# BELONGING:
# EXPLORING CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY

# OUR BELONGING JOURNEY

In 2015, Community Foundations of Canada released the first chapter of *Belonging: Exploring Connection to Community*—a national *Vital Signs* series that sparked an ongoing exploration and focus on belonging in Canada.

This exploration has included five national *Vital Signs* reports, the Belong 2017 Community Foundations Conference held in Ottawa, and more than 75 Vital Conversations about belonging, inclusion and social participation in communities across the country.

**October 2015**
This foundational report looks back over the past 50 years at our sense of belonging and where we as communities and a country are going next leading up to Canada's sesquicentennial in 2017 and beyond.
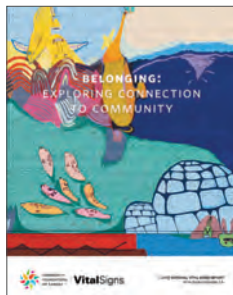
**April 2016**
Published in partnership with the TrueSport Foundation, this special *Vital Signs* report looks at how sport—when grounded in fairness, excellence, inclusion and fun—can strengthen our sense of belonging to each other and our communities.

**October 2016**
The second chapter of *Belonging: Exploring Connection to Community* uses the lens of social participation to better understand how we as individuals cultivate our connections to community.

**April 2017**
Published in partnership with the Canadian Arts Presenting Association (CAPACOA), this special *Vital Signs* report shines the spotlight on the power of the arts to build a greater sense of belonging to our communities, to our country, and to each other.

**October 2017**
The third and final chapter of *Belonging: Exploring Connection to Community* examines the challenges and issues that communities and places face in making people feel welcome and included.

**COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF CANADA**

Community Foundations of Canada is the national network for Canada's 191 community foundations. Together we are a philanthropic movement working across sectors to help Canadians invest in building strong and resilient communities.

**Vital**Signs®

*Vital Signs* is a national program led by community foundations and coordinated by Community Foundations of Canada that leverages community knowledge to measure the vitality of our communities and support action towards improving our quality of life.

**ALLIANCE·150**

Our 3-part series on belonging leading up to Canada's 150th was supported in part by Alliance 150, a national network of groups, organizations and individuals working to make the most of Canada's sesquicentennial year. Learn more about the Alliance at www.alliance150.ca.

Cover art by MU, a charitable organization with a mission to beautify the city of Montreal by creating murals that are anchored in local communities. At the heart of its approach is the desire to see and experience art on a daily basis, to trigger a social transformation and to turn Montreal into an open-air museum. Learn more about MU and its mission at www.mumtl.org.

> *What a powerful year to think about belonging. Who belongs, who doesn't and why not. And why we must, in the next 150 years, take the question of belonging extremely seriously.*

**SENATOR RATNA OMIDVAR**
BELONG 2017 COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS CONFERENCE

# WHY IS BELONGING IMPORTANT?

**What is belonging?** We define belonging simply as being part of a collective we. It's a two-way street: It's about communities sending signals of acceptance and inclusion, and about individuals cultivating their own connections to community. A sense of belonging is important to build safe, vibrant communities, and it brings purpose to our lives.

In 2015, Community Foundations of Canada released the first chapter of *Belonging: Exploring Connection to Community*—a national *Vital Signs* report series that sparked an ongoing exploration and focus on belonging in Canada. In the second chapter released last year, we focused on one side of "Belonging Street" and used the lens of social participation to better understand how we as individuals cultivate our connections to community.

In this year's report, the final chapter of our exploration, we're looking at belonging from the other side of the street—examining the challenges and issues that communities and places face in making people feel welcome and included. In short, we're asking what makes a community a place where everyone feels like they belong?

When an individual or a family encounters a school classroom, a government form, a potential landlady, or an immigration official, what are the messages of belonging that are communicated? Are the messages positive, neutral or negative? Are they the same for everyone? What happens when you add up the sum of these experiences over a lifetime?

The simple answer to these questions is that *it's complex*. There isn't a quick fix, a new policy or a piece of community infrastructure that will respond to everyone's needs. The top three things that Canadians say makes their community a good place to live are affordability, public safety and employment opportunities.[1] Taken on their own, access to affordable housing, feeling safe in your neighbourhood and having opportunities for meaningful employment don't make a community. But when you weave these threads together with other aspects of community, patterns and experiences of belonging and inclusion emerge.

*Research shows that when communities are made up of people who feel they belong and trust each other:*

We are healthier[2]

Neighbourhoods are safer[3]

People give more of their time and money to support the community[4]

Social inclusion improves[5]

We are more resilient in the face of community emergencies[6]

> As Canada continues to experience the push and pull of change, our communities are being put to the test. Belonging provides a way to create cohesion. It's as fundamental to our social fabric as food, safety and shelter, and is essential to building healthy and resilient communities for the future.

**ANDREW CHUNILALL**
CEO, COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS OF CANADA

MURAL: **ENGLOUTIE**, BY RAFAEL SOTTOLICHIO, REALISED BY MU, 2015.
PHOTO CREDIT: OLIVIER BOUSQUET

# WHERE WE LIVE

*More than half of Canadians no longer live in the community where they grew up, people living alone is on the rise, and housing in Canada's major cities is less affordable than ever. This creates an environment where it's easy to feel isolated.*

# PUBLIC SPACES

*For a sense of belonging to flourish, it needs room to grow. The public spaces and shared environments around us are important for people in communities to come together, learn and play.*

# ECONOMIC INCLUSION

*The growing economic gap between rich and poor in Canada affects the ability of citizens to participate equally in our society. Building economic inclusion can start by creating more welcoming workplaces.*

# MIGRATION & CITIZENSHIP

*Immigrants and newcomers to Canada face many barriers to participating fully in their communities, including the persistence of discrimination, racism and finding meaningful work at a decent income. Despite it all, many still feel a strong sense of belonging.*

# WHAT INFLUENCES BELONGING IN A COMMUNITY?

While many threads are needed to weave together a community's pattern of belonging and inclusion, our *Vital Signs* research focuses on exploring six key thematic threads. As the statistics and stories show, while many of us feel a strong connection to our communities and country, significant barriers to belonging exist for many groups, most notably for Indigenous people, newcomers, racialized groups and women.

