



2024-2025
MICHAEËLLE JEAN FOUNDATION

Annual Report

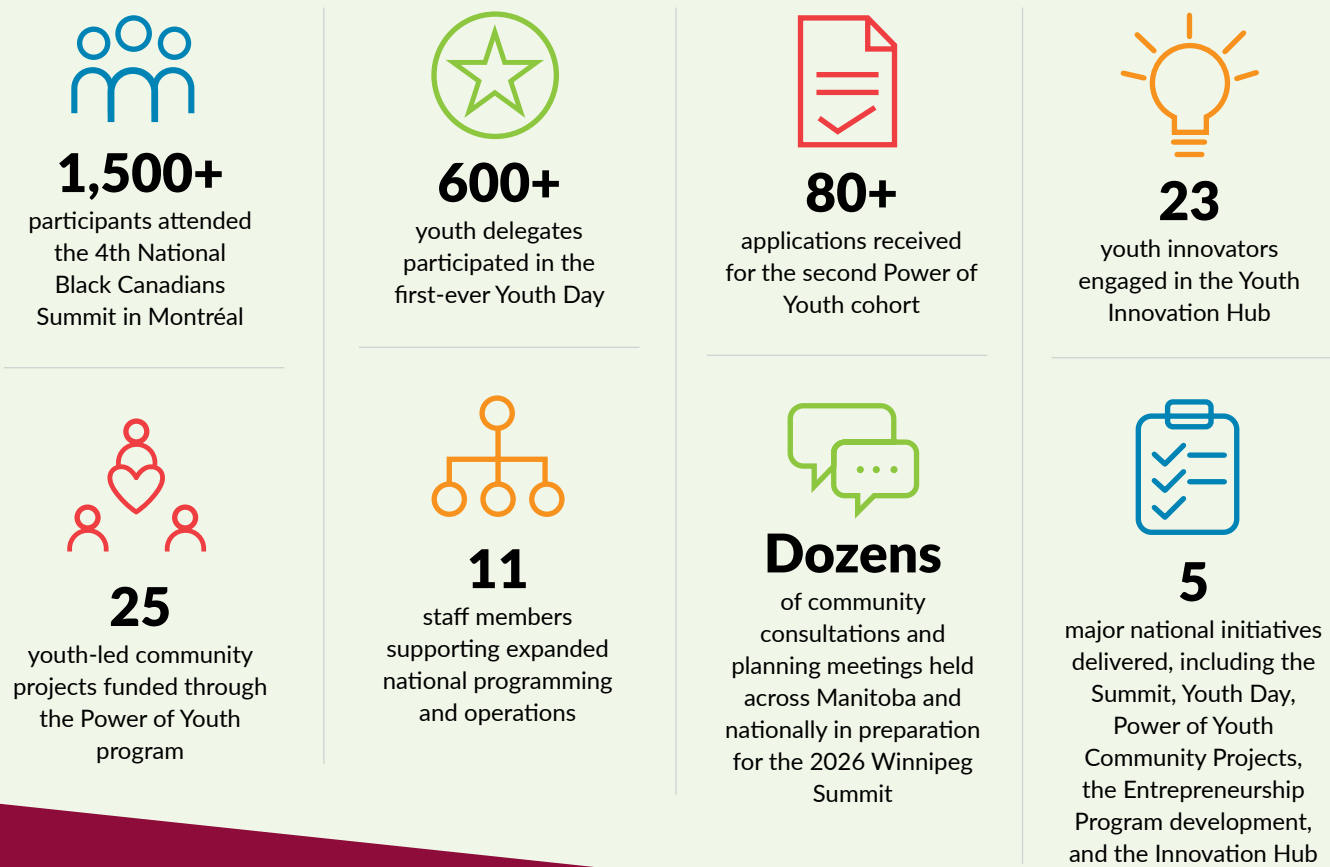


FONDATION
michaëlle jean
FOUNDATION

Year at a Glance

The 2024–2025 fiscal year (October 2024–September 2025) marked a period of growth for the Michaëlle Jean Foundation, strengthening youth leadership initiatives and bringing communities together across Canada through programs, partnerships, and national dialogue.

IMPACT BY NUMBERS



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS



MESSAGE FROM THE CO-FOUNDERS

A Pivotal Year

It is with a renewed attentiveness to the world around us—and to the forces that shape and unsettle it—that we present this annual report of the Michaëlle Jean Foundation.

We are living through a time of profound upheaval. In Canada, as elsewhere, the fault lines are deepening. Inequalities endure. Identity tensions are hardening. And aspirations for justice too often collide with systemic inertia. In such a demanding moment, we must resist the pull of indifference. We are called to embrace forms of engagement that are clear-sighted, anchored in solidarity, and decisively action-oriented. It is in this spirit that the 2024–2025 year unfolded for our Foundation—a pivotal year marked by meaningful internal transformation and a strengthened presence in communities across the country. We reorganized, we reinforced, we expanded. These were not simply operational choices, but necessary steps to meet the scale of the challenges before us and to align our means with our ambitions.

At the heart of our work lies a simple but unwavering conviction: young people are not only the future—they are already shaping it. Across the country, we see their intelligence, creativity, and initiative at work. It is therefore incumbent upon us to ensure that they have real opportunities to be heard, to lead, and to act.

This is precisely what drives the continued growth of our Power of Youth (POY) program. Over the past year, it has supported new cohorts of community-based projects while further strengthening its entrepreneurship stream. Rooted in a “learn by doing” approach, these initiatives do more than support—they empower. They equip young people with the tools to design and carry forward solutions grounded in their lived realities.

The 4th National Black Canadians Summit for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination, held in Montréal in early 2025, stands as one of the defining moments of the year. More than a gathering, it became a vibrant space for reflection, creativity, and collective mobilization. Guided by the principles of the Halifax Declaration—Recognition, Justice, Development—, the Summit brought together voices from across the country in a shared effort to advance meaningful social change.

We were especially moved by the strength and clarity of Youth Day, which placed young people at the center of a vital inter-generational dialogue. It marked an important shift—from

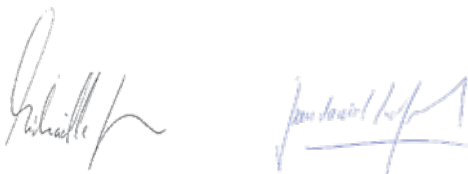
symbolic inclusion to genuine co-creation of the responses needed to address the challenges we face together. The momentum built from the earliest Summits through to Montréal is already carrying forward. Preparations are well underway for the upcoming Summit in Winnipeg, from September 18 to 20, 2026, supported by a remarkable level of engagement from local communities and institutional partners. This continuity speaks to something deeper: the steady growth of a national movement—one that is increasingly resonating beyond our borders—rooted in shared experience, reflection, and collective action.

At the same time, the Foundation has continued to engage with institutions and decision-making spaces, contributing to national conversations on key priorities while strengthening its ties with community, cultural, educational, and economic sectors. These connections matter. They allow ideas and knowledge to circulate, and they help turn intention into lasting change.

We would like to recognize the outstanding work of our team, whose growth and evolving structure reflect a clear commitment to expanding our impact. We are equally grateful to our partners, allies, and steadfast supporters, whose trust makes this progress possible.

True to the spirit that has guided the Foundation since its inception, we will continue to draw upon the arts, culture, and dialogue as essential forces for reimagining and rebuilding. It is within these spaces—where creation meets encounter, and where leadership is understood as shared and collective—that new possibilities take shape, and we begin to move beyond the impasses of our time.

