



COLORS OF CONNECTION



**2020
Annual
Report**

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Note from the Executive Director

During a year when a global pandemic brought unprecedented challenges, we stayed strong and productive working with our partners both remotely and on the ground in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo. In response to shifting priorities we adapted our work to address needs arising from this global health crisis. We also initiated our Girl Awakening Program using our new scalable and sustainable program model, and further rooted our work in a social justice and anti-racist approach.

Early in the pandemic we reached out to support our partner les Étoiles Messagères, past program participants and members of our current scholarship program. The lives of these young women and girls were disrupted by the pandemic with school closures, rising unemployment, food insecurity, and rising tensions at home from economic stress. The Covid-19 pandemic has shed a light on many systemic inequities worldwide, amplifying economic and social disparities. In Goma, the challenges women and girls already face were exacerbated. At the same time, Goma was also coping with many of the same challenges we all felt-- illnesses, job loss, financial instability, and social unrest. The community Colors of Connection works with faced all those challenges but with fewer resources and in the context of severe gender inequality and discrimination. Since the pandemic started, Goma has experienced an increase in school dropouts for girls, gender-based violence, and child marriage. We knew it was important to move swiftly to support them so they could protect themselves from compounding crises. We also knew that the determination and resilience of this community would mean that our support would go far.

We provided our partner staff and participants with basic supplies, sanitizer and soaps. We trained staff to teach mask making to participants, disseminate accurate information about the virus, and engage in mental health discussions with each other and participants – including discussions on domestic violence, which sharply increased during the pandemic. We assisted les Étoiles Messagères in sourcing a grant that funded the creation of a public mural that educated the community in Goma about COVID-19 and best practices to prevent the spread of the virus.

Les Étoiles Messagères worked with 25 young women and girl participants on this project, together reaching approximately 10k community members through public art messaging, and providing vital information in a place where it was needed.

Travel to Goma for the initial program launch of Girl Awakening (Musichana Hamuka in Swahili) was put on hold during the spring and summer, and like many did this year, we used this time for reflection and growth. We hosted a virtual retreat with board and staff where we created our 2021-2025 strategic plan, charting our next 5 years forward, notably deepening our social justice and anti-racism approach, and developing our scalable and sustainable program model.

By November we were able to travel onsite to Goma and work with our partner and community leaders to lay important groundwork for the Girl Awakening Program. With these foundations, we are ready to get started on our 2021 program, which will serve 80 girls, 40 community leaders, and more than 30 thousand community members. We are inspired by the resilience of our communities and partners during this time of challenge, and we are excited for the next chapter.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our donors and friends who have offered encouragement and support to our team as we navigated this unprecedented year, and are delighted to share with you all we accomplished in a year beset with challenges, growth and change.

In solidarity,



Christina Mallie, Executive Director & Co-Founder



Photo: Feza Balanga 2020

The Organization

I. WHO WE ARE

Colors of Connection (CC) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to engage youth from conflict-affected countries and their communities through collaborative art-making to promote hope, well-being, and self-determination in the pursuit of social justice.

Through the medium of art, we invest in building knowledge, skill sets and resources that strengthen adolescent's mental and emotional capacities, and allow them to move beyond the mindset of basic survival brought on by living through conflict. At the heart of our work is the belief that art is a powerful catalyst that can help people heal and rebuild their lives and communities. We put girls at the center of our work, recognizing their essential role as anchors and changemakers in their communities. We envision a world in which everyone's capabilities are awakened through creative engagement and put into action to achieve peace.

Our past project accomplishments demonstrate the powerful impacts of this innovative field. CC has successfully completed eight projects located in refugee camps and post-war areas in Sub-Saharan Africa directly benefiting 205 young people, and reaching an estimated 200,000 residents through a public mural-making process. Our projects have addressed the important issues of sexual violence, health promotion, peaceful cohabitation between ethnic groups, education for girls, and human rights.

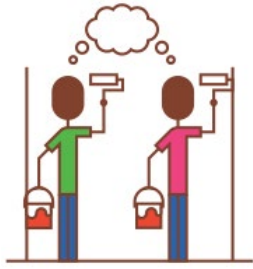


Photo: Pamela Tulizo 2016

II. WHAT WE DO

We work in partnership with communities hurt by inequalities and the violence of war, honoring their lived experiences and knowledge to realize their collective vision of a better future.





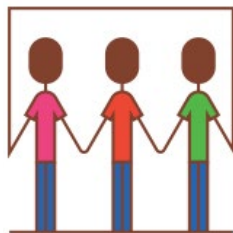
1. Provide tools to create solution-oriented art

Through large-scale collaborative public art, marginalized adolescent girls are provided a platform to engage with their community leaders and represent the issues and values that are important to them. A council of community leadership is brought together to engage in a series of discussions around critical issues and potential solutions. Based on these discussions, girls themselves design and produce murals and posters in lively public spaces in their community. While creating murals and posters, participants exercise and strengthen the skills they have learned during the program including leadership, and creative expression. The artwork expresses what the community desires to promote in society as opposed to what they desire to prevent. This approach successfully promotes local strength, resilience, leadership, and assets-focused thinking.



2. Facilitate opportunities for healing, relationship-building, and knowledge-building

Safe relational spaces for adolescent girls are established to creatively express themselves, build relationships, and experience engaged learning. Our programming is arts-based and integrates life skills curricula including sexual and reproductive health and human rights. Participants develop their social and emotional well-being, capacity for critical reflection, and foundational skill sets and knowledge to handle adversity and make progress on their life goals.



3. Build community

A range of societal actors - including power brokers, change makers, and conflicting and/or diverse segments of society - are engaged in discussions so that they can communicate and connect around shared values, responsibilities, and interests. Actors from all sectors of society are included - those who traditionally or culturally wield less power, such as women and girls, youth, ethnic and/or racial minorities, and those with a lesser socioeconomic status. With this participatory approach we challenge harmful power dynamics and build a more just community.



4. Build partnerships and models of cascading leadership

We work with local partners to build local capacity and ownership and increase the sustainability of our work. Program activities are led by a locally based partner organization and a cohort of mentors recruited from the same community as program participants. The presence of mentors within the community creates readily accessible support for participants and connects them to people knowledgeable about particular challenges they may be facing. The experience and skills built by mentors, develops their leadership potential opening up opportunities for them to become future program staff or find employment elsewhere.



5. Connect participants to academic opportunity

Participants are provided with scholarships for school tuition and associated school fees. Education supports youth development and increases lifetime earnings. For girls in particular, secondary education supports lower rates of child marriage, child mortality, and maternal mortality and increased lifetime earnings and national growth rates.

