

INSTITUTE
FOR
CHANGE
LEADERS

Empowering Change

2020 / 2021

Annual Report



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A Bold Vision

People seeking social justice have the practical and effective organizing skills they need to be leaders and create change in their communities.



An Essential Mission

Advancing social change by developing and delivering courses that teach participants the tools, principles, ethics, and values of self-empowerment and participatory democracy.

A Unique Approach

We empower people from all walks of life to develop their inner “change-maker” and provide the concrete skills needed to make lasting, transformative change.



Who We Are

Founded in 2016 by Olivia Chow, the Institute for Change Leaders (ICL) teaches the skills that organizers and activists need in order to win social change.

Our mission at ICL is to ensure organizers and community organizations are continually developing the skills they need to transform the resources they have into the change they want. Our approach to leadership is about accepting responsibility for enabling others to achieve shared purpose under conditions of uncertainty.

The Institute for Change Leaders has trained over 8,000 future leaders, organizers and change-makers from all walks of life. Each person we work with leaves our training with a more profound understanding of their own personal story, a deeper sense of their own power, and the skills to put that power into action.

What We Teach

The Institute offers an innovative five-part curriculum on how to organize to achieve change. The program is an intensive, hands-on learning process. It is led by a team of trained facilitators from all backgrounds and neighbourhoods, including labour activists, newcomers, Indigenous people, and people with lived experience of poverty and marginalization.

We teach how to tell your story to persuade and motivate others; how to recruit and retain volunteers; how to structure your team to encourage leadership development; and how to strategize and choose tactics that build power.

Our curriculum comes from Marshall Ganz, a Harvard professor who codified the relationship-building organizational framework we teach after the years he spent organizing the Civil Rights and United Farm Workers movements. The Institute offers the first accredited Marshall Ganz-based community-organizing course in Canada.

Letter from the Chair of the Board Inspiring!

That's how I feel about the achievement of ICL in emerging from the dark days of the pandemic and resulting challenges in a position to celebrate its fifth anniversary, and look forward to more.

In this report, we highlight major achievements of the past five years. And this year, ICL achieved another cornerstone and milestone, as we transitioned from being an initiative of the Faculty of Community Services of University X to becoming a fully independent charitable institution.

I would be remiss not to mention the inspiring leadership of ICL's Founder and Academic Leader, Olivia Chow. Amid board, administrative, staffing and financial challenges during the Covid era, Olivia Chow took on the additional role of Executive Director early in 2021.

Olivia and her team achieved charitable status, strengthened the team, and forged new partnerships while maintaining a close and enduring partnership with X University and with the help of Treasurer Judy Skinner, instituted a new accounting and financial system.

But most important – as academic lead, she and the ICL team of facilitators and trainers adapted brilliantly to online delivery and reached and trained thousands of people – empowering them as change leaders. As an educator, activist and change leader myself, I have a high regard for the effectiveness of this training, and we can all be justly proud of the resulting achievements of ICL's extraordinary alumni.



Through all these efforts, Olivia and the ICL team have been supported by a talented and dedicated staff, board members, alumni, supporters and advisors. On behalf of ICL, I thank you all.

ICL has come a long way in the past five years, and has emerged from this most challenging year stronger and more effective than ever and ready to move forward as an independent entity on strong foundations. With the leadership of Mike Perry and his committee, a major fundraising campaign is underway. That will help us achieve a key goal for the Board this year -- to help develop a new strategic plan, to help guide the Institute for Change Leaders through another five years of empowering change. Now that's inspiring!

amanuel melles

Chair

October 25, 2021

Letter from our Executive Director

Inspiring leaders, inspiring us!



For five years since we launched ICL, we have built foundations – not of bricks and mortar, but of relationships and trust.

In the past year, while maintaining an enduring relationship with and unwavering support from X University, we have forged new partnerships with organizations across Canada and beyond. That has helped us weather the impact of Covid on our operations and those of the people we reach and train. And that has been more important than ever, because in these dark days of pandemic, climate crisis, racism and international strife, empowering change and inspiring leaders has helped create rays of light.

