Towards Healing

December 20, 2018

A report to support the Ottawa Community Foundation in acting on the Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action

NOTE TO THE READER: this version of the report has been edited by OCF staff to remove confidential and personally identifying information. While the names of people interviewed have been removed, their knowledge and contributions are appreciated and acknowledged by the research team and the Ottawa Community Foundation.

OTTAWA COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership
CARLETON UNIVERSITY

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Acknowledgements

Ottawa, the Ottawa Community Foundation, and Carleton University are located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Nation. The research team recognizes the Algonquin peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which the communities that this project is intended to benefit are located.

Introduction

The research question and brief summary of methods

At the closing session of the TRC, a group of philanthropic funders presented the Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action pledging, in the context and spirit of Reconciliation, to learn, remember, understand, acknowledge, participate, build relationships, and support the Calls to Action; for the framers of this declaration, Reconciliation also explicitly means more than inclusion and requires signatories to look for and adopt new ways of thinking and doing the work of philanthropy (Pearson et al., 2015).

This report provides guidance to OCF on how it might act on the Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action through its granting, investing, and relationships with grantees and community partners within a larger context of what Reconciliation means in a philanthropic context.

As part of this work, three sources of information were considered:

- Academic and journalistic articles and books, with an emphasis on pieces written by Indigenous authors.
- Semi-structured conversations with people working in organizations that are either Indigenous or working with Indigenous communities.
- Internal data on granting and policies provided by the Ottawa Community Foundation or available on its public website.

Terminology

The following terms and definitions are used throughout this report:

- *Community*: "a group of people with a shared identity or interest that has the capacity to act or express itself as a collective. A community may be territorial, organizational, or a community of interest," (TCPS 2, 2014, p. 202).
- *Indigenous* and *Indigenous Peoples*: collectively, First Nations, Metis, and Inuit peoples, with the "s" on the end of peoples speaking to, "the incredible diversity of Indigenous peoples as hundreds of culturally and linguistically distinct groups rather than one homogeneous whole," (Vowel, 2016, p. 10).
- *Indigenous Organization*: an organization, formal or informal, that is meaningfully led and controlled by Indigenous peoples or communities.
- *Non-Indigenous*: collectively, those people and organizations that are not Indigenous.
- *Philanthropic Organization*: in the context of this report, an operating charity or public foundation that appeals broadly for donations and disburses funds to multiple qualified donees.
- *Settler*: "the non-Indigenous peoples living in Canada who form the European-descended sociopolitical majority," (Vowel, 2016, p. 16).
- *Colonial*: the systems and processes of assimilation and cultural genocide (adapted from TRC, 2015).
- *Institutional Racism*: "discriminatory treatment; unfair policies, practices and patterns; and inequitable opportunities and impacts in single … entities" (Jung et al., 2009, p. 4).
- *Systemic Racism*: "the cumulative impact of the racism of multiple social institutions over time," (Jung et al., 2009, p. 4).
- *Inclusion*: the least disruptive to current settler and colonial systems, it largely consists of helping Indigenous people adapt to existing systems and cultures in order to increase their participation across the system (Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018).
- *Reconciliation*: attempting to bridge settler and Indigenous cultures and broaden the settler understanding of what is valuable while building relationships between the groups (Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018).
- *Decolonization*: the complete transformation of a system, a re-alignment of what is considered valuable, and a re-balancing of the power relationships between groups. This is the most disruptive part of the spectrum for current settler and colonial systems (Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018).

Where possible, we tried to avoid terms that normalize or centre settler ways of thinking and doing that have the effect of devaluing Indigenous knowledge such as "modern" or "civilized" (Raibmon, 2008).

Information was gathered with the intent of supporting OCF in its work; while we did speak to people involved in philanthropy outside of Ottawa and to charities working in Ottawa, these conversations were approached within the context of this project so our observations and suggestions may not be generalizable to other organizations in Ottawa or to other communities without further work, reflection, and consultation.

"For over a century, the central goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada.

The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as "cultural genocide."

"… Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. In its dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things."

TRC, 2015, p. 1

What is Reconciliation?

Reconciliation is a very broad concept with varied interpretations across communities and individuals (Clark, de Costa, and Maddison, 2016) but can be broadly understood as an attempt to bridge settler and Indigenous cultures and broaden the settler understanding of what is valuable while building relationships between the groups; it involves greater change and disruption to existing systems than mere inclusion, but less change than decolonization (Gaudry and Lorenz, 2018). It is important to keep distinct the ideas of inclusion, Reconciliation, and decolonization because they have different meanings and refer to very different amounts of commitment and work. It is also important to note that these ideas exist within the context of relationships and that they will change and evolve over time as those relationships grow.