More than ever, we are called to move forward together—with determination and discernment.



The Honourable Michaëlle Jean and Jean-Daniel Lafond
Co-Founders & Co-chairs

The Momentum for a Fresh Start

The Foundation has experienced a new start — through recharging, recalibrating, and innovating, we have impressed upon our team that as the organization grows, we must grow too. The 2024 – 2025 year was highly busy and notably, a transformative year, where the Foundation turned challenges into opportunities. The dedication of our co-founders, board members, and staff ensured the success of these moments, paving a resilient path forward as we look ahead.



Over the course of the last fiscal year, the Michaëlle Jean Foundation began an unexpected but timely and necessary transitional period, which allowed for major structural and operational adjustments, including staff expansion and an updated strategic plan. The restructuring of the organizational chart and readjusting our priorities allowed for major savings, which enabled us to hire additional staff and grow the team for more effectiveness. This strategic and careful recruitment doubled the number of employees to Eleven (11), which is only the minimum amount of human power presently required for the Foundation to make significant impact.

During this period of change, the team continued to ensure the successful delivery of our programs.

Marking the end of the first International Decade for People of African Descent, the Montreal Summit was a celebration of the Halifax Declaration for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination. While the postponement of the 4th National Black Canadians Summit was unfortunate, and somewhat costly, it served as a trampoline for more imagination, innovation and enhancement to what was already being planned. Additional funds were raised, new strategic partnerships were developed, and more significant community outreach was initiated in the Montreal region, which created a new and more vigorous momentum and enthusiasm in local Black communities.

The ultimate success of the Montreal Summit was an indication that close and active collaboration between the Michaëlle Jean Foundation, and the community, continue to be the key ingredient in growing this movement. The Summit grew in financial profit, number of delegates and substance in content, with the first inaugural Youth Day becoming the highlight of the 3-day long event. A ceremonial passing of the torch was performed between the Montreal Summit

co-chairs and the Winnipeg delegation composed of Winnipeg Summit Chair, Deputy Premier of Manitoba and Deputy Mayor of Winnipeg.

With full endorsement by the province of Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg, there has been growing excitement around the 5th National Black Canadians Summit. Local Black community support has been tremendous, and we have met with several organizations and allies willing to help with the planning of the Summit. This includes the naming of the Winnipeg Summit Chair, Angela Cassie, who is a leader in the community and board member with the Michaëlle Jean Foundation. Community consultations and meetings with partners will continue for the purpose of creating an Advisory Council that will guide our efforts and actions. The local community and partner's support have brought in resources and funding, allowing us to execute the initial phases of the planning process.

Alongside Summit programming, this fiscal year saw the start of the second cohort of Power of Youth-Community Projects, allowing us to fund 25 additional initiatives across Canada, thanks to generous support from the Federal Government (SBCCI). This time, the application intake more than doubled the number of projects we could accept.

The Power of Youth-Entrepreneurship stream continued to gain momentum as the program platform was built to become the focal point and virtual location for project delivery. The Entrepreneurship Program is expected to attract participants from the various cohorts who have completed a Power of Youth-Community Project. The symbiose between the two programs embodies the experiential learning methodology – Learn by Doing philosophy.

The Michaëlle Jean Foundation was able to forge an understanding with the Million Little Miracles Foundation, a youth-led group, to establish a Youth Innovation Hub within FMJF. This initiative will allow for youth creativity, mentorship and leadership development.

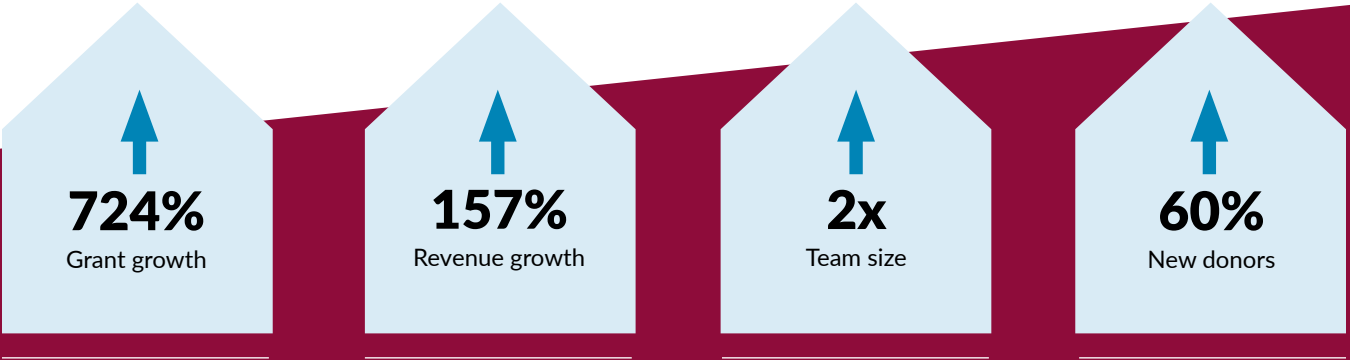
On several occasions this past year, the presence of the Michaëlle Jean Foundation has been requested. This includes the invitation we received to participate in the Black Leaders Roundtable on Federal pre-budget consultation priorities, where we provided recommendations. As Executive Director, I was pleased to provide keynote remarks at King's University in London (Presentation on the Halifax Declaration and Summit), University of Ottawa (Panelist – Black History Month), Congress of Black Women, London (Keynote remarks on Royalty), Essence Awards, London (Presented 2 youth awards), the Canadian Teacher's Federation (Keynote remarks), Republic of Gabon's Independence Day celebration, Montreal (Keynote remarks) and RISE Gala with Million Little Miracles Foundation (Keynote remarks and received an award).

Engagement with the community remains essential to this work. Representing the Foundation, I attended a range of events, among these were Ottawa Youth's 21 Under 21 Youth RBC Awards, CESOC's 30th Anniversary, Mindtrust Leadership Development's 20th Anniversary, the Opening ceremony

for Black History Month at city Hall in Montreal, BalAfrikana organized by CCAM - Montreal Afro-Canadian Cultural Centre, the MPI Charity Auction Dinner, the All Women Lead Annual conference, WARESA Awards Ceremony (where I received an award on entrepreneurship and innovation), Voices of Africa Evening during Black History Month, the graduation ceremony for Building Black Success by Design at the University of Toronto, Encore's 35th Anniversary, the Canadian Community Foundation's conference in Halifax, the Speech from the Throne by King Charles, the Assembly of First Nations AGA in Winnipeg (Observer) and the Desjardins Business Centre and Wealth's inauguration.

As the Foundation settles into its evolving structure, we look ahead with a vision of strengthened relationships throughout the community. Uplifting the voices of youth, we will plan steadily and tirelessly toward the 5th National Black Canadians Summit and stay connected to our national mission. We hope that you will stand with us in support of another successful year.


Edward Matwawana
Executive Director



Taking Action Together

Three days of dialogue, art and collective action. 1,500+ Participants – Montreal, January 2025

The 4th National Black Canadians Summit marked a major milestone in the continuing movement to advance racial justice, recognition, and development for Black communities across Canada. Held in Montréal, the Summit brought together youth, artists, scholars, policymakers, community leaders, entrepreneurs, and advocates from across the country for three days of dialogue, artistic expression, reflection, and collective strategy-building. Rooted in the pillars of the United Nations’ International Decade for People of African Descent and guided by the Halifax Declaration, the Summit served as both a national gathering and a platform for action, reaffirming that Black communities across Canada are not only responding to systemic inequities, but actively shaping the solutions.

