



Trends & Tensions Shaping the Social Purpose World

Insights Report



What does the future require of us?

In 2024, social purpose leaders and teams will experience their biggest pressure test yet — pressure to act on their responsibilities to the past, present and future. The pressures are hitting leaders, teams, and organizations at lightning speed— whether it’s the rapid pace of adoption of AI tools such as ChatGPT or Midjourney, or the re-emerged momentum of the parental rights movement, polarizing views unearthed by the Gaza crisis and global security issues, or the frequency of climate-related disasters in local communities. While it is the best time in the history of humanity to be alive and working, the systems humans designed decades ago continue to create and exacerbate societal problems all around us, from how we work to how we govern, volunteer, fund and deliver aid.

Across the social purpose world, pressures have given rise to extraordinary ingenuity and fragility like we’ve never seen. But first, let’s talk about the global pandemic—you know, the one we’ve basically forgotten. The year 2023 marked a significant downturn in the impacts of COVID-19 (however, specific long-term effects on health and society remain to be seen as research emerges) as the importance of this disease gradually diminished in both governmental policies and the public’s minds. In a milestone decision, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared the end of the global COVID-19 health emergency in May last year. That’s huge. In 2024, the social purpose world will also rise from any remaining

COVID legacy funding and related work.

This report highlights several trends and tensions to watch this year. Social purpose leaders will be slowly exposed to the promise of emerging innovations such as systemic financing or anticipatory disaster funding. At the same time, workplaces will struggle with the silence, inaction and double standards around the crisis in Gaza. Teams will integrate AI tools even further, while more human practices such as trust-based funding or funding non-qualified donees take a back seat this year. Social purpose ventures will finally see a boost with the initial capital flow from the Social Finance Fund, as will Black-led, Black-serving and Black-governed organizations as capital from the Government of Canada-endowed Foundation for Black Communities get disbursement underway. However, there will be no noticeable gains for charities from the increase in the disbursement quota. The social purpose world's volunteer and paid labour force will rise and demonstrate new initia-

tives in mentorship, professional development, workplace benefits, and wellbeing, while diversity, equity, and inclusion are challenged as empty slogans. Corporate citizenship teams will become increasingly more open to authentic action toward social justice while navigating the rise of anti-ESG sentiments.

And although Canada's non-profit sector alone contributes about eight per cent towards the GDP, more than half of non-profits and charities could march toward a fiscal cliff this year.

If you're a manager, team lead, executive or supervisor, it's possibly the most challenging time to lead in the history of work. Tensions are high as the employee demands on employers and managers are more significant than ever — from taking stances on global crises and geopolitics to managing remote teams to accelerating action on equity, decolonization, and addressing workplace wellbeing. Seventy-eight per cent of leaders say stress related to managing people

negatively impacts their work performance, according to research by The Workforce Institute. This year, managers and executives will likely feel fatigued.

There are positive trends. Optimism is on the rise worldwide, according to Ipsos Research.

Globally, 70 per cent of people think 2024 will be a better year than 2023, up five percentage points from 2022.

And I can see why. A historic resolution launched by the United Nations Environment Assembly to end plastic pollution is scheduled to be finalized and formalized in 2024. Just last year, the Vatican formally repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery, which was used historically to legitimize the colonization and theft of Indigenous territories. This year will be the first time humans are going toward the moon since the Apollo missions in the '60s and '70s. Some experts predict that as much as 95 per cent of online content will be AI-generated by 2025, including music. 2024 is also the

most significant election year in history; 4.2 billion people will go to polls to elect governments. In 2024, world governments are expected to decide what kind of global body they want to regulate artificial intelligence. These are only a handful of significant moments this year that'll push humanity forward.

Given the trends and tensions shaping the social purpose world, what does the future require of us?

This report offers guidance on what to watch, understand and act on for social purpose leaders and teams. It provides guidance to inform strategic and annual planning, program design and leadership discussions. The ability to anticipate disruption, act on trends, understand complexity, shift world views and practices, develop inclusive solutions, and evolve institutions matter more than ever.

The social purpose world has a history of deprioritizing learning development and paying attention to trends that matter. Even in an

age of urgency, proactive, systemic and long-term thinking is unappealing to governments, funders, social purpose organizations, intermediaries and associations—and therefore, band-aids tend to get more band-aid patches. 2024 is a chance to change that. This is a chance for social purpose teams in all sectors to prioritize learning and be proactive.

Future of Good journalists work hard to illuminate the real impacts of trends, tensions and transformations shaping the social purpose world in insightful, nuanced ways, including shifting power, using AI tools, growing your volunteer base, centring workplace wellbeing, and tackling misinformation.

I hope your team finds the 2024 Trends & Tensions Shaping the Social Purpose World an essential guide for discussion, prioritization and action.

How can you use this report for your work?

