



Reconciliation and the Nonprofit Sector: Where Are We Now?

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

(SFX: Hummingbird flying and tone)

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

Over this series of podcasts, we'll explore topics that are vital to the nonprofit sector in Canada. Topics like diversity, equity and inclusion, mental health in the workplace, the gap in female representation in leadership, and many other subjects crucial to the sector.

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 for your organization to deliver on its mission.

MUSIC TRANSITION

NEWS CLIP

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCs4E5h3AaI>

Si Pih Ko, Indigenous activist singing "Our Village in the Four Winds" in Maskwacis (Cree) to the tune of Oh Canada.

NEWS CLIP

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5wDubbMN4o>

"No, that's not Oh Canada, that's Our Village in the language of the Four Winds. And after the song, I spoke the law to him. The law of these lands. She speaks in Maskwacis (Cree). I hereby serve the spoken law; we the daughters of the great spirit and our tribal sovereign members cannot be coerced into any law or treaty that is not the great law."

Mary Barroll: To mark Canada's 4th annual National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, in this episode, we're checking in with Indigenous nonprofit leaders from across the country to hear what they have to say about whether any progress has been made in how the nonprofit sector supports, funds, and collaborates with Indigenous-led organizations.

Frances Sanderson: When we had received funding from each of the levels of government, there were restrictions. If we're going to give you this much money, then you spend it on these activities. We have always been told what we need, what's good for us, what's best for us, where we should live, how we should live. When I get a mosquito bite, I'm told where I can scratch.

Janine Manning: We take the view that money is medicine for restorative purposes. We welcome you and we welcome individuals also to support us monthly or one-time giving as they can. Through this lens of reconciliation, how have you benefited from

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colonization and how have we as Indigenous folks lost? And so, we're really taking this restorative view and trying to break down the transactional relationships that have historically been a part of philanthropy.

Jane Rabinowicz: Philanthropy as a sector is not mentioned in the TRC Calls to Action, but then we have the Declaration, which is specific to philanthropy. And so, these resources provide a roadmap for us. And I think the foundation, the internal work, understanding the legacy of trauma, understanding the systemic barriers, the injustices, digging into the resources that exist out there, allowed us to get to a place of readiness where it was a natural decision.

Nation Cheong: It was clear from the feedback we heard that this has to be more than just conversations. People wanted to see something substantive. People wanted to see something that was endorsed by the board of directors and senior staff to demonstrate that it had teeth and that it was a commitment that United Way was stepping into.

Tim Fox: I think what really stands out for me was that really profound, significant visit by the Pope a couple of summers ago, where he issued this public apology to residential school survivors. It was really significant because, you know, that was when we talk about things surrounding the truth and reconciliation, and I think, that stands out to me big time because what I think is happening is the lens is finally sort of being shone on the work that needs to be done. So, from that, what I am observing is there's this growing desire for organizations to either incorporate some sort of culturally specific or appropriate services and supports for Indigenous people that are not oppressive, but to actually change how they function, the structure of their organization.

NEWS CLIP:

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/1.6078765>

"We had communities in Northern Manitoba that were not having supplies sent, they were having body bags sent. As of yesterday, we have hit 751 unmarked graves. This is not a mass grave site. These are unmarked graves."

NEWS CLIP:

<https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/1.6101070>

"It hurts so much to keep hearing about how these are being uncovered and I'm really hoping Canadians' consciousness is awake to what experience First Nations have had since the beginning of this country."

Mary Barroll: A wind of change did blow during the Covid-19 pandemic, when it brought to light so many of the systemic challenges faced by Indigenous people, as inequitable access to basic supports were compounded by the virus. It was during this period that the consciousness of the Canadian settler public experienced an awakening to the realities of what Indigenous people, across the country, have suffered historically, and continue to face on a daily basis. That consciousness was heightened by the shocking discovery of unmarked Indigenous graves on former residential school grounds, providing stark evidence to the testimony given by survivors to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which resulted in the 2015 publication of the 94 Calls to

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Action. But many Indigenous leaders say those calls to action fell on deaf ears, until recently, when the dramatic events of the past few years became instrumental in provoking this growing public awareness and the recognition that more funding and support for Indigenous people is essential.

Don Shafer: Despite obvious need, Indigenous organizations have been historically underfunded. According to a 2022 article by Canadian Charity Law's Mark Blumberg, though Indigenous people make up about 4.9% of the Canadian population, in 2019, Indigenous groups received about \$1 for every \$138 given to non-Indigenous groups or just over 0.7% of gifted funds. A 2020 Charity Report on where private foundations spend their money, revealed that from a total of \$1.63 billion dollars in grants, from 20 private foundations, just 0.2% went to support Indigenous organizations.

Mary Barroll: CharityVillage spoke to one of the report's authors, Charity Lawyer, Mark Blumberg, and he had this to say:

Mark Blumberg: I've been writing for a couple years, with a few other people, a report on how almost no money is going to Indigenous groups. So, you know, it's 50 to 70 million going to Indigenous groups from all the charities in Canada. And that is a tiny amount of money, it's about 150th of the amount of money that they should be getting if you just looked at population size and things like that. So, it's extraordinarily embarrassing.

Mary Barroll: What is also embarrassing is that public awareness of Indigenous issues tends to fade just as quickly as it emerges, according to Janine Manning, Executive Team Lead of the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund.

Janine Manning: And prior to coming to IPRF, I was a fundraiser with an Indigenous health center. And we watched the trends, we watched the reports come through and it is unique. Indigenous organizations will see an increase in funding depending on the news and the environment, but it will spike and then it'll drop the following year, which is what we've seen happen, you know, a few years back when the first residential school graves were found on sites and that year funding went from 1% a year to charitable donations in Canada to 3%, the following year it fell to two and then back to one. So unfortunate that our communities have to make the news tragically for donors, and I'm talking individual donors, not philanthropic partnerships, to take notice of the need with Indigenous communities.

