



Indigenous Philanthropy in Ontario

In October 2013, the Association of Fundraising Professionals Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada hosted a conference with the Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada and other partners that brought together charity leaders, donors and volunteers to explore the philanthropy of Indigenous communities in Ontario. Here is a collection of insights from the conference and beyond.

AT A GLANCE

- 1 400 685** Aboriginal population of Canada
- 201 100 and 86 015** Population of First Nations and Métis in Ontario
- 600** Number of First Nations/Indian bands in Canada
- 20** Rate of Aboriginal population growth (compared to the overall population at 5%)
- 60** Number of Indigenous languages spoken in Canada
- 37** Percentage of Ontario's Indigenous peoples living on reserves

TERMINOLOGY

Indigenous Reciprocity refers to the recognition of and gratitude for what is received and given: "I have the honour of giving and you honour me by receiving." This contrasts with traditional reciprocity, which refers to the concept of "I do for you and you do for me."

CASE STUDY

Indspire is proud to be Canada's largest Indigenous-led charity. Established in 1985, the organization supports and celebrates the educational pursuits and achievements of Indigenous Canadians. Indspire delivers programs that serve more than 10,000 students, by encouraging them to stay in school. Furthermore, the organization fosters the financial vibrancy of Indigenous people by ensuring that the community's youth will be capable of supporting their families and contributing to their communities. Since its inception, Indspire has raised \$65 million from hundreds of individuals, foundations and corporations and distributed 20,000 scholarships and bursaries to Indigenous students.

WISE WORDS



"Even though we all may have values around sharing, caring, giving and making a difference, there is a historical disconnect between mainstream and Indigenous-focused philanthropy. The outcome has led to unrealized opportunities (which could also be regarded as unprecedented opportunities) to meaningfully engage Indigenous communities. Reciprocity is a balanced system of both giving wholeheartedly and accepting the generosity of others. It also contributes to the building and sustaining of mutually beneficial relationships between all those involved in the Indigenous philanthropic sector. This is not just an idea, but a call to action. In this moment and in this place, we bring our spirited energy, our unfettered imaginations and our audacious goals to the table so that we can make stronger communities."

— Bruce Miller, Conference Speaker

BACK IN TIME

BEFORE 1000 AD, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES CARVED MIGRATORY ROUTES ACROSS WHAT IS NOW KNOWN AS CANADA.

As they settled and flourished, they maintained great respect for the land, nature and one another. The British Proclamation of 1763 laid the foundation for the constitutional recognition and protection of First Nations rights in Canada. Nevertheless, Indigenous communities were subject to harsh social injustices and targeted attacks over many generations. In effect, European colonization changed the fate of Indigenous peoples forever. Along with numerous legal

restrictions, such as the Indian Act, and other exclusionary practices, one of the harshest realities was the residential school system, which removed Aboriginal children from their homes and placed them in Christian-run boarding schools. Until 1996, about 150,000 children passed through the residential school system where thousands faced abuse and at least 4,000 children died. In 2006, a settlement agreement was reached and in 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper

issued a formal apology on behalf of the Canadian government and its citizens for the residential school system. Currently, there are approximately 70 recognized treaties that form the basis of the relationship between 371 First Nations bands, representing over 500,000 people. In 2009, June was declared National Aboriginal History Month, providing an opportunity to recognize the contributions of Indigenous peoples.

INSIGHTS FROM THE EXPERTS

Conference presenters and participants shared many great examples and tips about giving within Indigenous communities. Here is what we heard:

ENSURE THAT RECEIVERS MAINTAIN THEIR DIGNITY AND GIVERS FEEL JOYOUS, NOT RESENTFUL.

BUILD NOURISHING, LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS WITH DONORS, EVEN AFTER THE GIVING.

PHILANTHROPY SHOULD BE ABOUT WORKING TOGETHER ON SOLUTIONS AND MOVING BEYOND BLAMING AND SHAMING.

“THERE’S NO ROOM FOR US AND THEM. WE ARE TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER.”

COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OFTEN PUT MONEY BACK INTO THE COMMUNITY THROUGH INTEGRATED MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES. THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY FOR INDIGENOUS-FOCUSED CHARITIES.

“WE NEED TO HELP STUDENTS THROUGH SCHOOL. ACHIEVEMENT INSPIRES FURTHER SUCCESS.”

RECIPROCITY AND CHARITABLE GIVING ARE BASED ON FRIENDSHIP AND A NETWORK OF TRUST.

WHEN ABORIGINAL PEOPLE SHARE, IT IS WITH A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR BUILDING A STRONG COLLECTIVE FUTURE.

THERE IS A CULTURAL TRADITION OF TRUSTING THOSE WHO SHARE.

“WE ARE PART OF THE SAME WHOLE. WE ARE CHILDREN OF THE EARTH.”

SHARING HELPS KEEP THE CYCLE OF LIFE MOVING.

“NEVER FORGET OUR CREATOR. WE RECOGNIZE MOTHER EARTH WITH CONSTANT THANKFULNESS.”

TRANSGENERATIONAL RECIPROCITY: A COMMITMENT TO FUTURE GENERATIONS AND RECOGNITION OF OUR ANCESTORS.

A REPORT BY VITAL SIGNS CANADA FOUND THAT WHILE ABORIGINAL YOUTH HAVE GREAT POTENTIAL TO ADVANCE THE COLLECTIVE GOOD, THEY STILL STRUGGLE TO SECURE EMPLOYMENT, PAYOFF THEIR DEBTS AND FACE MORE MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES THAN THE REST OF THE POPULATION.

“MONEY IS NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR HUMAN INVOLVEMENT.”

FOR A FULL LIST OF REFERENCES, VIDEOS AND RESOURCES, PLEASE VISIT:

www.afpinclusivegiving.ca

This conference, also known as the All My Relations Gathering, was part of a series for fundraising professionals, donors, and volunteers to develop a greater understanding of the giving traditions and charitable interests of several diverse communities in Ontario. Organized by the Circle on Philanthropy and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, with input from AFP and other partners, this initiative was generously funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration’s Partnership Project and the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada.