



THE STATE OF GLOBAL CHARITABLE GIVING



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a snapshot of today's state of Global Charity. It examines the size and prevalence of philanthropy worldwide, the characteristics of donors and beneficiaries, the reasons for their giving, and the reasons beneficiaries require assistance.

The findings in this report can be utilized by management and development officers of Charitable Organizations when constructing their marketing and donation strategies.

This report should be particularly useful for tailoring campaigns, especially for charitable organizations with an international focus. A clear narrative for giving can be developed by charitable organizations from the material in this report.

This report should be read in conjunction with our earlier report [Canada's Charities in a Global Context](#) (March 2024).

Principle conclusions of the Report

- total charitable giving globally (individual and corporate) amounted to \$2.3 trillion in 2024. We provide a breakdown of this giving.
- We provide statistics on:
 - the number and proportion of individuals globally who give to charity;
 - how these funds are distributed amongst different charitable activities;
- Individual giving reaches US\$1.3 trillion every year. This represents 1% of global Gross Domestic Product.
- We use the Charitable Aids Foundation (CAF) Worldwide Charity Index reported for the past ten years as a proxy in assessing the growth of global charity giving for this period. The results show an upward, though volatile, trend which was particularly impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic.
- Globally, we find that Religion is the largest category of giving at 22%. This is followed by Human Services (15%), Education (14%), and Foundations (12%)
- The CAF reveals that only the children and young people category makes the top five causes on every continent. We reveal the top categories by geographical continent.
- We detail the factors that can influence the decision as to which causes to support.
- An important part of the donation activity is individuals giving of their time as volunteers. We reveal the top reasons for volunteering around the world.
- We detail the top characteristics of individuals who donate. Of particular relevance are demographic and economic characteristics. The report discusses Gender, Age, Education Level, Income Level, and Household Characteristics.
- Caring about the cause is the most frequently cited reason for giving to a charitable organization worldwide. Interestingly, tax policy is ranked very low as a reason to give to charity.
- We provide insight into the reasons for giving on a global basis.



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INTRODUCTION

Humans are social beings who have formed communities since the beginning of time. The community provides safety and security, as well as psychological and emotional support, food and sustenance, financial stability, and opportunities for personal growth and enrichment.

Not everyone in the community is equal in capability or opportunity. Some of the reasons for this may be physical, mental, or geographic. To compensate for this, the community develops various means of support for its fellow members. The goal is to benefit the community as a whole through the individual's sacrifice. This is the underlying notion of charity or philanthropy.

Charitable behaviour is a global endeavour. There are elements of giving freely of one's time, efforts, and financial resources in every country and region around the world. It is believed that giving charitably fosters economic stability, promotes equality and opportunity for all, and contributes to building a better community and a better world.

This report provides a snapshot of today's state of Global Charity. It examines the size and prevalence of philanthropy worldwide, the characteristics of donors and beneficiaries, the reasons for their giving, and the reasons beneficiaries require assistance.

The findings in this report can be utilized by management and development officers of Charitable Organizations when constructing their marketing and donation strategies. It is essential to be realistic when contemplating the success of a charitable program. Similarly, donors should assess the likelihood of success and generally support those charitable activities that have the greatest impact.

Increased knowledge of the factors that influence charitable behaviour should aid in the development of communication and fundraising initiatives. This report should be particularly useful for tailoring campaigns, especially for charitable organizations with an international focus. A clear narrative for giving can be developed by charitable organizations from the material in this report.

Furthermore, we hope this report will inspire greater research into the factors that influence various forms of charitable behaviour and cultural differences in giving.

Worldwide, people strongly recognize the importance of charity and have a high degree of trust in charitable organizations. The studies referenced in this report revealed that the highest importance and trust is given to local charities, followed by national and international charities, respectively.

