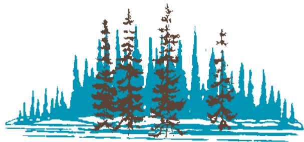
Intersections and Innovations

Change for Canada's Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector



The Muttart Foundation

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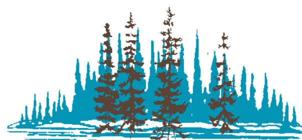

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Acknowledgements

For far too long, Canada has lacked a comprehensive resource examining Canada's charitable sector. That has now ended.

The Muttart Foundation has spent many years focusing on building the capacity of charities in this country. The publication of this collection is another contribution to that effort. By understanding more about itself, the sector can continue to develop and find new ways to serve Canadians and those in need outside our nation.

The authors of these essays bring different perspectives on the role and inner workings of Canada's charities. Collectively, they bring an unprecedented insight into the work of organizations whose diversity is exceeded only by their desire to serve.

It is difficult to express adequate appreciation to Dr. Susan Phillips of Carleton University for her leadership of this project. She has been a source of encouragement, persuasion, cajoling and improving authors from across the country. Her efforts now bear fruit as we make this material available to students, academics, practitioners and others interested in the history and future of Canada's charities.

Amanda Mayer of the Lawson Foundation volunteered at the outset to be the administrative overlord of the project, keeping the editors and authors up to date and keeping track of various versions of articles. We are so grateful for her skills, her patience and her friendship.

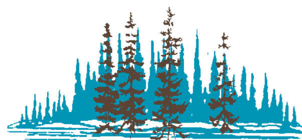
None of this would have been possible, of course, without the work of authors, themselves academics and/or practitioners. They took time from their schedules to contribute to a resource we hope many will find valuable.

Lesley Fraser did an incredible job in editing the various chapters and ensuring consistency. And Don Myhre of P40 Communications has again brought his talent to the fore in providing an attractive design for a Muttart publication.

The work of all of these individuals has come together in this resource which we dedicate to all of those in, or interested in, Canada's charitable sector.

Malcolm Burrows, President

Bob Wyatt, Executive Director



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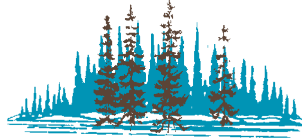

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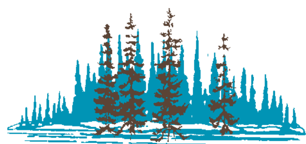

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Community and Corporate Intersections

Chapter 25

Indigenous Peoples, Communities, and the Canadian Charitable Sector

Shereen Munshi and Elisa Levi
The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

We [the Canadian charitable sector] are committed to supporting the fulfilment of the vision of [Indigenous] peoples, to building a fairer and more just country, and to the recommendations that will be outlined by the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. We will work, each in our own way, and together, towards achieving the goal of reconciliation and, in the end, a much stronger, more inclusive Canada.

– The Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action

Preface: Key Terms

All my relations: An acknowledgement of one's personal place in the universe as well as a recognition of the place of others and other living things. "All my relations" is a phrase used to acknowledge those who came before us and those who will come after us – to understand that everything that is, is connected and that connection sustains us. "All my relations" as a principle sees interconnection and does not recognize the "other" as less than or separate from.

Indigenous ways of knowing: Indigenous Peoples' creation stories, ceremonies, and ways are deeply rooted in the land from which they originate. While there are differences, as different as the geographical topography of Canada, there are similarities and shared principles. This chapter is grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing: technical information, innovations, and practices

developed from centuries of experience. Indigenous ways of knowing tend to be collectively owned and can be transmitted through stories, songs, folklore, proverbs, rituals, customary laws, languages, agricultural practices, and resource collection.

Reciprocity: The practice of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit, with recognition of what is received and what is provided. Sometimes demonstrated by intentional practices of shared appreciation: the offering of tobacco ties in a Sun Dance, a hunter asking permission from an animal before a kill, a healer placing tobacco on the earth before picking a plant. Policy and framework demonstrations of reciprocity are built into the Treaty relationship, which is at the foundation of Canada's existence: history tells us that it was Indigenous people who insisted that the Treaty relationship with settlers would be one of shared lands, of living together in peaceful co-existence and mutual support (Jamieson, 2014).

