



## 2015 Annual Report

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to EcoEquitable's 2015 Annual Report.

EcoEquitable (EE) is a non-profit social enterprise providing a bridge to social and economic integration for people in need, especially immigrant women, while greening the community.

EcoEquitable offers intensive four-month sewing and employment preparation programs to immigrant women and people in need, facilitating their integration into the Canadian workforce.

We raise revenue for these programs by offering public sewing workshops, selling recycled fabric and fashion accessories in our boutique and online, and by offering contract sewing for conference bags and small designer lines on site at 404 McArthur Avenue, Ottawa.

We are working to build a multicultural, inclusive community of women, who use their talents to create meaningful and sustainable employment through sewing, fashion retail and textile recycling.



## MESSAGE FROM HEATHER GEORGE, PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Every day at EcoEquitable, you uncover new inspiration that stops you in your tracks.**

This inspiration turns to self-reflection, which then turns to an overpowering level of motivation to help reach EcoEquitable's vision of creating an inclusive and sustainable society. Whether this inspiration comes from a new EE volunteer, a news story of the day, a graduating student, or an overly passionate employee; it allows you to take a break on the detailed task at hand and to take a moment to engage in the bigger picture.

In 2015, EcoEquitable initiated new programs at the core of our business that truly reflect our mission to provide a bridge to social and economic integration for people in need, especially immigrant women, *while* greening our community. The Enabling Apparel Entrepreneurship program began in 2015 which includes an entrepreneurship curriculum for participants to learn and network with others on how to establish and sustain an apparel business. In addition, EcoEquitable started the Boutique Mentorship program, which is designed to provide individuals, especially newcomers to Canada, with tailored retail training experience. EcoEquitable has also continued to expand the Sewing for Jobs program, in which 34 students participated in either the beginner or intermediate classes. Lastly, the Transition to Employment program grew in 2015 and became a valuable extension of our Sewing for Jobs program. Overall, these four programs have become the roots of EcoEquitable and the foundation for inspirational stories.

There were two very memorable events in 2015 that brought the community together to celebrate and participate in EcoEquitable's contagious momentum. A volunteer coordinated and kick started an eco-fashion show in Ottawa called Metamorphosis. This fashion show was dedicated to celebrating apparel entrepreneurs within our community including some of EcoEquitable's graduating students. We see 2015 as the year Metamorphosis was established and the event being an annual fashion show moving forward. In addition, United Way's GenNext Ottawa selected EcoEquitable as their charity of choice for their biggest networking event of the year; Schmoozefest. This networking event raised over \$15,000 for EcoEquitable's Boutique Mentorship program while bringing together various charities, companies, and entrepreneurs under one roof. Both of these events brought out hundreds of people in the Ottawa area and created a new voice for EcoEquitable within our community.

2015 was an exciting year and considered a foundational starting point for new programs and events. We are dedicated to continuing the success of these initiatives with the help of our hardworking network of individuals and supportive funders. We attribute the progress we made in 2015 to our passionate staff, our committed volunteers and board members, and our trusted funders. This network of people and organizations enable EcoEquitable to not only establish new programs but enable individuals in our community find empowerment and self-sustainability. Additionally, it allows us to be contributors towards a sustainable and greener planet. Continuous collaboration with this forward-thinking network and by broadening our partnerships, EcoEquitable is on a remarkable journey towards reaching our potential. I am both honored and excited to participate in EcoEquitable's future successes, challenges, and new opportunities in 2016.

Thank you to the entire EcoEquitable community for a memorable year. Thank you for every single inspirational story and every spark of motivation that tags along with it.

Sincerely,

*Heather George*

## MESSAGE FROM TARA TEMPLIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The pace of growth and positive change did not let up in 2015. This year, after the transition to our new location in 2014, we focused on formalizing and professionalizing our services and programs, both new and old, serving immigrant and marginalized women. Through a Job Creation Partnership Program with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, EcoEquitable hired three participants: Sandra Sawers: Volunteer Coordinator, Prudencio Israel, Accounting Advisor, and Chelsea Hillier, “Sewing for Jobs” Training Advisor. These talented individuals enabled EE to evaluate, professionalize and systemize our Sewing for Jobs and Volunteer programs, while upgrading our financial system to Quickbooks online. These advancements put EcoEquitable in an excellent position to scale up our programs and services, while also providing valuable employment related skills and network development.

