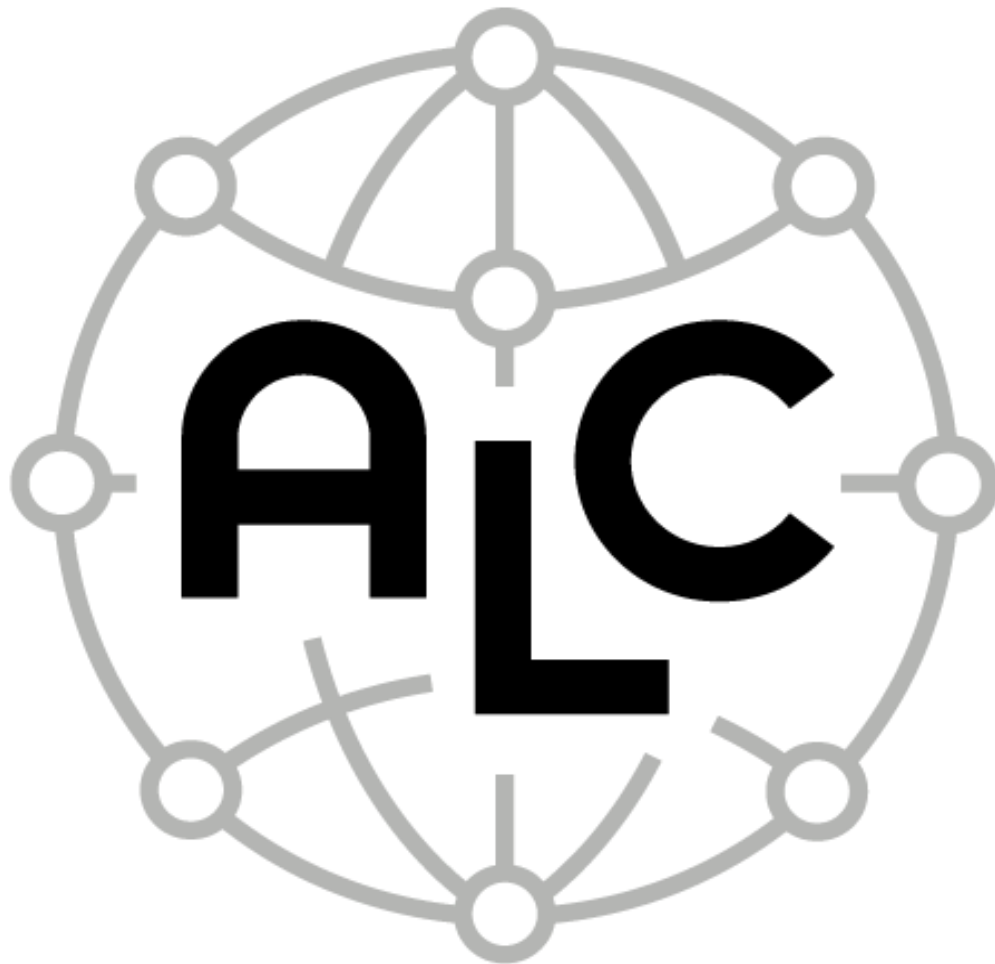


Agile Learning Centers: First 5 Years Report



Vision

We envision a future where the understanding that learning is happening all the time radically redefines education. We are building toward the possibility for every person to practice self-direction, self-expression, and community co-creation as they grow. Finally, we imagine that facilitating reflection and sharing among learning communities will guide them in adapting to our continuously changing world.

Purpose

By building relationships and connection across learning environments, we increase the accessibility of community wisdom and support for all involved, improving the impact, sustainability, and resilience of all projects.

Mission

Our mission is to support the operation of Self-Organized Learning Environments. Geronimo Education, DBA: “Agile Learning Centers” is also the holder of the ALC educational model as applied to early childhood, ages 8-18, and continuing education.



Practice

Early-Year Network Projects: Starter Kit, Slack, Google Drive, Trello, Website Hosting/Building/Upkeep, Support Calls, Organization Bank Account, Membership Model, Member Onboarding and Updates, Starter Kit Downloaders communication,

2017-2019 Undertakings: Optimizing website(s), Strategizing more robust blog/transcript platforms, Strategizing responsible support of international growth, Improving member onboarding, Strengthening ALF Community, Tending Local Catalysts//Culture-Shapers, Starting Monthly Member Newsletters, Increasing Transparency, Organizing Documentation, Updating Legal and Public Documents, Planning Summer Offerings, Reimagining Board, Convening Board of Advisors to call in even more brilliance, Work to stabilize Finances



Intended long-term Operations: Gather data to better communicate our impact, Raise and collect funds that cover staffing and annual ALF retreat, Tend and offer coaches and consultants, Coordinating and making accessible regular ALF/ALC trainings and gatherings, Provides startup courses (not unlike Aero), Set up established ALCs to be able to host rising ALFs for training seasons, Creating and maintaining an accessible toolkit, Translate key documents, Provides scholarship funding to make our membership more accessible

A Brief History of ALC



2012 [Beta Year]

- September: Agile Learning tools & practices piloted at the Manhattan Free School

2013

- Summer: Founding team brought ALC concept and reflections from Beta Year to incubator in upstate New York over the summer. They officially retired the Manhattan Free School and launched the Agile Learning Center of NYC in its stead.
- September: ALC-NYC began its first official school year. Homeschool program Cloudhouse ALC launched near the incubator in Chatham, NY.

