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## Sector News Digest - September 8, 2020

Title: Sector News Digest – September 8, 2020

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Published in: *The Philanthropist*, News Digest

ISSN: 2562-1491

Date: September 8, 2020

Original Link: <https://thephilanthropist.ca/2020/09/sector-news-digest-september-8-2020/>

Date of PDF Download: September 18, 2020

**This week:** UNICEF laments state of Canadian youth, McConnell Foundation pauses granting, new Canadians hold promise for giving and volunteering, and one in five Ontario charities may fold.

### Canada's youth face hardship

UNICEF on September 3 released [Report Card 16](#), an annual report measuring the state of children and youth under age 18 in wealthy countries. It showed that Canada has a long way to go to catch up to other wealthy countries in providing healthy, happy childhoods. While Canada ranks among the countries with the best economic, environmental, and social conditions for growing up, it ranked 20th of 38 countries cited in the report. The Netherlands ranked first, the United States 36th, and Chile 38th.

In terms of mental health and happiness, Canada ranked 31st overall and 35th in terms of adolescent suicide rates. It ranked 28th for infant mortality rates and 29th for childhood obesity, with one in three children being overweight.

“Canada needs bolder public policies that protect the right to a childhood during changing economic, social and environmental conditions,” the report concluded. It urged the federal government to establish a National Commissioner for Children and Youth, boost investment in public policies to support youth financially, and set a baseline to measure outcomes for youth. [Read the Canada-specific report here.](#)

### McConnell Foundation pauses granting

The [McConnell Foundation](#) announced that it will postpone granting decisions until December.

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The private Canadian foundation develops and applies innovative approaches to social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges. The pause comes as the organization completes a leadership transition and will also allow the foundation to manage the increased number of grant applications received because of COVID-19.

While the granting portal remains open, McConnell officials caution applicants that it may take an additional three to four months to complete reviews.

In separate McConnell news, the foundation, in partnership with *The Philanthropist*, co-published this month *Social Innovation in Canada: Reflections on Past, Present and Future Directions*. The book explores the possibilities, opportunities, and challenges that the social innovation movement has faced and will continue to face in support of transformative systems-change in Canada. [Click here to receive a free copy by mail.](#)

### **Businesses step up to help service charities**

When two Winnipeg non-profits put out a call for donations for non-medical masks, they didn't expect to receive 5,000 within days.

[1JustCity](#), which supports outreach sites offering food programs, personal care products, and haircuts, and [Main Street Project](#), a community health centre, both issued separate calls for masks.

"A mask can mean that our guest can go to a grocery store and get what she needs for her dietary restrictions," Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud, executive director of 1JustCity, told [Global News Winnipeg](#). "A mask means that another guest who recently became a grandmother can meet the baby without worry that she might be giving something to the baby."

Two local businesses, Smartrend Manufacturing Group and First Light Safety Products, provided the initial batch of masks within days of the August request and committed to providing 20,000 more within a month.

"As a company, we rely on our community, and having the opportunity to be able to take care of the people here in Manitoba and in Winnipeg is really important," said Monique Lashley, director of human resources for the two companies.

Dr. Theresa Tam, Canada's chief public health officer, stresses the importance of wearing a non-medical mask when social distancing is impossible. Many cities and provinces have made masks mandatory in most buildings.

### **Survey roundup**

- A new report on the giving and volunteering behaviours of newcomers to Canada and second-generation Canadians highlights an opportunity for non-profits and charities to engage these diverse communities.

The [Multicultural and Newcomer Charitable Giving Study](#) is one of the first in Canada to explore how ethnicity influences charitable giving. It surveyed South Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Black (Afro-Caribbean/African), Arab, and Iranian communities' willingness to embrace community

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service. The survey was a project of [Imagine Canada](#), cultural marketing firm [Ethnicity Matters](#), and a coalition of charities and non-profits.

A full 75% of respondents said giving is the right thing to do, while 70% believe it's "very important" to pass on the importance of charitable giving to their children. More than half would like to volunteer or give more.

This data, combined with census results, shows that the newcomer groups surveyed have the financial capacity to provide charities with nearly \$1.7 billion in new donations annually.

The *Multicultural and Newcomer Charitable Giving Study* was conducted by Ethnicity Matters' partner agency Cultural IQ between February 3 and March 2, 2020, with a stratified sample of 3,130 Canadian residents aged 18 years and over.

- An Imagine Canada survey of more than 1,000 registered charities suggests that many charities are not ready for "social finance." The term is often used to describe lending and investment into social enterprises. It can include community investing, micro-finance, venture philanthropy, and social investing in the form of interest-bearing repayable loans.

More than 65% of respondents said they had either never heard of the term "social finance" or knew the term but were not clear on the details. Operations with higher annual revenues were more likely to be aware of the concept and hold positive opinions about social finance.

The survey report, [Are Charities Ready for Social Finance? Investment Readiness in Canada's Charitable Sector](#), offers recommendations for organizations interested in building their financial capacity to accept social financing and for those looking to supply it to help charities prepare.

- An [August survey](#) by the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN) and Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario suggests that one in five of the 1,100 charitable and non-profit organizations surveyed may shut down by the end of December. Another 25% say that 2021 will likely be a greater financial struggle than this year.

Respondents said declining donations, an inability to hold annual fundraisers, and new costs for personal protective equipment and the technology needed to work from home are causing financial hardship.

## Upcoming events

- Afro-beat hip-hop fusion musician [Wise Atangana](#) launches a new album, *Justice for Peace #BlackLivesMatter*, in conjunction with his initiative to raise \$100,000 to support an Afro-Black cultural centre in downtown Ottawa, on September 11 at 3 p.m. The event will be held in front of the "We Gon' Be Alright" mural at Bank and Lisgar Streets.

The centre, slated to open in January 2021, will feature an audio-video production studio and a collaborative workspace. Its mission is teaching Black youth how to use art, creativity, and technology to create opportunities, deconstruct stereotypes, and fight anti-Black racism in Canada and around the world through entrepreneurial and artistic-development programs.

- On September 17, CCVO's [Nonprofits at 2:00](#) hosts an online conversation addressing the

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effects of the pandemic on Canada's non-profit sector. The conversation will examine #ABCommunityAdvantage and building economic and community prosperity going forward, from recovery to opportunity.

Todd Hirsch, vice-president and chief economist of ATB Financial, will moderate the panel, which includes Bernadette Johnson, director of mobilization and engagement at Imagine Canada; Vinod Rajasekaran, publisher and CEO of Future of Good; Melanie Thomas, senior director of emerging opportunities at Community Foundations of Canada; and Pamela Uppal, policy advisor at the Ontario Nonprofit Network.

- From September to December, Community Foundations Canada hosts a series of free webinars for registered community foundations. The topics covered will include anti-racism, governance and financial fundamentals, and corporate philanthropy. [Learn more and register here](#)