

2019

ANNUAL REPORT



Awakening Capabilities Through Creative Expression

COLORS OF CONNECTION

Participant Odette, measuring to guide the drawing process for the mural of the Female Construction Worker, Tunaweza Portraits Project, Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2019.

Photo: Bernadette Vivuya

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Dear Friends,



2019 was a dynamic year for Colors of Connection! We were successful in furthering our mission to provide opportunities for conflict-affected youth and their communities, so that they can benefit from the incredible power of creativity. We are thrilled to share our progress with you in this annual report.

2019 began on a high note as we implemented the Tunaweza Portraits Project from January through April with young women and their community leaders in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was remarkable to see young women creating powerful art in a public space as a commentary on gender issues. Throughout this process they they built relationships with each other, and engaged as leaders and skilled agents of change with community-stakeholders and the general public, embodying the change they are fighting for.

Through this project, we were proud to see how our work supported those most affected by gender inequality, and empowered them to take a stand for their rights. We witnessed over the course of the project how, as girls and women stepped into leadership roles and engaged in civil society, people's perceptions and gender biases shifted for the better, including those of the girls themselves.

Our evaluation report on this project, available on our website, attests to these significant achievements. The impact of Tunaweza Portraits is also highlighted throughout this report with quotes and photos from the young women and staff from the project.

To have impactful programming there must be a strong organizational foundation. As a young organization, 2019 was equally about strengthening our foundation to be able to continue to grow our impact. To this end, this report outlines our advancements in organizational development including strategy, program development and fundraising, and most exciting, our achievement of a significantly larger, more diverse, and engaged board of directors.

The profiles of our board of directors are interspersed throughout this report, and we hope you'll take a minute to get to know the leaders of Colors of Connection. We look forward to seeing the advancements we'll be able to make with so many hands on deck for 2020 and beyond.

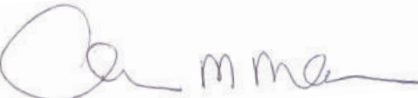
Because growth requires trial and error, and periods of assessment and learning, this report also notes challenges that we encountered in 2019, and outlines how we will address them as we move forward. Challenges included securing partnerships, building relationships with funders, and the balancing act of limited resources and time to accomplish our multiple goals.

Based on our growth and learning in 2019, we entered 2020 with a strategic focus on building on the foundations of our work with teenage girls in eastern Congo to create a long-term sustainable impact, and focusing our programs in a way that will allow us to make the best use of our resources. We are looking forward to seeing how this new strategic focus helps us accomplish our mission to reach more conflict-affected youth and their communities through art in 2020.

As Co-Founders, we know that our work is only possible with the support of our volunteers, supporters and donors, and we are incredibly grateful to you all. In particular, our thanks goes out to the NoVo Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation, without whom, our operations in 2019 would not have been possible. We are very thankful for their belief in the mission of Colors of Connection.

Thank you for being on our team, and we are looking forward to this next year of serving conflict-affected youth and communities through the arts!

With gratitude,



Laurie Reyman and Christina Mallie

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THE ORGANIZATION



“These murals and messages, they help make sure that girls are listened to when they don’t have sufficient voice within society. They make people think twice about what they think they know about girls and what they are capable of doing.”

***Community Stakeholder
Tunaweza Portraits Project***

Participants Grace, Alice and Winnie working together on the Female Artist Mural Tunaweza Portraits Project, Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2019.

Photo: Christina Mallie



WHO WE ARE

Colors of Connection (CC) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to utilize community-based art to nurture hope, cultivate well-being, and promote agency with conflict-affected youth and societies worldwide.

Working with adolescents and their communities through the medium of art, we invest in building knowledge, skill sets and resources that strengthen their 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 envision a peaceful world in which everyone's capabilities are awakened through creative engagement and put into action to benefit themselves, their communities, and others.

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.



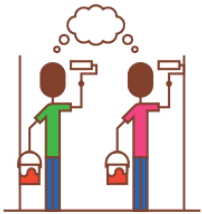
Photo: Christina Mallie

Participants work together to create the Education Mural, Little Wlebo Refugee Camp, Southeastern Liberia, August 2012.



Photo: Christina Mallie

WHAT WE DO



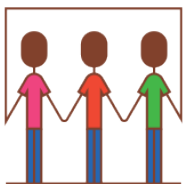
Provide tools to create solution-oriented art:

Using the medium of community-based public art, we create a platform for adolescents and community leaders to represent issues and values that are important to them. We focus on imagery that is based on 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.



Facilitate opportunities for healing, relationship-building, and knowledge-building:

We create safe relational spaces which promote emotional expression and creativity. Within these spaces we provide arts-based programming that focuses on social and emotional learning, is therapeutic, and that builds capacity for critical reflection.



Build community:

Our participatory approach engages with a range of societal actors, including power brokers, change makers, and conflicting and/or diverse segments of society, in a series of discussions which allow them to communicate and connect around shared values, responsibilities, and interests. We strive for the equal inclusion of actors from all sectors of society in our programs, including 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 work we challenge harmful power dynamics and build a more just community.



Build partnerships:

We work with international and local partners to build local capacity and increase sustainability of our work through local ownership.

(TOP) Drawings by participants of project “Energizing a Goudoubo Refugee Community Through Art” during a group mural composition brainstorm, Goudoubo Refugee Camp, Dori, Burkina Faso, 2014.

CC CO-FOUNDERS



CHRISTINA MALLIE

Christina is an artist and humanitarian dedicated to elevating the voices of conflict-affected youth through art. As a co-founder of the non-profit organization Colors of Connection she has led the creation and implementation of eight programs for marginalized youth in Liberia, Burkina Faso and the Democratic Republic of the Congo that innovatively work on community-identified issues through the medium of public art. Among her interests in creativity are its connections to self-determination, liberation, and healing.

Christina 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 addition to her work with Colors of Connection, she has consulted for the Population Council, Asymmetrica, and the Women's Building. Her work focused on creativity in the humanitarian field has been shared through presentations with the New School for Social Research, the Population Council, Philanthropy New York, the International Society of Education Through Art, and through written contributions to the following publications: *Outside the Margins: the Blue Book on the Global Refugee Crisis*, the Mental Health Innovation Network, *The New Context*, and *Beyond the Walls*, the book and documentary film.



LAURIE REYMAN

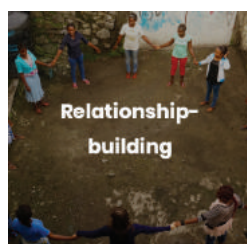
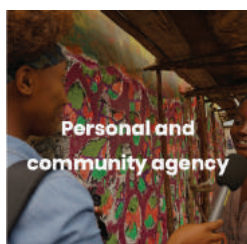
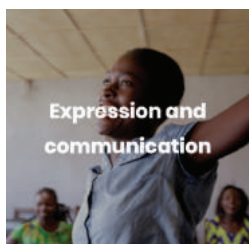
Laurie Reyman, LSWAIC, is an internationally focused social worker, working with conflict-affected populations, and the related issues of trauma, displacement, transition, and grief. She is dedicated to social justice and unpacking the related experiences of oppression and privilege.