2014

- January: ALC Mosaic launched in Charlotte, NC, with partner program Roots for younger learners following soon after.
- Winter-Spring: Branding and logos designed by Eric Friedensohn
- July: First “ALF Summer” facilitator training (19 participants & 5 projects represented) hosted by existing project facilitators at ALC Mosaic, with intentions of cohereing the network identity, supporting start-ups, and training facilitators
- July: Collaborators from ALC-NYC and ALC Mosaic adopted 501c3 non-profit, Geronimo Education, set up board of directors, and filed DBA: Agile Learning Centers, officially creating the Agile Learning Centers network organization.
- September: 3 ALCs began a new school year. Start-up launched in Everett, WA.



2015

- January: ExAlt ALC launched in San Juan, Puerto Rico.
- July: ALC Network hosted the second ALF Summer training at ALC Mosaic (37 participants & 8 projects represented), this time turning a profit.
- August: The network website launched. The first ALC Starter Kit was published, ALC Membership model launched, and the facilitator network adopted online communication tools Trello & Slack.
- September: 4 existing projects began a new year, and 4 new projects launched. 2 had folded.
- Fall: ALC Network representatives began attending conferences, offering workshops, and consulting with projects, such as CASA Middle School in the Bronx, NY, to support teachers there in adapting ALC tools and practices for their environments.

2016

- The first edition of The Facilitator Guide released
- June: ALC-NYC hosted the first ALF Summer program outside North Carolina, intending to increase the accessibility of trainings (15 participants, with 4 ALC projects represented)
- July: ALC Network hosted third ALF Summer at ALC Mosaic (45 participants & 14 projects represented)
- August: Upgraded the website & Starter Kit site. Began registering new members on our website, making record-keeping simpler. Also, partnerships with key voices in self-directed education (Akilah Richards, Scott Noelle, and Dr. Peter Gray) led to collaboration in support of *self-directed.org* launch
- September: 12 projects--out of the 17 launched since 2013--entered a new school year.
- November: ALF Change-Up call initiated a State-Of-The-Network review, to be carried out through the following months of documentation consolidation, local gatherings, and group calls

2017

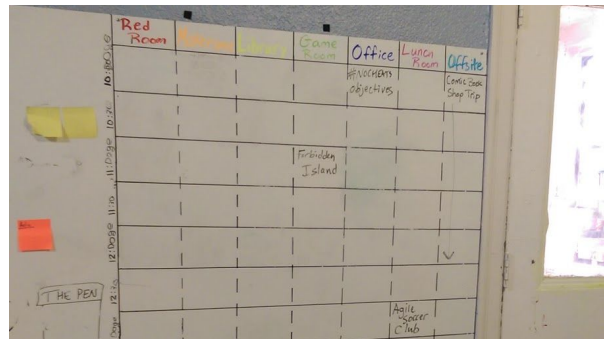
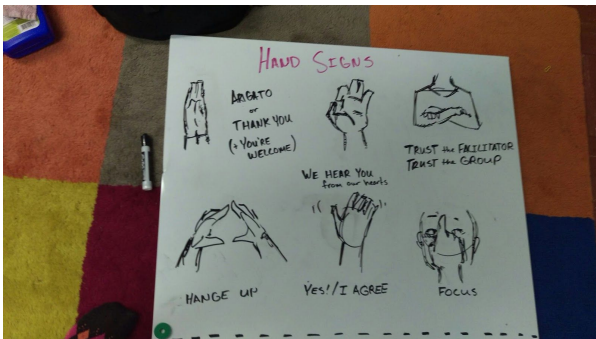
- June: Season of ALF Summers began, in which the first US West Coast ALF Summer, first non-English ALF Summers, and first international ALF Summers were held.
- August: ALC Network board transitions, in preparation for an organizational reset following the previous months' review conclusions.
- September: Weekly calls for facilitators started back up, and monthly newsletter emails were started. Member experience survey was sent out.
- October: Regular trainings facilitated growth of Start-ups in Mexico. Experiments with workshop designs accommodate differences in location and time-zone, as well as language, commenced. Coordinated InterALC relief efforts sent water purifiers and solar-powered appliances to ALC-connected community in San Juan after the hurricanes.

2018

- January: New logo options and Individual Membership offering were announced
- February: Updated version of the Starter Kit was released, along with a fundraising campaign towards which an anonymous donor pledged \$10,000 in matching funds
- March: Spanish-language translations of Starter Kit and The Facilitation Guide were released. Season II of ALF Summers offerings were shared.

School Snapshots





Photos are from ALCs in North Carolina, California, New York City, Georgia, and Mexico...5 of our now 57 projects globally.