III. WHY WE ENGAGE THROUGH ART

Since the beginning of human existence, art has been used as a form of personal and collective expression. It is a primal skill enabling us to express ourselves and connect to others in ways that surpass cultural, linguistic, and even psychological barriers. A growing body of research now confirms that art has the power to effectuate:



Relationship Building



Expression and Communication



Personal and Community Agency



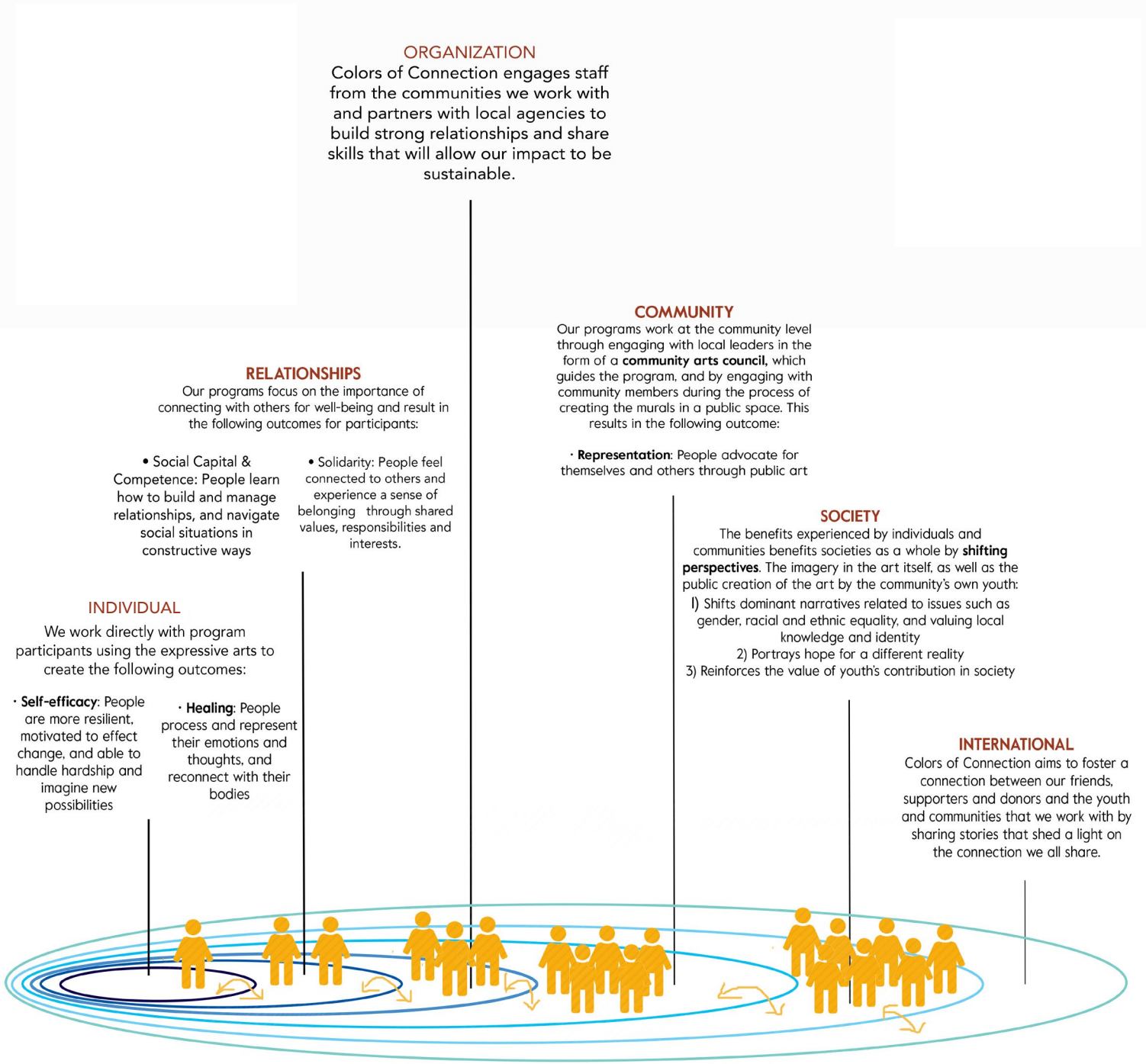
Holistic Healing



Self and Social Analysis

IV. OUR IMPACT

We effect change on individual, community, organizational and international levels



Accomplishments of 2020

This section outlines our accomplishments in program implementation and development, organizational growth, and fundraising.



I. PROGRAM

1. COMPLETED

Mural for Rights of the Handicapped, Goma DRC

In February funds raised from our end of year 2019 campaign supported our partner les Étoiles Messagères in their mural-making and awareness raising work in Goma. **Les Étoiles Messagères members painted a mural at a disabilities center, celebrating every person's ability to contribute to the community and make it a better place.**

The images depict a group of people working together to construct a well that will provide clean water, a basic resource that is direly needed in Goma. Written above the scene in kiSwahili is: "Watu wote wanausika kwa kufanya kazi" meaning "All people are capable of work." The mural was completed by 17 young women and girls, and led by les Étoiles Messagères staff who are female artists and community builders and former staff of Colors of Connection projects.



Photo: Feza Balanga 2020

COVID-19 Support and Awareness Raising, Goma DRC

As COVID-19 spread around the world, we supported les Étoiles Messagères as they took action in Goma DRC, safely meeting in solidarity with each other and with participants, and creating a COVID-19 education mural outside a health clinic to inform the public on best practices to prevent the spread of the virus. The meetings provided essential support at a moment when women and girls have been increasingly marginalized during the pandemic and face higher risks of discrimination and violence. The public mural the group created also served as an effective tool for social norms change. Community members were able to witness alternative and empowered roles for women and girls as they created the mural in a public space, thus challenging the harmful social norms that perpetuate gender-based violence and providing examples of empowered roles for women and girls.

Les Étoiles Messagères received remote training from CC on the most up to date information on the virus we had, mask making techniques, and guidance on mental health and domestic violence discussions with each other and participants.

Activities

- Sewing cloth masks for all girls and young women in the les Étoiles Messagères
- Distributing anti-bacterial soap and hand sanitizer
- Sensitization meetings (with a limit of 10 people and social distancing measures in place) to educate girls and young women in the group about the virus, its signs and symptoms, and the practices to prevent its spread
- Solidarity meetings to share common challenges, economic, emotional, social and collective ideas for coping and support, with a particular focus on domestic violence.



A resident of Goma walks by the mural created by les Étoiles Messagères educating the public about how to correctly wear a mask to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Photot: Bernadette Vivuya 2020

A participant of our scholarship program, Wivine wearing a mask she made herself. She learned how to sew it in a classe taught by staff of les Étoiles Messagères.
Photo: Feza Balanga 2020