Growing up, I'm sure you played some variation of a 'connect the dots' game. I loved playing it. And as far back as I can remember, one of the reasons I loved it was because I would make up imaginary dots on the page. This report isn't just about connecting the dots; it's also about illuminating the dots you can't see. Our aim at Future of Good is to help you keep your worldview up to date - and tell you what might be coming this year and what to do about it.

Social purpose teams, leaders, and organizations coast-to-coast-to-coast rely on Future of Good's journalism, reports, and summits to fuel their learning, development and decision-making.

As part of our research, scanning, and analysis, the editorial team monitors and reports on a range of societal trends and tensions shap-

ing the social purpose world. Some of these trends are weak; for example, our team has been watching the expansion of medical assistance in dying (MAID) since decriminalizing it in 2016.

Other trends are stronger, like corporate greenwashing. As of January, all Canadian financial institutions must collect real numbers on the greenhouse gas emissions they finance.

Stronger trends indicate implications or disruptions worth watching and acting on. These are the trends that, if leaders better understand, discuss internally and act on, could change the arc of the trends's effects on people's lives.

Based on a vast set of trends, tensions and transformations that Future of Good monitors and covers, this report makes educated assessments of how a trend could affect workers, volunteers, teams, boards, organizations or families that depend on programs and services developed, supported or delivered

by the social purpose world.

In identifying trends and tensions to watch in 2024, the report also asks critical questions of leaders and teams: As we witness new forms of volunteering and the decline of existing ones, which types of organizations benefit the most? With urgent humanitarian needs swamping the global development system, what resources will be left for long-term cooperation and development? How can more social purpose funders and organizations be incentivized to assess the intergenerational effects of their work? With greenwashing, socialwashing and anti-ESG on the rise, will businesses be held to account for what they deliver? With the proliferation of DEI initiatives, what has changed, if anything?

The report could help a wide range of social purpose teams become more informed in planning and discussions, consider new programming, refocus priorities or ways of working, and, most of all — better understand the systemic problems of tomorrow that affect the causes they care about.

What's inside this report?

With 22 key trends and tensions to watch over 30 pages of in-depth insights, predictions and data, the report highlights trends you need to know and how to act on them. Through research, scanning, our journalism, and surveying the Future of Good member community, we have synthesized insights from more than 1,000 articles, inputs, and papers.

Based on our journalism covering news, trends, tensions, and transformations, we ask 'what if' questions for some significant and below-the-radar developments shaping the social purpose world. You'll notice these questions scattered throughout the report as a way to nudge your thinking in slightly alternate directions for the scenarios ahead.

The 2024 trends report will also be accompanied by an in-depth webinar and recorded conversation where our editorial team will take a deeper and more nuanced look at the effects of the trends highlighted.

This webinar is an opportunity for leaders and teams to ask our journalists direct questions based on how these trends affect their missions, planning, and priorities.

Over the last few years, Future of Good's annual report on Trends & Tensions Shaping the Social Purpose World has become a vital guide for managers, team leaders, board members, executives, and more.



Trends & Tensions Shaping **the Social Purpose World** (and what to do about them)

1. Hate, polarizing views, divisive reactions and cancel culture will be stronger this year.

What it means for you: According to a recent Canadian Hub for Applied and Social Research study, three out of four Canadians feel our society is increasingly polarized. Global conflicts are deepening divisions at home. Just in the week following Hamas's attack on Israel last October, the number of hate incidents reported to the National Council of Canadian Muslims increased by more than 1,000 per cent. The spread of misinformation, rising general anxiety, declining trust in institutions, far-right politics and increasing polarization is a trend to watch — often inflamed by social media and partisan dogma — will continue to be fuelled by rising distrust in expertise, data, colonial structures and authority. As 2024 progresses, public protests will become more explicitly hate-filled and divisive. Underpinning all of this will be the

growth of online bullying, cancel culture and extremism, significantly exacerbated on platforms like X as Elon Musk slashed its content moderation teams and re-platformed many people who were banned a few years ago.

Social purpose teams will have to act by listening to people who may not believe in the same things they believe in and rebuilding trust with the populations they serve. How will social purpose teams respond to increasingly polarizing views? Cultivating a culture of viewpoint diversity within teams will become essential.

2. Zero Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action were completed in 2023. Unfortunately, the pace will not pick up in 2024.

What it means for you: 2024 marks eight years since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released its six-volume final report and 94 Calls to Action. The Calls to Action remain the most crucial guidance to achieve reconciliation in our lifetime. Yet, as the Yellowhead Institute notes, only 13 Calls have been completed. With this trend line, it will take 58 years, or until 2081, to complete all the Calls to Action. The Institute called reconciliation in Canada ‘stagnant.’ While the last couple of years saw the third National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, a papal apology, and legislative progress towards establishing a National Council for Reconciliation, in the words



of AFN National Chief RoseAnne Archibald, “If we were in a chapter of a book on reconciliation — we are, today, on the first sentence of that book.” Progress continues to be frustratingly slow, so slow that many wonder if meaningful change matters to Canada.

