



Annual Report

2020-2021

CRE

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A Message from the Executive Director

Aaniin Boozhoo,

From my relations to yours, I want to offer my gratitude to each participant, partnership and CRE team member for your continued engagement during CRE's most transformative year. 2020/2021 was truly the year of many teachings of humility, courage, patience, listening, learning, and rebuilding. Not to mention the year of hand sanitizer!

We started this year with an incredible Gathering of over 500 participants in Kanien'kehá:ka Territory or what is now the Island of Montreal. When we returned to our home fires, we were not ready for what was about to come. Like so many other organizations, CRE had to pivot all in-person programming and meetings. Our offices closed and CRE took this time to learn and reflect on how to actively engage with Indigenous youth using culturally safe and holistic online mechanisms. The Zoom Fatigue was real.

But nonetheless we continued to offer dynamic programming with some of the most dedicated participants to date. We learned throughout this time the importance of pausing, not rushing, and giving grace: we continued to look after one another. It was also during this time we were able to create stronger connections across what I refer to as Turtle Island. Using internet and technology and with an emphasis placed on Indigenous youth and community well-being, CRE was able to connect so many youth from coast to coast to coast.

During the summer of 2020, CRE began to take a deeper look into how we have been an accountable partner to the communities we serve and the youth we are so fortunate to engage with. While these conversations were difficult, they were incredibly necessary to our growth as an organization to do better. What we discovered was that there was a need for organization-wide systemic changes to both policy and procedures, and this resulted in the calls for leadership to build greater accountability in the organization, while ensuring that Indigenous youth and community partnerships will continue to be the focus of the organization and its work.

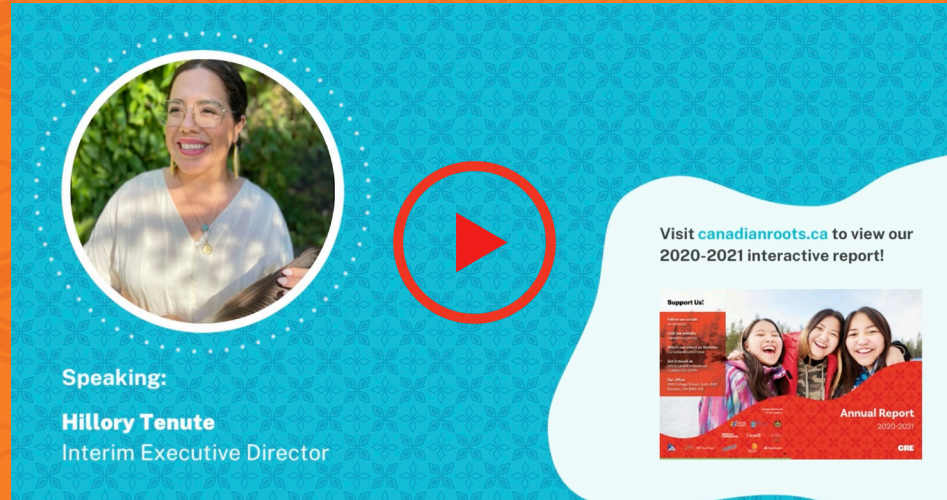
We will continue to reform some of the old ways of "doing business" by creating stronger accountable measures to guide the work we do. Our integrity not only as an organization, but most importantly as a community, is imperative to us creating pathways for Indigenous youth. We must always put the wellbeing of our relationships to one another, to community and to other organizations above all else - dollars, recognition and all that other stuff can come second. CRE should be the example of community we hope to see for the next seven generations. It is not only about returning to reciprocal partnerships that are imbedded in our traditional teachings of community, but it is leading with an open heart and an eagerness to transform.

No matter the challenge, CRE will continue down this journey of growth and transformation as it is necessary to our relations to one another. We look forward to walking down this path with you in years to come!

Miigwetch. Gizaagiin.



Hillory Tenute,
Interim Executive Director ("Executive Auntie")



Community Accountability

As a national organization, we recognize the diversity and strength of the communities and the various Nations we work alongside.