In this report, we highlight some of the amazing achievements of the change leaders we have trained, fighting against the odds to achieve social justice.

What we have been going through at ICL is nothing compared to the challenges faced by so many – and that is why we need to do more, reach more, empower more. That is why we decided to embark on the challenge of becoming an independent charitable organization, so we could raise more funds, provide more scholarships and financial assistance to students – reach more, empower more, inspire more – and be inspired.

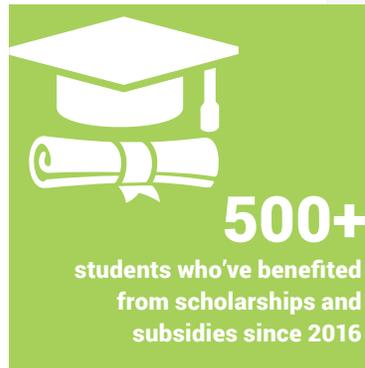
On a personal note, one of the most inspiring events of the past year was the Layton Legacy, a project marking the 10th anniversary of Jack Layton's passing. The project, which ICL helped facilitate, was very dear to my heart, as it reflected Jack's spirit of love, hope and optimism, and established awards for activism and indigenous leadership –and ICL scholarships for training award winners. This helped us reach more change leaders. Inspiring leaders.

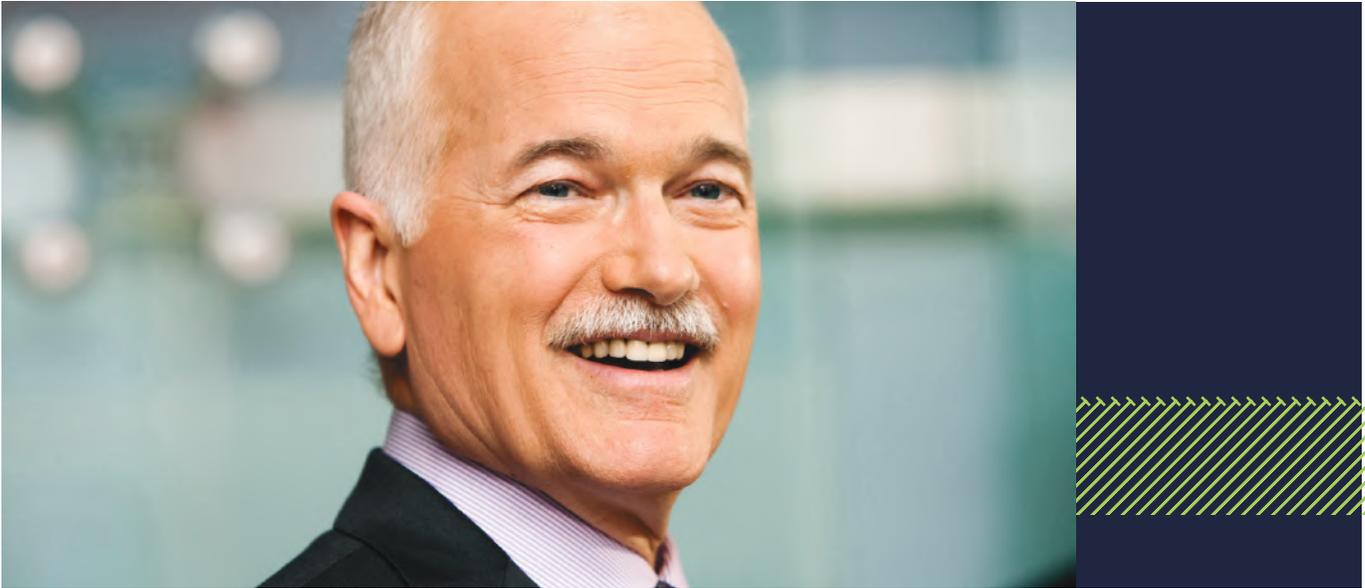
In the 10 years since we lost Jack, and five since I launched ICL, the needs have never been greater, and I have never been more inspired! Thank you all!

