



FONDATION
DUFRESNE &
GAUTHIER



THE PROXIMITY PHILANTHROPY
APPROACH OF THE FOUNDATION
DUFRESNE AND GAUTHIER



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INTRODUCTION

On the eve of its twentieth anniversary, the Dufresne and Gauthier Foundation has given itself the mandate to formalize its approach to community philanthropy, which it has refined over the years. This document aims to present the key elements of this approach using accessible language and illustrating the practices that have been put in place. To identify the content, we conducted eight interviews, including two with the Foundation's president and executive director and six with people related to the organizations we support. We also relied on certain documents produced by the FDG to extract the essential points.

First, a general presentation of the Foundation will be made. Then, the notion of proximity will be explained. Then the approach will be detailed, with five basic principles, three means of action to establish proximity, and a posture of agent of change and positive influence. The conclusion will highlight how this approach to proximity philanthropy generates impact, both for the Foundation and its partners. Finally, the last part will be devoted to how this approach of proximity is deployed in an overseas intervention area, namely Mongolia.

PRESENTATION OF THE FOUNDATION

CREATION OF THE FOUNDATION

The Dufresne and Gauthier Foundation, a private family foundation, was created at the end of 2001 following the adoption of two daughters from Mongolia by H el ene Dufresne and Daniel Gauthier and their departure from the world-famous cultural organization, Cirque du Soleil.

H el ene Dufresne and Daniel Gauthier have been with the circus since the beginning and have developed a better understanding of the world and of global inequalities. They have a small fortune and are anxious to come to the rescue to help children in Quebec and Mongolia who are born in difficult circumstances, they agree to set up a foundation whose mission is to promote the full development of children.

Sometimes, in order to help children, we must support their parents, their community. Thus, we must contribute to the improvement of society to support children in their optimal growth and development. Choosing the cause of children is choosing to help them to realize their full potential to fruition, it is investing in the tomorrow's society.

Awareness of different realities requires openness and attentive listening. Over time, this philosophy has come to characterize the Foundation. As well as the conviction of our interdependence as humanity and the need to find a balance with the Earth that welcomes us.

The Foundation
is **20 years old**
in 2021.

THE FDG VISION

FDG's vision is to ensure the sustainability of its proximity approach by promoting the progressive development and consolidation of a mutual aid network in the communities where it intervenes, in order to better support children and their families at all stages of their lives.

THE FDG'S MISSION

The Foundation's mission is to help children from the most vulnerable families and youth at risk by supporting projects that bring together families and organizations in a neighbourhood or community and that contribute to the well-being of children and the respect of their fundamental rights.

THE VALUES OF THE FDG

The choice of projects is guided by the values of its founders:

- **Social Transformation:** Supporting projects that emanate from the groups and communities we serve with the belief that every citizen has the ability to influence their reality and ours.
- **Social Inclusion:** Supporting children and their families regardless of social class, language, ethnicity or background.
- **Partnership:** Develop relationships based on respect, trust and transparency.
- **Eco-citizenship:** Exercising our relationship with others, institutions and the environment as full citizens whose rights also come with responsibilities.

We had initiated discussions and exchanges with community and philanthropic partners around three themes that will impact the Foundation's future actions:

- Climate issues and the environment as drivers of social development.
- Climate and environmental issues as drivers of social development.
- Immigration a valuable fiber to the (mis)weaving of our communities (in fact reducing discrimination, increasing our diversity and being more inclusive).

THE TARGETED TERRITORIES

In order to create a dynamic of proximity between organizations, the Foundation has targeted a certain number of neighborhoods in Montreal and Quebec City as well as certain regions to concentrate its donations.

Québec City: Beauport, Duberger-Les Saules, Lac-Saint-Charles, Limoilou, Lévis, Saint-Jean-Baptiste, Saint-Roch, Saint-Sauveur, Sainte-Foy, Vanier.

Charlevoix-Côte-de-Beaupré and MRC de Portneuf.

Montreal : Mercier West, Montreal North, Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, Plateau-Mont-Royal, Pointe-aux-Trembles, Rivière-des-Prairies, Rosemont, Saint-Laurent, Saint-Michel, Ville-Marie.

North Shore: Saint-Eustache, Pointe-Calumet, Saint-Jérôme.

SOME FIGURES*

The Foundation is more than
\$19,593,638
given since 2002 in Quebec and Mongolia



\$17,679,371 in Quebec
for 180 organizations

\$1,914,267 in Mongolia
for 26 organizations

24 organizations have been
supported by the FDG for
over 14 years in Quebec

8 organizations have been
supported by FDG for **over
10 years in Mongolia**

25%

organizations in Quebec
have received or have been
receiving from a **multi-year
agreement**

