



Wachiay Studio began as an after-school program teaching Indigenous youth (ages 15 to 29) the art and technique of screenprinting. Early success prompted the formation of a business that now provides training and employment to indigenous youth, sells original goods and services, does commercial screenprinting and offers workshops and classes to the general public out of its 2,500-square-foot studio. Wachiay Studio is also a promoter of environmentally conscious printing practices, using water-based inks and training participants to make conscious choices in their printing practices. The studio supports the growth of the local economy by developing sustainable small businesses and training a skilled labour force to help local businesses grow.

FAST FACTS

Location: Courtenay, BC
Founded: 2012
Sector: screenprinting
Annual Revenue (2018): \$250K
Parent Org: Wachiay Friendship Centre
Website: www.wachiaystudio.com

FINDINGS

- The case of Wachiay Studio highlights the challenges many local social enterprises face when looking to scale up - particularly for rural operations looking to participate in urban markets.
- There appears to be an inflection point where a social enterprise reaches a stage of success in the context of its local community but needs significant changes to scale up and participate in the broader economy.
- Lack of experience and awareness with procurement and preparing bids tends to limit opportunities for expansion.
- In general, only social enterprises with significant income and a high assessment of their marketing capacity end up engaged in social procurement. The rest, like Wachiay Studio, rely on social purchasing to stay viable.

Selling Social: Experiences of Social Enterprises with Social Procurement and Social Purchasing presents the findings of a three-year (2017-2020), pan-Canadian research project detailing experiences with social procurement and social purchasing from the perspective of social enterprises, as well as their organizational purchasers. These 19 profiles highlight the cases presented in the book and illustrate unique features that make them of interest to practitioners, scholars and students of the social economy.

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For further information:

contact: jennifer.sumner@utoronto.ca **or visit:** https://www.oise.utoronto.ca/clsew/Research/Social_Procurement_Project.html