*Communities need to do more to ensure that everyone feels like they belong.*

## SAFETY & SECURITY

*While crime rates are falling, racial discrimination, gender inequality and cultural assimilation continue to influence how unwelcome people sometimes feel in their communities.*

## FAMILIES

*The makeup of Canadian families is changing: they have grown smaller as parents shoulder heavier financial burdens and struggle with work-life balance. Communities will need to find creative ways of letting parents, children and families know they belong.*

**63%**
OF CANADIANS
ARE HAPPY WITH
THEIR HOMES[10]

AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD SIZE
**2.4 people**

**14,072,080**[11]
NUMBER OF PRIVATE
HOUSEHOLDS IN CANADA

# WHERE WE LIVE

HOME OWNERS (74%)
ARE HAPPIER WITH
THEIR HOMES THAN
NON-OWNERS (51%)[10]

*Housing is a physical dwelling that meets our basic needs of shelter and security. It's also home, a place of identity and belonging. When there is uncertainty about the very place we live, it can undermine our sense of community connection.*[7]

As Canada transforms, what will housing look like? Will rising costs in cities drive families out, or will policies be introduced to ensure affordability? Will poor housing in Indigenous communities[8] continue to be emblematic of colonization, or will governments and communities partner to make decent homes a cornerstone of healing and strength? Will innovations such as "housing first[9]" become the norm across Canada to address homelessness?
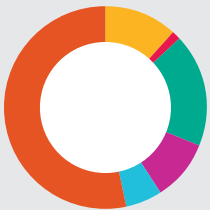
FOR CANADIANS BORN OUTSIDE OF THE COUNTRY, HOME OWNERSHIP
IS STRONGLY ASSOCIATED WITH A SENSE OF COMMUNITY BELONGING.[12]

# STATS & FACTS →
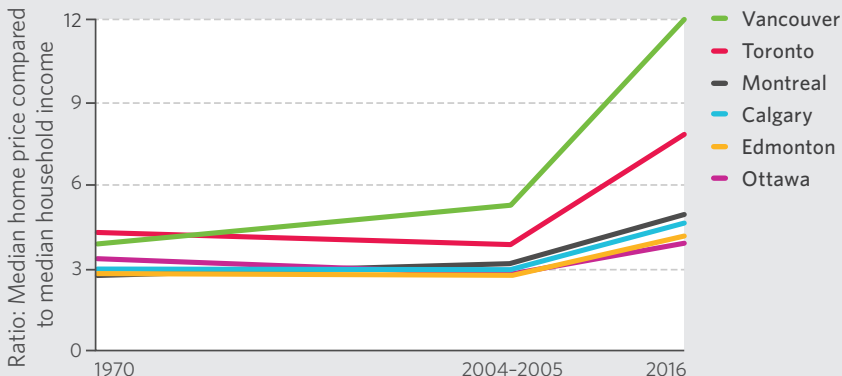
## WHAT TYPE OF HOMES DO WE LIVE IN?[13]



| | |
|---|---|
| **1.3%** | Houseboat, mobile home, or RV |
| **5.6%** | Duplex |
| **9.9%** | Apartment, building with 5+ storeys |
| **11.6%** | Semi-detached, rowhouse, or other attached dwelling |
| **18.0%** | Apartment, building with <5 storeys |
| **53.6%** | Single-detached house |

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IS IN DECLINE IN MAJOR CITIES[14]



Ratio: Median home price compared to median household income

- Vancouver
- Toronto
- Montreal
- Calgary
- Edmonton
- Ottawa

1970    2004–2005    2016

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY RANGES WIDELY IN SMALLER CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY[15]

Ratio: Median home price compared to median household income

| | |
|---|---|
| Victoria, BC | 8.1 |
| Kelowna, BC | 6.4 |
| Barrie, ON | 5.0 |
| Saskatoon, SK | 4.5 |
| Sherbrooke, QC | 4.2 |
| Kingston, ON | 3.9 |
| London, ON | 3.8 |
| Winnipeg, MB | 3.7 |
| Québec City, QC | 3.6 |
| Moose Jaw, SK | 3.0 |
| Windsor, ON | 2.7 |
| Charlottetown, PEI | 2.6 |
| Saguenay, QC | 2.5 |
| Fredericton, NB | 2.2 |

*For example, in Vancouver, a mid-ranged house costs 12 times the median income in the city. In Winnipeg, a mid-ranged house costs 3.7 times the median income.*

## BELONGING MAKERS
### HARBOURSIDE COHOUSING, SOOKE, BC

When someone in Harbourside Cohousing comes home from surgery, 12 of their neighbours kick into action, bring meals and check-in each day for a week. This is just one of the ways that community members make each others' lives better and break isolation.

Cohousing is a relatively new housing alternative, in which a group of people own their own adjacent dwellings while sharing community resources like gardens and a communal kitchen. About 50 people aged 49 to 85 live in Harbourside's 31 units.

As challenging as it was to create, co-founder and resident Margaret Critchlow believes cohousing offers a systemic solution, especially for seniors. "We know that social isolation is as big a health risk as smoking[21]," Margaret says. "If funders, provinces, or federal agencies offered ways to reduce development costs, especially land acquisition, there could be far more cohousing communities in Canada. These communities would save taxpayers a huge amount of money because people will support each other and need less care from the public system."

www.cohousing.ca
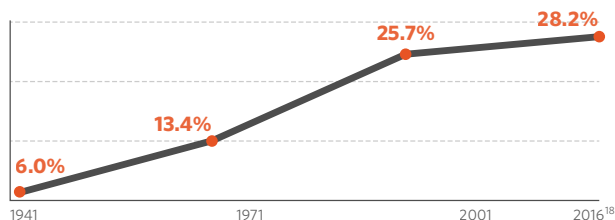www.canadianseniorcohousing.com

1 IN 5 OF ALL HOUSEHOLDS THAT RENT SPEND **>50%** OF THEIR INCOME ON RENT.[16]

### ON THE RISE

## 3,969,790[17]

**PEOPLE LIVING ALONE** IN 2016
*As a percentage of all households*

- 6.0% — 1941
- 13.4%
- 25.7% — 2001
- 28.2% — 2016[18]
- 1971

## 1,180,770[17]

**5+ PEOPLE HOUSEHOLDS** IN 2016
*As a percentage of all households*

- 38.2% — 1941
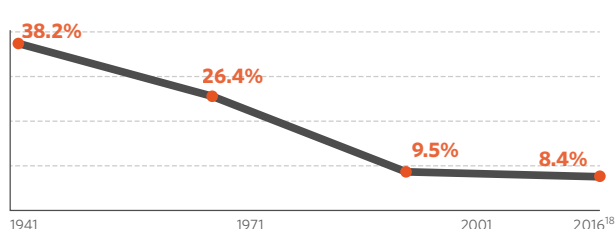- 26.4% — 1971
- 9.5% — 2001
- 8.4% — 2016[18]

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PHOTO CREDIT: STEVE MARTIN, THOMPSON MARTIN PHOTOGRAPHY

When **London Community Foundation (LCF)** realized how many people were on the waitlist for rent-geared-to-income apartments, it made housing a strategic priority. LCF created a new loan fund to finance affordable housing projects and partnered with the City of London to bring about a substantial increase in the number of these projects. Their vision is that increasing the amount of secure, accessible housing will help address other systemic challenges in the community like poverty and mental illness. Many community foundations across Canada, including Edmonton, Hamilton and Peterborough, have also engaged in impact investing to improve local housing.

**www.lcf.on.ca**

> *Housing is a priority if we wish to tackle other issues such as mental illness, addiction and unemployment. When people in our community are safely housed, our whole community thrives.*

**MARTHA POWELL**
PRESIDENT & CEO, LONDON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

**PEOPLE LIVING IN HOMES THAT NEED MAJOR REPAIRS**[19]
*(defective plumbing, electrical wiring, walls, floors or ceilings)*:

**INDIGENOUS**
## 21.7%

**NON-INDIGENOUS**
## 6.8%

**235,000 Canadians experience homelessness each year and 35,000 Canadians experience homelessness on any given night.**[20]

**50,000+ Canadians experience hidden homelessness, such as couchsurfing, sleeping in a car, or other precarious housing.**[20]

# PUBLIC SPACES

**3598**
NUMBER OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN CANADA[23]

**360 million**
VISITS MADE ANNUALLY TO LIBRARIES[23]

*Shared spaces and places like libraries, parks and cultural events are vital threads in our social fabric. They literally bring us together.*

Research shows that the presence of green spaces and community services, such as child care and recreational centres, are important factors that affect our sense of belonging.[22]

Changing a community's physical environment can make a big impact on how people move around and interact. Just as important are the less visible aspects of shared spaces. Are some community members welcome while others are not? Do public events reflect the diversity of our communities? By including previously excluded voices, we can make these important gathering places into ones where everyone feels they belong.[22]

MOST ONTARIANS BELIEVE LOSING THEIR LOCAL LIBRARY WOULD HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON THEIR COMMUNITIES.[31]

THE MORE WE ARE ATTACHED TO A PLACE, THE MORE LIKELY WE ARE TO TAKE CARE OF IT, ENGAGING IN ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR.[32]

## STATS & FACTS →

✔ Residents in small and medium-sized towns who rate the quality of local recreation as "excellent"[33]

✔ Seniors who have more contact with local green spaces[34]

✔ Residents that think public spaces in the community are of high quality[35]

✔ People who rate the arts, culture and leisure in their local area as "excellent"[36]

✔ People who regularly frequent libraries[36]

*...are more likely to have a strong sense of community belonging*

**41% OF CANADIANS ARE ACTIVE PUBLIC LIBRARY CARDHOLDERS**[37]
*Top four cities for library membership (% of residents who hold a card).*[38]

Vancouver **69.9%**

Victoria **62.5%**

**64.4%** Saskatoon

**55.8%** Mississauga
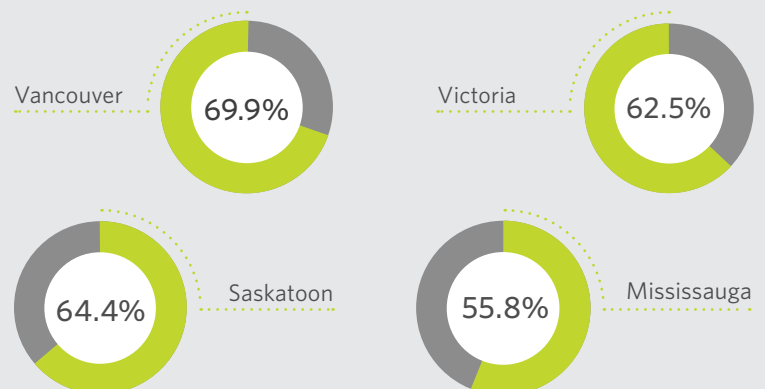
**Research has proven that access to natural environments in our communities improves quality of life, particularly for newcomers[39], children[40], and seniors[41].**

## PUBLIC SPACES

Public common spaces foster informal social ties that lead to greater social cohesion.[24] And they are more likely to be used for social activities if they have trees![25]

Child-friendly planning helps create communities where children can play outside and go places independently and safely[26], which is important for healthy child development.[27]

## SPACE FOR ARTS & CULTURE

77% of Canadians agree or strongly agree that arts and heritage experiences help them feel part of the local community.[28] Nearly 90% of Canadians say that performing arts facilities are important to quality of life, sense of community pride and the local economy.[29]

# 43% of Canadians
RATE THE NUMBER OF LOCAL ARTS FACILITIES AS GOOD.[28]

# 53% of Canadians
RATE THE QUALITY OF LOCAL ARTS FACILITIES AS GOOD.[28]

# Lack of performance spaces
FOR INDIGENOUS CULTURAL WORKS IS ESPECIALLY PRESSING.[30]
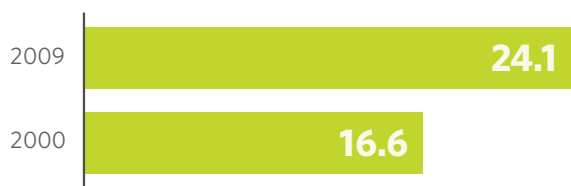
## LIBRARIES

Public and school libraries across the country have experienced unprecedented budget cuts and closures in recent years.[43]

In 2017, community members have resisted funding cuts to libraries, forcing several provincial governments to reverse their decisions, including Saskatchewan, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador.[44]

### ON THE RISE

# Library Use

LIBRARY TRANSACTIONS PER CANADIAN [42]

| Year | Transactions |
|------|--------------|
| 2009 | 24.1 |
| 2000 | 16.6 |

## 21.8 million
QUESTIONS ASKED BY PEOPLE IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES EACH YEAR[37]

### THE ELORA GREEN SPACE

For 80 years, a gas station was at the centre of Elora, Ontario. After the station was demolished, the space sat for years as an unattractive, inhospitable hole in the small town. Eventually community members mobilized and over five years with support from several donors and partners, including **Centre Wellington Community Foundation**, the site has been decontaminated and beautified with mature trees and boulders from the local landscape. Elora Green Space has changed the way community members move around in their town, providing a popular meeting and resting spot and contributing to downtown revitalization.