Facilitating Facilitators...and Growth

ALF (Agile Learning Facilitator) Summer began in July 2014 in Charlotte, North Carolina as an informal gathering between facilitators at the ALCs in New York and Charlotte, and a few additional community members who wanted to learn more about the project. The gathering lasted three weeks and had 19 people in attendance. It served to connect facilitators across schools, craft sharable versions of the foundation of the model, support aspiring start-up groups, and train new facilitators. Our second ALF Summer nearly doubled in size, with 37 participants. That gathering facilitated the launch of 2 brand new ALCs, supported 3 start-ups, launched our website, and led to the first version of the Starter Kit. By the end of the 2015, our open sharing of resources and commitment to intentional co-creation sessions among ALFs had brought us from a hope to save an East Harlem school to the emergence of a global initiative. We had 16 total ALC Network Member Organizations: 4 Official ALCs, 9 ALC Startups, and 3 organizations using our tools.

	2014	2015	2016
Week 1 Attendees	19	37	45
# Existing ALCs Represented	3 (NYC, Mosaic, Roots)	3 (NYC, Mosaic, Roots)	6 (NYC, Cottonwood, Mosaic, Roots, Endor, ExAlt)
# New ALCs Represented	2 (Everett, Cloud House)	5 (Endor, Oahu, ExAlt, Muddy Schoolhouse, Cottonwood)	7 (Explora, iSpark, Wildwood, Heartwood, Emerson, Manitou, ZigZag)
\$ Income		\$26,840	\$33,000
\$ Net Income	NEGATIVE	\$11,000	\$12,750
Key Outcomes	ALC Network Organization	Website, Starter Kit Beta Version, ALF Trello, ALF Slack, Google Drive Resource Folder	Start-Up Coaching, Growth Report started, Adventure Playground collaboration

ALF Summers at ALC Mosaic 2014-2016

In 2016, ALC-NYC began a transition in how the summer facilitator gatherings were organized by hosting the first ALF Summer run by an established ALC community and oriented primarily as a training. By 2017, there were 6 summer programs and 2 autumn ones offered in their local English, Spanish, Arabic, Greek, and Dutch. This shift has increased the accessibility of ALF programs, sparked translations of resources, still managed to connect facilitators from across ALCs, and allowed start-up programs to develop support relationships with established communities who remain valuable partners for them after the programs end.

In response, the role of the ALC Network has morphed from organizing and facilitating the training-gatherings to 1) improving the infrastructure for communication, connection, and sharing among those holding ALC projects and 2) begin to look for sources of funding which will enable us to host annual retreats, serving the leadership development and relationship building needs we see emerging.

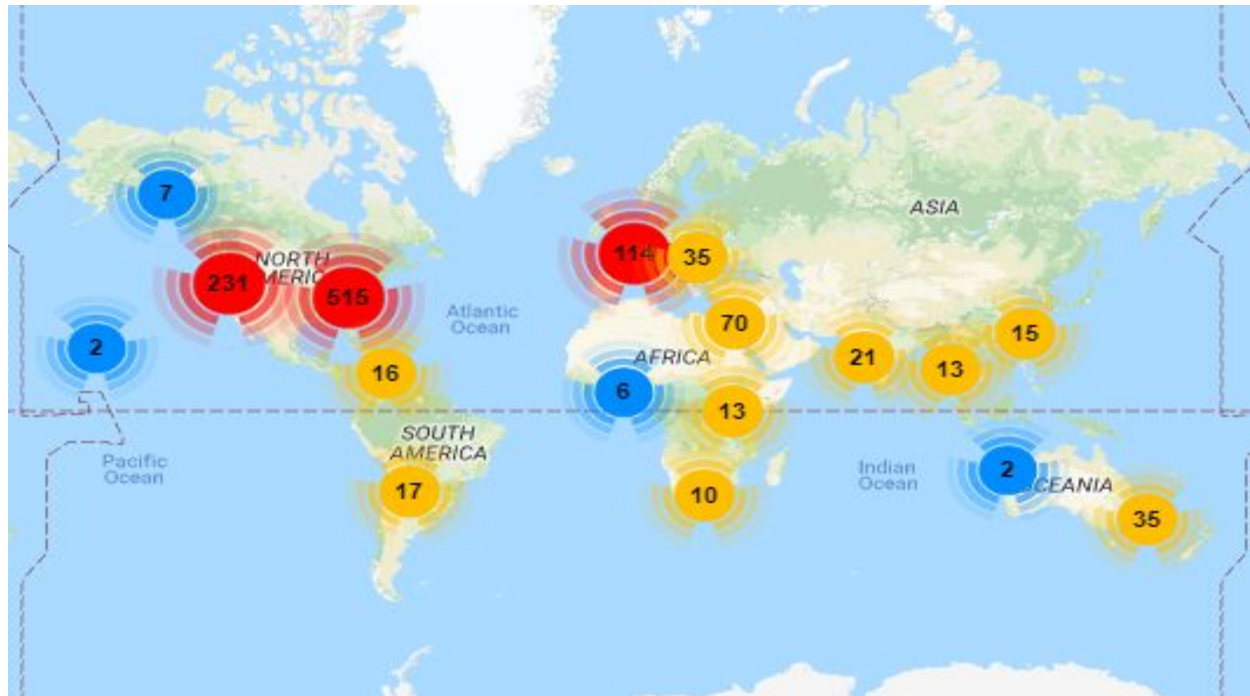


We are currently anticipating 10 facilitator trainings will be offered from April to August of 2018. The trainings are expected to take place across 4 continents and in multiple languages.