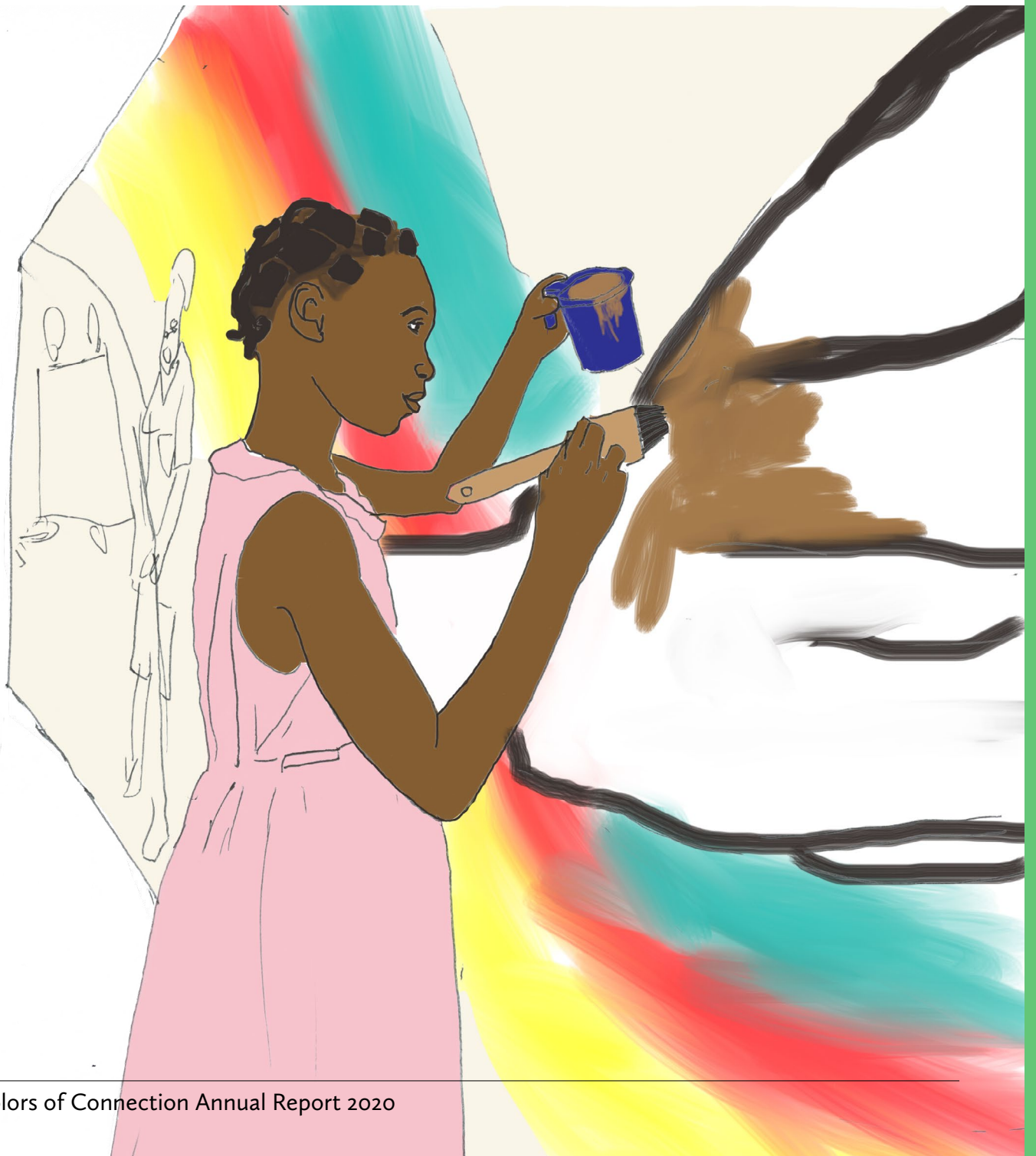


2. CURRENT

Girl Awakening

Musichana Hamuka in Swahili

Girl Awakening is a sustainable, year-round program that will work together with adolescent girls and community leaders to promote gender equality and fight gender-based violence through engagement in the arts. We completed phase 1 of Girl Awakening in November and December when staff Laurie Reyman and Christina Mallie traveled to Goma to work with our partner to lay the program foundations.



Accomplished in Phase 1:

Established local partnership with les Étoiles Messagères:

We established a partnership with the DRC-based nonprofit organization, les Étoiles Messagères. The group is supporting girls and young women through art and is composed of former CC staff.

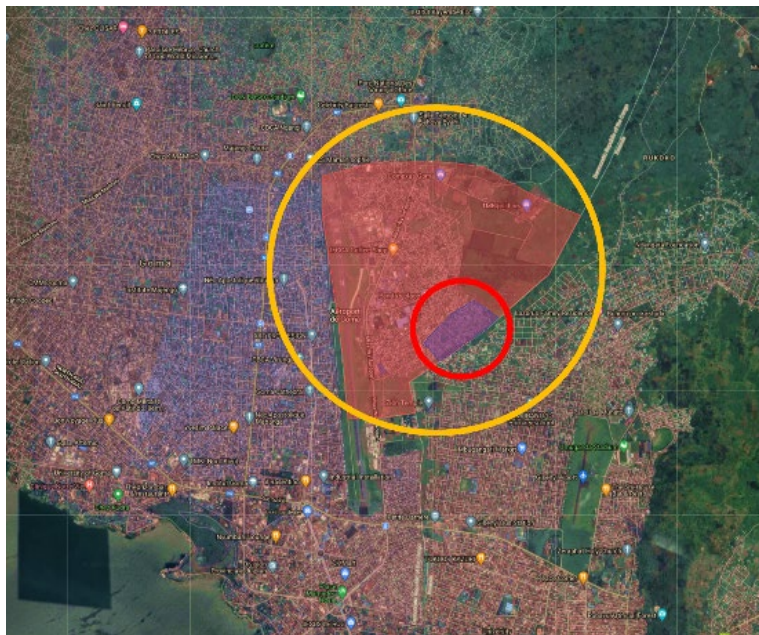
Established a community arts council: We brought together key DRC local stakeholders to advise the program.



Les Étoiles Messagères staff in workshop on program development
Photo: Christina Mallie 2020

Facilitated collaborative program design workshops with les Étoiles Messagères:

Over a two-week intensive we worked with the team to better understand their vision of the work, their passion and connection to it, and created a plan to work together to create meaningful change.



Selected neighborhood and sublocation for program: Bujovu, Cyirambo: Bujovu was selected by our partner les Étoiles Messagères from the 18 possible neighborhoods as it has one of the highest poverty levels and lowest access to health services in Goma. The population of Bujovu is 48,000. The Cyirambo area was selected within Bujovu as it is one of the most densely populated areas of the neighborhoods with poor sanitation, high food insecurity, poor access to healthcare and high crime rates.

Google maps overview of the city of Goma, with Bujovu neighborhood shaded in red, and the specific target area for recruitment of participants called Cyirambo for Girl Awakening shaded in blue.



Conducted the Girl Roster Survey Tool

We trained les Étoiles Messagères staff who then surveyed 400+ households in the Bujovu neighborhood to assess risk levels of girls. Developed by the Population Council, the Girl Roster Tool has been utilized in more than 35 countries, yet this is the first time it has ever been implemented in the DRC. We gathered foundational knowledge of girls' lived realities and understanding of groups of girls that would most benefit from the program which will be essential in the recruitment process.

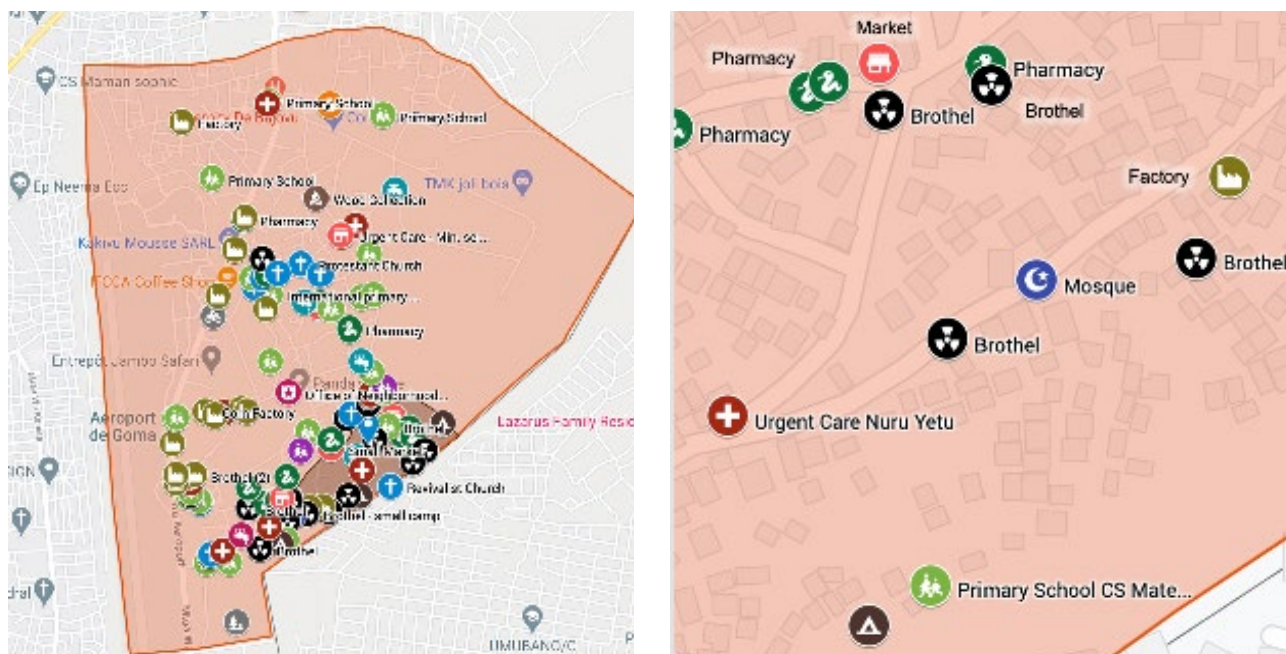
Les Étoiles Messagères members Gracey Kleise (right) and Salima Sudi (left) visit homes in the Bujovu neighborhood during the Girl Roster Survey. Photo: Gracey Klieise 2020

Findings from the Girl Roster shows that in the sublocation of Cyirambo Avenue in Bujovu, 76% of girls are in volatile domestic situations and by age 10-12 are “off-track,” meaning either out of school, married, or living with one or no parents.