In May 2015, through the initiative of Volunteer Isabel Sebastiao, we planned and held the first ever Metamorphosis, Eco Fashion Show at the Wabano Centre. This was an extremely successful eco-fashion show that showcased the creations of 25 women to an audience of 250. Leading up to the event, business and marketing opportunities started to materialize for EE’s community of entrepreneurs, including a mini fashion show on TV Rogers and CTV. During and after the event, looking to build on this success, EE created the “Enabling Apparel Entrepreneurship Program, which provides strategic entrepreneurship opportunities, mentorship and support.

The “Sewing for Jobs” program continues to be our flagship program, now expanded to offer Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced (Home Décor) levels. We also began offering a free-sewing drop-in to community members so that they could use the classroom space and equipment, collaborate and create new eco fashion designs.

2015 saw the steady growth of our business lines, along with the launch of our new Flagbarer and Remade brand of corporate gifts. These new products combine fashionable recycled materials, including banners that represent our Canadian heritage. Through the Flagbarer and Remade brands, EE is looking to help revitalize a sewn manufacturing industry in Ottawa while giving tourists and visitors an opportunity to take a piece of Ottawa home with them.

We are extremely grateful to everyone who contributed to the successful community building, eco fashion and employment and training opportunities that happened in 2015.

2016 promises to be just as exciting, so stay tuned for fashion shows, entrepreneurship successes and a thriving sewing social enterprise comprised of some very talented women!

Sincerely,

*Tara Templin*

## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

### Staff:

Anouk Bertner, Director of Business Operations  
Belkis Navas, Program Instructor  
Chelsea Hillier, Training Advisor (JCP Contract)  
Sandra Sawers, Volunteer Coordinator (JCP Contract)  
Prudencio Israel, Accounting Advisor (JCP Contract)  
Shirley Jaunai-Winter, Production Manager  
Theresa Rigby, Production Assistant  
Tara Templin, Executive Director

### Board Members:

Heather George, President (2012 - )  
Robert Nassrallah, Past Chair (2010- )  
Christine Searle, Treasurer – Strategy (2013 - 2015)  
Mikael Swirp, Treasurer – Operations (2010 - 2015)  
Danuta Whetton, Secretary (2015 - )  
Jessica Boissonneault (2015 - )  
Robin Whitford (2015 - )  
Daniel Brunet (2015 - )  
Parminder Dhama (2014 - 2015)  
Nadine Eskander (2013 - 2015)  
Naima Bode (2012 - 2015)

### Independent Contractors:

Almaz Beyin  
Bernadette  
Guillaume  
Carole Piche  
Hilola Ahmed  
Kelly McGregor  
Ludmila Popova  
Marie-Louise Malet  
Maluta  
Somaya Gabir  
Tanya Robinson  
Yasmin Karimjee  
You Rahn Choi

## DONORS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

EcoEquitable could not do what we do without the incredible support of donors and volunteers. EE is a social enterprise, an organization that seeks to grow our business lines in order to create our own financial sustainability — all in support of our mission. We are so grateful to our donors for believing in the work that we do and supporting us!

We would like to extend a special thank you to our 2015 funders and donors, and our wonderful community partners:

### Funders:

Alterna Savings  
Apparel Connexion  
Canadian Women's Foundation  
CIRA – Canadian Internet Registration Authority  
City of Ottawa  
Community Foundation of Ottawa  
Harry P. Ward  
MTCU  
Ontario Trillium Foundation  
Trinity Jubilee Foundation  
United Way of Ottawa

### Cash Donors:

Andrea Brown  
AVENAI  
Brenda Laquerre  
Catherine Carroll  
Cathy Fobert  
Carrefour Vanier Vein Clinic  
Christina Sutcliffe  
Danuta Whetton  
Eileen Vincent  
Erica Sher  
Geoff Rice  
Gilles Comeau  
Heather George  
Iberica Travel Agency  
Jesse Moon  
Juliette Champagne  
Margaret Hurley  
Nadine Eskander  
Pam Huston  
Parminder Dhani  
Robert Nassrallah  
Ron Barbeau  
Samme Doshen  
Whole Foods



**Community Partners:**

ALSO

Dress for Success

Enactus uOttawa

Heartwood House

Carleton University

University of Ottawa

YMCA/YWCA

CISED

Vanier CSC

OCISO

NCC

People, Words and Change

Wabano

While it is impossible to list all in-kind donors in this report, we want to recognize and thank the many, many, fabric and material donors who make our sewing training and fabric recycling possible!



