, Caely White, Simmie Steinberg, Hannah Feinberg, Lauren Laframboise, Noah Witte-WInnett, Josh Marquis, Yan Qin, Lindsay Nixo, Tanya Gill, Josh Falek, Coyote, Sarah Woolf, Macho Philipovich, Degane Sougal, Annie Preston, Andrea Figueroa, Jody Beck, Jamie McLean, Elliott Montpellier, Amber Gross, Urooj Nizami, Holly Nazar, Fred Burrell, Cleve Higgins, Delice Mugabo, Lena Palecios, Adrienne Hurley, Aziz Choudry, Michelle Hartmann, Aimee Louw, Al Blair, Jean-Luc St Amour, Shyam Patel, Elizabeth Higgins, Caitlin Manicom, Camillia Elachqar, Simone Lucas, Tyler Lawson, Reilly MacDonald, Aaron Lakhoff, Nicole Ebert, Louise Burns, Noah Eidemann, Jaggi Singh, Christina Xydous, Otto Buxton, Liam Mayes, Alienor Cambridge-Lemieux, Mutatayi Fuamba, Alex Garcia, Rosalind Wong, Leah Freeman, Bill Van Driel, Amy Darwish, Mary Foster, Anna Pringle,

## QPIRG-MCGILL STRUCTURE

Gwendolyn Muir, Carolin Huang , Amanda Lickers, David Whiteside, Keara Yim, Kota Harbron, Malek Yalaoui, Max Silverman, Noam Lapid, Noe Arteaga Santos, Viviana Carol, Mostafa Henaway, Sarah Malik, Cecilia, Danielle, Joey Calugay , Josh Pavan , Sheehan Moore, Alex Matak, Cera Yu, Stefan Christoff, Steve Baird, Pei-Ju Wang , Bader Takriti, Clifton Nicholas, Maria Forti, Ted Rutland, Maya Rolbin-Ghanie , Lucy Anacleto, Sam Bick, Noah Bick, Elena Stoodley, Dylan Fishlock, Freda Guttman, Nazik Dakkach , Gretchen King, Simone Page, Allison Figueroa, Joel Pednault , Jon McPhedran Waitzer, Brad Fougere, Cassie Smith, Sofia Fuad, Lina Martin Chan, Sasha Simmons , Caytee Lush, Sarah Mostafa Kamel, Ashley Fortier, Jill Hanley, Guillermo Martinez de Velasco, Edith Lafreniere, Hirut Eyob, Neil Kastro, Mahmoud Abdelal, Paul Di Stefano, Doug Smith, Dror Warschawski, Lara Khattab, Mohamed Elasri, Nadia Kanji , Oula Hajjar, Rémy-Paulin Twahirwa, Rena Saad, Rushdia Mehreen, Yasmeen Daher

### STAFF

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QPIRG-McGill has two core staff members who coordinate the day-to-day operations of the organization. The staff works hard to insure reliability, continuity and skill sharing within the organization. In addition to daily operations, the staff is responsible for programming, finances, outreach, working groups, programs, coordinating resources, volunteers, projects, grant research, and policy development among many other things. The FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATOR was KAMA MAUREEMOOTOO . The OUTREACH AND PROMOTIONS COORDINATOR WAS KIRA PAGE.

This year our two part-time work-study students were NIINA MANESS (RESOURCE CENTRE COORDINATOR) and SHAHIR OMAR (CURE COORDINATOR). We also have had three part time staff join us through government employment grants, Shaina Agbayani (Campus Outreach), Kristin Li (Community Research) and Grace Face (Accessibilty researqcher) . The 2013-14 accountant was DAN LACROIX.

In the summer of 2013, QPIRG-McGill hired two RAD FROSH COORDINATORS: OTTO BUXTON VINCENTINI (community-based) and DIEGO SANDOVAL (student-based); and one SCHOOL SCHMOOL COORDINATOR: CERA YU We funded two summer research stipends, with the Monster Academy and Accessibilize Montreal Jointly with the SSMU, we hired LEAH PAUL to coordinate Culture Shock, and LEELA SCOTT to coordinate Social Justice Days.

### CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (CRCC)

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At the Annual General Meeting in April 2014, the following QPIRG-McGill members were elected to the CRCC: MARIA FORTI, ANNIE PRESTON, AND KAI CHENG THOM. The CRCC follows a CRCC policy to address complaints involving QPIRG-McGill members that cannot be resolved by the Board of Directors.

# QPIRG-MCGILL BOARD REPORT

## TRAINING, VISIONING

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This year's QPIRG board training was split into two parts with one training happening at the end of April and the other happening at the end of August. These sessions were facilitated by full-time staff and returning board members and included discussions of the consensus process, conflict-resolution, who we are as an organization (including who is present in the room and who is less present or not present in the room), the history of the PIRG structure in "Canada" and the "United States," finances, solidarity vs. charity, and board/staff dynamics and labour relations, particularly to discuss the board as employers and hierarchies between board and staff. Additionally, board members chose the committees to take part in for the year. This training included scenarios, facilitated discussions, and information provided in both written and oral formats. The ability to have two trainings, especially one in the spring, was incredibly helpful in establishing a common base of knowledge and helped for a smoother transition in the fall than in previous years when spring training was not able to occur. We recommend that future boards continue to hold training in the spring and late summer if at all possible.

Visioning this year occurred on August 19th and August 21st, with the first session bringing together members of the previous year's board with the new board. The August 19th meeting lasted approximately 4 hours and the August 21st meeting lasted 2.5 hours. Visioning allowed board members - incoming, and outgoing - to reflect on QPIRG's role in the community, internal and external context, and its priorities for the future. The old outgoing/incoming board visioning centered around the following topics: strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats, the role of volunteers, accessibility, our values and mandate, and sustainability. It was also in these meetings that the decision was made to hold a visioning session specifically dedicated to discussing the racism and white-dominated nature of the board later in the fall. Unfortunately we did not have an additional visioning in the winter as has been the case in previous years. This was largely due to the referendum, which took place at the end of February. We suggest that future boards hold a visioning session in the winter to allow time to reflect, re-evaluate, and make changes for the rest of the year and beyond.

An important issue moving forward will be re-evaluating our relationship with the SSMU. In addition to having room booking privileges in the SSMU building, we currently collaborate with the SSMU on Rad Frosh, Culture Shock, and Social Justice Days- three of our largest and most high-profile areas of programming. These collaborations (and specifically, the financial support from the SSMU they involve) are not part of a long-term commitment; instead, QPIRG must make annual funding applications for each project. Although QPIRG has, for several years, requested that QPIRG-SSMU collaborations be formalised in multi-year agreements, successive SSMU executives and senior staff have rejected this suggestion. In the case of this year's Social Justice Days, SSMU's level of funding was less than half of what it has historically been, and was only confirmed after the event had concluded. This financial uncertainty has an adverse effect on our ability to plan annual core programming. As a result, it will be important for the new board to work with staff on strategies to bring greater stability to our relationship with the SSMU and/or reevaluate how our core events series are funded.

Another issue which was brought up during the visioning, and that became clear again during the referendum period, was that many campus events that we organize, including Rad Frosh, Social Justice Days, and Culture Shock are well-publicized but not in a way that people make an explicit link between them as events and QPIRG as an organization.

## QPIRG ON CAMPUS:

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Taking place during the last weekend of August, Rad Frosh 2014 went very well. It provided a fun alternative orientation of McGill and Montreal for approximately 120 first-year students who had access to workshops, tours, parties, and concerts. This year's Rad Frosh Coordinators ensured that the events be as accessible as possible. Details about specific measures taken can be found in the staff reports and in the Accessibility section. The turnout for this year was slightly lower than previous years, although we also had multiple participants registering throughout the weekend.

This year, Culture Shock was an incredible success. Not only were all of the events very well-attended, but based on feedback from participating members, the discussions were both enlightening and engaging. The workshops on the first day involved discussions surrounding the barriers faced by immigrants with disabilities, decolonization in Canada, migrant workers in Canada, a student-made film on Race @ McGill, and a collaborative anti-colonial feast with numerous Indigenous speakers and multiple co-organizing groups. On the second day, there were discussions and workshops on Indigenous liberation and resistance, intersectionality, white space and

## QPIRG-MCGILL BOARD REPORT

graphic design, race/Indigeneity and storytelling and the history of Turtle Island. Culture Shock also featured the launch of Nahla Abdo's book "Captive Revolution: Palestinian Women's Anti-Colonial Struggle Within the Israeli Prison System" and the day ended with our keynote event, Darkmatter presents #itgetsbitter! Darkmatter is a trans South Asian art and activist collaboration, and they blew away the audience, a room that was filled to the brim with community members eager to experience all that their poetry could inspire, and they did not disappoint. On the weekend, there was a hip-hop dance party, a conversation on afro-futurism, and Healing Rage, a convergence of Indigenous peoples and people of colour, all of which were also well-attended and well-organized. Culture Shock this year has the same number of events but was held over four days instead of the usual seven in an effort to reduce burden on the permanent staff.

This year, the board decided to condense Social Justice Days, usually a week-long series of panels, workshops, and film screenings, into a three-day period from February 12-14 because of the strain on staff in the context of the upcoming fee-increase referendum. With events on topics ranging from the accessibility of activist spaces to McGill's complicity in colonial war, Social Justice Days offered a forum for some of our working groups and other community organizations to facilitate conversations both on and off campus about social justice. It culminated with two events on February 14: a contingent to the Annual Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and the Self-Love Cabaret, an anti-valentine's manifesto that brought performances by six artists of colour to Cafe l'Artère.

Study in Action (SIA) is a social-justice research conference which brings together in conversation undergraduate students who have done applied student research and community organizations and organizers doing grassroots work. Study In Action took place on March 19-22 at Concordia University. The panels, each with three student presentations and a community moderator, sparked conversations on a broad range of issues within our mandate of social and environmental justice. All three Montreal-based PIRGs were involved in this collaborative event, but this year it ended up being an incredible amount of work for the QPIRG-McGill staff, and so moving forward, it seems important to reimagine what the conference will look like and how this collaborative relationship with the other PIRGs will be structured. In addition, attendance was low for many of the panels, perhaps a result of the lack of physical and online publicity until very close to the weekend of the conference. The conference ended on a positive note with a well-attended closing panel, "When You Say You Love Me: Black Girls, Public Schools, and State Violence" featuring d'bi young anitafrika, Nantali Indongo, Rachel Zellars and Frances Waithe.

On March 25-26, 2015, QPIRG organized From Austerity to Solidarity, a 2-day popular education workshop series. Planned in conjunction with Spring 2015 student strikes across Quebec, From Austerity to Solidarity had a large turnout and engaged McGill students and community members on a broad range of issues relating to austerity, including understanding austerity policies, the history of student strikes at McGill, the relationship between austerity and other social movements, and practical strategies for resistance. The event series was organized by QPIRG's popular education committee which has been very active this year and has brought a lot of great volunteers into the organization.