The Summary Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC, 2015) does not directly address the role or contribution of philanthropic organizations in the residential school system, nor do the recommendations directly speak to the broad non-profit and charitable sector in the same way they do to governments, schools, churches, and cultural institutions. However, there are five broad themes throughout the report that likely apply to philanthropic organizations that want to work on Reconciliation:

- *Consultation and self-determination:* Indigenous communities must have a meaningful say in matters that affect them.
- *Holisticness:* identities, relationships, harms, challenges, change, and growth are not separable; for people, communities, and organizations they are intersectional and interconnected.
- *Persistence:* Reconciliation will take time and requires ongoing attention to both the truth and to healing people and communities. Persistence is only possible through building and maintaining lasting, trust-based relationships.

- *Diversity:* just as there were a diversity of experiences and harms for different communities and people in residential schools, there are a diversity of traumas to overcome, and it will take different steps and amounts of time for each person and community to engage with their truth, to start healing, and then to begin Reconciliation.
- *Mutual respect and responsibility:* a fundamental challenge underlying Reconciliation effort is that colonial institutions were dishonourable and made promises and entered into agreements that they then broke, creating direct and lasting harm. Reconciliation will require acknowledging truths, taking responsibility for past actions and harms, and being responsible for the consequences of future choices. For settlers, being responsible requires respect for Indigenous peoples, knowledge, history, traditions, and ceremonies that was absent during colonization.

Generally, there is a great variation in how settlers understand Reconciliation, with as many as one in five having no awareness of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission or the Calls to Action (Denis and Bailey, 2016). During interviews, we heard that for some Indigenous peoples, Reconciliation, and the desire to work and live together in a more cohesive, equal, and balanced manner is a very old idea and that it seems like settlers may just be coming around to it. We also heard during interviews that Reconciliation efforts are hampered because the genocide that Indigenous peoples experienced has not stopped.

Reconciliation, in the context of philanthropy, is about building full reciprocity (Brascoupé Peters et al., 2016) which is built through listening, friendship, knowledge co-creation, and relationship building (Grant, 2016). When speaking with key informants, we heard that Reconciliation should be a circular, iterative process that results in stronger relationships between people. During one conversation, it was shared that, "every year, community foundations aren't meant to stay the same around Reconciliation, they're meant to engage differently with Indigenous communities, listen differently, action it differently, who they partner with they're going to do that differently. And that's going to be their journey, but it has to be consciously done." It was also shared that this process, from an Indigenous perspective, should be circular and not treated like a straight line or a checklist leading to an outcome; organizations who are working on Reconciliation need to consider from the very start what the loop back is and what they are going to communicate back into the community for the benefit of everyone.

Reconciliation is an area of growth, change, and uncertainty for the non-Indigenous philanthropic sector because it is very new work with few established practices and a need to learn from and adapt to local conditions and communities. In speaking with non-Indigenous organizations, we heard about some of the areas where people are looking for new ways of working. One of the key informants shared that:

> If you're trying to engage the Indigenous community just as you were trying to engage [other] communities, you need to be very intentional and proactive in doing outreach in order to really meaningfully outreach to and engage those

populations. So I think not just relying on our traditional methods, but getting creative and getting advice on mechanisms that will work, and working with Indigenous organizations, with elders, with people who are experts in this area to do that engagement.

Others advised that organizations should pay attention to whole systems when working towards Reconciliation and not staying inside programmatic or organizational silos; a hope that as Indigenous people navigate complicated systems and programs in non-Indigenous organizations that they will know that wherever they go they can access culturally appropriate programs.

Barriers to building relationships

Context

For further information on some of the biggest systemic issues, Chelsea Vowel's book *Indigenous Writes* (2016) is recommended.

It must be recognized and acknowledged that efforts at truth, healing, and Reconciliation are taking place in the context of widespread, ongoing harm to Indigenous people, including the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls crisis, continuing seizure of Indigenous children from their families at much higher rates than the general population, conviction and incarceration of Indigenous people at much higher rates than the general population, higher rates of suicide than the general population, and chronic, systemic under-funding for housing, water, and education of Indigenous people in areas where the Federal government has responsibility (TRC, 2015; Vowel, 2016). As one interview participant reminded us, Indigenous peoples were forced to give up land, to be assimilated, and that systemic efforts at assimilation continue; because these efforts to assimilate continue, the genocide of Indigenous peoples has not stopped. The intent of mentioning this is to acknowledge that the context matters and will continue to matter for as long as harm continues.

