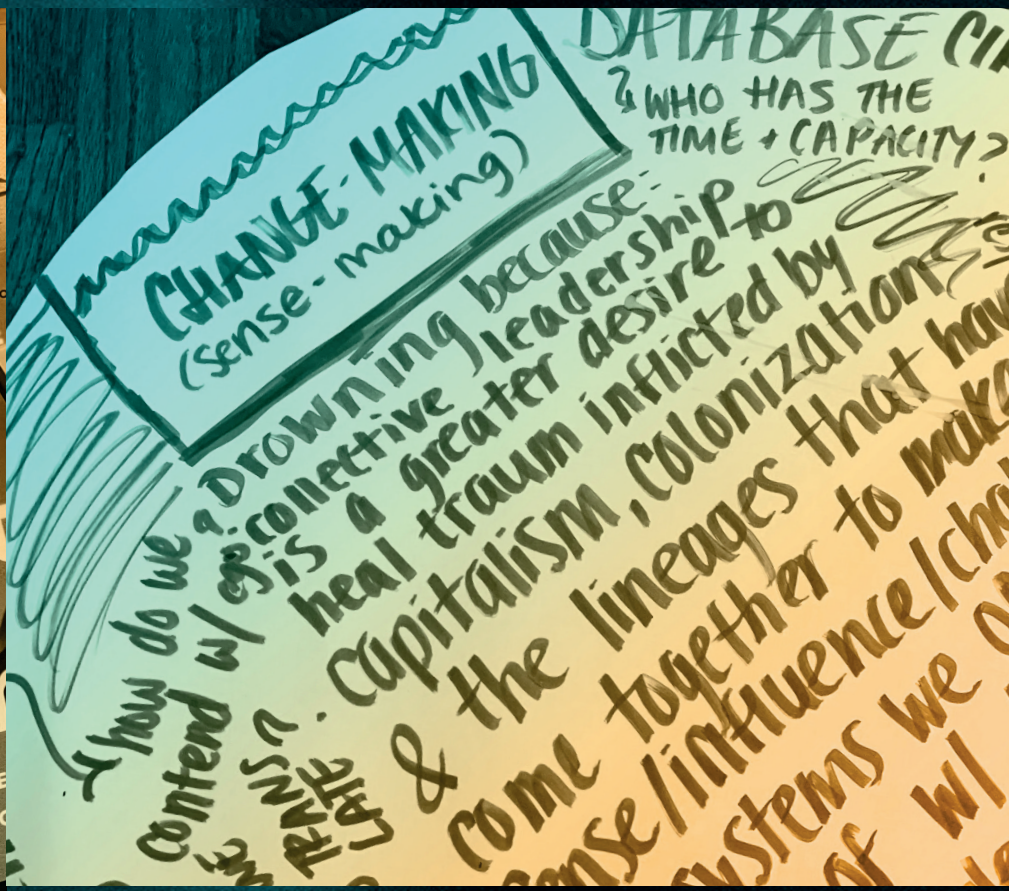
FLIPFOUNDATION.CA

Foundation for Leadership, Imagination and Place

Learning & Impact Report 2025-26





Land Acknowledgement



We are Indigenous and non-Indigenous, queer, trans and straight-identified settlers living in Toronto/Tkaronto, located on the territory of many Indigenous peoples including the Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat, Seneca, Petun, Metis and the Anishinabeg Nation, including the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation.

The land and waters in Tkaronto are subject to the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant; a pre-colonial agreement between Haudenosaunee & Ojibwe allied nations to share & care for the natural resources around the Great Lakes. The colonial contracts unjustly enacted on this land and multiple First Nations include Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

We know there are very different impacts of colonization and different ways people have come to be on this land. We particularly acknowledge Black and racialized communities in Tkaronto and on Turtle Island who have experienced forced displacement and the legacy of enslavement and continual anti-Black racism, and who at the same time are leading and creating movements, community contributions and new/old knowledges in the generational movement for justice.

As a settler organization on stolen land, actioning land acknowledgements personally and organizationally include building knowledge, unlearning, doing repair work, advocacy and solidarity work, mobilizing and distributing resources that have been unjustly accumulated through capitalism and white supremacy, and through building meaningful relationships.

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A Welcome From Rudy



Rudy Ruttimann
Founding Director

Dear Friends, Founders, and Funders,

Welcome. Whether you are a longtime companion of FLIP's or encountering us for the first time, I'm so glad you're here.

FLIP was created three years ago to facilitate collaboration between three worlds that, while inherently interconnected, are rarely in dialogue with each other: arts for social change, leadership development in arts and culture, and philanthropy and social finance.

The world of **philanthropy and social finance**, from participatory grant-making to community wealth building, is asking hard questions about power, money, and who decides where capital flows — what would it take to build a more just economy? While answers are emerging, arts and culture remain on the margins, considered a nice-to-have, rather than essential infrastructure for community wellbeing and economic justice.

