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## News Digest — December 15, 2020

Title: News Digest — December 15, 2020

Author: Kim Hart Macneill

Published in: *The Philanthropist*, News Digest

ISSN: 2562-1491

Date: December 15, 2020

Original Link: <https://thephilanthropist.ca/2020/12/news-digest-december-15-2020/>

Date of PDF Download: January 20, 2021

This week: Statistics Canada attempts to measure diversity in the sector, Black Canadians don't receive enough funding, FAFIA and YWCA Canada celebrate International Human Rights Day, and GivingTuesday donations rise.

### Measuring diversity

Statistics Canada launched a survey attempting to measure diversity on governing boards in the charitable and non-profit sector on December 4.

The voluntary, crowd-sourced survey [will be available online](#) until December 23. It asks board members about socio-demographic information, including race, gender, sexual orientation, age, immigration status, and disability. It also asks them to describe the communities they serve and whether their boards have a written policy about diversity. Only registered charities and public non-profits can access the survey.

As Larry MacNabb, a director at the federal agency, told [The Philanthropist](#), StatsCan will send the survey to as many organizations as possible, with directions to distribute it to board members. It will also share links to the survey on social media. "The more responses we get, the more confident we can be in the data," he says. "It will help us start telling a story and do better in measuring this."

That Statistics Canada is studying the issue is new, but the lack of board diversity has long been a recognized problem in the sector. Senator Ratna Omidvar, YCMA CEO Peter Dinsdale, and G(irl)s20's Bailey Greenspon tell [The Philanthropist](#) why this survey is crucial now.

### Black Communities Unfunded

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A report released on December 2 by the [Foundation for Black Communities](#) says Canadian philanthropy doesn't support Black people in Canada.

The Foundation is led by a working group of Black professionals within the non-profit, charitable, philanthropic, and community development sectors. The research was undertaken by the [Network for the Advancement of Black Communities](#) and [Carleton University's Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership program](#).

The report, called *Unfunded: Black Communities Overlooked by Canadian Philanthropy*, spotlights 40 leading Canadian foundations with assets totalling nearly \$16 billion. It found that only six funded Black-serving organizations, and just two foundations funded Black-led organizations between 2017 and 2018.

"The concerns of Black communities are often muted by the question 'Where's the data?'" says Liban Abokor, a member of the Foundation's working group, in a [press release](#). "This report lays out the stark numbers. Question is, now that we know, what will we do?"

There are 1.2 million Black Canadians, making up about 3.5% of the population. The report says that number is expected to increase to 5.6% by 2036. In the 2017/18 fiscal years, the top 15 community foundations in Canada dispersed only 0.07% of funds to Black-led organizations and 0.7% to Black-serving organizations.

Read the full report [here](#).

### **A guide for our times**

The [Muttart Foundation](#) and law firm [Miller Thomson LLP](#) released a resource to assist charities and non-profits coping with financial hardship.

*Paths Forward in Financially Troubled Times: A Restructuring and Insolvency Guidebook for Charities and Non-profit Organizations* outlines options for charities and non-profits left feeling financial strain during this anomalous year. The avenues include continuing operations in a different legal form or in collaboration, revamping finances to survive immediate threats to viability and wrapping up the organization and its functions in a prudent and reasonable manner.

For nearly 20 years, the Muttart Foundation has provided funding for capacity-building to individual charities and charities that serve other charities.

Download the guidebook [here](#).

### **A human rights approach to COVID-19 recovery**

Commemorating 2020 International Human Rights Day on December 10, the [Feminist Alliance for International Action](#) (FAFIA) and [YWCA Canada](#) released a special chapter on how to advance a human rights approach to post-pandemic recovery.

The publication, titled [A Feminist Economic Recovery Plan for Canada: Human Rights Approach](#), offers an intersectional, feminist, human-rights lens on what a meaningful COVID-19

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recovery could look like.

“COVID-19 has exposed the deep inequities that already existed in Canada for women, especially for Black women, Indigenous women, racialized women, non-status [women], newcomer women, women living with disabilities and 2SLGBTQ communities,” says Hawa Mire, FAFIA’s executive director. “It is time to recognize that this is not only a health crisis but the amplification of a systemic and structural social crisis right here in Canada.”

