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Our vision is to democratize a global, sustainable economy — and empowering global makers who produce responsibly made goods is how we achieve it.”

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# Founders Message

**W**elcome to Powered by People's second sustainability report. 2024 brought unprecedented global change across the entire supply chain. The impacts of inflation, threats of tariffs, geopolitical changes all played a role in a shifting economic landscape. We witnessed the retailer sector react by leaning more into third party marketplaces over wholesale purchasing, and PBP responded with an expansion of our PBP Dropship program.

At PBP, we see dropship as a vehicle for a more democratic shift in the digital retail landscape, where independent brands sit equally alongside established ones, letting consumers decide who they want to support. Think of it as power to the people.

Ours is the only dropship catalog of all responsibly made goods, and our technology platform helps reduce domestic shipping. By doing dropship better, we are enabling a more resilient, transparent and inclusive manufacturing ecosystem and value chain, which in turn supports our mission – to provide economic opportunities for makers of responsibly-made goods. Our PBP Verified™ program helps achieve our mission, and we continue our partnership with ESG consulting agency Equiception to support this.



By the end of 2024, more than 90 makers were part our expanded dropship catalog, 768 makers on our wholesale platform, and over 3000 registered on our network—from over 68 countries. Like our makers, our team is global with offices in Nairobi and Toronto, with members around the world. We continue our work with leading philanthropic organizations supporting the development of the next generation of makers entering the export market. As a company, we are focused on sustainable growth— a continuum and learning journey, striving to evolve our own sustainability standards and be a force of good in a quickly changing world.

**PBP FOUNDERS**

**Hedvig Alexander, Alison Phillips, Ella Peinovich**

# About This Report



**T**his is our second sustainability report, and in the past year, we've learned a lot. We've deepened our understanding of what it takes to create a responsible supply chain, and we've evolved our business model to better serve the independent makers at the heart of our platform. As a result, dropshipping has become a core part of our approach—because we believe in the power of democratizing retail, giving emerging brands the same opportunities as established ones. We're making that possible through technology and business innovation. We're still growing, still learning, and still improving. Transparency is key, and in this report, we'll tell you exactly where we stand and where we aim to be in the next year.

Photo:  
Gunia Project,  
Ukraine

Last year, we laid out our approach. This year, we're sharing our first dataset. Our mission remains the same: to provide a platform for authentic, meaningful products and to help sustain the makers who create them. Sustainability isn't just a goal—it's embedded in how we work. We partner with conscious makers and buyers who share our values and commitment to human rights and environmental responsibility. Every maker onboarded onto PBP's platform completes our ESG Due Diligence program, with many also completing additional steps to earn the PBP Verified™ mark, a reflection of their commitment to responsible production. Their progress is our progress, and we are proud to share that with you in this report. Our due-diligence framework aligns with global best practices, including the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and the OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Business Conduct and the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD).



## DISCLOSURE

- Powered by People (PBP) is voluntarily publishing this Sustainability Report based on the values of honesty and transparency. This report discloses in detail our vision, goals, and practices in the pursuit of environmental sustainability as we continue to grow and improve as a brand.

## REPORT BOUNDARY

- This is the second Sustainability Report published by Powered by People. It covers PBP's activities during the 2024 calendar year (1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024).

## EXTERNAL ASSURANCE

- We have obtained third-party guidance and data capture from Equiception, Switzerland for some of this report's content. For details, see [About Equiception](#)

## CONTACT US

- If you have any questions about this report or wish to obtain further information, please contact us through the email address: [info@poweredbypeople.com](mailto:info@poweredbypeople.com)

# STRATEGY



# Our Approach to Sustainability

Every product’s journey carries human rights and environmental risks, and at Powered by People, we take responsibility to help makers on our platform identify, prevent, and mitigate them. While we don’t control every step of the supply chain, we do have the power to shape a more ethical and sustainable marketplace. We design our platform with intention—carefully selecting the makers we onboard, the service providers we collaborate with, and, to a certain extent, the retail partners we engage with. By gathering the right information and making thoughtful choices, we can significantly reduce the risks embedded in global trade. As a platform, we don’t dictate how makers produce or how retailers sell, but we do hold a unique position to influence better business practices. That’s why we prioritize partners who align with our values—those who respect human rights, uphold fair labor practices, and minimize their environmental footprint. Every maker on our platform is invited to complete a due diligence process, the first step in order for makers to qualify to sell on PBP’s platform. To be able to sell with larger retailers we work with, makers are asked to complete a second step to earn the PBP Verified™ mark, demonstrating accountability. Our [PBP Code of Conduct](#) reflects these standards.

## PBP Sustainability Initiatives

### Due Diligence

In partnership with ESG experts Equiception, we created PBP Verified™—a full-service program designed to support makers, buyers, and our team in upholding human rights and minimizing environmental impact.