Mary Barroll: Senator Ratna Omidvar did take notice of the need and proposed Bill S-216, known as the Effective and Accountable Charities Act, components of which were incorporated into the April 2022 federal budget through amendments to the Income Tax Act. This legislative change allows charities to have more flexibility in forming partnerships with non-qualified donees (or organizations without charitable status), and to provide these organizations with funding, without needing to exercise full control over their activities. Behind this reform is an intention to reduce some of the historically colonialist structures of the settler-managed philanthropist funding system and allow for more free and efficient collaboration with grassroots and community-based organizations. Senator Ratna Omidvar explains.

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Ratna Omidvar: It deals with a stipulation in the Income Tax Act that states that charities can use their charitable dollars in one of two ways. One, they can use the money directly to provide their services, but these services have to be own activities, and two, they can grant dollars to another charity. So, the problem is own activities. Those two words, own activities, prevents charities from working in partnership with others who are not charitable because those activities would not be the own activities of the charity. The trouble with the own activities language is that when a charity needs to work with a non-charity to advance its charitable purpose, then the only way they can work with the non-charity is by entering into a very arcane workaround, which results in the charity imposing direction and control on the non-charity. Reconciliation is on the top of mind for everyone. When a Canadian charity or a Canadian foundation wants to give money to an Indigenous organization that is not a charity, they have to go through the same arrangements. In other words, they have to direct and control them.

I don't need to tell your listeners what those two words direct and control mean to Indigenous organizations. This law and the guidance around it is viewed as white saviourism in the developing world and neocolonialism in our country. So, this law needs to change, so that we don't lose what is at the heart of the current law. It's not any intention to be colonial or racist, or oppressive, frankly, you know I think it was written at a time when nobody thought of these things.

The intention of the law was to be accountable for charitable dollars. Yes, accountability is important. We can get accountability, but we can get it differently and get it equally, but we can do it by doing business differently. So that we are not imposing these colonial workarounds on partners who are in the field doing good work. In other words, emancipating the sector to do two things, one to continue to be accountable to the Canadian public for charitable dollars, that is incredibly important. But two, also to work in an empowered relationships with local partners, overseas partners, Indigenous organizations, racial minority groups, all these organizations who are doing essential public good, but are not charities.

Mary Barroll: The good news for Indigenous groups is that the legislative reform removed the requirement for charities to maintain "direction and control" over activities carried out by non-qualified donees. This allows organizations without charitable status to more easily receive funding from registered charities and to decide for themselves where to put the funds they receive. The reform has also acted as a catalyst for the nonprofit sector to explore new ways to support Indigenous communities in, as Senator Omidvar describes, an empowered relationship.

One notable example of a charity that has recognized the need for a better way to support Indigenous community groups is the United Way Greater Toronto. As part of their reconciliation and action plan, the United Way GTA reached out to Indigenous community members to learn about the roadblocks that they were facing when it came to seeking funding. One of those leaders was Frances Sanderson, a member of Whitefish River First Nation, and Executive Director of the non-profit Indigenous housing

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provider Nishnawbe Homes. Frances Sanderson explains how her conversation with the United Way led to the formation of the Indigenous Partnership Council.

Frances Sanderson: Well, in a meeting with the Greater Toronto United Way, they asked, how come your community is not asking for putting an application in for funding for projects or what's going on? And I told them point blank, it was too difficult. It was onerous. We didn't have the capacity for doing it. When we did put applications in, they were not given the opportunity.

So, sitting with the executive director of the United Way, the president, we had long conversations. And one of the things they said was, how can we work better? And I said, you have to build a trust. You have to do something to make yourself known. You have to develop a partnership with the community. You can't just put it out, you know, an application form and expect them to come back. You have to be invited. You don't go to someone's house unless you're invited. And we weren't going to the United Way's house unless we were invited. And so that kind of broke down. And they said, how can we do it better? And it sort of grew from there.

Mary Barroll: During her conversations with the United Way, Frances Sanderson proposed the idea of starting an Indigenous-led committee that would develop programs and allocate funding for Indigenous organizations. The United Way Greater Toronto supported this, and by the end of 2021, the Indigenous Partnership Council was created. Its members include representation from Indigenous educational facilities, shelters, housing and social service organizations. Developing partnerships with so many different Indigenous groups was made easier by the fact that Frances Sanderson is also the President of the Toronto Aboriginal Social Service Council, which is a table of 23 Indigenous organizations in Toronto.

Before the establishment of the Indigenous Partnership Council, Frances Sanderson says there was little opportunity for Indigenous-led organizations to access funding to achieve their goals.

Frances Sanderson: This was an opportunity to open the doors. And quite frankly, funding is the main reason, which is what we are lacking. And so, this was an opportunity to have access to funding, and to move our agenda forward, to move our educational needs forward, to move our housing needs forward, our health needs. All these were badly lacking. We were having to forego a number of things. So, with the partnership that we were developing with United Way, it opened a lot of doors for us and gave us opportunity that we didn't have before.

Mary Barroll: Prior to the legislative reform sponsored by Senator Omidvar, Frances Sanderson says that there were too many restrictions on the granting of funds and that as Indigenous-led organizations, they had very little say over how to spend the money that they were granted.

Frances Sanderson: When we had received funding from each of the levels of government, there were restrictions. If we're going to give you this much money, then you spend it on these activities. We have always been told what we need, what's good for us, what's best for us, where we should live, how we should live, when I get a

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mosquito bite, I'm told where I can scratch. And that was coming very onerous, and it was very tiring. So, one of the things we said is we know where that money is needed.

Mary Barroll: It was during the pandemic, when unrestricted funds became more available, that things started to change.

Frances Sanderson: We found that out through the pandemic, when we did have access to unrestricted funds. The government and the lenders soon found out that we did know where the money should be going, and our community was better for it. The people who were funding us were better for it. The community, our organizations became stronger. And so, this led to this feeling that perhaps we do know what's best for our people. And so, that became the nucleus for the development, was that if you give us money, don't dictate where it has to go when we know where it needs to go. So, we developed the critical path for that funding.

