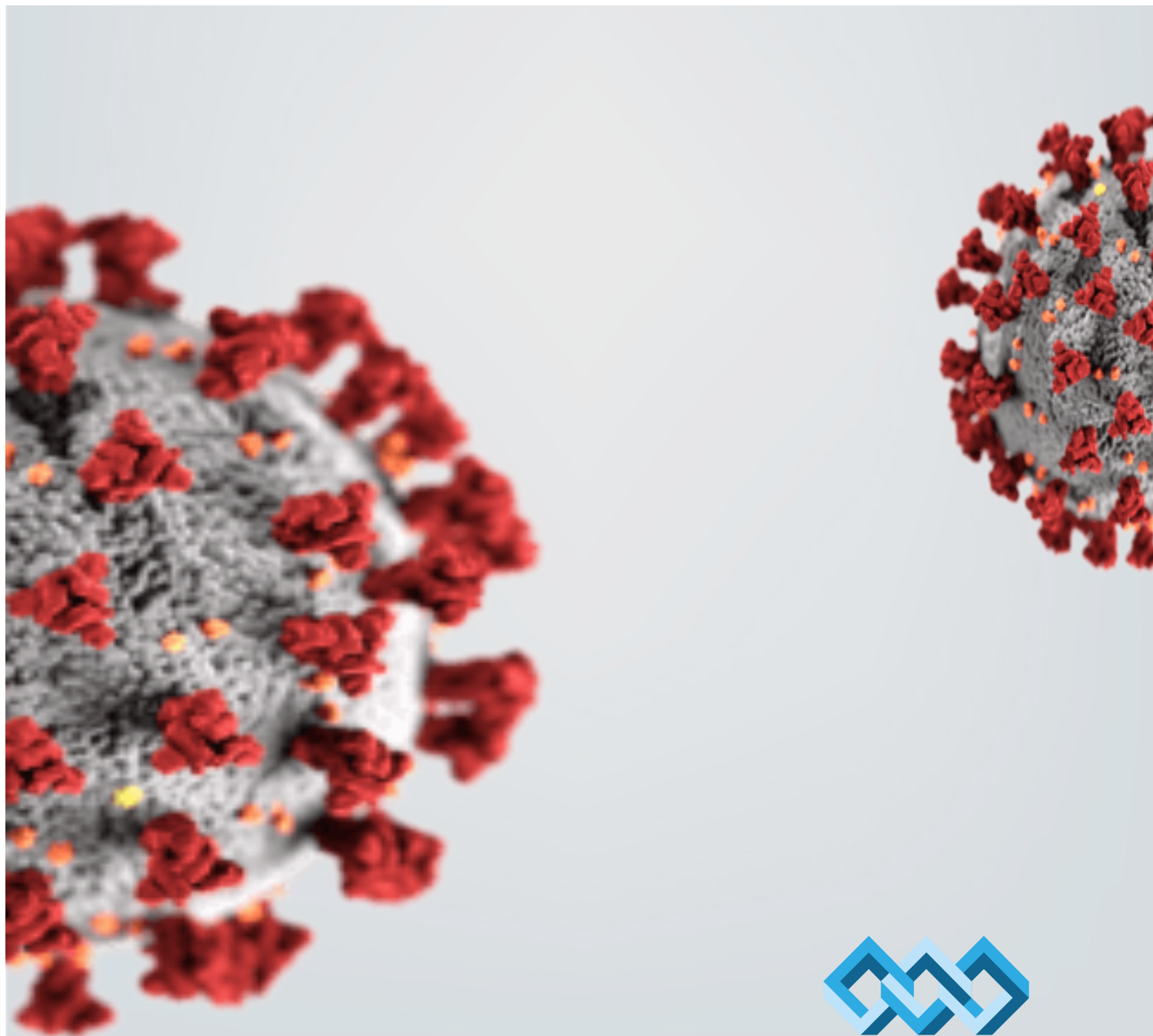


# L'Année PhiLanthropique The PhiLanthropic Year

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Hors-Série / Special Edition #1 | Mai / May 2020



**PhiLab**

Réseau Canadien de recherche partenariale sur la philanthropie  
Canadian Philanthropy Partnership Research Network