Laurie spent her childhood in Zimbabwe which formed her identity as a third culture kid, imbued in her a deep love of the African continent and its people, and ignited a passion for humanitarian work. She received a BA in International Studies with a focus on Africa in 2006 and was awarded her Masters in Social Work from the University of Georgia in May 2009, where her focus was on community practice and non-profit management. Upon graduating she went to Liberia with the Carter Center where she worked as a Project Officer for their Access to Justice Programs and managed the southeastern sub-office in Harper. While in Harper she co-founded Colors of Connection with Christina and began implementation of their pilot project in 2011.

Since 2017 Laurie's work with Colors of Connection has involved developing essential foundations for the organization, taking steps in strategic development that are helping CC develop from a start-up/incubation stage into a full-fledged organization that is better positioned to provide empowering programming and sustain the organization's work. She is currently exploring opportunities for programming for refugee and immigrant youth in Seattle, WA, where she has lived since 2018 with her family. She is also enrolled in the 2019-20 expressive arts therapy training program with Northwest Creative and Expressive Arts Institute, and is working towards her independent clinical social work license.

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:



HOW WE ACHIEVE OUR IMPACT



Collaborate with local communities

Colors of Connection has developed a strong project model that integrates community-formulated approaches to programming. All projects are guided by local leaders in the communities who form a community arts council and are regularly consulted for input. Our model invites a participatory approach enabling the curriculum and program design to be meaningful and contextually appropriate to the communities with which we work.



Provide psychosocial arts-based programming

Our programs train groups of thirty to forty vulnerable young people over a defined period of time in a psychosocial arts-based program. The youth learn new skills in painting and drawing, participate in activities designed to encourage reflection and emotional expression, build knowledge around important issues in the community, and engage in relationship-building activities.




Create public murals

The projects culminate in the creation of murals in public spaces in the community by the youth participants. The murals are collaboratively designed with local leaders and project participants to address concerns around a specific issue raised by community leaders, using positive imagery which portrays community-based solutions.

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ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2019

In the following section we outline our accomplishments in the areas of program implementation and development, our growth as an organization, and finally the successes we've had in the area of fundraising.



“When I’m with the others, I feel proud. I feel I am stronger.”

Anita

Participant Anita on site painting the Female Construction Worker Mural, Tunaweza Portraits Project, Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2019.

Photo: Bernadette Vivuya

PROGRAM

In 2019 we successfully implemented a project in Goma, DRC with adolescent girls and their community, progressed partnership development for future programming in eastern Congo and Central African Republic to advanced stages with both local and international partners, and explored additional programming opportunities in Nigeria, and Seattle, WA, USA.

In addition, we strategically narrowed our programmatic focus to adolescent girls and the Democratic Republic of Congo for greater impact, received Technical Programmatic Support, and published our “How to Make Mural Toolkit”


COMPLETED PROGRAM

TUNAWEZA PORTRAITS PROJECT

Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo.

We are thrilled to report that the Tunaweza Portraits Project was a big success. Implemented from January - April 2019, we were able to meet our outlined goal to improve perceptions of girls and women, particularly in relation to their role in society across four communities in Goma. Over the course of three months, the 26 young women participants developed leadership skills, learned new art techniques such as printmaking, and participated in psychosocial arts-based activities. With the guidance of community leaders, the young women designed and painted four murals and created and installed 28 posters in four different neighborhoods in Goma, DRC, reaching an estimated 130,000 residents. The project on the whole was widely appreciated by both the participants themselves, as well as the various community stakeholders, for the art-inspired innovations and new perspectives it brought to the existing programming around SGBV issues in eastern DRC. For a full program report, documentary and photos, please see our website:

<https://colorsofconnection.org/tunaweza-portraits/>



Participants painting the Female Artist Mural during the Tunaweza Portraits Project, Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2019.

Photo: Bernadette Vivuya

CURRENT PROGRAM

SHUJAA: A SUSTAINABLE PROGRAM EMPOWERING GIRLS AND THEIR COMMUNITIES THROUGH ART

Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo

In 2019 we took the first steps to begin developing this program in collaboration with our local partner **M'shujarts!: A Girls Arts Collective (GAC)**.

Partner:

M'shujarts!: A Girls Arts Collective (GAC). GAC provides young women and girls the opportunity to express themselves, support each other, and foster and enrich their role in the community through art activities. GAC formed in 2016 as an outcome of our previous two projects, Courage in Congo and Tunaweza Portraits Project. The program will be developed with technical support from our partner the Population Council, drawing from their practical framework and scalable model to empower adolescent girls in locally-driven programming.



Photo: Feza Balanga

Program Summary:

The Shujaa program is located in, in Goma, the capital of the North Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of Congo.

This region has been affected by war for decades, leaving lasting reverberations across a society with historically rooted gender inequalities. The sustained conflict has aggravated traditional socio-cultural norms and beliefs around gender roles and normalized and exacerbated sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in everyday life.

(TOP RIGHT) Members of M'shujarts house painting for income generation, Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, November 2019.

As a result, girls are some of the most excluded from societal benefits and protections and an overwhelming majority of girls have experienced SGBV. But we know that girls are not just

defined by their vulnerabilities. They are knowledgeable of and able to create solutions to the challenges they face if provided the opportunity. Investing in them is a key to unlocking their potential and supporting the broader development of their communities.

We are providing support and training for the leaders of GAC in Goma so that they can create a safe, expressive and empowered space for adolescent girls to develop core life and art skill sets, and amplify their voices through public murals and posters.

In this program adolescent girls in Goma will have the opportunity to effect positive change for themselves and their community in the pursuit of equality and freedom from violence.

Over a three year period this program will:

- Provide training and technical support for GAC toward becoming an independent and sustainable female-led organization serving the girls of their community.
- Provide opportunities for 120 marginalized out-of-school adolescent girls to build psychosocial and life skills through arts-based activities. Girls will gain skill sets and capabilities that help them to participate in their communities, local economies, support their families, and in turn contribute to the larger country goals of development and peace.
- Foster and enrich community participation through the creation of public murals and posters.
- Train 30 young women mentors and pair them with girls to provide role models, and build trusted and supportive relationships with adolescent girls.
- Engage 40 community leaders through community arts council that will guide the program.
- Reach 30,000 community members through public engagement.

(TOP RIGHT) Florence a member of M'shujarts, painting a mural at a handicapped center in Goma, DRC.



Photo: Ffeza Balanga

Potential to scale:

The program is currently underway with the first phase of collaborative program design and recruitment of staff and mentors scheduled for September 2020 and launch of the first Art and Lifeskills Program for Group I scheduled for January 2021. The full program will roll out over the course of 3 years, bringing in more girls each year.

It is our long-term intention to scale up our program and replicate it over time in similar settings in Goma, eastern Congo, and other countries.

DEVELOPING PROGRAMS

In 2019 CC spent time exploring programming and partnerships in the following areas:

1. Eastern Congo with partners Search for Common Ground and the Panzi Foundation
2. Central African Republic with partner Search for Common Ground
3. Nigeria with partners Women's Rights Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA), and Jos Stakeholders Center for Peace (JSCP)
4. Seattle, WA, USA with multiple schools and agencies serving refugee and immigrant populations

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



GEORGINA LOVELAND

Human Resources Professional

Georgina Loveland is a seasoned human resources leader with an extensive background in building high-impact training and development programs for banking and technology organizations looking to up their game in customer service, sales, sales management, and leadership development. She excels in proactively identifying and responding to the needs of diverse employee populations, instilling learning cultures focused

on development and business impact, and partnering with business clients to clearly understand their needs.

