



Growing the Cross-border
Entrepreneurial Spirit:

Importance of Women Entrepreneurs in Building Back Better

In partnership with



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Executive Summary

The fast-paced advancement in the global economy has made it critically important for today's startup founders and leaders to scale their businesses and compete globally. The evolving landscape means that for scaling the companies and trading globally it has never been more challenging, which only adds to the trade barriers that women entrepreneurs face. This project aimed to explore these challenges faced by women entrepreneurs when expanding their business in the U.S. and Canada.

Based on the Startup Canada 2021 Census, 33% of respondents are currently exporting to the U.S. and 42% have ambitions to ship to the U.S. As such, Startup Canada has partnered with the United States Embassy (U.S. Embassy) to understand the challenges faced and resources available, as well as to better support women entrepreneurs from both economies to expand their businesses.

The impetus of this bilateral partnership was to consult a crucial stakeholder (women entrepreneurs) and conduct an in-depth analysis of the impact on the sustainable and inclusive recovery in both Canada and the U.S. The goal of this project is to be inclusive of women-identifying entrepreneurs from diverse industries, geographic areas (including rural and urban), unique stages of the export journey, and include the perspectives of diverse entrepreneurs.

Spanning over five months, Startup Canada and the U.S. Embassy engaged **10 high-profile, leading women entrepreneurs** from both Canada and the U.S. to discuss their experiences with trade and the accessibility of resources available to them. The overall project enabled Startup Canada and the U.S. Embassy to closely observe and understand the core issues faced by service and product-focused women entrepreneurs, the support they could receive to expand, and which private or public sector partners can help them trade in both economies.

Through a series of roundtable discussions, one individual session, and additional peer-to-peer sessions, a few common themes were identified:

1. Trade barriers within Canada and the U.S.
2. Shipping best practices
3. Challenges in identifying distributors, suppliers, and/or partners
4. Relationship building
5. The credibility of e-commerce
6. Red tape reduction and navigating bureaucracy
7. Access to educational tools, resources, training, and funding
8. Advisory and mentorship support
9. Perceptions of women entrepreneurs

All the project stakeholders worked to solidify immediate and actionable recommendations that will be insightful for both the private and public sector in both economies. Two immediate next steps include:

1. A storytelling campaign to share the inspiring stories of the participants overcoming trade-related barriers, and
2. A mentorship platform to help participants connect with private sector partners, mentors, and mentees for knowledge sharing

It is important to note that we will continue to strive towards implementing actionable solutions to the aforementioned recommendations both as part of this project and through Startup Canada's flagship programs both in 2022 and beyond.

Introduction

In 2021, Startup Canada partnered with the U.S. Embassy to launch the first phase of a pilot project titled "Growing the Cross-Border Entrepreneurial Spirit: The Important Role Women Entrepreneurs Play in Building Back Better" (Project). This project aimed to grow the entrepreneurial spirit across the border and highlight the importance of

women entrepreneurship globally. Canada and the U.S. have a unique relationship not only being the largest trade relationship in the world, but also through “shared geography, similar values, common interests, deep personal connections and powerful, multi-layered economic ties.”¹

The devastating effects of the pandemic have spared no borders as the world sees economic downturns in all corners. The motivation of this project stemmed from the [Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership](#) (Roadmap) announced February 2021 by both President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau, which provided a blueprint for joint effort against the COVID-19 pandemic. In support of our mutual prosperity, this project was launched. The leaders agreed on the need to build back better together in a way that addresses the disproportionate impacts on women, and examines best practices in feminist public policy and women entrepreneurship.

Background

The strong bilateral relationship between Canada and the U.S. provided a beautiful backdrop for the commitment to the Roadmap to manifest. Prime Minister Trudeau and President Biden have a shared vision for a sustainable and inclusive economic recovery that strengthens the middle class, creates more opportunities for hard working people to join it, and ensures people have good jobs and careers on both sides of the border.² The Roadmap highlights a blueprint for the efforts against the COVID-19 pandemic as it shows no borders, and has reinforced the value of cooperation between the U.S. and Canada. Both leaders acknowledge the impact the pandemic has had on women and three focus areas must be noted as per the blueprint³:

¹ <https://www.international.gc.ca/country-pays/us-eu/relations.aspx?lang=eng>

² <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/02/23/roadmap-for-a-renewed-u-s-canada-partnership/>

³ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/02/23/roadmap-for-a-renewed-u-s-canada-partnership/>

1. The leaders agreed on the need to build back better together in a way that addresses the disproportionate impacts on women, youth, underrepresented groups, and Indigenous peoples.
2. As COVID-19 has rolled back many of the hard-won gains women have achieved over past decades, the President and Prime Minister committed to implement measures to support women's full and equal participation in the workforce, including with respect to early learning and childcare.
3. The President and the Prime Minister also considered the impact of the pandemic on small businesses. The U.S. and Canada announced joint initiatives to accelerate economic recovery of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), with a focus on supporting women-owned and minority-owned, and Indigenous-owned SMEs, by leveraging the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) SME chapter and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) model.

