

TALKING ABOUT CHARITIES 2008: TRACKING CANADIAN'S OPINIONS ABOUT CHARITIES AND THE ISSUES AFFECTING THEM

Conducted on Behalf of: The Muttart Foundation



Ipsos Reid Public Affairs

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Calgary, AB – The fourth wave of an Ipsos Reid Public Affairs national public opinion poll conducted on behalf of The Muttart Foundation, finds that charities continue to garner high levels of trust. More than three-quarters (77%) of Canadians say they trust charities 'a lot' or 'some,' a number that has been consistent since 2000.

The 2,732 respondents who said they did not trust charities 'a lot' were asked why they have only 'some,' 'a little' or 'no trust' in charities. Three-in-ten (30%) said it was because "they weren't sure where the money was really going."

Trust in leaders of charities (77%) is identical to trust in charities themselves. This level of trust puts charity leaders behind nurses (96%) and medical doctors (94%) but ahead of government employees (71%), business leaders (70%) and federal politicians (41%), as well as a number of other professions.

Canadians clearly recognize the importance of charities and view charities in a positive light. More than nine-in-ten (93%) agree charities are important to Canadians, while 85% say charities generally improve our quality of life. Further, three-quarters (75%) agree charities understand the needs of Canadians better than government and just slightly fewer (70%) agree that charities do a better job than government in meeting the needs of Canadians.



The majority of Canadians also see value in the opinions that charities express on issues of public concern. Just under two-thirds (64%) indicate that such opinions have value because they represent a public interest perspective. Conversely, 34% indicate that such opinions do not have value because they only represent the perspective of a particular interest group.

There is near universal agreement that it is important for charities to provide information about the programs and services charities deliver (98%), how charities use donations (98%), charities' fundraising costs (97%) and the impact of charities' work on Canadians (96%). A sizeable gap, however, exists when it comes to assessing charities' performance on the provision of information. Less than three-in-ten Canadians say charities do an 'excellent' or 'good job' of providing information about charities' fundraising costs (26%) or information about how charities use donations (29%). With regard to information about the impact of charities' work on Canadians, 38% of Canadians say they do an 'excellent' or 'good job' and half (50%) give charities an 'excellent' or 'good job' rating for providing information about the programs and services charities deliver.

Ipsos Reid was commissioned by the Muttart Foundation to conduct the fourth wave of a survey on public opinion about charities and issues relating to charities. This fourth iteration follows previous research undertaken by the Muttart Foundation in 2000, 2004, and 2006. A total of 3,863 telephone interviews were conducted with Canadians over the age of 18 between April and June 2008. Potential survey respondents were screened out if they or someone in their household worked for a charity. The results were weighted by household size and provincial distribution according to 2006 Census data. With a sample of 3,863, the overall national results are considered accurate to within ± 1.6 percentage points, nineteen times out of twenty. The margin of error is larger for provincial results and other sub-groups of the data.

For a copy of the full report and accompanying tabular presentation of findings please visit: <http://www.muttart.org/surveys.htm>

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