### Training + Development

Our Learning Hub helps makers bridge their knowledge gap and increase participation in the global economy. A resource delivered digitally, the content is accessible, helping increase acumen and success for sustainable-minded businesses.

### Economic Incentives

By giving Makers access to the global digital economy, affordable logistics, and financing options, we help unlock their potential. With our verification mark, they gain the visibility and credibility needed to drive commercial growth and work with our large retail partners.

## PBP Sustainability Program

Supporting makers through our comprehensive two-step program



**S**ustainability is no longer a choice—it's a necessity. In mid 2024, the EU's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) was transposed into law, requiring companies to carry out mandatory human rights and environmental due diligence. To comply with these requirements, businesses need reliable data from their partners, producers, and suppliers. That's where we come in. Our platform connects conscious buyers with responsible makers, ensuring transparency and accountability in sourcing. To strengthen this commitment, we've updated our program to a two-step process.

Photo  
Le Tenon et la  
Mortaise, Canada

PBP Verified™ is a verification system designed specifically to help independent brands with limited resources. **Here's how it works:**

## 1 GUIDANCE FIRST

We created PBP Verified™ in partnership with third-party ESG expert Equiception. It's not just about assessing a maker's sustainability—it's about empowering them with the tools and guidance they need to improve. This way, their businesses can grow alongside the increasing demand from conscious consumers and buyers.

## 2 ASSESS RISK

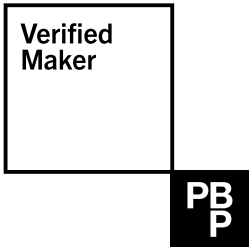
Equiception created an online self-assessments that help makers assess their exposure to risk, while also providing the tools they need to meet the due-diligence expectations of regulators, retailers, investors, workers, and consumers.

## 3 RECORD A SCORE

Makers receive a link to an online self-assessment along with policy templates for submission. They have two options: submit their own policies or adhere to Powered by People's provided standards.

## 4 COMMIT TO LEARN

Unlike traditional audits, our program meets makers where they're at and supports their growth through ongoing capacity building. It's completely free for our makers. All we ask is their continued commitment to evolving, learning, and improving—just as we're doing as a company.

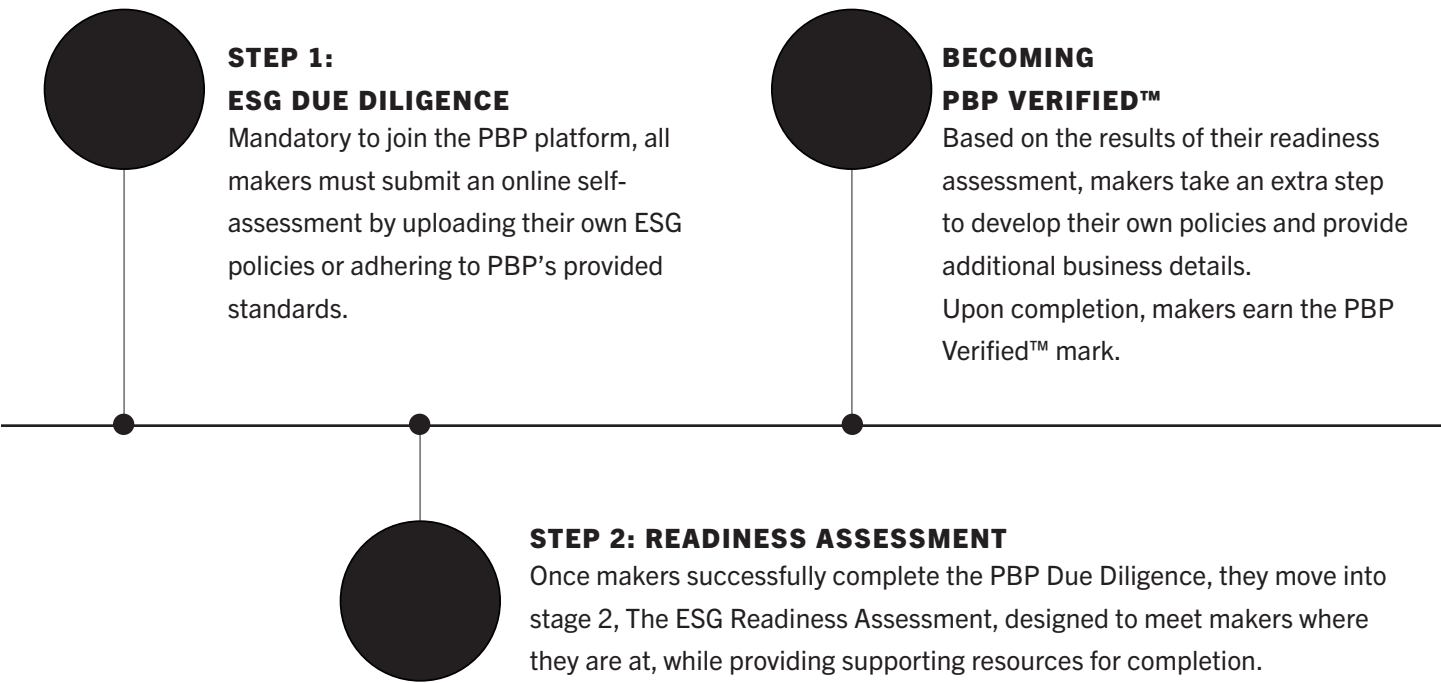


### PBP VERIFIED™ AREAS OF FOCUS

Our assessment considers our makers' size, capacity, and experience. Our assessment questions can be divided into the following categories:

