

Women in Tech World (WinTech) is halfway to its goal. The Vancouver-based organization is hoping a Kickstarter campaign will help fund [Driving WinTech](#)—a 2-month research tour that will see five women drive from B.C. to Newfoundland to connect with 50 communities across Canada.

BLANKSLATE talked with co-founder **Elena Yugai** about WinTech's inspired mission, and how we can work together to build community and break down the barriers women face in tech.

What inspired Driving WinTech?

Many organizations approach us and say, “We need more women, can you help us get more?” Women want to work in tech, but there are many myths and mysteries surrounding our industry. There are invisible barriers too. We asked ourselves how we can best break down some of these barriers.

We quickly recognized that Vancouver is a unique ecosystem. Our city has an extraordinary community, but it's not reflective of the broader Canadian landscape. There's a gap in knowledge across the country.

Grassroots efforts are tackling the challenge little by little, but there's no overarching effort to provide guidance and coordinate these efforts. We hope Driving WinTech will help fill that knowledge gap.

When do you hit the road?

We hit the road in September and we'll be traveling from B.C. to Newfoundland over the span of only two months. To keep costs low we're planning for lots of camping and peanut butter & jam sandwiches.

What are you hoping to achieve?

Our goal is to visit 50 communities and reach 10,000 people over the span of two months. We'll hold forums and town halls and compile a list of real, actionable insights based on the data we collect and the stories we hear. We believe women should have the opportunity to succeed in the tech industry, which is why we need to conduct large-scale research: so we can understand how best to initiate change.

Tell us about Women in Tech World (WinTech)—how did it start?

[Women in Tech](#) (WinTech) is only 18 months old, but because we have so many women on our leadership team who come from a startup background, we're used to growing and scaling organizations quickly—so we approached WinTech in the same way.

The original plan was to host an industry event and a few panels, but as soon as the word got out, we realized there was a huge demand. The first year we hosted 17 events in five Canadian cities. That showed us there was a huge demand for this kind of initiative.

Who is WinTech?

WinTech is 100% volunteer-run. People as far away as France and El Salvador ask how they can get involved; we believe that's because from day one, our leadership team made a commitment to ourselves and our volunteers.

There's no shortage of women wanting to do more, but we don't want this to be a *take* relationship.

WinTech has a very robust and engagement program. For us, it's important that we test

public programs before we roll them out. But it also sends a clear message to our volunteers that we're committed to them. We want to be a model for how things can be done. For example, we always try to make sure every job has a senior and a junior. This way there's a transfer of knowledge from someone experienced to someone learning new skills.

How can we help?

[Support the Driving WinTech project on Kickstarter!](#) And if you want us to come out to your town or community, please email us.

Also, we're always looking for volunteers. If you don't have time to volunteer, please consider joining our list of principals. We could really use your help and expertise. Maybe you can help with PR, or show us how to convert website visitors into event attendees. Whatever your area, your skills are needed.

Thanks so much, Elena! To learn more, follow WinTech on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

If you're an HR professional with a story to tell, [drop us a line](#)—we'd love to feature you on The Slate.