

PLACEMAKINGUS

2022 IMPACT REPORT



BRINGING TOGETHER PLACEMAKERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD
TO HELP COMMUNITIES CREATE BETTER PLACES

VISIT US ONLINE
[PLACEMAKINGUS.ORG](https://placemakingus.org)





A MESSAGE FROM OUR
CO-DIRECTORS:
RYAN SMOLAR &
MADELEINE SPENCER

In 2022, **PlacemakingUS** achieved the important milestone of obtaining **501(c)(3) non-profit status** under the fiscal-hosting of **Social Environmental Entrepreneurs** in Southern California.

We hope to utilize our non-profit status to receive grants, foundation support, technical assistance contracts and individual donations to help us carry out our mission to "**bring together placemakers from around the world to help communities create better places.**"

We also spent this year going both wide and deep. **Co-director Ryan Smolar** visited four continents to listen about how placemaking is being discussed and

implemented around the globe and he shared-out our aggregated knowledge. Meanwhile, **Co-director Madeleine Spencer** worked closely with the community of **South Park in Seattle, Washington** on an opportunity to work with local placemakers to reconnect the urban fabric with a community vision for removing a freeway that egregiously divides a historically, working-class neighborhood in half.

In 2023, we will continue to spread placemaking as a strategy for the frontlines of the greatest callings and crises of our time: **climate change** and **economic transformation, inequality** and **access, housing, democracy** and **polarization**, and **unleashing creativity** to solve problem and make life beautiful.

With your partnership, we can support communities across the US and around the world to realize their potential to make great places and to keep them. Special thanks to all our collaborators, especially **Ethan Kent** of **PlacemakingX**, our fellow network leaders and regional partners across the country!

Ryan Smolar *Madeleine Spencer*

2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AT A GLANCE

A NON-PROFIT PROJECT

We are now a fiscally-hosted 501(c)(3) non-profit project of Social Environmental Entrepreneurs making us eligible for more grants, foundation support and donations.

PERVASIVE PRESENTERS

Our leadership team presented placemaking concepts at 14 conferences on 4 continents, spreading placemaking ideas and approaches.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & MOVEMENT-BUILDING

We built momentum in Florida supporting #PlacemakingFL and #PlacemakingJAX and working with Jacksonville's Far East Side to help guide neighborhood restoration.

ONLINE COLLABORATIONS

We connected online with our monthly Cafecito, annual Placemaking Earth Challenge and an international Park(ing) Day Cohort.



PREVALENT PROGRAMS

We hosted an epic, in-person training in Portland, Oregon to show off its unique attributes and the placemakers who make it so.

FREEWAY FIGHTING

We won our first RFP to help a community envision removing a freeway that drives a wedge right through the center of town.

PLACEMAKING EN ESPAÑOL

We brought Guillermo Bernal of Placemaking Mexico to the US to do a placemaking training in Spanish. We hope to continue to reach out to the US's 62+ million Latinos about placemaking.