In addition to trainings, ALFs will also be hosting at least 2 camps, 3 workshops, and 2 retreats during that same 5 month period.

Mapping Our Impact

Between August of 2015 and March of 2018, our Starter Kit was downloaded 1906 times. Since the release of the updated version of the Starter Kit in early 2018, there have been multiple new downloads each day. Freely sharing this and other resources have helped our philosophy spread around the world in just a few years.



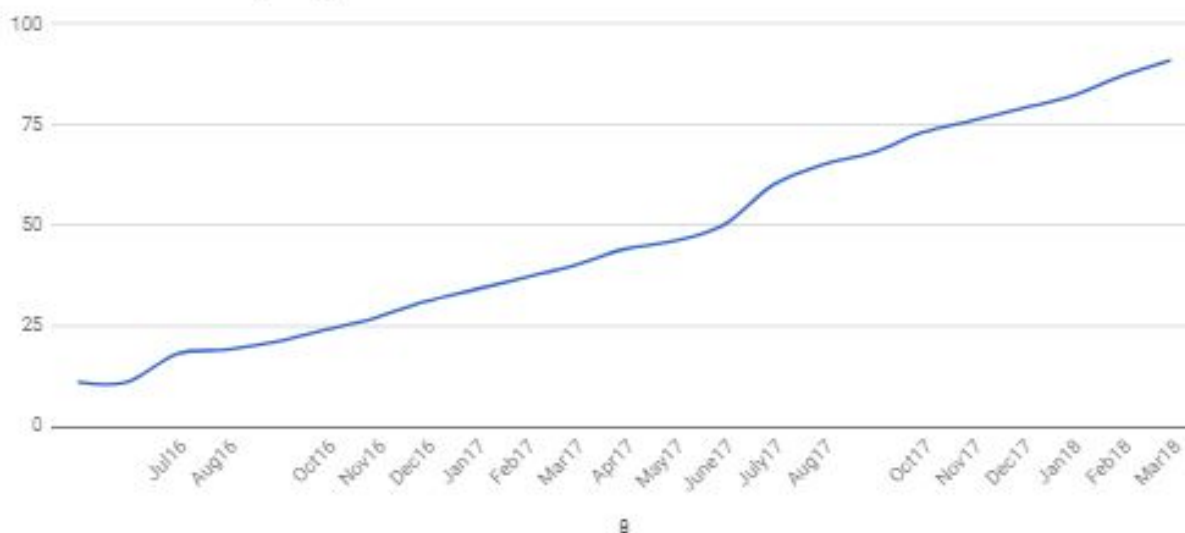
Starter Kit Downloaders as of March 18, 2018



ALC Network Member Organizations as of March 18, 2018

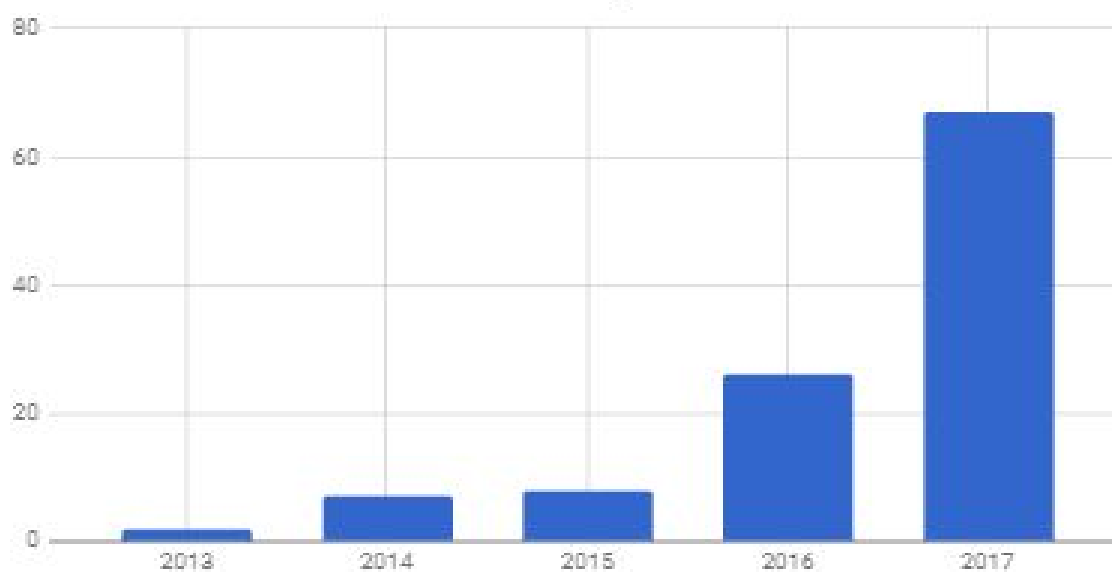
Since the launch of our Membership model in 2015, we have seen a consistent increase in new memberships each year. At this point, the number of new memberships we see increases by an average of 230% annually. 72.5% of all member projects--from a total that includes the 7 pre-2015 projects--remain active and retain network membership. As of the end of March 2018, the ALC Network shows a growth of 857% since the launch of our membership program and a 1800% growth overall.

Total Membership Registrations



New Membership Numbers, from webform entry export 3/18/18

Number of Active ALC Member Projects



Active Organization Memberships, from webform submissions as of 3/18/18

Financial Info

In the first years of the ALC Network, there were a handful of us scrambling to educate ourselves, sprout our local communities, define our broader ecosystem, generate open-source documentation of the work we were doing, and seed communities of collaborators around the world. The vast majority of this work for the ALC Network has been and continues to be carried out by facilitators and ALC community members who volunteer extra hours to support the larger network.

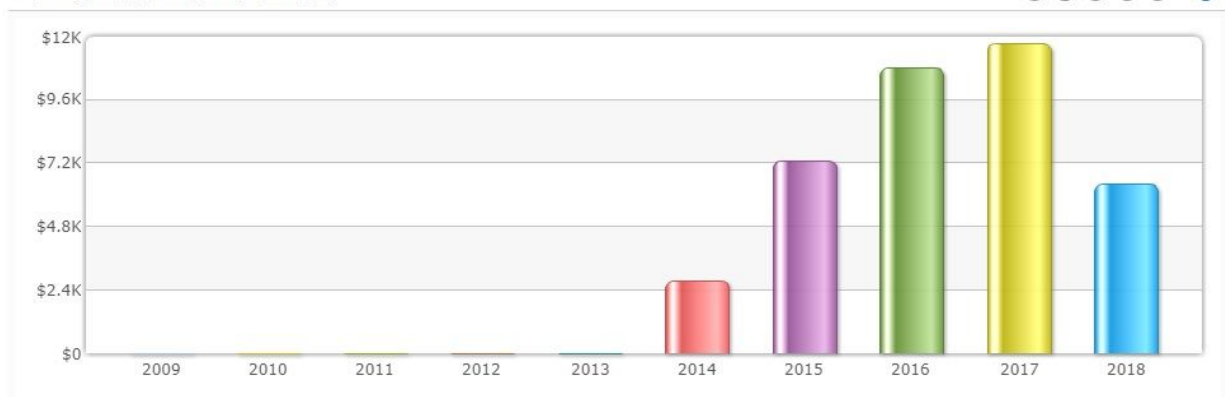


As minimal as we have collectively tried to keep our operating expenses, they necessarily increased as we grew. At first, revenue from ALF Summers, membership fees, donations, and consulting gigs generated enough income to cover our expenses.

Net Worth History

• You have 1 unread message - [view messages](#)

Report by Year Quarter Month Week Day



Net Worth History

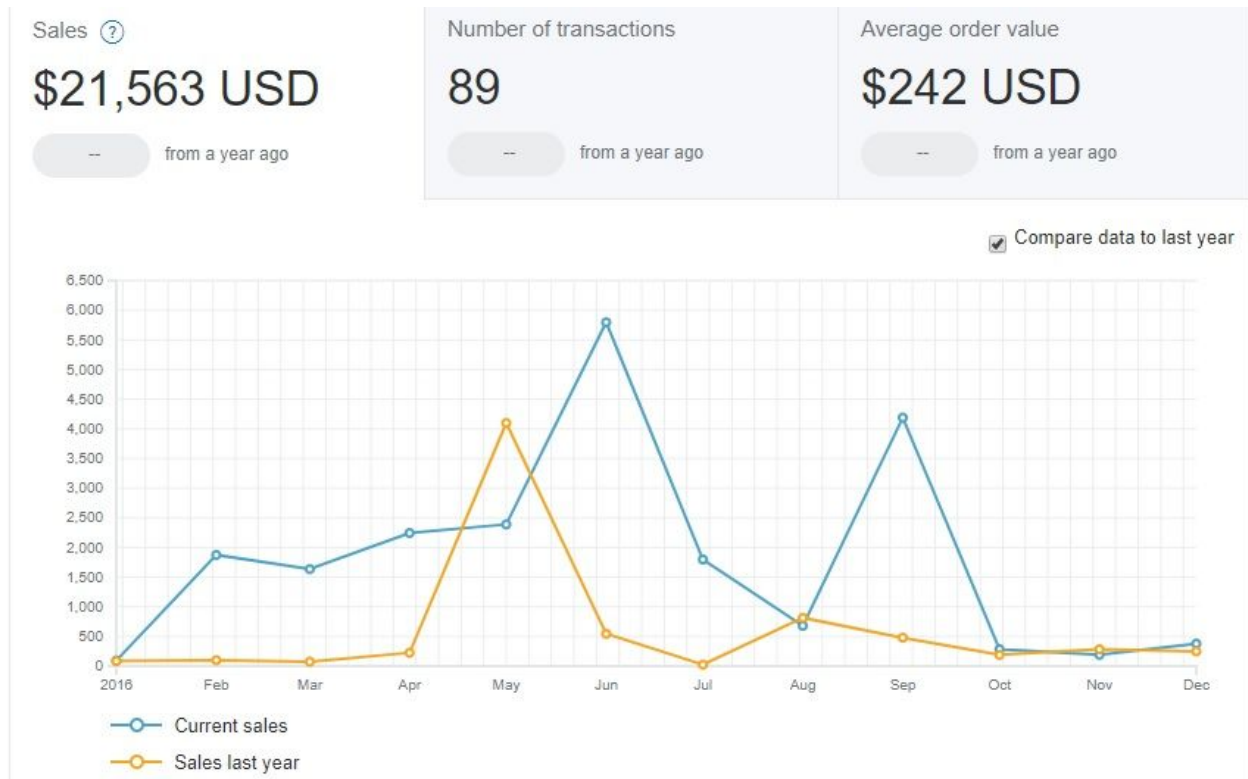
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Report by Year Quarter Month Week Day



