“As a Latino woman in society, it is fundamental for me to have the right information at all times. We sometimes are not provided with the right concepts on certain topics because of detrimental biases that affect the way my community is perceived.”

— Ana Rodriguez, Archie Williams High School student and NLP’s 2021 Gwen Ifill Student of the Year

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Dear Friends of NLP,

Current events continue to underscore that news literacy education is essential for the future of a healthy democracy.

For too many, trust in institutions, including the media, has ruptured. They no longer find facts convincing; feelings hold sway, and conspiratorial thinking has moved into the mainstream. The voting rights of all our citizens and the sanctity of our election system face ongoing threats. We’ve seen renewed evidence of the role of Facebook and other social media platforms in exacerbating political polarization and extremism. We are enduring a stress test of our democracy that has continued throughout the pandemic, the 2020 presidential election and the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol.

We recognized in early 2020 that misinformation poses such an existential threat to our democracy that we needed to extend our reach beyond students to all generations. We developed new resources for the general public and launched a comprehensive campaign to combat election misinformation during the 2020 election, including a series of public service announcements in English and Spanish. We also hosted the inaugural season of our podcast, Is that a fact?, which explored the question, “How can American democracy survive and thrive in our toxic information environment?”

At the same time, we made great progress on the education front. During the 2020-21 school year, we reached more students and educators than at any other point in NLP’s history, with over 108,000 students active on Checkology® and more than 13,000 educators across the country using our resources. We enhanced our support of educators by creating additional professional learning opportunities and opening our virtual NewsLitCamp® events to participants nationwide. We also launched NewsLit Nation, our 48,000-plus member network for educators, and our News Literacy Ambassador Program, which supports grassroots community organizing efforts for news literacy education.

You helped make all this progress possible. We hope that as you read this annual report, you’ll take pride in these accomplishments.

But we still have much work to do.

The country is deeply divided along partisan lines and separated into media echo chambers. News literacy education is one key to bridging this divide. We all need the skills to know what news and information to trust, share and act on. Our democracy depends on our collective engagement in the pursuit of a fact-based future.

Thank you for joining us in our fight for a future founded on facts.

Sincerely yours,

Greg McCaffery, Board Chair

Alan C. Miller, Founder and CEO
What is **News Literacy?**

The ability to determine the credibility of news and other content, to identify different types of information, and to use the standards of authoritative, fact-based journalism to determine what to trust, share and act on.

**Our Mission**

The **News Literacy Project**, a nonpartisan national education nonprofit, provides programs and resources for educators and the public to teach, learn and share the abilities needed to be smart, active consumers of news and information and equal and engaged participants in a democracy.

**Our Vision**

News literacy is embedded in the American education experience, and people of all ages and backgrounds know how to identify credible news and other information, empowering them to have an equal opportunity to participate in the civic life of their communities and the country.

**Organizational Values**

**What we believe**

• News literacy is an essential life skill.
• Facts matter.
• A free press is a cornerstone of democracy.

Read more about our values [here](#).

**How we achieve what we believe**

• Innovation.
• Independence and nonpartisanship.
• Inclusion and diversity.
• Collaboration.
NLP counted some of the country's largest school districts among our Checkology partners: statewide districts in Hawaii, Colorado, Oklahoma, and Iowa, and 17 individual school districts, including New York City, Los Angeles and Chicago — the nation's three largest.

Notably, we are seeing Checkology used by more educators in geographic areas that represent the full political and ideological spectrum, from Birmingham, Alabama; Nashville, Tennessee; and Lexington, South Carolina to Brookline, Massachusetts; Spokane, Washington, and numerous other cities, counties, states and regions.

NLP also saw tremendous growth in content for Checkology over the last year. This included publishing a new two-part lesson on conspiratorial thinking; creating an enhanced resource library for educators, including lesson plans, classroom activities, posters and infographics, quizzes and more; and assessing Checkology's alignment with over 130 distinct English Language Arts, social studies and library program TEKS standards.
NewsLitCamp®

NewsLitCamps hosted across the U.S. in FY21
8 events • 1,112 educators

NewsLitCamps connect educators with practicing journalists for a day-long professional development experience hosted in partnership with a newsroom. During the 2020-21 school year, NLCs were conducted virtually, five with local school districts and news outlets in their communities and three that were nationwide.

