



# Innovate for Impact

*Ignite ideas, spark change, transform the Kootenays.*

## YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

**Fall 2026 Cohort: Sept. 2026 - Jan. 2027**

Become a mentor and spark the next wave of social entrepreneurs in the Kootenays.



**Support Youth and Create Lasting Impact**



**Spark Big Ideas Into Real Ventures**



**Get Financial Support for the Time You Give**



**Be Recognized Across the Kootenays**



Buttons & Beyond from Cranbrook  
KAST "Youth Build-A-Business." Community  
Impact Award Winners, Spring 2025

Buttons & Beyond from Cranbrook  
KAST Kootenay Youth Build-A-Business Community Impact Award Winners,  
Spring 2025

# Are you an **educator or mentor** ready to help youth turn **big ideas** into **real-world impact**?

Join the *Innovate for Impact* **Youth Entrepreneurship Program** as a mentor and help empower purpose-driven youth to turn bold ideas into real solutions. You'll guide them as they build business skills, grow their confidence, and spark change in their Kootenay communities.

This program seeks teachers, youth program leaders, community educators and youth mentors who want to **help youth transform local problems into brilliant solutions** in the Kootenays.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Program provides mentors with...

- ✔ **8 ready-to-go lessons** packed with bite-size content, hands-on activities, and real-world learning.
- ✔ **Step-by-step support** to help you bring the program to life in your role.
- ✔ **\$500 mentor stipend** to fuel your leadership and impact.
- ✔ **Regional recognition as a leader in Kootenay innovation**, plus a chance to win funding to grow your impact.

Students/youth who you mentor will receive...

- ✔ Hands-on skills & knowledge that prepare youth for their **entrepreneurship journey**.
- ✔ Guidance to turn ideas into **bold, innovative businesses**.
- ✔ A chance to win **cash funding** to further develop their projects

Join a bold, local, and lasting movement for social enterprises in the Kootenays. Be part of an exciting opportunity to back youth leadership, community innovation, and the long-term resilience of rural Kootenay communities. **Read more below...**



# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Innovate for Impact is a **two-year initiative** powered by Community Futures East Kootenay (CFEK) and Impact Toolbox (ITB). We're here to back bold, purpose-driven entrepreneurs of all kinds, from bright new ideas to well-rooted ventures, and bring together youth, community leaders, and local innovators to **spark transformation across the Kootenays**. Through exciting programs (including our Youth Program), **rural communities will imagine, design, and grow business models that fuel economic vitality, boost local resilience, and create lasting positive impact.**

Over two cohorts in Winter 2026 and Fall 2026, **200 youth ages 14–18 across the Kootenays** will dive into an interactive online program packed with hands-on exercises, real-world learning, and plenty of creative problem-solving. It's a flexible way to bring social entrepreneurship into youth spaces, filling resource gaps and helping young people explore how business can be a force for good.

We'll **train and support teachers, youth leaders, and community educators** to guide students through this journey. Working in teams, students will develop innovative ideas for social enterprises tackling local or global challenges. The grand finale will be a virtual showcase where select **teams pitch their ideas for a chance to win funding and turn their vision into reality.**

## OUR GOAL

1

Inspire Kootenay youth to explore leadership and innovative entrepreneurship in a way that's **hands-on, exciting, and real-world.**

2

Equip educators and mentors with powerful tools and resources to help youth **spark innovation in their communities.**

# WHY SHOULD YOU BE A MENTOR?



## 1. Enhance your role as an educator and leader

As a mentor or educator, you have the chance to spark change in your community while **empowering the next generation of innovators**. Give them the **skills, confidence, and real-world know-how** to tackle challenges head-on. Through this initiative, you will:

- ✓ Give students hands-on leadership, innovation, and entrepreneurship skills they can use to **find brilliant solutions to local problems**.
- ✓ Access a dynamic, easy-to-use entrepreneurship curriculum plus tailored training to **help youth turn bold ideas into impactful businesses**.
- ✓ Help youth bring ambitious visions to life, **building the confidence and skills to create lasting solutions** for the challenges they see in their own communities.



## 2. Receive financial support and regional recognition

All participating mentors will receive a **\$500 CAD stipend** to help make this experience both accessible and rewarding for the youth you support. You'll also:

- ✓ **Be recognized for your dedication** to sparking innovation and entrepreneurship in your community.
- ✓ **Have the chance to win additional funding**, based on your students' showcase success, to keep their projects moving forward.