## SNAPSHOT OF THE ORGANIZATION

EcoEquitable evaluates program effectiveness by conducting an evaluation of social return on investment (SROI) for our Sewing for Jobs program, as well as by collecting quantitative and qualitative data.

In 2012/2013, the SROI ratio for the Sewing for Jobs program was \$5.12 : \$1.00; for every dollar invested, we return \$5.12 to the community. In 2015, with support from researchers from Carleton University, Bernadette Johnson and Vanessa Glasby, EE undertook an “Improving and Expanding upon the SROI of EE” project. This project graded EE’s SROI evaluation using a “Successful SROI Framework”, with our results being either “high achievement” or “partial achievement” in all 6 principles of a successful SROI. This project was a first of its kind intended to improve SROI evaluations in a holistic way, and led to some key recommendations for our evaluation going forward. In 2016, with the help of Bernadette Johnson, we will be implementing the recommendations.

### Key Facts for 2015:

- Over 75 women participated in the Sewing for Jobs, Boutique Mentorship or Enabling Apparel Entrepreneurship programs
- 90 women participated in a public sewing workshop, with 45% receiving either partial or fully subsidized tuition.
- Of our 16 Sewing for Jobs graduates, 5 obtained full time employment, 8 obtained part-time employment or began their home business, and 2 went on to continue their studies.
- 100% of participants surveyed reported an improvement in their sewing skills
- 93% of participants surveyed reported feeling prepared for employment
- 100% of seamstresses surveyed reported an enhanced social network
- Over 5,000 lbs. of fabric were recycled
- More than 90 volunteers contributed over 4,000 volunteer hours!

### A snapshot of a few graduates from 2015:

AMINA	ROBIN	PAYKAI	HAYAM
Amina completed EcoEquitable’s <i>Sewing for Jobs</i> program in 2015. Shortly after graduation, Amina was hired as an industrial seamstress for “Peak Sportswear”.	Robin completed our <i>Sewing for Jobs</i> program in 2015 and has gone on to become a designer and started her own business “Sew Crazy”. Her clothing has been featured on CTV Morning Live and at the 2015 Metamorphosis fashion show.	Paykai recently immigrated to Canada from Pakistan. Paykai was searching for meaningful work and loves to sew, so she enrolled in our Sewing for Jobs program. Since completing the program, Paykai has begun working for a local bedding manufacturer.	Hayam recently immigrated from Egypt, where she ran her own sewing business. As a busy, capable mother of 3, she saw the value of community and skill building in the Sewing for Jobs program. She now volunteers in the EcoEquitable boutique and runs her own repair/ alterations business.

## EE LAUNCHES ITS OWN BRANDS - FLAGBARER AND REMADE

In August 2015, EcoEquitable launched its two brands of corporate and consumer gifts: Flagbarer and Remade. Flagbarer offers unique Canadian-made products made from recycled flags and banners that represent our Canadian heritage. By reusing beautiful, durable materials, Flagbarer is helping revitalize a sewn manufacturing industry in Ottawa while also serving as a means of training and employment for new Canadians. Each piece is locally sourced and designed, cut and sewn by hand in limited editions.

Remade single and double wallets are the result of a collaboration between CanvasPop and EcoEquitable. This partnership, which features recycled canvas directly from Canvas Pop's production facilities, with the craftsmanship of EE's skilled seamstresses has resulted in a wallet that is as fashionable as it is functional. Sales from these products have resulted in training and employment opportunities for our Sewing for Jobs Program graduates.



## EE SEWING PRODUCTION AND PRODUCTS



### EE's Own Line of Sustainable Fashion Products:

In 2015, EcoEquitable continued to grow its offering of local, sustainably made fashion accessories. These products include scarves, clutches, picnic bags, yoga mat bags and much more. We hire our graduates to sew these beautiful products and continue to grow our revenue from sales, to be reinvested in training and employment programs. A win-win all around!