In 2020, we recommitted ourselves to implementing community accountability practices that are community and stakeholder-informed to ensure our work is done in a good way. CRE's policies continue to be reformed to ensure they are aligned with teachings received from staff trainings in the following areas:

* **Anti-Black Racism & Anti-Oppression**

* **Harm Reduction & Trauma-Informed Care Practices**

* **Lateral Kindness**

* **Conflict Management**

CRE is also working alongside the Board of Directors to develop a **Community Advisory Circle** to advise CRE's programs, policies and governance.

The purpose of the Community Advisory Circle is to strengthen CRE's programs and services through the implementation of a sound governance system based on Indigenous governance teachings and rooted in community accountability.



Since I was young, I was always reminded to stand up as if there are 1000 Ancestors behind you. So that's what we're going to do, as community members and as an organization, we're going to rise up. I recognize this path will be bumpy as growth and humility are imminent to transformation. Where we collectively go from here will be guided by our teachings of love, respect and reciprocity. Our path will be grounded by our relationships that are shaped by the strength of community and resiliency. We will hold one another accountable in response to truth and justice as we continue to pave the way for the next seven generations. That has been and will always remain to be part of our journey. Nii'kinaaganaa.

— **Hillory Tenute, Interim Executive Auntie**

Accomplishments from CREation

Launched in March 2020, **CREation** is a multi-level funding program that supports strengths-based, community-focused and youth-led projects taking place in communities across Canada.

Grassroot youth groups/collectives (comprised of Indigenous youth ages 15-29) are eligible to apply for funding to support community programs and projects, while receiving innovative mentorship, training and capacity-building opportunities.

CREation's goal is to empower Indigenous youth to implement innovative solutions to problems facing their communities, to take ownership over the wellness of their peers and community and to increase their own skills around project management and delivery.

Each project is led by 2-4 Indigenous youth leaders and aims to provide direct programming support and capacity building to these programs and initiatives.

Project Highlights

Tusaayaksat Magazine
Community Support Fund Grantee

Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family & Community Services
Medium Project Funding Grantee

Bkejwanong Eco-Keepers
Community Support Fund Grantee

The Lunaapeew Youth Collective
Youth Empowerment Grantee

CREation Advisory Circle

This was the first year we have had an Advisory Circle since the launch of CREation in March 2020. Seven youth and four community members participated. They sat on review circles to make funding decisions and provided the foundation for developing 2021's emerging streams and capacity-building. We are so grateful for their support.

This year, advisory members sat on review circles to make funding decisions and provided the foundations for developing our emerging streams and capacity-building program for 2021.

Over the course of this year, CREation ran 3 funding streams:

Community Support Fund

First launched in Spring/Summer 2020, the focus of this stream is to enable small organizations and collectives to support youth wellbeing during COVID-19 through providing innovative and essential supports, resources and initiatives.

Medium Project Funding

Over two intakes in Summer 2020 and Winter 2021, this stream provided funding to projects that were centered on one of six focus areas:

- * Assessment and Feasibility Studies
- * Arts and Culture
- * Youth and Community Wellness
- * Intergenerational Relationship Building
- * Innovation and Change
- * Resiliency Building

Youth Empowerment Stream

The Youth Empowerment Stream provided small grants of up to \$5,000 to 13 youth-led projects. The focus of this stream is to fund new and emerging micro-projects that focus on increasing the resilience, engagement and wellness of youth.

High-Level Impacts:



\$1,000,000 in funding distributed



90 communities reached



220 youth leaders engaged



20,000 youth directly engaged



95 projects funded



32,000 secondary or tertiary youth and community members engaged

Accomplishments from Indigenous Knowledge & Curriculum

The objective of the Indigenous Knowledge and Curriculum (IKC) Department is to create opportunities for Indigenous youth (ages 18-29) across Canada by promoting a strong sense of cultural identity and ensuring that Indigenous youth have a solid foundation for success in their personal and professional lives.

To accomplish IKC's objectives in 2020-2021, our department offered 4 programs:

Peer Program: The Peer Program was launched in November 2020.



