



# Shared Platform

Accelerating and amplifying impact



**The Nawalakw Culture Project** is creating a connection with land and language and creating economic opportunities for the local community.  
*Photo: April Bencze*

It takes a lot of hard work to create positive and lasting change. The precious time and energy available to changemakers should be spent on making it happen. But many community-led initiatives struggle to manage the administrative demands of a registered charity while driving impact.

With MakeWay's shared platform, changemakers share a suite of centralized organizational supports, and coaching when needed, so more time and money can go towards building strong, vibrant, just communities and a healthier planet.



**summerlunch+** provides healthy meals to students over the summer break. In 2020 they developed the summerlunch+ at home initiative which included a weekly food box and virtual program so that students could learn valuable food literacy and cooking skills at home. *Photo: Nadia Islam*



## What is a shared platform?

A shared platform is an innovative organizational model – multiple charitable projects join a shared platform as an alternative to operating individual charities.

MakeWay introduced the shared platform model in 2000 to support people and communities leading social and environmental change. It is the first and largest of its kind in Canada.

## Get from vision to impact with charitable tools and expertise

Each project on the platform works closely with a MakeWay Project Specialist and a Financial Specialist to coordinate supports.

**Projects receive a suite of capacity-building tools and operational supports, including governance and compliance expertise, financial and risk management, human resources, payroll and contract supports, and grants administration**

Shared platform projects become part of MakeWay, an established national organization with strong relationships with funders and leaders across the non-profit and philanthropic sector. The support team fosters opportunities for collaboration between projects on the platform and encourages peer-to-peer learning exchange.



*“The speed that we were able to get up and running with all the proper systems in place has been an impressive experience, and the wealth of experience we’ve drawn upon from the MakeWay team has been incredibly helpful.”*

Ben Scott, Project Director, EntrepreNorth

## The shared platform provides:

### Governance

- board/senior management
- dedicated support team
- day-to-day communication & problem solving

### People & Culture

- payroll & benefits administration
- HR advice & problem-solving

### Financial & Risk Management

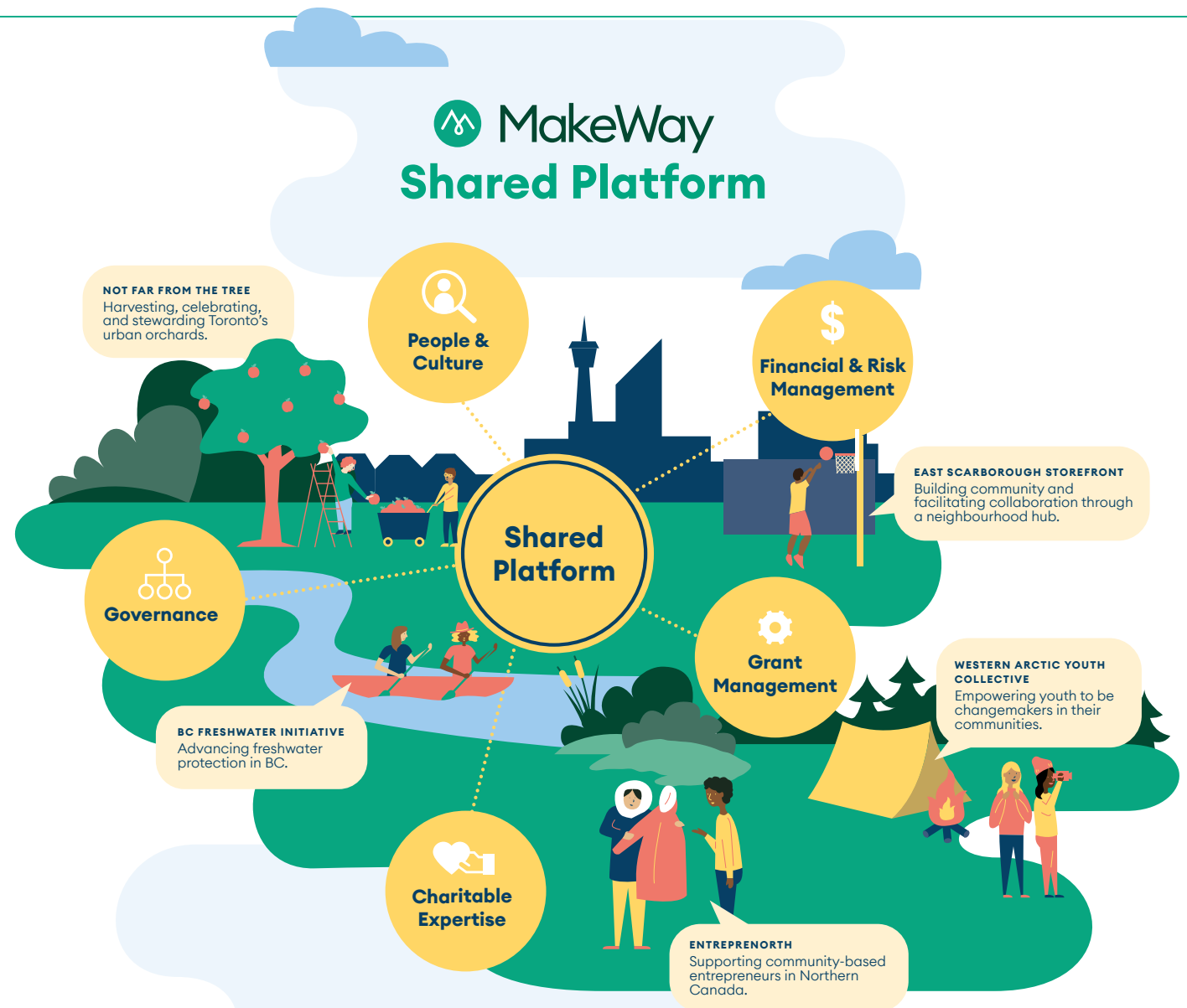
- contract administration
- legal oversight & insurance
- banking, bank reconciliation & monthly financial reports

