



“One of the most  
**transformative** professional  
experiences of my career.”

—Amy Reynolds  
(Founder, UpEarth Pathways)

From October 2–4, 2025, 75 **changemakers, entrepreneurs, and community leaders** from across Alberta gathered at Métis Crossing for three days of connection, reflection, and inspired problem-solving.

Through True Confession sessions, case studies, workshops, and peer coaching circles, participants engaged in experiential learning designed to spark both **practical breakthroughs** and **personal renewal**. Attendees gained practical tools to grow **financially sustainable, values-driven** businesses—strengthening Alberta’s social and economic fabric.



“I am deeply grateful that this community exists in Alberta—it gives me hope.”

—Laura Keating Elske

“The sessions gave real world advice that I could use immediately to improve my business.”

—Carrie Armstrong

“Exactly what I needed...stepping out of my comfort zone turned out to be one of the best experiences I’ve ever had.”

—Gloria Juarez



Overall average rating of SVI: Alberta experience:

9.2/10

Average estimated revenue increase over then next year attributed to SVI: Alberta 2025:

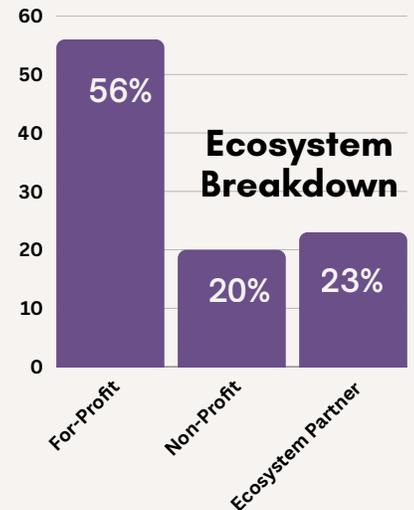
20%

The estimated total revenue impact of the learning, connecting and inspiration from SVI:

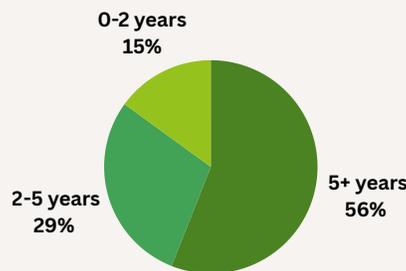
\$3.9 MILLION

# PARTICIPANTS BY THE NUMBERS

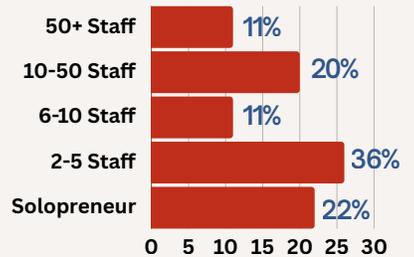
## BIPOC Participants



## Number of Years Operating



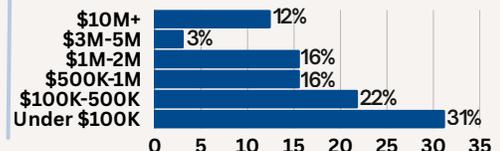
## Staff



## Female Participants



## Revenue

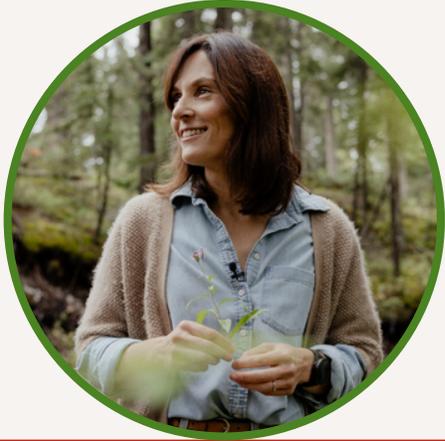


## SVI: ALBERTA HELPED ME TO:

88% Make connections with Indigenous entrepreneurs

87% Start a collaboration

64% Develop an actionable growth strategy



## Karina Birch, ROCKY MOUNTAIN SOAP COMPANY

Karina Birch shared the journey of growing Rocky Mountain Soap Company from a tiny shop in Canmore into a nationally loved, multi-million dollar brand with 14 stores and over 200 natural products. She spoke about staying true to her values as the company scaled, and how success is found not just in milestones—but in the everyday commitment to doing business differently.