FOOD AND PLACEMAKING

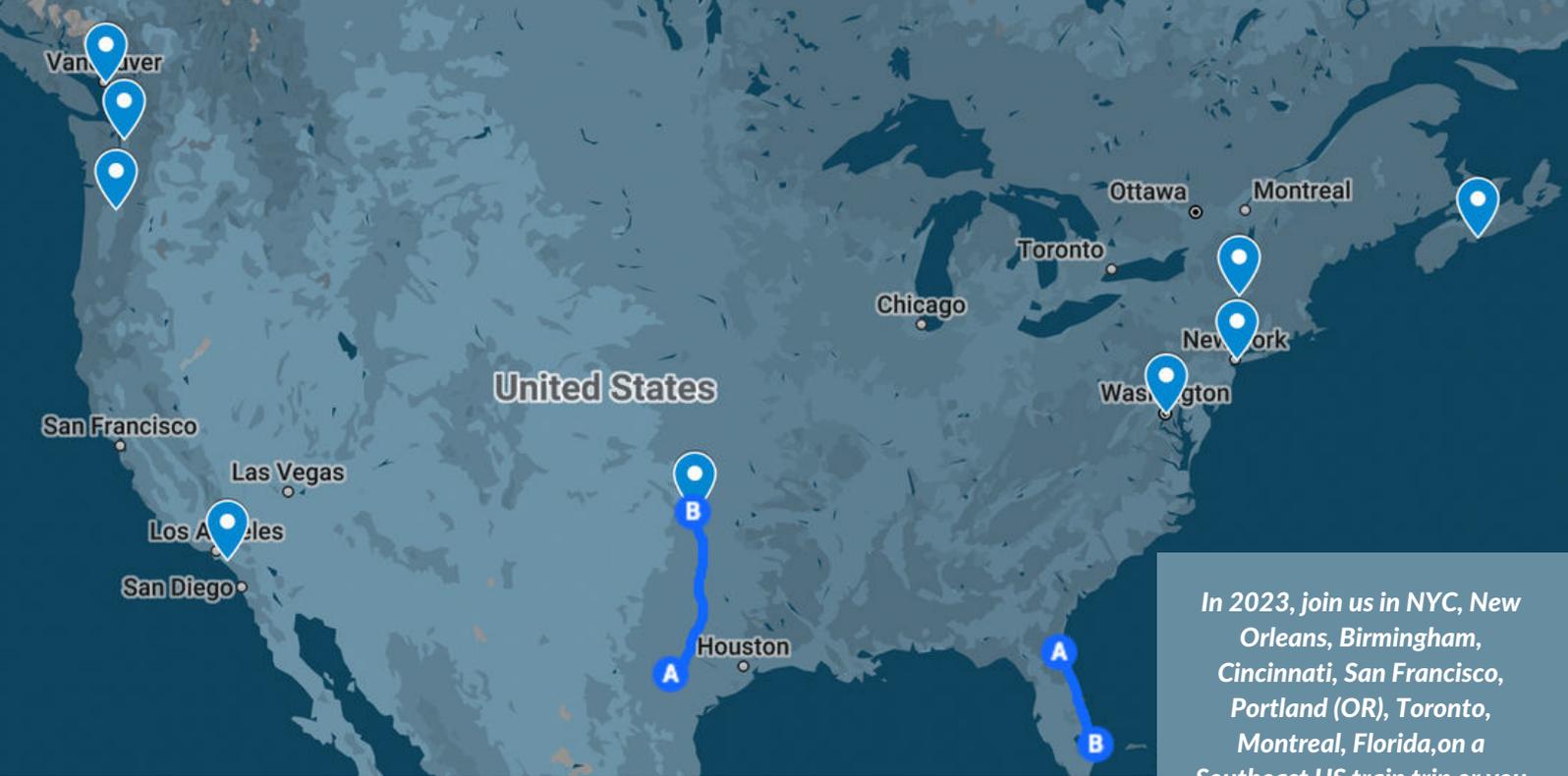
We're taking action to make food sites like farmers markets and urban gardens into great places with seating, signage and programming.



SPEAKING WITH A LARGE AUDIENCE AT PLACEMAKING WEEK INDIA



OUR FREEWAY FIGHT IS ON!



In 2023, join us in NYC, New Orleans, Birmingham, Cincinnati, San Francisco, Portland (OR), Toronto, Montreal, Florida, on a Southeast US train trip or you can invite us to your town!

PLACEMAKING ACROSS NORTH AMERICA

PlacemakingUS leaders travel to cities and towns across our country so that we can spend time and diffuse innovations with placemakers, their projects and the communities they are working with.

While embedded in real, local contexts, we learn about the dynamics, methodologies and approaches being employed in unique places so that we can help connect the dots between varied situations that are in search of appropriate tools, language, experience and benchmarks.

Our 2022 North American visits included:

South Park, Seattle, where we're working with the community, city, the **Congress for New Urbanism**, **America Walks**, and even the **White House** to enact a community vision to remove a freeway.

Vancouver, Canada, to speak with PlacemakingUS leaders **Kady Yellow** and **Sherryl Muriente** in front of 100+ business improvement district leaders at the **International Downtown Conference (IDA)**.

Santa Ana, California, bringing **Jaime Izurieta** of **Storefront Mastery** and **Guillermo Bernal** of **Placemaking Mexico** to lead Latino placemaking workshops for a 70+% Mexican-American community and its business district staff.