Originally hailing from Kenya, Africa, she provides a unique global perspective with earlier years focused on developing training and development programs while at Ecobank Group, Goodman Agencies LTD, and Barclays Bank of Kenya LTD. While at Barclays, she was instrumental in driving dramatic changes across customer-facing front-office operations countrywide as a result of her leadership in building training and training tools that transformed a regional teller team from mediocrity to world-class standards.

Fast forward to more recent years, she was highly successful in poising client companies for success in winning the Annual Company of the Year Awards (COYA) for three consecutive years as a Human Resources Consultant where she directly helped companies win by working hand-in-hand in the design and deployment of innovative talent strategies that encouraged changes in workforce leadership behaviors and culture.

Georgina holds a MSc. degree in Global Human Resource Management from the University of Liverpool in the United Kingdom, and diplomas in Human Resources Management, Banking, and French. She currently resides in Washington.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



ANIRUDH KULKARNI

Software Engineer at Microsoft

Anirudh graduated from Carleton University (Canada) with Bachelor's of Engineering – Biomedical and Electrical Engineering. He is currently working in Seattle at Microsoft as a Software Engineer. He has always been passionate about helping people and giving back to the community, and has been part of nonprofit organizations since high school. He is very excited to be part of Colors of Connections as it has a very unique and

impactful mission.

In his spare time he likes to wind down by watching shows, movies and learning about new technologies. He loves traveling, meeting new people and trying new cuisines. He is always open to meeting new people, so if you want to chat please do not be shy! You are welcome to contact him at any time.

PROFILE HIGHLIGHT

STRATEGIC PROGRAMMATIC FOCUS



In 2019, we narrowed our focus of work by population and geographic location to serve youth and communities in a more targeted way. This will result in more efficient use of time and resources, helping our programs to be more sustainable. Moving forward we will primarily focus on the following populations and geographic location:

ADOLESCENT GIRLS

Beginning in 2020, we will be working towards the goal of 70% of our programming serving adolescent girls. At the core of our mission is to work with those who are most marginalized, and we know that by focusing our efforts on adolescent girls, we will reach a group that is consistently the most marginalized in society.

In almost every aspect of daily life, the simple fact of being a girl means facing greater risks and having less opportunities. Research shows that girls and women have less access than boys and men to resources and services in the community, including education and health. Girls face isolation as they enter puberty, with less social support networks than boys and men. They are forced to undergo traditional practices that violate basic human rights, including child marriage and female circumcision. Girls are more likely than boys and men to experience exploitation and abuse, including sexual violence.

Our programs help girls become more resilient and confident, and provide knowledge and skills that they need in order to protect themselves, and increase their opportunities. Through collaborative public art, they find greater roles of leadership and visibility in their communities, and can build relationships with other girls and women that provide a sense of solidarity. This support is vital in empowering them to become agents of change in their communities.

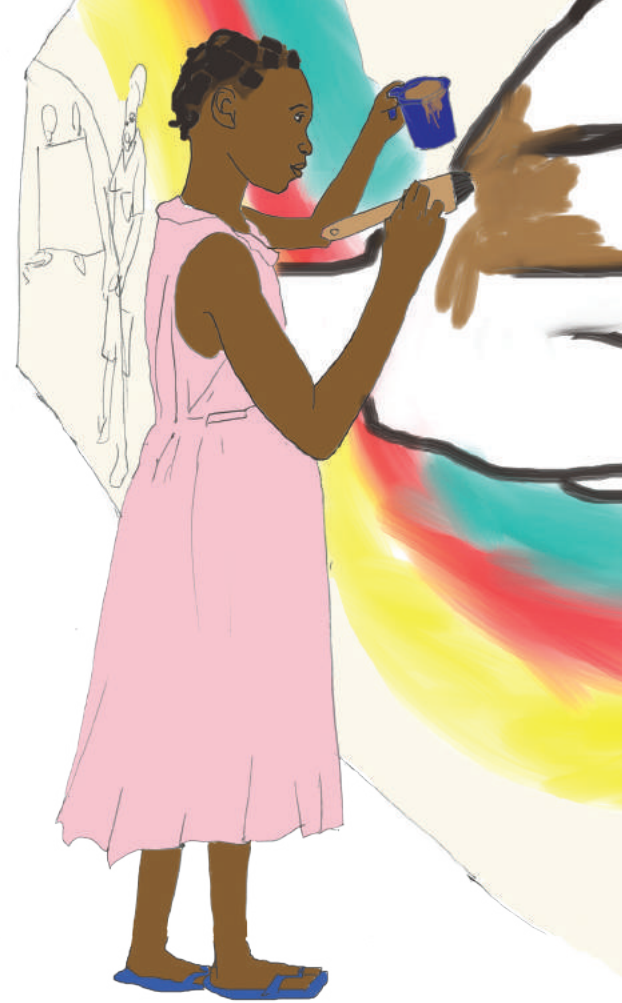
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The DRC is a place known for its high rates of sexual violence against girls and women, and there are a lot of international resources devoted to addressing the issue. Despite this, women and girls are too often victimized, and their critical role in addressing their own issues is not adequately recognized.

Our unique approach has deep impacts on the girl participants and community leaders, providing the space and time for them to delve into the issues that are important to them in a personal way, and enabling them to have a transformative role in creating local solutions.

Based on our experience and assessment that there is a need for adolescent-girl focused programming in the region, we will focus our international programming in eastern Congo.

Artwork: Christina Mallie



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



LAURA HOFFMAN

Expressive Arts Therapist, Dancer, Teacher, Producer

Laura is an expressive arts therapist, dancer, teacher, producer and entrepreneur. She's the co-owner of multiple businesses located in Athens, GA related to movement arts, expressive arts therapy, and design. She was a member of the Athens Cultural Affairs Commission from 2014-2020, where she helped produce the city's 10 year Public Art Master Plan, and multiple art installations and performance. She has worked in nonprofit arts organizations since college, including Robert Wilson's Byrd Hoffman Foundation and Dance Theater Workshop in New York, and also worked as a Development Officer for the University of Florida. Laura's personal art is choreography, dance, and fiction/poetry, and in the past included short films and documentary. She has also worked on commercial film and video projects as a producer in New York and Los Angeles. She has a Bachelor's degree with a double major in Cultural History and Dance, was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship in 1982, and is certified in the Alexander Technique. She has a Master's degree in Applied Psychology/Dance Movement Therapy, and a second Master's degree in Landscape Architecture. She currently lives outside Los Angeles, CA.

TECHNICAL PROGRAMMATIC SUPPORT

We secured technical support from the Population Council in the area of program development for adolescent girls in the areas of: scaling, recruitment, mentoring structures, and strengthening local staff.

PUBLISHED TOOLKIT

We published our “How to Make a Community-Mural” toolkit, now available on our website.

<https://colorsofconnection.org/creating-a-community-mural-toolkit/>

CREATING A COMMUNITY MURAL

A powerful toolkit about mural making that can be used to transform public spaces, communities, and youth.



Sparking transformation through art with youth and communities affected by war

ORGANIZATION

2019 resulted in successful growth in several key areas for the organization: communications, human resources, strategic development, and organizational governance.

COMMUNICATIONS

WEBSITE

We launched a new website that more effectively conveys our organization's cause and impact. Our new website launched in July 2019, after working on it for a year together with different professionals and volunteers. It has an updated and cleaner design, which is an important step for us to be able to better share our impact and gain momentum and support for our work going forward.