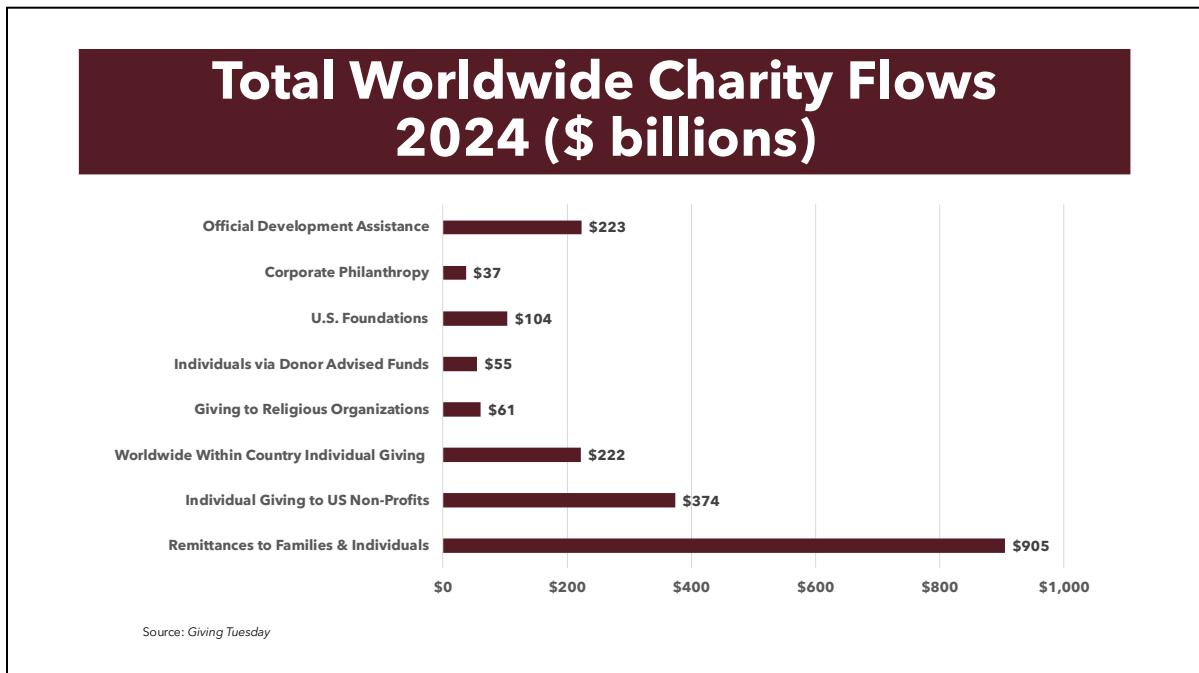
Rather than presenting comparative country results, we present an aggregate picture of global charity to examine recent trends in universal giving. The report looks at whether the world is becoming more or less charitable.

This report should be read in conjunction with our earlier report [Canada's Charities in a Global Context](#) (March 2024).

HOW MUCH IS GIVEN TO CHARITY AND BY WHAT MEANS

We can begin to assess the state of global charity by examining the aggregate amount of charitable giving and how that giving is being distributed. This provides the context for evaluating the significance and impact of community charity in our lives.

Giving Tuesday, the organization that created and promotes the world's annual day of charitable giving, has estimated that total charitable giving globally (individual and corporate) amounted to \$2.3 trillion in 2024. The breakdown of this giving is shown in the chart below.



The Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) also reports the following revealing statistics:

- Almost two-thirds (64%) of people globally gave money to community charitable activities, and of this
 - o 40% gave money directly to a person or family in need
 - o 36% gave to a charitable organization
 - o 24% gave to a religious organization
- 4.3 billion people around the world gave time, money, or helped a stranger in 2023

