

StartingBloc

Transparency Report // 2018

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“We are not ahead of or behind each other, we are in a million experiments.”

- adrienne maree brown



Opening letter from LKS

In 2003, Martin Smith and Blake Bible sought out a place to explore the newest, previously unnamed sector of work - social entrepreneurship. Not finding learning opportunities or communities within traditional institutions, they created their own: StartingBloc. Since 2003, StartingBloc has continued our legacy of finding space for what's next, for what's emergent and for bringing forth the power and boldness of a new wave of leadership. Moving away from a focus on entrepreneurship, we have found roots in building a community of leaders that embody the future we're trying to bring forth: one that champions maturity, self-awareness, evolutionary purpose, competence and connection, across industries, sectors, generations and geographies.

The pages of this report are filled with our core values, with the principles that drive our work, and with lessons learned over the last year. They're also filled with stories of our Fellows. What they're doing, what relationships they're cultivating, and how they're building a community of generosity, possibility, and support for the long haul of our work.

To start: In 2018, Sam Zucker (DC'14) worked with a team of Fellows to completely redesign a half day of design thinking content for our Institutes. Her work provided 8 Fellow-led organizations with a total of 36 hours of pro-bono design consulting. Yi Shan (NY'12) developed a 30-hour workweek system designed to enable greater spaciousness and agency, and she offered a workshop on her methodology to 100 people, free of charge. Megha Modi (NY'15) and Sherry Ezhuthachan (BLD'14) practiced deep, co-evolutionary friendship, and then built a platform to share that system with others. Chris Scott (DC'18), Rachel Konowitz (NY'17), Jess Riegel (NY'17) and Debra Cleaver (LA'15) collectively ensured that hundreds of thousands of people were registered to vote in the US, through their leadership at Vote With Me, Motivote, and vote.org, respectively. Nicole Banister (LA'18) and Callie Chamberlain (LA'14) were panelists at the 8th Annual United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) Global Forum, where they spoke in support of young people. Dieudonne Allo (NY'17) and Mikal Anderson (NY'17) teamed up to provide an

“Whatever your personal beliefs and experiences, I invite you to consider that we need a new worldview to navigate this chaotic time. We cannot hope to make sense using our old maps. It won't help to dust them off or reprint them in bold colors. The more we rely on them, the more disoriented we become. They cause us to focus on the wrong things and blind us to what's significant. Using them, we will journey only to greater chaos.”

● Margaret J. Wheatley

intercultural immersion experience in Dieudonne's hometown within South Africa.

Our Fellows and the Fellowship program remain central to who StartingBloc is and is becoming. In addition to a focus on our Fellowship community, we grew StartingBloc's offerings this year. We launched a consultancy, bringing our highest rated content directly to organizations, companies and civic groups - advancing our mission and generating enough revenue to fund another full-time position. We will continue to grow those services and offerings in 2019. We invested in our branding, and the initial results of that work are laid out in the following pages: clarified mission, vision, values and a StartingBloc manifesto. We refined our organizational culture: building a specified inclusion & justice line item into our annual budget, spending time in retreat with our working Board of Directors, and designing systems and processes to support collaboration in a culture of authenticity in partnership with external consultants.

Culture change is big, deep work. We know now, more than ever, that our future requires a new, evolving space for leaders to explore what's possible and find rest within communities of support. As we move into this next year, thank you for joining us, for supporting us, and for challenging us. Let's lead differently, together.

Kristine Sloan
CEO, StartingBloc

Vision Statement

StartingBloc envisions a thriving planet stewarded by leaders who are self-aware, mature, competent and connected.



Mission Statement

To convene and develop leaders and companies who value connection, community and courageous leadership.





Seed

We believe that unearthing the inner wisdom, purpose, and power of each person has the potential to shift culture.



Curiosity

We believe in creating experiences that include space for introspection, reflection and questions to explore the unknown and to reimagine what's possible.



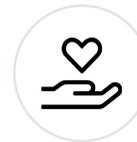
Presence

We believe that by fully showing up for ourselves and each other, we create the conditions in which we will all flourish and thrive.



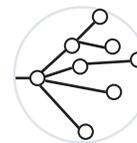
Freedom

We believe that claiming individual dignity and the full expression of self is powerful.



Belonging

We believe that our greatest successes arise out of interdependence; that being held and celebrated in community accelerates our individual and collective advancement.



Evolution

We believe that changes in systems and structures of leadership are powered by the grace and maturity to adapt, transform, and grow in generational time.

Manifesto

The world is in a period of tremendous shift.

People matter. Leadership matters. Culture is created and malleable.

Humans can build systems that enable the planet and one another to thrive.

To get there, leadership needs to be self-aware, competent and mature.