This year, QPIRG-McGill's board continued its involvement in organizing Israeli Apartheid Week. This year, the IAW collective organized a week and a half-long series, with sixteen different events that were incredibly well-attended. The collective is continuing to work towards building institutional memory from year to year.

This year, we ran a fee levy referendum to increase the QPIRG McGill fee to \$5.00 for both SSMU & PGSS members. Bearing in mind the anti-PIRG sentiments during our last existence referendum in 2011-12, we not only created a very comprehensive promotion strategy to justify our need for a fee increase, but we also made sure to educate all of our Yes Committee members on how to answer some of the harder questions that often get asked regarding our presence on campus. We flyer'd, poster'd, did class announcements, submitted endorsements to a variety of groups, maintained a very active online presence and table'd in various locations to get the message out to students. Both questions passed with roughly 60% of the vote being in favour of the increase. We are thrilled to see QPIRG grow into a healthier and happier organization as a result in the next year!

The Convergence Journal came out in March 2015 in time for the Study in Action conference. Although there were sporadic meetings throughout the summer, and rounds of both article recruitment and editing occurring in the Fall, the full-time staff struggled to complete the project due to already being overworked by other QPIRG projects. In March 2015, we hired Kristin Li as the Social Justice Research Coordinator under an Emploi Québec grant. Kristin has done a phenomenal work on taking on Convergence as a project

# QPIRG-MCGILL BOARD REPORT

and seeing the publication through until the end.

## QPIRG'S WORKING GROUPS

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Working groups have historically been the heart and soul of QPIRG, engaging in important projects against oppression and domination, and this year was no different. This year QPIRG had a large number of working groups, sixteen in total, including two solidarity working groups: Scarlet Solidarity and MICLA. Out of the sixteen working groups, five were new ones: Accessibilize Montreal, Demilitarize McGill, Howl Arts, Monster Academy and Scarlet Solidarity, while Barrier Lake Solidarity, Community-University Talks, Dignidad Migrante, Howl Arts, The Indigenous Women and Two-Spirit Harm Reduction Coalition, KANATA, Lakas Pag-gawa, MICLA, Solidarity Across Borders, Tadamon!, The Temporary Agency Workers' Association and the Prisoner Correspondence Project were returning working groups.

Our working groups have been very active in fostering both our popular education and our community-based research justice mandates, both on and off campus. Many of them ran workshops during Rad Frosh, Culture Shock and Social Justice Days and others participated in the "From Austerity to Solidarity Series." For Rad Frosh, the Indigenous Women and Two-Spirit Harm Reduction Coalition gave a workshop on "Struggles Against Capitalist Colonialism: How Indigenous Feminisms Will Save the Earth and Destroy the State" and also gave a decolonial and anti-racist tour of McGill; Tadamon! gave a workshop on Apartheid 101, and Demilitarize McGill gave a tour on "Demilitarize McGill: War, Colonialism and the University." As part of Culture Shock, members of Solidarity Across Borders gave a workshop on the ableist nature of the Canadian immigration system, the Temporary Agency Workers' Association ran a workshop on the working conditions of temporary foreign workers in Canada, the Indigenous Women and Two-Spirit Harm Reduction Coalition ran a workshop called "Colonialism and its Accomplices: A Critical History of the Colonization of Turtle Island" and Tadamon! co-sponsored the launch of Nahla Abdo's book "Captive Revolution: Palestinian Women's Anti-Colonial Struggle Within the Israeli Prison System." The Prisoner Correspondence Project also organized a film screening and a letter writing evening during Social Justice Days.

Many of our working groups have carried their own initiatives both on and off campus throughout the year. There are more details available on the "Working Group Reports" section of this document, here is an outline of some of our working groups' initiatives over the past year: Accessibilize Montreal has led unrelenting campaigns (and a couple of excellent demos!) to create more engaging conversations about accessibility and ableism in Montreal; Barrier Lake Solidarity has been continuing its support of the Algonquins of Barrier Lake, despite the increasingly challenging nature of their work; Demilitarize McGill has organized workshops, actions, talks and has published a lot of material throughout the year; C-Uni-T invited Prof. Anthony Stewart, professor of English at Bucknell University, scholar of Black American and Black Canadian scholarship for a series of talks on- and off-campus, "Talking Black to Canada"; Tadamon! continued to be actively involved in organizing Israeli Apartheid Week.

Each of our working groups has been highly active in terms of their visibility, mobilization, campaigning, research and action throughout the year. However, this year's board was particularly out-of-touch with the working groups. We acknowledge that this has been a concern expressed by previous boards, and that this board has not managed to address effectively. We recommend that, at this year's board training, the expectations around communication with working groups be clarified, and that board members commit to a more active level of involvement with the working groups they are assigned to liaise with.

## STAFF

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This year, QPIRG-McGill was incredibly fortunate to have Kama Maureemootoo and Kira Page stay on to work as our internal and external coordinators, respectively. Kama and Kira's hard work, dedication, and endless hours of overtime have been absolutely essential to the functioning of this organization.

This year, QPIRG-McGill has been fortunate to have an incredible team of part-time staff members throughout the year. Shahir Omar stayed on for their second year as the Community University Research Exchange Coordinator, and their wealth of knowledge about the project was essential to the expansion of the program. Though QPIRG-McGill will be sad to see Shahir leaving their position as CURE Coordinator, we are immensely thankful for their two years of hard work, and for their thoughtful contributions towards the long-term sustainability of the CURE project. We strongly recommend that next year's Board, and particularly the CURE



# QPIRG-MCGILL BOARD REPORT

Committee, be more actively involved in outreach for the CURE project at the beginning of the semester, as this is not something that the CURE coordinator has the capacity to undertake, and was helpful in increasing awareness of the CURE project amongst interested students. The board will need to be active in ensuring the next CURE coordinator receives adequate training for their position, and that this work does not fall to the core staff, particularly because Shahir's contract will end before the next CURE coordinator is hired.

Nina Maness was hired as our Library Resource Coordinator, and their incredible enthusiasm and welcoming presence was essential to the expansion of our Alternative Library, as they incorporated their experience with library management with a thorough knowledge of anti-oppression principles. Without Nina's initiative and hours of hard work, the expansion of the library volunteer committee, the continuing efforts to make the library more accessible, and new initiatives such as the Zine Club, would not have been possible.

Kristin was hired as our Social Justice Researcher in March. Kristin's thorough experience in event organizing and coordination made them instrumental in organizing and coordinating the Study in Action conference. Kristin's initiative and vision for the future of the Convergence project is incredibly exciting, and we're thrilled to welcome Kristin to our team this year.

Shaina Agbayani was hired as our Outreach Coordinator this fall. Shaina's long history of involvement with QPIRG-McGill made her the perfect candidate for this position. Shaina's wealth of knowledge about anti-oppression work and her positive spirit were incredibly appreciated.

Leela Scott was hired as our Social Justice Days Coordinator this year. Leela brought great initiative to the position, and was able to fit a huge amount of programming into a constrained time period. Social Justice Days was a huge success, largely thanks to Leela's great work!

Leah Paul was hired as our Culture Shock Coordinator. Leah brought a wonderful enthusiasm to the position, and her knowledge of the organization due to her previous role as a board member at QPIRG-McGill meant that she was able to do much of her work independently! We were thrilled to have Leah on the team.

At the beginning of the summer, QPIRG hired Grace as an Accessibility Policy Researcher, in order to further the work being done to increase the accessibility of QPIRG's resources and programming. Over that time, she put together a series of guides about print accessibility, web accessibility and accessible event organizing; she also began doing research into a future, physically accessible venue for QPIRG itself. She also collaborated with the Rad Frosh coordinators for things like assessing the accessibility of event venues. Her work and knowledge have proved extremely valuable, and she has continued to be involved with the Accessibility Committee through the rest of the year.

QPIRG funded two summer stipend projects: Monster Academy and The Underwater City Zine Project. The Monster Academy project was to design a curriculum for a series of workshops for youth about navigating mental health issues, and Aimee Louw created a zine comparing accessibility across five Canadian cities. Both groups did excellent work over the summer, and went on to become QPIRG working groups (Monster Academy and Accessibilize Montreal) for the 2014-15 year!

Diego Sandoval and Otto Buxton-Vicentini were hired as this year's Rad Frosh coordinators. Their energy and creativity were instrumental in the organization of this year's Rad Frosh, which was an incredible success! Otto and Diego not only incorporated the recommendations made by Grace, the Accessibility Researcher, in order to make Rad Frosh increasingly accessible to incoming froshies, but also put together a jam-packed schedule of concerts, barbecues, workshops, activity fairs, all while being incredibly patient, open, and available to Rad Frosh participants. We sincerely thank them for their long hours of work, incredible composure, creative vision, and thoughtfulness in preparing suggestions for this year's Rad Frosh coordinators.

As in previous years, the unsustainability of our present staff structure has continued to be a major concern at QPIRG-McGill. Though we have instituted changes to attempt to reduce workload for staff members, such as condensing Social Justice Days and Culture Shock into fewer days, the intense nature of our programming this year has continued to be far in excess of what two full-time staff members, even with the support of dedicated part-time staff, can handle. We strongly recommend that this year's summer collective, in deciding how to use the additional money won from our fee-levy referendum, take into consideration the pressing need to reduce the amount of staff overtime at QPIRG-McGill, and that staff overwork continue to be a serious consideration in programming and

# QPIRG-MCGILL BOARD REPORT

planning decisions of next year's board.

We also feel that this year has been characterized by particularly low levels of board initiative, especially in taking on the work of committees. We stress to the incoming board that the work of specific committees, including the task of scheduling meeting times and executing committee decisions, should fall primarily to members of the board, and not to the core staff who sit on these committees. We strongly recommend that this year's Board training be far more explicit about the specific role of Board members within the organization, in terms of clarifying which responsibilities Board members should regularly be undertaking - anything from regularly cleaning the office to regularly checking in with full and part-time staff members.

Additionally, the lack of board involvement in the work of part-time staff members, and the power dynamics between full-time and part-time staff have continued to be an ongoing concern. The Staff Committee has identified that our current level of engagement with and support of part-time staff is far from adequate, and this results in an informal dynamic in which full-time staff become responsible for supporting the work of part-time staff. We recommend that the incoming board be proactive in communicating with part-time staff members; connecting each part-time staff member with one particular member of the Staff Committee, as opposed to expecting them to liaise with a nebulous body, may help to strengthen communication and connections between board and staff members.

Another realization has been the crucial need for clarity around board-staff relations. Though it was covered briefly in the board training at the beginning of the year, it has been clear that it is often forgotten that the board is technically, and practically, the employer of the staff. While these dynamics may not feel apparent to board members, they are incredibly prevalent for staff members, who are directly impacted by all board decisions, from changes in policy to the decision to endorse an event. This is especially important to keep in mind when concerns or criticisms are raised regarding staff performance. While friendships are often common between board and staff members, it is crucial for board members to continue to acknowledge the existence of this power dynamic within these relationships. Better efforts must be made to separate the personal organizing and political work of QPIRG staff members from their work within the organization. Staff Committee recommends a drastic expansion of the labour portion of the board training.

