



The 2025 Giving Report: Disruption and the Digital Shift of Canadian Donors

SFX: Sound of typing and office ambiance

Mary Barroll: Welcome to CharityVillage Connects. I'm your host, Mary Barroll.

SFX: Hummingbird flying and tone

That's the sound of a Hummingbird pollinating our world and making it a better place.

Music

The Hummingbird is CharityVillage's logo because we strive – like the industrious Hummingbird – to make connections across the nonprofit sector and help make positive change.

We'll offer insight that will help you make sense of your life as a nonprofit professional, make connections to help navigate challenges, and support your organization to deliver on its mission.

Mary Barroll: In this episode of CharityVillage Connects, we take a close look at the insights revealed in the 2025 CanadaHelps Giving Report, about the landscape of charitable giving in Canada, and what they mean for nonprofits and charities across the country. Joined by sector leaders, we examine donor trends, shifting patterns of giving, and the broader implications for fundraising in today's uncertain economic climate.

Nicole Danesi: So, at Canada Helps, we are very proud to publish the Giving Report and it's a labour of love and it's really focused on getting a snapshot in terms of where charities are at across the country.

Allen Davidov: Some good news stories were that giving is up. We've reached an unprecedented mark of \$12.8 billion, that's with a B, which to me was incredible given all that's been going on in the world and all that's been happening.

Samantha Cooke: I would say the one that I was most excited about was the increase in local and regional giving. It gave us the opportunity to engage in philanthropy that feels more personal, more accountable to donors and directly connected to the communities where donors live and work.

Sarah Midanik: It is certainly reflective of our experiences in Indigenous-led charity at Downey Wenjack. We certainly felt the surge of support in 2021, which was definitely driven by what I would refer to as a collective awakening in Canada to the truths of

residential schools, which Indigenous communities have always been knowing. But since then, I would say giving has plateaued.

Aneil Gokhale: The report really talked about the steady decline in the percentage of Canadians that were claiming donations on their tax returns. And, you know, that for me is interesting because I think it's directly connected to the way philanthropy is shifting. I think there's still a lot of generosity and giving happening, but it's happening differently.

Mary Barroll: Hot off the presses is the 8th edition of the Giving Report published by CanadaHelps, the country's largest online platform for charitable giving and a collaborative effort with Environics Analytics, who provide data and demographic insights, Imagine Canada, a national charity dedicated to strengthening the charitable sector itself, and Common Good Strategies, a consulting firm focused on social impact.

SFX Buzz

News clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmbHTdX4trs&t=19s>

“The World Health Organization has officially named the new Corona virus: Covid-19.”

SFX Buzz

News clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dnem1MA-sE8>

“Canadians are demanding answers after unmarked graves of Indigenous children were discovered last week on the grounds of a former residential boarding school in British Columbia.”

Music

Mary Barroll: In the 2025 edition, CanadaHelps takes a deep dive into the truly fascinating landscape of Canadian charitable giving. It focusses on the period between 2018 and 2024, to understand how giving has evolved during a period shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, and a national reckoning by Canadians about the harsh realities Indigenous peoples continue to experience. Crisis and transformation have influenced how Canadians give and which causes receive support. In this age of massive change and challenges, the report also emphasizes how important it is for charities to innovate and be flexible and offers crucial insights into the sheer resilience and sometimes, the vulnerabilities of the charitable sector.

To help us get an understanding of the key findings of the 2025 Giving Report, CharityVillage spoke to Nicole Danesi, Senior Manager, Strategic Communications and

Brand at CanadaHelps. She lays out some of the current changes and trends this year's report describes.

Nicole Danesi: So, there is a number of high-level findings in this report. There's good news and there's bad news. There are so many challenges that charities have been facing. Just as a quick recap, we've gone through the pandemic, we've gone through the Canada Post strike, most recently, we've gone through moments of digital transformation and disruption and charities having to adapt to this. I was speaking to a charity earlier that was telling me about the fact that they are experiencing a scam, right now, when it comes to someone taking their brand and trying to fundraise off of it. And they're trying to deal with this issue, as I speak right now. And it's a serious challenge, especially in this digital world. So, there's all these new challenges that continue to come up.

We had a really strong 2024 when it comes to donations at Canada Helps. And that's a positive news story. At the same time though, we've seen a decline in donors, in terms of the rate of donors giving continues to fall, unfortunately. And that's a major challenge. When we look at the whole number of donors right now, it's increasing. And the reason for that is because our population has been increasing. But when you actually look at the rate, that number has been on the decline. The other thing I'll highlight is that online giving has really focused on local, community-based giving. We've seen Canadians turn to their local communities, in order to support their food banks or local shelters, for example. And in terms of giving to Indigenous charities, we've seen a 416% increase in the number of Canadians giving to those types of organizations. And of course, that has to do with the reckoning and reconciliation that many Canadians have been grappling with, over the last several years. However, keeping this into perspective, support for Indigenous charities remains at about 1% of all giving on Canada Help. So, it's still a very small percentage.

Mary Barroll: To get another perspective on some of the findings in the report, we spoke to Alan Davidoff at Environics Analytics, where he's the Senior Vice President and Practice Leader of the not-for-profit energy, transportation, and public sector. He summarizes some of the high-level trends.

Allen Davidov: It's kind of interesting looking at this year's report. One, some good news stories were that giving is up. We've reached an unprecedented mark of \$12.8 billion, that's with a B, which to me was incredible, given all that's been going on in the world. And it's seen a sizable increase of \$1.35 billion. And one of the first things, that when we looked at the data, we were quite surprised to see. The other highlight is that more Canadians gave. So, we have now over five million people that have actually given, across the country, a gift, at one point, that has gone through CRA. So, that again is an increase and if you think about that, that's about 13% of the population. So, I think that's really says something that a lot of Canadians continue to step up and continue to support local and national causes, of all different types, across the country. Healthcare and education still lead the way in a lot of the donations in areas that people

donate to. Those tend to still be the highest. And when we think about things like the environment, when we think about Indigenous peoples and causes, those have seen increases but not to the same degrees and we're still looking at smaller dollars. The other one I would say that really stood out to me was local giving. When we look at the different groups of donors across the board and the different target groups, we're looking at, that local giving always has its peaks and valleys, but we've noticed that, in the giving trends, that local giving has sort of peaked up again and people are starting to give more locally than they have in the last number of years.

SFX: Sounds of coins falling.

Mary Barroll: Aneil Gokhale is Director of Philanthropy at the Toronto Foundation, where he helps individuals, families, professional advisors, companies and other organizations be more strategic with their philanthropy. Aneil Gokhale points to the findings in the Canada Helps Giving Report that really jumped out at him.