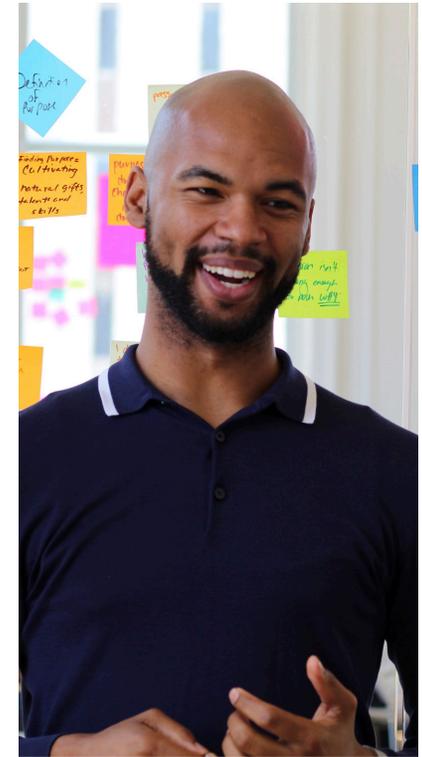
To get there faster, we need to build greater collective belonging and relationship.

StartingBloc works to identify individuals on a journey to embody these traits and we do everything we can to amplify their work. We invest in individualized development and in holding the container for a high-trust community of practice.

By finding the right people, providing them with training, and connecting them with a network of allies, we are intentionally designing a network effect.

Enough of these people, with enough influence, and the culture of leadership will shift: creating justice, sustainability, and co-evolution - a thriving planet.

StartingBloc envisions a thriving planet stewarded by leaders who are self-aware, mature, competent and connected.





Antionette Carroll

Three words guide Antionette Carroll's life and her work at Creative Reaction Lab: Challenge, Change, and Champion. Antionette founded Creative Reaction Lab in response to the 2014 unrest in Ferguson, MO. Since then, Creative Reaction Lab has developed a social justice-oriented form of creative problem solving called equity-centered community design. It is based on equity, humility-building, addressing power dynamics, and co-creating with the community. Antionette is primarily concerned with 'How do you design diversity and equity?'

"We want to create a new form of leaders - equity designers."

"When you recognize you are part of a marginalized community, you have one of two choices: You could accept what life gives you. Or, you can ask yourself what you're going to do about it, and not just for yourself, but for others. When I see a lot of negative things going around, I can't stand idly by. I want to do something, I want to help."

This is where Challenge, Change, and Champion comes in.

"Challenge" means not being content with the status quo. "We must acknowledge that human beings and our society by nature are flawed. We need to challenge the way structures were originally built - they are exclusive and definitely not equitable." The ultimate goal is "Change," completely shifting how systems were originally created.

"I'm a drops-in-a-bucket kind of girl. We need different types of intervention and change - to create the tide that will build a better world."

"Champion" means that this work isn't just a one-off effort at process adoption, it's a paradigm shift: "Equity is integrated into my journey and my mindset." This is even in her language. For example, Antionette doesn't typically use the word citizen,

"because it excludes many in the population that are doing phenomenal work, but they may be undocumented. I use the term resident. That is one way of integrating inclusion and equity into my mindset."

As a designer, Antionette also knows that systems are designed, including systems of oppression, inequality, and inequities. Building upon IBM's definition of design, Antionette defines Design as the intentional and unintentional impact behind an outcome. In other words, Design is everywhere, everything. As creators, we all have the ability to design or redesign for the betterment of all.

"StartingBloc is working with the redesigners. We need to have deep dialogue on equity, diversity, and design. If you're not training and supporting them to create equitable outcomes for all, you are perpetuating the status quo. Social innovation can't happen without equity and liberation for different populations."

Antionette's mantra is "It's not about me, it's about WE." She shares opportunities and even her funding lists with her community.

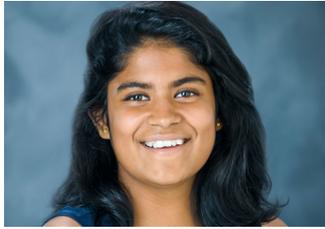
"Generally, people aren't used to that, but I feel that sentiment is universal within StartingBloc. The people that are brought into the institutes are naturally empathetic, humility-filled individuals. At the root of every Fellow, they are trying to help you become your better self."

Antionette sees StartingBloc as building an ecosystem as well.

"We are all essentially building upon each other to design a better society. That one week is just the start--it's a pipeline to something bigger and better. It's the serendipitous collisions that happens afterwards. I met my future board members at StartingBloc, my first TedX talk was organized by a Fellow, opportunities that we've applied for were through the network. If you ask, people are there. It is about supporting the continual development and journey of individuals that have gone through that initial touch point of the Institute. It's not just scholarship, it's actually building a new type of community and system together."