This year's board-staff evaluations were less impactful than they have been in past years because of the delay in collection and delivery of the board evaluations of the work of core staff members. Staff Committee regrets the delay and wishes to note that attention to timing and rigor of these evaluations would increase the effectiveness of communications between the two bodies, leading to increased capacity for self-reflection and improvement!

Finally, QPIRG-McGill needs to continue to improve its hiring practices. We feel that next year's board should prioritize a review of our current employment equity policy, and that next year's board continue to think critically about the role that informal knowledge and personal connections of QPIRG-McGill board members play in our hiring processes and relationships with staff members.

## OUR BOARD, OURSELVES

### 2014-2015 members

This year's board had two resignations. Julie Moreau, who was an active member of this year's Summer Collective, resigned to take a teaching position at Northern Arizona University. The board appointed Macho Philipovich, a returning board member from the previous year as Julie's replacement. Shortly thereafter Macho resigned from the board upon his acceptance into the École du Barreau, and the board appointed Becca Yu, also previously a board member, as his replacement.

This year, our SSMU board representative was Kareem Ibrahim, and our PGSS board representative was Isaac Stethem, returning for a second year. Both Kareem and Isaac were incredibly present and active members of the board, and we are so thankful for their contributions to QPIRG-McGill this year!

### Addressing Whiteness of the Board:

At last year's Annual General Meeting, QPIRG members in attendance raised concerns about the ability of a predominantly white board to effectively support and reflect the priorities of QPIRG's membership and mandate. Members, particularly women of colour,

# QPIRG-MCGILL BOARD REPORT

have expressed frustration and concern with QPIRG's repeated acknowledgement of this systemic and consistent reality over the years, but there has been a lack of concrete efforts to address the problem. That concerns about racism have been repeatedly voiced by both board members and general QPIRG members, and that these concerns have not been heard, prioritized, or concretely acted upon, is in itself the most obvious example of the perpetuation of racism by white folks within the board. In an attempt to move forward, the board has made a concrete effort to name many of the specific ways in which racism manifests in our organization.

At the board level, conversations about racism within the organization have most often been surface level and been met with defensive responses from white members of the board. Recurring dynamics include white guilt; 'confessing' about one's own racism; not listening to the points and concerns of people of colour, particularly those related to dynamics on the board; people of colour being asked to speak to the perspective of all racialized people; going silent after racist comments are made and leaving people of colour to address these problematic statements; using academic, activist, or theoretical language to talk about race and racism that avoids the problems at hand; responding defensively when being called out; distancing ourselves from and not engaging with our own racism but instead pointing to more explicit and egregious examples of racist behaviour; and not acknowledging and addressing complicity in perpetuating racism on an organizational level. People of colour on the board have repeatedly raised that these continued dynamics have made the board an unsafe experience.

Our decisions as a board about who to hire, who to recruit as board members, what discretionary requests to approve, and what projects to endorse, have consistently been driven by the whiteness of this year's board. For example, because most of board recruitment is done through word of mouth and specific outreach, many white people on the board have consistently recruited white friends, and recruitment of people of colour has been done in tokenistic ways. When considering discretionary funding requests, the board often considers whether a group has previously received discretionary funding, without consideration of the legacy of predominantly white boards, and without analysis of whether the project was necessary, effective, and worth funding at the time given other requests.

This was the first year, from our understanding, that there was a concerted attempt to address these concerns by having white members of the board talk openly about their own complicity in racism at a board and organizational level. Given the persistent lack of attention and action to challenging racism on the board, it was agreed that these concerns ought to be addressed separately from the standard visioning process. The white membership of the QPIRG-McGill board attended two facilitated discussions on whiteness within the organization, which were pushed for, planned, and organized by the people of colour on the board and staff, and particularly by women of colour. The first discussion took place over a few hours, and was largely dominated by white guilt, defensiveness, and theoretical discussions of racism and whiteness, instead of practical engagements with the board dynamics and planning of solutions. Further, when asked to summarise the discussion to board members who were not present, they were unable to provide a clear synopsis of their conversations, nor productive points to move forward from.

The second discussion was felt to have been more successful, as it was more clearly structured, with specific scenarios discussing real instances of racism in QPIRG's recent history, and included concrete steps on how to move forward in challenging the whiteness of the organization. The board was meant to have had a third discussion to re-assess our progress, and to draft an "exit report" about this process; to date, this discussion has not yet happened.

While the decision was made to not actively recruit any white folks to join the board, in the recognition that those that are most involved in the decision-making processes of the organization are already disproportionately white, this board acknowledges this is the first step of many to be taken. In these workshops, we discussed the need for white members of the board to educate ourselves and each other about our own racism, and to call each other out so that this work does not fall predominantly on people of colour. This included holding each other accountable for taking the concerns and points of people of colour seriously. However, following these workshops, the work of calling out racism at the board level is still being done primarily by the people of colour on the board. Given that the seats on the board next year will be primarily held by people of colour, conversations about racial dynamics on the board and within QPIRG will be vastly different. For white folks on the board next year, it is imperative to continue to address the whiteness of our organization. For those members not returning, it is essential to continue to challenge institutional racism, especially in the often predominantly white organizing spaces that we are members of, holding each other accountable in our other work and organizing.

# QPIRG-MCGILL BOARD REPORT

## Board Dynamics

Community members from outside of the McGill context are extremely valuable to QPIRG as they often provide important insight to the communities that we aim to support. That being said, The community positions have traditionally filled predominantly by recent McGill alumni. We recommend that the incoming board think critically about the role of community members within the organization. Our board structure is limiting and inaccessible to a large amount of people in terms of the large amount of unpaid labour demanded by members of the board, the lack of consistent food at meetings, the hours at which both board and committee meetings are held, the often internal focus of the organization on issues specifically related to McGill, and the frequency with which meeting times are changed. Further, there can be intergenerational tensions as the board tends to be dominated with individuals under the age of 25. Without serious alterations of these factors, we cannot expect that many community members will either desire or be able to participate in the organization at the board level. Notably this past year, we had a board member who was not involved with campus life and presented their nomination after hearing about QPIRG through a community organisation that they were involved with. This board member requested that the board seriously consider 'community members' within QPIRG, and while a meeting was agreed upon before the winter break, the meeting has still not taken place. More efforts must be made to ensure that board members from outside organisations are sufficiently supported and involved to ensure that their involvement is not tokenistic.

In last year's board report, the board acknowledged the presence of gender dynamics in the labour taken on by the board, specifically noting that those who identified using "she/they" pronouns were more often taking on tasks such as taking minutes, cleaning, facilitating, and were more responsive to requests from the staff for assistance. We believe these dynamics have been less present this year, but that distribution of labour has been incredibly unequal, with certain members of the board taking on vastly more work than others. We recommend that the incoming board have a discussion relatively early in the year clarifying their capacity to commit to the organization, and the expectations of the board as a whole.

Within board conversations, knowledge hierarchies continue to exist, and are particularly aided by the use of "social justicey" language, which often is used to justify certain positions on endorsements, discretionary requests, and board decisions. Though this board has been fairly aware of these dynamics, and has tried to ask one another to "break down" concepts and constructs, we strongly recommend that the incoming board keep this dynamic in the forefront of their minds. By emphasising the language people use vs. their lived experiences and context can result in condescension and may also perpetuate intergenerational tensions.

As has been noted in prior board reports, this year's board felt they had an inadequate level of financial literacy. Though extensive financial training is not something that falls within the staff's current capacity, we do strongly recommend that the Board attend at least one financial workshop, either one given by the Internal Coordinator or one that is being held elsewhere. This is particularly critical this year, given that the Financial Committee has not historically been a particularly active committee, and that this year's Financial Committee will have the particularly large task of translating the board's vision of what to do with our additional fee-levy funds into concrete financial decisions.

## VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are an essential part of QPIRG-McGill, and our work simply could not happen without them. QPIRG has been extremely lucky to have a dedicated group of volunteers on the Programming Committee (later re-named the Popular Education Committee) this year. They were involved in the planning, promotion, and day-of staffing of every major programming series this year, including Culture Shock, Social Justice Days, and Study in Action. In the context of global austerity and spring 2015 strikes, the volunteers also took incredible initiative this year and spearheaded a two-day popular education series called "Austerity to Solidarity: Communities Fighting Back" which featured workshops on precarious work at McGill, direct action, and the history of the 2012 student strike. Austerity to Solidarity culminated with a panel of speakers from Accessibilize Montréal, Solidarity Across Borders, Climate Justice Montréal, the Union for Gender Empowerment, Demilitarize McGill, and POPIR, which had excellent turnout. We're grateful for the commitment and labours of love that the Popular Education committee has poured into QPIRG this year.

Our referendum was completely run by a small army of volunteers, and we couldn't have won it without them! Excitingly, our librarian has recruited an active group of volunteers, many of whom are in the library science school at McGill, who are keeping the library

## QPIRG-MCGILL BOARD REPORT

a busy, active, and functional space. And as always, our biggest program, Rad Frosh, is a real community effort, from our organizing collective, to the people running the DIY fair and workshops, and our frosh facilitators.

We developed and improved our volunteer training sessions, which took place in the fall, and this greatly contributed to volunteer engagement and retention at QPIRG. Shaina also organized many training workshops throughout the year for board members and volunteers, including an Indigenous Perspectives workshop with Allan Vicaire from the First Peoples House and a Trans/Gender 101 workshop with Lucas Charlie Rose. All these trainings were well-attended and gave volunteers a good foundation. The board suggests that volunteer training continue to be held in the fall and throughout the year. Volunteers were largely integrated into the Popular Education and Library committees and did amazing and valuable work. We love them so much! We're excited to do more soon!

At the old board/new board visioning in August, one important point of discussion was the role of volunteers in QPIRG. Past boards have identified the lack of structure and roles for volunteers as a barrier to meaningful volunteer participation. As well, past volunteers have noted that a lack of training makes volunteering overwhelming and inaccessible. A Staff Comm review found that few of the full-time staff tasks could be transferred to volunteers, so it is also important to make sure that volunteer involvement does not create more work for the full-time staff.

We thank our volunteers for their many and diverse contributions - QPIRG-McGill would not exist without you!

### ACCESSIBILITY

This year marked the second year of the QPIRG-McGill Accessibility Committee, which has been a committee working to improve the accessibility of QPIRG's space, resources and events. The Board recognizes the very real limitations of QPIRG's space in terms of physical accessibility due our location on the third floor of a building with no elevator or other mobility aids. While we make long-term financial plans to address this problem, we are also making concrete efforts to increase the accessibility of our current space and our programming.

