



Looking into and out for Canada's charities and nonprofits

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Examiner et renforcer des organismes de bienfaisance et sans but lucratif au Canada

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Statement from Imagine Canada: CBC News coverage on charity fundraising is misleading

On September 22, the CBC presented a series of reports on charities and fundraising. Unfortunately, this reporting may have left Canadians with a sense that inappropriate behaviour with regard to fundraising is a widespread problem. In fact, the vast majority of charities act appropriately when they seek donations from Canadians.

To put things in context, the amount of donations over five years referred to by the CBC represents less than 1% of the approximately *\$86 billion* raised by charities over this period. Moreover, the report focuses on 0.3% of the over 85,000 charities in Canada.

The CBC coverage may have left Canadians with the belief that charities calling upon the services of third-party fundraisers are necessarily doing something wrong. That is not the case. Not only is it legitimate to use third-party fundraisers, but if done right, in certain circumstances, it may be a more efficient and effective way of using limited resources.

Imagine Canada, the national umbrella for charities, provides a set of standards for charitable organizations to manage and report their fundraising and financial affairs responsibly through its Ethical Code Program. The Ethical Code permits use of third-party fundraisers. However, what it does not permit is commissioned-based fundraising. It also requires costs to be reasonable and practices transparent as this is crucial to allow donors to decide for themselves whether they wish to give to a particular charity.

The CBC coverage got it right in emphasizing the importance for Canadians to be vigilant and do their homework before deciding to give to a particular charity. This is what we consistently tell potential donors. Canadians can find information on the websites of the charities they are interested in supporting, by contacting the charity directly, or on the website of Canada Revenue Agency's Charities Directorate. If they do not find the information that they need or are not satisfied with the answers provided then they should think about giving to another charity that meets their expectations for transparency and accountability.

Given the importance of facilitating access to this kind of information, Imagine Canada will launch in the coming year a new one-stop portal that will allow Canadians to have easier access to the information that they need to make their decisions about the charities they want to support.

The need in our communities and around the world is great, particularly in these tough economic times and when charities are often picking up where governments are leaving off. The vast majority of charities are working diligently and ethically to raise funds from generous Canadians to meet these growing needs.

For more information, please contact Marcel Lauzière, President and CEO, Imagine Canada at mlauziere@imaginecanada.ca or Marnie Grona, Director, Communications at mgrona@imaginecanada.ca