Olivia Chow

Executive Director and Academic Leader
October 25, 2021

Look at all the Change We're Making!





Ten years later Jack continues to inspire with ‘Layton Legacy’



August 22, 2021 marked the tenth anniversary of the untimely death of Jack Layton, Member of Parliament and Leader of the Official Opposition. Jack always believed change is possible when we all come together - so that's exactly what we did. Oliva Chow, the Layton family, and ICL brought together some of Jack's closest friends and colleagues to create "Love, Hope, and Optimism: Celebrating the Layton Legacy", a national online celebration of Jack's life.

The event featured an amazing lineup of activists, special guests and artists, assembled with the help of Barenaked Ladies lead vocalist, Steven Page. The celebration was made possible thanks to our generous sponsors: USW, Unifor, CUPE, CLC, IAFF -- as well as hundreds of individual donations large and small.

The result was a beautiful and fitting tribute event viewed by thousands across the country.

We know Jack would have loved the music, poetry, and words of inspiration.

Beyond joyful celebration, the key goal of the Layton Legacy initiative is to encourage and support new waves of activism. We were delighted to present the first Layton Activism Award to the African Centre for Refugees, for their outstanding work supporting African refugees from the LGBTQ community here in Ontario.



Jack Layton was profoundly inspired by Indigenous activists and strived to further their aims in Parliament, bringing Indigenous affairs to the forefront. The Indigenous Leadership Award was designed to carry on this important legacy, by recognizing Indigenous activists who are powerful changemakers. To select award winners, we have established a leadership panel of three powerful changemakers -- Bob Chemberlin, Claudette Commanda and Serena Koostachin -- to determine the winner, which will be announced next year.



Now, more than ever, Jack's message of love, hope and optimism is needed as we face the challenges this next decade will bring -- from building a just recovery to tackling climate change, and achieving true reconciliation.

As Jack always believed, together, we can change the world. So, let's empower change!





Empowering care workers fighting for just conditions

In 2021 ICL was proud to continue our multi-year partnership with the childcare movement. The movement secured a major victory in this year's federal budget, which committed \$30 Billion to early learning and child care. Carolyn Ferns of the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care—an ICL partner—called it “an historic turning point that will build the system that so many child care activists have worked for decades to push for.”

The movement continues to go from strength-to-strength.

Erica Saunders is an Early Childhood Educator (ECE) and ICL's Training Manager. Here she shares her reflections on ICL's work with the childcare movement:

As a Registered Early Childhood Educator, I know, all too well, the injustices and exploitation that care workers face, all too often.

I know how it felt to purchase classroom supplies out of my \$14.00 per hour wage because the millionaire owner of my child care centre refused

to buy paper and markers. I know how it felt to be underpaid, undervalued and subjected to poor working conditions, doing a job that is essential to supporting the economy.

I know how it felt, and how I felt. I felt powerless -- until I began working with ICL.

At the Institute, our mission is to lift up communities like those working in the care sector. I feel the power of other's goodness daily. I see people working for positive change in real-time, and I see the incredible power that this holds.

I was a part of the major petition campaign to halt provincial cuts to child care in 2019 at the OCBCC. Most of the folks who signed my petition were young, child free professionals off to work, yet they saw the value in child care. They saw value outside of their own experience.

I understand the impact of empowering those most undervalued by society, because I have been empowered.

Empowering a National Movement to End Homelessness

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on people living on the streets and in shelters, while greatly increasing the risk of homelessness.

Taking the lead in addressing this risk was the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH). In the early months of the pandemic, CAEH launched Recovery For All, a national advocacy campaign to pressure the federal government to make bold investments in housing, homelessness and income support as part of Canada's pandemic recovery.