Aneil Gokhale: The figures in the report really talked about the steady decline in the percentage of Canadians that were claiming donations on their tax returns. And that, for me, is interesting because I think it's directly connected to the way philanthropy is shifting. And I'd say particularly for younger audiences across Canada, there's been a real rise, over the years, in crowdfunding, in supporting mutual aid groups, non-qualified donies, and all of these methods or options that I've just mentioned are not traditional charities. So, they're not gonna give you a tax receipt in the same way that, many Canadians would have been used to for a number of years. And so, as a result, I think there's still a lot of generosity and giving happening, but it's happening differently. And particularly, I think the one metric that we can count on and compare, year to year to year, is tax filing.

SFX: Sounds of typing on a keyboard

And when giving changes, then the tax filing numbers are just going to change as a result.

Mary Barroll: Numbers never tell the whole story. Nicole Danesi provides some additional nuance to the figures in the report.

Nicole Danesi: So, when we look at 2023, for example, based on CRA data, we've noticed the largest year-over-year increase in donation dollars ever recorded in Canada. At the same time, we did see a noticeable slowdown in the long-term decline of the donation rate, when it comes to, again, the number of Canadians giving to registered charities.

However, for the first time since 2010, we saw an increase in the total number of donors. And again, when we look at the greater picture of these numbers, that increase in the total number of Canadians, it is because of our population increasing. We're

seeing a smaller pool of individuals making donations to registered charities, but when we look at that whole number, it's actually larger because of the population. You know, in 2023, when we're looking at the total dollars given to registered charities across the country, it grew by about \$1.35 billion, billion with a B, reaching \$12.8 billion. And that is the largest year-over-year increase ever recorded, when it comes to CRA data. And that is a good news story, again. We're seeing more dollars that are going to the charitable sector. At the same time though, we also know that charities have been experiencing higher levels of demand depending on the types of organizations, specifically calling out shelters and food banks, for example.

SFX: Sound of drumming

News clip

<https://youtu.be/mcWSY1YW9fQ?si=hAsg6LGPc0osOEpS>

“At Daily Bread Food Bank we share one vision and that is to end hunger in our city and every day, we strive together toward that common goal.”

Mary Barroll: Since 1983, Daily Bread Food Bank has worked to meet emergency needs while advocating for long-term solutions to end poverty, with over 200 programs across Toronto. Samantha Cook is Vice President of Philanthropy at the Daily Bread Food Bank. She tells me what insights in the report caught her attention.

Samantha Cooke: I would say the one that I was most excited about was the increase in local and regional giving. I felt like it gave us the opportunity to engage in philanthropy that feels more personal, more accountable to donors and directly connected to the communities where donors live and work. And I think that the pandemic really highlighted community independence and local vulnerabilities. And I think it brought people together and influenced people to prioritize, strengthen their immediate neighborhoods through their charitable support. So, I felt that that gave us some good takeaways for what we could do differently and how we could maybe focus more on community-centered impact that we're having, so that people get to see and witness the impact that they can have in their communities and, literally at Daily Bread, roll up their sleeves to help their neighbors.

SFX: News buzz

News clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v09I5XkobQg>

“So what’s behind the surge in demand for help from food banks? According to a new report titled Hunger Count 2024, it’s unaffordable housing, the cumulative effect of years of rapid inflation and a lack of social safety nets, driving poverty and food insecurity like never before. Foodbanks Canada said it recorded more than 2 million visits in March 2024. That is nearly double the number of monthly visits from five years ago, back in

2019. Of that, over 2 million visits, 700 000 of those are for children.”

Mary Barroll: There has been a stunning 90% demand surge at Canadian foodbanks since 2019, driven by inflation, housing costs, and insufficient social supports. The threats of tariffs and job loss, the fear of an imminent recession, rising unemployment, all these factors make for very difficult economic times with a lot of families struggling for just the basics. I asked Nicole Danesi to comment on how the community-based nonprofit sector is being affected by all of these economic challenges. She echoes Samantha Cooke’s view that Canadians appear to be responding to these hard times by engaging in more locally based giving.

Nicole Danesi: We know at Canada Helps, when we activate our crisis relief centre for whether it’s a humanitarian or a natural disaster, anywhere around the world, Canadians are responding. And those dollars often go to charities that are classified under more of an international lens. And we’ve seen this with the war in Ukraine, for example, or we’ve seen this for other natural disasters around the world.

When I go back to our 2024 Giving Report, that was actually one of my favourite reports that we’ve highlighted. And the reason why was because we really focused on community in that report. And we talked about the fact that data that our teams pulled together highlighted the fact that individuals who are feeling more connected to their networks, their family, their friends, they give at higher rates. And I think that when we see that online giving has moved more focused towards local communities, I personally hope that that’s an optimistic sign that individuals perhaps are feeling more connected to their local communities and that we are building those bridges, especially after so many years of a pandemic that has isolated us and especially in this environment where it’s very polarizing right now, right? So, I think that we are seeing right now a national moment of unity when it comes to what it means to be Canadian. I think that Canadians are really looking in their own backyards and trying to figure out what can I do to help my neighbors. And I think that’s good. I think that giving is good overall, whether it’s people supporting people who are halfway around the world or in our own backyards.

SFX News buzz

News clip

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/lm9PVpz8bVM>

“A storm is brewing at Canada Post. After a year of fruitless negotiations, Canadian Union of Postal Workers announces they’ll be in a legal strike position this Friday. We don’t want to strike, but Canada Posts’ next move will decide everything.”

News clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f7o2MWFjJKQ>

“Some Calgary charities say they’ve seen a difference in donations, but not enough to

close the gap, after the deadline for donors to include their donations in their 2024 tax return was extended due to the Canada Post strike.”

Music

Mary Barroll: The report’s data, stretching into 2024 and the first couple of months of 2025, shows donations on CanadaHelps rose a solid 7% in 2024, reaching \$482 million, up from \$450 million in 2023. The average donation on Canada Helps also saw a significant 10% increase in 2024. And it continued into early 2025 with an additional 13% increase in the first two months, compared to the same period the previous year. But again, the numbers don’t tell the whole story.

The CanadaHelps Giving Report measures digital giving. There was a surge in giving online in early 2025 when the federal government extended the usual year end 2024 charitable tax deadline to February 28, 2025. The government was responding to advocacy from the charitable sector to take action to alleviate the impact of the Canada Post strike during Giving Tuesday and the holiday season giving. The tax deadline extension prompted a remarkable surge, driving triple the donations on the last day before the extension, compared to the same day in 2024.

The strike had significantly disrupted traditional, direct mail fundraising, a crucial channel for many charities, particularly those serving older demographics who prefer to give by mail. As a direct consequence, many donors shifted their giving online, causing a notable spike in digital donations. But the surge in online giving could only stem the tide, not replace the loss. The Giving Report estimates that the strike potentially cost charities around 266 million dollars in giving through traditional channels. 266 million dollars lost is a lot of money! Nicole Danesi tells us what impact she saw the Canada Post strike have on charities.