In 2024, there will be increased pressure from grassroots and Indigenous groups and grantees on funders, associations and social purpose organizations to make tangible progress beyond symbolism on the Calls to Action. Will the pace pick up?



3. Volunteering continues to decline sharply in communities across the country. Social purpose organizations will continue to cut program and service delivery — possibly to dangerous levels.

What it means for you: Attracting and retaining skilled volunteers will be even more challenging in 2024. According to Volunteer Canada, the trend shows community groups, as well as larger non-profit organizations, have seen a steady decline in the number of volunteers over the past year, and experts say pandemic fatigue, fear of getting infected, personal caregiving commitments, changing habits, and financial barriers are all contributing to the drop. Volunteering — whether at charity runs, as a Big Sister mentor, international support, or on non-profit boards — is the backbone of the social purpose world and strong communities. The last time Canada launched a national volunteer strategy was in 1967— more than a generation ago. A significant number of programs, services and operations are run on volunteer efforts, and in 2024, as volunteering continues to drop, the effects in communities could be crippling.

Social purpose teams will have to resort to creative incentives, including offering honorariums, to

rekindle the habit of formal volunteering or completely reimagine their operating model.

WHAT IF?

Volunteering rates are sliding into dangerous territory in communities nationwide as community groups struggle to attract and retain people. According to CanadaHelps, 55 per cent of charities had fewer active volunteers in 2023. Imagine if half the local organizations in your community had to pause work due to a lack of volunteers — food banks, hockey clubs, support for older people, and much more. Volunteering hasn't been on the radar of the federal government for years. Still, given the federal election in 2025, it could be a clever way to create opportunities for urban, suburban, rural and remote communities across the country. What if the Trudeau government swiftly acted on the current call for a pan-Canadian volunteer strategy?

4. Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based tools will gain steam and confuse teams, prompting a critical decision for funders and social purpose organizations: are you in or are you out?

What it means for you: AI-based technologies are becoming integral to every role — from research to assessing applications and fundraising to writing. The AI trend will see plenty of action in 2024. AI tools are growing fast, offering a plethora of options for chatbots, virtual notetakers, image generators, video generators, copywriting, and a whole lot more. Those mocking the power of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Midjourney, Writerbuddy or NovelAI are quickly becoming the minority. Social purpose teams already use AI tools to augment and enhance their work—from communications to writing grant applications. Having said that,

while the pace of AI breakthroughs has been fast (there are currently more than 3,000 AI tools on the market), the potential negative externalities are concerning for many—and rightly so.

According to Axios, four out of five workers say their employers lack AI guidelines. There are pressing questions such as: What information can I input into an AI tool? Where does the data go? Can I input sensitive information? How do AI tools learn? What is sensitive information? There is much to sort out, as it is a fast-emerging industry. Canada's much-anticipated regulation, the Artificial Intelligence and Data Act, is not due until 2025. But here's the thing: The social purpose world can help shape it. Think about where the internet was in the early '90s, where smartphones were in the early aughts, and how much of the social purpose world was involved in shaping or harnessing it. Now think about what could've been possible or what could've been mitigated had there been more intentional organizing and action in the early days of either.

Digital adoption isn't just about using today's technologies but experimenting with emerging technologies such as AI tools. Plenty of AI use cases are building up with exciting opportunities for non-profits, charities, impact ventures, and funders to get involved. AI is one area to focus on employee upskilling for 2024.

5. The fight for reparations, capital transfers, and spending down endowments will pick up for philanthropic organizations in 2024.

What it means for you: In mid-December 2023, New York Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation to create a committee to consider reparations for slavery. New York is only the third state in the U.S. to do this, following California and Illinois. Here in Canada, last summer, a federal judge approved the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history: a

massive \$23.4 billion to compensate about 300,000 Indigenous children and families who were victims of Canada's discriminatory child welfare system. The philanthropic ecosystem has been watching these trends, and some have even acted on capital transfers, such as the Inspirit Foundation and McConnell Foundation. The pressure to consider shifting power through capital will continue to be upfront for philanthropic leaders—through spend downs, transfers, and even reparations. The tension is that few philanthropic organizations have genuinely reconciled with the origins of their wealth and endowments.

Perhaps by repairing some of the harms rooted in racist policies, funding and systems, philanthropy can begin to reimagine itself. Which foundation will be the first to act on reparations this year?

6. The movement for intergenerational justice will gain momentum and get louder in 2024. Although Montreal hosts One Young World this year, Canada has to tangibly demonstrate that future generations matter.