Charts from Charlotte Metro Federal Credit Union,
Agile Learning Centers account overview 3/27/2018

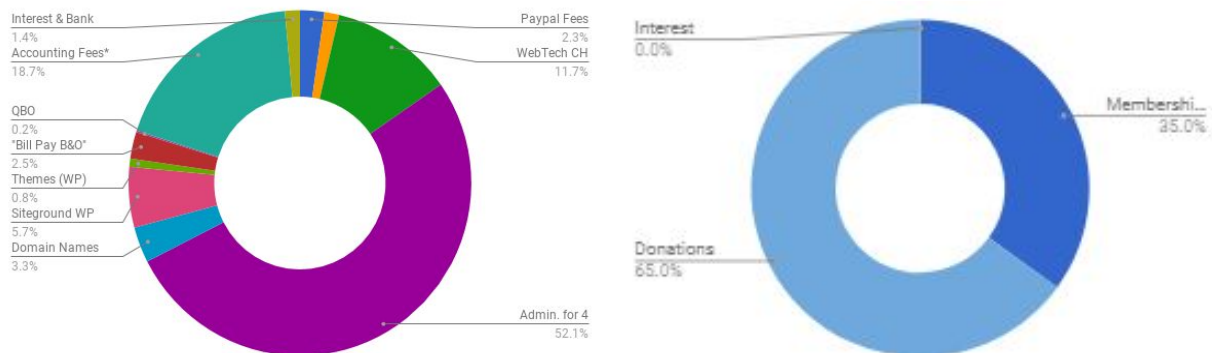
Most of our cash flow has been managed through PayPal. As visible in this chart comparing 2016 to the previous year, by our second year as an organization payments for registration and programming were coming in fairly regularly, with seasonal trends beginning to emerge.



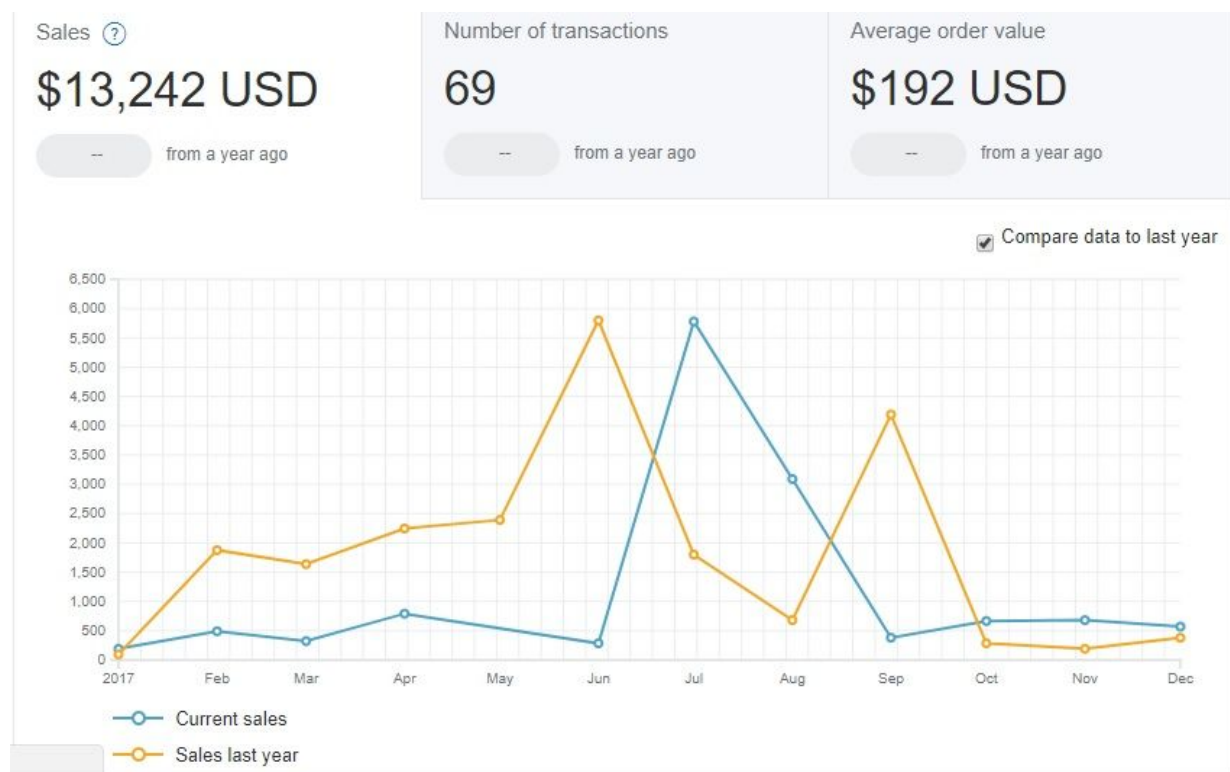
*PayPal Activity Summary comparing
2016-2017 to 2015-2016*