As a national support organization in Canada, Startup Canada was fortunate enough to partner with the U.S. Embassy to engage women entrepreneurs from both Canada and the U.S. to better understand their pain points, how the pandemic has impacted them, and how through the Roadmap, both countries can build back better and create more inclusive spaces and opportunities for women entrepreneurs.

About Startup Canada

Startup Canada is a Canadian non-profit organization that provides support to entrepreneurs in Canada. As the gateway to Canada's entrepreneurial ecosystem, we connect entrepreneurs with the support, community, and tools they need to build a successful business in Canada. Through our flagship and digital programs, we provide guidance, eliminate barriers, and champion the needs of each and every entrepreneur to private and public sector partners. Startup Canada supports entrepreneurs in starting up to ultimately make Canada the best place to start and build a business.

Since our inception in 2012, Startup Canada has grown to support more than 122,000 entrepreneurs annually and an ever-growing grassroots community network from coast to coast to coast, including close to 4,000 women in our Startup Women program and over 1,200 entrepreneurs in our Startup Global program. We have hosted a number of events in partnership with our Startup Communities across Canada to celebrate the contributions of women to the Canadian economy, and challenge entrepreneurs to press for progress to further unleash the economic potential of women through entrepreneurship and innovation. Throughout each of our programs, many of our participants and communities continuously raise interest in the U.S. market and the challenge in going global. Based on our most recent census 33% of Startup Canada's audience are currently exporting to the U.S. and 42% have ambitions to ship to the United States.

While this project is a unique international initiative, activities do fall within two of Startup Canada's flagship programs, which include **Startup Women** and **Startup Global**.

Startup Women 2022

Startup Canada stands with women-identified entrepreneurs to help support their growth and future goals. In 2022, our [Startup Women](#) program will provide tools, resources, and content to women-identified entrepreneurs throughout the year in the form of webinars, industry-specific advisory circles, and one-to-one mentorship and advisory support.

Startup Global 2022

[Startup Global](#) is a free program that offers a series of digital pitch competitions, pro-bono professional advising, and educational initiatives throughout the year to a pan-Canadian cohort of entrepreneurs committed to growing global businesses

with a network of partners committed to their success. It also recognizes the importance of exporting to the Canadian economy, celebrates those making waves in the global marketplace, and empower founders to take their ventures to the international stage. Housed within our portal is the annual Startup Global Pitch Competition, where this year startups (businesses with less than CAD\$1,000,000 in revenue or have no current sales) can compete to win from a cash prize pool of CAD\$75,000.

About the Project

Small business and startups have been bearing the brunt of COVID-19 impacts, and on top of that, women entrepreneurs have been disproportionately impacted. Industries most heavily hit include hospitality, tourism, and education—industries that tend to have higher concentrations of women workers. [According to a 2022 Canadian Labor Force Survey](#), employment levels among women (particularly those with children) dropped more than men at the outset of pandemic lockdowns. Out of about one million Canadians who lost their jobs in March 2021, [60% were women](#) which led to many dubbing it as a “she-cession.”

The first phase of the project started in October 2021, where Startup Canada and the U.S. Embassy engaged women entrepreneurs from Canada and the U.S. to share lessons and experiences on launching, growing, or scaling a business, and navigating cross-border trade. Through working roundtables, peer-to-peer sessions, and B2B meetings, this allowed collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. Startup Canada also facilitated working groups where participants were each in a different phase of the entrepreneurial journey to share their thoughts and policy recommendations on better supporting entrepreneurs. Recommendations and observations from these activities will be shared and used for additional advocacy both within the private and public sector of both economies. Partnership efforts in supporting the ecosystem are essential to ensuring both

Canadian and American women entrepreneurs have the tools and resources they need to succeed. A driving force of this project is the collective insights into how small businesses (particularly those led by women and under-represented groups) face pressure when pursuing global markets, and how these barriers can be addressed quickly through strong bilateral agreements.

