

# L'Année PhiLanthropique The PhiLanthropic Year

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Volume 3 | Hiver / Winter 2021



PhiLab

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**Prochaine publication | Next Publication**

Automne 2022 / Fall 2022

**À propos du PhiLab | About PhiLab**

Le Réseau canadien de recherche partenariale sur la philanthropie (PhiLab), anciennement Laboratoire montréalais de recherche sur la philanthropie canadienne, a été pensé en 2014 dans le cadre de la conception de la demande de financement du projet développement de partenariat CRSH intitulé « Innovation sociale, changement sociétal et Fondations subventionnaires canadiennes ». Ce financement a été reconduit en 2018 sous le nom d'« Évaluation du rôle et des actions de fondations subventionnaires canadiennes en réponse à l'enjeu des inégalités sociales et des défis environnementaux ». Depuis ses débuts, le Réseau constitue un lieu de recherche, de partage d'information et de mobilisation des connaissances des fondations canadiennes. Des recherches conduites en partenariat permettent la coproduction de nouvelles connaissances dédiées à une diversité d'acteurs : des représentants gouvernementaux, des chercheurs universitaires, des représentants du secteur philanthropique et leurs organisations affiliées ou des partenaires.

Le Réseau regroupe des chercheurs, des décideurs et des membres de la communauté philanthropique à travers le monde afin de partager des informations, des ressources et des idées.

The Canadian network of partnership-oriented research on philanthropy (PhiLab), previously called the Montreal Research Laboratory on Canadian philanthropy, was thought up in 2014 as part of the conception of a funding request by the NRCC partnership development project called "Social innovation, social change, and Canadian Grantmaking Foundations". From its beginning, the Network was a place for research, information exchange and mobilization of Canadian foundations' knowledge. Research conducted in partnership allows for the co-production of new knowledge dedicated to a diversity of actors: government representatives, university researchers, representatives of the philanthropic sector and their affiliate organizations or partners.

The Network brings together researchers, decision-makers and members of the philanthropic community from around the world in order to share information, resources, and ideas.



Social Sciences and Humanities  
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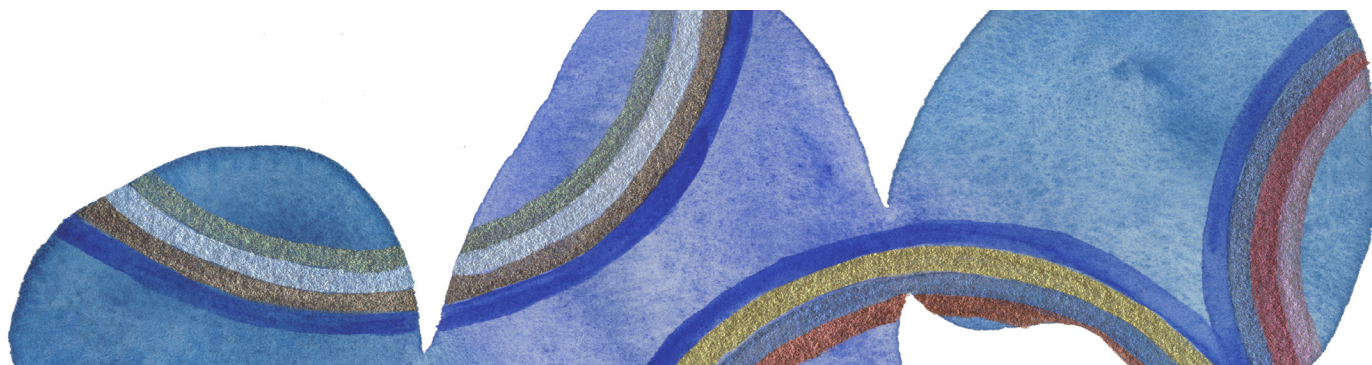


# TEXTES D'INVITÉS | GUEST CONTRIBUTORS

Cette section vous présente deux textes d'invités. Le premier, par Sharon Redsky, porte sur ses réflexions en tant que professionnelle autochtone de la collecte de fond. Un deuxième texte, par Pascale Lassagne Jullien, discute de la conciliation entre les besoins financiers pressants des OBE et la capacité des grandes corporations à leur allouer des fonds rapidement.

