

L'Année PhiLanthropique The PhiLanthropic Year

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PhiLab

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À propos du PhiLab | About PhiLab

Le Réseau canadien de recherche partenariale sur la philanthropie (PhiLab) a été créé en 2014 dans le cadre d'une demande de financement « développement de partenariat » obtenue du Conseil de recherche en sciences humaines du Canada (CRSH). Ce financement a été reconduit en 2018 pour six années par l'obtention d'une subvention « partenariat » du CRSH. Depuis 2024, PhiLab profite de financements octroyés par différentes fondations dont la Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon et la Fondation Mirella et Lino Saputo. Le Réseau pancanadien constitue un lieu de recherche partenarial, de partage d'information, de mobilisation des connaissances sur la philanthropie subventionnaire et de formation à la recherche. Les activités de recherche conduites en partenariat valorisent les connaissances auprès d'une diversité d'acteurs sociaux, d'agences gouvernementales, milieux universitaires et petits et grands médias. La valorisation des connaissances, via des outils de communication novateurs et accessibles, permet une diffusion élargie des connaissances produites ou déjà existantes. 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) was created in 2014 as part of a “partnership development” funding application obtained from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). This funding was renewed in 2018 for six years by obtaining a “partnership” grant from SSHRC. Since 2024, PhiLab has benefited from funding granted by various foundations, including the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon and the Mirella and Lino Saputo Foundation. The Pan-Canadian Network is a hub for partnership research, information sharing, knowledge mobilization on grantmaking philanthropy and research training. Research activities carried out in partnership promote knowledge among a wide range of social players, government agencies, academics and small and large media. The valorization of knowledge, via innovative and accessible communication tools, enables a wider dissemination of the knowledge produced or already existing.

Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

À propos de L'Année PhiLanthropique

Par : **Elisabeth Robinot et Adam Saifer**

Codirecteurs du PhiLab

Codirecteurs de publication



L'Année PhiLanthropique est une publication spécialisée dans la diffusion de connaissances scientifiques et professionnelles dans le domaine de la philanthropie et plus précisément de la philanthropie subventionnaire. La revue répond au besoin de rendre disponible, en français et en anglais, des connaissances principalement produites ou mises en valeur par des activités scientifiques réalisées au sein du Réseau canadien de recherche partenariale sur la philanthropie (PhiLab).

L'Année PhiLanthropique publie des travaux de nature scientifique ou professionnelle répondant aux exigences de base de l'édition scientifique. La revue dispose d'un comité de lecture et de politiques éditoriales qui assurent un niveau de qualité certain aux textes qui y sont publiés. Ces derniers prennent différentes formes – articles, chroniques, comptes rendus critiques – et s'inscrivent dans un créneau qui se situe entre les publications scientifiques formelles et informelles. Il s'agit donc de textes qui, tout en respectant les normes éthiques de la production scientifique et professionnelle, se veulent plus courts – une dizaine de pages – et plus légers (moins grande emphase sur les dimensions méthodologiques et plus sur les résultats ou l'analyse) que la moyenne des productions scientifiques.

Produite une fois par année (hors éditions spéciales), chaque numéro de la revue est pris en charge par une équipe éditoriale différente rattachée au PhiLab. L'équipe, en mode direction, est chargée de la conception, de la production et de la gestion d'un appel à contribution.

En publiant L'Année PhiLanthropique nous nous assurons d'agir en complémentarité avec une offre de publications scientifiques, ou visant le grand public, déjà existante. En se voulant accessible en ligne et offerte gratuitement, la revue ouvre la voie à la diffusion de contenus générés par ou découlant d'activités de recherche majoritairement conduites en partenariat avec des acteurs de l'écosystème philanthropique.

L'Année PhiLanthropique s'inscrit dans la stratégie globale mise en place par PhiLab afin de mieux faire connaître les réalisations et enjeux de l'écosystème philanthropique canadien tout en ouvrant la voie à sa mise en comparaison avec des pratiques existantes ailleurs dans le monde. Enfin, rappelons que la création de notre revue n'aurait pas été possible sans l'appui du Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada (CRSH).

Elisabeth Robinot, de l'Université du Québec à Montréal, et Adam Saifer, de la University of British Columbia (Okanagan Campus), sont les codirecteurs du PhiLab. À titre de codirecteurs, ils veillent à la réalisation et à la coordination des activités de recherche et de valorisation des connaissances inscrites dans les programmes de recherche menés en partenariat et soutenus financièrement par le CRSH et les partenaires du projet. Elisabeth Robinot est aussi la cofondatrice de l'Observatoire de la Philanthropie, une cellule d'études et de veille stratégique en philanthropie qui associe des chercheur-e-s de l'ESG UQAM, de l'UQTR et d'autres universités internationales.

About The PhiLanthropic Year

By: **Elisabeth Robinot & Adam Saifer**

Co-directors of the PhiLab Network

Publication Co-directors

The PhiLanthropic Year is a journal that specializes in the transmission of scientific and professional knowledge within the philanthropic sector, and more specifically, grantmaking philanthropy. The journal meets the need of rendering available, in French and English, knowledge mainly produced by or highlighted by the scientific activities that take place within the Canadian Philanthropy Partnership Research Network (PhiLab).

The PhiLanthropic Year publishes scientific and professional articles that meet the basic requirements of scientific publication. The journal has a peer-reviewed committee as well as basic editorial guidelines that ensure a quality standard for the texts it publishes. These latter take on different forms - articles, chronicles, critical book reviews- and find themselves somewhere between formal and informal scientific articles. These texts, while respecting the ethical norms of scientific and professional publications, are shorter - a dozen pages or less - and lighter (less emphasis on the methodological aspects and more on the results or analysis) than your average scientific publication.

Published annually, each issue is taken in charge by a different editorial team that is connected to PhiLab. The team, from a management point of view, is responsible for the design as well as the creation and management of a call for contributions. By publishing The PhiLanthropic Year, we make sure to act as a complement to the existing offer of scientific literature and publications directed to the general public. By being available online and offered free of charge, the journal paves the way to the dissemination of content generated by or stemming from research mainly conducted in partnership with actors of the philanthropic ecosystem.

The PhiLanthropic Year is part of a global strategy implemented by PhiLab to spread awareness of the successes as much as of the issues of the Canadian philanthropic ecosystem while paving the way for comparisons with existing practices from around the world. Finally, let us recognize that the creation of our journal could not have been possible without the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).



Elisabeth Robinot, from the Université du Québec à Montréal, and Adam Saifer, from the University of British Columbia (Okanagan Campus), are the co-directors of PhiLab. As co-directors, they oversee the implementation and coordination of research and knowledge dissemination activities included in the research programs led in partnership with and financially supported by the SSHRC and the project's partners. Elisabeth Robinot is also co-founder of the *Observatoire de la Philanthropie*, a philanthropy research and strategic monitoring unit that brings together researchers from ESG UQAM, UQTR and other international universities.



Editorial team

As PhiLab's co-coordinator, Laurence Croteau is responsible for all of the Network's communications, be it external or internal. This includes managing the website, newsletter, social media, publications, etc. In addition, she is responsible for building connections among and between PhiLab's members and partners to ensure a better mobilization strategy.



David Grant-Poitras is a doctoral candidate in sociology at the Université du Québec à Montréal. David has been working for several years as a research agent at PhiLab. His research focuses on the initiatives and innovations deployed by philanthropic actors to reduce social inequalities and combat climate change.



Katherine Lacefield is the founder and principal consultant of Just Be Cause Consulting, a philanthropic management consulting firm. She supports organizations in their development strategy, with a particular focus on a human and relational approach to building loyalty. For 6 years, Katherine was PhiLab's co-coordinator and communications manager.



Michele Fugiel Gartner is the Lead Researcher at Philanthropic Foundations Canada. She holds a PhD from the University of St Andrews, School of Management, where she studied the experiences of CEOs in UK family foundations and conceptualized the role of foundation professionals. She is an Adjunct Research Professor at the School of Public Policy and Administration at Carleton University, and teaches nonprofit management and social innovation at Mount Royal University in Calgary, AB.



Elisabeth Robinot has been co-director of PhiLab since June 2024. Elisabeth is a full professor in the Marketing Department at ESG UQAM. In 2018, she co-founded the Observatoire de la philanthropie with Professor Léo Trespeuch (EGUQTR). Her work focuses on giving practices and their new formats, as well as the transformational dynamics of partnerships between foundations and businesses.



Diane Alalouf-Hall has been a researcher at PhiLab since 2016. She initially served as coordinator of the PhiLab Network, and then of PhiLab Québec for five years. Starting in 2023, she served as director of PhiLab Québec until the regional hubs were closed as part of a restructuring aimed at breaking down silos within the network and strengthening cross-functional collaboration. Since 2025, she has been helping to coordinate research, knowledge translation, and knowledge transfer activities within the network.

Edition's Main Artist



Morgane Pellerin worked on research and illustration projects for PhiLab before beginning her PhD in sociology at the University of Montreal in the fall of 2025. Her current research focuses on the housing experiences of women with autism and on neuro-inclusion in youth centers. She was delighted to collaborate with PhiLab once again for this new edition!

Équipe éditoriale

En tant que co-coordinatrice de PhiLab, Laurence Croteau est responsable de toutes les communications du réseau, qu'elles soient externes ou internes. Cela comprend la gestion du site web, de l'infolettre, des médias sociaux, des publications, etc. En outre, elle est chargée d'établir des liens entre les membres et les partenaires du PhiLab afin d'assurer une meilleure stratégie de mobilisation.

David Grant-Poitras est candidat au doctorat en sociologie à l'Université du Québec à Montréal. David travaille depuis plusieurs années comme auxiliaire de recherche au PhiLab. Il y conduit diverses activités de recherche qui s'intéressent aux initiatives et innovations que déploient les acteurs philanthropiques pour réduire les inégalités sociales et lutter contre les changements climatiques.

Katherine Lacefield est la fondatrice et consultante principale de Just Be Cause Consulting, une firme de consultation en gestion philanthropique. Elle soutient les organismes dans leur stratégie de développement, avec une attention particulière sur une approche humaine et relationnelle de fidélisation. Pendant 6 ans Katherine a été la co-coordonnatrice et responsable des communications du PhiLab.

Michele Fugiel Gartner est chargée principale de recherche à Fondations Philanthropiques Canada. Elle est titulaire d'un doctorat de l'Université de St Andrews, School of Management, où elle a étudié les expériences des PDG de fondations familiales britanniques et conceptualisé le rôle des professionnels des fondations. Elle est professeure adjointe de recherche à la School of Public Policy and Administration de l'Université Carleton et enseigne la gestion des organisations à but non lucratif et l'innovation sociale à l'Université Mount Royal.

Elisabeth Robinot est codirectrice du PhiLab depuis juin 2024. Elisabeth est professeure titulaire au Département de marketing de l'ESG UQAM. En 2018, elle a cofondé l'Observatoire de la philanthropie avec le professeur Léo Trespeuch (EGUQTR). Ses travaux portent sur les pratiques de don et leurs nouveaux formats, ainsi que sur les dynamiques transformationnelles des partenariats entre fondations et entreprises.

Diane Alalouf-Hall est chercheure au PhiLab depuis 2016. Elle a d'abord occupé les fonctions de coordonnatrice du Réseau PhiLab, puis du PhiLab Québec pendant cinq ans. À partir de 2023, elle a assumé la direction du PhiLab Québec, jusqu'à la fermeture des hubs régionaux dans le cadre d'une restructuration visant à décloisonner le réseau et à renforcer les dynamiques transversales de collaboration. Depuis 2025, elle contribue à la coordination des activités de recherche, de valorisation et de transfert des connaissances au sein du réseau.

Artiste de cette édition

Morgane Pellerin a effectué des contrats de recherche et d'illustration pour le PhiLab avant de se tourner vers le doctorat en sociologie à l'Université de Montréal depuis l'automne 2025. Ses recherches en cours portent sur les parcours de logement de femmes autistes et sur la neuro-inclusion en contexte de maison des jeunes. Elle a pris plaisir à collaborer avec le PhiLab une fois de plus pour cette nouvelle édition!



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Beyond Response: Philanthropy, Crisis, and the Conditions That Produce Them

By Adam Saifer

Co-director of PhiLab

Publication co-director



Adam Saifer is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Management at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan. Prior to joining the Faculty in January 2023, he was a postdoctoral fellow with PhiLab, as well as the Director of PhiLab Quebec. Adam is an interdisciplinary scholar whose research draws on theories of capitalism, nation, and race to critically explore organizational phenomena in the nonprofit and philanthropic sector. His research is oriented around themes of social and economic justice, as well as research partnerships with community-led organizations.

“Crisis” is one of the most ubiquitous terms in modern philanthropic discourse. It is frequently invoked yet rarely defined. In recent years, for example, scholars have oriented their work around the COVID-19 crisis (e.g., Finchum-Mason et al., 2020; Hampton et al., 2024), the climate crisis (e.g., Monier, 2025; Morena, 2023), a crisis of democracy (e.g., Eisen et al., 2019; Reich, 2019; Stid, 2024), the refugee crisis (e.g., Alexander, 2020; Theodossopoulos, 2016), and a seemingly recurrent carousel of financial crises (e.g., Godfrey & Williamson, 2020; Osili et al., 2019). Likewise, pressing domestic social policy issues such as poverty, racial inequality, lack of affordable housing, and opioid addiction are increasingly characterized as “crises” in their own right to be acted upon by philanthropy (e.g., Francis, 2016; Ulrichs, 2026).

Against this backdrop, philanthropic practitioners have also turned inward, reflecting on their own practices and on philanthropy’s institutional role and legitimacy, in what some have come to see as philanthropy’s own “existential crisis” (e.g., McQueen, 2021; Mussadique, 2025). The proliferation of the term across such a range of domains invites a question that philanthropic discourse has largely left unasked: what do we actually mean by crisis?

The origins of the word “crisis” can be found in Ancient Greece, where it carried distinct meanings in legal, medical, and theological contexts (Koselleck, 2006). From the seventeenth century onward, the term expanded as a metaphor into politics, history, psychology, ecology, and economics, each carrying its own logic and, crucially, its own set of implied prescriptions for response. A political crisis signified a fundamental constitutional rupture that threatened the survival of a political order. Philosophers of history understood crisis as a unique temporal threshold after which history is permanently altered. Psychological frameworks recast crisis as a necessary and generative turning point in an individual’s identity formation rather than a purely pathological rupture (e.g., Erikson, 1968), while ecological thinkers introduced planetary thresholds, tipping points, and potentially irreversible changes to the biosphere (Moore, 2017).

Crisis has also played a constitutive role in the development of economic thought, with each major intervention redefining not only what crises are but what they demand in response. Classical economists like Ricardo and Mill viewed crises as real but self-correcting, requiring patience rather than intervention. Marx rejected this entirely, insisting that crises were structural contradictions of capital accumulation destined to recur with increasing severity. Bagehot shifted the frame from correction to containment, arguing that central banks should flood the financial system with emergency lending during panics rather than wait for markets to stabilize on their own. Keynes went further, calling for active counter-cyclical state intervention to sustain demand and prevent crises from becoming depressions. Hayek and Friedman inverted this logic, arguing that government intervention was itself the source of economic instability. Their prescription—cutting public spending, privatizing state functions, and leaving markets to self-correct—became the dominant policy response to crisis from the 1980s onward (Harvey, 2007). Each register, in other words, encodes a theory of cause and a theory of remedy. The difficulty is that contemporary crises routinely implicate all of them at once.

The term “polycrisis”—first developed by French philosophers Edgar Morin and Anne Brigitte Kern and subsequently popularized by historian Adam Tooze (2022)—captures this reality: multiple crises governed by seemingly distinct logics interacting in such a way that the overall impact exceeds the sum of its parts. Contemporary crises illustrate how political, psychological, ecological, and economic dimensions are mutually constitutive rather than merely concurrent. The War in Iran offers a vivid illustration: a humanitarian catastrophe simultaneously triggers a global economic crisis as Iran closes the Strait of Hormuz, with disproportionate impact on Global South nations dependent on energy exports; generates political crises in Iran, the US, and Gulf States; accelerates ecological destruction through bombardment and the destruction of oil refineries; and reshapes domestic political priorities in distant countries, including Canada’s pivot toward pipeline expansion. The rise of AI illustrates that this entanglement is not confined to geopolitical conflict. Here, we see rapid but bubble-prone economic growth concentrated in a handful of companies; structural job displacement through automation; the massive ecological footprint of data centres; algorithmic

amplification of polarization, misinformation, and psychological distress; and a fundamental crisis of democratic legitimacy, as transformative decisions affecting everyone are made by a small group of tech oligarchs unaccountable to the public. These intersecting crises are not exceptional; rather, they are characteristic of the present conjuncture.

Philanthropic intervention necessarily occurs at this intersection. The contributions gathered in this special issue take up these questions from a range of disciplinary and regional perspectives. Many examine philanthropy in its more familiar register as a responder to crisis, mapping how foundations, donors, and civil society organizations have mobilized in the face of humanitarian emergencies, democratic backsliding, ecological disruption, and economic precarity. Others push further, asking what it would mean to respond not just to crises as they present themselves, but to the conditions that produce them.

But the special issue also asks more pointed questions of the philanthropic sector itself: what is philanthropy’s relationship not just to crisis response, but to crisis itself? Philanthropic endowments invested in markets may actively contribute to the environmental destruction, labour displacement, and inequality that the same foundations seek to address through grantmaking. The capacity of private institutions to redirect public tax expenditure toward causes of their own choosing raises fundamental questions about democratic legitimacy. Namely, is this a symptom of a crisis in democracy, or a potential corrective to it? Philanthropy may function as a safety valve, absorbing the social pressures generated by crisis just enough to forestall the structural change that would address root causes. Philanthropy is thus not only a responder to crisis but potentially a symptom of it, and in some configurations, a perpetuator of it.

The contributions gathered here do not seek to resolve these tensions. What they offer instead is a more precise vocabulary for naming them, and a more honest reckoning with what it would mean for philanthropy to respond not just to crises as they appear, but to the conditions that produce them.

Lastly, thank you to all the contributors—the researchers, practitioners, community members, artists, activists, and editors—who made this issue of the PhiLanthropic Year possible.

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Au-delà de la simple réaction : philanthropie, crises et les conditions qui les engendrent

By Adam Saifer

Co-directeur du PhiLab

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Le terme « crise » est l'un des plus omniprésents dans le discours philanthropique moderne. Il est fréquemment invoqué, mais rarement défini. Ces dernières années, par exemple, les chercheurs ont axé leurs travaux sur la crise de la COVID-19 (Finchum-Mason et al., 2020 ; Hampton et al., 2024), la crise climatique (Monier, 2025 ; Morena, 2023), la crise de la démocratie (Eisen et al., 2019 ; Reich, 2019 ; Stid, 2024), la crise des réfugiés (Alexander, 2020 ; Theodossopoulos, 2016) et un cycle apparemment récurrent de crises financières (Godfrey & Williamson, 2020 ; Osili et al., 2019). De même, des questions urgentes de politique sociale nationale telles que la pauvreté, les inégalités raciales, le manque de logements abordables et la dépendance aux opiacés sont de plus en plus qualifiées de « crises »

à part entière, sur lesquelles la philanthropie doit agir (Francis, 2016 ; Ulrichs, 2026). Dans ce contexte, les acteurs du secteur philanthropique se sont également tournés vers l'introspection, réfléchissant à leurs propres pratiques ainsi qu'au rôle institutionnel et à la légitimité de la philanthropie, dans ce que certains en sont venus à considérer comme la « crise existentielle » de la philanthropie elle-même (McQueen, 2021 ; Mussadique, 2025). La prolifération du terme dans un éventail aussi large de domaines soulève une question préalable que le discours philanthropique a largement laissée de côté : qu'entend-on réellement par « crise » ?

Les origines du mot « crise » remontent à la Grèce antique, où il revêtait des significations distinctes dans les contextes juridique, médical et théologique (Koselleck, 2006). À partir du XVII^e siècle, le terme s'est étendu, sous forme de métaphore, à la politique, à l'histoire, à la psychologie, à l'écologie et à l'économie, chacun de ces domaines lui conférant sa propre logique et, surtout, son propre ensemble de prescriptions implicites quant à la réponse à apporter. Une crise politique signifiait une rupture constitutionnelle fondamentale qui menaçait la survie d'un ordre politique. Les philosophes de l'histoire concevaient la crise comme un seuil temporel unique au-delà duquel l'histoire est définitivement modifiée. Les cadres psychologiques ont redéfini la crise comme un tournant nécessaire et génératif dans la formation

de l'identité d'un individu plutôt que comme une rupture purement pathologique (Erikson, 1968), tandis que les penseurs écologistes ont introduit les seuils planétaires, les points de basculement et les changements potentiellement irréversibles de la biosphère (Moore, 2017).

La crise a également joué un rôle déterminant dans l'évolution de la pensée économique, chaque intervention majeure redéfinissant non seulement ce qu'est une crise, mais aussi les réponses qu'elle exige. Les économistes classiques comme Ricardo et Mill considéraient les crises comme réelles mais auto-correctrices, nécessitant de la patience plutôt qu'une intervention. Marx rejetait totalement cette vision, insistant sur le fait que les crises étaient des contradictions structurelles de l'accumulation du capital, vouées à se reproduire avec une gravité croissante. Bagehot a réorienté le débat, passant de la correction à la maîtrise, en soutenant que les banques centrales devraient inonder le système financier de prêts d'urgence en période de panique plutôt qu'attendre que les marchés se stabilisent d'eux-mêmes. Keynes est allé plus loin, appelant à une intervention étatique anticyclique active pour soutenir la demande et empêcher les crises de se transformer en dépressions. Hayek et Friedman ont inversé cette logique, affirmant que l'intervention gouvernementale était elle-même la source de l'instabilité économique. Leur prescription, réduire les dépenses publiques, privatiser les fonctions de l'État et laisser les marchés s'autoréguler, est devenue la réponse politique dominante à la crise à partir des années 1980 (Harvey, 2007). En d'autres termes, chaque registre encode une théorie de la cause et une théorie du remède. La difficulté réside dans le fait que les crises contemporaines les impliquent systématiquement toutes à la fois.

Le terme « polycrise », d'abord développé par les philosophes français Edgar Morin et Anne-Brigitte Kern, puis popularisé par l'historien Adam Tooze (2022), rend compte de cette réalité : des crises multiples régies par des logiques apparemment distinctes interagissent de telle sorte que l'impact global dépasse la somme de ses parties. Les crises contemporaines illustrent comment les dimensions politiques, psychologiques, écologiques et économiques sont mutuellement constitutives plutôt que simplement concomitantes. La guerre en Iran en offre une illustration frappante : une catastrophe humanitaire déclenche simultanément une crise économique

mondiale alors que l'Iran ferme le détroit d'Ormuz, avec un impact disproportionné sur les pays du Sud dépendants des exportations d'énergie ; elle génère des crises politiques en Iran, aux États-Unis et dans les États du Golfe ; elle accélère la destruction écologique par les bombardements et la destruction des raffineries de pétrole ; et elle redéfinit les priorités politiques nationales dans des pays lointains, notamment le virage du Canada vers l'expansion des pipelines. L'essor de l'IA montre que cet enchevêtrement ne se limite pas aux conflits géopolitiques. On observe ici une croissance économique rapide mais sujette à des bulles, concentrée dans une poignée d'entreprises ; des suppressions d'emplois structurelles dues à l'automatisation ; l'empreinte écologique massive des centres de données ; l'amplification algorithmique de la polarisation, de la désinformation et de la détresse psychologique ; et une crise fondamentale de la légitimité démocratique, car des décisions transformatrices affectant tout le monde sont prises par un petit groupe d'oligarques technologiques qui n'ont de comptes à rendre qu'à eux-mêmes. Ces crises qui s'entrecroisent ne sont pas exceptionnelles ; elles sont plutôt caractéristiques de la conjoncture actuelle.

L'intervention philanthropique se situe à cette intersection. Les contributions rassemblées dans ce numéro spécial abordent ces questions sous divers angles disciplinaires et régionaux. Beaucoup examinent la philanthropie sous son aspect de réponse à la crise, en cartographiant la manière dont les fondations, les donateurs et les organisations de la société civile se sont mobilisés face aux urgences humanitaires, au recul de la démocratie, aux perturbations écologiques et à la précarité économique. D'autres vont plus loin, en se demandant ce que signifierait de répondre non seulement aux crises telles qu'elles se présentent, mais aussi aux conditions qui les engendrent.

Ce numéro spécial pose également des questions plus pointues au secteur philanthropique lui-même : quelle est la relation de la philanthropie non seulement à la réponse aux crises, mais à la crise elle-même ? Les dotations philanthropiques investies sur les marchés peuvent contribuer activement à la destruction de l'environnement, au déplacement de main-d'œuvre et aux inégalités que ces mêmes fondations cherchent à combattre par le biais de subventions. La capacité des institutions privées à réorienter les dépenses publiques financées par l'impôt vers des causes de leur choix soulève des questions fondamentales sur la légitimité démocratique. À savoir : s'agit-il

d'un symptôme d'une crise de la démocratie, ou d'un remède potentiel à celle-ci ? La philanthropie peut fonctionner comme une soupape de sécurité, absorbant les pressions sociales générées par la crise juste assez pour empêcher le changement structurel qui s'attaquerait aux causes profondes. La philanthropie n'est donc pas seulement une réponse à la crise, mais potentiellement un symptôme de celle-ci, et dans certaines configurations, un facteur de sa perpétuation.

Les contributions rassemblées ici ne cherchent pas à résoudre ces tensions. Elles proposent plutôt un vocabulaire plus précis pour les nommer, et une réflexion plus honnête sur ce que signifierait pour la philanthropie de répondre non seulement aux crises telles qu'elles se présentent, mais aussi aux conditions qui les produisent. Enfin, merci à tous les contributrices et contributeurs, chercheur.e.s, praticien.ne.s, membres de la communauté, artistes, militant.e.s, rédactrices et rédacteurs qui ont rendu possible ce numéro de L'Année PhiLanthropique.

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La philanthropie à l'épreuve de sa cohérence : protéger tous les maillons de la chaîne du don

Une Charte des droits des personnes professionnelles en philanthropie

Par Daniel H. Lanteigne, ASC, C.Dir., CRHA, CFRE, MPNL



Daniel H. Lanteigne fait partie de ces leaders qui ne se contentent pas de faire évoluer la philanthropie. Il contribue activement à la redéfinir. Stratège reconnu et conseiller auprès de directions générales et de conseils d'administration, il intervient au cœur des décisions qui structurent les organisations philanthropiques au Canada. Il apporte un regard lucide, questionne les angles morts et pousse les organisations à élever leurs standards dans un secteur en pleine transformation. À l'intersection de la gouvernance, des ressources humaines et des stratégies philanthropiques, il accompagne des organisations dans des moments charnières et contribue à renforcer leur capacité à décider, à se structurer et à durer. Auteur et expert invité dans *Les Affaires*, il participe activement au débat public, notamment sur les enjeux de pouvoir, de santé mentale et de durabilité du secteur. Titulaire d'une maîtrise en philanthropie de l'Université Carleton et détenteur des titres ASC, C.Dir., CFRE et CRHA, il siège notamment au conseil d'administration d'Ingenium Canada. Daniel H. Lanteigne s'impose comme une voix influente qui invite le secteur à plus de lucidité, de rigueur et de cohérence.

Qui sont les personnes professionnelles en philanthropie?

Dans le présent article, cette expression renvoie principalement aux personnes dont les fonctions comprennent la collecte de fonds ou le développement philanthropique, que ces responsabilités soient exercées à temps plein ou intégrées à d'autres rôles organisationnels.

Introduction

Quand une réussite sectorielle révèle un angle mort

Depuis plus de trente ans, la philanthropie organisée s'est dotée d'un outil structurant devenu quasi universel, la Charte des droits du donateur (AFP, 1993). Élaborée par les principales associations professionnelles au début des années 1990, elle s'inscrit dans un mouvement d'autorégulation du secteur philanthropique visant à renforcer la transparence, le respect et la confiance du public dans la relation de don. Aujourd'hui, cette Charte est

rarement remise en question. Elle est enseignée, citée et intégrée aux pratiques comme une évidence.

Cette réussite démontre la capacité du secteur philanthropique à se doter de cadres éthiques robustes lorsqu'un enjeu est reconnu comme structurant. Aucune remise en question ici. Mais elle révèle aussi, avec le recul et par contraste, un déséquilibre préoccupant. Alors que l'expérience des personnes donatrices a été largement normée, protégée et institutionnalisée, les conditions éthiques et professionnelles de celles et ceux qui portent la philanthropie au quotidien demeurent, pour l'essentiel, non nommées. Comme si le don et sa provenance concentraient à eux seuls l'attention éthique, reléguant au second plan celles et ceux qui sont au cœur des relations philanthropiques, et qui demeurent les grands absents des cadres de protection et de reconnaissance. Ce silence n'est pas anodin. Il révèle ce que le secteur peine encore à nommer collectivement.

La philanthropie n'est pourtant pas dépourvue de repères normatifs. Les associations professionnelles ont élaboré et revoient régulièrement leurs codes de déontologie (AFP, 2023). Mais ces cadres restent principalement orientés vers les obligations professionnelles et la protection des organisations et du secteur, beaucoup moins vers la protection de celles et ceux qui les incarnent. Lorsque les relations se déséquilibrent, que les pressions s'installent ou que le pouvoir conféré par l'argent étire les limites de la bienveillance affichée, ces cadres montrent leurs limites. Dans un secteur où l'argent est perçu comme un bien à préserver à tout prix, le pouvoir qu'il confère demeure largement impensé, laissant les personnes professionnelles exposées dans des zones où l'inacceptable peut s'installer (Lanteigne, 2026).

Le coût humain

Oser nommer les tensions structurelles du travail philanthropique

Le travail philanthropique s'exerce au cœur de tensions structurelles rarement nommées (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Il conjugue des attentes financières élevées, une charge émotionnelle importante liée aux causes soutenues, une proximité constante avec le pouvoir du don et une responsabilité morale envers les communautés bénéficiaires. Cette combinaison crée un terrain propice aux déséquilibres, un statu quo qui ne peut plus être maintenu. Mais si nous souhaitons avoir des résultats différents, encore faut-

il avoir la volonté de penser autrement.

Depuis plusieurs années, les indicateurs de détresse psychologique et d'épuisement professionnel chez les personnes œuvrant en collecte de fonds se multiplient (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Ils se manifestent par une fatigue chronique, une détresse psychologique marquée, un sentiment de perte de sens, une pression constante à performer et une difficulté à poser des limites dans des contextes où l'engagement personnel est souvent confondu avec une disponibilité sans fin (Lanteigne, 2025). À cette réalité s'ajoute une forme plus silencieuse d'usure, celle de la fatigue de compassion (Skovholt et al., 2016 et Lanteigne, 2026), liée à une exposition continue aux besoins, aux vulnérabilités et aux récits difficiles des causes soutenues. Sans dramatiser, il devient difficile d'ignorer que le secteur philanthropique, pourtant fondé sur le mieux-être collectif, peine encore à reconnaître et à soutenir pleinement la santé psychologique de celles et ceux qui le font vivre. Les faits ne sont plus au niveau « cordonnier mal chaussé », ils sont à un stade où l'aveuglement volontaire et le silence qui perdurent sont complices d'une culture qui doit changer.

Ce questionnement dépasse désormais les trajectoires individuelles. Depuis quelques années, un mouvement de remise en question s'amorce au sein même de la profession, où les personnes en collecte de fonds interrogent non seulement ce qu'elles font, mais aussi la manière et les conditions dans lesquelles elles sont appelées à le faire (Breeze, 2017).

Le pouvoir du don

Quand l'argent redéfinit les rapports

Le don confère du pouvoir. Ce constat demeure vrai, même lorsque l'intention est affichée comme généreuse. Les travaux récents sur la philanthropie confirment d'ailleurs que le pouvoir s'y manifeste sous des formes multiples. Financières, relationnelles et symboliques. Souvent implicites, mais bien réelles dans les dynamiques organisationnelles (Dula et al., 2025). Au cœur des tensions observées dans le travail philanthropique se trouve cette dynamique centrale, le pouvoir conféré par l'argent (Emerson, 1962). Le don, même lorsqu'il est animé des meilleures intentions, introduit une relation asymétrique. Lorsqu'il est mal encadré, ce pouvoir peut glisser vers le contrôle, se traduire par des attentes implicites, une tolérance accrue à l'inacceptable ou une pression à maintenir des relations coûte que coûte. Ces tensions ne sont

pas propres au secteur. Elles renvoient à des dilemmes moraux documentés, notamment lorsque l'origine ou les conditions d'un don soulèvent des enjeux éthiques complexes (Rahwan & Leuker, 2023).

Cette dynamique est universelle et dépasse largement la philanthropie. Mais lorsque la frontière entre collaboration philanthropique et rapport de force devient floue, ce sont souvent les personnes professionnelles qui absorbent les tensions, faute de cadres explicites pour les soutenir.

Les situations documentées de pressions indues, de comportements inacceptables tolérés ou de silences organisationnels prolongés rappellent que la philanthropie n'échappe pas aux rapports de force. Or, lorsque ces situations surgissent, les mécanismes de régulation existants se révèlent souvent mal outillés pour intervenir de manière concrète et protectrice. Il en résulte un flou et un vide où les personnes professionnelles se retrouvent exposées, sans repères clairs ni appui suffisant, face à des dynamiques qu'elles n'ont ni le pouvoir ni la légitimité de corriger seules (Lipsky, 1969).

La confiance comme levier

Ce qui a changé, et ce qui reste à faire

Il serait toutefois réducteur de dresser un portrait uniquement sombre. Le secteur philanthropique a aussi connu des avancées significatives. Les approches fondées sur la confiance et l'espace permettant une réflexion et une remise en question de la culture philanthropique ont contribué à transformer certaines pratiques. Alors que personne n'osait critiquer le modèle il y a quelques années, plusieurs s'affairent désormais à secouer les colonnes du temple. Non pas pour affaiblir, mais pour oser faire mieux.

Ces mouvements ont permis de reconnaître les limites de modèles longtemps tenus pour acquis. Ils ont ouvert des brèches nécessaires, démontrant qu'une philanthropie fondée sur la confiance peut produire des relations plus saines et plus cohérentes avec les valeurs qu'elle revendique. Toutefois, cette transformation demeure encore largement centrée sur les pratiques de financement et les relations externes. Elle peine à se traduire pleinement dans les conditions d'exercice du travail philanthropique lui-même. Ce n'était probablement pas l'intention au départ. Mais, peut-être, sommes-nous collectivement prêts à considérer une philanthropie fondée sur la

confiance 2.0?

Ce qui a été tenté, et pourquoi cela ne suffit plus

Des signaux clairs, mais des cadres encore fragiles

Le sujet n'est pas vierge. Depuis plus d'une décennie, quelques voix du milieu, essentiellement au sud de la frontière, ont tenté de formaliser, sous différentes formes, des chartes pour les personnes œuvrant en collecte de fonds et en développement (NonProfit Times, s.d.). Ces voix levées sont des signaux utiles. Elles disent deux choses sans détour. D'abord, le malaise est assez répandu pour que l'on éprouve le besoin de le nommer publiquement. Ensuite, ce malaise touche un noyau dur de la pratique, là où le pouvoir du don peut se transformer en contrôle, là où des comportements inacceptables peuvent être tolérés, et là où l'usure psychologique devient un risque professionnel.

Mais ces tentatives révèlent aussi une limite majeure. Tant qu'un énoncé de droits reste un exercice isolé, non concerté et non fédérateur, il demeure précaire. Il peut sensibiliser, mais il peine à devenir structurant.

C'est ici que la présente réflexion se situe, avec une intention différente. Elle reconnaît l'existence de ces travaux, mais propose un cadre distinct, ancré dans l'observation des pratiques et le contexte canadien, et surtout dans un dialogue direct et plus large avec l'ensemble des personnes gravitant autour de la philanthropie et qui ont le pouvoir d'en fixer les balises.

L'objectif n'est pas d'ajouter une liste de principes de plus, ni de décliner une liste de revendications impossibles et contraignantes. Il s'agit plutôt de formuler une Charte à la fois assez ambitieuse pour élever les pratiques, tout en demeurant suffisamment pragmatique et transposable pour s'inscrire dans des contextes organisationnels diversifiés.

Vers une symétrie assumée

De l'asymétrie implicite à la responsabilité partagée

Reconnaître des droits aux personnes professionnelles en philanthropie ne s'inscrit pas dans une démarche d'opposition, ni dans une remise en cause des acquis du secteur. Il s'agit plutôt d'un recadrage nécessaire, aujourd'hui et appelé à évoluer dans le futur. Après

avoir structuré, normé et protégé l'expérience des personnes donatrices, le secteur se trouve aujourd'hui confronté à une question de cohérence. Peut-il continuer à fonctionner durablement sans nommer explicitement les balises qui encadrent celles et ceux qui portent cette relation au quotidien?

Reconnaître ces droits ne traduit ni une défiance à l'égard des personnes donatrices ni une volonté de rigidifier la relation philanthropique. Les personnes professionnelles en philanthropie se soucient profondément des donateurs avec lesquels elles travaillent. Leur engagement repose sur le respect, l'écoute et la recherche de relations durables. Poser des limites claires ne constitue donc pas une repréaille, mais un geste de cohérence et de responsabilité envers la mission, envers les donateurs et envers soi-même.

Loin de fragiliser les relations philanthropiques, des balises claires contribuent au contraire à les sécuriser. Elles offrent un cadre partagé qui protège autant l'organisation que les personnes donatrices, en évitant que les attentes, les rôles ou les responsabilités ne reposent sur des zones grises ou des interprétations implicites.

Le choix de parler de symétrie ne renvoie pas à une égalité formelle des rôles ou des responsabilités. Il renvoie à une exigence minimale de reconnaissance. La relation philanthropique ne se limite pas à un face-à-face entre donateur et organisation, mais s'inscrit dans un système triangulaire où interagissent donateurs, organisations et professionnels, chacun influençant la dynamique globale (Chapman et al., 2022). Toute relation durable, lorsqu'elle repose sur une asymétrie de pouvoir, nécessite des repères explicites pour éviter que les décisions sensibles ne reposent uniquement sur le jugement individuel, la capacité de résistance ou la bonne volonté des personnes les plus exposées.

Cette réflexion ne concerne pas qu'un groupe marginal. Le secteur des organismes sans but lucratif et de bienfaisance représente plus de 2,7 millions d'emplois au Canada (Statistiques Canada, 2025). Si toutes ces personnes ne font pas de la collecte de fonds, toutes en subissent néanmoins les effets, directement ou indirectement. La manière dont le travail philanthropique est encadré, soutenu ou fragilisé façonne les conditions d'exercice de milliers de rôles, influence la stabilité des équipes et pèse

sur la capacité du secteur à remplir durablement sa mission.

Proposer une Charte des droits des personnes professionnelles en philanthropie ne revient donc pas à créer un nouvel idéal abstrait. Il s'agit de formaliser ce qui est déjà attendu, mais rarement nommé, afin de soutenir des pratiques plus cohérentes et plus assumées. Elle offre un point d'appui commun pour discuter des limites, des responsabilités et des conditions minimales d'exercice du travail philanthropique. Elle permet ainsi de déplacer la gestion des tensions du courage individuel vers une responsabilité organisationnelle partagée.

La Charte proposée ici se veut un cadre de référence pragmatique, éthique, aspirationnel et perfectible. Cette Charte appelle à l'appropriation plutôt qu'à l'adhésion aveugle, et est destinée à nourrir un dialogue structuré entre personnes professionnelles, directions générales et conseils d'administration.

Dans cette perspective, le programme de Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership (MPNL) de l'Université Carleton souligne la pertinence de telles démarches : « Nous accueillons favorablement les initiatives visant à formuler et à approfondir des principes favorisant une pratique philanthropique éthique, équilibrée et responsable, notamment dans la gestion des relations complexes entre donateurs, organisations et communautés. Les personnes professionnelles en philanthropie jouent un rôle essentiel dans la gestion des ressources et des relations, et une attention soutenue aux conditions dans lesquelles elles exercent leur travail est indispensable pour assurer des pratiques à la fois éthiques et efficaces. Nous saluons également l'initiative de notre diplômé Daniel H. Lantaigne, qui contribue à faire avancer une réflexion essentielle dans ce domaine, en cohérence avec l'esprit critique développé au sein du programme MPNL. »

Comme le souligne l'Association des professionnels en philanthropie – section du Québec (AFP Québec), « les principes portés par cette Charte trouvent un écho favorable au sein du milieu. Leur formalisation dans un cadre structurant constitue une contribution pertinente pour reconnaître et valoriser le rôle des personnes professionnelles en philanthropie. Cette démarche apparaît à la fois opportune et nécessaire pour soutenir l'évolution des pratiques, tout en appelant à une réflexion collective sur ses conditions

de mise en œuvre et son appropriation par les organisations. »

Dans ce contexte, marqué par une pénurie de talents et un roulement accru, l'adoption d'un cadre explicite comme celui-ci constitue un choix stratégique en matière d'attraction, de rétention et de durabilité des équipes philanthropiques (Erasmus & Howson, 2021). Elle participe à un effort collectif de crédibilisation du secteur, bien au-delà des intérêts et de la réputation d'une organisation donnée. Cette Charte ne vise pas à atténuer les exigences de performance, mais à en clarifier les conditions. Elle rappelle que des attentes élevées, pour être atteignables et soutenables, doivent s'appuyer sur des cadres clairs, des ressources adéquates et des responsabilités partagées. S'en priver, à ce stade, relèverait d'un luxe devenu difficilement défendable.

Préambule

Les personnes professionnelles en philanthropie jouent un rôle central dans la relation entre les causes, les communautés et les personnes donatrices. Leur

travail repose sur un jugement professionnel constant, des compétences relationnelles élevées et la capacité de naviguer des contextes où le pouvoir, les attentes et les responsabilités se croisent. Leur rôle implique également d'agir comme intermédiaires de confiance et alliés des personnes donatrices, dans le respect de la mission, des valeurs organisationnelles et de l'intérêt public.

La présente Charte reconnaît que la durabilité et la crédibilité de l'action philanthropique dépendent aussi des conditions dans lesquelles ce travail est exercé. Sans se substituer aux obligations légales ni aux codes déontologiques existants, elle les complète en affirmant des principes minimaux de protection, de reconnaissance et de dignité professionnelle.

Conçue comme un cadre de référence, cette Charte a pour objectif de soutenir la prise de décision, de clarifier les limites et de favoriser des relations plus équilibrées. Elle s'adresse aux personnes professionnelles, aux directions générales et aux conseils d'administration qui souhaitent disposer d'un langage commun pour encadrer l'exercice du travail philanthropique.

Charte des droits des personnes professionnelles en philanthropie

Définition

L'expression « personnes professionnelles en philanthropie » désigne les personnes dont les fonctions comprennent la collecte de fonds ou le développement philanthropique, exercées à temps plein ou intégrées à d'autres responsabilités organisationnelles.

La Charte s'adresse principalement aux personnes salariées, tout en pouvant, selon les contextes, inspirer des repères applicables aux personnes bénévoles engagées dans des activités de sollicitation philanthropique.



Principe 1 : sécurité, dignité et protection

Intention

La philanthropie ne suspend ni le respect, ni la sécurité, ni le droit à des conditions de travail saines. Les organisations ont la responsabilité de protéger les personnes professionnelles et de reconnaître que la dignité et le bien-être constituent des conditions essentielles à l'exercice durable du travail philanthropique.

Droits

1. Droit d'exercer son travail dans un environnement respectueux, sécuritaire et exempt de comportements abusifs, harcelants, discriminatoires ou intimidants, quelle qu'en soit la provenance.
2. Droit de refuser, d'interrompre ou de mettre fin à une relation philanthropique, et de signaler toute situation problématique de comportements abusifs, sans crainte de représailles.
3. Droit à des conditions de travail favorisant un équilibre sain entre vie professionnelle et personnelle, reconnaissant que le bien-être constitue une condition de pérennité du travail philanthropique.

Principe 2 : intégrité professionnelle et limites éthiques

Intention

La collecte de fonds repose sur le jugement professionnel. Ce jugement doit pouvoir s'exercer sans pression indue lorsque l'intégrité, la mission ou les communautés concernées sont en jeu.

Droits

1. Droit de participer aux décisions d'acceptation, de conditionnalité ou de refus d'un don lorsque la mission, les valeurs ou les communautés concernées sont en jeu.
2. Droit de demander une diligence raisonnable proportionnée avant d'engager l'organisation dans des relations philanthropiques sensibles ou à risque.
3. Droit de refuser toute instrumentalisation visant à contourner les politiques, la gouvernance ou les balises établies.

Principe 3 : conditions réalistes d'exercice du travail philanthropique

Intention

Des attentes crédibles et des ressources adéquates protègent autant les équipes que la mission. La performance ne peut être dissociée des conditions dans lesquelles elle est exigée.

Droits

1. Droit à des objectifs de collecte de fonds fondés sur des données probantes et alignés sur les capacités organisationnelles.
2. Droit à une charge de travail soutenable et à des priorités explicites.
3. Droit à l'accès aux outils, informations, données et délais raisonnables nécessaires à l'exercice rigoureux du travail philanthropique.

Principe 4 : évaluation juste et responsable de la performance

Intention

La performance en philanthropie est cumulative, relationnelle et stratégique. Elle ne peut être réduite à des résultats financiers de court terme.

Droits

1. Droit à une évaluation transparente fondée sur des indicateurs multiples, incluant les efforts déployés, la qualité des relations, la rétention, l'avancement stratégique et la rigueur des pratiques.
2. Droit à des attentes alignées sur les cycles réels de la philanthropie et la maturité des programmes.
3. Droit de ne pas être tenu individuellement responsable de résultats découlant de décisions, contraintes ou choix organisationnels hors de son contrôle.

Principe 5 : développement, reconnaissance et parcours professionnels

Intention

La durabilité du secteur repose sur la durabilité des carrières. Former, accompagner et reconnaître constitue une condition de qualité et de rétention.

Droits

1. Droit à des occasions de développement professionnel continu, adaptées aux moyens de l'organisation.
2. Droit à du mentorat, à du soutien de pairs ou à la participation à des réseaux professionnels ou associatifs.
3. Droit à une rémunération équitable et à des conditions de travail décentes et respectueuses, reconnues comme partie intégrante de la contribution philanthropique.

Principe 6 : culture de confiance et reconnaissance du rôle philanthropique

Intention

Une philanthropie fondée sur la confiance ne peut s'arrêter aux relations externes. Elle doit aussi se traduire dans la manière dont les organisations traitent leurs équipes.

Droits

1. Droit à une autonomie professionnelle proportionnée aux responsabilités exercées.
2. Droit à une reconnaissance explicite du rôle stratégique de la collecte de fonds par la direction et la gouvernance.
3. Droit de contribuer au dialogue professionnel et public sur le secteur, sans crainte de représailles, dans le respect des responsabilités professionnelles et des cadres établis.

Portée, limites et vigilance

Cette Charte ne constitue ni un cadre juridique ni un règlement disciplinaire. Elle ne prétend pas résoudre à elle seule l'ensemble des tensions et des enjeux du travail philanthropique, ni se substituer aux obligations légales, aux politiques organisationnelles ou aux dynamiques humaines complexes qui traversent les organisations.

Elle peut susciter des résistances, notamment dans des contextes où les ressources sont limitées ou où les rapports de pouvoir philanthropiques demeurent peu questionnés. Elle comporte également un risque d'instrumentalisation si elle est adoptée de manière symbolique, sans transformation réelle des pratiques,

de la gouvernance ou des conditions d'exercice du travail philanthropique.

L'intention de cette Charte n'est pas de judiciaireiser les relations internes ni de déplacer les tensions vers des rapports de force formels. Elle vise au contraire à offrir un langage commun et des repères partagés permettant d'aborder plus tôt, plus clairement et plus collectivement les situations sensibles, avant qu'elles ne se transforment en conflits ouverts ou en ruptures coûteuses.

C'est précisément pourquoi cette Charte se veut un outil de référence et de dialogue, appelant à l'appropriation, à l'adaptation et à une vigilance continue, afin d'éviter qu'elle ne devienne un énoncé de principes de plus, déconnecté des réalités qu'elle cherche à nommer.

Conclusion Et maintenant

La philanthropie a su, lorsqu'elle l'a jugé nécessaire, se doter de cadres clairs pour protéger ce qu'elle considérait essentiel. La question n'est donc plus de savoir si le secteur en est capable, il l'est assurément. La question est désormais celle de savoir où il choisit de placer ses balises.

Proposer une Charte des droits des personnes professionnelles en philanthropie n'appelle pas à l'adhésion immédiate. Elle invite à un déplacement. À reconnaître que certaines décisions ne devraient plus reposer uniquement sur le courage individuel, le pouvoir discrétionnaire ou le silence organisationnel. À offrir un point d'appui commun pour discuter des limites, du pouvoir et des conditions dans lesquelles la philanthropie est exercée.

Mais cette réflexion ne demeure plus théorique. Des organisations et des associations, au Québec comme ailleurs au Canada, manifestent un intérêt croissant à s'en saisir pour engager un travail concerté. Ce qui relevait jusqu'ici de prises de position isolées commence à prendre la forme d'un espace collectif de dialogue, de co-construction et, potentiellement, de structuration.

La suite n'est donc pas écrite, mais elle est désormais amorcée. Cette Charte ne demande pas d'être adoptée telle quelle, mais d'être mise à l'épreuve du réel. Débattue, enrichie, adaptée et, surtout, appropriée collectivement. Elle appelle les personnes

professionnelles, les directions générales et les conseils d'administration à se poser une question simple, mais structurante : quelles balises souhaitons-nous établir ensemble lorsque les intentions sont bonnes, mais que les effets ne le sont plus?

Ce travail ne fera pas consensus. Il n'a pas à en faire. Mais refuser d'y prendre part, à ce stade, revient à laisser d'autres décider des contours d'un enjeu qui concerne l'ensemble du secteur. Et cela aussi constitue un choix.

“

Proposer une Charte des droits des personnes professionnelles en philanthropie n'appelle pas à l'adhésion immédiate. Elle invite à un déplacement. À reconnaître que certaines décisions ne devraient plus reposer uniquement sur le courage individuel, le pouvoir discrétionnaire ou le silence organisationnel.

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When Philanthropy Must Live Up to Its Own Values: Protecting Every Link in the Chain of Giving A Charter of Rights for Philanthropy Professionals

By Daniel H. Lantaigne, ASC, C.Dir., CHRP,
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Daniel H. Lantaigne is one of those leaders who does not merely drive the evolution of philanthropy; he actively helps to redefine it. A recognized strategist and advisor to executive teams and boards of directors, he plays a central role in the decisions that shape philanthropic organizations in Canada. He offers a clear-eyed perspective, challenges blind spots, and pushes organizations to raise their standards in a sector undergoing rapid transformation. At the intersection of governance, human resources, and philanthropic strategies, he supports organizations at pivotal moments and helps strengthen their ability to make decisions, organize themselves, and ensure their long-term viability. As an author and guest expert for *Les Affaires*, he actively participates in public discourse, particularly on issues of power, mental health, and the sector's sustainability. He holds a master's degree in philanthropy from Carleton University and holds the ASC, C.Dir., CFRE, and CHRP designations; he serves on the board of directors of Ingenium Canada. Daniel H. Lantaigne has established himself as an influential voice calling for greater clarity, rigor, and consistency within the sector.

Who Are Philanthropy Professionals?

As used in this article, the term refers primarily to individuals whose responsibilities include fundraising or philanthropic development — whether those responsibilities are carried out on a full-time basis or integrated into broader organizational roles.

