

QPIRG McGill
ANNUAL REPORT
2019 - 2020



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ABOUT QPIRG-McGILL

MANDATE

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.

HISTORY

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

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

Athina Khalid
Genevieve Vande Wiele Nobert
Julia Crowly
Damla Cakmak
Hannah Beaudoin
Serene Mitchell
Mayaluna Bierlich
Ella Wischnewsky
Rawda Baharun (resigned)
Adi Sneg (resigned)
Sarah Petrick (resigned)
Delahaye Joe (resigned)

COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBERS

Isabelle Oke
Théodore Poisson-McFarlane

SSMU REP: NONE

PGSS REP: Heather Porter

STAFF

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 IVORY TONG. The OUTREACH AND PROMOTIONS COORDINATOR was BOFTA HAILE and the WORKING GROUPS AND COMMUNITY RESEARCH COORDINATOR was SASHA SIMMONS.

This year our part-time staff members were AISHWARYA SINGH (Resource Centre Coordinator), RACHEL SCHLEIFFER & LEELA RIDDLE-MERRITTE (CURE Coordinator), SHAQUIERA HAMILTON & KIERA SHEPPARD (Campus Outreach Coordinator), and LEORA ALCHEK (Popular Education Coordinator). The 2019-20 accountant was Dan Lacroix and Stephen Kamp.

In the summer of 2019, QPIRG-McGill hired three Rad Frosh Coordinators: SONJA HANSON, BETHANY WONG, and MUTATAYI FUAMBA, and two School Schmoool Coordinators: DELALI EGYIMA and ANDIRA HERNANDEZ-RAMDWAR. We funded two summer research stipends, with the ACCESSIBILIZE MONTREAL and BIRTHING AND INDIGENOUS SEX WORK AND ART COLLECTIVE.

QPIRG-McGILL STRUCTURE



CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMPLAINTS COMMITTEE (CRCC)

At the Annual General Meeting in April 2019, the following QPIRG-McGill members were elected to the CRCC: EDDIE JUDE HAREVEN and AMANDA MURPHY. 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

Overview and Responsibilities

The Board is composed of students and community members who have been elected and committed to planning the direction and development of the organization, fulfilling the organization’s financial duties and supporting staff members and their programs.

Timeline of Board Responsibilities & Actions

	General Yearly Schedule	2020 Specific
April	AGM & Volunteer Appreciation	
May		
June	Board Training // Summer Project Coordinator Hiring	Working Group & Community Research Coordinator Hired
July		
August	Rad Frosh // School Schmoool	
September	Orientation Tabling & Working Group Ratification	
October		Resource Centre Coord & Campus Outreach Coord Hired
November	Culture Shock Event Series	
December	Office Closure	Finance and Administration Coordinator Hired
January		January Project Tasks
February	Social Justice Days Event Series // AGM	CURE Coordinator Hired
March	Report Writing	

Board Training

The board received trainings on the following topics, throughout the month of May 2019 (Facilitators are mentioned in parentheses):

- Staff/Board Relationship (Staff Committee)
- HR (Amuse)
- QPIRG Structure, Committees, History, Legal and Financial Realities (Bofta and Becca)
- Anti-Colonialism training (Amanda Lickers)
- Anti-Oppression (Shanice Nicole)
- Accessibility Training (Paul from Accessibilize MTL)
- Solidarity Not Charity Discussion (Becca and Amy)
- Conflict Resolution (Kira Page)

Board Decisions

Discretionary Funding

The Board distributed 4,400\$ in discretionary funding this year. This was done on a biweekly basis and distributed among 24 applications. Through these decisions we were able to support event series, provide individual financial support and help cover struggling organizations’ ongoing costs.

QPIRG-McGILL BOARD REPORT

January Projects

At the onset of the fall semester, Board attendance and responsiveness was quite low. The effects of this reality moved Staff Comm to bring this up as a point of discussion at a November board meeting, and to follow up with a summary of the 'ideal' board compared to the functions the board is currently living up to. The recommendation from Staff Comm was to re-distribute committee seats among its board members, and to commit to spending the month of January getting through as many extraneous, outstanding projects that have weighed on Board & Staff due to the fact that they had been pushed back for so long. The point of this endeavor wasn't to complete all the tasks needing attention, but to prioritize tasks and start as many as possible so as to give something for future board members and committees to work off of. On the last scheduled day of January, we met to organize the office's backspace, run a board meeting, and then met for a social bonding activity.