Category 2. Girls who are out of school OR living with no parent OR living with one parent OR married OR have a child. *							
AGE GROUP	ON-TRACK	OFF-TRACK	TOTALS		AGE GROUP	ON-TRACK%	OFF-TRACK%
6-9	6	13	19		6-9	32%	68%
10-12	8	25	33		10-12	24%	76%
13-14	3	16	19		13-14	16%	84%
15-17	4	31	35		15-17	11%	89%
Totals	21	85	106			19.81%	80.19%

For girls under 13, we do not collect marriage or maternity info.

Completed Community Mapping of Program Neighborhood Bujovu: This mapping exercise identified 120+ resources and services that exist in the community for girls such as health clinics, schools, markets, and potential areas of high risk such as brothels, military camps and public transit stations. **We will utilize this information when the program launches in 2021 to increase equal access for girls, and mitigate areas of risk, and as well as to help to reform systems and make them more equitable. Developed by the Population Council, this is the first time that the community mapping tool has been implemented in the DRC.**



Google maps showing GPS markers for the 120+ resources and risks identified by les Étoiles Messagères team in Bujovu.

Completed Building-Assets Toolkit Exercise: in collaboration with les Étoiles Messagères we identified 75 assets in areas of health, social/emotional, economic, creative and cognitive assets important for girls to learn. In the next phases of the program we will engage mentors and girl participants in the Building-Assets Toolkit Exercise as well and work these assets into the year-long curriculum.¹

Completed Assessment of Staff: We conducted individual meetings with staff of les Étoiles Messagères to understand their experience, interests and to identify areas for further capacity building during phase 2 of the program.

¹ An asset is a form of knowledge, skill, and/or resource that is either internal or external. As defined by the Population Council, and based on Amartya Sen’s capabilities approach, an asset can be understood to be a “store of value that is related to what a person can do or be (their ‘human stock’).”

Scholarship Program

Despite school closures from April through July of 2020, 9 participants of our past programs Courage in Congo and Tunaweza Portraits have been attending school with scholarships for school tuition and associated school fees. **So far, a total of 4 young women have graduated with 3 graduating in 2020 with their high school diplomas.** The pandemic made studying for the final exams highly challenging, and we are in total admiration of their perseverance and performance. It is a big achievement for girls in the DRC to get their high school diplomas: only 30% of girls even attend secondary school, let alone graduate. **Education is linked to other positive outcomes for girls including improved income earning capacity, better access to health- care and social support, and greater likelihood of experiencing better maternal and child health outcomes.** For these reasons we are proud and immensely happy that with this achievement they are better positioned to advance in their lives.



Four graduates of the scholarship program earned their high school diplomas.
Photo: Christina Mallie 2020.

3. IN DEVELOPMENT

In 2020 CC explored programming and partnerships in Kenya with Koyamada International Foundation's Kenya Chapter (KIF Kenya) and in Eastern Congo with Search for Common Ground.

We developed a joint proposal with KIF Kenya that will replicate the Girl Awakening Program in Kenya, location yet to be determined. Called Pamoja (the Swahili word meaning together), the program will serve 500 girls and their communities over a 5 year period. Colors of Connection will manage technical design and program planning. Implementation was scheduled for September of 2020 but due to the pandemic, activities are currently on hold with the goal to resume development in the fall of 2021.

We held preliminary discussions with the DRC-based team of Search for Common Ground in November 2020, with plans to assess areas for collaboration in June 2021 when they have completed their strategic planning process.

Strategic Programmatic Focus

We narrowed our work focus by geographic location to serve youth and communities in a more targeted way so that we can be more efficient with limited time and resources, and support program sustainability. In 2019 we moved to focus 70% of our programming on adolescent girls. In 2020 we have moved to focus exclusively in the DRC with potential to expand to other countries in the Sub-Saharan African Region - see section above on our partnership with KIF Kenya.

Technical Support and Training

Our partner the Population Council trained our staff in program tools for adolescent girl programming including the Girl Roster Survey, and Community Resource Mapping that we utilized in phase 1 of the Girl Awakening program in Goma DRC. In addition, the Population Council supports staff in preparation of proposals and is available to consult with on program design and implementation.



Our partner the Population Council trained ED Christina Mallie in utilizing the Building-Assets Toolkit, one of many they are providing to support our adolescent girl programming.

II. ORGANIZATIONAL

1. OUTREACH AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

Presentation

Christina Mallie was one of five panelists at the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) webinar: Arts in education during COVID-19: Illustrating the value of creativity and adaptability. This webinar highlighted how EiE practitioners can harness the arts to enhance the COVID-19 response. The discussion focused on how art can be used to foster social-emotional learning, student and school community wellbeing while linking to other life-saving humanitarian sectors. Panelists provided an overview of how they are adapting existing EiE arts responses to the COVID-19 context in a variety of settings and how others can integrate similar approaches in their work during the pandemic, and as classroom instruction resumes in a post-COVID world. **Christina presented an arts-based approach to supporting, protecting, and leading adolescent girls during Covid-19.**