The majority of the website development was done in partnership with a team of technologists from JPMorgan Chase through the company's Force for Good program, which provides free tech services to nonprofits. We worked closely with the team of IO young and motivated JPMorgan Chase employees, who developed a beautiful and functional website, with the added bonus that it will be easy for us to maintain without a big budget.

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Some new features of the website include:

- A murals page that tells the stories of each mural we've created.
- New content that conveys the impact of our work on the local youth artists and communities that we work with.
- Stories and content from our latest program, Tunaweza Portraits.
- Information about our upcoming programs.
- Our newly released Creating a Community Mural Toolkit, that provides a step-by-step outline to mural making in collaboration with a community based on our methodology and experience.

OUTREACH/PUBLIC RELATIONS

We presented work at the conference InSEA: International Society of Education Through Art on the topic of the indigenization of art education. In line with the theme of the conference, “Making,” and the sub-theme, “Indigenization of Art Education,” our presentation considered the indigenization of art education in the context of Colors of Connection, which we describe as a kind of socially engaged art that is transpedagogical in nature. Presenters were: Dr. Lynn Sanders-Bustle who was a member of CC’s Board of Directors, and an associate professor of art education at the University of Georgia, and Co-Founders Laurie Reyman and Christina Mallie.



Following the presentation a book chapter is being developed by Lynn Sanders Bustle in collaboration with CC Co-founders to be included in the book *Transversalities: International Perspectives on Community Art Education*, edited by Lin, C., Anita Sinner, A., and Irwin, R. The chapter focuses on interrogating social practice as a mediating force for community based art education. The anticipated publication date is 2021.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



KATE CHARLES

Kate has over 15 years experience in strategic marketing with some of the world’s most successful brands including American Express, Sony, Toyota and Lincoln Center. Motivated by “what’s next”, Kate’s passion is identifying ways that organizations can shape their strategy to meet the growing consumer demand for value exchange and brand purpose. She’s also passionate about helping non-profits better connect with younger donors through understanding digital behaviors, consumer motivations and generational barriers such as “slacktivism”.

Kate developed her deep expertise in consumer, media and brand understanding during seven years at 360i in New York leading the agency’s insights and planning group. Prior to 360i, she spent eight years at Hall & Partners, working in the London and New York offices. Originally from Minnesota, she now calls New York City home, with seats at the dinner table for her son, daughter, husband and two dogs.

PROFILE HIGHLIGHT

(TOP RIGHT) Colors of Connection Board Member Lynn Sanders-Bustle and Organization Development Director and Co-Founder Laurie Reyman at the International Society for Education through Art (InSEA) World Congress in Vancouver, BC earlier this month where they presented on the topic of indigenization of art education, July 2019.



Photo: Christina Mallie

HUMAN RESOURCES

In September 2019, we joined the Nonprofit Leadership Lab. Led by nonprofit consultant Joan Garry, the Nonprofit Leadership Lab is an online education and community for leaders – board and staff – of smaller nonprofits. The Lab provides resources and a community to support our learning and growth as co-founders, staff and board members. Staff utilized this lab as a resource for fundraising, marketing strategic planning, board development and communications.

Staff have also built their knowledge and capacity through coursework in the following areas: child protection, expressive art therapy and accounting.

We have been able to leverage additional support through providing two internships this year. Through the Academic Internship Council, we hired an intern with a background in international relations to work with us in our New York office over a two-month period during the summer. Her contribution of 40 hours a week during this period was invaluable and enabled both directors to accomplish more.

The intern's key responsibilities included assistance with grant research, outreach to companies for in-kind donations, creation and posting of content for our social media channels, and maintenance of our CRM system.

From October to December we had an intern working with us remotely 16 hours per week. Her key responsibilities of funder research, grant proposal writing, and case statement creation were invaluable to our fundraising efforts.

(ABOVE) Program Director Christina Mallie and fall intern Jordan Lee at United States Institute of Peace for PeaceCon2019 Seizing the Moment for Peace in a Disputed World, Washington D.C. October 2019.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



JANE MCPHERSON, *PhD, MPH, LCSW*

Jane is Director of Global Engagement and Assistant Professor at the University of Georgia School of Social Work (USA). Her scholarship sees social work through a human rights lens, and she applies human rights principles to research, teaching, and practice. In the US, her work focuses on asylum seekers, immigrants, and those fleeing violence; and globally, she creates tools to investigate and promote rights-based social work practice. She has examined rights-based practices in Brazil, and measured the impact of human rights education in the social work classroom. As an arts-activist, Dr. McPherson was a co-organizer of One Million Bones, a national anti-genocide project that ultimately laid 1,000,000 handmade bones on the National Mall in 2013. Dr. McPherson is clinical social worker with over 20 years experience in the field. Motherhood, trauma, torture, and the special treatment needs of women have been her areas of clinical specialization.

PROFILE HIGHLIGHT



STRATEGY SUPPORT

We received an in-kind grant for a week-long working residency in a house on Martha's Vineyard from the Turkey Land Cove Foundation. This in-kind support enabled the two co-founders to be in the same place for a week in a comfortable and catered environment that allowed them to focus solely on their strategy work for the organization. They completed an assessment of progress made on the strategic aims and goals laid out in the organization's 3-year strategic plan and created a work plan based on this assessment.

Plans have been secured for a strategic planning process for 2020, to meet our needs for a strategic plan going into 2021 and beyond. This will be led by a consultant providing pro-bono services. The consultant will lead the strategic planning process with a working group of staff and board members of the organization to put into place a new strategic plan for 2021-25.

(LEFT) Co-Founders Laurie Reyman and Christina Mallie on retreat granted by the Turkey Land Cove Foundation, Edgar Town, MA, June 2019