Completed or Partially Completed Projects:

- Hiring Policy
- Assembling list of trainings for incoming staff
- Look into External Staff Supervisors
- Revise Staff Comm manual
- Read through Diversity and Inclusion Report
- New office space search (preliminary)
- Cleaning Office Space -> New Bookable space
- Buying utensils
- Create Board Committee & general objectives

Outstanding Projects:

- Revise Board Application & Recruitment Material
- Support the revision of CRCC Policy
- Find policies/resources to contribute to Accessibility Committee
- Research Quebec non profit/group funding realities
- Organize Board Visioning

After debriefing the entire month with the board, we were able to conclude that this initiative was helpful in re-engaging board members/bringing board members up to speed with the goings on of the organization. We also supported the idea of engaging this way again in the upcoming year, with minor adjustments to the scheduling framework.

Board Committee

The Board felt that there should be a body responsible for following the consistency and capacity of the Board. The creation of a committee that would serve this purpose became one of the projects undertaken in January. The conclusion of this 'formation' is a committee with the following tasks:

- Support & contribute to Board recruitment and training
- Take on responsibility of onboarding new Board members post-AGM
- Schedule Board Meetings
- Act as point of contact and support for Board members and check-in with checked-out Board members.
- Organize Board social activities

QPIRG-McGILL BOARD REPORT

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2019-2020 Year

The Board Committee was created in January 2020. Since its creation, the committee organized a social board event, worked on outlining its mandate, proposed and monitored a weekly meeting Board Meeting schedule and checked in with several board members, helping make the January Projects endeavor possible.

2019-2020 Members: Isabelle, Mayaluna, Ella

Future Endeavors

Moving forward, Board Comm will continue to test the limits of its potential and capacity. It will also be supporting the creation of Board workspaces and organization.

Future Projects & Goals

Although many of the necessary principles and tools for the board to function effectively already exist, it is still the case that much work is still needed to connect these resources to board members and ensure sustained overall engagement. Over the past year we've tried to take steps towards strengthening board engagement and found that many members were able to engage when receiving more detailed information about upcoming tasks and time commitments, but this isn't possible without placing most of the burden on specific members who are able to coordinate and delegate tasks.

We recommend the 2020-2021 Board take engaging with resources and setting expectations especially seriously at the beginning of the year, that it intentionally make time helping staff with projects and tasks (even if it is for specific times in the year), and to continue to explore structures that accommodate various levels of capacity and prevent overburdening responsibilities of the Board onto specific individuals.

In the past year we have focused on improving our relationship with staff members, between board members and practices, as well as event planning support. We would like to see this same type of time and attention dedicated to the Board-Working Group relationship in future years.

Radical Research Committee

The Radical Research Committee works to support QPIRG's community-driven research projects by coordinating the Community-University Research Exchange (CURE) and compiling and publishing the Convergence journal. While low attendance meant that the committee was less active during the Fall 2019 semester, outreach to volunteers led to a more regular meeting schedule during the Winter 2020 semester.

Committee members assisted with restructuring the CURE program and with hiring a new CURE coordinator. However, despite pursuing ideas for the Radical Research Days event series, the series ultimately did not happen due to potential facilitators' availability restrictions. The committee's main project was the Convergence journal, which highlights undergraduate and community contributions to social justice research and art, including creative writing, essays, and visual art. Working with QPIRG Concordia, the committee finalized a new journal structure made up of several mini-issues published online throughout the year, as well as a physical zine published once a year. The money saved on printing was allocated to paying contributors. The committee solicited contributions and worked with contributors to edit the three pieces which make up the first issue published in April 2020.

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Financial Committee

The Finance Committee (Fincomm) focused this year on finding ways to adjust the budget for unforeseen and exceptional circumstances. Becca Yu, the previous Administration and Finance Coordinator, left half-way through the year and trained the incoming Finance and Administrative Coordinator, Ivory Tong. Training overlapped by three pay periods, and thus we had to factor in a double amount of salary in the budget line for this position. This led us to consider a budget line for incoming staff training for the future. Perhaps more pressing was also the need to consider how the novel COVID-19 virus might affect how we allocate money, as staff adjust to working from home, and we transition away from physical events. Fincomm also looked into ways to dedicate more money to the discretionary funding budget line, perhaps in order to meet any community needs that would arise due to the virus.

In the future, we would like to have a discussion with the Board about transparency, vis-a-vis publishing an edited budget on the QPIRG website for the sake of transparency. Fincomm will also continue to work on providing financial literacy workshops for QPIRG working groups, as well as offer some budgetary training to Board members on Fincomm.