The world of **leadership development** in arts and culture often asks leaders from marginalized communities for ongoing resilience, requiring them to operate in systems that offer episodic opportunities that are under-resourced and isolated from networks and capital.

The world of **arts for social change**, a mature and active movement, simply lacks sustained investment in its people. As arts leaders and systems change actors, we had spent time in each of these worlds and understood the gap between them — talented leaders kept hitting the same barriers of access, capital and connection, while funders wanted to invest in emerging leaders but didn't know how to reach them. We had a vision for how to close that gap, and FLIP is that vision in motion.

"True visionary and revolutionary ideas often emerge from those who straddle these boundaries and possess knowledge of both worlds." — bell hooks

Our approach has not been to help these worlds better navigate existing systems, but to invite them to participate in changing the systems they exist in together. And while there are many roles available in changing a system, we see ours as one that introduces leaders and funders, so that they can meet not as benefactor and recipient, but in a genuine and reciprocal relationship.

This year we put our role into practice with our first full year of programming, co-designing our initiatives with leaders themselves. One of these initiatives, SUSTAIN, our fellowship for emerging arts and culture founders and leaders, showed us that our vision was resonating. As I sat in a circle with the fellows, the very leaders that we had imagined gathering, I heard them express the value of being in community with each other, how they

felt like they no longer had to carry their work alone. “I didn’t know a space like this could exist for people like me,” one fellow said. These moments are not side effects of the work. They are the work. It was a gratifying year and also a hard year. Launching amid economic uncertainty meant difficult decisions, and as we made them, colleagues and collaborators held us up again and again. We come out of it with humility, gratitude and a deeper commitment. We consider ourselves a learning organization, which means that we learn by doing, we experiment, and we make the results available so that the worlds we work with can learn alongside us.

Here’s what we’re learning:

- Scaling with depth takes time, but it reaches further than scaling quickly. And it lasts.
- Relationship-building is not a soft add-on to movement work. It is movement work.
- FLIP's place as weaver and convener, where the just economy movement meets arts and culture, is rare, needed, and valued.

After attending one of FLIP’s Catalyst Dinners, Keira Bethwaite, Senior Manager at Corient, shared this reflection on how we bring people together in community: ***"Art and its creation is the marker of a healthy and thriving community."*** Going into next year, it’s this exact kind of health and thriving that we orient towards.

Here’s where we’re taking our learnings next year:

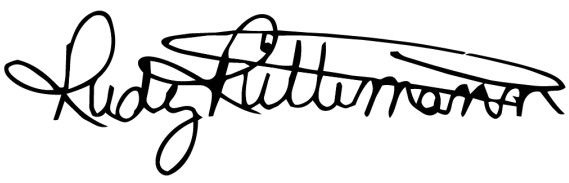
- We will welcome our second cohort of SUSTAIN fellows, expanding the initiative from six months to a full year.
- We will build the FLIP Emergence Fund, a low-barrier fund where capital will flow directly to emergent leaders.
- We will continue to nurture, and participate in, the meeting places where financial activists and arts and culture leaders convene and build together.

Thank you to our inaugural SUSTAIN Fellows — you trusted us with your time and your truths. Thank you to our funders and partners, who believed in an idea before it had a track record. And thank you to our advisors, collaborators, and community.

FLIP is young by design, born from experience, and grounded in more than 30 years of leadership in the arts, community, and movements for change. At its heart is one question: What becomes possible when the people with the power to move resources finally trust the people with the vision to use them? This year gave us a glimpse, and it is more beautiful and more urgent than we imagined.

Here's to finding the answer together.

With gratitude and respect,





Mobilizing a Just Economy

What are we doing, and how are we doing it?

Moving the existing system toward a **just economy** can mean different things.

For us, Jasmine Rashid, author of The Financial Activist Playbook and a FLIP faculty member of SUSTAIN, says it best: "At its core, it's an invitation to reimagine the role of money in our society, to help build a more sensible, equitable, and sustainable economy in service of all people and the planet."

FLIP is bringing together the worlds of **arts for social change, leadership development** and **finance** as part of the movement toward a just economy. As Rudy Ruttimann, FLIP's Founding Director, shared in her welcome letter, we believe these three worlds hold knowledge and possibility for practicing a more just economy, and need to talk to each other.

FLIP is a convener and facilitator at the centre, bringing people together to make change happen. We engage emerging arts and culture leaders, artists and creatives, funders, academic institutions, researchers, and donors/financial activists, who are all, in our words, Catalysts, working toward a more just economy.

Financial Activism, the practice of shifting the flow of capital and power to solve social and environmental problems, is our approach to mobilizing capital with Catalysts, so that it is can directly support the visions and work of emerging arts and culture leaders.