Mary Barroll: A vital foundation for developing this path for funding is the building of trust between settler and Indigenous organizations. Frances Sanderson explains.

Frances Sanderson: No one ever goes into a relationship with someone that is very meaningful and is going to change the direction of a community without having some trust that they're going to listen to what you say, hear what you say, and act on what you say. And so, we tried with the United Way by offering our hand by saying, yes, we'll sit down with you. They said, you know, tell us what's wrong. And we thought, do we actually come straight forward and tell you exactly what's wrong? Because it's very difficult to be that honest right off the bat. But they took it well. They responded well. They responded with concrete change to what they were doing, which showed that they had trust in what we were saying.

Mary Barroll: One concrete way the United Way responded to the trust being developed with the Indigenous Partnership Council was with an initial investment of \$1.5 million dollars dedicated to Council-identified priorities. Frances Sanderson says the opportunity to control how the funds were spent allowed the Council to start with their first priority – to support the healing of the Indigenous communities they serve.

Frances Sanderson: It's a large responsibility. We are very excited to have them carve off that funding specifically for our needs. So, it was ultimately the point of the whole Council to look at opportunities. What would we spend this money on? We had to be very careful that it was not frivolous in any nature.

So, one of the first things that we had discussed was a healing center. I'm not sure if you or your listeners are aware that there is much baggage, and with the Truth and Reconciliation report that came down, much history that had to be rectified. And with the rectification of that history, the things that had happened over the years, there's a lot of healing that must be done. And so, developing, and we're still in the process of developing this healing facility, an organization, a place where people can go and get the help that they need. So that's become one of the ultimate goals is to do that.

Mary Barroll: The Council's second goal is to alleviate the housing challenges Indigenous people face.

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Frances Sanderson: We also have a huge housing problem that is very difficult to meander through or navigate. There is a great deal of racism when it comes to Indigenous housing that's not felt by a lot of other organizations or other nationalities. For a number of reasons, we never did develop a neighborhood unlike where you can go to Greek town and run into all kinds of proprietors that service the Greek community or the real Indian neighborhoods.

Mary Barroll: Frances Sanderson says none of this important work would have been possible without the evolution of the more empowered relationship Indigenous Partnership Council developed with the United Way Greater Toronto. She shares her thoughts on what it takes for settler and Indigenous-led organizations to work together.

Frances Sanderson: You know, it's almost like a new language. You're learning something new. You're trying to take on the culture and understand it, while not walking on eggshells, but by being brutally honest. And this is one of the things that we found with the United Way. We said there are no stupid questions, and there is nothing that we can't answer and help. We know that the educational side of it is the most important.

Seeing it through the Indigenous lens, to see things the way we see it, to understand what we bring to the table, understanding our culture, actually changing the direction of the United Way to understand who we are, where we come from, and what we need. We'd like all the departments to understand what it is we're looking for, what would put us all on a level playing field. And so, I think we found that, and it comes from the top down, it comes from the leadership, and it filters its way down to all levels of management and administration at the United Way.

Mary Barroll: One of the United Way leaders who was instrumental in developing the organization's Reconciliation and Equity Action Plan, as well as the Indigenous Partnership Council was Nation Cheong, now Vice President of Community Impact and Mobilization for United Way Greater Toronto. Nation Cheong describes his efforts to work better with Indigenous communities and the Indigenous-led organizations, ultimately leading to the establishment of the Indigenous Partnership Council.

Nation Cheong: I'll take you back to 2017, at the time, we were taking an intentional effort to drive diversity and inclusion across the community service sector, and all of the funded partners that we work with. And at that point, a number of Indigenous leaders of Indigenous-led community services, as matter of fact, said to us, "pause, we are not part of the diversity and inclusion conversation." The relationship with Indigenous community centres on treaties, centres on land rights, centres on self-determination. And so, if you want to have that discussion with us, we need to have a separate conversation that is not under the auspice of diversity and inclusion, but under the auspice of truth and reconciliation.

Mary Barroll: This initial insight led the United Way to hire its first Senior Manager of Indigenous Collaboration to help them accomplish two objectives: one, deepen their relationship with Indigenous leaders in the Greater Toronto Area and two, map out key priorities to start thinking about how to invest and do research and public policy differently.

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Then the pandemic hit, and immediate community needs took over, bringing all strategic planning to a halt. And United Way Greater Toronto received another important message from leaders of the Indigenous community, as Nation Cheong describes.

Nation Cheong: At that juncture, some of the senior leaders of Indigenous-led community services approached United Way, engaged our CEO, and said, let's start over. It's great that you have staff, but we need something broader. We need a deeper relationship with United Way that isn't just about allocating dollars to community services, but thinking through together hand in hand what the big picture is for a growing population of urban Indigenous folks who span First Nation, Métis, Inuit, etc.

Mary Barroll: This act of thinking through together and working hand in hand was manifested in a gathering at Evergreen Brickworks where about eight leaders of Indigenous Community Services came together representing Toronto, Peel and York Region.

Nation Cheong: On that day, everything shifted. A different tone was set. We ensured that our CEO, Daniel Izanari, was there. We also ensured our board of directors, our Board Chair was there, Dr. Pado Campo. And that was important because it signaled to the community that this commitment to work differently, to step into our responsibilities as a philanthropic organization to address truth and reconciliation, was all the way through the organization. This wasn't just a senior manager showing up. This was the board chair and senior staff showing up for this important conversation. And the first conversation was about truth telling and it was a leader in a very emotional opening who said, whatever we do from this point forward, whatever we say from this point forward has to lead to self-determination. If it does not lead to self-determination, we're heading down the wrong path. And I thought that was critical, because it set the tone, the frame and the table stakes for all of the work that has followed since.

