

INSTITUTE  
FOR  
CHANGE  
LEADERS

2019 / 2020

# Annual Report

# Contents



<b>01.</b>	<b>ABOUT US</b>	
	– Our Vision	03
	– Our Mission	03
	– Our Values	03
	– Who We Are	04
	– What We Teach	04

<b>02.</b>	<b>LETTERS</b>	
	– From the Chair of the Board	05
	– From Our Founder	06

<b>03.</b>	<b>THE NUMBERS</b>	
	– ICL Highlights	07

<b>04.</b>	<b>INSPIRING MESSAGES</b>	
	– Generation of Black leaders	08
	– Early Childhood Educators	09

<b>05.</b>	<b>WHAT WE'RE BUILDING</b>	
	– Rank-and-file Power	10
	– Building Skills for Change	11

<b>06.</b>	<b>PARTNERS</b>	
	– Training Partners	12
	– Supporters	13

# Our Vision

People seeking social justice have the practical and effective organizing skills they need to build power and create change in Canada and around the world.

# Our Mission

Develop and deliver the tools, principles, knowledge and skills that members of the public need to participate in and lead democratic processes.

# Our Values

Four core values inform our work:



**SOCIAL JUSTICE**



**EMPOWERMENT**



**IMPACT**



**EQUALITY**



'Crown' Artwork by Wayne Moore





## Who We Are

Founded in 2016 by Olivia Chow and based at Ryerson University, the Institute for Change Leaders teaches the skills that organizers need in order to win social change. Olivia and her team of 30+ trainers have taught community and political organizing to a network of almost four thousand organizers since launching.

We believe students learn best when they practice what they learn. We deliver our full curriculum in regular weekend sessions at Ryerson University, and we work with organizations such as unions, nonprofits, and social service agencies to deliver tailored training in their gathering places.

## What We Teach

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. He was a key trainer and organizing strategist behind President Obama's presidential campaigns. The Institute offers the first accredited Marshall Ganz-based community-organizing course in Canada.

## Letter from the Chair of the Board

# A year for Change

What a year! A little over a year ago, when we formally launched the Institute for Change Leaders, we didn't realize using the word *change* would tempt the gods! Lives disrupted, livelihoods destroyed, families torn apart - the year has certainly given us enough change to keep us on our toes for years.

These changes have also highlighted the inequality and inequity that we have quietly accepted in our societies. They made us face the systemic racial bias that has been stitched into the fabric of our society. They unmasked the risks healthcare workers take to keep us safe and alive, despite the trying circumstances and government failings. They made us confront how much we depend on early childhood educators who take care of our children - and how little we take care of their economic, health, and well-being.



### *It has to change.*

In the pages ahead, we invite you to read about the people we have trained, and more importantly, the changes they have been able to advocate for, the fights they have been able to gear up for, and the victories - big and small - that they have won.

Thank you for your generous support and encouragement. We absolutely would not have been able to empower these leaders without your support.

We look forward to many more years of agitating, advocating, organizing, and fighting for the change we need.

**Rizwan Tufail**  
Board Chair

## Letter from our Founder

# Building Resilience

I

Building strong relationships with those who share our values is at the core of our teaching at ICL. It's how movements build power, and how we build resilience in times of uncertainty, fear and disruption.

Our work at ICL—of equipping new leaders with the skills and knowledge they need to make change—has continued during the Covid-19 pandemic through online workshops, with active participation and small group coaching sessions, using video conferencing services.

In fact, it's been our busiest year ever: we've trained nearly 2,000 new activists just this year, and formed partnerships with 25 new organizations across Canada and the United States.

These aren't just numbers. Each person who we work with leaves 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 to make a change in their communities.



With your support, we've made an incredible impact this year, helping a movement of early childhood educators win millions for childcare in Ontario, working with black youth from across Ontario to develop their leadership skills and confront anti-Black racism in their communities, and partnering with long-term care workers to fight for better conditions for seniors and better pay for those on the front line of the crisis.

The pandemic continues to do enormous damage, and the struggle to shape our post-COVID future will be intense, but it's difficult not to feel hopeful when working with such amazing groups of activists and organizers.

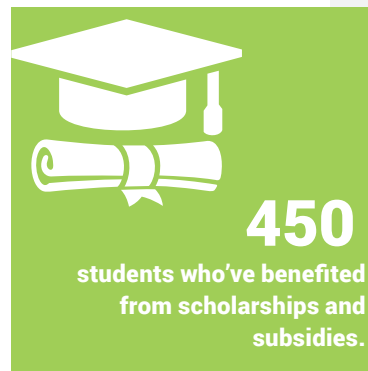
We would like to thank all of you for your support over the past year. We have been thinking about you, our supporters, training alumni, and friends and hope that you are safe and healthy. We rely on your continued generosity to sustain and expand our urgently-needed work.