Knowledge

There is an inherent tension when non-Indigenous organizations want to start building relationships with Indigenous organizations and communities that comes from how settler organizations try to access knowledge.

On the one hand, non-Indigenous organizations must learn about the peoples, cultures, and histories of the peoples that they want to work with so that they can move beyond what is often a silent expectation that all of their clients will match a settler's needs and definitions of success. It is also, as one of the key informants pointed out, important to have enough knowledge to separate Indigenous-focused programming from programs for other vulnerable and marginalized populations such as immigrants – they are not the same and they do not have the same issues.

On the other hand, when non-Indigenous organizations start to learn, they may be unsure of where to start. Unfortunately, systemic racism places the burden for education on marginalized communities, leading well-intentioned non-Indigenous organizations to ask a great deal of Indigenous organizations and peoples. As one key informant shared,

However well-intentioned mainstream organizations are, they can be unaware of how much time and energy educating them takes … So, when I hear you say they want to engage with Indigenous communities, my first thought is "*What are they going to be asking of Indigenous organizations? How much time, how many resources are going to have to be given on behalf of the Indigenous organization to get the foundation up to snuff?*"

Resolving this tension requires non-Indigenous organizations to do some work internally before reaching out, starting with learning from the resources and material that Indigenous organizations and peoples have already produced to help build organizational awareness of the issues. It was also repeatedly mentioned throughout this project that once an organization does reach out to an Indigenous organization that the organizations, elders, and knowledge keepers that educate non-Indigenous organizations should be funded or compensated for that work.

Processes

Processes are one area where, even with the best of intentions, trust can be eroded and relationships harmed. This may be because cultural myths of meritocracy and scarcity can contribute to power imbalances that allow funders to maintain their privilege. It is this privilege that prevents funders from being aware that their processes are contributing to challenges in the communities that they are trying to help (Enright, 2018). One of our key informants' feedback on processes was that it is important for non-Indigenous organizations to be open and flexible and listen to what the experts tell them, to not be too rigid, and to adapt (sometimes significantly) based on what they hear.

In designing, reviewing, and updating processes, it is important to keep in mind that many Indigenous organizations have less capacity and less funding than a comparable non-Indigenous organization for a variety of reasons, including systemic racism. It is also important to note that processes that emphasize speed or efficiency may lead to tokenism, where a small number of people may be taken as representative of all Indigenous peoples and communities; as one key informant put it, "the funders and all of us in this work are under pressures and time constraints and we want to do things quickly and efficiently, but I think it's really important to try to engage a broad range of perspectives and just try to take the time to really listen."

Three specific areas of process in the grant-maker-grantee relationship were highlighted by several people:

- *Grant Applications*: During one conversation it was shared that, "While it seems like process would make it fairer for everyone, it actually doesn't, it often creates barriers. By process I mean, what makes for an eligible organization on the proposal, what kind of proposal is required, what is needed for money to flow. So, smaller organizations can't start a project until money flows, larger organizations can get started without money flowing. You can't use the same measuring stick for each organization … It'd be nice if it

was just the same process for everybody, but you can't. Equality is not equity." Others spoke of funders with online applications that were quite confusing, time consuming, very detailed, and that did not accommodate applications from partnerships, unincorporated groups, or coalitions. For small organizations, available funding models do not seem to help them build capacity or hire more staff, and the perception may be that receiving funding might support a project for a short period of time but at the cost of adding more work for already over-worked staff.

- *Evaluation*: Several key informants referred to cultural differences affecting the expectations that philanthropic organizations may have for evaluation and the type of evaluation valued by Indigenous partners. They highlighted that evaluation in Indigenous organizations that they have worked with tended to be more holistic and community-focused and, rather than looking at just the individual served in a narrow way, there is a broader lens on the individual in the context of their relationships with family and community.

- *Grant Reporting*: because of the attention that TRC has brought to Indigenous issues, some funders who are new to this area ask for a lot of commitments like public relations activities, tours, speaking engagements, and written reports for what is essentially a small project fund. It can be challenging to continue to deliver front-line service while simultaneously doing unpaid public relations and reporting work and being asked by the funder to help them work on their internal Reconciliation activities.