In spring 2021, ICL partnered with the Alliance to create a custom workshop series to train activists with the leadership and organizing skills necessary to achieve sustainable change. We helped empower 125 anti-homelessness activists, workers and self-advocates from across Canada who took part in our sessions



-- representing a truly national movement of individuals, organizations and communities working together in a common cause. Some were brand new to activism, while others had decades of experience.

Meeting virtually every week on Zoom, ICL and CAEH worked with activists both one-on-one, in large groups and in breakout sessions to help them articulate their own stories, structure their teams, strategize, and translate that strategy into measurable, motivational, and effective action within the housing sector. The eight-week series was a resounding success, with participants gaining new skills, inspiration, and a sense of community to support their vital work.

"The practical skills and strategies I learned have made organizing seem tangible," noted one of the participants. "I have hope that we can end homelessness because I see the path forward and my place within the movement."

It was incredible for us to see so many participants discover their own voices, and to put their new skills into action. Advocates

“

...I have hope that we can end homelessness because I see the path forward and my place within the movement.

”

– CAEH participant





ran 37 unique letter-writing campaigns and sent over 758,000 letters to decision-makers. Ultimately 24,000 supporters took action and reached 3.9 million Canadians.

These actions had an immediate and positive impact.

In little over a month—by May, 2021—the campaign succeeded in securing a federal commitment to ending chronic homelessness. That commitment included accelerating the appointment of the National Housing Council and securing nearly \$6 billion in new or reallocated federal dollars for housing and homelessness, including the creation of the Rapid Housing Initiative, dramatically expanded funding for the federal Reaching Home program and a new veteran homelessness pilot program.

This was an important step forward—but now the challenge is to ensure the Federal Government makes good on its commitments, and goes further. As Tim Richter, President of CAEH, noted, while Budget 2021 did “make some important progress toward ending homelessness” it “did not go far enough or fast enough.” To maintain momentum, CAEH is planning on building on the success of the Recovery for All campaign.

At ICL, we are grateful for the opportunity to work with this inspiring Alliance - and immensely proud of the leaders that we helped train and empower. We are with them every step of the way as they work to ensure Recovery for All and bring everyone in from the cold.



When the pandemic hit, I was furious at the lack of care shown to our elders.



– Monica Tonlé



We learned the power we held as Black youth

by Monica Tonlé

I have always been a person that tries to bring out the best in the world, and if it is not there to create it. In that spirit I decided in summer 2019 to volunteer at a seniors center. It wasn't easy, but when you could see the smiles you brought to the residents' faces, it was all worth it.

When the pandemic hit, I was furious at the lack of care shown to our elders. Yet I also felt utterly powerless. With that in mind, I signed up for the Black Youth Leadership Program, an initiative created in partnership by ICL and the For Youth Initiative (FYI) to teach students from York-South Weston, an underserved community in Toronto, how to make positive change in the world.

It taught me and over 200 other participants much more than I had even hoped for. Sandra Whiting, the lead facilitator, mesmerized me. I was downright amazed as Sandra spoke to us of the power we held as Black youth. I hadn't heard a message like that before. To hear Sandra speak about hope with such candour and by a person who looked like me was completely transformative.

In the end, we all learned resilience and courage in the face of adversity—and that changes lives.

Monica is a graduate of the Black Youth Leadership Program and a facilitator with ICL.



Educating and Inspiring Our Community

ICL hosts regular events, talks, lunch-and-learns and get-togethers to strengthen and nourish our incredible community of activists and changemakers. Here are some of our favourites from 2021:



Showcasing African-Canadian Culture And Heritage

In March ICL hosted guest speakers Sandra Whiting and Amah Harris, both leaders in the African-Canadian community in Toronto, who shared their personal and professional experiences in the arts and in activism, showcasing their African-Canadian culture and heritage.