Miami
OCT. 23, 2020
Univision

San José, CA
DEC. 2 - 3, 2020
NBC Bay Area

National
DEC. 10, 2020
The Texas Tribune

National
JAN. 26, 2021
CNN Worldwide

Illinois
FEB. 25, 2021
Block Club Chicago
Chicago Defender
ProPublica Illinois
BGA
Rockford Register Star

Columbia, SC
MAY 14 & 21, 2021
South Carolina ETV and Public Radio
The Post and Courier

National
JUNE 3, 2021
The Wall Street Journal

Minnesota
JUNE 15, 2021
The Star Tribune
MPR News

“As a school Librarian, I bring so much of this back to my teachers and students. This is more important than ever that our students not only know how to read but how to evaluate what they are reading.”

— Christina Wilkins, middle school librarian, Springfield, Missouri

What Is NewsLitCamp?
**Professional Learning**

**4,700 educators**

Educators across the country attended unique professional learning opportunities, such as “Exploring the misinformation landscape,” “Understanding bias” and “Teaching digital verification.”

---

**The Sift**

**15,384 subscribers**

The Sift is an educator-focused newsletter sent weekly during the school year that explores timely examples of misinformation, addresses media and press freedom topics and discusses social media trends and issues. It includes discussion prompts, classroom activities and links to additional material.

---

“New additions to The Sift such as News Goggles and Featured Rumor Resource classroom-ready slides have been game changers.

Connecting with local journalists and content developers is a great way to connect students to the boots on the ground!”

— Conor Murphy, high school teacher, Camillus, New York

---

**Viral rumor rundown**

**NO:** There is no evidence that Black Lives Matter activists or anyone identifying as “Antifa” — an unofficial anti-fascism movement — started a fire at a church in Minneapolis on April 19. YES: The church caught fire the night before the verdict in the Derek Chauvin murder trial. YES: A Minneapolis Fire Department official said The Catholic Spirit, a publication of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, “There [are] no indications that the fire is associated with any civil unrest.” **NO:** The Instagram account that shared this rumor — @republicanparty — is not the official account of the Republican Party.
NLP successfully launched two initiatives that create a sense of community for news literacy educators: NewsLit Nation, NLP’s official home for our 48,000-plus member community of teachers, librarians and news literacy advocates, and a News Literacy Ambassador Program. News literacy ambassadors are working to build a footprint for community organizing efforts in the fight against misinformation. Both initiatives are part of a regional movement-building model designed around 10 hub cities for the 2020-21 school year — Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Denver, Houston, Chicago, Boston, New York City, Washington, D.C., and Miami — to champion news literacy education at the local level. NLP’s ambassadors held 22 virtual events — workshops, webinars, presentations, panel discussions and community meetings — reaching a total of 754 educators and librarians.

News Literacy Ambassador Program 2020-21 Cohort

- Seattle, WA: Sumyat Thu
- San Francisco, CA: Samantha Solomon, Adriana Chavira, Tascha Folsom
- Denver, CO: Sarah Edler
- Chicago, IL: Allie Nielse
- Sharon, MA: Dr. Cathy Collins
- Los Angeles, CA
- Houston, TX: K.C. Boyd, Dr. James Stancil
- New York, NY: Jeff Kaufman, Sandra Street
- Miami, FL: Monica Valdes, Kelly Tumy
Teachers share how they used NLP’s resources to teach news literacy in a challenging year:

K.C. Boyd
library media specialist and NLP Ambassador, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Boyd used The Sift, NLP’s free weekly newsletter for educators, to “jump start” her news literacy lessons. When the jury delivered its verdict convicting former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in the death of George Floyd, Boyd discussed the five core values of journalism with students in her “Media Studies” class.

