



The AFP Canada Fundraising Narrative

Narrative Primer Session: ICON
April 17, 2023



Agenda

- Introduction and overview of the Narrative
- Importance of Narrative to our sector
- Breakout groups
- Report Back
- Wrap up



The Narrative's Founding Story

- Launched by AFP Canada in 2018
- Leadership by Ian MacQuillin
- 2022 Reviewed and revised Narrative through a equity and decolonizing lens with Dr. Krishan Mehta

ROGARE
THE FUNDRAISING THINK TANK



The Narrative

- Instead of asking:
 - *“What is it about charities that people don’t like and how can we get them to change their minds?”*
- The new Narrative asks:
 - *“What about fundraising do we value, and can we get other people to value those things too?”*



Components of the New Narrative

Five components

- The Professionalist charity ideology
 - A counter to the 'Voluntarist' ideology
- Rights Balancing Fundraising Ethics
- The Canadian way of doing things: a 'Canadian civic philosophy'
- Donor-centered and/or community-centered language and messaging
- Extra facts and information



“Voluntarist”, an Ideology

- Small and local is better than big and national
- Low admin/fundraising costs = **good**
(high admin/fundraising costs = **bad**)
- Homegrown / grassroots = **good**
(too professional = **bad**)
- Volunteers = **good**
(paid fundraisers = **bad**)
- It's my decision to donate



Rogare research – Recognized underlying ideology

Heart-stroke charity builds huge war chest

The Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario has a whopping \$130 million war chest of donor dollars saved up over many years.

This is by far the largest build-up of savings by a Canadian charity that raises money in the name of a disease, and the charity continues to aggressively ask for more.

Heart and Stroke donors were dismayed to learn this news.



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The Solution

...assert a new fundraising ideology (narrative!)

1. Change the narrative both within and outside our community
1. Use clear messaging derived from this “New Narrative”
1. Deploy it regularly and wherever needed, to...
2. ...**minimize negative stereotypes** while **building a collaborative dialogue** with key stakeholders



The Narrative's Professionalist ideology

- Our role is to effect the greatest change in Canada and the world
- Non-profits need to be professional, 'business'-like; utilising the best practices to effect change, rewarding staff fairly and proportionately
- Provided change *is* effected, a non-profit can be big or small, local or national, campaigning or helping, fundraising or non-fundraising
- There is no one, preferred, 'ideal' way for us to change the world, provided the world is changed



Rights Balancing Ethics

Fundraising is also professional when it is ethical – Rights Balancing Ethics

- Fundraising is ethical when it balances the duty of fundraisers to ask for support on behalf of their beneficiaries with the relevant rights of the donor such that a mutually optimal outcome is achieved and neither stakeholder is significantly disadvantaged.



Rights Balancing Fundraising Ethics

Key Messages:

- Fundraisers have a duty to ask for donations on behalf of their beneficiaries
- Through ethics and regulation, we aim to balance our duty to ask for support with our other duties to our donors, particularly to not subject them to undue pressure to donate



The Narrative “in action”

“Canadian charities cannot change the world unless they have the money to do it, so they have a right – in fact, a duty – to ask people for support, because research shows most people only give to charity if they’re asked to do so.

To avoid wasting your money on ineffective and inefficient fundraising, we must adopt professional methods to raise that money.”



The “Canadian” way of doing things

Canada’s charities work within Canada’s quintessential civic tradition of supporting underrepresented and equity-deserving groups.

Issues and challenges facing Canadian fundraising need to be resolved within Canada’s civic traditions, honouring the diversity of expressions of generosity and humanity, including those of Indigenous peoples.

Canada deserves solutions to the challenges surrounding fundraising that are rooted in and tailored to distinctly Canadian themes, not copied uncritically for other countries [hand-me-downs from British politicians or newspaper editors].



The Narrative – Key Messages

Key messages

- Fundraising enables charities to help their beneficiaries
- To help their beneficiaries, fundraisers need to be as efficient, ethical, **equitable** and effective as they can, so they can provide the most help and don't waste the money donors give them



Donor-centered or Community-centered language

- Donor-centered fundraising has worked
- Challenges to Donor-centered fundraising
- Community-centric fundraising



Breakout



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Narrative: Final Exercise

- What about fundraising do you value?



Narrative for Canadian Fundraising:

<https://afpglobal.org/narrativecanadianfundraising>