Mary Barroll: That work led to the development of a vital starting point for self-determination – the establishment of the Indigenous Partnership Council. The United Way learned from listening to the Indigenous leaders that they needed to take concrete action to show their commitment.

Nation Cheong: And so, we started to draft the Terms of Reference because it was clear from the feedback we heard that this has to be more than just conversations. People wanted to see something substantive. People wanted to see something that was endorsed by the board of directors and senior staff to demonstrate that it had teeth and that it was a commitment that United Way was stepping into. And so, the staff were tasked to build that Terms of Reference and to vet it with the members of the forming Indigenous Partnership Council.

Mary Barroll: Once the Terms of Reference were vetted, the United Way Greater Toronto further demonstrated their commitment through a significant allocation of funds. Nation Cheong explains:

Nation Cheong: United Way earmarked \$1.5 million to the full governance of the Indigenous Partnership Council, again, to demonstrate unequivocally the commitment to self-determination. And so, the IPC has full governance over that \$1.5 million in addition

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to increased investment through our regular funding stream, which is our programming and our anchor funding stream. And the group honed in on building a healing lodge, an Indigenous-led healing lodge that would bridge clinical services with cultural healing practices and cultural restoration for Indigenous folks across Peel, York, and Toronto. So now we have a vision, we have an objective. We've got \$1.5 million.

Mary Barroll: I asked Nation to describe the ways in which the United Way Greater Toronto tried to work differently with the Indigenous Partnership Council than it had in the past.

Nation Cheong: The simplest way to describe that is to say that when we sat with the council, because of historical relationships and because United Way holds the purse string and is often the power broker in the space, intentional or otherwise, it kind of defaults to a particular dynamic. And so, we had to be explicit and intentional that we wanted to change that dynamic.

And it took two or three meetings to say to the folks at the table, this is your table. This is not our table. You are leading. We are seeking direction from you. And I think that was necessary to repeat, to shift the mindset in practice, and also to demonstrate that that is how we're showing up. We're showing up with this openness to say, we've agreed on this Terms of Reference. It took about three or four meetings to get that right. And one of the most affirming comments that we heard from an elder in the group was, you're listening, I can see clearly that you're listening to us because our words are in those Terms of Reference. And you have taken time to vet and ensure that our values are embedded in these Terms of Reference, the reference to the Medicine Wheel is an example of how we try to overlay the values of the medicine wheel with those terms of reference. As much as I think we got 95% of it right, the tweaking of language to be very, very explicit that it is by and for Indigenous Peoples was made really clear.

Mary Barroll: In addition to careful consideration of language, Nation Cheong explains that the United Way needed to learn to work at a different pace and with a different mindset.

Nation Cheong: Moving at the pace of trust versus moving at an agenda that I need to get these deliverables done by such and such a date is the difference maker. Moving at the pace of trust is the critical difference. And sometimes that means putting aside our timelines for a little bit and just saying, as long as we're not compromising this delicate fabric of trust that we need to rebuild and hold onto, we're in the right place.

Mary Barroll: Many Indigenous leaders agree that this concept of moving at the pace of trust is a crucial aspect of decolonizing the antiquated notions of white saviourism that have historically underpinned the attitudes and structures of the Canadian charitable legislative framework. Tim Fox, Vice President of Indigenous Relations and Equity Strategy of the Calgary Foundation, echoes the sentiment that settler-led charities wanting to collaborate with Indigenous-led organizations need to learn to work at a different pace, with a different mindset, and even with different goals and practices that deepen and honour relationships. He describes what that might look like:

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Tim Fox: We continue to convene seasonally an Indigenous network gathering that brings together both Indigenous and non-Indigenous charities. We continue to gather seasonally, we come together, we do not practice any kind of Robert's Rule of Order, any kind of colonial way of gathering and meeting is thrown out the window. We're sitting in circle, we're being our true selves, we're incorporating medicine, we're sitting in dialogue, and we're healing together. We are laughing together. We're just being in right relations. And I think if I could broadcast one of those meetings and show the world what it's like to really convene and be in that space, this is what we're trying to work to. We're trying to work to this holistic attitude, this way of life that really honours what it means to be in relationship with each other, with the land and spirituality, to really show what it means to be Indigenous. That's where we get our strengths from.

Mary Barroll: Tim Fox has a unique perspective on the philanthropic sector and its evolving work with Indigenous communities, because he embodies a unique intersectionality. He is both Indigenous – he's a member of the Blackfoot Confederacy from the Blood Reserve - and he holds a leadership position at a charitable foundation. From his vantage point, over the years he's experienced the evolution of how settler-led charities and Indigenous-led organizations are creating new, more equitable and respectful partnerships to better achieve their objectives. In his role at the Calgary Foundation, Tim Fox has seen some encouraging developments by staying committed to the communities the Foundation serves, building trust and stronger relationships, resulting in more Indigenous organizations applying for funding.

Tim Fox: We're staying consistent in what we have always promised to do since we began to focus on this area, and that's just to maintain a relationship with the surrounding Treaty 7 communities, including the Métis Nation communities and the Indigenous-led charities in and around the urban center of Calgary. I say Indigenous-led just because there are tons of other non-Indigenous agencies and organizations that are providing Indigenous specific supports, and that's a really exciting thing as well, that's always existed. The difference was the amount of support that the non-Indigenous agencies providing the specific supports were receiving versus an Indigenous-led organization and I feel like if we can get to a place where that's a little bit more balanced, that's why I would like to see it.

Mary Barroll: Tim Fox says the Calgary Foundation is committed to continuing to explore new ways to breakdown antiquated colonial based systems to develop new anti-oppressive ones, by working together with, and listening to, the Indigenous community.

