



# **QPIRG-McGill 2018-19 Annual Report**



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# ABOUT QPIRG-McGILL

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## 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 dis/ability. QPIRG-McGill is committed to engaging in research and action that are rooted in an anti-oppression analysis and practice.

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## 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

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## 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 the following committees: Staff Committee, Rad Research Committee, Popular Education Committee, Finance Committee, Outreach Committee, the Convergence Editorial Committee, and Policy Committee.

### STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS

Ella Hartsoe  
Psalm Tesalona  
Iris Madeline  
Maia Salameh  
Bethany Friesen  
Andrea Lee  
Robyn Lee, resigned  
Tali Ioselevich, resigned  
Evren Sezgin, resigned

### COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

Connor Spencer  
Isabelle Oke  
Théodore Poisson-McFarlane

SSMU REP: NONE

PGSS REP: Heather Porter

## STAFF

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QPIRG-McGill has three 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 BECCA YU. The OUTREACH AND PROMOTIONS COORDINATOR was BOFTA HAILE and the WORKING GROUPS AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH COORDINATOR was AMY DARWISH.

This year our part-time staff members were ELESSER BULATAO (RESOURCE CENTRE COORDINATOR), LEELA RIDDLE-MERRITTE and BEN KIRSEBOM (CURE COORDINATOR), KIERA SHEPPARD (CAMPUS OUTREACH COORDINATOR), and HANI ABRAMSON (POPULAR EDUCATION COORDINATOR). The 2018-19 accountant was DAN LACROIX AND STEPHEN KAMP.

In the summer of 2018, QPIRG-McGill hired two RAD FROSH COORDINATORS: BEN KIRSEBOM AND NAJ SUMAR, and two SCHOOL SCHMOOL COORDINATORS: AMANDA MURPHY AND GRETA RAINBOW. We funded one summer research stipends, with the Third Eye Collective.

# QPIRG-McGILL STRUCTURE

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## CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (CRCC)

At the Annual General Meeting in April 2018, the following QPIRG-McGill members were elected to the CRCC: MACHO PHILIPOVICH AND SHYAM PATEL. 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

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## BOARD TRAINING

All of the Board's training this year happened in early May 2018. The Board received training on a handful of things, including QPIRG's mandate and history, board legal and financial responsibilities, human resources and labour relations, anti oppression, consensus-based decision making and conflict resolution.

As well, the 2017-2018 Board gave a Staff Comm training to the new Board and met for a transitioning meeting with new Staff Comm members. As well, a training with some of the CRCC from the 2017-2018 year, as well as the new members from the CRCC, happened with new Board members. This training including explanations of what the CRCC policy is, what the CRCC does, and a conversation brainstorming ways that the Board could bolster the existing policy through the revival of the Policy Committee.

## BOARD VISIONING

The Board did not have a Board visioning this year.

## MAJOR THEMES AND ISSUES

Typical board meetings consisted of getting updates from different committees, projects, and hiring processes. We also dispense discretionary funding (ranging between 300\$ and 450\$) and review endorsement requests. This was consistent throughout the year, and included the following highlights:

- Attending a Trans 201 workshop in the Fall
- Dealing with loss of Young Canada Grants, which we replaced
- 2 Office Clean Ups
- Approving 3 new Working Groups, re-approving 13 Working Groups and finally approving 2 solidarity groups.

Budget: We approved a yearly budget in August/September. The surplus we were left with allowed us to buy a camera, a laptop and 3 new computers for the office.

## BOARD CHALLENGES

We faced challenges with reaching quorum at our board meetings a lot this year. This was likely because we never managed to find a regular meeting time that worked for everybody. Starting in November 2018, when we had to address a time-sensitive request, it was sometimes difficult to tell if everybody on the board was on the same page about the situation, because there was not one time the board could meet as a full board.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A few board members also didn't regularly show up to meetings and did not regularly respond to meetings with decisions suggested at board meetings when we didn't have quorum. In the future, it would be good to make sure we check in with board members we don't hear from for a while to make sure we're doing everything to make sure our board meetings are accessible to them. This would also ensure that board members don't feel like they are only welcome to come to meetings if they've been coming to meetings regularly. It would also be good to make sure everybody knows they can be involved as much or as little as they want, depending on their capacity.

# QPIRG-McGILL BOARD REPORT

## BOARD DYNAMICS

Overall, the board dynamics were quite good. When in meetings there was easy communication, people listened well, and supported each other. Unfortunately, due to low attendance at most of our board meetings throughout the year, a few board members did end up taking the bulk of the labour and in the future we should actively check-in with members of the board who have not been attending meetings and feel a bit out of the loops. Perhaps also sending tasks out for people to sign up for could be a good way of board members who do not have the capacity to attend meetings to remain involved.

## STAFF COMMITTEE

This year, the staff committee was comprised of Theo, Connor, Heather and Isabelle. We were trained over the Fall. Since then, we have been addressing several requests and appeals for information.

We also set the following goals:

- Review our equity hiring practices: We've been able to gather some resources to this effect
- Creating a StaffComm manual: Essentially a resource where relevant policies are gathered and conventional practices are outlined.
- Updating Staff Evaluation Forms: We received a template from the Centre des Organismes Communautaires (COCO) which we began to adapt to the Qpirg context. It still needs some trimming down.
- Reviewing Contracts: In order to have our contracts better reflect the realities of its positions, we created task-tracking timesheets for staff members to use in the upcoming months. We're hoping this will also help to effectively address issues of mounting overtime worked by staff.
- We also began drafting 'Staff files' to better store start-end dates and track days taken off.
- Finally, we were able to schedule one round of check ins with full-time and part-time staff.

## RADICAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE REPORT

The Radical Research Committee works to support QPIRG's community-driven research projects- organizing workshops and skillshares, conducting outreach for the Community-University Research Exchange (CURE) program, and planning the yearly Radical Research Days event series. The committee struggled with issues of capacity and continuity in the first semester, as meeting turnout was often low and featured different members each time. Nevertheless, it was able to participate in the planning of a BIPOC Youth Engagement event, co-organized by SEDE and the CURE program as part of the McGill Social Equity and Undergraduate Research and Engaged Learning Symposium in early October.

The committee became more active during the second semester, as a more consistent membership emerged. Committee members were involved in planning a CURE Dinner and Discussion on April 3rd, aiming to address whiteness in the CURE program and build relationships with BIPOC-led groups on campus. They also worked to organize this year's Radical Research Days event series, which began with a workshop and

# QPIRG-McGILL BOARD REPORT

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discussion on Mental Health, Burnout, and Organizing, co-organized with QPIRG McGill's Resource Center on March 11th. Future plans for the committee include organizing a panel on navigating conflict in activist groups and grassroots community organizations as part of Radical Research Days, and potentially organizing additional skillshares, screenings or guided tours over the summer, depending on committee member interests and capacity.

## Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee (Fin Comm) focused this year on a handful of projects. We wanted to plan a finance training for Working Groups like last year, and Becca is planning to facilitate this in late March. As well, members of Fin Comm went through the auditor's recommendations from this year as well as the mid-year budget review which happened in March, and reflected on the ways we can implement these suggestions into the finances at QPIRG. The committee also brainstormed the best ways that we can work to both support Becca's portfolio and work with the full-time staff to make sure QPIRG's finances are being organized in an accountable manner.

Fin Comm also hopes in the future to work with the Policy Committee in working on a wage policy, as QPIRG's last wage policy is out of date. This is a recommendation we have for the Summer Collective and future Fin Comms.

## Policy Committee Report

The Policy Committee met for the first time in several years! We consolidated what work there still was to be done on current QPIRG policies, as well as what work had been done by the last Policy Comm that had not been followed up on.

The recommendations made by the 2015-2016 Policy Committee for both the Hiring Policy and the Board Policy need to be incorporated. The CRCC policy update process was started by a member of the CRCC committee, but has not been finalized. We also spoke about the need for possibly an anti-harassment policy (to be possibly linked with the CRCC policy), a gendered and sexualized violence policy, and an accessibility audit by Accessibilize Mtl.

## Accessibility Committee Report

This year was a lower-capacity one for the board and the Accessibility Committee did not meet in 2018-2019. Instead, work centered around maintaining accessibility practices that had been implemented in previous years- such as booking accessible spaces, providing childcare, whisper translation and ASL interpretation, and bringing an accessibility backpack (with gender-neutral bathroom signs, interaction signal badges, and other materials) to all events. Board and staff members also engaged in ongoing work around addressing productivism in the organization- in particular, scaling back event series and other programming to reduce burnout.

Next year, we recommend that the Accessibility Committee be prioritized and that its work continue throughout the year. One of our working groups, Accessibilize Montreal, has also proposed to conduct an audit of QPIRG-McGill's policies and practices, and we hope that this will be pursued in the months to come.



# STAFF REPORT



## Staff

This year, QPIRG-McGill had a great team and a lot of collaboration between the staff. Overall, we had higher staff and volunteer capacity than we have had in the last few years, which reduced stress and led to more engagement in the organization as a whole.

A lot of the focus this year was on capacity and relationship-building, which included paying attention to process over results. One example of this was that we chose to do less events for Social Justice Days, so staff were less burned out and we were able to give more attention to each event, all of which went really well. Additionally, we reorganized the physical space of QPIRG, and worked on archiving and moving offices around to better suit organizational needs. We were also able to get new computers for part time staff and working group use for the first time in many, many years! We also now have a QPIRG laptop and a screen, in addition to our projector. Having these concrete resources has been very helpful in increasing functionality around the organization.

In regards to relationship-building, we have a larger, more engaged volunteer base than in previous years and we hope to keep working on this. Staff at QPIRG started having All-Staff meetings in an attempt to increase and improve communication amongst all of the staff, as there has often been not enough communication with the part-time staff. We have started meeting every two weeks and it's great to have a time where all staff can check in with each other! We also had a staff visioning last June, facilitated by Andrea Figueroa, and we hope to have another one in the coming months.

For our three permanent positions: Amy Darwish stayed on as the Working Groups and Community Research Coordinator for a fourth year, while Becca Yu stayed on as Finance and Administration Coordinator for a third year. In March 2018, we hired Bofita Haile as the interim Outreach and Promotions Coordinator, and in the summer she was hired for the position permanently.

Part-time staff included Kiera Sheppard as our Campus Outreach Coordinator, Ben Kirsebom was the CURE Coordinator until December 2018, when Leela Riddle-Merritte became the new CURE Coordinator, and Elessar Bulatao was our Resource Centre Coordinator.