This publication builds on YWCA Canada’s July release, [A Feminist Economic Recovery Plan for Canada: Making the Economy Work for Everyone](#), produced with the Institute for [Gender and Economy](#) at the University of Toronto. It was the world’s first nationally focused, feminist economic-recovery plan.

On January 28, 2021, FAFIA and YWCA Canada will host an online event examining the publication. Register [here](#).

### **GivingTuesday donations up at CanadaHelps.org**

While the final total from GivingTuesday on December 1 is still being tallied, [CanadaHelps](#) has released its own results.

The donation platform helped Canadian charities and non-profits raise over \$11 million, an increase of 123% from 2019. The site processed more than 77,000 donations for 9,366 charities, an increase of 112% over last year. And over 47,000 Canadians made contributions through CanadaHelps, more than doubling 2019’s numbers.

These numbers reflect giving only via CanadaHelps, so it’s difficult to know if GivingTuesday donations were up overall. As the end of the fiscal year for many organizations, December is the key month for Canadian charities and non-profits, and many have watched donations erode because of COVID-19.

Imagine Canada CEO Bruce MacDonald was a guest on The Big Story podcast December 8 to speak to how the pandemic has hit Canadian charities where it hurts. [Listen here](#).

### **New money for recovery**

The Alberta government announced a new Civil Society Fund on December 3. The \$20-million fund will help civil society organizations better address social problems and improve supports.

The fund will be disbursed over three years, with \$7 million earmarked for 2020/21 to support COVID-19 recovery.

Charities, non-profits, volunteer groups, and First Nations and Metis Settlements are invited to submit proposals for a one-time grant. Projects should have a positive impact on the civil society sector and help change how organizations build capacity to work together to address social challenges.

[Learn more here](#). Applications close January 21, 2021.

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In Atlantic Canada, meanwhile, the Prince Edward Island government announced \$100,000 each for the P.E.I. Association of Food Banks and the [United Way of PEI](#) to help with COVID-19 relief projects.

“As we go into stricter restrictions with the circuit breaker and the public health guidelines, we will really look back to make sure that mental health supports are in place,” United Way of PEI CEO Andrea MacDonald told [CBC](#). “That we’re able to make sure people who might be at risk of being isolated, and then also with people being homeless or ensuring basic needs – food, medication, transportation – are able to be met.”

Since March, United Way of PEI has funded 50 projects across the island, distributing more than \$1 million in provincial and federal funds.

## Leading women

[Great Place to Work](#) Canada announced its 2020 list of Best Workplaces Managed by Women on December 8.

This year’s list included five non-profits: [Nature Conservancy of Canada](#), Toronto; [MOSAIC \(Multi-Lingual Orientation Service Association for Immigrant Communities\)](#), Vancouver; [Kootenay Career Development Society](#), Nelson, BC; [Key Assets Newfoundland and Labrador](#), St. John’s; and [Brown Bagging for Calgary’s Kids](#).

To get on the list, an organization must have made the Great Place to Work list in the past year and be led by a woman. Great Place to Work researches thousands of organizations of varying sizes, industries, maturity, and structures in more than 50 countries.

“The Nature Conservancy of Canada is pleased to earn this recognition for developing leaders in Canada’s conservation and environment sector,” said Catherine Grenier, president and CEO, in [a press release](#). “Many staff who identify as women are driven to work on behalf of nature in the not-for-profit sector because they have a deep and passionate belief in the mission and what it means for our families, our communities and our planet. At NCC we are blessed to have committed staff who are innovative, talented and all care about protecting Canada’s special places and about the trust we earn from donors.”

## Feeling the squeeze

For more than 40 years, [Family SOS](#) (Service of Support) in Spryfield, Nova Scotia, has assisted families by providing food, clothing, parenting confidence and skills, and child-centred programming across the Halifax Regional Municipality. Now it’s asking for support from the community.

The pandemic has already made Family SOS’s work difficult, changing the way the in-kind donations could be accepted. Its main fundraiser, the Courage to Give Back Awards gala, which normally accounts for 30% of the annual budget, was also cancelled.

Normally at this time of year, the charity supplies some 300 youth with snowsuits and boots for the winter. This year, families requested 1,700 items. “If this is an indication, people are really struggling out there,” Mary Acton-Bond, the organization’s executive director, told [The Chronicle](#)

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Even after cutting costs “to the bone,” Acton-Bond says Family SOS is still \$18,000 short of the \$60,000 needed to allow the organization to respond quickly to the needs of the families they support.