Tim Fox: I know everything that we've done at the Foundation has really been based on experimentation. We lean on a lot of systems change ideologies. So, our friends at the Trico Changemaker Studio help us deliver a systems change retreat every year called Active Reconciliation. It's coming up in October. We always invite a charity into that space, a charity or two. And in the past, we've had charities like Calgary Legal Guidance, Fort Calgary, which is not Fort Calgary anymore, they changed their name. Trellis has been there, Hall of Homes, tons of agencies have come, over the past, this is our fifth year entering into the system change retreat. I can say that it's pretty transformational, we're not only talking about systems change, but we're also

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incorporating levels of what it looks like to be anti-oppressive, what it looks like to be culturally appropriate. To me, that's really listening to the community.

Mary Barroll: From his unique perspective, Tim Fox has learned that for real systems change in a charitable organization to succeed, a diversity of perspectives -- and especially Indigenous perspectives -- has to permeate every level, from leadership to frontline workers, and every grant program and committee -- to make real and lasting impact. Here's Tim Fox to explain.

Tim Fox: A big level to an organization that can either hinder or support and move this work forward is that board of director level. And if that board of director level is not open to being a part of this work, if they aren't understanding that it's not easy to measure the success of a changing system by numbers or by surveys and that's all they're used to seeing, they have so much power, they have the ability to stop it.

So, it's not just the organizations, it's the leadership that has that big influence on these organizations as well. So, it's the whole organization. It's every single actor that makes up that organization. That's the approach I've always taken. I was in the beginning asked, do you want to start your own specific Indigenous fund? Do you want to create your own Indigenous grants committee? I said, no, like, that's siloing the work. I want to bring on more Indigenous volunteers as committee viewers, but I want to see them throughout every committee. And same thing with our staff and our board representation. So since then, we've seen that growing diversity of perspectives.

And it's making a huge difference for actually impacting internal systems change because that wheel of change suggests once a person's heart and their mind are shifted, their behaviour is going to change. And then that behavior will lead to some of that structural change in it. It's easy for me to say that because I'm involved in the work on a day-to-day basis. But I don't know if I would have been as confident in having that perspective three years ago when we first spoke, Mary, to now that I see some of that, the needle is shifting. Somethings happening, towards the direction of what I think reconciliation can be. And so, for other organizations, it's, yes, it's tough. Yes, it's, it requires resourcing. But really, when it comes down to it, what is stopping you? What is stopping you? Is a question that I would encourage people to ask.

MUSIC TRANSITION

NEWS CLIP:

“When the pandemic started, Indigenous adults of all ages were prioritized for vaccination. Clinics were set up in remote communities that lacked infrastructure to deal with an outbreak, and many Indigenous people, wherever they live, have underlying health conditions making them vulnerable to pandemics. But we know a majority of Indigenous people actually live in cities, and those underlying health conditions don't shed once they leave the reserve. Yet, while vaccinations services travel to remote communities, meeting people where they were, the access wasn't the same in cities.”

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<https://www.cpac.ca/covid-19-canada-responds/episode/covid-19-pm-announces-75m-in-new-aid-for-indigenous-people-living-off-reserve?id=65855d84-584a-486f-a82f-5afc16799888>

“Last week, we announced more funding to support the most urgent needs of Indigenous communities dealing with the Covid-19 outbreak. We must adapt our approach and our programs to recognize the particular needs of all Indigenous Peoples, including those living in urban areas and off-reserve.”

Mary Barroll: Against the backdrop of the pandemic and the heightened awareness of the critical needs of Indigenous communities, and around the same time that the Indigenous Partnership Council was being established to facilitate a more empowered relationship with the United Way Greater Toronto that allowed the Indigenous-led organization greater self-determination over how granted funds were spent, another new relationship between a settler-led charitable foundation and an Indigenous-led organization was being developed. As the first Indigenous person to chair a private family foundation in Canada, Janine Manning is a leader dedicated to including Indigenous people in building community abundance through the decolonization and redistribution of wealth. Janine Manning is Anishinaabe and a member of the Chippewas of Nawash unceded First Nation and identifies as urban-Indigenous having been born and grown up in Toronto. Now the Executive Team Leader of the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund, Janine Manning tells us how this initiative came into existence.

Janine Manning: IPRF started in 2020 with the onset of the pandemic. Discussions were had about Indigenous communities being left behind in the economic responses and outreach during that time. So, these conversations began with seed funders on how to support Indigenous communities and how to engage the larger philanthropic sector to do just that. And then in 2021, the conversation about having a legacy fund began, kind of akin to what Western philanthropy would call an endowment. And we wanted to do it in our own way. And the idea is to manage the fund, the capital akin to how we would do stewardship in many traditional territories and family hunting grounds guided by the principles of taking only what you need and using all of it and leave enough for those to come behind.

Mary Barroll: In 2022, the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund received its charitable status and developed their first strategic plan, with a direction to meet communities where they were at, through a trust-based, philanthropy approach. Janine Manning describes their vision:

Janine Manning: That we would work within the relations of all to live well. This really acknowledges that Indigenous communities are not homogenous. We don't take a pan-Indigenous approach. We recognize that from coast to coast to coast, every Indigenous community is unique. And our ambition, vision or statement, as you would call it, is grounded in the values of the people served. We honour the voices of Indigenous communities and organizations. So really trying to emphasize that we're led by community, informed by community to benefit community.

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We're looking at doing a long-term resilience fund. So, it would be multi-year and increased amounts to the bundles. And yeah, we're really excited. We envision a very abundant future where we take the view that money is medicine for restorative purposes. IPRF's work is rooted in the Philanthropic Declaration of Action, which was a response to the TRC. You know, a group of folks in philanthropy came together when they did not see, you know, charity or not-for-profit or philanthropy mentioned in the 94 calls to action and they developed a framework to encourage and create brave spaces, to encourage support of Indigenous charities through that reconciliation lens.

Don Shafer: On June 1, 2015, a group of Canadian philanthropic organizations and individual funders presented a collective Declaration of Action to the closing session of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Ottawa. Signatories pledged among other things, to work towards reconciliation and the implementation of the spirit, intent, and content of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) recommendations and to ensure that the philanthropic community is engaged in the work of reconciliation. They agree not only to learn and remember and understand and acknowledge the tragedy of the Residential School System and its effects on Indigenous communities, but also to participate and to act by sharing networks and resources, building relationships with Indigenous communities, and supporting the TRC's findings and recommendations.

