L'Année PhiLanthropique
The PhiLanthropic Year

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PhiLab

Coordonnées | Contact
philab@uqam.ca
www.philab.uqam.ca
514-987-3000 #8576

Directeurs de publication
Publication Directors
Elisabeth Robinot & Adam Saifer

Rédacteurs en chef | Editors in Chief
Elisabeth Robinot & Adam Saifer

Coordination de la rédaction
Edition Coordination
Laurence Croteau

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Laurence Croteau

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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).

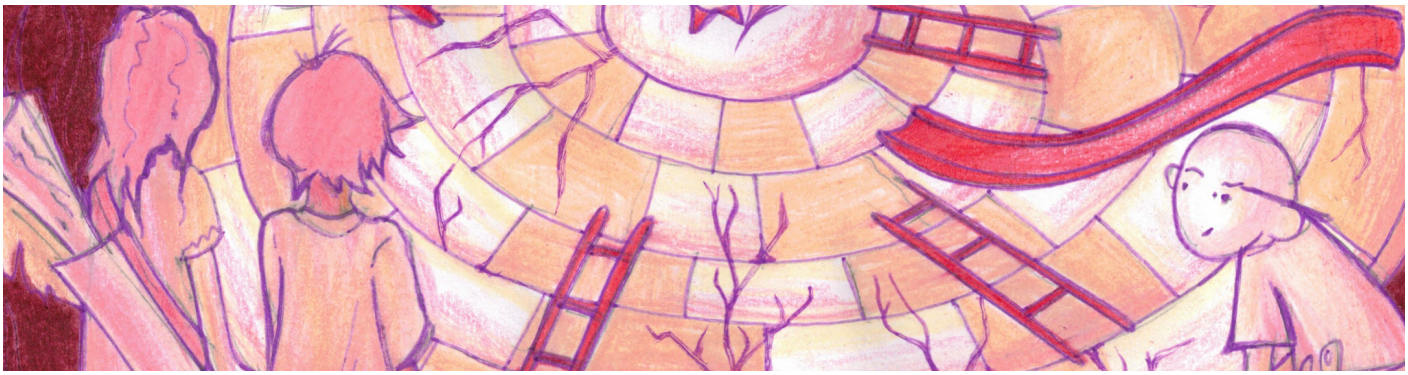
The PhiLanthropic Year publishes scientific and professional articles that meet the basic requirements of scientific publication. The journal has a peer-reviewed committee as well as basic editorial guidelines that ensure a quality standard for the texts it publishes. These latter take on different forms - 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.

Démocratie : quand la crise force le renouveau | Democracy: When Crisis Drives Renewal



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 Qaujisaqtiit 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 adapted[1].

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 areas[2]. 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.

“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.”

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 Inuinnait 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 - Tukisigiarvik 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.

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.

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

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Canadian Philanthropy Partnership
Research Network

Université du Québec à Montréal
Pavillon Saint-Denis (AB), 10e étage.
1290, rue Saint-Denis
Montréal (Québec) H2X 3J7

Téléphone : 514-987-3000 #8576
Courriel : philab@uqam.ca

www.philab.uqam.ca