**Inter-agency Network for
Education in Emergencies**





Publications

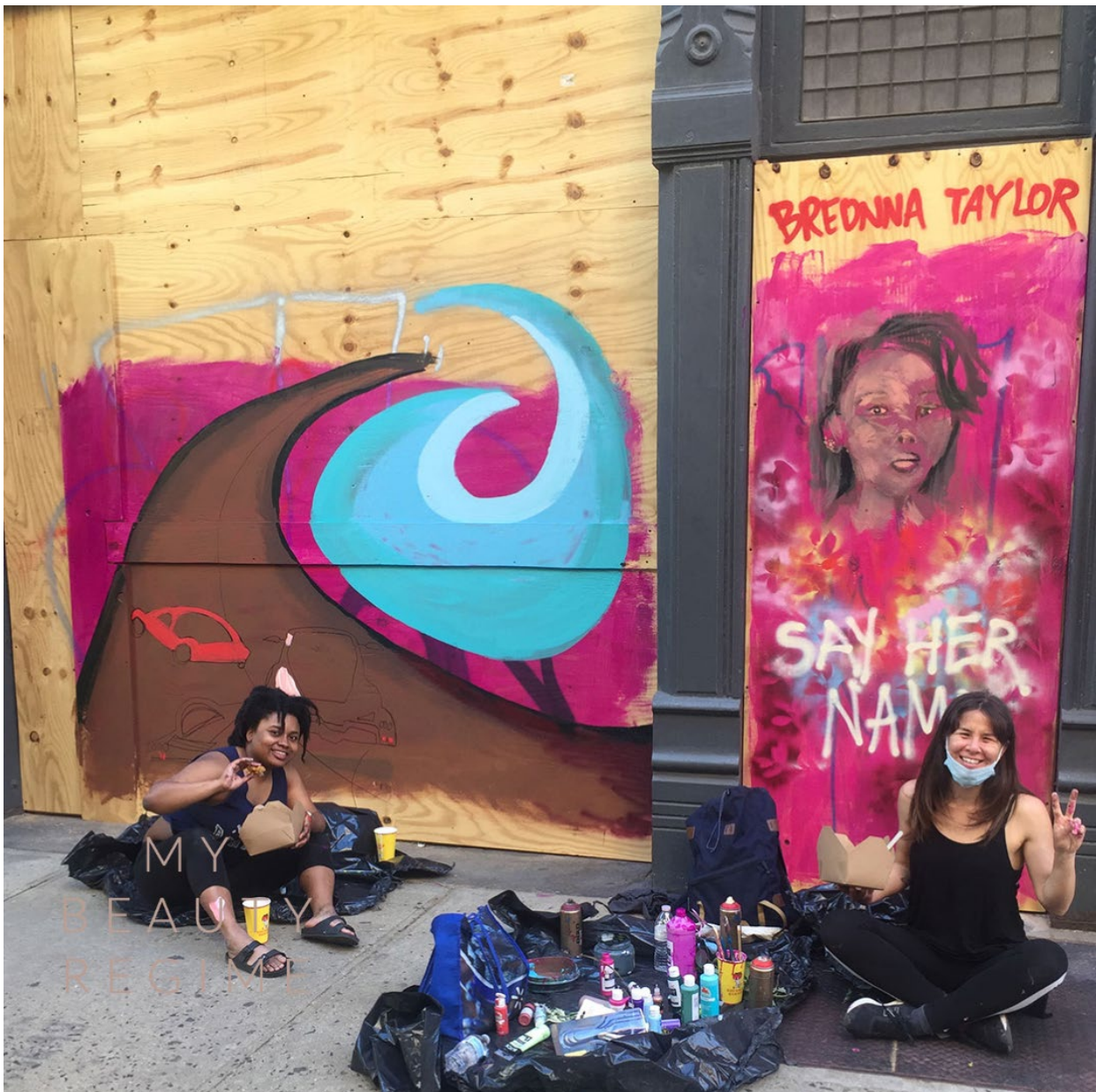
An addition to the Population Council’s work on adolescent girls: the Creative Assets and Program Content Guide: To Build Social and Emotional Learning and Promote Trauma Mitigation and Healing, edited by Executive Director Christina Mallie was published in June 2020. Available in knowledge commons at: <https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments/sbsr-pgy/1073/>. This publication brings together a wealth of knowledge and experience of collaborating partners in the field of arts and creativity in humanitarian and development settings to critically examine, adapt, and expand the Council’s Building Assets Toolkit© and complementary Asset Exercise. The collaborating members, called the Adolescent Girl and Creativity Network, led by Christina Mallie, explored the question of: What are the essential assets pertinent to the most-at-risk girls and how can they be built through creative techniques/ activities? The result of this inquiry —13 creative assets and 50 activities (program content) to build social and emotional learning, mitigate and manage trauma, and promote healing are captured in this publication.

Colors of Connection Co-Founders with CC advisor and former board member Dr. Lynn Sanders-Bustle collaboratively authored a book chapter for Transversalities: International Perspectives on Community Art Education, edited by Lin, C., Anita Sinner, A., and Irwin, R.. Entitled: Colors of Connection, Public Artmaking as an Activating Force for Community Art Education focuses on interrogating social practice as a mediating force for community based art education. The anticipated publication date is 2021.

Strategy

We developed a communications strategy to further our goals of social justice and anti-racism.

The strategy is based on participating and learnings from the online webinar series and conferences hosted by the Healing Solidarity Collective. It deepens our commitment to portray the individuals and communities we work with in a holistic way, emphasizing their individual voices and human dignity, and recognizing them as complex individuals and communities capable of self-determination and the entire range of human experiences, both positive and negative.



The pandemic coupled with mass protests made the boarded up storefronts of New York City's Soho district an open gallery space where artists shared messages of unity, justice and love. ED Christina Mallie was thrilled to be able to participate in this locally-based public art movement while we waited for travel to resume.

The strategy includes our commitment to create communications that challenge stereotypes, generalisations, victimisation, exploitation, heroism, and the centrality of whiteness. The strategy is included in our 2021-2025 strategic plan and applied to all the organization’s communications including the website, blog, social media channels, outreach to donors, and publications.



Artworks created on the boarded up storefronts of New York City’s Soho district that became an open gallery space where artists shared messages of unity, justice and love. Photo: Christina Mallie

Website

Spearheaded by a volunteer from Microsoft with expertise in product and user experience and interaction design, the website content was made more user friendly, the website aesthetics were improved to support brand identity, website design was made more accessible and responsive. This work is ongoing into 2021 to be completed by September 2021.



Volunteer spotlight: Vivian Xiao

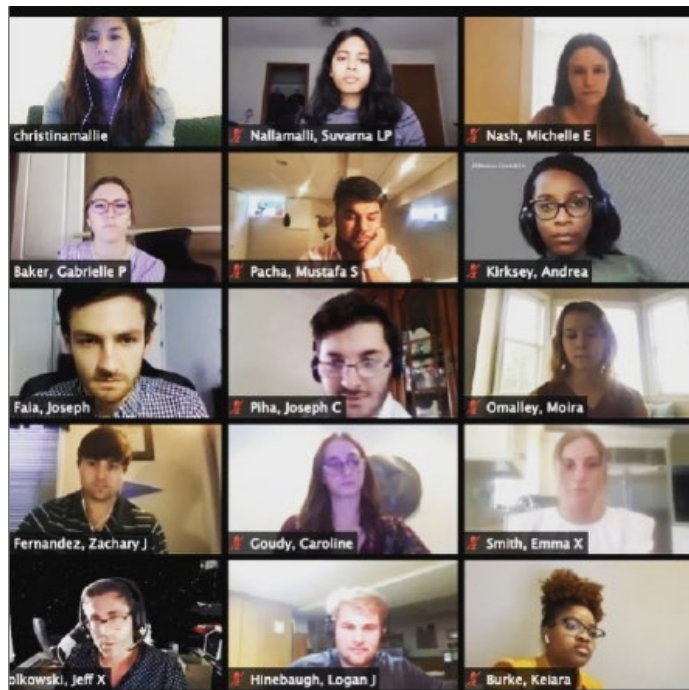
Vivian is using her background in user experience design, coding, web, and graphic design to contribute to Colors of Connection. We're really grateful to have her taking CC to the next level and enabling more people from across the world to access and engage with our site! "As an artist, I resonated with your organization's mission to uplift and empower youth and communities affected by war through creating art."

2. HUMAN RESOURCES

Staff built capacity by participating in trainings and coursework in areas of:
Grant writing and research, antiracism and social justice approaches to development and humanitarian work, adolescent girl programming, fundraising for individuals, organizational development, and strategic planning.

Establishment of Intern Program

The internship program supports Colors of Connection while training and building the skills of young, passionate professionals in the areas of grant writing and research, social media, graphic design, and fundraising and administration. The program engages with each intern cohort for 14-19 weeks in one of three sessions that run throughout the year.



Staff Christina Mallie and Laurie Reyman met weekly with interns and their supervisor in the Interns for Social Good Program over the course of the summer.

Leveraging in-kind support from JP Morgan Chase

We partnered with JPMorgan Chase and their Interns for Social Good program over the 2020 summer. JPMorgan dedicated over 60 interns to work intensively with us on our growth goals in the areas of human resources, process improvement and financial growth and expansion. These materials will be utilized in our strategic growth.