### Grant Management

- proposal management
- grant agreements
- tracking & reporting

### Charitable Expertise

- charitable tax receipting
- annual charitable filings
- compliance guidance



## Get from Vision to Impact

The Shared Platform provides charitable expertise and operational support to a mission-aligned community of environmental and social initiatives, so that they can focus on program delivery.

## Enabling access to the charitable sector

Nearly 1500 registered charities in Canada lose their status each year, often because they can't keep up with the complex administrative requirements. And, for an initiative to get charitable status in the first place? That is a whole other mountain to climb.

Creating a charity requires significant time, resources, and expertise. A new charity can take 12 to 24 months to set up and cost up to \$20,000 in start-up, legal, and accounting fees before they are registered and ready to operate.

The shared platform centralizes administrative and charitable supports lowering start-up barriers. And the MakeWay support team eases the burden for changemakers, making it easier to benefit from charitable dollars and create change sooner. The result is a more diverse charitable sector.

MakeWay's shared platform is home to increasing numbers of Indigenous-led projects in communities who have never before received charitable dollars or supports. Philanthropic awareness in supporting these changemakers is growing in Canada, but a lack of charitable infrastructure has created significant barriers. MakeWay is uniquely positioned to bridge that gap.



**Binnars' Project** is a group of waste-pickers aided by support staff dedicated to improving their economic opportunities and reducing the stigma they face as informal recyclable collectors. *Photo: Lani Brunn*

## Is the Shared Platform right for you?

- Do we share a vision of nature and communities thriving together?
- Are you a leader or a group with a plan to meet a need in your community?
- Are you looking for a community of peers to advance your impact?
- Are you looking for a charitable home with 20 years of experience?

## If this sounds like you, let's talk!

*"I can honestly say that without the immense support and guidance of the shared platform, the Marine Reference Guide would likely still be an idea being tossed around during group discussions. The shared platform helped us to achieve tangible results and grow our project's network and capacity."*

Fiona Beaty, Project Director,  
Howe Sound/ Átl'ka7tsem Marine Reference Guide



## Operational criteria

- Projects with an annual budget of more than \$100,000 are a good fit for the shared platform model.
- Each project is responsible for its own fundraising and revenue generation. You would set aside 10-12% of your revenue to contribute to the supports provided by MakeWay.
- By joining the shared platform, projects become part of MakeWay Charitable Society. MakeWay carries fiscal, legal, and fiduciary responsibility for each project. Projects still function with their own recognizable name and self-appointed steering committee, but are required to state publicly that they are part of MakeWay.

### Interested?

We'd love to have a conversation to find out if MakeWay and your project are a good fit.

[lizzie.howells@makeway.org](mailto:lizzie.howells@makeway.org)





**Projects come to the shared platform for a variety of reasons and are all shapes and sizes.**

The East Scarborough Storefront project has 30 staff members and a budget of over \$1 million per year and considers the shared platform a cost-effective way of administering their project.



In the short amount of time that the Indigenous-led Western Arctic Youth Collective has been on the platform they have applied for and won tens of thousands of dollars in grants, allowing them to grow the project substantially from a one-person team to three full time staff and a youth Steering Committee.


photo credit: Pat Kane



The shared platform provided a unique space for the BC Freshwater Initiative to bring together funding organizations to invest in new approaches to solving watershed problems in British Columbia. In 2020, they played a key role in securing \$27 million from the BC government for watershed projects as part of the province's economic recovery strategy.







*“Like most non-profit organizations working on environmental or social issues, we want to be as focused and economical with our time and resources as we can. We’d rather not have to divert our attention to tasks like HR and payroll and legal and insurance and the other necessary and important administrative tasks. MakeWay provides that support (very professionally and thoroughly) and we can focus on what we need to do – making a better future.”*

Curt Hull, Project Director,  
Climate Change Connection



*“The shared platform provides us with the myriad institutional supports necessary to ensure our project’s success. We count on MakeWay’s dedicated and expert staff to provide us with the highest standards in financial management and oversight, and to offer us critical guidance regarding our legal obligations as employees of a registered charity. In short, MakeWay provides the legal and institutional supports that allow us to focus on our area of expertise: promoting human rights.”*

Karyn Keenan, Project Director,  
Above Ground



**MakeWay is a national charity and public foundation with a goal to enable nature and communities to thrive together. We do this by building partnerships, providing solutions, grants, and services for the charitable sector across the country.**

[makeway.org](http://makeway.org)