Objectives and Outcomes

This project was launched as a way to support both Canada and the U.S. in building back better as outlined in the Roadmap framework for Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership. Key objectives include:

1. **Objective 1:** To build back better in a way that addresses the disproportionate impacts on women, meaning they must be part of the solution. Their voices must be heard and their recommendations and feedback considered as new programs and policies are created to reduce their hurdles.
 - a. **Outcome:** Through the various roundtables and one-to-one meetings, a series of recommendations and feedback were shared.
2. **Objective 2:** To create a space where women entrepreneurs can connect with other economies across the border to share best practices on cross-border trade, share resources, and offer advisory and mentorship support.
 - a. **Outcome:** Women participating in this project have the opportunity to share their wisdom and advice through Startup Canada's Startup Women and Startup Global mentorship programming. They also have the opportunity to connect with additional advisors, mentors, or coaches through the Startup Women program.
3. **Objective 3:** To create connections between entrepreneurs and support organizations with the private sector.
 - a. **Outcome:** For interested participants, Startup Canada facilitated one-to-one meetings between women entrepreneurs and private sector leaders.

4. **Objective 4:** To consolidate resources on navigating cross-border trade between Canada and the U.S.
 - a. **Outcome:** Through this project we created an evergreen resource guide that will continue to be updated throughout the year.
5. **Objective 5:** To share the voices of women entrepreneurs in Canada and the U.S. through storytelling campaigns.
 - a. **Outcome:** The second phase of this project will showcase both Canadian and American entrepreneurs who participated in the first phase and are looking beyond their borders for global growth. This phase will also identify additional resources that can strengthen support for women entrepreneurs, especially during the pandemic and beyond. This project is meant to reignite the enormous trade potential between Canada and the U.S. and create a platform for entrepreneurs to shape the framework for increased collaboration regarding entrepreneurial support.

Timeline

Activities in the first phase of the project took place between October 2021 and February 2022.

Project Component	Date
Introductory Meeting Startup Canada and the U.S. Embassy meeting to discuss the criteria for participant selection including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Representation from diverse entrepreneurs 2. Varied industries 3. Varied geographies (urban/rural) 4. Different phases in the export journey 	October 8, 2021
Project Development	October 22, 2021

Startup Canada and the U.S. Embassy identifies project participants (five Canadians and five Americans).	
<p>Virtual Kick-off Roundtable (Working Group 1)</p> <p>The first working group session, including additional activities such as publishing a press release, reaching out to the media, and preparing the social media launch campaign.</p>	November 5, 2021
<p>Working Group 2</p> <p>The second working group session on the credibility of e-commerce and trade barriers.</p>	November 30, 2021
<p>Working Group 3</p> <p>The third working group session involved Startup Canada meeting with each participant to better assess their largest pain points and determine solutions to assist in remedying these barriers. Questions that were asked included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your largest struggle/hurdle? • What is your key recommendation or "ask" for the private sector regarding a possible solution to your hurdle? • What is your key recommendation or "ask" for the public sector? • Is there a private sector partner that you would like to connect with? 	December 2021
<p>Working Group 4</p> <p>The fourth working group session involved facilitating one-to-one meetings between private sector partners, and offering mentorship opportunities through Startup Canada's flagship programs Startup Women and Startup Global.</p>	January and February 2022
<p>Working Group 5</p> <p>The fifth working group session focused on advisory and mentorship support.</p>	February 1, 2022

Working Group 6 The final and sixth working group session revolved discussion on the summary report for this project phase.	February 22, 2022
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The second phase of this project will begin in May 2022 where Startup Canada will be showcasing participants from the first phase through a storytelling campaign. These spotlights will highlight not only the successes, but also their struggles, to encapsulate their full story and inspire other entrepreneurs on how they can build back better through cross-border trade.

Participants

Please refer to [Appendix D](#) for a full list of biographies and information on each participant and host.

Canadian participants

1. Shyra Barberstock (President & CEO, [Okwaho Equal Source Inc.](#))
2. Richa Gupta (President, [GOOD FOOD FOR GOOD](#))
3. Christina Gwira (WordPress Developer, [NOYA DESIGNS](#))
4. Dr. Céline Leheurteux (CEO, [Euthabag](#); 2021 [Startup Global Pitch Competition](#) People's Choice Award Winner)
5. Angie Tran (Co-founder, [Kind Laundry](#); 2021 [Startup Global Pitch Competition](#) Scale-up Winner)