- ESG awareness & disclosure
- Stakeholder engagement
- Human and labor rights
- Working conditions
- Employee relations
- Due diligence
- Risk management
- Corporate oversight
- Ethics
- Traceability
- GHG emissions/ carbon
- Resource use
- Circularity

# Our Program’s Timeline



PBP Verified™ is our way of ensuring that makers meet the our standards in sustainability, quality, and reliability. The process starts with Step One, a self-assessment, agree to adhere to PBP’s guidelines. Step Two is designed to meet makers where they are at, while providing supporting resources for completion. Based on the results of their readiness assessment, makers can become PBP Verified™, where they take an extra step to develop their own policies and provide additional business details. Important to maintain selling to large retail accounts, this phase comes with tailored resources, expert advice, and optional Zoom support to guide through the process. Upon completion of both steps, makers can earn the PBP Verified™ mark. More than just a credential, PBP Verified™ is a mark of trust—signaling to buyers that a maker is committed to ethical practices, sustainable operations, and consistently high product quality.

PBP Verified™

Case Study: Gharyan Stoneware, Canada



**Gharyan Stoneware**, based in Montreal, Canada, draws from Tunisia’s centuries-old pottery tradition, sourcing mineral-rich clay and working with skilled artisans to create minimalist, handcrafted pieces. Committed to sustainability and fair trade, the brand partners with ethical workshops to ensure responsible production and lasting impact. Here is the process they underwent:

Their readiness assessment, submitted on November 21, 2022, identified five key gaps: freedom of association, ongoing due diligence processes, code of conduct (CoC), traceability, and consent prior to acquiring land. As one of the PBP pilot projects, they actively participated in workshops and one-on-one capacity-building sessions. Through this process, they developed a formal code of conduct, strengthening their commitments to ethical practices. Additionally, further assessments confirmed that land grabbing and freedom of association were not areas of concern.



“

From the start, our collaboration with Powered by People has been built on mutual growth and shared goals. PBP has been a great partner, connecting us with key clients and industry leaders. It’s truly a win-win collaboration, and the communication between all of us has been excellent. We appreciate the support and the opportunities PBP brings, and we’re excited to keep growing together.”

—**Ghassen Ghariani**  
Founder

PBP Verified™

Our Makers at a Glance

MAKERS ASSESSED IN 2023: 115 (WHOLESALE MARKETPLACE)



MAKERS ASSESSED 2024: 46 (BUSINESS PIVOT TO DROPSHIP)



PBP Verified™

Our Makers—By The Numbers



PBP Verified

## How PBP Measures Up

As a company, Powered by People decided to go through the readiness assessment along with its makers. PBP operates two offices, in Toronto and Nairobi, employs a handful of operatives in various countries around the world, and employs contracted workers to support its makers. In total, PBP employed 34 people in 2024. Through the readiness assessment, we were able to identify the following areas for improvement:

**Human Rights and Environmental Due Diligence**

We are committed to establishing a comprehensive due-diligence process that addresses actual and potential impacts that our business activities have on society and the environment. Our PBP Verified™ program is a reflection of our commitment.

**Living Wage and Freedom of Association**

All PBP employees and collaborators collect wages above the respective national minimum and living wage standards. We have implemented a formal plan to be a living-wage employer. We also introduced a formal policy covering the issue of Freedom of Association, which is covered in our updated employee manual.

**Traceability**

Even if we are not the ones directly producing the products sold through our platform, our role comes with the duty of identifying, preventing and mitigating risks linked to the products. In order to achieve that, we continue to work on strengthening our systems to trace the origin of the inputs used by our makers, from raw materials to labor practices.

**Carbon Footprint**

As an e-commerce platform, we recognize the importance of this issue and its role in our company’s environmental impact. We cannot manage what we cannot measure, so in 2024 we have calculated our carbon footprint as a baseline off which we can track our progress over time.

# CLIMATE



**A**s we continue to evaluate the climate impact of our operations, it's important to recognize the various stages a product goes through—from design and production to shipping, retail, use, and eventual disposal. Each phase is influenced by different players, including makers, logistics providers, PBP team members, retailers, and consumers, all of whom must work in unison to create a responsible and sustainable lifecycle. In 2024, we took a major step toward reducing our environmental footprint by implementing an aggressive consolidation strategy in India, a key sourcing market. Through strategic partnerships within our maker community, we restructured our shipping model, shifting from multiple small shipments to larger, consolidated sea freight loads.