In 2016, we shifted the hosting of ALF Summers from the ALC Network to individual ALCs and deprioritized organizing consulting gigs so we could focus on sustainability and web infrastructure efforts. These choices were made in the interest of the long-term health of the organization, but they also meant operations which had previously helped fund the network organization would no longer do so to such an extent. With the State Of The Network review started in the fall of 2016, it became clear that the next few years would need to involve careful budgeting and intentionally setting up structures to fund our future work.

That 2016 and 2017 were transition years is clearly reflected in our financial assessments and summaries from those years.



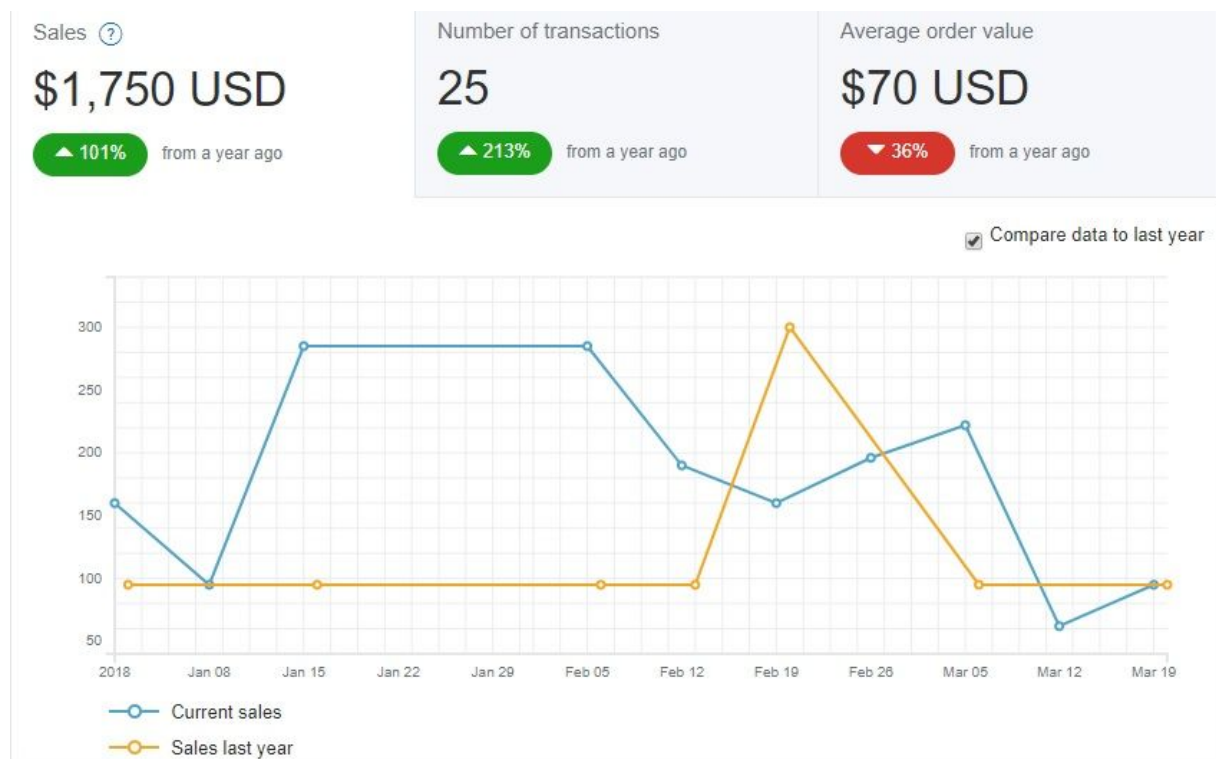
Breakdowns of our expenses and revenue, based on estimates for the year from late 2017. One donation was earmarked to fund the administration work.



The PayPal activity summary comparing 2017-2018 to 2016-2017 shows both the decrease in ALF Summer transactions in spring and summer, though similar overall.

We are already seeing the fruits of having spend the past two years reflecting and refining, even if taking that time means having slightly less in savings than before. Much of the wealth generated is non-monetary: the developing leadership, the increased communication between member organizations, and a more robust website all included. If this first quarter of the year is any indicator though, the financial support we have invited through launching a spring donation-matching campaign, encouraging supporters to sponsor our work with monthly contributions, engaging Starter Kit downloaders, and adding a new membership option for individuals is and will continue to come our way.