Introduction When Sectoral Success Reveals a Blind Spot

For over thirty years, organized philanthropy has embraced a near-universal framework: the Donor Bill of Rights (AFP, 1993). Developed by leading professional associations in the early 1990s, it emerged from a broader movement of sector self-regulation aimed at strengthening transparency, respect, and public trust in the relationship of giving. Today, this Bill of Rights is rarely questioned. It is taught, cited, and embedded in practice as a given.

This achievement demonstrates the philanthropic sector's capacity to build robust ethical frameworks when an issue is recognized as foundational. That is not in question here. But it also reveals, in hindsight and by contrast, a troubling imbalance. While the experience of donors has been extensively defined, protected, and institutionalized, the ethical and professional conditions of those who carry philanthropy forward day after day remain, for the most part, unnamed. As though the gift itself—and its origin—commanded the sector's entire ethical attention, pushing to the margins those at the heart of philanthropic relationships, who remain conspicuously absent from frameworks of protection and recognition. That silence is not incidental. It reflects what the sector has yet to name collectively.

Philanthropy is not without normative reference points. Professional associations have developed and regularly revisited their codes of ethics (AFP, 2023). But these frameworks remain primarily oriented toward professional obligations and the protection of organizations and the sector as a whole—far less toward the protection of the people who give them life. When relationships become unbalanced, when pressures mount, or when the power that comes with wealth begins to stretch the boundaries of stated goodwill, those frameworks show their limits. In a sector where money is treated as something to be preserved at all costs, the power it confers remains largely unexamined—leaving professionals exposed in spaces where the unacceptable can take hold (Lanteigne, 2026).

The Human Cost Naming the Structural Tensions of Philanthropic Work

Philanthropic work unfolds at the intersection of structural tensions that are rarely named (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). It combines high financial expectations, a significant emotional burden tied to the causes being served, constant proximity to the power of giving, and a moral responsibility toward the communities being supported. This combination creates fertile ground for imbalance—a status quo that can no longer be sustained. But if we want different results, we must first be willing to think differently.

For several years now, indicators of psychological

distress and professional burnout among fundraising professionals have been multiplying (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). They manifest as chronic fatigue, significant psychological distress, a growing sense of meaninglessness, relentless pressure to perform, and difficulty drawing boundaries in contexts where personal commitment is often mistaken for boundless availability (Lanteigne, 2025). Added to this is a quieter form of wear: compassion fatigue (Skovholt et al., 2016, and Lanteigne, 2026)—the result of sustained exposure to the needs, vulnerabilities, and difficult narratives of the causes being supported. Without dramatizing the situation, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore that the philanthropic sector, built on the premise of collective well-being, still struggles to fully recognize and support the psychological health of those who sustain it. This is no longer a matter of the cobbler's children going without shoes. It has reached a point where willful blindness and lingering silence make us complicit in a culture that must change.

This questioning now extends beyond individual trajectories. Over the past few years, a movement of critical reflection has begun to emerge from within the profession itself, as fundraisers begin questioning not only what they do, but how they do it—and under what conditions (Breeze, 2017).

The Power of Giving When Money Reshapes Relationships

Giving confers power. That observation holds true even when the stated intention is generosity. Recent scholarship on philanthropy confirms that power manifests in multiple forms—financial, relational, and symbolic—often implicit, yet very real in organizational dynamics (Dula et al., 2025). At the heart of the tensions observed in philanthropic work lies this central dynamic: the power that money carries (Emerson, 1962). Giving, even when motivated by the best of intentions, introduces an asymmetrical relationship. When poorly bounded, that power can slide into control—expressing itself through implicit expectations, an elevated tolerance for unacceptable behavior, or a pressure to maintain relationships at all costs. These tensions are not unique to this sector. They echo documented ethical dilemmas, particularly when the origins or conditions of a gift raise complex questions (Rahwan & Leuker, 2023).

This dynamic is universal and extends well beyond philanthropy. But when the line between philanthropic collaboration and power imbalance becomes blurred, it is typically the professionals who absorb the tension—in the absence of explicit frameworks to support them.

The documented instances of undue pressure, tolerated misconduct, and prolonged organizational silence serve as a reminder that philanthropy is not immune to power dynamics. And when such situations arise, the existing regulatory mechanisms often prove ill-equipped to intervene in a concrete and protective manner. What remains is a grey zone where professionals find themselves exposed—without clear reference points or adequate support—facing dynamics they have neither the authority nor the standing to correct on their own (Lipsky, 1969).

Trust as a Lever

What Has Changed—and What Remains to Be Done

It would be misleading, however, to paint only a bleak picture. The philanthropic sector has also seen meaningful progress. Trust-based approaches, and the space they create for critical reflection on philanthropic culture, have helped reshape certain practices. While open criticism of the dominant model was once rare, more voices are now working to challenge its foundations—not to undermine, but to push for something better.

These movements have made it possible to acknowledge the limits of models long taken for granted. They have opened necessary cracks, demonstrating that a trust-based philanthropy can produce healthier relationships—ones more genuinely aligned with the values the sector claims. Yet this transformation remains largely concentrated in funding practices and external relationships. It has not yet translated fully into the conditions under which philanthropic work itself is carried out. This may not have been the original intent. But perhaps we are now collectively ready to consider a Trust-Based Philanthropy 2.0.

What Has Been Tried—and Why It Is No Longer Enough

Clear Signals, Still Fragile Frameworks

This territory is not unexplored. For more than a decade, a few voices in the field—largely south of the border—have attempted, in various forms, to articulate charters for those working in fundraising and development (NonProfit Times, n.d.). These efforts are useful signals. They speak to two things plainly. First, the unease is widespread enough that people have felt compelled to name it publicly. Second, it touches the very core of practice: the place where the power of giving can become control, where unacceptable behavior can be tolerated, and where psychological wear becomes an occupational hazard.

But these attempts also reveal a significant limitation. As long as a statement of rights remains an isolated, uncoordinated, and non-unifying exercise, it stays precarious. It can raise awareness, but it struggles to become structurally significant.

That is where this reflection takes a different turn. It acknowledges the existence of prior work but proposes a distinct framework—rooted in observed practice and the Canadian context, and above all in a broader, more direct dialogue with the full range of people connected to philanthropy who hold the power to shape its boundaries.

The goal is not to add yet another list of principles, nor to compile a catalogue of impossible or burdensome demands. Rather, the aim is to articulate a Charter ambitious enough to elevate practice, while remaining sufficiently pragmatic and adaptable to take root in a wide variety of organizational contexts.

Toward Acknowledged Symmetry

From Implicit Asymmetry to Shared Responsibility

Recognizing rights for philanthropy professionals is not an act of opposition, nor a challenge to the sector's existing achievements. It is a necessary recalibration—timely today, and likely to evolve further. Having structured, defined, and protected the donor experience, the sector now faces a question of coherence: Can it continue to function sustainably without explicitly naming the parameters that govern

those who carry this relationship forward every day?

Recognizing these rights does not imply distrust of donors or a desire to rigidify the philanthropic relationship. Philanthropy professionals care deeply about the donors they work with. Their commitment is grounded in respect, attentiveness, and the pursuit of lasting relationships. Setting clear boundaries is not a form of pushback—it is an act of coherence and responsibility toward the mission, toward donors, and toward oneself.

Far from weakening philanthropic relationships, clear boundaries actually help secure them. They offer a shared framework that protects both the organization and donors, preventing expectations, roles, and responsibilities from resting on grey areas or unspoken assumptions.

The choice to speak of symmetry does not imply formal equality of roles or responsibilities. It speaks to a minimum standard of recognition. The philanthropic relationship is not simply a face-to-face exchange between donor and organization—it exists within a triangular system in which donors, organizations, and professionals all interact, each shaping the overall dynamic (Chapman et al., 2022). Any durable relationship built on a power asymmetry requires explicit reference points, to prevent consequential decisions from resting solely on individual judgment, resilience, or the goodwill of those most exposed.

This reflection extends beyond a narrow group. The nonprofit and charitable sector accounts for more than 2.7 million jobs in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2025). Not all of these people work in fundraising, but all of them are affected by it, directly or indirectly. How philanthropic work is framed, supported, or undermined shapes the working conditions of thousands of roles, affects team stability, and bears directly on the sector's capacity to fulfill its mission over time.

Proposing a Charter of Rights for Philanthropy Professionals is therefore not an exercise in abstract idealism. It is a matter of formalizing what is already expected—but rarely named—in order to support practices that are more coherent, more deliberate, and more accountable. It provides a shared reference point for discussing limits, responsibilities, and the minimum conditions under which philanthropic

work should be carried out. In doing so, it shifts the management of tensions from individual courage to shared organizational responsibility.

The Charter proposed here is intended as a pragmatic, ethical, aspirational, and perfectible framework—one that calls for genuine adoption rather than passive endorsement, and that is designed to fuel structured dialogue among professionals, executive directors, and boards of directors.

In this spirit, Carleton University's Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership (MPNL) program has affirmed the relevance of such initiatives: "We welcome efforts that seek to articulate and refine principles for ethical, balanced, and responsible philanthropic practice, particularly in navigating the complex relationships between donors, organizations, and communities. Philanthropy professionals play a vital role in stewarding resources and relationships, and careful attention to the conditions under which they operate is essential to ensuring ethical and effective practice. We also commend the initiative of our alumnus Daniel H. Lantaigne in advancing thoughtful dialogue in this area, reflecting the critical engagement fostered through the MPNL program."

As the Association of Fundraising Professionals—Québec Chapter (AFP Québec) notes: "The principles set out in this Charter resonate with the field. Formalizing them within a structured framework is a meaningful contribution to recognizing and elevating the role of philanthropy professionals. This initiative is both timely and necessary to support the evolution of practice, while calling for collective reflection on the conditions for its implementation and adoption by organizations."

In a context marked by talent shortages and increasing staff turnover, adopting an explicit framework like this one represents a strategic choice in terms of attracting, retaining, and sustaining philanthropic teams (Erasmus & Howson, 2021). It is part of a collective effort to strengthen the sector's credibility—well beyond the interests or reputation of any single organization. This Charter does not aim to lower performance expectations, but to clarify the conditions under which they can be met. It is a reminder that high expectations, to be both achievable and sustainable, must be grounded in clear frameworks, adequate

resources, and shared responsibilities. At this stage, doing without such a framework has become a luxury that is increasingly difficult to justify.

Preamble

Philanthropy professionals play a central role in the relationship between causes, communities, and donors. Their work demands constant professional judgment, highly developed relational skills, and the ability to navigate contexts where power, expectations, and responsibilities intersect. Their role also includes serving as trusted intermediaries and allies to donors—in keeping with the mission, organizational values, and the public interest.

This Charter recognizes that the sustainability and credibility of philanthropic action depend, in part, on the conditions under which this work is carried out. Without displacing existing legal obligations or professional codes of ethics, it complements them by affirming the minimum principles of protection, recognition, and professional dignity.

Designed as a reference framework, this Charter aims to support decision-making, clarify limits, and foster more balanced relationships. It is addressed to professionals, executive directors, and boards of directors who wish to have a shared language for guiding the practice of philanthropic work.

Charter of Rights for Philanthropy Professionals

Definition

The term "philanthropy professionals" refers to individuals whose responsibilities include fundraising or philanthropic development, whether carried out on a full-time basis or integrated into broader organizational roles.

The Charter is primarily intended for paid staff, while also serving, depending on the context, as a source of relevant guidance for volunteers engaged in philanthropic solicitation activities.



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Principle 1: Safety, Dignity, and Protection

Intent

Philanthropy does not suspend respect, safety, or the right to healthy working conditions. Organizations have a responsibility to protect their professional staff and to recognize that dignity and well-being are essential conditions for the sustainable practice of philanthropic work.

Rights

1. The right to work in an environment that is respectful, safe, and free from abusive, harassing, discriminatory, or intimidating behavior—regardless of its source.
2. The right to decline, interrupt, or end a philanthropic relationship, and to report any situation involving abusive behavior, without fear of retaliation.
3. The right to working conditions that support a healthy balance between professional and personal life, recognizing that well-being is a condition for the long-term sustainability of philanthropic work.

Principle 2: Professional Integrity and Ethical Boundaries

Intent

Fundraising rests on professional judgment. That judgment must be exercised free of undue pressure when integrity, mission, or the communities involved are at stake.

Rights

1. The right to participate in decisions regarding the acceptance, conditions, or refusal of a gift when mission, values, or affected communities are at stake.
2. The right to request proportionate due diligence before committing the organization to sensitive or high-risk philanthropic relationships.
3. The right to refuse any instrumentalization intended to circumvent established policies, governance, or agreed-upon guidelines.

Principle 3: Realistic Conditions for Philanthropic Practice

Intent

Credible expectations and adequate resources protect both teams and the mission. Performance cannot be separated from the conditions under which it is demanded.

Rights

1. The right to fundraising objectives grounded in evidence and aligned with organizational capacity.
2. The right to a sustainable workload and clearly stated priorities.
3. The right to the tools, information, data, and reasonable timelines necessary for the rigorous practice of philanthropic work.

Principle 4: Fair and Accountable Performance Evaluation

Intent

Performance in philanthropy is cumulative, relational, and strategic. It cannot be reduced to short-term financial results.

Rights

1. The right to a transparent evaluation based on multiple indicators—including effort, quality of relationships, donor retention, strategic progress, and rigor of practice.
2. The right to expectations aligned with the real cycles of philanthropy and the maturity of programs.
3. The right not to be held individually responsible for outcomes resulting from decisions, constraints, or organizational choices outside one's control.

Principle 5: Professional Development, Recognition, and Career Pathways

Intent

The sustainability of the sector depends on the sustainability of careers. Training, mentorship, and recognition are conditions for quality and retention.

Rights

1. The right to ongoing professional development opportunities, adapted to the organization's means.
2. The right to mentorship, peer support, or participation in professional or associative networks.
3. The right to equitable compensation and decent, respectful working conditions, recognized as an integral part of the philanthropic contribution.

Principle 6: A Culture of Trust and Recognition of the Philanthropic Role

Intent

A trust-based philanthropy cannot stop at external relationships. It must also be reflected in how organizations treat their own teams.

Rights

1. The right to professional autonomy commensurate with the responsibilities held.
2. The right to explicit recognition of the strategic role of fundraising by leadership and governance.
3. The right to contribute to professional and public dialogue about the sector—without fear of retaliation—within the bounds of professional responsibilities and established frameworks.

Scope, Limitations, and Ongoing Vigilance

This Charter is neither a legal instrument nor a disciplinary regulation. It does not claim to resolve, on its own, all of the tensions and challenges of philanthropic work, nor to replace existing legal obligations, organizational policies, or the complex human dynamics that run through every organization.

It may encounter resistance—particularly in contexts where resources are limited or where philanthropic power dynamics remain largely unexamined. It also carries a risk of instrumentalization, if adopted in a symbolic manner without genuine transformation of practices, governance, or the conditions under which philanthropic work is carried out.

The intent of this Charter is not to legalize internal

relationships or to channel tensions into formal adversarial processes. On the contrary, it aims to provide a shared language and common reference points that allow sensitive situations to be addressed earlier, more clearly, and more collectively—before they escalate into open conflict or costly ruptures.

This is precisely why this Charter is designed as a tool for reference and dialogue—one that calls for genuine adoption, thoughtful adaptation, and ongoing vigilance, to ensure it does not become yet another statement of principles, disconnected from the realities it seeks to name.

Conclusion What Comes Next

Philanthropy has proven, when it deemed it necessary, that it can build clear frameworks to protect what it considers essential. The question, then, is no longer whether the sector is capable of doing so—it clearly is. The question is now where it chooses to draw its lines.

Proposing a Charter of Rights for Philanthropy Professionals is not a call for immediate endorsement. It is an invitation to a shift. To acknowledge that certain decisions should no longer rest solely on individual courage, discretionary authority, or organizational silence. To offer a shared reference point for discussing limits, power, and the conditions under which philanthropy is practiced.

But this reflection is no longer merely theoretical. Organizations and associations—in Québec and across Canada—are expressing growing interest in engaging with it through coordinated work. What has until now been a series of isolated positions is beginning to take the shape of a collective space for dialogue, co-construction, and, potentially, structural development.

What comes next is not yet written—but it has begun. This Charter does not ask to be adopted as is. It asks to be tested against reality. Debated, enriched, adapted, and, above all, collectively owned. It calls on professionals, executive directors, and boards of directors to ask themselves a simple but consequential question: What guardrails do we want to build together—for those moments when intentions are good, but the effects are not?

This work will not achieve consensus. It does not need to. But refusing to engage with it, at this stage, means leaving others to define the contours of an issue that concerns the entire sector. And that, too, is a choice.

“

Proposing a Charter of Rights for Philanthropy Professionals is not a call for immediate endorsement. It is an invitation to a shift. To acknowledge that certain decisions should no longer rest solely on individual courage, discretionary authority, or organizational silence. To offer a shared reference point for discussing limits, power, and the conditions under which philanthropy is practiced.

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Justice socioenvironnementale : quand la crise exige justice | Socio-Environmental Justice: When Crisis Demands Justice





The Polycrisis as Opportunity for Canadian Global Health Philanthropy

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Introduction

Following decades of steady growth in global health and development financing via government –and philanthropic– donors, this trend has now reversed.

In the early 1990s, global health funding was roughly \$USD 10 billion (in constant 2023 dollars) per year, rising to \$USD 50 billion in 2019. However, with the exception of a 2020-22 spike at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, global health funding has stagnated (Apeagyei et al., 2025a). In 2025 alone, there was a precipitous decline of over \$10 billion in global health spending commitments, driven by reductions made by the largest government funders, including the United Kingdom, France, and Germany. There was an especially large plunge in US global health spending (Apeagyei et al., 2025b). While Canada's global health allocations have remained steadier than those of the US and other countries, the Prime Minister's November 2025 announcement of an estimated 12% reduction in international assistance spending over the next four years particularly targets global health (Cooperation Canada, 2025).

This vacuum opens space for other bilateral funders (e.g. China, Japan, and South Korea) to step up, as well as the possibility of greater engagement by philanthropic actors. In contrast to government cutbacks, philanthropic spending in global health has remained at relatively consistent levels in recent years. Approximately half comes from the Gates Foundation,

with newer players, such as UAE-based Mohamed Bin Zayed Foundation for Humanity, now joining this arena. Whether other philanthropies, especially those based in countries that have slashed bilateral health spending, increase their global health involvement remains uncertain.

Although Canadian global health philanthropic contributions are notoriously difficult to calculate and track over time, this shifting landscape presents an opportunity for Canadian philanthropies to increase their financial commitment in the global health arena, while also –we argue– ensuring that spending is social justice-oriented. As we detail ahead, this question is especially important in the absence of public accountability and transparency for what are ultimately taxpayer-subsidized endeavours. Yet important questions remain about how the philanthropic sector can respond to critical needs while avoiding perpetuating power asymmetries rooted in colonial legacies.

This piece seeks to unpack the “black box” of Canadian global health philanthropy, and offer possible avenues for social justice - or solidarity - oriented engagement, while highlighting potential dangers and concerns presented by greater philanthropic involvement within Canada’s overall global health presence.

Landscape of Canadian Global Health Philanthropy: Patterns and Problems

The Canadian philanthropic landscape and the rules governing it are extremely complex. This landscape comprises individual donors and three types of registered charities, differentiated by their structure, how they operate, and their sources of funding (Canada Revenue Agency [CRA], 2016; Gartner, 2024). While charitable organizations must spend more than 50% of income on their own activities, public foundations are required to gift over 50% of their income annually to donees, and private foundations can both carry out their own charitable activities and fund donees (CRA, 2016; CRA, 2023b; Hayhoe, 2009; LeBlanc, 2018). In the Canadian context, foundations are distinct from charitable organizations in that they are both donors to other charities and can carry out their own activities.

Little is known about the global health involvement of Canadian philanthropies, in part due to the Canada Revenue Agency’s (CRA’s) arcane tracking system

(Blumberg, 2019). In order to better understand how Canadian global health philanthropy operates, we mapped the terrain of Canadian global health philanthropy to determine the scope and nature of involvement across different charitable modalities. We focused on 2018-2019, the two years preceding the onset of COVID-19, since increased spending to address vaccine and other needs during the pandemic crisis period skewed the picture, and data for the most recent post-pandemic years are not fully available.

Pursuing a multi-pronged approach, we first identified the registered charities with the highest foreign expenditures and determined which of these were engaged in global health, defined as being involved in health-related activities in at least two countries outside Canada. We then uncovered the philanthropic funding sources for these efforts. Complementing this strategy, we excavated information on the activities of the largest Canadian public and private foundations by assets and explored their funding patterns and activities related to global health. Data sources included CRA’s (2021) List of Charities, Who Gives and Who Gets published by the Charity Report (2020), publicly available CRA T3010 tax forms (Government of Canada, n.d.), and the 2018 CRA charity data set hosted by Blumberg Segal LLC (2021), a law firm that specializes in charity and non-profit law.

Through this process, we first identified the 10 charitable organizations that met the above inclusion criteria. In parallel, we also identified five predominant Canadian private foundations that fund global health activities.

Charitable Organizations

Our in-depth analysis revealed a complex picture of charitable activity. Notably, the top 10 Canadian charitable organizations most involved in global health activities are Canadian branches of large mainstream organizations, including World Vision Canada, Plan International Canada, and Care Canada (See Appendix 1). These charitable organizations depend heavily on Canadian government funding, and their affiliation with “parent” organizations shape their focus areas. Initially, these humanitarian-cum-development agencies were established to facilitate fundraising from Canadian donors but the Canadian government subsequently called on them to play a larger role in directly operating global activities (Masaeli & Munro, 2018).

As illustrated in Appendix 1, the priority areas of these 10 charitable organizations centre most on access to health services; emergency and disaster preparedness and response; and food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition, mirroring larger trends in global health and development. In the wake of the 2008-2012 financial crisis, charitable organizations sought to respond to multiple compounding economic shocks, climate-related emergencies, conflict, and intersecting crises that increased vulnerability to food and housing insecurity, livelihood loss, and displacement, among other threats to health and wellbeing.

In the years following our analysis, the COVID-19 pandemic both vividly revealed and exacerbated health inequalities and needs globally; meanwhile, during the pandemic charitable organizations faced significant financial challenges, compromising their ability to respond adequately (Paras et al., 2020). This was as much the case for Canadian charities as those elsewhere (Lasby & Barr, 2021).

Private Foundations

Among the top 20 Canadian private foundations by 2018 assets, five had global health expenditures (See Table 1). Of these five, whose assets range from CDN\$252 million to CDN \$31.1 billion at that time, one is a corporate foundation (Mastercard Foundation), discussed in detail ahead.

The remaining four are family foundations, all based in Québec: the JW McConnell Family Foundation, the Fondation Marcelle et Jean Coutu, the Fondation Mirella & Lino Saputo and the Pathy Family Foundation. While far smaller than Mastercard, all four are significant in the range and reach of their global health donations (dating back decades in some cases). Their efforts include support to on-the-ground non-governmental organizations providing access to hearing aids, HIV prevention and treatment, and emergency and healthcare needs, as well as sponsoring local climate change mitigation efforts and helping women and children living in precarious situations in Latin America, Africa, and Asia (Fondation Marcelle et Jean Coutu, n.d.; La Fondation Mirella & Lino Saputo, n.d., McConnell Foundation, n.d.; Pathy Family Foundation, n.d.). These efforts often pursue a community-driven approach and are channeled via organizations with an explicit solidarity mission, such as Monde par la Main and Partners in Health Canada, which supports health and social justice efforts for

made-marginalized communities.

Notwithstanding the stated commitments of these four entities, concerns remain. Canadian charity law affords private foundations considerable flexibility in how they distribute their funds, provided they meet an annual disbursement quota of 3.5% on the first \$1 million in assets not used directly for charitable activities or administration, and 5% on amounts exceeding \$1 million (Canada Revenue Agency, 2023a; McQuaig & Brooks, 2026). This low requirement allows sizeable investment income to remain undisbursed, accumulating value and benefiting from tax concessions. When they do distribute funds, private foundations exercise significant autonomy in how this giving is directed, whether to their own charitable activities or other donees (McQuaig & Brooks, 2026).

Table 1 - Large Canadian Private Foundations in the Global Health Arena (mostly donors)

Private Foundation	Description	Total Assets (2018)	Illustrative 2019 Global Health Donees/Programs
Mastercard Foundation	Largest Canadian global health philanthropy, that seeks to help "economically disadvantaged young people in Africa and in Indigenous communities in Canada to access dignified and fulfilling work" (Mastercard Foundation, n.d.).	\$24B	Scholars Program (supporting African students to pursue higher education in health-related fields) (Mastercard Foundation n.d.-d).
The J W McConnell Family Foundation	Focused on contributing to "strengthening collective resilience and create conditions for more inclusive, future-ready communities" (McConnell Foundation, n.d.).	\$629M	Gift to World-Wide Hearing Foundation Canada
Fondation Marcelle et Jean Coutu	Provides emergency and development assistance to 'developing' countries	\$588M	Gift to Fondation Teasdale-Corti/Teasdale-Corti Foundation, Terre Sans Frontières
Fondation Mirella & Lino Saputo	Supports initiatives for older people, people with disabilities, and immigrants	\$277M	Gift to Monde Par La Main
Pathy Family Foundation	Supports organizations that provide aid to meet basic human needs and empower individuals and communities to generate and sustain positive social change	\$252M	Gift to Canadian Red Cross, Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada etc.

Public Foundations

Although many of Canada's thousands of public

foundations, which enjoy arms-length governance, are community-oriented, we found very few public foundations that were involved in global health. Two notable exceptions are: the Unifor Social Justice Fund (funded and operated by Unifor, Canada's largest private sector union), which gifted several hundred thousand dollars to Médecins Sans Frontières-Canada and the Canadian Red Cross; and the Stephen Lewis Foundation, which provides funding and resources for community-led efforts to address HIV and AIDS in Africa.

The Mastercard Foundation: Outshadowing the Rest by Far

Here we focus on the Mastercard Foundation, which since its 2006 founding has been the largest private foundation in Canada. Its sheer size warrants this attention: with assets totalling an estimated USD 24 billion in 2018 (and USD 37 billion in 2023), the foundation is 20 to 25 times larger than the next largest foundation) (Kerr, 2025). Despite Mastercard's US corporate home, its foundation was established in Canada so it could: 1) benefit from Canadian tax regulations that at the time mandated lower annual endowment disbursements (3.5% in Canada vs 5% in the US) and average out this obligation over time, affording it considerable flexibility (Brownell, 2021); and, 2) more speculatively, garner greater prominence—domestically and globally—given Canada's much smaller philanthropy scene.

Since 2012, a key focus of Mastercard Foundation's global health involvement has been its Scholars Program, launched to “develop the next generation of transformative leaders,” including in health fields (Mastercard Foundation, n.d.-d). Implemented in partnership with postsecondary institutions and charitable organizations, the program provides scholarships to African students to pursue higher education, aligned with its broader mission to “enable young people in Africa and Indigenous youth in Canada to access dignified, meaningful, and fulfilling work” (Mastercard Foundation, n.d.-a).

Although beyond the scope of our study time frame and full analysis, it is relevant to note that the Mastercard Foundation's size and range of activities poised it to deepen its engagement in global health with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2021, the foundation has partnered with Africa CDC through the Saving Lives and Livelihoods program to

support delivery of over 65 million COVID-19 vaccines across the continent. The program includes workforce training for vaccine manufacturing and integration of COVID-19 vaccines into routine immunization programs (Africa CDC, n.d.). The foundation also supports the Youth in Digital Health Jobs Initiative, which aims to create 1.2 million jobs in the digital health sector across Africa (Mastercard Foundation, n.d.-c). This program complements the foundation's other investments in digital health, including the scale-up of SMART Health cards intended to allow individuals easier access to their health information, thereby enhancing “person-centred” quality care (Mastercard Foundation, 2022).

These programs illustrate how Mastercard Foundation seeks to position itself in the global health arena: as a leader in “health systems transformation” across Africa, with emphasis on digital technologies and workforce development (Mastercard Foundation, n.d.-c). Although increasing healthcare capacity through workforce expansion and innovation can be important levers in improving health outcomes, the foundation's activities in global health and beyond warrant critical examination.

Notwithstanding its size and several decades of existence, the Mastercard Foundation's philanthropic activities have faced minimal scholarly scrutiny until recently (Lefèvre & Langevin, 2020). One line of critique has focused on how encouraging “the economic participation of African youth” via digital payment systems serves to financialize development efforts, ultimately benefiting the Mastercard corporation's “strategic interests” and overall business plan (Langevin et al., 2023; Langevin et al., 2025). Moreover, given the foundation's heft, Langevin et al. (2023, 2025) argue that its conflation of “inclusive economies” and development goals squeezes out alternative development approaches that emphasize autochthonous industries and pathways to better health and social well-being.

Additionally, Mastercard and the wider philanthropic sector face other related critiques that merit consideration. Most visibly, a growing crescendo of scholars and practitioners have argued that global philanthropy, especially philanthrocapitalist approaches (see ahead), constitutes a form of neocolonialism (Garcia-Arias & Mediavilla, 2023), with Canada joining others in promoting a (philanthropic) neoliberal agenda of economic liberalization and

privatization (Langevin et al., 2025; Masaeli & Munro, 2018), while perpetuating asymmetrical relations of power that create dependency and otherize the poor. In this way, financialization through digital payment mechanisms, as discussed above, may act as a tool of neocolonialism, furthering imbalances in power while foreclosing South-led economic futures.

Amid these critiques, there have been growing calls to “decolonize global health” (Afriyie et al., 2026; McCoy et al., 2024). However, what concrete actions are needed to achieve this aim remain underexamined, raising questions about whether this recent interest can indeed bring about transformative equity-focused changes in global health (philanthropy), or if invoking “decolonization” is purely rhetorical with little real-world impact (Mukumbang, 2025).

Another significant concern regarding philanthropic activity relates to how it often deflects attention from government responsibilities in meeting the needs of their populations. Our analysis found that many of the top Canadian charitable organizations engaged in global health, together with their funders, focus on efforts to address inadequate access to food and nutritional deprivation. Increasingly, philanthropic, as well as corporate, actors play a central role in defining the problem of global hunger and directing solutions, evidenced for example, by their prominence at the UN Food Systems Summit (Levkoe et al., 2023). Philanthropic approaches to food and food systems can fill important gaps in meeting basic needs, at least temporarily. However, philanthropies can also undermine the right to food as a social good – and diminish the state’s role in guaranteeing this right – when they rely on a charity model or support corporate-led strategies that frame food as a commodity (Koberinski et al., 2022).

For example, the Mastercard Foundation collaborates with Partners in Food Solutions (Mastercard Foundation, n.d.-b) – an initiative established by General Mills with Cargill, Hershey, and other food corporations as partners – to “strengthen food security...by expanding and increasing the competitiveness of the food processing sector” in Africa (Partners in Food Solutions, n.d.). By linking major transnational food corporations with African food businesses, Partners in Food Solutions furthers a corporate-led global food system with significant environmental and human health consequences. Harms associated with such a corporate-led arrangement include exploitation of

workers throughout the food system, acceleration of climate change and environmental degradation, prioritization of cash crops for export instead of food crops for domestic consumption, and food and nutritional insecurity. These initiatives, championed by the Mastercard Foundation among others, raise questions about whose interests are served through these approaches, and who ultimately benefits.

Conversely, supporting a food sovereignty approach might present opportunities for Canadian philanthropic actors to advance an equity-oriented global health agenda that supports social justice-oriented solutions and community-led efforts in the public interest.

The questions we have raised cannot be easily addressed yet deserve close attention if the Canadian philanthropic sector is to advance health and social justice beyond the rhetoric.

Canadian Global Health Philanthropy into the Future: Social Justice Aspirations or Business as Usual ?

How might Canadian philanthropy help renew and rebuild the global health arena, while heeding socially-just principles and practices?

Crisis as Opportunity

To be sure, the international context of interconnections between global philanthropic engagement and that of overseas development agencies, whose envelopes are vastly larger, remains salient for Canada. Since January 2025, the Trump administration has come under fire for withdrawing from the World Health Organization (WHO), slashing its USAID and PEPFAR commitments, and replacing them with an America First Global Health strategy marked by a blatantly transactional and extractive approach to health cooperation. This is unfolding through US government demands for favourable trade deals and US corporate access to Sub Saharan African markets, for example demanding mining concessions in exchange for HIV drugs and maternal healthcare programs (Cullinan, 2026; Farmer, 2026; Hirschfeld et al., 2026; KFF, 2026). While less visible than some other bilateral arrangements, Canadian health and development aid has followed similar global health-washing approaches, such as funding local social well-being projects in the vicinity of Barrick Gold’s mining interests in Peru (Birn et al., 2023).

Notwithstanding aspirations for a re-imagining and renewal of Canada's global health and humanitarian engagement amid the current polycrisis (Evans et al., 2025; The Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, 2025), such calls often resort to nostalgic and misinformed tropes of Canada as peacemaker and defender of health and human rights (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2018).

Philanthropic Foundations Canada asserts that by "reaffirming Canada's role as a compassionate global actor, the philanthropic sector has the capacity and the care to lead" (Gartner, 2025). Although claims regarding Canada's compassionate global role are problematic, we concur nonetheless that a socially-just transformation of Canadian philanthropic engagement is (aspirationally) possible. But the extent to which Canadian global health philanthropy can push Canada's federal government to distance itself from quid pro quo health and development approaches remains unknown in an era of mounting geo-realpolitik.

We argue that the current scenario is an opportunity for Canadian philanthropies to depart from their previous alignment with dominant US global health efforts, just as the two countries foreign policy approaches appear to be diverging.

Are Benevolent Family Foundations the Answer or is a Public Foundation Alternative Needed?

That said, we envision non-transactional approaches on the part of some family foundations (a subset of private foundations) may offer prospects for addressing the polycrisis through social justice-oriented involvement.

Concretely, social justice-oriented global health philanthropy focus areas might span: supporting food sovereignty rather than corporate-led food approaches; reversing health worker brain drain; addressing the climate crisis; and solidarity with Indigenous led-movements for livelihood and environmental protections against encroaching extractivism.

The four aforementioned Québec-based foundations – the JW McConnell Family Foundation, the Fondation Marcelle et Jean Coutu, the Fondation Mirella & Lino Saputo and the Pathy Family Foundation – set a partial example by partnering with on-the-ground organizations that espouse health justice missions

and practices. Yet this is by family foundation choice, and thus relies on benevolence, rather than any formal accountability mechanisms. Even though foundations are publicly subsidized through whopping 75% tax credits, government regulations demand minimal transparency or details regarding these foundations' activities and modus operandi other than opaque annual financial statements.

Alternatively, public foundations, governed by independent boards – meaning that more than 50% of their members are at arm's length from each other – offer a more propitious avenue for social justice-oriented global health philanthropy. Notably, this includes the Stephen Lewis Foundation, whose stated principles include "social justice, international solidarity, and substantive equality" (Stephen Lewis Foundation, n.d.).

The Problem of Philanthrocapitalism

Some, not unreasonably, argue that philanthropies, especially large private foundations, are undemocratic and that their tax-beneficial status shelters them from public accountability, thus making them illegitimate mechanisms for the (putative) public good.

As in many donor countries, Canadian philanthropic dollars are subsidized by taxpayers, without a concerted quid pro quo of accountability. That is, every dollar donated by corporations or individuals either directly or via the variety of philanthropic arrangements explained above enjoys a reduction in tax liability. These donations would otherwise be taxed at the relevant corporate or personal rate and be added to public coffers to (ideally) be spent on societal priorities (such as health, education, transit, housing; though often military, extractive etc.) as decided on by democratic decisionmaking processes and truly accountable elected officials.

While the excess private accumulation of assets enabling philanthrocapitalism can ultimately be addressed only through transforming the world order (Garcia-Arias & Mediavilla, 2023; Mushita & Thompson, 2021), certain reforms could build towards such transformation.

For Canada's largest global health donor, the Mastercard Foundation, the strictures of philanthrocapitalism undoubtedly guide its actions (Birn & Richter, 2017).

While it is important to not be starry-eyed about further possibilities, it is worth noting that historically some foundations, even philanthrocapitalist ones such as the Rockefeller Foundation (RF), gave leeway to a few high-level staff members to pursue social medicine approaches in their international grants (Birn & Brown, 2013; Weindling, 1995). Additionally, during the 1930s, the RF played an ersatz official overseas cooperation role, alongside the Kellogg Foundation and others, for example supporting international health training and providing grants for the development of local health departments. This philanthropic testing ground for the US's Good Neighbor Policy with Latin America, even after Mexico nationalized all oil holdings, suggests that philanthropies can at times help shape progressive foreign health policy, if not explicitly so.

Still, because Canadian government overseas spending far outstrips the investments of even the largest foundations, this is not a long-term solution.



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For Canada's largest global health donor, the Mastercard Foundation, the strictures of philanthrocapitalism undoubtedly guide its actions.



The Mastercard Foundation's partnering with Africa CDC is perhaps a promising beginning, given that these efforts are (ideally) accountable to the African Union and African health ministries. But unaccountable philanthropic agenda-setting power remains a major concern (Breen & Kumar, 2023). We certainly urge the Mastercard Foundation to suspend its efforts in

"financial inclusion" as a clear conflict of interest, just as mining companies' donations to medical/health research and local communities' well-being are forms of health-washing that are ultimately self-serving.

Perennial Accountability/Transparency Concerns, and a Propitious Approach

A paradoxical advantage of registered charities is that their limited reporting obligations, especially the case with private foundations, and mostly internal responsibility (to their own boards) can make them more nimble and responsive to needs than (democratically-operating) governments. Yet we remain concerned that lack of accountability to civil society in the settings where they work, as well as to the broader, subsidizing, Canadian public, threatens the putative aims of global health equity. One philanthropic sub-sector, community-oriented public foundations, have sought to create accountable relationships with local civil society. While by definition, these charitable organizations do not operate globally, the nature of their engagement could help shape a transformation in both global health philanthropy and Canadian health cooperation alike.

Another philanthropic approach that might propitiously inform a bona fide social justice-informed Canadian foreign policy approach to global health is via an existing hybrid agency: the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). IDRC, registered as a charitable organization, was founded as a Crown corporation in 1970 and is governed by an independent North-South board. Largely funded by the Canadian government (thus not fitting our inclusion criteria) and administratively linked to Global Affairs Canada (and to prior development and foreign affairs agencies), IDRC is subject to public-entity transparency and reporting requirements – precisely the kinds of regulatory obligations that could help make Canadian philanthropies engaged in global health more equity-oriented.

Originally providing grants related to population control, by the 1980s IDRC increasingly focused on workers' and environmental health, a highlight being an innovative Eco-Health approach that emphasizes holistic attention to community health and local participation, ecosystems, and gender inclusion (Cole et al., 2006). By 2018, IDRC was Canada's fourth highest charitable donor to global health, supporting Majority

World (Global South) researchers to study such topics as climate-resilient food systems, adolescent health, and epidemic preparedness. Far more is known about IDRC activities than those of most Canadian global health philanthropic actors, precisely because it is subject to government accountability mechanisms; moreover because of its direct ties to Global Affairs Canada, IDRC, and its social justice approaches, have the potential to directly shape Canadian foreign health policy engagement. To be sure, this remains a double-edged sword, given the menace of undemocratic political shifts akin to those south of the border.

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Conclusion

In the wake of significant U.S., European, and projected Canadian disinvestment in global health, Canadian philanthropies find themselves at a crossroads.

The concurrent global crises of unequal health conditions, escalating environmental degradation, and militarism (with military and related industry expenditures squeezing out multilateral and bilateral health cooperation) present a unique opportunity for Canadian philanthropies to both step up their financial commitments to the global health arena and to reorient spending towards a social justice focus.

This is also a moment to rethink philanthropy's role in pushing/informing government responsibilities.

Whether an equity-oriented action agenda for Canadian global health philanthropy is realizable remains to be seen. Certainly, tensions with the US and the US pullback from global health cooperation might enable the Canadian government to chart its own global health path beyond rhetorical assertions, for example by revisiting and expanding the kinds of bona fide health justice efforts historically propelled by IDRC.

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Appendix 1 - Top 10 Canadian charitable organizations most involved in global health activities

Registered Charity	Description	Total Spending (2018)	Recent Agency-Identified Global Health Priorities (Non-Exhaustive)										
			Expenses on Foreign Activities (2018)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
World Vision	Christian humanitarian aid and development organization focused on child wellbeing, with activities spanning various areas including poverty alleviation, nutrition, and child rights (World Vision Canada, 2026).	\$466M	\$363M	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Plan International Canada	Organization focused on "advancing children's rights and equality for girls" (Plan International Canada, 2025).	\$236M	\$175M	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Care Canada	Organization focused on fighting poverty and the empowerment of girls and women (Care Canada, 2026).	\$123M	\$115M	X		X		X	X		X	X	X
The Canadian Red Cross Society	Humanitarian organization that provides assistance to vulnerable people affected by disasters and emergencies in Canada and around the world (Canadian Red Cross, n.d.).	\$458M	\$65M	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	
Doctors Without Borders Canada/ Médecins Sans Frontières Canada	Provides medical services to people affected by disasters, conflict, populations in distress, and people excluded from healthcare (Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières, n.d.).	\$85M	\$58M		X			X	X				
Compassion Canada	Christian organization that partners with local churches to deliver child development programs outside of Canada that meet the needs of children living in poverty (Compassion Canada, n.d.).	\$65M	\$51M	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Islamic Relief-Canada	Organization that provides disaster assistance, support for basic services for people living in poverty, and longer-term poverty alleviation strategies (Islamic Relief Canada, n.d.).	\$56M	\$49M	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		
Mennonite Central Committee Canada	Organization that focuses on the provision of relief services, development, and peacebuilding (Mennonite Central Committee, n.d.).	\$56M	\$36M	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X
The Samaritan's Purse-Canada	Nondenominational evangelical Christian organization that provides aid to "hurting people in countries around the world" (Samaritan's Purse Canada, n.d.).	\$51M	\$36M	X		X	X	X	X	X			
Aga Khan Foundation Canada	Operates programs in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East to end poverty (Aga Khan Foundation Canada, n.d.).	\$150M	\$35M	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X

Legend

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Reproductive, Maternal and/or Child Health and Wellbeing | 6. Access to Health Services |
| 2. Infectious Diseases | 7. Access to Quality Education |
| 3. Food (in)security, Hunger and (mal)nutrition | 8. Poverty Alleviation and/or Economic Growth |
| 4. WaSH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) | 9. Gender Equality |
| 5. Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and Response | 10. Climate Change |



La contribution des donataires non reconnus à l'évolution des mouvements sociaux au Québec : étude de cas du programme de fiducie d'Exeko.

Par Simon Paradis, *Chercheur en histoire, praticien en philanthropie et travailleur culturel*



Simon Paradis est travailleur culturel au parcours multidisciplinaire depuis plus de 25 ans. Il s'intéresse aux partenariats entre différents écosystèmes, aux relations gouvernementales et à la solidarité dans les gestes philanthropiques. Il a été producteur de théâtre (Singulier Pluriel, collectif du Théâtre de l'intime, Un et un font mille) et œuvré à la promotion des arts et de la littérature (Librairie Monet), dont 9 ans comme directeur général (airelibre.ca). Il a également été gestionnaire et responsable des partenariats et du financement (Diversité artistique Montréal – Missions Exeko). Comme auteur de roman, il tisse des parallèles entre expériences vécues et d'autres fabulées, l'histoire contemporaine et « certains souvenirs de famille ».

Introduction

La pandémie de COVID 19 a exacerbé des problèmes déjà présents dans la société. Pour répondre aux besoins de plus en plus importants, de nombreux groupes sociaux sont à la recherche de ressources supplémentaires et d'autres voient le jour pour répondre à de nouveaux enjeux. Les mouvements sociaux représentent les solutions à ces crises. Or, les embûches qu'entraînent le statut de donataire non reconnu empêchent ces travailleur.euse.s sociaux de faire leur travail.

Les donataires non reconnus sont des organisations, des collectifs et des groupes sociaux qui effectuent des activités de bienfaisances sans avoir le statut officiel octroyé par l'Agence du revenu du Canada (ARC). Les donataires non reconnus ne peuvent remettre de reçus fiscaux pour des dons. Le privilège d'être reconnu comme un organisme de bienfaisance permet d'obtenir du soutien financier de nombreuses fondations philanthropiques qui ont pour mission de collaborer avec des donataires reconnus uniquement. Ainsi, de nombreux groupes sociaux non enregistrés doivent faire appel à un parrain fiscal qui fera une demande en leur nom auprès d'un bailleur de fonds et s'assurera de la saine gestion des fonds. Le changement réglementaire réalisé par l'ARC permet désormais de traiter directement avec des donataires non reconnus par le versement de subvention. Cette modification légale combinée au climat social postpandémique, à l'accroissement des inégalités et à l'urgence climatique fait en sorte que les donataires non reconnus sont maintenant surreprésentés dans l'écosystème des mouvements sociaux.

À travers ce projet de recherche, nous faisons converger les plus récentes études concernant la philanthropie engagée auprès des organismes communautaires œuvrant auprès de personnes en

quête d'équité et de reconnaissance. Si le *Guide pratique pour collaborer avec des donataires non reconnus*¹ propose aux fondations philanthropiques une manière de collaborer avec les donataires non reconnus, l'originalité de la démarche d'Exeko réside dans son positionnement entre les bailleurs de fonds et les mouvements sociaux. Exeko est un organisme qui vise la transformation sociale à travers les arts, la philosophie et l'éducation en mettant de l'avant la médiation culturelle.²

Revue de littérature

Cette revue de littérature vise à mettre en lumière les principales recherches en philanthropie concernant les communautés dont proviennent les groupes sociaux ayant participé à notre étude. Ces recherches ont été choisies, car elles démontrent les principales problématiques que rencontrent les groupes sociaux en matière de reconnaissance institutionnelle. Parallèlement, les orientations stratégiques des fondations philanthropiques établissent le soutien financier des communautés en recherche d'équité comme un axe prioritaire. En 2022, l'ARC a modifié sa réglementation. Les organismes de bienfaisance n'ont plus l'obligation de soutenir uniquement des donateurs reconnus par cette agence.³ Depuis, comme le démontrent les principales études dans le secteur, nous verrons comment les fondations recherchent toujours la meilleure approche pour soutenir les mouvements sociaux.

Les plus récentes recherches font état d'une interrelation entre causes sociales invisibles et communautés marginalisées. Pour donner de l'agentivité à ces communautés, il faut collectivement agir de façon durable sur le long terme envers les communautés noires, autochtones, LGBTQ+, ainsi que les aînés.⁴ (Kouamé, 2023)

Les communautés noires du Canada sont bénéficiaires de seulement 1% de l'engagement philanthropique. Pour améliorer leurs conditions socio-économiques, le milieu philanthropique doit investir pour plus d'accessibilité à l'éducation, et soutenir l'entrepreneuriat et l'innovation.⁵ (Zogning, 2023). Depuis, l'étude *Unfunded: Black Communities Overlooked* a joué un rôle déterminant dans l'activation du milieu philanthropique pour corriger ce retard historique.⁶ Cette étude auprès de grandes fondations

fait état d'un manque de données concernant les communautés noires du Canada ainsi que d'une incompréhension de leurs objectifs et de leurs besoins. Enfin, elle démontre le besoin de solutions par et pour comme la création de la The Foundation for Black Communities.⁷

Le soutien doit principalement aider les communautés racialisées et les organisations *grassroot*. De plus, les jeunes activistes de ces communautés reçoivent seulement 0,76% du financement.⁸ (Castelino, 2024). Il est difficile de catégoriser les groupes sociaux qui ne s'inscrivent pas nécessairement dans un schéma d'autonomisation classique passant du *baby non-profit* à l'organisme de bienfaisance reconnu. Dans ce schéma, les donataires non reconnus demeurent au bas de la hiérarchie des fondations, car ils ont des philosophies organisationnelles différentes de ce qui est reconnu par la philanthropie institutionnelle.⁹ (Adams et Liacas, 2024).

Enfin, la Stratégie Économique Nationale pour les Autochtones au Canada stipule que « le développement économique communautaire a un impact direct sur la qualité de vie de tous les membres de la communauté. Le développement des petites entreprises conduit à une participation accrue de la main-d'œuvre, qui est un déterminant clé de la santé économique et de la santé globale des communautés autochtones au Canada ». ¹⁰

Sondés par la Fondation du grand Montréal (FGM), 58,3% des dirigeants noirs disent obtenir difficilement du financement institutionnel. Parmi les raisons de ce manque de visibilité, l'étude parle de processus « jugés lourds et mal adaptés aux réalités des petits organismes » ¹¹ (FGM, 2025).

Les plus récentes recherches soulignent que malgré l'identification de problématiques systémiques entourant des enjeux de reconnaissance, elles demeurent privées d'un accès équitable aux ressources financières. Malgré ces ouvertures de l'ARC, ces groupes sociaux rencontrent davantage d'obstacles pour obtenir ce statut de bienfaisance et être juridiquement reconnu. Pour expliquer cela, on peut mettre en cause des lois qui continuent de privilégier une conception archaïque de la bienfaisance.

Notre étude entend contribuer au champ de recherche sur une philanthropie « vue d'en bas ». Elle cherche à

concilier les difficultés pour les bailleurs de fonds à rejoindre les mouvements *grassroot*, à leur donner une visibilité, et par le fait même, réduire la verticalité des processus de financement.

Problématique, méthodologie et matériel utilisé

Cette recherche se donne pour objectif d'analyser la solidarité entre les organisations culturelles et communautaires et d'analyser la mesure dans laquelle ces solidarités permettent de répondre aux préoccupations des bailleurs de fonds quant à leur volonté de rejoindre les mouvements sociaux *grassroot*. Nous interrogeons également le positionnement d'Exeko comme organisme généraliste et sa capacité d'agir en solidarité avec des mouvements sociaux issus des communautés marginalisées. Plus précisément, nous cherchons à identifier les stratégies qui permettent de favoriser la reconnaissance de ceux-ci.

Pour répondre à ces questions, nous ferons l'étude de cas du programme de fiducie d'Exeko avec une dizaine de partenaires culturels et communautaires. En premier lieu, nous présenterons un bref historique de ce programme. Ensuite, nous verrons les principales activités de recherche-action réalisées depuis le début de l'année 2025 avec les fiducies. Nous présenterons d'abord le programme de mutualisation de Centraide du grand Montréal et les raisons pour lesquelles Exeko y a fait appel.

Nous verrons les quatre activités réalisées jusqu'ici avec ce soutien. Avec la première activité, le parcours de mutualisation avec Laboratoire Conseil, qui a pour objectif de soutenir les entreprises collectives dans leur développement et favoriser le partage d'expérience entre gestionnaires d'entreprises, nous démontrerons l'importance de mettre en collaboration les différents acteurs sociaux afin de croiser les savoirs et les expertises. Aussi, bien que provenant de communautés différentes, les enjeux rencontrés présentent des similitudes, d'où l'intérêt à se coaliser afin de répondre à des enjeux systémiques. Nous verrons comment les neuf rencontres avec Laboratoire-conseil ont permis aux fiducies d'exprimer leurs besoins et de proposer différentes stratégies de collaborations.

Nous avons fait parvenir un sondage afin de valider auprès des fiduciaires les interrogations soulevées par le *Guide pratique pour collaborer avec des donataires non*

reconnus. Nous verrons les réponses des fiduciaires aux principales interrogations des bailleurs de fonds.

Ensuite, en réponse aux besoins exprimés par les fiduciaires, nous avons mis en place une clinique pour l'obtention du statut de bienfaisance. Nous verrons comment le processus réalisé par Social Impact Consulting, qui propose des solutions personnalisées aux organismes à but non lucratif, aux fondations, aux coopératives et aux équipes du secteur public, a permis aux donataires non reconnus de gagner en autonomie. En conclusion, nous proposons quelques idées pour enrichir la réflexion sur des moyens de mieux soutenir les donataires non reconnus.