Summer staff included: Ben Kirsebom and Naj Sumar (Rad Frosh Coordinators), Amanda Murphy and Greta Rainbow (School Schmool Coordinators).

Additionally, Hani Abramson was our Popular Education Coordinator, hired in conjunction with the SSMUVP External office. Amanda Murphy was hired on an Emploi Quebec contract for School Schmool and archiving work at QPIRG-McGill, and it was really great to have what's normally a summer position last until January. It allowed for there to be better follow-up with the project, such as organizing a launch and website.

Our work is, of course, made all the more interesting thanks to our volunteers and to our Board of Directors, who bring so much energy and enjoyment to the work that we do. And shout-out to our friends at The Midnight Kitchen, the UGE, MUNACA, AMUSE, AMURE, AGSEM, Black Students' Network, Solidarity Alliance McGill, the McGill Daily, CKUT, ECOLE, Rez Project, SACOMSS, SEDE, SSMU VP External Office, Project 10, the CSU, the Centre for Gender Advocacy, and QPIRG-Concordia! We love collaborating with you and we hope to continue strengthening our networks in the coming year! <3

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We look forward to continue growing and expanding the capacity of QPIRG-McGill and what we do. Some of our future plans include continuing to build our volunteer base, updating our promo materials, seeking more varied and stable sources of funding, and giving some needed attention to our policies.

In solidarity,

The Current QPIRG Staff (Amy Darwish, Becca Yu, Bofita Haile, Kiera Sheppard, Leela Riddle-Merritte, and Elessar Bulatao)

# POPULAR EDUCATION

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## CULTURE SHOCK AND SOCIAL JUSTICE DAYS- HANI ABRAMSON

Culture Shock and Social Justice days went very well as a whole. While Culture Shock had a higher volume of events, meaning more student and community groups were able to host events, both the Pop-Ed volunteers and the staff decided that we should scale back for Social Justice Days, meaning that we hosted less events. I believe that this was a positive choice as it meant that the organisers were less stressed and that the events had higher turnout, probably because community members and students were less overwhelmed by the smaller workshop series.

My relationship with SSMU as the liaison for the event series between QPIRG and SSMU was minimal compared to past years' popular education events coordinators. I was able to work with VP University Affairs Jacob Shapiro for some assistance when needed, especially regarding promotion to SSMU constituents, as he had adopted the PEEC role into his portfolio, but because the VP External had resigned, there was not as much of a collaboration with SSMU executives.

We worked with a variety of speakers, both keynotes from out of town and local activists.

## CULTURE SHOCK 2018 MAKING OUR WAY OVER, UNDER, AND THROUGH

Culture Shock went from the 11th to the 16th of November. The events include the following:

- Anti-Colonial Brunch and Learn: Fundraiser for the Kanehsatà:ke Longhouse
- Resisting Racism and the Rise of the Far Right
- Prison Strikes 101
- Anti-Racism 101
- Care Work in the Apocalypse with Leah Piepzna-Samarsinha (co-sponsored)
- QTBIPOC Film Screening: Tangerine
- Fat QTBIPOC Hangout Space!
- Keynote Presentation by El Jones
- Land and Indigeneity: Environmental Justice in Palestine
- Fighting Detention and Displacement- Film Screening and Discussion with Movement for Justice in El Barrio
- Performance Night Fundraiser for Racines Bookstore

In reflection, we had positive turn out and were able to create opportunities to fundraise and share knowledge. For some events, we had to consider security and privacy in ways that we had not before, specifically in regard to anti-fascist work. Also, the Fat QTBIPOC event was only attended by fat-identifying staff members and should have probably been better promoted to community members.

We were able to discuss workshop proposals with Pop-Ed committee volunteers, and it was very helpful to have the input of volunteers as well as staff. However, I started a bit late due to Jewish holidays.

Maddie Gnam made a very beautiful poster to advertise Culture Shock. Our theme was positive, attempting to make a statement on the fact that our world is a maze and we must work together to find justice.

# POPULAR EDUCATION

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## SOCIAL JUSTICE DAYS 2019

Intended to stimulate an alternative political culture in the McGill University community and beyond, Social Justice Days marked its 14th year with a week and a half of workshops, discussions, fundraiser performance nights, and speakers discussing local and global issues. Social Justice Days testifies to the diversity of critical political engagement on McGill campus, and offers students concrete opportunities to get active in their global community.

This year, we sent a call for proposals in December, and did the selection process in January with the Popular Education Committee. We received a lot of proposals, around 15 in total, and were able to accept 6 of them.

Social Justice Days 2018 took place from February 19 - 22 and had the theme of Looking In, Looking Out. It was co-sponsored by the SSMU, QPIRG-Concordia, and SACOMSS.

We organized the following events:

- Indigenous Perspectives to Harm Reduction in Addressing the MMIWG2S Crisis
- Contemporary Colonialisms: Palestine and Tibet
- Film Screening: Migrant Dreams
- Trivia Night with STAND: Discussing Realities Behind Bars
- Deep Accessibility: Building Capacity Beyond the Basics
- No Borders, No Prisons: The fight to stop the construction of a new migrant prison in Laval

For SJD 2019, we definitely had fewer events and fundraisers, but saw amazing turnout for the most part. We were not able to accept all of our proposals in a goal to cut down, but were able to locate other outlets for the workshop proposals we couldn't help sponsor as part of SJD.