What it means for you: In late-2023, Portugal became the newest country to launch an Intergenerational Justice Index. Only a handful of countries have one, and unfortunately, Canada isn't one of them, but it's a trend worth watching. Portugal's index intends to analyze how public policies have exacerbated or alleviated intergenerational disparities. The pressure will mount for executives as the scales tip for more authentic inclusion of young people in design and decision-making, and that

goes from governance to strategy to public policy to grantmaking and service delivery. Organizations and teams will have their relevancy and legitimacy publicly called out if anything is designed and implemented without intergenerational assessment and involvement. Young changemakers will push leaders to understand and assess the intergenerational impacts of their investing, policies, strategies and granting. This September, One Young World, the world's largest youth conference on bettering the world, comes to Montreal. What intergenerational justice work will Canada highlight and showcase?

WHAT IF?

About 30 per cent of charities raised fewer funds in 2022 than the year prior, and the percentage of Canadians donating is down five per cent over the last decade, according to CanadaHelps. However, a massive intergenerational wealth transfer is currently underway. Before the end of this decade, baby boomers will have transferred around \$1 trillion to the next generation—making it the most significant intergenerational wealth transfer in Canadian history. What if charities focus on proactively building relationships with and educating young people on their causes?



7. Rising community needs caused by Canada's deepening affordability crisis will further squeeze non-profits and charities as they struggle to keep doors open.

What it means for you: Canadian households currently owe \$1.81 for every dollar of disposable income, a debt ratio among the highest in the G7 countries. High interest rates, a volatile market, and dropping donations all create a fragile economic picture for social-purpose organizations. Services and programs in communities across the country are at risk of pausing or closing, even though the demand is higher than ever before, causing millions of lives to be severely impacted in 2024.

The trend is stark: More and more families nationwide will seek

community and social support to make ends meet this year — from housing to internet access to food and clothing. In the last couple of years, grocery prices increased at the fastest rate in 40 years, and nearly a quarter of Canadians bought less food because they just couldn't afford it. Currently, more Canadians rely on food banks than at any other time in Canadian history. Canada's sky-high mobile and broadband internet rates continue to climb and remain one of the highest in the world. From diapers to rent to gasoline, the price of nearly every essential need has shot up. These cost increases affect non-profits and charities too. A recent CanadaHelps survey found inflationary pressures have increased service delivery costs for 83 per cent of small charities, while a further 60 per cent say demand for their services now exceeds their capacity to deliver. In 2024, the systemic fragility of the non-profit and charitable business model will be exposed again, with serious implications for the future of the sector and communities. This is the year to reflect on which

fundors you rely on and the volatility of those dependencies, reimagine your business model and diversify income sources.

8. Impact measurement and reporting will see renewed momentum in 2024 but must contend with a critical and emerging issue: data consent.

What it means for you: Social purpose leaders haven't grappled with the inherent power imbalance and ethics that comes with demanding data from some of Canada's most vulnerable people. However, data is critical to ensuring social purpose organizations and funders achieve their desired results to address the challenges they intended to address. Central to this intent is high-quality disaggregated data — as it represents the experiences of marginalized

and racialized communities. But questions of data ethics and data consent have to be solved first. Are people who are asked to hand over their data fully aware of how their data could be used? Do they feel empowered to say no? There's often a vast gap between practice and what people perceive.

To date, most social purpose funders and community organizations don't exactly understand what disaggregated data means, how to implement data consent practices, how it informs impact measurement, and why Canada is now investing in collecting such data. In 2024, questions of data ethics, disaggregated data and how they inform impact measurement will become more pressing. Social purpose organizations must build their literacy and muscle in data collection, ethics, consent, analysis and reporting.

WHAT IF?

Exhaustion, fatigue, and burnout are rising among employees and volunteers across the social purpose world. Awareness is increasing; however, close to 51 per cent of charities are highly concerned about staff burnout, and about 42 per cent of charities are highly concerned about volunteer burnout, according to CanadaHelps. What if there was a pan-Canadian wellbeing network that was backed by the country's philanthropic funders? A mix of community, corporate and private family foundations could pool resources to establish a sector-wide wellbeing network. Staff and volunteers in communities nationwide could seek confidential support, advice, resources, and more.

What it means for you: Global crises can sometimes be a mobilizing force that pushes civil society organizations to ask foundational questions. Israel's siege of Gaza illustrated just how emotionally and politically charged this crisis is. Reactions, opinions, and responses were varied, tense, deeply personal, and polarized across the social purpose world — including several funders, intermediaries and charities choosing to be silent. While the sector holds up principles such as neutrality and non-partisanship as paramount, the street demonstrations and online reactions highlighted just how much backlash, tension, pushing back or remaining silent and neutral can get you.

9. The crisis in Gaza will push Canada's local and international charities and funders for a renewed civil society conversation on neutrality.

In 2024, this will spark a new push to rethink how crises are funded, and leaders who work domestically and internationally will build on their observations and experiences from 2023 to enable conversations on elephant-in-the-room topics such as double-standards in reporting, pressure from wealthy donors, and the meaning of silence. Could this be the start of a

monumental shift in challenging neutrality?

10. Canada's global ranking on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals progress will stagnate in 2024 as interest in the overall framework begins to fizzle out.