34 youth peers mentored



34 laptops distributed



17 youth peer alumni to support new cohort of peers



11 youth peer alumni to continue their post-secondary education

The program offered over 81 workshops led by CRE staff as well as professional development courses led by external facilitators. The goal of these sessions was to help peers strengthen their skillsets to achieve their personal and professional development goals.

Culture & Wellness Program:

A total of 195 youth across Canada were engaged by programs such as the Weekly Wellness workshops for Foster youth, the Mukluk Making Project, the Indigenous Languages Program Words in Motion, the Virtual 2 Spirit Regalia Making Workshop and Pine Needle Basket Weaving, among others.



195 youth engaged



13 programs



Since joining the peer program, I have gained more confidence, a sense of structure and stability that I didn't have before in my personal life. My support workers go above and beyond to help me with a variety of things like Education, Traditional Knowledge, Sobriety, Culture, and so much more. My life has dramatically changed for the better since I joined this program.

— Peer Program Participant

Developmental Stages Program:

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Developmental Stages program has served remote Northern Ontario communities (Chapleau) and Northwest Territories (Fort McPherson) by providing arts and craft supplies to young families. Projects engaged:

- Healthy parenting skills
- Learning about life stages
- Self-care/balance
- Ceremony
- Medicine teachings
- Crafting
- Skill development



250 young families with children engaged

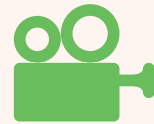
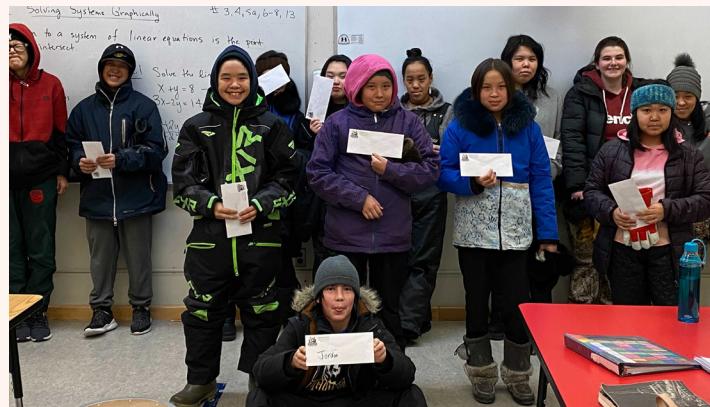
Justice Program: The planned activities of the Justice Program did not take off due to COVID-19 restrictions. The program proposed to make justice accessible to Indigenous youth. It would have provided Indigenous youth (13-29) with education about diversion programs, training on Gladue, and other cultural community programming for Indigenous youth facing the justice system.

Accomplishments from Strategic Initiatives

Nunavut Day

On July 9th, 2020, CRE launched across its social media channels a 'Very-Short Film Festival' in celebration of Nunavut Day. As the world was pivoting toward a new reality, CRE was searching for accessible ways to engage young people and recognized that during this intense time where people all over the world are self-isolating, themes of place, space and belonging have taken on new meanings. What particular perspective did youth from Nunavut have to share on the subject?

In collaboration with the NFB and bolstered by media attention from the CBC and elsewhere, submissions were sourced and a curated short-film festival was presented featuring the work of 28 youth. The filmmakers were compensated for their work.



28 youth filmmakers



600 people watched

Likhang Puso x CRE: Unheard



An organization created by 16 year-old Filipinix students in the Philippines and Singapore, Likhang Puso, launched their project Unheard, with the aim to feature youth Indigenous voices from around the world. Using their Instagram account, they are sharing personal stories of resilience and reclamation of culture. CRE was thrilled to partner with them and feature 3 of our Indigenous staff members in this project. As a continuation of this relationship, Likhang Puso is engaging with CRE on our International Indigenous Solidarity Program. IISP has the goal of hosting conversations with Indigenous youth globally and creating tangible outcomes towards International Indigenous Solidarity.

ICDI - Indigenous Catering Development Initiative

This project was conceived in response to a common barrier observed when planning largescale events across Canada. Due to systemic inequalities, Indigenous led/owned/operated caterers have not gained access to institutional preferred caterers lists or have simply been held back in being given opportunities for business development.