We chose to go with Holly Li as our poster artist, who created a visually-intriguing poster using our theme of "Looking In, Looking Out," meaning that social justice is internal and communal as well as global and part of a network of solidarity.

We noticed that events with student facilitators were more heavily attended by students, specifically regarding SPHR's workshop. Turnout was so high that there was absolutely not enough room in the space for all the attendees, meaning we had to come up with creative seating solutions, thus presenting many potential accessibility issues.

## MOVING FORWARD

For this upcoming academic year, we hope to focus on education, offering volunteers educational material regarding how to actually organise community events, meaning we explain logistics, budgeting, outreach, space booking, and other ins and outs to make the process of actually organising less esoteric and more democratic. A variety of volunteers have expressed that not being familiar with the "behind the scenes" aspect of organising proved to be a significant barrier.

I also believe that moving forward, perhaps we would have increased SSMU support if the VP External would be keen on joining efforts.

A big thank you to everyone who supported Culture Shock and Social Justice Days, and especially to the Popular Education Committee, who really made the series happen!

# POPULAR EDUCATION

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## SCHOOL SCHMOOL 2018 - AMANDA MURPHY & GRETA RAINBOW

School Schmool is an ad-free, corporate-free, agenda-with-an-agenda which is published yearly as a joint project between QPIRG-McGill and QPIRG Concordia. It aims to introduce new students to activism in Tioh'lia:ke (Montreal), connect them with the community, and be a radical resource for everyone.

We decided to make the theme for this year's edition of School Schmool The Tangible, so we tried to find content which focused on concrete actions and on recent/ongoing local struggles. Following the coordinators from the previous year, we continued to ensure that all contributors of new material were paid for their work and to prioritize QT/ BIPOC and other marginalized voices. We decided to make the font much bigger than the year before, which we would strongly recommend continuing for accessibility reasons, even though it made the book larger and heavier. Due to popular request, we also included two September calendars (2018 + 2019) so people can plan ahead and have a holdover calendar until the next edition of School Schmool is available.

Every year School Schmool is printed by the amazing Katasoho Printers. Printing costs were higher than expected because the price of paper has gone up a lot; this will probably continue in the future. Because one of the coordinators had a lot more hours to use towards distribution, we decided to print 1800 copies, the same as the year before, and were able to get rid of most of them. However, we strongly suggest that if there isn't the same capacity for distribution next year for the project, that coordinators print less copies (maybe more like 1500?). Even though people gave us overwhelming positive feedback about School Schmool and really appreciate the agenda, there is less and less demand for a physical calendar.

We also put this issue and most of the issues from the past 10 years online at [schoolschemool.com](http://schoolschemool.com) so there is now something of an online archive. In September, we had a launch party for the publication at the old QPIRG Concordia space.

# POPULAR EDUCATION

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## RAD FROSH 2018

Rad Frosh is a three-day orientation weekend for incoming students at McGill organized by QPIRG-McGill. The program is centered on introducing peeps to McGill and Montreal's vibrant activist communities. Rad Frosh occurred on Friday, August 31-Sunday, September 2nd. We had 152 participants with 28 facilitators during the weekend programming. Our objective was to offer both a creative and politically progressive orientation to new students, introducing folks to various social, political, and environmental issues, movements, and organizations within our communities.

Our theme for 2018 was "We Got the Beat," which recalled the activist work of 1980s North America and contextualized what community and having each other's backs means today. We wanted to speak to the relationship that exists between activist histories in Montreal and students in the present, and the kinds of reciprocal learning within these spaces.

This year some of the events were:

- Radical Campus Tours
- Queer Prom at Centre La Jeunesse
- Dance Party at La Sala Rossa
- Performance Night at the MAI
- DIY Fair
- BBQ in Parc Jeanne Mance
- Benefit Concert at Bar Le Ritz
- Workshops and Tours

Rad Frosh Day 1 began with registration and meet n' greet and segued into radical campus tours across McGill's sprawling greenery. The tours involved a round-robin of groups moving across campus to get a feel for the space and navigation as well as the services and groups around them. We rounded out the evening with dinner provided by the Afghan Women's Centre and a Benefit Concert at Bar Le Ritz highlighting local talent such as Shades Lawrence, Chivengi, DUTTY, and Ms. Holmes, with DJ Harmony Express providing sweet tunes between sets.

Rad Frosh Day 2 began with breakfast at our hub location for the weekend, the St. James Anglican Church. We moved into workshop blocks in the early afternoon and then into lunch followed by tours from groups like CKUT and Milton Parc Building Community. We held our BBQ Dinner at Parc Jeanne Mance in order to have a swift and easy transition into our main evening event at the MAI, our performance night featuring spoken word, dance, and poetry from local Montreal QTBIPOC artists. We finished the evening with a high-energy dance party at La Sala Rossa, which was a last minute addition but a roaring success.

Rad Frosh Day 3 opened with breakfast once more, as well as the workshop blocks. We held our DIY Fair with local representatives presenting activities like needle point, safe sex kits, and household projects. Our main event for that evening was our 1980s-themed Queer Prom at Centre La Jeunesse! Since it was a large event, we set up in waves with decorations, a photobooth, and the presence of local groups like Project 10 at information booths. We also had a makeup and hair team stationed to help froshers look their best. We cultivated a beautiful, inclusive and big-hair-a-plenty prom that had a great turn out and lots of great feedback.