Mary Barroll: In the spirit of viewing philanthropy through the reconciliation lens, in the words of Janine Manning, in March 2023 the McConnell Foundation made a \$30 million capital transfer to community-focused Indigenous-led foundations, beginning with a transfer of \$10 million to the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund. Janine Manning explains what was so important about this asset transfer.

Janine Manning: That was a huge leap of faith or leap into trust-based philanthropy to have our philanthropic partners trust that we as Indigenous folks working in the philanthropic space were in tune with communities and that they had trusted us to kind of steward this support on their behalf. What it's going to enable us to do is create that long-term bundle program. So, we have historically dispersed through our bundle program five to \$30,000 per project. And now we'll be able to increase that funding upwards to 100,000 a year for multiple years for those projects that really have the ability to have long term impact and sustainability in their community and really need more than a one-time bundle of \$5,000 to \$30,000 dollars. So, we're really excited about that and so we're really grateful for McConnell's support there. It's a multi-year support. So, for us, it's a very historical time in that it represents growth, I think, for us as an organization and for the community members that are going to benefit from it.

Mary Barroll: Jane Rabinowicz is the McConnell Foundation's Chief Executive Officer, and she describes what led to the Foundation's work with the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund.

Jane Rabinowicz: In March, I think, 2023, we celebrated 20 years of working in reconciliation. So, 20 years since McConnell made its first grant, and that was to the First Nations Caring Society. And so, it's been a long journey, and it's a journey of relationship building, of learning, of granting, of investing. So really, across the whole

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organization, our staff, our board, has led us to make reconciliation one of our three main granting focus areas. And also, that led us to make the commitment of a 30-million-dollar capital transfer to Indigenous-led community foundations. We made that overall commitment in 2023 with a first specific commitment of 10 million to the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund.

Mary Barroll: Jane Rabinowicz explains what was important about the Foundation making the contribution as an asset transfer.

Jane Rabinowicz: I think the Foundation for a while has been committed to using all of our levers for impact and an asset transfer is a new one. So, it's not an impact investment, it's not a grant, it's really about shifting resources from our endowment into the endowment of Indigenous-led organizations and having an endowment, we know that that gives us agency. So, we have our board has the agency to decide how that money is allocated in community. If you're truly committed to Indigenous leadership and self-determination, then why not support Indigenous organizations in building up endowments so they have that agency to determine how to allocate those resources the way that they see fit.

Mary Barroll: Granting the gift of agency to the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund through this capital transfer, was an action that the McConnell Foundation took after having undergone its own reconciliation work, using the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action and the Philanthropic Declaration as a guide, as Jane Rabinowicz explains.

Jane Rabinowicz: We have to learn that also there are these incredible resources and Calls to Action that exist that chart a course for any organization. Philanthropy as a sector is not mentioned in the TRC Calls to Action, but then we have the Declaration, which is specific to philanthropy and so, these resources provide a roadmap for us. And I think the foundation, the internal work, understanding the legacy of trauma, understanding the systemic barriers, the injustices, digging into the resources that exist out there, allowed us to get to a place of readiness where it was a natural decision. I'm not going to say it was an easy decision, but it was an easier decision because of where we were at as an organization. And I want to emphasize both staff and board because I don't think it works unless everybody is moving forward together.

Mary Barroll: The Foundation now has a program stream dedicated to reconciliation, with a focus on economic reconciliation. They've aligned *their* strategy with the National Indigenous Economic Strategy and its Calls to achieve financial prosperity. And their funding strategy is based in supporting Indigenous-led organizations.

Jane Rabinowicz: In 2023, we developed partnerships with 12 organizations. We continued or renewed partnerships with 27 organizations. So, we work with 39 partners now in our reconciliation focus area. And in 2023, allocated over \$7 million to that work. So again, it's one of our core areas of work, working with partners coast to coast to coast.

Mary Barroll: Meanwhile, Janine Manning is hopeful that the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund will meet its goal of raising \$50 million by next year and \$250 million within the next four years.

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Janine Manning: IPRF has developed a capitalization strategy, that has so far \$15 million in capital commitments, and we will raise 50 million in two years, and hopefully, fingers-crossed, and I have the utmost confidence in my team, we will raise 250 million in five years. So hopefully after five years, the fund becomes self-sustaining, just through the interest generated alone, and will be less dependent on partnerships. And we can focus more on community and developing the bundle programs that they need. Though the long-term fund, as we call it, which will be traditionally known as an endowment fund in Western philanthropy is really based on the principle of looking seven generations ahead.

IPRF wants to be around and support the journey for communities, so we have a really long view. And I think it's important to mention that IPRF represents a new way of thinking and doing in the sector regarding our approach to building and sharing capital. So, we have always given out well past the disbursement quota. This year alone, even though we have paused to reflect halfway through the year, we have dispersed 10%. In previous years, it had been like 40%. So, our strategy is also important, we want to improve how money is viewed. So, we want to apply that money is medicine model and bring our partners on a restorative journey through their partnership with us.

Mary Barroll: Janine Manning says that any organizations or individuals out there who have an interest in contributing to, or partnering with, the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund should just go ahead and reach out.

Janine Manning: I think folks are so interested in the model that we're developing and working on and working with communities, that folks have really been responsive and just reached out to say, I want to be involved and how can we support, and they want to be a part of our journey. So yeah, just reach out. We're really built upon resilience and so, we want to have resilient partnerships also. And if it's about reconciliation, I would encourage philanthropic organizations to really look at that Philanthropic Community Declaration of Action and bring that into their strategic plan to guide their way down that strategic reconciliation path, if you will, just to help them build braver spaces to be a part of building up Indigenous resilience through philanthropy. Really just don't be shy, reach out. That's kind of how we like to do things.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Mary Barroll: Settler-led organizations don't always know how to create community or spaces for learning in collaboration with Indigenous-led organizations and communities. But it's fundamental to get it right. Nation Cheong advises other settler-led organizations to start by doing their homework.