The Summit was built on years of organizing and mobilization. As the fourth national in-person gathering of its kind, it continued the momentum first sparked by young Black

artists and community leaders who envisioned a national space where Black experiences, ideas, and leadership could be centered with purpose and dignity. In Montréal, that vision deepened. The gathering became a powerful civic, cultural, and intergenerational space where communities from across the country could exchange best practices, identify urgent priorities, and imagine together what a more just and inclusive Canada can and must become.

THEME, VISION AND OBJECTIVES

The Montréal Summit was guided by a clear vision: to create a national space grounded in the principles of Recognition, Justice, and Development, while advancing the Halifax Declaration as a living roadmap for collective Black leadership in Canada. The Summit’s purpose was not simply to convene, but to move forward the work of dismantling systemic anti-Black racism through sustained collaboration, cultural affirmation, youth leadership, and community-rooted solutions.

Across plenaries, breakout sessions, artistic performances, and community exchanges, the Summit sought to:



- strengthen national solidarity among Black communities across regions and sectors;
- create space for bold discussion on education, health, housing, justice, arts, entrepreneurship, and public policy;
- affirm Black cultural excellence as essential to social transformation;
- elevate youth-led work as a central force in shaping Canada’s present and future; and
- translate the energy of community dialogue into action-oriented strategies for long-term systemic change.

In this way, the Montréal Summit reflected the Foundation’s long-standing commitment to leveraging arts, dialogue, and youth leadership as catalysts for change. It also reinforced the Foundation’s belief that national gatherings such as the Summit must do more than raise awareness; they must create pathways for mobilization, collaboration, and sustained impact.

YOUTH DAY: CONCEPTION, DELIVERY AND OUTCOMES
One of the most significant achievements of the Montréal Summit was the successful delivery of the first-ever Youth Day a historic addition to the National Black Canadians Summit and a major expression of the Foundation’s commitment to centering youth voices. Conceived as a fully youth-led and youth-informed day, Youth Day represented an important shift from youth participation as an element of programming to youth leadership as a core organizing principle.

From its earliest stages, Youth Day was intentionally built by young people, for young people. A Youth Day Organizing Committee, composed of members of the Foundation’s Youth Advisory Committee and young Montréal-based Black leaders, co-designed the program, helped shape the agenda, selected speakers, and ensured that the day reflected lived realities, current challenges, and the aspirations of Black youth across the country. This process created a stronger sense of ownership, relevance, and authenticity in programming.



1

RECOGNITION
Affirming black cultural identity and history

2

JUSTICE
Dismantling systemic anti-black racism

3

DEVELOPMENT
Investing in leadership and community

Youth Day opened the Summit with extraordinary energy, welcoming more than 600 youth delegates, making it the largest youth gathering in the Summit's history. The day combined artistic performances, keynote moments, networking opportunities, and dynamic workshops led by Power of Youth participants and other facilitators. It offered not only inspiration, but also practical engagement, peer exchange, and honest conversation about the realities Black youth are navigating in Canada today.

The opening moments of Youth Day set a powerful tone. Through performance, movement, sound, and visual art, artists such as Mukoma-K, Misé Johns, MALICIOUZ, Elena Stoodley, and the Montreal Steppers created a vibrant atmosphere that celebrated Black creativity, presence, and possibility. Their contributions affirmed that the arts were not peripheral to the Summit experience, but central to how youth entered the space, connected with one another, and engaged the themes of the day.

The content of Youth Day was anchored by five Power of Youth breakout sessions focused on:

- Community and cultural development;
- Civic engagement and anti-racism;
- Justice and mental health support;
- Education and employment; and
- Technology and innovation.

Together, these sessions reflected the depth and diversity of youth-led work happening across Canada. They also demonstrated how the Foundation's Power of Youth initiative has become a meaningful mechanism through which the calls embedded in the Halifax Declaration are translated into practical, community-based action. More than 25 Power of Youth projects were featured at the Summit, creating direct opportunities for youth delegates and community leaders to hear from one another, exchange strategies, and strengthen a shared sense of purpose.



YOUTH ADVISORS, FACILITATORS AND MCS

Youth leadership was visible throughout the design and delivery of the Summit, and especially throughout Youth Day. Members of the Foundation's Youth Advisory Committee played an essential role in shaping the day's structure, ensuring that it remained grounded in the realities and priorities of Black youth. Their contribution moved beyond consultation; they helped drive the day's direction and tone.

Youth facilitators and moderators also played an important role in creating spaces for honest dialogue, critical reflection, and peer engagement. Across sessions, facilitators helped sustain conversations that were emotionally resonant, politically sharp, and solution oriented. They supported participants in exploring themes such as belonging, anti-Black racism, trauma, leadership, education, cultural identity, and innovation in ways that were grounded, intergenerational, and action focused.

The MCs and hosts of Youth Day also helped establish a strong atmosphere of welcome, momentum, and clarity. Marina Mathieu, who hosted the Youth Day kick-off, helped frame the day as one of collaboration, exchange, and action. Her presence, alongside Artistic Director Misé Johns, contributed to a launch that was both celebratory and purposeful.

Beyond the stage and workshop rooms, youth were present throughout the Summit's broader operations. More than three quarters of the Summit's volunteer force was made up of youth, many of whom took on responsibilities in timekeeping, room coordination, guest engagement, communications support, and participant experience. Their leadership was not symbolic; it was operational, visible, and indispensable to the success of the event.

KEY OUTCOMES, LEARNINGS AND SECTOR IMPACT

The Montréal Summit generated a number of important outcomes, both immediate and long-term. First, it demonstrated the strength of a national movement that continues to grow in depth, scope, and intergenerational engagement. Across the three days, participants did not simply attend sessions; they helped shape a broader conversation about Black futures in Canada. The Summit created a national space in which policy concerns, artistic practice, social realities, and youth innovation could be meaningfully connected.

A second major outcome was the clear affirmation that youth are not only participants in this movement, but leaders of it. Youth Day, in particular, showed what becomes possible when young people are trusted with ownership, given visibility, and resources to lead. The scale of youth attendance, the quality of youth-led sessions, and the depth of engagement throughout the event all pointed to the importance of continuing to invest in youth-centered structures such as the Youth Advisory Committee and the Power of Youth initiative.

The Summit also generated important learning across sectors. Discussions in health highlighted the need for race-based data collection, culturally grounded care, and a national Black

health strategy. Sessions on housing emphasize collaboration, wealth-building, and structural policy change. Conversations on justice, education, entrepreneurship, and emerging technologies reinforced the need for Black-led research, stronger infrastructure, long-term investment, and greater accountability from institutions. Across sectors, one message remained consistent: sustainable change requires Black communities to be resourced not only as participants, but as decision-makers, builders, and leaders.

Another important impact of the Summit was cultural. Through performances, exhibitions, film, and multidisciplinary artistic dialogue, the Summit affirmed the arts as a powerful force for truth-telling, healing, resistance, and imagination. The integration of the arts across the event deepened participant engagement and underscored the Foundation's belief that social transformation must also be cultural transformation.

Finally, the Montréal Summit strengthened the Foundation's role as a convener of national dialogues and a catalyst for ongoing collaboration. It reinforced partnerships with community organizations, funders, cultural leaders, and public institutions, while also laying the groundwork for the next phase of the movement as the Summit baton was passed to Winnipeg for 2026. In doing so, the Montréal Summit stood not as a conclusion, but as a continuation, one that deepened relationships, clarified priorities, and expanded the collective horizon of what, Black-led national organizing in Canada can achieve.

“Youth Day marked an important shift — from symbolic inclusion to genuine co-creation.”