Staff Committee

QPIRG's Staff Committee is composed of board members who take on much of the HR responsibilities of the organization as an employer of 3 full-time staff, 3 part-time staff, and 4 project-specific summer employees. Committee members mainly facilitate contract signing and check ins with staff members. The Staff Committee also ensures the environment and processes outlined in staff contracts line-up with QPIRG's reality, and vice-versa.

Committee 2020 Activities

Over this past year, Staff comm has managed the following:

- fulfilled semi-regular checks with staff members over the academic year
- Updated and synthesized full-time and part-time contracts
- Created templates for staff information, communication and timesheets (using documents made by Kiera Sheppard)
- Completed 90% of a staff comm manual
- Coordinated a staff visioning day

2020 Committee Members: Isabelle Oke, Geneviève Vande Wiele Nobert, Heather Porter

Future Ambitions

If Staff Comm capacity is able to build on its minimum responsibilities, members should look into the following:

- Establishing a system of external community mentors for each staff member
- Re-incorporate the practice of staff & board evaluations
- Complete the process of updating the equitable hiring policy

All of these changes wouldn't have been possible without significant help and time of all the coordinators. Thank you!

STAFF REPORT

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Staff Report 2020

This year saw a lot of transitions within the staff team as three of our long-time staff members left their positions. We want to start by acknowledging the work of Amy Darwish, Becca Yu, and Kiera Sheppard, each of whom had been at QPIRG for several years. They each contributed so much creativity, care, and effort to the QPIRG McGill community and will be sorely missed. Thank you for everything!

Due to this higher than usual turnover, a significant amount of time this year was dedicated to hiring and training new staff members, and acclimating to our new relationships and responsibilities. Bringing on new team members requires input and effort from everyone, so this affected the working priorities of all board and staff members as things shifted throughout the year. Together, the current and new full-time staff worked to transfer institutional knowledge by reviewing and reorganizing some of our most important organizational documents. We approached these transitions as opportunities to bring on people with different skills and community connections, and we're excited to keep building on these together in future.

We continued to focus on relationship-building this year, both with our volunteer base and between staff. Using Slack and having regular meetings facilitated communication with volunteers and board, leading to higher engagement and more feedback. Thanks to the committed volunteers on the Popular Education Committee, the envisioning and execution of our two event series, Culture Shock and Social Justice Days, were a strong success. As a non-hierarchical organization, we are continuously working to balance the relationship between full-time and part-time staff by pairing full and part-time positions to update each other, and having all-staff meetings every two weeks. We had our staff visioning in November, facilitated by Kama la Mackerel.

In mid-March, all of QPIRG's activities were disrupted by the unprecedented quarantine surrounding the COVID-19 outbreak, leading to the closure of McGill campus and our office. Full and part-time staff have transitioned to working from home for the duration of the quarantine and are continuing to keep with all of the regular aspects of our positions to the best of our abilities.

In our three permanent positions: Amy Darwish left the position of Working Groups and Community Research Coordinator in the spring, and Sasha Simmons was hired for it in July. Becca Yu left as Finance and Administration Coordinator and Ivory Tong was hired for the position in December/January. Bofta Haile stayed on for her second year as Outreach and Promotions Coordinator.

As part-time staff: Leela Riddle-Merrite remained as CURE Coordinator for a year, before leaving in September. Rachel Schleiffer became CURE Coordinator in February. Elesser Bulatao was our Resource Centre Coordinator until May, and Aishwarya Singh was hired for the position in October. Kiera Sheppard was our Campus Outreach Coordinator for four years and left in October, when we hired Shaquiera Hamilton as our new Campus Outreach Coordinator.

Our summer staff were Delali Egyima and Andira Hernandez-Ramdwar as School Schmoool Coordinators, and Sonja Hanson, Bethany Wong, and Mutatayi Fuamba as Rad Frosh Coordinators.

Through the office of the SSMU VP External, Leora Alcheck was hired as our Popular Education Coordinator. Katie Jung was originally a summer stipend recipient, and then stayed on through an Emploi Quebec wage subsidy as our Accessibility Coordinator, until her planned leave of absence. Sarah Hollyer-Carney was hired in collaboration with the office of the SSMU VP University Affairs and Queer McGill as the Special Researcher (Preferred Name Research and Advocacy) in October and worked on the project throughout the academic year.