With most of our expenses still related to the upkeep of infrastructure, and with goals of hosting annual leadership development retreats and conferences by 2020, we plan to spend much of the summer of 2018 setting up fundraising efforts that let us steadily move towards our goals without decreasing the affordability of membership for new projects.



PayPal Activity Summary comparing
1/18 - 3/18 with 1/17 - 3/17

Our Board



Mercer Carlin is a founding parent from the original ALC in NYC. Mercer's passion for and commitment to self directed learning were much of the reason the Manhattan Free School was transformed into the first Agile Learning Center rather than simply folding in 2012.

Mecer has spent the last 21 years in corporate America as an Executive at a company named TRANZACT. Her passion has been to create human focused, empowering cultures in the workplace. Most recently she has been responsible for close to 1000 licensed insurance agents across four locations. These centers are known for being great work environments thanks to the work of Mercer and her team.

In 2016, Mercer joined our board, left her job, and began focusing on community building in and among ALCs.



Tomis Parker has been working directly with self-directed education models since graduating from college in 2008. After 4 years with the Manhattan Free School and some freelancing in the EdTech world, Tomis worked as part of the ALC-NYC founding team to transform the free school into the first Agile Learning Center.

In 2013, Tomis began running the ALC in NYC, where he remained the Director through the 2015-16 school year. During that time, he oversaw the launch of the Agile Learning Centers brand, trained new leadership, consulted with start-ups, co-organized the first Agile Learning Facilitator training program, and co-founded the ALC Network. He project-managed the launch of the Alliance for Self-Directed Education with other thought-leaders in the self-directed education field. Tomis has been on the board since 2014 and is currently based out of ALC Mosaic.



Abby Oulton started volunteering with the first ALC in the fall of 2013, and joined the staff a year later. She had just finished 6 years of exploring how different formal and informal education projects change societies, spending lots of time with kids and earning a degree from the Individualized Study program at NYU in the process.

While energized by and grounded in day-to-day facilitation, Abby additionally took on administration and community building for the school. After becoming one of the school's directors, she started planning and co-hosting facilitator trainings, working to provide support for facilitators across the network, coaching new directors and emerging community leaders, and sharing stories from the NYC school.

In summer of 2017 she joined the board with the intention of adjusting operations to better reflect the scale and diversity of the expanded community. She continues to write, host calls, coordinate trainings, explore partnerships with related projects, and play outside with kids, in service of her local and global goals.



Rubén Alvarado participated in the 2012 Emerging Leader Labs incubator of projects for social transformation, where ALC was one of the projects being workshopped. There he became familiar with self-directed learning and the intentional creation of culture. He returned to the following year with the task of co-facilitating the incubator and serving as a personal coach for some members of the community. In the following years he has continued to facilitate the creation of self-directed learning spaces, mostly but not exclusively in Mexico and the United States. He was brought ALC practices and SDE principles to organizations of different natures: sports teams, recreation groups, companies, and artistic projects, among others.

In 2014 he participated as a facilitator in the Ágil ExAlt Learning Center, in San Juan, Puerto Rico and during 2015 and 2016 as a Self-Directed Learning Coach with Coaches Across Continents, a Sports NGO for Social Impact, in North and South America, Asia and Africa. Currently he works as a coach, support facilitator, community builder, and facilitator trainer across ALCs while also serving as a coordinator for Spanish speaking regions.

For the Next Five Years

Check out our goals!

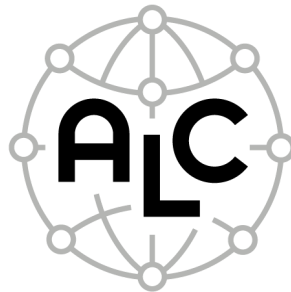
1. Increase sustainability by setting up regular and effective fundraising campaigns
2. Increase stability of our communication platforms and websites by intentionally redesigning them to scale with our community
3. Increase coherence by finding ways to fund and organize regular retreats for those doing network work, including those hosting ALF trainings
4. Increase accessibility by prioritizing translation projects, developing a system to adjust our membership fee for those whose local currencies are significantly weaker than the USD, and improving the onboarding of and burnout prevention for volunteers
5. Increase transparency by continuing to publish internal newsletters and committing to compiling and releasing regular annual reports

Connect with us!

1. Find a local ALC or ALC Start-up and say “Hi!”
2. Attend a workshop or training
3. Host a workshop or training in your community
4. Check out the free, open-source publications shared on our website
5. Sign up for an individual or organization membership

Support our work!

1. Practice authentic and respectful relationships with learners of all ages (you, too!)
2. Share our resources, social media posts, and story with your friends
3. Volunteer, either with your local ALC or with one of our network working groups
4. Donate by going to agilelearningcenters.org and clicking “Support”
5. Get in touch about sponsoring an upcoming conference or training



Thank you!

Feeling curious, inspired, or generous? We'd love to hear from you.
Find us at agilelearningcenters.org or email us directly at info@alc.network!

