



# 2021 Annual Report

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Fora operates in colonially recognized Toronto, Ontario in Canada. “Toronto” is derived from the Mohawk word “Tkaronto,” meaning “the place in the water where the trees are standing.” This land is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe, the Huron-Wendat, the Métis, and the territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

To acknowledge this traditional territory is to recognize its significance for the Indigenous people who lived and continue to live upon it. We also recognize that land acknowledgements should go beyond simply naming the lands on which we are located and should push us to work towards reconciliation and anti-colonialism in every aspect of our work.

With Fora's community spread across the globe, we recognize that there are many nations engaging in ongoing struggles against settler colonialism and dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their land. Fora stands in solidarity with these nations and works to ensure that young women and gender-diverse youth are given every opportunity to be empowered advocates and leaders.



**Dr. Rumeet Billan**  
Board Chair

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR & CEO

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2021 was a year marked by both challenges and opportunities.

In its second year, we witnessed the ways this pandemic has set back years of progress made towards gender equality.

Young women around the world continued to face the disproportionate brunt of COVID-19, as many saw their plans, careers, education and opportunities put on hold. Steep job losses, increased incidences of violence in the home and the heavy burden of unpaid labour fell unevenly on the shoulders of women – particularly young women, Black women, Indigenous women and women of colour.

As a result, conversations about, and action towards, equity, representation and the inclusion of women and gender-diverse leaders in spaces of power are more important than ever.



**Heather Barnabe**  
CEO

Over the past year, our work to promote the full participation of young leaders in decision-making spaces has taken on even more urgency.

We continued to be guided by our commitment to gender equity and driven by our vision to advance the full participation of young women and gender-diverse leaders at every decision-making table.

With your support, our team tackled these challenges head-on, pivoting to find innovative ways to support young leaders. Backed by a dedicated team, Board, and committee members, and alongside committed donors and strong programming, we:

- [Launched our Next Level program to address disruptions young women face in the COVID-era](#)
- [Ensured young voices were heard at board tables across Canada](#)
- [Delivered 26 essential leadership trainings for 154 young leaders](#)

This year also gave us the opportunity to reimagine our organization and reflect on our path forward. Highlights include:

- Developing a new 5-year Strategic Plan, informed by our community and by our commitment to gender equity. This plan is ambitious and future-focused, and will serve as our guideposts in the years ahead.
- A name change. In 2021, G(irls)20 became Fora: Network for Change, ensuring our organizational identity matches our values. Community members shared their insights to ensure our new direction reflects their priorities and lived experiences. [Learn all about our rebrand on p.4.](#)

As you read this Annual Report, I hope the urgency of our work in the face of ongoing local and global challenges comes to the forefront. And, as you read about the impact our programs have on the trajectory of so many exceptional young leaders, I hope you also feel immense pride in our work. We most certainly do.

With thanks,

*Dr. Rumeet Billan*

*Heather Barnabe*



## MISSION, VISION & OUR WHY

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### Our Mission

Fora is advancing the full participation of young women leaders in decision-making spaces to change the status quo.

### Our Vision

A world in which young women are able to participate fully in the economic growth, political stability and social innovations of their countries.

### Our Why

We have work to do:

- Last year, only 25.5% of Parliamentary seats around the world are held by women, with less than 2% held by women under 30.
- In Canada, public and private corporations have 19.4% of their board seats filled by women. Less than 5% of these seats are filled by women under 30.
- In the public, private and non-profit sectors combined, 90% of board directors are white, male, and an average of 60-years-old.

Since 2010, Fora has been working to place young women at the centre of decision-making processes.

In 2021, we heard more important conversations around equity, representation, diversity and inclusion happening than ever before. But there's a lot more work ahead of us.

Alongside young leaders and partners, Fora works to create meaningful change by advocating for the full participation of young women and gender-diverse youth in decision-making spaces at every level.

## INTRODUCING FORA

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Last summer, we introduced you to *Fora: Network for Change*, a new name and new look informed by, and reflective of, our community, our mission, our vision and our values.

### Why the new name?

Over the past two decades, we have seen the world undergo a seismic shift. We heard calls from our community, rightly demanding more from the gender equality movement.

We listened.

As we developed our new strategic plan, we consulted with program participants, partners, staff, board and our broader community to develop and focus our new strategic plan on two core areas: impact and growth.

We took what we heard and integrated it into our strategic planning process. What emerged was a natural shift in the presentation of our organization.



