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OUR CONNECTION TO THE LAND

We recognize that Canada is built upon the ancestral lands of many Indigenous nations that have lived across Turtle Island for thousands of years. In our work, we demand climate justice, sovereignty, and safety for Indigenous peoples across Canada.

We are based in Tkaronto (Toronto) in the ‘Dish With One Spoon Territory’. The Dish With One Spoon is a treaty between the Anishinaabe, Mississaugas and Haudenosaunee that bound them to share the territory and protect the land. In our role as settlers and displaced, and displaced people on this land, we share the responsibility of preserving the land and the ecosystems that sustain it.

We recognize that colonialism and land-based violence are connected to the inequities and gender-based violence that continue to harm Indigenous communities in Canada. As a result, we try to actively incorporate the Calls for Justice for Everyone, outlined in the final report of the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in our work.
Since our founding in 2017, Platform has been established as an emerging leader in the civic leadership and community engagement space. We are a prominent resource for timely and responsive leadership education and training on issues impacting Black, Indigenous, and racialized women and gender-diverse youth. Together with our community of supporters, we are working to amplify issues and solutions that are often dismissed within civic and political institutions, while being responsive to the varying needs of our communities.

Our work is led by and for Black, Indigenous, and racialized women and gender-diverse youth. We are governed by a Board of Directors who oversees the direction and sustainability of the organization, and a National Advisory Council (18-30y/o) who guide and inform the direction of our programming. We prioritize meaningful partnerships with youth-led, feminist and anti-oppressive organizations to advance leadership among marginalized women and gender-diverse youth, most commonly Girls Action Foundation in Quebec and Arctic Youth Development Initiative (AYDA) Women in the Northwest Territories.

By centring lived experience and intersectional feminist education in our work, we are advancing leadership qualities that will build more equitable and inclusive futures for Black, Indigenous, and racialized women and gender-diverse people, and their communities.
Our Mission

is to reshape the civic landscape to advance the priorities of Black, Indigenous, and racialized young women and gender-diverse people through capacity building and education.

Our Vision

is for a society in which all Black, Indigenous, and racialized young women and gender-diverse people can fully and safely participate in decision-making processes that lead to equitable outcomes for their communities.

Our Why

is the issues facing young Black, Indigenous and racialized women and gender-diverse youth are too often dismissed within civic and political spaces.
In all aspects, 2020 was an undoubtedly and universally challenging year. Despite it all, Platform continued to create safe(r) spaces for our community to share, learn, advocate and grow. As the COVID-19 pandemic took hold and put lockdowns in place around the world, Platform shifted our programming entirely online to increase access to intersectional feminist education, and ensure that our community continued to feel supported through the extraordinary challenges they were facing.

Our programs created space for and access to unique and inclusive opportunities, by empowering our community through advocacy, education, training and network building.
Feminist Summer School

Feminist Summer School (FSS) was Platform’s response to Instagram activism culture that rose in the summer of 2020. We recognized that Instagram can be a great tool for both quick and thorough information on current events and topics such as racism, environmentalism, and accessibility. With this in mind, we wanted to educate and support our audience, while ensuring consistency and accuracy. Through FSS, our audience learned from and engaged with facilitators and educators who have backgrounds in activism and education on these topics.

FSS was created in partnership with Girls Action Foundation to offer accessible knowledge-building opportunities on intersectional feminism in collaboration with Black, Indigenous, and racialized educators from across Canada, while creating paid knowledge-sharing opportunities to the 8 facilitators and educators.

Over two months, July and August of 2020, we delivered 8 virtual knowledge-building workshops and engaged 724 participants from across Canada, examining the following topics:

- Intersectional Feminism
- Anti-Oppression
- Disability Justice
- Challenging Anti-Black Racism
- Indigenous Solidarity
- Challenging Islamophobia
- Trans-Inclusive Feminism
- Environmental Justice

“I think it opens up a safe zone to have difficult conversations especially at a time where we are being bombarded with different definitions from social media. I attended the intersectional feminism workshop and it provided a lot of clarity of what it means to be a feminist.” - FSS Participant
Seasonal Learning Series

From the success and demand of FSS emerged our Seasonal Learning Series, which explores topics concerning equity and intersectionality in greater depth. Over the course of a eight weeks in the summer of 2020, participants delved into the root causes of social justice issues, their solutions, and how they intersect. Through knowledge-sharing and interactive sessions participants explored the ways in which they can strengthen their solidarity and be better allies to the communities experiencing oppression in its many forms. Through 2020, our Seasonal Learning Series engaged over 135 participants, exploring the topics of colonialism through a global lens, redefining queerness, self-care for racialized folks and more. Similar to our FSS, we employed grassroots educators and activists to facilitate sessions, build new knowledge and broaden conversations about inequality.

