

PhiLab Atlantic Hub Regional Conference

Mapping the Landscape: Philanthropy and Community Investment in Atlantic Canada

Co-hosted by [PhiLab Atlantic Hub](#), [Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia](#), and sponsored by [Charity Village](#)

Introduction

The PhiLab Atlantic Hub Regional Conference, entitled *Mapping the Landscape: Philanthropy and Community Investment in Atlantic Canada* was held on June 7th and 8th, 2021 between 1:30pm – 4:30pm (Newfoundland Time). Co-hosted with our partner organization, the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia (RCF of NS), our event was sponsored and advertised by Charity Village.

The regional conference brought leaders, researchers, practitioners, professionals, and students together who are working in and studying the Atlantic Canadian philanthropic sector.

Broken up over two days, day one focused on **Philanthropy, Community, and Environmental Resilience** while day two focused on **Evidence-Based Approaches to Maximizing Impact of Philanthropy**. Each day participants and presenters were able to discuss the prevailing issues and potential opportunities within the sector as we navigate post-COVID-19 waters.

The conference was very well received with several research questions and key themes identified that matched the priorities of community-based organizations and partners that were present. Working closely with community partners to identify research needs and co-develop and implement projects is a priority for our hub and the conference helped us do that as we plan for our activities in the years ahead.

This report will first provide a breakdown of the conference with who presented at each event and the participants and organizations that were present throughout each event. Then, the major themes that emerged from each day will be shared. Finally, we summarize the key research questions that were identified and wrap up with some thoughts on the future of the PhiLab Atlantic Hub.

Conference Overview

Day	Event	Presenter(s)	Organization(s)
1	Opening Remarks	Kelly Vodden Maureen Coady	PhiLab Atlantic Rural Communities Foundation of NS
	Day 1 Plenary	Devika Shah Dana Decent	Environment Funders Canada Community Foundations of Canada
	Research Report – Philanthropy, Community, and Environment (students)	Emma Squires Miranda Ivany Samantha Young	Simon Fraser University University of Guelph Grenfell Campus, Memorial University
	Panel – Sustaining Environmental Organizations	Darren Sheppard Lanna Campbell Sean Markey	Indian Bay Ecosystem Corporation (NL) Nature Conservancy (PEI) Simon Fraser University (BC)
2	Day 2 Plenary	Cindy Lindsay	Community Foundations of Canada
	Panel – Community Investment and Philanthropy	Joanie Cranston Ryan Gibson Susan Hirshberg	Bonne Bay Cottage Hospital Heritage Corp. University of Guelph Rural Communities Foundation of NS
	Panel – Opportunities and Challenges for the Sector pre- and post- COVID-19	Shelley Price Harry Daley Daniel Holland	St. Francis Xavier University Greater St. John Community Foundation Community Foundation of Nova Scotia
	Discussion – Evidence- Based Approaches	Open Discussion	All participants



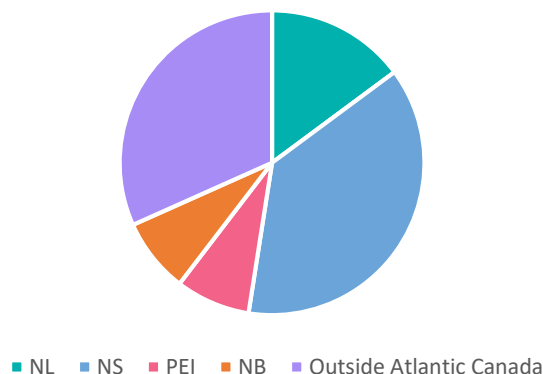
We've been working with community organizations to try to better understand the realities and the challenges of charities and philanthropic organizations to support their communities and their regions. At the end of the day, all of these organizations are focused around supporting long term prosperity.

– Researcher, Conference Day 2



The number of participants varied for each event, as the online conference room was open for folks to join and leave as necessary throughout each afternoon. However, there was a total of 44 people registered for day one and 43 registered for day two. Below is a general breakdown of where participants were located. Most of our participants joined from Nova Scotia, with a large number located outside of Atlantic Canada.

Distribution of Participants by Province



Key Learning and Themes

Day 1 – Philanthropy, Community, and Environmental Resilience

Donors are diverse - corporations, foundations, individuals, organisations, and governments

Environmental funding remains relatively low compared to other sectors despite urgency of climate emergency

Cultural shift toward intersections of environmental issues and the economy, social justice, etc. necessary

Organizations are susceptible to adaptation and change so funding must be flexible to support grassroots initiatives

Day 2 – Evidence-based Approaches to Maximizing Impact of Philanthropy

Shift focus of organizations from donor-drive to prioritize place-based social justice and equity approaches

Trust-based philanthropy = responsive, accountable, supportive, transparent

Challenges in capacity persist, particularly around opportunities / forums to collaborate effectively

Academic-organization partnerships provide validation and resources for innovation within philanthropy

Conclusion – Future Research Areas

The wrap-up round table discussion with all participants provided direction for future research with questions and ideas that can be built upon.

Grantmaking foundations in Atlantic Canada shared their interests in exploring:

1. The effectiveness of collaborative relationships between community organizations and various community-based stakeholders, academic institutions, etc.
2. Various types of application processes for available grants such as a common application that is used regionally with ~20% of the application specific to the foundation or funding opportunity

Non-charitable status organizations in Atlantic Canada shared their interests in exploring:

1. How organizations are able to effectively ‘work around’ charitable status requirements for funding set by the CRA to support place-based, grassroots efforts.

PhiLab Researchers that were present during the conference shared their interests in exploring:

1. Cross-sectoral relationships between within the philanthropic sector (i.e. environmental funders working with social justice funders working with entrepreneurship funders).
2. Large-scale, regional baseline data collection and analysis on the “State of Atlantic Canadian Philanthropy” that is updated regularly.

Thank you to our co-hosts, sponsors, panelists, PhiLab members, and participants for such an exciting, informative, and important event that highlighted the challenges and opportunities for the Atlantic Canadian philanthropic sector.

Philab Atlantic Hub Director, Dr. Kelly Vodden
PhiLab Atlantic Hub Coordinator, Brady Reid