Settler philanthropy: Often characterized as traditional, Eurocentric, or Western, settler philanthropy refers to the redistribution of accumulated wealth with the intention of goodwill – an act done or gift made for humanitarian purposes. Missing from the narrative of settler philanthropy are the stories and practices behind wealth accumulated on taken land and on the backs of Indigenous Peoples. It is important to acknowledge the legacy of harm and entitlement attached to philanthropic dollars to build relationships of transparency and trust.

Financial trusts: Financial trusts are established from a financial and legal framework to hold and manage funds received from settlement agreements, impact-benefit agreements, and business activities. Some governing trusts invest resources back into the community, with Indigenous communities leading the decision-making as funders. Other funds are invested for the long-term; the challenge faced by Indigenous leaders is how to responsibly align investment strategies and post-colonial funding strategies and invest their trust assets in ways that respect their broader values and their communities' long-term-development aspirations (Campbell & Sevestre, 2018).

Reconciliation: Following the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2015), "reconciliation" became a widely used umbrella term that refers to the learning of truths, an understanding of the legacy of shared history, and the building and maintaining of better relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, based on atonement and action. It is important to note the value of reconciliation-focused work while recognizing that the word "reconciliation" has been co-opted in today's social and political context. As a result, the word and its intention and meaning have been diluted for many people, communities, and grassroots organizers. The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada (The Circle) understands the work of reconciliation not as a singular definition but rather as a way of being and working to increase justice, access, and equity for Indigenous Peoples.

Since the release of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Final Report* in 2015, an energized commitment has emerged within the Canadian charitable sector to develop meaningful relations with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and organizations through reconciliation-focused work. The common thread of philanthropy in this era of reconciliation is the intention to foster a space for foundations, charities, and nonprofits to work alongside Indigenous-led organizations, communities, and grassroots movements. This goal requires learning about Indigenous values, addressing systems of power and rethinking public policies and the practices of philanthropy.

This learning journey must begin with the acknowledgement that Indigenous communities are not charity cases, nor is philanthropy a new concept – though the word itself may not be commonly used in Indigenous communities. Philanthropy, in the sense of caring for our fellow human beings, is a deeply held principle of Indigenous Peoples. To move forward in an atmosphere of understanding, dignity, and respect toward the shared goal of reconciliation, the Canadian charitable sector must move away from the one-way-relationship system – a wealthy benefactor giving to a deserving cause. The work of reconciliation requires co-created, collaborative, multilateral relationships in which all parties are committed to learning and growing. Through this adapted form of philanthropy, the Canadian charitable sector can work alongside Indigenous Peoples to build communities and address challenges such as inclusion, cultural and language revitalization, health, housing, education, employment, and climate change.

This chapter seeks to activate this learning journey. We provide a timeline of philanthropic acts pre- and post-colonization, share the wisdom of Indigenous leaders, and highlight challenges and opportunities for the Canadian charitable sector by focusing on organizations that have changed the dynamics and ways in which the charitable sector aligns itself with Indigenous communities and organizations.

Adapting Worldviews

The knowledge and intention of values like reciprocity can be found in the respective languages of Indigenous Peoples. A word like philanthropy, however, is often unfamiliar and can be difficult to translate. This example of Indigenous and settler worldviews colliding can be used to understand the revision that is required of the Canadian charitable sector to better work alongside Indigenous Peoples.

In *Walking Together: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Perspectives in Curriculum*, Dr. Leroy Little Bear demonstrates the challenges of integrating Indigenous philosophy with settler philosophy. He assesses the settler value system as being linear and singular – static and objective. He uses the concept of time to explain this linearity: "time begins somewhere way back there and follows a linear progression from A to B to C to D" (Little Bear, 2000). Little Bear identifies how linearity manifests in social organizations that are hierarchical in terms of both structure and power; the concept of time can be equated to the singular, static, and linear processes of the charitable system. Most importantly, the settler worldview sees philanthropy as a one-way transaction-based system – a social organization giving wealth or services to those in need, whereas in an Indigenous worldview, the sharers receive as much as they give.