2%

organizations in Mongolia
have benefited from a
multi-year agreement

In 2020, creation of a **Pandemic Emergency Fund**

\$101,050 11 organizations in Montreal,
1 north of Montreal, 2 in Quebec City

\$12,390 8 organizations in Mongolia

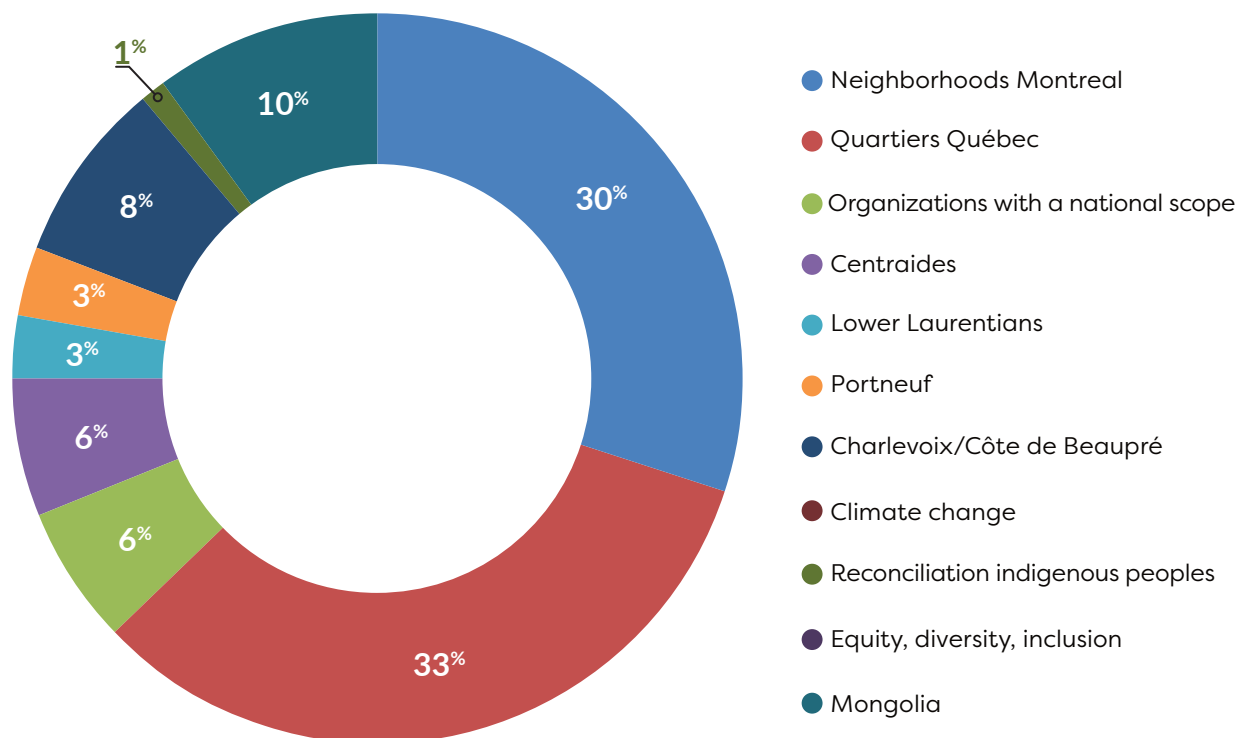


*as of November 30, 2021

% represents the portion of total donations that is tagged to...

Please read the actual % for the fields of interest:

- Climate change, environment, eco-citizenship: 0.18%
- Reconciliation with our history and First Nations history: 0.39%
- Equity, Diversity, Inclusion: 0%



THE NOTION OF PROXIMITY

Before presenting the Foundation's approach, it is useful to define what is meant by proximity. Proximity refers to a situation where one is at a short distance from someone, something or a place. **Proximity means being in contact with local realities, close to daily concerns.**

Proximity implies going to meet people to better understand their realities and needs. By taking an interest in the other, a sense of proximity is created because it sends the message that what this other person says or does is important and deserves attention. Proximity breaks down isolation and requires open, transparent and two-way communication that facilitates the sharing of information and the establishment of a relationship that is intended to be egalitarian. Proximity also promotes the development of a community by forging links between the actors of a territory through a diversity of activities and services offered.

Thus, three types of proximity can be identified, each with a specific angle:



Physical proximity. It is part of a geographical area, within a neighborhood or a community. It allows access to others and makes it easier to meet them. It is achieved by bringing together several people from a given territory to collaborate on a problem.