Action

This response to the challenges of Reconciliation can be a significant problem when the non-Indigenous partner, either as a funder or as a grant co-applicant, takes the lead on an initiative or program. This is why non-Indigenous organizations need to critically reflect on their role when partnering with Indigenous organizations and, generally, should be looking at ways to be allies and supporters instead of leaders.

What does the Ottawa environment look like?

Table 1 below provides an overview of the Indigenous population in Ottawa:

Table 1 - Indigenous Population in Ottawa

	Ottawa	
Total population in 2016	934,243	100.00%
Indigenous identity (any)	22,960	2.46%
First Nations	11,190	1.20%
Registered or Treaty	5,965	0.64%
Metis	9,475	1.01%
Inuit	1,145	0.12%
Multiple identities	550	0.06%

Other Indigenous	545	0.06%

<div align="right">(Statistics Canada, 2017)</div>

23,000 Indigenous people living in Ottawa

Key informants mentioned that some settlers have misconceptions that overestimate the amount of government funding provided to Indigenous organizations and these misconceptions affect how many funding opportunities are offered or awarded to Indigenous organizations.

Truth and Healing – practices of philanthropy

What we heard repeatedly was that for a philanthropic organization to engage in Reconciliation in a meaningful way, to move beyond tokenism and inclusion, the work must go beyond programming and include the staff team, volunteers, board, and other stakeholders. During interviews people shared that, in any philanthropic organization working towards Reconciliation, they would look for positions on the board or on the staff that are either Indigenous themselves or are specifically engaged in this issue because they have the necessary background and knowledge to educate the organization and who could be that authority on how to best engage with and consult with the community. This is something that is likely to be seen as valuable for both philanthropic funders and non-Indigenous operating charities that are serving or being funded to work with Indigenous communities.

Grant-making

Grant-making processes were repeatedly brought up during conversations. In talking about grant-making in general, several people shared in interviews that there are several key practices that may be less effective when trying to reach smaller Indigenous organizations: calls for applications don't reach people; evaluation frameworks may not fit the needs of the community; and there is a need to build capacity in organizations before they even apply, especially if specific policies and procedures need to be in place as a condition of funding or partnership.

Based on what we read in the literature and the general comments that we heard during interviews, some possible contributors to this barrier might include: an application form that is eight pages long; the appearance, on the application form, that an applicant must be a registered charity; an emphasis on innovation and short term projects; and questions that suggest that a full program design and evaluation plan must be in place at the time of the application. A more comprehensive review of the process, in consultation with Indigenous organizations and communities, will be required understand which specific elements of the process are a barrier.

At this point, with the low number of Indigenous organizations receiving community grants, it may not be helpful to look at how reporting may be a barrier, however the issues are likely similar and reporting processes should be reviewed in the future in consultation with Indigenous organizations and communities.

The relationship and collaboration with each Indigenous organization and community should be approached with a long-term view. Some concrete ways of doing this suggested by some of the interview participants are: proactively reaching out to Indigenous organizations about relevant opportunities for collaboration or funding; following up with the organization after the grant review process is complete (regardless of outcome); and allowing for flexibility in eligibility or evaluation requirements. It is important to remember that eligibility or evaluation requirements do not need to be eliminated or lessened to be flexible. For example, evaluation requirements can be adapted to better fit with an Indigenous community's culture or the organization's capacity, or if an organization does not meet an eligibility requirement yet but could meet it with support, that support and flexibility can be provided to allow the organization to still apply. In general, funders working with vulnerable communities are advised to: start from a place of explicit trust; use more informal, verbal communications throughout their processes; and provide greater flexibility in how grant funds are used by communities (Enright, 2018).

Disbursement of Funds

While there may be benefits to non-Indigenous and Indigenous organizations partnering to work on common issues, the Indigenous organization should be the lead organization. There are three reasons for this approach. First, it can help to build capacity in Indigenous organizations. Second, it centres Indigenous knowledge and experiences and recognizes that Indigenous peoples and organizations should be taking the leadership role in initiatives for their communities. Third, by funding the Indigenous organization to take the lead on a partnership as opposed to a non-Indigenous organization, the power dynamics within the partnership fundamentally shift, helping to decolonize the processes and services provided within Indigenous communities.

