



BMO Celebrating Women Grant Program

2021 Recipients

Canada

BMO Celebrating Women Grant Program – 2021 Recipients

CORE Landscape Products (Courtenay, BC)	2
Massy Books (Vancouver, BC).....	3
Nada (Vancouver, BC).....	4
RainStick Shower (Kelowna, BC)	5
Skwálwen Botanicals (Brackendale, BC)	6
Brave Soles (Toronto, ON)	7
ImaginAble Solutions (Hamilton, ON).....	8
Re4m Design and Fabrication (Ottawa, ON).....	9
Remix Snacks (Markham, ON)	10
Sahajan (Toronto, ON)	11
Sitti Social Enterprise Ltd. (Oakville, ON).....	12
Concept GEEBEE Inc. (Sherbrooke, QC).....	13
Déclic Ressource en Intervention Éducative Précoce Inc. (Montréal, QC).....	14
Épicerie LOCO (Montréal, QC).....	15
kotmo (Montréal, QC)	16
Mme L'Ovary (Montréal, QC).....	17
Permalution (Sherbrooke, QC)	18
Sankara Online Multicultural Marketplace (Saint John, NB).....	19

CORE Landscape Products (Courtenay, BC)



*"Receiving this grant is a humbling, but very clear indication that CORE is well on its way to creating sustainable changes that enhance the natural world without compromising amenities, and ensuring future generations have the opportunity to enjoy this world as well." - **Caroline Rutledge***

Owner: Caroline Rutledge

BIO

As humans, we possess the ability to improve our environment through conscious choices. CORE was created by Caroline Rutledge in 2010 out of necessity to reduce the number of impermeable surfaces in our environment, providing a sustainable and earth-friendly alternative to traditional surfaces such as concrete and asphalt. We aspire to contribute to a global community that is built upon low-impact development that ensures the 'Seventh Generation Principle', meaning we must consider how our actions now affect our descendants seven generations into the future. As a Benefit Company, CORE has legally pledged to be responsible, accountable, innovative, diverse, and inclusive in all aspects of its business. Through the sale of permeable foundations, photoluminescent aggregate, and locally designed privacy screens, CORE has pledged at least 1% of our sales to the restoration and preservation of the environment through supporting nonprofits dedicated to defending the natural world.

CORE's fearless leader, Caroline Rutledge has paved (permeable of course) the way for women in business and how people think about sustainable development. In addition, CORE's passion and impact would not be possible without an incredible team; a team committed to expanding our social and environmental impact around the world.

Massy Books (Vancouver, BC)



“Winning this grant will allow us to continue doing the work we do, and will specifically fund a vital reading series we’ve organized to help support Indigenous families seeking birth support – just one of the many initiatives we’ve created to support our community.” – Patricia Massy

Owner: Patricia Massy

BIO

Patricia Massy is a mother, changemaker, non-profit director, and owner of Massy Books – a new and used, Indigenous owned bookstore on the traditional, ancestral, unceded, and occupied territory of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, also known as Vancouver, BC. She is of Cree and English descent and a member of the Kelly Lake Cree nation.

After spending a lifetime working at various bookstores and non-profits, she decided to open her own bookstore prioritizing the voices and stories of underrepresented authors and artists, and creating a place where people could gather, connect, and organize. Patricia Massy is a champion for social sustainability through its abundance of community initiatives and fundraisers, raising over \$50,000 to date, as well as completely funding the operational costs and full-time position at Massy Arts Society - a non-profit she founded to advance the public’s appreciation of the arts by producing public art exhibitions, presentations, and performance arts events, as well as providing a forum for qualified artists to exhibit, present, or perform their artistic works through participation in such events, with a priority on Indigenous and underrepresented voices.

Nada (Vancouver, BC)



"We're honoured to be considered among some of the most impactful women-led companies in North America who are creating positive change in their communities, for their teams, and for the planet. Climate action is at the heart of all that we do, and this grant will enable Nada to continue our important work of connecting people to their food and supporting a more equitable, just, and regenerative food system." – **Brianne Miller**

Owner: Brianne Miller

BIO

Brianne is a marine biologist turned social entrepreneur with a passion for driving positive change through inspiring collective climate action. Having seen firsthand the impacts of our current food system on the oceans, Brianne is committed to revolutionizing the food system across the supply chain so that future generations can continue to enjoy and benefit from the world's oceans.