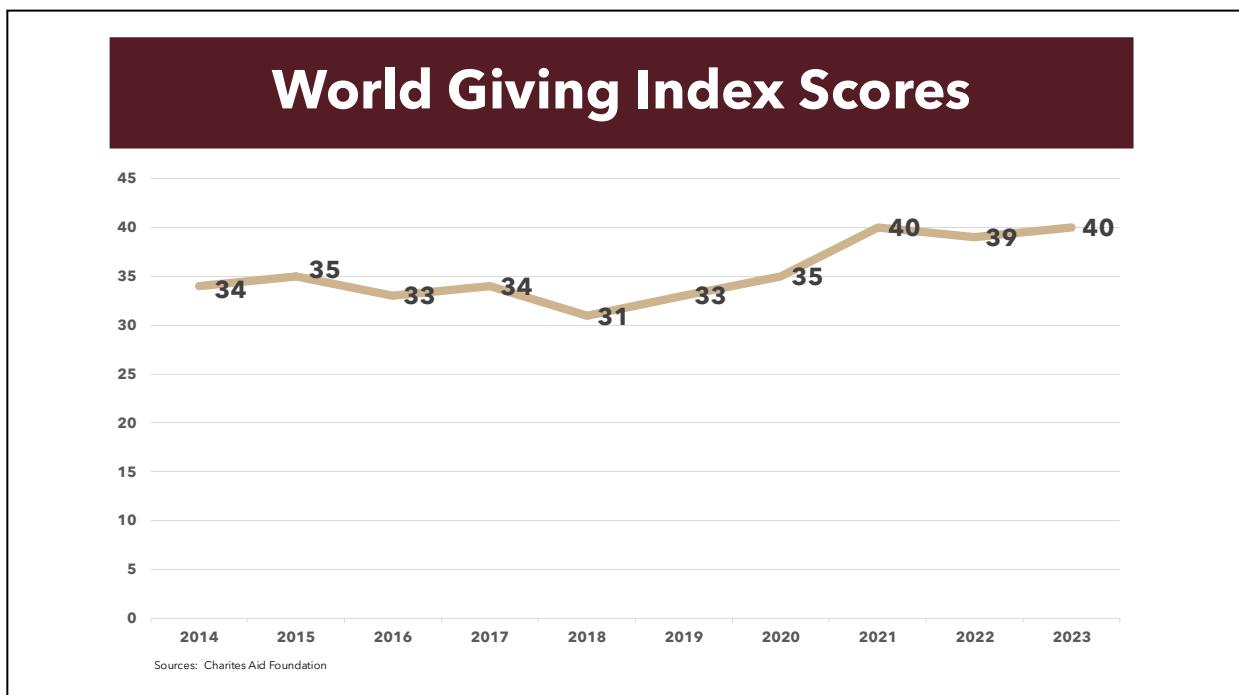
Similarly, Citibank has reported the following statistics on individual global giving for 2023:

- Individual giving reaches US\$1.3 trillion globally every year
 - o US\$ 770 billion is given by individuals
 - o US\$ 559 billion is the dollar value of time donated by individuals
- This represents 1% of Global Gross Domestic Product.

These statistics are impressive and reveal the importance of charitable giving in communities worldwide.

Since the aggregate value of global giving has only recently been calculated and presented publicly, there is no quantitative means of assessing the magnitude of change over time or the trend in aggregate giving. However, a proxy for growth over time can be provided by the World Giving Index published by the Charities Aid Foundation. This annual survey asks three questions about what people have done in the past month: donated money to charity, helped a stranger or someone you do not know who needed assistance, and volunteered their time to an organization. A higher index score indicates that a greater proportion of the population is engaged in giving.

The results show an upward, though volatile, trend which was particularly impacted by the COVID-19 global pandemic.



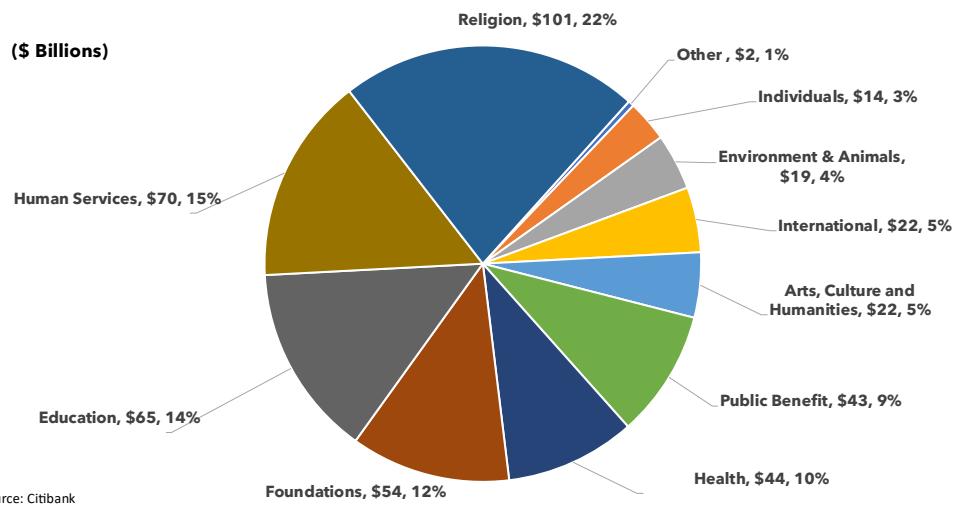
From this, we can safely assume that global charitable giving, both in terms of monetary and non-monetary measures, has increased over the past decade.