With our recent shift to dropshipping, our original climate goals required reassessment. However, we have now measured the carbon footprint of both our dropship program and ShipSmart, which focuses on reducing shipping emissions. As we refine our strategies, setting clear sustainability goals for 2025—including increasing sea freight utilization and expanding sustainable logistics—will be key to driving meaningful progress and reducing our overall environmental impact.

### **Goal 2025**

- In 2025, we aim to increase our sea freight utilization to 90% of our total shipping volume from India.
- We also plan to expand our overall international shipping via sea freight to 40%, reinforcing our commitment to sustainable logistics.



## The Impact of Logistics and Distribution

In 2024, we implemented an aggressive consolidation strategy in India, with positive results. By forging strategic partnerships within our maker community, we transformed our shipping approach, in our largest procurement regions. This innovative collaboration allowed us to pool multiple small shipments into larger consolidated loads, achieving the critical mass necessary for transporting sea freight.

The impact of this initiative has been notable: we successfully transported 7,405 kilograms via sea freight, representing 85% of our total shipping volume from India and 35% of PBP's overall global volume. This achievement demonstrates the effectiveness of our consolidation strategy and sets a new way of working in our industry for sustainable shipping practices.

**67.42 tons  
of CO<sub>2</sub>e**

Total greenhouse gas emissions  
across all PBP shipments in 2024

Our success in implementing this consolidation strategy was built on two key pillars: strengthening relationships within our maker community and optimizing our dropship purchase order processes to allow for larger Purchase Orders. This dual approach has reduced our carbon footprint and created a more resilient and efficient supply chain network.



## The Impact of Packaging and Waste

At Powered by People, we're always looking for practical ways to reduce waste while keeping sustainability at the core of our operations. This year, we've introduced monthly material usage tracking to help us better understand our impact. While we don't set strict usage targets—since makers rely on what's available in their local markets—in 2024, we achieved our goal of publishing our **Sustainable Packaging Guidelines Document**, providing clear packaging guidelines to support makers in making more sustainable choices.

On the warehouse side, we've doubled down on reuse and recycling, working with our 3PL to give incoming cardboard, pallets, and packing materials a second life. And as of 2024, all our shipments use recycled bubble wrap.

### Goals 2025

- Lower our Carbon Emissions by 10% in 2025 pending tariff impact.  
In 2025, we aim to establish a baseline using a packaging impact calculator and set international targets to drive measurable improvements.
- We aim to enhance reuse and recycling by repurposing materials, reducing new packaging. We will also continue to track material use for dropship orders, with our logistics team receiving monthly reports from our warehouse.



## **Dropshipping and Modal Shift Opportunities**

The increasing scale of our dropshipping operations continues to unlock new opportunities for consolidated shipping, driving down emissions and costs at unit level with every international purchase order we fulfill, from air to sea freight. We anticipate that as our dropshipping volume grows, we will continue to shift more shipments from air to sea freight, substantially reducing our carbon footprint per unit shipped.

## **Maker-Fulfilled Dropship**

By leveraging a decentralized Maker-Fulfilled dropship model, we not only streamline logistics but also drive significant reductions in shipping costs. By sourcing inventory from makers who already have stock within the United States and strategically distributing it closer to end customers, we minimize the need for long-haul shipping and expedite last-mile delivery.

This approach capitalizes on cost-effective bulk transport methods, such as ocean and ground freight, to move large inventory volumes to regional hubs. In contrast to traditional centralized distribution models that often require expensive air freight to meet demand, our localized fulfillment strategy ensures that shipments can be completed using more economical and environmentally friendly transportation methods.



Shorter shipping distances translate into lower carrier fees, fewer fuel surcharges, and reduced risks of customs delays—factors that typically drive up shipping expenses. The overall result is a more efficient, cost-effective logistics framework that also benefits our bottom line.

## Optimized Ground Shipping

We have optimised our last-mile delivery through our accounts with UPS and USPS to pursue the most sustainable and cost-effective options. We rely on the carriers' route optimization systems to improve delivery density and efficiency.

### Goals 2025

- Increase sea freight shipping by 10% for our dropshipping operations.
- We will continue decentralizing our dropship program across the United States, prioritizing makers with existing US inventory and positioning bulk shipments closer to end customers. Enable greater use of sea and road transport, minimizing the environmental impact of final-mile delivery.
- Expand our maker-fulfilled dropship catalog to 30% of our listed skus.