2018 Team



Hamsini Balaji
Apprentice
Oct 2018-present



Melina Martinez
Director of Admissions
Jan-Dec 2018



Kristine Sloan
CEO



Martha Cavazos
Director of Community
Engagement Sept 2018-present
Strategic Partnerships
Director Feb-Sept 2018

2018 Board



Brandi Nicole Johnson
Board Chair



Corinne Baker
Board Member
Jan-Sept 2018



Cortni Grange
Board Member
Jan-Dec 2018



Ellie Bahrmassel
Board Member



Gordon Casey
Board Member



Jai Krishnan
Board Member



Nils Klinkenberg
Board Member



Rhoda Tamakloe
Board Member



Sharan Bal
Board Member



Whitney Smith
Board Member

Speakers, Facilitators, Coaches



Aaron Walker

NOLA'18 Speaker
Founder & CEO, Camelback Ventures



Alexa Broderick

Equity Leadership Intensive
Lead Facilitator
Founder & Principal, The Equity Paradigm



Anurag Gupta

Deconstructing Bias in
Leadership Lead Facilitator
Founder & CEO, BE MORE America



Brandi Nicole Johnson

RDU'18 Volunteer Coach
DC'15 Fellow
StartingBloc Board Chair
Coach, Speaker & Consultant



Christophe Jospe

LA'18 Speaker. NY'17 Fellow
Chief Development Officer,
Nori



Douglas Tsoi

DC'18 Speaker
LA'18 Fellow
Co-Founder, Mycelium PDX



Fay Horwitt

RDU'18 Speaker
Vice President of Community
Innovation, Forward Cities



Flozell Daniels Jr

NOLA'18 Speaker
President & CEO, Foundation
for Louisiana



Heather Booth

DC'18 Speaker
President, Midwest Academy



Heidi Pease

LA'18 Speaker
CEO and Co-Founder, LA
Blockchain Lab



Jaq Pousot

2018 Institute Facilitator - Core
Content. NOLA'17 Fellow
Community Meditation &
Mindfulness Instructor



Jessica Morales Rocketto

NY'18 Speaker
Political Director of the
National Domestic Workers
Alliance (NDWA) Executive
Director of Care in Action



Jonathan Johnson

NOLA'18 Speaker
Founder & CEO, Rooted
Schools



Jonathan Lykes

NY'18 Speaker, DC'18 Speaker
National Youth Organizer and
Senior Policy Analyst



Kat Short

NY'18 Facilitator DC'18
Facilitator
NY'15 Fellow
Founder, Tell Your Damn Story

Speakers, Facilitators, Coaches



Kaveh Sadeghian

NY'18 Facilitator
DC'18 Facilitator
Creative Director, University of Pennsylvania Center for Impact Strategy



Michelina Ferrara

2018 Institute Facilitator - Core Content
Deputy Director, Atlas:DIY



Michelle Gonzalez-Green

RDU'18 Speaker
Founding Principal, 584 Studio and Gallery



Nafessa Kassim

NOLA'18 Facilitator
International Development Consultant, Mosaic Consulting Group



Neela Rajendra

RDU'18 Facilitator
Executive Director, SODI



Omid Safi

RDU'18 Speaker
Speaker, Author, Director of the Duke Islamic Studies Center



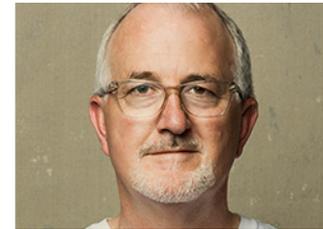
Renee Freedman

Director, StartingBloc Coaching Program
Founder, Renee Freedman & Co



Robert Dowling

LA'18 Speaker
NOLA'16 Fellow
Founder & CEO, Agora



Robert Egger

LA'18 Speaker
Founder & Director, Fucking Shit Up



Ross Morales Rocketto

NY'18 Speaker
Co-Founder, Run for Something



Russ Finkelstein

LA'18, RDU'18 & NY'18
Volunteer Coach
NY'17 Fellow
Co-Founder & Managing Director, ClearlyNext



Sam Zucker

2018 Institute Facilitator - Core Content
Design Strategist



Scott Sherman

LA'18 Facilitator
Founder & Executive Director, Transformative Action Institute



Seth Godin

NY'18 Speaker
Best Selling Author, Founder, Speaker



Shantae J. Edwards

NOLA'18 Speaker
NOLA'15 Fellow
Founder, IAMDOPE.INC

Speakers, Facilitators, Coaches



Tiye Sherrod

Social Justice Consultant
Founder, The Tiye Sherrod
Agency for Diversity/Inclusion



Tunde Wey

NOLA'18 Speaker
Chef/Writer



Vicki Saunders

NY'18 Speaker
Founder & CEO, SheEO



Ysaira Jiminez

LA'18 Speaker
CEO, LaborX

In 2018, our team was supported by:

Brian Manning, 2018 NOLA Institute Coordinator
Andrew Ferren and Goulston & Storrs
Luke Sollner and Blackwood Finance & Accounting
Justin Belleme and JB Media
Jules Howard-Wright
John Bates

2018 Institute Lead Mentors:

Nils Klinkenberg (Program Lead), Ellie Bahrmassel,
Rodney Agnant, and Callie Chamberlain.

2018 Institute Lead Volunteers:

Byron Go, Alicia Bonner Ness, Justin Belleme and
Jonathan Tsubira.