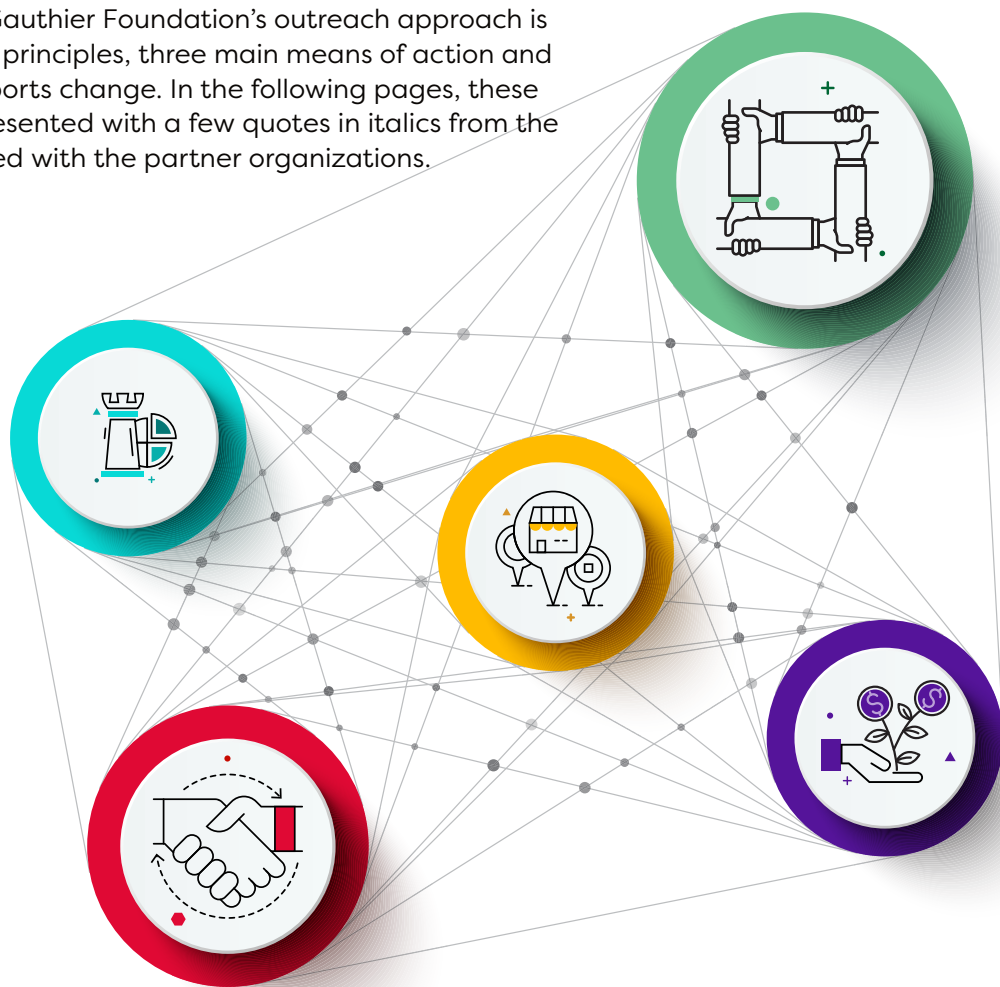
Relational proximity. It aims at establishing bonds of trust between people. It translates into an open relationship involving an emotional bond and complicity, the free sharing of ideas and perceptions on various situations and the recognition of the other's contribution.



Intellectual proximity. It is linked to a similar way of conceiving work, to ways of thinking and doing that are similar. Here, there is a proximity of convictions, values, philosophies and visions that encourages rapprochement and partnership.

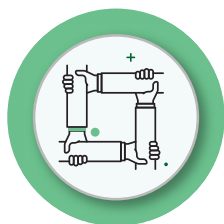
FDG'S APPROACH TO COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY

The Dufresne and Gauthier Foundation's outreach approach is based on five basic principles, three main means of action and a posture that supports change. In the following pages, these elements will be presented with a few quotes in italics from the interviews conducted with the partner organizations.



5 BASIC PRINCIPLES

1 BUILD AN IN-DEPTH AND TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ORGANIZATIONS WE SUPPORT



The Dufresne and Gauthier Foundation works with organizations that focus on youth and families. In order to truly understand what is happening in the communities in which it works, the Foundation relies on building a trusting and in-depth relationship. This trust is created as both parties get to know each other and build relationships. Quality human relationships are developed that generate a dialogue about the challenges encountered and the learning that takes place.

This relationship with the donees is based on:

- Mutual trust based on transparency and openness.
- An emphasis on dialogue and respect.
- An understanding of the constraints of the organizations supported.
- Recognition of the expertise developed.
- Accessibility to the Foundation's staff (management, administrators, employees).
- Coherence between the intervention in the community and the Foundation's mission.

*Accountability
for donors funders
that we don't know that you
don't know is anxiety-provoking.
With FDG, I just have to do the
assessment and evaluation of it. I'm
not afraid to say something negative
that happened in my project because
I feel they won't judge me. It takes
a lot of stress away!*

To establish a close and trusting relationship with an organization, you must first take the time to fully understand the context in which it evolves. This means understanding the reality of the other party and checking with them to see if they are on the right track. In this way, the Foundation can better identify the needs and see how to modulate its support. At the same time, it must be able to introduce itself to this organization to explain its vision and what it is trying to accomplish. By sharing points of view about a situation or a problem, a better understanding is established because we can adjust our perceptions. Another element is essential in the relationship: respect for rhythm. Indeed, each organization has its own rhythm. Sometimes, it is necessary to accept that an organization is not able to move in the desired direction or that it will move at its own pace and according to the resources it has available.

For the Foundation, several elements facilitate the development of a trusting and in-depth relationship. Here are four of them.

1. At the beginning of the relationship, the organization is able to name its needs, mention what it would like to do, and estimate the amount of money that would be needed to achieve its goal. There is clarity on the part of the organization towards the Foundation and this serves as a basis for exchange. This is an opportunity for the Foundation to state its framework for intervention and its limits, and then to propose initial funding to begin the relationship.
2. As the project progresses, both parties have fluid communication allowing for honest naming of things and asking questions as directly as possible. When the organization experiences difficulties, it is proactive in pointing out the obstacles encountered. When the Foundation does not understand certain choices or actions, it asks for clarification. The relationship is a dance of two that evolves over time.
3. Both parties are interested in the functioning and development of the other and do not hesitate to share good practices.
4. In a crisis situation, both parties are able to explain this transparently and propose adjustments. The Foundation does not cease its support and the organization commits itself to elaborate a crisis exit plan.

FDG's response during the pandemic was proactive and supportive. In fact, I would say that their response helped us cope with the situation. They allowed us to reallocate funds, as long as the mission and goals were aligned. To me, that shows a great deal of confidence in the work we are doing. I felt a lot of understanding on their part.

