Collaboration for Transformation

PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise continues to champion its vision of empowering women entrepreneurs through Collaboration for Transformation (CfT). This forward-thinking project places women entrepreneurs at the forefront, valuing their voices in the development of solutions. CfT unites women in business with PARO partners, community leaders, policymakers, and private sector allies to drive tangible, measurable change.

CfT's goals are threefold: first, to deepen understanding of the barriers limiting women's full economic participation; second, to increase access to financing and markets; and third, to strengthen the network of partners and advocates advancing women's entrepreneurship across Canada.

How this is achieved:

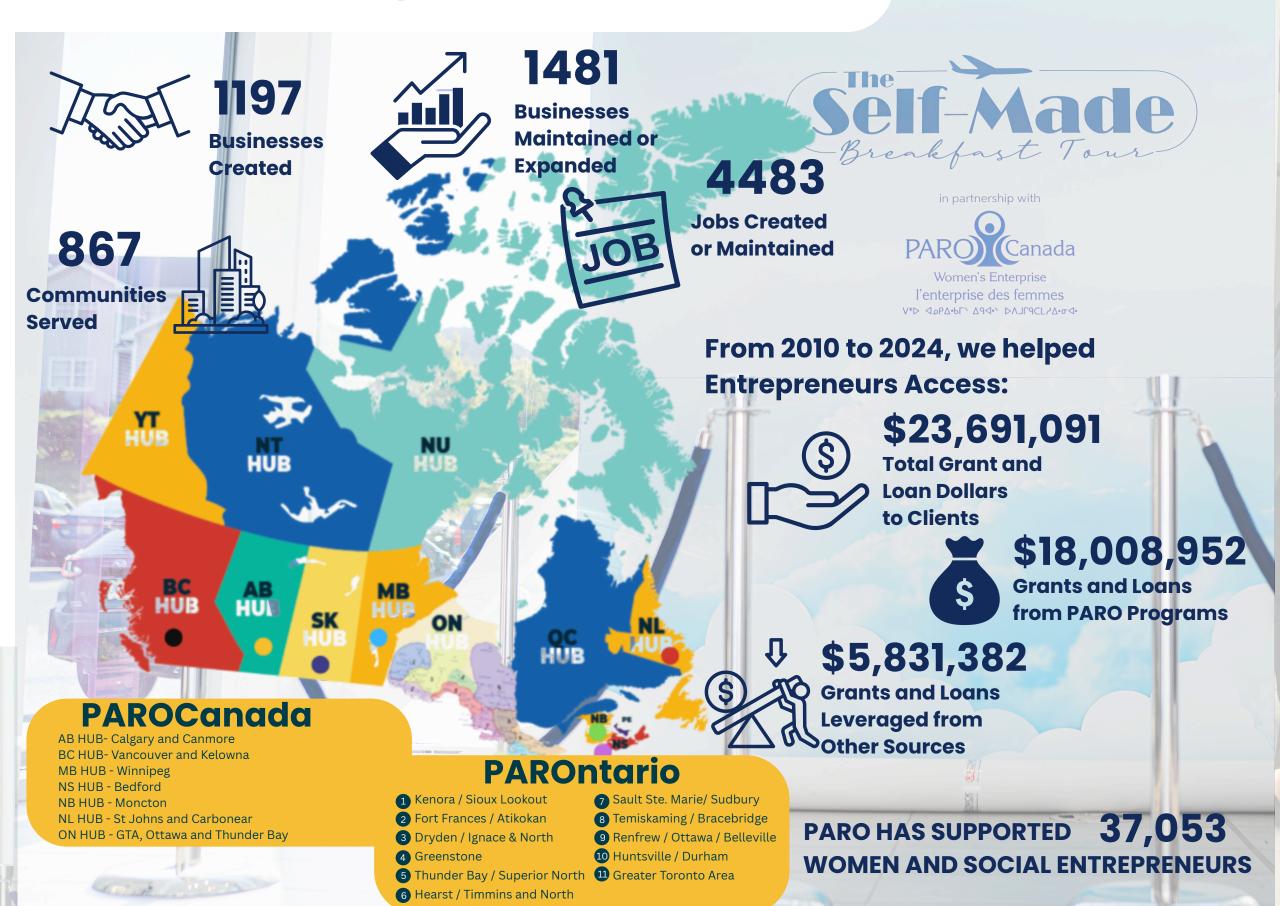
- Collaboration Innovation Tables: Facilitating virtual/in-person discussions connecting women and stakeholders, creating an open environment for dialogue and discovery, then informing program design.
- **Self-Made Breakfast Tour:** PARO connects with women in major Canadian cities through interactive events combining networking, problem-solving, and engaged discussion.
- National Collaboration Framework: Building foundation for longterm systemic change through data collection, dialogue, and documentation of lived experiences.

elf-Made

PARO remains committed to:

- Innovation through collaboration
- Removing barriers for women entrepreneurs
- Driving equitable growth
- Ensuring recognition of women's entrepreneurship as vital.

How We Made An Impact



Prosper Circles

The Prosper Circles Peer Support and Microlending Program:

- Provides a lifeline for aspiring/established entrepreneurs
- Offers peer support and access to ongoing funding
- Brings together small groups of women to share experiences
- Creates a community for mentorship, confidence, and connections

Today, more than 350 Prosper Circles operate across Canada, forming one of the largest peer-lending networks.

Prosper BIZCamps

Prosper BIZCamps empower women entrepreneurs by:

- Fostering collaboration, confidence, and business growth
- Providing dynamic learning experiences tailored to their evolving needs
- Inspiring participants to "fire up" their entrepreneurial potential
- Combining hands-on training, expert advising, and the PARO GoForth learning experience
- These initiatives give women the skills, networks, and opportunities to succeed.