### Retail Opportunities for EE's Community:

EE's boutique offers products made by our students, alumni, clients and volunteers. This is a unique opportunity for new designers to learn how to produce and retail their products in a safe, respectful environment. Now, with our new program "Enabling Apparel Entrepreneurship" we can further support our consignors with business mentorship, digital literacy, marketing training, design and pattern making support and more.

### Production of Designer Lines:

In 2015, we proudly continue our work producing for local, sustainable companies such as Bootsie Cushions, Krista Norris Collection, Parks Canada, Whole Foods and many others. We are confident in offering high quality, small batch work that our clients appreciate, as do their customers!

### Conference Tote Bags:

In 2015, EcoEquitable continued to grow its conference bag production for organizations and companies all over Ontario and Quebec. We recycle denim into durable, fashionable tote bags that can be manufactured with a company's label. Aside from producing everything in Ottawa, we also source fabric and printing locally, so that our line of conference bags has the minimum of environmental impact. For companies looking to establish a corporate sustainability strategy and "go green," we are proud to have become the supplier of choice!



## METAMORPHOSIS - EE'S INAUGURAL ECO FASHION SHOW

In 2015, EcoEquitable and volunteer Isabel Sebastiao launched the Metamorphosis Eco Fashion Show to highlight the amazing designs, craftsmanship and creativity of over 20 designers from the EcoEquitable community and local eco fashion community. With over 200 guests, participating designers had the unique opportunity to showcase their eco fashion designs in a fun, multicultural and creative community event.

### Metamorphosis 2015:

- Raised over \$4000 to support EcoEquitable training programs
- Celebrated all the hard work and creativity of immigrant and emerging designers in our community
- Generated entrepreneurship interest and opportunity that led to the launch of our Enabling Apparel Entrepreneurship Program.



## MISSION, VISION AND STRATEGIC GOALS

**Vision:**

An inclusive and sustainable society where all can realize their full potential within their community.

The vision is significantly broader than sewing or financial independence — it speaks to the holistic possibility of each person. It also allows for easy partnership with like-minded organizations.

**Mission:**

Providing a bridge to social and economic integration for people in need, especially immigrant women, while greening our community.

Over 80% of EE’s program participants are immigrant women; there will be an emphasis on continuing to support this specific group which is why they are specifically named in this mission statement. “Providing a bridge” allows for the concept of responsibility and autonomy. EE will provide the tools and programs but ultimately each program participant must take advantage of them. Finally, EE has a strong environmental mandate.

This ability to work across the traditional lines of funded charitable sector and for-profit work makes EE unique, and its mandate for social and environmental change is impressive.

**Strategic Goals:**

The Strategic Goals were created by the board and staff with the intention of having them be flexible and far-reaching enough to last for the next five years (next revision is in 2017). Interim goals for 2013 and 2015 were also listed as milestones.