### PRESERVING & TEACHING CREE CULTURE

For decades, James Bay Cree Elders spoke of the need for a central place for protecting and passing on their nation's ways of living. This vision was realized in 2011 when the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute (ACCI) was created. The **Eenou-Eeyou Community Foundation** raised over $25 million to build the world class museum, library, performance space and teaching centre in Ouje-Bougoumou, QC. ACCI's goals are to preserve and teach culture and language to Cree youth, and to share with non-native Canadians how the Cree have lived from the land for millennia, both priorities identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The foundation continues to support cultural and social development across the Cree territory of Eeyou Istchee.

**www.creefoundation.ca**

WE ASKED CANADIANS, WHAT MAKES A COMMUNITY A GOOD PLACE TO LIVE?[1]

**#1** Affordability
**#3** Employment Opportunities

**48%** OF MILLENNIALS
**29%** OF BABY BOOMERS
work from home some or all of the time.[45]

# ECONOMIC INCLUSION

**15.2%**
OF WORKING CANADIANS ARE SELF-EMPLOYED.[46]

WEALTH INEQUALITY IS ON THE RISE. THE RICHEST 10% OF CANADIANS OWN ALMOST HALF OF ALL WEALTH AND THE LEAST WEALTHY 50% OWN LESS THAN 6% COMBINED.[47]

*What do money and work have to do with belonging? It turns out, a lot.*

For many people, workplaces are important places of belonging. On the other hand, precarious employment and poverty create barriers for people to be involved in their communities and can magnify a sense of being "on the outside" of our prosperous society. A comparison of the world's 50 richest countries shows that nations with less income inequality are more cohesive, with higher levels of trust and less violence.[48] Canada ranks 12th of 17 peer countries for income equality.[49]

As more people are self-employed and do business from home, how can workplaces bolster belonging? Can employment and income disparities faced by racialized and Indigenous communities be lessened through economic inclusion? Can we slow the widening gap between rich and poor and lift more people out of poverty?
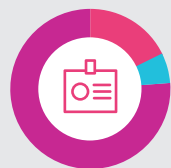
FOR IMMIGRANTS TO CANADA ESPECIALLY, HAVING A FULL-TIME JOB IS STRONGLY ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR SENSE OF COMMUNITY BELONGING.[50]

# STATS & FACTS →

## THE STATUS OF EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA[51]

**75.5%** Employed full time
**18.0%** Employed part time
**6.46%** Unemployed

## EMPLOYMENT RATE

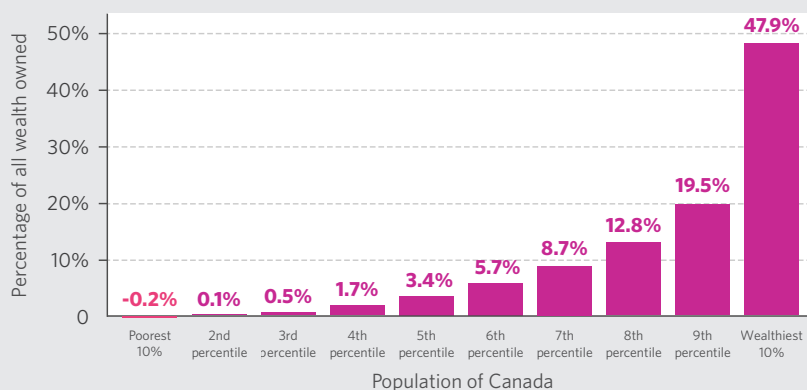**62.5%**
Indigenous People

**75.8%**
Non-Indigenous People[52]

## MEDIAN INCOME OF RACIALIZED PEOPLE[53]
**80%**
of Canadian median income

## MEDIAN INCOME OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE[53]
**72%**
of Canadian median income

## DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH IN CANADA, 2012[47]



Bar chart — Percentage of all wealth owned (y-axis) vs. Population of Canada (x-axis):
- Poorest 10%: -0.2%
- 2nd percentile: 0.1%
- 3rd percentile: 0.5%
- 4th percentile: 1.7%
- 5th percentile: 3.4%
- 6th percentile: 5.7%
- 7th percentile: 8.7%
- 8th percentile: 12.8%
- 9th percentile: 19.5%
- Wealthiest 10%: 47.9%

## WE UNDERESTIMATE THE UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH

| | WHAT CANADIANS THINK:[54] | THE REALITY:[55] |
|---|---|---|
| How much wealth does the richest 20% own? | **55.5%** | **67.4%** |
| How much wealth does the poorest 20% own? | **5.8%** | **0%** |

> **"**
>
> *Our community is pretty good at helping people live better in poverty. What we haven't been very good at is assisting people to get out of poverty. Community economic development provides people with low incomes the tools to increase their income and assets and therefore become more independent.*

**MARTIN GARBER-CONRAD**
CEO, EDMONTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

## WORKPLACES

When asked what other kind of non-geographic communities we identify with, our most common response is workplaces and people who share the same line of work.[1] Belonging and attachment to a group of coworkers is a better motivator for many employees than financial incentives.[56] Ostracism in a workplace—being ignored and left out—has been found to be even more harmful to belonging than harassment.[57]

## PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT

Precarious employment is a growing concern, detrimental to the economy and the home life of people with no stable job. There is a persistent gap between the earnings of people with 'good jobs' and those that are precariously employed. In some professions, such as nursing, trades, and teaching, temporary or part-time work leads to a lower sense of belonging.[58]

### ON THE RISE

# Minimum Wage Earners[61]

*The real value of minimum wage is the same as it was in 1975.*

% of all employed people

5.0% (1997) → 6.7% (2013)

**PEOPLE WITH SECURE, HIGHER INCOMES**
are more likely to have a strong sense of belonging and participate in community activities.[62]

**PEOPLE WITH LOWER INCOMES**
are more prone to social isolation and loneliness[63], likely because poverty creates financial, transportation and stigma-related barriers to taking part in community activities.[64]

## POVERTY REDUCTION

Edmonton is taking poverty reduction seriously. **Edmonton Community Foundation** was one of many organizations that took part in a two-year task force that considered how to make a real difference in eliminating poverty and revitalizing low-income communities. Support has quickly mobilized around one task force recommendation—to create a community development corporation (CDC) that would finance social enterprises, encourage local businesses and build financial skills. The foundation has taken a lead mobilizing support for the CDC, building on its strong credibility with both the municipal government and community groups. The foundation made a bold commitment of $10 million in loan capital which the city has matched with $10 million worth of land. The city and community groups have also provided operating funding for the new CDC's start-up.