We're creating a place of belonging for everyone involved, practicing care, and building relationships with each other as we go.

But what do we DO? and how do we do it?

FLIP's systems change work is targeting the **resourcing system** for arts for social change.

When we talk about the resourcing system for arts for social change, we don't just mean funding. What we mean is:

- The skills, care and access that people can gain
- The people in power and their mindsets
- The financial and social capital that people can access
- And the knowledge that is produced through arts for social change

We are catalyzing systemic change, building a more just economy through arts and culture. Ultimately, we want our sense of community expanded, and a greater sense of belonging and wellbeing. Emerging arts leaders' careers and organizations will be nourished and thrive. Communities will be supported by emerging arts leaders' programming and research.





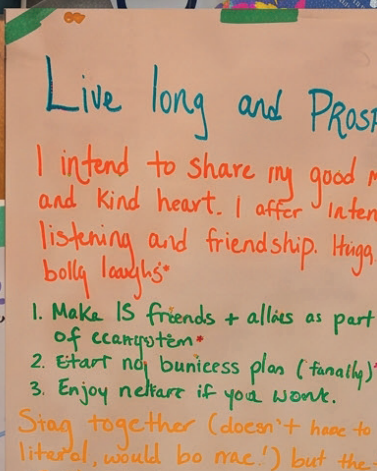


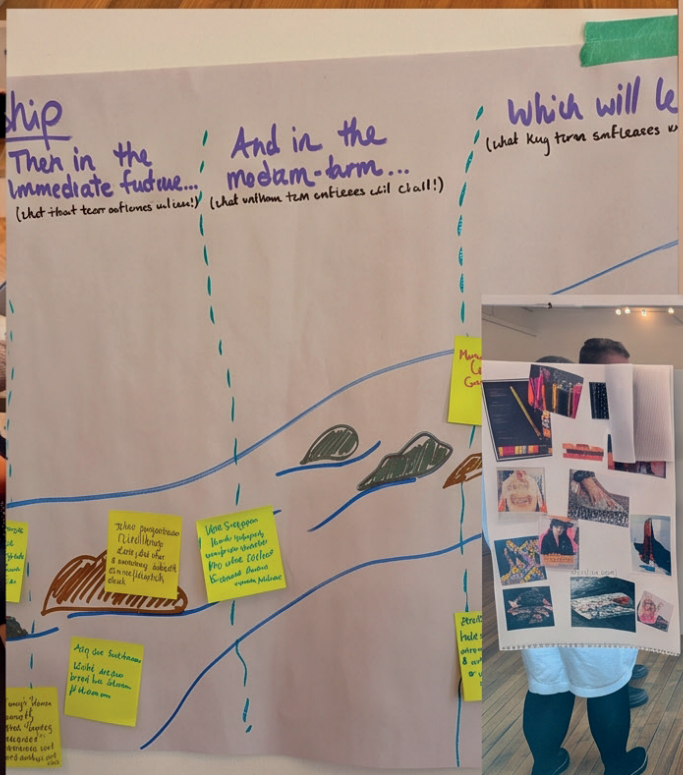





the Myth of Normal




Live long and Pros
I intend to share my good
and kind heart. I offer
listening and friendship. Hugg
belly laughs.
1. Make IS friends + allies as part
of community.
2. Start my business plan (finally)
3. Enjoy welfare if you won't.
Stay together (doesn't have to
literal, would be nice!) but the


And in the
medium-term...
Which will le



Bridging the Resourcing Gap

Part of Resourcing System	*System Barriers & Gaps*	*FLIP's Response & Programs*	*System Impact*
Financial and Social Capital	**Restrictive Models** *Unequal access to capital and skills.*	**Advocacy** *Funder dialogues, social finance for the arts.*	**Unrestrictive Models** *Trust-based, relevant funding models.*
	Lack of Access *to professional development, financial capital.*	**SUSTAIN Fellowship** *Stipend, Catalyst Dinners, Curriculum, and more.*	**Connected Community** *Reciprocal relationships.*
Skills, Care and Access	**Underresourcing** *Leaders feeling isolation and burnout.*	**SUSTAIN Fellowship** *Network of emerging leaders and activists.*	**Well Being** *Creative leaders with ongoing support.*
Knowledge and Methods	**Lack of Clarity** *Needing research to understand landscape.*	**SUSTAIN Model** *Collaborative research on just economy.*	**Demonstrated Models** *Engaged research as legitimate knowledge.*
People and Mindsets	**Lack of Trust** *Inequitable behaviours, operating from scarcity.*	**Catalyst Dinners** *Funder dialogues and advocacy on arts.*	**Financial Activism** *Trust based philanthropy.*



A FLIP Snapshot

Annual Operating Budget
$560,000

Team

Rudy Ruttimann
Founding Director

Myia Davar
Managing Director

Karibú Ramos
Culture Strategist & Lead Facilitato

Dr. Charlotte Lombardo
Research Lead

660 people
participated in our programming and events.