QPIRG's work this year was bolstered considerably by the hiring of a summer Accessibility Policy Researcher. The researcher, Grace, attended Accessibility Committee meetings over the year, and provided the committee with a number of useful resources such as guides for making online and print resources, as well as events, more accessible.

Over the last year, there have been a number of tangible efforts to make QPIRG's operations more accessible. One of these is the installation of non-fluorescent lamps in the QPIRG boardroom, lounge and library, which provide an alternative to the overhead fluorescent lights that are the cause of headaches and other negative effects for many people. QPIRG has also implemented a scent-free policy, which means that people who use the QPIRG space or attend our events are asked to refrain from using fragrant products such as perfume, hair spray, shampoo, body wash, deodorant, aftershave, etc. Information was shared in all event descriptions online and a script explaining the policy was read aloud before all events during the Winter semester. Furthermore, all of the cleaning supplies in QPIRG are now fragrance free.

Rad Frosh featured Interaction Signal Badges for participants, which are used to indicate the level and type of social interaction that the wearer feels comfortable with at any given moment. These are an extremely useful feature for events like Rad Frosh, which can involve large numbers of people and can be overwhelming for some participants.

After Culture Shock!, QPIRG's major event series of the Fall semester, the Popular Education committee used the accessibility guides written by Grace to reflect on accessibility for Culture Shock! and discuss changes that could be made for future events. Areas that needed improvement included the white noise and harsh fluorescent lighting in many rooms, respect for differing levels of comfort with noise, crowds, and claustrophobic spaces, and accessibility of graphic design in promoting events and distributing information. While these measures are a start, the Accessibility Committee members did find themselves rather unsure about potential next steps in improving accessibility. Furthermore, other projects that were discussed by the committee and supported by the Board were unable to get off the ground for various reasons, including lack of time and lack of communication between the board and the committee.

# BOARD REPORT

The Accessibility Committee has a number of recommendations for QPIRG going forward: 1) that the Board as a whole be part of setting priorities and goals regarding increasing the accessibility of QPIRG resources and programming, particularly in regards to a future, physically accessible new space for QPIRG-McGill; 2) that the Board prioritize the completion of implementing current measures, such as ensuring the availability of non-fluorescent lamps throughout the QPIRG-McGill office, and increasing the amount of information available regarding the scent-free policy; 3) that the Board undergo training on ableism and accessibility to have a common framework for approaching these problems.

## REFERENDUM

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In light of a relatively unchanged student fee since our foundation, despite rising costs and expanded programming, the possibility of running a fee increase referendum began to be explored by the 2013-14 board. The incoming board continued this process, in the first instance with policy committee by drafting a comprehensive referenda policy (applicable to referenda of both the SSMU and PGSS student bodies) over the course of the Fall and early Winter semesters, with input from a number of people and organisations with expertise in student elections and electoral policies. This policy allows us to run our own referenda, through "Elections QPIRG", rather than rely on the systems in place at the SSMU and the PGSS, which have not been good fits for our organization, and have also come under serious criticism and attacks from students over the past few years.

Both the policy, and our proposed fee increase referendum questions, were approved by the Board and the McGill administration; after objections from McGill, we decided to delay asking for our fee to be indexed to inflation until our upcoming existence referendum. In preparation for the referenda, Jean Murray was hired as Chief Electoral Officer of the newly-created Elections QPIRG-McGill. Guillaume Bauchu was hired as Deputy Electoral Officer of Elections QPIRG-McGill.

Planning for the referendum campaign began at the beginning of the Winter semester; the YES committee for SSMU question was chaired by Ella Belfer, while the PGSS question yes committee was chaired by Isaac Stethem. There was a main organizing group that dealt with most of the preparations for the referendum and coordinated the campaigning. A lack of ongoing and clear communication became a challenge as things moved into the referendum period itself. Volunteer recruitment happened during the 2 weeks leading up to the referendum period. A guidebook was created for them, and 2 training sessions were put on to help volunteers prepare for campaigning.

The process moved along slower than was expected by the board, and in the end the referendum period ran from February 25th to March 2nd, with voting starting February 26th. The first 3 days involved an intense on-campus campaign push (including postering, flyering, and classroom announcements), while the last 3 days primarily involved online campaigning. The main messaging centred around building institutional and financial sustainability, our importance on campus as a resource for all students, and the diverse engagement opportunities we provide for students.

No No committees were formed and there was minimal anti-QPIRG campaigning. In the end, the campaign outreach was fairly effective. Overall voter turnout was 13.7% for SSMU and 18.8% for PGSS, with the yes votes being 62.9% and 60.7% respectively. An exit report is being compiled by the Yes committees with more details about the process itself and recommendations for future referenda. For next year, it will be particularly important for policy committee to review the referenda policy and revise/improve it based on this year's experience.

An exit report is being compiled by the Yes committees with more details about the process itself and recommendations for future referenda. For next year, it will be particularly important for policy committee to review the referenda policy and revise/improve it based on this year's experience.

## STAFF REPORT

STAFF REPORT

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This year, both the full time staff renewed their employment contracts with the organization: Kira Page stayed on as the Outreach and Communications (External) Coordinator, and Kama Maureemootoo as the Finance and Administration (Internal) Coordinator.

This second year allowed us to have a better grasp on the nature of our work, and of QPIRG-McGill as an organization, which in turn allowed us to facilitate our internal work by readjusting our task descriptions. In the summer of 2014, we had a two-day visioning session with the Staff Committee to re-evaluate our positions and the job descriptions tied to each of them. This exercise allowed us to calculate the amount of time needed to complete each of our tasks and to look at what gets left behind and/or uncompleted despite our innumerable hours of overtime.

Over the past year, we have upheld the same level of programming when it comes to our popular education mandate, but we moved Culture Shock to later in the Fall, and we condensed both Culture Shock and Social Justice Days into 3-4-days event series, which significantly reduced our stress levels and our overtime. Working on the referenda was exhausting, particularly because we were simultaneously still running our regular programs, but we are happy both of our fee increases passed. This year, our on-campus and off-campus mobilization were mostly centered around anti-blackness, incarceration, austerity and the Sexual Assault Policy at McGill. The part of QPIRG's mandate that has been neglected, yet again, over this busy year is the research justice component of our work. We really hope that now that we have won a fee increase, we will be able to put in more resources (and maybe hire more staff?) towards our research justice mandate.

We have also worked in close proximity with some of our working groups over the past year, particularly the new ones, and we have provided them with training according to their needs (anti-oppression, consensus decision-making, facilitation, finances etc.), and we have also offered a couple of working groups extensive support in the form of day-long visionings. We received a high amount of requests from external groups for trainings as well, but due to our already-busy schedule, we had to turn down many of them. We did, however, give workshops and trainings to The Sense Project, SACOMSS, The McGill Daily, SPHR, ECOLE, Community Engagement Day facilitators, CKUT, and the Concordia Graduate Student Union, among others.

On the whole, we both have worked very well (and in style!) together, and we were very lucky to be accompanied by the part-time and contract employees throughout the year: Shahir Omar (CURE Coordinator), Nina Maness (Library Coordinator), Otto Buxton-Vicentini and Diego Sandoval (Rad Frosh Coordinators), Jay Manicom and Cera Yu (School Schmoool Coordinators), Leah Paul (Culture Shock Coordinator), Leela Scott (Social Justice Days Coordinator), Kristin Li (Social Justice Research Coordinator), and Dan Lacroix and Stephen Kamp (our bookkeepers).

Looking forward to the future, we have both confirmed the renewal our contracts for a third year. We look forward to working alongside the Staff Committee over the summer to reevaluate our positions, and to create more positions within the organization in order to reduce our overtime. QPIRG-McGill has been a hub for students and community members to come together and work on different projects, and we look forward to working with you all, and having you use the space on a daily basis!

We would like to thank all our volunteers who have dedicated their time and energy to QPIRG, as well as fellow-staff at QPIRG Concordia: Christina Xydous, Noah Eidelman and Jaggi Singh. You are all such inspirations <3

In solidarity,  
Kira Page and Kama Maureemootoo

## POPULAR EDUCATION

CULTURE SHOCK & HEALING RAGE 2014 – LEAH PAUL & COMMITTEE

SOCIAL JUSTICE DAYS 2015 – LEELA SCOTT & COMMITTEE

RAD FROSH 2014 – OTTO VICE AND DIEGO SANDOVAL

SCHOOL SCHMOOL 2014-2015 – CERA YU AND JAY MANICOM

SCHOOL SCHMOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2014

School Schmool has come out again for another amazing school year and has made its way across Concordia and McGill campuses as well as various locations in Montreal.

The agenda dates back to 1994, beginning as a bi-annual publication that brought together group profiles, articles, and practical resources of use to all students, especially those interested in environmental and social justice issues. It was resurrected as an agenda and resource book in the summer of 2006, and has been connecting together the Concordia, McGill and Montreal communities ever since.

The agenda this year was created with certain principles in mind – specifically, the idea that it is crucial to build connections in our communities and in solidarity with struggles around the world, as well as not wanting activism and struggle to be isolated within the academy. Although School Schmool is by its nature aimed at students, it is also meant to be resource guide for the wider community, and to serve as an impetus for students to join movements and organizations that exist in Montreal outside of the university setting.

The agenda was created with the understanding that radical movements should always centre marginalized people, and not in a tokenizing way – their voices and active participation of critical for the legitimacy of any movement or organization claiming to be radical or in favour of social justice. This also means that information should be accessible to the people it pertains to, and so this year's School Schmool Coordinators worked hard to try to keep incomprehensible jargon out of the agenda.

The 2014-2015 edition of School Schmool has three sections. The Issues features articles on a broad spectrum of topics that pertain to fighting marginalization and understanding how we can combat systems of power. Following the Issues section there is a small resource guide which provides key phone numbers and websites to projects and services mentioned in the articles, including resources for people of colour and Indigenous people and accessibility services. If you would like to get involved in organizing around these topics, The Groups section outlines radical organizations that you can contact and get involved with. Finally, to keep track of your busy schedule and important dates, there is The Agenda section of School Schmool – this year all hand-drawn!



## CULTURE SHOCK ANNUAL REPORT 2014

Collaboratively produced by Culture Shock Coordinator Leah Paul, along with QPIRG staff Kira and Kama, and the popular education committee.

Culture Shock is an annual event series dedicated to exploring the myths surrounding immigrants, refugees, indigenous people and communities of colour. Culture Shock seeks to bring together members of these communities to engage in dialogue about issues relevant to their lives, as well as to educate non-members around some of the issues faced by communities of colour in Canada and beyond. Every year, QPIRG and the SSMU bring panels, workshops, film screenings and fundraiser parties to McGill students and the broader Montreal community as part of the Culture Shock programming. Culture Shock is co-organized annually by the Quebec Public Interest Research Group (QPIRG) at McGill and the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU).