BIZGrowth Trade Missions

In addition to its national efforts, PARO led two major international trade

- WBENC National Conference (New Orleans): Connected participants with global procurement leaders, helping them showcase products, services, and form partnerships.
- EU Trade Mission (Paris and Madrid): Helped Canadian women entrepreneurs explore European markets, build cross-border collaborations, and attend WEConnect International events.

PARO continues to break barriers and open pathways for women, reflecting its commitment to helping them connect, grow, and thrive.

PARO ConneX

PARO ConneX supports women entrepreneurs in rural communities by:

- Focusing on interprovincial trade, joint ventures, and procurement collaboration
- Connecting entrepreneurs with resources, partners, and growth opportunities through resource-sharing, peer support, and events
- Offering guidance on accessing funding, building alliances, and leveraging PARO Prosper Circles

Self-Made Breakfast Tour

PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise recently launched the Self-Made **Breakfast Tour to:**

- Connect, inspire, and empower women coast to coast
- Create opportunities for collaboration with peers Provide insights from guest speakers
- Facilitate panel discussions and tradeshows

Events have already been held in Toronto, St. John's, and Calgary, with plans to continue the tour with stops in Ottawa on February 26, 2026, and Vancouver on March 31, 2026.



Letter from the CEO & President

Letter from the CEO and President PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise - "Honouring the Past, Empowering the Future"

What an incredible honour it is to reflect on and to celebrate 30 years growing PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise. When I founded PARO back in 1995, in a small rural city, Thunder Bay, Northwestern Ontario, I could not have imagined the powerful ripple effect we would create by 2025— reaching thousands of women across Ontario, across Canada, from urban centres to remote communities, helping them transform their dreams into thriving enterprises and empowered lives. Starting as a Peer Lending Circle Network model, we now support 350+ Prosper Circles, sea to sea!

We started with a simple but strong, radical belief: that women, when given the right tools, resources, and support, can and will change the world. Thirty years later, we have the proof. To date, supporting over 37k women, with over \$23M dollars in grants and loans, and bringing 4,483 jobs to Canada last year. We have witnessed women entrepreneurs grow their businesses, support their families, employ others, and create resilient, inclusive communities.

But this journey hasn't always been easy. We have faced funding gaps, policy hurdles, economic downturns, and—like so many—unexpected challenges like the global pandemic. And yet, through it all, we've stayed true to our mission, because we've never walked alone.

To our Team and Board, past and present—you are the heart of PARO. To our partners, funders, and community leaders—you have amplified our impact in ways we could never have done alone. And, most importantly, to the women we serve—you are the reason we exist. You inspire me every single day.

You have shown that entrepreneurship is not just about profit—it's about purpose, resilience, and building a better future. You are innovators, caregivers, leaders, disruptors, and we are proud to stand beside you.

As we look ahead, still, I am filled with excitement. The Board and Team are enthusiastic to move forward, stronger than ever. The next 30 years will demand new ideas, bold collaborations, and continued advocacy to ensure every woman in Canada—no matter where she lives—has access to opportunities, funding, and a seat at every table.

So today, we honour our history—but we are not done. PARO's work is far from finished. In fact, we're just getting started. Let's continue to lift as we

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for believing in this vision—for building it with me – all of you, and for walking this journey together. Here's to the next 30 years of empowerment, innovation, and unstoppable

Warmest of gratitude to all,







Board of Directors & PARO Team

President Mary Sabo

Past President Levina Collins

Vice President Anne Parr

> Treasurer Donna Brown

Secretary Juliet Kego Ume-Onvido

Directors Jodi-Rose Richer Andryanna Gonko Levina Collins Summer Reilly

Business Growth Advisors Andrea Zappe Carol Brazeau-Weisflock

Kaouthar Faouzi Chantal Fraser Melissa Maltais Gabriela Casineanu Carole Perrin Karen Van Heyst Francoise Briet Suzanne Tighe Laura Lynch Tiffany Mirzica, NB Joy Idoko, MB

Founder & CEO Rosalind Lockyer

Financial Manager Judith Tiriwepi

HR & Program Developer Maria Talarico

Program Manager Melissa Cook

Lead Business Counsellor-Northern Karen Lynn Evans

Lead Project Coordinator-Southern Renee Gendron

HR & Executive Assistant Brenda McDougall

Counsellors/ **Coordinators - Ontario** Lori Morin Kylee Monteith Oghenetega Okorigba Mary Margaret Laing Kayla Soomer

Luciana Palotino Haley Lidster Nathalie Plouffe Boneita Maria Joseph Valentine Katayon Qahir Stephanie Desrosiers

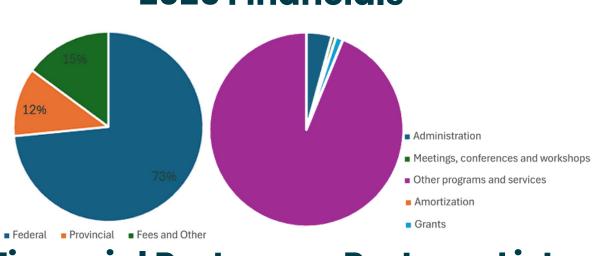
Regional Coordinators -Atlantic, Ontario, Prairies, Pacific

Fatemeh Zahmatkesh, NL Jeannine Riant, NS Pam Sawhney, ON Wen Teoh, ON Heidi Streu, MB Rubirose Reves Ong, AB Deborah Lampitt, BC Natasha Raey, BC

Facilitators

Kathleen Katruskha Moreno, NL Cheryl Himburg, ON Geraldine De Braune, MB Natasha Raey, BC

2025 Financials



Financial Partners Partners List

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