## Why “Fora”?

Fora (the plural of ‘forum’) is defined as places where ideas and views are exchanged. Our new name represents our approach to programming, community and advocacy work.

It gives us space to grow and change, while also amplifying our current mission.

It shifts attention away from any one institution or individual, to reflect our larger community.

Our programs and operations will continue to be participant-informed, using an intersectional lens that especially considers the experiences of Black, Indigenous and racialized community members, the different lived experience of youth around the world and the diversity of genders.

Together, we will continue to change the status quo for young changemakers, from community tables to the halls of government. We are grateful for all your support of G(irls)20 in our first decade and look forward to working together as Fora in the years ahead.





## Our Impact in 2021

Here are some of the highlights of what our Fora community made possible in 2021.

**26** Virtual Leadership Trainings Held

**154** Young Women & Gender-Diverse Youth Trained

**27** Spaces of Power Influenced

**4** Research & Reports Published

## Our Impact since 2010:

**1,000+** Young Women & Gender-Diverse Youth Trained

**11** Global Summits Held

**254** Summit Delegates Trained

**135** Young Directors Trained

**105** Partnering Boards

**50** Countries with Community Ambassadors

# OUR PROGRAMS

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## Girls on Boards

Girls on Boards is building a new generation of decision-makers in Canada. By training, supporting and placing young, emerging leaders from diverse backgrounds at board tables, this program puts forth a new vision for governance across the country.

The Girls on Boards program is building emerging leaders' skills and networks through training and mentorship, including:

### Technical Skills:

Introduction to Governance, Financial Fundamentals and Fund Development

### Essential Skills:

Negotiation, Professional Communications, Overcoming Imposter Syndrome and Navigating Tokenism & Microaggressions

### Mentorship

#### Networks:

A community of volunteer coaches (senior women and gender-diverse professionals) who provide one-on-one coaching

### Leadership

#### Experience:

1-year term placement on a registered non-profit governance board as a voting or ex-officio director

## Our Impact:

Since launching in 2017, Girls on Boards has had a big impact:

**170** participants placed on boards across 8 provinces

**350** additional participants trained at Leadership Forums

**105** governance boards participating

**80** coaches involved in mentorship

**70%** of participants recruited identify as Black, Indigenous or racialized. For a uses an equity lens to ensure diversity in regional representation and family income.





## Get on Board: Masterclass

On October 2 and 3, over 100 learners from around the world joined Fora for our Get on Board: Masterclass. The workshops provided young women and gender-diverse youth with essential skills required to join a non-profit governance board.

### Our Impact:

**104** young women & gender-diverse attendees

**16** hours of training received by learners

**26** countries represented

**4** LinkedIn Badges earned by each learner



“Going into it, I knew I would be learning a wealth of knowledge around board governance. I know that my newfound confidence stems from the care, thoughtfulness and intention that has gone into this program.”

**Katia El-Mokdad,**  
Cohort 5 Young Director, Girls on Boards



## Next Level

Next Level is a brand-new program, launched in response to the urgent disruption caused by COVID-19. Through this pilot program, Fora provided 20 young women and gender-diverse youth from the retail and hospitality sectors in Canada with social-emotional skills and transferable skills training and coaching to navigate the changing economy on their own terms.

Through weekly online workshops and bi-weekly coaching, Next Level leaders had the opportunity to build skills in leadership, negotiations, communications, marketing, financial literacy and budgeting, job interviews, resume-writing and networking.

### Our Impact:

- **100%** of participants felt more confident in networking
- **91%** of participants knew the next steps to take to transition their careers
- **91%** of participants felt more confident speaking up when their voice was needed



“I loved the Next Level workshops. It was great to be in a (Zoom) room with like-minded people who wanted to help you succeed. The program helped me gain confidence and helped me be better prepared for the professional world.”