Some of the questions that were suggested by our key informants that philanthropic organizations should ask of themselves as they start on this work are:

1. Look at who you serve and fund, mainstream-wise, and ask yourselves, "Is any of that money going to Indigenous people and how can we swap that?" and,

2. "What kind of requirements do we make of mainstream organizations to partner with Indigenous organizations?"

3. "And then, finally it's something around expectations. What is the funding level and what are we expecting for that amount? And can we have the courage to look at our own biases. No shame, no blame … we must be willing to say, we have not been doing this well and we need to do better before we can really work together, here's what we've done wrong."

An additional point to consider is that, while Indigenous peoples practice and belong to many faiths, and settlement agreement churches are making progress on Reconciliation (TRC, 2015), disbursements to faith groups may, in some cases, be inconsistent with the goals of

Reconciliation where those groups are engaging in proselytization or conversion in a manner that seeks to suppress the expression of other faiths, traditions, or cultures.

Towards healing: where OCF could be helping

Non-Indigenous people and organizations are looking for an organization to help them understand and navigate the issues. When asked about how community foundations could support non-Indigenous organizations to engage in Reconciliation, one informant shared that:

> If the community foundation is building relationships within the Indigenous community, and they're identifying leaders who are able to support this work, so then connecting us with those leaders. Or connecting us with models or connecting us with other organizations that are also on this journey that have had some successes.

Indigenous organizations shared, and the literature that we read said, that there is one area where a philanthropic organization can help them within the context of building trusting, reciprocal relationships: by building their capacity. In this context, capacity building might include:

- Taking and promoting a long-term view, instead of focusing on short term projects or innovations (Formsma, 2013).
- Funding positions in Indigenous organizations for outreach and education, particularly if that organization is supporting non-Indigenous organizations in working towards Reconciliation.
- Supporting Indigenous organizations in registering as charities so that they become eligible for more funding (Brascoupé Peters, 2016).
- Helping Indigenous organizations figure out the mechanics of building sustainable organizations (Brascoupé Peters, 2016).
- Investing in Indigenous-led leadership development programs, particularly Indigenous youth leadership development (Formsma, 2013; DuPré, 2018).

Philanthropy's unexamined question

The philanthropic community should also begin to examine the source of the wealth that it uses for public benefit and explore what that means with its Indigenous partners and stakeholders. As one of our key informants put it:

> There's this mental model that exists about philanthropic organizations that "Philanthropy is about love of human kind" … [and] that we work with very generous people, people who help build our endowment and our funds and all that kind of stuff. But when you start to explore [Reconciliation], if you're doing that in a very authentic, genuine way, you're going to find that the wealth of all of those donors and formal philanthropists has been built off of what the Indigenous community has had to give up, and oppression and all that kind of stuff … We

haven't explored what has had to happen to a certain group of people to get to where we're at…

I feel like there's a level of internal work and exploration that has to happen even before you even start to question where the funds are going and what they're doing. Like talk about where the funds have come from in the first place. Because they've come from the Indigenous community. ... And likely there are donors we work with that have no idea where their wealth comes from…

It's a hard thing, it's a very heavy thing, to get into to get into this kind of discussion. But that truth piece, that truth movement is crucial in order to get into the work of Reconciliation.

Reconciliation

Acting authentically on the Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action will require philanthropic organizations to move beyond inclusion and to work towards meaningful, and sometimes uncomfortable, change. It is important that in doing this work Reconciliation does not become, "appropriated, becoming a mask for ongoing colonialism … with Indigenous priorities and leadership pushed to the margins," (DuPré, 2018). It is also very important to remember that philanthropy is not a settler concept; Indigenous peoples have their own traditions and ways of using resources for the public good that may have been suppressed or hidden away because of systemic racism and colonialism (Brascoupé Peters et al., 2015). Reconciliation will require building relationships and partnerships with Indigenous organizations, following their leadership, and coming to understand and value their approaches to philanthropy.

Start with two (very big) questions

At the start of working on Reconciliation in a philanthropic organization, two things should happen internally:

- Gather the entire internal team and work through, unpack, and examine two questions that one key informant suggested, "'What does Reconciliation mean to you?' And: 'What are you hoping to do? How do you understand Reconciliation?'" The discussions should be broad and the answers should inform where the work goes within the organization.
- Then, work through a question that one key informant asked, "From an Indigenous perspective everything is a circle, even history. History is a circle, it's not a straight line. So, if you look at that circle for the community foundation, what is that loop back? How are we communicating back to the community? And not for our own benefit, but for theirs as well. If we're communicating in a way that is embracing Reconciliation, that means the communication will help not only us as a community foundation, but also those that we serve, they can understand what we do, they can be inspired by what we do and new partnerships can be developed."

