

# **Building *Sustainable* Relationships between Non-Profit/Voluntary Sector and Provincial & Territorial Governments**

**An Updated Pan-Canadian Snapshot and  
Summary Report of the Second Gathering of Counterparts,  
held February 9-10, 2009, in Halifax, Nova Scotia**

**March 9, 2009  
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[www.cvsrd.org](http://www.cvsrd.org)

## **Acknowledgements**

The Gathering of Counterparts, the Pan-Canadian Snap-shot, and the Summary Report were made possible by the collective enthusiasm and generosity of leaders from the non-profit/voluntary sector and provincial/territorial governments, throughout Canada. We wish to express our appreciation for their interest, encouragement, and support of this important work.

**The Second Gathering of Counterparts was co-sponsored by:  
The Government of New Brunswick and The Government of Nova Scotia,**  
in collaboration with  
**The Federation of Community Organizations (Halifax Regional Municipality) and  
The Volunteer Centre of Southeastern New Brunswick**

**The Muttart Foundation**  
Provided travel subsidies to non-profit/voluntary sector delegates

**Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration**  
Sponsored the research and report production

**Carleton University's Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development**  
Provided program development and research support

**The Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks**  
Provided leadership and Pan-Canadian linkages

### **The Second Annual Gathering of Counterparts Planning Committee**

Angela Carr	Annette Vautour-MacKay
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Margaret Frazer	Nicole Smith
Brenda Hardiman	Paula Speevak-Sladowski

Appreciation and admiration is expressed to the participants of the Gathering of Counterparts for taking the time and investing their resources to participate, in the spirit of openness and collaboration for the collective public good.

## Building *Sustainable* Relationships between the Non-Profit/Voluntary Sector and Provincial & Territorial Governments

### Foreword

Interest in strengthening relationships between governments and the non-profit and voluntary sector has resurfaced in several Canadian provinces and territories over the past few years. Leadership organizations; chambers, networks, and councils, in the non-profit/voluntary sector have been gaining momentum as they build connections, cohesion, and capacity within the sector. Government departments, units, and branches, have broadened their scope from volunteer recognition to recognizing the contributions that voluntary organizations make to society. With each sector coming to the table possessing renewed energy and a clearer focus, there is even greater will to work collaboratively and to leverage their collective capacity to build resilient communities.

In February 2008, 38 leaders from provincial and territorial governments as well as the non-profit/voluntary sector came together in Calgary for the first ever **Gathering of Counterparts**. Hosted by the Alberta Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs and the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, the purpose was to facilitate learning and the exchange of experiences, research, and resources; across governments, across the non-profit/voluntary sector and between the two. While each province or territory was different in terms of its stage of development, scope, history, and available resources, they shared a common desire to learn from one another. Together they explored the following themes:

- **Conditions, Challenges, Barriers and Success Factors** for non-profit/voluntary sector-government relationships.
- **Framework Agreements**, policies, declarations, and accords that articulate the values and principles of the relationship.
- **Joint Mechanisms** for implementing and monitoring these agreements.
- **Leadership and Umbrella Organizations** within the non-profit/voluntary sector (networks, chambers, coalitions, councils etc.).
- **Engagement Strategies** to involve the broader non-profit/voluntary sector and across government departments.

In preparation for this first event, a background paper, *Building Deliberate Relationships between the Non-Profit/Voluntary Sector and Governments: An Unfolding Story*<sup>1</sup> was commissioned by the Wellesley Institute. It described various models, key challenges, and conditions for success as well as provided the first “Snapshot” of the voluntary sector in each province and territory. In the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cvsrd.org/eng/docs>

summary report of the first Gathering of Counterparts<sup>2</sup> sponsored by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, highlights of the insights and experiences of both government and non-profit/voluntary sector participants were captured and, while each sector learned more about the distinct characteristics and culture of the other, there was a new appreciation for their shared interests and common challenges.

### Organization:

The *second* Gathering of Counterparts, which took place in Halifax February 9-10, 2009 was jointly sponsored by the Governments of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, in collaboration with the Federation of Community Organizations of Halifax and region and the Volunteer Centre of Southeastern New Brunswick. Building on the foundation of the first event, this year's theme was **Building Sustainable Relationships between Provincial/Territorial Governments and the Non-Profit/Voluntary Sector**. Participants explored subjects including the capacity to engage, strategies to broaden the engagement, and promotion of the value of a collaborative relationship.

This document is divided into two sections:

**Part A** An updated Pan-Canadian Snapshot was prepared as a backgrounder for the event and provides an overview of the key organizations and initiatives in each province and territory. All documents referenced in this section can be found at [www.cvsrd.org](http://www.cvsrd.org).

**Part B** Includes a Summary Report of the second annual Gathering of Counterparts, containing highlights from the presentations, table discussions, insights, and potential strategies for moving forward.

Appreciation is expressed to the many reviewers of this document, including our colleagues at the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development, Sandy Jones and Tom Damery, and those contributors, from each province and territory. Special thanks go to **Marilee Campbell**, for her enthusiastic curiosity of this subject and her careful research and writing.