Brianne is the founder of Nada, a certified B-Corporation and carbon negative package-free grocery store & delivery service on a mission to connect people to a more equitable, just, and regenerative food system. Brianne is a United Nations #notwasting food ambassador, a 2018 SheEO Venture, a former member of Vancouver Food Policy Council, and a Board Member of Régénération Canada. Her food systems work has been featured widely in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Forbes and Nada was most recently recognized as 1% for the Planet's Business Changemaker of the Year.

Nada offers a package-free alternative to the conventional grocery shopping experience. By allowing customers to buy only what they need, and removing the need for unnecessary packaging by offering high quality groceries & goods in upcycled containers, Nada is able to divert both food & packaging waste from the supply chain. Nada's food recovery programs completely offset their total direct emissions and they offer carbon-neutral delivery with a pedal-powered bicycle co-op, Shift Delivery. Nada hosts a myriad of food-centred community events and also supports dozens of local grassroots organizations spearheading food security and food accessibility initiatives through 1% for the Planet.

RainStick Shower (Kelowna, BC)



"It feels incredible to be recognized as one of the women who are making sustainable living a reality and despite a pandemic, entrepreneurship is alive and well in Canada. Thank you to BMO and the partners involved in this award." – **Alisha McFetridge**

Owner: Alisha McFetridge

BIO

Alisha McFetridge is an entrepreneur, musician, and bone tumor survivor. She is the co-founder and CEO of RainStick, a Canadian clean technology company committed to cutting residential water usage in half. RainStick is a WiFi-enabled circular shower that saves 80% water and up to 80% energy while providing 2X the flow rate compared to a traditional shower.

Alisha holds an MSc in Climate Change and Development and a Bachelor in International Business, majoring in Sustainability. She has spent time working, studying and living in Kenya, China, The Netherlands, the United States and Canada, where she currently lives today.

Skwálwen Botanicals (Brackendale, BC)



"I'm so thankful to receive this grant for our business! The vision for Skwálwen is to grow in sustainable and ecologically-minded ways and having this vote of confidence and support feels so good!" – Leigh Joseph

Owner: Leigh Joseph

BIO

Leigh Joseph (ancestral name Styawat), is an ethnobotanist, researcher and entrepreneur from the Squamish First Nation. She contributes to cultural knowledge renewal in connection to Indigenous plant and land-based relationships and contributes an Indigenous lens to her field of study. As founder of Skwálwen Botanicals, Leigh brings together Indigenous science and self care, providing gentle and effective skincare products that draw from the ceremonial aspects of plants. Incorporating sustainably harvested and sourced botanicals, Skwálwen unites ancestral traditions with modern beauty rituals, empowering people to connect to themselves and the natural world.

Skwálwen champions sustainability through crafting natural, cruelty-free skincare products. Each batch is made with care and intention, with zero harsh chemicals, phthalates, synthetic fragrances, synthetic colours or parabens. The company's packaging and shipping materials are primarily paper, glass and tin, and all raw ingredients used are sustainably harvested and sourced, with a large portion of suppliers based in BC. Skwálwen also gives back to the environment through The hiyám Project, a collaboration with Saanich Native Plants that facilitates thousands of seeds planted on Indigenous lands.

Brave Soles (Toronto, ON)



"For Brave Soles, receiving this grant allows us to strengthen our supply chain with a new source of upcycled materials and work on some key pieces that we want in place to pursue our BCorp status."

- Christal Earle

Owner: Christal Earle

BIO

Christal Earle has been a lifelong social entrepreneur. She was first introduced to landfill workers in vulnerable parts of the world in 2005, while helping to lead the Canadian youth charity she had co-founded called Live Different.

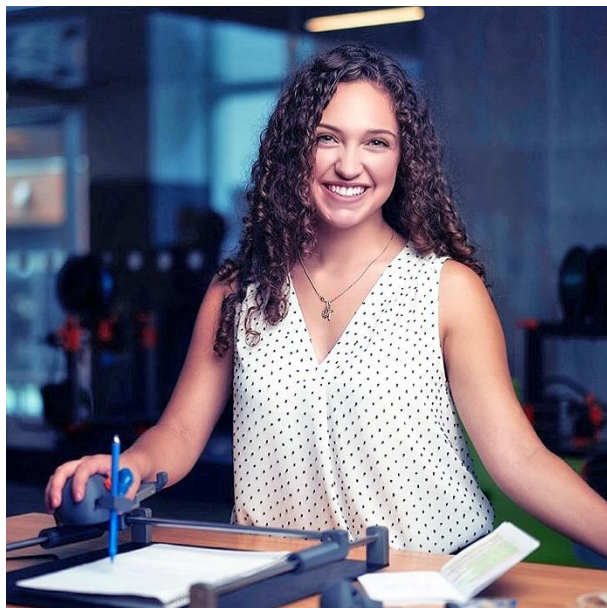
What started out as a passion for social equality has grown into a love for people and the planet.