600+
youth delegates participated in Youth Day


75+
Volunteers were youth



Building the Path to the Winnipeg Summit

Moving Forward Together. > *Winnipeg, Manitoba, RBC Convention Centre & Delta Hotel*

Following the success of the Montreal Summit, preparations began for the 5th National Black Canadians Summit in Winnipeg, marking an important transition in the Summit’s ongoing national journey. Each Summit represents a moment in a longer process—one that carries forward the ideas, relationships, and commitments built previously. In this sense, the move from Montreal to Winnipeg represents a true passing of the baton, ensuring that the momentum created continues to grow and evolve across regions of the country.

Early planning for the Winnipeg Summit has been strengthened by strong institutional and regional support. The Foundation is grateful to have received funding pledges from the Province of Manitoba in partnership with Travel Manitoba, and the City of Winnipeg in partnership with Tourism Winnipeg, whose leadership and commitment have helped establish a strong foundation for the Summit’s development. The RBC Convention Centre and the Delta Hotel were selected as official venues for the event.

We are particularly grateful for the leadership of Premier Wab Kinew, whose government has demonstrated meaningful commitment to supporting the Summit in Manitoba. Through his leadership, resources have been allocated to support the initiative, and key members of the provincial government have played an important role in championing the project. Among them are Deputy Minister Asgware and Minister Jamie Moses, Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation, both of African descent and both strong advocates for the Summit and its vision.

As preparations progressed, the Foundation undertook dozens of meetings with community organizations, leaders, and cultural actors in Winnipeg and across Manitoba. These conversations have been essential in laying the groundwork for the creation of a Summit Advisory Council, which will ensure that the Summit remains deeply rooted in the local community. This council will centre the voices and perspectives of Manitoba’s Black communities while also benefiting from the participation of regional representatives from across Canada, including leaders who have been involved in previous National Black Canadians Summits. In this way, the advisory structure reflects both continuity and growth, linking local leadership with the broader national movement that the Summits have helped cultivate.

The choice of Winnipeg as the host city also invites a deeper reflection on solidarity and shared histories. Manitoba and Winnipeg are home to strong Indigenous communities with a long history of organizing and resisting colonial and systemic structures of racial oppression. As the Summit takes shape, it is essential that the work of Black communities across Canada be expressed in solidarity with Indigenous peoples, recognizing the shared commitments to justice, dignity, and self-determination.

This understanding helped inspire the Summit’s guiding motto: “Moving Forward Together.”

Moving forward together means strengthening connections within Black communities themselves, building solidarity and collective vision across regions, generations, and sectors. It also means moving forward in solidarity with Indigenous communities, acknowledging the histories and realities that shape our shared national context. Finally, it means moving forward with allies across the country and around the world, engaging institutions, civil society, cultural leaders, and policymakers in a collective effort to eradicate the devastating effects of racial discrimination in all its forms.

As planning continues, the Winnipeg Summit is emerging not only as the next national gathering, but as a growing movement of collaboration, dialogue, and shared leadership—one that brings together communities, partners, youth, and institutions committed to building a more just and inclusive future.



5th National Black Canadians Summit

Winnipeg, Manitoba • September 18-20, 2026



Power of Youth Initiative

Equipping young black leaders to shape their communities.

The Power of Youth is an initiative established by the Michaelle the Jean Foundation in response to the call of action issued at the 3rd National Black Canadians Summit, outline in the Halifax Declaration: Manifesto for the Eradication of Racial Discrimination. In accordance with the Halifax Declaration, a community-led proclamation based on the three pillars of the United Nations International Decade for the People of African Descent (Recognition, Justice & Development), the Power of Youth Initiative empowers young Black leaders to shape the future of their communities. This initiative equips emerging changemakers with the tools, resources, and support needed to build and scale community-driven projects that advance recognition, justice, and sustainable development in Black communities across Canada.

The first phase of this initiative, Power of Youth - Community Projects, was first launched in 2023, with major support from the Canadian Race Relations Foundation as well as the Defin-

ity Foundation and the Vancouver Foundation. Through this initial investment, up to \$5,000 in funding was awarded to 35 youth-led projects, designed and led by Black leaders aged 16–30 across Canada. These projects span diverse sectors, including education, mental health, entrepreneurship, the arts, civic engagement, and more.

Throughout the program, these young leaders strengthen skills such as project management, partnership development, public presentation, budgetary oversight and many more. In recognition of their dedication and impact, Power of Youth Community Projects leaders were supported to travel to Montreal and present their projects at the 4th National Black Canadians Summit.

Following the significant impact of the first cohort, the Foundation has been inspired to expand the program into two distinct phases: Power of Youth Community Projects and Power of Youth Entrepreneurship Program.

POWER OF YOUTH COMMUNITY PROJECTS

The Power of Youth Community Projects stream focuses on supporting young Black leaders by providing funding to create community driven projects aligned with the principles and demands of the Halifax Declaration.

In April 2025, the Foundation launched a second call for applications for Black youth-led projects across Canada, made possible through funding from the Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative (SBCCI) administered by Employment and Social Development Canada. The SBCCI supports Black-led solutions and initiatives that strengthen civic and economic participation within Black communities.



1

APPLY
Open call nationwide

2

SELECT
Rigorous review

3

FUND
\$5,000 per project

4

DELIVER
Learn by doing

5

SHOWCASE
Summit presentation

This new call for proposals invited young leaders to submit innovative project ideas aimed at strengthening community resilience, advancing social justice, and promoting economic and civic engagement. The response was strong, with more than 80 applications submitted from across the country, representing significant growth compared to the first call in 2023, which received over 60 submissions. Following a

rigorous selection process, 25 projects were selected, with each initiative receiving \$5,000 in funding to support the development and implementation of their work.

The following section introduces the youth participants of the second cohort and the projects they are leading:



01 | On The Horizon Showcase – Robel Adugna, North York, ON
On the Horizon Showcase is a youth-centered arts and culture initiative that created a dynamic space for young people and community members to engage with live performance, creative expression, and cultural leadership. Through a public showcase featuring artists, DJs, and cultural professionals, the project encouraged youth to imagine future pathways in the arts, both on stage and behind the scenes. By centering representation, community connection, and storytelling, the initiative helped participants build confidence, reflect on their aspirations, and see creativity as a tool for leadership, empowerment, and long-term impact.



02 | Rhythm & Roots: Regent Park Women's Dance Collective – Deangela Provo, Toronto, ON
Rhythm & Roots is a dance collective empowering young women (ages 13–18) from Regent Park and surrounding low-income communities through Afro-Indigenous and Caribbean dance traditions. The program fosters confidence, sisterhood, leadership, and mental wellness, providing a safe space for creative self-expression and community connection.



03 | Picnic in the Park – Flourish Aiwize, Port Coquitlam, BC
Picnic in the Park is a youth-led community event celebrating Black culture, businesses, and organizations in Metro Vancouver. Featuring food, dance, literature, STEM activities, and youth games, it creates a joyful space for connection, empowerment, and cultural pride.



04 | For The Culture – Hidaya Tchassanti, Ottawa, ON
For the Culture is an immersive, multisensory series by the Million Little Miracles Foundation celebrating the richness and diversity of Black cultures through art, storytelling, food, and intergenerational exchange. Each session blends a performance-led opening, tactile artifacts, traditional dishes, and creative workshops to spark learning, dialogue, and youth leadership. The first university session launches at the University of Ottawa in September 2025, at the end of the month with a goal of engaging 50 participants.