What it means for you: The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were created to set ambitious targets to overcome the world's biggest societal challenges by 2030. The SDGs consist of 17 goals and bring all our social, environmental, and economic crises together under a single framework, showing us how one challenge is deeply linked to the others. Although the framework has been criticized for its rigidity and lack of evolution post-global pandemic, it remains an instrumental framework for global human progress. Ironically, even though Prime

Minister Justin Trudeau is the co-chair for the global SDG Advocates group, which works to raise awareness of the Goals and the need for accelerated action, Canada is stagnating in relation to the world on our overall SDGs progress — ranking 26th in 2023. Currently, Canada is decreasing or stagnating in a number of indicators, including the gender wage gap, the prevalence of obesity, renewable energy production, and access to and affordability of justice. As this trend plays out, social purpose teams will have to pay closer attention to Canada's indicators and how they can help accelerate progress. Minister Justin Trudeau is the co-chair for the global SDG Advocates group, which works to raise awareness of the Goals and the need for accelerated action, Canada is stagnating in relation to the world on our overall SDGs progress — ranking 26th in 2023. Currently, Canada is decreasing or stagnating in a number of indicators, including the gender wage gap, the prevalence of obesity, renewable energy production, and access to and affordability of justice.

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WHAT IF?

Donor-advised funds (DAF) continue to grow in popularity across Canada. It's quickly becoming an instrument of choice for new donors and financial institutions. In the last five years, assets in Canadian DAFs have grown about 20 per cent, much of the increase by DAF-holding foundations. DAFs also have a dark side—they are opaque and don't fall under the same level of CRA scrutiny. As the \$1 trillion intergenerational wealth transfer pushes ahead, what if DAFs have their most significant year of growth in 2024? It could be a powerful new (old) tool for fundraisers and donors.

11. Companies engaging in and funding climate and social justice will increase in 2024.

What it means for you: Companies are feeling investor pressure from above, employee pressure from within and consumer pressure from all around to defend their values and actions. A 2023 survey of 4,000 corporate employees by Paul Polman in the U.S. and UK alone found that more than 60 per cent of employees wanted to see their company take a firmer stance on the environment and social justice, and half said they would consider resigning if their companies' values didn't align with their own. That's big. There have been recent instances, such as more than 100 American companies quickly responding to the overturning of *Roe v Wade*, supporting their female employees by expanding reproductive health-care options and making public commitments to gender equity and abortion access. Corporations

worldwide can no longer remain neutral on political and social issues. Some companies have moved to ‘greenhushing,’ a term coined by South Pole, meaning companies choose not to publicize their milestones on climate action— but silence isn’t the answer. Alongside abortion, trans rights, and global peace and security in 2024, companies will be judged on their approach to climate change and the energy transition, immigrant and refugee rights, ethical labour practices and racial justice. If you’re a corporate funder, taking courageous stances will be rewarded by your grantee partners. The key is authenticity — meaning what you say and doing what you promise.

12. Scenario planning will reluctantly begin as the social purpose world starts to prepare for a Trump-Poillievre duo in the near future.

What it means for you: There are more nationwide elections in the same year than ever in human history. Closer to home, there is a high likelihood of Pierre Poillievre becoming prime minister and Donald Trump becoming U.S. president shortly. You can bet that these results will, again, affect the social purpose world. Trump is tracking well ahead of Biden, according to ActiVote. With a possible Trump re-election in November, you can expect the rise of far-right movements on home soil—LGBTQ+ rights, women’s rights, immigration, and hate crimes to be affected, not to mention issues caused by economic isolationism. In Canada, the conservatives are comfortably in majority territory, according to Nanos Research. If Poillievre wins, what could happen to gender-based analysis for public policy? What about the carbon tax? The social finance fund? What about Canada’s aid and global development agenda? There’s a lot at stake.

Although it’s easier just to be

angry for four or eight years, social purpose organizations and leaders must listen to those they don't share the same values with and ready themselves for a Trump-Poilievre scenario.

WHAT IF?

There are estimated 200,000 non-profits, charities, social enterprises, and community groups nationwide. That's a lot. There have been and continue to be those questioning the level of community duplication efforts. The notion of mergers is often seen as an embarrassing last resort, something that one does when there's no alternative, an almost-failure. What if, in 2024, the 'last resort' notion got challenged, and we see more mergers across the country in a range of areas—from humanitarian aid NGOs to newcomer services and elderly support organizations?