San Antonio-to-Oklahoma City road trip, we piled in a bus with 30+ urbanists for the **CityBuilding Express**: a multi-city tour of new urbanist developments en route to **CNU 30** where we presented along with **Kate Durio**, **Amy Stelly** and **Cade Surface**.

Jacksonville-to-West Palm Beach road trip, we met with **Kady Yellow**, **Sherryl Muriente**, **Beju** and **Ethan Kent** for an East Coast tour of Florida to kick-off the organizing of **#PlacemakingJAX** and **#PlacemakingFL**.

Washington DC, we rode the rails to a **Place Leadership Summit** hosted by the **Global Cities Initiative** at **Georgetown University** led by **Rich Bradley**, **Ellen M. McCarthy** and **Uwe Brandes**.

New York City, we hosted placemaking meetups in Manhattan and Brooklyn that were attended by **Project for Public Spaces** leaders, **Open Plans**, author **Paco Underhill**, NYC BIDs, local artists and **Pratt Urban Placemaking and Management** folks.

Schenectady, NY, we spoke upstate at the **Creative Placemaking Northeast Summit** on how to fund placemaking careers and projects.

Halifax, Canada, we helped keynote the **Art of City Building** and toured **Nova Scotia** with **Placemaking Canada/Develop Nova Scotia's TJ Maguire**.



MEETUP IN BROOKLYN, NYC



INTERNATIONAL DOWNTOWN ASSOC IN VANCOUVER



PLACEMAKERSPACE TOUR IN MIAMI, FL

U.S. ROAD TO RECOVERY TOUR



MADELEINE SPENCER



RYAN SMOLAR



AMY STELLY



CADE SURFACE



KATE DURIO

CNU30.Oklahoma City
Resilient Together



CITYBUILDER EXPRESS TO CNU 30 IN OKC



REDLINING MAPS IN JACKSONVILLE, FL



CELEBRATION AT PLACEMAKING WEEK INDIA



FAMILY-LED PLACEMAKING ON MALTA



PLACEMAKINGX AT UN-HABITAT WORLD URBAN FORUM



REGENERATIVE PLACEMAKING AT DAVOS



CREATIVE BUREAUCRACY FESTIVAL IN BERLIN



SPEAKING AT UNIVERSITY OF STAVANGER IN NORWAY

PORTLAND MASTERY PROGRAM

Portland, Oregon is famously one of the most human-scaled, creative and livable places in the nation. Unfortunately, many of the underlying efforts that make Portland so great, haven't spread to other cities that could be benefitting from them.

In 2022, we brought placemakers to Portland so they could learn from this great city and the people who made it that way. We were joined by **Jerin Sage** and **Frankie McIntosh** (who crowdfunded her way there).

We started our journey by surveying the natural ecologies of the **Willamette Valley**, learning about the ways and place names of the **indigenous inhabitants**. We spent time tasting a delectable path through Portland's **foodcart pods on bikes**, painted colorful intersections with **Portland Bureau of Transportation** gurus **Greg Raisman** and **Kirk Rea**, treasured our time with **Mark Lakeman's** theories and praxis at the **City Repair Project**, had our minds blown by **Master Artist Michael Bernard Stevenson Jr.**, we went behind the scenes of **Pioneer Courthouse Square's** public-private partnership, got inspired at the adaptive reuse of the **Kennedy School** by **McMenamins**, toured PSU's campus with the **Urban Design Collaborative**, checked out views of the city from **Pittock Mansion** and **Skidmore Bluffs**, meditated on spiritual placemaking at **The Grotto**, cooled our jets in **Lawrence Halprin's Keller Fountain**, and dined and debated with **A Pattern Language** scholar **Michael Mehaffy PHD** in the **Columbia Gorge**.

Additionally, we explored Portland's unique culture at the **PSU Farmers Market**, **Powell's Books**, **Pedalpalooza's Lit n' Loud** bike ride, the **Adult Soapbox Derby** on **Mt. Tabor** and cooled off by jumping from the perch at **High Rocks Park**. After the program, some of us remained and also got to meet-up with **Matt Bibeau** at **Jean's Farm** and **PSU Social Practice Arts** chair, **Harrell Fletcher**.