“I knew that day that my students were going to be inundated with a tremendous amount of information and, unfortunately, misinformation. So, I was looking for a lot of material that would help remind them to seek out credible sources,” she says.

“This platform has been a tremendous support and help in my instructional program.” Her lesson, inspired by The Sift, focused on preparing students to actively seek out credible information concerning the trial and verdict.

Patricia Russac
history teacher and library director, ROSLYN, NY

Russac taught in a hybrid learning environment this year and says the act of “teaching out and teaching in” was not easy. She used Checkology with sixth- and seventh-graders to build their news literacy skills and noted that Checkology worked well “because the resources are so accessible to remote learners as well as to students in the room.” After each lesson segment, Russac gave students the opportunity to ask questions and participate in class discussions. “The students had plenty to share about what they heard, saw and viewed online,” she says.

“It was a powerful reminder as to why news literacy education should be part of every grade level and across subjects. It is not enough to teach it just in the humanities. Math and science need news literacy education as well. Data matters.”
Resources for Everyone

NLP embarked on an entirely new line of work — the development and launch of a suite of free resources designed for use outside of the classroom setting by people of all ages. We also increased our efforts to combat misinformation on a national scale. Metrics are for July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021.

Checkology®
4,922 registrants
Customized for the public, this version of Checkology provides a comprehensive news literacy program at no cost. It includes foundational lessons, supplemental practice opportunities and fact-checking tools for reverse image searches, geolocation and more.

Get Smart About News
20,978 subscribers
Modeled on The Sift newsletter for educators, Get Smart About News is designed for everyone. It explores timely examples of misinformation, addresses media and press freedom topics and discusses social media trends and issues.

Informable®
4,741 downloads
Our free mobile app, Informable, helps people of all ages practice four distinct news literacy skills using real-world examples in a game-like format.

Is That A Fact?
In September 2020, NLP launched its podcast Is that a fact? Hosted by Darragh Worland, NLP’s vice president of creative services and a former journalist, the inaugural 10-episode season featured conversations with leading American thinkers, journalists, foreign policy experts, psychologists and authors. It explored how access to reliable information — a core element of American democracy — became threatened and how our democracy can survive the impact of misinformation.
Combating Misinformation Campaigns

**Election Misinformation Campaign**

**Voting depends on you.**  
**Democracy depends on us.**

From September to November 2020, NLP conducted a successful nonpartisan, nationwide election response effort designed to combat malicious attempts to mislead voters and suppress voting. This was our widest-reaching news literacy campaign to date and included public service announcements (in both English and Spanish), digital ads, a webpage, webinar series and weekly email briefings. In addition, NLP was cited as a subject matter expert in over 20 news articles on misinformation and the election. Our work helped voters discern credible sources of information regarding early voting, voting by mail, and other alternatives to long voting lines at polling places. News literacy skills help protect every voter’s right to make their vote count and build the essential critical thinking skills needed long after an election to remain engaged and informed participants in our country’s democracy. Read the full impact report here.

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**Combating COVID-19 misinformation**

NLP redirected substantial resources to address what the World Health Organization dubbed an “infodemic” — the overabundance of information, including false information, about COVID-19. This campaign to combat misinformation included a webpage, a professional development webinar series for educators, a four-part webinar series for the general public, weekly email briefings and media inquiries that resulted in more than three dozen interviews with NLP staff experts. We also produced a special episode of our podcast, *Is that a fact?*, to explore why some people remain hesitant to get one of the COVID-19 vaccines and find out just how much misinformation might be to blame for that reluctance.
In recognition of their outstanding achievements during the 2020-21 school year, NLP named the recipients of its educator, journalist and students of the year awards in June. Honorees are recognized as having distinguished themselves in their commitment to news literacy in their classrooms, in their professions and in their daily lives. The awards also acknowledge their efforts as leading voices in support of news literacy education. We are grateful for their contributions in the fight for facts. Recipients are selected by a committee of NLP board members and staff.

**EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR**

Kelly Vikstrom-Hoyt  
Director of library services, The Overlake School in Redmond, Washington

It didn’t take the tumultuous events of 2020 and the accompanying flood of misinformation to convince educator Kelly Vikstrom-Hoyt that news literacy should be part of every school’s curriculum. She already knew it. “As the librarian, I consider it my duty to integrate news literacy across as many areas of the curriculum as I can,” Vikstrom-Hoyt told NLP.

As a news literacy leader at her school, Vikstrom-Hoyt saw proof that students absorbed what they learned and applied it to other disciplines. For example, an eighth-grade civics class that completed the Checkology lesson on bias in the media then worked on projects for their civics teacher using what they had studied. “The teachers told me that (students) incorporated a lot of the language and the lessons they learned into that project without even being prompted to do it,” Vikstrom-Hoyt said. “Then, even better, when they did the next project down the line that wasn’t even tied to the lesson, they were still pulling in those skills, and naming the terms and the things that I taught them in the Checkology lesson.”

**JOHN S. CARROLL**

**JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR**  
Alisyn Camerota  
Co-host, CNN Newsroom

Alisyn Camerota has provided unflinching coverage and vital and verified information on major news stories to millions of people as a leading broadcast journalist.

She also has seen misinformation increasingly pollute the information landscape. If such distortions and falsehoods are not called out and corrected, she says, real harm can occur, which is what happened during the Jan. 6 riot at the U.S. Capitol.

“People stormed the Capitol because they had misinformation. They were fed falsehoods and lies about the election, and they didn’t know that,” Camerota said during an interview with NLP. “You can have your own conspiracy theories, but you can’t have your own facts.”

Camerota has been involved with NLP since 2017 and is a member of our National Leadership Council.

“I’m really touched and flattered to receive the John S. Carroll Award, particularly this year,” Camerota said. “It has been a really challenging year for journalism to be able to broadcast during a global pandemic.”
GWEN IFILL
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Ana Rodriguez
Archie Williams High School, San Anselmo, California

Like many teens, Ana Rodriguez, 15, turns to social media to find out what is going on in the world.

“A few years ago, I wouldn’t have checked my sources or the sources the articles that I’m reading about come from, but now I would definitely do that because I don’t want to be sharing false information to the people around me,” she said.

Rodriguez used Checkology in her 10th-grade English class and learned about bias and misinformation, helping her complete an interdisciplinary project. She examined the long and harmful history of racial bias in scientific thinking, from eugenics to contemporary medical discrimination.

“Being able to distinguish reliable information from detrimental bias has been of great importance in my life. It has allowed me to help my parents and other family members during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez said the award “has given me the sense that I accomplished something very big, and that I can be successful with the things that I do.”

GWEN IFILL
MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT OF THE YEAR

Mirudulaa Suginathan Yamini
Central Middle School, Quincy, Massachusetts

Mirudulaa Suginathan Yamini, 13, always had assumed that misinformation did not affect her. Then, last year she learned how it could fool her and how fast and how far it can spread.

“I read a really interesting post and sent it to so many of my friends. But when I was reading it for the 10th time or so, I realized it wasn’t real news. It was fake,” she told NLP.

“I had to tell all the friends I’d sent the post to stop spreading it and why it’s not credible and not reliable,” Yamini said. “But it was already too late. They sent it to their friends and so on.”

When she entered eighth grade, Yamini used Checkology as part of a media class and said she feels empowered by her news literacy lessons.

“I showed my parents many of the tools I saw in Checkology. Even they felt it was a big impact on their life. They changed. They stopped viewing some of the websites that they thought they could rely on,” Yamini said. And, she added, they were even more proud of her than before.
National News Literacy Week 2021

“Get NewsLit Fit”

NLP’s second annual National News Literacy Week (NNLW), presented with The E.W. Scripps Company, was held Jan. 25-29. NNLW is a nationwide public awareness campaign with events, public service announcements and social media engagement to focus attention on the importance of news literacy as an essential 21st century skill for all ages. Messaging played on this year’s theme of “Get NewsLit Fit” and encouraged audiences to “Exercise your right to be well-informed,” “Be a healthy news consumer” and “Test your news literacy fitness.” Read the full 2021 impact report here.