This year we had 8 workshops, 2 panels, a book launch, a keynote performance, and a dance party, over the course of 3 days, instead of the usual 9. Packed as it was, Culture Shock was extremely well attended with overwhelmingly good reviews-- we had numerous events that were over capacity, with the major events attracting hundreds. We also collaborated with the Frigo Vert, Kanata and QPIRG-Concordia for the yearly anti-colonial dinner, which was a huge success.

Immigrants With Disabilities In Canada: Discrimination, Segregation, Suicidal Deportation

Oh Canada, our home on Native Land: Discussing Decolonization

Race @ McGill: Film Screening and Discussion

Migrant Workers in Canada: Why Everyone Should Care

Autumn Feast: An Anti-Colonial evening of Food, Art and Resistance

~Creating a Culture of Resistance ~ Decolonization as a Weapon ~ Rebuilding Nationhood ~

White Space: A look into the relationship between graphic design and systems of oppression

Giving Birth to Yourself: Revolutionary Storytelling for People of Colour

Colonialism and its Accomplices: A Critical History of the Colonization of Turtle Island

"Captive Revolution: Palestinian Women's Anti-Colonial Struggle Within the Israeli Prison System": A Book Launch, Discussion and 4-a-6 with Nahla Abdo

KEYNOTE: Dark Matter presents #ItGetsBitter: An Evening of Poetry, Polemic and Healing

LATIN@ BEATS // HIP-HOP // DANCE-PARTY // FUNDRAISER TO FIGHT DOUBLE PUNISHMENT

Afro to the Future: Paving Pathways to Liberation: a Conversation on Afrofuturism

This year's Culture Shock was packed into a shorter time and moved back a month-- which were both great decisions. We also felt very positive about ensuring that a significant part of Culture Shock focussed on building connections and shared space between people who share experiences of racism & colonization, and in particular the addition of "Healing Rage", a day long event connected to Culture Shock open only to racialized and indigenous peoples. Most of the major problems related to tech issues at the SSMU, and we recommend that QPIRG invest in a projector, ASAP!

This year's Culture Shock budget was very high, and we could not have pulled off Culture Shock without the support of organizations like the Midnight Kitchen, the Union for Gender Empowerment, the SSMU, the Social Equity and Diversity Education Office, QPIRG-Concordia, the IGSF, MUNACA, and AMUSE.

For the full report from Culture Shock 2013, please see the 2013-2014 binder!

## POPULAR EDUCATION

HEALING RAGE 2014

Healing Rage was a one-day convergence by and for Indigenous persons and people of color to come together in a healing space to share their experiences, discuss strategies, share skills, spend time together and discuss the complexities of trying to build a decolonizing and anti-racist movement in Montreal. Decolonizing and anti-racist work has taken many forms in Montreal. While much organizing happens on campuses, there is also significant effort by Montreal community members to create conversations and build movements around decolonization and anti-racism. We had between 50-100 attendees throughout the day from multiple cities including Ottawa, Kingston, and Toronto. The space welcomed individuals from multiple generations and multiple attendees indicated that this was the first convergence that they had ever attended.

We aimed to make the space as open and accessible as possible, ensuring that attendees could access the space in the way they felt most comfortable. That is, if they needed a quiet place to sleep, chat, for childcare, or to debrief, there were rooms made available. We rented the Centre Georges-Vanier, which was not only physically accessible but also helped facilitate our vision in terms of space. As with Rad Frosh, we incorporated the Interaction Signal Badges into the day. Further, we ensured that the convergence's activities took a variety of forms to be inclusive of different learning styles. This included silent reflection activities, workshops, performance pieces, and interactive art pieces.

In terms of programming, we wanted to ensure that the presentations were not too heavily academic. Amongst the organisers, we felt that there a lot of community organising in Montreal, tended to shy away from spiritual practice, which is important to many Indigenous and racialized folks. As such, we opened with a spiritual and meditative exercise in order to ground the day, acknowledge that we are on colonized territory and express the good intent of the convergence. This was followed by a presentation about the Algonquin-Haitian relationship on Turtle Island in order to examine how alliances can be built between racialized settlers and Indigenous peoples. Throughout the day, we also had workshops on a variety of topics, including a workshop by the Third Eye Collective on violence against Black women in our communities, one on anti-authoritarian food politics and one on racialized settler relationships with Indigenous communities in anti-authoritarian organizing.

At the end of the day, we closed with an open discussion on how to engage with anti-racist and decolonial organising in Montreal. People emphasised the importance of more spaces such as Healing Rage in addition to continued space for more intergenerational learning and support. Moving forward, we hope to further develop a more deliberate engagement with the Kanien'kehá:ka for future convergences. While there were a handful of Indigenous people present, all the organisers acknowledged that we needed to do more to engage local Indigenous populations. More recently, an off-shoot of Healing Rage was developed by attendees from Ottawa! Unfortunately, none of the Montreal based organisers were able to attend.

SOCIAL JUSTICE DAYS ANNUAL REPORT 2015

Produced by Leela Scott, Social Justice Days Coordinator, along with the Popular Education Committee

This year was the 10th year anniversary of Social Justice Days, an event series aimed at stimulating alternative political culture on campus as well as creating links between university activism and activism in the greater Montreal community. Social Justice Days continued in the tradition of soliciting workshop proposals from community and campus groups in developing its programming, and events were chosen by consensus by the popular education committee at QPIRG. Many of them focused on police and state violence, although there was a variety of other events on accessibility, unlikely alliances, facilitation skills, and a self-love cabaret. This focus was a result of the submissions received and not any conscious

## POPULAR EDUCATION

desire to make it themed.

Victims of the State: Police Violence & Non-Status Youth in Montreal  
 The Face of 21st Century State Violence and Police Brutality in Palestine  
 Accessibility & Ableism in Activist Communities  
 What's That Got To Do With Us? Building Unlikely Alliances in Radical Queer and Trans Politics  
 Bombs, Drones, and Twitter: The University's Complicity in War  
 Dangerous Spaces: Trauma-Informed Facilitation Skills for Holding Triggering Conversations  
 Annual Memorial March for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women  
 The Self-Love Cabaret: l'amour se conjugue à la première personne

Social Justice Days was mostly well attended, with numerous events over capacity. The planning and execution went smoothly-- in part due to the strong teamwork and communication between the organizers as well as having contingency plans for technical and bureaucratic difficulties that have tended to crop up in the past. It was also condensed into 3 days, which was a great for both attendance and for the energy of the organizers! As in last year, we took the opportunity to collaborate with a number of new organizations and collectives, allowing us to expand the reach and the connections QPIRG has to the wider community.

Social Justice Days faced significant challenges this year financially, as the SSMU has been unwilling to guarantee funding in advance, and let us know several weeks after the event that they would fund only 40% of the budget that they have historically covered. We are still in the process of exploring options to make up this deficit.

For Leela's full report, please see the 2014-2015 Annual Reports section in the binder.

## RAD FROSH 2014

Collaboratively produced by Rad Frosh Coordinators Otto Buxton-Vincentini and Diego Sandoval

Rad Frosh is an alternative orientation to McGill and Montreal for over 100 new students over three days (Aug. 31st – Sept. 1st) – jam-packed with parties, workshops, music, food, and more. It's a fun and unique opportunity to check out local activist and community groups, get introduced to and learn about a wide range of social, environmental and political issues, meet fellow students and cool folks, and for froshies to get the tools to make the most of their time at McGill, and in Montreal. This year, the Rad Frosh theme was "Break it Down!". We strive to introduce students to the social justice scene on McGill campus and, more broadly, in Montreal by hosting workshops, tours, concerts, film screenings, etc. We also attempt to create a space where people who might feel alienated from regular frosh feel comfortable and welcomed to a more inclusive McGill environment.

This year, we had 92 froshies sign up and 61 facilitators.

This year Rad Frosh was relatively smooth, and also very fun and engaging. We kept a lot of the usual programming of Rad Frosh (and some of the newer things from the year before): the workshops, tours, concert, pub crawl, non-drinking events like open mic night and board games, and the closing party. We had about 200 participants for two and a half days of events. Our finances ended up in a pretty strong place after a slow start and much difficulty with SSMU.

We had 40 plus facilitators this year. This was a good number considering we had quite high registration. Overall they

were great to work with. We had the Harm Reduction Squad (started the year before) at drinking events and thought they were definitely a positive thing to have around.

We added three new elements: a Queer Mixer and Information Session, a collaboration with Faggity Ass Fridays, and a BBQ and film screening, and a karaoke night. As with last year, we kept the DIY fair and the consent skits (visual, engaging representations of consent).

#### Activities

Queer Mixer and Information Session // Historical Walking Tour of the Village // Collaboration with Faggity Ass Friday's // Workshops from people in the McGill and Montreal Community // D.I.Y./Activity Fair // Hangout and hike on the Mountain // Community Tours // BBQ and Film Screening of "Hedwig and the Angry Inch" // Benefit Concert at Bar Studio Backstage // Open Mic Night at Artere // Karaoke at Alexanderplatz

#### Workshops & Tours

Struggles Against Capitalist Colonialism: How Indigenous Feminisms Will Save the Earth and Destroy the State // HIV 101 & Safer Sex Workshop with AIDS Community Care Montreal // I've got your back!: Taking care of yourself and your friends // Funding 101: How to fund your projects at McGill // Healing Inang Kalikasan: Stories, People, Emotions: Climate Justice // Let's get a SENSE of Sex with Sense Project from Head and Hands // Anti-Oppression and Campus Media given by the McGill Daily // Making Sex Revisited - Intersex Realities // Fat Embodiment, Race and Class // Who in the World is AnarchoPanda?: An Insider's View on the Quebec Student Movement of 2012 // Yiddish Anarchists, Bastard Cops, and Queer Pirates: An Incendiary Historic Walking Tour of Downtown Montreal // Fresh Waves: Radical Radio at CKUT 90.3 FM // Demilitarize McGill: War, Colonialism, and the University // AntiRacist and Decolonial Walking Tour

In collaboration with the Campus Life and Engagement Office we participated in a number of "How to Frosh!" Info sessions to spread awareness of Rad Frosh. We also collaborated with the Office for Students with Disabilities to make our programming more accessible and promote Rad Frosh to incoming disabled students.

One of the major things we worked on this year is trying to make Rad Frosh as accessible as possible using a bunch of different methods. First, we tried to book only accessible venues for all the night events, which meant that we compiled a list of accessible venues in Montreal for next year. We also used QPIRG's scent free policy, though this was pretty ineffective and should be publicized better. We also made Interaction Signal Badges, which were explained to all froshies on our website and via e-mail as well as during our first introductions to froshies. These weren't consistently used throughout the weekend, but if a greater emphasis is placed on frosh leaders wearing them it would have had a better result. We also created smaller frosh groups for froshies who might be shy or have social anxiety. We also had a harm reduction team throughout the weekend, which staffed the quiet room during the days and were visibly available to froshies during the night events. We also publicized the schedule far in advance and tried to keep to that schedule as much as possible so Froshies could prepare for the events and could avoid last minute confusion as much as possible.