## NOVA SCOTIA COMMUNITIES

Nova Scotia communities are facing an economic precipice. "Now or Never" was the title of the government commissioned report on the provincial economy that is awakening many people to the reality of an aging population and lack of workers to fill employment needs. While many communities did not know what to do to revitalize themselves, the people of one region decided to take matters into their own hands. NOW Lunenburg County was started by local business owners that wanted to get at the underlying causes. They got people talking in the county about their visions and then zeroed in on a key lever in the local economy: the need for new people to settle there with the skills needed to fill existing job openings or operate their own businesses. With support from **Lunenburg County Community Fund**, the initiative came up with an innovative action plan. They hired a full time Population Growth Strategy Coordinator and, in summer 2017, a trailer crossed Canada singing the praises of the quality of life and job opportunities in the county, with the goal of enticing 150 families to move to the region.
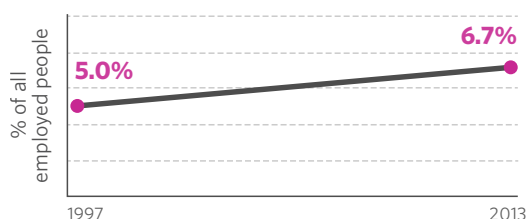
**www.nowlunenburgcounty.com**

**20.6%** OF CANADIANS WERE BORN OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY AND ARRIVED AS IMMIGRANTS.[65]

**Full-time Employment** LEADS TO STRENGTHENED BELONGING AMONG NEWCOMERS.[66]

# MIGRATION & CITIZENSHIP

## Who belongs and who doesn't?

More immigrants have a strong sense of belonging to Canada than Canadian-born residents. This is one of many indicators that Canada is doing better compared to many developed countries on inclusion of newcomers.[67]

Yet, newcomers often face barriers to creating the lives they imagined here. Unemployment and earnings compared to non-immigrants have actually been worsening over the last 30 years.[68] Who gets to become a citizen? Who gets to have their family live together? These questions point to key levers in our country's process towards building a society where we all belong.

**MORE IMMIGRANTS HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING TO CANADA (93.3%) THAN CANADIAN-BORN RESIDENTS (87.9%).**[66]

COMPARED TO PEOPLE BORN IN CANADA, IMMIGRANTS PLACE MORE IMPORTANCE ON KNOWING THEIR NEIGHBOURS ON A FIRST NAME BASIS AND BEING ABLE TO TRUST OTHER PEOPLE AS DETERMINANTS OF THEIR SENSE OF BELONGING.[69]
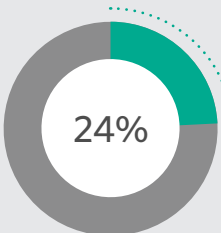
## STATS & FACTS →
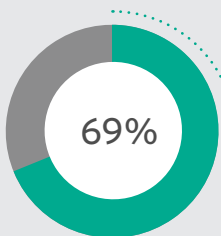
**69%** Immigrants with a strong sense of belonging to both Canada and their home country.

**24%** Immigrants with a strong sense of belonging to Canada (and a weak sense of belonging to their home country).[66]

→ **Immigrants who are unemployed or have a family income under $30,000 are more likely to have a weak sense of belonging to both Canada and their country of origin.**[66]

**TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKERS**[70]

**4x** Between 2000 and 2015, the number of temporary foreign workers more than quadrupled.

**310,000** The number of temporary work permit holders in Canada (1.7% of the national employed workforce).

**2%** The percentage of people arriving through the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program who became permanent residents within five years of coming to Canada.

**56%** The percentage of people arriving through the Live-in Caregiver Program who became permanent residents within five years of coming to Canada.

## BENCHMARKS OF A WELCOMING COMMUNITY[71]

- Positive attitudes toward immigrants, cultural diversity, and the presence of newcomers in the community
- Presence of diverse religious and cultural organizations
- Social engagement opportunities for community members
- Opportunities for the use of public space and recreational facilities
- Favourable media coverage and representation of newcomers

## BARRIERS TO BELONGING: KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

Citizens and permanent residents must wait 16 months for processing of their spouses and children to be accepted into Canada. Refugees wait 38 months. Live-in caregivers, as temporary workers, wait 62 months.[72]

> IMMIGRANTS TEND TO DISPLAY A STRONG SENSE OF BELONGING TO THEIR CITY OF RESIDENCE AS WELL AS TO THEIR ETHNIC GROUP.[66]

> EXPERIENCING DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM DISCOURAGES NEWCOMERS' SENSE OF BELONGING TO THE RECEIVING COUNTRY.[73]

PHOTO CREDIT: JEFFREY BOSDET

Employment and adequate income make a difference to newcomers' sense of belonging. They are also cornerstones to an immigrant family's well-being over the long term. **Victoria Foundation**, through the Community Fund for Canada's 150th, provided support for entrepreneur training for newcomers, including 14 refugees from Syria. In addition to building skills to start their own businesses, participants were assisted to overcome systemic barriers to financial and social capital, through access to a community micro-lending organization and networking events with the Chamber of Commerce and City Hall. The program was led by Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society.

**www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca**

## DESMOND COLE: STATUS FOR ALL
### Excerpt of a keynote address given at Belong 2017: Community Foundations Conference

*Sheldon McKenzie was 39 years old. He was a farm worker from Jamaica who came to Ontario under the Seasonal Agricultural Worker Program. Sheldon died when he suffered a severe and ultimately fatal head injury. He left behind a wife and two daughters in Jamaica whose livelihoods he supported by working here.*

*Sheldon was in the hospital and the Jamaican Consulate was trying very hard to have him brought back home. This is the silent agreement between consulates and our government: when people get hurt picking and growing and nurturing the food that we eat, we will simply send them home and get a more healthy and productive worker in their place.*

*His cousin, Marcia, described Sheldon as a giving, happy, delightful man. She told me how grateful he was to have the opportunity to work here but that gratitude should not mean that his life was taken for granted.*

*There has not been an inquiry into the death of a migrant worker in this country, ever. But we know that between 2001 and 2011, about 800 were sent home. The Canadian Medical Association Journal had to do that work because the government does not. We do not count the number injured or dead, because seemingly, we do not care. I wonder why Sheldon was good enough to come here and pick our food but was not good enough to have automatic status in this country so that he could enjoy the same protections and benefits that Canadians do? I wonder why we erased his humanity? I think to myself we need status for all. Status for all. Status for all.*

**About 30,000 temporary farm workers come and leave Canada each year. They are not allowed to bring family members or receive protection from labour laws governing minimum wage, overtime and rest periods.[74]**

**4 million**

(13%) CANADIANS REPORTED BEING VICTIMS OF DISCRIMINATION IN THE PAST FIVE YEARS.[75]

LOW INCOME PEOPLE, WOMEN, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE HAVE LOW SATISFACTION WITH THEIR PERSONAL SAFETY, WHEN COMPARED TO OTHER COMMUNITY MEMBERS.[76]