We thank all our volunteers and our Board of Directors, without whom our work would be both impossible and much less enjoyable! Shout-out to our friends at The Midnight Kitchen, the UGE, MUNACA, AMUSE, AMURE, AGSEM, Black Students' Network, Solidarity Alliance McGill, Students for a Free Tibet, Queer McGill, the McGill Daily, CKUT, ECOLE, Rez Project, SACOMSS, SSMU VP External Office, the CSU, the Centre for Gender Advocacy, and QPIRG-Concordia. We love collaborating with you all and we look forward to continuing to grow and strengthen our relationship in the coming year! <3

We look forward to the upcoming year and continuing to grow as an organization. Some of our future plans include finding QPIRG a

STAFF REPORT



new physical space, relaunching the CURE program, increasing the amount of training offered to volunteers, developing contingency plans in case of emergency, and continuing to build community among working groups and friend organizations.

In Solidarity,

The Current QPIRG Staff (Aishwarya Singh, Bofta Haile, Ivory Tong, Rachel Schleiffer, Sasha Simmons, and Shaquiera Hamilton)

POPULAR EDUCATION

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Culture Shock and Social Justice Days - Bofta Weldetnsae

This year, Culture Shock and Social Justice Days went extremely well (in spite of Social Justice Days being cut short due to the COVID-19 outbreak.) Both event series were organized primarily by the Popular Education committee, who helped to plan, organize, and execute a total of 14 different events over the span of the academic year.

Following the advice of previous Pop-Ed committees, we decided to keep the lineup of events smaller than normal as to ensure that both the organizers and attendees would be less likely to be overwhelmed by the event schedule and therefore more likely to attend. The overall turnout was pretty great for both event series! As always, we worked with a variety of speakers, both keynotes from out of town and local activists.

This year, we primarily worked with SSMU's VP External, Adam Gwiazda-Amsel in order to secure funding and promotional assistance to SSMU constituents. Leora Alchek was hired by SSMU to be QPIRG's Popular Education Coordinator.

Culture Shock 2019: A Community Interface

Culture Shock went from November 18th to 23rd. The events included the following:

- CONVICTION w Ariella Pahlke, Teresa MacInnes & Nance Ackerman
- A New Prison for Migrants in Laval? Information session and discussion with Solidarity Across Borders
- Harm Redux 102
- The Mess of Healing and Finding Body Peace
- Land: The original community interface on Indigenous technologies, interdependence, abundance & life affirmation
- Uyghur Voices: Stories from Occupied East Turkestan
- A Conversation About Sexual Violence Against Indigenous Peoples

As in previous years, the building closures across campus (including SSMU building closure) continued to impact our ability to promote more directly to McGill students. That being said, turnout for most of the events was very high.

Our poster was designed by the wonderful Holly Li around the theme of the community being the interface with which we all engage.

Social Justice Days 2020

Social Justice Days went from March 9th to 13th and included the following events:

- Waging War on the Poor: A Film & Presentation on the Philippines President Duterte's "War on Drugs"
- Abolissons la détention, abolishing detention: Film Screening w/ Solidarity Across Borders
- Invasion: Climate Change and Settler Colonialism in Wet'suwet'en territory
- Greenwashing Colonialism: From Tibet to Palestine
- Being Good neighbours in Milton-Parc: Panel & Discussion (postponed to Fall 2020)
- Sin City - Sex Work, the Law, and Labour Rights in Montreal, 1970 - 2020 (postponed to Fall 2020)
- BIHRA & Indigenous Sex Work and Art Collective - Sex Work Compilation Film Screening (postponed to Fall 2020)

This year, we ended up designing the SJD poster in house with the help of Thai Judiesch, a member of the Pop-Ed committee.

Due to the nature of COVID-19 and out of an abundance of caution, the last three events of Social Justice Days were cancelled. After speaking with workshop facilitators, we have decided to tentatively reschedule the remaining events for the Fall 2020 semester.

POPULAR EDUCATION

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This year saw fewer events (in large part due to the coronavirus) but we saw amazing turnout for the most part. We were not able to accept all of the submitted proposals, but were able to locate other outlets for some of the workshop proposals we couldn't help sponsor as part of SJD.

Moving Forward

For this upcoming academic year, we hope to continue to focus on education, offering volunteers educational material and training modules regarding the practical considerations around organising community events (i.e. event logistics, budgeting, outreach, etc.) We hope to build on this year's successes and continue to grow as a committee.

We would like to give a huge thank you to everyone who supported all of our popular education events, and a special shout out to the Popular Education committee. Culture Shock and Social Justice Days would not have been possible without their amazing support!