American participants

1. Erin Andrews (Founder, Owner, and CEO, [indi chocolate](#))
2. Kristine Carey (Reinvention Expert, [Kristine Carey.com](#))
3. Darlene Damm (Faculty Chair and Head of Social Impact and Startups, [Singularity University](#))

4. Sheila Hawkins–Bucklew (Founder, [Hawkins Bucklew™\(Handcrafted\) Jewelry Designs](#))
5. Kate Torgersen (Founder and CEO, [MilkStork®](#))

Startup Canada hosts

- **Kayla Isabelle**, CEO of Startup Canada
- **Natasha Hope Morano**, Director of Corporate and Government Affairs

Discussion

Over the span of four months, women entrepreneurs from both Canada and the U.S. gathered and discussed the hurdles each have had to overcome, as well as the continuing need to address barriers in growing their businesses and navigating cross-border trade. Collectively, these discussions identified pertinent themes and topics important to women entrepreneurs. This project is a first step in creating more inclusive opportunities for like-minded women to gather and co-create solutions that can better support them.

Through active discussions, the group explored barriers women face both presently and pre-pandemic, as well as examined the policies that are working in each economy and where there is room for improvement. Recurring themes and our overarching recommendations for consideration are:

1. Trade barriers within Canada and the U.S.

- a. This includes labeling the role of women beyond the role of the entrepreneur (women on the other side of the coin) like distributors, investors, buyers, and what export-related support is currently available.
- b. **Recommendation:** A resource document that lists vetted organizations to connect with for trade-related questions via Startup Global portal. As well as a checklist of paperwork and documentation required to expand business in the US/Canada via Startup Global portal.

2. Shipping Best Practices

- a. The need for a resource guide and access to advisors or coaches to support with shipping processes who can share best practices.
- b. **Recommendation:** A checklist of paperwork and documentation required to expand business in the US/Canada via Startup Global portal.

3. Challenges in identifying distributors, suppliers, partners

- a. **Recommendations:** A resource document that lists vetted organizations to connect with for trade-related questions via Startup Global portal and creating a navigator tool to better assist entrepreneurs in understanding and accessing support.

4. Relationship building

- a. Strategic international partnerships and connecting to private sector partners that can support all aspects of going global and navigating cross border trade.
- b. Startup Canada facilitated connections between the project participants and the private sector for partnership development.
- c. **Recommendation:** Opportunity for more one-to-one connections such as ones Startup Canada facilitated, and more networking opportunities outside of regular business hours. Additionally, providing a platform for mentorship connections.

5. The credibility of e-commerce

- a. Women entrepreneurs' challenges in getting heard when there's no brick and mortar.
- b. **Recommendation:** Openness to offering opportunities specifically to women-owned and/or women-led businesses by private sector companies can help mitigate this issue at scale.

6. Red tape and navigating bureaucracy

- a. The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) have complicated processes.

The added layer of differing processes makes it tricky for small businesses even though populations and laws are very similar.

- b. **Recommendation:** Need to find a better way for FDA and CFIA to speak to one another. Creation of joint info sessions and webinars will be extremely helpful. An additional recommendation is to provide more opportunities for entrepreneurs to access support in the ecosystem as it relates to red tape reduction and navigating bureaucracy.

7. Educational tools and access to resources

- a. There is a need to simplify access to finding information surrounding training and funding. Many entrepreneurs have to take the trial and error route to understand how exporting works. This demands time, resources, and money with no concrete solution. There's no streamlined training or a resource bank explaining what paperwork or documentation is required to get export licenses, get approvals, and trade internationally.
- b. **Recommendation:** A checklist of paperwork and documentation required to expand business in the US/Canada via Startup Global portal.

8. Advisory and mentorship support

- a. A crucial requirement for a platform or network that can offer industry specific mentors with whom women entrepreneurs can identify with and take industry-specific inspiration from.
- b. Awareness and education around professional versus personal coaches and understanding of which one to choose and when.
- c. Education around Indigenous perspective on mentorship versus Western perspective.
- d. **Recommendation:** Startup Women and Startup Global mentor/mentee opportunities can address these challenges, these programs are built upon the pillars of offering inclusive and supportive mentorship opportunities.

9. Perceptions of women entrepreneurs

- a. There is strong prejudice towards different cultures and communities, for example Indigenous and new immigrants.
- b. **Recommendation:** Storytelling campaign to better support the many faces and approaches to women entrepreneurship.