Paula Speevak Sladowski,  
Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development  
March 2009

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.cvsrd.org/eng/connections-communities/cc\\_counterparts.html#highlight](http://www.cvsrd.org/eng/connections-communities/cc_counterparts.html#highlight)

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## **Part A:**

### **An Updated Pan-Canadian Snapshot of the Non-Profit/Voluntary Sector - Government Relations by Province and Territory**

*"You are not here merely to make a living. You are here in order to enable the world to live more amply, with greater vision, with a finer spirit of hope and achievement. You are here to enrich the world, and you impoverish yourself if you forget the errand."*

Woodrow Wilson

## **Introduction:**

Albert Einstein said "We can't solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them." Imaginative thinking, new strategies and fresh ideas are transforming the interaction between the government and the non-profit and voluntary sector (hereafter the NPVS or the sector) in Canada today. Governments across the nation have begun to acknowledge the extraordinary contribution the sector makes to society, and the sector is fully investing in its relationship with government in order to maximize shared interests and build stronger communities. Across the country, individuals and organizations are reaching beyond the historical gap separating the sector and government to forge lasting relationships of cooperation. Reflecting their unique history, culture, and characteristics, provinces and territories from coast to coast to coast are recognizing the significance of inter-dependence.

This snapshot will attempt to identify key developments in each province and territory with respect to the process of developing relations between the government and the sector. It will include a brief description of the key organizations, initiatives, councils and secretariats referred to in its predecessor; the Pan-Canadian Snapshot of Non-Profit/Voluntary Sector - Government Relations by Province and Territory. It will also provide updated information on the developments, challenges and milestones that occurred in 2008.

### **For each province and territory there will be a brief description of:**

- The context and history,
- Leadership organizations in the non-profit/voluntary sector and their recent initiatives,
- Government Policies, Programs, or Units including their recent initiatives; and,
- Joint Initiatives between Government and the Non-Profit/Voluntary Sector.

## Policy Transfer:

As you read through the snapshot, you may recognize common themes and similarities in language in the documents that have been produced by each province and territory. This reflects the policy transfer that has been occurring across jurisdictions, as well as some of the earlier work done through the federal Voluntary Sector Initiative. For example, many of the joint initiatives to build intentional relationships between government and the non-profit/voluntary sector include an element of:

- Mutual recognition of the value and complementary roles that each sector plays in building civil society.
- The importance and benefits of collaboration between the two sectors.
- Guiding principles to strengthen the relationship.
- A desire to create an enabling regulatory environment.
- A shared interest in building the capacity to serve.

Without a doubt, the transition toward sector-government cooperation has been a long time in the making, however almost without exception; greater steps are being taken to bridge that gap. Language in publications, round-tables and phone-calls reflects this change as voices on both sides articulate not just a need for cooperation, but a *willingness* to cooperate.

## Limitations:

As with last year's snapshot, this document will be bound to certain limitations. It is primarily based on documents and materials available at the time of research in late December 2008 and early January 2009. Information was primarily harvested from websites, and researchers attempted to use the most recent data available. This in itself was a limitation as many organizations lack the resources (time, money and staff) to regularly update online information. Current data was also made available by key government contacts and individuals from many of the leading voluntary sector organizations themselves, as they have the most up-to-date knowledge of progress that has been made throughout 2008.

Unlike last year's snapshot however, this document is intended to be more in-depth; exploring in greater detail each province's development; and attempting to include as many resources as possible.

This snapshot is best read within the context of last year's report, as a great deal of the information builds upon details expounded in the original, and revises out-of-date information. As much detail as possible was included for jurisdictions such as the Yukon, Nunavut and Prince Edward Island, however, again little information was available at the time of research. We welcome any feedback, information or resources on these geographic regions to offer an increasingly well-rounded synopsis of the state of voluntary sector/government relations across Canada.

### **Disclaimer:**

Because of the immensity of the country, and the broad range of changes instigated within the huge array of sector organizations, it is of course impossible to research and include all the nuanced differences within each organization, however the greatest effort has been made to gather as much input as possible, and be as inclusive and exhaustive as possible. Apologies to anyone who feels their contribution was overlooked, it was unintentional. Please feel free to contact the CVSRD with any information you wish to be included in the next snapshot. Any such input would be welcomed. Contact information is located at the end of the document.

### **Organization and Format:**

For the reader's benefit, and to ensure information is presented as clearly as possible, each province and territory has been broken into four subsections: Context, Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives, Government Policies and Initiatives and Joint Relationship Building. The last subsection is followed by a short list of websites belonging to organizations mentioned therein.

It is possible that there may be cross-over between sub-sections, or no content for a sub-section at all simply based on the availability of information at the time of research. The best effort was made to organize the material in the most user-friendly manner possible.

## British Columbia



### Context:

In the last 20 years, immense headway has been made in the development of the sector in British Columbia, as well as its relationship with the government. Beginning in the 1990's the Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives & Volunteers provided funding for voluntary organization development, demonstration and best practice models as well as promotion and research. It was closed in 2001, with the change in government. Then, in 2005, the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts was given a portfolio for volunteers. Since that time, much has changed in the province.