Research & Advocacy

In spring 2021, Platform co-authored ‘Resetting Normal: Gender, Intersectionality, and Leadership’ in partnership with the Canadian Women’s Foundation and Federation of Canadian Municipalities to imagine a post-pandemic leadership paradigm focused on the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and racialized women and gender-diverse people.

Further, in partnership with the University of Toronto School of Cities, Platform supported the development of Leading Through Change, an interview series centreing the expertise of young women and gender-diverse community leaders in conversations surrounding the COVID-19 response and opportunities for change amid the pandemic. This series highlighted the crucial role of young marginalized leaders community sustainability and city-building, and urban leadership that is often overlooked and unappreciated.
Responsive Programming

To best support our community, our Responsive Programming exists as a way to effectively and appropriately meet and respond to the changing needs and issues impacting our community. Responsive Programming is designed in a way that allows Platform to respond to emerging issues in a timely, accessible, and constructive manner.

Responsive Programming is offered in many different forms including but not limited to, interactive workshops, knowledge-sharing sessions, group and art therapy, advocacy work etc. Through the 2020/2021 year, Platform offered the following supportive programs:

- Group healing sessions, and music therapy for young Asian women and gender-diverse folks in response to the increased racism and violence as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent anti-Asian rhetoric, specifically the Atlanta spa shooting. Through April 2021, Platform delivered three free group therapy sessions facilitated by a Registered Psychotherapist.
- Indigenous Women’s Health and Wellness programs were offered in partnership with AYDA, and funded by the Canadian Women’s Foundation. The partnership provided COVID-19 care kits to Indigenous youth across the Northwest Territories, and held digital wellness workshops for Indigenous women.
- Mental Wellness and Community Support workshop series for Black, Indigenous and racialized young women and gender-diverse folks in northern, rural, and remote communities to support folks who are facing compound barriers in accessing community spaces and support services, particularly through the pandemic.
- Police Carding information sessions, in response to the dangerous increased police powers to card residents during COVID-19 lockdowns in Ontario.

Responsive Programming ensures that our work is relevant to our audience and lends accessible and constructive resources to issues that are impacting our communities right now, while allowing us to deliver programs in ways that are valuable and supportive to our community.
Chai Chats

Chai Chats are informal, intimate conversations between participants and Black, Indigenous, and racialized young women and gender-diverse political leaders and candidates. These conversations are non-partisan and engage past candidates and elected officials from across the political spectrum, and are intended to examine and discuss the realities and experiences of running and leading within civic institutions as marginalized folks. In 2020, we hosted five Chai Chats and engaged 55 participants in intersectional conversations about running for office.

Special Mentions

YWCA Young Women of Distinction Award

Each year, the YWCA Toronto honours and awards the leadership of local women doing extraordinary work through their Women of Distinction Awards Gala. These awards recognize and celebrate women whose commitment to advancing gender equity drives change in their communities and around the globe.

At the 2020 Awards Gala, our Founder and Managing Director, Arezoo Najibzadeh, joined the YWCA Toronto as the recipient of the Young Women of Distinction Award for her work at Platform. Arezoo is a respected leader in the sector, whose dedication to building Platform from the ground up, and commitment to advancing the conversation on gender, intersectionality, and leadership has contributed to meaningful progress for young leaders. This achievement, recognition and celebration is a reflection of her tireless efforts to advance the priorities of Black, Indigenous and racialized young women and gender-diverse leaders in the realm of political, civic and community engagement and leadership.
In 2020, we were thrilled to announce that we had received a three-year, $750,000 contribution from Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE) to build organizational capacity and develop programming that increases civic leadership capacity among Black, Indigenous, and racialized young women and gender-diverse youth.

We have spent the last four years exploring pathways and creating spaces that encourage and celebrate the leadership of Black, Indigenous, and racialized young women and gender-diverse people. From addressing gender-based sexual violence in civic institutions to facilitating culturally-relevant healing spaces, we take an intersectional, anti-oppressive, and transformational feminist approach toward developing a leadership continuum that centres lived experiences and redefines civic engagement.

This contribution from WAGE is allowing us to strengthen our internal capacity for community and financial accountability, as well as our ability to deepen existing relationships and forge new ones. It’s also allowing us to design and deliver civic leadership programming that centres intersectionality, solidarity, and anti-oppression. Most importantly, it will further enable us to work with our community members to build an organization that meets the needs of our audience and reflects their vision for an intersectional feminist organization.

We remain committed to our mission and the community we serve, and understand how crucial it is, now more than ever, for us to strengthen social determinants of civic engagement and redefine leadership in ways that dismantle intersecting systems of oppression.
2020/2021 FINANCIALS

Revenue
- Government: $16,029
- Fundraising: $16,783
- Total: $32,812

Expenses
- Programs: $23,506
- Fundraising & Comms.: $3,349
- Administration: $3,854
- Total: $30,709
Thank you!

We are so grateful to have the support of our community members and donors as we continue to grow and serve our audience. Our work would not be possible with you.