# SAFETY & SECURITY

*When asked what makes a community a good place to live, public safety is the second most common response, after affordability.[1] A sense of security is essential for building belonging.*

The good news is that crime is on the decline in Canada and most of us feel safe where we live. The challenge is to listen to those in our communities that regularly don't feel safe—even when doing simple acts likes walking alone at night or crossing paths with a police officer. Indigenous people, for example, often avoid dealing with public services like the justice[75] and health care systems[77] because of negative past experiences. Weaving a strong net of belonging means urging services and institutions to become places where all people are treated with empathy and respect.[78]
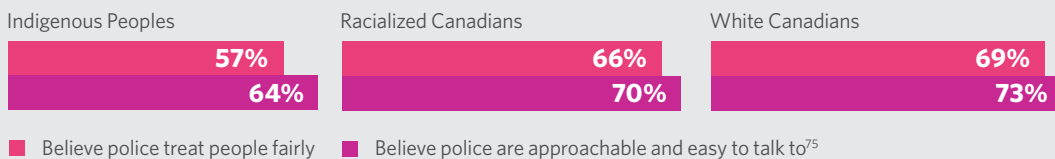
MOST PEOPLE IN CANADA (93%) ARE SATISFIED WITH THEIR SENSE OF PERSONAL SAFETY FROM CRIME.[76]

CRIME IS INFLUENCED BY BROAD SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS. OVER TIME, CHANGES IN VIOLENT CRIME RATES HAVE CORRELATED WITH SHIFTS IN CANADA'S UNEMPLOYMENT AND ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION LEVELS. ROBBERIES AND OTHER FINANCIALLY-MOTIVATED CRIMES HAVE CORRELATED WITH INFLATION RATES.[78]
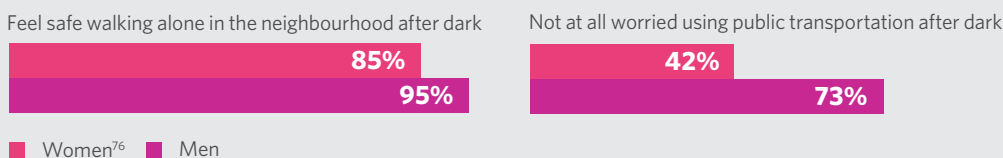
# STATS & FACTS →

PERCEPTIONS OF POLICE INTERACTION WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS VARY DEPENDING ON ETHNIC AND RACIAL BACKGROUND.[75]

| Indigenous Peoples | Racialized Canadians | White Canadians |
|---|---|---|
| 57% | 66% | 69% |
| 64% | 70% | 73% |

■ Believe police treat people fairly    ■ Believe police are approachable and easy to talk to[75]

MORE CANADIANS BELIEVE POLICE ARE DOING A GOOD JOB, COMPARED TO A DECADE AGO.

FEELING SAFE IN OUR NEIGHBOURHOODS[76]

| Feel safe walking alone in the neighbourhood after dark | Not at all worried using public transportation after dark |
|---|---|
| 85% | 42% |
| 95% | 73% |

■ Women[76]    ■ Men

**31%** of crimes were brought to the attention of police in 2014.[79]

**76%** OF US HAVE A GREAT DEAL OR SOME CONFIDENCE IN THE POLICE, MAKING IT THE INSTITUTION WITH THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF PUBLIC CONFIDENCE.

**50%** of break-ins, but only **5%** of sexual assaults were reported.[79]

## RACIAL PROFILING

*Safety also means freedom from discrimination and suspicion.*

🔖 *Racial profiling is being unfairly singled out for surveillance, scrutiny, investigation and disproportionately harsh treatment based on perceived race or ethnicity.*[80]

According to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, unfair treatment based on race is widespread in many of our public institutions, including schools, child welfare, transportation, national security, stores and private businesses. Racial profiling is particularly experienced by people in Canada who identify as Muslim, Arab, West Asian, Black or Indigenous.[81]

In Toronto, where Black Lives Matter, an anti-racism movement, has been most active, 55% of voters support the movement and 50% agree there is systemic racism in the city.[82]
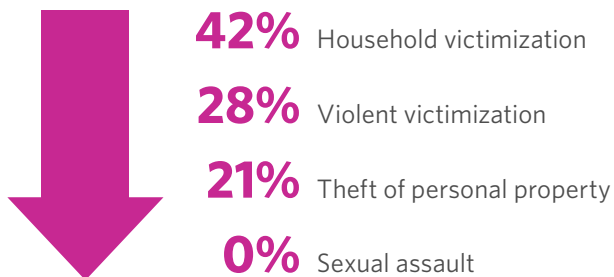
## CULTURAL SAFETY

🔖 *Cultural safety is the condition of being physically, spiritually and socially safe, free of racism and stereotypes; services, institutions and environments where all people are treated with empathy, dignity and respect.*[83]

There is growing awareness of the importance of creating services that are culturally safe. While this approach is most widespread in health services for Indigenous people, it could be applied across all our public institutions.

**ALMOST ALL TYPES OF CRIME HAVE BEEN IN DECLINE SINCE THE 1990S.**[84]

## DECREASE IN CRIME RATES
(2004–2014)[79]

**42%** Household victimization

**28%** Violent victimization

**21%** Theft of personal property

**0%** Sexual assault

*But public perception is not keeping pace...*

**88%**

**OF CANADIANS BELIEVE THAT CRIME RATES IN THEIR COMMUNITIES ARE INCREASING OR STAYING THE SAME.**[76]



### WEST VANCOUVER SAFETY

PHOTO CREDIT: SERGEANT MARK BRAITHWAITE

West Vancouver Police Department and local Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations have intentionally deepened relationships over the past several years. Recently, a 29-foot canoe named Ch'ich'iyúy, has been helping to build cultural bridges that lead to more culturally sensitive and responsive policing. Each summer, First Nations youth and police paddle the canoe for 10 days as part of **Pulling Together**, an annual voyage started by RCMP to create bonds of understanding between public servants and Indigenous young people in BC. West Vancouver Community Foundation supported the original purchase of the canoe as well as the 2017 voyage. Constable Jeff Wood, WVPD quotes that "in order to make West Vancouver safe today and safer tomorrow, we must harness the strength in diversity of our community."