# FALL 2026 PROGRAM JOURNEY



## CURRICULUM SNAPSHOT

The Youth Entrepreneurship Program features **8 action-packed lessons on an easy-to-use online platform**. Each session (max 60 minutes) blends bite-sized videos with hands-on activities, guiding youth step-by-step in creating a business that **tackles real challenges in their own Kootenay communities**.

- 1 Lesson One:** Entrepreneurship and the Social Entrepreneurial Journey
- 2 Lesson Two:** Exploring the Impact You Want to Make
- 3 Lesson Three:** Problem Identification & Analysis
- 4 Lesson Four:** Identifying Your Innovative Solution
- 5 Lesson Five:** Developing Your Innovative Solution
- 6 Lesson Six:** Developing Your Business Model
- 7 Lesson Seven:** Action Planning & Budgeting
- 8 Lesson Eight:** Storytelling & Crafting Your Pitch

# PARTICIPATION EXPECTATIONS FOR MENTORS AND STUDENTS



**Mentors** play a key role in opening doors to entrepreneurship and **social impact education** for youth across the Kootenays. Here's what we ask of you:

- Involve **at least one** committed team of 4–5 students. More teams are welcome and encouraged! Come with your students already in mind when you apply.
- Guide students through the curriculum and exercises, supporting them as they transform their learning into an innovative business idea that **addresses real community needs**.



Buttons & Beyond from Cranbrook KAST “Youth Build-A-Business.” Community Impact Award Winners, Spring 2025

**Students** will put their new skills into action by preparing projects for the showcase. Here's what's expected:

- Complete all learning modules and exercises in the program.
- Work in teams to create a purpose-driven business idea that tackles a local or global problem and **promotes meaningful social good**.



# PARTICIPATION ELIGIBILITY

We're looking for **mentors who are ready to spark ideas, guide bold projects, and help youth see what's possible through entrepreneurship.**

*This program is a great fit if you are:*

- Based in the Kootenays
- Working with youth ages 14–18 in schools or community settings, with an interest in entrepreneurship (and are ready to involve at least one team of 4-5 youth upon registration)
- Available for the full duration of the program (Sept 2026–Jan 2027)
- Have one group of students ready upon registration

*CFEK and Impact Toolbox are committed to fostering inclusivity and diversity in every aspect of Innovate for Impact, and we welcome applications from mentors and students of all backgrounds and experiences.*

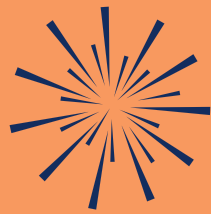
# REGISTRATION PROCESS

Ready to mentor the next wave of young innovators? Start by chatting with your students and gauging their interest in joining the program.

When you know how many want in, fill out the registration form by **September 5, 2026**. Spots are limited, so we'll follow up by the end of December to confirm your place and share your next steps.

**[CLICK HERE TO ACCESS THE REGISTRATION LINK](#)**

*Deadline passed? Reach out! We are running multiple events, workshops, and opportunities for community members passionate about creating change. We'd love to explore how we can still work together.*



# Innovate for Impact

*Ignite ideas, spark change, transform the Kootenays.*

Inspire the next wave of social entrepreneurs by championing youth-led innovation. Your guidance can spark lasting change for young people in the Kootenays, while fueling social and economic progress across the region.

## REACH OUT TO US

**Tanya Misra (She/Her)**

Program Manager, Impact Toolbox

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*Community Futures East Kootenay (CFEK) is a non-profit that supports entrepreneurs and local development in BC's East Kootenay region. They offer business loans, training, and lead regional economic initiatives.*



*Impact Toolbox (ITB) is a British Columbia-based social enterprise and registered charity that equips youth with the training and resources to turn their passion for social change into impactful and sustainable enterprises.*



*Since 1998, KAST has driven economic development in the Kootenays by fostering a vibrant tech community through inclusive opportunities, job growth, and support for entrepreneurs and businesses.*



Supported by the Province of British Columbia

*CFEK, ITB, and KAST are able to provide this training for Kootenay-based individuals for free, thanks to funding from the Government of BC and the Ministry of Jobs and Economic Growth through a Rural Economic Diversification and Infrastructure Program (REDIP) grant.*