Food for our events was primarily provided by the Afghan Women's Centre, with the Midnight Kitchen

## POPULAR EDUCATION

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contributing secondary food items, continuing our lengthy partnership with MK. Other groups we partnered with throughout the weekend included: CKUT 90.3 FM, Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights McGill (SPHR), the Black Students' Network (BSN), Nyoka Palm Trees, AIDS Community Care Montreal (ACCM), and Queering the Map. Rad Frosh is community-driven and supported, and the efforts and love from these groups and those of the past fueled our weekend, and really demonstrated the ways in which communities show up for one another.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2019 AND BEYOND:

- More advertising about bursaries, who is eligible, and how they work, would be important. I think there is also a certain degree of discomfort around applying or seeking them, so normalizing them as part of how we make Rad Frosh accessible during registration is valuable, as well as possibly having testimonials from those who have received bursaries before. Anonymously of course.
- Try to incorporate more programming around colonialism and indigeneity. We did not have enough content around this subject, and it was not prioritized enough in the way that we structured things. As well, having decolonial perspectives weaved into each day is integral
- Make sure your Harm Reduction Team is solidified by early August. If possible, having additional training for those part of the Team would be beneficial, just in case there is trouble finding enough people with experience to round out the squad
- There will be a lot of groups that cannot be physically present, so try to have as many resources as possible. The more resources the better! Especially in the frosh bags, but also readily available in case someone needs recommendations or access that we had not included. Covering all the bases is a great idea, whether it is pamphlets, zines, or digital resources in a list format
- Strategic inclusion and invitation of youth from local organizations, like Project 10, Asterisk, DESTA, etc. would be great to give opportunities for frosh to mix with other youth and get a feel for what other groups like QPIRG do

## COMMUNITY RESEARCH

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### RADICAL RESEARCH DAYS - AMY DARWISH

Now in its fourth year, Radical Research Days is a monthly event series that takes place in the Winter semester. The series aims to showcase grassroots knowledge work and build links between students and broader community struggles.

To date, the event series began with a discussion on mental health, burnout and organizing in March 2019. As a collaboration with the Resource Centre at QPIRG-McGill, the discussion also aimed to inform a longer-term objective of developing a series of workshops, discussions, and resources around mental health. Radical Research Days will also feature a panel discussion on facing conflict in community groups in April, bringing together workers and organizers from different projects to speak to their experiences in addressing conflict, to highlight practices they have seen used to respond to conflict, and to draw links between conflict, systemic oppression, and transformative justice. Future events- which may include skillshares, film screenings or guided tours- may also be organized during the spring and summer months, based on the capacity of Radical Research Committee members.

While the series got off to a late start, and struggled sometimes with issues of capacity, the first event generated considerable excitement in our networks, as well as a good discussion the day-of. In the future, we hope to start planning events during the fall semester, to give us more time to organize. We also hope to work on the pacing of events and to leave more time for outreach to improve event attendance and avoid committee burnout.

### CURE (COMMUNITY UNIVERSITY RESEARCH EXCHANGE) AT MCGILL - LEELA RIDDLE-MER- RITTE

This past year can be summarized as laying the ideas down for the beginning of a new CURE McGill. Due to an uncertainty about if we were going to concurrently follow Concordia's new project system (one main project per semester), we had a quieter year, participant-wise. Through discussions with Amy, the newly-formed Solidarity Alliance of McGill (SAM), as well as the RAD Research Committee, we may be moving toward programming that includes projects that work with smaller nonprofits and that are more BIPOC-centric. Our path may be diverging from CURE Concordia's, however I am enthusiastic that our mandate will develop into one that is more laterally collaborative and diverse!

#### CURE EVENTS:

- CURE Dinner  
Historically, CURE participation has been mostly white. We recognize this as a program and will thus be engaging in discussion with BIPOC and activist student groups on campus (ensuring that the majority of attendees are of colour) to brainstorm how to divert the idea of white centrality tied to radical, community-based research at McGill. We will also be noting suggested non-profits that come up for future project possibility.

#### CURE PROJECTS:

- Women of Diverse Origins (WDO) archiving project (phase 1)  
As this incredible alliance of POC Montreal-based women's groups approaches its 20th anniversary, they have asked if CURE would be able to assist in beginning to compile its history in a centralized system. Every year since its inception has had a different theme led by a different group, thus their



## COMMUNITY RESEARCH

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storage is effectively dispersed between the WDO members. This project will likely be ongoing into the next year as not all of the storage will be located this semester and they hope to create a book, a film or another media-based recount of their important history.

### COLLABORATIONS WITH THE RAD RESEARCH COMMITTEE:

- CURE Dinner
- Mental Health, Burnout and Activism (workshop)

### IN THE WORKS/FUTURE PLANS:

- Short-term: CURE Dinner
- Continuing phases of the WDO archiving project
- Submission of and discussion about an amendment to point 1 of the CURE mandate

## QPIRG MCGILL RESOURCE CENTRE REPORT - EL BULATAO

The QPIRG McGill Resource Centre (henceforth QMRC) has had a successful year.

With a slow start due to the turnover of volunteers in the QMRC Volunteers Committee (2017-2018) to (2018-2019), QMRC has quickened pace after the recruitment period of the Fall 2018 semester. With a good handful of interested volunteers, we ended up with 2 dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers for the year.

