

Title: "150 Profiles: Anna Godefroy"

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Published in: *The Philanthropist*, [150 Profiles](#)

Date: July 6, 2017

Original Link: <https://thephilanthropist.ca/2017/07/150-profiles-anna-godefroy/>

Date of PDF Download: January 20, 2018

150 Profiles: Anna Godefroy

By Anna Godefroy

As we mark the 150th anniversary of confederation, The Philanthropist is profiling Canadians from across the non-profit sector and putting a face to 150 individuals who work or volunteer in Canada's social sector.

Name: Anna Godefroy

Current role in the sector: Co-founder and Director of the [Binnners' Project](#), a project of Tides Canada

Years working and/or volunteering in the non-profit sector: I started volunteering formally in the non-profit sector when I was 15.



What was your first job in the sector or a defining moment?

I've always been passionate about social justice. I became a volunteer School Speaker with the British Red Cross right after graduating from my Masters in Law from the University of Lyon 3, in France. It was my job to visit inner-city schools in London and facilitate sessions with kids about the role of

NGOs and their missions around the world. While that was a short-lived experience, it was the first time I realised there were tons of interesting jobs available in the non-profit sector. That was the defining moment when I decided to make social justice my career. I am especially interested in fostering the circulation of knowledge between different social classes, generations, and continents, with the goal of growing social and economic inclusion and contributing to a more just society.

Describe your desk/workspace.

Well, the Binnners' Project is a grassroots initiative. This means that while there is a glamorous side in my day-to-day life, there is also a less-glamorous side. The less-glamorous side is that we can't afford our own space, despite being a five-person team and dozen of volunteers. We rely on our strong partners when sharing spaces but it does mean that we still lack a permanent community space. The great part of my job is that I have the freedom to make creative use of space—walking meetings with staff, phone calls in the park, and I work out of local coffee shops that make up the unique community I work out of.

What are you reading or following that has expanded your understanding of the non-profit sector?

Mainly the [Stanford Social Innovation Review](#). I also read, and occasionally write on, foundation blogs and reviews, such as the [J.W. McConnell Family Foundation blog](#), and the [Vancouver Foundation](#) magazine. Overall I am an avid news reader. I love to understand the big picture in order to work at the local scale.

What do you think our sector needs to be thinking about?

I am interested in fostering economic inclusion in urban areas. My area of expertise is the informal economy from a practical side, thanks to my experience in co-creating and running the Binnners' Project. My day-to-day work is with people living on the margins of our society. Binnners quite literally go through our society's trash on a daily basis and that can be very grounding when I think about economic development and social justice issues at play in my work. Survival activities, such as binning and street vending items often found in our waste, when taken together to constitute someone's daily routine, is often a first step toward regaining stability and coping with barriers such as mental health issues and addictions. My experience has shown me that the right way to support those most vulnerable in our society is to build on existing assets and capacity within their communities—from the ground up!

Do you know someone we should profile as part of this series? Email us at philanthropistprofiles@gmail.com