Leveraging support from interns and volunteers

Staff were supported by interns throughout 2020

Spring: We were supported by 1 intern who supported us in social media and grant writing.

Summer: We engaged three interns in social media and marketing and grant writing as a part of the Georgetown Undergraduate Virtual Internship and Experiential Work (VIEW) Initiative. Interns contributed to running Colors of Connection social media channels and conducting grant research and drafting grant proposals.

Fall: We launched our intern program in September 2020 working with a cohort of 5 interns in roles of: Media, Fundraising and Administration, Technology, Grant Writing, and Graphic Design. Interns contributed in their varied roles to the functioning of the organization including the following : drafting grant applications and LOI's, creating an advocacy video, drafting a technology security policy, and creating social media content.

We engaged volunteers in several key roles to support our operations

Volunteers contributed their expertise to: website development, website maintenance, strategic planning, documents translation from english to french, and graphic design.

3. STRATEGIC PLANNING

Our talented board and staff developed a five year strategic plan for the organization with new programming and approaches. In this vision for 2021-2025, we will be expanding upon our discrete engagement-by-project approach to create sustainable, year-round programs that will work together with adolescent girls and community leaders to promote gender equality and fight gender-based violence through engagement in the arts.

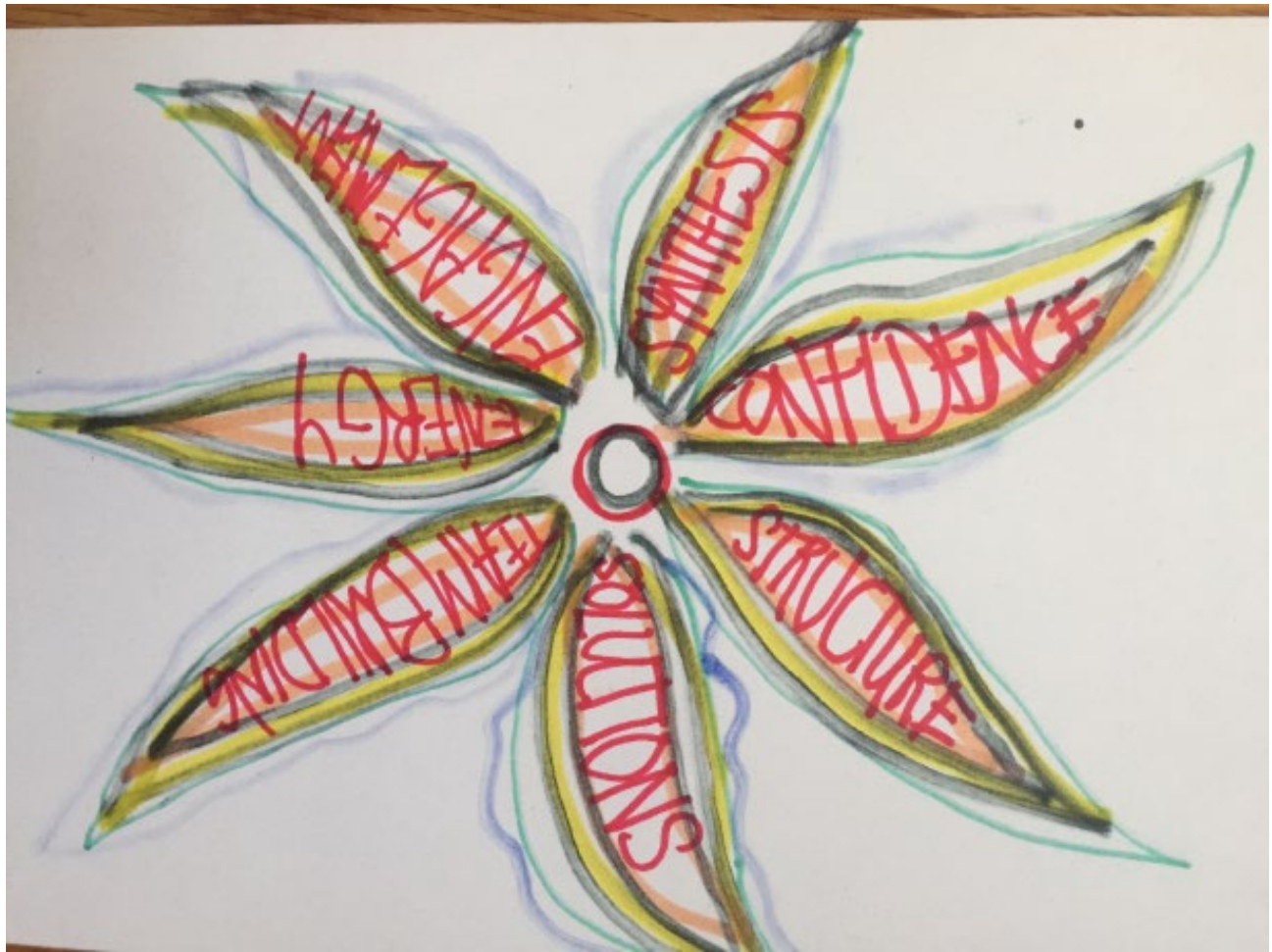
Our girl-focused programs will holistically support adolescent girls, with the new additions of scholarships for school, structured mentorship, and enhanced life-skills development. The program is comprised of the following 4 elements.

- Psychosocial and life-skills development
- Community participation
- Mentorship
- Scholarship support for school fees

Amy Rajan, an innovation and strategy consultant, designing and executing strategies for growth across various industries, led this pro-bono strategic planning including a two-day strategic workshop with staff and board.

In our vision for growth, we have identified 14 objectives

1. 70% of programming will be focused on adolescent girls.
2. Approach every aspect of our work, both externally and internally, from a perspective of social justice and anti-racism.
3. Pilot and replicate Girl Awakening, a year-round program for adolescent girls.
4. As opportunities arise explore other potential avenues for expansion of Girl Awakening Program.
5. Secure long-term implementation partnership with INGO such as Search for Common Ground, International Rescue Committee or the Danish Refugee Council.
6. Enhance monitoring and evaluation to measure both short and long term impact with qualitative and quantitative data.
7. Work towards a balanced mix of base, mid and high level donors (individual giving, grants, corporate and in-kind giving) to achieve the ideal donor relationship pyramid.
8. Evaluate and enhance financial management resources.
9. Excel at donor stewardship.
10. Improve internal efficiency of operations.
11. Create and maintain a sustainable workplace culture that values and cares for employees.
12. Strengthen our public profile.
13. Nurture a conducive environment for continuous learning.
14. Expand our engagement as contributors in the interdisciplinary practice of art as social practice.