2 UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE COMMUNITIES AND TAKING A LONG-TERM VIEW



FDG was the first financial partner to come to us. Never before had a partner come to the field and understand our reality.

The Foundation favors support over several years. This allows it to adapt to the rhythm of the organization and the community. With such a history, the foundation broadens its understanding of the organizations and the issues in the community. This is greatly appreciated by the organizations, as it promotes the sustainability of their actions.

The proximity established with the organizations offers a better reading of the reality on the ground. In fact, by being aware of the main issues, the progress of projects, the difficulties encountered along the way or the tensions with other organizations or funders, it allows us to know exactly what is happening in the communities. By better understanding the context of intervention and having a more accurate picture, the Foundation is able to adapt its commitment to a territory. It is also easier for the Foundation to discover other organizations involved in the field, to initiate certain partnerships or to join existing collaborations in order to provide more support to organizations.

FDG understands my organization and its issues and I feel like their BOD does too. It's not superficial, they remember our projects, the problems we've experienced or the things we've brought up. All of this makes them feel like long-term partners.

The Foundation's work also aims to achieve systemic change by strengthening support for vulnerable families. To achieve systemic change, three elements are fundamental:

- From an individual point of view, one must have power over one's own life to be able to influence a reality and play a civic role. The power to act starts small and grows when you develop an awareness of this power and let people enter your circle.
- There are several organizations that have the necessary resources and are able to prioritize the actions to be deployed to achieve the desired effects.
- We must identify and bring together partners who want to contribute to the implementation of responses to specific problems experienced by the community. In this regard, the establishment of meeting places between partners facilitates the creation of synergy within a territory.

3 IDENTIFY FUNDED ORGANIZATIONS AS PARTNERS



A philanthropic practice of proximity is at the service of the donees. It is a different way of looking at the philanthropic hierarchy. It is a horizontal model where donors and donees exchange resources, expertise and know-how. Confident in the capacity for innovation of its donors, the Foundation supports them in their efforts to move forward together towards a better society where the well-being of children takes precedence.

We are growing at the same time as the Foundation. We help each other a lot. I bring you something and you bring me something. We don't look down on each other, we have equal exchanges. Our partnership has brought a lot of confidence in the Foundation and its employees.

In this context, funded organizations are referred to as “partners” and the relationship is described as genuinely mutual. Organizations provide the Foundation with direct knowledge and expertise, as well as the means to achieve its goals. In return, FDG not only provides funding but also contributes to capacity building, joint problem solving and networking.

I'm mostly looking for partners that I can look forward to for three years to build things. There have been investments made by FDG to support our organization in the form of venture capital. A partner is able to go in that direction, to be bold. A partner is able to hear our needs and be there at key moments.

The Foundation is aware, however, that it remains a funder and that a power relationship exists, whether we like it or not. To mitigate this, the Foundation emphasizes the interdependence of the Foundation and its partners. The FDG needs the organizations to care for vulnerable people and to build relationships with families or neighbourhoods. On the other hand, the Foundation solicits the opinion of the organizations to identify training themes, rethink certain mechanisms such as accountability or evaluation, shed light on questions that have been expressed, and develop collective reflections in the form of articles published on its website... The regular presence of the Foundation's staff in the field also contributes to the creation of a partnership relationship, as does the fact that the Foundation clearly states its objectives and expectations of the organizations it supports.

With a funder, the line of articles published on its website... can be a thin line between thin line between interference and proximity. This is not the case for the FDG. The Foundation is coming really makes us feel important and is there to support us in our ways. To me, that makes a big difference.

4 FOCUS ON TERRITORIAL CONCENTRATION TO STRENGTHEN THE SOCIAL NET



By geographically delimiting the ecosystem in which it operates, the Foundation ensures that it is not spreading itself too thin. Since its resources are limited, four Quebec regions are targeted (Montreal, Quebec City, Charlevoix, Portneuf) and certain areas of intervention where there are generally fewer donors or funding are favoured. The Foundation's action consists in federating several complementary organizations in a sector to create a synergy between them in order to provide adequate support to children and parents. Since each territory has its own specificities, the Foundation's intention is to combine the strengths present. This favors the creation of links with other organizations and families present in the sector and generates a stronger territorial anchorage. The projects developed and the mesh of the social net are then strengthened.

In fact, the Foundation relies on the theoretical model that a child who is vulnerable at an early age is likely to be vulnerable well into life. If we want to accompany this child at all stages of his or her development, we must intervene from early childhood, in primary and secondary school, and beyond the school setting, such as in youth centres. The Foundation's model tends towards this because the creation of a network within a community is generally beneficial for the children and their families, by offering more security and a better quality of life.

The approach territory, where there is more than one There is more than one funded organization in a territory, so that the Foundation understands the needs and differences in needs from one neighbourhood to another and can make a better reading of the environment.

5 COLLABORATE WITH OTHER FOUNDATIONS AND FUNDERS



The Foundation believes that we can learn from each other and contribute to the to the development of the communities served through philanthropic activities. To this end, collaboration with other foundations and funders is envisioned. This can be done in several ways:

- Joining forces to financially support a project when you have less financial capacity (leverage effect).
- Refer to other foundations for financial support when a project is no longer in line with what we can support or because we no longer have the capacity to do so.
- While respecting confidentiality, share information in order to better support an organization.
- To exchange on the socio-economic contexts, on the territories, on the specific challenges of certain sectors of activity, on the orientations of the large philanthropic foundations in order to better target the strategies to develop.
- Faced with certain priority issues, provide a collective response through a presence in the public space (participation in the submission of briefs, signing of collective letters from foundations, etc.).