05 | VDJI Organizational Capacity Building & IRCA Top – Up Program – Michael Tshimanga, Montreal, QC
VDJI provides Impact of Race and Culture Assessments (IRCAs) to justice-involved Black Canadians and ensures favourable labour conditions for VDJI IRCA Assessors through its IRCA Assessor Registry and top-up program. VDJI's top-up program seeks to address the nationwide IRCA pay inequity confronted by IRCA Assessors.



06 | Voice Up - Abubaker Bukulu, East York, ON
Voice Up is a youth-led digital storytelling initiative that empowers Black LGBTIQ+ refugees and immigrants in Toronto and surrounding regions by equipping them with employable skills in podcasting, video production, and digital media. Using a mobile podcast booth, the project brings media tools directly to communities often excluded from mainstream narratives, offering a safe and accessible platform to share lived experiences and spark dialogue on racism, discrimination, inclusion, and access to social services.



07 | Sankofa Farming Cooperative (2025 Summer Programming) - Tamia Thompson, Montreal, QC
Sankofa Farming Cooperative is a Black-Indigenous, non-hierarchical, worker-run, non-profit organization rooted in ancestral practice and sustainable, slow-growth. We are committed to land stewardship as well as delivering fresh produce, educational programming, land-based learning opportunities, and special events to the Black-Indigenous communities of Tiohtià:ke/Mooniyang (Montréal).



08 | United Through Sport: A Community Youth Tournament - Prescious Carvery, Ottawa, ON
United Through Sports was an inclusive youth sports initiative designed to foster belonging, teamwork, and leadership through collective play and accessible programming. By bringing young people together through sports activities, training sessions, and mentorship, the project created opportunities for participants to strengthen their confidence, discipline, and sense of community. The initiative positioned sport as more than physical activity, using it as a vehicle for youth empowerment, resilience, social connection, and personal growth in a supportive and community-driven environment.



09 | AccessPoint: A Youth-Led Digital Access Project - Daniel Ohaegbu, Charlottetown, PE
AccessPoint is a youth-led digital innovation project that improves access to employment and support services for Black and racialized, immigrant, and newcomer youth across Nova Scotia. This is a design sprint initiative to co-design a user-friendly digital platform to improve access to employment opportunities.



10 | Expressions: Touch, Tell, Transform - Gabriela Sealy, Toronto, ON
Expressions: Touch, Tell, Transform is a creative wellness initiative that utilizes visual arts, storytelling, and sensory-based workshops to support Black youth in exploring their identity, emotional expression, and cultural heritage.



11 | Dance To Your Heart's Content (Youth Afro-Caribbean Dance Competition) - Nicole Boye, Scarborough, ON
Dance To Your Heart's Content is a youth Afro-Caribbean Dance competition that aims to highlight the cultural creativity found in our youth, while bringing in a diverse audience that recognizes the importance of art in our lives. The goal is to inspire Black youth, offer them the chance to take up space on a stage, and challenge the assumption that showcasing their talent is limited to February's Black History Month celebrations.



12 | Uncut Conversations: Bridging Black Artistic Voices from Toronto to Montreal - Alliston Davis, Toronto, ON
Our Crib Uncut - French Connections is a one-hour live recorded talk show designed to spotlight Black artists and creatives from Toronto and Montreal in a shared space of dialogue, storytelling, and performance — building solidarity across provincial lines while advancing the cultural priorities outlined in the Halifax Declaration.



13 | Black Aspiring Medical Professionals: Building an Inclusive Pipeline to Healthcare Careers - Warona Alawiye, Calgary, AB
Black Aspiring Medical Professionals (BAMP) is a student-led initiative dedicated to empowering Black and racialized students pursuing careers in medicine and the health sciences. We focus on mentorship, community-building, and advocacy to address systemic barriers and promote equity in healthcare.



14 | Youth Effectiveness Program Conference - Zetseat Lakew, Calgary, AB
Elevate Your Future is an 8-week program supporting Black first-generation Canadian youth in Calgary through workshops on leadership, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, academic success, and post-secondary preparation. The initiative helps youth build practical life skills, broaden their understanding of future opportunities, and gain confidence in navigating pathways to success.



15 | Lead-HER-ship Summit - Mabintou Ouattara, Calgary, AB
The Ubora Women's Initiative empowers African, Black, and Caribbean women and gender-diverse youth to pursue careers in international relations and diplomacy through mentorship, career development support, and leadership training. Our upcoming LEAD-HER SHIP Summit will feature an SDG workshop, an interactive policy session, and panels with professors and young professionals, equipping participants with the tools and confidence to lead in global spaces.



16 | Uvusa Abalele - D-yana Bommier, Montreal, QC
Uvusa Abalele is an inclusive platform that empowers women through psychonutrition, wellness, and personal growth. Its Canadian community branch, Ubuntu _ Canada, creates a safe space for newcomer women to learn, exchange, and grow. To mark the launch, 50 empowerment kits will be distributed in partnership with Mon Nouveau Bercaïl and Centre de femmes interculturel Claire in Montreal.



17 | Marteine Forward - Rayyan Jalal Ebrahim, Ottawa, ON
Marteine Forward helps Black and marginalized students transition into post-secondary education by covering application fees, offering free mentorship, and exposing them to opportunities in STEM.



18 | HackApro - Ammielle Wambo Becker, Brampton, ON
A 1-day bilingual (French/English) hackathon that introduced over 60 Black and Francophone youth (ages 8-19) to coding, game design, and digital creativity in a fun, inclusive environment.

 **80+**
Applications

 **25**
Projects funded



19 | Safe Place – Rania Ivala, Gatineau, QC
Healing through Words is a creative initiative that uses writing and story sharing as tools for emotional healing and personal development. The project provides a safe space where words become a bridge to resilience and human connection.



20 | Maker Festival - Kelvin Doe, Toronto, ON
The Maker Festival, the first of its kind in Regent Park, is an annual celebration of science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM). A multifaceted, multicultural event, the festival makes maker learning accessible, interactive, and fun, highlighting the impact of STEAM in all our lives.



21 | Sew & Tell - Nishauna Phillip, Brampton, ON
Sew & Tell” is a 6-week program where girls ages 8-12 learn how to sew while also exploring how to navigate their emotions, guided by a skilled seamstress, a mental health professional, and a teacher experienced with primary-aged children. Each week, participants engage in therapeutic learning, a movement break, and hands-on sewing, culminating in a final showcase where they proudly share their creations with family and friends.



22 | STEMBOUND - Demilade Akinleye-Abraham, Bradford West Gwillimbury, ON
STEMBOUND aims to cultivate the next cohort of Black leaders and innovators across various STEM disciplines. Through interactive workshops, panel discussions and access to University Campus, we hope to usher the next wave of Black youth into STEM based programs in university.



23 | Black sheep project – Felicia Ca, Laval, QC
The Black Sheep Project is a Quebec-based initiative that seeks to reach as many mixed-race or Black adoptees of African descent between the ages of 18 and 30 who have white families as possible. The goal is to break the isolation of these African Canadians by allowing them to talk about their experiences and share their coping strategies.



24 | Parole et parcours – Judia Neida Joseph, Ottawa, ON
Paroles et Parcours (Real Talks, Real Paths) is a monthly bilingual community program for newcomer youth, including international students, refugees, asylum seekers, permanent residents, aged 18-30 in Ottawa-Gatineau, providing a safe space for dialogue, mutual support, and skill-building. The main goal is to foster inclusion and resilience among young immigrants through shared experiences and collective problem-solving.