Le matériel d'analyse provient de la plateforme MURAL utilisée par Laboratoire-conseil lors de ses présentations, du sondage envoyé aux fiducies, et des explications et des exercices fournis par Social Impact Consulting. Les organisations en parrainage fiscal et les collectifs en administration fiduciaire sont tous signataires d'une entente avec Missions Exeko. Pour cette recherche, un protocole éthique doit être signé par l'ensemble des parties.

Une réponse à la crise - Historique du programme de fiducie d'Exeko

Depuis 2019, Exeko accueille plusieurs organismes et collectifs à titre de fiduciaire. Cette approche lui permet de réaliser sa mission en soutenant des initiatives issues des communautés avec lesquelles l'organisme travaille. Depuis 2020, et la crise sociale et sanitaire liée à la pandémie de COVID 19, la place des fiducies au sein de l'organisation a augmenté considérablement. Afin de permettre une saine gestion des fiducies, réduisant les risques autant pour Exeko que pour les initiatives fiduciaires, un projet de programme formel de fiducies a été développé. Depuis 2020, ce programme de fiducie a contribué à financer les organismes et les collectifs pour près de deux millions de dollars.

Programme de mutualisation

Le projet de mutualisation, présenté à Centraide, cherche à répondre aux besoins de reconnaissance des donataires non reconnus et un transfert du prototype de programme de fiducie vers les communautés respectives. En détail, les objectifs du parcours pour Exeko étaient d'encadrer la croissance du nombre

de demandes d'accompagnement d'organismes ou de mouvements sociaux et de réfléchir aux besoins grandissant des organisations qui font pression sur les ressources internes d'Exeko. Pour les fiducies d'Exeko, les objectifs étaient d'accroître leur impact grâce à de l'accompagnement organisationnel, du soutien administratif, d'un parrain fiscal, et de solidarité de groupes et de personnes de la communauté montréalaise.

Ce programme de fiducie visait aussi à répondre aux difficultés pour les fondations de travailler avec les mouvements sociaux malgré le nouveau cadre réglementaire mis en place par l'Agence du Revenu du Canada (ARC). Il cherchait également à proposer des alternatives afin de pallier au manque de ressources dédiées à l'accompagnement des donataires non reconnus, de même qu'à la faible tolérance à la prise de risques.

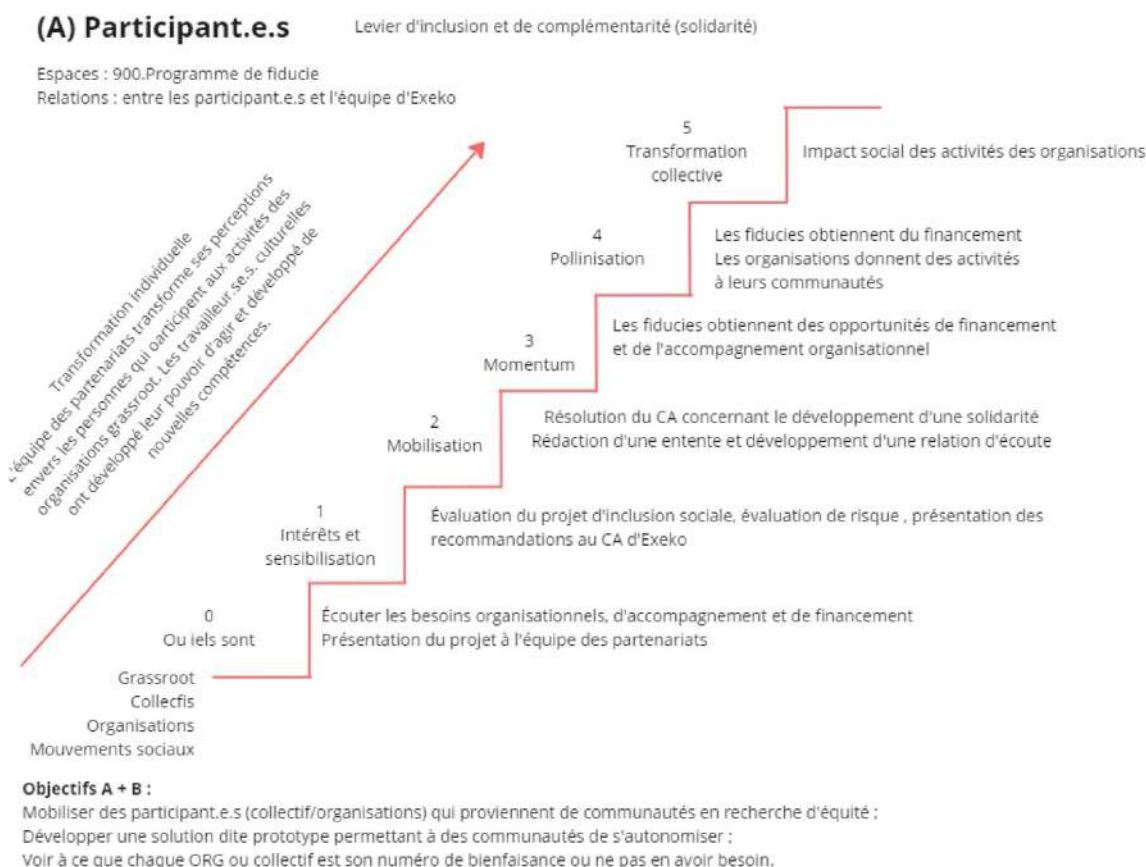
Le programme de mutualisation d'Exeko comprend trois organisations en administration fiduciaire, cinq organisations bénéficient d'un parrainage fiscal et

deux organisations qui sont soutenues en solidarité pour leur développement organisationnel.

Parcours de mutualisation avec Laboratoire-conseil

Le parcours de mutualisation a été réalisé par l'équipe de Laboratoire-conseil. Lors de neuf ateliers virtuels, le programme de fiducie a reçu l'apport de l'intelligence collective pour parfaire la proposition de mise en commun de réseaux, de savoirs et de ressources. Dix-sept personnes provenant de sept groupes sociaux différents, incluant Exeko, ont participé aux ateliers. La transformation du modèle d'affaire du programme de fiducie d'Exeko a été ciblée par l'ensemble des participant.e.s présent lors de l'atelier.

Comme proposition générale, le groupe s'est entendu sur l'intitulé suivant: "Ensemble, NOUS ferons l'expérimentation d'un prototype avec le modèle du programme de fiducie d'Exeko dans une logique de transfert et de reproduction dans les différentes communautés."



Source : Missions Exeko – juillet 2025 – atelier TOT fiducies – Échelle d'engagement des participant.e.s au programme de fiducie vers l'inclusion et la complémentarité avec le milieu communautaire.

Comme vision partagée, ils ont choisi ces valeurs fondamentales : les relations humaines, basées sur la réciprocité, l'entraide et la confiance, perçues comme essentielles pour assurer une collaboration équilibrée et respectueuse ; l'engagement et la cohérence, basés sur l'intégrité et la simplicité qui seront mises de l'avant pour garantir une approche transparente et accessible; l'action collective, en solidarité et pour une justice sociale comme des moteurs de transformation et de renforcement des communautés impliquées.

Le parcours a réuni onze groupes. Le prototype de programme de fiducie a permis le transfert de connaissances vers onze milieux communautaires ; le milieu philanthropique est sensibilisé aux enjeux des organisations grassroot. Enfin, l'adoption par les mouvements sociaux du programme de fiducie a aussi permis l'implantation dans leur milieu de l'innovation sociale.

Le programme de mutualisation nous a aussi permis de planifier des activités communes, de définir des mesures de gouvernance et d'établir un cadre d'évaluation. Il a été recommandé de rémunérer les participant.e.s lors de ces consultations – ce que nous avons fait –, de partager au plus grand nombre les informations sur les terrains et les territoires, de favoriser une gestion participative et de maintenir une objectivité dans le processus décisionnel de sélection des fiducies. Enfin, le processus a permis de faire émerger des idées pour développer une nouvelle identité, notamment de créer des synergies autour d'activités et projets communs, d'offres communes de services, de partage de ressources et expertises, d'accès aux réseaux (politique, financement, etc.) et d'établissement de normes de collaboration.

Les besoins des donataires non reconnus

Nous avons reformulé les questions du Guide pratique pour collaborer avec des donataires non reconnus pour les adapter au programme d'Exeko. Si le Guide pratique mentionne que les organisations sont soumises à différentes barrières qui les empêchent d'accéder au statut d'organisme de bienfaisance, notre étude précise le type de difficultés. Certains groupes sociaux ont mentionné le manque de ressources organisationnelles, de ressources financières, de même que le manque de capacités administratives pour assurer l'évolution du dossier à l'ARC. Une

autre proportion a dit ne pas avoir les capacités administratives pour soutenir le renforcement capacitaire que permettent les fins de bienfaisance, et enfin, certains croient à l'autodétermination et refusent l'institutionnalisation.

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Comme vision partagée, ils ont choisi ces valeurs fondamentales: les relations humaines, basées sur la réciprocité, l'entraide et la confiance, perçues comme essentielles pour assurer une collaboration équilibrée et respectueuse ; l'engagement et la cohérence, basés sur l'intégrité et la simplicité qui seront mises de l'avant pour garantir une approche transparente et accessible; l'action collective, en solidarité et pour une justice sociale comme des moteurs de transformation et de renforcement des communautés impliquées.

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Lorsqu'ils ont été interrogés sur leur perception du programme de fiducie d'Exeko, certains travailleurs sociaux ont indiqué qu'ils avaient bénéficié d'une

« expérience organique », qui permet « beaucoup de souplesse ». Une majorité a dit que le programme s'adapte bien aux exigences des fiduciaires sans jamais empiéter sur leur indépendance. Pour d'autres, la réactivité et la disponibilité sont un facteur clé de la bonne perception du programme.

Concernant ce qui devrait être privilégié dans l'analyse des demandes de fiduciaires, certains ont estimé que l'évaluation des partenariats avec les communautés était prioritaire dans l'étude des candidatures, alors que d'autres ont souligné l'importance d'examiner la capacité des personnes chargées de mener à bien les activités. Enfin, certains ont mentionné la faisabilité du projet, les ressources disponibles, les besoins du secteur comme facteur de sélection, alors que d'autres ont mentionné l'aspect relationnel, soit la capacité à formuler un projet clair, à développer des relations, à promouvoir son projet.

À la question, « qu'elle est la plus grande charge administrative pour votre organisation entourant le financement et la reddition de compte qui vient avec ? », les fiduciaires ont répondu que la présentation du projet, la documentation financière, le matériel complémentaire et la reconnaissance de partenariats sont des charges excessives.

Nous leur avons demandé de se projeter dans le futur et d'identifier par quels autres moyens Exeko pourrait soutenir leur développement. Certains évoquent le renforcement du leadership et une vaste majorité a exprimé le besoin de conseils et de soutien pour le financement et l'obtention d'un statut de bienfaisance.

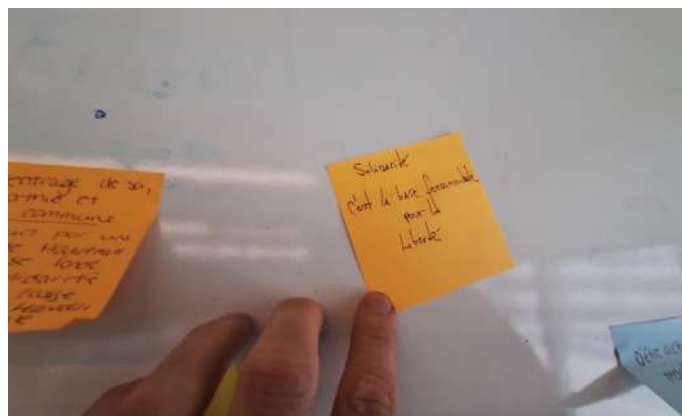
Les résultats du sondage nous amènent à reconsidérer les objectifs liés au développement d'une nouvelle identité. En particulier, la mise en évidence du désir d'autonomisation associé à l'obtention du statut d'organisme de bienfaisance suggère de repenser l'approche du programme de mutualisation.

Atelier sur la théorie de transformation sociale d'Exeko

L'atelier s'est tenu en juillet 2025 avec l'idée d'harmoniser le programme de fiducie avec la théorie de transformation sociale d'Exeko. Lors de ces ateliers, les médiateur.trice.s et l'équipe administrative se sont penchées sur quatre différentes échelles d'engagement permettant ces transformations. Quatre orientations ont émané de cette réflexion.

1. Pour mieux inclure les participant.e.s – les donataires non reconnus –, les objectifs de toutes les parties prenantes doivent être clairement définis afin de renforcer leur agentivité et de réduire la verticalité de la relation.
2. Pour être complémentaire avec le milieu, la création d'un réseau d'accompagnement et d'un parcours de formation continue serait bénéfique pour le soutien des mouvements sociaux.
3. Pour favoriser la reconnaissance, la création d'un réseau de collaboration, d'échange et de partage entre les organismes et les collectifs est une piste à considérer.
4. Pour influencer, des actions de plaidoyer doivent être menées auprès des fondations pour qu'elles modifient leurs pratiques et orientations stratégiques en ce qui a trait au financement des mouvements sociaux.

Enfin, il nous a été possible de constater que le programme de fiducie s'intègre parfaitement avec les quatre axes de la théorie de transformation sociale d'Exeko que sont : l'inclusion, la complémentarité (avec le milieu), l'interconnaissance et l'influence (auprès des institutions).



Source : Missions Exeko – juillet 2025 - atelier TOT fiducies – qu'est-ce que la solidarité signifie pour vous ?

Une clinique d'obtention du statut de bienfaisance comme vecteur de reconnaissance des mouvements sociaux

Les résultats du sondage sont très clairs. Les organisations et les collectifs grassroots souhaitent obtenir leur pleine autonomie. Grâce au soutien de

Centraide, nous avons été en mesure de mettre en place une clinique pour l'obtention du statut de bienfaisance. Les consultantes de Social Impact Consulting ont proposé un parcours en trois étapes distinctes. Comme première étape, nous avons réalisé un atelier d'information concernant l'acquisition d'un statut de bienfaisance, auquel ont participé douze personnes issues de différents horizons.

La deuxième étape a permis de réaliser quatre ateliers en virtuel, qui ont eu lieu entre octobre et décembre 2025. Les participant.e.s ont réfléchi collectivement à leurs façons propres d'écrire leurs fins de bienfaisance en vue du dépôt d'une demande à l'ARC. L'ensemble des groupes a trouvé, de façon inspirée, une façon de présenter les impacts sociaux de leurs initiatives.

La troisième étape consiste à accompagner de façon individuelle chaque organisation avec son dépôt de demande à l'ARC. Les groupes ont rencontré plusieurs difficultés. Les enjeux de richesses humaines et les changements d'administrateur.trice.s dans les équipes, ont compliqué l'accès au site de l'ARC. Enfin, en cours de processus, certains ont décidé que cet enregistrement comme organisme de bienfaisance ne correspondait pas à leur intention de demeurer indépendants.

Sur les douze groupes invités à participer à la clinique, deux ont présenté une demande à l'ARC, quatre étaient en bonne voie de déposer leur demande, trois sont toujours en processus de rédaction, et trois ont abandonné ou ont décidé que le statut de bienfaisance n'est pas pour leur groupe.

Conclusion

Cette étude nous a permis d'entrevoir différentes façons de collaborer avec les donateurs non reconnus. La solidarité entre organismes culturels et communautaires – comme Exeko – avec différents écosystèmes permet de répondre aux préoccupations des bailleurs de fonds. L'approche d'Exeko basée sur la réciprocité des échanges permet une relation basée sur la confiance grâce à un équilibre entre la prise de risque et une solidarité entre les différentes communautés montréalaises.

Nous avons aussi réussi à démontrer que les enjeux rencontrés sont communs à tous les écosystèmes d'où proviennent ces groupes. La mise en relation de

différents mouvements sociaux permet de conjuguer différentes expériences afin de trouver des problèmes complexes. Enfin, cette mise en relation a permis de briser l'isolement que peuvent ressentir les travailleurs sociaux.

Nous avons pu réfléchir à quelques stratégies permettant de favoriser la reconnaissance de ces mouvements. D'abord, solliciter des bailleurs de fonds et des consultants dans le développement de cesdits mouvements sociaux. La demande à Centraide a permis au bailleur de fonds de se conscientiser aux besoins des groupes sociaux. La mise en relation des mouvements sociaux avec Social Impact Consulting et Laboratoire-conseil a permis à ces derniers de prendre conscience des problématiques récurrentes dans le milieu communautaire et de proposer des solutions pour y remédier.

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La mise en relation de différents mouvements sociaux permet de conjuguer différentes expériences afin de trouver des problèmes complexes.

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Enfin, cette étude a permis de démontrer que des programmes de fiducie permettent une plus grande résilience des communautés. Elle a aussi mis en évidence que la collaboration entre fondations philanthropiques, parrains fiscaux et mouvements sociaux est à la fois possible et souhaitable. Cette collaboration permet d'enrichir chaque initiative en divisant les responsabilités selon ce que chacune des parties fait de mieux.

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Sunsetting Foundations for Climate Action: New Pathways for Environmental Philanthropy

By Sacha-Emmanuel Mossu, PhD Candidate in philosophy at Université Laval



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Introduction

Climate change is coming fast and is outpacing our efforts to fight it. As the need to strengthen mitigation efforts grows, institutional responses continue to fall short of the scale of the challenge. The scientific consensus is clear: we are nowhere near meeting our Paris Agreement commitments. Although climate policies and laws have expanded over the last decade, the greenhouse gas emissions projected for 2030 make it likely that global warming will surpass 1.5°C this century and significantly reduce the chances of staying below 2°C (IPCC 2023). In sum, we are acting too little and too slowly. This failure to act sometimes looks like it's rooted in the structural constraints of

existing political and economic institutions. On one hand, electoral democracies incentivize political leaders to prioritize short-term horizons dictated by electoral cycles and day-to-day issues. On the other, market competition tends to relegate environmental considerations to the background of corporate priorities, thereby hindering the energy modernization of the economy.

Is climate philanthropy efficient?

From this institutional perspective, the philanthropic sector appears – in theory – to be in a better position to respond to the climate crisis, precisely because it is freed from these constraints. As political scientist Rob Reich notes (2018), philanthropy benefits from a privileged institutional position that grants it relative autonomy from electoral and market imperatives. Possessing a structural advantage over the market and the state, philanthropy could easily operate on an extended time horizon to fund risky and pioneering projects. It would thus be able to avoid the “presentism” of democracy and the market, which are systematically oriented toward short-term projects due to financial and political constraints. Yet, in practice, most philanthropic foundations prove scarcely bolder than governments or businesses in climate action. Even liberated from the need to convince voters or

satisfy shareholders, they remain subject to their own institutional constraints. The most decisive among them is undoubtedly the principle of perpetuity. Many foundations are designed to preserve their capital over time, even ensuring its perpetual growth (Reiser & Dean, 2023). In theory, this structure could favor risky investments and long-term strategies. In practice, however, it tends to yield the opposite effect, which can be detrimental when tackling a cause like climate change.

As sociologist Francie Ostrower suggests (2011), perpetual foundations often develop an autonomous organizational identity, detached from their original purposes, and ultimately come to view their own survival as an “end in itself”. Capital preservation then becomes paramount, sometimes at the expense of the causes these institutions claim to serve—particularly when the amount of resources required to make a significant impact conflicts with the goal of perpetuity. In this context, foundations generally limit themselves to disbursing the mandatory quota imposed by the law, generally around 5% of the foundation’s capital. That pace is insufficient. According to a report published by the Royal Bank of Canada, the investment required to reach net-zero emissions in Canada is estimated at nearly \$2 trillion (2021). In the context of a climate crisis demanding rapid, large-scale, and risky responses to foster innovation, this logic of giving small sums year after year appears to be a major barrier to the effectiveness of environmental philanthropy.

Limited-life foundations: A strategic shift in climate action

That said, environmental philanthropy has not yet said its last word. Indeed, another model of foundation, often called “sunsetting” or “limited-life” foundations, is emerging with the promise of shaking things up in the philanthropic sector. Unlike perpetual foundations, these organizations commit to spending all their assets and ceasing operations at the end of a predetermined time horizon or after achieving specific objectives (Mossu & Grant Poitras, 2024). According to Ostrower (2011), contrary to “normal” foundations, the upcoming wind-up of these foundations ensures that organizational survival is no longer a priority. They thus become temporary “vehicles,” explicitly and rapidly oriented toward achieving the goals set by their founders or responding promptly to current issues. This institutional logic appears particularly suited to the temporal constraints of the environmental crisis.

Although the phenomenon of sunsetting foundations is slowly gaining popularity, it remains marginal, and few organizations of this type specifically focus on combating climate change. Three examples are nonetheless particularly illuminating. In the United States, the Beldon Fund, founded in 1982 by John Hunting to promote environmental policies, decided in 1998 to voluntarily liquidate its assets over a ten-year period, motivated by a strong sense of environmental urgency. This decision led the foundation to spend over \$100 million to maximize its political impact before its definitive closure (Beldon Fund, 2009). In Canada, the Ivey Foundation - one of Canada’s oldest foundations created in 1947 by Richard G. Ivey and his son Richard M. Ivey - follows a similar trajectory.

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Unlike perpetual foundations, these organizations commit to spending all their assets and ceasing operations at the end of a predetermined time horizon or after achieving specific objectives.

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Among the country’s earliest environmental foundations, it progressively specialized in energy transition issues. In 2022, it announced its impending closure (Ivey 2022) and the end-of-life process was designed to accelerate Canada’s economic energy transition through its Economy and Environnement Program (2023). Finally, another compelling example is the MAVA Foundation, founded in Switzerland by Luc Hoffmann in 1994 to support the conservation of biodiversity around the globe. While climate change mitigation was a peripheral—though vital—objective compared to its core mission of protecting endangered species, its strategic logic and the motivations behind its closure in 2022 mirror those of the Ivey Foundation

and Beldon Fund. These initiatives, which reinterpret the temporality of philanthropic action, are expanding the scope of what environmental philanthropy can achieve and pointing toward a dramatic leap in the effectiveness of these institutions in fighting climate change.

It is interesting to examine why a planned closure would be attractive to these three environmental organizations. Despite the diversity of their trajectories, several common characteristics emerge from limited-life environmental foundations. First, sunseting offers financial flexibility that enables these foundations to better integrate the imperatives of climate urgency into their strategy. Since their institutional survival is no longer a concern, limited-duration foundations can spend far beyond the annual disbursement quotas. This allows them to allocate funds more responsively tailoring spending to on-the-ground needs and the actual resource demands of the cause they support.

From this perspective, deliberately spending down capital allows foundations to move faster toward their goals—achieving impacts that would otherwise be impossible under the constraints of minimum payouts. This allows them to dramatically increase the scale of resources deployed. In some cases, even a small boost in spending can unlock entirely new areas of action, enabling riskier but high-impact projects with substantial social returns. This is particularly true for these environmental foundations, which often adopt much shorter time horizons than the average limited-duration foundation — often set at twenty years or more (Mossu & Poitras 2024). The Beldon Fund thus opted for a ten-year liquidation period, while the Ivey Foundation chose a five-year horizon. This brevity enables concentrating considerable resources over a very short time frame, rapidly increasing the sector's capacity for action. To get a sense of the scale, the Ivey Foundation will spend, over five years, the equivalent of nearly eighty years of funding under a perpetuity scenario (Grant-Poitras & Mossu 2025 (TBP)). By renouncing capital preservation, it has multiplied its intervention power and invested massively where potential impact is deemed highest, thus creating real momentum around an issue long neglected in Canada. This allowed the foundation to accelerate the impact of its Economy and Environment Program and to strengthen the capacities of its partners such as Transition Accelerator, Clean Energy Canada, Clean Prosperity, Canadian Climate Institute, Efficiency

Canada, Environmental Defence Canada, New Economy Canada, and Pembina Institute. In the same way, the Beldon Fund consolidated its means to bolster environmental advocacy around key issues which lead to few important policy changes in the United-States. It notably engaged a lot of resources in key states such as Florida on regulating the use of toxic chemicals in consumer products and on environmental protection issues, including actions supporting the ratification of the Great Lakes Compact, a binding interstate agreement among eight U.S. states to manage the water supply more sustainably. (Cramer & Kehoe, 2014). In doing so, these foundations prove that strategic spending, rather than capital preservation, is a decisive lever for meeting the scale of the climate challenge (or other environmental issues)

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Beyond the numbers and the scale, the value of limited-life foundation also lies in the qualitative shifts it creates in the way they operate. A second distinctive trait of these foundations is often called “the focus effect” generated by planned closure (Ostrower, 2011). The foundation's end date instills a

sense of urgency and fosters discipline among staff and members, encouraging them to produce the best results and concentrate efforts on what matters most. The fact that the foundation's money is no longer perceived as a renewable resource translates into a concern to make optimal use of every dollar spent and maximize the organization's relevance for the time remaining (Riley, 2023). As Lynda Mansson (2018), the former director general from the MAVA Foundation put it, "there is nothing like knowing there is an end-date to sharpen discussions. Although there has always been a finite amount of funding to provide to partners, when there is a finite number of years for that funding, suddenly things change. Trade-offs become more apparent and the choices we make are more critical".

Conservation projects are highly complex and require sustained commitment across several dimensions—environmental, political, legal, and social. Achieving meaningful impact therefore relies on building partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders. Rather than dispersing resources across numerous scattered initiatives, foundations can be more effective by concentrating on a limited number of causes where a holistic approach can be implemented. For example, the Sea Turtle Partnership funded by the MAVA Foundation focused its efforts on a small number of priority projects in West Africa and the Mediterranean. By strengthening the protection of key breeding sites through collaboration between local actors, scientists, and governments, the initiative demonstrated how targeted, partnership-based action can generate stronger conservation outcomes (MAVA & FOS 2021). Seen this way, the certainty of imminent closure pushes leadership and staff to focus efforts on what truly matters. Unlike perpetual foundations, which can afford to disperse resources and attention across peripheral activities, limited-duration foundations are structurally compelled to prioritize the most efficient and strategic projects. In the case of the Ivey Foundation, this translated into tightening partner selection criteria, explicitly hierarchizing funding relationships, and refocusing on organizations most aligned with its energy transition objectives. This approach led to ending partnerships deemed insufficiently conducive to tangible progress, in favor of closer, more strategic collaborations (Grant-Poitras & Mossu 2025, TBP). Those experiences show the way that the closure of a foundation represents an opportunity to rethink approaches to environmental

action and to reconsider cooperation around this issue, in a manner that prioritizes effectiveness and innovation.

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The fact that the foundation's money is no longer perceived as a renewable resource translates into a concern to make optimal use of every dollar spent and maximize the organization's relevance for the time remaining.

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Finally, these experiences invite to think differently the very notion of sustainability in philanthropy. As we saw, perpetuity is often justified by the idea that it ensures durable, long-term impact, shielded from political and economic fluctuations. But as John Hunting of the Beldon Fund puts it: "Environmental problems can't wait." (Carlson & Lurie 2009). Put differently, while environmental challenges require a long-term vision, they also demand immediate action and strong mobilization right now. In this sense, those foundation's experience demonstrates that giving up perpetual existence does not mean forsaking a long-term vision. On the contrary, the prospect of closure encourages deep reflection on the future effects of actions undertaken right now. Their sunset is oriented toward fostering long-term systemic change at an institutional level. For Ivey, the foundation thus focused on its partners' capacity to continue their mission after its departure, strengthening their autonomy and skills. It also sought to structurally reinforce Canada's environmental philanthropy ecosystem by supporting innovative financing models, perpetual institutions, and nationwide collaboration

networks. This ecosystem revolves around another nonprofit, the Transition Accelerator, an entity that the foundation itself helped build, whose mission is to put 'Canada on a path to a strong, competitive economy in a world driving to reduce emissions to carbon neutrality'. The case of the Ivey Foundation demonstrates how the sunsetting process empowers the organization to pursue systemic change strategies and engage in field-building for the underdeveloped sector of energy transition. In the same way, prior to closing, the MAVA Foundation supported key partners in their organizational development to ensure they were well-equipped for the future. By strengthening these entities, the foundation aimed to guarantee the delivery of effective conservation efforts for years to come (Fintch 2023). For these institutions, the relationships and the infrastructure they helped build over the years prior to sunsetting will outlive their disappearance. Thus, contrary to common assumptions, closing a foundation may foster the integration of long-term and sustainability thinking into an organization's strategic approach, in a way that perpetuals foundations don't.

Conclusion

In sum, the greater financial agility, the strategic focus and the new approach to sustainability fostered by the closure make the model of sunsetting foundation particularly relevant for certain types of philanthropic activities. In the case of the climate crisis, it thus appears that the bet of limited-duration foundations—based on intensity, concentration, and speed of action—is potentially better suited than the incremental strategy favored by perpetual foundations. By renouncing perpetuity, these organizations equip themselves to act at the scale of the urgency. In this regard, if additional foundations follow the example set by the Beldon Fund, the Ivey Foundation and the MAVA Foundation, the philanthropic sector may emerge as a powerful accelerator of the energy transition and a leading force in climate change mitigation. Such examples can certainly serve as an inspiration for other organizations and foundations seeking solutions to urgent systemic problems, such as the climate crisis.

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De bailleur de fonds à catalyseur d'innovation : Le repositionnement de la Fondation de la FMSQ face à la crise de la proche aidance au Québec

Par Joël Paré-Julien, *Directeur général de la
Fondation de la FMSQ*



Joël Paré-Julien est passionné par les enjeux internationaux, environnementaux et de santé. Il détient un baccalauréat en science politique de l'Université de Montréal ainsi qu'une maîtrise de la London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Après avoir travaillé pour deux programmes des Nations Unies en Colombie et à Montréal, il s'implique en philanthropie depuis 2012. En 2022, il fait le saut à temps plein dans ce milieu et occupe aujourd'hui le poste de directeur général de la Fondation de la FMSQ.

Introduction

Au Québec, 21,1 % de la population âgée de 15 ans et plus agit aujourd'hui comme personne proche aidante (Observatoire québécois de la proche aidance). Ces personnes constituent des piliers essentiels de notre société et du réseau de la santé. Derrière ce chiffre se cachent des trajectoires de vie multiples, mais une réalité commune demeure trop souvent invisible : celles et ceux qui soutiennent un proche vivant avec une incapacité temporaire ou permanente le font souvent au détriment de leur propre santé.

Les données sont sans équivoque. Les responsabilités liées à la proche aidance ont des répercussions

importantes sur la santé physique, psychologique, financière et sociale. Selon l'Institut de la statistique du Québec, 64 % des personnes proches aidantes réduisent le temps consacré aux activités sociales, aux loisirs ou à la détente, 49 % diminuent le temps passé avec leur conjoint et 44 % avec leurs amis (Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2015).

Sur le plan financier, les conséquences économiques sont tout aussi tangibles. Parmi les personnes proches aidantes offrant 20 heures et plus de soutien par semaine, seulement 33 % occupent un emploi à temps plein, et près de 29 % vivent avec un revenu familial inférieur à 35 000 \$, ce qui accentue leur vulnérabilité socioéconomique (Enquête statistique sur la proche aidance au Québec, 2022).

Même si le Québec se distingue à l'échelle canadienne en matière de reconnaissance et de soutien aux personnes proches aidantes, la Fondation de la Fédération des médecins spécialistes du Québec (FMSQ) a posé un constat clair : les besoins des personnes proches aidantes augmentent plus rapidement que les ressources disponibles pour les soutenir.

Dans ce contexte, continuer à agir uniquement en tant

que bailleur de fonds revenait à répondre à l'urgence de manière temporaire, sans développer des solutions pérennes susceptibles d'atténuer la crise.

La crise comme point de bascule

Cette crise de la proche aidance a ainsi agi à la fois comme un point de bascule et comme un levier de transformation. Elle a mis en lumière les limites d'une approche philanthropique centrée principalement sur le financement de projets ponctuels et a renforcé la volonté de la Fondation de contribuer à des transformations durables dans les pratiques du réseau de la santé.



Depuis sa création en 2012, la Fondation de la FMSQ appuie des organismes partout au Québec offrant des services et du soutien aux personnes proches aidantes, notamment par le répit. Ces services demeurent essentiels. Toutefois, l'ampleur des besoins des organismes nous a rapidement fait réaliser que notre contribution, bien que significative, demeurait une solution temporaire pour pallier le sous-financement chronique du milieu. Elle ne permettait pas, à elle seule, de générer des changements durables.

- Joël Paré-Julien, directeur général de la Fondation de la FMSQ.



Depuis sa création, la Fondation a soutenu plus de 190 organismes à travers le Québec, appuyant plus de 500 projets pour un total de plus de 13 millions de dollars en soutien financier. Cette mobilisation a permis de répondre à des besoins urgents, tout en révélant les limites d'une intervention qui, sans vision structurante, peinait à transformer les pratiques sur le long terme.

C'est en 2022, à l'occasion du 10^e anniversaire de la Fondation de la FMSQ, qu'un changement d'orientation a commencé à prendre forme. Plutôt que de souligner cet anniversaire par un regard rétrospectif, la Fondation a choisi de se tourner résolument vers l'avenir en allant à la rencontre du terrain.

Pour alimenter cette réflexion collective, la Fondation a organisé quatre ateliers d'innovation sociale en co-création avec Mangrove, une entreprise d'économie sociale. Tenus dans différentes régions du Québec, ces ateliers ont réuni des organismes communautaires, des professionnels de la santé, des personnes proches aidantes, des personnes aidées ainsi que des partenaires représentant l'ensemble de l'écosystème de la proche aidance. Les participants ont été invités à partager leurs constats, leurs défis et leurs pistes de solution.

À la suite de cet exercice, un cinquième événement d'envergure a été organisé à Montréal, réunissant plus d'une centaine d'acteurs de la proche aidance. Ce forum a mobilisé des parties prenantes de haut niveau, dont la ministre déléguée aux Aînés de l'époque, Mme Sonia Bélanger, aujourd'hui ministre de la Santé.

Cette démarche a permis de prendre le pouls des besoins réels tout en confirmant une intuition forte qui animait la Fondation depuis plusieurs années : pour générer un impact structurant et durable dans la vie des personnes proches aidantes, il était nécessaire de faire évoluer en profondeur la manière de les soutenir.

À l'issue de ce processus, huit besoins prioritaires ont été identifiés : la reconnaissance, la sécurité financière, le soutien psychologique, la formation, le répit, l'accès à l'information, le soutien en main-d'œuvre spécialisée et l'aide à la mobilité.

Afin de traduire cette réflexion en actions concrètes, la Fondation a fait évoluer sa gouvernance. Soucieuse d'ancrer ses décisions dans les réalités du terrain, elle a accueilli au sein de son conseil d'administration deux nouvelles membres: Mélanie Perroux, ancienne directrice de Proche aidance Québec et aujourd'hui conseillère scientifique à l'Institut national de santé publique du Québec, ainsi que Mélanie Labbé, engagée de longue date en philanthropie.

Parallèlement, la Fondation s'est fait accompagner par Épisode, une firme spécialisée afin de structurer et de transformer les apprentissages issus du terrain en orientations stratégiques claires, cohérentes et directement alignées avec les besoins exprimés par les acteurs du milieu. Ce processus a permis de faire émerger un positionnement ancré dans les réalités du terrain.

Une philanthropie catalyseur d'innovation

À partir de cette démarche, la Fondation de la FMSQ a réaffirmé sa volonté de contribuer à une transformation systémique du réseau de la santé. Au cœur de cette nouvelle vision se trouve la reconnaissance pleine et entière des personnes proches aidantes comme partenaires essentielles de l'équipe de soins.

Pour la Fondation, cette reconnaissance s'amorce par l'auto-reconnaissance. Encore aujourd'hui, plus du tiers des personnes proches aidantes ne se reconnaissent pas comme telles (Enquête statistique sur la proche aidance au Québec, 2022). Cette absence de reconnaissance constitue un frein majeur à l'accès aux ressources et aux services de soutien. Elle doit donc être suivie d'une reconnaissance sociale et institutionnelle, condition essentielle à une inclusion réelle et durable des personnes proches aidantes au sein du réseau de la santé.



Source : Fondation de la FMSQ

Rejoignant les travaux récents en philanthropie stratégique, qui mettent de l'avant un rôle renouvelé des fondations comme acteurs de développement plutôt que comme simples bailleurs de fonds (Gilothe, 2019), la Fondation a dévoilé à l'automne 2025 une nouvelle orientation marquant le passage d'une philanthropie principalement axée sur le financement à une philanthropie fondée sur la co-construction et l'innovation.

La Fondation soutient désormais des projets structurants, modélisables et durables, développés en étroite collaboration avec les organismes du terrain et les professionnels de la santé. Ces initiatives s'inscrivent dans une logique où la reconnaissance et l'auto-reconnaissance des personnes proches aidantes constituent des leviers centraux d'action.

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L'objectif n'était pas uniquement de répondre à des besoins immédiats, mais de soutenir des initiatives structurantes, capables d'être modélisées et déployées à plus grande échelle, d'influencer durablement les pratiques et de renforcer les liens entre les acteurs du réseau de la santé. Cette réflexion s'est amorcée sans augmentation des ressources financières disponibles. Nous devons faire mieux avec le même budget, en misant sur des leviers plus impactants

- Joël Paré-Julien, directeur général de la Fondation de la FMSQ.

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Dans cette perspective, la Fondation souhaite devenir un acteur clé de l'amélioration de l'accès aux soins et aux services de soutien offerts aux personnes proches aidantes au Québec. S'inscrivant dans le rôle croissant des fondations philanthropiques comme acteurs d'influence dans les transformations sociales (Lefebvre, Fontan & Elson, 2017), la Fondation affirme sa volonté d'influencer positivement les politiques publiques et les pratiques en santé à toutes les étapes du continuum de soins.

Cette approche se traduit par un appui accru à des projets novateurs qui renforcent la relation entre les médecins spécialistes, les patients et les personnes proches aidantes, ainsi que par la mobilisation de l'expertise médicale afin de générer un impact structurant sur le réseau de la santé et d'en améliorer durablement l'accessibilité. S'appuyant sur ses partenaires de terrain, la Fondation de la FMSQ offre également à ses membres des formations accréditées visant à sensibiliser les médecins spécialistes du Québec aux réalités, aux besoins et aux enjeux propres aux personnes proches aidantes, et à favoriser leur meilleure intégration au parcours de soins des patients.



Source : Fondation de la FMSQ

Des projets qui transforment les pratiques

Cette nouvelle approche se matérialise dans plusieurs initiatives phares et reflète une évolution du rôle de la Fondation, désormais partenaire des organismes dans le déploiement, la mise en valeur et le rayonnement des projets qu'ils portent.

La plateforme [Agir pour bien vieillir](#), développée en partenariat avec la Fondation AGES, illustre concrètement cette approche. Ce projet illustre la volonté de la Fondation de la FMSQ de soutenir des projets privilégiant une approche sociétale

de maintien de l'autonomie plutôt qu'une logique strictement médicale axée sur la gestion de la perte d'autonomie, en cohérence avec les recommandations de la Commissaire à la santé et au bien-être.



Source : Fondation de la FMSQ

Dans un contexte où la proportion de personnes âgées au Québec continuera de croître au cours des prochaines décennies, Agir pour bien vieillir est une plateforme web visant à redonner du pouvoir d'agir aux aînés et à leurs proches. En offrant un accès à une information fiable, accessible et adaptée aux réalités du vieillissement, la plateforme permet de mieux comprendre son état de santé, de repérer les signes précurseurs d'une détérioration, de savoir quand il est pertinent de consulter et de se préparer adéquatement à un rendez-vous médical.

La reconnaissance et la valorisation des personnes proches aidantes occupent également une place centrale dans ce projet. En proposant un langage commun et des outils de communication facilitant les échanges avec les professionnels de la santé, Agir pour bien vieillir contribue à renforcer leur rôle comme partenaires du soin, améliorant à la fois la qualité des diagnostics et la pertinence des interventions cliniques.

Le succès immédiat de la plateforme, qui a attiré plus de 40 000 visiteurs uniques dans les jours suivant son lancement, témoigne de la pertinence de cette approche et de l'ampleur des besoins auxquels elle répond.

Cette logique d'intervention préventive et structurante se retrouve également dans le projet [Aider sans filtre](#), porté par CAP santé mentale. Conçue pour et avec les jeunes, cette initiative vise à créer un réseau de jeunes vigies capables de repérer leurs pairs présentant des besoins en santé mentale, notamment les jeunes

proches aidants, et de les orienter vers les ressources appropriées. La littérature scientifique stipule qu'un jeune sur cinq soutient un parent vivant avec un trouble de santé mentale (Aldridge, 2008). Exposés à des niveaux élevés de stress, ces jeunes sont plus à risque de développer eux-mêmes un trouble de santé mentale.

Après deux ans de mise en œuvre, les résultats sont probants. 43 jeunes agents de sensibilisation et de soutien ont été formés, plus de 16 500 jeunes ont été sensibilisés et 1 200 jeunes proches aidants ont été accompagnés par des organismes de leur région.

Enfin, le projet piloté par la Dre Julia Chabot, présidente de l'Association des gériatres du Québec et gériatre au Centre hospitalier St. Mary, témoigne du potentiel de transformation à l'intérieur même des milieux cliniques. Né d'un dialogue avec Claire Webster, fondatrice du Programme de formation sur la démence de McGill, ce projet a mené à la création d'un espace dédié aux personnes proches aidantes au sein même de la clinique ambulatoire en gériatrie de l'hôpital. Pensé comme un lieu de rencontre et de formation intégré aux parcours de soins, cet espace permet aux personnes proches aidantes et aux équipes soignantes de se rencontrer, d'échanger et de reconnaître mutuellement leurs rôles.



Source : Dre Julia Chabot et Mme Raneburger dans l'Espace proche aidant. Fondation de la FMSQ

Le volet de recherche récemment amorcé, soutenu par la Fondation de la FMSQ, ouvrira la voie à la modélisation de cette approche afin qu'elle puisse être reproduite dans d'autres centres hospitaliers, contribuant ainsi à une transformation durable des pratiques en gériatrie.

Vers un rôle assumé de catalyseur

À travers ces initiatives, la Fondation de la FMSQ

affirme une posture renouvelée, celle d'un acteur clé œuvrant à l'amélioration concrète de la vie des personnes proches aidantes, au service d'un réseau de la santé plus humain et plus solidaire. La crise de la proche aide n'a pas seulement révélé l'urgence d'agir, elle a permis de repenser en profondeur la manière d'agir.

En choisissant de co-construire avec les organismes, d'intégrer les personnes proches aidantes au cœur des solutions, d'impliquer et de sensibiliser ses propres membres et de viser des impacts durables sur les pratiques, la Fondation illustre comment la philanthropie peut évoluer vers des interventions plus structurantes et transformatrices, capables d'agir durablement sur les systèmes plutôt que sur leurs seuls symptômes.

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The Unaccounted Crisis, Food Banks and the Shadow of Social Justice

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Before turning to teaching, he spent several years working in taxation and research at the international firm Deloitte. He serves on the boards of directors of several charitable organizations in Ottawa.

Poverty and Need for Social Justice

A crisis can be understood as the moment when people within a social system collectively perceive that the foundations sustaining their way of life, its values, institutions, or material conditions, are no longer secure and may be at risk of collapse (Boin et al., 2017). It has three main components: threat, urgency and uncertainty (Boin et al., 2017). Crises force people and organizations to move away from routine management, to quick, reactive decision-making, where swift acting often matters more than thoughtful strategic long-term planning (Brouard, 2020).

Although crises are sometimes described as external shocks, such as medical emergencies, natural disasters, or economic downturns, many of the most destabilizing threats unfold slowly. Crises often emerge so gradually that we barely notice their danger until it is almost too late, much like the fable of the frog that fails to realize it is being boiled alive as the

water warms slowly around it. When change happens incrementally, each small shift feels manageable, even normal, and we adapt without questioning the broader trajectory. By the time the full scale of the crisis becomes visible—whether environmental, social, or political—we may already be deeply entrenched in its consequences. This slow burn dynamic makes early awareness and vigilance essential, because recognizing subtle warning signs is the only way to avoid becoming the metaphorical frog in the pot. Being aware of the signals of an emerging crisis is essential (Brouard, 2020).

In this essay, we underline how growing food insecurity is symptomatic of a crisis, one which may well illustrate the shortfalls of the Canadian economic system and its capacity to look after the welfare of its citizens. Rather than representing a sudden disruption, rising food insecurity reflects deeper structural pressures linked to income instability, welfare retrenchment, and shifting governance responsibilities. Our text explored the Canadian philanthropic landscape, and the growth and normalization of food banks during times of prolonged crisis. It observed both an increase in demands and systemic shortcomings in social support.

Food banks are acknowledged as symptomatic institutions, responding to dire social needs; essentials which go unmet by the Canadian welfare state. Their expansion therefore raises broader questions about how responsibility for addressing poverty has gradually shifted from public income supports toward charitable and market-based actors. Adopting a crisis perspective, their expansion highlights not only how charities/civil society respond to disruptions, but also how crises become embedded in Canada's charitable approach to food insecurity. In this sense, the normalization of emergency food provision may both reflect and reinforce longer-term transformations in the social safety net. Following this overview, one may ask why food banks in the country have become a standard fixture in social provisions, compensating for the market and a struggling welfare state.

Crisis in Food Banks

Based on Food Banks Canada (2025a), monthly visits to food banks across Canada have reached record highs, revealing a troubling reliance on charitable food

support. In recent years, these visits have doubled compared to pre-pandemic levels, a testimony to just how sharply demand has risen. Alarming, most adults experiencing food insecurity are currently employed, highlighting that even some Canadians who work full-time cannot make ends meet, amid the ongoing affordability crisis (Food Banks Canada, 2025a).

This trend signals a broader food-insecurity crisis rather than a simple food bank issue. While donations and volunteering remain crucial, they alone cannot resolve the problem. Without systemic intervention, hunger risks becoming normalized, needs continue to escalate, and organizations originally designed to provide temporary relief are increasingly tasked with meeting long-term demand (Food Banks Canada, 2025a). Indeed, food banks play an essential role, but only coordinated action from governments, communities, and other stakeholders can reverse these trends (Food Banks Canada, 2025a).

Historically, food banks have been part of Canada's social support network for decades, yet their repeated milestones reveal deeper policy shortcomings. It took roughly 25 years for monthly visits to surpass 1 million; in contrast, the following 1 million visits occurred in just five years. By March 2024, food banks recorded over 2 million visits in a single month (nearly 90% higher than in 2019), demonstrating a growth rate that is unsustainable for both the organizations and the people they serve (Food Banks Canada, 2024).

These developments align with broader economic data. According to the Canadian Income Survey (Food Banks Canada, 2024):

- 1 in 10 Canadians now lives in poverty.
- Nearly a quarter (23%) face food insecurity.
- After a historic decline in poverty from 14.5% in 2015 to 6.4% in 2020, the trend reversed by 2022, with poverty rising to nearly 10%.

Today, food insecurity has reached record levels, affecting almost 10 million Canadians, including more than 2.5 million children (Food Insecurity Policy Research, 2025).

Compounding these pressures, rising inflation has intensified financial strain on households. Increasingly, families rely on credit or emergency savings to cover

essentials like rent and food, leaving them vulnerable to unexpected income shocks, such as job loss or health crises (Food Banks Canada, 2025a).

Affordability Crisis

What stands out in the recent evidence is how little relief people feel, even as inflation slows. Lower inflation does not undo years of price increases. The cost of necessities has already shifted upward, and for many households that shift has become permanent. Day-to-day expenses now start from a much higher baseline than they did only a few years ago. Since 2021, the cost of everyday essentials has risen sharply, with housing, food, and transportation becoming noticeably more expensive, contributing to a 18% increase in overall consumer prices and putting real strain on many households (Food Banks Canada, 2025a). For those with the lowest incomes, including people relying on provincial social assistance, more than 80% of disposable income goes straight to housing and food (Food Banks Canada, 2024). When so much of a household budget is fixed, food is often the first thing to suffer, and turning to a food bank becomes less about choice and more about necessity.

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The speed and scale of this struggle is striking. In the summer of 2021, about one in five households reported difficulty meeting their basic needs. By the end of 2022, that number had jumped to roughly one third, and it has stayed at a similarly high level since (Food Banks Canada, 2024). This rapid shift shows that financial stress is no longer an issue affecting

a small portion of the population. It is becoming a common reality.

Poverty and food insecurity are rising sharply together (Food Banks Canada, 2024). Income supports, wages, and the cost of basic living are no longer aligned, leaving many households caught in a cycle of constant financial strain. Without systemic changes, affordability pressures are likely to keep pushing more Canadians toward food insecurity, making hunger not just an occasional hardship, but a structural feature of daily life.

Social Assistance

Provincial social assistance plays a central role in the lives of many Canadians who rely on food banks. Based on Food Banks Canada (2025a), around 40% of food bank clients depend primarily on these programs, which include general welfare and provincial disability support. General welfare is meant as a short-term safety net for those who are temporarily out of work and have no other income, while disability support is intended for individuals facing medical or physical barriers that prevent them from securing or maintaining employment (Food Banks Canada, 2025a). For many, these programs are the main—and sometimes the only—source of financial stability.

Yet social assistance alone is not enough to prevent food insecurity. The funding structure for food banks highlights a troubling gap: nearly all resources (98%) come from community donations, while less than 2% is provided by government support (Ottawa Food Bank, 2024). This imbalance leaves charitable organizations carrying the weight of a systemic problem, rather than addressing the root causes. While community generosity is remarkable, it is not a long-term solution. Without stronger, sustained government investment and policy interventions, social assistance cannot fully shield households from the pressures of rising living costs, housing expenses, and food price inflation.

Food Banks Situation Across Canada

Today, food banks are a common and visible component of Canada's social landscape. Across Canada, Food Banks Canada provides support to a network of 5,500 food banks and community groups (Food Banks Canada, 2025c). The food bank network reportedly supports around 3 million people each

year through its ten provincial associations and newly established Territorial Association in Yukon (Food Banks Canada, 2025c). According to Food Banks Canada's 2025 annual report, the organization made a significant difference last year, creating meaningful social, environmental, and economic impact. Its network helped prevent millions of kilograms of greenhouse gases (103 million) from entering the atmosphere, showing that rescuing and redistributing food can benefit the planet. Altogether, for every dollar invested by donors and partners, Food Banks Canada generates nearly \$8 in combined social, environmental, and economic value, demonstrating the wide-reaching and lasting impact of its work (Food Banks Canada, 2025c).

However, some studies have highlighted a clear mismatch between what food banks are expected to achieve and what they are able to deliver (Bazerghi et al., 2016). Designed as short-term support, they are now serving people who rely on them continuously, often as their main source of food. Yet growing demand, uneven donations, and limited capacity mean that food banks struggle to provide food that is both adequate and nutritious. For many users, frequent visits do not resolve food insecurity but simply help them get through the next few days, revealing the limits of charitable food provision in addressing deeper structural deprivation (Bazerghi et al., 2016).

Supporting food banks can create the appearance that hunger is being effectively addressed, yet these efforts often respond to its symptoms rather than its structural drivers. By emphasizing charitable food relief, governments risk ignoring the deeper issue to unequal access to resources, as well as insufficient individual and family income despite full-time work. This dynamic is not new. The expansion of food banks since the 1980s coincided with broader shifts in social policy and labour markets, including the retrenchment of income supports and rising employment precarity (Azadian et al., 2023). What began as a temporary emergency response has become institutionalized within Canada's social landscape.

Institutionalization of Food Banks

Robinson (2014) argues that the institutionalization of food banks reflects broader neoliberal restructuring that shifts responsibility for poverty from the state

to charitable and market actors. Within this framing, hunger is constructed primarily as a problem of food supply rather than income inadequacy, legitimizing charity-based and corporate-supported responses while narrowing policy attention to emergency relief instead of structural reform. By stabilizing an 'emergency food' paradigm, this discourse constrains the scope of policy debate and diverts attention from the structural drivers of food insecurity, including income inadequacy and welfare retrenchment (Robinson, 2014). Over time, such normalization may unintentionally reinforce food-based responses as the default solution, while deflecting attention from the income-based policy reforms necessary to meaningfully reduce household food insecurity (Tarasuk et al., 2020; Azadian et al., 2023).