Nation Cheong: It's always important to demonstrate that you've done your homework. Like asking questions that have been answered 20 times and you can go on YouTube and get the answer is usually received as a disingenuous effort because it appears as you're not lifting what you can lift and then showing up to say, what more should I learn, what more should I understand? Go and learn that information and show up. That's the starting point.

Mary Barroll: Tim Fox reiterates this point about it being crucial that non-Indigenous people do their own learning and be mindful of just who is doing the heavy lifting in the exchange of knowledge with Indigenous peoples.

Tim Fox: How is it that what we're giving you in terms of our knowledge, how are you mobilizing that? We talk about this notion of knowledge extraction versus knowledge mobilization. And I'm really vocal about this, that if you're inviting us into these spaces, simply to increase your level of understanding, you're being no less extractive than efforts before you. And I'm talking about the extraction in land, extraction in resources, extraction in children. You know, it's what you do with that knowledge that really makes a difference, and that's to us, that's knowledge mobilization.

Mary Barroll: Jane Rabinowicz agrees that settler-led charities have to do the hard work of educating themselves, but she emphasizes the resources are right there, publicly available, in the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Philanthropic Declaration, it's a matter of willingness to take action and be open to learn.

Jane Rabinowicz: Yeah, I mean I talked about the journey, and I think sometimes, you know our society we've been facing a number of reckonings recently. And in that context, prompts you to want to act really quickly to address or redress historical and contemporary injustices. But it's more important to build up knowledge and relationships and impact over time. And so, you know you have to pay attention to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Philanthropic Declaration of Action. For us, we focus on economic reconciliation, so there's now the National Indigenous Economic Strategy.

Mary Barroll: Both the Indigenous Partnership Council's collaboration with the United Way GTA and the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund asset transfer from the McConnell Foundation demonstrate that settler-led and Indigenous-led organizations can work together in a new way to promote trust-based philanthropy in empowered relationships grounded in principles of self-determination, trust, and respect.

We began this episode with an overview of the objectives of Senator Omidvar's Bill S-216 that was enacted as part of the Federal Budget to breakdown the antiquated colonial structures that hindered the ability for charities to grant funds to non-charities that, in Canada, include many grassroots, community-based organizations on the frontline working to support Indigenous communities. I asked our guests whether the legislative reforms have had an overall impact on increasing the amount of funding for Indigenous-led organizations. Here's Janine Manning of the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund with her perspective.

Janine Manning: It may be a little premature to decide whether it is. I do know that many philanthropic peers are still a bit intimidated, I think, to amending their programs to allow for non-qualified donees. And beyond the non-qualified donee status is the barriers that many philanthropic organizations and public granting, many barriers they put up with their application reporting process. It's very intimidating for groups of volunteers, which is often what non-qualified donee is, they just don't have the time, capacity or experience to do such things.

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Mary Barroll: Part of Janine Manning's work on the decolonization and redistribution of wealth has been to work in non-Indigenous spaces, such as at Ontario Trillium Laidlaw Foundation, to try and take down the grant application barriers.

Janine Manning: I was the only Indigenous person and where I went to these spaces to learn, to be a better grant maker, well, what I found was that I was often teaching folks in those spaces, how to understand applications from Indigenous communities, the different language we use, concepts, the importance of some activities when it's in a pile, I'd see amazing applications from Indigenous groups and people would dismiss it because they didn't understand it and it's really hard to compare Indigenous applications to mainstream applications that are coming in from urban centres or whatnot. So yeah, I found that these spaces of power really, you know, reviewing applications or being on the board, they really need to be inclusive of the community members you're serving. So, if you're welcoming applications from Black and Indigenous folks, you need to have those people in those spaces at the governance level, as employees, to give you that perspective, that lens to help you on your journey with those communities, to be in better relationship with those communities.

Mary Barroll: Tim Fox of the Calgary Foundation agrees it may be too early to know if legislative reforms will have a substantial impact on increasing funding for Indigenous communities, but he's hopeful it will and is seeing encouraging signs. But at the end of the day, he emphasizes it's up to the charities and foundations and encourages them to keep the dialogue going that will raise awareness and drive change over time.

Tim Fox: I'm hopeful that it will. I think it's too early to tell right now. The legislative changes that have occurred are now in the hands of the organization. So, they have to restructure their own processes, which is something that we're also doing. So, it's too early to tell if that change has made a significant difference. What I do know is that, just by the fact that there's other foundations reaching out and have this area of focus and interest is exciting to me, it's promising. The real sort of tests whether or not that's going to make a difference is if they are adjusting, revising or creating some sort of sightline for Indigenous communities to access their own funding or their opportunities. We know through the pandemic and how quickly we were able to respond, how flexible we were able to be in those really hard times that it is possible. So, I think, you know historically it's like, well, we really can't do this. We can't do this because of this policy. And it's just like well, we just proved through a whole global health crisis that we can actually make the change that we need to do. And so, it's really through podcasts like this, it's through, conversations like this, dialogue like this, that we really have to push that and have them realize, no, there is something that you can do. What is stopping you is this unconscious bias for whatever reason.

If they're not doing anything, but I don't really see that basically happening. I see more of an upswing, and I see more support or interest in supporting and which is then leading to behavioral change, which is then leading to, okay, we need to sort of change this application process. It's kind of problematic and all that kind of stuff. Overall, it's incremental, but when you want to do things right, I think you need to take the time, and you need to involve the community as well.

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Mary Barroll: Frances Sanderson of the Indigenous Partnership Council agrees that creating dialogue to share the strategies and approaches discussed in this episode, and adapting them to your own organization is a great way to start to develop a new empowered and equitable relationship with Indigenous communities, as long as you include the basic ingredients of trust building, learning, equity and respect.