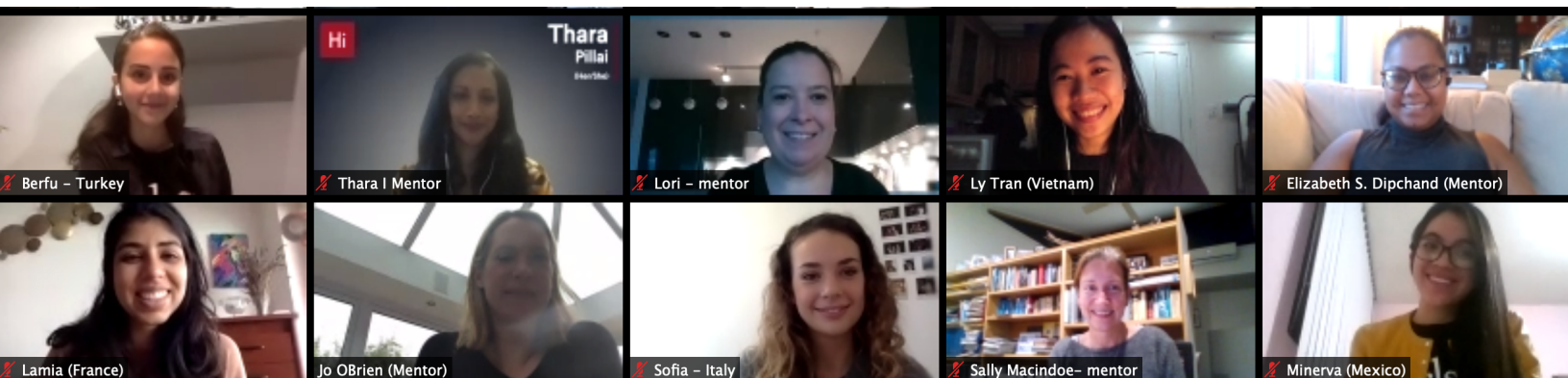
**Brianna Dos Santos,**  
Cohort 1 - Next Level Leader

## Global Summit

Our Global Summit brings together accomplished young women and gender-diverse trailblazers from around the world for a week of leadership development, advocacy and policy-creation training. Every session is designed to propel Delegates forward on their leadership trajectory and help them advocate for gender equity in their local communities.

With our new strategic direction in place, we knew it was also time for a Global Summit refresh. In 2021, in response to ongoing pandemic-related challenges, Fora paused the Summit for one year to give ourselves room to reimagine what future Summits could look like.

We invited our community and the Steering Committee to participate in sharing thoughts and ideas to help re-evaluate the structure and criteria, and further strengthen the Summit experience.



### As of 2022, the Global Summit will:

- Stand alone from the G20 and be open to delegates beyond G20 countries
- Be hosted in Canada
- Include regional representation from six regions: Africa, Asia & the Pacific, Eastern Europe, Indigenous Peoples, Latin America and Caribbean States, and Western Europe & Other.

Some things are staying the same! We are committed to ensuring the Summit experience continues to deliver exceptional value to participants, and the Summit will continue to:

- Focus on building skills and community
- Support delegates beyond the Summit by connecting them with opportunities to share their voices in spaces of power (including the W20, G7, Women Political Leaders, Women's Forum for the Economy)

We look forward to bringing young leaders together for dialogue and collaboration in 2022 and beyond.

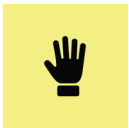
# CONNECTING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

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## Full Participation: Five recommendations for including young women in decision-making

In 2021, the UN Commission on the Status of Women focused on a theme of “women’s full and effective participation in decision-making in public life.” This aligns closely with Fora’s mission of advancing the full participation of young women leaders in decision-making spaces, to change the status quo.

For the 65<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women Official Meetings, we published a [White Paper](#) and global campaign with five recommendations to include young women in decision-making spaces:



**Avoid the Trap of Tokenism**



**Invest in Mentorship & Coaching**



**Acknowledge Imposter Syndrome**



**Amplify Young Women’s Voices**



**Measure Progress**

## Fireside Chat: Women in STEM

On May 21, Fora hosted a fireside chat with Astrid Fontaine, Member of the Bentley Motors Board of Management, People, Digitalization & IT and Mmabatho Mokiti, Mathematician turned Entrepreneur for an impactful conversation on developing confidence and navigating careers in male-dominated STEM industries. They also shared insights on navigating trends in STEM, and advice on how young women can have a competitive advantage in the future of work.





### **The ColorStay Life-Proof Series, in partnership with Revlon**

In June, Fora partnered with Revlon to present an engaging, two-part series featuring women at the top of their professions sharing insights on navigating imposter syndrome, building negotiation skills and helping young women lead with confidence.

Presenters included Sarah Nurse (Team Canada, Silver Medal Olympian and IHF World Champion), Michele Romanow (Co-founder and President of Clearco, Dragon on Dragon's Den), Nadia Theodore (Senior Vice President, Global Government and Industry Relations, Maple Leaf Foods Inc.) and Miriam Buttu (Director, Development & Operations at Fora).