# PEOPLE





**S**mall producers and independent brands often operate without formal systems for managing human rights risks. Even when aware of potential issues, many micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) lack dedicated staff, structured policies, and the tools to monitor compliance. Through the PBP Verified™ program, we provide makers with accessible templates to develop human rights policies and offer training to help them implement and oversee these practices. By adopting these frameworks, small brands can meet growing due diligence and non-financial reporting requirements, including those outlined in the EU CSRD and EU CSDDD, while strengthening their commitment to ethical business practices.

## Here are four ways our makers benefit from PBP Verified™

# 1

### ESTABLISH A CODE OF CONDUCT

A strong Code of Conduct (CoC) is the foundation of any responsible business. We encourage makers to develop their own, ensuring it reflects their values, culture, and operational context. This not only formalizes their commitment to human and labor rights but also serves as a tool for awareness and training. By the end of 2024, every PBP Verified™ Maker created their own CoC, marking a significant step toward stronger ethical business practices.

# 2

### PROTECT THEIR EMPLOYEES

The fundamental human and labor rights of freedom of association, prevention of child and forced labor, and non-discrimination are generally protected by law. However, we believe every business should make an explicit commitment to upholding these rights, integrating them into onboarding, employee handbooks, and regular training. Over the past year, we assessed the strength of the systems our producers use and provided them with practical tools to prevent rights infringements.

# 3

### ACHIEVE A LIVING WAGE

A living wage or living income is essential for ensuring fair and sustainable employment. We've worked closely with our PBP Verified™ Makers to collect data, assess wages, and develop actionable plans to meet living wage standards. As a result, 100% of our PBP Verified™ Makers have now calculated the living wage for their location and put a plan in place to achieve it within a realistic timeframe. This milestone reflects our commitment to fostering ethical business practices and supporting economic sustainability.

# 4

### ASSESS THEIR PARTNERS

A maker's responsibility extends beyond their own practices—it includes their partners as well. To support this, we provided every producer on our platform with due diligence tools to assess potential risks in their supply chain. With Equiception's step-by-step template, makers now have a clear process to identify, address, and mitigate risks while ensuring accountability. If issues arise, they have the guidance to take corrective action.

## Our Team

## A Detailed Look at PBP's Workforce



**P**owered by People operates offices in Nairobi and Toronto, with a team of 34 dedicated individuals. Our workforce includes 19 full-time employees and 15 independent contractors, each playing a crucial role in connecting with makers around the world. After our 2024 Readiness Assessment, we took a close look at our global compensation practices to ensure that all our people are earning living wages. We found that we continue to meet this standard across the board, though wages differ depending on location—like \$28.04 per hour in New York City versus \$254 per month in Nairobi. We're committed to at-will contracts, negotiated individually, and fair compensation practices that align with our core values of equity and integrity. As part of our continued focus on ensuring fairness, we've also introduced our Freedom of Association Policy, which ensures they have the ability to associate with whom they choose and advocate.

This policy further strengthens our commitment to ethical labor practices and empowers our team to advocate for their rights. In 2024, we also became WBENC Certified Business, WEConnect International Certified Business and are Women Owned Business Certified, reflecting our deep commitment to equity, inclusion, and supporting women-led businesses. As a women-owned company, we know firsthand the power of economic opportunity—and we’re proud to work with a global community of makers, many of whom are women shaping the future of craft. This certification is more than a badge; it’s a testament to the way we do business: with purpose, integrity, and a focus on building a more inclusive economy.