WHERE DOES CHARITABLE GIVING GO?

There are many societal causes to support in the Charitable Sector, and it is often a difficult decision for a donor to decide where to allocate their giving. There is also the decision as to whether to make donations local, regional, or international.

Globally, we find that Religion is the largest category of giving at 22%. This is followed by Human Services (15%), Education (14%), and Foundations (12%)

Individual Global Philanthropic Flows by Cause - 2023

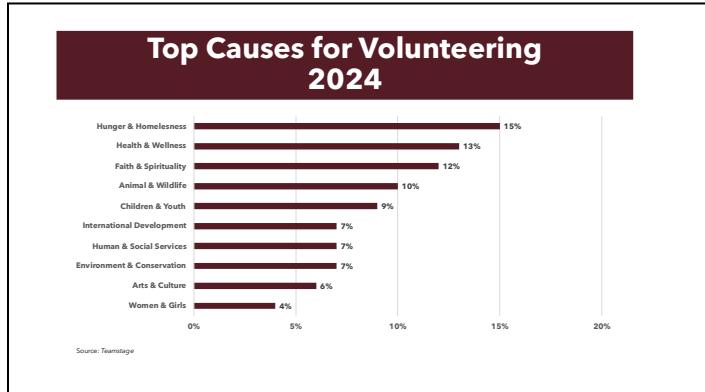


The CAF reveals that only children and young people make the top five causes on every continent. In Africa, religious organizations are the most popular, while in Asia, poverty relief is the primary focus, and in Europe, humanitarian aid and disaster relief are the main priorities. Homelessness is among the top-supported causes across the Americas, while Health charities come top in Oceania.

There are many factors that can influence the decision as to which causes to support:

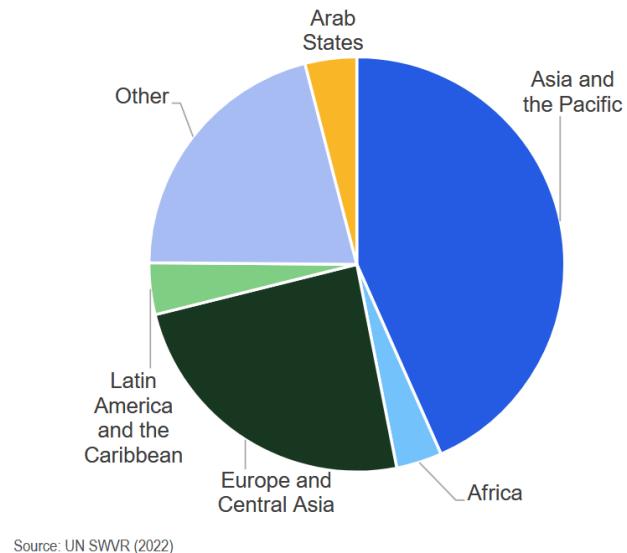
- Global disasters can occur at any time and often require substantial sums of money for relief and rebuilding. This also affects the donor's decision whether to donate locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally.
- The size and impact of the donor's donation can determine which categories of Charity to support.
- Donors will direct their funding according to their personal interests, beliefs, and situation. This particularly impacts education, religion, human rights, children, and the elderly.
- An important activity around giving is being asked. The donor, the frequency of the request, and the size of the ask can all influence the donor's decision.

As noted above, individuals give more than just monetary donations. An important part of the donation activity is the giving of their time as volunteers, though the monetary value of this time is not recorded in financial accounts. Teamstage advises that over 1 billion people volunteered their time for charitable causes in 2024.



The United Nations publishes annually its State of the World's Volunteerism Report (SWVR). Their results for 2022 are shown below.