### **Unpacking Canada's First Pandemic Federal Election**

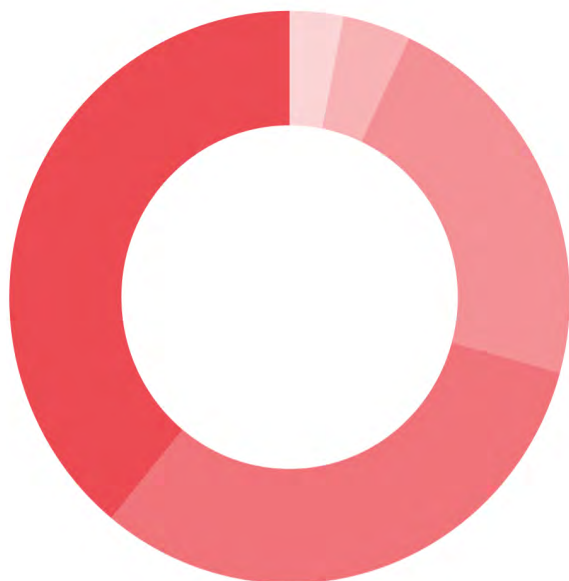
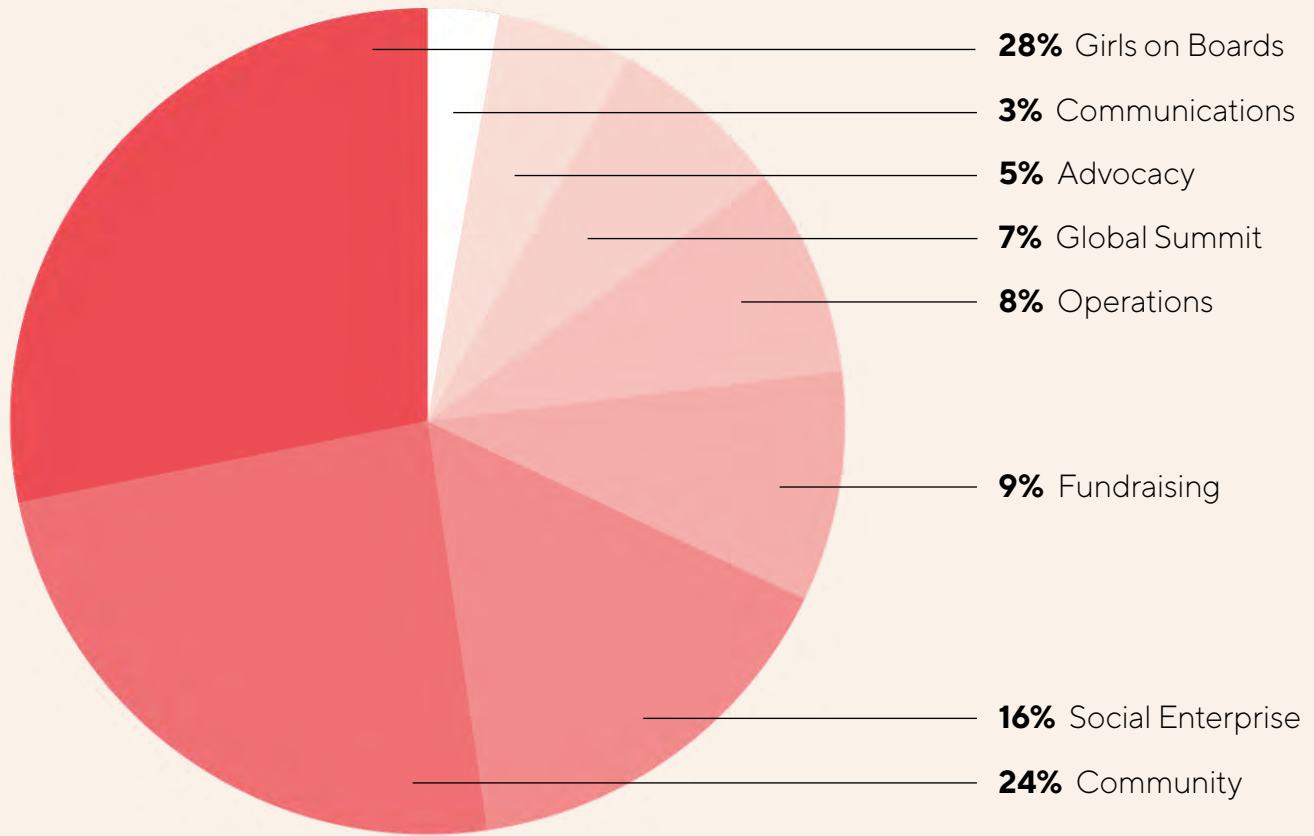
On September 22, Fora and YWCA Canada teamed up to host the Pundits' Panel, breaking down election results and what they meant for so many issues that were raised during the election period, such as anti-racism, childcare, climate change, economic recovery, gender equity, housing and homelessness, reconciliation and Canada's role on the global stage.

