

[STORIES](#) /

5 Social Impact Startups to Watch in Charlotte

[✉ Email](#)

[f Facebook](#)

[in LinkedIn](#)

[t Twitter](#)



Project Outpour. Photo Courtesy Project Outpour's Facebook page.

By Courtney Gabrielson

November 25, 2019, 08:04am EST

Consider Lyft. Or Postmates. Or Disney+. Or whatever app or service you use to make things that used to take a long time — cabs/making dinner/Blockbuster — a lot quicker and easier. There's no shortage of innovative technology companies working to bring us into the future.

While these kinds of development are wonderful, they're only one side of the coin of progress. There's social enterprises, too — those entities that are less concerned with contriving modern convenience and focus instead on driving change for the better, in the most basic sense.

Charlotte is home to many of these kinds of organizations, which are in turn bolstered by a host of [entities](#) and [programs](#). Consider [Apparo](#), a local nonprofit that provides other area nonprofits access to education, tech services and other resources for "very small contributions," Apparo CEO Kim Lanphear told Charlotte Inno. "We are meeting a nonprofit where they are." And so far, Apparo has worked with 500 organizations.

There's also the Queen City chapter of [Social Venture Partners](#), a group that aims to be a conduit between investors and the local social enterprises (there are [10,000 nonprofits](#) in Mecklenburg County alone) that need their funds. These investors, dubbed "members," contribute annually to establish a \$350,000 fund, which is in turn doled out to seven chosen teams per year. The group is also behind [SEED20](#), an annual event that brings together Charlotte-based nonprofit entrepreneurs.

The abundance of resource speaks to, at the very least, a burgeoning social enterprise niche in the Queen City. And to celebrate that, we've rounded up five social impact startups that are worth keeping an eye on this holiday season and beyond.

FASHION & COMPASSION

03:58



It's the age of fast fashion. Clothes and jewelry are often made with ethically dubious or outright monstrous practices to keep prices low and option numerous. Shopping morally can be a minefield.

That's where Fashion & Compassion comes in. It's a faith-based boutique jewelry and gift store that partners with artisans in six countries across the globe. These women artisans, often economically or socially vulnerable, receive training to make their wares — which, in turn, become a source of secondary income and connection to other economic resources for them.

It's these pieces that Fashion & Compassion sells on its online shop and brick-and-mortar store in Charlotte.

INTECH

INTech Camp for Girls



1,165 scholars: That's how many girls who have learned practical technology skills through InTech, which operates in both Charlotte and Raleigh.

The programming it offers ranges from day camps to a full "InTech Academy," an opportunity designed specifically for high school girls. Regardless of the program, InTech is united by one mission: "increas[ing] the confidence in girls who are interested in learning more about technology."

In addition to hands-on skills, the Khalia Braswell-led entity also challenges its scholars to consider how technology and innovation can drive social change.

Open Broadband

Internet is something one can take for granted. But when it's missing, it can make modern life almost impossible. Open Broadband looks to fix the problem by bringing broadband to underserved communities, thus bolstering connectivity and opportunity to growth of all kinds.

It does this by offering hybrid fiber and fixed wireless ISP solutions, meaning that there's no digging up of streets or long wait times that are often associated with, say, cable or fiber.

And it's cheap, another element of its accessibility. In fact, most prices begin at \$40/month, without overage charges.

PROJECT OutPOUR



Project Outpour's mobile shower unit. Photo Courtesy Project Outpour.

Speaking of things majorly taken for granted: shower access. For the homeless, it's a real concern — one that Project Outpour looks to alleviate.

Thanks to an 18 foot mobile shower trailer, which includes two full bathrooms, users are able to enjoy a 20-minute shower. Project Outpour provides the necessary supplies, allowing guests to keep everything except for the towels.

Another pivotal element of Project Outpour's offering is what happens while users wait: community building. The organization hopes that the approachable process of waiting for a turn to shower makes guests at ease, allowing for easy conversation.

It's all a part of Project Outpour's ultimate goal: restoring dignity to the homeless.

Pip & Grow



Pip & Grow. Courtesy Photo.

This Davidson-based startup has developed a portable and sustainable baby box for kiddos to safely sleep in. This year, it was one of six fall NC IDEA grant recipients, winning a piece of the \$300,000 funds.

That's not all: Pip & Grow partners with organizations like 90by30, which works to lower child abuse, to distribute its products. There's also the company's emphasis on ensuring that those manufacturing its product [pay their employees fairly](#) and "prioritize the environment."

Keep Digging



Charlotte Inno's Startups to Watch in 2021

SPONSORED CONTENT
by Brinkmann Constructors

[4 features senior living consumers look for p](#)

SPONSORED CONTENT
by Dualboot Partners

[Social challenge app from concept to launch](#)

Spotlight

[More](#) 



1
FIRE
WARDS

Charlotte Inno's Fire Awards: Meet the 50 winners of 2021

[See More >](#)



INNO
UNDE
25

Inno Under 25: Meet 10 young innovators making waves in Charlotte's tech, startup scene

[See More >](#)

Want to stay ahead of who & what is next? Sent weekly, the Beat is your definitive look at Charlotte's innovation economy, offering news, analysis & more on the people, companies & ideas driving your Charlotte forward. Follow the Beat

[Share the Beat](#)

[Sign Up](#)

)

Founding Partners



[Back to Top](#) ▲

CHARLOTTEINNO

[User Agreement](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)
[Your California Privacy Rights](#) | [Ad Choices](#)

© 2022 American City Business Journals. All rights reserved. Use of and/or registration on any portion of this site constitutes acceptance of our User Agreement (updated as of 1/1/21) and Privacy Policy and Cookie Statement (updated as of 1/1/21). The material on this site may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, cached or otherwise used, except with the prior written permission of American City Business Journals.