Figure 5. Total Monthly Value of Volunteer Hours, by Region



The CAF provides some fascinating insight into global volunteering:

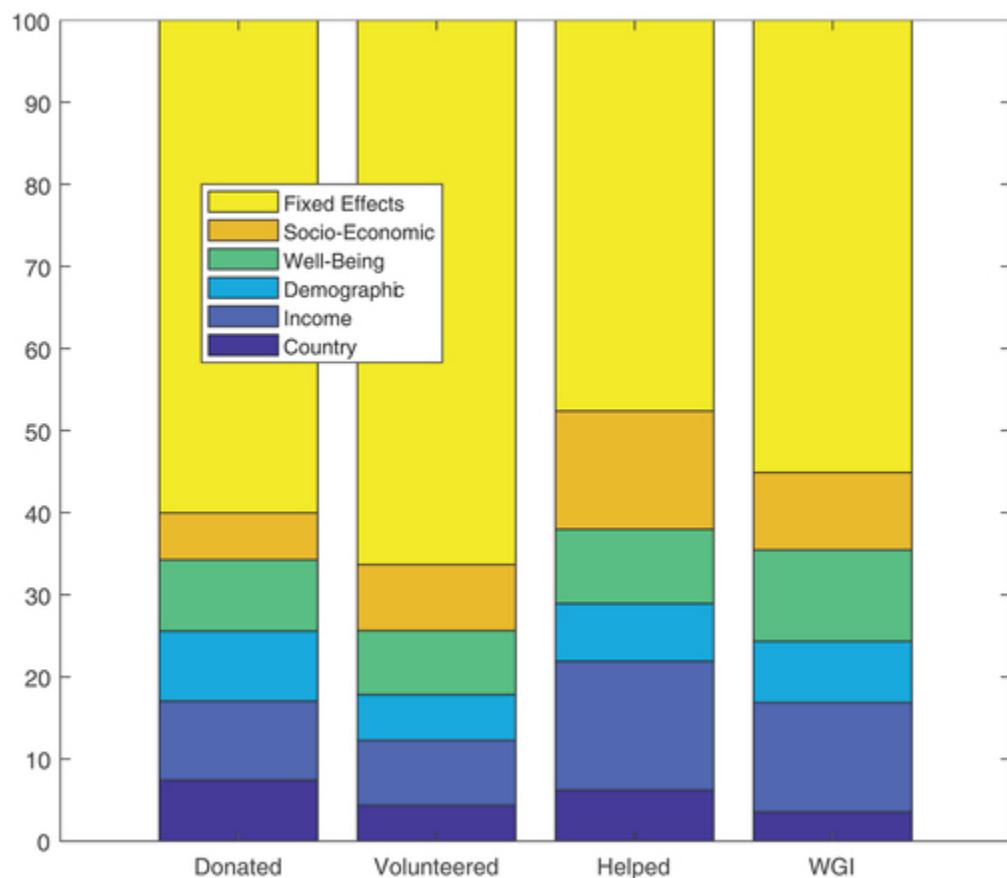
- Around one in four individuals, or 26%, volunteered in 2024.
- The average amount of time spent volunteering was 9 hours.
- The proportion of people volunteering declines with age, falling from 31% in the 18-34 year-olds to 19% for those over 55 years.
- In contrast, the amount of time spent volunteering increases with age.
- The most popular causes for volunteering were for children and young people, and older people, with over a quarter of volunteers supporting each cause.

WHO GIVES TO CHARITY GLOBALLY?

Another important consideration is the characteristics of individuals who donate. Generally, donors are motivated or affected to give by:

- A sense of empathy or concern for others and their distress;
- An ingrained culture of giving associated with their country, social norms, and upbringing;
- Government policy on giving, especially related to tax relief;
- In response to an ask for assistance, perhaps by an acquaintance or through marketing and public calls to action;
- The individual's own personal values and identity, such as for human rights;
- The individual's socio-economic status;
- The individual's demographic status; or
- For purely altruistic purposes.

Of particular relevance to this report are demographic and economic characteristics related to charitable giving. Each can be considered jointly and separately when considering the ideal makeup of a generous donor. The analytical study of CAF World Giving Index data by a group of academics (Knowles et al) on charitable giving shows the following relative factors that influence charitable giving.



This reveals that, outside of country-specific factors identified as Fixed Effects (culture and government policy), the greatest impact on charitable giving is income, followed by well-being.