Rad Frosh - Sasha Simmons

Rad Frosh is a three-day orientation weekend for incoming students at McGill organized by QPIRG-McGill. The program is centered on introducing people to McGill and Montreal's vibrant activist communities. Rad Frosh occurred on Friday, August 30 - Sunday, September 1st. We had 122 participants with 20 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 2019 was "Light the Fire"

This year some of the events were:

- Radical Campus Tours
- Queer Prom
- Benefit Concert
- DIY Fair
- BBQ in Parc Jeanne Mance
- 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. Afterwards we gathered for a BBQ in Parc Jeanne-Mance, and then participants had the choice between a quiet movie and art-making activity, or a karaoke party. The karaoke, as well as the concert and prom activities, were all held in an unnamed event venue at 4301 St Denis. We were able to rent the location for the entire weekend and change the setup according to our needs each day.

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. In the evening we held a fundraiser concert benefiting the Native Women's Shelter, with performances by local Montreal QTBIPOC artists Backxwash, Chivengi, Grapes, and DJ Bertronnd.

Rad Frosh Day 3 opened with breakfast once more, followed by workshops and our DIY fair. Our main event for that evening was our Queer Prom. The event started with a dinner, clothing swap, and makeup and hair stations, and eventually moved on to a dance party.

Organizations that contributed to the success of the weekend included Midnight Kitchen, CKUT 90.3 FM, Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights McGill, Building Community, the Pine Collective, Queering the Map, and many individual volunteers and facilitators.

POPULAR EDUCATION



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 2020 and beyond:

- Booking venues even further in advance - perhaps even before coordinators are hired
- Continue looking into reused or recycled options for shirts, swag bags etc - the Centre for Creative Reuse at Concordia is a great resource
- 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
- The clothing swap was very successful and can be replicated in future!

School Schmool - Andira Hernandez & Delali Egyima

School Schmool, the agenda produced each summer as a joint project between QPIRG-McGill and QPIRG-Concordia, was successfully put out again this year. The 2018-2019 edition of School Schmool was coordinated by Andira Hernandez and Delali Egyima.

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 the Concordia, McGill and Montreal communities ever since.

This year's theme was Limit(less). We chose this theme because as people trying to transform the world, we try to be limitless in what we imagine it could become, but we are also well aware of the barriers that limit the change we dream of. To make those dreams come true, we are constantly learning and re-learning how to remove these barriers and how we continue to contribute to their existence, specifically on the unceded territory of Tiohtià:ke (so-called "Montreal") and Turtle Island ("North America"). For many of us, destroying these limits are about a lot more than giving ourselves the label "activist." Some questions we asked our contributors this year were:

- What are the ways you've seen settler colonialism manifest itself in so-called Montreal/Canada? How have you seen it being addressed? What is your role in it?
- How do you continue to do the work needed for a better world given the state of the political/environmental climate? (How do you avoid burnout?)
- What do you hope to be able to see happen within your lifetime?

We continued to prioritize fairly compensating School Schmool contributors -- this year we gave honorariums for all the new content printed in the agenda, and we continued to reach out to BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and disabled contributors to prioritize these voices. We continued to print on recycled paper at work with the local printer Katasoho. We ended up getting less funds than we usually would from the Sustainability Action Fund this year, so we are still currently working on finding other sources of funding.

1600 agendas were printed this year, and so far we have distributed approximately 778 on campus at Concordia and McGill, and are working on distributing them at various independent bookstores and community locations around the city. We are also having a launch party in collaboration with DisOrientation to help promote awareness of the agenda.

COMMUNITY RESEARCH

CURE (Community-University Research Exchange) at McGill - Rachel Schleiffer and Sasha Simons

Fall 2019 Semester

This academic year, the CURE program took a step back from maintaining active research projects in order to develop a new format that will better suit our capacities and needs. After Sasha started working at QPIRG in July 2019, she interviewed people who had previously been involved in CURE, including Leela Riddle-Merritte (outgoing CURE Coordinator), Amy Darwish (outgoing Working Groups & Community Research Coordinator), and Alex Heggie (Co-Coordinator of CURE Concordia). These conversations were very valuable, and through them Sasha learned that the current format of the program had some significant issues and would need to be reorganized. The main issues reported were that it was difficult to provide students with the support and supervision needed to ensure that projects were completed and useful for the partnering community organization, and that the developments inside of CURE Concordia's own structure no longer made the previous level of collaboration between our organizations possible.