As Little Bear highlights, Indigenous philosophy is rooted in the understanding that existence consists of energy. He explains that "all things are animate, imbued with spirit, and are in constant motion. In this realm of energy and spirit, interrelationships between all entities are of paramount importance […] the idea of all things being in constant motion or flux leads to a holistic and cyclical view of the world" (Little Bear, 2000). Under this cyclical worldview, acts of philanthropy are best embodied by Indigenous reciprocity, a concept that is an integral part of many Indigenous worldviews.

Colonialization and the Charitable Sector in Canada

It is natural in many Indigenous cultures to pay homage to location, ancestry, and creation stories when meeting someone new. Therefore, it is important to position a timeline. Although significantly summarized, this is the story of Canada's charitable sector.

In the 480 years since the first written account of a philanthropic act in what would become Canada – the gift of medicine from Indigenous Peoples that allowed members of the Cartier expedition of 1535/1536 to survive – the history is now painfully clear. "Cultural genocide" was the term used by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to describe systematic attempts to contain, destroy, and absorb Indigenous Peoples into "Canadian" culture (Brascoupé Peters et al., 2016).

There is a complex history of philanthropy in relation to Indigenous Peoples in Canada, but the six-year residential-school inquiry provides a short overview: it found that the government-funded, church-run residential schools were the key to a policy of cultural genocide designed to "kill the Indian in the child." It is an essential step for nonprofit organizations to look back and take the time to think about the charitable sector's role in the Indian Residential Schools system.

Going back to the creation of "settler philanthropy," as it is known, one must recognize that endowments in philanthropic organizations were created through the accumulation of wealth. The early (and continuing) wealth in Canada was produced by resource extraction, agricultural production, settlement, and transportation on disputed land. Land and resource extraction directly impacted the practical needs of Indigenous communities and created impediments to self-sufficiency. Settler philanthropy benefited from practices, movements, and actions that negatively affected Indigenous Peoples.

Wealth creation inhibited Indigenous self-determination. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which delineates the rights of indigenous Peoples, explicitly addresses a key issue of self-determination: the obligation of governments and corporations to obtain the free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of Indigenous communities for any project on their land, "particularly in connection with the development, utilization, or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources" (UNDRIP, 2017). The principle of free, prior, and informed consent refers to the right of local communities to give or withhold their consent to projects that may affect their territories. "Free" refers to consent given voluntarily, without manipulation, intimidation, or coercion. "Prior" refers to consent that is given before the project activities start.

“Informed” implies that communities have received complete information about the project, its location, duration, costs, risks, and impacts (IFIP, 2017). At the formation stages of settler philanthropy in Canada, Indigenous Peoples did not have free, prior, and informed consent.

It is now known how and why philanthropic systems in Indigenous communities, which honoured gifts and the sharing of responsibilities, such as the Potlatch of the West Coast and the Sun Dance of the Prairies, were severed, particularly by the banning of essential cultural practices in 1884 (following the enactment of Canada’s Indian Act). While Indigenous Peoples and “philanthropy” were subjugated for centuries, a renewed “Indigenous philanthropy” is emerging. As indicated by research from The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, Indigenous charities and donors are on the rise, and networks are growing to address fundamental community-defined issues. The intentions behind these renewed practices are informed by Indigenous principles and ways of being – in particular the principle of reciprocity.

Philanthropy and Reciprocity

When speaking at the International Funders for Indigenous Peoples summit in 2014, Roberta Jamieson spoke of Indigenous reciprocity and how it relates to the concept of settler philanthropy. She explained that Indigenous reciprocity is much more complex than an exchange of favours:

> Reciprocity is intended to maintain balance […] to maintain equilibrium in a relationship. With reciprocity, we feel good about giving, and we feel good about being offered a gift. We feel nourished by the transaction, both as giver–receivers and receiver–givers. When reciprocity is not practised in Indigenous philanthropy, things easily can go awry: givers feel unappreciated and resentful, receivers feel their dignity has been diminished, guilty about not having been able to give back. The loss of balance is felt in our hearts (Jamieson, 2014).