Photo: Christina Mallie

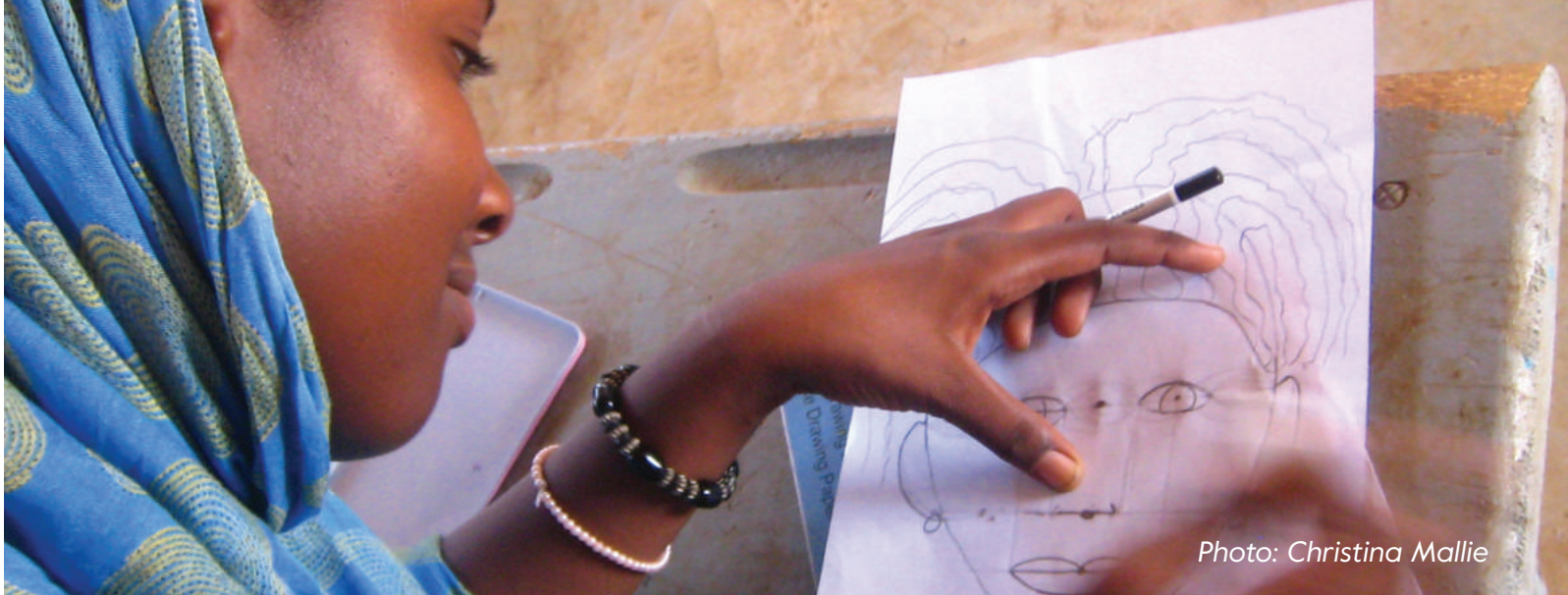


Photo: Christina Mallie

ORGANIZATIONAL GOVERNANCE

2019 resulted in recruitment of five new board members bringing our total to eight. As a young organization, this is a significant milestone as an active and robust board is key to the growth of the organization.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECRUITMENT

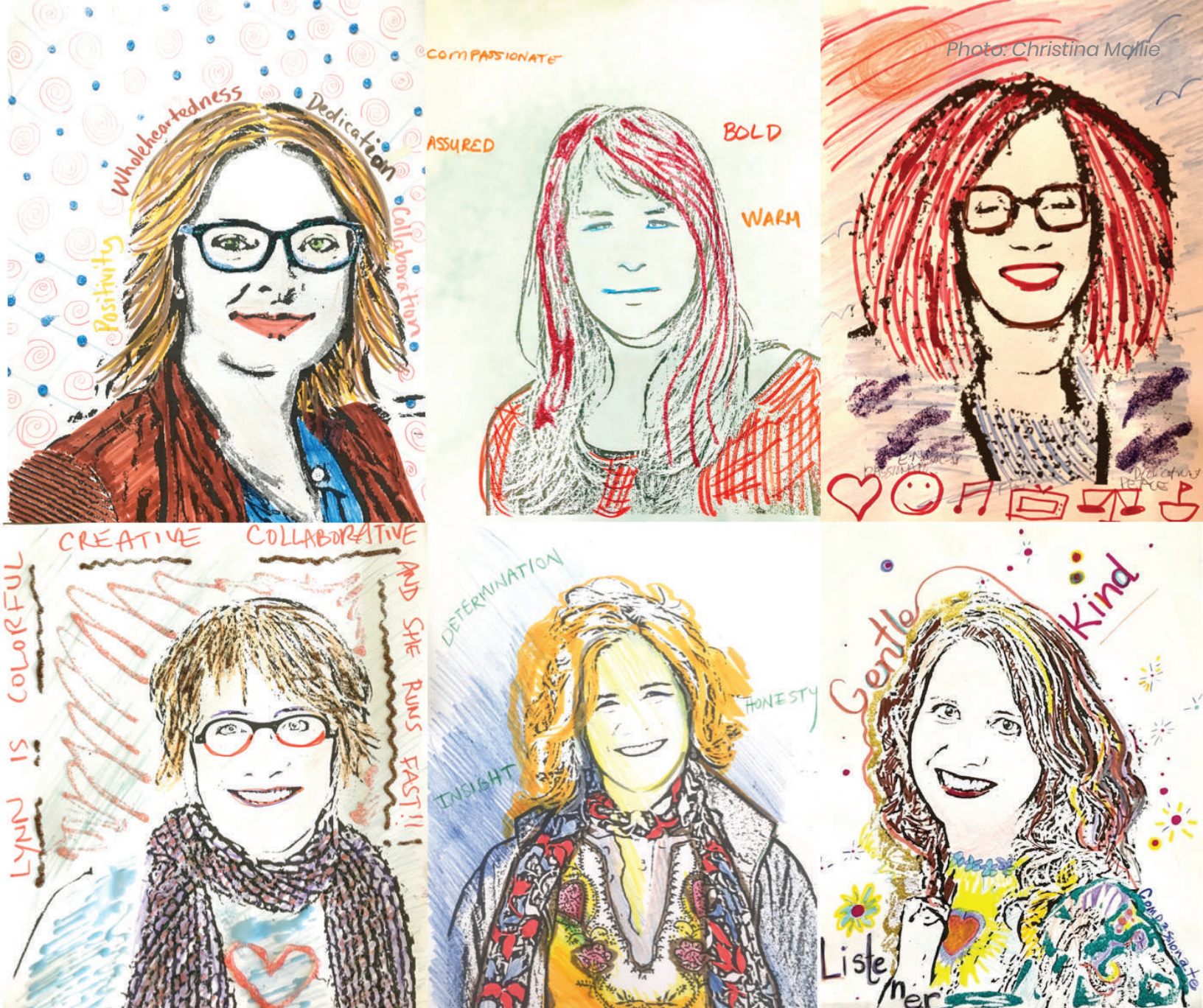
Last year we participated in two board member recruitment events - Board Match in New York City and Board Networking Happy Hour hosted by the Gates Foundation in Seattle. In addition, we reached out through our community networks for new members.

By the end of the year we successfully recruited these five new members:

- **Anirudh Kulkarni:** brings technical knowledge as a software engineer at Microsoft. Kulkarni will be able to advise and assist us with all technology related aspects of our work. He is also enthusiastic about engaging his network to recruit volunteers and for fundraising, and is leveraging his position at Microsoft to take advantage of their corporate giving programs.
- **Zahreen Ghaznavi:** a lawyer who brings expertise in legal issues affecting nonprofits, as well as nonprofit fundraising and is available to be actively engaged in fundraising strategies and processes.
- **Georgina Loveland:** a Kenyan who has experience in human resources, business administration, and non-profit work, and has worked in the conflict-affected countries of Kenya, South Sudan and Rwanda.
- **Laura Hoffman:** brings experience in community art engagement, marketing and fundraising, and capacity to mobilize a social network.
- **Tehreem Mohsin:** Risk control Vice president at the investment bank JP Morgan Chase brings expertise to CC's operations in risk management at an operational and program levels.

These valuable recruitments bring diverse expertise and perspectives to guide CC into the future.

(TOP): Participant Soumaiyata learning how to create a portrait during Colors of Connections Project in Goudoudo Refugee Camp, Burkina Faso, 2014.



Portraits of Colors of Connection’s board, created at the annual board retreat, September 2019.

DEVELOPING BOARD CAPACITY

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

- Half day board retreat in August of 2019 to give the board a chance to connect, get to know each other better, and spend time on organizational development.
- 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.
- Creating elevator pitches - together we worked on creating and practicing our elevator pitches to make us more comfortable and successful when engaging with people about the organization and our work.