Vision 2022

StartingBloc is financially well-resourced and acts with autonomy and agency

StartingBloc leads a global movement around the Future of Leadership.

The StartingBloc Fellowship becomes the core flagship program of a broader, movement-oriented organization and community.

StartingBloc Fellows are supported with clear, well-defined learning pathways over a lifetime.

StartingBloc's organizational culture is the model for employee engagement, care, and professional development.

Goals 2018

- Emerge from 2018 debt free
 - Meet the 70/15/15 goal (70% earned income, 15% Fellow-funded, 15% sponsorships/grants) with funders who operate on a model of trust and who fund core programming.
 - Secure funding to hire a 3rd full time team member focused on revenue generating structures and major gifts.
 - Create a working definition of The Future of Leadership. Write Concept Paper and publish.
 - Uplift the voices of Fellows in public content, launch Fellow committee on content creation.
 - Secure funding to explore our role in movement making with an expert partner.
 - Attend 7 conferences and workshops to continue to engage with the broader ecosystem and uplift the StartingBloc brand.
- Develop a stronger network of pipeline partners + double the application pipeline to ensure full Institutes throughout 2018.
- Obtain 2-3 external contracts and deliver training (0.5-2 days) with a minimum additional revenue goal of \$10k.

Results 2018

- We finished paying off our long term debt. We maintain revolving credit card debt on one card.
- Our budget consisted of 81% earned income, 12% donations from Fellows and 7% sponsorship revenue.
- In February 2018 we brought on a part time team member focused on strategic partnerships. The position became full time in October and pivoted to a focus on community engagement.
- Core tenants of the Future of Leadership were identified and are on the website. Refined mission vision values and StartingBloc manifesto published above.
- We supported a Fellow content committee throughout the year who interviewed StartingBloc fellows, transcribed their stories and published those stories on our website and in our newsletter. Launched a StartingBloc blog.
- Failed to secure funding for a movement making partner.
- Complete. Some of our favorite conferences this year were OC:US (which StartingBloc supported as a Founding Partner) and AshokaU where we cheered on Forefront, co-founded by StartingBloc Fellows Yulkendy Valdez (NOLA'16) and Josuel Plasencia (NOLA'16).
- We grew the number of pipeline partners by seven and invested time in strengthening our relationships with pre-existing partners. In 2017 we accepted 601 Fellowship applications and in 2018 we only accepted 507. Instead of growing, our application pipeline shrunk.
- We worked with seven different clients which generated \$31k in extra revenue.

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Goals 2018 Cont...

- Deliver five high quality Institutes with powerful facilitators and speakers.
- Reinvigorate our impact survey.
- Continue to strengthen our mentorship program and volunteer engagement.
- Fully map the StartingBloc ecosystem and find a platform that enables connections between Fellows.
- Secure funding to pilot in-person circles of learning between Fellows (1-year commitment). Develop content, curriculum, and execute.
- Develop and launch 3 online modules for current Fellows.
- Develop norms and processes that enable our team to thrive. Nurture deep, honest, curious inquiry around organizational culture.
- Rewrite and publish an employee guide / ethos of StartingBloc document, congruent with Teal organizations.
- Fund benefits packages for team, inclusive of full health, clear vacation mandates, and professional development.
- In addition to our new Director of Admissions, hire 1 additional full-time team member.

Results 2018 Cont...

- Institutes retained an average net promoter score of 9/10. Speakers included Vicki Saunders, Founder and CEO of SheEO, Seth Godin, best-selling author and Aaron Walker, Founder and CEO of Camelback Ventures
- We did not update or adapt the long-term impact survey.
- In 2018 we spent 40+ hours of team time redesigning and rethinking our mentor program, with the support of a social justice consultant and our Board of Directors. Our volunteer opportunities grew, offering clear pathways for existing Fellows to support StartingBloc outside of the Institute.
- Launched The Bloc, a brand new Fellows-only directory and platform. 700+ Fellows created a profile and engagement rates remained over 90% throughout the year.
- Did not secure funding but moved forward on the design and development of learning circles. Worked with a team of over ten Fellows and the program launched January 17, 2019.
- Designed and recorded two modules; modules have not yet launched.
- Organizational culture was a core priority for our team in 2018. We spent two days in New York with The Ready, an organizational design consultancy building the systems and processes we needed in order to truly function as a Teal organization. We hired a social justice consultant and developed a protocol to collaborate authentically.
- The new employee handbook is drafted and set to be published in Q1 2019.
- Health insurance funded for the full team. Changed vacation policy from unlimited vacation to unlimited with a two week minimum. We added a professional development stipend into the FY18-19 budget (\$2K per team member).
- Hired 3rd full time team member.