At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that food banks provide immediate assistance to households facing acute material hardship and often operate through extensive networks of volunteers, community organizations, and local partnerships. For many individuals experiencing crisis, food banks represent a critical short-term source of support. However, recognizing this immediate function does not resolve the structural concerns. Notably, food banks require substantial public and private investments, including storage, transportation, and tax incentives to sustain operations. Ontario, for example, funds perishable food transport and storage, and federal funding added \$100 million in August 2021 on top of an earlier \$200 million. While such funding supports short-term relief, it does little to address the underlying structural inequities that drive food insecurity (Azadian et al., 2023). In this sense, food banks may alleviate immediate need, but they cannot substitute for the broader policy reforms and redistributive strategies required to meaningfully reduce hunger in Canada.

Critical scholarship has also emphasized how the normalization and corporatization of food charity can contribute to the depoliticization of hunger. As charitable food provision became institutionalized and increasingly supported by corporate actors, hunger was reframed as a matter of community compassion and philanthropy, rather than as a political issue rooted in poverty and income inequality (Riches, 2011). Over time, this shift contributed to the cultural embedding

of food banks as a socially acceptable response to hardship, reducing pressure on governments to fulfill their obligations to ensure adequate income security and uphold the right to food. The growing involvement of corporate sponsors, media partnerships, and tax-supported incentives further solidified food banking as a second-tier safety net operating alongside a weakened public welfare system (Riches, 2011). In this context, food charity does not simply alleviate immediate need; it can also render hunger less visible as a matter of social justice and public policy, thereby allowing structural determinants of food insecurity to remain insufficiently addressed.

Structural Deficit and Systemic Barriers

Food banks across Canada are facing growth that far exceeds anything previously seen. In the past five years, demand has risen faster than ever, and even modest annual increases in usage now strain the system. This surge is happening alongside the ongoing affordability crisis and higher unemployment, particularly among recent newcomers, creating a perfect storm for charitable food support (Food Banks Canada, 2024).

The roots of this crisis stretch back further. While the pandemic exposed and intensified vulnerabilities, inflation, rising housing costs, and a fraying social safety net have compounded the problem. Food banks, which were designed to offer temporary relief, are now being asked to absorb long-term systemic pressures. More than three-quarters of food banks now must purchase food to meet demand, up from just over half a few years ago (Food Banks Canada, 2025a). The cost of keeping the system running has more than doubled in only three years, and for urban centers, annual costs now reach into the millions (Food Banks Canada, 2025a). Clearly, the network can no longer operate sustainably under these conditions.

Worth mentioning is that food insecurity is not evenly distributed in Canada. Northern Canada experiences a far more severe and complex crisis. Indigenous communities in general face persistent disparities. Almost 40% of Inuit, Métis, and First Nations individuals experience food insecurity, compared to roughly 25% of the overall population. These differences are not the result of individual choices, but of structural and systemic barriers that continue to limit access to

adequate food (Food Banks Canada, 2025a). Poverty in the region is more than double the national average, and food insecurity affects over a third of households, reaching nearly 60% in Nunavut (Food Banks Canada, 2025a). High prices, limited availability, poor quality, and climate-related threats to traditional food sources all contribute to the problem. Addressing these issues requires systemic change: subsidies and tax benefits alone are not enough; long-term, locally accountable strategies, co-designed with Indigenous communities, are essential to ensure equitable access to food and to support food sovereignty (Food Banks Canada, 2025a).

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At the federal level, some steps have been taken to address affordability and poverty. Government programs aimed to increase housing supply, improve employment insurance, and invest in Northern communities do exist. While these actions have potential, they are not sufficient on their own. Real change will require economic and welfare state structural reforms that address the underlying causes of poverty and inequality, rather than relying solely on short-term fixes (Food Banks Canada, 2025a). Ultimately, Canada's food banks reflect deeper structural deficits. Rising demand, uneven access to services, and the growing cost of providing support

reveal a system under pressure. Without coordinated policy, systemic reform, and targeted investment, food insecurity will continue to mirror these larger social and economic gaps rather than being meaningfully resolved (Food Banks Canada, 2025b).

Moreover, Food Banks Canada (2025b) emphasizes that “we can create a Canada where no one goes hungry.” However, the poverty report card continues to show a very low score and weak performance across most provinces (Brouard, Litalien, and Zaredorahi, 2025). Food Banks Canada argues that, through collective action and policy change, food insecurity could be cut by half by 2030. While this objective reflects recognition that structural reform is necessary, policy research suggests that such reductions will depend less on expanding charitable food initiatives and more on strengthening income-based public interventions. Despite persistently high levels of food insecurity, government responses have continued to prioritize funding for food-focused and charitable programs rather than addressing underlying income insufficiency (Food Insecurity Policy Research, 2022). Extensive evidence demonstrates that food insecurity is primarily driven by inadequate and unstable income and that meaningful reductions occur when income-support programs are strengthened.

Reframing food insecurity as a matter of income adequacy, rather than food supply, redirects policy attention toward the economic conditions that structure household vulnerability. In this context, the growing institutionalization of food banks as a permanent feature of the social safety net risks normalizing emergency food provision as a substitute for comprehensive income security policy. Recent research further notes that major food bank and food diversion organizations increasingly include corporate actors in leadership and governance roles (Azadian et al., 2023). The authors caution that while such partnerships may enhance operational capacity, they can also shape advocacy priorities and limit engagement with structural issues such as wages, labour protections, taxation, and welfare state retrenchment. This dynamic reinforces a model in which charitable food provision expands while deeper income inequalities remain insufficiently addressed. While food banks provide essential short-term relief, their expansion may inadvertently shift

public and political attention away from the structural income reforms required to sustainably reduce food insecurity.

To tackle food insecurity, we need stronger policies that guarantee stable and sufficient incomes for everyone. This includes increasing social assistance rates to reflect actual living costs, strengthening Employment Insurance coverage, enhancing child and disability benefits, protecting minimum wage levels, and considering guaranteed income models. Research conducted by Food Insecurity Policy Research at the University of Toronto (2019), based on national survey data from nearly 1,600 households across four provinces (New Brunswick, Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan) show that even among severely food-insecure households, charitable food assistance was among the least commonly used coping strategies; households were more likely to delay bill payments or seek financial support from friends and family.

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Moreover, food bank users had substantially lower incomes and were more likely to rely on multiple resource-augmentation strategies, suggesting

that food bank use often reflects acute financial desperation rather than a routine or effective support (Tarasuk et al., 2020). In addition, practical barriers to food bank access include transportation challenges, restrictive eligibility criteria, limited hours of operation, and instances of being turned away (Tarasuk et al., 2020). Food banks therefore represent “the exception, not the norm” among food-insecure and a policy focus centered primarily on expanding charitable food assistance is misaligned with the lived realities of most food-insecure households (Tarasuk et al., 2020, p.846). This evidence underscores the limits of food charity as a structural response and highlights the need for upstream interventions targeting income insecurity. This evidence underscores the limits of food charity as a structural solution and highlights the need for upstream income-based policy interventions to address the underlying determinants of food insecurity (Tarasuk et al., 2020).

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Complementary policy analyses reinforce this conclusion. Improvements to federal and provincial income-based programs, including “public seniors pensions, social assistance, child benefits, Employment Insurance, and minimum wage” policies, have been associated with measurable reductions in food insecurity when they meaningfully increase household

incomes (Li, Fafard St-Germain, and Tarasuk, 2023, p.6). Taken together, this body of evidence indicates that food insecurity is fundamentally rooted in financial instability and insufficient income. Addressing it therefore requires strengthening and expanding income-based policy instruments that protect households from persistent low income, unexpected expenses, and sudden income shocks, rather than relying primarily on charitable food systems.

At the same time, structural inequities must be explicitly acknowledged. Systemic racism and the ongoing impacts of colonialism are key drivers of disproportionately high rates of food insecurity among Black and Indigenous communities (Food Insecurity Policy Research, 2022). Meaningful progress requires confronting these structural determinants directly, not merely alleviating their symptoms through downstream food provision. In line with this perspective, Food Banks Canada (2025b) identifies urgent action in three areas: addressing the root causes of poverty, improving affordability, and tackling food insecurity in Northern communities. Such priorities further underscore that durable reductions in food insecurity depend on structural economic and policy reforms rather than the expansion of emergency food charity alone.

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From Extraction to Equity: Philanthropy's Role in Advancing Environmental Justice

By Alicia Richins, *Program Officer, Climate at the McConnell Foundation*



Alicia Richins is the Program Officer, Climate at the McConnell Foundation. There, she supports a granting strategy focused on climate mitigation, equity and finance across Canada. A certified foresight practitioner with a Master in Environmental Studies from York University, Alicia brings over five years of experience in sustainable development, impact measurement, community facilitation and climate storytelling to her work.

Introduction

Environmental justice is rooted in a simple but profound principle: all people deserve equal protection from environmental harm and equal access to environmental benefits. It insists that no community—especially those historically marginalized—should bear disproportionate burdens from pollution, toxic exposure, or the economic fallout of industrial decline. Across Canada, however, environmental harms have rarely been distributed evenly. From Africville to Sarnia's Chemical Valley to Grassy Narrows, the pattern is unmistakable: low-income, racialized and Indigenous communities are more likely to live near hazardous sites, face elevated health risks, and be excluded from the decisions that shape their

environments (Aamjiwnaang First Nation & Ecojustice, 2017; Grassy Narrows First Nation, 2020).

Today, as Canada navigates the global shift away from fossil fuels, the stakes of environmental justice are rising. Communities directly impacted by extraction—particularly in Alberta—are confronting toxic legacies, economic uncertainty, and political narratives that frame decarbonization as a threat rather than an opportunity. At the same time, the transition offers a once-in-a-generation chance to repair past harms and build a more equitable future.

Philanthropy has a catalytic role to play in this moment. Unlike governments, philanthropic institutions can innovate to fund long-term strategies, and support community-led solutions that challenge entrenched systems (Environment Funders Canada, 2023). Yet, Canadian philanthropy remains underinvested in environmental justice, even as the need for sustained, strategic funding grows.

This article explores three areas where philanthropic investment is already helping to shift outcomes, and where deeper commitment is urgently needed:

1. Securing remediation and compensation for fossil fuel-affected communities.
2. Supporting a just transition for workers and Indigenous communities.
3. Building public support for economic diversification and decarbonization.

Securing Remediation for Fossil Fuel-Affected Communities

The Landscape of Abandonment

Across Alberta, the remnants of extraction are everywhere, from rusting pump jacks to inactive wells and tailings ponds that stretch across the horizon. For many rural, landholding, and Indigenous communities, these are not distant symbols of industrial decline but daily reminders of environmental harm. With more than 470,000 non-producing wells across Canada, and nearly half of them in Alberta (CBC News, 2025; McGill University, 2025), the scale of the cleanup challenge is immense. Methane leaks from these wells are now understood to be seven times higher than official estimates (McGill University, 2025). Methane contributes significantly to climate warming—80 times more than carbon dioxide (IPCC, 2021)—and poses direct risks to landowners and nearby residents. The longer these sites remain unaddressed, the more expensive and technically complex remediation becomes, creating a growing liability that threatens both public finances and community wellbeing.



Source : Tom Prilesky, Ecojustice Canada

Ecojustice's Approach

Ecojustice has emerged as a leading force in confronting this legacy. As Canada's largest environmental law charity, they combine litigation, scientific research, and public advocacy to hold fossil fuel companies

accountable for the true cost of cleanup. Their work scrutinizes Alberta's Mine Financial Security Program (MFSP), revealing how flawed assumptions about asset values and cleanup costs have allowed companies to defer their obligations while communities bear the consequences (Ecojustice, 2023).

Ecojustice's legal strategies are designed not only to address individual cases but to set precedents that reshape how regulators assess risk and enforce responsibility across the entire sector.

Ecojustice's strategy is deeply collaborative: Through partnerships with community groups, Indigenous nations, and national and provincial networks coalitions like the Coalition for Responsible Energy they amplify voices that have historically been sidelined in regulatory processes, like those of rural landowners. Their goal is not only to secure remediation but to reshape the legal and policy landscape so that polluters—not the public—pay for the damage they leave behind. This work also helps shift public understanding of the true costs of fossil fuel extraction, making visible the long-term environmental debts that have too often been hidden from view.

Why Philanthropy Matters

Legal challenges and scientific investigations require long-term, flexible funding. Philanthropic investment enables Ecojustice to pursue precedent-setting cases, respond quickly to emerging threats, and support communities seeking justice. Funders who back this work are helping to build a more accountable regulatory system—one where environmental justice is not merely aspirational but enforceable.

Transitioning the Oil & Gas Workforce for the Clean Energy Future

A Workforce at a Crossroads

For generations, Alberta's oil and gas sector has offered workers stability, pride, and a clear sense of identity. As global markets shift and climate commitments deepen, many workers now face an uncertain future. The transition to renewable energy is underway, but without intentional support, workers risk being left behind. The emotional dimension of this shift is often overlooked: for many, the energy sector is not



Source : At picnic tables, Iron & Earth instructors guide two groups of Indigenous youth through renewable energy projects. Iron & Earth

just a job but a community, a culture, and a source of intergenerational livelihood. A just transition must therefore address not only economic realities but the social fabric that binds these communities together (CCPA, 2021).

Iron & Earth's Worker-Led Vision

Iron & Earth was founded by oil sands workers who recognized that their skills could be redeployed to build a clean energy future. Their programs help workers gain hands-on experience in solar installation, geothermal development, and energy efficiency retrofits (Iron & Earth, 2023). What makes their approach unique is that it is worker-led: training programs are designed around the realities of shift work, family responsibilities, and the need for income stability. This worker-centered model builds trust and ensures that training is relevant, accessible, and grounded in lived experience.

The organization also partners closely with Indigenous communities, supporting local leadership in developing renewable energy projects that strengthen sovereignty and long-term economic resilience. Their work demonstrates that the transition is not just about technology—it's about dignity, opportunity, and community empowerment. By centering workers and Indigenous partners, Iron & Earth is helping to build a transition that reflects the values and aspirations of the people most affected by economic change.

Why Philanthropy Matters

Government programs often overlook the community-level supports needed for a just transition. Philanthropic funding allows Iron & Earth to pilot new models, respond quickly to community requests, and advocate for policies that reflect workers' lived experience. Funders who support this work help

ensure that the transition is not only environmentally necessary but socially just.

Building Public Support for Economic Diversification and Decarbonization

The Narrative Challenge

Even the most ambitious climate policies cannot succeed without broad public support. In Alberta, where fossil fuels have shaped jobs, community and individual prosperity for generations, decarbonization is often framed as a threat, making even straightforward conversations about the future of energy deeply polarized. Shifting this narrative and bringing regional stakeholders for lasting change back to the table requires trust, dialogue, and a shared sense of possibility. Public opinion research consistently shows that people are more open to change when they feel included in the conversation and when they can see tangible benefits for their families and communities (Abacus Data, 2024). Without this foundation, progress becomes gridlocked, innovation stalls out, and opportunities for advancement and investment are lost.



Source : The Energy Futures Lab's Brian Nicholson (top left) listens to an exchange of ideas at a regional summit held at the Mannawanis Native Friendship Centre in St. Paul, Alberta.

Energy Futures Lab's Collaborative Model

The Energy Futures Lab (EFL) has become a vital convener in this space. As a social innovation lab, EFL brings together industry leaders, Indigenous Rights holders, community advocates, entrepreneurs, and policymakers to explore Alberta's economic future. Through regional dialogues and multi-stakeholder workshops, the Lab helps participants identify shared interests and co-create pathways for diversification—whether through modernizing and optimizing electricity systems, responsible development of critical materials value chains, or advancing low emission economic development opportunities. These engagements often surface unexpected alliances, revealing that communities with seemingly divergent priorities can find common ground when given the space to explore solutions together (Energy Futures Lab, 2023).

EFL's strength lies in its commitment to relationship-building. Participants often enter the process with divergent views, but through facilitated dialogue, they discover common ground and new opportunities. This collaborative approach helps shift public narratives and garner the support of champions from all sides by showing that decarbonization is not a zero-sum game but a chance to build a more resilient, diversified economy. By reframing the transition as a story of innovation and shared prosperity and revealing direct benefits to communities, EFL helps them reimagine themselves as active participants in shaping Alberta's energy future.

Why Philanthropy Matters

Narrative change is long-term work. It requires broad participation and sustained investment in bespoke project design, facilitation, community engagement, and storytelling—areas that rarely fit neatly into traditional funding cycles. Philanthropic support allows EFL to maintain continuity through multi-year projects, remove barriers to convening diverse partners, and experiment with new approaches to public engagement. Particularly, pooled funds give the Lab the stability needed to deepen impact over time. In a political landscape where, public opinion can shift rapidly, philanthropy provides the steady foundation required to build durable support for climate action.

Conclusion: The Throughline of Philanthropic Investment

Environmental justice is not a short-term project. It requires decades of sustained commitment, deep collaboration, and a willingness to challenge entrenched systems. It also requires funders to embrace the same principles that frontline organizations model every day: partnership, accountability, and community leadership.

Philanthropy can help secure remediation for communities living with the toxic legacies of extraction. It can empower workers and Indigenous communities to shape the clean energy future. And it can build the public support needed to diversify and decarbonize regional economies.

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Environmental justice is not a short-term project. It requires decades of sustained commitment, deep collaboration, and a willingness to challenge entrenched systems. It also requires funders to embrace the same principles that frontline organizations model every day: partnership, accountability, and community leadership.

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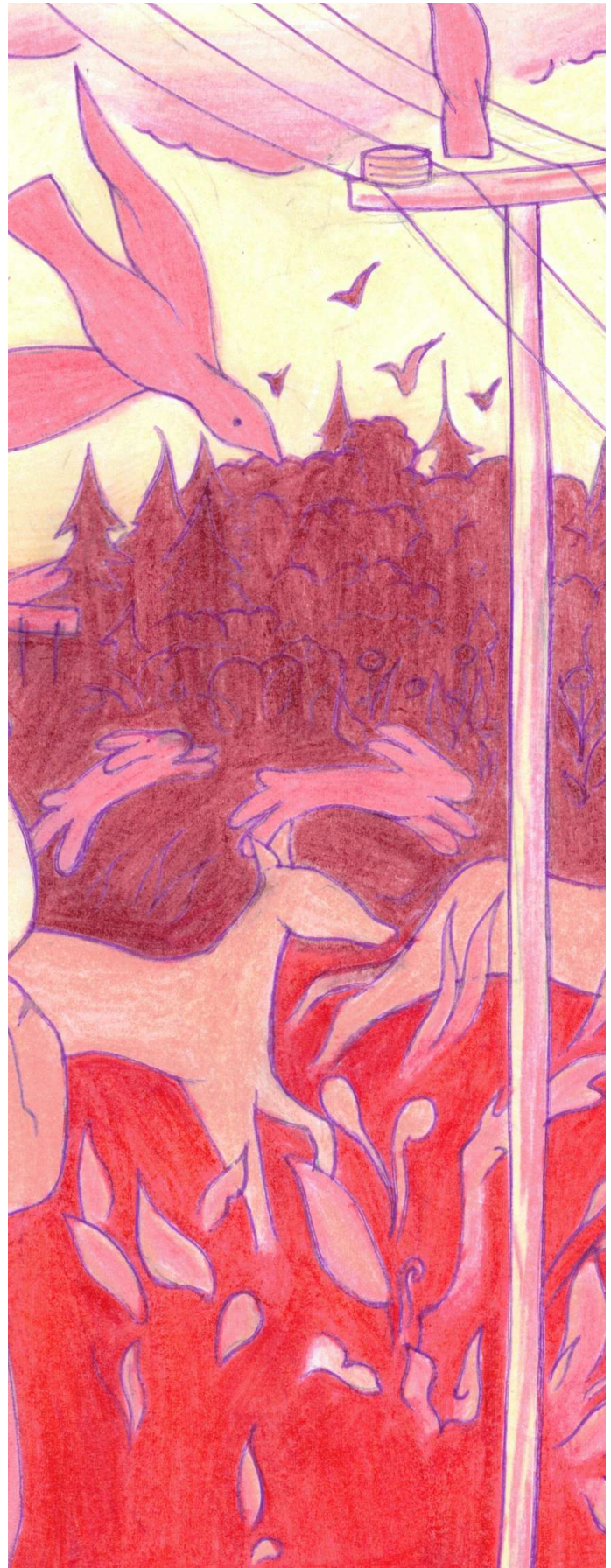
To meet this moment, funders should: provide stable, multi-year funding for grassroots and community-led organizations; join or create pooled funds that strengthen collaboration and reduce duplication; and

support implementation and innovation, especially in early-stage initiatives. Across the sector, we need to fully embrace the tenets of trust-based philanthropy: trust that the communities impacted by environmental injustice know which strategies to deploy (legal, regulatory and/or narrative change). And incorporate flexibility by supporting multiple strategies at a time, on terms that are responsive to frontline needs.

In closing, the transition to a decarbonized future is already underway. Philanthropy has the opportunity—and the responsibility—to help ensure that it is equitable, inclusive, and grounded in justice.

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One Crisis, One Family: The Case for Interspecies and Intersectional Approaches to Philanthropic Giving

By Katherine Lacefield, *Founder and head consultant of Just Be Cause Consulting*



Katherine Lacefield is a trusted partner in the philanthropic sector, drawing on more than 20 years of experience in empowering organizations and individuals to make a positive impact in their communities. Her knowledge and expertise span many areas, ranging from comprehensive fundraising strategy, monthly giving, major gift campaigns, and peer-to-peer giving, to a deep understanding of the global grantmaking landscape.

Introduction

Shelters overflow with abandoned pets. "Adopt, don't shop" advertisements urge the public to open their homes, but this solution addresses only the symptoms of deeper social issues. The reality is that a significant portion of surrendered animals comes from families in crisis: housing loss, food insecurity, intimate partner violence, and addiction.

No matter the crisis, be it in large-scale events such as wars and natural disasters, or individual crises, families refuse to be separated from their companion animals (Macdonald, 2025, p.66). When forced to do so, this leads to devastating guilt and additional trauma. Alternatively, people remain in dangerous situations to stay with their pets. From the animal

welfare perspective, shelters continue to be filled with surrendered pets and spend millions of dollars to care for and rehome them (Macdonald, 2022).

What if philanthropy could fund sustainable solutions by considering human and animal crises as one problem?

Crises that affect humans don't spare their animal companions.

The numbers indicate the scale of the problem. With over 60% of Canadian households sharing their lives with cats or dogs (Blair, 2026), crises rarely respect the species divide. When a family loses housing, the pet loses housing. When domestic violence escalates, animals face abuse alongside their owners. When food security grips a household, the dog goes unfed. Yet our response systems remain siloed: human services for people, animal services for pets, and a widening gap where both fall through.

What emerges when we refuse this division? One Welfare (2025) and One Health (WHO, 2026) are two frameworks gaining traction across disciplines. They offer a different perspective: human, animal, and environmental well-being are fundamentally

connected. From this foundation, a new generation of collaborations is taking shape. Nonprofits are crossing traditional boundaries, funders are rethinking grant structures, and policy campaigns are demanding intersectional solutions.

If this is the case, why aren't more grantmaking efforts directed towards crisis responses that consider animals?

This article examines how specific social crises have catalyzed these shifts, spotlighting collaborative initiatives that address housing, food security, addiction, intimate partner violence (IPV), and shelter overpopulation not as separate challenges, but as interconnected problems demanding integrated responses and how grantmaking would benefit from adopting a similar perspective.

How the housing and food insecurity crises affect all members of the family

The national housing crisis in Canada remains one of the country's biggest challenges (Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities, 2024). As families struggle to find affordable housing, one factor can make the search even more challenging: pets.

According to Eagan, Gordon, and Protopopova (2022), 17% of dog surrenders in British Columbia shelters were surrendered due to housing issues. In a podcast interview, Kathy Powelson of Paws for Hope, a nonprofit offering temporary housing for pets in British Columbia, shared how she deals with this situation daily, with families calling in desperate to find a temporary solution for their pets as they search for affordable housing (Macdonald, 2024).

A quick search for rentals in the Metro Vancouver area for under 2,000\$ a month initially identified 309 listings. When the "Pets" filter was added, only 131 rentals remained, representing a nearly 60% drop in options.

No-pet policies represent a significant additional barrier to affordable housing for the majority of the Canadian population, with nonprofits across the country claiming similar situations, from the Winnipeg Humane Society (2026) to the Montreal SPCA (2025).



Source : Keeping Families together Montreal SPCA. Montreal SPCA, 2026

Alongside the housing crisis, food insecurity is on the rise. In 2023, 22.9% of Canadians were food insecure (Fafard St-Germain & Tarasuck, 2025). This situation affected families' ability to care for their pets. As Barbara Cartright, the CEO of Humane Canada, stated in an interview about the organization's National Pet Food Bank project, stated "Food costs are going up, vet care costs have skyrocketed, and even access to veterinarians is much more difficult. So we have all of these intersecting crises coming together that make it very difficult for people to access the resources they need." (Levesque, 2024).

Families are facing a multitude of simultaneous crises: the housing crisis, heightened by no-pet policies, and a rise in food insecurity, are forcing families to make impossible choices: find a home, feed their family, or keep their companion animal.

When seeking help comes with an unbearable price tag

Three of the vulnerable populations at risk of not seeking out or receiving the help they need because of their pets are the unhoused, victims of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), and people suffering from addiction (Montreal SPCA, 2025; Barbosa-Torres et al., 2024; Macdonald, 2024). Some of the most common challenges faced by pet-owning members of these vulnerable groups are: access to affordable veterinary care for their pets, access to housing or shelter that accepts them and their pets, and accessing treatment

or help without needing to surrender their animals (Macdonald, 2024).

Paws for Hope is an organization that helps in times of crisis by offering a temporary home for people's pets as they try to find pet-friendly, affordable housing, escape IPV, or seek addiction treatment. Their stories will help provide real-world examples of the connection between families and their pets, and how this connection impacts the outcomes they face during crises.

Pets don't judge our situation. For many individuals going through challenging times, their pets become a source of hope and companionship that is stronger than their ties with other people. The story of Raine exemplifies this bond (Hoshooley, 2025). Raine was experiencing homelessness when she sought out veterinary care for her puppy, Cane, through Paws for Hope. Being able to keep her pet healthy and safe as she was unhoused taught her about responsibility and inspired her return to school, where she studied shelter and veterinary medicine.



Source: Paws for Hope, 2025 : Cane and Raine.

Excluding pets from social service plans can lead to suboptimal outcomes. Research has demonstrated the intimate connection between pets and victims of IPV seeking out help (Montgomery et al., 2024). When considering leaving their abusive situation, the fear of retribution on their pets (Barbosa-Torres et al., 2024) and the simple fact that many shelters do not accept pets act as a deterrent.

Kathy Powelson recalls a case in which a woman called at 4 pm on a Friday, asking them to take her two large dogs because her abusive partner was finally out of the house and she needed to leave immediately (Macdonald, 2024). Finding a place for her animals was a priority in her plan to seek out help. Luckily, Paws for Hope partner shelters had space, allowing them to place the dogs there temporarily until they could find a longer-term foster family solution. Thanks to this intervention, the woman was not only able to escape an abusive situation, but she also had the time to find safe and affordable housing, knowing her pets were safe. Had no one been there to temporarily house her pets, this woman might not have been able to seek help, representing a service gap.

The same can be said for individuals seeking out addiction treatment. Similar to shelters for the unhoused and victims of IPV, most rehabilitation centers do not allow pets, hindering pet owners suffering from addiction from deciding to seek out help for fear of abandoning their pet. Kathy shares the story of an individual calling in when a spot opened up in a recovery center, but they had only two hours to find somewhere to leave their dog, or risk losing their opportunity.

It has been shown that, for people in vulnerable situations, pets are a source of emotional support, a sense of belonging, and for many, the only family they have (Dell & Butt, 2023). The act or threat of being separated from their animals can lead to additional trauma, guilt, and lower their chances of seeking out the help they need.

“

[...] with our fentanyl epidemic in British Columbia, an average of six people a day are dying from a fatal drug overdose. When we can get someone into treatment, we're potentially saving that person's life. We're also keeping their pet out of the shelter, we're maintaining that significant bond between the two, and we're also giving them time to get back on their feet.

— Kathy Powelson (Macdonald, 2024, 27:19)

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From Crisis to Collaborative Solutions

The pattern is clear: crises don't fracture families along species lines. Pet owners facing homelessness, violence, or addiction overwhelmingly refuse to abandon their animals, even when keeping them means staying in danger, remaining unhoused, or forgoing treatment. Even in extreme cases like natural disasters, people refuse to abandon their pets, such as in the case of Hurricane Katrina, where 50% of those who stayed behind and lost their lives did so to stay with their pets (Animal Welfare Institute, 2017). Force the choice and the outcome is predictable: people suffer without their pets, remain in dangerous situations, and animals flood shelters from families desperate to keep them. All three paths are undesirable.

However, by approaching these issues through an intersectional lens, collaborations between human-focused and animal nonprofits find solutions. They create interventions that keep families together

through crisis, shelters less burdened and improve outcomes for all.

Temporary pet housing

Organizations like Paws for Hope act as intermediaries between social and animal services by offering temporary housing for pets in times of crisis. They help avoid countless unnecessary animal surrenders to already overcrowded animal shelters. And they're not alone. Animal shelters across the country are adopting similar initiatives, including the Alberta SPCA (2025), The Humane Society of Kitchener Waterloo & Stratford Perth (2026) and the Edmonton Humane Society (2026), to name a few.

The United States is seeing a similar influx in initiatives such as Praline's Backyard Foundation (2026), which offers temporary housing for victims of IPV. The Potter League for Animals in Rhode Island opened up a Community Navigator position on their team, bridging the gap between animal welfare and social services. In the words of their Executive Director, Brad Shear:

“

[...] our Community Navigators help people find housing...medical care... all sorts of things outside of what we would normally think of as something an animal wellbeing organization would do. Because we're not just focused on the animal, we're focused on that family and making sure that family stays intact and can keep those animals with them.

- Brad Shear (Macdonald, 2025, 10:21)

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A study conducted by Gemma C. Ma, Jioji Ravulo and Ursula McGeown in 2023 attempted to calculate the social value of such programs through a case study of the RSPCA New South Wales in Australia. The quotes from interviewed program participants include countless mentions of how their companion animals were their reason for living, having been by their side through multiple crises, showcasing the importance of their animals in their lives. The self-reported outcomes of the program included: improved mental health and wellbeing for the individuals, improved personal safety, increased social inclusion and decreased isolation, improved physical health and 71% stated how the program gave them access to safe accommodation (Ma et al., 2023).

The study also demonstrated how this program leads to fewer animals being abandoned, as 37% of respondents claimed they would have had to surrender their animals had the program not existed. Finally, the estimated social return of this temporary pet housing program was eightfold (Ma et al., 2023), demonstrating the potential social returns of increased philanthropic funding for similar programs.

Policy reform

Sustainable solutions to crises like housing insecurity demand policy intervention. The Montreal SPCA's Keeping Families Together campaign is calling for the abolition of no-pet clauses in housing, using Ontario's provincial legislation as precedent (Montreal SPCA, 2025). On a national level, Humane Canada is also working on Pet Inclusive Housing policies and advocacy (2024a). Both argue that these clauses disproportionately affect vulnerable populations such as the elderly and isolated individuals, for whom the mental health benefits are stronger.

Food Security

National crises like food security require national responses. Humane Canada's National Pet Food Bank Map, in collaboration with PetSmart Charities, was launched in 2024 in response to rising food insecurity (Humane Canada, 2024b). By distributing grants to help formalize existing programs run by local charities, this initiative helped map out over 300 locations where families in need could find food for their pets as well.



Source : Humane Canada National Food Bank Map

Conclusion

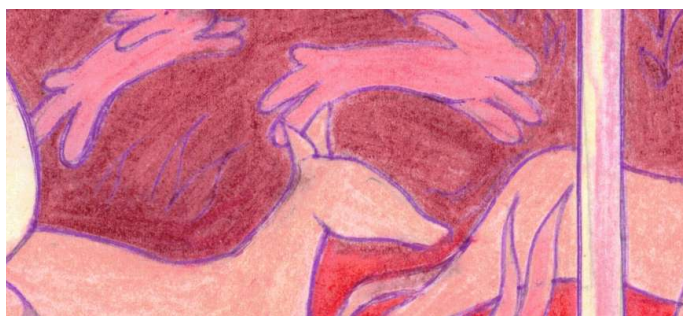
Pets are woven into Canadian family life. The examples here prove what becomes possible when we stop treating human crises and animal welfare as separate domains: families stay intact through trauma, shelters stop warehousing animals from loving homes, and solutions address root causes rather than symptoms.

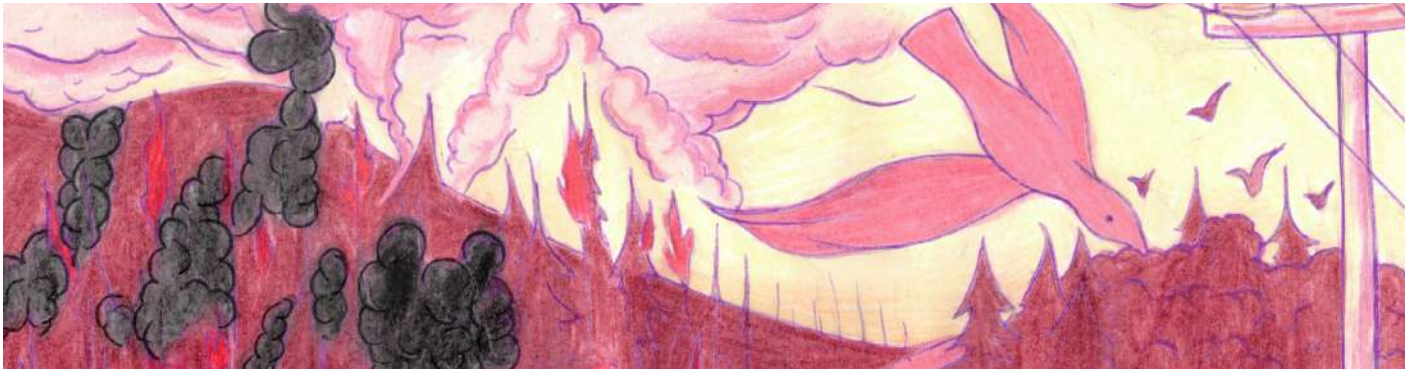
However, philanthropic funding for animal shelter programs remains limited (Macdonald, 2022), although the positive implications for communities are significant. Intersectional approaches don't just improve outcomes; they unlock entirely new funding pathways. An animal shelter partnering with an IPV organization becomes eligible for violence prevention grants. An addiction treatment program offering pet fostering can access animal welfare funding to remove a critical barrier to care. These aren't creative workarounds; they're logical extensions of what the work actually requires.

What emerges is a funding landscape that reflects reality. The question is no longer whether human and animal welfare are linked. The question now is whether our funding structures, organizational partnerships, and policy frameworks will evolve to match what frontline work has already proven: the human-animal bond deserves more than our current siloed systems.

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The courage to shrink: Towards a philanthropy of degrowth

By David Grant-Poitras, PhD Candidate in sociology at UQAM ; Charles Duprez, PhD Candidate in Social and Environmental Responsibility joint between UQAM and EHESS & Adam Saifer, Co-director of PhiLab



David Grant-Poitras is a PhD candidate in sociology at the Université du Québec à Montréal. His thesis focuses on the roles and impacts of Quebec grantmaking foundations in the social and ecological transition. He has been working for several years as a research agent at PhiLab. There, he conducts various research activities focusing on the initiatives and innovations deployed by philanthropic players to reduce social inequalities and combat climate change.

Charles Duprez is currently pursuing a Joint PhD between UQAM and EHESS, investigating the transformation of social solidarity and social bonds in the context of ecological crises and climate change, with a particular focus on water scarcity. This research aligns closely with my broader interests in how ecological pressures reshape the dynamics of solidarity and challenge existing frameworks for social cohesion. As an active member of both the CRSDD (Chercheur.es en responsabilité sociale et développement durable) research group under the supervision of Corinne Gendron and the CMH (Centre Maurice Halbwachs), I am also engaged in exploring contemporary

controversies and the social acceptability of large-scale technological, organizational, and social projects. My academic background includes a Master's in Management with a specialization in Marketing from IESEG in France, and my ongoing work aims to contribute to our understanding of post-growth society and the evolution of social structures in response to environmental and economic limits.

Adam Saifer is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Management at the University of British Columbia Okanagan and co-director of the Canadian Philanthropy Partnership Research Network [PhiLab]. Dr. Saifer is an interdisciplinary scholar whose research draws on theories of capitalism, nation, and race to critically explore organizational phenomena in the nonprofit and philanthropic sector. His research is oriented around themes of social and economic justice, as well as research partnerships with community-led organizations.



To the PhiLab community,

As members of the newly launched PhiLab Degrowth Collective, we invite you to engage with a pressing question: How can philanthropy act with integrity in a world structured by unsustainable growth? We are a working group of researchers, philanthropic foundations, and community actors involved in degrowth scholarship and practice. Our purpose is to examine, in a rigorous and dialogical way, the structural relationship between philanthropy and the growth-dependent political economy that shapes our institutions, policies, environments, and social imaginaries.

We believe that this conversation is not only urgent—it is unavoidable.

As we write this at the end of December 2025, the global socio-ecological context is increasingly unstable. Current trajectories make it unlikely that our 2030 climate commitments will be met. Limiting warming to 1.5°C is effectively out of reach, and stabilizing below 2°C is increasingly uncertain. Recent international climate negotiations, such as COP 30, have revealed persistent structural asymmetries—the entrenched power of the fossil fuel lobby, for example—that obstruct bold and necessary collective action.¹ Planetary boundaries are increasingly defined, yet the gap between this knowledge and concrete climate implementation widens.² A similar diagnosis can be applied to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. While some progress has been made since their launch more than a decade ago, outcomes across the 17 goals remain uneven, and in some areas, have regressed.³ At the core of this is a contradiction: an inability to reconcile infinite economic expansion with ecological limits and social justice. As UN Secretary-General António Guterres recently warned: "We are on a road to climate hell with our foot on the accelerator".⁴

Degrowth emerges here, not as a slogan, but as an analytical and normative lens. It asks: what should prosperity mean when ecological collapse is imminent, and how can societies thrive without the tyranny of growth? Economic expansion, once a neutral indicator, has become a prescriptive organizing principle shaping policy, institutional legitimacy, and social imagination.⁵ Rather than providing material benefits for the masses, it drives ecological devastation and entrenches inequality.⁶

As geopolitical instability and economic pressures push governments toward austerity and the retreat from climate commitments, extractivist and nationalist political movements have strengthened carbon-heavy power structures, thereby weakening democratic resilience — including here in Canada, where federal climate commitments have been scaled back in favour of large resource extraction projects.

Now, what does this have to do with the philanthropic sector?

Philanthropy occupies a unique and paradoxical position vis-à-vis growth, fulfilling three deeply contradictory roles.

1. **Foundations as Accumulators:** First, many foundations articulate missions rooted in social justice, ecological transition, and systemic change. Yet philanthropic action is funded by wealth generated through the very growth-based systems that produce the social and environmental harms foundations seek to challenge through grantmaking. Most endowments are structured to grow in perpetuity by prioritizing yield, preservation, and market returns over ecological or social consequences. Even foundations that have shifted toward values-aligned investment remain dependent on ongoing capital accumulation as the precondition for their philanthropic functioning. A degrowth lens asks a more uncomfortable question: should foundations be spending down and urgently redistributing their capital, rather than preserving it indefinitely?
2. **Foundations as Stabilizers:** Philanthropic interventions can fund the stabilization of a system they claim to want to transform, easing visible harms like poverty, exclusion, and environmental degradation without touching the structural drivers of accumulation. A degrowth praxis asks foundations to go further: to direct capital toward democratic, commons-oriented alternatives—worker cooperatives, housing cooperatives, community land trusts, mutual aid networks—that prioritize social reproduction over capital accumulation, empowering communities to define and direct their own futures.
3. **Foundations as Ideological Promoters:** Many philanthropic institutions embrace reformist notions such as “green growth,” “sustainable development,” and “inclusive growth.” These frameworks offer incremental improvements but never address the root of the problem: economic growth. But a degrowth praxis demands more than quiet portfolio reorientation. It calls on foundations to actively use their social, cultural, and financial capital to challenge the ideological underpinnings of growthism—to oppose techno-solutionism and “green growth” narratives, to fund degrowth scholarship and grassroots movements, and to engage in political advocacy that directly challenges the policies sustaining growth imperatives.

If philanthropy is serious about systemic change, it must consider a deeper shift, actively dismantling its dependence on expansionary economic structures. This is neither simple nor painless. Yet the capacity exists. Foundations have historically demonstrated foresight and strategic imagination.

Degrowth illuminates one path. It calls for democratically organized reductions of material and energy throughput in high-income economies, alongside redistributive measures to enhance collective well-being within ecological limits. We are at a decisive moment. Socio-ecological transformation is not optional; it is underway. The open question is whether it will be guided by democratic deliberation and commitments to justice, or by reactive, exclusionary, and extractivist forces. Philanthropy, with its relative autonomy and resources, has both the capacity and the responsibility to shape this transition.

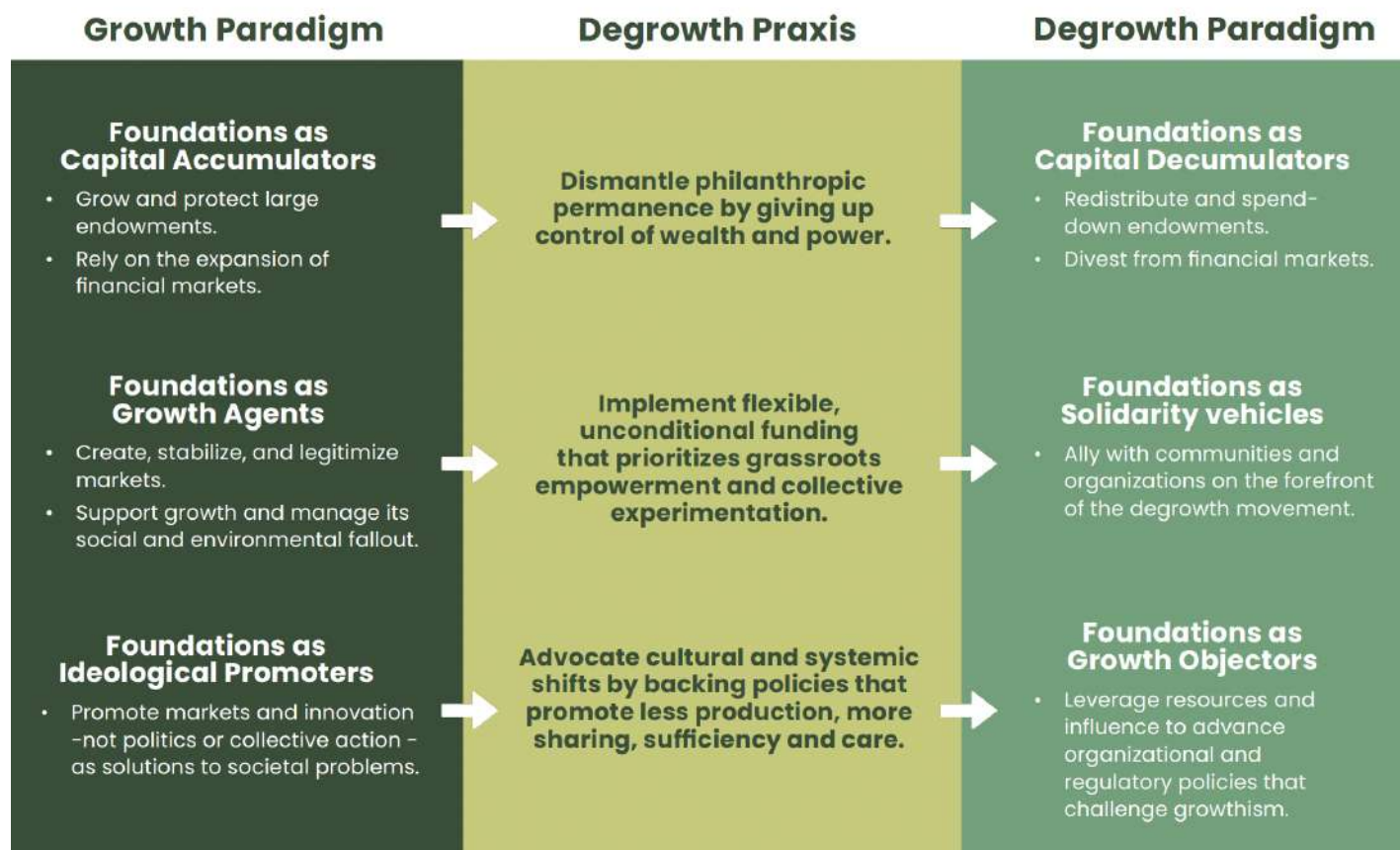
We invite you to join this reflection. Not as passive observers, but as actors willing to interrogate, and ultimately reorganize, the structural foundations of your own practice. The future of philanthropy—and our societies—depends on the courage to question inherited assumptions and imagine alternatives to growth as usual.

----- [CLICK HERE TO EXPRESS YOUR INTEREST](#) -----

We thank you for considering our invitation to join the PhiLab Degrowth Collective.

David Grant-Poitras, Charles Duprez & Adam Saifer

Framework for a Paradigm Shift



Source : Charles Duprez, David Grant-Poitras, Adam Saifer. (2026). Degrowth Philanthropy, [Infographic], PhiLab. [Link](#)

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Crisis as a Catalyst: How Climate Justice Is Reshaping Canadian Philanthropy

By **André Pawan Vashist**, *Director, Learning & Collaboration at Philanthropic Foundations Canada*



André Pawan Vashist is a multi award winning social innovator with over 25 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. He is a network leader and systems strategist dedicated to advancing equity, environmental sustainability, and community wellbeing. His career spans community program design, youth services, and post-secondary student leadership, grounded in anti-oppression and cultural inclusion principles. He works closely with Indigenous communities and equity deserving groups to, supporting initiatives that their cultural leadership, stewardship, and sovereignty. As a grassroots nonprofit Executive Director, youth services network lead and fund manager of a place-based impact investing intermediary, he has built and scaled programs that empower communities while advancing economic inclusion and environmental resilience. He has played key roles in social enterprise development, entrepreneurial ecosystem building, and conservation finance, working to align capital with community impact and climate goals. Over the years, He has become a connector across Canada's nonprofit, social finance, environmental, and philanthropic networks - facilitating partnerships, convening learning exchanges, and shaping equity-lens program development.

Introduction: Crisis as a Turning Point for Philanthropy

The climate crisis has reached a threshold at which incremental responses are no longer sufficient. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned that the world is rapidly approaching irreversible climatic tipping points, with impacts already being felt across social, ecological, and economic systems (IPCC, 2021). Canada is warming at approximately twice the global average, with northern regions warming nearly three times as fast (Government of Canada, 2023). These trends are driven in part by an economic history rooted in large scale resource extraction and the ongoing dispossession of Indigenous lands, positioning Canada among the highest per capita greenhouse gas emitters in the OECD (OECD, 2023).

The consequences are increasingly visible. Wildfires, droughts, flooding, melting permafrost, and severe storms are reshaping communities and ecosystems across the country. These impacts threaten progress across every domain that philanthropy seeks to advance, including health, housing, food security, education, economic inclusion, culture, and human

rights. Climate change is therefore not a single issue environmental challenge, but a multidimensional justice crisis that amplifies existing inequities and disproportionately harms Indigenous, racialized, low income, and marginalized communities.

Philanthropy occupies a distinctive position in responding to this crisis. With its long term perspective, convening power, and capacity to take risks, the sector has both a moral and practical responsibility to act. This article situates the Canadian Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change within this broader landscape of crisis and transformation. It examines the role of Indigenous leadership in climate action, analyzes emerging trends within Canadian philanthropy, and presents early findings from the 2026 signatory survey. It concludes by identifying priorities for strengthening justice informed climate leadership across the sector.

Indigenous Leadership and Rights as Foundations for Climate Action

Any meaningful response to climate change in Canada must begin with Indigenous rights, sovereignty, and leadership. Although Indigenous Peoples represent approximately five percent of the global population, they steward an estimated 80 percent of the world's remaining biodiversity, reflecting land based knowledge systems that have sustained ecosystems for millennia (UNPFII, 2021; IPBES, 2019).

In Canada, Indigenous communities are among the first to experience the impacts of climate change, including disrupted food systems, collapsing ice roads, and threats to cultural continuity. They also hold some of the most effective solutions. Upholding Indigenous title and rights, including the right to free, prior, and informed consent, is both a legal obligation under the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (TRC, 2015) and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN, 2007), and a climate imperative.

Philanthropy therefore has a critical role to play in resourcing Indigenous led climate action, shifting decision making power, and supporting long term relationships grounded in respect, reciprocity, and self determination. As the survey data presented later in this article demonstrate, this shift is underway within

Canadian philanthropy, though progress remains uneven.

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Crisis as Catalyst: Why Philanthropy Must Transform

Crises tend to expose institutional vulnerabilities, accelerate innovation, and force a re evaluation of established practices. The climate crisis is no exception. Its impacts cut across all philanthropic portfolios, from health and housing to food systems, cultural resilience, and economic inclusion. Globally, philanthropic engagement with climate change is increasing but remains insufficient relative to the scale of the challenge. Less than two percent of global philanthropic funding is currently directed toward climate mitigation (ClimateWorks Foundation, 2023).

At the same time, international movements such as the Belém Declaration emphasize the centrality of Indigenous leadership, climate justice, and community led solutions in achieving a just transition (Alliance Magazine, 2025). Within Canada, philanthropic actors are increasingly recognizing that climate action is integral to achieving their missions. The transition to a socially just and ecologically sustainable future presents both an obligation and an opportunity to invest in well being economies, support community wealth building, and ensure that those most vulnerable

to climate impacts are resourced and included.

The Canadian Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change

The Canadian Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change is part of the international Philanthropy for Climate movement, a global network of national climate commitments spanning Europe, Africa, and the Americas (Philanthropy for Climate, 2024). These commitments share a common framework organized around seven pillars: education and learning; commitment of resources; integration; endowments and assets; operations; influencing and advocacy; and transparency.

Across all national commitments, an overarching principle is the centering of Indigenous led climate action and climate justice. The Canadian Commitment aligns with this global framework while grounding its approach in the national context, including reconciliation, Indigenous rights, and region specific climate impacts. Signatories represent a diverse cross section of Canadian philanthropy, including private, public, community, family, and corporate foundations.

Methodology

The findings presented in this article draw on a national survey conducted in early 2026 as part of the Canadian Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change. The survey was administered by Philanthropic Foundations Canada, the Commitment's coordinating team, to all organizational signatories at the time of data collection.

Respondents included foundations and philanthropic organizations across Canada, representing a mix of private, public, community, family, and corporate foundations. Invitations were sent electronically to designated organizational contacts, typically senior staff or executive leaders responsible for strategy, grantmaking, or investments. A total of 31 organizations responded to the survey.

While participation was voluntary and the sample is not statistically representative of the entire Canadian philanthropic sector, respondents reflect a geographically diverse group of institutions actively engaged in climate related work. The survey combined self assessment ratings aligned with the seven pillars

of the Philanthropy for Climate framework with quantitative and qualitative questions on grantmaking, investments, operations, learning, and partnerships. The results are descriptive and exploratory, offering an indicative snapshot of emerging practices rather than definitive sector wide conclusions.