“The project raised the status [of marginalized youth] and made them agents of change in their community.”

*Audrey Crawford,
Camp Manager,
Danish Refugee Council*

Desiré and Junior work together to “grid” out a space so that accurate sketches can be made on the Peace Mural in Little Wlebo Refugee Camp, Southeastern Liberia, 2012

Photo: Christina Mallie

FUNDING

CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL DONORS

We secured a total of \$77,030 from charitable foundations and individual donors for 2019, and were successful in securing funding from both old and new sources. We received funding for the first time from the Embrey Family Foundation and an in-kind grant from TurkeyLand Cove Foundation for a week-long working residency for the two co-founders. We received a second grant from the Riverside Church Sharing Fund which went to cover Tunaweza Portraits costs retroactively. We received \$20,559 in gifts from individual donors, 61 of whom were new donors, and 65 previous donors, of which 7 were recurring donors. Our average donation amount from individual donors was \$96.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



EUNICE JORDAN

Eunice is a compliance/regulatory attorney based in New York. She comes to Colors of Connection with over twenty years of legal experience. Eunice received her Bachelors in History from Wesleyan University and graduated from Columbia University School of Law in 1991. She began her legal career as Assistant District Attorney in Bronx County, NY, and after that began her transition into compliance/ regulatory law.

THE ARTIVIST CIRCLE: A RECURRING DONOR PROGRAM

In November of 2018 we launched a monthly giving program called the Artist Circle which successfully brought in a total of \$3,907 in 2019. Research shows that monthly giving programs have a high return on investment, and we therefore created a program and began advertising this as an option for people to give. In 2019 seven people gave as recurring donors. We will continue to focus on growing this program in the future given the high return on investment that it yields.

The program offers the following to members who join by signing up to give on a recurring basis:

- Join a community of like-minded people passionate about using the power of art to bring change to conflict-affected youth and their communities around the world.
- Provide invaluable support to CC programs.
- Receive an exclusive annual progress report on the impact of your support.
- Get an exclusive Artist tote bag created by artist and muralist Magda Love that is only available to members of the CC Artist Circle. (Reserved for those who donate at the \$25+ monthly level.)
- Receive the Artist Circle Newsletter three times a year, featuring creative and cultural treasures from regions where CC works.
- Receive exclusive discounts and access to CC merchandise and partnership deals.
- Discounted registration rates for CC fundraisers and events.

Artwork: Magda Love





Products available on colorsofconnection.org featuring the Colors of Connection logo and the “Creativity takes courage” design by Magda Love.

ONLINE SHOP

In December of 2018 we launched an online shop to create a new low investment revenue stream. The shop features two lines of children and adult clothing, mugs and t-shirts. One features our logo and the other features a “Courage Takes Creativity” design that was donated by artist Magda Love.

We also sell our newly self-published e-toolkit on how to make a community mural.

This again is an avenue for raising funds that requires minimal investment because we use a service that creates all the products at the time of the order, and handles all packaging and shipping. Although this does reduce the profit margin, it provides another option to engage our supporters and get our brand out in the public. We have received \$77 in profit from product sales over the last year. We will continue to provide CC goods for sale in the future given the minimal investment required to have another source of income, and the value it brings to marketing our brand.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



TEHREEM MOHSIN

Tehreem Mohsin, MBA, is a risk/control manager (Vice President) at an investment bank in NYC; she holds 12 years of experience at various investment banks in NY. Tehreem has an MBA from Baruch College in Finance, and International Business, and is currently enrolled at Columbia University for a professional MS degree in Enterprise Risk Management. Her interests include traveling, running, spinning, painting, sketching, reading, learning new languages, and learning about different cultures. She has a driven

personality, and is passionate about helping others. She is actively involved in volunteering and mentoring both within and outside her current organization.

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:

- **Accounting:** Two volunteers assist us with accounting questions or issues and the 990 tax form.
- **Website development:** In 2018 we applied and were accepted to JP Morgan Chase Technology for Social Good Force for Good program which was an eight-month program that was completed in June 2019. A team of seven JP Morgan Chase technologists developed a new website for Colors of Connection which went live on July 12th, 2019.
- **Legal:** One of our board members is a lawyer who is able to regularly provide services as a volunteer to advise on legal matters of the organization.
- **Advertising:** We applied and were accepted for the GoogleAds Grant which indefinitely provides up to \$10,000 of free advertising per month.
- **Marketing:** Board member Kate Charles who has expertise in marketing has helped us with branding, fundraising campaigns and communications with donors.
- **Graphic Design:** A volunteer graphic designer has worked with us to design beautiful, reader-friendly documents that drive home our impact, including brochures, reports and postcards.
- **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 in section C. Organization, we have been able to leverage additional support through providing two internships this year.
- **Strategy Support:** As mentioned in section C. Organization, strategic support was provided in 2019 through a residency for the co-founders by Turkey Land Cove Foundation and the pro bono services of a strategy consultant.

3

CHALLENGES IN 2019

We encountered three primary challenges in 2019. These were (1) securing partnerships for program implementation, (2) developing funding and program related relationships, and (3) operating with limited resources.

1. SECURING PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

All of our programming occurs in partnership with local and international organizations. This is due to necessity in the case of the administrative and logistical capacity required to implement programs in Sub-Saharan Africa, as well as our commitment to have our programs embedded within a community. This increases community ownership so that the programs are relevant, effective and sustainable.

The challenges of identifying, developing and securing these partnerships, primarily due to the amount of time and resources such partnerships require by all involved parties, has had a great impact on our work this last year, limiting our program implementation.

CC's plans to implement two additional programs in 2019, one with UNICEF in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and one with Seattle World School in Seattle, WA, USA, fell through due complications on our partners' ends.

(RIGHT) Participant Winnie prepares the wall for a mural outside of a school in the Murara neighborhood in Goma, DRC during the Tunaweza Portraits Project, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2019.

Photo: Bernadette Vivuya



2. RELATIONSHIP FOCUSED PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING IS TIME-INTENSIVE, REQUIRES SPECIFIC SKILL SETS AND IS SLOW TO DEVELOP

Guided by best practice in the area of development, during 2019 we focused on building and cultivating relationships through networking in order to secure partnerships, programming and funding. This is a time intensive approach, both as an activity as well as the time required to develop relationships that will bear fruit. Encountering challenges in this area has meant that while we are ready to grow and scale our programming in a big way, our growth is currently limited by the size of our network.

3. LIMITED RESOURCES

A three-year capacity building grant received from Tides Foundation on the recommendation of NoVo Foundation, provided us with the resources to pay part-time salaries to the two co-founders, enabling us to focus on organizational and program development. However, our fundraising for 2019 was limited particularly due to challenges of securing partnerships for program implementation, which limited our ability to secure additional funding for programs that would have bolstered our resources during the year.

A woman wearing a blue t-shirt and a black visor is painting a white wall. She is holding a long-handled roller in her right hand and a brush in her left hand. The wall is partially painted, and a ladder is visible in the background.

“I feel good in my skin when I am doing art.”

*Project Participant,
Tunaweza Portraits Project, 2019*

Micheline priming the wall for the Female Construction Worker Mural, during the Tunaweza Portraits Project, Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2019.

Photo: Bernadette Vivuya.