13. Humanitarian needs will saturate the global development system again in 2024.

What it means for you: The web of humanitarian crises worldwide is worsening and becoming far more frequent, complex and unpredictable. The trends are clear: Authoritarian and right-leaning leaders are on the upswing worldwide. Once fringe figures such as Geert Wilders, the anti-immigration proponent who won the Dutch election in late 2023, are now becoming mainstream in many countries (Perhaps not incidentally, Wilders' election platform calls for eliminating foreign aid). According to Humanitarian Action, 300 million people globally need humanitarian assistance, and a quarter of the world lives in fragile contexts. The International Monetary Fund lists 36 countries either in debt distress or sliding into debt distress. The costs to support emergency aid for them are growing and will continue to increase in 2024. Canada's global devel-

opment funding will be squeezed in this new era of high-frequency humanitarian crises. Tight budgets by philanthropic organizations and governments will lead to flat or declining funding for development, while rising humanitarian needs will consume more and more of the budget. This is already visible, as international NGOs are seeing the proportion of government budgets going to humanitarian emergencies rising year after year.

The ingredients of long-term cooperation and development, such as peacebuilding, economic development, human rights education, civil society support, building institutions, and media freedoms, are already being crowded out by urgent humanitarian needs and the pandemic. As this trend gets stronger, it's up to civil society organizations to build a stronger case for funding long-term development and cooperation.

14. As Canadian communities welcome more new permanent residents than ever before, community service organizations will find it tougher to meet demand.

What it means for you: Under its Immigration Levels Plan, Canada is welcoming about 500,000 new immigrants annually until at least 2026, the highest level in its history. The idea is generally positive as Canada has one of the world's oldest populations, and birth rates continue to trend downwards. But the volume of newcomers is unlike anything Canada has experienced, and all kinds of community services—from resettlement to language training to employment—will feel increased demand with little additional funding support. And where is the housing for all these new residents? Will there be sufficient accessible housing stock?

How the housing puzzle gets solved remains a mystery. The dark side and tension in this, perhaps, is that growing numbers of immigrants to Canada are deciding to leave rather than stay, according to a recent report by the Institute for Canadian Citizenship. The report found the risk of onward migration is particularly high between years four and seven following arrival in Canada.

Place-based social purpose organizations, in particular, will have to understand better how the communities they serve might be affected and prepare their programs and services accordingly.

15. In 2024, trust-based funding and giving will be challenged as an empty slogan.

What it means for you: People closest to a problem often have the least power to act on it. For a short period, with the global pandemic and calls to act on systemic injustices, there was an emerging trend around changing this — through trust-based grant-making, donations and impact investing, the practice of shifting power and capital to people close to the problem. But while online giving exploded in the last two years, there is still only a fraction flowing to Black, Indigenous and people of colour-led organizations. In 2024, civil society's giving, impact investing and philanthropic apparatus will change even more. Even though every funder wants to be like billionaire philanthropist Mackenzie Scott, few funders practice what Scott does, and authentic trust-based work will be challenged again with institutions,

investors and wealthy donors being given another chance to genuinely shift power.

Pay close attention to how many strings you attach to your RFPs, grant applications, impact investing and donations, and who decides where the capital flows. Conduct anonymous surveys to evaluate how trust-based your work is; you might be surprised by the feedback you receive from grantees and investees.

16. Philanthropic organizations will come under increasing pressure to move to 100 per cent impact portfolios.

What it means for you: There are about 7,000 philanthropic organizations in Canada, but only a handful maintain a 100 per cent impact investment portfolio.

Although calls to become more equitable funders were frequent and high-profile, philanthropic organizations have taken steps on the granting side but shied away from orienting their entire investment portfolios toward impact. Not to mention, a small portion of philanthropic organizations are members of the Responsible Investment Association, which is telling. Philanthropic organizations such as the McConnell Foundation recently announced their move to a 100 per cent impact portfolio within ten years. In 2024, the pressure to attend to the investment side of the foundation will continue to grow as donors, grantees and other stakeholders speak up about the inaction and as funders learn that a significant part of being an equitable funder is to centre equity, ethics and impact into their investments.

Team leaders will explore multiple options, including program-related investments, mission-related investments, participating in Canada's Social Finance Fund, and more. The question remains: What kind of pressure is most effective? What kind of pressure would

philanthropic organizations respond to?

WHAT IF?

The adoption of artificial intelligence (AI)-based tools such as ChatGPT, Midjourney, Jasper, Fireflies, and more is increasing exponentially. From content creation to note-taking to video generation to chatbots, every role in social purpose organizations is impacted by AI. Recently, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Kristalina Georgieva, said that AI will affect 60 per cent of jobs in advanced economies. At a time of tightening purse strings, drops in donations and limited funding, what if employers choose to lay off real humans and invest in AI tools instead to work more efficiently and be cost-effective? Although there is anecdotal evidence here and there, a pattern could be forming.

17. Workers across the social purpose world will increasingly demand action from employers and team leaders on workplace wellbeing.