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Goals 2019

- Meet the 70/15/15 goal.
- Secure funding/generate sufficient revenue to hire a 4th full time team member.
- Create a new visual identity for StartingBloc's brand.
- Attend 5 conferences/trade shows.
- Host three highly rated Institutes with newly designed curriculum.
- Host five Bootcamps - one day events with community partners in cities across the US.
- Bring in \$60k in revenue from StartingBloc's consultancy program.
- Provide 12+ Fellow-led regional teams with stipend to support their agency and to enable decentralization.
- 90+ Fellows engage in a StartingBloc Learning Circle.
- Grow the number of Fellows on the Bloc to 1,100.
- Publish employee handbook.
- Publish two articles that showcase StartingBloc's culture and highlight lessons learned from becoming a Teal organization.
- Fund retirement benefits for full team.



Celebrating Forward Movement

We Launched The Bloc - our new Fellows Only Directory

Due to support from Fellow donations, we were able to launch The Bloc, our new Fellows-only platform. The Bloc grew from a beta-version with 50 Fellow users, to a platform of over 730 Fellows with a 96% engagement rate. The Bloc hosts evolving features like a SB-curated Digital Library, a space to feature Fellows' #asks and the possibility to indicate whether you're hiring or searching for a job. Trust us, if you're a Fellow, and you're not yet on The Bloc, we encourage you to dive into the new, emerging way we connect and grow as a community.

We Clarified Who we Are and Who we are For

Over our 15 year history, StartingBloc has consistently lacked clear brand identity and our brand has been dominated by a "cult of personality" (brand legitimacy and understanding housed within people, rather than decentralized and representative of the organization/community as a whole). This year, Alicia Bonner Ness, NY'17 Fellow and Founder of Heptagon Productions, donated 50 hours of her time to help our team work through a rebranding process. Our intention was to get clear on who StartingBloc is now and who we are for. We conducted 10 open community calls with Fellows to get a better sense of where StartingBloc is strong and where we are evolving. We captured feedback from Fellows through an online survey and we worked with our Board of Directors. Our new mission, vision, values and manifesto came from that work, as well as a clarified sense of StartingBloc's role in supporting leaders and companies. Our next step is to create a new visual identity for StartingBloc - work we will complete in 2019.



The branding work also enabled us to see that even within our community, the sense of "who StartingBloc is" and "who StartingBloc is for" is all over the map. As an organization committed to evolution, we've changed a lot over the last 15 years and we haven't done a good job at communicating our core shifts. After hearing from dozens of Fellows throughout the year, we decided to launch a new convening structure for 2019. The StartingBloc Bootcamp will be held in cities across the United States throughout 2019. Bootcamps will give Fellows (and interested potential new Fellows) an opportunity to reconnect with one another and with StartingBloc. We'll have content centered within our emergent definition on the Future of Leadership and each Bootcamp will feature the work of a community partner who has deeply influenced our thinking on "who we are". If you're interested in experiencing StartingBloc in 2019 but don't feel ready to commit to mentoring or volunteering at an Institute, [Bootcamp](#) might be for you.

2018 Wins / Fails

We Worked “On the Business”

We spent a lot of 2018 working on the business, rather than in the business. We focused on organizational culture and health, developing new protocols and systems internally, working with a social justice consultant, and making significant shifts in our operating model and budget. Even as a community-centered organization, we consistently worked with strategic priorities that looked like “systems even over responsiveness” and “org culture even over execution”.

Steve Jobs said “Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work.” We spent a lot of time this year discussing and refining and iterating StartingBloc - to orient the organization in a way that it does truly great work. Specifically,

- 1 After our NOLA’18 Institute, we worked on bringing a trauma-informed facilitation lens to the Institute space. With the grace and guidance of our core facilitators (thank you Sam & Michelina) and the NOLA’18 cohort (thanks y’all) we decided to bring our half day inclusion and identity workshop earlier in the Institute and our Design Thinking workshop later to help mitigate bias and power dynamics in how we design and work together at Institute. Mitigating these dynamics, along with offering more space, time and individual and collective reflection are key ways we started to bring a trauma-informed facilitation lens to Institutes. NOLA’18 was rated a Net Promoter Score of 7.91/10. By contrast, after our iterations the next Institute (one month later) was rated a 9.38/10.
- 2 We engaged tension and didn’t indulge drama (to quote adrienne maree brown). We’ll discuss more below, but in 2019, StartingBloc got called in and got called out by our community. 15 years of legacy, lack of clarity around who StartingBloc is and is for, and serious missteps on the part of our team resulted in a large social media thread within our Fellowship community, full of concerns, ideas, and feedback. Our team and Board heard from
- 3 We worked more in a mindset of financial abundance. We began to pay our speakers at Institute and we focused on finding the right people, with the right life experience, wisdom and message to put in front of our Institute rooms. We brought StartingBloc’s work out into the world, fundamentally shifting our operating budget and financial model through launching a Consultancy. We approved a 2019 budget that includes stipends for our Regional Leadership teams, fewer Institutes, and concentration on structures for existing Fellows.
- 4 We stepped into decentralization. We worked closely with existing Regional leadership teams to refine and update our regional leadership structure, and we are doubling the number of those teams in 2019. We continuously interrogated questions around feedback loops at StartingBloc and how we could spread out a sense of “who has the answer” within our growing Fellowship community. We worked to decenter the voice of the team and instead amplify the voices of our Fellows - by having a Fellow content committee, by launching a StartingBlog and by being intentional around the new programs we approved within our budget.