Nicole Danesi: We saw the Canada Post strike take place at the end of 2024. And our team crunched the numbers in terms of trying to estimate what impact that strike had on charities across the country. And based on different data points that our team has been able to pull together, it is an estimate, but we are estimating about \$266 million lost for charities across the country. And of course, it has hit some charities harder than others. Some charities that I had spoken to back during the holidays, they had relied on a very small portion of direct mail for their donations. Other charities had relied on, I spoke to one charity that relied on as much as about 20% of their annual donations on as part of direct mail. So, it really depends on a case-by-case basis. We continue to see digital grow over and over and over again.

Mary Barroll: With the ongoing potential for disruptions, such as what was experienced during the pandemic and the impact of the Canada Post strike, it’s clear that digital resilience is no longer optional but rather a fundamental requirement for nonprofits to sustain and grow giving.

SFX: Sounds of coins

Report data shows that the COVID-19 pandemic was truly a universal catalyst for digital philanthropy with just about everyone going online to give. From 2018 to 2021, every single donor segment increased its online giving by at least 100 percent. This reflects a broad society-wide and often forced shift toward digital platforms when traditional methods became difficult or impossible. Those organizations with robust, user-friendly, online infrastructure were best positioned to absorb the sudden shifts during the pandemic, and later, with the Canada Post strike, to pivot effectively when traditional methods like direct mail were hampered. It's clear that online giving is not a temporary fix or a passing trend. It's a permanent evolution to the fundraising landscape, demanding ongoing investment and strategic thinking from charities. Nicole Danesi has this to say:

Nicole Danesi: We did see an uptick in Canadians moving from analog methods of donations, for example, through the mail to online giving during that Canada Post strike, as well. So, it's another reminder that if your charity is not optimized, on your website, when it comes to your donation button on your site and making sure that all of your online fundraising ecosystem is completely up to par, this is your moment to take away one action item to make sure you're auditing your systems and making sure that you're not losing any dollars.

Mary Barroll: Something else the report reveals is that the rise in total donations continues to be driven not by a broader donor base, but by larger average gifts from a smaller group of donors. The number of Canadians who are giving is more concentrated, but these Canadians are giving more. This means that the sector is becoming more reliant on a concentrated, perhaps shrinking pool of high-impact givers. While resulting in higher overall dollar amounts for now, this trend points to a critical structural vulnerability. The charitable sector is becoming increasingly reliant on a smaller, generally older demographic. One that inevitably will, with the passage of time, shrink. I asked Nicole Danesi to comment on this trend.

Nicole Danesi: We're seeing fewer people giving, but their donation amounts are slightly higher. So, they're sort of compensating for the fewer individuals actually making those donations. So again, it's a good news story, but it's also a really challenging story as well because if those donors were to disappear, for example, that revenue is gone.

SFX: Sounds of coin spinning on table.

If you look back at previous editions of the Giving Report, we talk about what we have coined the giving gap. And essentially, what that means is that we know that donors are concentrated among an older population. They have grown up and they have built habits essentially of giving and generosity and making donations. And the concern is that as individuals get older and there's fewer people giving, that are giving right now, will younger generations come in and make those donations? So, I think that this is

another reminder for Canadian charitable leaders to think and really consider how are you engaging younger donors.

Mary Barroll: The Giving Report's data strongly indicates that wealthy, older donors are driving nearly all the significant gains in charitable giving. From 2022 to 2023, taxpayers making more than \$1 million in personal income, representing a tiny 0.1% of Canadians, accounted for an astonishing 59% of the overall increase in giving dollars. This small group alone contributed a full 21% of total donations in 2023. When considering that the top 5% of taxpayers, which includes people with personal incomes over \$150,000, the concentration becomes even more pronounced. This group collectively accounted for 49%, nearly half of total donations in 2023. And an even more astonishing 89% of the increase in donations, between 2022 and 2023. But again, these wealthy donors are aging fast. I asked Allen Davidov if he thinks this is a concern.

Allen Davidov: So boomers, wealthy donors, older donors continue to make a big slice of the pie. Unfortunately, the donor pool has actually come down a little bit. So, we've seen a decrease in the trends, by about 3%, but the donor revenue size continues to actually grow, in terms of their contribution. And we're seeing roughly around 11% growth year over year.

The other parts that a lot of charities need to really be considering is the wealth transfer. So that is something that's about boomers getting older, some of them passing away. And if we come back to that recession piece and the cost of living going up for the younger generations, they're actually passing some of their wealth over sooner. So, one of the trends that we've seen is that wealth transfer is now happening both at the end of life when people are deceased but also right before people pass away.

As we kind of think about a recession and moving forward, that wealth transfer will continue to happen. Younger people can't afford houses, so their grandparents step in and they give them some money. And we're also seeing that same trend about charities. They're then thinking about, well, I can give some money to charity right now, as well as when I pass away. So, that wealth transfer will continue to happen and only grow as that ageing population gets older. And all of that money that they've accumulated continues to grow as well through all their wealth and stocks and other things that they've invested in. So, another way to look at it is, what's the opportunity we have with those donors, along with their other family members that might be slightly younger in different cohorts that might be accumulating wealth?

Mary Barroll: Though it may feel indelicate or inappropriate to mention it, there is an opportunity here for charities. Allen Davidov says, as crass as it may sound, charitable organizations should consider that many of these aging donors may want to create a legacy before they pass on.

Allen Davidov: They're getting older, and we're sort of engaging with them, in terms of what are their wishes when they pass away, thinking about, well, they actually have

wealth now. So, some of them are also coming to realization. And I think we as humans, when you go through big life events or catastrophic, global things like COVID happen, you kind of re rethink your life and what you want to contribute to and the lasting impact you want to make in your legacy, which we've seen in a lot of these different donor groups is that that value is so strong and high is that sense of duty, but also legacy, what's that opportunity for a charity? Because that could be life changing for a charity that one donor can step in, that a charity that maybe drives revenue of about a million dollars or less can get one endowment or one big gift that can really change the trajectory of that charity. So, leaning into some of that, as crass as it sounds, following the money is really important, I think, especially during these times.

Mary Barroll: Thanks to data analysis provided by Environics Analytics, the CanadaHelps Giving Report can further help nonprofits follow that money. The Report divides donor data into segments based on demographic commonalities. Allen Davidov explains.

Allen Davidov: So, one of the ways that we look at giving is through our PRISM segmentation data. So, it is typography that takes all of the postal codes across Canada, the 780,000, and we've segmented the entire population. So, every single postal code is represented from coast to coast to coast. And with that, we're able to then layer on top of donation history, as well as giving patterns, people's values, their behaviors and attributes, and their demographics. So, based on that, then we're able to group cohorts together that have similar values, that have similar demographics or geographies. So, if you're thinking about urban groups versus suburban groups, or you're thinking about town dwellers, there are some commonalities across those groups.

