



United Way  
Lower Mainland



Factum | British Columbians' feelings of loneliness are counter-balanced by sense of fulfillment from giving and volunteering in groups

**FOR RELEASE: 5AM PST TUESDAY OCTOBER 8, 2019**

**Methodology:**

Results are based on an online study conducted from September 13 to September 18, 2019, among 800 adult British Columbians.

The data has been statistically weighted according to Canadian census figures for age, gender and region in British Columbia.

The margin of error — which measures sample variability — is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

**Executive Summary**

Almost **half of British Columbians (46%) sometimes feel lonely.**

The good news? Giving back in a group – whether you donate money or time – is one way neighbours come together, fostering valuable social connections for themselves and for others.

British Columbians report that **giving to charity is 10% more meaningful** as part of a group campaign, while **volunteering is 21% more meaningful** with other people you know.

**Results by question, and correlations across questions**

➤ **Loneliness, isolation, fulfilment in giving/volunteering**

**Loneliness and isolation:** All things considered, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

- Almost half of British Columbians (46%) sometimes feel lonely.
- More than a third of British Columbians (38%) feel isolated from other people in their community.
- Two-in-five British Columbians (41%) don't have many people to talk to in their neighbourhood.

**Fulfilment from giving or volunteering:** Thinking of the last time you made a **personal or individual donation** to charity, did you experience any of the following? – First choice selected

- The first feeling elicited by a personal or individual donation to charity is “being a part of something meaningful” (29%), followed by feeling “proud” (25%), feeling “inspired” (24%) and knowing the contribution “would make a difference” (22%).

Thinking of the last time you participated in a **group fundraiser or campaign**, did you experience any of the following? – First choice selected

- The top feeling elicited by participation in a group fundraiser or campaign is “being a part of something meaningful” (39%), followed by feeling “inspired” (22%),

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knowing the contribution “would make a difference” (and feeling “proud” (18%).

*Thinking of the last time you **volunteered or carried out a kind act alone**, did you experience any of the following? – First choice selected*

- The top feeling elicited by volunteering alone is “pride” (29%), followed by “being a part of something meaningful” (27%), knowing the contribution “would make a difference” (23%) and feeling “inspired” (22%).

*Thinking of the last time you **volunteered or carried out a kind act as part of a group**, did you experience any of the following? – First choice selected*

- The top feeling elicited by volunteering in a group is “being a part of something meaningful” (48%), followed by feeling “proud” (23%), knowing the contribution “would make a difference” (16%) and feeling “inspired” (13%).

➤ **Summary of most notable differences:**

**Meaningfulness**

- **29%** for individual donation
- **39%** for group donation
- **27%** for individual volunteering
- **48%** for group volunteering

➤ **Pride in community, charitable giving and volunteering behaviour**

*Pride in local community: All things considered, do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?*

- More than four-in-five British Columbians (86%) are proud of the city or municipality in which they live.
- More than four-in-five British Columbians (84%) are proud of the neighbourhood in which they live.
- More than three-in-four British Columbians (78%) feel a strong sense of connection to where they live.

*Charitable giving and volunteering behaviour: How often do you do each of the following?*

- One-in-four British Columbians (24%) make charitable donations on a personal or individual basis “many times a year”; one third (34%) do so “a few times a year.”
- About one-in-six British Columbians (15%) volunteer (whether a formal commitment or helping someone informally in your community) on a personal or individual basis “many times a year”; more than a third (36%) do so “a few times a year.”

- More than one-in-ten British Columbians (13%) contribute to group fundraisers or campaigns (such as a peer-to-peer fundraising event a crowdsource fundraising campaign, or a workplace or school fundraising campaign) “many times a year”; just under three-in-ten (28%) do so “a few times a year.”
- More than one-in-ten British Columbians (13%) Volunteer (whether a formal commitment or helping someone informally in your community) as part of a group “many times a year”; three-in-ten (30%) do so “a few times a year.”

➤ **Correlations between volunteering, meaningfulness and community pride**

- For British Columbians who say they are proud of their neighbourhood or city, or who say they have a strong connection to where they live, there is a stronger sense of meaningfulness derived from group volunteer experiences.
- Of those who say they proud of their city, 50% report a strong sense of meaning when volunteering in group.
- Of those who say they are proud of their neighbourhood, 52% say they derive a strong sense of meaning from group volunteering
- Of those who say they have a strong connection to where they live, 54% say volunteering with others is a meaningful experience.

➤ **Behavior in local community, priorities in charitable giving**

*Behaviour in local community: We'd like to ask you some questions about your local community. Over the course of an average week, how often do you do each of the following in your local community?*

- Three-in-five British Columbians (59%) visit businesses in their local community at least two times a week.
- More than half of British Columbians (52%) talk to their neighbours at least two times a week.
- Almost half of British Columbians (46%) visit parks and/or public spaces at least two times a week.
- A third of British Columbians (32%) participate in events and activities in their local community at least two times a week.

*Priorities in charitable giving: All things considered, which of these statements best describes your own point of view?*

- Three-in-five British Columbians (62%) say they prefer giving to charities that operate in their community.

- About one-in-six British Columbians (16%) prefer giving to charities located outside of their community.

### ➤ **Regional comparisons**

- The Fraser Valley and Northern BC have the highest proportion of people in B.C. who report talking to neighbours 5 times a week or more (27%).
- Across BC, Vancouver is home to the highest proportion of people who report a strong sense of connection to their city (39%), while the Fraser Valley has the lowest (27%).
- People in Vancouver and Southern BC are the most likely British Columbians to report feeling isolated (20%), whereas residents in Other Metro areas are the least likely to (6%).
- People in Other Metro areas and the Fraser Valley are less likely to say they feel lonely (8%, 3% respectively) compared to the average British Columbian (14%).
- People in Other Metro areas and the Fraser Valley are also less likely to say they do not have neighbours to talk to (9%, 10% respectively) compared to the average British Columbian (14%).
- People in the Fraser Valley and Northern BC are more likely to volunteer in groups, many times per year (21%, 22% respectively), compared to the British Columbia average (13%).

### **Glossary**

- **Vancouver** - City of Vancouver.
- **Other Metro** - Every municipality in Metro Vancouver except the City of Vancouver itself (City of Abbotsford, Village of Anmore, Village of Belcarra, Bowen Island Municipality, City of Burnaby, City of Coquitlam, Corporation of Delta, City of Langley, Township of Langley, Village of Lions Bay, District of Maple Ridge, City of New Westminster, City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, City of Pitt Meadows, City of Port Coquitlam, City of Port Moody, City of Richmond, City of Surrey, Tsawwassen, District of West Vancouver, City of White Rock).
- **Northern BC** - Includes Northwest (Prince Rupert, Hazelton, Kitimat), Northeast (Fort Nelson, Dawson Creek) and Northern Interior (Prince George, Quesnel, Valemount).
- **Southern BC** - Includes South Central (Lillooet, Kamloops, Vernon, Kelowna) and South East (Creston, Cranbrook, Invermere)
- **Vancouver Island** - Vancouver Island.

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