Winter 2020 Semester

Rachel was hired as CURE coordinator in February in order to effectively re-define CURE's model and establish partnerships to launch a project in the Fall 2020 semester. Before the COVID-19 closures, the following partnerships were established:

- SSMU
 - Adi Sneg - Community Engagement Day Project Coordinator
 - Adam Amsel - VP External
- SEDE / Equipe BRANCHES Team
 - Anurag Dhir - Community Engagement Coordinator
- Quebec Studies
 - Stephan Gervais - Quebec Studies Director

These partnerships have been essential in the reworking of CURE McGill's program, as Concordia's new project system is separate from our old, conjoined model. Ideas were shared between SSMU, the BRANCHES team, and CURE to establish a model similar to ExCELR, when SEDE was still operating.

Because of the COVID-19 closure of all McGill buildings, planning and facilitating ongoing partnerships between CURE and community organizations has been difficult. Many community organizations have been suffering because regular services cannot be provided under such circumstances. A continued effort to help these organizations, as well as incorporate student research remains at the center of CURE's mission. Hopefully CURE can continue these long standing relationships and adapt to such circumstances.

In the Works/Future Plans

- Re-establish past relationships with community organizations
- Establish new relationships based on SEDE's list of community organizations (these organizations were left behind, often with no alternative to SEDE)
- Create a model of CURE that is remotely accessible
 - McGill 2020 Fall Semester might be remotely taught
 - Collaborate with SEDE, SSMU, Teaching & Learning Services
- Establish new norms for our relationship with CURE Concordia
- Outreach to faculties, professors, and students to promote new program
- Provide skillshares and workshops to students

COMMUNITY RESERACH

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Summer Research Stipends - Sasha Simmons

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.

QPIRG-McGill was able to provide two summer research stipends this year- one for \$3000, and one for \$1500. We were excited to support Accessibilize Montreal's pursuit of researching, development, and writing the constitution of a new disability justice organization, building on organizing and consulting done in the past by their group. Our other stipend funded a healing and organizing retreat which led to the formation of a new group- the Indigenous Sex Work and Art Collective.

In terms of recommendations for the summer stipend project, we want to continue prioritizing doing widespread outreach of the program, to ensure the opportunity reaches outside our more immediate networks.

The Birthing of an Indigenous Sex Work and Art Collective

Montréal is a well-known city for its historical red light district with more than 20 years of advocacy by and for sex workers. However, the local sex work organisations do not have any programming for Indigenous folks and 2S people that are selling/trading sex. It's also important to note that a lot of Indigenous organisations are not supportive of sex workers' battle for their rights, and mostly advocate from a narrow perspective of understanding prostitution as inherently violent. Thus, there is no visible local campaign nor support groups either in both the sex working and Indigenous communities at this time. After years of advocating for more spaces in both sex working and Indigenous organisations for Indigenous sex workers, we have decided that we need to move forward and build our own collective.

Founding member Anna Aude reached out to different people from diverse experiences in the sex trade after being part of a larger conversation with other Indigenous sex workers in so-called Canada. In these conversations, it became apparent that there was a need to have Indigenous sex worker voices around MMIW2SG and to organize a national gathering. On these calls, it was also clear that local Montréal sex worker organisations did not have Indigenous membership. Anna Aude felt that she needed to organize a grassroots collective where Indigenous sex workers could have culturally safe(r) support within their community, make art and to be part of a larger Indigenous sex work gathering. Some of us Indig sex workers met in April to discuss the creation of this collective and talked about how to finance its various projects such as a retreat. We decided to apply for the 2019 Qpirg-McGill Summer Stipend and we were selected! YAY!

The Retreat

This project supported the birthing of this collective by bringing Indigenous folks with experience selling/trading sex together in a healing retreat during summer 2019. Collective members discussed how to do outreach/ building relations with community members in and outside Montréal, reflecting the mobility of sex workers. We successfully built support among us so we feel safe(r) to be vocal about our realities and finally sharing a lot about ourselves while doing collective care.

We gathered outside Montréal with the intention to connect with the land as we often feel overwhelmed by the concrete and the colonial way of being productive. Some of us are far from our traditional territories so we felt the importance of having a nice fire and access to water. As we were organising the retreat, we wanted to recognise the gifts that this life offered each and every one of us by asking people what they would love to share with us. That is how we got a collective care session with a DIY body scrub, access to amazing food with a cooking session and finally harm reduction session and support for our lovely drug users!