$350,000 mobilized
directly into the hands of emerging artists, founders, and cultural leaders from knowledge-rich and systemically marginalized communities

2 Fellowships, 7 Research Projects, 4 Catalyst Dinners and hundreds of conversations
launched between 2023 and 2026, aimed at flipping the resourcing system for arts and social change

Ecosystem & Strategy Partners

Just Economy Institute
OCADU
MASS Culture
Trauma of Money
Flourishing Startups

Funding Partners, past and present

McConnell Foundation
TELUS: Future Friendly Foundation
Inspirit Foundation
Heart Lake Committed Capital
Metcalf Foundation
Canada Council for the Arts
Canadian Heritage
Andras Family Foundation
Community Counts Foundation
Hubbs Family Foundation
Innoweave (Makeway)
Kingfisher Family Foundation
Ottawa Community Foundation
And many individual investors



Sustaining Emerging Leaders

Rewiring our relationships to resourcing, wealth, and each other

FLIP's flagship SUSTAIN Leadership Development Fellowship launched in 2025. The first Fellowship welcomed 10 emerging cultural leaders and founders from knowledge-rich and systemically marginalized communities, using arts for social change in their projects, organizations, and companies.

For six months, Fellows came together through online facilitated sessions, co-coaching, in-person gatherings, research co-creation, and action-based strategy to gain skills to challenge barriers and sustain their work.

We built SUSTAIN on the idea that leadership development needs to be more holistic, offering care to founders and leaders. Leadership training should also leave organizations more sustainable, through social capital, financial capital, a healthier relationship to money, or all three. SUSTAIN is unique in a few different ways. First, our curriculum weaves together the Just Economy Institute, the Trauma of Money Institute, the Flourishing Business Model Design Course, and other models connecting personal and systems transformation, to ground leaders in the real work of wealth. Second, SUSTAIN builds in a basic income stipend for each Fellow for the duration of the Fellowship. Third, SUSTAIN is co-researched as a just economy practice by Fellows and our Research Lead.

What happened was powerful—and we learned a lot. Over the six months of the program and beyond, we built a community where we could be vulnerable with each other. We strengthened our collective capacity to exchange ideas, resources, and tangible and emotional supports. Very quickly Fellows began procuring each other's services, fundraising for each others' work, or building relationships outside of the program.

"What feels powerful about this space is that it's creating values-aligned pathways for connection and support, ways of networking and collaborating that don't require abandoning ourselves. It feels like reclaiming our right to connection, opportunity, and collective support without sacrificing integrity." *— A. E., SUSTAIN Fellow*

"What's been reassuring here is seeing that another model is possible, one where people remain central while still meeting deadlines, budgets, and stakeholder needs. That's deeply validating because I've often been criticized for prioritizing care and patience with people over efficiency. This fellowship shows me those values can actually scale. It's not just idealism." *— Z. H., SUSTAIN Fellow*

It was also hard at times and we struggled and misstepped, bringing to our awareness when we weren't clear about our own limitations as a team and a learning organization. Fellows also had significant things happening in their lives that impacted their ability to participate.

"FLIP is also making me ask - what does it mean to be in community? What does it mean to be accountable to others? Is this part of the shift from individualism to collectivism? And it's really hard. It's really really hard." *— N. M., SUSTAIN Fellow*

Our takeaways

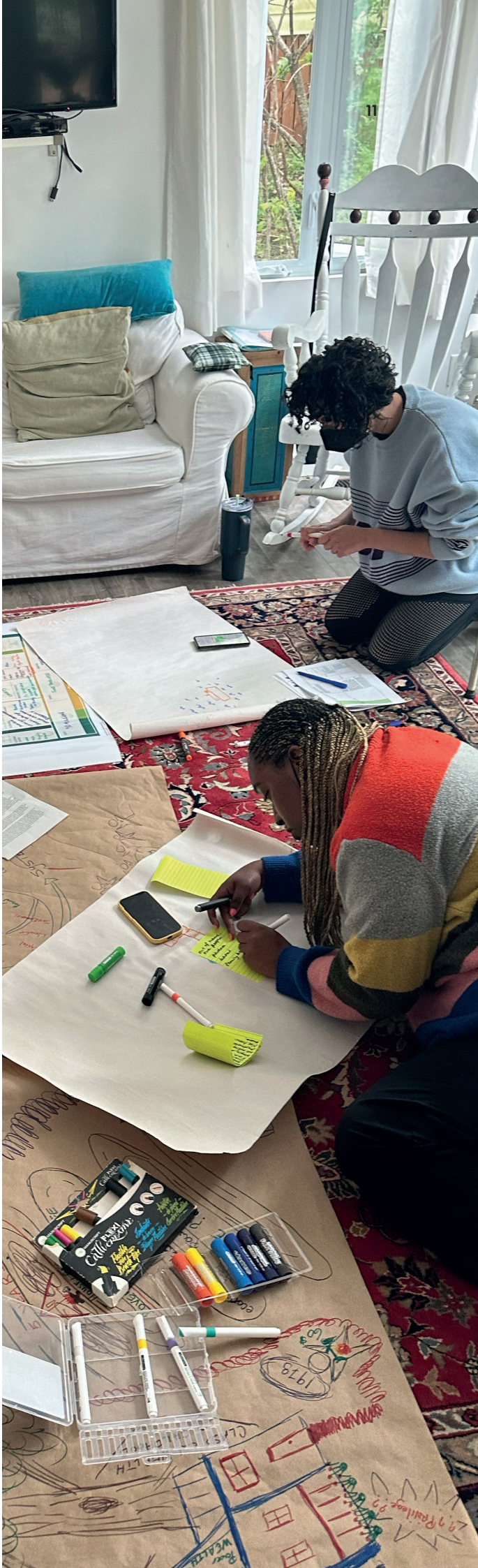
Relational Infrastructure IS Core Movement Work: It is incredibly important to create spaces for values-aligned connection, emotional support systems, collaborative ecosystems, and spaces of mutual witnessing for founders and leaders. Care must be