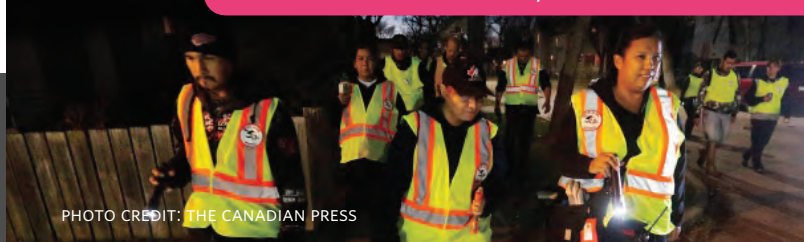**www.pullingtogether.ca**



### BEAR CLAN PATROL, WINNIPEG

PHOTO CREDIT: THE CANADIAN PRESS

When First Nations teen Tina Fontaine's body was found in the Red River in 2014, it was "the last straw" for **Bear Clan Patrol**'s founder. James Flavel knew he needed to do something positive to address "the systematic failures of the system."[85] He and a small group of other Indigenous residents started a neighbourhood watch in Winnipeg's North End, walking five nights per week, handing out snacks and goodwill and helping out in crises. Although patrollers are volunteers, the work of coordinating volunteers and training is extensive and resources have been slim, especially given the huge growth. Bear Clan Patrol started with 12 members in 2014 and now has 730 volunteers. The model has inspired many. Similar patrols are taking place in 19 communities in Manitoba, Ontario, Alberta and Saskatchewan, including a Filipino-led neighbourhood watch in another part of Winnipeg. Leery at first, the Winnipeg Police have come to regard Bear Clan as important partners in creating a climate of harmony and safety in the city.

**www.bearclanpatrolinc.com**

**80%**

OF CANADIANS BELIEVE THE COST OF LICENSED DAYCARE IS PRICING OUT FAMILIES WHO NEED IT MOST.[86]

**1/3**

OF US SAY WE DO NOT SPEND ENOUGH TIME WITH OUR FAMILIES.[87]

# FAMILIES

*For most of us, belonging starts with our families. We often think of families as units, separate and self-sufficient. In fact, families exist in a wide web of relationships and are strongly influenced by society.*

Studies have even shown that people parent better when they live in "belonging communities" characterized by strong links between families, neighbours, and local services.[88]

Communities have a responsibility to support our families. And there are many opportunities to do better, for example, to address low-income children and parents' concern about the future, to lower depression rates among family caregivers, and to keep Indigenous children with their families and cultures.
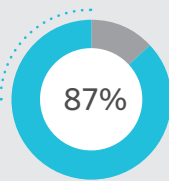
**64% OF MILLENNIALS AND 39% OF PEOPLE AGED 55+ BELIEVE** "FAMILY IS WHOEVER YOU CHOOSE TO SURROUND YOURSELF WITH."

AFFORDABILITY OF EDUCATION IS A HIGH PRIORITY AMONG BOTH CHILDREN AND ADULTS.[86]
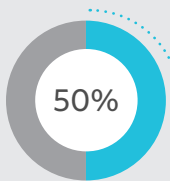
## STATS & FACTS →
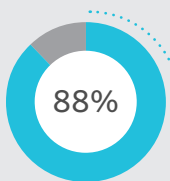
**88%**
Canadians who believe that families are under a lot of financial pressure[86]

**87%**
Low-income kids who say that families like theirs will struggle to pay for post-secondary education[86]

**50%**
Parents who say that their family's lack of money is hurting their children[86]

**Nearly 1 in 5 Canadian children live in poverty.[89]**

**8 million**

CANADIANS ARE FAMILY CAREGIVERS

(provide care to family members or friends with a long-term health condition, disability or age-related challenge).[90]

PEOPLE PROVIDING REGULAR CARE TO A CHILD OR SPOUSE WITH HIGH HEALTH NEEDS

**1/3**
Feel depressed

**1/4**
Experience financial difficulties as a result of their caregiving responsibilities[90]

*One strength of community foundations is our ability to stand back and look at different areas in a system, and apply our support in different ways. In the case of say mental health, other funders often focus on prevention or treatment instead of the whole system. Community foundations need to make the most of our flexibility.*

**MATTHEW BLOUGH**
**GRANTS IMPACT ASSOCIATE, CALGARY FOUNDATION**

## SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

76% of parents worry sometimes or often that they are not a good parent.[86] Aside from extra money, the top supports parents would find helpful are:

- Flexible work hours
- Affordable childcare
- Part-time work options[86]

### INDIGENOUS CHILDREN MAKE UP:

**7%** of all children, and **1/2** of all foster children.[91]

The Auditor General noted that First Nations children are often placed into foster care for cases of "neglect" due to poverty, poor housing and substance misuse[92], all systemic problems exacerbated by past and current colonial policies and beyond parents' direct control.[93]

## ON THE RISE

# Diverse Living Arrangements

*More and more Canadian households are made up of:*

3 or more generations living under the same roof **(4.5% of Canada's population)**.[94]

More than one family living together **(2% of all households)**.[95]

Young adults living with their parents **(42% of 20-29 year olds)**.[94]

People living with roommates or relatives such as siblings, cousins, or aunts **(4.1% of all households)**.[95]

# Positive Child-Parent Relationships

In the last 20 years the proportion of 11- to 15-year-olds that feel understood by their parents has increased substantially.[96]

PHOTO CREDIT: DON MOLYNEAUX

Caring for people with dementia takes a toll on families as well as the health care system. Dementia Network Calgary was formed to give their city the best chance at facing the rising prevalence of this disease with no cure. This Collective Impact initiative brings together families, community groups, governments and private, public and nonprofit service providers. With support from **Calgary Foundation**, network members constructed a system map to identify problems and opportunities and are starting to implement a cross-sector work plan to achieve the goal of an innovative community where all people impacted by dementia—including family and care providers—can live life well.

**www.dementianetworkcalgary.ca**

**The number of people living with dementia, including Alzheimer's is expected to nearly double in just 15 years.**[97]

## INDIGENOUS MIDWIVES


PHOTO CREDIT: INUKJUAK MATERNITY

In Indigenous communities, birthing is a central experience that strengthens connections between the child, their family, community[98] and the land.[99] Over time, however, colonization and medicalization of birth has meant that families from rural and remote communities rarely get to experience their babies being born close to home and families can be separated for several weeks at this transformative time. The **National Aboriginal Council of Midwives** works to restore this important cultural event by encouraging Indigenous aspiring midwives, reclaiming Indigenous knowledge about birth, and assisting communities to "bring birth back" and begin a process of healing that will last through the lifespan.