Jamieson went on to explain that to move philanthropy into reciprocity, a relationship must be built for the purpose of cultivating the relationship itself. Unlike numerous forms of settler-based philanthropy, the transfer of funds cannot develop a relationship or override natural components of good relations: human interaction, transparency, trust, and compliance. Through the process of intentional relationship-building, settler philanthropy has the potential to develop a consciousness of reciprocity through interconnectedness. This entails working with an open mind to unconventional approaches, engaging in courage, conviction, collaboration, and confidence.

To further deepen understanding of Indigenous reciprocity, Jamieson shares the wisdom of transgenerational reciprocity, as embodied by the Seventh Generation, which is integral to the concept of reciprocity:

> As is true of many Indigenous peoples, my own people, the Mohawks of the Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, are instructed that in living our lives and making our decisions for the future, we must focus our attention not on ourselves, not on our children, or even our grandchildren, but rather on the Seventh

> Generation – those yet to be born, children whose faces are still coming towards us. The Seventh Generation are our great-grandchildren's great-grandchildren. The Seventh Generation is not a figurative abstraction: it consists of real human beings not yet born – the people who will call us "their ancestors." They have every right to expect that we will realize the opportunity to put our minds together to improve life for our children.

Jamieson shares that a focus on the Seventh Generation has been a powerful force in her own life and explains how it teaches us about the opportunity and responsibility to create change:

> It has taught me that I do not live alone in this world: we walk with our past, our present, and our common future. It has taught me to seek a longer view whenever I have felt the push of impatience or the immobilization of despair. If we think of the Seventh Generation, we will be pushed to go beyond the mark, to go in new directions, to find opportunities that don't appear when we are thinking of the short term. The Seventh Generation is with us in spirit here, today. They are our future, cheering us on. We need them for our lives to have meaning. They need us to provide them with a foundation, a future which is viable and sustainable (Jamieson, 2014).

Adapting settler philanthropy to embrace Indigenous worldviews and actively practise the principle of reciprocity while holding a responsibility to the Seventh Generation has the potential to transform settler philanthropy; the challenge for the Canadian nonprofit sector is where to begin. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the philanthropic community's Declaration of Action are a good place to start.

Starting Points for a Transformed Philanthropy

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The year 2014 was a catalyst that sparked the era of reconciliation in communities, sectors, and academia from coast to coast to coast. The increased commitment is a direct result of the courage, bravery, and resilience of residential school survivors and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC's mandate is to inform all Canadians about the honest and true history of the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) system. The TRC documented the experience of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis survivors, families, and communities affected by the IRS system through a series of national gatherings, community events, and individual truth-sharing. In 2015, the TRC presented its recommendations, consisting of 94 Calls to Action that defined areas that Canadians needed to address to mend the ills resulting from Canada's colonial legacy. Although Canada's nonprofit sector is not directly addressed in the Calls to Action, they offer a valuable guide to reconciliation in areas that include child welfare, education, language and culture, health, and justice.

It is of utmost importance that staff, executives, boards of directors, and volunteers working in Canada's nonprofit sector read the TRC Calls to Action in full. Knowledge of them is the first step to developing areas of focus and approaching reconciliation-focused work with intention and mindfulness.

The Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action

Coinciding with the TRC closing event, a group of Canada's philanthropic organizations (including The Circle, Community Foundations of Canada, Philanthropic Foundations Canada, the Martin Family Initiative, and the Counselling Foundation of Canada) presented The Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action as a commitment to ensure that positive action on reconciliation will continue. Directly addressed to Canada's nonprofit sector, the Declaration of Action is an invitation to join in moving forward in an atmosphere of understanding, dignity, and respect toward the shared goal of reconciliation.

