

Community Project: Millennials' Giving

Who is the community partner?

JustChange is an organization founded by a group of 12 diverse young professionals from the millennial generation who identify themselves as change makers. Their mandate is to accelerate great ideas that will produce a positive economic, social or environmental impact. They can be seen as an alternative form of giving analogous to a giving circle. This structure brings people together to pool funds (\$1000) for bi-monthly grants to support locally based, bold ideas that create social and environmental outcomes. The process has a low-barrier entry call-for-proposals that caters to innovative high risk projects with high potential social return on investment. A consensus voting system ensures an inclusive and deliberative decision-making process. The group also organizes grant-giving celebrations that accelerate initiatives by connecting grantees with diverse networks and provide a platform to share ideas and request additional support. JustChange board members engage the community by partnering with local champions, reaching out to traditional media, producing blogs and sharing throughout social media, as well as, make connections among grantees to create a community of practice around local giving.

Why are the partners working on this project?

We know from the GSGVP data that those who are most likely to volunteer are young (between ages 15-24), highly educated (university degree), and have a high household income (greater than \$100k). Furthermore, they are more likely to volunteer if they have been active in student government in high school, had parents who volunteer, or saw someone they admired volunteer. Despite these findings, members of the millennial generation are the recipient of negative stereotypes and biases. Without evidence, some are labeled as being less involved in their communities than their parents' generation. As members of the millennial generation, our partners are interested in challenging this stereotype by demonstrating they are active members in their community. They are also interested in understanding the motivations and circumstances surrounding the creation of JustChange in an effort to expand the model to other cities and provinces across Canada and to other countries. Together, we are exploring how CSGVP data and recent literature can contribute to understanding millennials' motivations and patterns of giving and volunteering.

What are the project's main activities?

We collaborated to systematically interview each member of JustChange (Ottawa chapter) so that we have a better understanding of individual motivations for joining the group, the driving forces that led to the group's formation, how the group operates, and individual and collective future goals for community engagement. The information will lead to a better appreciation of the complexities faced by organizations operating on a consensus basis. The rich source of data is being combined with other data sources for co-creation and development of knowledge products such as infographics, workshops, organization start-up manual, a survey of millennials, and a number of articles and presentations.

What are the anticipated results or outcomes from this project?

The partnership will increase our understanding of motivations and barriers to community engagement among members of the millennial generation. An anticipated outcome of the project is increased awareness and promotion of an alternative form of giving and volunteering among members of the millennial generation, and the public at large. This awareness can lead to an increase in the number of giving circles nationally, eventually contributing to an increase in hours volunteered and funds donated and to producing stronger and more resilient communities.