Lunch and Learn on LGBTQ+ activism

Christopher Nkambwe—activist and founder of the African Centre for Refugees in Ontario—and activist and journalist Andrea Houston discussed the challenges that face LGBTQ+ newcomers and the African Centre’s work to organize and take action against homophobia and advocate for a safer environment here in Toronto. Christopher shared her inspirational story as a trans newcomer from Uganda, and the passion that continues to drive her efforts to support LGBTQ+ rights here in Canada and in Uganda





Decades of Hate: Taking Back Power

How can we collectively combat hate, support our communities, and move forward to create the change we need? In August, ICL organized an event to explore these questions with an incredible panel of community leaders and activists from the Black, LGBTQ+, Muslim, Jewish and Indigenous community: Farheen Khan, Bob Gallagher, Cantor Cheryl Wunch, Dawn Maracle, Rizwan Tufail, and Mark Thompson. They shared their stories and discussed how we can all come together in a community to combat hate and move forward together. It was an incredible opportunity to listen, learn, and grow together as powerful change-leaders and allies.



I went canvassing today for the first time since learning from you now and found it really made a difference. Got much better at connecting and being brave to ask about what issues people cared about.



– Canvassing 101 Participant



Canvassing 101

On September 20th, millions of Canadians went to the polls, and we're really proud of our work in the run-up to the election. On September 8th, we ran a free workshop with the Broadbent Institute: How To Talk To Undecided Friends and Voters. Hundreds of people signed up to learn how to canvass their neighbors on a local issue -- and get people out to vote!

Our training partners

Despite the ongoing pandemic we have been as busy as ever, training activists from a diverse range of backgrounds on how to build power, form new relationships, and create lasting change.

**Here are some of the groups we've worked with in our
2020/2021 Fiscal Year.**



Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario
Building Skills for Change Community Training
Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness
CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals
City of Kawartha Lakes Family Health Team
Canadian Labour Congress
CMHC- Indigenous Advisory Council
Community Food Centres Canada
CUPE 2316
CUPE 905
DMZ Ryerson Incubator
For Youth Initiative
Inuvialuit Regional Corporation
Jack Layton School
Newcomer Women's Services
Plan International
Rwandan Canadian Healing Centre =
Ryerson Students of Early Childhood Studies
Trent University
Canada Hong Kong Link
UFCW Gay Straight Alliance
USW District 6
Vision Youth
We Matter
X University FCS Student Leaders
Youth Action Now Ottawa
YWCA

"ICL is delivering impactful, innovative training in action-oriented techniques for change. The experience was wonderful across the board. The facilitators, the content, and the classmates all brought so much energy and learning opportunities to the course. I look forward to driving change in my campaign."

– Building Skills for Change graduate

"I have heard people talk for the first time. I have seen people grow in their self confidence. I see the smiles and light bulbs and insights and development in so many people in this training. The training is so great, the facilitators are great. I cannot tell you how much I value this."

– CUPE 2316 worker

"I recommend this training to everyone who wants to take action to speak out against the injustice they are facing."

– Newcomer Women's Services participant

"The passion seems to be getting stronger and stronger with each lesson. For residents, family, community. If we take the passion to the forefront we can do a lot."

– USW Long Term Care worker



Our supporters

“

People don't donate because they are not asked.

”

Our work would not be possible without the generosity and vision of our supporters.

In February of this year, the Board of Directors unanimously approved the ICL's first-ever major gifts campaign with the goal of raising \$1M in order to put the Institute on a sound financial footing to ensure the continued development of future change leaders.

Led by a crack team of volunteer fundraising experts, the *\$1,000,000 Building Leaders for Change Campaign* is currently in the process of engaging with key supporters. All Board members have donated.

The campaign is designed to raise much-needed funds to change the increased racial, gender-based, and political violence in our communities and nationally. The campaign is also intended to create and enhance lasting relationships and ensure people can benefit from ICL programs regardless of their ability to pay. We'll also have some fun along the way!