Organizations starting to work towards Reconciliation must own the work of shifting the attitudes of their staff, board, and volunteers. Indigenous organizations should not be expected to take on that role for non-Indigenous organizations that they collaborate with, especially if that work is uncompensated. When non-Indigenous organizations own and take responsibility for their own education and attitude shifting process, the organization helps fosters openness and empathy. The process can involve Indigenous people as facilitators, advisors, or knowledge-holders. During interviews, it was suggested that this awareness and education work needs to be started and underway before a philanthropic organization can mobilize or reconciliate.

Raise awareness internally and organizational culture shifts

An organization's staff, board, and volunteers should be aware and educated about Indigenous issues so that they can meaningfully engage, personally and professionally, with Reconciliation and build positive relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations. It was often shared during interviews with non-Indigenous organizations that a barrier that they perceived in working with Indigenous communities was the lack of knowledge and understanding of their culture, history and needs. As one key informant shared, "The part we often forget around the TRC is that truth comes before the Reconciliation part. And truth can be hard."

> An often-used approach that many mentioned in interviews were learning activities that have a tactile or action component, such as the KAIROS Blanket Exercise.

The organization should be mindful that truth-telling and increased awareness of Indigenous history and issues can elicit feelings of guilt and shame among non-Indigenous people. While past harms should be acknowledged and steps taken to correct them, the organization should be proactive in identifying and addressing any of those feelings in staff, volunteers or board members. Encouraging open, honest, and respectful dialogue is one way guilt and shame can be reduced or avoided.

> The book *White Fragility* by Robin DiAngelo (2018) is a useful resource for exploring how these reactions can be worked with.

Build relationships

As has been mentioned a few times already, the next step is to engage in ongoing education within the organization using existing resources and exercises. During interviews, people suggested that this process is ongoing, takes time, and should involve as much of the internal team as possible. While the end goal is to build the capacity of the internal team to understand and speak to the issues and to identify and confront institutionalized and systemic racism, a simple first step is to learn about the peoples and the land in Ottawa (and other communities receiving funds from OCF) and to start including a land acknowledgement at formal gatherings, on the website, and in print materials (Simon, 2016).

From there, one key informant shared four steps that could be followed after an organization has started the basic work of educating itself:

Number one, you're out there in the community, on the ground, building relationships with Indigenous organizations. Are you going to an Indigenous function? Are you going to a community? Just having that visible face…over and over again…it builds trust. Starting there, building relationships is always number one.

Number two: look at your strategic priorities. Do you see the word Indigenous in there somewhere? And if you don't, what do you need to bring to your board to make sure that it's in there, it's part of your strategic plan.

Which links the number three: the TRC is there for you, its Calls to Action. It can support you in ensuring that you make Reconciliation, truth-telling, all of that, a priority for you within your organization.

Then that moves us to number four. Look at your processes for how do you dole out money. Look at your list of grantees right now: how many Indigenous organizations are you funding? Does it need to be more? Does it need to be less, because we want to invest more in one or two Indigenous initiatives? You know, it's not always about more money, its about challenging what you value, what you invest in…seeing Indigenous initiatives as valuable and worth investment.

We heard repeatedly that if a philanthropic organization wants to engage with Indigenous partners or work towards reconciliation, then Indigenous partners must be involved from the start in the development of: requirements that organizations must meet to apply for funding, the process to apply for funding, training in how to request funding, decision-making on funding requests, and how donors are educated.

Key points to take away:

- *It is a relationship:* fundamentally, it is about connecting with other people in an authentic, meaningful, and reciprocal way. It is not a transaction or a token.
- *It takes time:* there are no shortcuts to relationship building. From a settler perspective, it may seem to take a long time, but this time is absolutely necessary to build trusting relationships.
- *It takes listening:* building a relationship is about getting to know the other person, and this is can be quite hard to do if one is talking the whole time. One of our key informants suggested asking, "What can we do?" instead of stating, "Here's what we'll do." Fundamentally, this means being flexible, listening to, responding to, and acting on the priorities of Indigenous peoples.
- *It takes showing up:* as our informant put it, "you can't do your community foundation work at your desk. The ones that do partnerships well are actually at community events of the organizations. Whether you fund them or not, you're aware of what's happening in the community, not because you read it on a poster, but because you were actually there."