What the 2026 Signatory Survey Reveals: Momentum, Gaps, and Signals of Change

The 2026 survey of signatories to the Canadian Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change (n = 31) offers an indicative snapshot of how Canadian philanthropic organizations are responding to the climate crisis. While the data is self reported and not statistically representative of the entire sector, they provide valuable insight into emerging practices, areas of leadership, and persistent gaps among foundations that have formally committed to climate action.

Climate Funding Is Increasing, Though Still Variable

Among organizations that reported both total grantmaking and climate specific funding, the median proportion of grant dollars allocated to climate related initiatives was approximately 12.5 %. This represents a notable shift from earlier periods, when climate funding within Canadian philanthropy was often siloed, intermittent, or treated as a niche issue.

At the same time, the range of responses points to uneven uptake. For some organizations, climate considerations now influence multiple funding portfolios and strategic priorities, while for others climate funding continues to compete with established program areas for limited resources. This variability suggests that climate funding has gained legitimacy within philanthropy, but has not yet achieved consistent sector wide integration.

Increasing Attention to Indigenous Leadership

The survey indicates growing recognition of the importance of Indigenous leadership within philanthropic climate action. 71 % of respondents (22 of 31 organizations) rated their funding to Indigenous led organizations as at least "reasonable," and 16 % rated their performance as "excellent."

While these self assessments suggest progress, they also point to substantial room for improvement. The findings highlight an emerging shift toward

acknowledging Indigenous rights and leadership as central to effective climate action, but do not yet demonstrate consistent alignment with Indigenous self determination, long term partnership, or shared decision making across the sector.

Investment Practices Are Advancing Faster Than Operations

One of the clearest patterns in the survey is the pace of change in investment practices relative to internal operations. 42% of respondents report advanced progress on the Endowments and Assets pillar of the Commitment. Approximately 71 % of organizations indicate that they have assessed their investment portfolios through a climate lens, and a similar proportion report developing environmental, social, and governance or impact investing strategies. 61 % are moving toward low carbon portfolios or divestment, and the same proportion have revised their Investment Policy Statements to explicitly integrate climate considerations.

These findings point to material, policy level shifts in how philanthropic capital is governed and deployed. By contrast, progress on operational decarbonization remains limited: only 16 % of organizations report advanced progress on the Operations pillar, and just 23 % currently measure their organizational carbon footprint. This divergence suggests that while foundations may find it more feasible and impactful to influence grantmaking and investment practices, operational emissions, often comparatively small in scale, may be perceived as less material, leading them to receive less strategic focus despite requiring additional measurement, capacity, and sustained leadership attention.

Resources Are Shifting Closer to Communities

The survey results also show an increase in funding directed toward grassroots and community led climate action. 74 % of respondents report directing funds to grassroots groups, including non qualified donees, and 97 % report funding Indigenous led organizations. In addition, 74 % indicate that they are actively deepening relationships with Indigenous communities, while 45 % report working with dedicated Indigenous advisors.

These trends suggest growing recognition within philanthropy that climate justice requires not only

reallocating resources, but also shifting power and strengthening relationships with communities most affected by climate impacts.

Learning Is Widespread but Not Always Translating into Integration

Learning activities are common across respondent organizations. 74 % participate in climate related learning networks, 58 % provide internal staff education on climate issues, and 52 % report targeted learning related to Indigenous rights and climate leadership. Approximately half of respondents also report efforts to build climate awareness at the board level.

These findings underscore the role of learning as a foundational step in organizational change. However, the limited progress on full integration suggests that learning does not always translate into cross portfolio strategy, operational change, or publicly accountable commitments.

Persistent Barriers to Integration and Transparency

Despite evident momentum, several barriers continue to constrain progress. Only 19 % of organizations report advanced progress on integrating climate considerations across all programs and strategies, and just 32 % publish information on their climate related progress. Capacity constraints emerge as the most frequently cited barrier: limited staff time was identified by more than half of respondents, followed by competing organizational priorities.

These challenges matter because they slow field wide learning, limit transparency, and reduce opportunities for collective action. Addressing capacity gaps and supporting shared infrastructure may therefore be essential to sustaining and scaling progress across the sector.

Bright Spots: Case Examples of Transformation

Several Canadian foundations illustrate what crisis driven transformation can look like in practice. During its spend down period, the Ivey Foundation made climate action its sole strategic focus, co initiating a climate fund that has mobilized approximately \$481 million to date. Its approach combines policy advocacy with explicit pathways for Indigenous partnerships and systems level change (Ivey Foundation, 2024).

The Real Estate Foundation of British Columbia has similarly transformed its grantmaking practices, shifting from approximately five percent to more than 70 percent Indigenous led projects in its general grants. This shift has been guided by Indigenous advisors and a dedicated UNDRIP Fellowship, representing an equity first model for land based climate action (REFBC, 2023).

Toronto Foundation has aligned 52 % of its investment assets with managers committed to halving emissions by 2030, while 19 % of its social impact investments are explicitly environment aligned. These investment shifts are paired with place based partnerships focused on green infrastructure and community resilience (Toronto Foundation, 2024).

Priorities for Strengthening Collective Action

Taken together, the survey findings and case examples point to a broader shift within Canadian philanthropy toward a more integrated, justice oriented model of climate action. Drawing on the survey results and existing sector research, five priorities emerge for strengthening collective progress.

First, increasing transparency through regular public reporting can accelerate peer learning and accountability. Second, establishing operational baselines and emissions targets is essential for translating commitments into measurable decarbonization. Third, practical integration tools are needed to support funders whose primary portfolios lie outside the environmental field. Fourth, strengthening pathways for funding grassroots organizations and non qualified donees can help shift resources toward communities closest to the impacts of climate change. Finally, shared sector assets can help address persistent capacity constraints.

Conclusion: Crisis as a Catalyst for a Just, Equitable and Sustainable Future

The climate crisis is reshaping Canadian philanthropy. It is exposing vulnerabilities, accelerating innovation, and compelling foundations to reconsider how they deploy resources, build partnerships, and exercise influence. The Canadian Philanthropy Commitment on Climate Change provides a framework for coordinated action, but its impact ultimately depends on how signatories bring it to life through learning,

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Crisis may act as a catalyst, but transformation remains a choice. Philanthropy has an opportunity, and a responsibility, to help shape a future that is just, equitable, regenerative. The momentum is real, and the path is emerging. The next step is collective.

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Holding Tension: Fundraising, Belonging, and Ethical Work in a Moment of Philanthropic Strain

By **Michelle Fuko**, Chief Advancement Officer at Queen's University & **Tanya Hannah Rumble**, Executive Director, Development (University-Wide Initiatives) at TMU



Michelle Fuko is a scholar-practitioner/educator whose professional and research work examines philanthropy as a site of possibility and constraint in institutional life. As Chief Advancement Officer at Queen's University, she brings decades of experience in fundraising and organizational leadership across post-secondary and nonprofit contexts, with a commitment to practicing leadership and cultivating generosity that is relational and accountable. As a doctoral student, Michelle examines ethical tensions shaping post-secondary fundraising, with attention to how power and accountability are produced through institutional and sectoral practices. Her work is oriented toward strengthening conditions for resilience and equity within philanthropic practice.

Tanya Hannah Rumble is a visionary fundraising executive with nearly 15 years of experience leading high-performing teams to raise millions for institutions including Toronto Metropolitan University, McMaster University, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, and the Canadian Cancer Society. Named one of Canada's Top 100 Most Powerful Women in 2023, she currently serves as Executive Director, Development (University-Wide Initiatives) at TMU. Tanya is also co-founder of Recast Philanthropy, where she challenges conventional fundraising norms through justice-centred, restorative,

and ethical approaches. A sought-after speaker, writer, and facilitator, her work has shaped national and international conversations on power, equity, and the future of philanthropy.

Introduction

Fundraising in post-secondary institutions is increasingly shaped by sectoral uncertainty, ethical contradiction, and shifting expectations about accountability and influence (Council for Advancement and Support of Education & Canadian Council for the Advancement of Education, 2025; Rumble, 2023). Across the Canadian charitable and nonprofit sector, changes in giving patterns, financial precarity, and constrained public funding have intensified reliance on private philanthropy, even as public trust remains uneven (Imagine Canada, 2023; Saifer & Ahmad, 2025). As a result, fundraising has become both more central to institutional sustainability and more publicly scrutinized.

Debates about donor influence, legitimacy, accountability, and equity have consequently moved to the foreground, particularly in public institutions that depend on private giving to supplement insufficient public funding (Reich, 2020; Saifer & Ahmad, 2025). These are not abstract tensions.

They shape the everyday conditions under which fundraising happens, influencing how relationships are navigated, how professional credibility is assessed, and how ethical boundaries are negotiated.

Within this context, professional norms in advancement continue to privilege composure, professional intelligibility, credibility, and results-oriented performance, even as the work itself grows more complex and constrained (Meisenbach, 2008; Raddon, 2023). There is limited space within these norms to examine how fundraisers themselves experience these conditions or how they carry the emotional and moral labor their work entails (see Meisenbach, 2004; Meisenbach et al., 2019). While these dynamics are often discussed at the level of strategy, performance, or sector trends, they are less frequently examined through the lived experiences of fundraisers themselves (Madeo, 2022).

This article takes those lived experiences seriously as sites of knowledge. Rather than resolving the tensions that shape contemporary fundraising, we surface them to consider what they reveal about belonging, legitimacy, and ethical practice. We do not offer a representative account of fundraising. Instead, we invite a different kind of professional attention, one that treats difference and unevenness as conditions that make ethical work visible. In this context, ethical work and emotional labor are intertwined; ethical judgement in fundraising is often carried through emotional absorption that remains largely unseen.

Our approach is inspired by the co-reflexive narrative work of Patel and Nath (2014), who place lived experiences in relation to one another to examine decolonization in white Universities. Their work prompted a question for us: what might become visible if two settler women in fundraising, racialized as White and racialized as Black, shared their experiences to notice how a profession often assumed to be coherent and neutral is lived unevenly?

Throughout this work, we attend to positionality while also taking seriously Nath and Allen's (2022) caution that declarations of privilege can become moments of recognition without disruption (see also Ahmed, 2012; Tuck & Yang, 2012). Rather than foregrounding positionality as a declarative exercise, we attend to how experience shapes what comes into focus, what

feels safe to articulate, and how meaning is made.

Methodology

Drawing on a feminist dialogic approach, we treat knowledge as relational and situated, emerging through conversation rather than extraction (Oakley, 1981; Bloom, 1998). Our exchanges were reciprocal and attentive to how meaning emerges over time, including through moments of discomfort. Rather than seeking coherence or consensus, we remained interested in what these moments reveal about professional fundraising life as it is lived.

For this exchange, we conducted one virtual, recorded interview with one another, using guiding prompts related to professional entry into fundraising, belonging, legitimacy, accountability, and ethical tension within post-secondary advancement. The questions emerged through an iterative process between the two of us—centered on what we sought to understand about our profession and about each other, in more depth. Since we live in two different cities, we met on Zoom and recorded the interview and its transcript.

Rather than coding for themes or seeking consensus, we treated differences as analytically significant; each independently authoring a written reflection responding to the conversation. These reflections draw not only from the transcript but also from our affective responses, memories surfaced through dialogue, memos and notes, and points of discomfort or divergence that became newly visible through relational exchange.

We chose to structure this article around our two individual reflections drawn from this same dialogic exchange: one from Michelle Fuko and Tanya Rumble; both leaders and practitioners within post-secondary fundraising. Each of us has different social locations, professional trajectories, backgrounds, and relationships to learning, that shape our accounts. Read together, our reflections illustrate how shared institutional and sectoral contexts can be experienced unevenly, and how alignment and divergence can coexist without needing to be resolved. We also hope that these accounts unsettle the idea of a singular fundraising experience, inviting our colleagues to pay closer attention to how marginalization operates within the profession.

Michelle's Reflections

Tanya approached the dialogue with a kind of readiness that will feel familiar to many fundraisers. She trusted that coherence would emerge through speaking and doing. Only afterward did I realize how deeply that readiness reflects professional conditioning in fundraising, where composure and responsiveness are expected regardless of what one is carrying.

That conditioning appeared in how Tanya narrated her path into fundraising. When she described her career as a series of deliberate steps, her path felt structured and intentional. Planning, she explained, offered a sense of order amid uncertainty. I heard discipline there.

Listening to her, I became aware of my own less linear path. When asked how I came into fundraising, I described it almost reflexively as a “means to an end”, something that enabled work I cared about rather than an identity I claimed. At the time, I understood this difference as stylistic. With reflection, I see a pattern in how legitimacy is unevenly granted (Douglas, 2021). I was able to speak casually about belonging without the casualness being read as ambivalence or lack of commitment. Yet that statement created distance between me and the profession I now lead, a distance I cannot ignore.

I believe deeply in learning through failure and have long framed that orientation as values driven. This dialogue forced me to recognize that my ability to fail safely has functioned as privilege. My whiteness presumes competence (Applebaum, 2019; Tevis et al., 2023). Behaviors such as informality, experimentation, or imprecision are read as growth because my credibility has been granted. For me, the risk of being misread is minimal, so confidence is just read as confidence.

That unevenness surfaced most clearly when we spoke about accountability and performance. Tanya described the physical toll of carrying ambitious fundraising targets early in her career, the stress-related illness, and the weight of knowing that failure was not an option. Accountability is non-negotiable for her. She also described resentment when others advanced without similar scrutiny and recalled being labelled “too aggressive,” a description she named as

racialized and gendered.

As she described being passed over for promotions or subjected to additional vetting beyond what her colleagues experienced, I was uncomfortable. It clarified how little I must calculate the reputational cost of being misread. I have never been labeled aggressive in my fundraising work; my credentials are taken at face value in a way Tanya's are not always afforded. I am read as confident, while Tanya's intensity and passion are read as aggression.

“

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”

Her reflections returned me to an earlier moment in my career when I was hired into an executive role with a national African charity. I did not have deep sectoral experience in international aid work, though I brought other forms of experience that were treated as sufficient. Importantly, I was white, Canadian, and carried the legitimacy of a Western educational and professional background. I was positioned above my local colleagues with far greater sector experience.

At the time, I understood myself to have earned the role, and in many ways I had. What I did not recognize yet was how the conditions under which I earned it were shaped by colonial and racialized logics that positioned my knowledge and my experience as superior (Villaneuva, 2018). I learned far more from local colleagues than they were expected to learn

from me, a familiar pattern in colonial professional arrangements where legitimacy and expertise are presumed to flow in one direction (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Villanueva, 2018).

Those logics have been carried through other contexts. I am attentive to metrics and their role in fundraising, but they have not been required to internalize them as measures of my worth or professional legitimacy. Senior leaders have accepted my judgments about impact and interpreted successes and failures as evidence of growth. I have worked hard and earned much of my success, but that work unfolded within conditions that extended trust early and consistently.

My understanding of leadership has been shaped by these conditions. I have long valued authenticity, believing honesty breeds trust and integrity. I have come to learn, however, that authenticity is not neutral (Dei, 2018). I am permitted to be informal, unfinished, even subtly transgressive, and still be read as competent. What I experience as freedom often functions as protection of the status quo including the protection of Whiteness as the status quo (Ahmed, 2012; Applebaum, 2019). Tanya's careful presentation, by contrast, responds to norms that demand legibility at a cost (Ahmed, 2012).

Those same dynamics surfaced again in how we spoke about emotional labor. Fundraising requires absorbing institutional anxiety, soothing donors, protecting values, and deciding when to push and when to hold back (Raddon, 2023). I had assumed fundraisers experienced similar ethical fatigue. Our dialogue revealed otherwise. Tanya carries not only the demands of the work itself, but also the burden of remaining legible and palatable within a profession shaped by racialized norms. She did not name this as emotional labor; she has simply absorbed this work as part of the job. Even my ability to name this work as emotional labor was shaped by my distance from the risks such naming carries. For Tanya, naming this labor carries professional risk rather than recognition.

This dialogue reminds me that I do not hold leadership because I am white, but that Whiteness has shaped my authority as an institutional condition (Applebaum, 2019). That authority has allowed my judgment to be trusted and my failures to be framed as growth. This creates an obligation for leaders such as me; not to

redistribute wholesale authority, but to interrupt the norms through which it is assumed. The work I have before me is to change the conditions under which credibility is granted so that questioning, learning, and hesitation do not carry unequal professional risk. For me, leading differently requires questioning how readiness, professionalism, legitimacy, and credibility are defined and rewarded, and using my position to question those definitions rather than quietly benefit from them.

By placing our experiences in relation, this exchange amplified difference rather than flattening it. We are both invested in the work. We are both shaped by its demands. But the conditions under which we navigate those demands are not the same, and that unevenness shapes whose credibility is presumed, whose labor remains unseen, and whose mistakes are survivable.

Tanya's Reflections

I came into our conversation ready, or at least presenting myself as ready. As a fundraiser, I am accustomed to being "always on," prepared to move forward without pause. When Michelle suggested grounding us beforehand, I brushed it off. I said I was fine. I could jump right in. It was only later that I noticed how automatic it was, and how much it reflected what this work has taught me to do.

Readiness has always felt necessary to my survival in this field. As a racialized woman in fundraising, hesitation has never felt safe. I have learned that composure and decisiveness are expected, and that any deviation from those norms- both in fundraising and in post-secondary spaces- risks being read as incompetence (Ahmed, 2012; Douglas, 2022).

When we spoke about our career paths, the contrast between us felt stark. I shared a carefully planned trajectory that included public health, health promotion, and then fundraising, designed to establish credibility at every stage. Planning was a strategy for legitimacy. Michelle spoke about fundraising as instrumental, as something that enabled work she cared about rather than an identity she needed to defend. I remember being struck by how easily she could say that. It unsettled me.

I have never felt free to be casual about belonging

in this profession. I have spent years accumulating signals of legitimacy: credentials, leadership roles, volunteer service, speaking engagements, research, and mentorship. Some of this was driven by genuine commitment to the sector, but much of it came from the belief that I needed to leave no room for doubt. Even then, doubt remained.

Our conversation about metrics surfaced memories I carry deeply. Early in my career, I was given a significant fundraising target without the portfolio to support it. I worked relentlessly, internalizing the belief that failing to meet the goal would harm real people. The pressure manifested physically. When I succeeded, I was not celebrated; instead, I was labeled “too aggressive.” That word landed heavily. I knew it carried consequence.

Aggression, when applied to women of color, is rarely about behavior alone. It is a way of disciplining ambition (Collins, 2009; Dei, 2018). I watched colleagues who exerted similar pressure celebrated as assertive or visionary, while my intensity was treated as problematic. That double bind taught me to monitor myself constantly, to temper my tone, soften my delivery, and carefully manage how I was perceived.

One experience crystallized this reality. I was pursuing a new opportunity. I was offered the role, only to have the title downgraded at the time of offer. The compensation matched that of the previous incumbent, but the role itself was downgraded. Despite strong references, my credibility was further vetted through informal channels unrelated to my direct supervisors. No explanation was offered. I accepted the role, anyway, knowing that refusal would be read as a lack of commitment. That moment made clear how conditional legitimacy can be (Ahmed, 2012; Douglas, 2021).

Listening to Michelle reflect on her own professional ease forced me to confront how uneven those conditions are. It is not that she did not work hard or face challenges; it is that her competence was not perpetually under review. Whiteness, in our exchange, emerged not as accusation but as context, an often-unnoticed condition that shapes how risk and doubt are distributed (Applebaum, 2019).

Our dialogue also made me consider my own complicity. I have internalized the norms that constrained me. I

have judged others, including racialized colleagues, for refusing to conform to standards I felt I had no choice but to meet. Naming that tension was uncomfortable, but necessary.

“

Listening to Michelle reflect on her own professional ease forced me to confront how uneven those conditions are. It is not that she did not work hard or face challenges; it is that her competence was not perpetually under review. Whiteness, in our exchange, emerged not as accusation but as context, an often-unnoticed condition that shapes how risk and doubt are distributed

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Emotional labor became more visible as we spoke. Fundraising requires constant translation: between donors and institutions, between values and outcomes, between ethics and urgency (Breeze, 2017; Raddon, 2023). That translation carries weight. I have spent years absorbing discomfort, calming donors, managing internal anxieties, and advocating quietly for ethical boundaries. Until recently, I treated that work as simply part of the job. I told myself I needed to be more resilient.

It is through conversations like this one with Michelle that I have begun to name this as labor. Once named, it becomes harder to treat the strain as a personal shortcoming. It raises uncomfortable questions: Why is resilience so heavily individualized? Why is emotional

absorption expected rather than supported?

What this dialogue offered me was validation and clarity. Validation that my experiences are not simply personal struggles but reflections of structural conditions. Clarity that changes requires more than resilience. It requires reckoning with how legitimacy, belonging, and credibility are unevenly constructed within our profession.

By placing our experiences in relation, Michelle and I did not resolve that pressure. But we made it visible. And visibility is where transformation begins.

Conclusion

This article does not seek to resolve the tensions that shape contemporary fundraising, nor to offer a representative account of the profession. Instead, it brings two lived experiences into relation to notice how credibility, legitimacy, and emotional labor are unevenly experienced within shared institutional contexts.

This asymmetry matters. In these reflections, crisis is not named in the same way or at the same moment. Tanya lives with sustained pressure without naming it as a crisis; Michelle can name ethical tension and emotional labor because the risks of doing so are lower. It is only at the level of synthesis, in relation rather than in isolation, that crisis becomes visible as a catalyst rather than a rupture.

By holding difference without collapsing it, our dialogic approach unsettles assumptions about neutrality, professionalism, and belonging in post-secondary advancement work. What emerges is not a single narrative of fundraising under strain, but a textured account of how fundraisers navigate ethical work in ways shaped by race, professional socialization, credibility, and legitimacy.

In a moment when Canadian philanthropy is marked by sustained pressure rather than a singular crisis, attending to these lived experiences matters. Fundraisers often absorb tension so that philanthropic systems appear coherent and functional. Yet the labor of doing so is unevenly distributed and rarely named. Making this work visible does not solve the structural challenges philanthropy faces, but it does create space for greater ethical attentiveness.

These reflections connect to broader ethical tensions in philanthropy that are carried most acutely by those closest to the work. Fundraisers are often positioned at the intersection of institutional values, donor expectations, and financial precarity, making them central to decisions about whether money aligns with stated commitments. Saying no to a gift is rarely simple (Rumble, 2023). Navigating these tensions quietly, often without clear frameworks that meaningfully integrate equity or reconciliation, adds another layer of ethical work that is absorbed rather than acknowledged.

Read in the context of this volume's theme, the strains described in our reflections point to the possibility of transformation grounded not in quick fixes, but in sustained relational awareness. By staying with discomfort, difference, and partial understanding, we suggest that ethical philanthropic practice may begin not with resolution, but with closer listening to the tensions already present.

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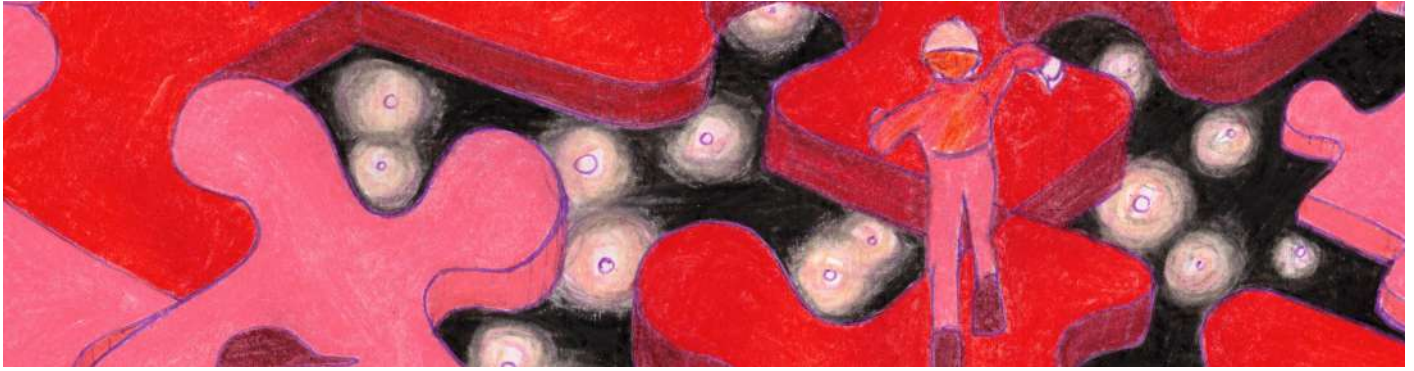
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Les entreprises adaptées, au cœur de partenariats philanthropiques essentiels pour les Québécois·es en situation de handicap

Entrevue avec Gabriel Tremblay

Par Gabriel Tremblay, PDG de Groupe TAQ et Rina Marchand, Directrice, partenariats philanthropiques et communications, Groupe TAQ



Gabriel Tremblay est un entrepreneur social inspirant, il gravite dans le monde des entreprises adaptées depuis plus de 35 ans soit comme dirigeant d'entreprises adaptées ou de l'association provinciale (CQEA). Acteur de changement, il a contribué à la création de plus de 2 000 emplois de qualité pour les personnes en situation de handicap.

Depuis 2013, il dirige le Groupe TAQ avec la mission d'offrir un environnement de travail positif et inclusif. Grâce à des investissements stratégiques et des acquisitions d'entreprises, il a fait croître l'organisation de façon significative. Il a été nommé PDG de l'année 2025 en économie sociale par Les Affaires et est l'auteur du livre : La saga des entreprises adaptées - La victoire du bon sens (2012).

Rina Marchand est une professionnelle chevronnée du développement entrepreneurial et des communications stratégiques, avec plus de 30 ans d'expérience dans les entreprises numériques et l'économie sociale. Elle occupe aujourd'hui le poste de directrice des partenariats philanthropiques et des communications au Groupe TAQ, où elle pilote une campagne d'obligations

communautaires et des projets philanthropiques pour l'inclusion socioprofessionnelle des personnes vivant avec des limitations fonctionnelles.

Introduction

Fondé en 1979 à Québec, Groupe TAQ est une entreprise adaptée dont la mission est de créer des emplois valorisants pour des personnes en situation de handicap. Depuis plus de quarante ans, l'organisation évolue à l'intersection de l'économie, de l'inclusion sociale et de l'innovation. À sa tête depuis 2013, Gabriel Tremblay porte une vision résolument humaine de l'entrepreneuriat, où la performance économique se met au service des personnes.

Dans cette entrevue, il revient sur l'évolution de la place des personnes en situation de handicap sur le marché du travail, la pertinence toujours actuelle du modèle des entreprises adaptées, les défis majeurs auxquels elles font face, notamment en contexte de transformation du travail, et le rôle croissant que peuvent jouer les partenaires philanthropiques. Dans un contexte marqué par des crises sociales,

économiques et organisationnelles, ces enjeux invitent à repenser les pratiques philanthropiques comme catalyseurs d'innovation sociale durable et inclusive.

Rina Marchand (RM) : En 2026, quelle place occupent les personnes handicapées sur le marché du travail québécois ?

Gabriel Tremblay (GT) : Au Québec, beaucoup de chemin a été parcouru depuis 1960, période qui correspond aux débuts de l'employabilité des personnes handicapées au Québec, puis à la reconnaissance officielle de leur statut en 1978 (NDLR: voir encadré sur les entreprises adaptées).

Le regard porté sur les personnes vivant avec des limitations fonctionnelles a évolué, notamment sous l'influence des mouvements en équité, diversité et inclusion (EDI) et en responsabilité sociétale des entreprises (RSE).

C'est une évolution évidemment positive qui a ouvert la voie à une intégration plus grande des personnes en situation de handicap dans les entreprises. Mais elle amène aussi de nouvelles réalités : les entreprises adaptées accueillent aujourd'hui des personnes en situation de handicap qui ont des besoins plus particuliers.

Chez Groupe TAQ, par exemple, nous accueillons davantage de personnes vivant avec un trouble du spectre de l'autisme. Cela nous a obligés à faire évoluer nos pratiques, nos modes d'encadrement et notre organisation du travail.

Est-ce qu'il reste encore du chemin à faire ? Certainement ! Dans la seule région de la Capitale-Nationale, 8 405¹ personnes en situation de handicap sont actuellement inscrites soit au Programme de revenu de base, soit au Programme de solidarité sociale. Si Groupe TAQ pouvait offrir un emploi à seulement 5 % d'entre elles, l'impact serait considérable !

RM : Dans ce contexte où l'EDI a progressé, pourquoi le modèle des entreprises adaptées demeure-t-il pertinent ?

GT : L'idée d'imposer des quotas d'embauche aux entreprises est souvent évoquée. Elle peut sembler séduisante, mais elle comporte un risque réel de marginalisation et de stigmatisation et c'est

exactement ce qu'on cherche à éviter. Une personne qui commence un nouvel emploi un lundi matin ne veut pas être perçue comme quelqu'un qui « remplit un quota ». Comme tout le monde, elle souhaite simplement contribuer, être utile, donner le meilleur d'elle-même.

Et l'intégration réussie de personnes vivant avec des limitations fonctionnelles implique des responsabilités, des coûts et une capacité d'adaptation que toutes les entreprises ne sont pas nécessairement en mesure d'assumer. Le modèle des entreprises adaptées ne crée pas un ghetto ; il repose au contraire sur un milieu dans lequel les personnes ont beaucoup plus d'opportunités d'évoluer (avec des tâches et postes diversifiés, de la formation continue, des activités favorisant de saines habitudes de vie, etc.). Les entreprises adaptées offrent des conditions gagnantes fondées sur l'acceptation pleine et entière de la personne.

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Chez Groupe TAQ, par exemple, nous accueillons davantage de personnes vivant avec un trouble du spectre de l'autisme. Cela nous a obligés à faire évoluer nos pratiques, nos modes d'encadrement et notre organisation du travail.

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D'ailleurs, un élément clé de ce modèle est le rôle des agents d'intégration, qui agissent comme pivot entre la personne qui a un potentiel et des besoins, les tâches disponibles et l'organisation de celles-ci et enfin sont le lien avec la famille ou les proches de la personne. C'est un travail d'une grande finesse qui demande de l'empathie, de l'agilité et qui est profondément humain.

Le quotidien d'une entreprise adaptée ressemble souvent à une boîte à surprises : une santé physique ou mentale parfois plus fragile qui explique un taux d'absentéisme plus élevé, des quarts de travail variés où des personnes à temps plein et à temps partiel se côtoient en permanence demandant une organisation souple. Bref : des besoins d'accompagnement qui varient d'un jour à l'autre. Ce sont toutes des choses qui nous forcent à continuellement nous adapter. On peut penser que c'est un fardeau, mais non ! La fierté que nous voyons dans les yeux de nos travailleurs, et le bonheur qu'ils ont de se savoir pleinement acceptés dépassent tout ce qu'on peut imaginer.

Tout ça explique pourquoi, malgré les avancées en équité, diversité et inclusion, le modèle des entreprises adaptées demeure non seulement pertinent, mais essentiel. L'inclusion ne se décrète pas uniquement par des politiques ou des quotas : elle se construit au quotidien, dans l'organisation du travail, dans la capacité d'adaptation et dans la reconnaissance des réalités individuelles. Car dans une entreprise adaptée, le point de référence, c'est la personne. C'est autour d'elle que l'on bâtit un modèle économique agile, capable de lui permettre de s'épanouir.

RM : Quel lien pouvons-nous faire entre la philanthropie et les entreprises adaptées ?

GT : L'enjeu fondamental des entreprises adaptées reste le même aujourd'hui, demain et dans dix ans : offrir du travail dans un contexte où le marché de l'emploi vit une révolution. L'automatisation et l'intelligence artificielle transforment déjà en profondeur les activités des entreprises, et cette transformation s'accélérera.

Par exemple, chez TAQ, nous faisons face à une baisse de productivité de nos travailleurs combinée à un besoin accru de soutien (NDLR : voir les graphiques 1 et 2 fournis par Groupe TAQ), une situation qui n'est plus compensée adéquatement par les subventions

existantes. Comme ces coûts supplémentaires ne peuvent pas être simplement 'refilés' à nos clients, nous devons trouver d'autres façons de soutenir notre mission.

Le soutien philanthropique est donc devenu pour nous une évidence durant les dernières années : non seulement pour maintenir l'équilibre entre notre mission d'inclusion et notre besoin de performance entrepreneuriale, mais aussi pour nous permettre d'innover et de nous adapter à un monde du travail en pleine mutation.

RM : L'innovation est-elle une question de survie pour les entreprises adaptées ?

GT : C'est vrai pour toutes les entreprises, mais c'est encore plus le cas pour nous, je crois. On est constamment à la recherche de marchés où la contribution humaine (surtout manuelle) reste essentielle, dans un monde où ce type de travail est de moins en moins valorisé. Ça nous oblige à investir sans arrêt dans de nouvelles activités, parfois même alors que l'amortissement des investissements précédents n'est pas encore terminé.

Certaines entreprises adaptées se sont tournées vers l'économie circulaire, notamment le tri et la revalorisation des matières. Chez Groupe TAQ, nous avons choisi de diversifier nos activités. Nous avons racheté et intégré trois entreprises depuis une dizaine d'années. La dernière en liste : les raquettes à neige Faber, une marque qui a 150 ans d'histoire, faisant de nous le premier fabricant au Canada et parmi les plus importants au monde. Nous avons aussi développé des activités de sous-traitance en conditionnement alimentaire, parce que, peu importe les cycles économiques, on sait que le monde aura toujours besoin de manger !

L'innovation ne concerne toutefois pas seulement le modèle d'affaires. Nous avons aussi mené en 2025 la plus grande campagne d'obligations communautaires jamais réalisée au Québec, pour un montant de 5 millions de dollars. Au-delà de l'objectif financier atteint, nous sommes surtout fiers de l'avoir fait avec 65 investisseurs issus de milieux très divers : fondations, firmes de gestion de placements, entrepreneurs, familles en affaires et grand public. Une véritable communauté s'est créée autour de TAQ.

“

Dans une entreprise adaptée, le point de référence, c'est la personne. C'est autour d'elle que l'on bâtit un modèle économique agile, capable de lui permettre de s'épanouir.

”

RM : Que peut faire le Québec pour mieux soutenir les entreprises adaptées ?

GT : Le gouvernement du Québec joue déjà un rôle important, et ce soutien est grandement apprécié. Un ajustement pour pallier la baisse de productivité des travailleurs serait toutefois nécessaire, car une partie du manque à gagner observé ces dernières années s'explique par cet écart. C'est un phénomène qui mériterait d'être étudié à plus large échelle aussi.

Le gouvernement fédéral pourrait également contribuer davantage, notamment en partageant les charges liées au soutien à l'emploi. Après tout, les personnes que nous employons contribuent aux deux paliers de gouvernement par leurs impôts.

Au niveau municipal, il s'agit souvent du palier le plus proche des réalités du terrain. Les municipalités comprennent bien nos besoins, mais aussi notre impact sur l'économie locale et sur le tissu social et communautaire. C'est certainement le cas de la Ville de Québec dans notre expérience et qui est un vrai catalyseur pour certains de nos projets.

Enfin, il faut créer un véritable pont entre les entreprises adaptées et la philanthropie : les fondations, bien sûr, mais aussi cette génération d'entrepreneurs qui cèdent ou transfèrent leurs entreprises et qui souhaitent continuer à s'impliquer de façon structurante dans notre économie.

RM : Comment la philanthropie peut-elle devenir un véritable allié dans l'intégration socioprofessionnelle des personnes en situation de handicap ?

GT : Notre histoire commune est encore très récente. Pendant longtemps, l'équilibre entre l'aide gouvernementale, principalement par le Programme de soutien aux entreprises adaptées, et nos revenus marchands nous permettait de remplir notre mission. Ce n'est plus suffisant aujourd'hui.

Ce que nous offrons est pourtant clair : nous créons de l'emploi. Nous sommes un puissant vecteur de changement social et économique. Et l'impact va bien au-delà de la personne employée. Oui, cette personne gagne en autonomie, évolue dans un milieu de travail adapté et y trouve de la fierté. Mais ce sont aussi les familles et les proches dont la vie se transforme.

Si on pense en termes d'« investissement » et de « traçabilité » de l'impact, une organisation comme TAQ est un gage solide de retombées mesurables. Mais pour jouer pleinement notre rôle, nous avons besoin d'espace et d'oxygène. La forte tendance au financement par projets, au détriment du financement de la mission, fragilise des organisations comme la nôtre. Il faut nous faire confiance, et pour cela, se rapprocher.

Dans un contexte où les équipes des fondations sont elles aussi très sollicitées, les occasions de rencontre avec le terrain deviennent d'autant plus précieuses. Je les invite à venir voir nos équipes et nos travailleurs. Les entreprises adaptées sont un antidote puissant face au cynisme ambiant et une réponse concrète au défi de générer davantage d'impact social avec les mêmes ressources.

Les entreprises adaptées sont des PME qui occupent une place tangible dans l'économie québécoise et qui jouent un rôle essentiel dans une véritable intégration socioprofessionnelle des personnes en situation de handicap.

Notes

1. Rapport statistique sur la clientèle des programmes d'assistance sociale - Août 2024 - Ministère de l'emploi et de la solidarité sociale. [Lien](#)
2. Enquête sur les plateaux de travail, La Presse, 31 mai 2025. [Lien](#)

Qu'est-ce qu'une entreprise adaptée (EA)?

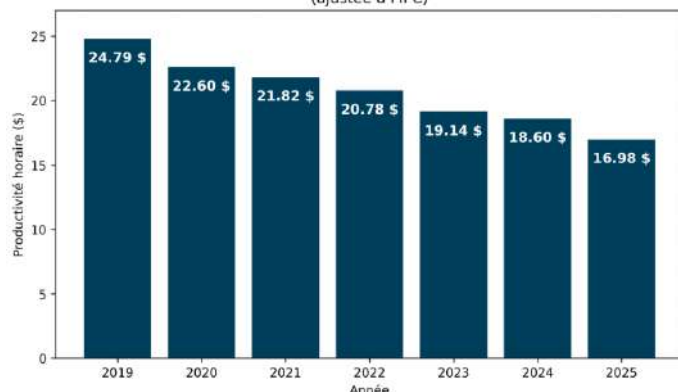
- Organisme à but non lucratif (OBNL), et dans une majorité de cas, aussi un organisme de charité (deux tiers des EA le sont).
- Mission : offrir un emploi rémunéré et valorisant à des personnes en situation de handicap.
- Modèle unique au Québec, reconnu et soutenu par le ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS) et par le Programme de soutien aux entreprises adaptées (PSEA)
- Pour être reconnu comme une EA : au moins 60 % des employés doivent vivre avec un handicap.
- Le Conseil québécois des entreprises adaptées (CQEA) est l'organisme fédérateur qui offre soutien, accompagnement et représentation pour les quelque 36 entreprises adaptées du Québec.

Repères historiques

- Années 1960 : naissance des premiers ateliers de travail avec les personnes handicapées dans les hôpitaux (impulsés par Roger Jauvin et André Chagnon).
- 1973 : multiplication des ateliers protégés, mais peu de droits pour les travailleurs handicapés. La reconnaissance de l'apport économique des personnes vivant avec un handicap est encore difficile puisque le Québec a encore son lot de plateaux de travail qui ne respectent pas les droits des travailleurs (lire l'enquête de La Presse à ce sujet²).
- 1978 : création de l'Office des personnes handicapées du Québec (OPHQ) → naissance d'un encadrement légal.
- 1979 : création de plusieurs EA dont les Ateliers T.A.Q. (désormais Groupe TAQ). Le modèle québécois est unique au Canada. La Belgique, la France et la Grande-Bretagne proposent des initiatives similaires.
- 1980 (approx.) : création du Programme de soutien aux entreprises adaptées (PSEA), d'abord soutenu par l'OPHQ et ensuite transféré en 2016 à Emploi Québec

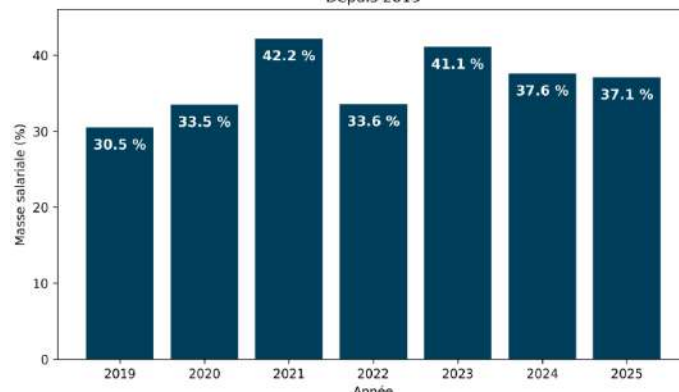
Graphique 1

Productivité horaire des travailleurs en situation de handicap
(ajustée à l'IPC)



Graphique 2

Évolution de la masse salariale – Équipe de soutien (Groupe TAQ)
Depuis 2019





Vers une philanthropie à l'échelle de la polycrise : portrait narratif inspiré par les mouvements féministes noirs

Par Nadia Ahidjo, *Chargée des partenariats philanthropiques au Fonds Féministe Noir*



Nadia Ahidjo est une féministe Africaine et experte en philanthropie féministe, passionnée par la justice raciale et de genre, ainsi que par l'inclusion sociale. Elle est conseillère principale pour les partenariats philanthropiques au Fonds Féministe Noir. Son travail comprend le développement de stratégies, la conception de programmes et de projets, la facilitation d'espaces de collaboration et d'échanges, ainsi que la recherche et l'écriture. Au Canada, son engagement se manifeste également à travers ses rôles bénévoles et de gouvernance au sein du CECI Canada, de la Hogan's Alley Society et du Circle on Philanthropy.

Entre crises et résistances : la force des mouvements féministes noirs

Cet article propose une synthèse du rapport [Mouvements Féministes Noirs et Crises](#) publié par le [Fonds Féministe Noir](#) (BFF - acronyme de l'anglais). Le BFF a été créé en 2021, et est dirigé par des féministes noires pour accroître l'accès des mouvements à des ressources durables par des subventions qui renforcent leur pérennité et leur résilience; et mobiliser la philanthropie afin d'orienter davantage de financements, et de meilleurs financements, vers leurs interventions essentielles, au Canada, et à travers le monde. Le fonds pratique un financement

participatif dans lequel les processus de sélection des subventions sont co-construits avec des membres et partenaires féministes noirs, afin que les prises de décision reflètent authentiquement leurs priorités et savoirs. Pour soutenir cette approche transformatrice, il est financé par un large éventail de bailleurs institutionnels, privés, individuels et d'individus, réunissant des ressources diversifiées pour renforcer les mouvements féministes noirs et leur travail pour l'équité et la justice sociale.

Dans un contexte de polycrises mondiales, ces mouvements conjuguent protection des communautés et avancées stratégiques face aux résistances croissantes. Ils créent des espaces sûrs et intentionnels où femmes, filles et personnes de genre expansif peuvent s'épanouir, amplifier les voix marginalisées et contester l'autoritarisme, les restrictions des droits humains et l'érosion démocratique. Le rapport analyse la manière dont ces mouvements comprennent et affrontent les crises systémiques contemporaines. Il met en lumière une lecture structurelle des crises; envisagées comme les manifestations de violences raciales, patriarcales, coloniales et économiques enracinées. Il s'appuie sur une méthodologie qualitative et engagée, combinant des entretiens approfondis, l'implication directe de féministes noir·e·s vivant des situations

de crise, ainsi qu'une analyse de la littérature portant sur les féminismes noirs, l'action humanitaire, les changements climatiques, les conflits, la philanthropie à l'échelle mondiale.

Dans un monde où les crises se succèdent à une vitesse désorientante entre incendies, inondations, violences racistes, montée de l'autoritarisme, précarité économique, et effondrement des systèmes de soutien; la philanthropie est de plus en plus sollicitée pour répondre. Pourtant, cette logique de réponse immédiate, si familière et si rassurante, ne suffit plus. Elle colmate sans transformer, réagit sans prévenir, et stabilise sans libérer. Et parfois, malgré de bonnes intentions, elle reproduit les mêmes dynamiques de pouvoir qui ont généré la crise en premier lieu.



Source : Des féministes noires lèvent les bras lors d'une manifestation, exprimant la résistance et l'engagement politique collectif, Black Feminist Fund

Les féministes noires² nous rappellent que ce que les institutions appellent crise n'est jamais un accident, ni un événement soudain et exceptionnel. Là où la philanthropie voit un ouragan, elles voient l'héritage de la dépossession foncière et du racisme environnemental. Là où les médias voient un pic de violence, elles voient la continuité d'un patriarcat renforcé par les politiques économiques et les régimes autoritaires. Cette compréhension systémique empêche de réduire les communautés impactées à des victimes passives. Elles deviennent les analystes, les visionnaires et les stratèges d'un avenir réparateur.

“

Les analyses [et les réponses] sont ancrées dans les relations entre les personnes et non dans les cessez-le-feu. Il ne s'agit pas de reporter les crises à plus tard, mais d'essayer de s'attaquer à leurs causes profondes et de changer les relations (entre les personnes, avec la terre, avec la communauté, avec les ethnies, avec les sexes et avec les membres de la famille)

- Sara Abbas dans *Mouvements féministes noirs et crises*

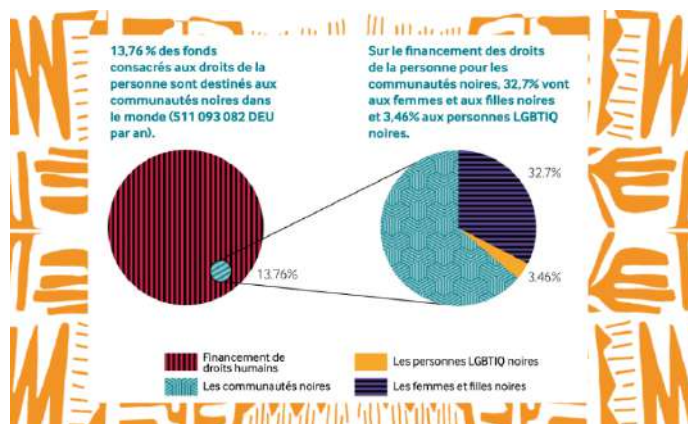
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Pour le BFF, les crises sont les manifestations visibles de systèmes anciens, profondément ancrés, qui produisent une continuité de violences raciales, patriarcales, coloniales et économiques. Grâce à des espaces de réseautage, de financement et de construction communautaire, le fonds invite le secteur philanthropique, et au-delà, tous les acteurs engagés dans la justice sociale, à reconsidérer la manière dont nous comprenons et abordons les crises. Au cœur de cette initiative se trouve une intuition simple: pour répondre réellement aux crises, il faut s'intéresser non seulement aux dégâts, mais aux racines.

Cette perspective permet aussi de comprendre pourquoi la notion de résilience, si valorisée dans la philanthropie, est souvent perçue avec méfiance par les communautés noires. Être résilient-e signifie trop souvent survivre à ce qui aurait dû être empêché.

C'est une injonction silencieuse à endurer l'injustice plutôt qu'à la transformer. C'est d'évoluer souvent dans des environnements hostiles, où la continuité du travail dépend autant du bien-être collectif que des stratégies politiques et des ressources financières.

Les féministes noires, elles, parlent plutôt de réparation et de prévention, deux concepts qui recentrent la justice, la guérison et la redistribution des ressources et du pouvoir. Alors même qu'elles sont donc à l'avant-plan de nombreuses luttes pour la justice sociale à l'échelle mondiale, les mouvements féministes noirs font face à un sous-financement dramatique. Cette affirmation, loin d'être une dénonciation abstraite, met en lumière un paradoxe structurel : celles qui soutiennent, protègent et reconstruisent les communautés les plus précaires sont systématiquement sous-financées.



Source : Où est l'argent pour les Mouvements Féministes Noirs? Publié par le Black Feminist Fund. Mars 2023, P15

Le financement, ou l'éternel combat des mouvements féministes noirs

Ce constat du BFF est sans appel (Black Feminist Fund, 2023). Au niveau mondial, près de 59 % des organisations féministes noires n'ont jamais reçu de financement de base, tandis que 75 % d'entre elles doivent se contenter de fonds strictement liés à des projets, instables par définition et rarement adaptés aux besoins réels d'un mouvement qui navigue quotidiennement entre survie et résistance. Ce manque de financement durable n'est pas un hasard. De nombreux groupes dirigés par des femmes noires travaillent sur des enjeux aussi variés que les droits fonciers, la justice climatique, et économique, ou la recherche de la paix. Malheureusement, les logiques traditionnelles de la philanthropie privilégient des

priorités définies par des acteurs majoritairement blancs, et souvent déconnectées des réalités vécues par les femmes et personnes de genre expansif noires. Ainsi, l'agenda du financement devient un terrain de reproduction des hiérarchies raciales où les préoccupations des femmes et personnes de genre expansif noires sont reléguées aux marges.



Source : Où est l'argent pour les Mouvements Féministes Noirs? Publié par le Black Feminist Fund. Mars 2023, P16

Ces analyses trouvent une pertinence particulière dans le contexte Canadien où plusieurs dénoncent une crise pour les communautés noires. Selon le Black Canadian National Survey (Canadian Race Relations Foundation, 2021), 70 % des personnes noires déclarent vivre régulièrement du racisme, près d'un sur cinq rapporte avoir été arrêté ou contrôlé injustement par la police, et 96 % considèrent que le racisme en milieu de travail est un problème, 78 % le qualifiant même de grave. Même dans le domaine de la santé, 91 % des répondants noirs estiment que le racisme est un problème dans le secteur, 70 % qu'il est grave. Ces réalités sont ancrées dans des crises interreliées; des crises climatiques exacerbées sur les territoires autochtones, des violences policières envers les personnes noires, crises du logement, montée de l'extrême droite, inégalités de santé pour les personnes noires, et pressions croissantes sur les droits des femmes et des personnes LGBTQ+. Ces dynamiques ne sont pas isolées, elles s'enchevêtrent et se renforcent.

Elles sont reflétées aussi dans les inégalités philanthropiques canadiennes plus larges. Le rapport de la Fondation pour les Communautés Noires (Pereira et al, 2021) met en lumière un déséquilibre massif : en 2017 et 2018, les 25 fondations publiques et privées examinées ont distribué 979 millions

de dollars en subventions, mais seulement 0,16 % de ces fonds ont été alloués à des organisations dirigées par des noirs (Black-led), ou au service des communautés noires (Black-serving). Du côté des fondations communautaires, bien qu'elles fassent légèrement mieux, les statistiques restent profondément problématiques. Les 15 plus grandes fondations communautaires ont versé seulement 0,07 % de leurs subventions aux organisations dirigées par des Noirs (Black-led), et 0,70 % à des groupes au service des communautés noires (Black-serving). Ces sommes symboliques soulignent un manque de priorisation systémique. Le rapport dénonce non seulement le manque de financement, mais aussi le fait que les donateurs ne collectent souvent aucune donnée désagrégée par race. Sans informations, la philanthropie ne parvient pas à voir ni réparer ses propres biais (Community Foundations of Canada, 2023).



Source : Une composition visuelle représentant des féministes noires de différentes générations, incarnant la diversité, la résistance et la continuité des luttes. Black Feminist Fund

Le BFF et ces acteurs clé de l'écosystème Canadien convergent sur deux points essentiels. Il faut financer à la hauteur des défis et des réalités des communautés noires, repartager le pouvoir, reconnaître l'expertise des mouvements féministes noirs; et construire des infrastructures philanthropiques fondées sur la relation, la confiance, et la durabilité. Il s'agit de faire des dons ou donner des subventions, et aussi de transformer les pratiques de décision, de création et de soutien. Il faut investir dans des initiatives

locales, des réseaux, des espaces de co-création, des alliances intergénérationnelles, et des pratiques de financement comme acte politique.