The campaign will be launched officially later in 2021 with many unique opportunities for everyone to donate to the work of the ICL and exceed the \$1M target early next year.

ICL Fundraising Committee:

Bob Gallagher, ICL Board of Directors

Liz Glor-Bell, Vice-Chair

Klim Khomenko

Mike Perry, Chair

Lydia Treadwell

Ken Wyman

Kausar Farooq, ICL Development Officer

Olivia Chow, Executive Director

ICL's 2021 Treasurer's Report

Transition to an independent charitable organization was among the many changes and challenges that ICL has encountered in the past year. Previously, as an initiative of the Faculty of Community Services of X University, ICL did not face requirements for financial reporting, and accounting and donations were managed through the university. That changed when ICL became an independent charitable organization during the past fiscal year.

As a newly minted Board Member and Treasurer, I worked with Olivia and her team as they reviewed requirements, instituted a new accounting system, established new financial policies and procedures and prepared for ICL's first audit and first set of financial statements.

Those statements show a deficit and reduction in cash reserves as at April 30 in both fiscal 2019-20 and 2020-21, reflecting the impact of adjusting to operating in the era of Covid and the resulting administrative challenges, as well as new costs associated with becoming an independent entity.



The team put in a lot of hard work and rose to the challenge. And since year end, they have generated an increase in training revenues and donations. ICL is moving forward with financial stability, and with focused fundraising underway. That will establish a reserve to help ICL weather future storms, while growing and continuing to deliver training to those who need it most.

Judy Skinner

Treasurer

October 25, 2021

Audited financial statements and notes are available on request.

Our team



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Beebe
 Bob Gallagher - *Vice Chair*
 Kiloran German
 Susan Kwong - *Secretary*
 Sean Meagher
 Amanuel Melles - *Chair*
 Judy Skinner - *Treasurer*
 Rizwan Tufail

STAFF

Keisha Chotoosingh - *Accountant*
 Olivia Chow - *Founder, Executive Director*
 Kausar Farooq - *Fundraising Coordinator*
 Aliyah French - *Outreach Assistant*
 Eishvinder Gill - *Finance Assistant*
 Judy Jung - *Financial Officer*
 Nastasia Krstic - *Placement Student*
 Graeme Lamb - *Curriculum Development Officer*
 Dafina Maloku - *Placement Student*
 Melanie Matthews - *Research, Evaluation and Grant Writing Coordinator*
 Duncan Pike - *Communications Manager*
 Abigail Richards - *Videographer and Social Media Coordinator*
 Erica Saunders - *Training Manager*
 Monica Tonle - *Communications Officer*

Institute for Change Leaders Alumni Association

Creating impactful change alone is hard work, but it doesn't have to be lonely work. This is why we formed the Institute for Change Leaders Alumni Association, a network for alumni to stay connected with ICL, build partnerships, and stay engaged in an active, fun, dynamic community of practice. Run by an all-volunteer Executive Committee, the Alumni Association organizes events, get-together, skill-sharing sessions, and other activities to build solidarity, knowledge, and fellowship.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION VOLUNTEER EXECUTIVE

Christine Blair - *Co-chair*
 Damineh Akhavan - *Co-chair*
 Adenike Soyibo - *Secretary*
 Abby Richards - *Communications*
 Andreea Mihai - *Events*
 Alexander Waddling - *Member at large*
 Jay Woodruff - *Member at large*

Building skills, Finding passion, Making change



Join us!

2021 has been a big year for us. Together, we can accomplish so much more.

Progressive social change doesn't happen by accident; it's won because ordinary people get organized, build power, and demand better. Here's how you can help us empower people with the skills they need to win these changes and be leaders in their community.

Donate to ICL at changeleaders.ca/donate. Your generosity allows us to offer pro-bono trainings and much-needed subsidies so that everyone is able to participate, regardless of their ability to pay.



The Institute for Change Leaders is brought to you by the Faculty of Community Services at Ryerson University.



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