In 2017 she launched Brave Soles with \$250, working with local artisans in the Dominican Republic. Through research and local partnerships, she discovered that a fashion business model focused on meaningful work, responsible production, and within the reach of average consumers could help inspire and create meaningful change.

Brave Soles creates handcrafted shoes with upcycled tire soles and is focused on providing opportunities for their customers and fans to love the story behind what they own.

Discarded tires and other usable materials fill landfills, ditches and waterways around the world. They are biohazardous and pose significant health risks. Yet materials such as tires, deadstock fabrics and leathers present endless opportunities for circular fashion designs. Through a simple and scalable process, Brave Soles is creating fashion that is kind to both people and planet - and built on a circular economy. Since we launched, we have upcycled more than 2600 large truck tires. This has helped to divert those waste tires from waterways and landfills and put them back into circulation in a new and safe form. We hope to have this goal, reach 10,000 tires, by 2023.

ImaginAble Solutions (Hamilton, ON)



*"As a 100% women owned Canadian business, we are honoured to be a recipient of the BMO Celebrating Women Grant to support the growth of our social innovation, Guided Hands™ to improve the quality of life for people living with limited hand mobility." – **Lianna Genovese***

Owner: Lianna Genovese

BIO

Lianna Genovese is the CEO & Founder of ImaginAble Solutions, a 100% women owned Canadian company located in Hamilton, ON that creates assistive technology to improve the quality of life for people living with limited motor movement. Lianna is also the inventor of the company's international award-winning product Guided Hands™ and a public speaker for women in engineering and STEM.

Inspired by a woman living with Cerebral Palsy, Lianna used her biomedical and mechanical background at McMaster University to invent the first prototype of Guided Hands, an assistive device that enables anyone living with limited hand mobility to write, paint, draw and use a touch-screen device.

Guided Hands™ improves the quality of life for people living with Cerebral Palsy, ALS, Huntington's Disease, arthritis and even those recovering from spinal cord injuries and strokes among others. The social innovation addresses 5 of the sustainable development goals allowing people to reach their full potential in school, work and life. Guided Hands creates an equal opportunity for children to succeed in school, promoting communication, independence and self-expression. The team aims to increase the number of jobs and opportunities for people living with disabilities by accessing technology using Guided Hands™.

ImaginAble Solutions' mission is to help people living with disabilities to regain their passion, confidence, and independence during daily activities - to enable them to live the life they imagine.

Re4m Design and Fabrication (Ottawa, ON)



"Our hearts are full! After an exhausting 18 months, this is exactly what Re4m needed to expand our goals and boost our aspirations, we couldn't be more thrilled!" – **Heather Jeffery**

Owner: Heather Jeffery

BIO

Heather Jeffery is an innovative industrial designer and entrepreneur making strides in Ottawa's sustainable design sector. She is a maker, problem solver and the creator of Re4m Design and Fabrication, a company that designs and builds furnishings, fixtures and displays using recycled and reclaimed materials.

With over 8000 lbs. of waste diverted from Ottawa's landfills since 2017, Re4m is on track to reduce and reuse a minimum of 2000 lbs. of discarded materials per year. Re4m's success can be attributed to Heather's unique skills and keen eye which has gained her recognition in the Ottawa Sun, Ottawa Matters and a recipient of the 2019 OBJ (Ottawa Business Journal) Small business Award for manufacturing. Her passion for the environment has helped her pave a sustainable path in innovative recycling that is said to inspire others and shift the mindset of how individuals perceive discarded materials.