embedded in the structure of a program, not as a soft add-on.

Witnessing as Transformational Practice: Fellows repeatedly emphasize the importance of being seen, having process acknowledged, sharing vulnerability and witnessing struggle before success. Witnessing itself is reparative and movement building. FLIP and our Fellows wrestle with how to sustain meaningful work without reproducing harm, navigate systems without fully assimilating into them, and build relational depth while pursuing broader systemic impact.

A SUSTAIN Story: Our first in-person Immersion was coming to a close. Beginning with a snowstorm that cancelled flights, delayed trains and limited car travel, we finally all made it to each other in a winter wonderland in rural Ontario. After three days of workshops, getting to know each other, navigating different needs, sharing our artistic practices and eating delicious food, it was time to say goodbye. The facilitation team had planned a closing session, but leading up to that session Fellows started to come up to the team and ask if they could contribute something to the closing session. As a result, a collaborative and unplanned offering emerged: a profound song, the closing of a collective altar, a poetry reading and sharing something we were grateful for about another person in the group, facilitated by three Fellows and the FLIP team. The feeling of care and connection was palpable, and the team was a bit stunned by how generous and seamless the session was. What were the conditions that led to this? We believe this speaks to the power of trust-building, of building a culture of reciprocity, and what it can look like when those conditions exist.

We heal together. The conditions for this didn't just include what we did "right," with time for conversations, reflection, relationship-building and art-making. They also included moments of tension navigating different needs in the group, being hit with the reality of the injustice of how capital moves, and limitations of time and capacity within the team. Moving through challenges and sticking with it, learning and changing how we do things in real time, and later on, trying to acknowledge impacts as they happen and creating



space for connection, reflection and play—these are all ingredients that we believe lead to the set of conditions that allowed the first ever SUSTAIN Cohort to solidify in such a real way. This affirms that relational infrastructure and resourcing are key to sustainability for emerging leaders, and that SUSTAIN is rewiring our relationships to resourcing, wealth, and each other.

KEY STATS

- $60,000 in basic income support distributed to 10 Fellows
- Relationships seeded between 60 Catalysts and 10 Fellows, resulting in demonstrable action (financial commitments to Fellows, procurement of Fellows' services, ongoing relationships)

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

- What family stories did you hear about money growing up?
- What kinds of financial and non-financial wealth did your parents, grandparents, or community have?



SUSTAIN Fellow Spotlight



Nawaaz Makhani (he/him)

Nawaaz Makhani is the founder and operator of CQC Arts, a community arts small business. As an educator and interdisciplinary artist (tabla, water marbling, writing), he uses art and storytelling to explore the question of "who am I?" and "who are we?"

He recently wrapped up a successful Southern Ontario tour of his solo theatre show bol, brown boy, bol, and continues to explore themes of mental health, consent, toxic masculinity and healing generational trauma through his work.

CQCarts.ca

BolBrownBoyBol.ca

Image credit: Braxton Dinh-Wignall (IG @braxtondinhwignall)



Ali Elashram (he/him)

Experienced grassroots nonprofit founder and professional with an entrepreneurial attitude and mindset. I specialize in understanding institutional problems and architecting solutions for them.

Muslims in Media

An organization built to incubate independent media. We support productions that provide nuanced depictions of Muslim life.