So, when we look at it through the lens of demographics and PRISM, we're able actually to group some of these donor clusters together to really look at what are those commonalities? So, if we're looking at younger generational donors that are in the urban cores of Ottawa and Montreal and Toronto, what are those similarities that they have, that different organizations can tap into, from a marketing perspective? So, if they need to pivot from sending something in the mail to online and they're thinking about, well, I have a thousand-dollar campaign, how do I use Meta or TikTok or others? Or which one do I use? They can use some of this data and we partner with a lot of charities to help them highlight which of those mediums make the most sense and then how do you just go activate in those platforms? So again, if you have \$50 campaigning, you just want to run a test campaign because you're a small charity and you just want to get the awareness of your cause out all the way through the bigger charities and you're spending tens of thousands of dollars on a digital campaign and acquisition campaign, you can take a lot of these clusters and demographics that we've actually showcased, in the Giving Report, and actually go activate against them and then see how they responded.

Mary Barroll: Allen Davidov outlines some of the findings based on these demographic

clusters.

Allen Davidov: I'll start with wealthy families. And some interesting attributes that popped up for us is some areas that they give to. So, they're very keen on giving to religious organizations, things that they're personally connected to. So again, charities that they have an affinity to that may have had an experience. They tend to be less diverse, but their values are really about leaving a legacy and a sense of duty. So, they have that sense of duty. So, a lot of the wealthy, target audience or families really have that sense of duty to fill in the gaps where the government can't or other services can't. And they tend to lead the way, but it's really interesting because they also have teenage or adult children. They're leaving the nest in some cases. So, some of their disposable income is going up, but also just their general wealth.

That was an interesting sort of view on wealthy families and looking at whether it's one-time gifts or monthly giving. They do give. They give to Indigenous causes. They've given to environment, at lower numbers, but significant enough that some of those charities should definitely ask. And they still feel comfortable enough to give online. So, one of the attributes that we think about when we look at these different groups is which ones are used to giving offline versus online.

If I think about those urban or suburban and rural families, slightly younger, slightly less money. The Canadian average income is about \$122,000. This group still sits at \$152,000, which is a good chunk above. They tend to, similarly to wealthy families, give to things that they're personally affected and different causes. And given the age, they're probably what we would call the Sandwich Generation, where they have younger kids. They're not teenagers, they're a little bit younger than that but they also have parents that could be older and going through their own medical or health issues. So, the Sandwich Generation are taking care of different groups. They're the ones that usually also are thinking about their finances. So, there are groups that would be worried about finances and trying to save money for a rainy day or when things change, but they will continue to give. Some of these families reside all over the country, but places like Halifax and Hamilton come up and Ottawa come up. But they will give local as well. So, they will give across the country, but they will give locally as well. Again, they've given millions and millions of dollars, as a collective group, to one-time gifts and monthly gifts. So, these are groups of people that you still want to ask for that \$20 monthly donation and they will continue to give if they can.

They may change it to a smaller amount because they're financially really worried, but they also understand the charity perspective and making sure that charities are supported. And if I highlight one last group, I'd really look at what we get asked about the most from charities is those downtown donors. That is probably one of those up-and-coming groups that everybody asks about. How will millennials give, should we focus on millennials? These are that new millennial group. Obviously from their name of downtown donors, they're located in a lot of the big centers. So, you have the Torontos, the Vancouvers, the Montreals.

This group, because they're younger, you are looking at somewhere between 25 to probably 40 years old. They have a sense of the global causes a little bit more than the others. So, they will give local, given its importance in the cause. But they also have that global mindset, in terms of how am I making an impact globally? So, it's not, I understand where my five dollars goes and it can make an impact or my 20 dollars, but I also want to think big picture. And how is that different than just giving locally at small amounts? And they give to Indigenous causes, environmental causes.

So, it's interesting when you think about these three samples of target audiences. They're quite different in their age, in their life stage, where they are with kids or families or they're married. And they're giving in so many different ways and charities are engaging with them in different ways.

Mary Barroll: This granular data provides crucial insights for charities looking to target their engagement effectively. Understanding these nuances may allow organizations to tailor their storytelling, their outreach, even the channels they use to connect more deeply with specific donor segments.

SFX: News buzz

NEWS CLIP

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGJFT_XORbs

“For many people across Canada, the recent news of finding unmarked graves at residential schools was an awakening to a deeper knowledge of the truth. And the true horror of residential schools and the continuing impacts on Indigenous peoples today. These truths have been known by Indigenous communities for years. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission dedicated volume four of their final report to the horrors of missing children and unmarked burials. As a country, we know the truth. Once you know the truth you cannot unknow it. First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities have lived with the trauma of residential schools for generations. Now, as the country gains a deeper understanding of our shared history, Canadians are looking for ways to support Indigenous communities.”

Mary Barroll: There is another very significant segment of the population, for which the CanadaHelps Giving Report provides crucial insights. The report highlights an increase in giving to Indigenous causes, in recent years, but it cautions that Indigenous organizations are still very underfunded. I asked Nicole Danesi to shed some further light on the findings.

Nicole Danesi: So, between 2018 and 2024 donations to Indigenous-focused charities, through CanadaHelps, had increased by about 416% and this is faster than any other cause area that we have on our website and keep in mind, on CanadaHelps, we list all 85,000 registered charities. The other thing that I'll highlight is the fact that donations to

Indigenous-focused charities grew 2.5 times faster than overall giving. So, it's seen this acceleration, in terms of support. And of course, when you think back at the last several years, we've unfortunately seen the uncovering of unmarked graves at former residential schools and Canadians trying to reconcile with the dark history of this country. And we saw a lot of Canadians giving to Indigenous-led charities because of that news. Now, keeping in mind, that when we look at overall giving, donations to Indigenous-focused charities represents less than about 1% of giving on CanadaHelps. So, we still have a long ways to go when it comes to making sure that Canadians are engaging in reconciliation.

SFX: Sound of coin dropping.

Mary Barroll: Sarah Midanek, a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, is President and CEO of the Gord Downie and Cheney Wenjack Fund, a national charity that seeks to build cultural understanding and create a path towards reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. She sits on the National Board for the BGC Canada that supports children and youth in need, as well as the Canadian Council for Indigenous Business. She supports the Indigenous Professionals Association of Canada and sits on the CRA's Advisory Committee on the Charitable Sector.

As we heard from Nicole Danesi, The CanadaHelps report revealed that giving to Indigenous-focused charities grew 416 % between 2018 and 2024, an astonishing increase. But unfortunately, that giving peaked in 2021 and has since declined and flattened out. I asked Sarah Midanik what this trend looks and feels like, from her vantage point.

