

LEARNING EVENT

Aligning ENGO Financial Practices with Commitments to Indigenous-led Conservation

10-11:00 am PDT | 1:00 - 2:00 EDT

December 2, 2025

Agenda

TIME (EDT)	Aligning ENGO Financial Practices with Commitments to Indigenous-led Conservation
1:00-1:08	Opening (8 min) Opening Song: Dirt Roads by Tia Wood
1:08-1:13	Background & Context Setting (5 min)
1:13 - 1:45	Findings & So What (33 min)
1:45-1:52	Review of the tool (7 minutes)
1:52 - 2:00	Wrap Up & Close (8 min)

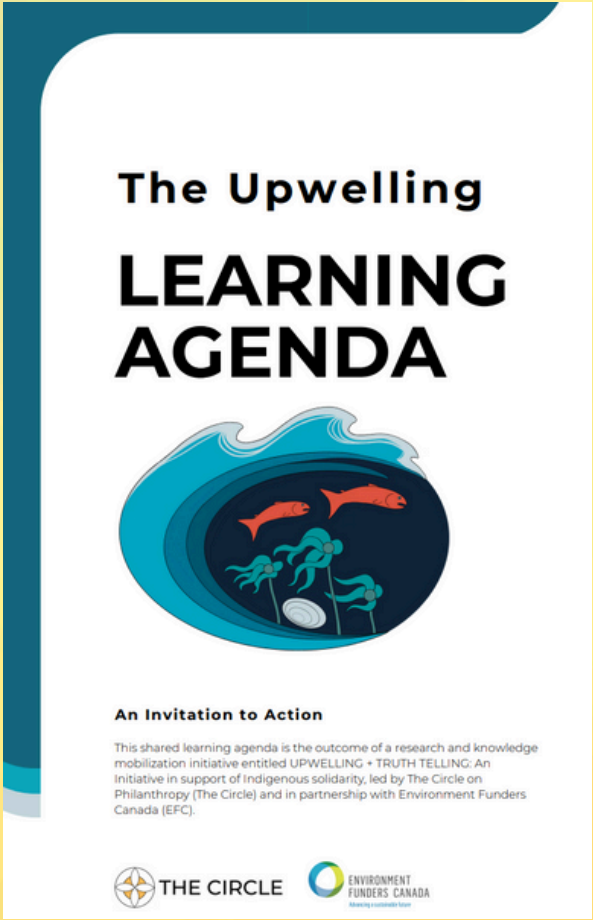
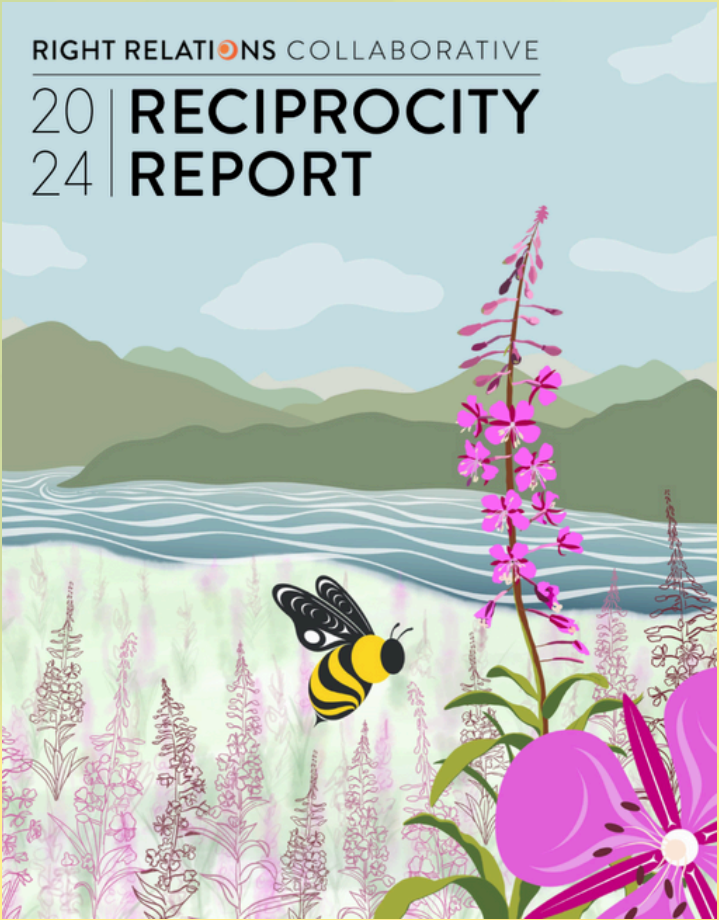
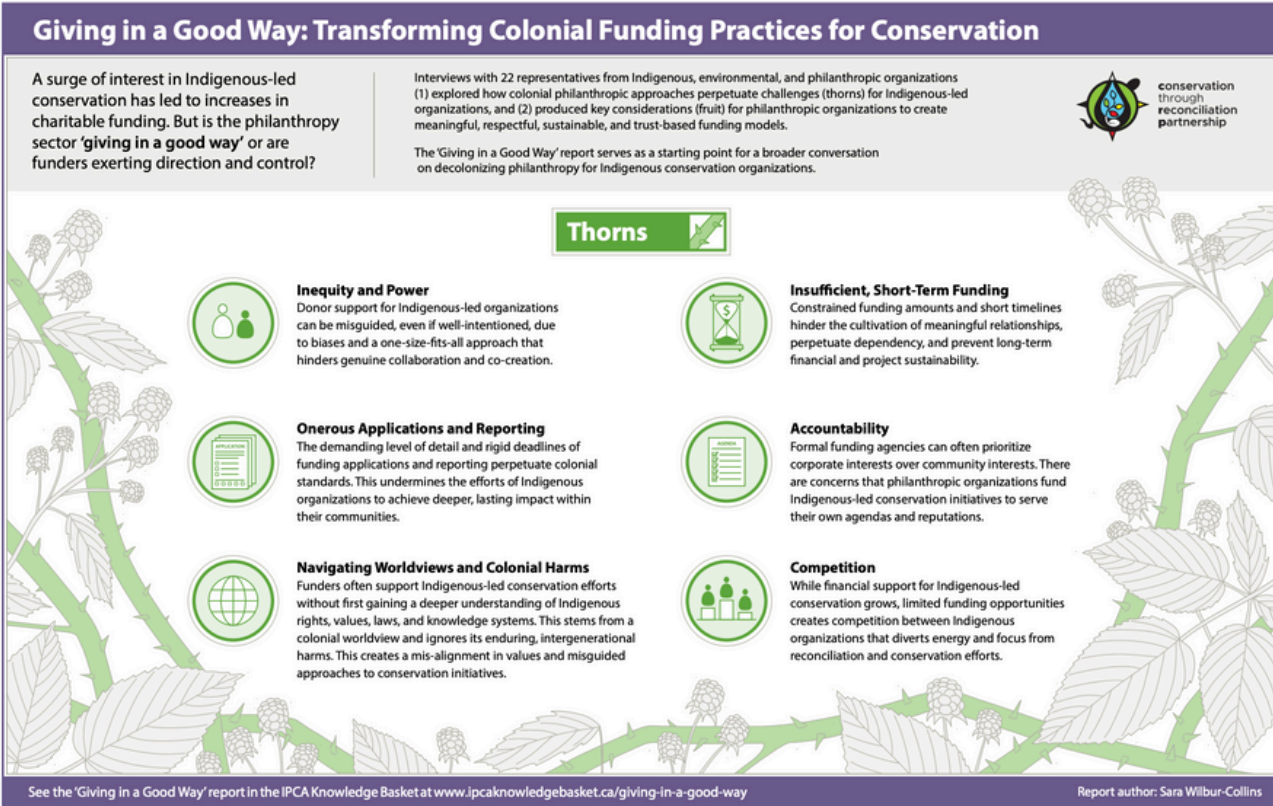
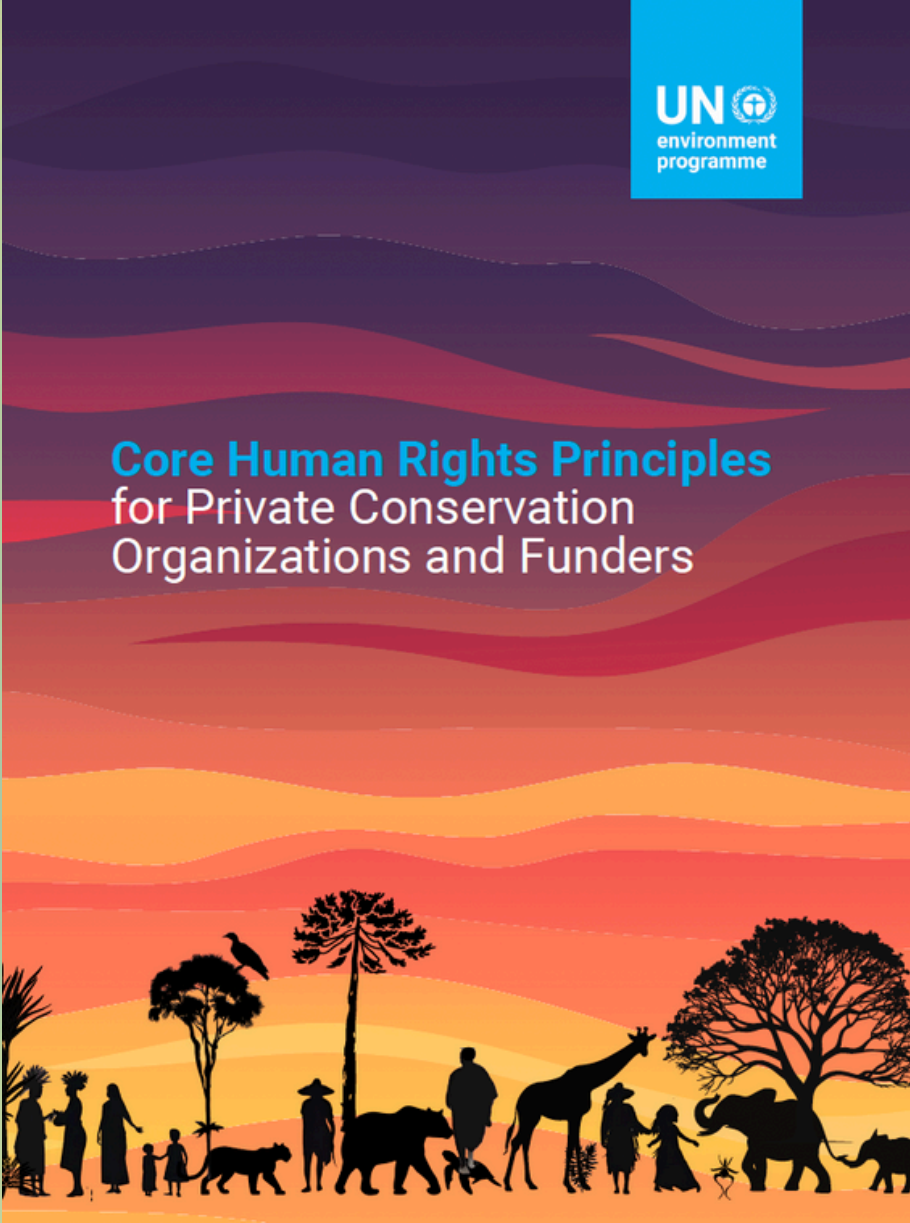
Introduction and Context