The declaration "is a way to acknowledge and to honour the survivors by making a commitment to listen and to learn from their experience, to act to build new relationships with Indigenous Peoples that will support their healing, to work towards reconciliation and the implementation of the spirit, intent, and content of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) recommendations."

The declaration is available as a framework for Canada's nonprofit sector to use. Signatories commit to:

- **Learn and remember by ...**
  - listening with respect, compassion, and empathy while reaching out to those who have given voice to the tragedy that was the Indian Residential Schools experience, understanding the cumulative impact of unresolved trauma passed from generation to generation and remembering the voices that were silenced; and
  - engaging the philanthropic community in the dialogue necessary to ensure that we do this with, and not for, Aboriginal Peoples in all their diversity.
- **Understand and acknowledge by ...**
  - learning about the history and legacy of the colonial system that imposed the Indian Residential Schools system that dispossessed and inflicted harm upon Aboriginal Peoples and their cultures, so that we can understand how to work toward the reconciliation that is needed now and into the future; and
  - recognizing the need for an ongoing commitment to support the continuation of this multigenerational journey of healing and reconciliation.
- **Participate and act by ...**
  - sharing our networks, our voices, and our resources to include and benefit Aboriginal Peoples;
  - committing to building relationships with Aboriginal Peoples and extending the reach of our efforts in both policy and practice; and
  - exploring new opportunities to support healing and reconciliation and the implementation of the spirit, intent, and content of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's findings and recommendations.

The declaration is housed with [The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada] (The Circle) and continues to influence Canada's nonprofit sector through reconciliation-focused work. The upholding of the commitment made by signatories of the declaration is supported by a number of Indigenous-focused organizations, including The Circle.

The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

The mandate of The Circle is to transform philanthropy and contribute to positive change within Indigenous communities by "creating spaces of learning, innovation, relationship-building, co-creation and activation" (The Circle, 2016).

The Circle is a membership-based organization that serves two spheres of membership:

- Indigenous-led organizations, communities, and grassroots movements working in unique and powerful ways with wisdom and experience to address challenges of inequity, climate change, cultural revitalization, justice, food security, policy change, and more; and
- philanthropic organizations working to adapt settler philanthropic practices to better serve Indigenous Peoples and reconciliation efforts through building relationships, creating Indigenous-focused funding models, convening opportunities for dialogue, and developing innovative approaches that challenge colonial systems of oppression.

The Circle cultivates deep and informed relationships with all members and intentionally fosters spaces for members to connect and discover opportunities for co-creation through gatherings, programming, research, social media, and meaningful dialogue. It works to increase information about Indigenous forms of philanthropy, access to opportunity for Indigenous organizations, cultural competency and capacity of philanthropic organizations, and commitment and engagement in reconciliation. In addition, The Circle seeks to foster investment in Indigenous communities and Indigenous-led initiatives.

The Circle's programming for the philanthropic sector follows a pathway to reconciliation. The pathway offers an example for organizations in Canada's nonprofit sector looking to increase their aptitude to work alongside Indigenous partners toward the shared goal of reconciliation. The pathway begins with the individual. The Circle suggests that the work of reconciliation cannot begin and stay in the professional space. It involves a willingness to be uncomfortable, to undertake personal reflection, to understand social location, and to uncover personal biases. This stage of understanding oneself leads to the unearthing of colonial themes ingrained in day-to-day life and interaction.

The next step is to learn about and engage in the neighbourhood and local community. This stage involves the development of a deepened relationship with land, territories, and community. At this stage, individuals can position themselves in relation to the full history of the land and actively seek opportunities to develop relationships with both urban and rural Indigenous people from an informed place. In the era of reconciliation, there are a number of ways to engage with local Indigenous businesses, programs, and festivals. By actively engaging on a personal and community level, one creates a foundation to bring reconciliation-focused work into the professional space. The deeper sense of understanding, respect, and relationship creates an ability to sense power dynamics, challenge systems of oppression, and create reciprocal partnerships.