Metrics

NNLW’s public service awareness campaign achieved 57 million impressions on 213 television stations and 201 radio stations. The total earned media during NNLW reached 76.3 million impressions.

National brands

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Spelling Bee teacher newsletter:</th>
<th>Simplemost stories on social:</th>
<th>Newsy audience emails blasts:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67,500 impressions.</td>
<td>194,000 impressions.</td>
<td>372,000 impressions.</td>
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Save the date for National News Literacy Week 2022

"Over the past 20 years, misinformation has become the primary driver of the polarization of our society and the greatest risk to our democracy. It has become a fundamental and effective tool for political parties for undermining our values, science, and thoughtful solutions.

A society that can no longer agree on scientific and historical facts cannot thrive."

— Tom Ellis, Visionary Circle Member, Wisconsin
NLP is grateful for the support and guidance from our Board of Directors and our National Leadership Council. We appreciate their partnership. Without their dedication to news literacy, our work would not be possible.

Lists reflect members who served for any period during July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021.

“Unless we train people to think critically and to detect and reject misinformation, our democracy will be in grave danger. NLP is literally in the business of saving democracy.”

— Walt Mossberg, NLP board member, Washington D.C.
Donors

The following individuals and organizations supported our work in FY20. Without their support, our mission to scale our resources could not have moved forward.

**Leadership Gifts**

**Pulitzers ($1M+)**
- Apple*
- John S. and James L. Knight Foundation*

**Champions ($500,000 - $999,999)**
- Apple*
- John S. and James L. Knight Foundation*
- Apple*
- John S. and James L. Knight Foundation*

**Investors ($250,000 - $499,999)**
- The Klarman Family Foundation*
- The Klarman Family Foundation*
- The Klarman Family Foundation*
- The Klarman Family Foundation*

**Principals ($100,000 - $249,999)**
- Dow Jones Foundation
- The Grable Foundation*
- The Robert R. McCormick Foundation
- Dow Jones Foundation
- The Grable Foundation*
- The Robert R. McCormick Foundation

**Publishers ($50,000 - $99,999)**
- The Klarman Family Foundation*
- The Klarman Family Foundation*
- The Klarman Family Foundation*
- The Klarman Family Foundation*

**Editors ($25,000 - $49,999)**
- Fore River Foundation
- Mansueto Foundation
- Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation
- Noble and Lorraine Hancock Family Fund
- Orange County Community Foundation
- Fore River Foundation
- Mansueto Foundation
- Max and Victoria Dreyfus Foundation
- Noble and Lorraine Hancock Family Fund
- Orange County Community Foundation

**Visionary Circle Gifts**

**Mentors ($5,000 - $9,999)**
- A Little Help Foundation Fund
- American Association of Editorial Cartoonists
- Ann B. and Thomas L. Friedman Family Foundation
- Bailey, Huntington, and Madison Brown Charitable Fund
- Betty S. Cohen
- Charlene Barshefsky and Ed Cohen
- American Association of Editorial Cartoonists
- Ann B. and Thomas L. Friedman Family Foundation
- Bailey, Huntington, and Madison Brown Charitable Fund
- Betty S. Cohen
- Charlene Barshefsky and Ed Cohen

**Patrons ($2,500 - $4,999)**
- Alan Miller and Katherine Newell Smith
- Bridget Price
- Catherine and Alan Harper Charitable Fund
- Chase Family Philanthropic Fund
- Cliff and Deborah White Family Foundation
- American Association of Editorial Cartoonists
- Ann B. and Thomas L. Friedman Family Foundation
- Bailey, Huntington, and Madison Brown Charitable Fund
- Betty S. Cohen
- Charlene Barshefsky and Ed Cohen
- American Association of Editorial Cartoonists
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- Bailey, Huntington, and Madison Brown Charitable Fund
- Betty S. Cohen
- Charlene Barshefsky and Ed Cohen
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The Zisman Family Foundation Inc.
Theodore J. Jr Boutrous
Tina Vandersteel and Matthew Cressotti

