

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **CARAVANSERAI PROJECT ANNOUNCES 5<sup>TH</sup> SEED LAB PRE-ACCELERATOR COHORT**

**Palm Springs, CA, December 20, 2022** – Caravanserai Project announced the fifth cohort of mission-driven startups slated to participate in their Social Entrepreneurship, Engagement and Development Lab Pre-accelerator (SEED Lab). Caravanserai Project is committed to support mission-driven entrepreneurs build sustainable and future-ready ventures, for profits and nonprofits. SEED Lab turbo-charges startup and early-stage social innovators from historically underserved communities in California’s Inland Empire and empowers them to pioneer pathways out of inherited challenges.

Caravanserai Project is investing in eleven emerging mission-driven entrepreneurs who join the 2022-2023 SEED Lab Pre-accelerator to advance bold solutions, and tackle challenges in disability ([Martha Barragan](#), [Maria Martinez](#), [Isabel Torres](#), [Javier Torres](#)), education ([Arlington C. Rodgers Jr.](#), [Adriana Ordonez](#)), financial wellness ([Dr. Guadalupe Buitron](#)), mental health ([Dr. Araceli Ramirez](#), [Mayra Barragan-O'Brien](#)), sustainable agriculture ([Dr. Gina Oliver](#), [Richard Hutchinson](#)), childcare ([Leidy Milla Bernasconi](#)), and wellness ([Gail Herring](#), [Jona Herrera](#)). Their innovations range from implementing new approaches to sustainable agriculture in food deserts, changing the immigrants’ mindset regarding money to developing support systems for childcare businesses or families with children with special needs, and empowering underserved individuals from BIPOC and undocumented communities through mental health programs, coaching and dietary programs.

“The 2022-2023 SEED Lab Fellows truly reflect the diverse social and cultural fabric of Southern California and reconfirm the immense pool of talent that exists in our communities. SEED Lab Pre-accelerator, through its trainings and the unrestricted funding opportunities the fellows have access to, represents future-thinking investments that will generate irreversible system change led by these entrepreneurs”, said Mihai Patru, Caravanserai Project Executive Director.

Through the eight-month program designed by Caravanserai Project and implemented in partnership with University of California Riverside-Extension, the 2022-2023 cohort participate in intensive business and leadership trainings and individual coaching sessions. They also have access to considerable investments to advance their mission and grow their ventures from programs like the California Dream Fund and stakeholders such as the Employment Training Panel and the Western Wind Foundation.

"As part of the SEED Lab Pre-Accelerator Program, I have been inspired and encouraged by both the team and other participants. The program helped me realize the potential for growth that

my business, UndocuMental Health, can reach". Mayra Barragan-O'Brien, Founder, UndocuMental Health, 2022/2023 SEED Lab Fellow.

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#### **About SEED Lab Pre-accelerator**

SEED Lab Pre-accelerator is an 8-month intensive program designed by Caravanserai Project and implemented in partnership with University of California Riverside - Extension. The 2022-2023 program is supported by the California Office for Small Business Advocate, Employment Training Panel of California, MUFU Union Bank Foundation, Inland Empire Community Foundation, San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, Grace Helen Spearman Charitable Foundation and individual donors. To learn more about the SEED Lab Pre-Accelerator, visit <https://caravanseraiproject.org/seed-lab/>. Learn more about each of the SEED Lab Fellows [here](#).

#### **About Caravanserai Project**

[Caravanserai Project](#) is a social impact venture that advances the work of mission-driven entrepreneurs and organizations, for profit and nonprofit alike, through programs and solutions designed to strengthen their organizational infrastructure. For more information, please visit [www.caravanseraiproject.org](http://www.caravanseraiproject.org).