We also created some new handouts for this year. We created maps for each night event so that froshies would have an explanation of how to get to campus with a corresponding map. We also transformed the Scarleteen's online publication "Can I Get Pregnant or Get or Pass an STI from That?" as a useful safer sex handout for the frosh bags. For next year we recommend doing a similar thing around harm reductive ways of using drugs and alcohol.

For the full report, see the Annual Reports Binder.

# COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

CONVERGENCE UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL

COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH EXCHANGE

STUDY IN ACTION 2013: UNDERGRADUATE & COMMUNITY RESEARCH CONFERENCE

SUMMER STIPEND 2012: ANTI-COLONIAL SOLIDARITY COLLECTIVE

# COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

## CONVERGENCE UNDERGRADUATE JOURNAL

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Convergence this year was launched later than usual due to lack of resources—physical and financial. Nonetheless, the journal (now in its 4th volume) was published in the early winter of 2013, and featured 8 articles in English and French, and artwork by 6 different artists. Some of the work published was from Study In Action and Art In Action, while others were from CURE projects.

In March 2014, we organized a small launch of Convergence at the QPIRG-McGill office, which also coincided with the “How to turn your papers into a presentation” workshop we gave for future Study In Action participants. We also distributed and promoted the journal during the course of Study In Action and other events.

The Convergence collective and editorial team, this year, was comprised of members from QPIRG-McGill and QPIRG Concordia. We would like to thank everyone who made this publication possible: all the contributors and the volunteers alike!

Convergence is available online: <http://convergencejournal.ca/>

## COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH EXCHANGE

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By Shahir Omar, Community University Research Exchange Coordinator

CURE (Community-University Research Exchange) is an academic platform for McGill students to work on socially-engaged research with local Montréal organizations. CURE works to offer support to marginalized community groups, basing student research specifically on the group’s needs (as well as the academic interests of the student). As the CURE Coordinator, my job entails holding CURE committee meetings, preparing promotional materials, updating the CURE website, tabling and poster, holding office hours for students, giving classroom talks, and maintaining communication with CURE students over email. This year, the CURE team focused most of our energy on promoting CURE and starting up 7 CURE projects in total.

My major development in CURE this year has been the expansion of students in CURE projects. Last semester, a student completed a research project with Solidarity Across Borders about access to healthcare services for non-status immigrants in Parc Ex (student: Selin Jessa). She wrote a report for SAB on her findings, as well as an exposé in the McGill Daily about her experience to share across campus. We currently have two students working on CURE projects with Montreal Birthing Companions (Uzma) and Solidarity Across Borders (Bavna), One student is beginning in the summer with the Prisoner Correspondence Project (Simmie), as well as 2 more projects lined up for next fall. We have introduced a new project next year on documenting the history of Louise Norton Langdon Little, Malcolm X’s mother, in Montreal between the years 1937 and 1963. CURE has also collaborated on a series of workshops about Applied Student Research with ECOLE and the Office of Sustainability this past year, as well as Community Engagement Day with Social Equity and Diversity Education Office (SEDE).

My future plans for CURE are to continue to seek students who are interested in projects for the summer or next fall. Moreover, I hope to create a new project that connects art and activism with Qouleur for the upcoming festival. Furthermore, I will be preparing a action plan to transition to the next CURE Coordinator, so as to make their learning curve much more smooth and foundational. My shortcoming this past year was balancing the heavy workload of CURE as a sole correspondent in the position. Luckily, we created a very helpful CURE committee to follow through with promotional

## COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

activities, and I would like to set up a more rigid and firm structure of the same sort for the upcoming QPIRG McGill Board, so that the CURE workload is a high priority and carried through by all members.

### ALTERNATIVE RESOURCE LIBRARY

Produced by Nina Maness, Resource Library Coordinator

The QPIRG McGill Resource Centre is dedicated to providing hard-to-find books, periodicals, media, and zines that contribute to QPIRG McGill's anti-oppression mandate and support its working groups. In addition to lending resources to McGill students and community members, the Resource Centre is dedicated to promoting personal development and community building through the sharing and preservation of diverse forms of knowledge, whether they are found in books or learned through skill-sharing.

The Library Collective this year had many dedicated volunteers, helping the Resource Centre Coordinator brainstorm ideas and make decisions about spending the budget, drafting new policy, purchasing new materials, revamping the catalogue, starting the zine club, and so much more!

#### ~Main Events & Activities~

- Recruiting, training, and organizing volunteers
- Facilitating library committee meetings to discuss areas of improvement for the library
- Aiding in the development and application of the new catalogue
- Networking with other alternative library coordinators
- Community outreach
- Researching, photocopying, and providing zines at events during the Mois Contre Les Prisons at UQAM
- Creating resource lists and tabling for events at Social Justice Days
- Book buy- Expozine
- Reorganizing and cataloguing of materials
- Removal of out-dated materials
- Circulation- going through all overdue books from the last several years
- Editing the website and moving it to QPIRG's webpage
- Development of the QPIRG-M Zine Club

#### ~Major Changes~

- Moving to the new library catalogue
- Making the library more volunteer run
- Changes to the classification scheme

# COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

## SUMMER STIPEND 2014: UNDERWATER CITY ZINE

By Aimee Louw

Underwater City is a long-term multimedia project searching for the most accessible city in urban Turtle Island/ Canada. The project documents personal experiences of ableism told through first-person accounts featuring research, creative and journalistic writing, photography, and broadcasts. In addition to being an empowering process for the people involved because we are telling our own stories, the project is directly aimed at pointing out the ways other cities have developed inclusive spaces, and encouraging Montreal to learn from the success and failures of those cities. Select writings, photographs and links can be found at: [underwatercityproject.tumblr.com](http://underwatercityproject.tumblr.com)

Project produced in collaboration with QPIRG McGill:

A self-published zine presenting research and interviews with artists and activists in disability justice communities in different urban settings throughout Canada, providing a comparative look at accessibility in Canadian cities. Themes discussed in the public realms of:

- transit
- daily life experiences: employment, housing, healthcare, homecare
- public perceptions of diversity/ disability
- community-building strategies

Major events/ promotion of Zine:

- August, 2014. Table at Queer Between the Covers
- September, 2014. Launch in collaboration with Kaleigh Trace's book tour, Hot Wet and Shaking at Cafe L'artere
- Fall, 2014. Workshop at McGill in collaboration with Accessibilize Montreal.
- Winter, 2015. All original zines sold out.
- March, 2015. Reprinting of zines at Rubiks print shop.

Successes:

- November, 2014. Request for zines to be sold at Venus Envy shop in Halifax.
- Winter, 2015. All original zines sold out!
- March, 2015. Reprinting of zines at Rubiks print shop.

Changes from proposed project:

- a lot more queer content than I previewed
- not translated from French to English due to lack of resources. Future creations of UWC will be increasingly bilingual, as my French improves and other creators come on board.

Next steps:

- send zines to Venus Envy for sale
- hustle other shops and distros to distribute
- create website at domain [www.underwatercity.ca](http://www.underwatercity.ca); including blog, sale of zines online, offering pdf and word versions as well.
- write and gather for UWC Zine II, projected release Fall/ Winter, 2015-2016

Reflections on Summer Stipend program/ future recommendations:



## COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

- I love the volunteer member + staff member support team. Kama and Brooke were always willing to help and easy to get in contact with, and I really appreciated their energy and hard work!
- I found that model – board member/ staff member works well as a stipend recipient
- Really appreciated that they emphasized taking a living wage from the stipend.
- Recommendation: All stipend projects coming together for a 5 à 7 to share final products, in the fall following the summer for which the stipend is granted.

### SUMMER STIPEND 2014: MONSTER ACADEMY

MONSTER ACADEMY: Free Mental Health School for Montreal Youth is a social justice-oriented workshop series designed to provide accessible, anti-oppressive mental health skills training to youth aged 16-25.

We created MONSTER ACADEMY so that youth would have a place to share ideas and skills about mental health and illness. We wanted to debunk the myth that “being crazy” is something that only happens to a few isolated people – to share the truth that so often, our environments make us feel crazy, and most of us feel alone at some point in our lives. We wanted to make feeling crazy or ugly or monstrous something that isn’t shameful, that doesn’t have to be a secret. We wanted to give each other strategies to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe. We wanted to celebrate the amazing ways that people find to survive and thrive against the odds.

The QPIRG McGill summer stipend funded the creation of a monster handbook filled with eight original 3-hour workshops on various subjects relating to mental health. The workshops cover topics such as depression and anxiety, body image and dysphoria, suicidality, PTSD and mental health struggles within intimate relationships. Each interactive and dynamic workshop involves a variety of activities, such as: discussion, art-making, role-plays, ice-breakers, writing, small group collaboration and more.

The project originated out of a desire to help address lack of mental health resources for youth in the city, particularly support that is free, harm-reductive, relatable and which strives to be accessible and anti-oppressive. As two people who have received mental health training in university settings (in addition to our personal and community support work experience), we wanted to translate whatever useful strategies and information we learned within academia into language that was more broadly accessible and relevant to youth facing barriers to accessing mental health resources.

We couldn’t have done it alone! Through a public callout, we hired a youth artist to design our beautiful original logo and poster art. We also provided honoraria to four community members who have acted as our advisory board. We are very grateful for their wisdom and generosity, which has been woven into the creation of the project.

A hard copy of the MONSTER ACADEMY workshop outlines, including an annotated collection of community resources and a more in-depth description of the project, can be accessed through the QPIRG McGill library. The manual was used as a reference to guide us through the two-month-long weekly workshop series we coordinated, which ran from February 8-March 29, 2015. You can read more about that in our working groups report!

# COMMUNITY BASED RESEARCH

## STUDY IN ACTION 2015

Study in Action is an undergraduate conference designed to link students and community activism. The conference is a space for undergraduate students to present research, develop greater knowledge of social and environmental issues and build ties with community organizations. Organized by a collective of students through QPIRG Concordia, QPIRG McGill and QPIRG UQÀM, this academic year's conference was March 20th-22nd.

This year's changes to Study in Action were largely about our application process. In an effort to deepen our understanding and practice of social justice research, this year's committee asked applicants to describe their research in much more detail, from their own relationship to the research to their citations and sources. We felt this gave us a much stronger ability to create the kind of Study in Action we all want to see!

Opening panel, as a co-presentation with HIP HOP WEEK MONTREAL: Fight the Power: A Panel on Hip Hop, Activism and Revolution with Bambu (Native Guns), Yes McCan (Dead Obies), Audrey Hudson, Dalton Higgins, Dan Parker and Habib Siam.