Friends ($1,000 - $2,499)
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Allison Morrow
Andrew Woods
Benjamin Sakai
Bill and Diane Marimow
Byron and Kathryn Calame
C. Shelby and Mary Coffey
Chuck Salter
Coulter Family Foundation
Crosby Foundation
Dahvi and Tom Marshall-Wilson
Daniel L. Nir and Jill E. Braufman Family Foundation
Davia L. Loren Charitable Fund
Deloitte
Douglas C. Coutts and Lynne T. Coutts Family Foundation
Dr. Nancy Loos and Dr. William Loos
Edmund LeRoy Keeley
Elisa and Kenneth Glazer
Elizabeth Mehren
Grant and Joanna Ehat
Griffin Family Fund
Jay and Geeta Brara
Juliet Stipeche
Kaiden Family Fund
Karen and Rick Wolfen Charitable Trust
Laurence Leive
Leonard and Janice Downie
Liz Ramos
Lucie Addison
Marcus Cole
Maura Vanderzon
McKenna Quint
Mel Levine and Connie Bruck
Michael H. Anderson
Nicholas Baumann
Nicole Kule Seiff
Peter Sagal
Pierre Thomas and Alyson Westbrooks Thomas
Rahul Nand
Robert and Sheri Rosenfeld
Sandra Nelson
Sheila Solomon
Shirley Brandman
Stan Watt
Stefan Holt
Stephen Dull Foundation
The Judith L. Bader Charitable Gift Fund
The Michael Schilmoeller and Katie Larsell Charitable Fund
Thomas Campbell Jackson and Pamela Brandt Jackson
Tom and Nancy Ellis
Tucker Eskew

In-kind Giving
Bangor Daily News
Buzzfeed
CNN
Comcast
Local Media Association
Local Media Consortium
Los Angeles Times
National Public Radio
ProPublica
Reveal News
The Associated Press
The Day Publishing Company
The E.W. Scripps Company
The New York Times
The New Yorker
The Valley Breeze
The Wall Street Journal
The Washington Post
Vox Media

* denotes multi-year contributions recognized at the level of the total amount.

"In my 72-year-old view, our democracy is at a critical crossroads, due to the proliferation of misinformation and outright lies, mainly in social and fringe media. **Education on this topic is vital;** I can think of no better place to start than engaging, educating and equipping young people with the skills to know the difference between truth and fiction in news and information."

— Sandra Nelson, Visionary Circle Member, Minnesota

The Visionary Circle is a thriving group of philanthropic leaders who support the mission of the News Literacy Project and enjoy exclusive benefits and access to NLP programs and leaders.

Learn more at newslit.org/vision.
Financials

FY21 Expenses and Revenue

FY21 audit performed by GRF CPAs & Advisors

Expenses

- Program Services: $3,250,105
- Management/general: $840,600
- Fundraising: $580,104

Total expenses: $4,670,809

Revenue

- Grants and contributions: $2,917,210
- Net assets released from donor restrictions: $2,544,020
- In-kind contributions: $238,956
- Interest and investment income: $82,124
- Program income: $15,052

Total revenue: $5,797,362
# Statement of Activities and Change in Net Assets

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<thead>
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<th>Support and Revenue</th>
<th>Without donor restrictions</th>
<th>With donor restrictions</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>restrictions</td>
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<td>Total support and revenue</td>
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<td>($ 890,362)</td>
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<td>Total Supporting Services</td>
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<td>$ 1,420,704</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total expenses</td>
<td>$ 4,670,809</td>
<td></td>
<td>$ 4,670,809</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Change in net assets                   | $ 1,126,553               | - $ 890,362             | $ 236,191   |
| Net assets at beginning of period      | $ 2,266,540               | $ 4,590,781             | $ 6,857,321 |
| Net assets at end of period            | $ 3,393,093               | $ 3,700,419             | $ 7,093,512 |
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