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

### Statement of Activities and Changes in Net Assets (year ending Dec. 31, 2015)

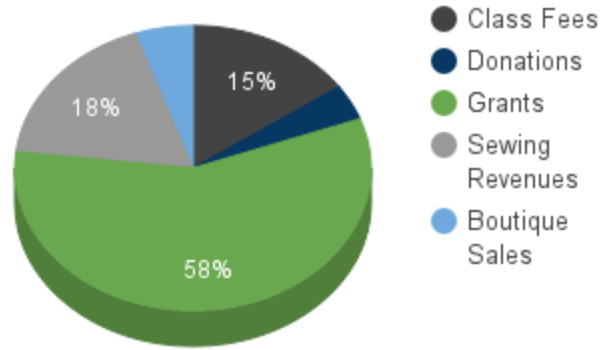
Revenue		2015	2014
	Class Fees	35,344	15,688
	Donations	9,334	6,487
	Grants	132,375	112,204
	Sewing Revenues	41,258	45,725
	Boutique Sales	12,180	
	(Less Discount)	(293)	
	Other Revenues		
	<b>Net Sales</b>	<b>230,199</b>	<b>180,104</b>
	Cost of Goods Sold	17,686	
	<b>Gross Revenue (Loss)</b>	<b>212,513</b>	<b>180,104</b>
Expenses			
	Advertising and Promotion	385	635
	Bank Charges	23	
	Building Repairs and Maintenances(Note 1)	1,145	
	Donations and Contributions	1,500	
	Dues and Subscriptions	1,483	
	Insurance	8,945	8,295
	Legal and professional fees	2,368	3,558
	Meals and entertainment	1,162	
	Office expenses	2,373	6,583
	Miscellaneous (Note 2)	3,225	6,122
	Salaries and Contractors	150,934	161,294
	Rent	22,829	23,996
	Sewing Equipment Maintenance & Repair	1,869	
	Shipping & Handling	252	
	Sewing Materials	4,518	14,286
	Telephone	767	
	Training	1,987	
	Travel	463	1,114
	Total Operating Expenses	206,229	225,883
	<b>Excess(deficiency) of Revenues over Expenses</b>	<b>6,285</b>	<b>(45,779)</b>
	<b>Net Asset, Beginning of Year</b>	<b>14,647</b>	<b>55,423</b>
	<b>Net Assets, End of Year</b>	<b>20,932</b>	<b>9,644</b>

**Note 1:** Building repairs and Maintenance includes cleaning fees

**Note 2:** Includes:

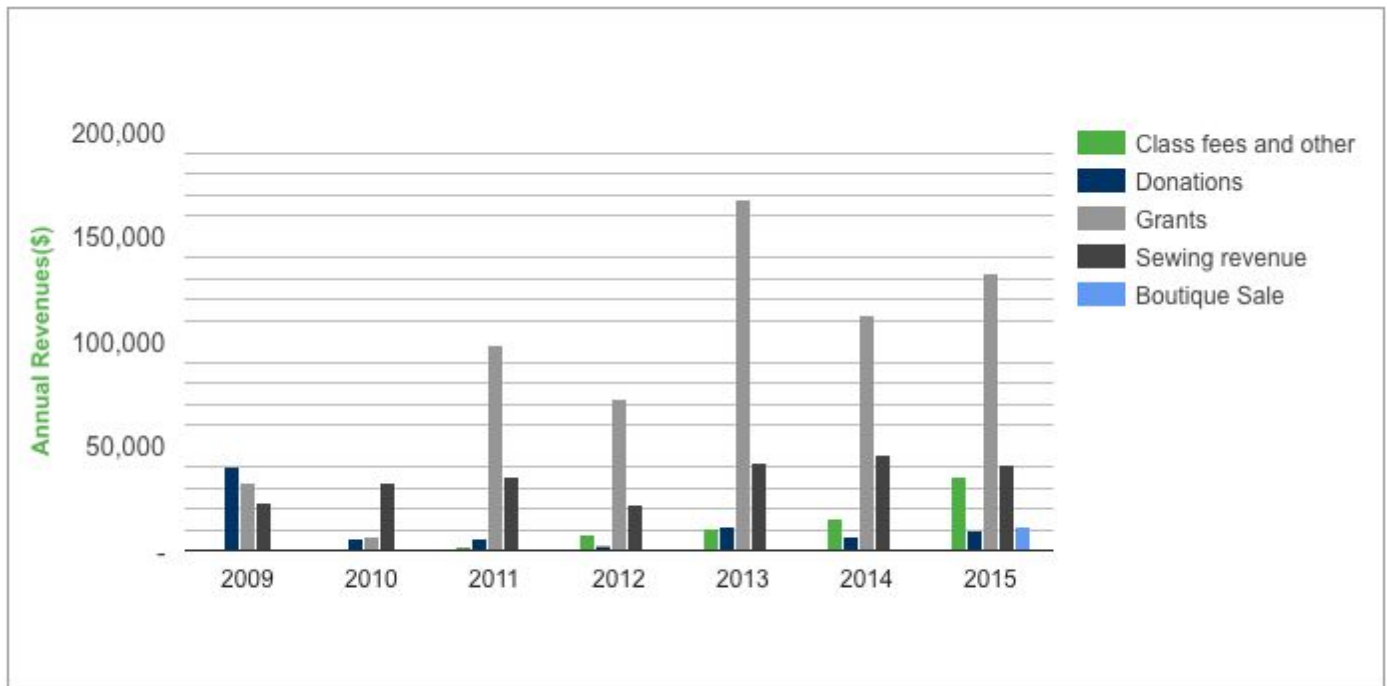
- General and Admin Expenses
- Other Organizational Fees
- Other Service Charges