This section presents two articles from our guest contributors. First, Sharon Redsky offers her reflections as an Indigenous fundraiser. Second, Pascale Lassagne Jullien discusses how to reconcile charities' urgent needs and large corporations' capacity to allocate funds quickly in times of crisis.

Artiste | Artist: Kai Yun Ching



# TEXTES D'INVITÉS | GUEST CONTRIBUTORS

## Living in harmony and giving back: Reflections of an Indigenous fundraiser

By Sharon Redsky, Redsky Fundraising



Sharon Redsky is resident of Winnipeg and First Nation member of Shoal Lake #40 with mixed heritage. Principle of Redsky Fundraising and has extensive experience working with Indigenous-led organizations.

*I acknowledge the ancestral traditional territory of Treaty #1 and Homeland of the Metis Nation that I have the privilege of living on. I also acknowledge Treaty #3 traditional territory of my ancestors and Shoal Lake First Nation #40 which is primary water source for Winnipeg and recently lifted their 25-year boil water advisory.*

As an Indigenous fundraiser, I believe there is opportunity to build stronger relationships and include Indigenous worldviews in the sector.

### The importance of supporting Indigenous-led organizations

There are incredible national and local Indigenous charities across Canada. You don't have to look far to

find Indigenous people of all ages dedicated to serving, uplifting, and protecting inherent rights, for me this is truly inspiring. Over the years, I have personally benefited from the generosity of Indigenous Elders, Knowledge keepers and individuals who have given me their precious time and wisdom. They have taught me the importance of living in harmony and giving back.

Despite the numerous colonial policies, Indigenous charities and communities are vital in providing community-based and culturally appropriate services solutions and strengthening reconciliation efforts across Turtle Island. At the heart of their work, is a culture of giving.

While some work is being done to bridge the gap, more is urgently needed to increase the philanthropic giving for Indigenous nonprofits and communities. Not only are Indigenous people are dealing with alarming health and social inequities, they are dealing with the



impacts of the legacy of residential schools, suicides, addictions, MMIWG2S, Indian day school, 60 scoop, and now the discovery of the unmarked graves.

In a recent article published in partnership by myself, Wanda Brascoupé, Mark Blumberg and Jessie Lang, highlighted that Indigenous groups received \$1 for every \$178 dollars gifted by Foundations in 2018, which was just over one half a percent. If that increased by even \$5, it would put millions into Indigenous charities and communities. Allowing them to make significant investment into much needed programming and infrastructure. [The report can be article can be found here.](#)

The unmarked graves on the grounds of Indian Residential Schools have once again highlighted Canada's national tragedy. Residential schools were established to destroy cultural and assimilate Indigenous people, funded by government and operated by churches. Survivors spoke of this during their testimonies in the Truth and Reconciliation process, but the government choose not to act on the recommendation to examine these sites for graves. This has been personally a difficult time for me, and many others, as it opened painful memories and a deep sadness for what our children had to endure. As a child, my mother was forcefully removed from her home to attend residential school, while there she contracted tuberculosis and was sent to a sanitarium 4 hours away from her community. Sadly, my mother passed away before the government apology in 2008.

This resurfaced painful feelings and frustrations that we may never know the entire truth about this dark history. I was grateful to local Indigenous organizations like Anish Corporation, Aboriginal Health and Wellness, Southern Chiefs Organizations and Wa-Say Healing Centre who set up an outdoor healing space in Winnipeg where I and hundreds of individuals were able to make offerings to a sacred fire and receive support. Many individuals volunteered their time and money, including [The Winnipeg Foundation](#) and [Lawson Foundation](#). My heart goes out to communities, families and individuals who have a difficult journey ahead.

### Barriers for Indigenous communities accessing philanthropic donations

I believe that there are two primary barriers for Indigenous charities and communities in accessing philanthropic giving. One is the perception that

Indigenous communities and people already receive adequate funding from the Canadian Government. This is not true. This inequity of funding, particularly for children has been proven by the Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society that showed that children's medical and child welfare services received only 70 cents (up to 78 cents) on the dollar compared to non-Indigenous children<sup>1</sup>.