From October 2020 to May 2021, The Strategic Initiatives unit launched phase 1 of a pilot program that aimed to support young Indigenous caterers who are interested in growing their businesses to accommodate these big asks. We partnered with caterToronto, a community-based network with proven experience supporting the work of BIPOC chefs. We hired industry professionals to mentor and guide our participant in culinary and Indigenous teachings.



Accomplishments from the Centre for Indigenous Policy and Research

The Centre for Indigenous Policy and Research (The Centre) prioritizes youth policy development and research to support Indigenous-based reconciliation actions in Canada. The Centre focuses its work on four areas; policy, research, the innovation hub, and engagement.

Our policy programming focuses on increasing capacity to influence policy change and includes programs like our **Indigenous Youth Policy School**:

This program connected change-oriented, solutions focused, Indigenous youth to ensure their priorities are advanced and perspectives are reflected in government policies and programs. Youth (ages 18-29) from coast to coast to coast engaged in weekly classes for 9 months, beginning with a launch, and ending with a graduation. Youth supported one another online with the goal of completing the program with a presentation and submission of a policy brief. In addition to the policy school, we also hosted workshops for Indigenous youth to introduce conversations about using policy as a tool for advocacy.

Our research programming in 2020-2021 consisted of our small grants and content creation:

Small Grants

The small grants provided opportunities for Indigenous youth to produce forward thinking, exploratory and innovative research in the field of Reconciliation. These research grants were about more than putting money in the hands of youth; but focused on capacity development through webinars and mentorship as well.

A key component of this program also focused on knowledge mobilization and the sharing of the final products of each research project in order to highlight the importance of diverse forms of research. This program supported a resurgence of Indigenous research with youth at the forefront.

Small grants of \$1000 were provided to successful applicants who wanted to design, develop, and implement their own community-based research projects. In periods of 3, 6, or 9 months, youth were paired with a mentor to support in the design and implementation of their projects.

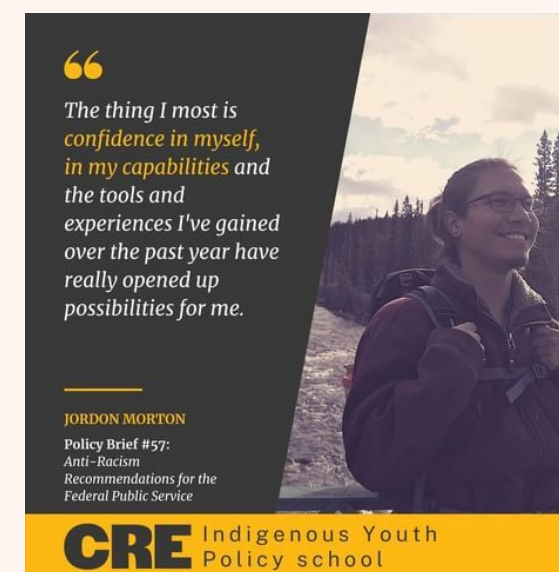
Innovation Hub

Our innovation hub is a physical space located in our Ottawa office. With a central focus on Indigenous-led policy co-development, the Innovation Hub seeks to foster positive, meaningful and reciprocal engagement initiatives with various key stakeholders and building long lasting partnerships. This year, we hosted follow-up engagement sessions with Indigenous youth on the Implementation of UNDRIP in order to ensure youth voices were heard.



The Network

Our engagement programming focuses on the growth of the Network. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action #66 calls for "community-based youth organizations to deliver programs on reconciliation and establish a national network to share information and best practices".



In response to this, CRE has created The Network – an online community where members can share information and resources, opportunities (eg. jobs, volunteering), and connect with organizations and young Indigenous leaders across the country. The Network will also work to strengthen and help facilitate engagement opportunities for Indigenous youth.

As a result of the programs and initiatives we ran in the 2020-2021 fiscal year, over 209 Indigenous youth have taken part as primary participants. In addition, over 15 Indigenous youth were offered opportunities for employment including two who now work with CRE. We look forward to continuing this work next year!