hundreds of Fellows, whose experiences and perspectives were drastically varied in terms of their experience of StartingBloc (support systems, programs for Fellows, what they expected of the organization, how StartingBloc should move forward). We’re proud that we engaged that tension over a full year time horizon. We held community calls, opened up a process for Fellows to shape norms and expectations within the community (with thanks to LA’15 Fellow David Fridley), pivoted and iterated our approach when needed, and most importantly, decided that we needed to do the work internally to create an organizational culture that was more equity-centered and collaborative. Especially after our NOLA’18 Institute in May, our team made the commitment to continue to move forward - to sit with the tension and reality of the organization but also to not let that tension be or become drama.

Where We Fell Short

It Took Getting Called out/Called in to Change

StartingBloc is a listening organization - we pride ourselves on our ability to adapt and evolve to meet our Fellows where they are at. The problem with that approach is that it often doesn't take into account the ways in which power, voice, and belonging move and flow through community. As such, we often hear the same voices when we ask for input, and that limits the amount of creativity, imagination, and constructive criticism that we receive as an organization. In 15 years of operation, we haven't created clear systems for feedback. In the last four years alone, we grew from a community of 2000 to 3000 (exponential growth) and yet we did not foresee a need for clearer, more depersonalized feedback loops. In 2018, we got called out in public and we were called in during many private, direct conversations. Liz Weaver has said that "Authentic community change moves at the speed of trust." In a moment in time where many of us feel distrust in companies, organizations, and institutions, StartingBloc also lost some of the trust of our community. Communities like StartingBloc's Fellowship are the most powerful when they earn and maintain high-trust relationships. Moving forward, we intend to build trust not only through personal relationships, but also through transparent structures and systems.

Institutes were Undersold

Our Institutes are filled by word of mouth direct referrals from existing Fellows (on average 70% of any incoming cohort of Fellows found out about StartingBloc from an existing Fellow). When we lost some of the trust of our community, we also lost their voice as champion and advocate for the organization, and our Institute numbers fell dramatically. Institutes were undersold - we had space for 500 incoming Fellows this year and only welcomed 316 into the Fellowship. In addition, our

sales and marketing efforts, designed to expand our audience, were ineffective and stagnant. As a result, we were unable to fully achieve our mission, lacked the financing to invest in the community, organization and team, and we felt a sense of financial urgency throughout the year. We diverted time and focus from fundraising and strategic partnership development into Institute marketing and lost out on opportunities to grow.

Fundraising Stagnated

StartingBloc creates deeply meaningful, transformative impact in the lives of our Fellows. We have always been hindered by our lack of fundraising success and 2018 was no different. Fundraising in 2018 stagnated, as we diverted our team time and focus from fundraising into community health, Institutes, and organizational culture. Ultimately, this means that our 2019 programs are bootstrapped instead of well-resourced and that we don't have an abundance of funding to support access into the Fellowship community. Additionally, we have not been able to invest in strong structures of support for our Fellowship community.



Lorenzo P. Lewis

Lorenzo P. Lewis was at a daring moment in his career when he attended StartingBloc. Lorenzo wanted to focus on mental health for black men and personally knew how important it was to bring this idea to life.

I was looking for something different. I knew what I wanted to do, but I didn't have the tools. I was on the beginning edge of social entrepreneurship.

I tell people I was born into this identity. I was born in a prison, since my mom was incarcerated at the time. Throughout my young adult life I struggled with a lot of issues of depression and trauma. I was a juvenile delinquent myself when I was 17. I lost both of my parents before I was 21. At the age of 21, I started working at the Juvenile Delinquency center. Over the next 10 years I worked in Behavioral Health, across the general population. Working with kids started it for me."

Lorenzo was working with the Arkansas Department of Human Services. He had earned his Masters in Public Administration and was in the field he aspired to, but he felt there was still more that could be done.

"I slowly started wanting to tap back into my previous work in mental health facilities, but this time I wanted to do it from a community grassroots perspective."

Lorenzo brought his vision for the Confess Project to the LA '17 Institute Ideas Marketplace and was voted a top pick for Ideas to workshop.

"It didn't advance to the final, but it was a big deal for me. I'd never been around these people! For them to think that much of the idea, I realized that I had something. It gave me that daring chance to say that I didn't have to just submit, that I could live beyond the measures of what I wanted to do. Honestly, that one moment allowed me to stick to it."

Lorenzo is now the Founder and Project Director of The Confess Project, which works on suicide prevention for black males, aged 10 to 40, through mental health awareness and education. The Confess Project operates in schools, colleges, and barbershops. In all settings there is a focus on

Interview completed and transcribed by StartingBloc Fellow Sherry Ezhuthachan



Story of Impact

wellness tools and building mental health resiliency. In the barbershop they provide a series of talks and workshops, which they are now evolving to include a mentorship and advocacy program.