Remix Snacks (Markham, ON)



"Being a BMO for Women Grant Recipient is truly an honour; it validates all the hard work we've put into building Remix Snacks and encourages us and allows us to dream bigger and grow the company into a household name for healthy, sustainable snacks." – Isabelle Lam

Owners: Jamie Lee and Isabelle Lam

BIO

Remix Snacks is a BIPOC, female-led snack company that was born from a simple mission created by two dietitians looking to fill a void in the snack industry: to create simple, healthy snacks that are good for the consumers' well-being and good for the environment. Their first product, Bean Bark, is the market's first vegan chocolate bark made with beans instead of nuts, and is also high-fibre, high-iron and protein-rich. By using both the trending plant-based protein, beans, and upcycled fruits in our products, they make chocolate healthier while also using ingredients that have less of an environmental impact and reduce food waste.

Sahajan (Toronto, ON)



"To protect the earth not only for ourselves but for generations to come is not just my mission, I believe it's our responsibility. This grant will help us continue our journey as not only a leader in clean beauty but a leader in sustainable beauty."

- Lisa Mattam

Owner: Lisa Mattam

BIO

A former pharmaceutical executive, Lisa's journey with Sahajan began the day she came home and saw her young daughter applying her conventional skincare while playing. By pairing her belief in Ayurveda, the 5,000 year old science from Ancient India, the one of her heritage, and clinical science, the one of her career, she created Sahajan. Since its launch, Sahajan has been featured in Vogue, Elle, Glamour & O, the Oprah Magazine, has won several awards and is sold globally. Sahajan commitment to sustainability is weaved through the brand, from the FSC paper to the bio renewable ink to the shift to post consumer resin in any plastics.

Sahajan recognizes that sustainability is about more than just the physical components in their products but rather the mission driven work that garners global sustainability. In 2019, Sahajan launched their Lip Karmas in partnership with the Because I am a Girl Campaign, which enables girls in developing countries to attend school so they can navigate their own futures.

Sitti Social Enterprise Ltd. (Oakville, ON)



*"The BMO Celebrating Women Grant Program will equip Sitti with the resources to measure and improve our impact outcomes related to refugee self-reliance across our global operations in the Middle East and North America." - **Noora Sharrab***

Owner: Noora Sharrab

BIO

Sitti is a conscious lifestyle brand committed to the self-reliance of refugee and displaced communities through long-term employment opportunities and skill development training, empowered by an inclusive global economy. The Sitti product line includes more than 20 SKUs sold through distributors, retailers and on our e-commerce site across North America, the Middle East and Europe. Our products are handcrafted and rooted in the traditions that refugee communities carry with them. Sitti products include our signature handmade cold-pressed olive oil soap bars, as well as other soap and bath products, apparel and curated gift sets. Each purchase supports the self-reliance of the refugee community through long-term, fair wage employment and skill development opportunities.

Co-creators Noora Sharrab, Safiah Abu Shanin and Jacqueline Sofia bring a combined expertise in nonprofit management, community development and capacity building, along with a unhindered passion for refugee self-reliance, that has helped grow Sitti into a business with careful and constant attention its primary stakeholder: the refugee community.

Sitti maintains its commitment to providing sustainable, long-term employment to its growing team of 31 refugee women and men across two community-based organization (CBO) partners, as well as financial and in-kind support to each CBO's beneficiary programs that contribute towards the enterprise's social mission. Sitti is a certified Women's Business Enterprise (WBE) and a multinational brand that can be found in over 200 retailers and distributors across the Middle East and North America, Europe and Australia.

Concept GEEBEE Inc. (Sherbrooke, QC)



*"We at Concept Geebee Inc. are grateful for BMO's commitment to women cleantech entrepreneurs. We're proud to receive this award to work toward our goal of decarbonizing transportation with the support and recognition of a socially responsible financial partner." - **Sabine Le Névannau***

Owner: Sabine Le Névannau

BIO

Sabine has a Bachelor's degree in Logistics and has worked in health for 25 years. When she arrived in Quebec in 1999, she studied international trade and then joined an electronic patient records company, where she used her project management skills as Solution Deployment Lead. She then worked as operations manager in a robotic production environment.

Concerned by sustainable development and specifically by sustainable mobility, Sabine founded the Concept GEEBEE in 2013, with her husband Jean-Luc, an innovative serial entrepreneur for 35 years and the creator of the GEEBEE.

The company's vision is to work toward decarbonizing transportation by avoiding the inappropriate use of combustion vehicles. Its mission is to propose sustainable smart mobility solutions for public and private organizations to address their short- and medium-distance travel challenges. Its flagship solution, the GEEBEE, was called one of the "1000 Efficient Solutions" to change the planet, by the Solar Impulse Foundation, which assesses the solution's impact in the fight against climate change as well as its profitability for the purchasers.