INTERSECTION PAINTING WITH PBOT



PEDALPALOOZA'S LIT N' LOUD RIDE

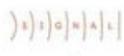


Be part of our Portland Mastery Program in 2023 as we return to Oregon for City Repair Project's Village Build Convergence June 10-17 and the Assembly Social Practice Art festival at KSMoCA June 9-11.

building a community vision to reconnect south park



MxM LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE



AMERICA WALKS

DUWAMISH RIVER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION



ECOSSE Sustainable Solutions for All



Michael W. Mehaffy, Ph.D. Associate Professor



DUWAMISH VALLEY AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION



DUWAMISH VALLEY SAFE STREETS



FRONT AND CENTERED



PLACEMAKINGUS

FREEWAY FIGHTING

We were visiting about a dozen placemakers in **Seattle, Washington** during the pandemic when we were introduced to **Tim and Coté Soerens** who operate **Resistencia**, a social justice cafe in their neighborhood, as well as the **Parish Collective**, a national network that connects churches with neighborhood work through placemaking.

While dining at their home along with **Asset Based Community Development** disciples of **Peter Block**, Coté slammed down an overhead map of their Latino neighborhood and said, "*My dream is to remove this freeway*," her finger sliding down the center of the map, tracing a spinal column that broke the **South Park** neighborhood in two.

Removing a freeway sounded like a tall order at the time, but through our technical assistance program, the **United Streets of America**, we seek to restore BIPOC communities who've been affected by fraughtless urban planning decisions like the one that drove **SR-99** through this working people's neighborhood.

We gathered a meeting of freeway fighters we knew, **Nick Falbo** from **Portland**, **Brian Ulaszewski** from **Long Beach** and even the **City of Seattle's Planning Director, Rico Quirindongo** to take a closer look at what could be done. Fortuitously, we learned in that first meeting that the removal of **SR-99** was distinctly possible as traffic counts were low and there were viable alternative routes to move traffic.

Co-Director **Madeleine Spencer** further connected the project with **Justice40**, a commitment by the White House that 40% of climate/infrastructure dollars shall be spent in overburdened communities like this one.

Now, through Madeline and Coté's continued work, the project has gathered hundreds of thousands of dollars of support and we are helping lead an RFP-selected team to facilitate a community vision for the removal and restoration of **South Park** while this segment of **SR-99** will be featured in the 2023 "**Freeways Without Futures**" report by the **Congress for New Urbanism**.

PLACEMAKING EN ESPAÑOL

Placemaking Mexico is world-renowned for their *lighter, quicker, cheaper* actions across their country. To date, they have created over **200 park spaces and playgrounds** through their local partnerships and national funders.

We went to visit two of their projects last year in the rural hills outside **Tijuana** and were incredibly impressed with the way they built community spaces hand-in-hand with the mothers, fathers and children who would use a place once it was created.

We finally met **Guillermo Bernal**, Placemaking Mexico's fearless leader in **Katowice, Poland** at the **UN-Habitat World Urban Forum** and we invited him to the United States to work with a Latino community in Southern California. Guillermo accepted the challenge and we were excited to host him in **Santa Ana, California** just a few months later.

Guillermo worked with the **Downtown Santa Ana business improvement district** by popping-up in public spaces that were wonderful, but not performing at their peak due to a variety of issues we quickly ascertained during our activations.

Just by setting up tents, seating, kid's activities, design tools, and putting out some food and friendly invitations, we were able to gather an audience with users of the spaces -- from neighborhood kids, to morning walkers, mothers and teens, mobile vendors, even homeless people.

The people we encountered had lots to add to the conversation and it became apparent that the park, plaza and alleyway we popped-up in had infinite potential with clear, simple steps forward. To top things off, Guillermo's team did a **Placemaking Training in Spanish** for the **Downtown Santa Ana Clean and Safe Team**, who are all first-generation Mexican immigrants.

We hope to work with Placemaking Mexico to bring trainings and activations to more **Latino communities** across the USA.



POPPING-UP IN PLACE WITH THE DTSA BID TEAM



ARTIST-LED TOUR OF AN EMERGING ALLEY PLAZA



Are you working in or with a Latino community? Contact us so we can bring Placemaking Mexico to support placemaking efforts by your community and/or Spanish-speaking frontline staff.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE & MOVEMENT-BUILDING TRIPS

We love being invited by placemakers to their community to back them up with the knowledge of the network and to create an impetus to gather momentum locally for placemaking to be funded and executed.