Today's objectives:

- Share our research findings on ENGO Financial Practices
- Introduce a Self-Assessment and Reflective tool for ENGOs to advance financial conversations in your organizational context
- Share comments questions or reflections on your organizational journey
- Identify what supports could be helpful as next steps



Building on Prior work



Themes from Literature Review

1. Direct Funding Practices: Redirecting funds, long-term commitments, flexible models, Indigenous-led funds (e.g., IPRF, Coast Funds, Right Relations Collaborative).

2 Transparency & Accountability: Full disclosure, independent evaluation, human rights due diligence, grievance systems, transparency of fundraising practices.

Sources in literature review

International Indian Treaty Council (IITC, 2024)
– Survey results & consolidated report of Indigenous guidance/feedback
A Challenge to Conservationists (Chapin, 2004)
Windigo Faces (Lee, 2011)
Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE, 2018)
Confronting Colonialism in Conservation (2023)
UNEP (2024) – Core Human Rights Principles
Fox (2024) – MSc Thesis
Giving in a Good Way (Wilbur-Collins, 2024) + Infographic
The Upwelling Learning Agenda (The Circle & EFC, 2024)
Justice Funders Resonance Framework

Themes from Literature Review

3. Partnership Principles: Centering Indigenous governance, UNDRIP/FPIC, long-term relationships, protecting knowledge systems, accountability in partnerships.