There needs to be involvement and the time taken to bring in Indigenous peoples and learn from them about the barriers that exist. But, for this to happen, they and their organizations need to have the capacity to do this work.

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As we heard during one conversation, "Reconciliation is a journey and it takes time; to be done right you need a willingness to learn from each other, to trip up once in a while but have to trust that you're ultimately on the path."

Follow an Indigenous lead

While there are many places where a philanthropic organization can and should make some progress on its own or as a leader, there are key places and times where non-Indigenous organizations should not lead. Indigenous organizations and peoples should be leading on Indigenous issues and setting priorities for their communities. Depending on the project and context, there may be a need for partnership, support, or capacity building from non-Indigenous partners, but not necessarily leadership. It is also important to remember that, depending on how it is framed, funding is a way to build capacity and not necessarily the same as providing leadership.

Role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action

The TRC's Calls to Action are not specifically targeted to the philanthropic sector. However, several key informants expressed in their interviews that many non-Indigenous organizations are examining the Calls to Action to find where there could be alignment with their mission, or to see if they have a role to play in addressing any of the issues. They also shared that the nonprofit sector's willingness to embrace the Calls to Action is positive. The Calls to Action can also serve as context and as a starting point for organizations exploring what Reconciliation could mean to them. They are a starting point, but reading the Calls to Action alone cannot replace consultation with Indigenous communities, since each community has unique strengths and areas requiring support.

Allyship

One step that several people suggested might be explored is the concept of allyship. We heard that "ally" is a label that others apply to a person or organization in recognition of their work and it should not be something that is self-declared.

Becoming an ally means going beyond Reconciliation and actively engaging in the process of decolonization (Smith, Puckett, and Simon, 2015). An ally is someone who: engages in public expressions of reconciliation, is aware of their privilege, supports Indigenous-led movements, and acts with the consent of Indigenous communities (Denis and Bailey, 2016). Allyship requires a degree of change and discomfort and an active confrontation of one's own privilege (Dufferin Diversity Network, n.d.). It may be best to postpone a decision on whether to work towards allyship until after more work is done and relationships are stronger, otherwise there is a danger that using the term "ally" could contribute to cynicism and mistrust if the level of commitment and work is not sufficient for this label (Indigenous Action, 2014).

Closing this circle

Returning to that question, the answer seems simple but challenging: build trusting, reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities and build consensual, constructive, living processes that support and empower the people in those relationships.

Summary of Recommendations

This summary is provided for convenience but should not be treated as a checklist or roadmap, and each of these actions must take place in the context of relationship building and dialogue.

Internal work by OCF and its staff

- Learn about the Indigenous peoples and land in Ottawa and other communities receiving grants and add land acknowledgements to the start of significant gatherings and on print and web material.
- Together with the entire internal team, meet to work through two large questions:
  - What does Reconciliation mean to us? What are we hoping to do?
  - How will we communicate the results of this work back out to community?
- As a team, attend and engage with the Indigenous communities and organizations to listen and learn. Start to build bridges.
- Find meaningful ways to add Indigenous people to the board, staff, and volunteer teams in roles where they are empowered and supported to change systems and practices.
- Ensure that Indigenous issues and Reconciliation are added to the organization's strategy in a way that is meaningful to the Indigenous peoples that you plan to work with.

Granting practices

- *Grant-making*
  - Provide funding to organizations and people who are educating others on Reconciliation to support this work. Consider ways to help them connect and to help build their capacity.
  - Focus grants intended to benefit Indigenous peoples on long-term capacity building for Indigenous organizations and communities.
  - Ensure that grants intended to benefit Indigenous peoples go to Indigenous organizations, including in situations where there is a partnership between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations. If there is a need for greater capacity in an Indigenous organization as a condition of a grant, support that capacity building in advance of a grant application or project.
  - Examine, together with Indigenous partners, whether there are organizations receiving disbursements that are used for purposes that are counter-productive to Reconciliation and take meaningful action to reduce any harm.

- *Processes*
    - o Simplify the grant application and reporting forms and consider ways to receive non-traditional applications through dialogue and conversation.
    - o Engage grantees in conversations about how progress will be measured and what units of analysis and timelines for change are important in their contexts.
    - o Scale reporting, education, and public relations activities to match the size of a grant; consider allocating a portion of grants to these activities.

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