Sarah Midanik: It is certainly reflective of our experiences in Indigenous-led charity at Downey Wenjack. We certainly felt the surge of support in 2021, which was definitely driven by what I would refer to as a collective awakening in Canada to the truths of residential schools, which Indigenous communities have always been knowing. But since then, I would say, giving has plateaued, while there's still broader awareness, we're seeing that donors may feel unsure of how to meaningfully support Indigenous organizations or communities beyond moments of national attention.

On the ground, demand for our programs hasn't slowed, if anything, it's continued to grow. But funding has become less predictable, especially from individual donors. And that's challenging for long-term planning. And of course, we understand there are a ton of other external factors at play here too. You know, at times of economic uncertainty, whether that's caused by war or the impact of tariffs or the impending threat of a recession or changes in government, discretionary spending is always the first thing impacted and that directly impacts charitable giving and that's a really tough place for the charitable sector to be put in overall.

Mary Barroll: Despite the growth noted in the Giving Report, Indigenous-focused

charities still receive less than 1% of total donations. I asked Sarah Midanik what she thinks it will take to change this.

Sarah Midanik: I think it comes down to education and trust. Continuing to educate the general public so they understand why giving to Indigenous charities is important. The whole country cannot thrive until everyone is thriving. And by educating about Indigenous causes and the important work being done by Indigenous-led organizations and communities, we can continue to ensure that people understand that communities know best what they need. And it makes most sense for us to be delivering on that work in the ways that we know how. I would say that many Canadians want to help or want to support Indigenous organizations or causes but may not know which organizations are actually Indigenous-led or how their support might translate into meaningful impact. And it takes more relationship building between funders and communities, transparency about where dollars go and what the impact is. And I would say ongoing education around truth and reconciliation.

Mary Barroll: Not only does it seem that truth and reconciliation, and Indigenous-focused initiatives may have receded into the background for many Canadian donors, Sarah Midanik thinks that lingering misconceptions about funding may also play a role.

Sarah Midanik: I do still think there's misconceptions about funding that Indigenous organizations or charities receive. In Downey Wenjack's case, we don't receive ongoing federal, provincial or municipal government funding. We fundraise every single year. But there's a misconception that that's something that we might receive on an ongoing basis. And so, if that's something that we experience, I'm sure that other organizations and initiatives do as well. You kind of make the joke of, that information's available on our website and it's simple Google searches, but it's that education piece again. As a donor and taking the responsibility to do your homework and to learn about the organizations and causes that are meaningful to you and that you wish to support. I would also say, receiving less than 1% of total donations on Canada Helps, greater Indigenous representation, whether it's in media or philanthropy or just having the opportunity to share about the work being done to support Indigenous peoples and communities would also help normalize and encourage sustained giving.

Mary Barroll: Sarah Midanik elaborates on some of the systemic barriers Indigenous-led charities and nonprofits continue to face within the Canadian nonprofit and philanthropic landscape.

Sarah Midanik: I mean, aside from, you know, systemic oppression, racism and being trapped in systems that aren't actually designed to help break cycles of poverty or the over-representation of Indigenous people and justice and child welfare systems, I would say that's probably the biggest systemic barrier for Indigenous people overall.

But if we're talking specifically about Indigenous-led charities and nonprofits, I would say that capacity remains a major barrier. Most Indigenous-led organizations are small and

under resourced, yet are expected to deliver high impact work and meet complex reporting requirements that accountant is used to preparing for bigger organizations, whereas it might just be that one executive director or project manager is HR, is finance, is operations, is all of the things.

Grant systems often require administrative capacity that many grassroots groups simply don't have. I would say there's also a historical lack of trust from funders and an overemphasis on short-term, project-based funding that doesn't allow for long-term planning, hiring or growth. Or if you're always trying to scrap together enough project funding to cover your operating costs, then how can you think strategically about how to meet the needs of those that you're serving? I think the one-year funding cycle is really, really tough for organizations and the reporting requirements often aren't any less cumbersome than those for four- or five-year granting cycles.

Mary Barroll: Sarah Midanik points to another basic but very important obstacle that funding organizations may forget about. While the rest of the country has largely embraced the new digital tools for engaging with our world, many rural, remote Indigenous communities are unable to join other Canadians in this online reality due to a lack of technological infrastructure.

SFX: Sounds of birds, nature.

Sarah Midanik: I think one other thing that goes without saying, but I feel like always needs to be mentioned is that rural and remote communities also continue to face tech and infrastructure gaps that limit access to funding tools and platforms. So, you always have to ask yourself, is our granting framework or the way we receive applications, is it truly accessible? If you don't have consistent internet, can you really submit a big file like video or audio? I know, with a lot of government funding, there's complex requirements through systems like GCOS, and they're buggy. And if you don't have a strong internet connection, it'll be impossible to use. So, I think there's a number of barriers that can be addressed in really simple, straightforward ways, but it requires taking the time to look at these systems and say, do they serve and are they accessible to Indigenous peoples and communities and organizations?

Mary Barroll: Despite some of these ongoing barriers, Sarah Midanik has noticed a slight shift, in recent years, in how funders are approaching their support for Indigenous-led work.

Sarah Midanik: I would say one really positive thing is that more funders are asking how they can better support Indigenous communities. And we've seen growing interest in multi-year funding. Family foundations really being interested in supporting a strategy or a goal or a plan versus a year? And really working one-on-one with organizations to build a true partnership.

I would say there is still a tendency for impact and evaluation metrics, especially within

some of the more traditional corporate partners to meet the objectives of the funder or the business strategy or the EDI strategy, rather than the project or who it's meant to serve. I would say foundations have made a ton of progress in that area and they're starting to value lived experience and community rooted leadership, and are really supporting communities identifying those impact markers, and allowing space for more Indigenous impact and evaluation methodologies to be implemented within those agreements. I would still say there's probably a long way to go in shifting decision-making power in how Indigenous organizations are selected.

This is something we know a lot about at Downey Wenjack because we created Oshki Woopuwane, the Blanket Fund. And it launched in September of 2022. And we spent almost an entire year meeting with Indigenous leaders and community members and organizations to set up a system that prioritized the needs of the grantees and to create a participatory granting model.

And so, we've done a number of things for our granting process. So, we ensure that our application process is as simple as possible, that we can provide multi-year funding for grassroots organizations. And they can use those funds, however they deem necessary. And so, it was a really good learning process for us. And I think that's something that we're more than happy to share with all of our partners because we've seen the success in the model. We just, of course, wish we had more money to grant out.

Mary Barroll: As the work to educate the Canadian public about Indigenous-focused causes and their need for support continues, Sarah Midanik shares these thoughts about what meaningful partnership with Indigenous organizations should look like.