Sincerely,

**Olivia Chow**

Founder and Academic Lead

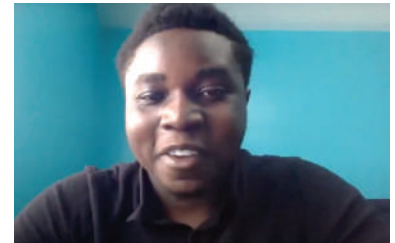
# Look at all the Change We're Making!



# Inspiring the next generation of Black leaders

This year we were proud to continue our partnership with For Youth Initiative (FYI), a non-profit organization that serves teens and young adults in York South-Weston, to deliver the Black Youth Leadership Program. This three-month program worked with Black youth from across Ontario to develop their leadership skills and confront anti-Black racism in their communities. The training sessions were led by well-known storyteller and speaker Sandra Whiting.

*"Without a doubt, I have expanded my perspectives and grown as an individual through the training," says Elijah. "I feel motivated to inspire the next generation of Black leaders."*



“

The sessions have shown all of us ways of being leaders and are empowering us to reach our full potential. Now we know we too can touch the sky

”

– Monica Tonlé, a 15-year-old graduate of the program and co-organizer with Elijah of the celebratory event.



## A letter from Elijah and Monica

### We found our own story

Over the past few months, the Black Lives Matter movement has finally come to light for the public but has always been the forefront issue in the Black community. Our involvement with the Black Youth Leadership Program has been a refuge for us amidst the global pandemic. It has given us a feeling of belonging, especially living in a world where it's rare to see people who look like us succeed.

A main aspect of the program, aside from learning how to fight injustices and gathering resources, was understanding the importance of storytelling. In learning the fundamentals of connecting to people through a story, we can not only recruit others but build meaningful bonds to eventually unite to make a difference.

After completing the program as participants and becoming facilitators, we have found our own story and work to help others discover their own story and use that drive to take action to be the change they need to see. We are using our new and refined skills to continue to combat the injustice Black people fight and work to inspire others to join and change the status quo.

The community must act now to stop the suffering of the Black community, it must act now so the education system stops becoming a pipeline to jail for black youth, it must act now so people stop using stereotypes to judge our character and potential. The community must act now before it's too late to save Black pride.

– Elijah and Monica





# Winning Big

## with Early Childhood Educators

In early April, ICL partnered with the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Ontario (AECEO), with generous support from the Blue Sky Foundation, to run a months-long online training for over 200 early childhood educators (ECEs) and parents to provide them the skills they need to build power, confidence and solidarity. It was an amazing journey, and privilege to work with such an inspiring, dedicated group of changemakers.

Ten days after completing our training, ECEs held a Virtual Rally of 1,500 participants and over 20,000 viewers demanding a reopening plan that ensured quality and safety for all.

The government had no choice but to act.

In July, the Government of Canada announced \$625 million in federal funding for the child care sector. In early September, Ontario's child care sector received a \$147 million funding boost to offset costs linked to COVID-19 pandemic. And in the September Speech From the Throne, the Federal Government announced a commitment

to "a significant, long-term, sustained investment to create a Canada-wide early learning and childcare system."

The AECEO called it a "bold statement which shows the power of advocacy and raising our collective voice."

*"I still remember how discouraged I was when I first began working as an early childhood educator. The waitlist was disgraceful, the paycheque wasn't enough to start a family, and parents were struggling to afford ever-rising costs."*

*As a young woman beginning my career, I did not know how to face such an enormous challenge.*

*That's when I discovered Olivia Chow's course. The Institute for Change Leaders taught me the skills I needed to **win lasting change**. With Olivia's energy and expertise, we trained and launched teams of early childhood educators who have in turn engaged thousands of childcare workers and reached tens of thousands of parents and voters."*  
Lyndsay Macdonald, Early Childhood Educator



# Building

## rank-and-file power with essential workers



These are tough times for long-term care (LTC) workers, who have fought for years for better working conditions and pay, and are now on the front lines of the Covid-19 pandemic.

That's one reason the Institute for Change Leaders stepped this summer up to host a series of connect-and-share sessions, where LTC workers were able to build solidarity over storytelling, conversation and laughs.

The sessions gave an outlet for frontline workers. They also came up with strategies and tactics on how to fix long term care so seniors can live in dignity, and workers get decent wages with stable, rewarding employment.

We're so excited to be playing a part in the fight for decent and stable work for everyone in the health-care sector by empowering these essential workers with the skills they need to organize their coworkers, tell their story with confidence, strategize, and take action.