Frances Sanderson: You know, it's kind of like having your mother's recipe for I don't know, oatmeal cookies, that's a good recipe and it works, and everybody likes it. But there's nothing that says you can't put raisins in them. There's nothing that says you can't alternate. The basic cookie dough is there, that's what you're looking for. This is the basic means process to develop a relationship with the Indigenous community. There's no reason why it can't work with other foundations and funders. There's no reason why it shouldn't work. All you need is the basic recipe, which we are developing and we're honing and we're making more streamlined every time. But there's got to be someone who believes there's a future for it.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Mary Barroll: There is clearly still much work to be done to ensure that Indigenous groups gain increased access to more funding, along with greater self-determination and decision-making power over how the funds are used to support their own communities. But the leaders we spoke with in this episode have navigated the challenges to reimagine and rebuild their relationships and forge a new path toward trust-based philanthropy to support Indigenous communities. With cautious optimism, our guests share their advice on how the sector can continue to do better.

Tim Fox from the Calgary Foundation says acknowledging the lessons of history and the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission are the real turning points that lead to transformative change.

Tim Fox: I always try to encourage people not to aspire to be an ally. That shouldn't be your motivation. Your motivation should come from the fact and the realization that severe genocide has occurred, attempts at assimilation and oppression continues to happen today. And you're inspired to right the wrongs of that past and change the trajectory in the future for the well-being of Indigenous people. It's your actions that show your allyship status, not the fact that you want to be an ally. Allies are needed, but it's this context that we want to really try to change. Now that we're knowledgeable about this history, it implicates us to do something, now we know better, we have to do better, but that doesn't mean that we have to stop talking about it. I think if they can begin to really look at the structure of what makes them an organization, do a deep dive into their organizational script, there's opportunities. I don't want them to be overwhelmed by the challenges. How can they sort of shift the way they think about these challenges as actually possibilities? And once that happens, I think they will begin to see that that's a leverage point for them to realize specific policy change that has to happen.

Mary Barroll: Janine Manning of the Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund says it's about commitment and active learning.

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Janine Manning: The only thing that's stopping philanthropic organizations is themselves. I've met with many folks in the sector who are afraid of getting it wrong and I always tell people that there's nothing, there's no error so wrong that you can't undo it. There's no relationship I don't think in that you can't repair. But just do this with intention, the best intention with community at the centre and commit to actively learning year over year and let the communities lead, let them tell you what they need and ask them, ask them how it is they want to be in reciprocal relationships, so that you can disrupt that power imbalance and make it less transactional.

Mary Barroll: Frances Sanderson from the Indigenous Partnership Council urges charities to begin the dialogue and listen to Indigenous people about what is needed to help their communities.

Frances Sanderson: Reach out, invite them for a cup of coffee, cup of tea, go to where they are. We're not always going to go to somebody else's house unless we're invited. So, go to where they are, offer the opportunity to sit and talk and find out what does this organization do? How could you, Mr. Foundation, how could you help? What resources do you have to help? It may be just advice, resources, doesn't always have to be 100% financial. It might be human resources. But open the door and ask, knock on that door and see who we are, what we're doing. We're not just sitting there looking after our people as best we can. We do want prosperity. We do want to move up. We do want a level playing field.

Mary Barroll: Nation Cheong from United Way Greater Toronto believes leadership must be engaged and involved throughout.

Nation Cheong: I would recommend putting decision-makers at the table and ensuring even if those decision-makers can't be there for every meeting, that there is an organizational commitment, and you can see it in the budget. My last comment is the strategy is good, the plans are good, the vision and the objectives and the relationship is essential. But if you haven't put it in your budget, you're not serious. It has to be in your budget, because this work costs money, you need the right staff persons and then when the work starts to take foot and get some ground, you need the resources to support it. Otherwise, you'll lose trust, you'll lose faith, and you'll lose people at the table.

Mary Barroll: And finally, Jane Rabinowicz from the McConnell Foundation says it starts with relationship building – with humility and an open heart.

Jane Rabinowicz: I would recommend building relationships. Oftentimes when you're a funder, the onus is on the partner to come and seek you out and to approach you. But as a funder to build relationships, to get out there, to go into community, to go see people in their playground, trying to shift the power dynamic a little bit. So, building relationships, I think be humble, coming from a place of an open heart and a desire to learn and a desire to unlearn and to engage. To not let fear of making mistakes prevent you from taking action. And so, I've emphasized a lot, learning and not rushing, and taking time, but at the same time if you focus only on your own learning, you could just be extracting knowledge from folks to whom you really should be making gifts. So, this notion of acting and learning simultaneously, so not to act out of an impulse to make

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things better or for guilt, but acting, you know with purpose and being informed and learning alongside that. Then the last piece I would say is to consider your spheres of influence and all of your levers for change. So, it's not just granting, it's not just investing, it's not just a capital transfer, it's also voice, it's also influence, it's also opening doors. So, it's really looking at all of your levers to change and putting them to work.

MUSIC TRANSITION

Mary Barroll: I'd like to thank all of our guests for joining us and sharing their wisdom, lived experiences, valuable insights and advice, to help nonprofit organizations on their reconciliation journeys towards better, more equitable and respectful ways to support Indigenous communities. 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 their full video interviews on our website.

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 our next episode: Creating accessible workplaces in the nonprofit sector:

According to the 2022 Canadian Survey on Disability, the employment rate for persons with disabilities currently sits at 62%. While this figure has risen in recent years, it's clear that more work can be done to create more inclusive and accessible workplaces for Canadians with disabilities. In the next episode of CharityVillage Connects, we talk to accessibility experts from across the sector to find out about the challenges and barriers that contribute to this employment gap, along with what nonprofit organizations like yours can do to address these barriers within workplaces, programming, and communities. I'm Mary Barroll, thanks for listening.

MUSIC OUT

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