



annual report

Dogwood brings people together to transform our democracy, uphold Indigenous rights and defend the climate, land and water that sustain life in B.C.



Message from the Chair

By now a cliché understatement, this has been a year like no other with “unprecedented” challenges for Dogwood, B.C. and the world. I am proud that our organization has been able to face these challenges with resilience, compassion and tenacity.

In the midst of fires, heat domes and pandemics, Dogwood’s campaigns to fight climate change and advance democracy were more relevant than ever. Our staff and volunteers found creative ways to advance the organization’s strategic goals throughout the ups and downs of the public health crisis. Overall our volunteers and supporters found their connection with the organization to be a source of hope in a dark time, and people continue to look to us for leadership on climate action and related energy issues, as well as political analysis.

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Dogwood also completed a strategic planning process this year with staff, board members, allies and experts, developing a new strategic framework with a revitalized mission, vision and core principles to drive the organization forward. The 3 Ds will be our beacon for the coming years: decolonize, decarbonize and democratize. I am particularly grateful for the work of Jada Gabrielle Pape, who facilitated a series of sessions for staff, board and volunteer leaders on Indigenous history and decolonization. This work significantly influenced the strategic framework,

as did the insights from experts who agreed to participate in a UBC research project I co-led for Dogwood, *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in B.C.’s Environmental Movement*.

In December 2020, Dogwood and the BC Government Employees Union signed our first collective agreement after staff unionized earlier in the year. We are grateful to have this agreement in place to support Dogwood staff and provide stability for the organization.

All of this was made possible by the individual donors and funding partners that stuck with Dogwood through these tough times. With this steadfast support, and COVID assistance from the federal government, Dogwood remains on a strong foundation.

With our allies we will continue our work to break free from fossil fuels, supercharge decarbonization, and expand voting to those most impacted by today’s decisions — youth. All of this work takes place on unceded, stolen Indigenous territories amidst ongoing colonial violence, racial injustices and profound wealth inequalities. Thus, as the 2021–2025 Strategic Plan outlines, Dogwood will contribute, always, to the generations-long project of repairing the injustices of colonialism and dismantling systems of oppression.

All of us at Dogwood look forward to working with you on the 3 Ds: decolonizing, decarbonizing and democratizing.

— Jess Dempsey

Campaign Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic prevented us from gathering in person and pushed our organizing work online, presenting a major challenge for our campaigns. We used the opportunity to deepen our learning and draw out the connections between the climate crisis, colonialism and corporate attacks on our democracy. This led to an overhaul of our strategic framework that will guide Dogwood’s work over the next several years.

We continued our longstanding efforts to stop the Trans Mountain expansion project, helping to reinvigorate opposition by focusing on delays, cost overruns and rising public spending on fossil fuel expansion. At the same time we ramped up our work on local power and decarbonization projects in communities across the province, presenting supporters with a clear vision of a better future — our job now is to force politicians to shift their priorities.

Key to that battle is loosening the grip of corporations on the landbase, and dismantling the colonial institutions that suppress Indigenous knowledge, criminalize Indigenous law and stand in the way of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. This year Dogwood recommitted to decolonization efforts in B.C. to help break down the systems created by settlers that have done so much harm to Indigenous peoples and communities.

The people with the most at stake in this existential struggle are children and youth, which is why Dogwood provides dedicated support to high school students working to organize and empower their peers. In 2020–21 we continued our support for youth climate activists and the youth-led campaign to lower the voting age in B.C., which gathered impressive momentum despite the pandemic.



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We kept our connection to volunteers and supporters strong through online events, and drew strength from the many donors who deepened their commitment to Dogwood in this challenging year. This grassroots support, new relationships and a strong, comprehensive new strategic framework position us to play a key role in decarbonizing, decolonizing and democratizing the province we call home.

Organizing

A year under COVID public health restrictions was an existential challenge for the work of community organizing. Working virtually meant no in-person team meetings, one-on-one recruitment, trainings or canvassing.

With hard work and creativity from our dedicated volunteer leaders and small staff team, plus a more cohesive approach between communications and organizing staff, Dogwood not only kept our organizing community together, we provided tactics trainings and educational webinars to give our campaign work deeper context. We heard feedback from supporters that these events gave them a sense of purpose, community and hope in a dark time. To further support the work of volunteers, we redesigned our online organizing hub, now called Base Camp, to give folks a more streamlined way to engage with our work.

Teams continued to meet virtually and, with the help of youth on part-time contracts, even recruited dozens of new volunteers over the course of the year. Volunteers also started a discussion group focused on Indigenous rights, sharing resources to support

learning about colonialism in B.C., past and present. We piloted a rapid-response team to provide more witnesses at Indigenous-led actions subject to police enforcement.

Organizers also experimented with digital canvassing this year. Youth leading the Vote16 team were the first to try this new way of reaching potential supporters by tapping into existing spaces online to find like-minded people and share Dogwood's work. "Digi-can" as we came to call it showed promise, so we formed a special team to test this tactic more broadly.

We kicked off April with a 1,000-person Zoom meeting



Trans Mountain

As the Alberta energy minister said in the early weeks of the pandemic, "now is a great time to be building a pipeline because you can't have protests of more than 15 people". Aided by provincial exemptions from public health directives, contractors worked as quickly as possible to clear land, drill tunnels and lay out pipe on the Trans Mountain expansion route.

This led to terrible accidents (including a worker's death), expensive mistakes and eventually a full two-month shutdown of construction as the publicly-owned pipeline corporation struggled to maintain momentum. Local grassroots groups won another construction shutdown after catching the company destroying endangered hummingbird nests.

Indigenous youth and NGO allies forced several global insurance companies to drop coverage for the pipeline and oil tanker project, jeopardizing Trans Mountain's completion. Dogwood supported all of these efforts, and mobilized supporters to demand accountability for police brutality against Indigenous youth who peacefully occupied insurance company offices.

Throughout the year, we focused on chipping away at political support for this massive, taxpayer-funded boondoggle.

We kicked off April with a 1,000-person Zoom meeting with youth climate strikers, Leadnow, Stand.earth and special guests including Chief Judy Wilson from Neskonalith and MPs from the Liberals, NDP and Greens. Together, we delivered thousands of petition signatures to MPs, stopping a full-scale federal bailout of oil & gas companies.

So far 11,615 people have used a Dogwood letter-writing tool to tell Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland to stop funding TMX construction. In the spring we upped the pressure on the Trudeau government ahead of the federal budget with a volunteer-run



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phonebank to Liberal donors. Local teams also supported and organized demonstrations in the Lower Mainland and Victoria for "Hold the Red Line Against TMX". But we haven't reached the political tipping point yet.

Markets for diluted bitumen are shifting rapidly. Chinese refineries have all but stopped taking shipments from Trans Mountain's existing marine terminal, while refineries in Washington and California are expected to phase out heavy crude as their jurisdictions ban the sale of gas and diesel vehicles in the near future. It will take all of that, plus increased political pressure and likely sustained frontline land defence, to convince Ottawa to abandon TMX.



Climate

The public health crisis opened up new challenges and opportunities in Dogwood's overall work to fight climate breakdown. We started the year mobilizing British Columbians to help the province with its COVID recovery plan. We highlighted some of the best ideas on a crowdsourced Build Back Better [map](#). While the province supported some of the projects (rural broadband, local food, ecosystem restoration and youth conservation jobs) they remain opposed to local renewable energy, and committed to expanding the fossil fuel industry.

Premier Horgan called a snap provincial election in the fall, Dogwood mounted a rapid-response, short-term campaign hoping to push a few brave candidates to speak out against oil and gas subsidies, as many had in the past. A strong core of volunteers, focused on few key ridings, phonebanked with the Organizing for Change Get Out the Vote hub, put up posters and tried new digital tactics for a COVID election. Fossil fuel subsidies became a notable campaign issue, but only Green Party candidates were willing to take a stand. Amid record low voter turnout, the BCNDP won its long-coveted majority government.

Following on Dogwood's work pressuring BC Hydro to support Indigenous and local clean power generation, the organization joined those who have long been on the forefront of the battle to stop the Site C dam. We ran a joint action with the National Farmers Union calling on Premier Horgan to cancel the megadam to protect food security. Our "Don't let BC Hydro jack up your bill" petition reached supporters concerned about out-of-control project costs. But the NDP majority government pushed ahead with the Site C dam under a new \$16 billion budget.

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Local Power

This betrayal from the government fueled growth in Local Power teams in communities across the province, bringing in new people focused on decarbonizing their own lives and working with others to advance initiatives in their communities. The growing frustration with our leaders' lack of ambition is fueling this energy, and we expect it to grow.