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Sarah Midanik: A good partnership really centers relationship, not transactions, and especially with Indigenous communities and partners, it's reciprocal and reciprocal relationships are built on trust, and they take time and good intentions. It means listening before prescribing, trusting Indigenous ways of knowing and understanding that community timelines and goals may not always align with traditional funding cycles. So, there needs to be a level of flexibility, I think, to actually center the needs of Indigenous peoples and communities, when you're looking at partnership. For us at Downey Wenjack, the best partners are those who show up consistently, they ask what's needed, and they stay engaged for the long haul. Reconciliation is not a checkbox on a list. It's not take these steps and we're going to reach a destination. It's the process and it requires ongoing commitment and engagement.

SFX News buzz

News clip

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PgH06elhX5A>

“This was another crushing day on the markets. The main index here in Toronto is down four and a half percent, over two days that’s a more than 9% plunge. And boy, the Dow in New York, it was down 2200 points. For a second day, staggering stock losses with quadruple-digit plunges, on both Toronto’s main exchange and in New York. There’s a lot of fear, as once famously said, there’s blood flowing in the streets. This, as there are signs trade tariffs are working their way through the Canadian economy which shed 33,000 jobs in March. The biggest drop in three years, the unemployment rate rising to 6.7%. With the first round of tariffs and then a warning that a second round was coming, most businesses hit pause for the last month and only were hiring those critical roles. And more job losses are expected.”

News clip

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-63-the-current/clip/16155647-why-gen-zs-jobless-rate-matter-everyone>

“Job hunting is rarely easy but for Gen Z now it’s turning out to be historically difficult. The unemployment rate in Canada for people aged 15 to 24 is over 14%, the highest it’s been in decades.”

News clip

<https://www.tiktok.com/@gtacommercialbrokers/video/7512961873176759608>

“If you think the job market is steady, think again. Unemployment is climbing and Canadians are feeling it. Here’s what you need to know: In May, Canada’s unemployment rate jumped to 7%. That’s the highest since 2015, unless you count the pandemic. And it’s not just a blip. Job growth has nearly stalled since January, with only 8,800 new jobs last month.”

News clip

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/street-needs-assessment-homeless-population-toronto-1.7580073>

“A city survey has found that homelessness has more than doubled in Toronto since 2021. The report calls the situation a crisis that no single government or sector can address alone.”

Mary Barroll: Recent geopolitical and economic changes, such as the U.S. President Donald Trump’s threats of tariffs on Canada causing uncertainty in the stock market, as well as the rising cost of living, unemployment and homelessness, are stoking fears of a recession, and are all having a huge impact on the financial well-being of Canadians. I asked Allen Davidov to share what the data indicates about how all of this is affecting how Canadians are donating.

Allen Davidov: So, what we know as two trends, is that one, those that have wealth,

some of those donors will pull back because they're thinking about investing in opportunities that exist. So, those are that are super wealthy, that have a lot of money will always continue to give but they will also pull back a little bit, just because, if there's a stock market opportunity or there's other opportunities to buy, to make money, they will jump on it and they'll usually pull out the monies that they'll donate, and those funds may come, but just at a later date. And then, the other groups that we often talk about, on the mass fundraising side is, you know, the middle class if you call it, the younger families, those that are just building up their wealth, those that want to get engaged and they're giving out smaller amounts.

That is the secondary group that we often think about, and the data really shows quite clearly that they will continue to give, but they give smaller amounts because all the uncertainty usually unlocks for them, it's maybe we should just pull some money aside, just for that rainy day or just in case, because you just never know. So, they will give and instead of maybe \$200, they'll pull back to \$100 and they'll give to less charities or potentially to the same amount but a smaller amount. So, looking at those two groups and when we think about all the uncertainty that's happening, you have one that will really focus on trying to make money and then potentially that will still go to our charity in some way and another one that will claw back a little bit.

Mary Barroll: With the potential for recession looming, I asked Allen Davidov if he can share any lessons learned in the 2008 crisis or other past economic hard times, lessons that might help nonprofits and charities navigate another recession, should it appear.

Allen Davidov: So, the data doesn't necessarily forecast out potential downfalls or areas, but what it does highlight is people's sense of what's important and what they will support regardless. So, people that have a sense of duty will always try to step up with whatever dollars that they have to give to areas of need. So, if you think about the wildfires, people that have that sense of duty within their values or the different groups and cohorts will continue to step up in different ways. And again, it might be smaller amounts, it might be five versus a \$20 gift. It might be \$20 instead of a \$100 gift. So, the denominations of that we've seen, in previous recessions, will come down, but they'll still step up to support, because if there's a war going on and there are people coming over new immigrants from that war-torn area, as an example, they'll support them and step up, whether it's clothing or monies or other things, as we've seen Canadians continue to do.

What I would say, when it comes to recessions is, stepping into understanding why people are connected to your cause and if you should continue to ask those people or what groups of people make the most sense to ask, is really the lessons that we've learned over the last number of decades and the last number of recessions, going even back to 2008, is that you want to continue to ask but you need to understand what the tone of ask is and who are the right people to ask, in what way makes the most sense.

Mary Barroll: In addition to considering who to ask for donations and what tone to take,

Nicole Danesi outlines other giving trends that charities should focus on.

Nicole Danesi: So, in terms of what charities can do and what's in their control, I'll highlight three trends that we've been seeing at Canada Helps and we've been talking about a lot. One of the things I'll highlight, off the top, is Giving Tuesday. We continue to see Giving Tuesday grow and our data at CanadaHelps backs up the fact that when charities actively launch campaigns, when it comes to Giving Tuesday, not only do they raise more for that Giving Tuesday single day, they raise more during their holiday giving season and also throughout the rest of the year. So, that is something that is also really attractive to younger donors. And in terms of this context of a shrinking donor pool and needing to make sure that we are stewarding younger donors to build those giving habits, this is critical. And I can tell you that even just amongst my friends, I'm in the millennial generation, a lot of them love Giving Tuesday because they feel like they are in this moment where it is bigger than themselves, that they can join this community that everyone else is giving that day. And they almost get this fear of missing out element that if they're not giving also, they're missing out on that bit. The other thing I'll highlight is that monthly giving has really, really surged and popularized. So, in terms of our growth, we've seen this grow and there's many data points in the report that I'll let listeners read and dig into, when it comes to how much it's grown. But we've seen that this particularly is attractive, again, to younger donors and keeping in mind of all the subscriptions that many Canadians have become accustomed to. My last point is securities. We continue to see securities be very popular at CanadaHelps. It's a growing way that many Canadians are trying to make strategic giving decisions and make sure that those tax benefits are really extended and making sure that they're having a bigger impact.

Music

Mary Barroll: CanadaHelps offers a platform for organizations to accept donations in securities form, so that they don't have to find a broker or acquire expertise in this area themselves. It's a simple form that they can add to their website. Aneil Gokhale shares some additional thoughts about giving the gift of securities, as well as other financial angles charitable organizations might consider.