Recommendations

In summary, suggestions from the group include: the development of new tools, resources, and training to navigate cross-border trade, mentorship opportunities, consolidation of existing resources available to support with cross-border trade, and additional opportunities to amplify women's voices across borders. By supporting women with their hurdles as it relates to trade between Canada and the U.S., it can lead to better financial independence and empower women entrepreneurs in both ecosystems which ultimately supports the goal to build back better. The full list of recommendations include:

- A resource document that lists vetted organizations to connect with for trade-related questions via the Startup Global portal;
- A checklist of paperwork and documentation required to expand business in Canada and/or the U.S. via the Startup Global portal;
- A platform to increase opportunities for more one-to-one connections (such as the ones Startup Canada facilitated), and more networking and mentorship opportunities;
- Openness to offering opportunities specifically to women-owned and/or women-led businesses by private sector companies to help mitigate e-commerce credibility issues at scale;
- A method of opening up lines of communications between the FDA and CFIA, such as the creation of joint info sessions and webinars;

- Investment into programs that address the lack of mentorship opportunities, such as Startup Women and Startup Global that are built upon the pillars of offering inclusive and supportive mentorship opportunities; and
- A storytelling campaign to better support the many faces, perspectives, and approaches to women entrepreneurship.

Next steps

The findings of this report indicate the need to implement women-led solutions while examining how to build back better. Based on the key recommendations, the following actions will be taken in the next phase of this project:

1. More advisory, mentorship and coaching support for women entrepreneurs through Startup Women and Startup Global
2. A checklist of paperwork and documentation required to expand business in Canada and/or the U.S. via the Startup Global portal
3. A resource document that lists vetted organizations to connect with for trade-related questions via the Startup Global portal
4. A storytelling campaign to share the inspiring stories of the participants and focusing on amplifying the voices and perspectives of those who have not had the opportunity to be heard

Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted how entrepreneurs operate, scale, and both import and export their products, especially for women entrepreneurs who have been disproportionately impacted. Due to COVID-19 and the related economic downturn, the creation of new companies in Canada and the U.S., whose goal is to export into each other's respective countries, has been affected. This must be addressed. Investment in cross-border business models requires researching and exploring the export target market to look for distributors, partners, local investors, as well as many other aspects. This project is meant to reignite the enormous trade

potential between Canada and the U.S. and create a platform for entrepreneurs to shape the framework for increased collaboration regarding entrepreneurial support. This report is a pivotal first step in realizing the tremendous opportunity between Canada and the U.S., and the important role women play in efforts to build back better.

Beginning in May 2022, Startup Canada and the U.S. Embassy will pilot phase two of this project by sharing the stories of Canadian and American entrepreneurs through Startup Canada's social media channels. Over the span of six months, Startup Canada and the U.S. Embassy will showcase both Canadian and American entrepreneurs who participated in the first phase of the project who are looking beyond their borders for global growth. There will be a special focus on highlighting women entrepreneurs and the struggles they have endured and continue to endure during the pandemic. We will highlight the successes, struggles, and stories of up to three participants from each economy (6 total). The goal is to inspire more entrepreneurs to build back better, with a special focus on women entrepreneurs by working with their partners both north and south of the border. We hope that you will follow along the journey of learning more about the incredible women entrepreneurs who participated through the storytelling campaign and join us in our effort to create a more inclusive and equitable ecosystem for women entrepreneurs to flourish.

Appendix

Appendix A: [Summary of Project Press Release](#)

OTTAWA, ON – Startup Canada is delighted to announce a new partnership with the [United States Embassy](#) (U.S. Embassy) to grow the entrepreneurial spirit across the border. With the support of the U.S. Embassy, Startup Canada will be hosting closed-door working groups with entrepreneurs from both Canada and the United States to share key lessons, learn how to navigate cross-border trade, and discuss how both economies can bolster support for entrepreneurs.

Recommendations and observations from these roundtables will be collected into a final report which will be shared and used for additional advocacy both within the private and public sector of both economies. Complementary to this initiative, Startup Canada will also be showcasing both Canadian and American entrepreneurs who participate in this first phase that are also looking toward global growth. These spotlights highlight not only the successes, but also their struggles, to encapsulate their full story and inspire other entrepreneurs on how they can build back better through cross-border trade.

“Cross-border trade is one of the most common first steps that entrepreneurs in Canada take in order to grow their business globally,” said Kayla Isabelle, CEO at Startup Canada. “Our new partnership with the U.S. Embassy aims to bridge entrepreneurs from both economies to share key takeaways, as well as fuel the entrepreneurial spirit across the border.”