It is important that Canada's nonprofit leadership create space for staff, volunteers, executives, and board members to engage in each of the steps while making them feel supported in doing so. What can be seen as abstract and time-consuming has the potential to strengthen understanding and the ability to bring one's whole self to work in a purposeful way.

Ontario Indigenous Youth Partnership Project

The ability to work from a position of awareness is key to reconciliation-focused work. New transformative models of reciprocity are emerging, such as the Ontario Indigenous Youth Partnership Project (OIYPP). OIYPP works to support Indigenous youth in Ontario to activate their projects and ideas. As an initiative *for* Indigenous youth – led *by* Indigenous youth – OIYPP is a model often considered by philanthropic organizations looking to develop Indigenous-focused granting streams. OIYPP's goal is to create a network of empowered and celebrated Indigenous youth alongside a community of individuals, organizations, and supporters who work toward shared desires for a healthy environment, social inclusivity, and strong cultural connections. OIYPP's values are ever-evolving and come from a place of discussion and unity. Every year, OIYPP's advisory committee, made up of youth and a core team from The Circle and MakeWay (formerly Tides Canada), meet for a day of in-person visualization and relationship-building.

Youth advisors are at the core of what makes OIYPP work. They are distinguished Indigenous youth who bring their own strengths to OIYPP, including their personal and professional experience. They provide insight into both the overall strategy and approach of the program and offer direct connections to the Indigenous youth community. Through OIYPP, advisors are supported in further building their skills and networks to influence the world of philanthropy.

OIYPP supporters include charitable organizations and donors who want to support and empower the creativity of Indigenous youth. Together, and as equal partners with youth advisors and the OIYPP core team, the grantmaking process is highly reflective, values-based, and inclusive. The goal is to ensure that the perspectives of Indigenous youth are central to decision-making and that no applicants get left behind. This means that when financial resources cannot be offered, other in-kind supports are available to add capacity to the project. From an after-school empowerment project for girls to cultural programming that incorporates teachings about wild rice, the diversity of youth-led projects is inspiring and demonstrates how youth are using their connections and experience to effect change for their communities.

Overall, OIYPP focuses on reciprocal learning. Funders and supporters learn from young Indigenous people about their priorities, and youth learn about the philanthropic charitable sector as empowered leaders. Ultimately, all partners build deeper relationships through dialogue and respect, providing an example of cultivating meaningful partnerships for reconciliation.

The Onaman Collective

Other Indigenous-led organizations are reconstructing forms of sharing, caring, and giving in an effort to restore original intentions.

The Onaman (pronounced ah-nah-min) Collective was formed in 2014 by Isaac Murdoch, Christi Belcourt, and Erin Konsmo. The collective finds ways to converge land-based art creation with traditional knowledge, with the ultimate goal of preserving and recovering traditional knowledge, developing traditional art skills, and creating new ways for traditional teachings in the arts to carry on within the next generations. One of the projects is Nimkii Aazhibikong, which means Village of Thunder Mountain. It's the name given by Elders to a year-round Ojibway art, culture, and language-revitalization camp being built by a community of youth, Elders, and organizers north of Elliot Lake, Ontario, within traditional Anishinaabeg territory. The goal of the camp is to create, under the guidance of Elders, a cultural resurgence of sustainable Indigenous practices through the restoration of traditional land, resource protection, and management. The collective is not funded by governments or corporations; rather, it has been financed by the sale of art, donated by Indigenous artisans, through online auctions. This initiative is unique in that it launched with long-term intentions – creating space for the next generations – and its philanthropic spirit is based in action (Onaman Collective, 2018).

The lesson for Canada's philanthropic and nonprofit sector is that initiatives such as the Onaman Collective are developing innovative paths, backward and forward, for a new philanthropy that embraces Indigenous ways of being. The sector needs to become more aware of and engage with them.