Fora's Bailey Greenspon (Director of Programs & Global Engagement) joined Fae Johnston (Executive Director of Wisdom2Action), Hannan Mohamud (Canadian Council of Muslim Women Board Member), and Anjum Sultana (former National Director of Public Policy & Strategic Communication at YWCA Canada) in conversation about what the results meant for young women and gender-diverse youth.

# OUR FINANCIALS

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## Your Gifts at Work



## Where our Support Comes From

- Major Donors 3%
- Individual Donors 4%
- Corporate 22%
- Foundations 32%
- Government 39%

## 2021 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

For the year ending December 31, 2021

	2021	2020
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash	\$561,361	\$447,340
Accounts receivable	6,792	45,627
HST recoverable	11,458	13,968
Prepaid expenses and deposits	6,931	1,253
Total Current Assets	586,542	508,188
<b>Capital Assets</b>	2,621	2,719
<b>Total Assets</b>	\$589,163	\$510,907
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$15,301	\$10,685
<b>Deferred Contributions</b>	199,893	210,745
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	215,194	221,430
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	373,969	289,477
	\$589,163	\$510,907
<b>CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	\$735,254	\$635,110
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Advocacy program	33,912	4,769
Community program	156,972	52,061
Girls on Boards program	183,324	183,136
Global Summit program	45,214	111,715
Communications	17,976	0
Fundraising	58,747	7,841
Operations	52,860	82,694
Social enterprise program	101,757	92,457
<b>Total Expenses</b>	650,762	534,573
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENSES</b>	84,492	100,437
<b>Net assets, beginning of year</b>	289,477	189,040
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	\$373,969	\$289,477



**Thank you for  
supporting  
young women &  
gender-diverse  
voices around  
the world!**

**Board of  
Directors**

Dr. Rumeet Billan (Chair)  
Elizabeth Dipchand (Secretary)  
Minora Arnold (Treasurer)  
Chauntae De Gannes  
Suzanne De Lint  
Michael Geddes  
Tanvi Girotra  
Robin Holloway  
Carrie Kirkman  
Farah Mohamed  
Lori Spadorcia  
Nadia Theodore

**Girls on  
Boards  
Steering**

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Amal Elmi (Co-Vice Chair)  
Sarah Mariani (Co-Vice Chair)  
Sibel Cicek  
Elizabeth Tuck  
Khadija Waseem

**Global  
Summit  
Steering**

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Dunola Oladapo  
(Vice Chair)  
Ayushi Banerji  
Lena Hoffmann  
Lara Kasbari  
Justine Landis-Hanley  
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Advisory**

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Hibaq Gelle  
Chanèle McFarlane  
Sarah Mariani  
Crystal Witter  
Brianna Brown  
Jace Meyer  
Elle AyoubZadeh

**Global  
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Ashleigh Au  
Heidi Bonnell  
Elana Chan  
Joanne Fedeyko  
Amy Greenshields  
Lisa Kimmel  
Julie Reilly  
Kristine Stewart  
Paddy Torsney



# SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY

We extend our deepest gratitude to our valued supporters. Thank you for making our work possible.

## Valued Sponsors:



Women and Gender  
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité  
des genres Canada



## Foundations:



**Flanagan Foundation**

## Major Donors (\$1,000+)

Minora Arnold  
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Elizabeth Dipchand  
Martha Eggenberger  
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Vishwath Kumar  
Alyssa Pei  
Linda Rasmussen  
Lori Spadorcia



**LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!**

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Website:** [www.foranetwork.org](http://www.foranetwork.org)

**Email:** [info@foranetwork.org](mailto:info@foranetwork.org)

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