Throughout the year, Dogwood continued to participate in the coalition to bring Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) financing to B.C., helping homeowners and businesses decarbonize. The NDP committed to bringing enabling legislation during the fall election and local teams stand ready to mobilize support to ensure it passes.

We rounded out the year with a series of six webinars exploring a range of decarbonize topics featuring Indigenous leaders and experts in health, energy and industry misinformation.

Vote16

Dogwood staff continued our support for the irreplaceable Vote16 team who started off the year with a youth voter registration drive. Over the winter, the team developed a power-building plan for 2021 that focused on growing their list of allies and endorsers, building their social media presence, e-mail list and storytelling capacity, and training more youth volunteers.

They've made big strides towards all of these goals, racking up endorsements from the BC Teachers Federation, the B.C. Federation of Labour, local labour councils and individual unions. Youth continued meeting with MLAs, building leadership on their team and adding thousands of new petition signers.

All of this work continued as Dogwood developed a new strategic framework for the years ahead and helped build the foundation for our turn toward a new vision to decolonize, decarbonize and democratize this place we call home.



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Fundraising

If you remember nothing else from this report, remember this: when the going got tough, Dogwood donors doubled down on their support.

Right from the beginning of the pandemic, unsolicited donations large and small came in to make sure that Dogwood was able to continue standing up for our coast. These donors understood that in this crucial moment, the cynical forces of Big Oil would use the crisis as a cover to push ahead with fossil fuel expansion.

As Jason Kenney’s Energy Minister Sonya Savage told reporters, “now is a great time to build a pipeline.” And while COVID-19 prevented in-person gatherings, Savage didn’t count on thousands of people coming together in other ways to keep oil tankers and diluted bitumen off our coast.

Nearly 8,000 people made a donation to Dogwood during the pandemic. 2,118 were monthly donors, sustaining our operations through thick and thin. 257 new people stepped up to the challenge and became monthly donors this year, the most we’ve welcomed since 2017. Thanks to all of you for supporting our fight when it was needed most.

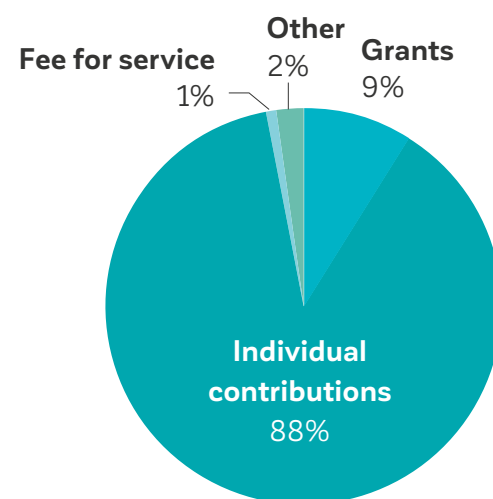
Over 75 per cent of Dogwood’s funding comes from individual donors. Ours is truly a people-powered movement. That said, we are grateful to our foundation partners for their support during this challenging time. Program officers scrambled to meet acute needs in community health, while keeping civil society organizations like ours afloat.

More than any year before, supporters reached out to us to find out how to leave a gift for us in their will. You too can leave a legacy of activism, and keep our coast safe and beautiful whatever may come

The pandemic prompted many supporters to use their time at home to reflect on their lives and plan their legacy. More than any year before, supporters reached out to us to find out how to leave a gift for Dogwood in their will. You too can leave a legacy of activism, and keep our coast safe and beautiful whatever may come.

I am humbled and honoured to work with so many generous people who care about the place we live and share a vision for our future. Thank you for your steadfast support.

Revenue



Financial summary

Summary of revenues and expenditures

Year ended March 31, 2021

	2020-21
Revenue	
Grants	\$88,435
Individual Contributions	\$823,235
Fee for Service	\$10,536
Other	\$14,513
	\$936,719
Expenses	
Overhead	\$171,776
Communications/Campaigns	\$214,850
Special Events	\$412
Travel	\$2,521
Human Resources	\$739,133
Amortization of Assets	\$44,723
	\$1,173,415
Operating Loss	-\$236,516
Gain (Loss) on Foreign Exchange	\$16,129
Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy	\$350,132
Equity Income	\$15,853
Excess of Revenue over Expenditures	\$145,598




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