COMMUNITY RESERACH



Next Steps

Members that attended the retreat are excited to continue building relations with other Indigenous sex workers and find more financial support so we can gather again, have more skill sharing sessions and find ways to be visible in a way that we can be and feel safe as sex work is still criminalized and stigmatized; we understand that a lot of us can't be 'out' as people with lived experience in the sex trade. Members that could not attend the retreat were excited to hear from us and our experience of the retreat and how we can continue to be active as a collective. One thing is sure, all agreed on being in touch with Indigenous folks across so-called Canada and Québec to contribute to our larger sex working communities!

GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

Discretionary Funding

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.

May 22, 2019	ABIPOC Distro	\$50
	Uyghur Genocide Awareness & Advocacy Seminar	\$75
	Black Grad	\$100
	Public Assembly	\$100
	Glamarchist Lookfair	\$100
	Dinner, Film Screening, & Fundraiser for Sandra Cordero	\$175
	Vital Equipment Repair for Reclaim Turtle Island	\$175
	Ester Support Committee	\$175
June 19, 2019	Camp Cosmos Youth Leadership Program	\$150
	Young Roots Farm & Wilderness Camp	\$150
	Summing Up: Organizing Filipino Migrant Women	\$150
	Bill 21 Documentary	\$125
July 30, 2019	McGill Farmers Market	\$125
	Parc Ex is Not for Sale Community Block Party	\$150
August 28, 2019	TAWA Women's Committee Training Retreat	\$250
	Anti-colonial & anti-authoritarian interventions in the climate strike movement	\$100
October 7, 2019	Filipino Canadian Futures Conference	\$250
	Poplife Kiki Ball	\$250
	Dure Réalité	\$150
	L'industrielle	\$225
	Sept 27 Autonomous Zone	\$225
	All-In Casino Night (Chinese Students Assn)	\$50
	Forêt du lac à Moïse	\$250
	Safrrr Spaces	\$150
November 7, 2019	Yellow Door Benefit Dinner 2019	\$250
November 26, 2019	L'industrielle	\$175
	International Migrants Alliance (IWC)	\$225

GRASSROOTS MOBILIZATION

January 16, 2020	NYE Noise Demo	\$175
	First Voices Week Concordia 2020	\$125
	Cafe Coop Touski	\$250
	Legal fees for single mother in Kahnawá:ke	\$250
February 2, 2020	CKUT Homelessness Marathon	\$200
	Bibliotheque DIRA	\$200
February 11, 2020	Les presses de l'est	\$100
	Accessibilize Montreal (Aimee Louw)	\$300
	Montreal Kiki Ballroom Alliance	\$100
February 25, 2020	Minorities & Philosophy McGill	\$250
	Yellow Door Volunteer Gala 2020	\$150
March 10, 2020	Students for a Free Tibet - Guided Meditation event	\$100
March 24, 2020	Mazi Housing Project	\$150
	Montreal Student Initiative for COVID-19 Response & Relief	\$250
April 22, 2020	Street Solidarity Project	\$250
	The Third World Collective	\$212

Co-Sponsorships, Endorsements, and Campaigns 2019-2020

- Women & Femmes Tool Club (MKRLAB) - June 19, 2019
- RadLaw Conference - June 19, 2019
- Black in Canada documentary - June 19, 2019
- SAVIE-LGBTQ research project recruitment - July 30, 2019
- OSVRSE outreach materials - July 30, 2019
- National Student Food Summit - August 15-18, 2019
- Open letter denouncing construction of a new migrant detention centre in Laval - September 19, 2019
- OSVRSE #Consent McGill campaign - September 23-October 4, 2019
- First Generation Peer Support Group - September 24, 2019
- Climate Justice Action McGill global climate strike mobilization - September 27, 2019
- Sustainable Youth Canada, Montreal recruitment - October 6, 2019
- OSVRSE closed session for queer, trans and 2-spirit students - October 16, 2019
- Santropol Roulant Assistant Cook job posting - October 31, 2019
- SSMU Community Narratives Project - November 7, 2019
- Climate Futures research project - November 7, 2019
- GROW Montreal workshop series - November 21, 2019-February 19, 2020
- Statement of solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en Nation - February 1, 2020
- Climate Justice Action Montreal event with Vanessa Gray - February 27, 2020
- Israeli Apartheid Week - March 22-29, 2020 (postponed)
- Climate Justice Action Montreal, student strike week - March 30-April 3, 2020 (postponed)
- Open letter in support of the migrant hunger strike - March 31, 2020
- Midnight Kitchen event with Sundance Harvest - April 3, 2020 (postponed)
- CRARR campaign against anti-Asian racism - April 22, 2020

OUTREACH REPORT

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Outreach Report - Bofta Weldetnsae & Shaquiera Hamilton

This year, with the help of our amazing team of volunteers, we tabled at the Discover McGill Fair, both the Fall and Winter Activities Night, and appeared at various events across campus and throughout the community.

