



Who are we?

Roots for Resilience

The Black Environmental Initiative (BEI) is a non-profit organization based in Toronto, focused on engaging equity-seeking communities—particularly Black, and People of Color (BIPOC)—in environmental action. BEI works to address issues like environmental racism, climate change, and food insecurity, with a strong emphasis on sustainability and justice. Our programs aim to empower marginalized communities by providing access to environmental education, green job opportunities, and community energy projects. BEI fosters community involvement through workshops, outreach events, and partnerships with local organizations, advocating for environmental equity and creating pathways for BIPOC communities to thrive in green sectors. By integrating environmental justice with social equity, BEI contributes to both the environmental movement and the well-being of underrepresented groups, focusing on making environmental spaces and opportunities more inclusive.



The Roots for Resilience initiative is a garden engagement initiative that connects Black and other marginalized youth with land-based learning at Maloca Community Gardens. Through hands-on workshops, participants gain skills in horticulture and urban agriculture, addressing food insecurity and offering sustainable solutions to climate change. Focused on youth from the Jane and Finch community and York University Heights, the program provides access to organic, locally grown food while fostering a supportive community. Activities include soil preparation, gardening, and harvesting, all led by community experts.



Outcomes

In its inaugural year, this initiative successfully connected over 80 youth from diverse backgrounds, primarily Black and Brown, from various neighbourhoods across Toronto. Over the span of four months (June to September), these participants gained critical skills in horticulture, food security, and sustainable living. Our initial outreach efforts, including a targeted Instagram campaign with a modest \$70 budget, reached over 4,400 accounts in just three weeks. This high level of engagement demonstrated a strong desire among youth for programs that offer meaningful connections with nature and community. As the demand for sustainable living solutions continues to grow, our initiative plays a vital role in empowering youth to take actionable steps against climate change. By teaching participants how to grow their own food, we help reduce the strain on industrial agriculture—one of the largest contributors to environmental pollution. This program not only fosters environmental stewardship but also strengthens community resilience, providing long-term benefits for both participants and the planet. We aim to expand this initiative to additional gardens in Toronto.



Program Budget

At full maturity, Roots for Resilience is projected to cost CAD \$117,800. This budget supports 200 participants over 26 weeks, aligning with the Southern Ontario growing season from May to October. The breakdown of expenses is as follows:

- Materials: \$15,000
- Facilitator Honorarium: \$7,800
- Food & Refreshments: \$5,000
- Marketing & Promotion: \$2,000
- Transportation: \$5,000
- Salaries: \$80,000

This investment will secure the program's long-term success, providing essential resources for participants and facilitators. Partial contributions are also welcome.

Support Us! Get in touch!



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[Our Programs](#)



Testimonials

"Participating in the Roots for Resilience initiative has been an incredibly rewarding experience. I enjoyed learning alongside others and gained valuable skills in growing food and understanding the various uses of plants I previously viewed as weeds. For instance, I learned that clover can be used for food and medicinal purposes. The program provided a welcoming space away from work and school where I could connect with like-minded individuals who share a passion for the earth and sustainable practices. This sense of community and shared learning has greatly influenced my personal growth and well-being." — Julian



"Through the Roots for Resilience program, I gained valuable skills in plant identification and discovered the boundless resourcefulness of nature. Before participating, I didn't even know what a pepper plant looked like, but now I can confidently identify various plants and use that knowledge at home. This program has significantly enhanced my personal growth and well-being, as it allowed me to connect with nature and align myself with it. Applying the theoretical knowledge I had learned in practice has been incredibly beneficial." — Xavier



"My favourite part of the Roots for Resilience initiative has been meeting like-minded individuals who share my passion for the environment. The initiative provided a space to connect with nature and each other. I learned valuable skills in cooking and how to make the most of the fresh produce we grew, which has helped me be less wasteful. Now, I appreciate the intention behind the food we grow and consume. Participating in this program has been a sanctuary for me amidst the stress of school, fostering both my personal growth and my connection to the environment." — Mahalia