When we arrive for tours and meet with artists, activists, tactical urbanists, government officials, business district leaders, academics, and other types of placemakers, they immediately feel like we are one big family, or if the term is new to them, they often say, *"I've been doing this all my life or career, I just never called it placemaking."*

We love catalyzing local efforts and helping the on-the-ground scene gather steam. One great partner in this has been **Kady Yellow** who first brought the national network to support her work in **Flint, Michigan** and she has since "graduated" to working in another dynamic city: **Jacksonville, Florida**.

We made two technical assistance trips to Jacksonville this year and we are talking with Kady about our next trip in 2023. The first visit was to help catalyze Kady's vision for **#PlacemakingJAX** and was followed by an East Coast of Florida tour to instantiate **Sherryl Muriente's** (of **West Palm Beach DDA**) vision for **#PlacemakingFL**.

Kady threw three gatherings that helped connect her placemakers socially and *in esprit de corps*. She tapped a local network of experts to give us tours which lead to her developing some of her key working relationships as she ingratiated herself with her new community.

A few months later, we returned with **Amy Stelly** from **New Orleans** and worked with a historically black neighborhood called the **Far East Side**, walking the street with them and helping them envision a placemaking project them secure **\$200,000** to execute the plans.



KICKING-OFF OUR #PLACEMAKINGFL TOUR



LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITY ON THE FAR EAST SIDE



Invite us for tours, trainings, tough conversations and celebrations of placemaking in your community in 2023. Our national and international networks exist primarily to back-up real placemaking in real places.

FOOD & PLACE IN PRACTICE

A seed was planted at the **UN-Habitat World Urban Forum**: our Co-director **Ryan Smolar** attended every session hosted by the **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization** where he unapologetically grabbed the mic and engaged with international food professionals and bureaucrats working from Rome to Africa. The conversations were intriguing and centered around the connection of placemaking and food systems.

It clicked for Smolar that he wanted to release a good practices guide to **Placemaking with Food** in 2023. To get started, he hosted a **Food Placemaking in Practice** paid webinar which attracted nearly 50 participants including governments, food policy councils, market managers, students and advocates from multiple US states and several countries. We co-hosted the webinar with two urban farmers, a homesteader, an equity expert and a farmers market maestro and gave out nearly **\$1,500 in scholarships** to attendees in need.

Our growing experience in this field comes from partnering with **Long Beach Fresh**, a city-level food council in **Southern California** that we've been placemaking with at their local food sites since 2020. With LB Fresh, we worked with Cambodian refugees to build a parklet they host a night market on, we built a farmstand with neighbors, we placemaded the farmers market, we hosted a neighborhood food festival and we've helped secure land for an urban farm targeting foster youth aging out of that system.

We got to delve even further this year when we were approached by **USC Master of Urban Planning** student **Ruei-Chen Tsai**, who we worked with to analyze gardens as places. We also got the opportunity to share our ideas on food and place with the **International Society for Urban Health**. We look forward to germinating our food vision and strategies more widely in 2023.



SHARING ABOUT FOOD + PLACE WITH THE FAO



MAKING SIGNAGE FOR THE FARMERS MARKET



GETTING FEEDBACK ON A COMMUNITY FOOD HUB

ONLINE LEARNING & SHARING

While we much prefer our in-person visits, tours and trips, the power of gathering and sharing online is a utilitarian must. To that end, we created many online opportunities to connect, learn and share this year.

Our most extensive online program was our monthly **Cafecito**, a free-form thematic discussion we hosted with urban acupuncturist, **Sherryl Muriente** from **#PlacemakingFL**. With open-ended topics like *"Use Your Feet," "Difficult Conversations,"* and *"Heal the Democracy,"* over **220 placemakers** signed-up for these events. While many rotated in-and-out of the discussions, a regular cast of characters became well-connected and shared their interesting projects and personal growth with the group over the 12- month span of these gatherings.

In March, Co-director **Madeleine Spencer** hosted author, **Majora Carter**, to discuss and give away copies of her new book, ***Reclaiming Your Community***. Carter's insightful book was recently selected by **Chuck Marohn** of **Strong Towns** on a short list of the best community-building books of the year.