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ISBN:  
Dépôt légal - Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, Mai 2020  
Dépôt légal - Bibliothèque et Archives Canada, Mai 2020

# À propos du PhiLab | About PhiLab

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Le Réseau canadien de recherche partenariale sur la philanthropie (PhiLab), anciennement Laboratoire montréalais de recherche sur la philanthropie canadienne, a été pensé en 2014 dans le cadre de la conception de la demande de financement du projet développement de partenariat CRSH intitulé “Innovation sociale, changement sociétal et Fondations subventionnaires canadiennes”. Ce financement a été reconduit en 2018 sous le nom “Evaluation du rôle et des actions de fondations subventionnaires canadiennes en réponse à l’enjeu des inégalités sociales et des défis environnementaux”. Depuis ses débuts, le Réseau constitue un lieu de recherche, de partage d’information et de mobilisation des connaissances des fondations canadiennes. Des recherches conduites en partenariat permettent la coproduction de nouvelles connaissances dédiées à une diversité d’acteurs : des représentants gouvernementaux, des chercheurs universitaires, des représentants du secteur philanthropique et leurs organisations affiliées ou partenaires.

Le Réseau regroupe des chercheurs, des décideurs et des membres de la communauté philanthropique à travers le monde afin de partager des informations, des ressources et des idées.

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The Canadian network of partnership-oriented research on philanthropy (PhiLab), previously called the Montreal Research Laboratory on Canadian philanthropy, was thought up in 2014 as part of the conception of a funding request by the NRCC partnership development project called “Social innovation, social change, and Canadian Grantmaking Foundations”. From its beginning, the Network was a place for research, information exchange and mobilization of Canadian foundations’ knowledge. Research conducted in partnership allows for the co-production of new knowledge dedicated to a diversity of actors: government representatives, university researchers, representatives of the philanthropic sector and their affiliate organizations or partners.

The Network brings together researchers, decision-makers and members of the philanthropic community from around the world in order to share information, resources, and ideas.

## Prochaine publication

Next publication

Volume #2 en juin 2020 / June 2020



Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada



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# PHILAB DE L'OUEST | WESTERN HUB

Le Centre Régional de l'Ouest est dirigé par Iryna Khovrenkov et Lynn Gidluck. Le Centre Régional de l'Ouest, situé à Régina, possède son propre site internet: [Funders in The West](#)

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The Western Regional Hub is co-supervised by Iryna Khovrenkov and Lynn Gidluck. The Hub is located in Regina and it has their own Hub-specific website: [Funders in the West](#)



# WESTERN HUB

## *211 Teams playing critical role during COVID-19 Pandemic*



Par | By:  
**Lynn Gidluck**, co-director of PhiLab's Western Hub  
**Sue Wilkinson**, of Findhelp 211 Central  
**Kristin Nelson**, Director of 211 Saskatchewan

*Lynn Gidluck has a Ph.D. in Public Policy and History from the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School at the University of Regina. She is also the Community Director for the Faculty of Arts' Community Research Unit at the same university. She will put her twenty-plus years of experience as a public relations consultant to good use working with Iryna Khovrenkov and the rest of the members of the Western Canada Hub on Grantmaking Foundations to develop a knowledge exchange platform that links academic researchers with community groups*

*Sue Wilkinson joined Findhelp | 211 Central with a mandate to lead the organization through a period of strategic realignment and transformation. She has been actively engaged in system building at a local, provincial, national and North American level, building collaborations that leverage navigation, technology and data to connect people and strengthen communities. Sue currently co-chairs the 211 Canada Leadership Table, working with colleagues across Canada to bring 211 to all Canadians.*

*Kristin Nelson is the Director of 211 Saskatchewan and is proud to work with United Ways in Saskatchewan. Kristin started her career as a frontline service worker in the area of providing support to people who had experienced domestic violence. Seeing people overcome challenges and face barriers provided a great appreciation and understanding for the vast need for supports and services in our community – and how important it is to have a simple way to connect with those services.*



In early March of 2020, Kristin Nelson and Dr. Lynn Gidluck were just starting to analyze data from the interviews that their research assistant had completed for them. Together, they have been researching the role that 211 has played during emergencies like forest fires or floods in Canada.