Pourquoi ça tienne : investir dans l'écosystème des mouvements

Ces approches essentielles sont portées par plusieurs membres du réseau de [Féministes Noires dans la Philanthropie](#) (BFiP acronyme de l'anglais) abrité par le BFF. Les membres du BFiP partent d'une conviction simple: les femmes et personnes noires de genre expansif transforment déjà les pratiques philanthropiques, et c'est en consolidant notre pouvoir collectif que nous pouvons changer la manière dont les ressources circulent en temps de crise. Parmi les plus de 300 membres du réseau, 11 sont basées au Canada et apportent une diversité remarquable de perspectives. Leurs rôles s'étendent des fondations privées, des fonds féministes, des fondations communautaires, des institutions nationales, toutes dédiées à la justice et à l'équité. Leur engagement couvre le renforcement des communautés noires, la justice raciale, la mobilisation de ressources pour les mouvements de genre et les approches philanthropiques axées sur la jeunesse et le climat. Ensemble, elles incarnent l'amplitude du leadership féministe noir au sein de la philanthropie canadienne, ancré à la fois dans l'expérience locale, et dans une analyse globale des luttes. La présence de ces membres Canadien-ne-s illustre combien les réseaux de solidarité transnationale sont essentiels, alors que les crises s'intensifient ici comme ailleurs. Face aux violences au Soudan, au travail essentiel des mouvements au Brésil, ou aux urgences climatiques dans les Caraïbes, le réseau BFiP a démontré sa capacité à agir rapidement, à déplacer des ressources critiques, et à combler les vides laissés par une philanthropie souvent trop lente.

Ces mêmes stratégies de solidarité globale, d'éducation politique et de redistribution intentionnelle parlent directement au contexte Canadien, où les communautés noires continuent de faire face à des inégalités systémiques, à la violence de genre, aux impacts climatiques et aux limites structurelles de la philanthropie traditionnelle. En reliant des leaders basés au Canada à une communauté mondiale de praticiennes féministes noires, BFiP renforce notre capacité collective à répondre aux crises, à transformer les récits et à débloquent les ressources que les mouvements féministes noirs, ici et partout, méritent depuis longtemps.

Les pratiques de financement comme actes politiques

Une autre philanthropie est possible, comme le démontre le BFF et un nombre croissant de fonds féministes³ au Canada, et à travers le monde. Leurs interventions montrent qu'il est possible de soutenir des organisations communautaires même en période de crise, malgré les effondrements financiers, la violence, les coupures d'Internet et les déplacements. Là où la philanthropie traditionnelle impose des résultats rapides et souvent irréalistes, ces acteurs font confiance aux mouvements et aux organisations pour décider de la manière d'avancer, des actions à mener, et du moment où il faut réorienter leurs stratégies. Cette confiance, longtemps refusée aux communautés noires, au Canada, et à travers le monde, devient un acte politique, reconnaissant les mouvements féministes noirs comme des expert.e.s de leurs réalités, capables d'anticiper les crises, d'y répondre et de créer des futurs mondes justes.



Source : Des donatrices et stratèges féministes noires, membres du réseau BFF, Black Feminist Fund

Ces expériences démontrent l'importance d'une approche compatissante, réactive et agile, centrée sur les communautés et leur leadership. Il s'agit de financer les réseaux féministes et les communautés de solidarité existants et émergents, au-delà des frontières, pour protéger, renforcer et permettre l'action même dans les moments les plus critiques. Les subventions doivent soutenir la production de connaissances, le plaidoyer et la communication, tout en étant flexibles, rapides et non conditionnées à des résultats spécifiques, afin de renforcer le pouvoir collectif et favoriser un changement durable. Les mécanismes de financement doivent supprimer les exigences bureaucratiques inutiles, permettre la

réallocation des fonds en période de crise, et investir dans les communautés invisibilisées ou marginalisées. Ancrer les réponses dans les savoirs et approches féministes noirs garantit une légitimité, de l'efficacité, et un impact transformateur.



Source : Des donatrices et stratèges féministes noires, membres du réseau BFF, Black Feminist Fund

Face aux crises, une vision radicale et réparatrice

Ces approches s'imposent comme une urgence éthique. Alors que les crises raciales, climatiques et économiques s'imbriquent, la philanthropie mondiale, et Canadienne a la possibilité de jouer un rôle de catalyseur; non pas en sauveuse, mais en alliée, auprès des organisations et militant.e.s noires déjà actrices de leurs propres récits. La philanthropie peut, non seulement répondre aux urgences, mais construire un futur où les communautés noires ne sont pas les recipient.e.s silencieuses de dons, mais des actrices centrales de transformation sociale.

Les solutions ne naissent pas dans les bureaux des fondations. Elles émergent des relations, des solidarités, et des transmissions intergénérationnelles. Elles naissent dans ces espaces où se rencontrent activistes, chercheur.es, gardien.nes de savoirs, artistes, jeunes leaders et aîné.es. À travers des forums féministes, des réseaux transnationaux et des cercles de partage, les féministes noires construisent des infrastructures essentielles : la confiance, la mémoire collective, et la capacité à imaginer au-delà du présent. Ces espaces de relations incarnent une autre vision de réponses aux crises : une vision qui

considère la réparation et la prévention, comme des éléments essentiels. Pour les féministes noires, la transformation n'est pas seulement un résultat, c'est un processus vivant, un tissu social à nourrir.



Source : Une féministe noire tient une fleur blanche, symbole de dignité, de liberté, d'épanouissement et de puissance vécue. Black Feminist Fund

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Notre communauté est-elle en sécurité ? Disposons-nous d'un espace propice à la croissance et à la responsabilité? Comment contribuons-nous aux différents systèmes qui peuvent nous nuire et/ou nous accorder de l'attention ?

- Akola Thomson dans *Mouvements Féministes Noirs et Crises*

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Repenser la philanthropie à travers les optiques féministes noires permet de bâtir des systèmes inclusifs, de fournir des soins et une protection efficaces, de s'attaquer aux causes profondes et de soutenir la création de mondes où les systèmes politiques et économiques sont habilitants et nourrissants pour les êtres humains et pour la planète. Pour le Canada, cela signifie investir dans le leadership communautaire, dans des organisations ancrées localement et dans des visions politiques de long terme. L'avenir de la philanthropie dépend de sa capacité à financer en confiance, durablement, et selon les priorités des mouvements, afin de réparer plutôt que reproduire les héritages de la violence raciale.

Les mouvements féministes noirs⁴ continueront à ouvrir des chemins de vie, de résistance et d'imagination politique, qu'on les finance ou non. Mais pour transformer la polycrise, il est temps que la philanthropie se mette à leur hauteur.

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Si les bailleurs de fonds pouvaient garantir la protection ou un système de protection pour les féministes Noir.e.s, nous pourrions alors avancer. Nous devons garantir non seulement notre sécurité et nos vies, mais aussi nos droits fondamentaux. Nous ne pouvons pas payer un.e activiste pour sauver le monde si sa propre maison s'effondre... Les bailleurs de fonds devraient garantir la transformation et le strict minimum pour que les féministes Noir.e.s puissent faire leur travail.

- Tamára Cesário da Silva dans *Mouvements Féministes Noirs et Crises*

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Notes

1. Le BFF agit autour de l'octroi de subventions, l'apprentissage et l'accompagnement, ainsi que le plaidoyer philanthropique. Il fournit des financements de base, flexibles et de long terme à des organisations féministes noires dirigées par, et pour, les communautés en Afrique, dans les Amériques, les Caraïbes, le Moyen-Orient et l'Europe, permettant aux militant.e.s de défendre leurs droits et de construire leurs mouvements de justice sociale. Convaincu que ces mouvements connaissent le mieux leurs contextes et stratégies, le BFF privilégie un soutien structurel durable, notamment via des engagements de huit ans, tout en offrant des financements de solidarité, d'opportunité et d'innovation, ainsi qu'un accompagnement pour renforcer l'infrastructure des mouvements. Il organise également des espaces d'apprentissage collectif, pour diffuser des savoirs et analyses ancrés dans les féminismes noirs. Parallèlement, le fonds mène un plaidoyer philanthropique, nourrit un réseau Black Feminists in Philanthropy (BFiP), soutient la prochaine génération de leaders féministes noires, et investit dans la production de connaissances afin de dénoncer le sous-financement des mouvements féministes noirs et proposer des approches transformatrices centrées sur leurs réalités, savoirs et visions d'avenir.

2. Capsule vidéo de la série Politiques Féministes Noires de BFF «Temps de crise : Les leçons des féminismes noirs». [Lien](#)

3. Il s'agit notamment des fonds féministes Urgent Action, Madre, We Are Purposeful, le Fonds mondial pour les femmes, Thousand Currents, Mama Cash, le Fonds mondial de résilience, le Fonds pour l'égalité, le Fonds pour les femmes en Asie, et les fonds membres de Leading From the South (LFS), la Fondation Houssian, parmi tant d'autres.

4. Capsule vidéo «We bring Fire!» de BFF. [Lien](#)

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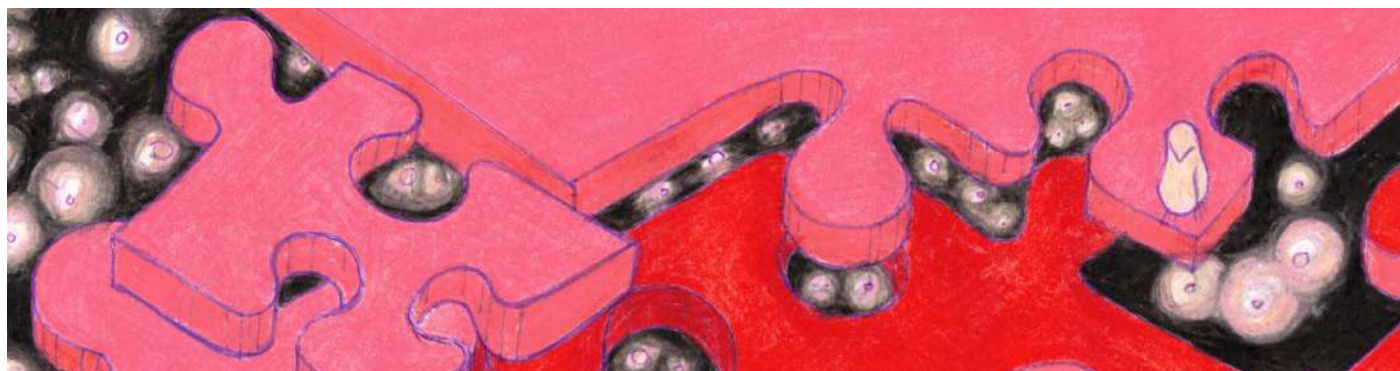
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L'élaboration du rapport Signes vitaux sur la philanthropie des communautés noires par la Fondation du Grand Montréal

Par **Bélanda Bah**, Directrice de l'Observatoire des communautés noires du Québec et **Luc Rabouin**, Président-directeur général de la Fondation du Grand Montréal



Bélanda Bah est sociologue et gestionnaire, titulaire du diplôme de l'Institut d'Études Politiques de Toulouse, d'un master en administration publique de l'Université Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne et d'un doctorat en sociologie de l'Université de Montréal. Elle se passionne pour les enjeux politiques, communautaires et individuels, liés aux dynamiques migratoires dans un monde globalisé. Sa thèse explore la citoyenneté culturelle d'immigrant.e.s internationaux établi.e.s à Montréal, en examinant la construction de leur identité citoyenne. Avant et pendant son doctorat, elle a travaillé comme professionnelle et consultante sur des projets socio-économiques ciblant les immigrants internationaux ou la jeunesse vulnérable, en Haïti, en Équateur et en Afrique de l'Ouest. Elle se consacre aujourd'hui à la recherche sociale menée avec les milieux d'intervention et les personnes concernées. En tant que directrice de l'Observatoire des communautés noires du Québec du Sommet Jeunes Afro, elle dirige une initiative novatrice qui valorise différents savoirs pour résoudre des problèmes sociaux complexes.

Luc Rabouin est principal porte-parole de la Fondation du Grand Montréal, en dirige l'équipe et les opérations. Il établit ses stratégies globales de concert avec le conseil d'administration. Il a notamment été maire de l'arrondissement du Plateau-Mont-Royal et président

du comité exécutif de la Ville de Montréal. Il a aussi occupé des postes de direction au sein du Centre d'écologie urbaine de Montréal, à PME MTL Centre-ville (alors la Corporation de développement économique communautaire Centre-Sud/Plateau-Mont-Royal) ainsi qu'à la Caisse d'économie solidaire Desjardins, principale institution financière spécialisée en économie sociale et en investissement responsable au Québec.

La philanthropie au sein des communautés noires du Québec

Comme fondation communautaire, la [Fondation du Grand Montréal](#) (FGM) est au service et à l'écoute de sa communauté. En collaboration avec ses partenaires, elle mobilise des ressources philanthropiques, diffuse des connaissances et catalyse des initiatives afin de soutenir la communauté du Grand Montréal. En d'autres mots, la FGM est une organisation qui sert d'abord à rassembler et à gérer des fonds philanthropiques, certes, mais qui a aussi pour mission de développer la philanthropie, de rassembler la communauté et de soutenir la recherche de solutions innovantes et durables aux enjeux auxquels cette dernière fait face. Elle poursuit ainsi la vision d'une communauté exempte de pauvreté et de discrimination, où toutes

et tous peuvent réaliser leur potentiel et vivre dans un environnement sain, aujourd'hui et dans l'avenir.

À ce titre, les valeurs de justice, d'équité, de diversité et d'inclusion sont au cœur de la mission de la Fondation, qui aspire à être le reflet de la communauté qu'elle sert. Afin de briser les barrières et de créer une société inclusive, la FGM écoute, apprend, et met en œuvre des mesures intentionnelles dans sa culture organisationnelle, ses programmes de distribution, ses investissements, ses décisions et ses actions. Elle reconnaît l'existence de facteurs discriminants envers des individus et des groupes de façon directe ou systémique au sein de la société. Ces facteurs existent aussi à l'intérieur du secteur philanthropique, qui n'est pas exempt des biais qui affectent le reste de la société.

L'enjeu de la philanthropie au sein des communautés noires constitue un bon exemple de cette réalité. La FGM en a d'ailleurs fait une priorité d'action depuis quelques années. Trop souvent, les parcours philanthropiques des personnes noires, comme ceux de bien d'autres groupes, passent sous le radar et ne sont pas reconnus à leur juste valeur. Il s'agit d'un enjeu de justice et d'inclusion au sens large, bien sûr, mais aussi d'un angle mort de la philanthropie sur lequel celle-ci a tout intérêt à se pencher.

Comprendre pour mieux agir

Parallèlement, avec sa série de rapports Signes vitaux du Grand Montréal, la Fondation s'est donné pour objectifs d'informer, de rassembler et d'encourager les leaders de tous les secteurs de notre communauté à agir sur les enjeux les plus importants. En réunissant et en diffusant des données contextualisées et fiables sur l'état de la collectivité, sa volonté est de stimuler la réflexion, la concertation et l'élaboration de solutions adaptées à ces enjeux.

Dès 2023, l'invisibilité et le déficit de reconnaissance des contributions philanthropiques des communautés noires a été le point de départ de la réflexion de la FGM dans l'élaboration d'une nouvelle édition des Signes vitaux. En collaboration avec l'[Observatoire des communautés noires du Québec](#), la FGM a donc produit cette étude qui a été rendue publique à l'automne 2025. L'Observatoire, un organe de recherche rattaché au Sommet Jeunes Afro, est engagé dans la production et la diffusion de connaissances sur

les réalités des communautés noires du Québec. Cette expertise en faisait un partenaire idéal pour témoigner, avec toute la rigueur scientifique nécessaire, de la diversité et du dynamisme de ces communautés en termes de philanthropie.

En plus de proposer un portrait inédit de la philanthropie des communautés noires d'ici, cette édition des Signes vitaux vise à rendre visible cette philanthropie du point de vue des personnes qui l'incarnent. La démarche a permis de déconstruire certains préjugés, comme celui voulant que ces communautés ne se trouvent que du côté des bénéficiaires de la philanthropie. Elle a aussi mis en lumière des façons différentes de définir et de pratiquer la philanthropie et permis, en identifiant les lacunes dans les données, de défricher un nouvel espace de recherche et de réflexion pour notre secteur.

“

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Les principaux constats

Le rapport Philanthropie et communautés noires du Québec : perceptions, pratiques et pistes d'action¹ présente une démarche permettant de documenter et reconnaître la contribution philanthropique des communautés noires au Québec. Cette enquête combine sondage et entrevues pour explorer les conceptions, pratiques de dons et motivations des individus, de même que certaines tendances parmi

les organismes dirigés par des personnes noires. Le rapport met en lumière ces formes d'engagement, s'interroge sur leurs déterminants et approfondit leur compréhension à travers des récits individuels. Il souligne également le rôle social de ces contributions aux échelles locale, nationale et internationale.

Comment les personnes noires du Québec qui ont été interrogées perçoivent-elles la philanthropie ?

L'étude révèle une conception large de la philanthropie chez les répondant·e·s, englobant un éventail d'actions allant au-delà du seul don d'argent. Les pratiques considérées comme philanthropiques incluent le don de temps (bénévolat, expertise), de biens (vêtements, nourriture, équipements...), le soutien direct à des personnes en difficulté, ou encore l'appui à des organismes communautaires ou religieux.

Ainsi, 49,6 % sont « tout à fait d'accord » avec l'énoncé « Être philanthrope, c'est donner de son temps », et 46,8 % avec l'énoncé « Être philanthrope, c'est donner directement aux gens en situation de besoin ». La perception que la philanthropie doit passer par des dons monétaires assortis d'avantages fiscaux est beaucoup moins répandue : seulement 16,8 % y adhèrent pleinement, et 39,3 % rejettent l'idée qu'il faille donner un montant annuel minimum pour être considéré comme philanthrope.

Les entrevues font ressortir le fait que la philanthropie est perçue comme une expression d'amour pour l'humanité et une disposition à améliorer le bien-être collectif, indépendamment du statut social ou du revenu. Elle se traduit alors autant par des actions discrètes que par des contributions visibles.

Qui sont les donateur·trice·s ?

Le sondage révèle que 87,9 % des répondant·e·s ont donné au moins une fois au cours des 12 derniers mois. D'après nos analyses, certaines tendances se dessinent en fonction du profil du ou de la donateur·trice. Par exemple, les femmes se distinguent par une forte implication dans des formes de philanthropie de proximité, et les personnes de 45 à 59 ans se montrent plus régulières dans leurs dons. Les personnes nées à l'étranger entretiennent un lien fort avec leur pays d'origine et soutiennent financièrement leurs proches dans des domaines comme l'éducation ou la santé, inscrivant ainsi leurs gestes dans une dynamique

diasporique. Les croyances religieuses nourrissent également l'élan de donner, en particulier sous forme de dons matériels et alimentaires.

Les personnes à revenus plus élevés favorisent une philanthropie planifiée et revendiquée, alors que celles aux revenus modestes privilégient les gestes spontanés et communautaires. Fait marquant : 52,9 % des répondant·e·s s'identifient comme philanthropes, 16,4 % non, et 25 % demeurent dans l'indécision sur ce point (le total ne fait pas 100). Cela signifie qu'une part non négligeable des personnes qui donnent en argent, en biens ou en temps (87,9 % des répondant·e·s) peine à se reconnaître comme philanthrope, en dépit d'une conception large de la philanthropie. Nous faisons le lien entre cette hésitation et les stéréotypes qui associent la philanthropie aux grandes fortunes, aux personnalités connues ou aux dons institutionnalisés, une vision dominante qui invisibilise les pratiques informelles courantes chez les communautés noires.

Que donnent les donateur·trice·s ?

La majorité des répondant·e·s (73,2 %) avait donné de l'argent au cours des 12 derniers mois. Le montant médian des dons financiers aux organismes s'élevait à 600 \$ par an, mais avec des écarts importants au sein de l'échantillon.

Les transferts diasporiques sont nombreux, surtout chez les personnes nées à l'étranger : près de 80 % d'entre elles soutiennent financièrement des proches vivant encore dans leur pays d'origine. Ces gestes, bien qu'ancrés dans les solidarités familiales, participent à des dynamiques de développement social local. Or, ils restent en grande partie invisibles dans les statistiques et les discours dominants.

Les dons ne se limitent pas à l'argent : environ la moitié de l'ensemble des répondant·e·s, sans égard à leur lieu de naissance, ont donné des biens matériels et du temps.

Qu'est-ce qui motive les dons ?

Trois grandes motivations structurent les pratiques qui ont été documentées :

1. Contribuer à la transformation de la société québécoise : Les personnes interrogées souhaitent renforcer l'équité, l'inclusion et la justice sociale. Les causes privilégiées incluent la lutte contre la

pauvreté, l'accès à l'éducation, la santé et les droits de la personne. La reconnaissance publique est un incitatif pour certaines catégories de répondant·e·s : les personnes de 45 à 59 ans et celles ayant un revenu supérieur à 100 000 \$ y sont plus sensibles.

2. Soutenir le développement des communautés noires : Le sous-financement chronique des organismes dirigés par des Noir·e·s constitue une motivation notable. Les dons visent à renforcer des structures qui répondent à des besoins spécifiques, allant de l'intégration socio-économique à la lutte contre le racisme.

3. Contribuer au développement des pays d'origine : Les dons diasporiques, que ce soit pour financer l'éducation, la santé ou encore les infrastructures locales, sont significatifs. L'entrevue avec certain·e·s donateur·trice·s a vraiment mis en lumière une conscience de l'impact socio-économique qu'avaient leurs contributions pour les localités réceptrices, au-delà de la solidarité familiale.

Comment les dons se font-ils ?

Les canaux sont diversifiés. Le plus fréquemment mentionné est la participation à des événements de collecte de fonds (35,6 % des répondant·e·s), suivi des dons en ligne, des contributions directes aux bénéficiaires et de la participation à des campagnes communautaires. Les canaux informels, comme le transfert direct à des proches pour leurs besoins propres ou ceux de la communauté où ils et elles vivent, sont importants aussi.

Certain·e·s donateur·trice·s planifient un budget annuel pour leurs dons, tandis que d'autres répondent aux sollicitations ponctuelles ou agissent spontanément. En ce qui a trait plus particulièrement aux dons aux organismes, les habitudes varient : 43,3 % donnent régulièrement aux mêmes, 18,1 % en soutiennent de manière constante, mais en variant les bénéficiaires, et près d'un tiers (31 %) varie entre divers organismes, selon les causes et les besoins du moment.

Quelles difficultés rencontrent les donateur·trice·s ?

Divers freins ont été relevés :

- Des ressources financières limitées, en particulier pour les personnes à faible revenu.

- De la méfiance envers certaines organisations, en raison d'un manque de transparence ou d'une perception que les fonds ne bénéficient pas directement aux communautés.
- Le manque de reconnaissance des contributions noires dans le paysage philanthropique québécois.
- Au niveau des organisations dirigées par des Noir·e·s, des processus d'accès au financement jugés lourds et mal adaptés aux réalités des petits organismes à faible capacité administrative.

À propos des organisations philanthropiques dirigées par des Noir·e·s

Au Québec, les organisations dirigées par des personnes noires contribuent à répondre aux besoins sociaux, culturels et économiques de personnes vulnérables des communautés noires et d'autres appartenances. Elles interviennent dans des domaines variés : éducation, santé, emploi, culture, lutte contre le racisme, ou encore soutien aux nouveaux·elles arrivant·e·s.

Autotal, 58,3 % des dirigeant·e·s noir·e·s d'organisations philanthropiques interrogé·e·s considèrent qu'il est difficile d'obtenir du financement de la part d'autres organismes (gouvernement, fondation, entreprise...), et 38,9 % estiment que ce problème est grave. Rappelons que le rapport *Unfunded : Black Communities Overlooked by Canadian Philanthropy* (Pereira et al., 2020) a révélé un sous-financement majeur des organismes dirigés par des personnes noires ou au service des communautés noires : entre 2017 et 2018, ils ont reçu seulement 0,07 % des fondations communautaires canadiennes.

Les recommandations

Bien que 87,9 % des participant·e·s à l'étude déclarent avoir effectué au moins un don au cours des 12 derniers mois, seulement 52,9 % s'identifient comme philanthropes. Cet écart soulève une question centrale : pourquoi des personnes qui posent des gestes de générosité ne se reconnaissent-elles pas comme étant acteur·trice·s de la philanthropie ? Une partie de la réponse se trouve sans doute dans la perception même du mot philanthropie, souvent associé à des dons d'argent substantiels ou à des figures de « grands donateurs et grandes donatrices ».

Cette vision dominante occulte la richesse et la diversité des formes d'engagement présentes dans les communautés noires. Le fait que 25 % des répondant·e·s ne sachent pas s'ils ou elles sont des philanthropes illustre cette ambivalence. Cela démontre la nécessité de déconstruire les stéréotypes autour de la philanthropie et de valoriser les pratiques qui, bien qu'informelles ou modestes, s'inscrivent dans une logique de solidarité, de partage et de responsabilité collective.

C'est dans cette perspective que s'inscrivent les recommandations qui concluent cette édition des Signes vitaux.

Recommandation 1 : Plaider pour une meilleure reconnaissance institutionnelle et politique

Il est important de faire reconnaître la philanthropie noire comme une composante à part entière de l'écosystème philanthropique québécois, et d'en intégrer les enjeux dans les politiques publiques de lutte contre le racisme systémique, de soutien aux OBNL et de développement communautaire. Cela nécessite une campagne de plaidoyer coordonnée, soutenue par les actrices et acteurs publics directement concernés. Ces instances pourraient encourager l'ouverture d'espaces de dialogue, et plaider pour l'intégration de la philanthropie noire dans les plans d'action ministériels et la reconnaissance officielle de son rôle dans le tissu social québécois. Les élu·e·s municipaux et provinciaux pourraient être mobilisé·e·s pour relayer ces enjeux à l'Assemblée nationale et dans les politiques municipales.

La reconnaissance des transferts diasporiques comme leviers de développement et de solidarité internationale : un enjeu particulier, une recommandation claire

Afin de mieux reconnaître la contribution transnationale des communautés noires du Québec, il est recommandé que les transferts financiers envoyés par la diaspora vers les pays d'origine – notamment pour l'éducation, la santé, le soutien aux familles ou le développement communautaire – soient considérés comme des actes philanthropiques admissibles à des incitatifs fiscaux, notamment des crédits d'impôt, lorsqu'ils sont acheminés via des organismes reconnus ou partenaires accrédités.

Un plaidoyer important des organismes

communautaires noirs et des organismes diasporiques auprès des autorités compétentes pourrait être envisagé pour examiner la faisabilité d'un cadre fiscal adapté. De leur côté, les acteur·trice·s communautaires sont appelé·e·s à développer des mécanismes de traçabilité des transferts et à renforcer leurs liens avec des entités fiscalement reconnues.

Recommandation 2 : Renforcer la production et la diffusion de données sur la philanthropie noire

Une meilleure valorisation des dons des actrices et acteurs des communautés noires ne saurait se réaliser sans le renforcement de la production et de la diffusion de données sur la philanthropie noire. La réalisation de cette étude est un point de départ. Les actions de plaidoyer politique pour une philanthropie plus inclusive ont besoin d'une production et de diffusion régulière de données spécifiques et désagrégées sur les pratiques, les obstacles et l'impact de la philanthropie noire. Diverses collaborations permettraient de développer des indicateurs adaptés pour des collectes de données quantitatives d'envergure. Le milieu philanthropique s'appuierait sur ces données pour mieux cibler les soutiens financiers, dans un souci d'équité dans l'allocation des ressources.

Recommandation 3 : Renforcer et permettre une meilleure structuration des organismes communautaires noirs

Pour accroître la crédibilité et l'impact des organismes communautaires dirigés par des personnes noires, y compris les moins visibles, il est essentiel d'investir simultanément dans le renforcement de leurs capacités organisationnelles et dans l'accès à des ressources financières structurantes.

Sur le plan organisationnel, les fondations communautaires et les OBNL spécialisés pourraient jouer un rôle clé. En partenariat avec les organismes noirs, elles pourraient codévelopper des formations contextualisées en gouvernance, gestion financière, collecte de fonds et communication, offrir des outils clés en main et mettre en place un accompagnement sur mesure (mentorat, audit bienveillant, coaching stratégique) pour les équipes de direction.

Sur le plan financier, un frein majeur demeure le manque de financement structurel. Les grandes fondations privées pourraient réserver des enveloppes

spécifiques, simplifier leurs processus d'octroi pour tenir compte des réalités des petits organismes et collaborer avec des leaders communautaires pour concevoir les critères de sélection. Elles pourraient également parrainer des levées de fonds communautaires et garantir une reddition de comptes souple, mais transparente, adaptée au contexte des OBNL à plus faible capacité administrative.

Ces organismes philanthropiques pourraient davantage se positionner et continuer de s'inscrire dans une approche de « trust-based philanthropy » (philanthropie basée sur la confiance). Il s'agirait de mettre l'accent sur la construction de relations de confiance entre les donateur·trice·s et les organisations bénéficiaires. Cela implique un meilleur partage des pouvoirs entre les acteur·trice·s, une plus grande flexibilité dans l'utilisation des fonds, et une reconnaissance de l'expertise des organisations sur le terrain (Pole et Rey, 2022)².

Recommandation 4 : Structurer un écosystème philanthropique solide et durable permettant de connaître et de reconnaître la contribution sociétale des communautés noires

L'importance de la co-construction d'un réseau structuré et interconnecté d'acteurs et d'actrices de la philanthropie noire au Québec est, aujourd'hui plus que jamais, une nécessité dans une société qui se veut inclusive et équitable. Cet espace de collaboration durable devrait rassembler des organismes communautaires, des fondations dirigées par des personnes noires, des collectifs citoyens, des établissements universitaires et de recherche, des bailleur·se·s de fonds et des leaders philanthropiques issu·e·s des communautés noires.

Ces acteur·trice·s de l'écosystème de la « philanthropie par les communautés noires » collaboreraient davantage et de façon plus stratégique pour faciliter le partage d'expertises, le mentorat, la mise en commun de ressources et la création d'initiatives collectives. Des bailleurs de fonds et des leaders communautaires pourraient jouer un rôle structurant en soutenant la création du réseau, en finançant son animation et en servant de plateforme de liaison avec les institutions publiques et autres organismes philanthropiques du Québec et du Canada.

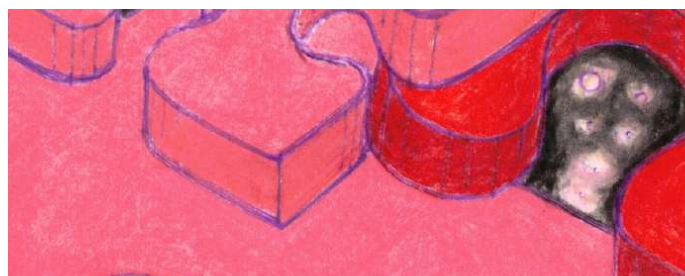
Conclusion

Les communautés noires du Québec contribuent au bien commun. Pourtant, leurs actions philanthropiques, qu'il s'agisse de dons d'argent, de bénévolat ou de soutien direct aux personnes, demeurent souvent peu reconnues et rarement documentées. Retenons, par exemple, que les dons diasporiques faits par les membres des communautés noires, souvent motivés par la solidarité familiale, participent significativement au développement social et économique des pays d'origine, une contribution encore largement sous-estimée dans les statistiques officielles. Cette philanthropie transnationale s'ajoute bien entendu à un engagement local dans la lutte contre la pauvreté, l'éducation, la santé, la justice sociale et une multitude d'autres causes. Les organisations dirigées par des personnes noires jouent d'ailleurs aussi un rôle clé dans la cohésion sociale. Elles agissent par exemple dans les domaines de l'éducation, de la culture, de la santé, de l'emploi et de la lutte contre le racisme.

Bref, reconnaître la philanthropie des communautés noires, c'est reconnaître une force collective faite de solidarité, de dignité et d'autodétermination. C'est aussi élargir notre conception de la philanthropie et bâtir un écosystème philanthropique plus juste, plus diversifié et plus représentatif du Québec d'aujourd'hui.

Références

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Trust, Consensus, and Community: A Model of Inuktitut Philanthropy

Interview with Annauma Community Foundation

By **Udloriak (Udlu) Hanson**, *Founding member and Board Chair of Annauma Community Foundation*; **Danielle Gibbie**, *Executive Director of Annauma Community Foundation* & **Laurence Croteau**, *co-coordinator at PhiLab*



Udlu Hanson was born and raised in Iqaluit. As a founding member of Annauma Community Foundation, Udlu brings a wealth of both professional and community experience. Udlu led the development of Qaujisagtiit Society, Nunavut's first charitable consortium of Inuit not-for-profits. She is also the Director Emeritus with the Rideau Hall Foundation. She is the Vice-President of Community and Strategic Development at Baffinland Iron Mines. She is the former Deputy Minister of the Department of Economic Development and Transportation (Government of Nunavut), and previously she held the roles of Chief Operating Officer, and Chief Negotiator for Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated, the land claims organization representing Nunavut Inuit.

Danielle Gibbie collaborates with Annauma's Board of Directors to advance strategic priorities, oversee day-to-day operations, and build partnerships that strengthen community-led action across Nunavut. Before joining Annauma in August 2023, Danielle built her career in international development, focusing on programs in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. As Director of Strategic Partnerships at Operation Eyesight Universal, she led institutional funding

strategies and worked closely with program teams to design innovative approaches that expanded the organization's impact. Earlier, as Executive Director of the DKM Foundation, she advanced efforts to address the root causes of poverty through blended funding models that combined philanthropy and investment. Beyond her professional roles, she also co-founded the High River Artisans Market to support local businesses in Alberta as they recovered from a major flood disaster.

Laurence Croteau holds a Master's degree in Environmental Sciences from the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM). She is particularly interested in eco-citizenship, the development of collective capacities and citizen involvement in eco-social transformations. She initially joined PhiLab as a research assistant during her time at university. Since summer 2024, she has taken over the coordination of communications and knowledge transfer.

Introduction

What happens when communities—not funders—decide how resources are shared? In Nunavut, where social, cultural, and economic challenges demand both long-term vision and immediate responsiveness,

[Annauma Community Foundation](#) is reimagining philanthropy through a consensus-based model rooted in trust, flexibility, and collective responsibility. This approach challenges conventional southern funding structures and incorporates Inuktitut Philanthropy, which is trust-based, culturally grounded support that restores community decision-making to create lasting impact.

Laurence Croteau (LC) : Thank you very much for joining us today. It's a real pleasure to have you both with us. I suggest we start by introducing yourselves, then the Annauma Community Foundation, its origin, the mission, and the communities it serves.

Udlu Hanson (UH) : My name is Udlu Hanson. I am co-founder and chair of Annaumakkaijiit Community Foundation. We've shortened the name to Annauma. Annaumakkaijiit means helping others to thrive, but it could also mean helping others to survive, and I think that's an important interpretation of the meaning.

Nunavut has a very young and small charitable sector with very few granting organizations. Framing the conversation around survival may not always attract support to the sector, as it requires facing uncomfortable truths about the daily challenges Inuit communities navigate, including social indicators that remain among the lowest in Canada. Annauma's co-founders knew there was significant interest in southern Canada to support the North, but there was no mechanism to do so. Annauma is the first community foundation in Nunavut and carries a significant mandate, one that we intentionally place in the hands of our community members. While we have identified five priority areas (Inuit Children & Youth, Education & Learning, Arts & Culture, Community Health & Wellbeing, and Community Identified Priorities), it is our community members who ultimately define what those priorities mean in practice.

One of the key messages we wanted to share with PhiLab is precisely this: Meaningful philanthropy requires that communities determine for themselves what is important and where their priorities lie.

Danielle Gibbie (DG) : My name is Danielle Gibbie, and I'm the executive director of Annauma Community Foundation. Annauma aims to support Inuit across Nunavut to be healthy, confident, and thriving. We do this by supporting nonprofit and charitable

organizations across the sector and trusting that they know best how to use resources to address community priorities, in support of Inuit self-determination.

LC : How do Inuit values such as collective responsibility, reciprocity, care, and relationality shape Annauma's approach to funding?

UH : I know it may seem like a nuance, but we don't typically say we're funders or that we fund Inuit communities or our community initiatives. I think the way we like to look at it is that we're providing support. Funding sounds like a transaction, and it's not.

We really want as much decision-making and accountability to be held by our community partners. When we bring them together, they determine how funding is allocated, how much each organization receives, and what outcomes matter most. Our community partners define what success looks like, what accountability means, and how reporting should be approached. All of these decisions are made collectively at the table. Annauma's role is to provide guidance and support, but the authority rests with the community.

When we reflect on Inuit traditions, this model is not new. Inuit communities have long been grounded in self-reliance and collective responsibility. In camp life, resources were shared, food was distributed collectively, and wealth—as it was understood—was held in common. There were no extreme disparities; decisions about strengths, needs, gaps, and priorities were made together, with the well-being of the whole community in mind. In many ways, this approach is a return to those principles: restoring collective decision-making and recentring community stewardship over resources.

DG : Inuktitut Philanthropy shapes not only how Annauma supports communities, but everything we do. It informs how we design fundraising campaigns, engage donors, and build partnerships. It is embedded in all aspects of Annauma's work and guides the way we cultivate relationships. At its core, it ensures that Annauma's relationships are grounded in Inuit values, reciprocity, and community priorities, rather than external expectations.

UH : From the very beginning, it was essential that Annauma's approach be something done with the

community, not for the community. That principle has guided us since day one. We have consistently sought the guidance and support of community members, particularly Elders and individuals who have lived the traditional way of life, who remain deeply grounded in Inuit values, culture, and language. If we are to be true to ourselves and to the community, we must ensure that every step we take is informed by these knowledgeable and generous individuals who share their time and wisdom with us. In many ways, it is an ongoing process of returning, checking back, and remaining accountable to them.

LC : How do you then balance the external funding sources with the goal of Inuit self-determination?

DG : Through the Caring North Campaign, we invite donors and partners to practice Inuktitut Philanthropy—to walk alongside us and learn with us. Annauma's co-founders understood early on that a conventional southern philanthropic model would not work in Nunavut.

At the same time, as Udlu has said from the very beginning, the vision has always been clear: a community foundation for Nunavut means the community makes the decisions. For that reason, adopting donor-advised funds, in which donors determine priorities and direct spending, never aligned with this vision. Decision-making had to remain in the community's hands.

Of the first \$10 million raised through the Caring North Campaign, the majority has been allocated using a unique model developed by Annauma, the 40/40/20 framework. Through this approach, 40 percent is directed to community granting over a three-year period. For us, meeting the disbursement quota has never been the driving concern; rather, responding to urgent community needs is. We cannot afford to wait years to build an endowment before taking action. Communities need support now. In fact, had we chosen to slowly accumulate capital without redistributing it, we likely would not have earned the trust and respect of the communities we serve.

Another 40 percent is dedicated to long-term investments. We are thinking about the future, with the intention that after a minimum of 10 years, those funds will cycle back into community granting. This creates an ongoing flow of capital that balances

immediate needs with long-term sustainability.

The remaining 20 percent is allocated to sector development. While this can support Annauma's operations, its broader purpose is to strengthen and build the capacity of the nonprofit and charitable sector. Many organizations have historically relied on short-term, project-based funding, which does not enable them to build strong internal infrastructure. Our approach aims to help them grow, stabilize, and thrive.

Our approach to fundraising is deeply relational. While we do enter into formal grant agreements, those arrangements are grounded first and foremost in shared values and a shared vision. Encouragingly, our funding partners have embraced this approach and continue to journey alongside us.

LC : It's really interesting to hear about this. Your relationships with partners clearly reflect a trust-based approach, and I imagine there have been important lessons learned on both sides through that process.

I also had a question related to your funding model. Could you speak a bit about how that initial funding shaped your development and approach?

DG : We received early core support from Community Foundations of Canada and the Government of Nunavut. The Gordon Foundation was our very first philanthropic partner and has a long track record of working in the North. This support was followed by contributions from the MasterCard Foundation and the Counselling Foundation of Canada, among many others who have invested in Annauma's vision.

In addition, we have recently benefited from capital transfers. The first capital transfer we received was in June 2025 from the McConnell Foundation, followed shortly after by contributions from the Euphrosine Foundation and Dents De Lion Foundation.

LC : I'd now like to dive a bit deeper into the consensus granting model, as it is an incredibly innovative approach. I haven't encountered many examples of community partners being funded in this way. Could you explain what the consensus granting model is and how it works in practice?

UH : It's important to clarify that we didn't invent the consensus-based granting model. When we

were exploring how best to support our community members, we knew that traditional southern funding models wouldn't work in the context of Nunavut. One of the co-founders conducted a scan across Canada and came across a model used by the Peterborough Community Foundation, which we then adapted¹.

We certainly modified it to fit the needs and context of Inuit communities, but we don't take credit for creating the concept itself. Acknowledging its origins is important, while highlighting how we tailored it to our community's context.

DG : The consensus granting model, at a high level, is an approach to granting that centres the voices of community organizations. Annauma shares an expression of interest, broadly, that's focused on one of our five priority areas². Organizations then complete this expression of interest, which is intentionally designed to be brief.

Next, we review all the expressions of interest. We assess whether there is Inuit leadership within the organization or, if not, whether the initiative clearly demonstrates community leadership in developing the idea. We also check that the organization is actually based in Nunavut. While many southern-based organizations run programs in Nunavut and do excellent work, Annauma's goal is to support Nunavut-based organizations with Inuit leadership.

In the past, we brought these expressions of interest to our Granting Advisory Council, composed of community members and one board representative. The council reviewed the submissions and determined which organizations would form each cohort, typically selecting between three and five organizations. As we have scaled—now running four cohorts per year, with the potential for more—this has become a significant commitment for a volunteer council, requiring at least four meetings annually to review applications. While the council's role has evolved, it remains central as an advisory body, helping ensure Annauma's granting is responsive to community needs and priorities.

At the same time, our growing team brings considerable expertise and knowledge of the nonprofit sector, strengthening our internal review process. The team assesses organizational readiness and risk, identifies a proposed cohort with attention to regional representation and a balance of emerging

and established organizations, and then brings those recommendations to the Granting Advisory Council for confirmation, maintaining a strong governance process. Final decisions on the composition of the cohort are made through this combined process, ensuring both organizational due diligence and community-informed oversight. For each cohort, Annauma allocates a predetermined amount of funding, approved by our Board and reflected in our annual budget. In recent cohorts, this has been \$250,000. When the cohort comes together, one of the first priorities is building an environment of trust. Participants get to know each other first as people, and then through their organizations, recognizing that this process requires vulnerability. Trust, active listening, and mutual respect are essential.

The cohort then creates a shared agreement outlining expected behaviours and how members want to show up for one another. They also establish their decision-making process and define what consensus looks like. It's an approach that varies with each cohort. For example, the first cohort defined consensus as "I support this project even if it's not my favourite option." Another, defined it as "I want to feel pride and excitement in all of these initiatives so I can go back and share them with my community." For yet another cohort, consensus was determined more intuitively, based on gut feeling. Next, participants share what they want to do, why it matters to them, and how their initiative addresses community needs. They receive feedback on their ideas and discuss timelines, partners, potential challenges—essentially covering all the traditional details that would normally go into a written application, through a highly collaborative process.



Source : Fund for Gender Equality cohort (May 2024), Annauma Community Foundation

What we often see is the cohort's collective strength shaping and improving each other's ideas. Most initiatives emerge stronger and more refined than participants initially imagined. Once consensus is reached on the projects, the process moves to funding allocations.

The last cohort was held at the beginning of December, and amazingly, they completed this part of the process in under a minute. We shared a spreadsheet showing how much each organization had requested. The total was slightly over budget by about \$12,000, so adjustments were needed. Two organizations volunteered to reduce their requests, and it felt almost like a tug-of-war over who would get less funding.



Source : Community Health and Well-being cohort (April 2025), Annauma Community Foundation

But each cohort handles it differently. For example, in a fall cohort focused on Inuit children and youth, one organization, a daycare in Pond Inlet that was developing a food sovereignty program requested \$90,000. Their program involves working with hunters to gather country food and teaching children how to process it, covering every step from land to table. The other three organizations in the cohort voluntarily reduced their requests, and the daycare ultimately received \$100,000 because everyone recognized the program's importance and potential ripple effect.

This process isn't competitive; it's deeply collaborative. Organizations become stewards of the funding, holding it with a shared sense of responsibility and asking not what they can take, but what will create the greatest impact for children, youth, arts, culture, and their communities.

The cohorts define what success looks like for themselves. We don't impose a standardized set of indicators. Monitoring and reporting are determined by the cohort and embedded into the process. Each cohort decides what they want to measure and learn about their own project, what success looks like, and what they want to understand from the work of their peer organizations. They collaboratively establish their self-determined accomplishments and decide when to reconvene. Annauma requires at least one follow-up meeting, where participants reflect on challenges, successes, and lessons learned. In practice, no cohort has ever only met once; we have a cohort that's approaching their fourth gathering, reflecting the value participants find in coming together with their peers.

That said, we are developing an impact framework. This will not change how cohorts are run—success will continue to be defined by community members, with space for cohort-defined outcomes. The framework will operate at a higher level, helping us understand whether this approach is working and ensuring it remains grounded in community values.

LC : For clarity, the cohorts take place in person? And for how long?

UH : We have 25 communities in Nunavut and our reach needs to be geographically spread out. We needed to have a model that accommodates for that and we landed on a hybrid model, in-person and online.



Source : Arts and Culture cohort (October 2024), Annauma Community Foundation

DG : Cohort sessions are over two days and typically run about three hours each day. On the first day, the focus is on building trust, creating a shared

agreement, defining what consensus looks like, and beginning to share ideas. We encourage participants to ask clarifying questions to understand each other's proposals, but not to dive into deep, detailed critiques just yet.

The second day allows for more in-depth discussion and collaboration. Ideas can evolve between sessions, and we usually schedule the days with a break in between, such as Tuesday and Thursday, so participants have time to connect with their communities, colleagues, and boards. On day two, participants engage in detailed discussions about their projects, determine funding allocations, and establish their self-determined accomplishments.

LC : Have you seen any mutualization of resources among partners within the same cohort, like organizations sharing tools, expertise, or other resources while working on similar projects?

UH : Yes, we have seen organizations within the same cohort share resources and support one another. Sometimes one group has more experience or stronger systems in place, while another may be newer or have fewer resources. In those cases, they step in to help, sharing knowledge, tools, advice, and practical support. That's part of the magic of this process—it's truly a community-oriented approach. Organizations don't just focus on their own work; they support each other so the whole cohort can succeed.

DG : Absolutely, there are several examples of organizations sharing resources within cohorts. In the Inuit Children and Youth cohort this past fall, one organization led a parka-making initiative, bringing seamstresses together with children to pass on traditional knowledge.

That same organization was later supported by another cohort member, who offered additional parkas, recognizing they were best positioned to distribute them to families in need. They also redirected some of their unused program funds to support another cohort member's project, sharing resources both in kind and financially.

Another example comes from the Fund for Gender Equality cohort. One organization realized they were no longer able to carry out their project at the scale they had originally planned. They reached out to us

and asked whether they could return a portion of their funds to the cohort, knowing that other organizations were ready to use the funding to expand or deepen their work.

When the cohort gathered to reallocate the funds, members shared that this model felt refreshing. In many funding situations, organizations feel pressure to spend all allocated funds—even if priorities shift—in order to remain in good standing with the funder. In this case, the funding was redirected where it could have the greatest impact, guided not by obligation, but by what the community needed most.

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Sometimes one group has more experience or stronger systems in place, while another may be newer or have fewer resources. In those cases, they step in to help, sharing knowledge, tools, advice, and practical support. That's part of the magic of this process—it's truly a community-oriented approach. Organizations don't just focus on their own work; they support each other so the whole cohort can succeed.

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UH : The value of consensus granting lies not in checking boxes, but in the real impact it has on individuals and the broader community. In the sewing program, eight children now have parkas to wear, and the women teaching the program have gained skills that will continue to be passed on. As these children grow, the women can make more parkas, ensuring the knowledge is preserved and shared. There's a deep sense of pride in that. The true measure of success is the lasting cultural, personal, and community impact, not just quantitative outputs.

LC : Talking about real impacts, I'd like to highlight the results and learning from those cohorts and the consensus granting model. What have you observed so far from organizations, communities, and the foundation itself?

DG : We see impact in two main ways. First, through the cohort process itself. Organizations build meaningful connections with others doing similar work, while also experiencing a reduced administrative burden compared to traditional funding processes. The second area of impact is in the projects themselves. The collaboration, learning, and resource-sharing within each cohort strengthen initiatives, helping to achieve meaningful outcomes for Nunavut communities.

Annauma's flexible approach to funding also plays a key role. Organizations are able to adapt their projects as priorities shift, directing resources where they're most needed. In a context like Nunavut, where community needs can change quickly, this flexibility ensures that funding remains relevant and responsive, and ultimately increases its impact.

One project that's particularly close to my heart is the Redfish Arts Society in Cambridge Bay. They support young men who are often referred to them by the RCMP or the criminal justice system. The program focuses on livelihoods, leadership, and personal development, offering a welding program that allows participants to fully engage as themselves. What's unique is that there's no set end date, and participants can stay in the program as long as they need, rather than being limited to a time-bound course.

With funding from Annauma, the program provided participants with a living wage, recognizing that they need to support themselves and their families. One participant was able to purchase a snowmobile for

himself—an essential form of transportation in the North. The following year, he bought another and gave it to his mother. What began with one participant extended to his family, reflecting how support can move across generations.

Another example is the Kitikmeot Heritage Society in Cambridge Bay, an Inuit-led organization focused on preserving Inuinnaqtun culture and language. Their work centres on Inuinnaqtun, an endangered language with fewer than 500 fluent speakers remaining.

With funding from Annauma, they piloted a program pairing midlife adults with Elders. This program allowed participants to focus on what was important to the Elders at that particular moment, guided by the season, the land, and community needs.

One participant, who had previously known the language but was hesitant to speak it, saw their confidence grow significantly and is now much more comfortable speaking Inuinnaqtun. They shared that the language was always within them and this experience helped bring it forward. This initiative demonstrates how flexible, community-driven funding can have a transformative impact on both individuals and cultural preservation.



Source : Community Nominated Award - Tukisigiavik Society (October 2024), Annauma Community Foundation

LC : Have you noticed any learning or takeaways among your southern partners from collaborating with Annauma?

UH : The beautiful thing about impact is that you never really know when it happens. In our culture, it's not about claiming credit.

If our southern partners learn something or gain new understanding from collaborating with Annauma, it's

because they were open to it, because they chose to engage, and because they saw value in it. It's not something we imposed—it's a true partnership, something that happens together through mutual agreement.

Sometimes the benefits may be greater for one partner than another, but the goal is always shared: ensuring Inuit communities have what they need to thrive. If partners also take something away that informs their work with other communities, that's a wonderful, unintended impact. But we can't claim credit for that. It's a result of their openness and willingness to engage.

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The beautiful thing about impact is that you never really know when it happens. In our culture, it's not about claiming credit. If our southern partners learn something or gain new understanding from collaborating with Annauma, it's because they were open to it, because they chose to engage, and because they saw value in it. It's not something we imposed—it's a true partnership, something that happens together through mutual agreement.

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LC : Those examples are a great combination of long-term vision and the necessity of immediate, in-the-moment action. Do you think this approach has the potential to challenge dominant norms in philanthropy or even lead to systemic change?

DG : Across Canada, some Indigenous-led community foundations are emerging, while others are more established. In our early stages, we benefited greatly from the guidance and support of peer organizations who had already built strong foundations. Now, we're connecting with others who are earlier in their journey and sharing what we've learned. There is growing interest in models like the 40/40/20 approach to pooling and allocating resources, as well as in our consensus granting model.