“President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau in the Roadmap for a Renewed U.S.-Canada Partnership committed to supporting women and diverse entrepreneurs,” said Ambassador Arnold Chacon, Charge d’Affaires for the U.S. Mission to Canada. “Small and medium-sized enterprises on both sides of the border

are essential to ensuring the sustainable and inclusive growth of the U.S. and Canadian economies, post-COVID, so we can build back better, together.” This partnership was funded [in part] by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the author[s] and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.

Appendix B: Consultation Themes and Questions

- What are the biggest barriers that women entrepreneurs have faced historically? (Pose to each entrepreneur)
- What are the unique challenges that women entrepreneurs face during COVID-19 as it relates to importing and exporting to each country ?
- What has your import/export experience with each country been like during the pandemic?
- How difficult or easy has it been for you in finding and building relationships with partners, suppliers, and distributors in the U.S. or Canada?
- What was your experience in finding resources on import/export, labeling, packaging, tariffs, licensing or certifications to expand in the U.S. or Canada?
- What strategies have been effective in supporting women entrepreneurs?
 - United States
 - Canada
- In terms of support, what unique support from the government and private sector have been successful?

The credibility of e-commerce

- What are the challenges that you have faced in exploring E-commerce for your business?
 - What steps did you take to overcome these challenges?
- What do you think can be done to address this gender gap pertaining to e-commerce?

- What infrastructure, platforms, or resources have you found useful in building an e-commerce base for your business?

Trade barriers

- What are your top trade challenges that you face as an American/Canadian women entrepreneur expanding to Canada or the U.S.? (finding partners, laws, money transfers, etc.)
- How was your experience in finding and building relationships with partners, suppliers, and distributors in the U.S. or Canada?
 - What resources/platforms did you use?
- What was your experience in finding resources on import/export, labeling, packaging, tariffs, licensing or certifications to expand in the U.S. or Canada?
- In terms of support, what unique support from the government and private sector have been successful?

Appendix C: [Resource Guide](#)

As part of this project, we have created a resource guide that will continue to be updated and expanded upon throughout the year.

Appendix D: Participants' Bio

Canadian participants

6. **Shyra Barberstock (President & CEO, [Okwaho Equal Source Inc.](#))** Shyra Barberstock is the President and CEO of Okwaho Equal Source. Her academic career and entrepreneurship expertise in Indigenous social innovation and social impact is highly sought-after by public and private institutions. Shyra brings over a decade of experience as a professional Indigenous researcher and has extensive knowledge in Indigenous entrepreneurship, Indigenous economic development, and international business relations. She received formal training by the Rotman School of Management in Design Thinking and

the Playing to Win framework used by Fortune 500 companies world-wide. Of notable interest, Shyra was the first Indigenous Innovator-in-Residence at the former Innovation, Science and Economic Development (ISED) Lab in Ottawa and is a recognized practitioner of Indigenous social innovation and Indigenous business development by the Government of Canada. Shyra is currently pursuing her Ph.D. at Queen's University in Geography and Planning, with a research focus on Indigenous supply chain and procurement. Shyra is Anishinaabe and a member of Kebaowek First Nation in Kipawa, Quebec.

- 7. Richa Gupta (President, [GOOD FOOD FOR GOOD](#)):** The pursuit of a dream to help consumers lead healthier lives, the company started with one simple question: – how do you make eating healthy easy and delicious while making a difference in the world? Good Food For Good was founded in 2013 by entrepreneur and mother Richa with a simple idea: making it easy for everyone to eat well and do good. With an MBA & over fifteen years of experience in retail, fashion and food marketing, after becoming a new mom and working as a marketing executive, she constantly found it challenging to feed her family good food on busy nights. She grew up eating fresh home-cooked meals every night, a blessing she often took for granted. As an adult, she strived to cook the same kind of wholesome, hearty meals she grew up on, but the lack of options that were both convenient and nutritious made it increasingly difficult to eat healthy. After becoming a mother, Richa knew there was something she needed to do to make a change. How could people be expected to compromise health for convenience? Driven to make a difference through food, she started Good Food For Good using only ingredients you would add if you were cooking yourself. “I grew up in a family where my mum cooked fresh food, three times a day. So even just grabbing a pizza for dinner, as a working mom, I had so much guilt over not being able to cook healthy food for my kids. Anything that my mother did for me was the best that I wanted to do for my own child.” Today, she is actively working on

building better, healthier experiences for people with a goal to make it easy for everyone to eat well and do good.