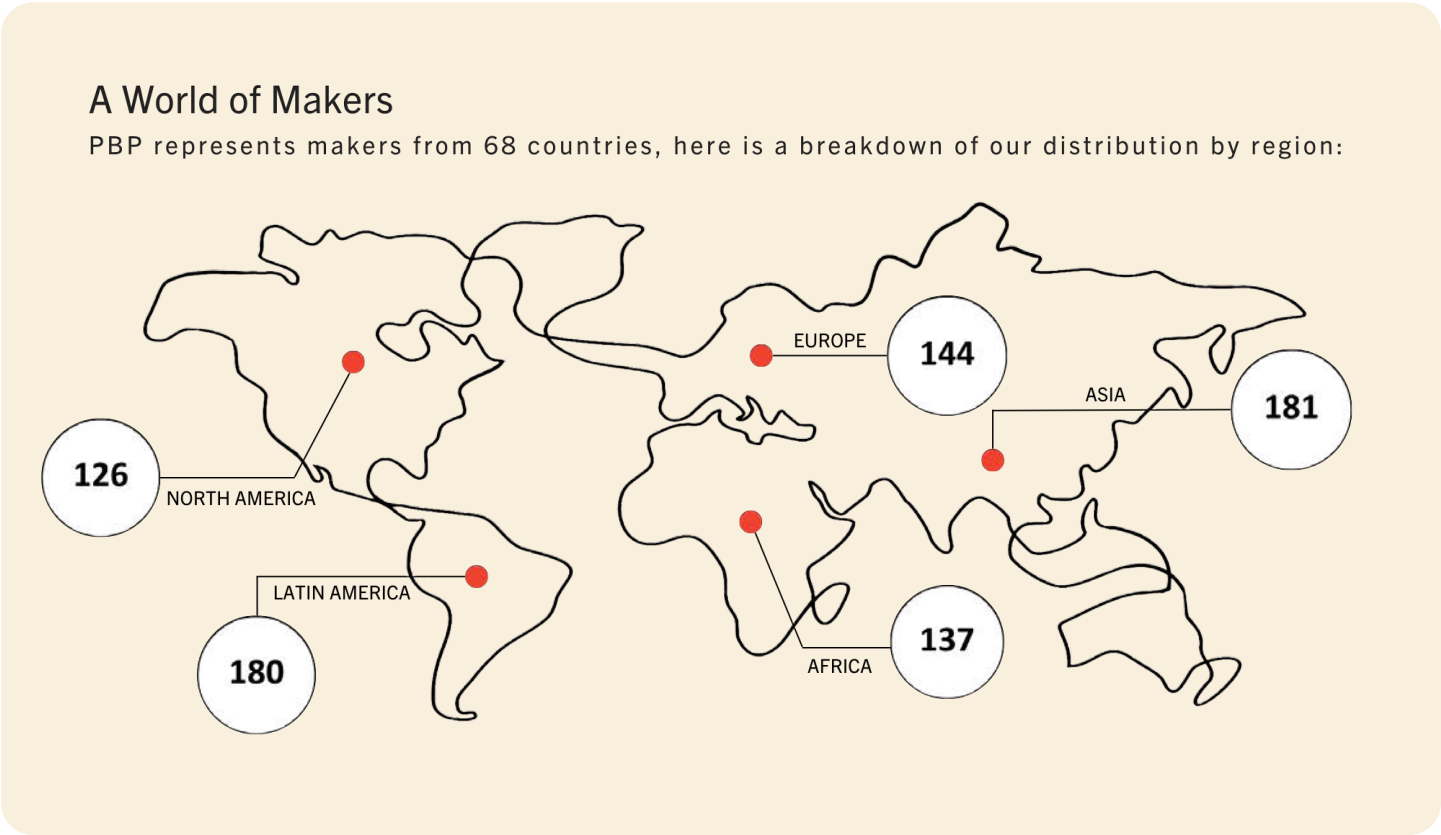
As we continue scaling our impact, we have officially submitted our B Impact Assessment for B Corp Certification. Achieving this pending certification will further align our mission with the highest standards of social and environmental responsibility, and we look forward to joining the growing community of Certified B Corps dedicated to making a meaningful difference.

| Total Employees | Full-Time Employees | Contingent Independent Contractors | Female Employees (including CEO) | Male Employees |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| 34              | 19                  | 15                                 | 17                               | 17             |

People

Meet Our Makers

With 768 makers on our platform across 68 countries, our network spans the world. Some preserve heritage craftsmanship, others push the boundaries of innovation—but all are independent brands committed to sustainability. Here’s a closer look at who they are and how they create.



321,923

Total number of artisans within our current PBP Maker network

3,118

Total # registered makers in the PBP network including 768 makers on the platform

84%

Of makers on the PBP platform are women-led (founder or senior management)

“

Powered by People isn't just a name—it's the foundation of everything they do, striking the perfect balance between supporting small businesses like us and working with large retailers. Offering guidance and opportunities we never dreamed possible.”

PRIYANAA SHARMA, FOUNDER, OSMOS STUDIO, INDIA

## People

## Get to know a few of our sustainable-minded makers



### Mungo, South Africa

For Dax Holding, some things are more important than profit.

Mungo is proof that beautiful, high-quality textiles can be made with sustainability at the core. From their second generation family owned mill in Plettenberg Bay, South Africa, they weave natural fibers using time-honored techniques while keeping waste to a minimum. Their MOVE program drives social and environmental impact, ensuring that every piece they create does more than just look good—it does good. Since joining Powered by People, Mungo has been a top-performing maker across many large accounts in our dropship program, proving that ethical production and commercial success can go hand in hand. With a commitment to responsible design, transparent sourcing, and craftsmanship with integrity, Mungo is setting a new standard for sustainable textiles.



## **DAR Proyectos, Peru**

Connecting indigenous craft heritage with modern design.

DAR Proyectos is redefining sustainability by blending thoughtful design with social impact in the heart of Pacasmayo, Peru. Rooted in tradition and driven by innovation, the brand empowers over 50 local artisans, providing them with the tools and training needed to build sustainable livelihoods. By preserving ancestral techniques and incorporating them into contemporary designs, they ensure that cultural heritage remains vibrant and relevant. Their commitment goes beyond craftsmanship—through blockchain technology, they guarantee transparency and traceability, allowing customers to connect with the hands behind every piece. Since its founding, DAR Proyectos has helped formalize over 80% of its artisan partners, improving their access to fair wages and economic stability. With 60% of their artisan network made up of women, they actively support gender equality and economic empowerment, aligning their mission with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. At its core, DAR Proyectos is about creating lasting impact—one handcrafted piece at a time.