This collaboration also avoids duplication by focusing on different or complementary things. By linking funding, actions and support, a greater impact is achieved. Indeed, we are always stronger when we can integrate ourselves into a network and when sharing information and thoughts leads us to have a more global vision of a situation or a community. Finally, sharing intervention philosophies and expertise is an opportunity to draw inspiration from others and to influence the philanthropic sector towards practices that are more in line with the needs and values of the organizations we support.

TWO EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATION



The “Collectif des fondations québécoises contre les inégalités” is a working and vigilant network that focuses on the role of the state and philanthropy in the fight against inequality. It brings together some fifteen public and private foundations of different sizes, capacities and expressions.

After several months of work, some fifteen foundations have signed a declaration of commitment that includes the principles of coherence and ground rules identified by the Collective as a result of its tax reflection process. This declaration serves as a guide for our philanthropic practices in order to be consistent with the reduction of inequalities. The Foundation has contributed to this reflection process and its Board of Directors has approved its adherence to this declaration.



PFC is a membership association of private and public foundations, charities and corporations incorporated in Canada. Established in 1999, it supports its members and organized philanthropy by promoting public policy that supports the sector, raising awareness of the contribution of philanthropy to the well-being of Canadians, and providing opportunities for philanthropic funders to learn from one another.

3 WAYS TO ESTABLISH PROXIMITY



In its approach to community philanthropy, the Foundation uses three main means of action to build and maintain relationships with its partners. These means are presented in detail in the following pages, using the following framework: a) description, b) benefits, c) examples illustrating the means.

1

GROUP VISITS

Description

Group visits are annual meetings organized and facilitated by the Foundation within a territory. They bring together four or five FDG community partners and last approximately two hours. Each organization is represented by its executive director or coordination and a stakeholder or board member can be invited. Discussions deal with the results of projects supported by the FDG (of the organizations present), new requests, issues in the neighbourhood or the region, or any other point that people want to discuss. Organizations are consulted beforehand to establish the agenda. This meeting is therefore an opportunity to evaluate the projects but also to see how the organizations are progressing. As a result of the sharing, questions emerge and some discussions take place in a friendly atmosphere. At the end of the meeting, time is set aside to review the proceedings and to identify key points or common elements.

The meetings of work that we do locally is always interesting because there is a variety of partners invited and it allows us to discover other approaches, other realities

To ensure that the group visit runs smoothly, four **rules of play** are specified at the beginning of the meeting and people are asked to respect them:

1. The elements and thoughts shared are confidential.
2. Judgment of people and ideas is not tolerated. Exchanges are carried out with respect for each other's practices.
3. The meeting takes place in all simplicity and spontaneous expression is valued.
4. The financial aspect of the projects is not discussed in group.

Benefits

Group visits generate several beneficial impacts:

- They allow organizations and individuals, including managers, to break the isolation. It is sometimes an opportunity to evacuate an overflow of emotions or accumulated pressure.
- They provide a deeper understanding of the organizational realities and activities of each agency, thus reinforcing the proximity of services between organizations within the same territory.
- They bring a better knowledge at different levels: understanding of the issues, of a problem or of the pitfalls to avoid. They stimulate questioning and reflection, which are necessary for improvement. Moreover, when comments are shared by peers, they are easier to receive.
- They are a unique opportunity to highlight and recognize the practices developed by organizations and their expertise. They lead people to be inspired, to discover things outside their usual way of doing things. This generates emulation from one organization to another, encouraging the pursuit of what organizations are doing and what works well.
- They promote networking: visits between community organizations take place, people call each other for support, new collaborations are established.
- For the Foundation, the exchanges invite us to make certain readjustments, to develop a flexibility that solicits the creativity of the personnel.

Example of a review of group visits held in the fall of 2019

Number of visits and organizations:

7 group visits and 33 organizations met with.

Topics covered:

- The challenges and benefits of implementing service offerings.
- Creating a home-like environment for families.
- The enormous pressure on organizations to conduct research and compile data requested by various levels of government and institutions.
- Common values in intervention: taking the person where they are, working with people and not for people, non-judgmental, empowerment.
- Juvenile prostitution, assaults, cybercrime: the fact that young girls do not always recognize acts of aggression, such as receiving sexual images repeatedly.
- The request to the FDG to influence governments to increase funding for overburdened and under-resourced organizations.



Common issues identified:

- Human resources: attraction and retention of personnel.
- Concern about the level of anxiety among agency workers and their clients.

Information for strategic orientations of FDG:

- There is a gap in services for 6-12 year olds in the Charlevoix region.
- There is a new reality regarding youth work. Indeed, young people are working earlier and earlier: 12, 13, 14, 15 years old. There is no law that forbids this and parents just need to sign a release. So there is an opportunity to make a portrait of young people to better understand this problem.



2

RRV DAYS

Description

The RRV Days (Resourcing, Networking, Valorization) are held every year and all organizations supported by the Foundation are invited to participate. The **objectives** of these days are to:

1. To encourage people to recharge their batteries by sharing topical content and tools that are not widely available.
2. Provide moments to stimulate networking among those in attendance and strengthen ties between organizations.
3. Valorize people's knowledge by capturing the exchanges and ideas produced, then formalizing it in the form of popularized articles.