### Panels:

From the Ground Up: Making the Environmental Movement a Real Threat  
Facing Islamophobia in Contemporary Québec: From Nationalism to Identity Politics

This is Real Violence: Understanding Austerity in Practice  
Beyond intersectionality 101: Women resisting racialized, gendered and sexualized violence and marginalization in transnational perspective  
In Whose Interest? Levelling Critiques at International Development, Voluntourism, and the Community Sector  
Highways to Hell (& Back): Indigenous Women, Indigenous Children, State Violence & Resistance  
Criminal (In)Justice: Prisons, Policing, and Marginalized Identities  
Radical Theory and Praxis: Rethinking the Foundations

### Workshops:

Childcare In Our Movements  
Prison Life Under the Scope  
1, 2, 3, 4, I declare a race war: A discussion on resisting numerical measurement  
Design-Labour-Utopia: Imagining a Left design practice today  
Palestine is a Queer Issue: a Workshop on Israeli Pinkwashing and Homonationalism  
Free Press Libre: Consciousness Raising at the Intersection of Art, Activism and Academia

### Closing Panel:

When You Say You Love Me: Black Girls, Public Schools, and State Violence  
FEATURING: d'bi young anitafrika, Nantali Indongo, Rachel Zellars and Frances Waithe

# SUPPORTING GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

DISCRETIONARY FUNDING 2014-2015

CO-SPONSORSHIPS AND ENDORSEMENTS 2015-2016

WORKING GROUP FUNDING 2015-2016

## SUPPORTING GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

## DISCRETIONARIES 2014-2015

QPIRG-McGill funds action-oriented research that supports our mandate of social justice and environmental activism, we provide several avenues for securing funding and support, enabling a diversity of groups and actors to participate.

Each year, QPIRG-McGill's Board of Directors sets aside an amount of money to fund external projects. Campus and community groups are encouraged to apply to this discretionary fund when planning any goal-oriented social justice and/or environmental events. The maximum for any request is \$250.00

DATE	To/Event	AMOUNT
May 20, 2014	• May Day Post-Manif Herbal Care Packages	• \$50.00
	• Indigenous Land Defenders Tour	\$250.00
	• Why we need warrior societies	\$225.00
	• Head & Hands Fundraiser	\$225.00
	• Ensemble Contre la Charte Xenophobe	\$125.00
July 9, 2014	• QTPOC Zine Distro	\$150.00
	• The Affirmations Coloring Book	\$100.00
	• Picnic against Borders and in support of the Awan Family	\$150.00
	• Qouleur	\$150.00
	• Les Maisons Transitionnelles (O3)	\$200.00
August 27, 2014	• A qui la ville? website	\$250.00
	• ECOLE anti-o workshops	\$100.00
	• Solidarity with Elsipogtog	\$100.00
	• Demo in solidarity with migrant strikers	\$200.00
	• Pervers/Cité keynote panel	\$350.00
October 6, 2014	• "Captive revolution" book launch	\$175.00
	• Commission populaire sur la répression politique	\$50.00
	• Truth hurts with Aamer Rahman	\$250.00
	• Migrant temp work Radio project	\$150.00
October 21, 2014	• Fundraiser for solidarity across borders	\$45.00
	• Mois contre les prisons	\$55.00
	• SPHR - Remi Kanazi talk	\$150.00

## SUPPORTING GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

DATE	To/EVENT	AMOUNT
November 3, 2014	Race at McGill film project	\$75.00
	Family left behind project	\$175.00
November 18, 2014	Collectif hamac conflict resolution training	\$125.00
	People's commission website	\$40.00
	Rise-up funding drive	\$85.00
DECEMBER 2, 2014	New Year's Eve noise demo	\$250.00
JANUARY 23, 2015	Homelessness Marathon CKUT	\$100.00
	Deepan Budlakoti Justice committee	\$175.00
	Anthony Stewart talk	\$100.00
	Hip hop week montreal	\$125.00
FEBRUARY 16, 2015	No Canada: Intersectional Perspectives	\$250.00
FEBRUARY 26, 2015	Qouleur Summer Fest	\$250.00
MARCH 12, 2015	Solidairyt 5e3	\$175.00
	Project 10 - visioning & strategic planning	\$125.00
MARCH 24, 2015	Venus radio extravaganza	\$175.00
	Pour tout transformer	\$75.00
APRIL 2, 2015	Filipino Indigenous Peoples Organizing	\$75.00
	Projet Bleuét	\$175.00

## CoSPONSORSHIPS, ENDORSEMENTS AND CAMPAIGNS 2014-2015

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Every year, QPIRG lends its administrative, political, and mobilization capacities to dozens of events and campaigns throughout the year. These are just some of them!

- Comité 8 mars des Femmes de diverses origines
- Centre des travailleurs et travailleuses immigrants - May 12, 2014
- Anti-USA Iraq reinvasion Demo - July 4, 2014
- Vigile et manifestation contre l'invasion de Gaza et le massacre de Shuja'iya - July 23, 2014
- Vigile pour Gaza - July 25, 2014
- Union for Gender Empowerment Abortion Zine
- Open Letter for the Khalida Jarrar Solidarity Campaign - August 26, 2014
- SoMove Oral History Workshop Tour
- Fear of a Brown Planet with Aamer Rahman O September 24, 2014
- An Evening with Janet Mock: gender, race, & redefining realness - October 3, 2014
- Signed onto the Déclaration commune pour un réel accès à la justice à la Régie du logement - October 7, 2014
- Sit-in against transphobia in the health system - October 23, 2014
- decolonize & anti-oppression community workshop with Tami Starlight
- Afro to the Future: Paving Pathways to Liberation - A Conversation on Afrofuturism - November 9, 2014
- Open Letter by Ontario Coalition Against Poverty to John Tory - November 18, 2014
- Open Letter by the Justice for Deepan Committee - December 6, 2014
- Support of the McGill Sexual Assault Policy Working Group
- Letter in support of Peter Collins - February 23, 2015
- Israeli Apartheid Week Montreal - March 8-17, 2015
- March 8th Committee and March of Women of Diverse Origins, March 8, 2015
- Support of the ECOLE Fee Levy Creation - March 12, 2015
- Independent Jewish Voices Letter to Oppose the Canadian Government's Threat to Criminalize Criticism of Israel - March 26, 2015
- "In the Shadow of the Border" Documentary Fundraiser
- Woman's and Sexual Diversity Studies Student Association Anti-Austerity Strike - April 2, 2015

# SUPPORTING GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

## WORKING GROUPS

At the heart of QPIRG McGill are our working groups. These are autonomous organisations, made up of students and community members, who undertake action and research into issues at the core of QPIRG McGill's mandate. QPIRG-McGill selects working groups once a year and provides them with a budget based on their needs and activities.

For more information on what the working groups have done in the last year, please check out their annual reports in the Year-end binder. A highlight of events can be found in the Programming and Events Annual Review section.

## ACCESSIBILIZE MONTREAL!

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLLOCATED BUDGET: \$400.00

Accessibilize Montreal! aims to make Montreal a more accessible place in every way: from the mindsets and interactions between Montrealers to the infrastructure that surrounds us. By producing independent media and holding workshops like What is Accessibility, and Accessibilizing Language, we challenge mainstream perceptions of disability, and through advocacy and direct action we protest transit and systemic discrimination.

Contact: [access4mtl@gmail.com](mailto:access4mtl@gmail.com)

## BARRIERE LAKE SOLIDARITY

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLLOCATED BUDGET: \$1825.00

A volunteer collective that supports Barriere Lake, an Algonquin community 4 hours north of Montreal, which has been trying to regain control over their traditional territories, protect their forests from clear-cut logging, and fend off the Canadian government's interference in their traditional governance system. They do popular education, organize demonstrations and direct action, and are developing a community radio station on the reserve.

Contact: [barrierelakesolidarity@gmail.com](mailto:barrierelakesolidarity@gmail.com)

## COMMUNITY-UNIVERSITY TALKS (C-UNI-T)

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLOCATED BUDGET: \$650.00

C-UNI-T is a multidisciplinary collective of students and community members committed to the pursuit of accessible education informed by anti-colonial and critical race discourses. Our mission is to create spaces for dialogue between members of the Montreal Black community and members of the McGill community, in which the diversity of experiences and strengths of Black communities are centered.

Contact: [C.unit.forum@gmail.com](mailto:C.unit.forum@gmail.com)

## DIGNIDAD MIGRANTE

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLOCATED BUDGET: \$800.00

Dignidad Migrante is a group of Spanish-speaking immigrant workers and their allies. Our goals are to: (1) bring together

## WORKING GROUPS 2013-2014

people of this community in Montreal who face injustice and exploitation in their workplaces and beyond, whether they have legal working papers or not; (2) create a space where people of this community feel safe to express their anger, frustration, or any feelings at all about their situation; and (3) work together to think of ways to fight the exploitation and injustice faced by many immigrant workers, both in the workplace and in society at large, while making sure that everyone in the group feels safe and comfortable with the actions we take.

Contact: dignidadmigrante@gmail.com

### DEMILITARIZE MCGILL

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLOCATED BUDGET: \$350.00

Demilitarize McGill organizes to interrupt the University's history of complicity in colonization and imperialist warfare by ending military collaboration at McGill. We are students and community members who use research, popular education and direct action to impede military research at McGill. We strive to be anti-hierarchical, anti-oppressive, and self-critical in our organizing. We welcome new members, new ideas, and any questions you might have!

Contact: demilitarizemcgill@riseup.net

### HOWL! ARTS

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLOCATED BUDGET: \$150.00

How! arts collective is a Montreal-based collective of cultural workers, artists and activists working for social justice via artistic expression.

Contact: info@howlarts.net

### INDIGENOUS WOMEN AND TWO-SPIRIT HARM REDUCTION COALITION

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLOCATED BUDGET: \$1700.00

The Indigenous Women and 2-Spirit's Harm Reductive Coalition is a non-hierarchical Indigenous collective running under a Indigenous feminist framework. The collective provides free harm reductive resources, referrals and services to Aboriginal women a 2-Spirit peoples in Montreal via mail and email correspondence. Resources include a clean needle service, pregnancy tests, gloves, dental dams and condoms. We also provide resources and referrals around issues like sexual health, legal rights, access to low cost food, homelessness, sex work, criminalization, addiction and other issues which affect Indigenous peoples.

contact: ndn.harmredux@gmail.com

### KANATA (MCGILL INDIGENOUS STUDIES GROUP)

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLOCATED BUDGET: \$300.00

KANATA is dedicated to providing a safe space and avenue for dialogue with Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples on issues pertaining to Indigenous Culture in North America. We seek to expand Indigenous Studies at McGill by publishing student research papers, artwork, and other content on these topics in our Journal, creating a platform for interactive presentation and exchange in our Peer-to-Peer Conference, and lobbying for an official minor program in Indigenous studies.