For example, I spoke recently with the Executive Director of the Kw'umut Lelum Foundation on Vancouver Island, which had completed its first cohort with six First Nation communities. She was smiling ear to ear and said, “Everything you described about this model, I now feel it, because there's no other way.” Moments like that show the ripple impact this approach is starting to have. Broadly, we're seeing shifts in Canada's philanthropic sector, with power moving toward local decision-makers and a recognition that intermediaries like Annauma are well-positioned to support and facilitate community-led funding decisions.

LC : Udlu and Danielle, thank you very much for sharing your insights and for your time. It was a real pleasure to learn more about the Annauma Foundation, its consensus granting model, and your perspectives.

Notes

1. Consensus Granting Guide, Annauma Community Foundation. [Link](#)
2. Annauma Community Foundation supports Nunavut-based organizations working within the following priority areas: Inuit Children and Youth, Community Health and Well-being, Education and Learning, Arts and Culture, Community-Identified Opportunities. [Link](#)



Meeting the Moment: A Roadmap for Philanthropy to Respond to a Changing Canada

By **Afshan Paarlberg**, lawyer and interdisciplinary researcher & **Imoleayo Adeyeri**, PhD scholar and researcher at the IU Lilly Family School of Philanthropy



Afshan Paarlberg is a lawyer and interdisciplinary researcher who engages in policy-driven work on philanthropy, nonprofits, and access to justice. Afshan is an assistant research scholar with the IU Lilly Family School of Philanthropy and recently served as Director, Global Philanthropy Indices. She was previously awarded a Fulbright Fellowship during 2024-2025, hosted by the University of British Columbia Centre for Migration Studies with the support of Fulbright Canada, and a Global Philanthropy Fellowship during 2023-2024, supported by the Giving USA Foundation. She is also a PhD candidate, examining how immigrant-oriented nonprofits bridge access to justice across legal deserts.

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to 2025 and received Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal in 2022.

Desiderantes meliorem patriam. This motto of the Order of Canada—"they desire a better country"—offers inspiration to philanthropic actors to lead with exemplary efforts in improving conditions across the country. Like the rest of the world, Canada's socio-economic and political environments are shifting rapidly. At the same time, traditional funding models often struggle to keep pace. In this article, we explore the essential conditions for unlocking responsive giving and transforming how donors, foundations, and governments listen, fund, and partner.

Why philanthropy?

Philanthropy—the giving of time, talent, testimony, treasure, and ties—continues to play a crucial yet less understood role across societies. Although philanthropy cannot match the scale of public funding, it can offer nimble responses to crises and early support for community-led solutions. In Canada, philanthropy became popular at a time when government capacity for service provision was shrinking, and philanthropy was mobilized in support of solutions to community problems (Glass & Pole, 2018; Brouard & Glass, 2018).

At present, Canada presents a multifaceted

philanthropic environment characterized by provincial variations, pockets of robust domestic fiscal support, and regulatory friction concerning rapid operations and cross-border activities. The Canadian charitable sector has experienced changes and strains (CanadaHelps, 2025; Vantage Point, 2025), and the full potential of philanthropy has yet to be realized to 1) respond to societal demands, 2) innovate solutions, and 3) help address complex problems. This article unpacks these complexities and offers a preliminary roadmap for unlocking philanthropy's potential to respond to the needs of a changing Canada.

What conditions support philanthropy?

Based on existing research, regulatory quality and economic conditions are strong predictors of philanthropic environments (Garcia et al., 2019; Wiepking & Handy, 2015). In addition, tax incentives and favorable political and socio-cultural environments are associated with formal giving, and informal giving is associated with a favorable socio-cultural environment (Garcia et al., 2019).

To understand how these conditions fare in Canada, we use the PESTLE framework (Aguilar, 1967) to analyze data from three editions of the Global Philanthropy Environment Index (GPEI) Canada reports, bolstered with practitioner insights.

The GPEI is the leading and most comprehensive international index on philanthropic environments. It relies on expert opinion from 95 countries to evaluate six conditions for philanthropy: the ease of operating a philanthropic organization, fiscal incentives, cross-border giving, and the political, economic, and socio-cultural environments. Canada has participated in all three GPEI editions: 2018 (2015-2017), 2022 (2018-2020), and 2025 (2021-2023)¹. In complement to the GPEI, practitioner insights are offered about circumstances through the end of 2025. Thus, this article brings together GPEI analysis through 2023 and current events.

PESTLE Framework

The PESTLE framework is a strategic management tool that identifies and analyzes the key drivers of change in an organization's external environment. PESTLE is an acronym for political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental analysis, a term coined by Aguilar (1967). Aguilar initially developed ETPS (economic, technical, political, and social) in his book *Scanning the Business Environment*. ETPS was

later adapted into PESTLE, which became a popular tool for gathering and analyzing information to improve performance and predict and evaluate future situations (Buye, 2021).

The PESTLE framework has primarily been utilized worldwide to identify significant external factors that impact various industry landscapes. For example, it was used to strategically evaluate NPOs in Malaysia (Afshar & Shah, 2025), categorize external threats and risks of Syrian humanitarian NGOs (Alhousseiny & Atar, 2021), identify risk in the UK's Tidal Industry (Kolios & Read, 2013), design fundraising strategies (Wright et al., 2022), evaluate NGO projects in Tanzania (Machange & Temba, 2025), understand trust, bias and organizational behavior of mainstream Western media (Bruijl, 2025), and analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the U.S. education system (Shahid, 2022).

Minimal information was found on its application to Canada and Canadian philanthropy. Thus, we adapt the PESTLE framework to understand the external factors influencing philanthropy in Canada, relying on GPEI data and practitioner insights.

Key Findings

1. The conditions for Canadian philanthropy are overall favorable, stable, and largely institutionalized.

The GPEI consistently affirms that Canadian philanthropy is overall favorable, largely institutionalized, and well-organized (Drache, 2018; Aptowitzer, 2022, 2025). The overall favorable environment is attributed to political stability, generous charitable tax incentives, deep-rooted traditions, and government-matching contributions to the philanthropic sector. Indeed, Canada, with a population of over 41 million (Statistics Canada, 2025), has a robust charitable and nonprofit sector that contributes up to 225 billion dollars in annual domestic economic activity, accounting for 8.2 percent of the country's GDP and employing 2.7 million people, which is more than what the retail industry contributes to the Canadian GDP (Imagine Canada, 2025).

When we break down the analysis by the six GPEI factors, five factors showed a score change of 0.5 or more: ease of operating a PO (-), tax incentives (+), cross-border giving (+), economic environment (-), and the socio-cultural environment (-). Table 1 shows how each factor has changed over time.

Table 1. Canada Philanthropic Environment Scores and Change Over Time ²

Year	Ease of Operating a PO	Tax Incentives	Cross-Border Philanthropic Flows	Political Environment	Economic Environment	Socio-Cultural Environment	Overall Score
2025 GPEI	3.33	5.00	4.00	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.31
2022 GPEI	3.67	5.00	4.00	4.50	5.00	4.50	4.44
2018 GPEI	4.67	4.50	3.50	4.25	N/A	5.00	4.38
Change	-1.33	+0.50	+0.50	+0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.07

Source: Author calculations of change, based on 3 editions of GPEI Canada data

2. The political conditions for philanthropy remain stable and favorable.

The GPEI results indicate that the political environment in Canada has remained favorable and stable, and philanthropy is generally encouraged by all levels of government. For example, the Governor General annually honors "caring Canadians" – individuals who volunteer in their communities in Canada or abroad. However, it is worth noting that elections and the majority party can at times adopt slightly different attitudes toward certain types of charities, as seen during the transition from the Conservative to the Liberal parties in 2015.

Of note, the political acceptance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and associated calls to action have changed the philanthropic landscape. There are political pressures and a genuine desire for foundations and donors to shift funding toward Indigenous-led organizations (AFP Canada, 2023). In doing so, philanthropic actors are being asked to examine their own colonial roots and decolonize their wealth management and grantmaking practices (Burrows, 2025).

Further, heightened political attention to systemic racism has encouraged corporate donors and private foundations to heavily invest in DEI initiatives. For example, the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) in Canada shared a report based on an internal

investigation of how it has perpetuated inequities within the profession; this audit resulted in a report to guide future systemic changes (AFP Global, 2022, 2025). Likewise, Imagine Canada conducted a benchmarking survey on behalf of the Equitable Recovery Collective to explore what Canadian charities and nonprofits are doing to advance DEI in their organizations (Imagine Canada, 2023).

There appears to be varying understandings regarding the importance of political stability for philanthropy. Just over half of the surveyed charitable sector leaders believe political changes will affect fundraising, while most of the rest were uncertain (Global Philanthropic Canada & Muscant, 2025). Philanthropic Foundations Canada, among others, has placed greater emphasis on political stability, issuing cautionary tales from the United States and raising concerns about spillover effects on Canada (Gartner, 2025; Mangin, 2025; Nguyen, 2025). These pleas urge clarity in communicating the value of philanthropy to policymakers amid heightened turbulence. AFP Canada, among others, has advanced related priorities, including the establishment of a Charitable Sector secretariat within the federal government, recognition and profiling of National Philanthropy Day at Parliament, and acknowledgment of the essential roles of philanthropy and fundraisers across Canada (AFP Global, 2025b, 2025c).

3. The economic and socio-cultural environments remain favorable but have become more restrictive.

The GPEI results indicate that the overall economic environment has remained highly favorable. A relatively strong economy, alongside incentives to donate on capital gains and public securities, is noted as important in this domain (Aptowitz, 2025). While the GPEI offers reassurance at the national level, there has also been a noted decline in consideration for Canada's reliance on oil and natural resources, pricing fluctuations, and inflation.

In the current economic environment, Canada has seen record levels of use of food banks. Inflation and soaring housing costs have also pushed lower-income workers and those on fixed incomes (such as seniors) toward relying on charities for basic survival. Economic stress has been a major driver of mental health concerns and has resulted in an increased burden on nonprofits operating in these sectors.

Recent data from organizations like Imagine Canada shows that, though total donation amounts remain relatively stable, they are coming from fewer people. A typical donor is disappearing, leaving the sector reliant on a smaller pool of wealthier donors. Meanwhile, wealthy donors often give based on the performance of their assets rather than their salaried income. Poor stock market performance and higher interest rates can tie up capital and reduce the immediate liquidity available for large philanthropic gestures from individuals, corporations, and grantmaking institutions. Future trends remain uncertain, as interest rates have continued to decline in 2025 and are expected to decline further in 2026. Ultimately, while the GPEI indicates macro-level political and economic stability, it also indicates a decline, which reflects the on-the-ground realities of many Canadians.

Based on the GPEI, the socio-cultural environment remains favorable with a strong sense of community and deep-rooted traditions from Indigenous and religious practices. Nevertheless, this factor has seen a slight decline between 2015-2017 and 2021-2023. Of note is the decline in donations and in organized religion, which served as an important basis for the founding of many early charities across Canada.

Although mainstream Canada has become more secular, faith remains an important driver of charitable giving, and fundraisers are adapting their practices to capture faith-based giving. In addition, newcomers

to Canada represent diverse faith communities (i.e., Christian, Muslim, Sikh, Jewish, Hindu), which changes the donor pool, recipients, and community needs. Given the continued, albeit changing, importance of faith and giving, the AFP monitored pre-budget discussions and advocated for the retention of charitable status for faith-based organizations, a position to which Parliament has responded positively. Overall, however, the changing demographics, giving patterns, and ideas of social good are not adequately reflected in the meaning of charity, which remains tied to religion.

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Further, mainstream Canadian philanthropy toward Indigenous communities has historically been paternalistic, often tied to religious colonization. Today, the social mandate is changing. There is social pressure on foundations and donors to support Indigenous-led solutions and sovereignty. Foundations are also encouraged to examine their own structures,

the sources of their endowments, and the reasons for the lack of Indigenous representation in leadership. These reflections have led to a rise in "trust-based philanthropy," in which donors give unrestricted funds to Indigenous organizations without imposing burdensome colonial reporting requirements. Within this mandate, the AFP also created a special working group, resulting in a new career-track training program for Indigenous fundraisers and Indigenous education for practitioners.

In addition, since the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and following global social movements, there has been a powerful social spotlight on who receives funding. Data has shown that Black-led and other racialized organizations have historically been chronically underfunded by major Canadian foundations (Pereira et al., 2020). The social environment is forcing a correction and encouraging corporations and foundations to set specific targets for funding diverse communities.

Finally, an aging population is leading to increased demand for senior services, as well as considerations of large intergenerational wealth transfers. Baby Boomers are currently holding an enormous amount of wealth, which is beginning to transfer to Gen X and Millennials. These younger generations have different social values—they are often more interested in social justice, climate change, and immediate impact than in traditional institution-building, such as funding hospital wings named after them. Taking the GPEI findings together with practitioner insights, there remains an opportunity to further align understandings and definitions of philanthropy alongside the observed social and cultural changes.

4. Technology is rapidly changing and can be leveraged in support of philanthropy.

As Canada and the world experience rapid technological transformations, there is a need to understand how new technologies can enable philanthropy while mindful of acquisition costs, threats, and opportunities.

Although the GPEI does not directly measure technological advancements, it does offer some insights. For example, blockchain technologies and crowdfunding were emerging before 2020. However, their impacts are not fully understood. Meanwhile, virtual and hybrid workspaces have lasted beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall, philanthropic actors are cautiously optimistic about automation and artificial intelligence. On the one hand, new technologies can improve efficiencies in interacting with stakeholders. On the other hand, they can create new needs and further exacerbate inequities. With these tensions in mind, GrantBook, a Toronto-based group, has helped grantmakers assess which industries will be disrupted and what implications these disruptions will have for philanthropic actors (Patel, 2018). Meanwhile, other actors, including the Community Foundations of Canada, are building digital exchange platforms to facilitate networks and ease knowledge transfer (Patel, 2018).

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5. The legal environment offers mixed results.

The GPEI results indicate that the environment for operating a philanthropic organization in Canada became more restrictive. While the ease of registering an organization has not drastically changed, the ease of operating and dissolving an organization has declined. Notably, the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has assumed more disciplinary action rather than individual guidance to improve compliance. Actions are perceived as severe, with increased discretion in the recent period under consideration (2021–2023). GPEI experts have repeatedly recommended an

increased and non-siloed regulatory role for provincial governments (Aptowitz, 2022, 2025).

On the other hand, the environment for cross-border giving has improved. Receiving foreign donations is overall favorable. While sending foreign donations has been described as "onerous," it has shown some signs of improvement. Between 2018 and 2020, there was a push to adjust these laws. In June 2022, a qualifying disbursement mechanism became law, with CRA comments published in December 2023 (Shin, 2023). Overall, this new law permits Canadian charities to make grants to foreign groups. This permission is regulated by the CRA, with detailed due diligence obligations to ensure the proper use of grant funds. Due diligence checks include the political and social stability of the recipient's country.

Tax incentives for making and receiving donations have improved. The favorable environment for nonprofits and charities is registered mainly due to the lack of tax on donations and earned revenue, and general awareness of tax credits.

Additional legal changes include the scope and meaning of qualified donees and disbursement quotas. The scope of work that charities can support expanded in 2022, extending to non-qualified donees through a grant-based approach. Additionally, the disbursement quota was revisited in 2023, increasing from 3.5 percent to 5 percent for assets above \$1 million.

At the forefront of government advocacy for an improved legal environment are AFP Canada and Imagine Canada. They have presented recommendations on charitable giving, tax policy, and sector capacity during Federal pre-budget consultations, positioning charities as partners in key national priorities, including housing and reconciliation. They have also joined the CRA Technical Issues Working Group to improve data quality and reduce administrative burden for charities.

6. Skilled labor and physical space for philanthropy are limited, but emerging efforts offer promise.

Overall, the sector currently grapples with a "labor-funding disconnect," which means staff are frequently underpaid relative to the private sector. Yet, the mechanisms to rectify this disconnect are structurally constrained because the staff of charitable and nonprofit organizations are perceived as 'do-gooders' rather than professionals. Also, many charities rely on

multi-year government contracts or rigid philanthropic grants that lack inflationary adjustment clauses; as a result, organizations are often trapped in a fiscal vice (Shields et al., 2024). As inflation erodes purchasing power, the sector faces an exodus of talent to more lucrative industries.

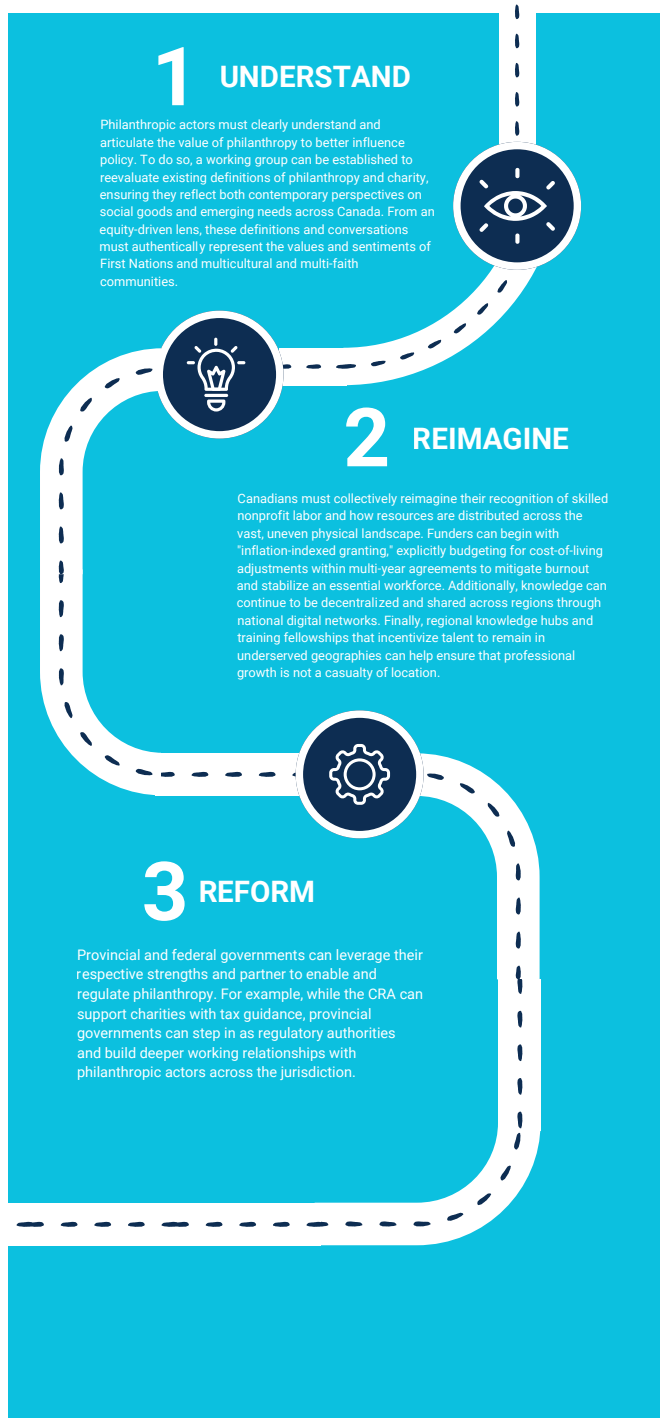
The promise of a skilled labor force in Canada remains siloed, requiring a more robust national network of professional development. Currently, specialized academic training, such as the Master of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership at Carleton University, serves as a vital hub. However, a single program cannot sustain a coast-to-coast-to-coast ecosystem. Overall, we see a significant geographic imbalance: professional development resources and skilled labor clusters are heavily concentrated in Ontario, often leaving Western Canada, Quebec, the Atlantic provinces, and the Territories in a resource desert.

Furthermore, Canada's physical and natural environment presents unique operational challenges that philanthropy has yet to fully internalize. The "geography of Canada" is not merely a logistical hurdle but a fundamental determinant of philanthropic equity. Organizations operating in the North or in rural Atlantic Canada face astronomical costs for physical space, heating, and transportation. These costs are rarely reflected in standard "one-size-fits-all" grant formulas designed in urban centers like Toronto or Vancouver. A responsive philanthropic practice requires a "geographic-cost lens," in which the localized costs of the natural and built environments weigh funding amounts. For instance, a grant for a youth center in Yellowknife must be fundamentally different from one in Mississauga to account for the radical disparity in land use and operational overhead.

A PESTLE Roadmap for Philanthropy

In sum, this article uses a PESTLE framework to advance our collective understanding of Canada's favorable but changing philanthropic environment. Based on this analysis, we conclude with three recommendations to better unlock the potential of philanthropy, considering evolving needs, circumstances, and opportunities.

PESTLE-INFORMED ROADMAP



Notes

1. More information about how this research was conducted can be found in Developing an International Philanthropy Dataset: Reflections from the 2025 Global Philanthropy Environment Index. [Link](#)
2. GPEI scores range from 1 to 5, 1 meaning the least favorable and 5 meaning the most favorable

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Faire mieux sans se perdre

Le lien humain à l'épreuve de l'accélération numérique en philanthropie

Par **Thémis Daraïche**, *Coordonnatrice de la philanthropie et des communications, Tel-Aide Montréal*



Thémis Daraïche contribue au développement de la philanthropie, des partenariats et des communications institutionnelles chez Tel-Aide Montréal. Son parcours au sein des milieux communautaires et privés lui a permis de développer une expertise en développement philanthropique, mobilisation de partenaires, communication stratégique et coordination de projets. Elle s'intéresse particulièrement aux dynamiques relationnelles et aux stratégies de collaboration qui renforcent l'impact, la crédibilité et la pérennité des organisations.

Ce texte propose une réflexion située sur la qualité du lien humain en philanthropie, à partir d'une pratique professionnelle en communications, partenariats et relation d'aide, en contexte d'accélération numérique et de crises sociales multiples.

L'urgence des crises récentes a accéléré l'adoption des technologies en philanthropie, révélant que chaque relation possède, elle aussi, un seuil de saturation.

Introduction et contexte

Ce texte propose une réflexion appliquée sur la qualité du lien humain en philanthropie, à partir d'une

expérience professionnelle située dans une première année de structuration de pratiques philanthropiques au sein d'un organisme communautaire. Il s'appuie sur des observations issues de la pratique, en contexte d'accélération numérique et de crises sociales multiples.

Sans prétendre rendre compte de l'ensemble du milieu philanthropique, il explore les effets du rythme et de l'intensification des pratiques relationnelles sur la durabilité du lien philanthropique, en croisant une approche en communications, partenariats et relation d'aide.

Entrer dans la cadence

Entrer aujourd'hui dans le milieu philanthropique, c'est entrer dans un rythme déjà accéléré. Les crises sociales récentes ont profondément marqué le secteur, rendant la communication essentielle. Courriels, infolettres, campagnes, rapports et redditions de comptes se multiplient à mesure que la visibilité devient une condition de survie pour les organismes.

Cette intensification n'est pas un problème en soi. Elle témoigne d'un secteur engagé, mobilisé, soucieux de maintenir la confiance et de rendre visible son impact.

Elle soulève toutefois une question rarement formulée : que devient la relation philanthropique lorsqu'elle est menée à grande vitesse ?

Observer la philanthropie depuis l'intérieur, à ce moment précis, révèle un décalage subtil entre la fréquence des échanges et la durabilité du lien. Cette réflexion est nourrie par une pratique professionnelle en communications et partenariats, ainsi que par un parcours en pleine conscience et en relation d'aide. Elle s'ancre dans une attention particulière portée à la qualité de présence, au rythme et à la manière dont les relations sont habitées. Le propos s'inscrit ainsi dans une observation située, ancrée dans la pratique actuelle.

Faire mieux sans se perdre

- Toute relation a un seuil de saturation
- La générosité s'épuise plus vite lorsqu'elle est dispersée
- Le donateur est un humain attentif, pas une cible
- Le contact direct nourrit la qualité du lien
- Ralentir, c'est choisir où investir son attention

Quand le numérique devient une cadence

Les outils numériques sont aujourd'hui indispensables. Ils structurent les suivis, facilitent la coordination et rendent possible une continuité d'action précieuse en contexte d'urgence.

Mais le numérique ne fait pas que soutenir la relation : il en impose aussi le rythme.

Les interactions s'intensifient et s'accroissent. L'attente, les silences relationnels et la spontanéité se raréfient. Cette cadence s'installe souvent sans être interrogée. Or, mener les relations à grande vitesse en fragilise la construction : ce qui croît trop vite s'enracine rarement en profondeur, tant pour les organisations que pour celles et ceux qui les soutiennent.

Cette accélération ne transforme pas seulement le rythme des échanges, elle en modifie aussi l'horizon. En installant les relations dans une logique d'immédiateté continue, elle tend à réduire la capacité des partenaires à se projeter ensemble dans une temporalité plus longue, à tolérer l'ambiguïté et à laisser mûrir la confiance.

La relation philanthropique comme infrastructure vivante

En philanthropie, la relation est souvent envisagée comme un moyen : un levier de mobilisation, de financement ou de fidélisation. Plus rarement comme une infrastructure vivante, cumulative et fragile.

Toute relation possède une capacité d'absorption limitée. Au-delà d'un certain seuil, l'accumulation des interactions n'approfondit plus le lien ; elle le rend neutre, interchangeable, saturé. La perte de singularité fragilise alors la relation philanthropique.

Cette observation rejoint un principe bien connu en relation d'aide : la qualité du lien repose moins sur la quantité d'échanges que sur la qualité de la présence offerte. Carl Rogers rappelait déjà que la relation, lorsqu'elle est authentique et attentive, constitue en elle-même un facteur de transformation (Rogers, 1957).

Ce seuil demeure difficile à mesurer. Il se manifeste plutôt par une fatigue relationnelle diffuse, une saturation douce, largement partagée et souvent normalisée dans le secteur.

Le donateur dans la cadence : quand la générosité rencontre la saturation

Dans cet environnement accéléré, le donateur occupe une place centrale. Il est à la fois le cœur du lien philanthropique et l'un des plus exposés à son intensification.

Les crises ont suscité un élan réel de solidarité. Beaucoup souhaitent contribuer, soutenir, répondre présent. Leur générosité est sincère et durable. Mais elle s'exerce aujourd'hui dans un espace saturé, où les messages se succèdent et se ressemblent.

Cette saturation ne traduit pas un désengagement. Elle reflète une réalité humaine simple : l'attention, comme le temps, est une ressource limitée. À force d'être sollicité, le donateur peut éprouver une fatigue morale : vouloir aider, sans toujours savoir comment ni où poser son attention.

La saturation vécue par les donateurs devient alors le miroir de celle vécue en amont par les organisations. Le défi n'est plus seulement de rejoindre le donateur, mais de prendre soin de l'écosystème relationnel dans

lequel la philanthropie évolue.

Éléments empiriques sur la saturation relationnelle

Ce que je décris comme une saturation relationnelle trouve un écho dans les données récentes.

- Selon Statistique Canada (2023), la proportion de Canadiens faisant un don en argent est passée de 68 % en 2018 à 54 % en 2023. Il s'agit d'une baisse de 14 points en cinq ans, non pas par manque de générosité, mais par retrait du nombre de donateurs actifs.
- Au Québec, l'agence Épisode (2023) observe que la moitié des habitants donnent encore, mais que 70 % préfèrent l'aide non pécuniaire. C'est le signe d'un déplacement du don vers des formes plus relationnelles, moins sollicitées.
- Selon CAF Canada (2025), les donateurs canadiens sont de plus en plus sensibles à la fréquence et à la pertinence des sollicitations : les campagnes trop répétitives ou génériques entraînent un désengagement, même chez les fidèles.

Ces données ne contredisent pas la sincérité de la générosité : elles confirment plutôt que, dans un environnement saturé, la qualité de la relation devient le seul levier capable de maintenir l'engagement.

Une pratique située : Tel-Aide Montréal

Tel-Aide Montréal est un organisme communautaire dont la mission repose sur l'écoute active et le bien-être mental. L'écoute y est envisagée comme un acte d'autonomie et de soin de soi. On y observe tous les jours qu'être écouté, ça fait du bien.

Dans un organisme où la qualité de présence est centrale, la manière d'entrer en relation devient un enjeu en soi. L'augmentation des besoins et du financement a renforcé les exigences de visibilité, de suivis et de reddition de comptes, intensifiant les pratiques relationnelles numériques. Cette évolution était nécessaire pour assurer la continuité des services.

Elle a toutefois mis en lumière une question exigeante : comment préserver une culture de l'écoute dans des relations menées à grande vitesse ?

Une partie de la réponse réside dans la valorisation

du contact direct. Les rencontres en personne, les appels ou la visioconférence agissent comme des technologies relationnelles lentes. Elles réintroduisent la voix, le regard, les silences et la nuance, donnant de l'épaisseur au lien là où l'écrit tend parfois à l'aplanir.

Cette attention à la présence rejoint les enseignements de la pleine conscience, pour lesquels la qualité d'attention portée à l'autre constitue déjà une forme de soin (Kabat-Zinn, 2003 ; Thích Nhất Hạnh, 1991).

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Bien-être mental et cohérence

Les crises récentes ont placé le bien-être mental au centre des préoccupations collectives. Les organismes communautaires sont appelés à jouer un rôle accru, tant dans l'accompagnement que dans la sensibilisation.

Dans le même temps, les pratiques relationnelles numériques s'intensifient. Les attentes de disponibilité augmentent. La cadence s'accélère. La frontière entre engagement et surcharge devient plus difficile à tracer.

Il ne s'agit pas d'une contradiction volontaire, mais d'une zone de frottement entre les valeurs portées et les formes relationnelles adoptées. C'est dans cet espace que se joue une partie de la cohérence institutionnelle.

Ralentir comme ajustement de posture

Ralentir certaines pratiques relationnelles numériques ne relève pas d'un refus du progrès, mais d'un ajustement de posture. Il ne s'agit pas de faire moins, mais de connecter autrement, en reconnaissant que toute relation possède une capacité d'absorption limitée.

Ralentir, ici, signifie redonner du poids à chaque interaction et déplacer les critères d'efficacité :

- de la quantité vers la qualité,
- de la rapidité vers la justesse,
- de la visibilité vers la cohérence.

Il s'agit d'un changement de métriques, pas d'un recul. Cette posture rejoint également une sagesse ancienne, présente dans le taoïsme, qui valorise l'action juste plutôt que l'action forcée. Dans le Tao Te King, Lao Tseu rappelle que ce qui croît naturellement, sans contrainte excessive, trouve plus facilement sa stabilité.

C'est aussi un geste de considération envers les donateurs, en respectant leur capacité d'attention et leur désir de relations significatives.

Choisir où l'on plante ses graines

Ralentir ne signifie ni se retirer ni renoncer à l'action. Cela revient à choisir où investir son attention, son temps et son énergie.

Dans un environnement saturé, chaque interaction devient une graine. La disperser au vent permet peut-être d'atteindre plus largement, mais rarement de bâtir durablement. À l'inverse, planter, arroser et revenir permet à la relation de s'enraciner.

Cette logique vaut autant pour les organisations que pour les donateurs. Donner, comme s'engager, demande un lieu où quelque chose peut grandir. Choisir de ralentir certaines pratiques relationnelles numériques, c'est privilégier la profondeur plutôt que la dispersion, la continuité plutôt que l'instantané.

Dans un secteur fondé sur la confiance, choisir où l'on plante ses graines devient un levier stratégique.

Figure 1 : De l'urgence à l'enracinement relationnel



Source et description : Élaboration de l'auteure. Cette figure illustre comment l'urgence des crises récentes a accéléré l'adoption des technologies en philanthropie, intensifiant les sollicitations relationnelles jusqu'à un seuil de saturation. Elle met en lumière l'importance d'un ajustement de posture, fondé sur la qualité de présence, le choix et l'enracinement, pour préserver la durabilité et la singularité du lien philanthropique.

Conclusion : Habiter la relation sans l'épuiser

L'urgence des crises récentes a accéléré certaines pratiques philanthropiques et a rendu visibles des tensions longtemps latentes dans la manière d'entrer en relation.

La question n'est peut-être pas de savoir comment communiquer davantage, mais comment communiquer pour habiter pleinement la relation sans l'épuiser.

Dans un secteur fondé sur la confiance et l'engagement humain, prendre soin du rythme devient une forme d'engagement en soi : une innovation discrète, mais profondément structurante. La question devient alors moins celle de la multiplication des communications que celle de la qualité de présence dans la relation philanthropique.

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La question n'est peut-être pas de savoir comment communiquer davantage, mais comment communiquer pour habiter pleinement la relation sans l'épuiser.

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Crisis as Catalyst: How Philanthropy's funding changes during the pandemic can help grantees now

By **Ebony Davitt**, *Public Policy Advisor and Researcher, Ontario Nonprofit Network*



Ebony Davitt is a policy professional based in Toronto with a background in History and Gender studies. She has worked in both municipal government and in the nonprofit sector, currently working as a Policy Advisor for the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN). Her work focuses on Decent Work including nonprofit funding reform and anti-privatization research and policy advocacy. She is passionate about developing just and equitable public policy as well as supporting grassroots community advocacy.

Introduction

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic offers an important opportunity to reflect on the crisis as a period of necessary and welcomed change. The Canadian philanthropic sector was at a juncture: either continue with funding practices that were out of touch with the reality of grantees on the ground or forge ahead with trust-based philanthropic practices. Fortunately, some chose the latter.

The willingness of some in Canada's philanthropic sector to adapt funding practices during the pandemic was a significant difference-maker for the survival of many nonprofit grantees. COVID became a catalyst for an influx of necessary funding changes that the

nonprofit sector had needed for decades. Still, once the pandemic had ended, not all of these bold changes were maintained; for some in the philanthropic sector these changes were viewed as too costly and/or the desire to "return to normal" was strong. For the many that we interviewed, crisis became an accelerator for the adoption of funding practices rooted in trust-based philanthropy.

The COVID-19 pandemic and its fallout have forged the perfect storm of intersecting challenges for nonprofits. They are facing the following megatrends: an uncertain economy (i.e. tariffs and global trade war)¹, a weakening social safety net, rapid evolution of AI, new public policy landscapes, deepening polarization, backlash to equity, the global rise in fascism, and most importantly shorter time between crises like climate disasters, public health emergencies, and social unrest.

For this reason it's a critical time to reflect on the wins in better funding practices that were adopted during the pandemic. How can the philanthropic sector learn from the pivots and evolutions made during the pandemic and reinstitute or continue those practices? How does the philanthropic sector join forces with nonprofits to weather these current and incoming storms together once again?

The current moment also calls for the philanthropic sector to step up again, and for good. Decades of underfunding², unequal disbursement across communities³, and funding cuts have left the nonprofit sector vulnerable and ill-prepared for crises, including general, but expected difficult economic times.⁴ Reconnecting with the nonprofit sector and building trust-based and transformative relationships not only supports the sector now, but paves the way for a future where the sector and philanthropy can grow and adapt together. In essence, learning from a crisis and adapting to confront it, instead of simply surviving it, can lead to better outcomes for the whole nonprofit ecosystem. When nonprofits thrive in supporting their communities, so does philanthropy.

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Methodology

Our outreach process began with asking approximately ten funders for virtual thirty minute interviews on the changes in their funding practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the timing of this project we were able to interview approximately five well-known and established Canadian philanthropic funders (of which seventy five percent were public and twenty five percent private). We spent thirty minutes asking questions on why they changed their funding practices, what were the lessons they learned and impact of those changes, and what funding practices they had taken forward with them over the past five years.

Background

For decades, Canada's nonprofit sector has encouraged philanthropic funders to provide trust-based, flexible, and equitable disbursements across equity-denied communities.⁵ Trust-based philanthropy aims to uproot power dynamics between funders and grantees so funders are collaborators working alongside nonprofits.⁶ This allows for resources to be used more efficiently and enables nonprofit leaders to use their discretion to pivot when circumstances change.⁷ Equitable funding practices can also create space for introspection amongst funders. When new approaches to funding are tested, like with the changes to funding non-qualified donees (NQD) in 2023⁸, opportunities for traditionally overlooked grantees can increase.⁹

Historically philanthropy has kept grantees accountable, protected their money, and achieved real results by sticking to traditional notions of grant-making that favours oversight and hierarchical funding models.¹⁰ However, the pandemic effectively challenged these notions. If the nonprofit sector was to not only meet exponential demand but also be able to rapidly pivot and innovate to meet said demand, more funding, and better funding, needed to flow to organizations quickly.

Nonprofits were vocal about their needs to the public and to existing philanthropic partners. Many shared their struggles with the hope that these stories would encourage philanthropy to mobilize rapidly.¹¹ While much of the changes in funding practices have now become the norm (and have even catalyzed different funding models) some practices were scaled back as

the urgency from the pandemic waned.

Getting money out the door faster

While always important, but more critical during the pandemic, getting money out the door faster was one of the first funding issues that changed for many in philanthropy.

The Canadian Women's Foundation moved funding agreements and reporting online allowing funds to flow much quicker and ensuring that people were served as efficiently as possible in the process. Oral applications were introduced enabling organisations that were overburdened or dealing with crisis to continue to engage with the foundation. During the pandemic, the foundation also launched an Emerging and Urgent Granting Area which enabled them to give grantees rapid turnaround timelines for funding and flexible reporting requirements.

Similarly, London Community Foundation chose to leverage their relationships with community and government and applied to be a distributor of the federal Emergency Community Support Fund, a highly responsive fund that sought to use trust-based philanthropy principles to support small grassroots organisations on a rolling basis throughout the pandemic. Because of this money was able to more effectively move from the federal level down to local organisations that were doing on-the-ground work.

In their June 2020 report, Philanthropic Foundations of Canada (PFC) stated that 41 % of funders advanced payments on existing grants and 44 % modified payment schedules and other banking procedures.¹² These changes enabled necessary pivots and scaling up of vital programing across the nonprofit sector.

Giving money for emerging and urgent needs, collectively

It was clear early on in the pandemic that not only would moving money faster be necessary, but injecting more money into the areas of the nonprofit ecosystem that were experiencing urgent and emerging need, would be necessary. As a result, many in the philanthropic sector collectively pooled their resources (e.g. money, connections, data, etc.) to better support their grantees' work.

The London Community Foundation made the decision to pool extra funding and invited other

funders to join them in developing a fund that would eventually be called the COVID-19 Response Fund.¹³ This 1.4 million dollar fund included response, recovery, and rebuild grants that allowed grantees to address pressing matters, re-organize when ready, and transform operations once stabilized.

At Lawson Foundation, past visions of developing a funding envelope specifically for Indigenous communities were able to become a reality during the pandemic. In collaboration with the Community Foundations Canada Network, Lawson Foundation became a supporter of what would eventually be the [Indigenous People's Resilience Fund](#) (IPRF); Lawson Foundation, along with other philanthropic organizations, took the bold step of placing money into a donor advised fund where they had no right to fundee reporting, only a tax receipt. The goal was to make the process "brilliantly simple", enabling Indigenous communities to use the money as needed and to report through various methods that suited their needs and capacity. By bundling recipients, IPRF was able to give sixty per cent of the funding to non-qualified donees. Due to its success during the pandemic, the fund developed into its own charitable organization maintaining many of those same values around keeping reporting simple and trusting donees.

Lawson Foundation saw in real time the value in funding more non-qualified donees recognizing that not all charitable work, especially work done within equity-denied communities, was going to be conducted within the more colonial, bureaucratic bounds of legal charitable status in Canada.

The decision to pool funds presented an opportunity to target specific emerging needs amongst grantees and was one of the more common tactics amongst philanthropy during the pandemic. PFC's reported that 16 % of funders at one point or another contributed to pooled funds during the pandemic.¹⁴

The most important lesson from the interviewees emphasized was that when crisis necessitated change, they were all willing and capable of mobilizing and collaborating to support the nonprofit sector. Building out funder networks was a feasible task that could mobilize more money and function as a learning and collaboration opportunity for both funders and grantees. Through these interviews we saw that despite changing funding practices traditionally being considered difficult endeavors, funders could have

positive experiences with these changes. We also saw that these changes could also receive positive feedback from their grantees.

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The most important lesson from the interviewees emphasized was that when crisis necessitated change, they were all willing and capable of mobilizing and collaborating to support the nonprofit sector. Building out funder networks was a feasible task that could mobilize more money and function as a learning and collaboration opportunity for both funders and grantees.

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Two steps forward, one step backward

Given these positive experiences, you may ask why did some in the philanthropic sector revert back to traditional funding practices? Anecdotal evidence from ONN's network points to some funders feeling the need to revert back once the urgency of the pandemic was over. However, it is of course difficult to find organizations who will go on record to talk in depth about this reversion.

Interviewees expressed similar sentiments when asked about why some in philanthropy may have rolled back on new funding practices, in essence stating, “old habits die hard.” As the urgency of the pandemic ended, the notion that funding practices had to return to status quo as they were pre-COVID was brewing. Some in philanthropy felt that large amounts of funding injections were simply not sustainable in the

long-term, others that the risk presented by increased flexibility was not justifiable when not in crisis. Some saw the pandemic as just a moment in time and once it was over, it was time to return to traditional funding practices. In order to quell inflation there needed to be less spending and more saving, this looked like the rolling back of funding at the government level and a slowing in granting as philanthropy confronted oversubscription.¹⁵

According to Ontario Nonprofit Network's 2025 State of the Sector survey, a quarter of nonprofits saw a decrease in funding from foundation grants.¹⁶ In a 2025 survey from Carleton University, 30 per cent of respondents said their funding from donors had decreased.¹⁷ As inflation transitioned into recession, waitlists continued to increase¹⁸ and discussions around nonprofit duplication and downsizing began to replace the recently more innovative conversations centering trust and collaboration. Nonprofits had to become more creative about seeking funding and concerns about mission drift increased as funding opportunities began to dwindle.¹⁹

Fortunately, the end of the pandemic didn't signal a return to normalcy for all of philanthropy. A positive is that there is evidence that some of these COVID-era practices did remain, even if not always in their original form. For some, rigidity set back in as inflation began to skyrocket, but for London Community Foundation, flexibility remains a priority. PFC continues to collaborate with other funding partners making it easier to respond when times of crisis return. The Canadian Women's Foundation still prioritizes intentional and targeted outreach both in-person and virtually in order to better meet organizations where they are at. Lawson Foundation remains a supporter of NQDs, helping set an example for the new guidance from the federal government which made it easier to work with NQDs.²⁰

After the worst of the pandemic, though Canada began to get back on its feet, inflation almost immediately began to impact the economy and the lives of everyday Canadians. This left many of the nonprofits that were labeled “essential” and “heroic” during the height of the pandemic, struggling to keep pace with increased costs due to inflation.

The cost of sliding backwards

While discussing maintaining trust-based philanthropy,

one of the first elements that must be further bolstered is flexibility. Nonprofits may not be facing a public health emergency that has closed everything except essential services, but they are navigating the ongoing fall out from the pandemic and the megatrends around the economy, equity, and more. Ongoing crises over the last five years have led to an increase in demand and less time to go back and forth over moving budget lines. When funding agreements lack flexibility, nonprofits serving vulnerable communities struggle to pivot, and when the population of people facing emergency circumstances rises due to rapidly deteriorating and changing economic and political circumstances, there's little time to negotiate moving budget lines.²¹ Many nonprofits proved themselves more than capable during the pandemic, now is the time to bring back that flexibility and help Canadians quicker.

Similarly less administrative and reporting requirements should remain a priority. Too much time is being wasted proving that the work is, or will be done, instead of working towards a reciprocal relationship that considers philanthropy to be a co-learner with their grantees.²² When grantees are responding to increased waitlists and need, any staff time spent not tackling the issues can often increase wait times further.

Continuing to pool resources is also vital. Vulnerable communities are disproportionately impacted during times of crisis and efforts to collaborate to make sure emerging needs are met and communities don't get left behind must continue and expand.²³

Now is not the time to scale back and save for a rainier day. The rainy days are here once again and it's time for philanthropy to invest not just in the hopes of weathering a crisis once again, but in hopes of encouraging and maintaining organizational sustainability and moving away from sporadic funding cycles.

So What, Now What?

Trust-based philanthropy which advances good funding practices is possible, during crisis and beyond economic and political context.²⁴ The funding practices that evolved during the pandemic demonstrate how trust-based philanthropy can enable efficiency and innovation, and in a time when sustainability is vital, the status quo is no longer a viable funding option.

By thinking deeper about the nonprofit ecosystem, philanthropy can transition from historically transactional relationships with grantees to transformative relationships. This means thinking deeper about sustainability and funding longer-term contracts that can actually enable the process of systems change, working alongside grantees leading with trust and flexibility that enables them to better innovate and grow with their work, and recognizing the value of injecting more funding into the sector. The nonprofit sector doesn't have to struggle to respond if it's always ready. This means philanthropy, as one of the biggest enablers for change in the sector must begin thinking systemically instead of just crisis to crisis.

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Vieillir en temps de crise : subsidiarité, philanthropie et défaillances de l'État au Québec

Par Diane Alalouf-Hall, Professeure à l'UQAM et Responsable du transfert et de la formation au PhiLab et Jean-Marc Fontan, Professeur émérite et co-fondateur du PhiLab



Diane Alalouf-Hall est chercheuse au PhiLab depuis 2016. Elle a d'abord occupé les fonctions de coordonnatrice du Réseau PhiLab, puis du PhiLab Québec pendant cinq ans. À partir de 2023, elle a assumé la direction du PhiLab Québec, jusqu'à la fermeture des hubs régionaux dans le cadre d'une restructuration visant à décloisonner le réseau et à renforcer les dynamiques transversales de collaboration. Depuis 2025, elle contribue à la coordination des activités de recherche, de valorisation et de transfert des connaissances au sein du réseau.

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La cause âgée, miroir des limites d'un agir philanthropique complice

La situation des personnes âgées au Québec représente un cas d'école pour ce numéro de L'Année Philanthropique consacré aux crises. Elle illustre

avec une clarté particulière la tension centrale que pose l'éditorial de ce volume, à savoir que l'agir philanthropique, au-delà de proposer des éléments de réponse à toute crise, peut également en être un symptôme, et, dans certaines configurations, être un facteur de perpétuation.

Quand une société confie à des fondations privées le financement de services de maintien à domicile que l'État devrait assurer, quand la survie d'organismes communautaires dépend de la générosité de quelques donateurs plutôt que d'un financement public stable, quand les personnes âgées les plus vulnérables n'accèdent aux ressources dont elles ont besoin que parce qu'une fondation a décidé d'en faire une priorité, alors la philanthropie ne répond plus à la crise : elle en gère les conséquences en en rendant le coût politique supportable, et en différant ainsi les transformations structurelles qui permettraient d'en traiter les causes.

Le vieillissement démographique est une certitude. Une personne sur quatre au Québec aura plus de 65 ans d'ici 2031 (Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2022, cité dans Phase II, p. 13). La question n'est pas de savoir si cette réalité constituera une crise, elle l'est déjà pour des dizaines de milliers de personnes âgées. La question est plutôt de savoir si la philanthropie choisira d'en être le miroir critique ou se contenter

d'être un filet de sécurité silencieux.

Que nous apprend la crise pandémique sur la cause philanthropique des personnes âgées ?

Une crise n'arrive jamais seule. C'est l'une des leçons les plus claires que tire l'observation de la situation des personnes âgées au Québec. En 2020, l'inefficacité des CHSLD a rendu visible une crise (désertion du personnel de soutien, indignité des conditions de vie, isolement forcé, taux de mortalité très élevé) qui n'était pas un accident. Cette inefficacité traduisait l'aboutissement d'une fragilisation systémique construite sur plusieurs décennies sous les traits de :

- services à domicile chroniquement sous-financés;
- pénurie de main-d'œuvre non anticipée;
- coordination déficiente entre les paliers de gouvernement;
- délestage progressif de responsabilités publiques vers des acteurs privés et caritatifs.

La pandémie n'a pas créé la crise des personnes âgées. Elle a rendu manifeste le défi collectif de l'endiguer.

Une crise structurelle amplifiée par la conjoncture

Au Québec, la vulnérabilité des personnes âgées prend forme autour de six axes qui s'alimentent mutuellement :

- la précarité économique (le revenu médian après impôt des 65 ans et plus atteignait à peine 25 500 \$ en 2019, parmi les plus faibles de la population) (Statistique Canada, 2021, cité dans Phase I, §2.2.1);
- la fragilité sanitaire dans un système de santé saturé;
- l'isolement social que les mesures pandémiques ont porté à un niveau critique;
- la fracture numérique qui exclut une part croissante des personnes âgées des services publics dématérialisés (Phase I, §2.2.4);
- les limitations de mobilité insuffisamment couvertes par les programmes existants,
- enfin la crise du logement, où près d'un ménage âgé sur quatre consacre plus de 30 % de son revenu à se loger (SCHL, 2020, cité dans Phase I, §2.2.6).

L'isolement social aggrave la détresse psychologique,

laquelle génère un recours accru aux soins institutionnels qui saturent un système déjà à bout. La fracture numérique bloque l'accès aux consultations à distance et aux démarches administratives, renforçant la pression sur les ressources communautaires. La précarité économique rend impossible l'accès aux services d'aide à domicile à coût réel, accélérant l'entrée en hébergement institutionnel, dont le coût pour l'État dépasse les 252 dollars par jour en CHSLD, contre des services à domicile bien moins onéreux mais chroniquement sous-financés (FADOQ, 2016, cité dans Phase I, p. 27).

Cette situation préexistait à la pandémie. Les données le montrent sans ambiguïté. Le sous-financement des services à domicile, les délais d'attente de dix-huit mois pour une place en CHSLD, la dépendance croissante du réseau communautaire à la proche-aidance non rémunérée : tout cela était documenté avant 2020. (Phase I, §2.2.2 ; Phase II, p. 8). La COVID-19 n'a pas créé ces conditions. Elle les a rendues mortelles, littéralement, pour les personnes les plus vulnérables, et politiquement intenable pour les gouvernements qui les avaient laissées s'installer.

La subsidiarité négative : quand l'État se déleste sans raison de ses fonctions et responsabilités

Le Québec occupe une position intermédiaire dans les typologies des régimes d'État-providence. Plus interventionniste que le Canada anglais ou les États-Unis, mais nettement moins redistributif que les modèles scandinaves, il a développé depuis la Révolution tranquille une architecture originale mêlant action publique, économie sociale et philanthropie (Esping-Andersen, 1990 ; Graefe, 2006, cités dans Phase I, §2.1). Dans le domaine du soutien aux personnes âgées, cette architecture sociale reposait sur un postulat de complémentarité : l'État devait assurer les fonctions régaliennes de protection sociale, le secteur communautaire et l'action philanthropique devaient enrichir à la marge l'offre de services publics.

Cette division équitable des responsabilités n'a jamais tout à fait correspondu à la réalité, elle s'en écarte d'ailleurs de plus en plus. Depuis le virage néolibéral des années 1980-1990 et la consolidation de l'État austère à partir du milieu des années 2010, le délestage s'est accéléré. La plus grosse vague de réductions dans les CHSLD québécois a eu lieu en 2019-2020, avec une diminution de 1,2 % du budget, entraînant des

compressions de personnel et des fermetures de lits (Phase II, p. 14). Et ce, à un moment où la pandémie était en gestation. Des organismes communautaires ont progressivement hérité de fonctions (livraison de repas, visites d'amitié, transport médical, accompagnement psychosocial) qui relevaient auparavant du réseau public ou qui auraient dû en relever. Le budget provincial consacré au Programme de soutien aux organismes communautaires (PSOC) atteignait 777 millions de dollars en 2021-2022, mais la hausse consentie pour la période 2021-2026 ne représente que 10 millions par an, soit 1,3 % du budget total (Phase II, p. 14), loin des 370 millions réclamés par la campagne CA\$\$\$H des organismes du secteur. Les fondations subventionnaires, sollicitées par ces organismes en manque de financement stable, ont comblé ces vides. Ce faisant, des fondations ont élargi leur rôle, sans toujours en avoir pleinement conscience. De complémentaire à l'action de l'État, l'action philanthropique s'est en partie substituée à l'action étatique.