The RRVs are a great way to get a sense of belonging. I've met members of the Foundation's Board of directors, the president is there almost all the time and there is the fact that we share with each other. When you put this world together once a year, it creates a family because everyone has a bond that unites them!

The format of the RRV Days follows a two-year cycle, alternating between two major regional meetings held in Montreal and Quebec City in Year 1, and a collective day for all organizations in Year 2 (in a location between Montreal and Quebec City). Between 50 and 75 people participate in the RRV Days and a theme is proposed each year based on feedback gathered in the field.

Benefits

The RRV Days generate several benefits:

- They allow a salutary pause that gives organizations a perspective on their activities and their daily lives.
- They highlight the best practices of the organizations (community of practice). In this way, they help promote innovation within the organizations they support.
- They offer answers to help organizations eliminate certain obstacles. In this sense, they enhance the toolbox of managers and practitioners.
- They facilitate networking among grantees, which sometimes leads to new relationships or partnerships.



Examples of topics discussed during the RRV days and in the articles produced

YEAR	THEME	TITLE OF THE ARTICLES	SOME CONTENT ELEMENTS
2019	Impact and qualitative research	<i>Impact and qualitative research methods (2 complementary articles)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 big ideas about evaluation and research• The best questions for improving consensus-building processes• 8 golden rules and steps for conducting a semi-structured interview• Top 10 challenges in measuring impact• 7 main benefits of impact measurement



YEAR	THEME	TITLE OF THE ARTICLES	SOME CONTENT ELEMENTS
2018	The collaboration	<i>Collaboration in the community</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills and attitudes to have when collaborating • Elements that promote collaboration between two groups • 6 modes of collaboration: organization and private company, organization and foundation, organization and government/city, organization and other NPO, organization and other colleagues, organization and Board of Directors
2017	Succession management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Succession: first and foremost a question of vision!</i> - <i>Succession management in the community</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways to retain your employees and attract new ones • Inspiring practices in succession management • 6 steps to a succession plan
	Citizen mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Participation to achieve the mission</i> - <i>A relationship at the heart of the action</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing participatory governance • Practical tips for meeting engagement challenges • Some keys to successful mobilization

3

DIRECT COMMUNICATION

Description

Direct communication is the usual way for the Foundation to build relationships with the organizations it supports and is done through phone calls, e-mails, video-conferences or during informal moments in certain events organized by the Foundation or others. This method is used to ask clarifying questions, to better understand a dynamic within a territory, to follow up or evaluate projects, to consult organizations on certain subjects (e.g., RRV themes) or simply to find out how the partners are doing.

Benefits

Direct communication has the following benefits:

- Develop in-depth, multi-year relationships with partners.
- Provide quick responses in difficult or crisis situations.
- Create a two-way channel that facilitates exchanges and consultations. This channel allows for easy feedback.

If the Foundation doesn't fully understand your project, they are not afraid to not afraid to talk to you and ask and ask you questions. They will help you with your projects. You have no advantage in hiding anything. There is a frankness and an authenticity that is good for you.

Examples of communications made

- After the group visits conducted in the fall of 2019, the Foundation's Executive Director made 36 follow-up calls, averaging 45 minutes in length.
- To determine a possible theme for RRV Day 2020 (which could not be held because of the pandemic), management asked 88 people for their opinions on the issue.
- To produce this document on outreach, the Foundation contacted six organizations that responded promptly to the call to share their vision of their relationship with FDG.
- Two committees have been set up, one for Montreal and one for Quebec City, to redesign the donation request forms and accountability documents.
- As part of its tenth anniversary, the Dufresne and Gauthier Foundation wanted to highlight the good deeds of parents involved in their children's education by organizing the contest « **Si ta famille m'était contée** ». The Foundation created an organizing committee made up of six community organizations. The content of the contest, its development, and the production of a family agenda were determined by the members of the committee in order to take into account the reality of the communities and the families.



POSTURE AS AN AGENT OF CHANGE AND POSITIVE INFLUENCE

The Dufresne and Gauthier Foundation works with its partners in a positive and optimistic spirit. Since the problems related to youth and families are complex, relying on control strategies is ineffective. In complex situations, we prefer to influence and to do so, the Foundation adopts the posture of an agent of change.



To fulfill this role, the Foundation:

- **Places the sharing of ideas, practices and results at the heart of its approach.** By focusing on co-development and co-creation, the Foundation values the collective intelligence of its partners.
- **Supports organizations financially over several years,** which favors their stability, their development and the sustainability of their actions.
- **Provides tools,** methods or approaches that help organizations improve certain ways of thinking or doing.
- **Value the expertise held by community** because it is strong but not recognized enough.
- **Stimulates networking to strengthen links** within a territory or within an intervention environment. As such, the Foundation believes that the influence of organizations is greater than what they perceive. By knowing each other better and keeping in mind the strengths and specificities of each organization, the capacity to influence the various authorities and political powers is increased and this has beneficial impacts on the path of vulnerable youth and families.
- **Identifies relevant organizations in a territory** to avoid duplicating what is already being done and to fill service gaps.
- **Refers to other funders** when it cannot support an organization. In addition, the Foundation shares with organizations interesting activities that are being carried out elsewhere and that it does not offer (e.g.: J.A. Bombardier Foundation, Bénévoles d'Expertise).