4

LESSONS LEARNED & STRATEGIES GOING FORWARD

Participant creating an empowerment collage during the Tunaweza Portraits Project, Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2019.

Photo: Bernadette Vivuya



I. KEY LEARNING: GROWTH TAKES TRIAL AND ERROR, AND REQUIRES ONGOING ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING

Strategies:

1. The co-directors and board of directors will engage in a strategy assessment activity once a year.
2. The co-directors as leaders and staff will pursue professional development opportunities to build their knowledge and expertise in the areas required by the organization.
3. CC will recruit board members whose expertise is able to fill the knowledge gaps in the leadership of the organization and guide us in the right direction.
4. CC will recruit volunteer assistance to help us fill the knowledge gap for completing certain necessary tasks.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



ZAHREEN GHAZNAVI

Legal Counsel, Success Academy Charter Schools

Zahreen Ghaznavi is currently legal counsel for Success Academy Charter Schools in NYC. Prior to becoming a lawyer, Zahreen taught 5th grade on the southwest side of Chicago and worked for the U.S. Department of Education. She began her legal career in the New York office of Kirkland and Ellis LLP, where she was a general commercial litigator. Zahreen earned her BA/MA in Political Science from Yale

University and her J.D. from Columbia Law School. Her previous board experience includes other youth and education-related organizations. She is passionate about equity in the K-12 public education space, dedicating her career to achieving it. She also loves children and is a big believer in public art, so she is excited to be working with CC to help youth abroad through the creation of art in public spaces.

PROFILE HIGHLIGHT

2. AN ENGAGED, SKILLED AND HIGH FUNCTIONING BOARD IS CRUCIAL TO THE SURVIVAL AND SUCCESS OF THE ORGANIZATION.

Strategies:

1. Recruit board members who have the following expertise or profile: finance, fundraising, a background in and relationships with larger IGOs/INGOs, academia, African with knowledge of our target populations.
2. Co-directors will continue to increase their learning on how to create an inspired and engaged board, and implement the tools and techniques that we learn.

3. BUILDING OUR NETWORK AND CULTIVATING RELATIONSHIPS ARE ESSENTIAL TO SECURING RESOURCES

Strategies:

1. Invest more time in relationship-based fundraising through networking, and leveraging our board to explore their networks.
2. Focus on building our monthly donor program as a way to grow our base of dedicated individual donors who feel personally invested in CC.
3. Identify potential large donors and seek to cultivate relationships with them that will lead to significant personal investments in CC.



4. PARTNERSHIPS NEED TO BE VIEWED AS LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS THAT REQUIRE A CLEAR DEFINITION OF AN IDEAL PARTNER, MUTUAL PROGRAMMATIC GOALS, AND TIME TO CULTIVATE.

Strategies:

1. Invest in building relationships with multiple partners simultaneously to ensure greater success.
2. Prioritize sustainable partnerships that will be on-going.
3. Identify partners who have enough capacity to take on a leadership role within the partnership.
4. Recruit a board member who has a background in, and relationships with, larger Inter Governmental Organizations (IGOs) and/or International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs).

5. AS A SMALL NONPROFIT WITH LIMITED RESOURCES, WE NEED TO NARROW OUR GEOGRAPHIC AND POPULATION FOCUS.

Strategies:

1. Focus our international programming in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), in order to build on the relationships and impact created from our last two programs there
 - i. Collaborate with M'Shujarts! A Girls Arts Collective (a spinoff group from our last two programs) to develop a program that will establish the group as a resourced and sustainable program that will continue to support even more girls through art.
 - ii. Explore programming with DRC-based partners Search for Common Ground and the Panzi Foundation.
2. Based on the implementation of and learnings from our last two programs with adolescent girls/young women in eastern Congo, we have set a goal that 70% of our future programming will be exclusively with adolescent girls.

(TOP) Participant Kloate priming the wall of the distribution center for the Education Mural, Little Wlebo Refugee Camp, Liberia, July, 2012. *Photo: Christina Mallie*

5

FUNDING & FINANCES

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The three-year capacity building grant from NoVo Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation, totaling \$57,000 for 2018, 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 salaries of the two directors who, as a result, were able to dedicate 24 hours a week 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 2018 was the implementation of Tunaweza Portraits Project which totaled \$33,394.

Total revenue for 2019 was \$143,321 and total expenses were \$108,164. The net revenue of \$35,157 is the third-year grant from NoVo Foundation which is allocated for operating expenses in 2020.

Block print created by a participant during the Tunaweza Portraits Project, Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2019

Photo: Bernadette Vivuya



Photo: Bernadette Vivuya

FUNDING SOURCES

Our total revenue for 2019 was \$143,321. In addition to the second year of funding totaling \$57,000 received from the NoVo Foundation Fund of Tides Foundation, we were successful in securing funding from both old and new sources during 2018, totaling an additional \$20,971. We received a first time grant of \$3,000 from the Embrey Family Foundation, and a second time grant of \$5,000 from the Riverside Sharing Fund.

We received a total of \$20,559 from individual donors, who gave in response to our monthly giving campaign, fundraising appeals sent throughout the year, and an end of the year crowd funder, Connection Starts with Kindness. Gifts from individual donors can be broken down as follows:

- 224 gifts from 126 individual donors,
- 61 of which were new donors and
- 65 of which were previous donors.
- 7 monthly donors
- Our average donation amount from individual donors was \$96.46.

In addition, we leveraged the following free or low-cost services to offset our operating expenses: accounting, website design, website development, legal, Google Ads, marketing, graphic design, internship program.

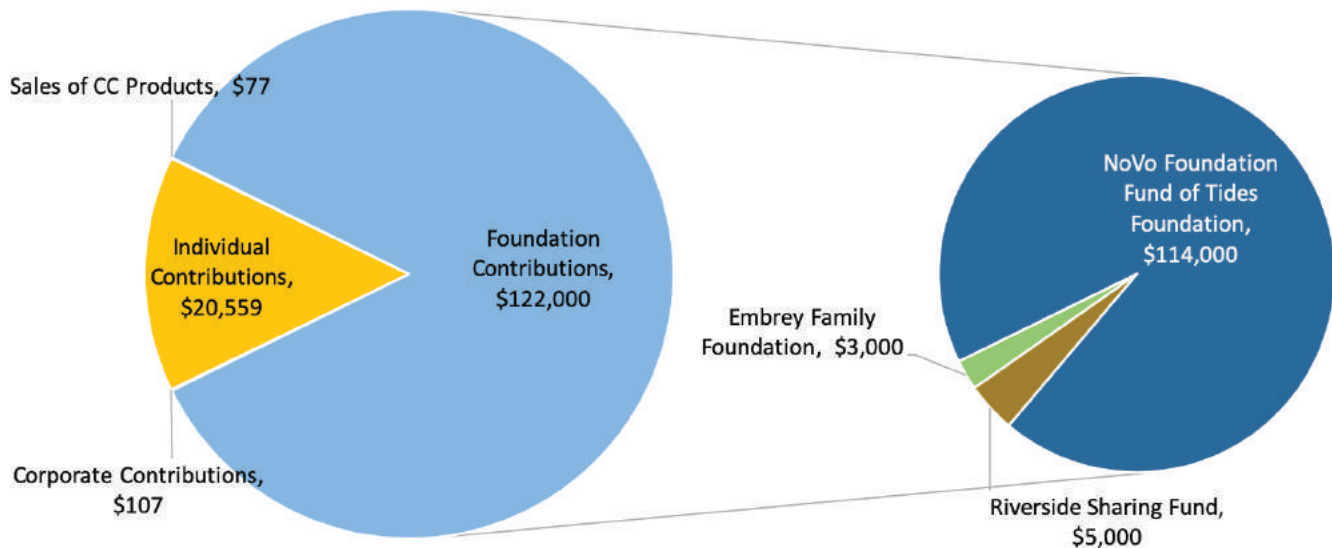


Fig. 5.2 Colors of Connection - 2019 Expense Breakdown

(TOP) Block prints created by participants during the Tunaweza Portraits Project, Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2019. Refugee Camp, Dori, Burkina Faso, 2014.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