Our workshop with board members and staff integrated activities that foster creative thinking, build relationships, and energize. The board got to experience what happens during our sessions with adolescents. Activities included story circles, breath and draw activities, scribble and draw activity, strike a pose activity, shake it out activity, portrait transformation activity, hand doodles, and an inspiration rock.” activity.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECRUITMENT



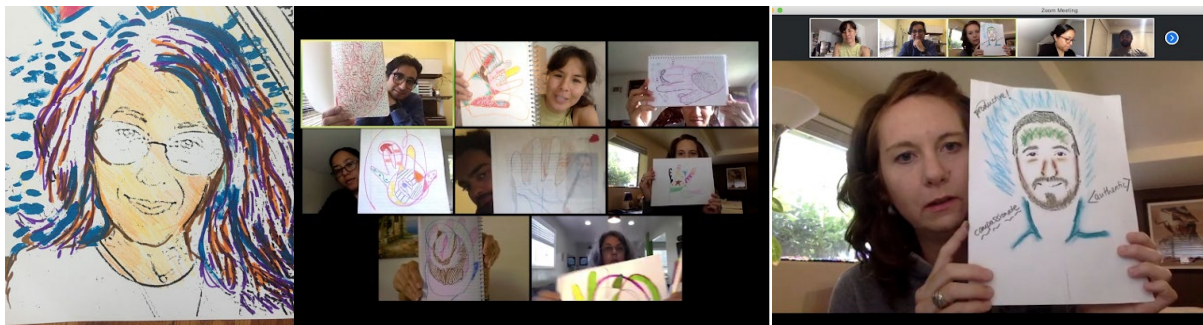
Dr. Marina Kasongo Muteho

We recruited a new board member from the Goma, DRC community - Dr Marina Kasongo Muteho. Dr. Muteho is the Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Université Libre des Pays des Grands Lacs (ULPGL) in Goma, DRC. At ULPGL she also serves as a professor of social ethics, gender ethics, environmental ethics and bioethics. Her experience includes work in the international humanitarian sector in Goma, DRC with Action Aid, and serving on numerous boards for both local and international non-governmental organizations including the Global Ethics Network. She completed her Doctorate and Masters in Theology at the South East Asia School of Theology at Silliman University in the Philippines. Dr. Muteho is passionate about supporting girls in her community and has served as a community arts council member to guide Colors of Connection's programs in Goma, since 2015. **Dr. Muteho board participation aligns with our goals in social justice and anti-racism to move decision-making and resources to the communities with whom we work.**

DEVELOPING BOARD CAPACITY

With the goal to engage and energize our board, we have utilized the following tools:

- 2-day board and staff virtual retreat to create a 5 year strategic plan.
- Personal involvement plans - Each board member completed a personal involvement plan for the year setting personal goals in the areas of governance, fundraising and contribution of personal expertise.
- Established committees within the board of directors to increase engagement and create a pipeline for leadership.



Our workshop with board members and staff integrated activities that foster creative thinking, build relationships, and energize. The board got to experience what happens during our sessions with adolescents. Activities included story circles, breath and draw activities, scribble and draw activity, strike a pose activity, shake it out activity, portrait transformation activity, hand doodles, and an inspiration rock activity.



5. NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Boda Coffee

CC formed a brand partnership with Boda Coffee. The company is committed to ethical trade and are donating 5% of their sales to support education in the regions their coffee is sourced which include the DRC, home to our current programs. This year, Boda supported all costs of school uniforms and supplies for all girls in our scholarship program for the 2020-2021 year.

Koyamada International Foundation's Kenya Chapter (KIF Kenya)

CC developed a partnership with KIF Kenya to implement the Pamoja Project in Kenya, see Program section on page 19 above.

6. FUNDRAISING

Charitable Foundations, Businesses and Individual Donors

We secured a total of \$56,667.79 from charitable foundations and individual donors for 2020, and were successful in securing funding from both old and new sources over the last 11 months. We received funding for the first time from the Adventures of the Mind Foundation. We received 43,667 in gifts from individual donors, 54 of whom were new donors, and 74 previous donors, of which 17 were recurring donors. Our average donation amount from individual donors was \$98.

Estate Planning

We established a relationship with a major donor who included us in her estate planning for the amount of \$175,000.

The Artist Circle: A Recurring Donor Program

We grew the Artist Circle, this year, from \$231 in monthly donations to \$454 by December 2021.

In-kind Support

To complement our fundraising efforts, we have endeavored to garner in-kind support in a variety of service areas. We successfully accomplished the following through our efforts:

- **Website Development:** As mentioned above on page 19, Organization our website was improved our website by a volunteer in product and user experience and interactive design.
- **Legal:** One of our board members is a lawyer regularly provided services as a volunteer to advise on legal matters of the organization.
- **Graphic Design:** As mentioned above on page 20, Organization, A volunteer graphic designer has worked with us to design our annual report. And graphic design intern supported the design of a pitch deck.
- **Grant Research:** CC's membership in the Kota Alliance has provided free access to the Foundation Center's online directory allowing us to conduct grant research.
- **Human Resources:** As mentioned on page 20, Organization, we have been able to leverage additional support through our internships and launch of our internship program as well as the JP Morgan Chase Interns for Social Good Program.
- **Strategy Support:** As mentioned on page 21, Organization, strategic support was provided through the pro bono services of a strategy consultant Amyn Rajan.
- **Finance:** As mentioned on page 20 Organization We partnered with JPMorgan Chase and their Interns for Social Good program who created models for financial growth and expansion.

Challenges in 2020



Shrinking board and limited board member engagement

Two board members resigned in 2020 needing to make commitments elsewhere in their professional and personal lives. Several other board members were less active this year and found it challenging to commit the 8-10 hours per month required. Board members also faced difficulties mobilizing their constituents to donate to the organization.

Securing larger funders

This year we increased staff time dedicated to research, outreach, and submission of applications to foundations. However, we were unable to secure larger funders necessary to diversify our funding base for stability and enable us to increase our operations and program capacity.

Pandemic: COVID-19 programming delays and shrinking foundation and individual funder-base

The past year has changed all of our lives with the spread of COVID-19. As we adapted to these unprecedented circumstances, we had to delay implementation of our program Girl Awakening in Goma DRC and sister program Pamoja, in Kenya. Staff resources originally directed to the development of this program were diverted to support our partner staff and participants in Goma through activities in health promotion and hygiene: soap and sanitizer distribution, mask sewing, and mental health support.

It was difficult to attract new donors to our cause as health, essential needs and communities close to home became a top priority for both individuals and foundations in the US. Financial strain and the shrinking economy made it especially challenging to develop new relationships with funders, which is key to our growth and future stability, as many have needed to focus on their current commitments to grantees and causes.





Lessons Learned and Strategies Going Forward

1. Key Learning: As a small nonprofit with limited resources, we need to narrow our geographic and population focus

Strategy: We have narrowed our geographic focus exclusively to the DRC, with the exception of expansion into Kenya with our partner KIF Kenya. This focus will help us to conserve our resources.

2. Key Learning: Building partnerships is necessary to broaden and diversify our funding base

Strategy: We are working to identify partners who align with our mission and through collaborative efforts can bring funding to programs and the organization.

3. Key Learning: While there are multiple fundraising strategies for nonprofits, we do not have the capacity to successfully pursue more than a select few.

Strategy: We will focus more on targeted outreach to high networth individuals and to foundation and less on individual crowdfunding and low and mid-level donors.



A canvas bag created by CC participants based on their mural work in 2019, Jennifer Mallie 2020

Thank you

We are forever grateful to everyone who has supported our work over the last year, and appreciate your efforts more than you know. Right now, we'd like to individually thank those who went above and beyond in supporting us:

Kathryn Bennett
Victoire Beaufile
Elodie-Olivia Bonazzi
Nelda Brangwin
Katherine Charles
Ray Choy
Susan Choy
Kari Chwirka
Jani Davis
Diane Evans
Paul Fong
Debra Fram
Zahreen Ghaznavi
Judith Gillespie
Nicolaus Glomb
Michael Hauenstein
Joerg Kuehnel
Alenka Krizenecky
Diana Lyon & Kevin Walters

David & Jennifer Mallie
John & Jody Mallie
Syed Mohsin
Laurie Reyman
Paul & Karen Reyman
Bruce and Carol Rodda
Carla Soracco
Gayle Embrey
Laura Hoffman
Jane McPherson
Tehreem Mohsin
Amyr Rajan
Jesse Ribot
Julie Rothschild
Arlene Shechet
Joan Snyder
Larry Spillane
Vivian Xiao
Carol Zukin