211 is a free information service that helps navigate people to human and social services including food and shelter, mental health support, financial services, resources for seniors, and more. Service providers and funding partners vary from region to region with United Ways playing a key role in the development and expansion of 211 in Canada.

Ms. Nelson is Director of 211 Saskatchewan, while Dr. Gidluck oversees the University of Regina's Community Research Unit. Lynn is also a co-lead for the Western Hub of the Canadian Philanthropy Partnership Research Network (PhiLab), which is funded by a six-year partnership grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. Funding from this grant is supporting Nelson and Gidluck's project.

Like many of the researchers associated with PhiLab, Nelson and Gidluck, along with their research assistant Brendan Anderson, were getting ready to present a paper in June 2020 at the Association for Nonprofit and Social Economy Research (ANSER) annual conference (as part of the Congress for the Humanities and Social Sciences) in London, Ontario. They were also thinking about ways to communicate their research findings during Emergency Preparedness Week, and

annual event that takes place during the first full week of May. They thought their research was almost complete.

Everyone knows what happened in March of 2020. Yes. Few of us will ever forget the COVID-19 global pandemic. For Nelson and her 211 colleagues, this crisis meant kicking their operations into overdrive. As stressful as the first few weeks of the country's physical distancing measures were for the 211 Canada Leadership Table (CLT) and their staff, it has also been a period of great validation.

211 CLT is the leadership voice of a vibrant network of organizations from across Canada. Members serve diverse communities across Canada and are rooted in the communities they serve. Each is a non-profit organization and governed by an independent volunteer-led Board of Directors. Many are United Ways.

Sue Wilkinson is co-lead of the 211 Canada Leadership Table and Executive Director of Findhelp/211 Central in Toronto. Nelson and Wilkinson, together with representatives from other regional 211 organizations in Canada meet regularly to share best practices, discuss common concerns and, when appropriate, coordinate efforts. "We have been part of emergency response partnerships in the past but to a much smaller scale compared to what's happening now," said Wilkinson. "This has been a real test for us in how we can position ourselves. We believed in our capacity. We believed in what we could offer. And we believed in the work of our system. But, I don't think others totally understood or bought into what 211 could offer them until we had the opportunity to prove ourselves."

Wilkinson says that Findhelp/211 Central has been able to leverage their business intelligence tools in ways that have been extremely valuable for the design of Toronto's strategy and coordination of services during this crisis.

"At every emergency response meeting we've been at the table telling the story of what we're finding—what the unmet needs in our community are," said Wilkinson. "We have been producing weekly snapshots of trends. Originally food security was a really big issue.

Then it became financial security as benefits began to be announced. Now we are seeing more calls about mental health services and internet access. Regional trends will continue to change and our data will help pinpoint where community resources and action should be directed."

Wilkinson said that across the country collaboration and cooperation between 211, other non-profit partners, government agencies and the business community has been phenomenal.

"There are so many amazing stories of how 211 is helping during this pandemic," she says. "For example, in British Columbia, the government has funded a new program that helps seniors stay at home and cope with the strains of COVID-19 isolation. The province engaged a large number of civil servants to help 211 to register both seniors who need help as well as volunteers willing to provide it."

This is just one example, she says, of how funders and service providers are coming together to respond to the needs of the community.

Wilkinson said her team members feel so validated. "They keep saying how good it feels to be making a difference. We are proud of everything that we have built so that we could be able to respond in the way that we are during this crisis."

As for Nelson and Gidluck, they are happy to continue their research together.

"How could we write a report on the role of 211 during emergencies without analyzing what's happening during this crisis? Our interviews were still fresh on the minds of my colleagues when the national state of emergency was declared," said Nelson.

"Like everyone, we hope the crisis ends soon. When it does we will do another round of interviews and lead the 211 Canada Leadership Table through a discussion to collectively document the lessons we learned during this pandemic," said Nelson. "Our goal is to provide recommendations on the role 211 has played during emergencies and can play in future emergencies so we become an even more valuable hub of community information than we already are." ■