Terry is a family advocate for better conditions in long-term care. She joined ICL's connect-and-share to learn how to use the power of her family's story to further her advocacy.

Terry started volunteering alongside long-term care workers after moving her mother into a long-term care home. Years of underfunding by the government led to severe leaks in the roof of her mother's facility in February 2019, forcing elderly residents to evacuate.

*"I got my mother into her heavy winter coat and we went down to the lobby to wait. The front entrance was just a constant scene of frail and elderly residents in their wheelchairs.*

*My mum didn't really understand where she was going. She trusted me. She looked at me with faith in her eyes, that I would take care of her.*

*I only knew she was going to long-term care an hour and a half drive from where we lived. I knew nothing about the home. How would they treat her? I had no say, I had no control. My mom's well-being was completely taken out of my hands.*

*The tragedy is that this disaster didn't have to happen. Why should our elders, who look to us in the end for care, not even have a safe roof over their heads?*

*It's time for us, for me, to stand up, give my voice, and act for those who've done some much for us, but have so little voice themselves."*

# Building skills, Finding passion, Making change



We're in a unique time. There are millions of people, in Canada and around the world, who feel anger or frustration at the injustices around them but have no sense of how things can really change.

That's one reason we are so proud to host *Building Skills for Change*, our flagship two-day training program that anyone can sign up for. Students learn the fundamentals of community organizing, centered on five key leadership practices: telling stories, building relationships, structuring teams, strategizing, and taking action.

They leave with the ability to persuade and motivate others, recruit and retain volunteers structure their team of leaders for growth, and identify how power operates, and choose tactics that move decision-makers.

It's our job to help people find their source of strength and hope, and build power to take action for the first time. We've worked with hundreds of ordinary people and witnessed many of their victories, big and small, after taking our course.

*"There aren't many places where change leaders from across the country can come together to listen, learn & support each other. This training is vital for anyone who wants to be an effective agent of change in their community."* Gracia

*"Olivia is an engaging speaker who makes you feel like you will accomplish your goals. This training was the positive push I needed to stay motivated for my cause."* Rachel

*"Building Skills for Change was a wonderful experience for me to dive deeper in my own narratives and turn it into solid goals. It was also inspiring to hear others' narratives and realize that we were all connected by our will to create change for our human kind."* Ngoc Tho

*"I feel determined to realise the goal I came here with. I feel confident in the outcome and have found the passion I had lost a few weeks ago."* Gino





# Our training partners

We had a busy year, training activists from a diverse range of backgrounds on how to build relationships, shift power, and create lasting change.

**Here are some of the groups  
we've worked with in our  
2019/2020 Fiscal Year.**

## NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Action Chinese Canadians Together Foundation (ACCT)  
Canada-Hong Kong Link  
Durham Children's Services  
For Youth Initiative  
Muslim Youth Fellowship  
New Israel Fund Canada  
Newcomer Women's Services  
St. James Town Service Providers  
Sustainability Network  
The Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO)  
Ward Museum  
Young Adults Cancer Canada

## UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Community Action Research Course at Ryerson University  
Jack Layton School at Ryerson University



## LABOUR MOVEMENTS

Long Term Care Workers  
Ontario Public Service Employees Union  
Public Service Alliance of Canada  
Toronto York Region Labour Council  
United Steelworkers District 6 Political Action Committee  
United Steelworkers Local 1998

## INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

We Matter

## DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

Hollyhock Leadership Institute  
Unitarian Universalist Advocacy Network of Illinois  
Youth Action Now Ottawa





# Our supporters

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

The Institute for Change Leaders would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to our work in 2019-2020.

AMAPCEO	Kong, Justin
Assange, Scott	Koster, Jane
Bell, Cassie	Law, Emily
Berman, Rachel	Lockyer, James
Betteridge, Neil	Louie, Tonny
Blue Sky Foundation	Ma, Lilian
CUPW	Nelson, Christine
CWA-SCA Canada	Olowaffe, Isaac
David Suzuki Foundation	Parker, Suzanne (Sue)
De Castell, Christopher	Samuel, Dave
De Rosa, Susan	Schein, Laura
Gallagher, Bob	Solberg, Janet
Hayes, Edward	Tufail, Rizwan Mohammad
Horne, Kathleen (Kat)	United Steelworkers
Hui, Linda & Anthony	Willats, Anna
International Association of Fire Fighters	Wong, Joseph & Christine
Kellett-Betsos, Kathleen	

## Join us!

2020 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. 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](https://changeleaders.ca/donate).



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



40 Gould St KHS-041  
Toronto, ON, M5B 1E9



[www.changeleaders.ca](https://www.changeleaders.ca)  
[contact@changeleaders.ca](mailto:contact@changeleaders.ca)