Aneil Gokhale: So, a gift of securities, it's not a day-to-day gift. It's more of a future gift, in terms of your assets. And so, if you are feeling the pinch, like a lot of Canadians are right now, but you also understand the need in community and want to make an impact, maybe it's hard for you to directly affect your pocketbook today by making a donation from your checking account or your credit card. But instead, if you've got some assets and maybe they're sitting in a brokerage account and they've grown for a number of years and you're just kind of sitting on this gain. Well, there's the whole strategy where you can consider giving those, you don't pay tax on the gain, and then all of a sudden, you've made a gift to a charity that you deem to be important. And so, that's a strategy to really consider, especially in the current economic conditions where giving is something that people want to do, but they may not have the disposable income to do it

in a way that they want to.

Mary Barroll: Aneil Gokhale adds that in times when people are less inclined to spend their money indiscriminately, nonprofits might want to consider how ethical considerations are playing a role in their spending.

Aneil Gokhale: You know, there's a lot of folks that, as the world continues to evolve, there might be companies for whom they might hold some stock that, as things play out, maybe they're finding that they're just not as aligned with company X as they once were. Changes have been made, the way that a company goes about their business, the things they're saying, they're just not really agreeing with it anymore. So, a strategy that I've heard some folks doing recently is actually liquidating those shares as a bit of a protest and taking those funds and then doing charitable good with those funds, but then basically divesting themselves of those securities. And so, that's kind of a thought that somebody might consider when they think about their portfolio of investments and what they want to do with that portfolio as it continues to grow and evolve and change.

Mary Barroll: What it comes down to is that charities need to think about all the ways they can expand what is currently a shrinking donor base. Samantha Cooke shares some steps that Daily Bread is taking to do this. One major investment their organization has made is in expanding their digital infrastructure.

Samantha Cooke: What organizations should really focus in on is making sure that you are doing a good job of retaining and migrating those annual donors, up into your monthly giving programs, your mid-level, your major giving programs, and even attracting donors. At Daily Bread, we've been grateful to attract some new higher net worth donors, so we've seen major giving actually surpass pandemic levels, which is great. But the revenue growth has been due to that increase in gift frequency that we've been able to generate and the increase in average gift. So, our average gift has gone up from 518, five years ago, to 729. That's wonderful, but like this trend shows, it's all to do with gift frequency and average gift and not through growth. So, I think it's really important that charities think about ways that it's not just about growing, not just the gifts, but growing the base itself. And there's lots of things that we're doing to acquire new donors. So, we're investing more in digital.

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Mary Barroll: Samantha Cooke says that focusing on digital giving not only makes it easier to migrate one off donors into monthly donor programs, and converting smaller donors into higher value donors, it has also increased the total value of donations by nearly 70% over print-acquired donors. Here she is to explain how it all works.

Samantha Cooke: We actually know, through our data, that digital acquisitions deliver higher value donors for us. So, they're on average, their long-term value is 69 dollars higher than print-acquired donors. So, we're putting more funds into digital search, we're

putting more funds into a relatively new Google product called PMax, which is a machine-learning product that really is, set it in play, it will run for you and maximize your campaigns across a variety of different platforms. So, we tested that, we're rolling that out, we're going to continue to invest in digital lead generation. Over the years, we've tested different approaches, things like petitions, that type of thing. And now we're focusing in on a downloadable tool that you can download, and we will put you through a series of emails to encourage you to give financially at the end. We're also investing in large advocacy campaigns that's designed to activate people around advocacy, but it should also raise overall awareness about us and give us an opportunity for remarketing. And we're also looking at developing a nurture email series that really encourages people to learn more about us and get more involved.

One example I can give you about Daily Bread a couple of years ago, online, you would have been given two options. One, you could choose to give a one-time gift, and you could choose to give a monthly gift. I didn't want people to have that choice. We've got seconds to attract them and to take them through this process. So, then we moved to a platform that prioritized the upsell and it upsold people, it offered that two or three times even at the final stage, and it helped grow our monthly giving that year by 15%. And that's 142 % increase over 2020. And now we're sitting at over 8,000 monthly donors, which represents about 17% of our file, which is wonderful and still more to do, but just offering that as a not a choice, but an upsell option or something that is offered right then and there to help people make that decision.

Mary Barroll: In addition to making donating easier, via tech innovations, Samantha Cook shares ways that charities can expand their donor base to attract younger Canadians.

Samantha Cooke: There's a few more things that we're doing to try and attract younger audiences as well. We have lots of hands-on activities. We encourage youth groups and schools to come on site. We're engaging with them through the curriculum. We have a toolkit that we use. We're encouraging them to do food drives. We partner with Purolator, for example, on a Red Bag campaign in schools. And we've also done a recent audit of our social channels to help us identify the channels that work for us and perhaps testing new ones like TikTok. We've just set up an account there and we're going to be diving a little bit more into that and potentially testing a paid budget there, as well.

Mary Barroll: Aneil Gokhale agrees that attracting a younger and diverse group of people to philanthropy is essential.

Aneil Gokhale: What we've been seeing and doing at the Community Foundation here in Toronto is we've always said that philanthropy needs everyone. And over the last several years, we've been very deliberate about inviting younger donors, younger Canadians and more diverse Canadians and Torontonians to join us in that idea of giving back. For a long time, if you looked at the boards and the donor walls of many of

the largest organizations across this country, you'd see similar names, similar genders, similar racial backgrounds.

And while a lot of organizations have benefited from a lot of that generosity, the challenge is, as we continue to evolve as a country, and then particularly in Toronto where greater than 50% of Torontonians are foreign-born, the demographics are changing in this country. And so, being able to connect with this changing diaspora and invite them into places that maybe previously weren't as welcoming, but certainly now are more so, in some cases, I think is really important.

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Mary Barroll: Aneil Gokhale also shares some strategies for broadening participation among not only younger people but also those who may not be particularly wealthy.

Aneil Gokhale: At the Community Foundation, the main thing we do is we work with individuals and families around donor-advised funds. And one of the ways that we've tried to make this more accessible is by lowering the threshold to start a fund. And the way I try to describe it is, the act of setting up a donor advice fund is very transactional. You give money, you get a receipt, and then now you have an account that you can give from. But I think the way to think about it is, as a community foundation, we're sitting on a ton of knowledge and networks that are really important to mobilize and share with philanthropists, so we can educate them and allow them to make more impact. And more and more newer Canadians, younger donors are looking for that kind of engagement because for them, philanthropy isn't just cheque writing. It isn't just, me of wealth want to give to you the needy, but it's like, I care about my community, and I want to be part of making it stronger for all of us, that's including me and everyone else around me. And so, partnering with an organization that can help on that learning and understanding is really critical.