What it means for you: When the COVID-19 pandemic forced workers everywhere to grind away from their couches, spare rooms and kitchen tables, it triggered the most significant shift in professional life in more than a generation—with that, workplace wellbeing entered the mainstream of the social purpose world. However, managers, leaders and teams are facing chronic stress, microaggressions, anxiety and burnout, as well as the early onset of chronic illness. In a global survey on changemakers conducted by The Wellbeing Project, they found that while 75 per cent of respondents felt that looking after their wellbeing was ‘very important,’ merely 25 per cent reported that they looked after their wellbeing ‘to a great extent.’ Whether it’s addressing

the rapidly increasing demands for community services or addressing the complex social and environmental challenges facing society, teams, executives, and frontline workers are being called upon to do even more.

Following the pandemic, many non-profits, charities and community groups had to close their doors, downsize teams, pause operations or operate daily in financial anxiety. In 2024, employees will speak up, pressuring employers and team leaders to learn, understand, and act on improving and focusing on workplace wellbeing.



18. Following floods, fires, hurricanes, a pandemic, and their cascading effects, most social purpose organizations will still not have emergency preparedness plans in 2024.

What it means for you: In 2023 alone, 18 million hectares of forest burned—nearly eight times the annual average. About 200,000 Canadians were forced to evacuate, and millions across North America were breathing toxic smoke. The Canadian Red Cross noted that climate change, global travel, urbanization, and infectious disease outbreaks are rising. Experts have predicted that 2024 will see large-scale outbreaks, hurricanes, floods — and their cascading effects, such as food shortages, loss of work, lack of childcare, an increase in domestic violence, and a rise in depression and anxiety. Following the 2013 Calgary floods,

local stakeholders convened to create and distribute an emergency preparedness plan for non-profits called EPIC (Emergency Preparedness Initiative for Calgary). Today, most of Calgary's 8,000 non-profits have emergency preparedness plans. The same can't be said for the 100,000 non-profits across Canada. More than ever, social purpose teams need to understand how to coordinate action and understand the immediate and cascading workplace risks for various emergencies to prepare for and mitigate the adverse effects.

Last May, the federal government launched the National Risk Profile, Canada's first country-wide climate-risk assessment, which could help workplaces better assess their risks. 2024 will be the year for alarm bells on pan-Canadian emergency preparedness plans to focus on prevention, coordination and mitigation before organizations are in the middle of another crisis.

WHAT IF?

In 2024, funders can finally disburse capital to informal, unincorporated groups, otherwise known as non-qualified donees. It's legislation that's been a long time coming, and advocates for more inclusive funding have been working on this for decades. But what if funders stick to what they know and don't include unincorporated groups in their funding or grant portfolio? Then, that could become a massive missed opportunity. And for funders, it's worth paying attention to your ratio of incorporated versus unincorporated groups.

19. As anti-ESG campaigns in the U.S. gain momentum in 2024, the anti-ESG sentiment in Canada will also pick up—but won't stick—as much.

What it means for you: Since 2021, the number of multinationals, including Canadian

companies, pledging to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 grew by almost 40 per cent, now reaching 82 per cent of all multinationals. Among them are notable brands like Loblaw, BMO, Cenovus, Manulife, Enbridge, and Shopify. However, as COP28 noted, the world is far off-track to limit global warming below two degrees. Climate pledges and ESG offerings have increasingly become performative acts, empty promises, lack of transparency in reporting, greenwashing, social washing, and a whole lot more. This fuels a range of anti-ESG campaigns in the U.S., with harsh ‘investment ban’ language and predominantly Republican backing. It’s a trend worth watching as anti-ESG sentiments are also evident in Canada; for example, through reports by think tanks such as Fraser Institute and shareholder proposals demanding that BMO, TD, and CIBC clarify their commitments to oil and gas (which each received around one per cent support). But they don’t appear to be sticky.

However, attention in Canada will turn from pledges to delivery in

2024, and it will be harder to distract people with beautifully written sustainability and impact reports. Transparency requirements are accelerating, too. In 2024, while the anti-ESG sentiment won’t stick, climate pledges and ESG screens will only be the bare minimum for companies.

WHAT IF?

Canada’s Social Finance Fund is rolling out in 2024, but social purpose leaders are already asking: what if it’s a bust? What if the capital doesn’t go to people and the solutions where it can generate the biggest difference? Will the wholesalers’ pressure on intermediaries kill any grassroots innovative approaches? As much as the fund is seen as a bright light, skepticism remains. One just hopes the feedback loops with the venture-intermediary-wholesaler ecosystem are strong enough to make improvements and adjustments swiftly.

20. DEI training, chief diversity officers, anti-racism pledge organizers, and leaders inside organizations will realize that not much has changed.

What it means for you: In 2024, social purpose teams will be forced to grapple with the trends of virtue signalling, positive posturing, performative acts, and faulty DEI training and initiatives — and that might mean tough choices, including letting go of board members, executives, and even DEI programs to start from scratch. While there are significant numbers of racialized workers in the non-profit sector, only a small minority occupy roles with influence and leadership. It quickly became apparent that the COVID-19 pandemic had an ugly, racist side, and people were being sidelined. It's a significant tension. Sparked by the global activism on the heels

of George Floyd's murder back in 2020, many businesses, INGOs, philanthropic organizations and non-profits moved to create diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, staff training programs, solidarity and reconciliation statements and revisit their policies and programs.