"It all intersects at the barbershop. So many young black males already see their barbers as mentors. In their regular visits to the barbershop, the community, the men of color - both participants and contributors - can all identify inside a cultural arena that allows each other to not only eliminate stigma, but access resources and services. It becomes normalized to talk about emotions.

We recently had a barber that overcame the stigma enough to start therapy. He then got other barbers on board and led us into creating a training program for barbers to become mental health advocates themselves. Now barbers can support these men even when the Confess Project isn't there!

I got to give it to the communities and the world, we didn't do this on our own. We played out small part in a big way".

Lorenzo is now working with the College of Public Health at the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences to become an evidence-based program that is able to show improvement in these communities, especially in the rural south.

"Suicide is the third leading cause of death for black males, and only 2% of psychologists in America are black. African Americans and Hispanic Americans are some of the most disenfranchised communities because of the historical context of slavery and racism, There's never been any kind of racial healing, never any resources for mental health literacy or treatment. These racial barriers create a stigma leaving these men less likely to receive treatment. Research shows that what we're doing with Confess Project is rare on many levels. We use the barbershop's cultural identity and place in the black community to normalize mental health."

With the feedback and support of the StartingBloc community Lorenzo has been able to sustain and expand on his vision.

"I don't think we would have seen how the Confess Project could multiply to communities beyond my home; it can go to 30 places, instead of two."

Lorenzo is currently working on expanding the Confess Project nationally, with goals to adapt the program for international use.

Learn more at theconfessproject.com

Interview completed and transcribed by StartingBloc Fellow Sherry Ezhuthachan



2018 Financial Summary

2018 was a mixed bag financially. We grew a completely new revenue stream through our consulting work and brought in additional funding through donations and sponsorships. In total, we brought in/raised \$107k in donations, sponsorships, and consultancy income. However, we were \$102k under our projected numbers for Institutes. End result? Our Annual Operating Budget shrunk by 2% from 2017 to 2018.

Significant shifts from 2017 to 2018:

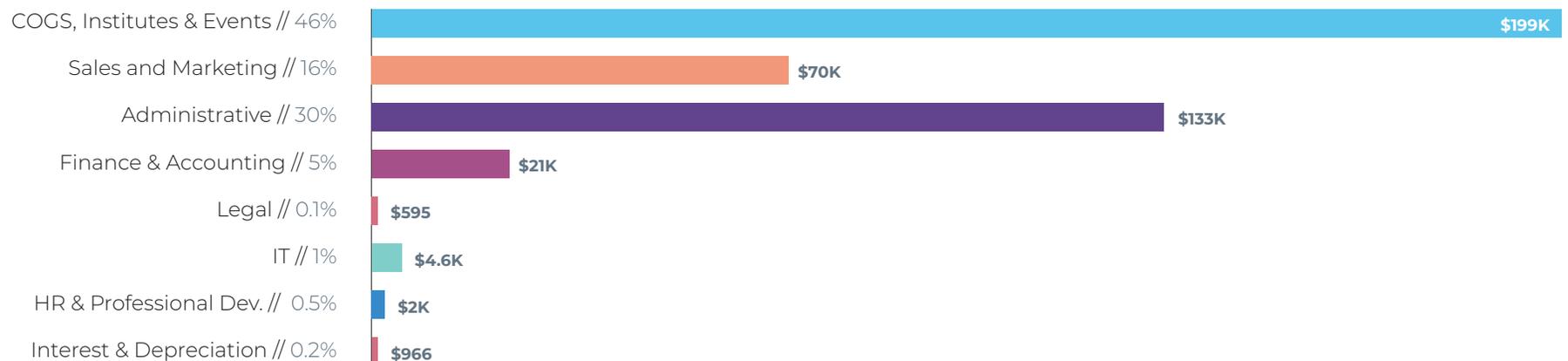
- We lowered operational costs by \$11055 even with hosting a 5th Institute, hiring a third team member with health insurance benefits, and investing in software for a Fellows-only directory and platform.
- We built a new program to advance our mission: the StartingBloc consultancy.

- Our Fellowship application pipeline shrunk. We saw fewer applications come in, accepted fewer applicants, and had smaller Institutes across the board. Our Institute marketing and sales failed.
- We awarded more scholarships. In 2017, incoming Fellows utilized \$91k in scholarship funding. In 2018, incoming Fellows utilized \$103k in scholarship funding.