25 | Women in servitude – Sophia Harries Jones, Ottawa, ON
Women in Servitude is a documentary short that empowers the voices of women at the heart of Ontario's hospitality and nightlife industries. The film centres their stories to show how women make these spaces flourish. It also confronts industry and societal challenges they face, while honouring the strength, creativity, and resilience that carry them through.

POWER OF YOUTH

POWER OF YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

The Power of Youth Entrepreneurship Program was developed in response to a clear and growing need identified both across the country and within the Foundation’s own initiatives. Many young people possess strong ideas, creativity, and a deep desire to contribute to their communities, yet face structural barriers when attempting to transform those ideas into sustainable initiatives or enterprises. Access to mentorship, professional networks, training, and capital remains uneven, particularly for youth from communities that have historically been excluded from economic opportunity.

This program also emerged directly from the experiences and feedback of participants in the first cohort of the Power of Youth - Community Projects. Through reporting processes, interviews, surveys, and dedicated feedback sessions, many participants expressed a strong interest in developing entrepreneurial pathways that would allow them to scale their projects, strengthen their economic independence, and build sustainable community initiatives.

These conversations highlighted the need for a more structured program that could provide targeted support for youth seeking to move from ideas and early-stage projects toward viable ventures. The Power of Youth Entrepreneurship Program is being developed to respond to these calls by creating pathways that enable young people to translate their creativity, leadership, and lived experience into sustainable ventures.

The development of this initiative has been made possible through a pledge of support from Desjardins, which recognized the importance of investing in youth-led innovation and community entrepreneurship. This early commitment allowed the Foundation to begin building the program’s foundations and to move forward with the design and development phase.

To lead this work, the Foundation recruited Wided El Fessi as a Program Officer, with a mandate dedicated specifically to coordinating the development of the Power of Youth Entrepreneurship Program. Her role includes guiding the program’s structure, engaging with partners and youth leaders, and ensuring that the initiative reflects both community needs and national opportunities.

The Foundation also partnered with Strategic Heart Consulting, which has been supporting the development of the program’s overall design. Their work includes contributing to the creation of the program framework, the development of a digital platform, and the design of a curriculum that will support young participants as they move from ideas to implementation. Together, these elements aim to create a structured yet flexible environment where young entrepreneurs can access practical tools, mentorship, and knowledge.

Building on the Foundation’s broader Power of Youth framework, the entrepreneurship program embraces a broad understanding of entrepreneurship. Participants are encouraged to develop projects across all sectors, including social enterprise, cultural initiatives, community-based ventures, and innovative economic projects. In doing so, the program recognizes that entrepreneurship can serve not only as a pathway to economic participation, but also as a powerful vehicle for social change, cultural expression, and community development.

The program structure is being designed to combine capacity-building, mentorship, and network development. Youth participants will benefit from training sessions that strengthen key competencies such as project development, financial planning, leadership, storytelling, and partnership-building. They will also be connected with experienced mentors and professionals who can support them as their projects evolve from early concept to implementation.

Although still in its development phase, the program is already generating strong interest from youth leaders, partners, and institutions interested in supporting the next generation of innovators. Early engagement with communities and stakeholders suggests a clear appetite for initiatives that equip young people with the tools and networks necessary to develop their ideas and bring them to life.

Looking ahead, the Foundation will continue refining the program design, expanding the mentorship network, and preparing for the launch of the first cohort. Through the Power of Youth Entrepreneurship Program, the Foundation aims to contribute to the development of a new generation of young leaders capable of shaping innovative projects that strengthen communities and help build a more inclusive and dynamic economy across Canada.

Partnerships

Building the movement together.

The work of the Michaëlle Jean Foundation is uplifted by the growing number of partnerships that span across Canada. These collaborations play a central role in advancing the Foundation's mission and expanding the reach of initiatives that support youth leadership and social change.

The Foundation approached partnerships in 2024/2025 through three strategic priorities. Partnerships were cultivated to strengthen youth advocacy and engagement leveraged through the Power of Youth Community Projects and the emerging Power of Youth Entrepreneurship Program. Diversifying relationships across institutions and organizations nationwide has ensured efforts for advancing social justice and youth engagement are elevated through a wide-reach and informed by a resilient network of collaborators. The Foundation also prioritized partnerships that generate collective impact — convening organizations that can share expertise, resources, and best practices for maximization.

This approach is reflected in the Foundation's new 2025 – 2030 Strategic Plan, where philanthropic growth is foundational. During the 2024/2025 year, the Foundation saw significant progress in this area through the expansion of our networks, while strengthening relationships with existing partners alongside the cultivation of new collaborations across diverse sectors.

PUBLIC-SECTOR PARTNERS

Public-sector partners play an important role in supporting the scope of the Foundation's mission and national initiatives. Through collaborations with partners at federal and municipal institutions, the success of the 4th National Black Canadians Summit in Montréal was strengthened through this public leadership, where institutional collaboration and shared commitments advanced important dialogues and opportunities for Black communities across Canada.

During the 2024/2025 fiscal year, exceptional support from the Government of Canada through the Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)'s Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative (SBCCI), contributed to success in delivering the National Black Canadians Summit and Power of Youth programs.

With a particular dedication to uplifting youth-led initiatives at the Summit, SBCCI became a principal partner for the second cohort of the Power of Youth initiative.

Municipal leadership facilitated the warm welcome that the Foundation received in Montréal. The City of Montréal demonstrated early and enthusiastic support for hosting the Summit. This collaboration generated a strong alignment between the Summit's objectives and the context of the host city. The Foundation is grateful for the leadership, com-



mitment, and efforts of municipal employees who played a crucial role in planning and coordination.

The end of the 2024/2025 fiscal year generated strong momentum toward the upcoming 5th National Black Canadians Summit in Winnipeg. Early commitment from the City of Winnipeg and Province of Manitoba has set a strong foundation for carrying the Summit to the heart of the country and continuing the National movement that the Summit represents.

CULTURAL AND ARTS PARTNERS

Cultural and artistic partners remain an important avenue for the advancement of creativity and youth engagement that are critical to advancing the Foundation's mission. The 2024 – 2025 fiscal year primarily focused on staying in conversation with cultural institutions and looking toward the future for strengthening and expanding core collaborators.

Discussions with the National Gallery of Canada were reinitiated, with excitement building around the return of the Foundation's 4th Wall: Making the Invisible Visible initiative.

This partnership would seek to support youth artists in engaging with major cultural institutions; using their expression as a tool for social change. These early discussions signal a renewed commitment in strengthening the artistic programming at the Foundation while looking to the community for grassroots support.

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH PARTNERS

Opportunities to expand programming and knowledge development were a promising direction that blossomed this year. Partnerships with academic institutions and researchers who are aligned with the goals and vision of the Foundation were sought out with the intent to develop this expansion.

The Foundation began conversations with the Diversity Institute, from the Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) regarding a memorandum of understanding to support one another in this capacity. These early conversations explored collaboration across community engagement and programming, alongside joint-initiatives critical to knowledge-sharing in the lead up to the 5th National Black Canadians Summit. These discussions represent a promising step toward stronger collaborations with community-driven initiatives and academic partners.

PRIVATE-SECTOR AND PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORTERS

The continued growth of the National Black Canadians Summit and the Michaëlle Jean Foundation has been strengthened through the engagement of private sector philanthropic supporters who have invested in meaningful ways. Extending beyond financial gifts, they have assisted in the expansion of the Foundation's reach, accessibility to the Summit, and in the scale of programming delivered.