Network:
70
Members



Policy School:
24
Graduates



Small grants:
14
Youth



Workshops:
60
Participants



Engagement:
12
Youth

Accomplishments from the Youth Reconciliation Initiative (YRI)

The Youth Reconciliation Initiative has been training and supporting youth to take on leadership roles in their own communities since 2012. This year, which marks the end of the program, staff worked hard to adapt to a variety of challenges, not least of which was the need to adapt the program so it could pivot to an online program.

Though we are sad to see the program end, this year's youth and coordinators came together for an excellent year of programming. The program started with a month-long training that introduced youth to the skills and knowledge they needed to carry out their own projects.



55 Youth Leaders



6 Provinces



933 Community Participants



24 Communities



21 Events



33.5 Hours of Youth-Led Programming

This project engaged young leaders (ages 18 to 29) from across the country, in both rural and urban communities, building a national network of young leaders realizing their own transformative visions of community building and reconciliation.

Youth leaders participated in an intensive orientation training retreat which took place in-person in Winnipeg, MB, St. Catharines, ON and Kamloops, BC with remaining training taking place virtually due to health and travel restrictions. Participants were away for approximately five days for in-person training.

The training provided workshops and sessions on reconciliation, decolonization, facilitation, cross-cultural education, as well as Indigenous history, cultures and worldviews. YRI leaders worked together to develop tools and action plans for the second phase of the project. The second phase of the project was in community which each youth (team) facilitated based on health and travel restrictions within their communities.

CRE undertook this program to create and uplift dialogue in regions of the country that do not have access to the same tools and resources as larger city centres as well as those with higher access in urban settings. The YRI program allowed for discussions around reconciliation to take place between Indigenous youth living on and off reserves in rural areas as well as non-Indigenous people in surrounding communities to foster reconciliatory action.

Youth that participated in the YRI program are now pursuing careers in:

 Policy/Politics	 Arts	 Recreation	 Management
 Education	 NGO/Non-Profits	 Academia	 Law
 Community Service/Youth Work	 Health and Mental Health	 Community Organizing	 Business/Entrepreneurship

YRI Over the Years (2012-2021)



425 YRI Leaders



54 Communities



All 13 Provinces and Territories



172+ Events (2015-2021)



4500+ Participants (2015-2021)