Contact: kanata.mcgill@gmail.com



## WORKING GROUPS 2013-2014

### LAKAS PAG-GAWA

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLOCATED BUDGET: \$1350.00

Exploitation does not stop at permanent residency. The immigration sponsored children of former migrant workers (LCP) are joining the work force in Canada. They have become a new source of cheap labour for the Canadian capitalist class. Where will their future take them as they struggle for the economic well-being of their families? Lakas Paggawa will pool together young Filipino workers and provide them the venue and resources to start the fight back. Social transformation not integration is the fighting call for the day!

Contact: [project.anakbayan@gmail.com](mailto:project.anakbayan@gmail.com)

### MCGILL RESEARCH GROUP INVESTIGATING CANADIAN MINING IN LATIN AMERICA

SOLIDARITY GROUP

MICLA is a research collective based out of McGill University, investigating the consequences of Canadian mining in Latin America. MICLA members carry out and share research, assist community groups and sponsor activism around this issue. MICLA's work seeks to change the status quo of extractivism, which has resulted in environmental destruction, violation of community sovereignty and the erosion of traditional livelihoods in communities across Latin America.

### MONSTER ACADEMY

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLOCATED BUDGET: \$825.00

MONSTER ACADEMY: Free Mental Health School for Montreal Youth is a social justice-oriented workshop series designed to provide accessible, anti-oppressive mental health skills training to youth aged 16-25.

Contact: [monsteracademymtl@gmail.com](mailto:monsteracademymtl@gmail.com)

### SCARLET SOLIDARITY

SOLIDARITY GROUP

Scarlet Solidarity is a group for and by student sex workers at McGill. Through info and skill-shares, resource collection and dissemination, and connections with organizations in the city, Scarlet Solidarity seeks to empower and support members of the McGill community who engage in sex work.

Contact: [scarletsolidarity@gmail.com](mailto:scarletsolidarity@gmail.com)

### SOLIDARITY ACROSS BORDERS

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLOCATED BUDGET: \$450.00

Solidarity Across Borders is a Montreal-based network engaged in the struggle for justice and dignity of immigrants and refugees. We are comprised of migrants, immigrants, refugees and allies, and come together in support of our main demands: the regularization of all non-status people (Status for All!), an end to deportations and detentions, and the abolition of double punishment of migrants with criminal records. We the beginning stages of building a "Solidarity City" campaign – which includes access to all essential services, such as health care and education, for everyone regardless of their immigration status. Some of us have direct experiences with the immigration and refugee system; some of us come

## WORKING GROUPS 2013-2014

from immigrant backgrounds; all of us organize as part of a collective struggle for justice and dignity. For us, there is no such thing as “illegal” human beings, only unjust laws and illegitimate governments. We organize not on the basis of pity or charity, but rather solidarity and mutual aid.

### TADAMON!

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLOCATED BUDGET: \$1550.00

Tadamon! (Arabic for “solidarity”), is a Montreal-based collective which works in solidarity with struggles for self-determination, equality and justice in the ‘Middle East’ and in diaspora communities in Montreal and beyond. Tadamon strives for a world in which every human being is free to live and flourish in dignity and justice.

Contact: [info@tadamon.ca](mailto:info@tadamon.ca)

### TEMPORARY AGENCY WORKER’S ASSOCIATION

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLOCATED BUDGET: \$1750.00

End Exploitation: Temporary Agency Workers Association is a workers collective actively engaged in connecting foreign and temporary agency workers to unite against workplace injustices. They work to end unfair temporary agency practice and ensure quality workplace standards that foster respect, equality, and security for foreign/temporary agency worker communities.

Contact: [iwc\\_cti@yahoo.com](mailto:iwc_cti@yahoo.com)

### THE PRISONERS CORRESPONDENCE PROJECT

QPIRG-MCGILL ALLOCATED BUDGET: \$900.00

The Prisoner Correspondence Project is a collectively-run initiative based out of Montreal, Quebec. It coordinates a direct-correspondence program for gay, lesbian, transsexual, transgender, gendervariant, two-spirit, intersex, bisexual & queer inmates in Canada and the United States, linking these inmates with people outside of prison. It also coordinates a resource library of information and aims to make prisoner justice and solidarity a priority within queer movements on the outside through events like film screenings, workshops, and panels which touch on the broader issues relating to criminalization and incarceration of queers and transfolk.

## FINANCE & OUTREACH REPORTS

### OUTREACH

The first challenge of the outreach portfolio this year was revamping our website after it was infected with malware! This was a time consuming and somewhat difficult process (especially to do it in-house) -- and while the website is up and looking great, there are still kinks to work out.

The second project we took on, with the help of Kai Cheng Thom and the CURE committee, was to do more directed CURE outreach in an effort to increase the number of students doing CURE projects in the next year. This was immensely successful, with the program jumping from 2-3 students per year to close to 10 for this upcoming September.

We continued the process of integrating all of our outreach together, eliminating unnecessary websites and integrating them into the main page, creating standard visuals across our promotional materials, for specific event series, and so on. We continue to seek ways to ensure that when people come into contact with projects like CURE, our working groups, Study in Action, and so on, they actually know it's QPIRG!

Our social media presence continues to grow and expand, as we experiment with different ways of reaching our members and audience, especially with Twitter and Facebook.

We are also always looking to find ways to bring people who attend our events or are interested in our working into active roles in the organization. This year saw much broader and more focussed volunteer outreach, training, and integration, and it totally worked-- increasing our active base of volunteers considerably, and in positions that are interesting and engaging. We still have a long way to go in making non-board volunteers a big part of our organization, but this year was a huge step forward in that direction.

The attendance at QPIRG events this year was superb, and we are extraordinarily happy with the way that events like Culture Shock and Social Justice Days happened. The outreach that happened as a result of the referendum campaign also brought an increase in interest in the organization and provided a great opportunity for us to get the word out about QPIRG.

We continue to look for ways to increase the visibility of our working groups, and this year collaborated with the McGill Daily to produce a series of articles, written by working groups, to familiarize students with their work, and the concepts and struggles associated with them.

Our biggest challenge with outreach, as always, is actually balancing it with the other workload of staff and volunteers-- like actually planning the events-- a problem we are hoping will get better with the fee levy increase.

The Outreach coordinator for the 2014-2015 year was Kira Page

### FINANCES

The 2014-15 year has been a challenging, yet stable year, for QPIRG-McGill. Because we had already restored several of our budget lines in 2013-14 (Library Funds, Summer Stipends, Discretionary Requests etc.-budget lines that had been cut in previous years because of the high rate of opt-outs), we did not have much leeway to readjust/restore any other budget lines this year; so there were no significant changes to our budget from 2013-14 to 2014-15.

# FINANCIAL REPORTS

Our fundraising efforts, though very successful in the Fall, fell short in the winter. This is mostly due to the fact that the work on the referenda did not allow any space and time for any fundraising. However, we still successfully secured employment grants: we obtained an EmploiQuébec grant to hire a Social Justice Research Coordinator, and we have recently received confirmation for two Young Canada Work grants for the summer. We also applied for the Canada Summer Works Grant and we are waiting to hear back from them.

While the financial situation of the organization is sound, there are a few things we need to keep in mind moving forward. First of all, even if our financial situation is presently stable, our total opt-outs for the year came up to \$19,736, which represents 10% of the student population opting out. These figures are fairly standard, but these might change drastically if there are active opt-out campaigns on campus. Secondly, we need to have a clearer idea of what our relationship with the SSMU will look like regarding events that we co-organize. There has been a lot of back-and-forth and confusion regarding this relationship for a while now, but it came as a surprise to us that the SSMU only funded Social Justice Days for less than half the amount that they have historically funded Social Justice Days, disclosed to us after the event series was over, and despite SSMU Execs having previously expressed that our funding was guaranteed.

We should also think about the relationship that our working groups have with the PGSS. A couple of our working groups attempted to obtain funding from the PGSS over the past year in order to carry out their own projects, but their requests were rejected because they are QPIRG working groups. The PGSS' current bylaws prevent the PGSS from granting funding to any group that already obtains a fee-levy from PGSS members. While this does not affect QPIRG's core operations and programming (we do not apply for funding via the PGSS anyway), it does affect our working groups because it stops them from accessing funding from the PGSS because they are associated with QPIRG.

Looking forward, it will be a busy and exciting summer for QPIRG as the organization takes on working on a revamped budget for 2015-16!

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

**QPIRG McGill  
Budget****Budget 2014-15**

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>ITEM</b>	
	Student Levy	202,470
	QPIRG Events	7,500
	Working Groups	500
	Workstudy	6,000
	Radical Frosh	5,500
	Radical Frosh Registration	5,000
	Revenue from Misc sources	250
	Summer Stipend 1	-
	Summer Stipend 2	-
	Special Projects	-
	Gov't Grants	23,125
	School Schmoool	2,500
	Fundraising	-
	Miscellaneous	-
	Interest Revenue	200
	Photocopy Revenue	600
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>		<b>253,645</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
	Rent	22,080
	Office Supplies	2,000
	Repairs & Maintenance	300
	Bank Charges	560
	McGill Admin Fee	750
	Opt out refunds	22,415
	Photocopies	3,081
	Audit	2,679
	Legal	1,000
	Accounting	3,034
	Telephone & Fax rental	3,501
	Insurance	2,840
	Postage	150
	Late Fees	100
	Emergency Fund	-
	Accessibility Fund Expenses	-
	Incorporation	39
<b>TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE</b>		<b>64,529</b>
	Retreat	-
	Elections	600
	Board and Staff Training	1,200
	Board and Staff Appreciation	300
	QPIRG Events	11,500
	CURE and Convergence	1,000
	Discretionary	6,500
	Library	1,500
	Translation	300
	Promo Materials	1,500

## FINANCIAL REPORTS

**QPIRG McGill  
Budget**

		<b>Budget 2014-15</b>
	Summer Stipend 1	3,000
	Summer Stipend 2	1,500
	Radical Frosh staffing	-
	Radical Frosh Programming	10,500
	Special Projects	-
	School Schmool	4,000
	Working Groups	13,000
<b>TOTAL PROGRAMMING</b>		<b>56,400</b>
	Internal Coordinator	33,761
	External Coordinator	33,761
	Intern	10,283
	Work Study Library	7,452
	HRDC CURE	3,527
	Work Study CURE	4,968
	Rad Frosh Coordinator	10,433
	School Schmool Coordinator	5,216
	Campus Outreach Coordinator	5,216
	Provincial Source Deductions	9,199
	Federal Source Deductions	2,552
	QHSE	-
	CSST	905
	CNT	-
	QPIP	-
	Health Insurance	4,256
	Staff Benefits	-
	Bonus	500
<b>TOTAL PAYROLL</b>		<b>132,130</b>
	<i>Petty Cash Short/Over</i>	
	<i>Write Offs</i>	
	<i>Suspense</i>	
	<i>Depreciation</i>	400
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>253,459</b>
<b>NET PROFIT/(LOSS)</b>		<b>186</b>