- **Occasionally makes recommendations** when deciding to make a donation to an organization (after discussion with the organization's management). These recommendations are made with a view to enhancing the impact of the project in question and better meeting the needs identified by the partner.
- **Instills a dynamic of experimentation** where risk-taking is supported.
- **Promotes certain values and puts them into practice:** an egalitarian relationship between organizations and individuals, attentive and empathetic listening that allows for a good understanding of the context and the needs mentioned, humility and the ability to recognize one's mistakes, flexibility in the deployment of the projects supported, patience in order to respect the rhythm of the organizations and the territories.

The Foundation can support me in the challenges I absolutely must face: governance, human resources management, project and impact evaluation. These are things that are really important these days to achieve project efficiency, to measure what we are doing and then to correct the gaps. Moreover, people from the outside bring us a new perspective that is inspiring for an organization. It helps us to project ourselves into the future and to develop visions.

THE PROXIMITY APPROACH DEPLOYED IN MONGOLIA

HISTORY OF THE FOUNDATION'S WORK IN MONGOLIA

Since its creation in 2001, FDG has made investments in Mongolia with the help of Save the Children (STC), the local branch of the international NGO based in England, then headed by a Quebecer, Marc Laporte, who would eventually become FDG's director (2005-2010).

In 2010, following a restructuring of Save the Children in Mongolia, the way in which FDG's programs are administered and monitored in that country is being reviewed. Rather than renewing the original organizational model, the Foundation chose to hire an STC worker to help develop an FDG office in Mongolia. Although more costly at first glance, this choice seemed appropriate to continue with the outreach approach in hopes of multiplying projects and investments in the country.

The end of communist rule in Mongolia in 1992 left a large gap in services that a handful of agencies in the capital, Ulaanbaatar, have been trying to fill. An exodus from the countryside to the cities resulted in substantial urban sprawl. Unoccupied land lacking services (water, electricity, sanitation, school network, etc.) was quickly invaded by yurts (called ger in Mongolia) and families. The lack of government support for the few existing organizations, the absence of links between the organizations supported by the Foundation and the crying needs of the ger districts are all factors that prompted the FDG to reflect on its approach and to try to give some structure to the small group of organizations it supports.

CREATION OF A NETWORK

Dulmaa Luvsansharav, FDG's program coordinator in Mongolia, also experiences isolation. Although calls and then virtual meetings with FDG's general management are instituted on a regular basis, it is difficult for her to work alone with minimal professional contacts. Taking a cue from the formula applied in Quebec, in 2014 she organized the first RRV Meeting in Mongolia, which brought together a dozen organizations supported by the FDG. To make the exercise more dynamic, the participants (all women) agree to visit each other in turn, so as to better understand the realities of each organization. During these meetings, they share best practices, agree on training activities to improve their skills and share information on the services they receive from the government. The fragmented vision of the government and its often purely electoral objectives is sometimes dismaying. This lack of vision is prompting organizations to conduct a broad survey of the reality of youth in ger districts, the results of which will be shared with government officials.

MONGOLIA (from the FDG 2019 Annual Report)

An active network and a community of practice

As in Quebec, the organizations in Mongolia meet on a regular basis. They define a plan at the beginning of the year, determine the dates of their meetings, organize training sessions and discuss public policies in their country. Here are the themes addressed this year:

- Fostering children's participation and how to better assess it.
- Work methodology for multidisciplinary teams.
- The development of child protection policies.
- Art therapy for workers who work with children who are victims of violence or in particularly difficult conditions (5-day training with 15 participants).
- Drafted and submitted a brief on day care centers for vulnerable children to the Authority for Family, Child and Youth Development (AFCYD). 12 organizations represented by 14 people.
- Tour of the organizations. Each meeting becomes an opportunity to visit one or another of the organizations in order to better understand the realities of each.

COLLABORATION FOR A SURVEY

In 2017, FDG-supported organizations decide to document the condition of adolescents in nine districts of the capital city, Ulaanbaatar. Some data are used to define the problem:

- 46% of the country's population lives in the capital, almost one and a half million people
- of which 32% are under the age of 18
- the number of teenage pregnancies (ages 10-18) is high and consistent: 2.8% in 2013 and 2014

We wish to document the living conditions of adolescents (10 to 17 years old), their level of education, their health and the social protection measures they benefit from. Information will be collected from three sources: a questionnaire, individual interviews and an existing literature review. Led by a University of Mongolia professor of social work, supported by two representatives of FDG-supported organizations in Mongolia, the survey involves 24 other individuals connected to youth-serving organizations and members of civil society. The study is based on the participation of 540 youth.

The results, when compiled, revealed that youth are not supported in any way by the state. If families receive help, it does not go directly to the young people, who are sometimes at odds with their environment. Broken families, economic precariousness, addiction problems, lack of sexual education are all aggravating factors on the living conditions of young people. The results were presented by the contributing organizations to the Ministry of Family in Mongolia.

BEST PRACTICES OF MONGOLIAN ORGANIZATIONS

After having made their first appearance before the Department of Labour and Social Welfare to highlight the difficult living conditions of young people, the organizations chose to document their practices in order to make their resources in the field better known. A brochure gives a broad overview of their existence and their work with youth and families living in precarious situations. The brochure, written in the Mongolian language, was translated into English and presented to the contributing organizations, the Mongolian government and potential donors.