In Spring, we collaborated with the **Tooltest Day Crew** and **Placemaking Europe** on **Placemake Earth Challenge 3: Inspire Your Parks**. We hosted learning webinars with park staff, park advocates and equity expert, **Carmen Mays**, leading up to *"parkifying"* actions which took place in several countries. Our participants this year were hungry for more and so we organized a second international tooltesting cohort around **Park(ing) Day** with active participation from one of Park(ing) Day's founders, **John Bela**.

Finally, we recorded a session of all of our **2022 Learning / 2023 Plans** to round out the year. The recording is available on our website and Youtube Channel.



COMMUNITY PROJECT TO ACTIVATE THEIR PARK

HELP US GROW

The co-directors and leaders of **PlacemakingUS** have been investing in starting up a national chapter of the **PlacemakingX** global network. Next year, we hope to amplify the support of our work through grants, foundation support, donations and technical assistance contracts.

We are seeking productive relationships with funders who believe in our ability to be a critical resource for the learning and sharing of placemaking techniques, strategies and for building relationships across multiple sectors and communities by helping us cover our costs including:

Operations

Our co-directors currently volunteer their time to create value for placemakers across the nation. We seek sustaining funding to engage a part-time staff to operate our programs, digital media, teaching efforts and connecting others.

Travel

PlacemakingUS leaders mostly pay their own way for conference tickets, flights, hotels and per diem expenses. We'd like to be able to make it easier for our leaders and learners to attend conferences and visit each others' communities.

Programming

Providing quality programs like our **Portland Mastery Program** don't pencil on tuition prices alone. We need support for 2023 programs we'd like to launch in a city near you or on a priority theme that strikes a chord.



Scholarships

In 2022, we provided nearly **\$2,000** in scholarships to our programs to local students, activists and learning participants from the global south. We'd like to find a funder who can support learners, leaders and experts participating in placemaking programs.

Grantmaking

We've seen through our **Placemaking Earth Challenge's** partnerships with business improvement districts that our ability to offer small grants bring more placemakers into the fold and helps ensure they complete their projects and learning objectives. We seek partnerships to re-grant funds along with our education programs and technical assistance.



ELEVATING THE DISCUSSION AT THE ART OF CITY BUILDING IN HALIFAX



MATTHEW SHOWS THE CITY WHERE HE'D LIKE A PLAYGROUND

TESTIMONIALS

From placemakers who participate in our programs:

"I learned about ARPA funds at the Placemaking Week in Flint. On return home, we lobbied our City and won \$1.8 million for historic Packard Park which will serve many families that are struggling."

**Cornelia Schultz - Packard Park Area Alliance
Fort Wayne, Indiana**

"Inspired by the Flint Public Art Project mural tour at Placemaking Week in Flint, Erie Arts & Culture is raising \$1 million for a two-year initiative to implement 50 new murals along Safe Routes to School in Erie."

**Patrick Fisher - Erie Arts and Culture
Erie, Pennsylvania**

"At the Portland, Oregon Mastery Program I had a fantastic time and met incredible people. We got in touch with the physical, geographical place and deep dived into one of America's most placemaded cities. Afterwards, I reflected back on the geographical features of where I live and how I can tap into that as a placemaker. It was well-curated and highly-effective."

**Jerin Sage - What's Up? Downtown Project
Flint, Michigan**

"Jane Ellery, who we met at Placemaking Week in Flint, introduced us to Town Team Movement who brought us abroad to Australia for a multi-city training tour, growing our practice internationally."

**Krista Nightengale - Better Block Foundation
Dallas, Texas**



**"EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT
TO LIVE IN A GREAT PLACE.**

**MORE IMPORTANTLY,
EVERYONE HAS THE RIGHT
TO CONTRIBUTE TO
MAKING THE PLACE WHERE
THEY ALREADY LIVE
GREAT."**

—FRED KENT, SOCIAL LIFE PROJECT —

PlacemakingUS is a regional network organized in coordination with our global partner PlacemakingX and 20+ sister networks in Asia, Europe, Latin America, Australia, Canada, Mexico and beyond.

We are organized as a 501c(3) non-profit project of Social Environmental Entrepreneurs.

Please check-out our "Help us Grow" section on the previous page to see how you can partner with us to support our work!