8. **Christina Gwira (WordPress Developer, [NOYA DESIGNS](#)):** Without a university degree, college diploma or training certificate, Christina Gwira was able to: learn how to build websites on WordPress (and Joomla!), create graphics with Photoshop as well as design in print for print with Illustrator. By 2016, she had accidentally built her web design firm NOYA DESIGNS. She can call multi-national magazines, global non-profits as well as trillion dollar financial institutions my clients. In 2020, she was also a part of Barack Obama's Young Leaders of the Americas Initiative, being one of the first Canadians to be selected to participate in the program. Pretty dope, right! Today, Christina uses her platforms on Patreon, YouTube and Twitter to help aspiring web designers move from the life of a freelancer, to a life of freedom as an agency owner with the tools, framework and techniques that she wishes that she had access to when she first started out as a "jackie-of-all-trades".
9. **Dr. Céline Leheurteux (CEO, [Euthabag](#); 2021 [Startup Global Pitch Competition People's Choice Award Winner](#)):** Céline Leheurteux decided to be a veterinarian at the age of 8 and has been treating pets since 1999. Unable to find a dignified alternative to the garbage bag used for the disposal of deceased animals, she developed EUTHABAG, a pet body bag, now used in 25 countries by thousands of veterinarians. She provides training and tools to veterinary teams to improve the euthanasia experience for everyone involved: the family, the animal, and veterinary professionals. She gave a TEDx in May 2021 where she explained the Hidden face of veterinary medicine: the financial aspect of pet health.
10. **Angie Tran (Co-founder, [Kind Laundry](#); 2021 [Startup Global Pitch Competition Scale-up Winner](#)):** Angie Tran's background is in Digital Marketing and she has a passion in health and wellness. Her mission is to

create a company and brand that can impact the world for the better and that is how Kind Laundry was born. Kind Laundry is a purpose-driven company whose mission is to single-use plastic polluting our oceans and landfills, while providing people with a more eco-friendly laundry cleaning solution. They keep sustainability at the centre of every single step of their business operations by offering innovative, greener and safer ways to do laundry that will keep your clothes clean and the planet happy.

American participants

- 6. Erin Andrews (Founder, Owner, and CEO, [indi chocolate](#)):** Erin Andrews, founder of indi chocolate has been making chocolate for over 12 years. She started making chocolate because her daughters asked her where chocolate comes from. After taking them to Belize to show them that cacao grows on trees, she fell in love with the world of chocolate. Erin has been very creative in the ways she uses the cacao bean, she started indi chocolate with her amazing cocoa butter lotions. People come back to Pike Place Market every year for her all natural, luxurious lotions and she loves to see how chocolate makes people smile! When Erin started making chocolate, small batch chocolate machines were not robust enough and would often break down. She spent as much time fixing machines as she did making chocolate and wanted better made equipment that could stand up to the rigors of making chocolate. The Chocolate Refiner has been updated specifically for chocolate making and is built to last. indi chocolate sells table-top and larger Refiners, as well as replacement parts. If you want to learn how to make chocolate check out our bean to bar chocolate classes! indi chocolate started in 2010 and opened up in Pike Place Market in 2013. Starting out as a small business is hard work, in order to be able to afford the equipment to make chocolate Erin Andrews started making body care to earn enough to buy chocolate making equipment. Hidden deep within the Market indi chocolate started to get a

great reputation for its variety of wonderful products, fun after hour classes and our friendly team.

- 7. Kristine Carey (Reinvention Expert, [Kristine Carey.com](http://KristineCarey.com)):** Kristine Carey is a Reinvention Expert, helping solo entrepreneurs and small and mighty businesses to revisit the work they do, and how they do it, so they can produce more of the results they're looking for. She's been coaching and catalyzing since 2002 with her business, Moxie, Inc. She muses often in her own blog about business, life, the universe and everything, and is a regular contributor to the Get Clients Now! blog, where she also serves as the Director of Training.
- 8. Darlene Damm (Faculty Chair and Head of Social Impact and Startups, [Singularity University](http://SingularityUniversity)):** Darlene Damm is Faculty Chair & Head of Social Impact and Startups at Singularity University where she oversees Singularity's programs for startups and portfolio companies. Darlene has a broad background spanning across both technology and social change. In 2012 she founded DIYROCKETS, the first company to crowdsource space technology, and in 2011 was an early co-founder of Matternet, one of the world's first companies using drones for commercial transport and delivery of medical goods in the developing world. Darlene served with Ashoka, the world's largest association of social entrepreneurs for nearly ten years where she built the organization's fundraising system and led Ashoka's presence in the Silicon Valley. In addition, she helped launch Ashoka's StartEmpathy initiative which has scaled to over 30 countries ensuring young children grow up learning empathy and changemaking as core skills for the 21st century. Prior to that, Darlene spent over a decade working in Vietnam, Myanmar, Indonesia, East Asia and the US on educational and economic programs that empowered youth and helped bring developing nations into the global economy. She received her bachelor's degree in History from Stanford University and her master's degree in International Affairs from Johns Hopkins SAIS. She was a Fellow with Japan-US Community Education and Exchange and a graduate of

Singularity University. She holds a patent and regularly speaks around the world and publishes on the topic of technology, innovation, and social change.