# COMMUNITIES



## Communities

## Our Philanthropic Partnerships

Powered by People partners with a number of philanthropic foundations and organizations to support its global maker community. We rely on grants to help makers hone their digital and marketing skills and evolve their businesses so they are able to compete in the global marketplace. The grants allow us to test new models and incur risk we wouldn't be able to otherwise.

**Here a few of the key partnerships that help us do this work:**

Powered by People is part of the Jiinue Growth Program (JGP) implemented in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation and a consortium of partners consisting of Grassroots Business Fund, DT Global, 4G Capital, GROOTS Kenya, Kenya National Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA). JGP aims to bridge the financing gap for micro, small and medium (MSME's) in Kenya. The program combines financial support with technical assistance and a coordinated approach among various players in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.



TRANSFORM aims to impact over 15 million lives by 2025 by supporting visionary enterprises across Africa, Asia and beyond. PBP uses support from TRANSFORM to test and scale solutions that improve outcomes for the environment, health and inclusion. Established in 2015, TRANSFORM is a joint initiative of Unilever, the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and EY.



Through the Ashoka-IKEA Dela Programme, Powered by People works with IKEA to help effect systemic change in global shipping. We have used this accelerator to pilot our PBP ShipSmart program, which offers consolidated shipping opportunities to our makers worldwide.



PBP works with BFA Global to address women's economic empowerment in Kenya by using technology to close the digital divide in underserved communities. With BFA, we are testing the extent to which AI-generated, high quality digital profiles positively affect our makers' discoverability and sales conversion rates

In 2024, Powered by People significantly expanded its hybrid philanthropic and venture-backed model, driving impactful growth for makers. We deployed \$246,040 in loan capital to 59 businesses, directly supporting 2,524 artisans. Furthermore, we opened up export market opportunities for 49 businesses, benefiting 1,336 artisans and expanding their global reach. Our comprehensive technical assistance initiatives reached 15,666 artisans through face-to-face training, while 314 accessed digital training resources. To enhance market visibility, we also empowered 455 artisans through the creation of digital catalogs, broadening their access to both local and international buyers.

**2025 GOALS**

- Continue to innovate on AI supported digital catalog creation for makers in Kenya and beyond.
- Facilitate 1,100 purchase orders, \$450,000 in purchase order financing, and provide training to 15,000 artisans.

Communities

Voices of Kenyan based makers, supported by PBP



Funded by our philanthropic partners, The Soko Artisan Show was a trade show hosted in 2024 by PBP to connect Kenyan makers with local and global buyers enabling makers to grow into the global market.

“Earlier this year, I wanted to close up my business. But coming here, to Artisan Soko, meeting the quality of buyers, having interactions with artisans and being part of this community and people saying we really love what you are doing and it is really needed!”

Umba Creations

“We have a good product and wanted to learn how to showcase it to the global market. PBP enabled us to upscale our business and to showcase our Kenyan handmade products to the world.”

Kisasa Weavers

“It is a big deal to be a part of the Artisan Soko. We get instant feedback on our products from international buyers that inspires us. It gives us a chance to learn from one another and explore potential synergies. By participating, it made us up our game and made us think globally and not just locally.”

Bawa Hope

## Communities

## Generative AI Leveling the Playing Field for Global Makers

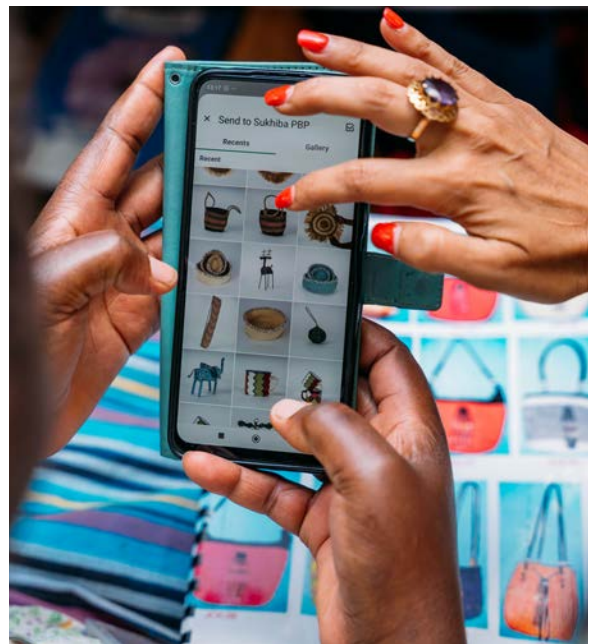
Artisans worldwide face significant barriers to accessing digital commerce. Artisans lack the necessary tools to make their products retail-ready. Powered by People is addressing this challenge by leveraging Generative AI to not only help artisans get online but also ensure their digital presence is professional, polished, and competitive. This AI-driven approach is designed to bridge the "readiness gap", ensuring artisans can present their work in a way that builds trust and attracts buyers, ultimately increasing sales.