Volunteers have been shown the cataloguing process from start to finish, including bookstore visits to change the routine once in a while. Discussion meetings were held every so often for brainstorming how to recruit more QMRC Volunteers. There were therefore two sub-committees formed: the cataloguing and the recruitment committees. While the former was maintained successfully, the latter had to be dismantled due to the declining number of volunteers.

The pilot project of exploring mental health, particularly drawn from the experiences of activists and social justice advocates, was tentatively launched to continuously remind ourselves that the QMRC's activities are not all confined to the Library. We hope to provide more workshops/events and provide more literature in the near future.

One challenge remains the maintenance of QMRC Volunteers throughout the year.

The next set of book purchases will occur in May at the Anarchist Book Fair.

# COMMUNITY RESEARCH

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## SUMMER RESEARCH STIPEND REPORT

One way in which QPIRG-McGill carries out its mandate to support community-driven research is through the provision of summer research stipends. The stipends consist of grants to fund projects that align with QPIRG’s social and environmental justice mandate, are grassroots in focus, local in scope and long-term in their impact.

Due to funding constraints, QPIRG-McGill was only able to provide one summer research stipend this year. We were still excited to offer the stipend to the Third Eye Collective’s “We Are Our Own Best Resource” project, involving two components- a community survey seeking input from Black community members about their experiences with sexual and gendered violence resources, along with a guide compiling resources and support services for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

In terms of recommendations, we received significantly fewer applications this year, with the majority of them sent by campus groups and QPIRG-McGill working group members. We hope to begin outreach earlier this year and to proactively contact community groups to circulate the call for submissions in order to reach outside our more immediate networks.

## WE ARE OUR BEST RESOURCE: A COMMUNITY SURVEY AND GUIDE - THIRD EYE COLLECTIVE

### OUTLINE OF THE PROJECT

The Third Eye Collective is routinely asked by folks for professional referrals including “traditional” healers and resources for survivors/victims/resisters of gender violence and sexual abuse. Our response was to create a zine which can act as a resource guide.

The proposed project was twofold:

- The first was to promote and get responses to a survey. Acknowledging that breaking the cycle of violence also requires that community, state and colonial violence be addressed, the project delved into the processes for addressing such violence within Montreal, providing a breakdown of what types of resources are available and how to access them.
- The second was conducting research into the various supports and resources (formal and informal, traditional, and western-based) that have an intersectional and critical race analysis available in Montreal for sexual and gender-based violence survivors. The project relied on internet research as well as in-person interviews and referrals.

### OUTCOME OF THE PROJECT

The end result was a comprehensive compilation of supports and resources available in Montreal for sexual and gender-based violence. This final product was a zine, in English and French, which was distributed to various schools in Montreal.

# COMMUNITY RESEARCH

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## CHALLENGES FACED

- We faced administrative challenges that delayed the project starting and finishing time.
- Our goal, in order to ensure accessibility, was to provide the zine in an audio format in both English and French. Unfortunately, we did not have the financial means to implement this part of the project. Doing the research took more time than anticipated.

## FUTURE PLANS

Thanks to QPIRG's support we were able to create the first version of resource guide. However, this is an on-going project. In the near future we will make the zine available online, as well as create a continuously up-to-date version on our website.

We are also committed to making the information accessible in an audio format.

## GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

### DISCRETIONARY FUNDING- 2018-2019

One way in which QPIRG-McGill supports grassroots organizing is by providing funding for smaller-scale, non-institutional projects and initiatives.

An annual budget is set aside each year by the QPIRG-McGill Board of Directors to fund such external projects. Campus and community groups are encouraged to submit requests for goal-oriented events that align with our mandate, up to a maximum of \$250.

Date	To/Event:	Amount:
June 12, 2018	Conference for North American Anarchist Studies Network	\$100.00
	Transformative Radio with CKUT 90.3FM	\$150.00
	Montreal-Hamilton Anti-Repression Solidarity Project	\$200.00
	Trans March 2018	\$250.00
	Westhaven Summer Camp	\$250.00
	Young Roots Farm and Wilderness Camp	\$250.00
June 28, 2018	Sisters in Motion	\$250.00
August 2, 2018	Women's War Stories: Commemorating the Sabra and Shatila Massacre	\$100.00
	Queer Performance Camp	\$150.00
	Status for Omar: Call for Donations	\$250.00
August 23, 2018	Medic Team and Demo After-Care	\$100.00
	Migrant Worker Education Forum	\$200.00
	Indigenous Awareness Week- Tibet-Indigenous Panel	\$100.00
	October 7th Demonstration Against Racism	\$200.00
September 12, 2018	Picnic for Plaza Hutchison	\$150.00
	No Condos, No Borders: Housing for All!	\$150.00
October 18, 2018	Rally Against Prison Stickers	\$100.00
	ASTTeQ Bus Tickets	\$100.00
	Winter Newsletter- Prisoner Correspondence Project	\$150.00

## GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

Date	To/Event:	Amount:
November 1, 2018	Montreal Abortion Access Project	\$175.00
	Feminist-Trans Queer Library	\$175.00
November 22, 2018	New Years Eve Noise Demo	\$150.00
	Powershift: Young and Rising	\$50.00
	New Years Eve Anti-Prison Noise Demo	\$150.00
	Event Series on the New Migrant Prison in Laval	\$150.00
January 15, 2019	Employment Equity Poster Campaign	\$10.00
	Festival Filministes	\$100.00
	Food Against Fascism Christmas Serving	\$150.00
	Status for Omar Dinner and Fundraiser	\$200.00
February 25, 2019	Winter Fair	\$150.00
	Transport(e)	\$150.00
	Indigenous Health Centre of Tioitià:ke Annual General Meeting	\$150.00
March 19, 2019	From the Ground Up Conference	\$50.00
	Panel: Sustainability and People of Colour	\$50.00
	Lire Fanon	\$50.00
	Understanding the Haitian Revolt: Meeting with Activists Live in Port-au-Prince	\$100.00
	Self-Contained Mobile Sound System Bike Trailer	\$100.00
	Purim: Dancing Against Apartheid	\$100.00

## GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

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### CO-SPONSORSHIPS, ENDORSEMENTS AND CAMPAIGNS- 2018-2019

- SESTA/FOSTA and the New Context of Sex Work Criminalization in Canada- September 23, 2018
- Contemporary Poetics of Trans Women of Colour- October 20, 2018
- Change the Redmen Name Campagin- October 29, 2018
- National Student Food Summit- November 1-5, 2019
- Statement of Solidarity to Human Rights Defenders in the Philippines- November 6, 2019
- Talking About Transformative Justice and Accountability- November 7, 2018
- Care Work in the Apocalypse, with Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha- November 13, 2018
- Self-Determination of the Palestinian People Conference- November 29-December 1, 2018
- Letter to CNN Condemning the Firing of Marc Lamont Hill- November 30, 2018
- Certain Days: Freedom for Political Prisoners Calendar Launch- December 13, 2018
- January 29th Campaign- January 29, 2019
- Book Launch and Community Discussion on Enviromental Racism and Land Struggles in Canada- February 18, 2019
- Justice For Soli: Mental Health and Incarceration in Canada- February 19, 2019
- Indigenous People and Wrongful Conviction- February 26, 2019
- Sex Spirit Strength and Flat Rocks: Two Films by Courtney Montour- February 27, 2019
- Farming While Black Tour- March 5, 2019
- Exils: Souper et Show Antifasciste- March 22, 2019
- Israeli Apartheid Week 2019- March 18-25, 2019
- Lunchtime Discussion with World Uyghur Congress President Dolkun Isa- March 26, 2019
- Crisis, Neoliberalism and Liberation in the Middle East- March 26, 2019
- Carceral Capitalism: Discussion with Jackie Wang- April 4, 2019

# OUTREACH REPORT

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## OUTREACH REPORT - BOFTA HAILE & KIERA SHEPPARD

This year, we continued using our tried and true outreach methods. With the help of our wonderful team of volunteers, we tabled at both the Fall and Winter Activities Night, and appeared at various events across campus and throughout the community. In addition to tabling at Leacock to distribute copies of School Schmoool, we also distributed copies of our agenda at various community locations across the Milton Parc area.

Promotion of events generally happened through the email list, social media, and in-person flyer distribution. Unfortunately, the closure of the SSMU building and lack of daily Midnight Kitchen servings meant that it was harder to engage in our regular in-person outreach with McGill students but we are hopeful that that will change once daily servings begin again in the upcoming academic year.

This year, we diversified our outreach methods by not only relying on social media as a way to reach out to our membership. We are 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 volunteer outreach. We still have a long way to go in making volunteers a more central part of our organization, but this year was a step forward in that direction. We are hopeful to have ready in time for this September a revamped volunteer program, so as to increase volunteer integration and create more learning opportunities for our volunteer base.

Event attendance steadily increased as the year progressed, with Social Justice Days being one of our most well attended popular education series to date. We are extremely happy with the turn out, as it reflects on the efforts of the staff and volunteers to boost QPIRG's presence in our community.

We will continue to look for ways to increase the visibility of our working groups and CURE projects so as to familiarize the McGill community with the awesome work that they have been doing.

This largest outreach project to date has been the filming of a new introduction to QPIRG-M video. The Outreach committee spearheaded the project, with our Campus Outreach Coordinator, Kiera, doing the editing of the video in-house. Once completed (ideally by the end of the summer), we will be able to officially launch the video.

This academic year, the Outreach Committee was inactive during the Fall semester due to the Outreach Coordinators having a low-capacity to run the committee. Regular meeting commenced towards the end of the winter semester and the committee has begun the process of selecting an artist to design a new logo for us. Once designed, we will be able to move forward with acquiring new, updated outreach materials.

# FINANCIAL REPORTS

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## FINANCE REPORT - BECCA YU 2018-2019

This was my third year as Finance Coordinator, and it's definitely been good to have more time to familiarize myself with the more complex aspects of QPIRG's finances. Things continue to get smoother in terms of staying on top of the finances and things not taking as long as they did in the beginning. It also has allowed me to expand my work as finance coordinator, to seek more funding, to focus on some new equipment/infrastructure for the office, and to devote some time to increasing financial literacy in the organization and those that we work with.

The year 2017-2018 was overall an okay year for QPIRG-McGill's finances, with general financial security, but there have been some challenges. This is the third year we have operated with the increased student fee levy, and we have maintained the majority of our expanded programming this year. The greatest challenge is unstable funding and fundraising. Student levies depend on opt-outs and student enrollment, our funding relationship with SSMU remains confusing, and in general fundraising on campus has been more difficult than it used to be, with fewer groups offering discretionary funding. Additionally, for the first time in many years we didn't receive Young Canada Works grants last summer. Usually we have received 1 grant for a School Schmoool position and 1 for Rad Frosh. Because of this, we got a 6-month full-time position funded through Emploi Quebec- more details on this below.