Funding and Finances

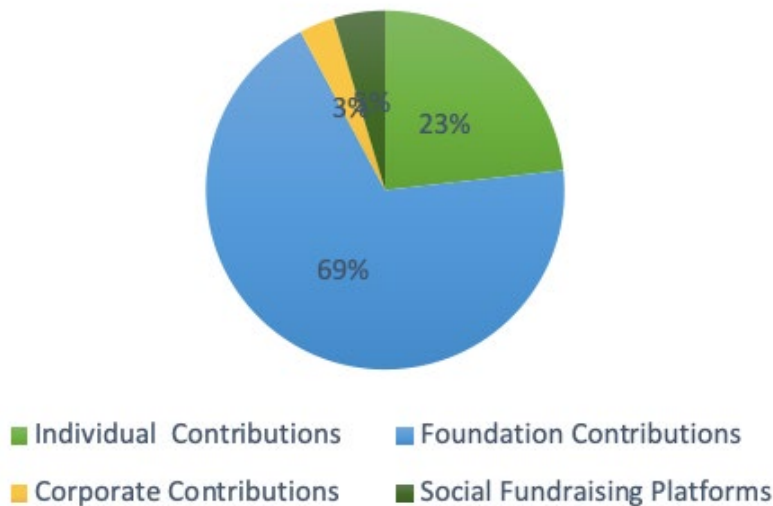


I. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The three-year capacity building grant from NoVo Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation, totaling \$60,000 for 2020, provided CC with a financial foundation which enabled us to continue to build our capacity as an organization. The funding paid for general operating expenses, including the part-time salary for the organizational development director and full-time salary for the program director, who, as a result, were able to dedicate 24 and 40 hours a week respectively to program and organizational development, as well as general administration. Through fundraising efforts, we secured additional funds from charitable foundations and individual donors to support our programs. Our biggest program expense of 2020 was the implementation of Phase 1 of the Girl Awakening Program which totaled \$18,096.

Total revenue for 2020 was \$105,888 and total expenses were \$107,112. The net revenue of \$-1,223.

Colors of Connection 2020 Funding Sources



Funding sources

Our total revenue for 2020 was \$105,888. In addition to the third year of funding totaling \$60,000 received from the NoVo Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation, we were successful in securing funding from both old and new sources during 2020, totaling an additional \$56,667. We received a first time grant of \$10,000 from the Adventures of the Mind Foundation.

We received a total of \$24,612 from individual donors, who gave in response to our monthly giving campaign, fundraising appeals sent throughout the year, and an end of the year crowdfunder, Unite with Girls for Social Justice. Gifts from individual donors can be broken down as follows:

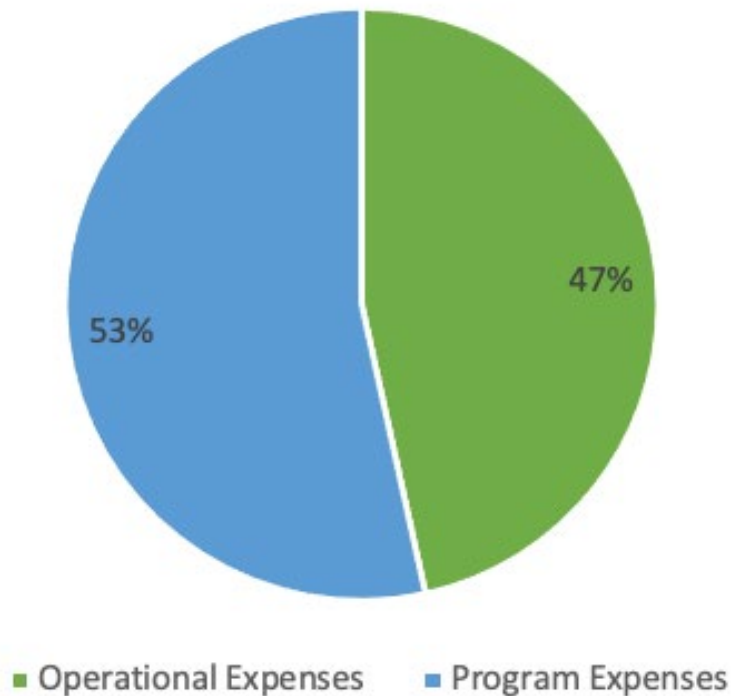
- 292 gifts from 128 individual donors
- 54 of which were new donors and
- 74 of which were previous donors
- 17 monthly donors

II. EXPENSES

Our total expenses for 2020 were \$107,112. Program expenses, a total of \$49,858, included the cost of implementing \$18,096, as well as program development costs, \$31,761. which includes the co-directors' time allocated to developing new programs and partnerships.

Operational expenses in 2020, a total of \$57,254, included general operating expenses and the co-directors' time allocated to administrative duties and fundraising efforts.

Colors of Connection 2020 Expense Breakdown



Looking forward to 2021

**We are incredibly excited for what lays ahead for us in 2021!
Here's what we'll be focusing on:**

Implementing Girl Awakening in Goma, DR Congo, in partnership with les Étoiles Messagères. We are engaging in curriculum development to train our local partner and staff, as well as mobilizing resources, and conducting development and outreach. In August and September we will conduct an intensive training for 6 staff and 10 mentors and launch the program in September reaching 80 marginalized girls ages 10-12, 40 community leaders and 30k community members.

Initiating Pre-launch activities for the Pamoja Project with KIF Kenya: Pre-launch activities will include: discussion and consultations with key stakeholders, conducting community survey the Girl Roster, conducting community mapping of risks and resources, establishing a community arts council, locating space for program, recruitment of staff, mentors and participants, conducting collaborative curriculum building workshops with staff and local partner, and conducting a baseline evaluation for key indicators.

Securing increased operational and program funding: focusing on building relationships with individual donors, charitable foundations and brand partners to diversify and broaden our funding.

Supercharging our board of directors to become passionate and effective ambassadors for CC through ongoing engagement, and increase the board's productivity.

Building partnerships with like-minded organizations to further our mission and grow our impact.

Leadership and Board

Executive Director & Co-Founder Christina Mallie

Christina is an artist and humanitarian. Her core interests lie in supporting underrepresented groups, and the arts as a source of healing, inspiration and strength. She was awarded her Bachelor of Fine Arts from Hunter College and her Master of Science in International Affairs from the New School with a focus on conflict and security. In her work with Colors of Connection she has served as a program director from 2011 - 2020 and transitioned to her current role as executive director at the beginning of 2021. Some of the innovative work she has done with Colors of Connection is developing and implementing artistic content that has therapeutic value, conducting arts trainings, and working with adolescent girls from an arts-based approach.



Board of Directors

Laurie Reyman - Co-Founder of Colors of Connection

Laura Hoffman - Expressive Arts Therapist

Tehreem Mohsin - Risk Control Vice President at JP Morgan Chase

Marina Muteho Kasongo - Dean of Faculty of Theology at Univeristé Libre de Pays Des Grands Lacs

Georgina Loveland - Human Resources Professional

Christina Mallie - Co-Founder of Colors of Connection

Board of Advisors

Dominique Koffy Kouacou - Humanitarian Program Manager

Gayle Embrey - Filmmaker and Licensed Professional Counselor

Kathy Eldon - Founder & Chairman, Creative Visions Foundation

Joan Snyder - Artist & MacArthur Fellow 2007

Awet Andemichael - Musician, Writer, Consultant and Educator

John Hummel - Deschutes County District Attorney

Lynn Sanders-Bustle - Associate Professor & Art Education Chair, Lamar Dodd School of Art University of Georgia

Bonnie Hirschhorn - Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Art Therapist, Expressive Psychoanalyst,

Sophie Soares - Project Manager & Staff Associate at Population Council



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Colors of Connection is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit
Organization. EIN 46-4114716