Similar patterns cropping up in our work:

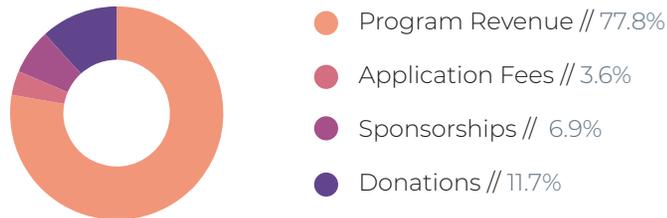
- We made little progress on fundraising for major gifts. We reported that as a key constraint for our work in 2017 and it continued in 2018.
- The number of incoming Fellows at our New Orleans Institute remained small, even with investment in a local coordinator. While hiring someone local to NOLA was a great choice to bring in local leaders (thanks for all of your amazing work Brian!) we still didn't generate the "pull factor" for folks applying from outside of New Orleans, and the Institute was again our smallest of the year.
- We're awarding more and more scholarship funding without significantly growing our donations and grants. We're not managing the tension of access/inclusivity and sustainability/abundance very well.

2018 Costs

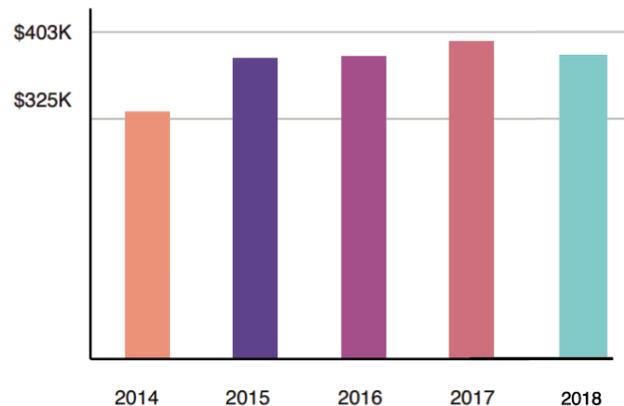


StartingBloc's Finances

2018 Revenue



Operating Budget



Fundraising

Total // \$49.7K



Scholarships Utilized



The 2019 Financial Picture

This summer, we took a long hard look at our 2019-2021 priorities as well as who we want StartingBloc to be now and into the future. We drew out the financial implications of those decisions and our 2019 operating model reflects a significant shift in how we intend to work.

First, we committed to depth with our existing Fellowship community. Instead of hosting 5 Institutes (focus on growth), [we're hosting 3 - in LA, RDU and NYC](#). We raised the price of entry into the lifelong Fellowship from \$1250 to \$1500. Without those extra 2 Institutes, we opened up time to build [Learning Circles](#) - creating a structure for monthly accountability, continued growth, and deepened relationships within our Fellowship community as well as a new revenue stream for the organization. In response to the feedback we heard from the StartingBloc Fellowship Community, we also built a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion line item into our budget, to support continued training for the StartingBloc Board of Directors and Team.

Second, we combined our desire to build meaningful partnerships with our love of place. We're hosting 5 one-day events (Bootcamps) in cities across the US, in partnership with community-based organizations we admire. We identified cities that we either want to continue engagement with (NOLA & Baltimore) or where we are really interested in laying down roots (Detroit, St. Louis & Seattle). [You can see the full schedule of Bootcamps here](#).

Finally, we're investing in high level marketing consulting to expand our audience and share our work with the right people. We're thinking about StartingBloc as an opportunity for individual leaders, companies, and city governments to begin to lead differently. Whether that's through attending an Institute, sending a team to a Bootcamp, or funding a full day retreat for Chamber of Commerce members, [we're excited to engage and build together](#).

“A rebellion is important, we said, because it throws into question the legitimacy and supposed permanence of existing institutions. A revolution, however, requires that a people go beyond struggling against oppressive institutions and make a evolutionary/revolutionary leap towards becoming more self-conscious, more self-critical, more socially responsible human beings. In order to transform the world, we/they must transform our/themselves. Thus, unlike rebellions, which erupt spontaneously and usually last only a few days, revolutions require a patient and protracted process of two-sided transformational struggles. Going beyond rejections to projections, they bring onto the historical stage human beings who are practicing new, more socially responsible and loving relationships to one another and to the earth.”

- Grace Lee Boggs

In Closing

If you've read through all of the pages of this report, you probably see a narrative of an organization that, in a sense, "wrung itself out" in 2018. In 2019, we're continuing to do the work of refining, clarifying, and building internally. We're investing in high level marketing and sales strategy consulting, we're seeking to hire a fourth team member, and we will run open recruitment + selection for our next Board of Directors. We'll host 3 Institutes, 5 Bootcamps, and we will work with dozens of companies, organizations and civic groups. Within our Fellowship community, we will grow the Bloc, build clear systems for feedback, fund and support Regional Leadership teams, and launch monthly circles of learning and accountability. Finally,

we'll continue to invest in clear brand identity and igniting a new narrative around leadership, highlighting the stories and voices of our Fellows as we go.

If you are interested in supporting a group of StartingBloc Fellows in your region, funding our vision, or bringing StartingBloc's content and workshops to your next team retreat or organizational offsite, please [let us know](#). You can [use this link to donate](#).

To collectively embodying the future we hope to create,

The StartingBloc Team