And I think just overall, younger donors in particular, when we think about philanthropy, while the gift is important and that sort of connection to community is important, I think also there's a bit of selfishness as part of it too. It's about networking, it's about building our own capacity and for a lot of us, especially younger Canadians, as we start working, as we start families, all these kinds of things, we don't meet as many new people in our lives from day to day, right? And so philanthropy, volunteering, giving, these are places that you can start connecting with like-valued, like-thinking people and magic happens as a result. And so those are some of the things that we're seeing.

Mary Barroll: Charitable organizations are well-placed to help create the vital connections that so many Canadians crave, in our increasingly individualistic, polarized and isolating world. Aneil Gokhale shares a sobering statistic to make this point, and which may explain the rise in more locally focused giving.

Aneil Gokhale: This past year, when we launched the most recent Toronto's Vital Signs

report, we shared a stat and this stat garnered the most attention we've ever received in any of our reports, in all the time we've been doing it. And the stat is 37% of Canadians experience loneliness up to three days per week.

And that statistic, it's connective tissue for a lot of this conversation that we're having today around giving, around being involved in your local community, around having that focus. And I think while that stat is kind of the start of it, it's really like, what do we do as a result of that? And how do we create more opportunities for people to lean in and be part of the solution? And so, I've talked a lot about giving locally, connecting locally, like these are all really important things. I think something, this is kind of bigger than giving, it's really for all of us to be finding ways to be more connected locally, right in community. And I think for me, the important thing there is to understand that the more we know each other, particularly our neighbors, but not exclusively, the more we build trust with one another. At the end of the day, what it comes down to is, this ability for each of us, as humans, to build connection with other humans that we can ultimately trust and build and grow rapport with.

What I'm saying can be really hard for a lot of people who are just trying to make ends meet. They're just hustling to do one job, maybe two, maybe three, and they can't even take care of their own families. So, don't for a second think that we're not thinking about that side of this. But what I'd like to see more and more is, from a philanthropic perspective is people supporting the ability for more people to come together. A lot of people think of philanthropy, and they think of it very personally. What am I personally connected to? What do I personally care about? What are my values and how do they align with my giving? And I think more and more, what I want people, especially, let's say more affluent or people of means, I want us thinking about what's the impersonal thing or the unconnected thing that I can be supporting that actually doesn't impact my day to day, but will have a huge impact on others, day to day, that are in my city, in my orbit, but not directly connected. And I think the more we can lift up those other pockets, you can start seeing, rising tides lift all boats.

Mary Barroll: The CanadaHelps Giving Report ends with a call for charities to be prepared for disruption ahead. In these difficult economic times, I asked each of our guests what piece of practical fundraising advice they can offer to our listeners, especially as they navigate increased demand with limited resources.

Nicole Danesi: I think that so many charities as we've shared here, they have had to adapt and cartwheel their way through so many challenges. I've seen so many food banks out in Western Canada, for example, all of a sudden have to create an emergency campaign that they likely would never have considered 10 years ago because wildfires was just not a constant threat that Canadians are facing. I think that this is a moment to have serious conversations on your team to understand what are the threats, what are the strengths on your team, what are the opportunities and where are your weaknesses that you can turn into strengths? And really doing that SWOT analysis when it comes to understanding what can you control, what can't you control.

And then for the elements that you can control in your organizations, what are you doing about it?

Samantha Cooke: We are bracing for more uncertainty. It's a certain thing. We've got the U.S. tariffs, the geopolitical tensions. It's going to strain households. It's going to strain their budgets. It's going to strain their cost of living. It's going to increase the demand for services, especially food banking and other charitable services as well. So again, I would just focus on the tools that are working for you and how you might enhance them, lean into them, and also reach out to your sector colleagues. Let's talk to each other. Let's support each other. Share ideas. Share what we're seeing. And this report is a great example of that. Bringing people together, talking about trends, and seeing how we might lean into the things that are working.

Allen Davidov: It's a good opportunity to sit down and really dive into your donor database and get to know your donors. There are different ways to do that, calling them and just touching base with them and seeing where they're at and sharing the impact that you're making and their connections. Engage with them, talk with them, understand what their barriers are, understand where they are and how they would want to support your charity, whether it's through volunteerism or continued giving. So, it's not just about sending them newsletters, but asking for their opinion on things. So, they're still willing to support us during this difficult time even though they might be struggling. Maybe we think about a new campaign that looks like this, based on the advice. It's all about leaning in a little bit and being there with your donors, with your community, and really moving forward together.

Sarah Midanik: Supporting Indigenous-led work, Indigenous organizations, isn't a trend. It's a commitment and a responsibility. True reconciliation requires sustained action and not reaction to specific events or our news cycles. Indigenous communities know what they need. We know what we need. Trust us. Fund us and walk with us on this path towards reconciliation. We're all on this journey together, whether we like it or not. And reconciliation is such an important opportunity for us to create the next chapter in a history we can all be proud of.

Aneil Gokhale: For a long time, Toronto has been sort of described as a city of neighborhoods. And I think what we want to really be thinking about is how can we shift from being a city of neighborhoods to a city of neighbors? And I think that's really critical because ultimately it means that we're all in this together and we're all supporting one another to make it better for all of us. That's really, really important. I'm an optimist at heart and these days it can be really difficult and hard to be an optimist. And so, this idea of shifting to become more of a city of neighbours is something that has that feeling of really connecting folks beyond just kind of where they are but thinking more broadly and ultimately improving the lives of everyone in the community.

Mary Barroll: The 2025 CanadaHelps Giving Report suggests that the nonprofit sector needs to keep building proactive readiness and deep resilience. It emphasizes that the

future will belong to those organizations who truly listen to their communities and donors, adapt quickly and strategically to changing circumstances, and fundamentally build trust that endures beyond any single campaign or immediate crisis. Thriving organizations, it suggests, will be deeply human, grounded in community, and unafraid to meet disruption with imagination.

Thank you to all our guests for their keen insights and wise advice. Be sure to visit our website and our show notes for more information on the resources, reports and programs mentioned in this episode. If you'd like to hear more of what our guests have to say check out our full video interviews on our website.

CharityVillage Connects theme music

CharityVillage is proud to be the Canadian source for nonprofit news, employment services, crowdfunding, e-learning, HR resources and tools, and so much more. Please take a moment to check out our website at charityvillage.com.

In next episode of CharityVillage Connects, we take a deep dive into the wellbeing of Canada's nonprofit workforce through the lens of new research, including the 2025 Changemaker Wellbeing Index by Future of Good. The Wellbeing Index found that one third of nonprofit workers surveyed, experience food insecurity and that number rises to a stunning 50% among frontline workers -- revealing urgent challenges facing those whose labour powers the sector. Joined by the researchers behind these reports, we unpack the data, explore key trends and discuss actionable strategies to support healthier, more sustainable, nonprofit workplaces and to value the people who toil across the country, providing crucial and invaluable services in their mission-driven work. That's next time on CharityVillage Connects. I'm Mary Barroll. Thanks for listening.