Sabine has been managing the company since its inception and is also responsible for logistics, procurement and partner relationships.

She regularly participates in panels on transportation and mobility issues.

Déclic Ressource en Intervention Éducative Précoce Inc.
(Montréal, QC)



*"Besides being gratifying for our team, this award sends a clear message that we have a collective duty to do things differently and that there are partners to support the efforts of organizations that are developing innovations in health and education." – **Cadleen Désir***

Owner: Cadleen Désir

BIO

Cadleen Désir is a committed entrepreneur with over 20 years of experience in health and education. She is the CEO and founder of Déclic, a network of professionals that has been serving children with special needs for 15 years. In addition to going out to educational settings and receiving families in clinics, the team recently launched "Mon parcours Déclic."

"Mon parcours Déclic" is a virtual support solution to foster the development of children aged 3 to 8. Through short videos, simple activity sheets and virtual meetings with professionals, the solution helps parents independently support their child.

"Mon parcours Déclic" now offers language development, emotional management, anxiety control and homework help. New tracks will be available every month to support children throughout Quebec, Canada and international Francophonie.

Déclic currently supports 2,000 children a year and aspires to support 5,000 by 2024 through "Mon parcours Déclic."

Épicerie LOCO (Montréal, QC)



"Together, let's change the world one basket at a time!" -

Andréanne Laurin

Owners: Sophie Maccario, Marie-Soleil L'Allier, Andréanne Laurin and Sylvie Girard (not pictured)

BIO

Andréanne Laurin is the co-founder and executive director of LOCO, the first ecological and zero waste grocery store in Québec. LOCO now has four stores within the greater Montreal area which are located in Villeray, Verdun, Brossard and Ahuntsic. Having earned a bachelor's degree in marketing communication and a master's degree in environmental sciences from UQAM, Andréanne embarked on the opening of LOCO grocery stores with three student colleagues.

Aiming to make a social and ecological difference, LOCO's mission is to offer a basket of groceries with the least environmental impact, to democratize and facilitate the adoption of a zero waste lifestyle, to encourage a local and human scale economy, to reduce food waste, to encourage healthy eating and contribute to greening the food system in Quebec.

kotmo (Montréal, QC)



"This award is important because it allows us to speed up the market launch of a project that's really important to us and that the kotmo team has been working on for nearly three years. We want to offer an alternative to the traditional corporate pen by offering a version made locally using compostable material." – **Cindy Couture**

Owners: Céline Juppeau and Cindy Couture

BIO

As the first B Corp certified company in its industry in Quebec, kotmo is a Canadian leader in responsible promotional items. All its products are manufactured in Canada by Canadian manufacturers and meet high environmental standards to have a positive impact now and for future generations. kotmo was one of B Corp's #BestForTheWorld honourees in 2016, 2017 and 2018 in the "Community" category for its impact on the community.

kotmo is a women-owned company led by Céline Juppeau and Cindy Couture. Céline is an interior architect and designer by training, and she founded kotmo in 2014. Passionate about design and sustainability, she believes these two areas are the key to building the future. Céline is involved in the causes that are dear to her heart – youth involvement and the place of women in our society. A designer, entrepreneur, journalist and strategist, Cindy joined kotmo as a partner in 2015 with the hope of revolutionizing the promotional goods industry. Backed by more than 15 years of experience in communications and marketing, she is leading the company toward increasingly innovative ideas and projects. As a mother of three, she combines work and family life to be present with her family while managing kotmo's growth.

With support from the NRC IRAP, the company has been working on a research and development project for the past three years, which is expected to be officially launched in 2022.

Mme L'Ovary (Montréal, QC)



"Continue to fight the menstrual taboo for an increasingly inclusive society." – Érica Lebrun

Owners: Olivia Elting and Érica Lebrun

BIO

Olivia Elting and Érica Lebrun are the two passionate humans behind Madame L'Ovary. Their number-1 mission is to take action on behalf of the planet and humanity, for a healthier future. Every year, 45 billion sanitary napkins/tampons are thrown into landfills and oceans.

Elting and Lebrun have dedicated themselves to creating a new durable, reusable sanitary protection option, an innovation that is playing hardball with the tampon and disposable napkin "empire": menstrual undies designed to hold removable, reusable pads (equivalent to three pairs of classic menstrual undies).