Muslimsinmedia.org

"SUSTAIN has offered me an important network and infrastructure for the emergence of the value I believe I can uniquely offer while also demonstrating that the relationships of reciprocity I wish to see in my life are possible and, indeed, imminent. SUSTAIN has been much-needed oxygen to support me in remaining rooted in the work most meaningful to me and where I believe my true potential can be fulfilled. I feel deep gratitude to FLIP leadership and the facilitation team as well as the fellows I have had the distinct privilege of learning from and getting to know during the inaugural SUSTAIN cohort."



Rolla Tahir (she/her)

Rolla Tahir is a founder and independent filmmaker with more than a decade of experience in film production, festival work, and arts management. She is the founder of Qan Yama Qan Films, a production company championing diasporic narratives that combine formal ingenuity and unique voices. Her films have screened at TIFF, Oberhausen, DOXA and more festivals around the world. She is the co-founder of Toronto Arab Film, the only pan-Arab film festival in Canada. Rolla holds a specialist degree in Cinema Studies from the University of Toronto.

Qan Yama Qan Films

QYQ Films (est. 2022) is a Toronto-based production company working within and beyond the existing Canadian film industry to spearhead a new holistic ecosystem that supports cultural perpetuity through film production and meaningful community engagement. QYQ Films specializes in creating films that resonate with diasporic and art cinema enthusiasts worldwide. Our commitment lies in crafting films that immerse you in diverse, complex and celebratory stories that combines formal ingenuity with unique voices to bring these narratives to life.

QanYamaQan.ca

"SUSTAIN gave me the language I needed to address various problem areas in our sector around financial instability, sustainability and the undervalued impact of our work. It also gave me the confidence and hope to aspire and imagine a better and more just system for artists, cultural leaders and changemakers within the arts & culture sector. In addition, the access we were granted through the weekly sessions, but particularly through the Catalyst Dinner, is invaluable. Given that we're still very much at the beginning of the road to creating better futures, much is riding on the continuation of SUSTAIN not just as a program but as a movement that not only connects people, but also educates on knowledge and expertise that is absent from our sector, specifically around investment."



Ziyaad Haniff (he/him)

Ziyaad Haniff is a Multidisciplinary Artist, Digital Storyteller, and Arts Facilitator based in Toronto. As the Creative Director of Storied — a creative collective operating as a full-scope creative agency and social enterprise — he uses a story-first approach to scale the impact of emerging artists through to established enterprises. Through his efforts, his goal is to reduce the barriers to entry for sustainability in the industry by creating & sharing space. In short, Ziyaad helps creative people do creative things. Collaborators looking to work alongside him would join world-class talent such as Warner Music Group, Miguel, Just For Laughs, Sony Music, and Hasan Minhaj.

Storied

Through my sole proprietorship and Storied, our goal is to 'open doors' and help marginalized communities get closer to their goals within the Creative industries. We've done this by prioritizing equitable practices in an industry hyperfixated on tradition: we've crowdfunded labour costs to extend our opportunities to others, paid many creatives' first invoices, hosted community events, connected dots that turned into paid gigs or beneficial collaborations, and discounted our rates to provide artists and arts orgs with high-quality services. Inadvertently conducting ourselves as a social enterprise means that as we continue to scale, the offerings and change we contribute to Canada's creative economies are felt exponentially.

Patreon.com/cw/Storied_one

Art is Knowledge

Research at the intersection of art and just economy

Research is a key part of our strategy to mobilize a more just economy through arts and culture.

Our research focuses on three key areas: **just economy, art as knowledge,** and **radical belonging.**

We work with partners such as OCADU and MASS Culture to build research examining and demonstrating the value of arts for social change, and the different kinds of resourcing models that can support artists, founders and organizations to thrive. We share this research with academic institutions, artists and philanthropic organizations, to impact their thinking and contribute to knowledge being shared.

We use arts-based and collaborative research methods and models that invite collective ownership over the research process and materials - a unique aspect of FLIP's research approach.

This year, we've been working with SUSTAIN Fellows, our Research Lead Dr. Charlotte Lombardo, and OCADU professor and filmmaker Min Sook Lee, to identify research questions, processes, and products exploring the themes that came out of SUSTAIN Cohort 1:

1. **For the Artist**: Insights for emerging arts & cultural leaders, for their own emotional care.
2. **For the Moment**: Insights for the moment that we are in.
3. **For the Work**: Insights on how people's work has been informed by SUSTAIN, and how they're making work differently because of what came out.
4. **For the Change**: Insights on practical strategies for utility/application. How do we mobilize theory into something that is concrete?

A website, video, written work and launch event are forthcoming at the end of 2026/beginning of 2027.