## 2015 Revenue Distribution



## REVENUE 2009-2015

Revenue Category	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Class fees and other	80	348	1,488	7,424	10,675	15,688	
Donations	40,155	5,920	5,902	2,316	11,367	6,487	9,334
Grants	32,381	6,559	97,723	72,282	167,375	112,204	132,375
Sewing revenue	22,915	32,351	35,302	22,061	41,661	45,725	41,258
Boutique Sale							11,888
<b>Total</b>	<b>95,531</b>	<b>45,178</b>	<b>140,415</b>	<b>104,083</b>	<b>231,078</b>	<b>180,104</b>	<b>230,199</b>



## INSPIRING LIVES - INTERVIEW WITH SUPRIYA CHETTUR

### How is EcoEquitable helping you?

Ecoequitable helps me in many ways. First of all, the instructor, Belkis Navas, and her assistants helped us learn about hand stitching, making pincushions, tote bag, and zipper bags in the Beginners Sewing for Jobs program. We also learned how to use a serger. Hand stitching made me interested in bead weaving for my jewelry making. We also have an excellent collection of book on sewing for students to borrow.

I love the social interaction in my class during our break. People from various part of the world attend these program and it helps me learn about new cultures. They all help each other in succeeding. The students also bring home cooked meals and share small gifts. We also get lots of help from Chelsea Hillier who is a staff member at EcoEquitable. For example, she helps them with their resume, job hunting, computer classes, and language training.

Volunteers at the EcoEquitable boutique also give fabrics to the students. I also love to shop at EcoEquitable boutique for making all kinds of bags. Students can buy fabric for two dollars a meter.

One of our students also received a donated sewing machine from EcoEquitable which helped her learn faster. She made a lot of fabric covers for the upcoming EcoEquitable fashion show.

I also work as a boutique volunteer with volunteer coordinator, Sandra Sawers, and with fashion show Project Coordinator, Isabel Sebastiao, for the Metamorphosis Eco Fashion Show. I am also busy making more jewelry for the models. I can even display and sell the jewelry that I make at the EcoEquitable boutique.

Additionally, I photograph various activities at EcoEquitable and publish photos to EcoEquitable and Fashion Show Instagram. I am learning how to use Instagram as a promotional and branding tool in the best possible way.

### What is the best part of Equitable?

EcoEquitable is a social enterprise that supports individuals and allows them to explore their creativity. I am very much inspired by the success stories from the past.

### What are your goals after the program?

EcoEquitable taught me see possibilities in recycled fabric. My goal is personal enrichment and skills development through creative crafts such as jewelry making, pottery, and sewing. I will continue to develop unique handmade products for sale at various events and craft fairs.



## CONCLUSION

### Where Are We in 2015 and Beyond?

2015 was a year of professionalization, creativity and growth. Launching a new eco fashion show – Metamorphosis, our Flagbarer and Remade brands and our new Boutique Mentorship and Enabling Apparel Entrepreneurship were all major creative endeavors this year. We are very proud of how these initiatives have gotten off the ground, expanded our diverse community and increased the number of training and employment opportunities generated.

In 2016, we are looking to double our revenue from Flagbarer, Remade and sustainable conference bags, leading to both increased employment opportunities, as well as diversification of funding. We will be hosting the second annual Metamorphosis Eco Fashion Show on Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>, and we are strengthening our Enabling Apparel Entrepreneurship Program to accompany our emerging designers along the way. 2016 will be a year of continuous improvement – growing those programs and business lines that have the most potential to achieve our triple bottom line: people, profit and the environment.

We ask you to join us in any way that you would like: follow us on social media, subscribe to our newsletter, take our courses, volunteer in our boutique, introduce us to community partners or potential leads for our sewing production. We hope you will join us and participate in our growing, multicultural community!

Every Stitch, A Story...



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