Through its partnership with BFA, PBP has tested AI-driven solutions with nearly 400 Kenyan makers. This technology automates catalog generation, enhances product images, and optimizes descriptions tailored for retail platforms—all while preserving the unique storytelling and craftsmanship of each artisan's work. By removing the bottleneck of manual onboarding and providing AI-powered design and content support, artisans can showcase their work in a more visually appealing and retail-ready manner.

AI is making digital commerce more inclusive. By lowering the digital entry barriers and providing artisans with the same high-quality presentation tools as established brands, Generative AI has the potential to drive tangible income increases, improve livelihoods, and ensure that makers — most of whom are women — can compete effectively in the global digital economy.

**“As a maker, I sometimes struggle to describe what I'm making in a marketable way. The AI bot was really helpful because it took my descriptions and refined them, reorganizing the content to create a more effective presentation. I appreciate the innovative approach of listening to what makers need. Many platforms exist, but they often don't simplify the process for us. This initiative truly stands out, and I'm thankful for the direction you're taking.”**

**Soapstone Interiors, Kenya**



Communities

About Equiception

Equiception Business and Human Rights is a mission-driven consulting group specializing in the interface of business and human rights. Its goal is to contribute to the development of value chains that meet economic, social and environmental objectives through the just and judicious management of natural and human resources, materials and waste.

Equiception is active in value chains in all industrial sectors and regions of the world, assessing situations and advising public and private sector clients on the social, environmental and governance risks they face.

Equiception has two main areas of work—bespoke human and labor rights evaluations, and online due-diligence assessments. The bespoke human and labor rights evaluations are conducted through its worldwide network of experts, practitioners, entrepreneurs and civil society leaders built-up over 40-plus years of activity. This allows Equiception to rapidly respond to client needs with trusted teams that have the skills and expertise required for each assignment. Its trademark style is to analyze the social context and value chain before zooming in to examine the specific case in hand. Equiception likes to see situations for itself and personally interact with all the stakeholders since there is no substitute for understanding and empathizing with the situation of every value- chain actor. This is hands-on, interview-based work. On the other hand, its online due-diligence platform enables clients to conduct value-chain due diligence at scale, backed by Equiception consulting and training services. This is a high tech, high-touch model that allows one to affordably conduct large numbers of risk assessments with accompaniment in the form of capacity building and remediation.

Equiception offers to PBP

- Full-service sustainability program
- Human rights and environmental due diligence services to makers
- Remediation services
- Capacity building
- Sustainability reporting

" Equiception Business and Human Rights has been working with Powered by People to develop due- diligence solutions adapted to PBP’s unique business model. We designed tools to collect ESG data from PBP makers, as well as online training packages to help them address the risks they face. This allows us to advance their human-rights and environmental performance and build more sustainable businesses at the same time"

- Aurret Van Heerden  
Equiception Founder

## Our 2025 Goals

### Streamline Shipping

In 2025, we will target a 10% increase in sea freight shipping for our dropshipping operations, further reducing our reliance on air freight and lowering overall emissions per unit shipped. This shift will be driven by smarter consolidation strategies and optimized international purchase orders. We will continue decentralizing our dropship program across the US, prioritizing makers with existing US inventory and positioning bulk shipments closer to end customers. This means expanding our maker-fulfilled catalog to look to reduce our overall green house gas emissions by up to 10%.

### Packaging

We aim to build on our packaging guidelines by exploring additional resources, forming strategic partnerships, and identifying alternative materials that enable makers to access cost-effective, eco-friendly packaging solutions tailored to their local markets.

We aim to strengthen our reuse and recycling systems by finding new ways to repurpose incoming materials, reducing reliance on new packaging, and exploring potential collaborations to further minimize waste.

### PBP Verified™

By the end of 2025, we're aiming to double the number of dropship makers connected, building on the 97 already in place. As a result, we are projecting 100 additional makers to be PBP Verified™. To strengthen our commitment to retail readiness, we aim for 100% of dropship makers selling to large retail accounts be PBP Verified, ensuring they meet the highest standards. We are implementing a streamlined onboarding process where 100% of makers on the platform will go through Stage 1 verification, setting a strong foundation for growth and success.

### Philanthropic Partners

In partnership with BFA, we will continue to innovate on digital catalog creation for makers in Kenya and beyond, ensuring that artisans have access to cutting-edge tools that enhance their visibility and market reach.

In 2025, we aim to achieve 1,100 purchase orders, \$450,000 in letter of credit transactions, and provide training to 15,000 market operators and employees, strengthening market access and capacity-building for makers.