The relevance and impact of these factors can be summarized as follows:

Gender

Using data from the CAF studies noted above, Knowles et al. have found that, historically, women are more likely to donate than men in high-income countries; however, there are no statistically significant gender differences for countries with lower incomes per capita.

Age

Age has been shown to be positively correlated with charitable giving. The effect of age is linear, with the exception of helping a stranger, where both younger and older age groups tend to be less willing to help. However, in terms of a percentage of income, the CAF reports that 35-44 year-olds gave the highest proportion of their income to charity, which is 1.5x greater than those aged 65 and up. As well, it is understandably the younger age that is driving the methods by which donations are being processed, as they encourage and adopt technology in the process.

Education Level

Numerous studies have demonstrated a correlation between higher education and a greater propensity to be charitable, as summarized in Knowles et al.

Income Level

Not surprisingly, there is a higher propensity to give at higher income levels. This can be significantly affected by government income tax policy and the tax relief provided to donors. However, the CAF report also found that People in high-income countries tend to donate less as a proportion of their annual incomes, giving away just 0.7% on average. This is around half the proportion given in low-income countries, where people donate on average 1.45% of their annual incomes.

Household Characteristics

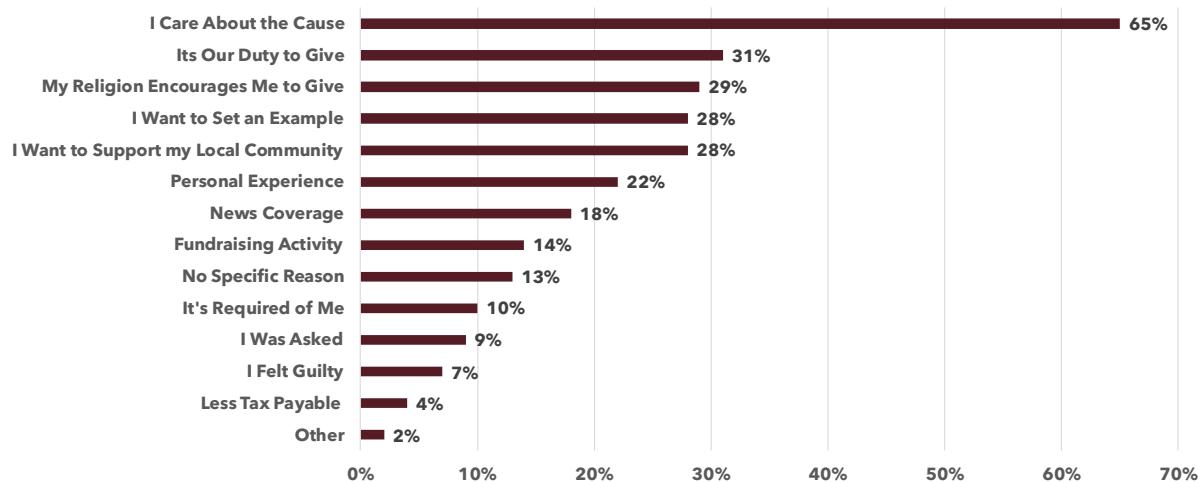
Giving can be influenced by household characteristics, such as marital status and the number of children in the family.

Similarly, whether an individual lives in an urban or rural location can have an impact. Urban individuals generally account for a larger share of the total donation value, whereas rural individuals often donate a higher percentage of their income and are more engaged in informal giving such as volunteering or assisting those who need help.

WHY DONORS GIVE?

Similar to who gives around the world, we can study why individuals give. Not surprisingly, caring about the cause is the most frequently cited reason for giving to a charitable organization worldwide. Notably, tax relief is very low on the list of giving, and this could be a reflection that much of the world lives in low-income countries where taxes are not a material part of life.

Reasons for Giving, Globally



Source: CAF 2025

In summary, these results suggest that charities should strive to directly connect their work to personal experiences and local concerns. Charitable organizations should establish trust and partnerships with local communities to expand the impact of their activities and secure financial support.

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Our Vision

We will participate in a thriving Canadian philanthropic sector where the most impactful charities with the highest governance standards are celebrated and supported by donor capital.

Our Mission

The Veritas Foundation aims to be Canada's authoritative source for participating in the country's charitable sector and evaluating its effectiveness and impact.



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