Conclusion

The *TRC Final Report* has brought about energized commitment within the Canadian charitable sector. There is abundant opportunity to develop meaningful relations with Indigenous Peoples, communities, and organizations. To foster a space for reconciliation-focused work, settler philanthropy must transform itself to include Indigenous worldviews and principles. This requires deep learning to understand Indigenous values, bring to light systems of power and oppression, and rethink policies and practices – all to realize an adapted form of philanthropy. Fundamental to this process is the need to shift the settler philanthropic paradigm, whereby one gives and the other receives, to instead stress the importance of reciprocity (Adamson, 2011). The work of reconciliation requires co-created, collaborative, multilateral relationships in which all parties are committed to learning and growing. It is only through transformed philanthropy that the Canadian charitable sector can work alongside Indigenous Peoples to build communities and address challenges brought on by legacies of colonialization, extraction, destruction, imperialism, and war.

This chapter provides an opportunity to activate a learning journey. This journey looks to the wisdom of Indigenous leaders, reveals challenges, and uncovers opportunities for the Canadian charitable sector to work alongside Indigenous Peoples, communities, and organizations. As Adamson (2011) says, "If we want to change outcomes in Indigenous communities, the first step for donors is self-reflection."

Taking the idea of self-reflection seriously, this chapter concludes with an invitation.

There is a common thread in Canada's nonprofit sector of hesitancy and fear to engage in Indigenous-focused initiatives – fear of not moving forward in a productive way, fear of the

unknown. There is a substantial risk in remaining idle, however. This space of "reconciliation" can be used as an opportunity for deep reflection. For philanthropic organizations to contribute to the collective path of reconciliation, their cultures must shift on an organizational and systemic level. Change is uncomfortable, but it offers an opportunity to rethink the policies and practices of the philanthropic and nonprofit sector.

The tendencies of settler philanthropy are rooted in a scarcity mentality, based on a notion of having only so much (Sheehan, 2010). This can be linked to the understanding that if dollars and practices shift one way, it means less for everybody else. With this mindset, the way forward is expected to be risk-averse. Reconciliation calls on philanthropy to evaluate its willingness to share grant dollars, recognition, and power.

The way forward can be found in adopting a mindset of abundance and identifying that there is enough to go around. It calls for sharing on all levels: recognition, funding, capacity, decision-making, and prestige. This abundance fosters space for being creative and innovating in the face of risk.

For reconciliation to work, the nonprofit sector needs to focus on the long-term: not everything will fall into place immediately, or when expected. It needs to understand that adapting settler philanthropy does not take away from legacies of goodwill. Rather, it creates room to evolve by investing in Indigenous-led solutions. There is enough to go around when abundance is recognized. We hope that Canada's philanthropic and nonprofit sector will take up an invitation to re-evaluate, rethink, and take risks.

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Biography

Shereen Munshi and Elisa Levi, The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada

Shereen Munshi is a communications professional who was born in Zambia and immigrated to Canada with her family more than 10 years ago. As a proud University of Ottawa alumnus, she has since gone on to amass experience working in the Canadian nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. In her current role as manager of partnerships and strategic communications at The Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, Shereen develops strategic relationships between The Circle and peer organizations that are in alignment with The Circle's values, mission, and strategic goals. In addition, Shereen works to increase visibility, amplify issues and voices of note, and ensure strong, responsive communication to achieve goals in service to The Circle's primary member audiences. She has a compulsion to uphold principles of equity and justice in her work and is nurturing a growing aptitude to amplify deep analysis of people, place, policy, and power to inform the philanthropic and nonprofit sectors. Shereen sits on the Data Policy Coalition Steering Committee, is a proud member of the Next Generation Philanthropy Collaborative, and serves on the Ontario Indigenous Youth Partnership Project core team.

After several years in the nonprofit sector strengthening Indigenous Peoples' health and the reclamation of Indigenous food systems, Elisa Levi is complementing this experience studying medicine at the Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, with graduation in 2021. She contributes her leadership as a community-elected trustee for her First Nation, Chippewas of Nawash; as a board director for the Anishnawbe Health Foundation; and as advisor to the newly established Indigenous Resilience Fund. As a registered dietitian, she holds a master of public health from Lakehead University and BASc from Ryerson University.