

### March 3, 2021: Statement on behalf of WE Charity

On Sunday, February 28, Mr. Charlie Angus, MP for Timmins – James Bay, made serious, unfounded allegations with regard to the operations of WE Charity and demanded that the RCMP and the CRA investigate the organization and its leadership.

While WE Charity would welcome and cooperate with any potential investigation conducted by these agencies, no organization should be subject to both an investigation of the same matters by a partisan Parliamentary Committee which wishes to carry out its own substitute investigation. The Supreme Court of Canada has warned of the unfairness inherent in such a process in *Starr vs Houlden* [1990] 1 SCR 1366.

Accordingly, WE Charity and its leadership are declining the additional requests to testify from the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics and also the Procedure and House Affairs Committee. WE Charity will continue engagement with the non-partisan Ethics Commissioner regarding the Canada Student Service Grant (CSSG).

Over the past nine months, five members of WE Charity leadership have participated in highly partisan Committee proceedings, including an unprecedented four-hour appearance by Craig Kielburger and Marc Kielburger and the subsequent delivery of dozens of requested documents.

While we are declining the invitation to testify further at the Committee, we take donor matters very seriously. WE Charity's Board of Directors is establishing a *Standing Committee on Donor Transparency (SCDT)*, with the mandate to, among other things, inquire into any specific concerns that may be raised by any past, present, or future donor. Gerry Connolly, Board member since 2012 and the former Director of Education of the Toronto District School Board, will chair the committee.

The first priority of the SCDT will be to investigate the allegations brought forward by Reed Cowan and the error that led to removing one of the plaques commemorating his 2006 donations in memory of his son. Reed Cowan and his organization directly raised tens of thousands of dollars for WE Charity supporting four schoolhouses in Kenya, which continue to operate today.

As we work through these issues, we ask our stakeholders to remember that over 25 years, WE Charity has evolved from a grassroots organization to one that continually grows and works to better address the needs of our partner communities. When donors support programs such as a farm animal or a schoolhouse, those funds are often pooled to help villages, as is common with other major international development organizations. WE Charity has sought to communicate this development model via websites and other materials for well-over a decade, including [HERE](#) and [HERE](#). Every penny donated to WE Charity was used to help children.