**www.aboriginalmidwives.ca**

**More than 40,000 pregnant women travel from rural and remote areas to give birth in hospitals each year. Federal regulations require Indigenous women living on remote reserves to leave their homes 2-4 weeks before their due dates to await the birth in a designated city.**[100]

# BUILDING COMMUNITIES AND A COUNTRY WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS

**20,378,000** (1967)
**35,151,728** (2017)
Population of Canada

**Only 1/2**
of Canadians think that being involved in community events or activities is important to their day-to-day lives

**38%**
of Canadians don't feel like they have a stake in their local community

*Since 2015, Community Foundations of Canada and community foundations across the country have made belonging a major focus of our work. In addition to guiding and informing our philanthropy, this focus on belonging has also led our movement to consider other important ways that we can influence, inform and support change in communities across the country.*

2017 marks 150 years since the confederation of Canada. Whether you celebrate or contest this milestone, the anniversary of confederation provides an opportunity for us to look back on where we've come from and also to look forward to where we are going.

When we look back and compare Canada today to our country's sesquicentennial in 1967, traditional metrics measuring civic engagement suggest that Canadians feel like they belong less than ever. Looking to the future, we expect the trends that *Vital Signs* has uncovered over the past three years to become even more relevant.

Why? Because the face of Canada is changing, literally. Immigration is fueling population growth. We are aging. The knowledge economy is shifting the nature of work. Technology is changing how we interact and engage with our friends, families and communities. What does all of this mean for the future?

Our three-year exploration has also taught us that belonging is a two-way street. It's about communities sending signals of acceptance and inclusion, and about individuals cultivating their own connections to community.

If we want to see progress and change, we know that action is needed on both sides of the street. Individuals will need to cultivate connection with friends, family and co-workers while engaging in the places they call home. Communities—and the various systems actors within them—will need to improve programs, policies, systems and services to make people feel more welcome and included.

We believe that community foundations have an important role to play in creating communities where everyone feels like they belong. Hosting town hall conversations, creating space for newcomers to raise their voices, responding in the wake of disaster, engaging in acts of reconciliation, investing in rural economies, working toward sustainable development—these are just some of the ways community foundations have taken action. Community foundations in Canada and around the world can and must work with governments, institutions and other local actors to build more welcoming, inclusive communities.

*Why? Because it's the key to community vitality.*

> *There are many opportunities for Canadian philanthropic organizations to create respectful, mutual partnerships with Indigenous communities. Community foundations can be important contributors to reconciliation. Indigenous-led foundations are one way that our communities are reclaiming self-determination, and we invite your collaboration.*

**GRAND CHIEF DR. ABEL BOSUM**
**GRAND COUNCIL OF THE CREES – EEYOU ISTCHEE, AND MEMBER OF BOARD, EEYOU-EENOU COMMUNITY FOUNDATION**

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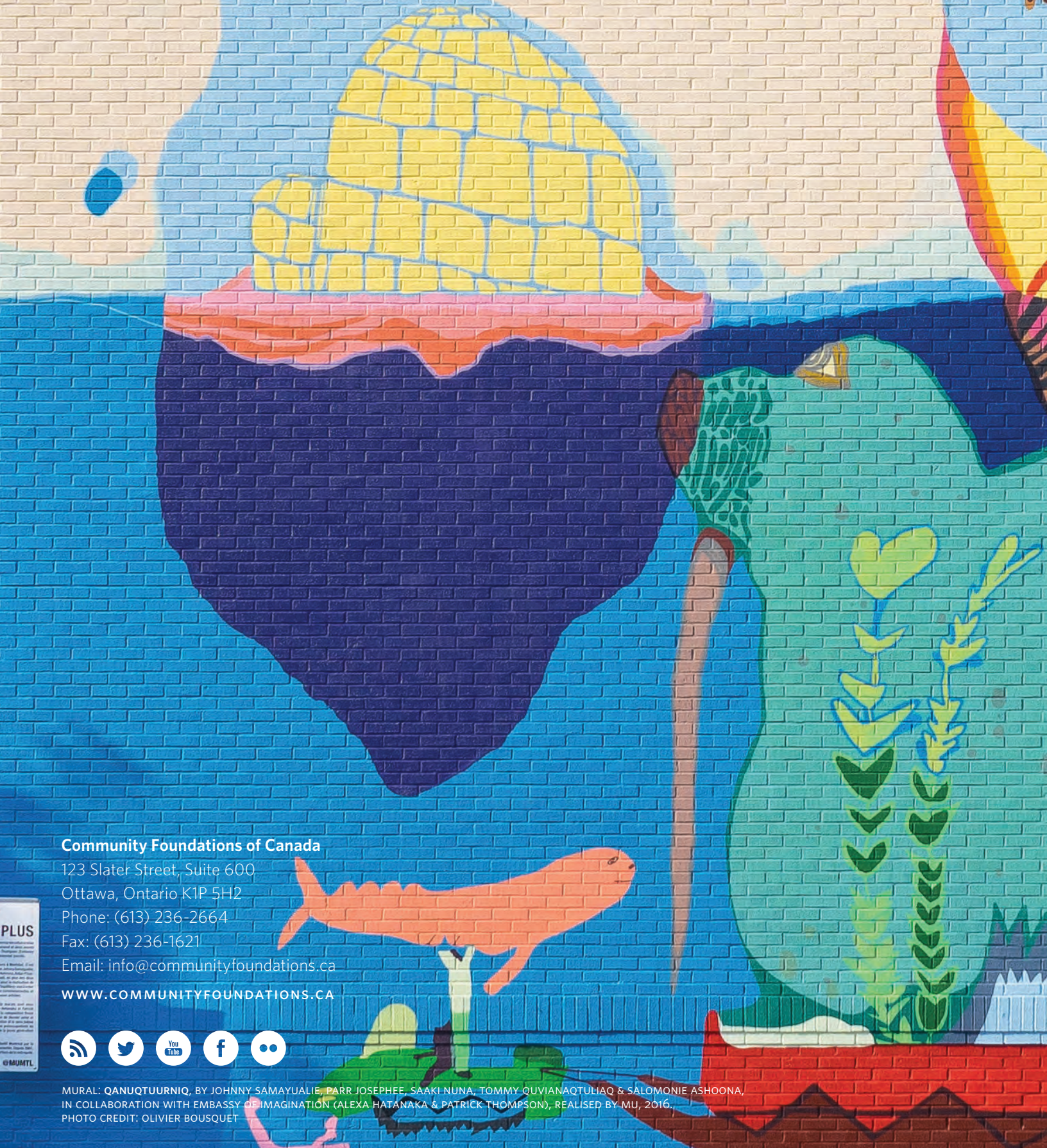
**Community Foundations of Canada**
123 Slater Street, Suite 600
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H2
Phone: (613) 236-2664
Fax: (613) 236-1621
Email: info@communityfoundations.ca

**WWW.COMMUNITYFOUNDATIONS.CA**

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