4. Systemic Change in Economy and Finance: Shifting decision-making power, recognition of transformative change needed in economy, refusing harmful funding and corporate/government funding, decolonizing climate/biodiversity finance, need for non-market and holistic approaches.

Sources in literature review

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+ Infographic

The Upwelling Learning Agenda (The Circle & EFC, 2024)

Justice Funders Resonance Framework

Defining ENGO Financial Practices:

Financial Practices

- Activities and policies that help your organization decide how funding is obtained and allocated
- Includes financial and administrative relationships with Indigenous peoples, and communities
- Examples of financial planning, partnerships/contracts, strategic budgeting processes, record keeping, fund management, pro bono or in-kind services, internal controls, and financial reporting

Research Methods Used

1. Literature review of guidance & reports

2. Reflexive survey with 10 ENGOs

3. Focus group with 7 ENGOs

4. Learning session with ~100 attendees

Key Findings: Indigenous partnerships increasingly important

- **ENGOS are committed to supporting Indigenous-led conservation**
 - Respectful and appropriate language used
 - Level of centrality to core mission varies
 - Decades of support, collaboration, and long-standing partnerships
- **Level of alignment with financial practices varies greatly across organizations**
 - Most ENGOS relatively early in systemizing practices
 - Promising initiatives in action but not always formalized
 - Often difficult to find/quantify the percentage of budget dedicated to Indigenous-led efforts

Key Findings: Leadership integration needs more focus

The ways ENGOs incorporate Indigenous engagement and leadership falls on a spectrum:

Arrangement	Ad-Hoc Indigenous Advisors	Indigenous Advisory Councils or Board participation	Full-time Indigenous Staff	Integrated Indigenous Unit
Description	Contracting external Indigenous advisors or consultants on an as-needed basis for specific projects or initiatives	Part of the governance structure, meet regularly or as needed to provide input on specific initiatives or strategic direction	Dedicated internal roles meant for Indigenous People, goals and objectives of the role can revolve around influencing strategic direction	Integrated unit comprised of staff that advise the board and largely influences strategic direction of the organization.
Usage	All organizations mentioned using this method	Many do this but level of formality and frequency of meetings vary	A few do this but note challenges with retention	Very few use this arrangement

Key Findings: In-kind support is core but evolving

- **In-kind/direct support is the most common way ENGOs support Indigenous partners**
- **Examples include:**
 - Proposal/Grant Writing Support
 - Pro Bono Legal Services
 - Technical Support
 - Education Delivery & Capacity Building Programs
 - Participation in and promotion of Indigenous-led initiatives
 - Land stewardship activities
- **Emerging practices on increasing capacity among Indigenous partners vs providing services**

Key Findings: Decolonizing Agreements is a challenge

ENGOs use a variety of different agreements with Indigenous partners, nations, and governments:

Informal Agreements

Handshake or verbal agreements used for:

- In-kind activities
- Honoraria
- Collaboration

Formal Agreements

Short or long term contracts used for:

- In-kind services
- Direct funding
- Transfer of funds
- Shared goals, co-learning opportunities, communications protocols

Common Challenges

- Rewriting formal agreements to shift away from colonial lens
- Burden of administrative requirements (i.e. lack of MOUs or contracts)

Contracts, Agreements, and Intellectual Property

What we heard from ENGOs- Working to Decolonize Agreements and Contracts

Co-creating agreements with Indigenous partners is commonly used to create agreements that work will for both parties, however; partners may not always have the capacity to co-create. Inclusion of OCAP Principles are a way to decolonize written language.

"In formal agreements, we have started including our values and the ways we want to work together. This might seem intrinsic but we do it because we want to work in a more relational way with our First Nations partners, so we co-create both formal and informal agreements together. That is a huge shift away from our legal team just drafting it up. We often use a template then ask our partners what to keep, change, or what should be added. It usually takes a couple sessions co-creating the agreements together. "

"One of the Indigenous partners' lawyers worked on a few nuances and strengthened some of our own language with better 'legalese' so we asked if we can adopt that in our own stuff and now we've started using that. Its also mandatory in all agreements that OCAP principles are written in anything formal or informal across the board.