- 9. Sheila Hawkins–Bucklew (Founder, [Hawkins Bucklew™ \(Handcrafted Jewelry Designs\)](#)):** Sheila Hawkins–Bucklew is an entrepreneur whose journey has been woven together with a common thread: the empowerment of women. She is a proponent of equality and women’s rights, something she has held close to her heart throughout her career. She was recognized in 2008 as a recipient of the Austin Board of REALTORS® Cultural Awareness Award. She received the 2004 "REALTOR® of the Year" award from the Austin Chapter of Women’s Council of REALTORS® and received National Chapter recognition for the local chapter work done during her 2006 presidency. Sheila has been involved in her local community as a member of the Greater Austin Black Chamber, National Council of Negro Women, the Four Point’s Task Force in District 6, and Jewelers of America. She is also a former member of The Links, Inc. Town Lake Chapter, National Black MBA Association, and National Association of Real Estate Brokers (REALTIST). Sheila enjoys volunteering in the community dedicating her time to such organizations as the Capital City Black Film Festival, Austin Area Jazz Festival, and SXSW. Sheila has been featured in articles of the following periodicals: The Austin Chronicle Newspaper, Community Impact Newspaper, Austin Women’s Magazine, Tribeza Magazine, Eclectic Shades Magazine, and British Vogue.
- 10. Kate Torgersen (Founder and CEO, [MilkStork®](#)):** Kate Torgersen is the founder and CEO of Milk Stork®, the first-ever breast milk shipping company. Since launching in 2015, Milk Stork’s award-winning services have supported breastfeeding, traveling moms at more than 700 companies, and Milk Stork has delivered more than 3,200,000 ounces of breastmilk – helping traveling moms maintain their commitment to breastfeeding. Kate founded Milk Stork out of a personal need while working as senior executive communications manager at Clif Bar & Company. After the birth of her twins, Kate faced a

four-day business trip, but she was not willing to sacrifice the breastfeeding relationship that she had struggled to achieve. Instead, she pumped relentlessly prior to the trip to create two extra gallons of milk to ensure that they would have enough to eat while she was away. Then, during the trip, she had to pump every three hours to maintain her milk supply for when she returned. After lugging two gallons of breast milk home and enduring a lengthy inspection by airport security, she arrived home exhausted, frustrated and angry. There had to be a simple solution to this complex problem. She contacted her father, Silicon Valley veteran Mike Torgersen, with her idea, and together they created Milk Stork. In August 2015, Kate officially launched Milk Stork. Within a few days, Milk Stork had landed its first enterprise partner, one of the world's largest consulting firms. Since then Milk Stork has become an essential benefit for progressive, family-friendly companies supporting more than 85 employers, including Salesforce, Pinterest, SAP, The Home Depot, Major League Baseball, and many others. An advocate for working mothers, Kate has made it her mission to normalize pumping and motherhood in the workplace. When she isn't brainstorming innovative solutions to make breastfeeding logistics easier, Kate is busy shuttling her three kids to their various sports practices, tackling her favorite Peloton ride, or trying desperately to get eight uninterrupted hours of sleep. Favorite Quote: "I'm fast, smart, strong and brave!" - Zoë, Kate's 6 year old daughter.

Startup Canada Hosts:

- **Kayla Isabelle:** Kayla is CEO of Startup Canada has played a significant role in this project and overseen all activities related to this project. Kayla is an award-winning strategic communications consultant and change management facilitator and is passionate about leveraging the power of storytelling in the entrepreneurial community. An advocate for women in leadership, Kayla is also the host of the Startup Women Podcast.

- **Natasha Hope Morano:** Natasha Morano, Director of Corporate and Government Affairs has also played a role in this project as it relates to partnership development. Ms. Morano is President of NHM Connect, an Ottawa based consultancy company specializing in strategic partnerships, fundraising, event management and corporate and government relations. A demonstrated history of working in the non-profit sector has equipped Ms. Morano with providing her client base with high level strategic advice.

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