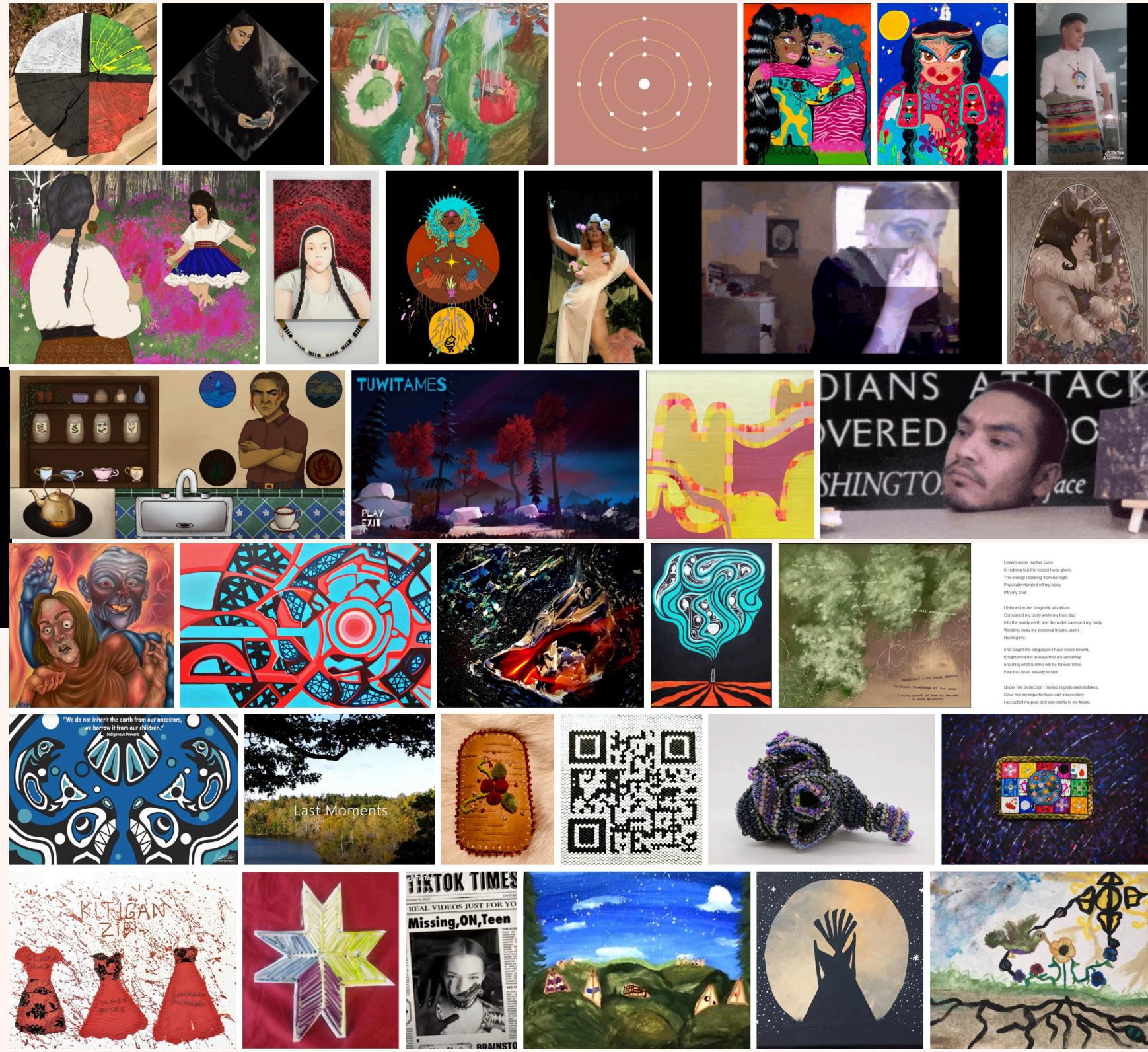
YOUTH RECONCILIATION INITIATIVE

L'Initiative réconciliation jeunesse

Digital Mural

Group art exhibition by Indigenous youth showcases creative artistic production that engages with concepts of community, care, and resilience.

On March 12, 2021 Red Beans Group and CRE launched The Digital Mural project, an exciting and innovative art exhibition space that showcases Indigenous art. The virtual group exhibition featured 31 Indigenous emerging youth artists. Viewers encounter a range of mediums, from beadwork and Tik Toks to QR codes and embedded video games.



“ We need to make art **accessible** to our communities while **uplifting** the voices of our youth because they are our future **ancestors**.

— Adrienne Huard, Co-Curator

This project stems from a “passion to blur the lines of what constitutes Indigenous art” said Huard. The Digital Mural is designed to support curators to reimagine how to categorize and sort artistic works according to their relevant metadata and through an Indigenous lens. Curator Franchesca Hebert-Spence comments that “it has been the experience of too many Indigenous artists to have their work contextualized within a non-Indigenous lens.”

This platform encourages Indigenous youth to continue sharing their unique stories through the arts.

Curatorial Committee

Adrienne Huard, Franchesca Herbert-Spence,
Jennifer McGregor, Mikinaak Migwans, Tom Mcleod

Financial Statements

Canadian Roots Exchange has a fiscal year end of March 31, and our finances are annually audited by Grant Thornton LLP. The below numbers represent the totals at the fiscal year end for 2020-21.

Statement of Financial Position

As of March 31

Assets		
	2021	2020
Current		
Cash	\$ 3,806,576	\$ 1,096,002
Marketable Securities	20,000	1,336,875
Grants Receivable	101,200	32,200
Accounts Receivable	-	75,336
HST Rebate Receivable	195,515	105,953
Prepaid Expenses	195,883	276,446
	4,319,174	2,922,812
Investments	70,553	-
Total Assets	\$ 4,389,727	\$ 2,922,812
Liabilities		
	2021	2020
Current		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	182,545	328,800
Deferred contributions	3,444,048	1,863,525
Total Liabilities	3,626,593	2,192,325
Net Assets		
	2021	2020
Designated	700,000	125,000
Unrestricted	63,134	605,487
Total Net Assets	763,134	730,487
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 4,389,727	\$ 2,922,812