40+

artists, performers, cultural workers, and creative collaborators supported through cultural and artistic partnerships across Foundation programming in 2024/2025



4,000+

youth reached through Power of Youth community projects supported by SBCCI, with continued impact through the program's second cohort

The 4th National Black Canadians Summit would not have been possible without the tremendous support, commitment, and leadership of our partners. From visionary institutions to folks on-the-ground, our private-sector supporters ensured that the Montréal convening was a defining moment in our collective journey.

TD Bank Group, who has shown exceptional support for NBCS continued to extend their championing of this work as our 2025 Presenting Sponsor. We extend our sincere thanks for their ongoing support of Black communities across Canada. The Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) supported the Summit through the dedication of over 20 staff who attended all breakout sessions at the Summit, serving as rapporteurs and capturing the vibrant discussions, quotes, and feedback throughout the convening.

Champions of the NBCS included the Black Opportunity Fund (BOF) who supported the Montreal Summit, while also providing collaboration on the Halifax Declaration. Joined with BOF was the uplifting of youth voices led by Youth Delegate Champion: John Beck, who supported the waving of fees associated with Summit registration, leading over 630 youth to attend. A long-standing partner, Enbridge was amongst these dedicated supporters in the commitment to community-building and social equity.

Among Summit advocates was the generous support of over 13 organizations and individuals who deepened the impact

of this convening and the moments well-shared. This includes Canada Life, Black Business Initiative, Groupe 3737, Tropicana Community Services, Africa Centre, Foundation for Black Communities, Network of the Advancement of Black Communities, African Nova Scotian Justice Institute, Caribbean African Canadian Social Services, Canadian Commission for UNESCO, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Power Corporation of Canada, and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Partnerships with media further amplified the reach and visibility of Summit activities. Blackstars, a Black-led Montréal media outlet; Sayaspora, a platform highlighting the voices of young African women worldwide; and media relations consultant Myriam Valcin supported press engagement and thoughtful storytelling. CBC contributed to Youth Day by providing professional headshots for youth and covered the event through TV, radio, and web features.

The work of the Foundation continues to reach beyond the scope of the National Black Canadians Summit — a reach that philanthropic partners make possible. The pledge of support from Desjardins Bank for \$200,000 over the next three years, which will support The Power of Youth Entrepreneurship initiative, has been a strong foundation for its creation, and we look forward to uplifting these youth through the support of our generous partner in the years to come, while seeking further sponsorship support for the initiative.

Desjardins pledge
\$200K
over 3 years to the
POY Entrepreneurship Program



Our Team

The people who make it happen.



Edward Matwawana Executive Director
Edward manages the overall activities of the organization, and leads all aspects of the Foundation's strategic planning, communications, stakeholder relations, fundraising, and governance. As a spokesperson for the Foundation, Edo represents the organization at various events and platforms. He also executes the vision of the Michaëlle Jean Foundation while leading a small, but strong staff team.

Edo is an internationally experienced trainer and public speaker. He is also an accomplished artist and Community Economic Developer-at-heart with a passion and major focus on youth, social justice, entrepreneurship education, and social reintegration. He has held various leadership roles in several non-profit organizations and boards in Nova Scotia and in Ontario, such as the Black United Front of Nova Scotia, Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development, African Nova Scotian Music Association, Music Nova Scotia, Black Business Initiative, Catholic Centre for Immigrants and World Skills Centre. He currently serves as a board member with Centre d'établissement, de soutien et d'orientation Communautaire-CÉSOC, Mindtrust Youth Leadership Development Inc. and McGill University's Department of Education.



Nick Veltmeyer Director of Programs and Operations
Nick is a multidisciplinary artist and a social entrepreneur with a focus on youth development. He oversees various aspects of the Foundation's daily operations in collaboration with the Executive Director. Drawing on a critical approach to development, he supports initiatives that amplify underrepresented voices and challenge structural barriers that lead to exclusion.

A graduate of the University of Toronto and the University of King's College, Nick has organized dozens of community events across Canada and founded a youth-led musical ensemble supporting emerging artists. He has received national and regional arts funding to produce innovative performances that bring together storytelling, music, and social engagement.



S. Stephanie Georges Interim Executive Assistant
Stephanie currently serves, on an interim basis, as Executive Administrative Assistant at the Michaëlle Jean Foundation, where she supports day-to-day office operations, administrative coordination, and organizational processes that help ensure the Foundation's work runs smoothly. Known for her discretion, efficiency, and service-oriented approach, she brings a strong commitment to supporting leadership teams and advancing mission-driven work behind the scenes.

Stephanie is an experienced administrator and former diplomat with a background in public service, education, and organizational management. She spent ten years at the Haitian General Consulate in Santiago Dominican Republic, where she led several departments—including Cultural Affairs, Commerce and Tourism, and Student Affairs—before establishing and heading the Protocol Department. She later acquired and directed Laie Art School in the Dominican Republic, continuing its mission of providing accessible arts education to people from diverse backgrounds.



Dedel Makabe Executive Assistant (Maternity leave)
Dedel is Executive Assistant at the Michaëlle Jean Foundation (On maternity leave) holds a bachelor's degree in business administration (cum laude) and is deeply committed to service, collaboration, and creating impact through purposeful well-organized work.

Before joining the Foundation, Dedel worked at the Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in Kinshasa, where she supported bilateral cooperations, diplomatic and trade promotion efforts by coordinating high-level engagements, organizing international forums, increasing stakeholder participation and building bridges between public and private sector partners.



Anna Hamilton Development Manager

Anna is the Development Manager of the Michaëlle Jean Foundation where she strengthens impact and sustainability through strategic planning, fundraising, and development. She is driven by the power of storytelling — connecting people to the causes that fuel them.

Holding her master’s degree in Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership, Anna is passionate about justice-oriented research in the nonprofit sector, bridging worlds between policy, equity, and culture to advocate for multidimensional approaches to social change. Having worn different hats in the sector from Research Associate to Fundraising Coordinator, Anna has always aligned herself with organizations committed to progress.



Benazir Tom Erdimi Program Officer

Benazir Tom Erdimi is a Program Officer at the Michaëlle Jean Foundation and the founder of The People of Tomorrow, an organization that celebrates youth excellence and amplifies young voices. Originally from Chad, she recently completed her degree in Conflict Studies and Human Rights with a minor in Law at the University of Ottawa and is now pursuing a master’s in human Rights and Social Justice. Passionate about law, advocacy, and social impact, Benazir is committed to creating opportunities for youth to express themselves, connect, and thrive. She brings the perspective of a new generation of changemakers, highlighting the role of youth leadership in advancing social justice and human rights.



Wided El Fessi Program officer

Wided is a certified project manager who is currently coordinating the Power of Youth Entrepreneurship Program, which aims at supporting young aspiring entrepreneurs across Canada, in developing their leadership skills while affecting meaningful social change. Wided has extensive experience in working with the settlement of newcomers and internationally trained immigrants transitioning into new employment or self-employment ventures.



Sallysha Vital Program Associate

Sallysha is a recent graduate of the University of Ottawa with a bachelor’s degree in psychology. She has experience working in social justice projects providing her increased knowledge of systemic inequities in Canada, with a special focus on supporting marginalized youth and POC communities. Sallysha is also a strong advocate for mental health awareness, striving to push its importance in both everyday life and community well-being.

Working at the Foundation has allowed her to grow in both my passion and skills. One of her highlights was joining the team during the 4th National Black Canadians Summit in Montreal and witnessing firsthand the powerful impact this work had on many Black Canadians and allies.