## Tonya Surman, CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INNOVATION

Tonya Surman reflected on her journey founding the Centre for Social Innovation, which has supported over 6,000 changemakers and pioneered tools like the Community Bond to fund over \$40 million in social-purpose real estate. At SVI: Alberta, she spoke candidly about her post-COVID challenges, sharing hard-won lessons from navigating failure, loss, and deep organizational change.



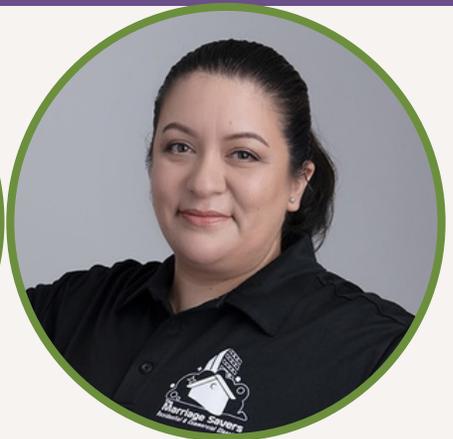
## Colby Delorme, IMAGINATION GROUP

Colby Delorme shared the story behind Imagination Ceremonial Tobacco, Canada's first Elder-blessed, certified organic ceremonial tobacco company. It was a powerful conversation about reconciliation, cultural protocol, and economic sovereignty, asking: how can we scale when the law prohibits us from using traditional marketing channels? He received thoughtful, actionable feedback from both a panel of experts and the audience.



## Gloria Juarez, THE MARRIAGE SAVERS CLEANING

Gloria Juarez shared the story behind her family-owned cleaning business and the values that guide it—care, integrity, and service. In an emotional case study that moved the room, she opened up about the challenge of communicating her company's value beyond price, and the deeper journey of learning to believe in herself as a leader. She received thoughtful feedback on how to grow the higher-margin side of her business with confidence and clarity.



# WORKSHOPS

## **Purposeful Growth: Driving Social Venture Success**

*Mike Rowlands (Junxion Strategy)*

Through stories and candid insights, Mike challenged participants to rethink what growth really means in a social venture. He shared lessons from scaling mission-driven businesses—highlighting how success often requires tradeoffs, self-awareness, and a commitment to staying true to purpose.



## **Working with Barriers: Attracting and Retaining Staff in an Increasingly Competitive Market**

*Holly Singer (Milk Jar), Jodi Phelan (Hiregood), and Bill Zheng (Radicare Ventures)*

Entrepreneurs shared real experiences hiring individuals facing barriers—what worked, what didn't, and the surprising benefits that followed. The session revealed how inclusive hiring can strengthen teams and drive meaningful results.



## **Developing Predictable Revenue for Your Social Enterprise**

*Jude Brunt (PURPPL)*

Participants explored how to make sales feel purposeful, not pressured. Jude shared a simple framework for building trust-based relationships that drive consistent, values-aligned revenue.



## **Tools to Attract Investment**

*Barb Rallison (Institute for Community Prosperity), Lacey Chyz (ACCA) and Tonya Surman (Centre for Social Innovation)*

This practical discussion unpacked what investors are looking for and how to position a social venture for funding success. Participants walked away with tangible tools, fresh confidence, and insights on building authentic investor relationships.



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“What made this retreat **exceptional** was how it wove together **practical business strategy** with **deep personal reconnection**.

The workshops on *Tools to Attract Investment* and *Purposeful Growth* provided tangible insights I'm already implementing, while the case studies reminded me to approach challenges with curiosity rather than predetermined solutions.”

”

“I'm leaving feeling **recharged** by the real-life reminder that all over this province, people are actively making a **positive social and economic impact**.

...whether you're rural or urban, Indigenous or a newcomer, experienced or in your early stages, **there's a need for you and a place for you at SVI Alberta.**”

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“**So much more** than I expected.

I built amazing new connections, and learned a lot from many incredible businesses and initiatives, each driven by a strong commitment to social impact...Thank you for **a truly transformative experience!**”

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“SVI: Alberta was **powerful on every level**.

Personally, it offered a rare chance to slow down, breathe, and reset, surrounded by nature, Indigenous learning, and other business leaders who truly get what it means to lead with purpose. Professionally it was, as always, **a masterclass in authentic connection and collaboration**. I left with new relationships, fresh ideas, and a renewed sense of hope for what's possible when changemakers come together with honesty, creativity, and care.”



Thank you to our **sponsors** for making **SVI: Alberta 2025** possible



With the support of:  
Prairies Economic  
Development Canada