FLIP Research at a Glance

What we've done

- Built our research framework to support decolonial, community-engaged approaches to arts-based research (2023)
- 4 community-engaged research projects and digital stories with partners entitled FLIP-ping Education, FLIP-ingSupport, FLIP-ingCommunity Safety and FLIP-ing Arts & Culture (2023-2024) https://www.flipfoundation.ca/impact-stories/
- **ReAct ReCreate ReVision research project** engaging 18 diverse emerging artists, 3 organizations and 1 university, in community arts advocacy, including findings and recommendations for investment into care for artists and community-academic research partnerships. Over an 18-month period, artists took part in creative research to develop artworks and activations responding to key desires they named, when asked "What change do you want to make with your art?" This work culminated in a group exhibit Trajectories of Now: An Anthology, which took place in June 2024 at Bodyshop Studios on Geary Avenue, Toronto (2022-2024)
- Trajectories of Now Film made about the ReAct ReCreate Revision project, a Field Guide offering practical guidance on research and practice in socially engaged arts, and screenings & panel events (2025) https://www.makingwithplace.ca/fieldguide/

What we're learning

Research is a loaded term, with many people experiencing extraction from themselves or communities, while also acknowledging the value of creating and sharing knowledge, whether that's inside academic institutions or more broadly in community in different ways.

We're learning how to play a bridge building role with artists and academic institutions, how to create research that is understood and valued by both community members and institutions. It's a tricky dance, and we're committed to it.

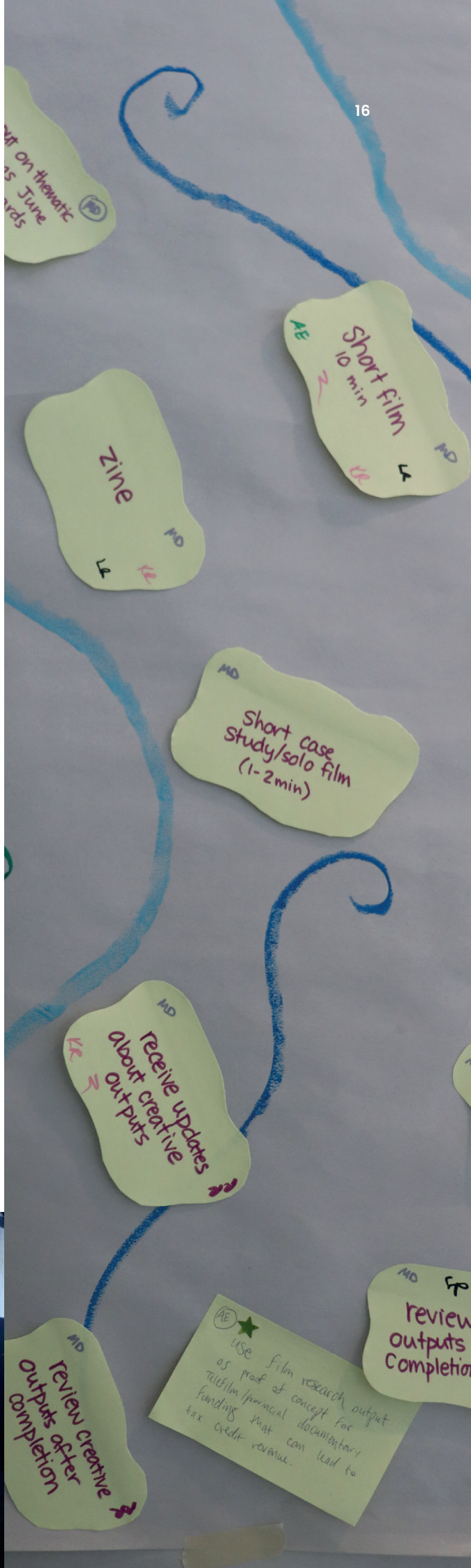
KEY STATS

1. 7 research projects with 7 partners launched and completed
2. FLIP is actively contributing to the under-researched area of arts for social change in Canada
3. FLIP used the findings from React Recreate Revision to build successful resourcing for SUSTAIN and its research approach

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is art for social change and why does it matter to you?
2. How can art-making be used as research in different environments and contexts?














Seeding Financial Activism

Bringing arts for social change and social finance together

FLIP is coming to understand its own role in the ecosystem—not as a builder of new institutions, but as a bridge. There is a persistent gap between the worlds of arts and culture and the worlds of finance and philanthropy, and what's missing isn't another product. It's relational infrastructure: the trusted connective tissue that allows capital, ideas, and people to move between systems that currently operate in isolation from one another.