LYNN SANDERS-BUSTLE

Associate Professor & Art Education Chair, Lamar Dodd School of Art, University of Georgia

Lynn Sanders-Bustle holds an undergraduate and graduate degree in Art Education from East Carolina and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from Virginia Tech. She has taught art at all levels of the PK-12 public school spectrum. Sanders-Bustle is currently Chair and Associate Professor of Art Education at the University of Georgia. Prior to coming to the University of

Georgia she served as Director of Programs at Greenhill Center for NC Art where she oversaw curatorial and education programs. From 2002 through 2012 she coordinated the Art Education program at the University of Louisiana Lafayette. She is editor of the book, *Image, Inquiry, and Transformative Practice: Engaging Learners in Creative and Critical Inquiry Through Visual Representation* published in 2003 by Peter Lang. Sanders-Bustle has published in professional journals such as the *Canadian Review of Art Education*, the *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, the *International Journal of Education and the Arts*, and *Art Education*. She has presented at the International Society for Arts and Education, the American Educational Research Association, the National Art Education Association and the Literacy Research Association. Sanders-Bustle has received grants supporting the integration of technology, faculty development, and service-learning. Her research focuses on social justice pedagogy, community-based art education, service-learning, and teacher preparation.

PROFILE HIGHLIGHT

EXPENSES

Our total expenses for 2019 were \$108,164. Program expenses, a total of \$65,449, included the cost of implementing Tunaweza Portraits Project, \$33,394, as well as program development costs, \$32,055, which includes the co-directors' time allocated to developing new programs and partnerships.

Operational expenses in 2019, a total of \$43,083, included general operating expenses and the co-directors' time allocated to administrative duties and fundraising efforts.

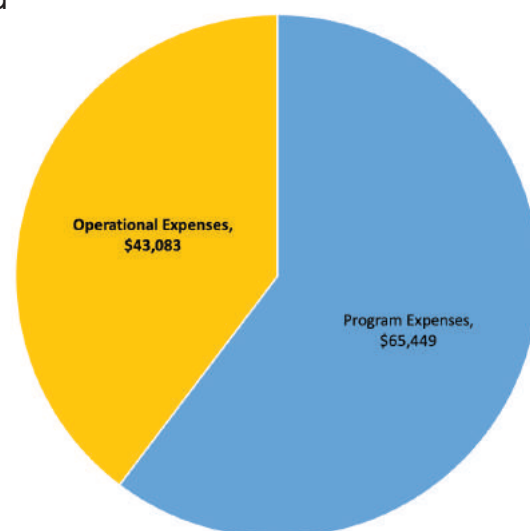


Fig. 5.2 Colors of Connection - 2019 Expense Breakdown

THANK YOU

We at Colors of Connection are eternally grateful to everyone who has supported our work with conflict-affected youth and communities over the last year, and we appreciate your efforts more than you know. Right now, we'd like to individually thank those who went above and beyond in supporting us:

Sarah-Anne Astwood
Elodie Olivia Bonazzi
Kate and Gerald Charles
Raymond Choy
Gayle Embrey
Paul Fong
Ziru Gao
Judy Gillespie
Nicolaus Glomb
Rhona Hoffman
Jenny Khalema
Jordan Lee
David and Jennifer Mallie
John and Jody Mallie
Leo and Rosie Mallie

Jane McPherson
Sandy Moreno
Guilherme Pereira
Sara Pohlad
Paul and Karen Reyman
Carol and Bruce Rodda
Keith Rudman
Carla Soracco
Alexandre Studer
Kevin Walters and Diana Lyon
Carol Zukin
The NoVo Foundation
Blick Art Materials
The Embrey Family Foundation
The Riverside Sharing Fund



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2020

We are incredibly excited for what lays ahead for us in 2020! Here's what we'll be focusing on:

1. Launching our brand new program, Shujaa: Empowering Girls and Their Communities Through Art, in Goma, DR Congo, in partnership with **M'shujarts! A Girls Arts Collective (GAC)**. This program will cultivate a population of empowered adolescent girls in Goma who effect positive change for themselves and their community in the pursuit of equality. CC will invest in the development of GACs' leaders in order for GAC to be able to one day independently and sustainably run the program on their own.
2. Developing additional programming for adolescent girls in eastern DR Congo with local partners.
3. Securing increased operational and project funding, focusing on building relationships with individual donors, charitable foundations and brand partners, in order to allow us to grow our impact.
4. Supercharging our board of directors to become passionate and effective ambassadors for CC through ongoing engagement, and increase the board's productivity through the establishment of committees.
5. Creating a new strategic plan for 2021 – 2023 together with the co-founders and the board of directors.

(TOP) M'Shujarts members creating their first mural as an independent group. The mural is outside a center for the handicapped in Goma and advocates for equal inclusion of the disabled in society, Democratic Republic of the Congo, February 2020.

Photo: Feza Balanga

JOIN US

ONE OPPORTUNITY CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE

One in four children live in countries affected by conflict or disaster. In the aftermath of war, peoples' emotional and social needs are often neglected, and they have severely limited opportunities and platforms for personal and public expression. There is often limited emotional and social support for people who have been affected by violent conflict, even though emotional health and community are vital to recovery.

Young people suffer the most in these environments from a lack of opportunities for education and engagement.

Together we can change that.

During our programs, youth tap into ways to creatively express themselves through painting, drawing, movement and dialogue. Together, they paint large murals in their community that transform public spaces into a vision for the future that they have decided to collectively portray. It's a rare opportunity for youth to engage in and transform the world around them. We believe that everyone has a unique potential to change this world for good, and just one opportunity can spark that potential into a force that will make a great impact.

You can invest directly in the emotional and social development of young people affected by war and violence. Your support will help youth find healing and dignity, and to feel empowered to make positive change through art.

THE TIME TO GROW OUR IMPACT HAS COME. JOIN US.

Give Monthly

Help us awaken capabilities by joining the Artist Circle, our monthly giving community: <https://www.colorsofconnection.org/the-artist-circle/>

Become a Brand Partner

Is your business looking for a social cause to incorporate into your brand? By partnering with Colors of Connection, you will share the impact of engaging in art for healing and building community with your customers. Learn more at: <https://colorsofconnection.org/brand-partners/>

Become an Implementation Partner

Is your organization ready to increase your impact by offering the power of art-based interventions to the populations you serve? Colors of Connection offers collaborative and innovative partnerships, providing custom-designed programs that are effective in meeting the needs of the target population because they are created together with the community members. Learn more at: <https://colorsofconnection.org/implementation-partner/>



CONNECT WITH US

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