2024 will be a tipping point for DEI in the social purpose world, with organizations unresponsive to performative DEI initiatives getting called out or risk losing talent. “Nothing about us, without us,” will echo in every executive call, annual planning retreat and board meeting.

21. 2024 is a big year for social finance, impact investment deals, and getting social purpose organizations investment-ready.

What it means for you: Canada's Social Finance Fund has enormous

potential to mobilize private, community finance and philanthropic capital to accelerate and scale solutions to systemic challenges. The growth of social finance is a trend social purpose leaders have watched for at least a decade. All three wholesalers of the fund, Bann Social Impact, Realize Capital Partners and CAP Finance, are gearing up for an action-packed year with intermediaries being selected from coast-to-coast-to-coast, who would then create financing products targeted for their audiences, sectors and regions. Although there isn't a full picture of all the intermediaries, this is a milestone year for social finance rollouts. There is some uncertainty around the volume of deal flow and whether the wholesalers have pressured select winners and conventional ventures.

How inclusive and innovative the approaches are remains to be seen. But if you lead a social purpose organization looking to grow, it's a huge opportunity to begin gearing up for investment readiness to scale your solution.

WHAT IF?

Announced in 2022, Global Affairs Canada is currently overhauling the \$6 billion grants and contributions system. Global Affairs distributes billions yearly, from small grants supporting overseas Pride events to Canada's budgetary contribution to the United Nations. 2024 is set to be a milestone year in terms of sharing the progress of the overhaul. But what if the direction presented by Global Affairs Canada is unsatisfactory? What if it doesn't embed principles of decolonization, localization or trust-based funding? Will civil society organizations speak up?

22. In 2024, most funders will still not have divested from fossil fuels, created a carbon-neutral plan, or assessed their future environmental harms — as communities experience severe local disasters.

What it means for you: The world’s “take, make, waste” system is deeply entrenched in our societies—but is untenable. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change was founded in 1988 after scientists spent decades raising the alarm about global warming. Thirty-six years later, there is effectively zero binding policy to address climate change. Funders face no accountability for climate change either, potentially causing and contributing enormous harm to today’s and future generations through their investments, programs and grantmaking. In 2024,

the global temperature will continue to trend upward, bringing more disruptive and unpredictable weather, the signature calling card of climate breakdown. While the Government of Canada has committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, the social or philanthropic sectors have made no such commitment.

Most social purpose funders and organizations have yet to divest from fossil fuels and carbon-intensive industries, create a carbon-neutral plan, assess their current and future environmental harms, and set targets to achieve. Yet, much of social purpose work exacerbates climate change daily — from investment portfolios to international development to fundraisers and Zoom calls.

About the Author

An award-winning innovator, Vinod Rajasekaran is CEO & Editor-in-Chief of Future of Good, the leading media and learning organization for Canada's social purpose world. Future of Good's journalism and learning events equip changemakers with essential news, insights and knowledge on trends, tensions, transformations and innovations shaping the social purpose world.

In addition to leading Future of Good, Vinod teaches a Master's level course on the trends and debates shaping philanthropy at Carleton University's Masters in Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership program. Prior to launching Future of Good, Vinod oversaw strategy and business model development as the founding Managing Director of Rideau Hall Foundation, chaired by former Governor General David Johnston. He was Co-founder and Executive Director of Impact Hub Ottawa, the largest social purpose co-working community in Canada's capital. Vinod also launched Canada's social R&D network as a Fellow with SiG and McConnell Foundation, working to strengthen R&D capacity in Canada's non-profits. His ground-breaking work in social R&D is referenced worldwide, including in global organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Australian Centre for Social Innovation (TACSI). Vinod has also worked abroad with various international development organizations.

About Future of Good

Founded in 2019, Future of Good is the leading media and learning organization for Canada's social purpose world. Tens of thousands of changemakers subscribe to Future of Good every day to fuel their learning, development and decision-making. With a mission to enable a smarter social purpose world, our journalism, research, and live learning events deliver news, insights, analysis, and know-how to teams and leaders. Future of Good's groundbreaking summits on Black Leadership in Social Impact, Dismantling Digital Barriers and Social Finance Forum have convened more than 5,000 changemakers to learn, gain knowledge, and make a bigger difference at work and on the causes they care about.

Speaking Inquiries

Vinod Rajasekaran is available for speaking engagements for your team, board, strategic planning, or conference. Vinod is a regular commentator in the media, an invited speaker, panellist and moderator to conferences world-wide on emerging trends in social purpose, sector modernization, shifting narratives, social finance, social innovation, philanthropy, and corporate social responsibility. Vinod has offered in-depth presentations on social purpose trends to philanthropy leaders, humanitarian leaders, academia, public policy leaders, and corporate teams.

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