Promotion of events generally happened through email lists, social media, and cross-promotion through our friend organization. Unfortunately, the continued 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 attempted to diversify 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 groups into active roles in the organization. This year also saw broader volunteer outreach. We have made great strides in making volunteers a more central part of the organization, and hope to continue growing our volunteer base in the upcoming year.

Event attendance has continued to increase, with this year's 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 continued efforts of the staff and volunteers to boost QPIRC's presence in our community.

Moving forward, we will continue to look for ways to increase the visibility of our working groups so as to familiarize the McGill community with the awesome work that they have been doing.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Financial Report - Ivory Tong

In my first four months as Finance Coordinator, I adjusted to the role while some unexpected challenges arose. Due to the unprecedented COVID-19 outbreak, staff transitioned to working from home, and the status of future events is now uncertain. However, Becca Yu, the previous Finance Coordinator, has laid a lot of groundwork for QPIRG's existing financial stability, allowing us to allocate resources towards continuing work throughout the pandemic.

In 2018-2019, we ran a deficit of \$2,205. After years of running a surplus, the decision was made last year to spend our excess of revenue on more office equipment. Unfortunately, the surplus amount was exceeded, which means we will have to be more conservative in our spending this year.

The Finance Committee this year, composed of myself, Athina Khan, and Mayaluna Bierlich, met only a few times. Carrying on from last year's Finance Committee report, we suggested that in the future, the Finance Committee can work on improving financial literacy throughout the organization. We also discussed ways to improve transparency by putting the budget online.

Our rent was corrected this year after Becca alerted McGill that we had been charged more than the listed rent amounts on our lease. Thanks to this, we received a \$2,689.62 credit on rent, and will be spending less on rent than we had been paying, through to May 31st, 2022.

This year, for the first time, we paid a summer stipend recipient through payroll, which allowed us to access her Emploi Québec wage subsidy to extend the project to an overall length of 10 months. The EQ wage subsidy provides a way for QPIRG to hire people at very little cost to our organization, while we continue to provide non-monetary resources such as our workspace. Pursuing future EQ grants is already in progress.

We have received two Young Canada Works grants, for the positions of Alternative Orientation Coordinator and Alternative Publication Coordinator. Canada Summer Jobs grant applications were opened later this year than usual, so the status of our applications are as of yet unknown.

This year's audit was performed in January, and the audit draft was approved by the Board on March 31st, 2020. Our auditors were Nadine Gravel and Caroline Pombert, from APSV comptables professionnels agréés inc. The results of our audit moved slowly, due to circumstances beyond our control at the firm. The report outlines our major financial policies and shows that while QPIRG is at low risk for fraud overall, we still have improvements to make in terms of enriching and formalizing our written procedures.

Our accountants continue to be Stephen and Dan at General Ledjah. They are invaluable to our organization, and strongly contribute to our overall financial health.

As Becca and I overlapped for three pay periods during training, the accountants suggested creating a different "training" budget line out of which expenses like this would be taken. We could expand the existing Board and Staff training line, or split the line into two to differentiate between board and staff training.

The opt-out proportion remains steady at around 10%. This year, this amounts to \$27,505. Activity around opt-out campaigns for QPIRG-McGill remains minimal, despite the online opt-out option voted in at Concordia University.

FINANCIAL REPORT

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We do not currently expect opt-outs to increase in the near future.

With SSMU this year, we signed a new memorandum of agreement with VP External Adam Gwiazda-Amsel lasting until 2022 stating that QPIRG can apply to SSMU for any deficit in monies fundraised by us for Culture Shock and Social Justice Days. Although access to the funds is not guaranteed, this expanded agreement has generally allowed us to access more secure funding from SSMU.

Our response to COVID-19 mirrored McGill University communications regarding campus closure. We closed the office on March 13th, 2020. Adjustments had to be made to prepare us to work from home, so we created a new and temporary budget line to purchase essential supplies for staff to work from home, including the repair, replacement, and maintenance of necessary technology. Events costs are assumed to be lower for the foreseeable future, since we will not have to pay for venue rentals or food costs.

Although we have already received our fall and winter fee levies, my concerns are that student registration may be lower this upcoming fall, which would lower our total budget overall. This is difficult to predict as the COVID-19 situation is rapidly changing.