Over this period, FLIP invested deeply in being present across the spaces where arts and social finance intersect:

- Participated in gatherings including the Blended Finance Summit, Coalition for Impact's private wealth mapping meetings and event, and Resource Movement's Resource Gathering and finance subcommittee
- Sustained relationships with the Just Economy Institute (JEI) Canadian Alumni through monthly meetings and the JEI Alumni Gathering in California, including conversations with JEI peers about what it actually means to start a fund
- Built relationships and held conversations at 4 Catalyst Dinners, a meeting with Impact United, and ongoing engagement with Heart Lake Committed Capital
- Made introductions that led to direct financial and social capital-building for SUSTAIN Fellows
- Advanced arts-specific finance infrastructure through MASS Culture's Bank for the Arts work and a meeting with the Canada Council for the Arts
- Co-developed a training program on social finance for arts leaders in partnership with Flourishing Startups, Sojo, and Trauma of Money Institute
- Deepened a relationship with a family foundation, exploring together what a fund could look like — conversations that surfaced generative questions about capital flows and the forms capital can take

What we are learning

The most important learning of this period is about the gap itself. Deals at the intersection of arts and finance require translation across financial, legal, philanthropic, and creative worlds—and right now, almost no one holds that translation role. The systems work separately from each other. They lack flexibility, tend toward risk-aversion, and often operate from a fear of scarcity. Moving capital into arts and culture isn't slow because the ideas aren't ready; it's slow because there is no one whose job it is to accompany a deal across worlds.

We've started calling this missing role the "deal doula," someone who convenes, brokers partnership, and, critically witnesses. We are learning that witnessing is not a soft function—it is what builds the trust these deals depend on. When FLIP asks "can't we move faster?" the honest answer is that speed follows trust, and trust is built relationally, not transactionally. This also means FLIP must be able to hold and support the people on both sides of the bridge, the funder/wealth-holder and the artist/entrepreneur alike.

From this, FLIP's role is becoming clear:

- **FLIP is a connector and bridge-builder, not a creator of new entities.** The value is in being present across all the spaces, not in duplicating what exists.

- **FLIP's anchors remain its value proposition:** convening multiple pedagogies, offering gathering space, centering arts and culture, and treating money stories as inseparable from the rest of the learning and curriculum.

"I leave tonight carrying inspiration that more is possible. Spending time with money people can make you feel tethered to constraint, and there is an amazing way that art can expand the mind and make you feel unbounded and creative."

"A thought I'm leaving with... how can navigating the tension between capital preservation and unlocking capital be generative?"

The work ahead

Much of the invisible labour in this work is relational infrastructure: the trust, relationships, and connective tissue that the convenor/doula role builds and holds between partners.

The questions before us are:

- How do we resource that role and that infrastructure, so they stop being invisible?

- How do we help risk-averse systems build the flexibility these deals require?

- And how do we tell the story of this bridging work so that funders recognize relational infrastructure as infrastructure, worth investing in on its own terms?

Shifting philanthropic mindsets and practices towards more trust-based, relational philanthropy is possible!

FLIP has experienced trust-based, relational philanthropy in action, receiving $500,000 from a family foundation after requesting $241,000 within one week of the request. This is highly unusual, POWERFUL, and an example that tells us that trust-based, relational philanthropy is possible!



Catalyst Dinner

Designing a room where relationships can begin.

Most rooms in social finance are built for pitching: someone presents, everyone else evaluates. The Catalyst Dinner was designed as the opposite of that room.

This year, FLIP hosted 60 individuals for an evening built around a simple intention: bring the Fellows from SUSTAIN together with funders, wealth-holders, and connectors positioned to learn about their work—and create the conditions for genuine reciprocity rather than performance. Our job was not to broker transactions. It was to set a table.

We designed the evening to embody the intention: guests made art side by side, and one-to-one introductions created concrete opportunities for financial activism.

The dinner tested a hypothesis at the core of FLIP's bridging role: emerging leaders flourish not when they are discovered, but when they are in relationship—and relationship begins with mutual witnessing, not one-directional evaluation. Fellows shared their work; guests shared their own stories, questions, and resources. The exchange ran in both directions by design.

No deal was signed that night, and that was the point. The Catalyst Dinner is what relational infrastructure looks like in practice: creating the conditions from which partnerships and flourishing eventually come, and demonstrating the role FLIP is learning to name for itself—the convenor who makes the room possible.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Think of a deal, partnership, or idea you've seen stall—not because it wasn't ready, but because no one held the space between worlds. Who could have been the "doula" in that moment? Could it have been you?

2. What would it take for you to fund relationships the way you fund programs—to see convening, witnessing, and trust-building as infrastructure worth investing in on its own terms?



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Looking Ahead

Looking ahead at the next couple of years, FLIP will roll-out SUSTAIN Cohort 2 for one year beginning November 2026 and activate the SUSTAIN Alumni network, while building close relationships with Just Economy Institute Canada, launching their first Canadian Cohort in 2027.

We will continue to produce and share research on the SUSTAIN model, and with our partners get ready to deliver a CATALYST curriculum and community for Financial Activists. Our Big Dream is to build the FLIP Emergence Fund for emerging cultural leaders to access capital to sustain their work.

We know we're not the only ones thinking about arts & culture and a more just economy. If any of what we're up to speaks to you, please reach out to us! We want to do this together.

Onward!

With care,
Rudy, Myia and Karibú

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