Sarah-Divine Kalunga Communications Officer

Sarah-Divine Kalunga is a communications officer with a bachelor’s degree in communications and public Relations. With experience spanning media relations, corporate communications, and cultural projects, she bridges strategy and creativity to craft meaningful narratives that resonate. Her work with the National Dental Examining Board of Canada (NDEB) strengthened her expertise in stakeholder communications, digital content strategy, and organizational messaging, while her involvement with the Cranium Arts & Music Festival deepened her commitment to community-driven cultural storytelling. Across the health, music, and fashion sectors, she fosters authentic engagement and amplifies voices driving social and artistic impact.



Holly McLellan Consultant (Governance/Strategic Advisor)

Holly lives in Toronto/Tkaronto and works with high impact leaders who are committed to greater good governance. An experienced Executive Director/CEO and board director, she has worked and volunteered in the for-purpose sector for over 20 years, collaborating with organizations across Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Hong Kong, with a significant focus on education, environment, civic engagement, and philanthropy. From 2015-2022, Holly led the launch, development, and accreditation of a national public foundation in Canada. Today, as founder and principal of Hummingboard, she uses her training and hands-on experiences to support passionate founders, ED/CEOs, and boards to build and manage governance cycles that drive organizational strategy, deepen their accountability to equity and justice, and give busy leaders more time back for their missions, teams, and lives.



YOUTH INNOVATION HUB

Launched in May 2025, the Michaëlle Jean Foundation Innovation Hub is a space dedicated to social innovation and youth leadership. As the first organization to be hosted within this hub, the Million Little Miracles Foundation develops and implements high-impact initiatives in an environment designed to foster reflection, co-creation, and the experimentation of new ideas.



The Innovation Hub currently brings together 23 engaged young members who collaborate on projects aimed at amplifying the voices and perspectives of Black communities. Among the flagship initiatives underway is the development of a documentary inspired by the Halifax Declaration manifesto, transforming this historic text into a living project of dialogue, memory, and civic engagement for new generations.

List of youth involved in the Innovation Hub:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Hidaya Tchassanti | • Imane Konan |
| • Brice Badoutikalak | • Fabien Kombo |
| • Souleman Baba Eya | • Hodan Khaireh |
| • Patrick Fogaing | • Kella Diabate |
| • Debora Kedi | • Samira Coulibaly |
| • Sean Mboulou Essimengane | • Ismael Traore |
| • Exauce Kalolo | • Amadou Sabry |
| • Kehnan Nouh | • Aminata Dialla |
| • Marwo Mohamed | • Moustapha Ndiaye |
| • Malika Sanou | • Eden Tano |
| • Pierre Desire Mongui | • Stephane Bonay Agounke |
| • Yael Orsot | |

MILLION LITTLE MIRACLES (MLM) is a youth and community-driven foundation dedicated to advancing lasting social transformation across African and Black communities and their diasporas. Through education, youth leadership, cultural initiatives, and social innovation, MLM creates spaces where individuals are empowered to grow, communities are strengthened, and collective potential is unlocked.

Rooted in solidarity, excellence, and impact, the foundation brings together volunteers, partners, and institutions to turn grassroots initiatives into sustainable programs that foster opportunity, and leadership for this and the next generation.

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- Lloyd Wilks, *Director*
- Curtis Gilfillan, *Director*
- Angela Simmonds, *Director*
- Deanna Pashe, *Director*

Financial Overview

A year of significant growth.

The 2024–2025 fiscal year represented a period of significant growth and expanded activity for the Michaëlle Jean Foundation. The Foundation recorded total revenues of over \$1.8M, a substantial increase compared to \$699,947 in the previous fiscal year, reflecting the expansion of national initiatives, particularly the National Black Canadians Summit, and the strengthening of partnerships with public institutions, philanthropic organizations, and community supporters across Canada.

A major driver of this growth was the increase in grants and public contributions, which reached \$806,539, compared to \$97,875 in the previous year. This 724% increase was largely made possible through the support of the Government of Canada’s Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative administered by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). This critical investment has strengthened the Foundation’s capacity to expand national programming, deepen engagement with communities across the country, and support initiatives that foster leadership and opportunity within Black communities.

Support from partners across sectors also contributed significantly to the Foundation’s financial position. Sponsorship revenues totalled \$312,500, reflecting strong engagement from a diverse range of institutions, organizations, and private partners who supported both the National Black Canadians Summit and the Foundation’s broader mission. The revenues from ticket sales associated with the Summit generated

\$63,380, marking an important step in developing sustainable event-based revenue while maintaining accessibility. The Summit welcomed more than 1,500 registered participants, including over 600 youth delegates who received free access as part of the Foundation’s commitment to ensuring youth participation remains at the heart of the initiative. Even for general participants, registration fees were subsidized by more than 90 percent, ensuring that cost would not become a barrier to participation. This model reflects the Foundation’s priority of maintaining accessibility while leveraging ticket revenue as one element within a broader funding structure.

Individual and corporate donations continued to play an important role, contributing \$47,651 during the fiscal year, while the Foundation’s investment portfolio also generated income through dividends, interest, and investment gains, strengthening the organization’s long-term financial sustainability. Operating expenditures reflected the significant expansion of programming activities during the year. Program-related expenses totalled over \$1M demonstrating the Foundation’s commitment to directing the majority of its resources toward initiatives that support youth leadership, creativity, and civic participation. Additional expenditures supported staffing, travel, professional services, and the operational infrastructure required to deliver national programming.

Overall, the Foundation reported an excess of revenues over expenses of \$456,811, strengthening its financial position and enabling continued investment in programs serving youth and communities across Canada. In addition, the financial statements include over \$300k in deferred revenues and contributions, allocated toward the development of the upcoming Winnipeg Summit. These deferred funds also reflect strong momentum and partner confidence supporting the next phase of the Foundation’s national initiatives.

Importantly, the year also demonstrated a continued diversification of funding sources. The Foundation’s revenues now draw from a broad mix of federal support, institutional sponsorships, philanthropic contributions, event participation, and investment income. This diversified funding structure strengthens the organization’s resilience while allowing it to continue advancing its mission independently.

Securing long-term financial sustainability has become particularly crucial in a context where investments in programs and

initiatives aimed at strengthening inclusion within our society and economy are increasingly contracting. In response, the Foundation is taking proactive steps to reinforce its development capacity. For the first time, the organization has invested directly in its fundraising, donor care and partnership development by recruiting a dedicated Development Manager, helping to deepen relationships with supporters and expand philanthropic engagement.

These strong financial results reflect both the growing scale of the Foundation’s initiatives and the confidence placed in its work by partners across the country. As preparations continue for the upcoming Winnipeg Summit and other national initiatives, this expanding network of supporters will remain essential in ensuring that the Foundation’s work with youth, communities, and creative leaders continues to grow and thrive.



Acknowledgements

Thank you to all who uplift this work!

As our team reflects on the achievements of this year, we are deeply grateful for the community of partners, supporters, and collaborators who elevate this work. Of the gifts we received, our most cherished is that of our community. Your continued belief in this mission sustains us.

Our community rose to each occasion — whether through the gift of knowledge, connection, resources, or time.

This work was collective, and it was made stronger through shared commitment and care. Our impact continued to grow, and with it, our sincere appreciation for each

individual and organization who took the time to be part of this generous community.

This year, our community committed to generosity by showing up in new ways. Notably, 60% of donors made their first contribution to the Foundation, marking a meaningful expansion of new relationships. This expansion complements the generous long-standing support we receive from dedicated individuals. Whether giving monthly, in honour, or anonymously, each gift is an investment in this mission and a meaningful contribution to the communities we serve.

We are sincerely thankful for your trust, your generosity, and your continued commitment. Thank you!

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