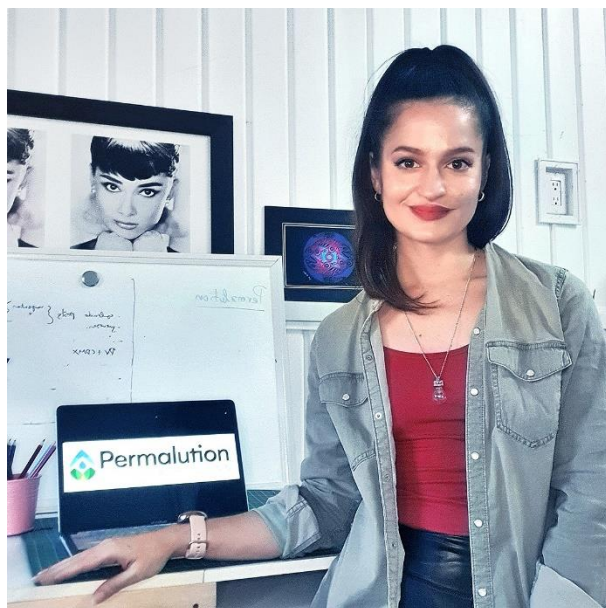
Today, there are more than 25,000 L'Ovary fans, which means 6 million fewer single-use products used each year. The product itself backs a strong mission. The L'Ovary team offers daily education to help menstruating people overcome the prejudices and misconceptions conveyed by advertising for "traditional" menstrual products.

Menstrual undies connect with environmental topics (reducing waste at the source), social topics (fighting the menstrual taboo, working toward inclusivity for all women, shedding light on the health impacts of disposable products) and economic topics (facilitating access to sustainable products through grants, partnering with organizations fighting menstrual insecurity).

The L'Ovary team is making its voice heard on all these topics through multiple initiatives such as monthly events, political engagement (#sangdechets), communications and associative partnerships.

The topic of menstruation is the tip of an iceberg that encompasses all the feminist themes of our era!

Permalution (Sherbrooke, QC)



*"We are immensely grateful for this valuable support from BMO Celebrating Women, which will help us deliver even further our mission to create a positive impact in the world!" – **Tatiana Estevez***

Owners: Tatiana Estevez and Priscila Casillas (not pictured)

BIO

Tatiana Estevez is the founder CEO of Permalution, a Canadian women-led cleantech startup working on fog and cloud water harvesting technology and innovation, based in Sherbrooke, Quebec.

Permalution is disturbing the water industry with its technology: the water radar and the fog collectors, the only fireproof, ready to assemble modules with an integrated IoT system, able to collect from 150-400 litres of water per unit, per day.

Permalution's solutions are cheaper than desalination plants, safer than groundwater mining, and more efficient than rain capture.

If fog water can be accessed globally, then we can count on a new substantial solution for the world's current water access, drought and climate change challenges.

Sankara | Online Multicultural Marketplace (Saint John, NB)



“Building a startup can be an isolating experience, being recognized by BMO alongside other powerful female entrepreneurs for the impact of our work is motivating and encouraging!” – Lily Lynch

Owners: Chinweotito Atansi and Lily Lynch

BIO

Lily Lynch graduated from the University of King’s College in Halifax in 2016 where she majored in History and French. Upon moving to New Brunswick, she was eager to meet people with similar interests and soon co-founded Sankara. Operating in Atlantic Canada, Sankara is an Online Multicultural Marketplace to experience cultural products like Catering, Meal Plans, and Handcrafts from local cultural vendors. We’re a collective of independent cultural chefs, restaurants, grocers, and artisans who plant roots in our communities by sharing our cultures. Sankara partners with dozens of vendors from over 20+ countries who use our platform as a free tool to generate income and express their cultural identities.

As a multiracial woman, Lily is passionate about creating exchanges, experiences and public commemorations centred around the identities, stories and cultures of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of colour). In February 2020, the month after the passing of her paternal grandfather, a descendant of Black Loyalists, she helped organize the inaugural raising of the Pan-African flag in New Brunswick to celebrate Black History Month. The following year she coordinated a province-wide Pan-African flag raising in 8 communities. In her work and life, Lily aims to encourage and catalyze further opportunities for communities to participate in cross-cultural appreciation and build empathy.