The second is the criteria funders set to be eligible for funding, and Indigenous organizations' limited number of staff for fundraising. I work with many Indigenous charities and communities who take a holistic approach (inclusive of mind, body, emotion and spirit) in their service delivery. Because of the way grants work, too often Indigenous organizations are asked to focus on meeting the needs of the funding criteria rather than responding to community needs.

With this in mind, the [Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund](#) (IPRF) set up a trust-based fund specifically for Indigenous people led by an Indigenous advisory council with support from several grantmaking foundations. Now Indigenous charities and communities can access this fund without rigid criteria to fit into.



### How I approach fundraising as a First Nations woman

I am a professional fundraiser. There are mainstream views about what fundraising is and how it should be done, but Indigenous fundraisers (there are more and more of us!) take a slightly different approach.

When I am fundraising, it is important to use a strength-based approach in working with Indigenous charities and communities. This means starting with their values and their vision for growth, and building on that through our fundraising.

Recently I had the opportunity, along with my mentor Joan Blight with Strategic Philanthropy, to facilitate a course designed for Indigenous charities

that combined Indigenous beliefs with “mainstream” philanthropic fund development tools and techniques. Support for this course was provided by The Winnipeg Foundation.

Prior to the course development, we hosted a sharing circle with senior leadership to gather their input and priorities about fundraising. The course highlighted the differences between the culture of giving in Indigenous communities and settler-led institutional philanthropy. We also provided the various elements of fundraising as a charity in the current context. We explored the history of Canada’s colonial practices and legislation, for example, the criminalization of Indigenous giving practices like potlatches that until 1951 restricted cultural traditional ceremonies.

One of my highlights in delivering the course was the engagement and the strong commitment and willingness to build respectful relationships with the sector. The course reinforced the challenges for many Indigenous charities and communities that they were not funded appropriately to hire staff that could take full responsibility for fundraising.

I look forward to working with Joan to build on the course to assist Indigenous charities and communities to fully engage the sector while exercising their traditional values and practices.

# Redsky Fundraising

## We know what our communities need

One important thing to know about Indigenous charities and communities, is how they know what their communities need and have the ability to develop solutions. This was demonstrated during COVID-19, when Indigenous people faced significantly higher inequities in health and socioeconomics. Indigenous organizations quickly stepped up to reduce vulnerabilities and many were the first to establish COVID-19 vaccine clinics.

An innovative example is the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre, located in Winnipeg, which set up an emergency food program that made daily deliveries,

and administered hundreds of vaccines and COVID-19 tests weekly with wraparound supports. And, Swan Lake First Nation, which purchased a mobile butcher trailer with thermal and sanitary capability for chilling and cutting bison to distribute to community members to help address food insecurity.

Having said that, we know that health and socioeconomics will continue to worsen as a result of the pandemic. More resources will be needed to support Indigenous charities and communities. Now is the time we need leadership in the sector to advocate and prioritize the needs of Indigenous charities and communities. This will require capacity building and resources to ensure Indigenous people are included and leading in the sector.

## What can you do?

When people ask me what they can do my answer is always the same. Be willing to have an honest assessment of your organization’s cultural competency. Is there a willingness to learn and opportunity for greater education on the important role that Indigenous-led organizations play in the sector? A helpful initiative was developed by the Association of Fundraising Professionals Manitoba Chapter who partnered with the Indigenous Leadership Development Institute to offer online cultural training entitled, [Indigenous Cultural Training at AFP Chapters](#): Canadian History Re-learned. I highly recommend the course.

Read the [94 Calls to Action Truth and Reconciliation](#), the [231 Calls to Justice](#) for the Murdered Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, and the United Nation’s [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (UNDRIP).

As fundraisers, advance partnerships and collaboration with local Indigenous organizations and communities by reaching out and building respectful relationships. Educate donors on the innovative work that is taking place in Indigenous organizations and communities.

I feel very fortunate to be working in this sector with so many groups and individuals working hard for our future generations.

## Note

1 <https://fncaringsociety.com/information-sheets>

# L'Année PhiLanthropique

## The PhiLanthropic Year



**PhiLab**

Réseau canadien de recherche  
partenariale sur la philanthropie

Canadian Philanthropy Partnership  
Research Network



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