Contracts, Agreements, and Intellectual Property

What we heard from ENGOs- Intellectual Property and Data Collection

Protecting Indigenous knowledge and IP is important. A few participants shared how this is approached at their organizations. Creating intentional safeguards such as requiring written consent and using firewall protections help ENGOs relate with Indigenous IP respectfully.

REQUIRING WRITTEN CONSENT FOR USING INDIGENOUS IP:

We created a few key clauses used within and outside the [the organisation]t saying that Indigenous nations, persons or community members are experts. Anything that we classify as Indigenous Knowledge whether its written, oral, or any other form, non-Indigenous folks cannot use it unless they have written consent

FIREWALL PROTECTION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE:

One thing I love about [the organisation] is that they actually firewall the data as well. They're doing lots of plant restoration and working with cultural information and with the firewall, even other people who work in the organization actually can't access that information

INCLUDING INDIGENOUS DATA SOVEREIGNTY IN POLICIES AND PROCESSES:

There is a group of us that are explicitly focused on that area. We support direction setting and implementation through our processes, policies and systems, including considerations around Indigenous data sovereignty

Key Findings: Transparency

From the literature:

- Transparency is a crucial practice for building trust and ensuring financial practices include Indigenous leadership
- Globally, 62% of Indigenous people report not being informed of the sources of funding for projects or activities being brought onto their land.

Some organizations proactively share information about funding and financial practices but we do not have enough findings that show this is a common practice.

Key Findings: Summary

- **ENGOS committed to supporting Indigenous-led conservation but practices vary**
- **Leadership integration needs more focus**
- **In-kind support is core but evolving**
- **Agreements & Intellectual Property (IP) require decolonization**
- **Transparency in funding sources, flows and overall allocations is still a major gap**

Self assessment Tool

- Made for both Indigenous and non Indigenous audiences in mind.
 - A tool about accountability and transformation. By examining financial practices honestly and collaboratively, we can shift systems to better support Indigenous-led conservation and build relationships rooted in respect, transparency, and shared purpose & understanding.

Self assessment Tool

Section 1: *Overview of Current Funding and Financial Practices*

Section 2: *Understanding the role of Indigenous-led conservation in your organization*

Section 3: *Funding Agreements and Partnerships with Indigenous Nations*

Section 4: *Barriers and challenges*

Section 5: *Increasing Support for Indigenous-led Conservation and Supporting Reflexive Policies*

Section 6: *Financial Transformation Evaluation Chart*

Financial Transformation Evaluation Chart Sneak Peak

	<u>Paths of Practice</u>	
<u>Practice</u>	<u>Transactional</u>	<u>Transformative</u>
Reporting	Reporting mechanisms are strictly determined by organization/funder.	Indigenous methodologies and chosen platforms of storytelling/ceremony are the main method of reporting.
Annual funding distribution	Minimal funds are distributed to Indigenous-led initiatives/projects and majority stays within ENGO.	Significant and intentional allocations are made to Indigenous-led initiatives.
Commitments to Indigenous-led conservation	ENGO has no internal or external commitments to Indigenous-led conservation.	ENGO has public facing commitments (with progress reports) that align with Treaty Rights, UNDRIP, TRC, OCAP and community partner protocols.
Land Back action	Minimal to no efforts are being made to ensure land is returned to Indigenous partners.	Actively supporting return or transfer of land back to Indigenous partners.
Funding agreements and contracts	ENGO imposes funding cycles with fixed-term end dates.	Trust-based funding agreement models are designed in collaboration with Indigenous partners, with predictable and sustainable funding.

Lets Hear From You!

- Please share any questions or comments you have about the research &/or tool
 - Raise your hand or feel free to use the chat function
- Share comments questions or reflections on your organizational journey
- Identify what supports could be helpful as next steps!

Stay Connected!



Invite your team to check out our websites & sign up for newsletters!

**RAD
Website**



**Eco Analytics
Website**



**Environics
Website**



We encourage you to reach out with questions, ideas and collaborative opportunities!



***Thank you, anushiik, ekosani, miigwetch, masih,
niá:wen, nitsiniiyi'taki, woliwon, wela'lin, hai hai,
ʔeeeko, marsi, ཨ་ལྷོས་ཀྱི་གསུང་མཆོད་, giauxsixa, merci.***

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