C'est ce que le principe de subsidiarité permet de nommer avec précision. Dans sa dimension « positive », la subsidiarité rend compte d'une division du travail respectueuse entre différentes parties prenantes. La logique de base est celle où chaque acteur (citoyen-ne, entreprise privée, organisme communautaire, agences publiques) assume ce qu'il peut assumer le mieux. L'échelon supérieur n'intervenant que là où les échelons inférieurs sont moins efficaces, efficaces et pertinents. Dans sa dimension « négative », la subsidiarité représente une délégation de pouvoirs et de responsabilités et signifie un désengagement. Pour l'État, la subsidiarité négative se manifeste lorsque des corps intermédiaires sont utilisés pour justifier son propre retrait. Ces derniers, en comblant les vides, valident involontairement une architecture de sous-financement public qu'ils voulaient pallier par défaut. Au Québec, pour la cause aînée, cette subsidiarité négative s'est progressivement imposée, non pas comme choix délibéré, mais comme le résultat cumulé de décisions budgétaires et d'abstentions politiques.

Les praticiens et praticiennes du secteur philanthropique le perçoivent et l'expriment clairement. Plusieurs décrivent un malaise profond : ils et elles financent des services que l'État devrait assurer, savent qu'ils le font, et savent aussi que leur financement est désormais structurellement anticipé par les organismes de terrain, qui ne survivraient

pas sans lui. Rappelons-nous très dernièrement du mouvement collectif « communautaire à bout » au Québec. Cette dépendance croisée n'est pas saine. Elle prive les fondations de leur capacité à orienter librement leurs ressources vers l'innovation ou l'expérimentation, les enferme dans la gestion de l'urgence, et les rend complices d'un système dont elles désapprouvent la logique.

Un écosystème sans pilote dans un contexte de polycrise

L'étude menée par PhiLab révèle clairement, au-delà des discours institutionnels, le besoin de voir émerger un leadership partagé et concerté pour la cause aînée au Québec. Présentement, aucune organisation – ni publique, ni philanthropique – ne joue le rôle de figure de proue capable d'agrèger les efforts, de définir des priorités communes et d'exercer une pression cohérente sur les pouvoirs publics. Il s'ensuit la présence d'un système en charge du vieillissement qui fonctionne en silos : les fondations s'ignorent mutuellement ou se concurrencent pour les mêmes organismes bénéficiaires ; les niveaux gouvernementaux (fédéral, provincial, municipal) ne coordonnent pas toujours leurs programmes ; et les personnes aînées vulnérables naviguent dans un labyrinthe de ressources fragmentées dont l'accès dépend souvent de la chance géographique ou du réseau d'un ou une proche aidante (Phase II, §4.6).

Cette fragmentation des capacités d'agir est d'autant plus préoccupante que la polycrise que vivent les personnes aînées exige une réponse coordonnée et des services intégrés. Traiter l'isolement social sans aborder la fracture numérique ou la mobilité, c'est s'assurer de l'inefficacité de l'intervention. Financer des services de maintien à domicile sans s'interroger sur l'accessibilité du logement, c'est colmater une brèche pendant qu'une autre s'ouvre. Les fondations qui s'engagent sur ces terrains le savent. Mais les structures de financement cloisonnées et les logiques de rendement social à court terme sont profondément inadaptées et ne peuvent permettre à tous et à toutes de « bien vieillir » (Phase II, §4.5).

Vers une subsidiarité positive : nommer les crises pour les transformer

Face à ce constat, la question qui se pose à la philanthropie n'est pas seulement de savoir combien investir dans la cause aînée, mais comment le faire

sans reconduire les conditions mêmes qui produisent les crises qu'elle cherche à atténuer. La distinction entre subsidiarité négative et subsidiarité positive apparaît alors centrale si l'on veut réellement changer les choses.

Une philanthropie complice absorbe les défaillances de l'État sans les dénoncer, finance l'urgence sans interpellier les structures responsables, et nourrit involontairement l'illusion que le système social fonctionne bien. Au contraire, une philanthropie critique choisit au contraire de rendre visibles les angles morts, de documenter systématiquement les vides que son financement comble, et de porter ces constats dans les arènes de débat public et de décision politique. Elle finance des services de maintien à domicile, mais en interpellant simultanément l'État sur l'insuffisance de sa propre couverture. Elle soutient les organisations qui portent la voix des personnes âgées dans les processus décisionnels, plutôt que de se substituer à cette voix. Elle investit dans la concertation intersectorielle, estimant que sa valeur ajoutée réside autant dans la structuration d'un écosystème capable de transformer les politiques publiques que dans la prestation directe de services.

Cette voie d'action critique ne relève pas de la pensée magique. Certaines des fondations engagées pour la cause âgée au Québec en esquissent des éléments concrets : dialogue direct avec le MSSS pour articuler l'action philanthropique à l'action publique, financement prioritaire d'initiatives de concertation plutôt que de services isolés, soutien aux démarches de plaidoyer portées par les organismes communautaires (Phase II, §5.2). Cependant, ces initiatives restent minoritaires, fragilisées par la pression des demandes d'urgence et la méconnaissance mutuelle que l'État et la philanthropie entretiennent l'un envers l'autre (Phase II, §4.4).

Elles indiquent toutefois une direction et une posture à prendre, à suivre et à renforcer. Lorsque chaque acteur social prend ses responsabilités et travaille de concert et en harmonie avec les autres, cela revient à penser le registre de l'action sociale sous la forme d'un écosystème naturel. Adopter collectivement cette posture permettra de sortir des silos comportementaux en proposant des modalités d'action inclusives, respectueuses des capacités et des droits sous toutes leurs formes. Évidemment, le tout impliquera un dialogue social fondé sur la démocratie, où l'intérêt commun de travailler ensemble prendra le dessus

sur toute initiative nombriliste à visée ostentatoire.

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Rebuilding Trust in the Small: Behavioral Philanthropy and the Democratization of Giving in Times of Crisis

By Sanjay Bindra, Co-Founder and President of GOSUMEC Foundation USA



Sanjay Bindra, MD is Co-Founder and President of GOSUMEC Foundation USA, a zero-staff nonprofit supporting medical education through diaspora philanthropy. A cardiac electrophysiologist by training, his work focuses on behavioral philanthropy, trust-centered nonprofit design, and sustainable giving systems for small organizations. He is the principal investigator of the GIVE Study (2025), examining relational drivers of recurring giving, and writes on democratizing philanthropy through community-based governance models.

Crisis, Trust, and the Democratic Fragility of Philanthropy

Crises — whether pandemics, climate disasters, political polarization, or economic shocks — routinely disrupt philanthropic flows. Yet beyond financial volatility, crises more profoundly erode trust: trust in institutions, intermediaries, and even in the social contract itself. Surveys across North America show declining confidence in public institutions, media, and nonprofits, with trust deficits particularly acute among younger donors and racialized communities (Edelman, 2024).

In Canada, philanthropic systems increasingly rely on large intermediaries and professionalized fundraising

structures. While these systems enhance efficiency and compliance, they can

unintentionally distance donors from beneficiaries and weaken perceived agency. During crises, this distance often widens, reinforcing a model of philanthropy that is reactive, transactional, and centralized.

However, democratic participation depends not merely on the capacity to donate, but on whether citizens feel seen, heard, and socially embedded within civic ecosystems. If philanthropy is to support democracy during crises, it must rebuild trust not only through accountability mechanisms but through relational participation — mechanisms that allow donors and beneficiaries to recognize themselves as part of a shared civic project.

Small nonprofits, particularly zero-staff or volunteer-led organizations, are often dismissed as fragile or inefficient. Yet they may possess unique capacities for trust-building, narrative coherence, and community identity — precisely the conditions needed to sustain democratic engagement during prolonged disruption.

The findings further suggest that small, relationally designed nonprofit systems are not merely adaptive responses to crisis, but may represent a scalable model for restoring civic participation, particularly

within diaspora and community-based philanthropic ecosystems.

While causality cannot be definitively established, the consistency of behavioral patterns observed suggests that trust-centered, relational design may play a central role in sustaining civic participation within small nonprofit ecosystems during periods of crisis.

The GIVE Study: Design and Context

The GIVE Study (Gratitude, Impact, Voice, Engagement) is a prospective, year-long field study conducted in 2025 by the GOSUMEC Foundation USA, a zero-staff, alumni-led nonprofit that supports medical students in India through U.S.-based diaspora philanthropy.

Study Design

This study was conducted over a 12-month period from January to December 2025 and involved approximately 400 donor households. Quantitative data were collected through a structured tagging system within the organization's CRM platform (Givebutter), enabling real-time tracking of donor behaviors and interactions throughout the study period. These tags captured key actions such as donation frequency, recurring giving enrollment, engagement touchpoints, and upgrade behavior. At the conclusion of the study, data reflecting the organization's relational approach were aggregated and analyzed to quantify outcomes, including the total number of recurring donors, overall growth in recurring giving, the acquisition of new recurring donors, and the conversion of existing one-time donors into recurring supporters. Additionally, email open rates were analyzed as a proxy measure for community identity formation, providing insight into the extent to which donors remained engaged with and connected to the organization over time.

The donor population consisted primarily of individual contributors rather than institutional funders. All supporters were based in the United States and largely represented a diaspora alumni community with ongoing social and educational ties to India. The cohort included both first-time donors and prior contributors, enabling analysis across different stages of donor engagement.

Rather than testing isolated fundraising tactics, the study examined organizational design as behavioral architecture—specifically, how systems of storytelling, transparency, recognition, and

participation shape donor identity and influence long-term engagement.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected prospectively through the Givebutter CRM platform using a predefined and consistently applied tagging framework to capture donor actions, including donation frequency, recurring conversion, upgrade behavior, and email engagement. This structured approach enhanced internal consistency and allowed for longitudinal tracking of individual and cohort-level behaviors. Quantitative analysis consisted primarily of descriptive statistics examining donor conversion, retention, and engagement patterns over the 12-month study period. Although the study is observational and not randomized, its prospective design supports the identification of temporal associations between relational interventions and donor behavior.

Although conducted within a U.S.-based organization, the study's implications extend to other philanthropic contexts, particularly in Canada. The findings are especially relevant for diaspora-led community organizations, volunteer-driven educational and healthcare charities, and small nonprofits operating without professional fundraising staff. These organizations represent a substantial portion of the charitable sector yet remain underrepresented in empirical philanthropic research.

The GIVE Framework: Why People Stay Engaged

At the heart of the study lies the GIVE Framework, which identifies four psychological and social drivers of sustained generosity:

The GIVE Framework identifies four interrelated drivers of sustained generosity: gratitude, impact, voice, and engagement. Gratitude reflects the recognition of donors as partners rather than passive contributors. Impact refers to the clear linkage between giving and tangible outcomes, often best communicated through narrative. Voice encompasses opportunities for participation, feedback, and storytelling, allowing donors to engage as stakeholders. Engagement represents the continuity of relational contact beyond discrete transactions, reinforcing long-term commitment.

Together, these dimensions map onto fundamental

drivers of democratic participation: recognition, efficacy, agency, and belonging.

Gratitude as Trust Infrastructure

Gratitude is not simply politeness; it is a social signal that reinforces mutual respect and relational equity. In the study, personalized gratitude communications significantly predicted donor retention independent of donation size, suggesting that recognition functions as a stabilizing force in donor relationships.

Impact as Meaning, Not Metrics

While many nonprofits emphasize quantitative outputs, donors in this study responded most strongly to narrative-based impact: individual stories, community milestones, and longitudinal student outcomes. These narratives helped donors cognitively link their contributions to human consequences, reinforcing moral meaning.

Voice as Civic Participation

Donors who were invited to community discussions, student meetings, and governance updates demonstrated higher long-term retention. Voice transformed donors from spectators into stakeholders, mirroring participatory mechanisms central to democratic systems.

Engagement as Identity Formation

Sustained engagement correlated more strongly with community participation than with donation frequency. Giving became part of personal identity rather than a purely financial behavior, reinforcing long-term commitment even during periods of external uncertainty.

Figure 1: The GIVE Framework as Behavioral Drivers of Democratic Participation



The 4S Framework: How Small Organizations Operationalize Trust

Understanding why people give is insufficient without systems that sustain engagement. The study therefore operationalized the GIVE Framework through the 4S Framework:

The 4S Framework operationalizes these principles through storytelling, smart technology, behavioral science, and supportive community structures. Storytelling centers on authentic, beneficiary-driven narratives that connect donors to lived experiences. Smart technology utilizes low-cost platforms to enable transparency, real-time tracking, and communication. Behavioral science informs the timing, framing, and cadence of donor engagement. Supportive community structures foster peer reinforcement, shared identity, and social belonging loops that sustain long-term participation. This architecture allowed a zero-staff nonprofit to scale relational engagement without professional fundraising teams.

Smart Tech as Enabler, Not Substitute

Digital platforms enabled real-time donor acknowledgment, transparent financial reporting, and behavioral tagging for personalized engagement. However, technology functioned as infrastructure rather than relationship replacement. Human connection remained central to sustaining trust.

Supportive Community as Retention Engine

Community forums, donor-student interactions, and shared celebrations created horizontal relationships among donors, reinforcing commitment beyond institutional loyalty and fostering peer-based norm formation around generosity.

Outcomes

Using this architecture, the organization achieved:

- 35% conversion to recurring giving
- 81% recurring donor share
- 109% growth in recurring donors
- 98% retention among recurring donors
- 60% email open rates
- 73% total donor retention (2025 vs. 2024)

These outcomes are notable within small-nonprofit benchmarks, where annual donor retention often falls below 45% (Fundraising Effectiveness Project, 2024).

These outcomes should be interpreted within the context of a single-organization study and may not be directly generalizable across all nonprofit settings. This allowed GOSUMEC Foundation to create the first US endowment to benefit medical students in India at their alma mater.

Figure 2: 4S Framework Linking Systems to Behavioral Outcomes



“Start with Tech, Stay with Trust”: A Hybrid Governance Model

One of the study’s central operational principles was: “Start with Tech, Stay with Trust.”

This reflects a critical governance insight: while transparency tools are necessary for accountability, trust is ultimately sustained through relationships and perceived fairness, not dashboards.

In this hybrid model, financial transparency builds baseline credibility, storytelling fosters emotional resonance, voice enables participatory legitimacy, and community reinforces normative commitment.

Together, these functions replicate key mechanisms of democratic systems: information, representation, deliberation, and collective identity.

This model is particularly relevant for Canadian nonprofits navigating increased compliance demands, declining volunteer availability, and rising donor skepticism about institutional efficiency. Rather than scaling bureaucracy, small organizations may benefit from scaling relational governance.

“

In this hybrid model, financial transparency builds baseline credibility, storytelling fosters emotional resonance, voice enables participatory legitimacy, and community reinforces normative commitment. Together, these functions replicate key mechanisms of democratic systems: information, representation, deliberation, and collective identity.

”

Micro-Philanthropy as Democratic Infrastructure

The GIVE Study suggests that micro-philanthropy — small, recurring, community-embedded giving — may function as a form of democratic infrastructure, particularly during crises.

Shifting Power Dynamics

Rather than concentrating decision-making within professional institutions, relational philanthropy redistributes influence across networks of citizens, donors, beneficiaries, and volunteers, reinforcing

horizontal accountability and shared ownership.

Cultural Resonance

The model integrates behavioral science with cultural traditions of mutual aid, collective responsibility, and intergenerational obligation — principles deeply rooted in many immigrant and Indigenous communities in Canada.

Crisis as Catalyst

Crises accelerate digital adoption, informal community networks, and identity-based giving. When organizations are structurally prepared, crises can deepen participation rather than erode it.

Implications for Canadian Philanthropy

While this study was conducted in a U.S.-based diaspora organization, its implications extend to Canadian philanthropic ecosystems. The GIVE framework is a universally applicable relational approach that all nonprofits can benefit from, moving beyond transactional approaches to identity anchored philanthropy.

1. Re-centering Small Organizations in Research

Policy and research often focus on large foundations, yet most community trust operates at small organizational scales.

2. Designing for Participation, Not Only Compliance

Regulatory accountability must be complemented by participatory transparency — donors and beneficiaries must feel meaningfully included.

3. Investing in Behavioral Infrastructure

Capacity-building should prioritize story systems, feedback loops, and community facilitation, not only financial management.

4. Viewing Trust as Strategic Capital

Trust should be treated as an operational asset, not merely as a reputational outcome.

Conclusion: Trust as the True Infrastructure of Resilience

Crises will continue to disrupt philanthropic systems. Financial capital alone cannot sustain democratic participation when trust erodes.

The GIVE Study suggests that trust can be intentionally designed, participation can be operationalized, and community can be scaled without bureaucracy. Small nonprofits, far from being fragile, may represent the most resilient democratic laboratories in times of crisis.

If philanthropy is to function as a civic institution rather than merely a financial mechanism, it must rediscover its relational foundations. In that sense, rebuilding trust in the small may be the most scalable democratic strategy of all.

Beyond descriptive outcomes, the study suggests that donor retention and recurring conversion are more strongly associated with relational and identity-based interventions than with transactional incentives or campaign-based urgency. While causality cannot be definitively established, the consistency of observed behavioral patterns supports the hypothesis that trust-centered design plays a central role in sustaining civic participation within small nonprofit ecosystems.

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Projets de recherche | Research Projects

Introduction

Cette section présente un aperçu des projets de recherche du PhiLab, actuellement à différentes étapes de développement, de l'émergence des questionnements de recherche jusqu'à la diffusion des résultats. Elle met en lumière la diversité des thématiques, des approches et des partenariats qui structurent les travaux du réseau. Pour chaque projet, un lien vers sa page dédiée sur le site du PhiLab permet d'en apprendre davantage et de consulter les livrables, publications et outils déjà rendus disponibles.

Introduction

This section provides an overview of PhiLab's research projects, which are currently at various stages of development—from the initial formulation of research questions to the dissemination of results. It highlights the diversity of themes, approaches, and partnerships that shape the network's work. For each project, a link to its dedicated page on the PhiLab website allows you to learn more and view the deliverables, publications, and tools already made available.





L'impact des initiatives philanthropiques sur l'engagement et la rétention des employés dans les PME québécoises | The Impact of Philanthropic Initiatives on Employee Engagement and Retention in Quebec SMEs

[Lien vers la page du projet](#) | [Link to the research project page](#)

Partenaire | Partner

Fondation Nooé



Résumé

Les initiatives philanthropiques en milieu de travail occupent une place croissante dans les pratiques organisationnelles québécoises, en particulier au sein des petites et moyennes entreprises (PME). Au-delà de leur portée sociale et communautaire, ces initiatives sont de plus en plus envisagées comme des leviers potentiels d'engagement organisationnel et de rétention des employés, dans un contexte marqué par des défis persistants de mobilisation et de pénurie de main-d'oeuvre. Cette recherche partenariale vise à structurer une étude conceptuelle et méthodologique portant sur l'impact des initiatives philanthropiques organisationnelles perçues sur l'engagement organisationnel et l'intention de rester des employés dans les PME québécoises.

Les apports conceptuels mettent en évidence le rôle central des perceptions des employés dans les mécanismes étudiés. Lorsque les initiatives philanthropiques sont perçues comme cohérentes, authentiques et alignées avec les valeurs organisationnelles, elles sont susceptibles de renforcer l'engagement organisationnel et d'influencer positivement l'intention de rester. À l'inverse, des perceptions d'instrumentalisation ou d'incohérence peuvent en limiter, voire en neutraliser, les effets internes.

Summary

Philanthropic initiatives in the workplace are playing an increasingly significant role in organizational practices in Quebec, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Beyond their social and community impact, these initiatives are increasingly viewed as potential drivers of organizational engagement and employee retention, in a context marked by persistent challenges in workforce mobilization and labor shortages.

This collaborative research, conducted in partnership with the Nooé Foundation, aimed to design a conceptual and methodological study examining the impact of perceived organizational philanthropic initiatives on organizational commitment and employees' intention to stay in Quebec SMEs.

The conceptual findings highlight the central role of employee perceptions in the mechanisms studied. When philanthropic initiatives are perceived as coherent, authentic, and aligned with organizational values, they are likely to strengthen organizational commitment and positively influence retention intentions. Conversely, perceptions of instrumentalization or incoherence can limit, or even neutralize, their internal effects.



Cartographie de l'écosystème d'accompagnement des OBNL au Québec | Mapping the Support Ecosystem for Nonprofit Organizations (NPOs) in Quebec

[Lien vers la page du projet](#) | [Link to the research project page](#)

Partenaire | Partner

Fondation J. Armand Bombardier



FONDATION
J. ARMAND
BOMBARDIER

Résumé

Les organismes à but non lucratif (OBNL) jouent un rôle essentiel dans le tissu social québécois, mais leur fonctionnement est souvent freiné par des défis structurels : précarité financière, manque de ressources humaines, complexité administrative, et pression croissante à innover. Face à ces contraintes, plusieurs acteurs (fondations, regroupements, institutions publiques) offrent des services d'accompagnement. Pourtant, aucun portrait global de cet écosystème d'accompagnement n'a encore été réalisé au Québec.

Ce projet est donc justifié par un besoin urgent de visibilité, coordination et amélioration de ces services. Il permettra à la fois d'outiller les OBNL dans leurs choix stratégiques, d'orienter les politiques publiques, et de valoriser les initiatives existantes. En plus de combler un vide scientifique, cette cartographie aidera à renforcer les capacités organisationnelles des OBNL à long terme.

Objectifs du projet

L'étude porte sur l'analyse des acteurs, services et dynamiques qui composent l'écosystème d'accompagnement des OBNL au Québec, avec pour but de mieux comprendre leur rôle, leur complémentarité et leur potentiel de renforcement des capacités des organismes communautaires.

Summary

Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) are vital to Quebec's social fabric, yet their operations are often hindered by structural challenges: financial instability, lack of skilled personnel, increasing complexity, and pressure to innovate. In response, various support services are provided by foundations, networks, and public institutions. However, no comprehensive mapping of this support ecosystem currently exists in Quebec. This project responds to a critical need for visibility, coordination, and improvement in the landscape of NPO support. It will equip organizations to make better strategic decisions, inform public policy, and highlight existing initiatives. Beyond filling an academic gap, this mapping will contribute to long-term organizational strengthening for the nonprofit sector.

Research purpose

The research examines the actors, services, and dynamics shaping Quebec's NPO support ecosystem, with the goal of understanding their role, complementarity, and potential to build organizational capacity in the nonprofit sector.



Stratégie de fin de vie programmée de la Fondation Ivey : étude de cas | Ivey Foundation sunseting strategy: case study

[Lien vers la page du projet](#) | [Link to the research project page](#)

Partenaire | Partner
Ivey Foundation



Résumé

La Fondation Ivey, créée en 1947, a choisi de renoncer à sa perpétuité en 2022. Sa dotation de 100 millions de dollars sera progressivement investie selon la priorité de 2014 de consacrer ses ressources au développement d'une économie à zéro émission de gaz à effet de serre. La fondation s'est donné un horizon de cinq ans pour allouer l'ensemble de ses fonds de dotation à des causes philanthropiques d'ici fin 2027. Cette décision de contribuer à une transition énergétique vise à développer une économie canadienne à faible émission de carbone. L'approche consistant à opter pour une dissolution planifiée de ses activités est peu courante dans le monde des fondations philanthropiques. D'où l'intérêt de mieux comprendre le choix de la Fondation Ivey et de réaliser une étude de cas sur son expérience.

Démarche

1. Documentation : La réalisation de ce premier volet reposera principalement sur une analyse documentaire de la littérature scientifique et de la littérature grise.
2. Documenter le processus de dissolution prévu de la Fondation Ivey.
3. Les connaissances pratiques et théoriques seront générées sur la base des informations recueillies lors d'une synthèse des connaissances et d'entretiens.

Summary

The Ivey Foundation, established in 1947, chose to relinquish its perpetuity in 2022. Its \$100 million endowment will be progressively invested according to the 2014 priority of devoting its resources to the development of a zero greenhouse gas emissions economy. The foundation gave itself a five-year horizon to allocate all of its endowment funds to philanthropic causes by the end of 2027. This decision to contribute to an energy transition aims to develop a low-carbon Canadian economy. The approach of opting for a planned dissolution of its activities is uncommon in the world of philanthropic foundations. This results in an interest to better understand the choice made by the Ivey Foundation and to conduct a case study about its experience.

Research approach

1. Documentation: The realization of this first component will be based mainly on a literature review of scientific and grey literature.
2. Document the Ivey Foundation's planned dissolution process
3. Practical and theoretical knowledge will be generated based on information gathered during a synthesis of knowledge and interviews.



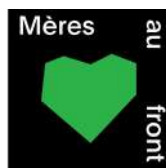
Les relations entre philanthropie et mouvements environnementalistes dans un contexte de fragmentation politique et numérique | The Relationship Between Philanthropy and Environmental Movements in a Context of Political and Digital Fragmentation

[Lien vers la page du projet](#) | [Link to the research project page](#)

Partenaires | Partners

Eau Secours

Mères au Front



Résumé

Dans un contexte marqué par des transformations politiques, sociales et numériques rapides, les relations entre philanthropie et mouvements sociaux évoluent de manière significative. Ce projet de recherche vise à analyser ces relations au Québec, en portant une attention particulière aux enjeux de financement, de gouvernance et d'autonomie des mouvements sociaux.

Objectifs du projet

Mieux comprendre les dynamiques actuelles entre acteurs philanthropiques et mouvements sociaux

Éclairer les pratiques afin de soutenir les initiatives engagées en justice sociale et environnementale

Démarche

Le projet s'articule autour de plusieurs dimensions clés :

1. Trajectoires des mouvements sociaux
2. Relations avec la philanthropie
3. Contexte politique et institutionnel
4. Numérisation et enjeux de surveillance
5. Stratégies et perspectives

Summary

In a context marked by rapid political, social, and digital transformations, the relationship between philanthropy and social movements is undergoing significant changes. This research project aims to analyze these relationships in Quebec, with a particular focus on the issues of funding, governance, and autonomy within social movements.

Research purpose

To better understand the current dynamics between philanthropic actors and social movements

To shed light on best practices in order to support initiatives dedicated to social and environmental justice

Research approach

The project is structured around several key dimensions:

1. Trajectories of social movements
2. Relations with philanthropy
3. Political and institutional context
4. Digitalization and surveillance issues
5. Strategies and outlook



L'inclusion des personnes en situation de handicap au Canada et à l'international | The inclusion of people with disabilities in Canada and abroad

[Lien vers la page du projet](#) | [Link to the research project page](#)

Partenaires | Partners

Humanité et inclusion

Fondation Mirella et Lino Saputo

Fondations Philanthropiques Canada

Le handicap sans pauvreté



disability
without
poverty | le handicap
sans
pauvreté

Résumé

Le besoin d'adapter les organisations, les institutions, les attitudes et les comportements révèle la présence d'un problème ancien et une culture profondément enracinée d'exclusion ou d'une insertion déficiente des personnes vivant une situation d'handicap. La visibilité partielle de leurs besoins et les défis liés à la prise en considération réelle et universelle de leur situation affectent tous les acteurs sociaux dont les acteurs philanthropiques. Les acteurs de la philanthropie subventionnaire accordent en général moins d'importance aux enjeux sociaux liés aux situations spécifiques d'injustice sociale et environnementale.

Objectifs du projet

La question centrale de la recherche est la suivante : Quelle importance occupe la cause des personnes en situation de handicap dans les programmes nationaux et internationaux réalisés par des fondations philanthropiques canadiennes ?

Cette recherche fournira aux fondations philanthropiques, aux organismes de la société civile, aux entreprises privées et aux leaders communautaires des outils pratiques et des informations pour plaider en faveur des personnes en situation de handicap, à la fois au sein du secteur philanthropique et au-delà.

Summary

The need to adapt organizations, institutions, attitudes and behaviors reveals the presence of a long-standing problem and a deeply rooted culture of exclusion or deficient integration of people living with disabilities. The partial visibility of their needs and the challenges of ensuring that their situation is truly and universally taken into account affect all social stakeholders, including those involved in philanthropy. Grant-making philanthropic stakeholders generally attach less importance to social issues linked to specific situations of social and environmental injustice.

Research purpose

The core question across the research is: How important is the cause of people with disabilities in the national and international programs of Canadian philanthropic foundations?

This research will provide philanthropic foundations, civil society organizations, private companies and community leaders with practical tools and information to advocate on behalf of people with disabilities, both within the philanthropic sector and beyond.



Philanthropie et post-croissance : pratiques, tensions et perspectives au Canada | Post-Growth Philanthropy in Canada: Possibilities, Limits, and Tensions

[Lien vers la page du projet](#) | [Link to the research project page](#)

Partenaire | Partner
Makeway Foundation



Résumé

La philanthropie canadienne a adopté des formes innovantes de justice sociale et environnementale, notamment à travers l'investissement responsable et le soutien à des communautés marginalisées. Toutefois, ces efforts s'inscrivent toujours dans un cadre idéologique de croissance économique continue le « growthisme » qui reste largement non remis en question. Or, de nombreux chercheurs soutiennent que cette obsession de la croissance perpétuelle contribue aux mêmes crises sociales et écologiques que le secteur cherche à résoudre. Il devient donc essentiel de réfléchir aux fondements idéologiques de la philanthropie contemporaine et d'explorer des modèles alternatifs, notamment ceux issus du courant post-croissance.

Objectifs du projet

Ce projet explore les fondements idéologiques et pratiques de la philanthropie post-croissance au Canada. Il a deux objectifs principaux :

1. Théoriser le lien entre les approches actuelles de la philanthropie et l'idéologie de la croissance ;
2. Identifier et analyser les pratiques philanthropiques post-croissance existantes.

Summary

Canadian philanthropy has made progress in advancing social and environmental justice, notably through responsible investing and support for marginalized communities. However, these efforts remain largely embedded within a dominant ideology of continuous economic growth known as “growthism” which remains unchallenged. Yet, many scholars argue that this very focus on growth underpins the social and ecological crises philanthropy seeks to address. There is a pressing need to examine the ideological foundations of contemporary philanthropic practice and explore alternative frameworks, such as post-growth approaches.

Research purpose

This project explores the ideological and practical foundations of post-growth philanthropy in Canada. It has two main objectives:

1. Theorize how current philanthropic models are entangled with the ideology of growth;
2. Identify and analyze post-growth philanthropic practices.



Les partenariats fondations–entreprises sont-ils vertueux? Are Foundation–Business Partnerships Virtuous?

[Lien vers la page du projet](#) | [Link to the research project page](#)

Partenaire | Partner

Surfrider Foundation



Résumé

Ce projet vise à mieux comprendre les partenariats entre fondations et entreprises privées, en particulier leurs effets sur les perceptions des donateurs, bénévoles et gestionnaires, ainsi que leur potentiel de transformation sociétale. À travers une première phase de revue systématique de littérature, les chercheurs établiront un cadre d'analyse des pratiques de philanthropie corporative et des enjeux liés à la légitimité de ces partenariats. La deuxième phase consistera en une étude qualitative, fondée sur des entrevues semi-dirigées auprès de gestionnaires et de parties prenantes de fondations œuvrant dans la protection de l'environnement.

Objectifs du projet

Le projet vise à comprendre comment ces collaborations influencent les perceptions des parties prenantes (donateurs, bénévoles, gestionnaires) et dans quelle mesure elles peuvent favoriser des transformations sociales et environnementales positives.

L'enjeu est d'examiner à la fois la légitimité perçue de ces alliances et leur impact réel sur les fondations et les entreprises partenaires.

Summary

This project explores partnerships between foundations and private companies, focusing on their effects on stakeholder perceptions and their potential for societal transformation. In the first phase, researchers will conduct a systematic literature review to develop a framework for analyzing corporate philanthropy and the legitimacy of such collaborations. The second phase will involve a qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews with foundation managers, donors, and volunteers in the environmental sector.

Research purpose

This project seeks to understand how these collaborations influence the perceptions of key stakeholders—including donors, volunteers, and foundation managers—and whether such partnerships can truly drive positive social and environmental transformation.

The research explores the perceived legitimacy of these alliances and their tangible impacts on both foundations and corporate partners.



Quelles sont les approches efficaces, pourquoi et pour qui ? Évaluation des traitements résidentiels de la toxicomanie chez les jeunes en Colombie-Britannique | What works, why, and for whom? Evaluating live-in substance use treatment for youth in British Columbia

[Lien vers la page du projet](#) | [Link to the research project page](#)

Partenaire | Partner

The Bridge Youth & Family Services



Résumé

Ce projet a été conçu pour approfondir la compréhension pratique et théorique du traitement de la toxicomanie chez les jeunes, avec des implications importantes tant sur le plan académique qu'au niveau communautaire. Étant donné que les centres de traitement de la toxicomanie sont gérés et gérés par le secteur caritatif, cette recherche vise également à diffuser ses résultats au sein du secteur philanthropique, notamment auprès des fondations octroyant des subventions dans le domaine de la santé mentale des jeunes.

Objectifs du projet

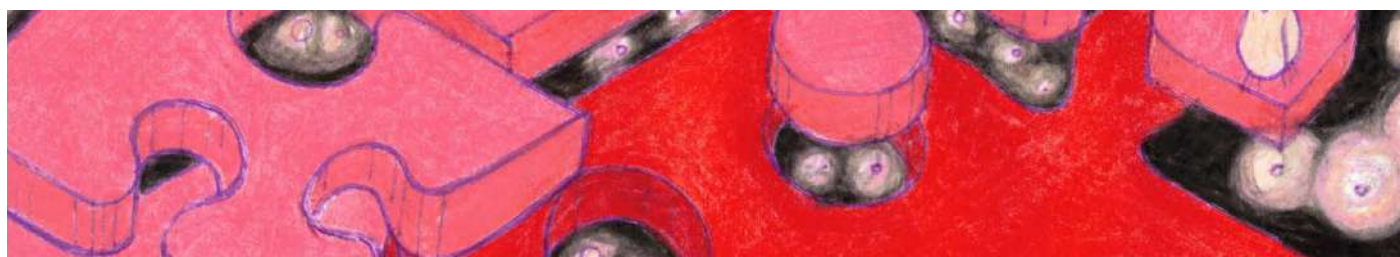
Les objectifs vont au-delà de la simple évaluation visant à déterminer si le programme est associé ou non à une diminution de la consommation de substances. L'équipe de recherche souhaite plutôt apporter une contribution substantielle à la littérature, au domaine, à la communauté locale et au secteur caritatif dans son ensemble en adoptant une approche holistique pour répondre aux questions suivantes : qu'est-ce qui fonctionne, pourquoi et pour qui ?

Summary

This project was developed to advance practical and theoretical understanding of youth substance use treatment, with significant academic and community-level implications. Given that substance use centers are administered and delivered through the charitable sector, this research further seeks to disseminate findings throughout the philanthropic sector to grantmaking foundations working in the area of youth mental health. Advancing our understanding of how to maximize the impact of youth substance use treatment is highly pertinent given the urgent and evolving nature of youth substance use and the critical need for evidence-based, developmentally informed treatment approaches.

Research purpose

The goals extend beyond simply evaluating whether or not the program is associated with decreased substance use. Instead, the research team aims to provide a substantial contribution to the literature, field, local community, and the charitable sector at large by taking a holistic approach in asking: What works, why, and for whom?



Exploration de grands modèles linguistiques pour améliorer l'agrégation des données relatives à l'octroi de subventions au Canada | Exploring Large Language Models to Improve Grantmaking Data Aggregation in Canada

[Lien vers la page du projet](#) | [Link to the research project page](#)

Résumé

Ce projet explore la façon dont les grands modèles linguistiques (LLM) peuvent améliorer l'agrégation et l'analyse des données T3010. Les déclarations T3010, déclarées par les fondations elles-mêmes, demeurent la source de données la plus complète au Canada, malgré des délais de 18 à 24 mois, un système de classification vaste et désuet, et l'incapacité de répondre à des questions cruciales sur le comportement des fondations et l'impact de l'octroi de subventions. Au cœur de ces défis se trouve l'utilité limitée du cadre classificatoire général de la T3010, qui ne parvient pas à saisir les nuances nécessaires à une analyse significative. Ce projet utilisera de grands modèles linguistiques (LLM) et l'analyse de groupes pour développer une typologie plus détaillée et plus précise des activités de bienfaisance. Ce système de classification amélioré aidera le secteur philanthropique à répondre à des questions réglementaires et politiques clés, à améliorer la prise de décision fondée sur des données et à favoriser des résultats équitables dans l'ensemble de la société.

Objectifs du projet

Cette étude comporte 3 objectifs principaux :

1. Élaborer une typologie détaillée
2. Évaluer l'impact des politiques
3. Faciliter la mobilisation des connaissances

Summary

This project explores how Large Language Models (LLMs) can enhance the aggregation and analysis of T3010 data. T3010 filings, self-reported by foundations, remain Canada's most comprehensive data source despite their delays of 18-24 months, broad and outdated classificatory system, and inability to address critical questions about grantmaking behaviour and impact. At the core of these challenges is the limited utility of the T3010's broad classificatory framework, which fails to capture the nuance required for meaningful analysis. To confront this problem, this project will employ Large Language Models (LLMs) and cluster analysis to develop a more detailed and granular typology of charitable activities. This enhanced classification system will support the philanthropic sector in answering key regulatory and policy questions, improving data-driven decision-making, and fostering equitable outcomes across society.

Research purpose

This study has 3 main objectives:

1. Develop a Detailed Typology
2. Evaluate Policy Impacts
3. Facilitate Knowledge Mobilization



Financement des banques alimentaires dans les provinces et principales villes au Canada | Food Banks Finances in Canadian Provinces and Main Cities

[Lien vers la page du projet](#) | [Link to the research project page](#)

Résumé

Il est essentiel de recueillir systématiquement des informations financières sur les banques alimentaires afin d'illustrer avec précision la situation existante et les défis auxquels ces organisations sont confrontées. Malheureusement, ces organisations sont mal comprises au Canada. Actuellement, peu de recherches sur la dimension financière des banques alimentaires et de leurs fondations respectives peuvent être trouvées dans la littérature. La littérature se concentre sur les opérations et l'utilisation. Par conséquent, la préparation de la série de notes de recherche est une tentative de combler cette lacune, de fournir une cartographie plus large du secteur philanthropique des banques alimentaires par le biais d'une description de leur situation financière.

Objectifs du projet

Le but de cette étude est d'examiner l'information financière des banques alimentaires dans les provinces et les principales villes canadiennes. Un autre exercice de cartographie offrira une vue d'ensemble de la situation et fournira certaines réponses aux questions soulevées dans le rapport.

Démarche

1. Contextualisation et problématisation de la question de recherche : le cadre de référence
2. Identification des banques alimentaires par province disposant d'un numéro d'entreprise
3. Collecte et analyse de données sur les organisations à partir du formulaire T3010 et de leur site web

Summary

There is a crucial need to systematically gather financial information on food banks to accurately illustrate the existing situation and challenges faced by those organizations. Unfortunately, there is a lack of understanding about these nonprofit organizations in Canada. Currently, little research on the financial dimension of food banks and their respective foundations can be found in the literature. Literature focus on the operations and use. Hence the preparation of the series of research notes is an attempt to address this gap, to provide a wider map of the food banks philanthropic sector through a description of their financial situation.

Research purpose

The purpose of this study is to examine the financial information of food banks in Canadian provinces and in main Canadian cities. A further mapping exercise will offer an overview of the situation and provide some answers to questions raised in the report.

Research approach

1. Contextualizing and problematizing the research question: the framework
2. Identification of food banks with business numbers by province
3. Data collection and analysis on organizations using the T3010 form and their website



Cartographier la philanthropie de droite au Canada | Mapping Right-Wing Philanthropy in Canada

[Lien vers la page du projet](#) | [Link to the research project page](#)

Résumé

Dans le contexte post-pandémique marqué par les mouvements pour la justice sociale et environnementale, cette recherche explore comment certaines fondations canadiennes utilisent l'infrastructure philanthropique pour soutenir des causes de droite, en contraste avec les pratiques dites progressistes. Le projet vise à cartographier les fondations engagées dans des mouvements sociaux ou environnementaux conservateurs au Canada. Il fournira une typologie des fondations identifiées, analysera leur rôle dans la légitimation idéologique, et posera les bases pour une intervention critique dans les débats sectoriels.

Objectif du projet

L'objectif est de cartographier, analyser et comprendre les pratiques philanthropiques conservatrices au Canada, en mettant en lumière leur rôle idéologique et politique dans l'espace public.

Démarche

1. Revue de littérature approfondie sur les mouvements de droite contemporains au Canada et le rôle de la philanthropie dans le changement social
2. Entretiens informels avec des experts des mouvements conservateurs canadiens
3. Analyse empirique et cartographie des fondations subventionnaires appuyant des causes conservatrices
4. Analyse critique du rôle de ces fondations dans la légitimation idéologique des mouvements conservateurs

Summary

In the wake of COVID-19 and growing social and environmental justice movements, this project investigates how some Canadian philanthropic foundations actively support right-wing causes. It aims to map and classify foundations that fund conservative or anti-environmental movements in Canada. The findings will provide insight into how these institutions influence public discourse and philanthropic policy and lay the groundwork for future critical interventions in sectoral reform debates.

Research purpose

It aims to map, analyze, and understand the conservative philanthropic practices in Canada and examine their ideological and political influence within the broader philanthropic and civic landscape.

Research approach

1. Comprehensive literature review on contemporary right-wing movements in Canada and the relationship between philanthropy and social change.
 2. Informal interviews/discussions with experts on Canadian conservative movements
- Empirical mapping and analysis of grantmaking foundations that support right-wing causes
4. Critical analysis of how foundations contribute to the ideological legitimization of right-wing narratives.



La philanthropie sur le terrain : communauté, solidarité et résilience dans le Canada atlantique | Philanthropy in Place: Community, Care, and Resilience in Atlantic Canada

Résumé

Cet ouvrage, qui paraîtra prochainement, examine comment la philanthropie contribue au développement durable, à la résilience et au bien-être social dans le Canada atlantique. Il soutient que la philanthropie dans la région va au-delà des dons formels pour englober le bénévolat, l'entraide et la solidarité communautaire. S'appuyant sur des recherches menées en collaboration avec le PhiLab Atlantic Hub, il explore des thèmes tels que les perspectives autochtones, la résilience climatique, l'entreprise sociale, le développement rural et la justice environnementale. Les auteurs mettent en évidence à la fois les atouts et les défis du paysage philanthropique de la région, notamment la capacité de financement limitée et la fragmentation des réseaux. L'ouvrage souligne que les approches ancrées localement et portées par les communautés sont essentielles pour répondre aux enjeux sociaux, économiques et environnementaux.

Objectifs de la recherche

1. Examiner comment la philanthropie est conceptualisée et mise en pratique dans le Canada atlantique.
2. Analyser le rôle de la philanthropie dans le soutien à la résilience communautaire, à la durabilité et à la justice sociale et environnementale au sein des communautés rurales et autochtones.
3. Explorer comment les partenariats entre les établissements universitaires, les organisations communautaires et les acteurs philanthropiques peuvent renforcer le développement régional et le renforcement des capacités.

Summary

This new book, soon to be published examines how philanthropy supports sustainability, resilience, and social well-being in Atlantic Canada. The book argues that philanthropy in the region extends beyond formal donations to include volunteerism, mutual aid, and community care. Drawing on collaborative research through the PhiLab Atlantic Hub, it explores themes such as Indigenous perspectives, climate resilience, social enterprise, rural development, and environmental justice. The authors highlight both the strengths and challenges of the region's philanthropic landscape, including limited funding capacity and fragmented networks. The volume emphasizes place-based and community-driven approaches as essential for addressing social, economic, and environmental issues. Overall, the book calls for stronger partnerships, broader definitions of philanthropy, and more inclusive strategies for long-term regional resilience.

Research purpose

1. To examine how philanthropy is conceptualized and practiced in Atlantic Canada, including both formal and informal forms of giving.
2. To analyze the role of philanthropy in supporting community resilience, sustainability, and social/environmental justice in rural and Indigenous communities.
3. To explore how partnerships between academic institutions, community organizations, and philanthropic actors can strengthen regional development and capacity building.

Projets de recherche doctoraux et post-doctoraux | Doctoral and postdoctoral research projects

Femvertising et mouvements féministes : entre visibilité des luttes et reconfiguration des discours | Femvertising and Feminist Movements: Between the Visibility of Struggles and the Reconfiguration of Discourse

Par Valentine Hainneville

Résumé

Dans un contexte marqué par la montée des inégalités sociales et de genre, le femvertising constitue un terrain privilégié pour analyser les tensions entre transformation sociale et logique de communication. D'un côté, ces campagnes peuvent contribuer à visibiliser certaines revendications féministes et à mobiliser de nouveaux publics; de l'autre, elles peuvent neutraliser ou dépolitiser les luttes en les reformulant dans un registre individualisant et consumériste. Valentine cherche ainsi à comprendre dans quelles conditions ces initiatives participent réellement au renforcement des mouvements sociaux, et dans quelles situations elles en redéfinissent les cadres discursifs et stratégiques. Ses travaux contribuent aux réflexions collectives du PhiLab sur les dynamiques de mobilisation en examinant comment les mouvements féministes négocient aussi leurs relations avec les acteurs philanthropiques. Elle analyse notamment le rôle des fondations et leur financement, la légitimation ou la reconfiguration des revendications liées à l'égalité de genre et à la transition socio-écologique. Cette perspective permet d'éclairer les recompositions contemporaines du pouvoir d'agir collectif, à l'intersection des logiques militantes et philanthropiques.

By Valentine Hainneville

Summary

In a context marked by rising social and gender inequalities, femvertising provides a prime lens through which to analyze the tensions between social transformation and the logic of communication. On the one hand, these campaigns can help bring certain feminist demands to the forefront and mobilize new audiences; on the other, they can neutralize or depoliticize these struggles by reframing them in individualistic and consumerist terms. Valentine thus seeks to understand under what conditions these initiatives genuinely contribute to strengthening social movements, and in which situations they redefine their discursive and strategic frameworks. Her work contributes to PhiLab's collective reflections on the dynamics of mobilization by examining how feminist movements also negotiate their relationships with philanthropic actors. In particular, she analyzes the role of foundations and their funding, as well as the legitimization or reconfiguration of demands related to gender equality and the socio-ecological transition. This perspective sheds light on contemporary reconfigurations of collective agency, at the intersection of activist and philanthropic logics.



Philanthropie et action climatique communautaire dans le Canada Atlantique | Philanthropy and Community Climate Action in Atlantic Canada

Partenaire | Partner

Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia



Par Edmund Yirenkyi

Résumé

Le projet de recherche doctorale d'Edmund Yirenkyi, soutenu par PhiLab et mené en collaboration avec la Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia, vise à examiner comment la philanthropie peut mieux soutenir l'atténuation et l'adaptation aux changements climatiques dans le Canada atlantique, avec un accent particulier sur la Nouvelle-Écosse.

Il explore des initiatives dirigées par les communautés, telles que les coopératives d'énergie renouvelable, la restauration des écosystèmes et la planification de la résilience rurale, tout en analysant la manière dont le financement philanthropique s'intègre aux acteurs publics, privés et locaux.

Le travail identifie les lacunes en matière de financement, évalue des pratiques efficaces comme l'octroi de subventions fondé sur la confiance, et met en lumière des possibilités de collaboration renforcée entre les différents secteurs.

Cette recherche vise à renforcer le rôle de la philanthropie comme catalyseur d'une action climatique plus équitable, plus efficace et durable à long terme dans la région.

By Edmund Yirenkyi

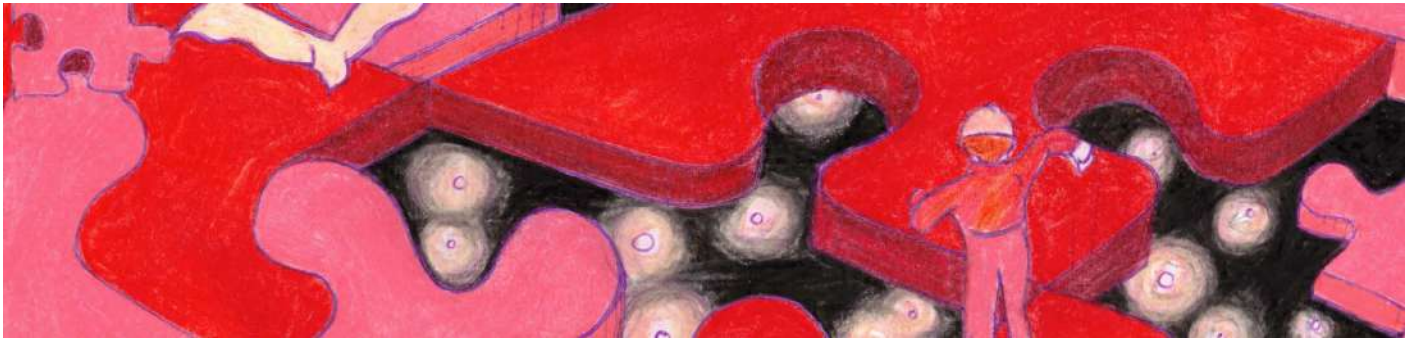
Summary

Edmund Yirenkyi's PhiLab supported PhD research project, a collaboration with Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia, aims to examine how philanthropy can better support climate change mitigation and adaptation in Atlantic Canada, with a focus on Nova Scotia.

It explores community-led initiatives such as renewable energy cooperatives, ecosystem restoration, and rural resilience planning, while analyzing how philanthropic funding integrates with public, private, and local actors.

The work identifies funding gaps, evaluates effective practices like trust-based grantmaking, and highlights opportunities for stronger cross-sector collaboration.

The research aims to strengthen philanthropy's role as a catalyst for more equitable, effective, and long-term climate action in the region.



Comprendre le financement des systèmes alimentaires dans la communauté mi'kmaq de Three Rivers | Understanding Food System Financing in the Mi'kmaq Community of Three Rivers

Partenaire | Partner

Three Rivers Mi'kmaq Band



Par Emily Doyle

Résumé

Le projet de recherche postdoctorale de la Dre Emily Doyle, soutenu par le PhiLab, s'est déroulé de mai 2023 à mai 2025 dans le but de « mieux comprendre le financement du système alimentaire de la bande mi'kmaq de Three Rivers ».

Ce projet a été élaboré en collaboration avec la bande mi'kmaq de Three Rivers, qui cherchait des moyens plus équitables de financer les initiatives communautaires visant à lutter contre l'insécurité alimentaire. L'inventaire des systèmes alimentaires s'inspire du [rapport 2023](#) sur le système alimentaire communautaire de la stratégie alimentaire de Thunder Bay et de sa région. Nous avons ajouté des questions sur le financement des initiatives liées aux systèmes alimentaires à ce rapport afin de mieux comprendre l'existence et le potentiel de la philanthropie dans les systèmes alimentaires de cette communauté.

La nature de cette recherche réside dans le fait qu'il s'agit d'un processus axé sur l'engagement communautaire visant à aboutir à une compréhension collaborative du système alimentaire. La publication finale des résultats de ce processus est à venir.

By Emily Doyle

Summary

Dr. Emily Doyle's PhiLab supported postdoctoral research project was conducted between May 2023-May 2025 with the intent to 'Engage to Understand the Resourcing of the Three Rivers Mi'kmaq Band Food System'.

This project was built in collaboration with the Three Rivers Mi'kmaq Band as they sought out more equitable ways to finance community-based responses to food insecurity. The food systems inventory is modelled on the Thunder Bay + Area Food Strategy Community Food System [Report Card 2023](#). We added questions about the resourcing of food systems initiatives to the report card to understand more about the existence and potential of philanthropy in food systems in this community.

The nature of this research is that it is a process which focuses on community engagement to lead to a collaborative understanding of the food system. Final publication of the results of this process is forthcoming.

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