Statement of Operations and Change in Net Assets

Year ended March 31

Revenue	2021	2020
Grants	\$ 6,073,062	\$ 5,169,769
Donations	69,945	58,323
Interest	35,388	42,878
Service and fee income	11,264	113,058
Unrealized gain on investments	1,980	-
	6,191,639	5,384,028
Expenses		
	2021	2020
Personnel	3,468,034	2,157,151
Program	1,162,850	590,201
Rent	483,976	298,545
Professional Fees	469,275	165,737
Office and general	152,947	216,032
Participant travel and accommodation	137,079	910,532
Communications and outreach	132,794	59,154
Honoraria	102,052	137,882
Staff travel and accommodation	41,719	312,602
Insurance	6,217	8,544
Fundraising	1,000	26,325
Relationship building	1,049	21,848
	6,158,992	4,904,544
Excess of revenue over expenses	32,647	479,484
Net assets, beginning of year	730,487	251,003
Net assets, end of year	\$ 763,134	\$ 730,487

Our Staff

Our thanks and gratitude to our team.



Alyssa Luttenberger
She/Her



Amanda Amour-Lynx
She/Her/They



Amani Maatouk
She/Her



Avery Velez
They/Them



Bella Lyne
They/Them



Brijlal Chaudhari
He/Him



Brooke Rice
She/Her/They



Brooke Stratton
She/Her



Carlee Kawinehta Loft
She/Her



Carly Brascoupé
She/Her



Chris Mitchell
He/Him



Claudia Escobar
She/Her



Dona Nham
She/Her



Erica Kopyto
She/Her



Eagleclaw Thom
He/Him



Fola Kortee
She/Her



Forrest Eaglespeaker
He/Him



Gabrielle Veilleux
She/Her/Elle



Galya Bravo
She/Her/They



Hillory Tenute
She/Kew/They



Jacqueline Neshkawa
She/Her



Jaelyn Jarrett
She/Her



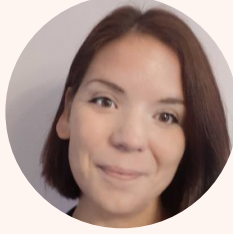
Jaime Fortin
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James Arruda
He/Him



Jessica Alegria
They/Them



Jillian Collins
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Julia Giraudi
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**Katsitsanoron Celeste
Beauchamp**
She/Her



Kimberley Hartwig
She/Her



Kimberley Wakeford
She/Her



Marissa Campbell
She/Her



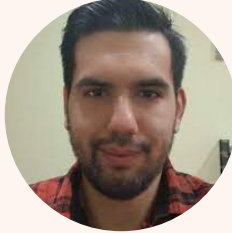
Megan Lewis
She/Her



Melissa Compton
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Mhiingan Schrader
He/Him



Naithan Lagace
He/Him



Nicole Maxwell
She/Her



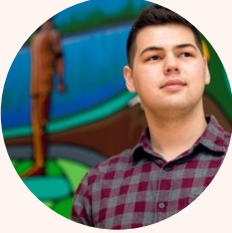
Patricia Martin
She/Her



Raven Spiratos
She/Her



Robbyn Zwaigenbaum
No Pronouns



Sam Kloetstra
He/Him



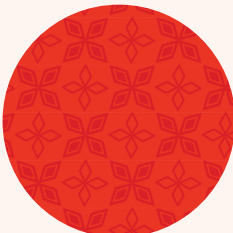
Shanese Steele
No Pronouns



Sharon Witruk
She/Her



Shawna Moore
She/Her



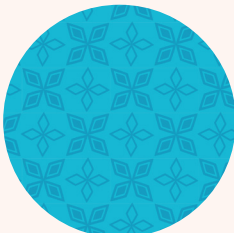
Shayla Snowshoe
She/Her



Summer Leigh Cardinal
She/Her



Tija Hauta
She/Her



Tony Johnson
He/Him



Tristan Smyth
They/Them



Zaheen Karim
She/Her

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