This collaborative work, which promotes best practices, aims to obtain recognition in the field and by elected officials. It presents existing resources and their impact in order to convince funders to better support organizations that are well established in their communities and with the populations they serve. In addition, the exercise facilitates the understanding and strengthening of ties between the members of the network of organizations supported by the FDG. The Foundation's presence in Mongolia and the type of relationships it maintains with organizations are inspired by the same philosophy that characterizes it in Quebec.



CONCLUSION: COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPY WITH IMPACT

Interviews with the Foundation's partners clearly demonstrated that its approach is unique. This uniqueness can be summarized in three key points:

1. The Foundation invests a great deal of time in building in-depth relationships with its community and funding partners. This takes the form of calls, site visits, meetings and networking of individuals and organizations.
2. The Foundation is very flexible in terms of what organizations are experiencing. It adapts to the various needs expressed, the realities of the territories and the challenges encountered. It accompanies organizations over time, as they evolve.
3. The Foundation values the expertise of its partners. It aims to be a lever for the practices put forward by organizations. It contributes to the recognition of organizations as key players in an intervention environment or in Quebec society.

In terms of the Foundation's impact, it can be viewed from three distinct angles: 1) impact on communities, 2) impact on organizations, 3) the impact of organizations on the Foundation.



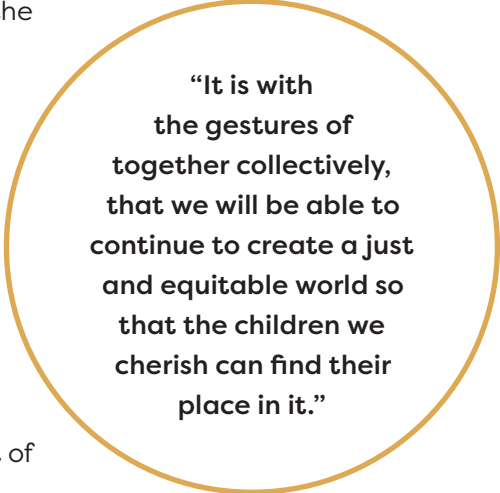
In terms of **community impact**, it was noted that the Foundation works on an issue from a global perspective, in the short, medium and long term. Three examples illustrate what makes the Foundation proud, particularly when its support creates a movement that has a positive impact. The first example involves supporting an organization in a city that is in a state of devitalization and lacks financial backers. The creation of a community garden created a meeting place where everyone gathered during the summer. It has become a focal point for the community that has encouraged citizen involvement and information sharing. The second example is of a radio project that gave young people multiple opportunities to express themselves. This gave them greater ease in speaking out but also in participating in the development of the project and taking ownership of it. The last example is the support to an organization that addresses the father-child relationship. This allowed the fathers to go on a camping trip with their children and make a video. This experience in the wilderness was significant in terms of transforming the family bond. The fathers' self-confidence and their ability to organize themselves were transformed. In addition, a festive evening in a movie theater has become a must, as the rewarding moment of the year.

When organizations are asked to name the **impact of the Foundation** on them, three things stand out. The first element revolves around credibility. Indeed, being supported by the FDG is perceived as a guarantee of rigour. Organizations report that other partners find it reassuring, which encourages collaboration. In this regard, it was mentioned that it is important when looking for funding to have visibility and recognition, and this is what the FDG offers us. Many say that this has given them the confidence to approach other funding partners, as being associated with a credible philanthropic organization provides an outreach that reinforces the perception of relevance and professionalism. It also allows us to consolidate our foundations at the local level by no longer being alone in supporting a certain vision of intervention. The second element is related to stability. Having medium- to long-term funding has a positive effect on employees and on the creation of a serene climate: It has allowed us to have stability at the staff level, which we did not have before. We were able to pay decent salaries, which is always difficult with the community. Finally, the motivating effect of the FDG's support was mentioned, as it encourages a certain amount of risk-taking in the development of new initiatives. One person says that it has made a shift that needed to be made, giving the organization extra energy to move in that direction.

Another mentions that this was a trigger to model their intervention approach and to give themselves a precise vocabulary to facilitate communication. This structuring even allowed them to obtain their first public funds because the funders saw in it a mastery of the contents and methods developed, and a good opportunity for knowledge transfer. One last person emphasizes that the partnership with the FDG has increased his confidence in developing projects that match his ambitions: “When you are a partner in a project, you want everyone to win, you want to surpass yourself and everyone to be proud of the results.”

Finally, this proximity approach has **positive impacts on the Foundation**. These impacts can be grouped into two main categories. Firstly, the relationship with the organizations provides a framework for better analysis of the field, allowing us to see what will or will not work, or what are the best solutions to develop. This grid is also useful for guiding certain choices, such as identifying good community partners, and for having a broader understanding of the ecosystem that takes into account the interdependencies and different realities encountered. Second, working with community organizations puts the Foundation in a better community organizations brings the Foundation into closer contact with current with current issues such as the relationship with the natives, climate change or systemic racism. This leads to reflections with the Board of Directors that act as awareness-raising activities and prompt the Foundation to consider certain positions or take new directions in its philanthropic work.

These shared elements of impact would not have emerged as strongly would not have emerged as strongly if proximity was not at the Foundation’s approach. Proximity guides the way we work with others and intervene in the territories. It also acts as a driving force to build a just and supportive society that meets the essential needs of youth and families while fostering the development of their potential.



**“It is with
the gestures of
together collectively,
that we will be able to
continue to create a just
and equitable world so
that the children we
cherish can find their
place in it.”**