The 2016-2017 year ended with a \$4,396 surplus dated August 31, 2017, and this year 2017-2018 ended with a \$9,721 surplus. This surplus was the result of a combination of things: not all Working Groups claimed their whole budget, we didn't have a third full time staff person on payroll for all of February and part of March, and we actually saved some money with the Emploi Quebec position, since a higher percentage of the position was covered than the YCW grants. Assessing the budget at the end of the year helped us decide to make some much needed equipment purchases- namely, we got 3 new desktop computers for part time staff and working group use, a laptop for meetings and events, a projector screen, and a camera. All of these were things we desperately needed and we use often!

One financial developments that continued this year was the formation of a finance committee made up of board members- it was slightly less active than last year due to capacity, but still got some important things done. This year the committee consisted of myself and three board members: Ella Hartsoe, Andrea Lee, and Isabelle Oke. This has continued to help de-centralize some of the financial decision-making process, and has helped increase board financial literacy, and it's been really great to have the board more active in our finances. The finance committee also held a finance training for working groups for the second year in a row, with four working groups in attendance. We also conducted a midyear budget review, which helped the board to decide to start allocating \$450 in discretionary funding at each board meeting for the rest of this year, the previous number was \$350. On a more long term basis, we want to continue discussing the financial literacy at the organization, revisit all of our policies related to finances, and find a better balance between the Finance Coordinator and the Board.

Importantly, we completed our audit dated Aug 31, 2018. For the third year in a row, our audit was conducted by an independent auditor's office, APSV Chartered Professional Accountants inc., by Anne-Marie Chabot-Bouchard and Mélanie Desmarais-Sénécal. This was our third year working with Mélanie and our first year with Anne-Marie. Working with Anne-Marie and Mélanie was a great experience and we thank them for their patience and hard work. We are grateful for their close attention to detail that has led to some helpful recommendations for better finance organization and accountability. They confirmed QPIRG-McGill's finances to be healthy and in order; their full breakdown can be found after this report.



# FINANCIAL REPORTS

## OTHER ITEMS OF NOTE:

- Our financial relationship with SSMU continues to be in flux, often changing with each executive. We were able to sign an MOA with SSMU for this year, and we are very thankful to those in SSMU who helped make this happen! However, this remains not the most stable relationship and we aren't sure what the future will hold. We met with the incoming executive last May and it was a good chance to talk in person and answer questions. We hope to meet with the incoming executive in May again to continue fostering a stronger, more stable relationship with SSMU, and hopefully we can sign another MOA this year.
- Our opt-outs are fairly standard and stabilized at approximately 10% of the student population, as has been the case over the past couple of years, and is consistent for many other campus groups. For us, this amounted to a total of \$27,768 for the 2017-2018 year. We do not predict a change in this unless there are active opt-out campaigns or other forms of organized backlash, which we haven't seen much of over the last few years.
- Rad Frosh was significantly more expensive this year due to the SSMU closure--we ended up spending a lot of money for extra catering and space bookings. Fingers crossed SSMU will be open again for the coming Rad Frosh!
- As is the case every year, we apply to employment-based grants through government funding bodies, namely the Young Canada Works (YCW) and the Canada Summer Jobs (HRDC) programs. For our summer 2018 jobs, we received no YCW grants, but we received 2 HRDC grants: 1 for a Volunteer and Working Groups coordinator, 1 for a Alternative Resource Coordinator, however we didn't know we would be receiving the 2nd grant until June. We have applied again this year, and thankfully have already received the YCW grants. We are still waiting on the HRDC.
- After we found out that we wouldn't be receiving YCW grants last summer, we started talking to QPIRG-Concordia about the possibility of hiring a full-time 6-month position through Emploi Quebec to compensate, which would also allow a coordinator to continue through the fall, allowing for some much-needed follow up that we have often struggled to do around School Schmoool. Having Amanda as another full-time staff for a few months was really good for the organization and we highly recommend continuing to look at the possibility of EQ grants in coming years.
- One problem we have been trying to address this year that was pointed out by the Auditors but also has been a discussion at QPIRG for a few years now is the lack of a reliable hours and vacation tracking system for employees. This often has lead to disorganization and confusion, and is a priority that staff and board are trying to address together, particularly staff comm.
- This year we were able to achieve greater funding stability for our event series. This was due to a few factors: signing an MOA with SSMU for \$2040, receiving \$3000 from the CSU Community Action Fund, collaborating with Qpirg-Concordia and the CGA on Culture Shock, and SACOMSS was able to reinstate their discretionary funding. Due to all of this, we were able to have a Keynote speaker, El Jones, for Culture Shock, as well as many other exciting events this year with less financial stress overall. Huge thanks to all of those who contributed!!

Our accountants are Dan Lacroix and Stephen Kamp, whose diligence and knowledge is greatly appreciated. Stephen Kamp will be leaving the accounting firm sometime in the upcoming year and we will miss him greatly! They do so much for the financial health of QPIRG-McGill, and it has been a great benefit for us that we have worked with them for so many years now.

Thank you to all of the QPIRG staff, board, volunteers, and partner organizations who have contributed so much to QPIRG this year and made my job better than ever!