Acting as an impetus for change, the coming Olympics, to be held in Vancouver in 2010, are renewing interest and stirring British Columbians to action. Non-profit and voluntary sector organizations are being mobilized and utilized as never before in such a fashion that it is raising their profile across the province. The imminence of the Olympics is motivating individuals, organizations and all levels of government alike. Collectively spurred towards the same goal, cooperative links across and between these elements are building a strong foundation for growth in the province.

### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

**Volunteer BC** is one of many voluntary sector infrastructure organizations making head-way in British Columbia. Founded in 1976, it is a provincial association of volunteer centres actively working to achieve excellence in volunteerism for the benefit of all British Columbians. The organization has been able to offer expanding services recently because of increased government funding.<sup>3</sup> It is hoped that they will be able to release the first ever: *British Columbia State of Volunteering Report* in early 2009. Those in charge of its development expect that it will become "a cornerstone of Volunteer BC's policy work on volunteerism, and will be a unique effort to create a snapshot in time on volunteerism specific to the BC experience, drawing from both qualitative and quantitative sources."<sup>4</sup> Volunteer BC has also expanded its sphere of influence within the province by opening several new centres in various locations across BC.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/volbc/documents/Web-VolBCAnnualReport2008-Complete.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/volbc/documents/August08TheConnector-SpecialIssue-Environment.pdf>

**The Voluntary Organizations Consortium of British Columbia (VOCBC)** is a network of provincial-level voluntary organizations that it is facilitated by and partners with Volunteer BC and other organizations in its projects. Its mandate is to close the gaps between non-profit organizations by:

- Encouraging organizations to work together on specific projects.
- Promoting and advancing research efforts in the voluntary sector.
- Creating and sustaining a body that will unite and promote voluntary organizations.
- Facilitating dialogue on voluntary sector issues, community trends and socio-economic needs in BC communities.
- Helping to build the capacity within voluntary organizations for planning, analysis and policy development.<sup>5</sup>

Many organizations provide the on-going service of connecting individuals interested in volunteering to relevant opportunities, raising awareness and enhancing provincial operation while bettering communities. VOCBC is doing exactly that as it continues to operate within the administrative framework of Volunteer BC, promoting initiatives like LegaciesNow, LiteracyNow, ActNow, and VolunteersNow. Volunteer BC and VOCBC are intelligently using the coming Olympics to raise awareness and provide a springboard for their message distribution.

One initiative whose influence is spreading across British Columbia is an offshoot of an idea meant to aid in planning for the 2010 Olympic Games. Initially designed to mobilize volunteers for the Olympics, **VolWeb.ca** is now connecting volunteers with organizations across the province. Its capacity and impact have grown considerably since its 2005 launch. In 2006/2007, VolWeb.ca filled 1600 volunteer positions, whereas in 2007/2008, it filled 1900.<sup>6</sup> It is useful to both volunteers and those wishing to find volunteers for special events.

The **BC-211** initiative is continuing to work on the development of an “easy-to-remember three-digit phone number and website providing free, confidential, multilingual access to information about a range of community, social, health and government services.”<sup>7</sup> Although much momentum seems to have been lost in the last year, developers still hope to provide this province-wide, free, referral service. The service will probably start on a regional basis and developers hope to see it eventually grow to a province-wide system.

### Government Policies and Initiatives:

The Ministry of Housing and Social Development was instrumental in the development of the BC Government Non-Profit Initiative (GNPI). Additional funding and support was also provided by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. More information on the GNPI is found in the next section, *Sector-Government Joint Cooperation*.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/newsroom/vocbc.html>

<sup>6</sup> [http://volweb.ca/volweb/aboutus.php?header=About\\_Us](http://volweb.ca/volweb/aboutus.php?header=About_Us)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.bc-airs.ca>

### Sector-Government Joint Cooperation:

Since the Round Table held in May 2007, over 60 BC Government and non-profit agencies have been collaborating through the **BC Government Non-Profit Initiative (GNPI)** to improve the way the two sectors work together to produce the best results for individuals and communities.

The GNPI is jointly co-chaired by the CEO of The Vancouver Foundation and the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. It incorporates input from government leaders (a committee of Deputy Ministers) and the NPVS (senior non-profit leaders). It encompasses the work of three joint task forces including: Working Together; Procurement and Funding; and Capacity Building.<sup>8</sup>

In 2008, the GNPI in cooperation with the Vancouver Foundation developed a series of focus groups that took place across B.C. They gathered the insight of government and non-profit partners, reported on progress, shared their views on the recommendations offered in the *Better Outcomes and Stronger Communities* reports and devised action plans to be reviewed in subsequent conversations.<sup>9</sup> Working through a series of consultations, both face-to-face and online, the intention was to broaden the discussion to involve a wider cross-section of representatives from both non-profit and government communities.

The task forces met throughout 2008 and gathered at a Summit in November 2008 where 130 delegates sought to sort out methods of implementing feedback as well as finalizing what steps would be taken to follow recommendations given throughout the year.

*The Executive Summary on the Better Outcomes Stronger Communities* report,<sup>10</sup> produced by the GNPI in October 2008, identifies common challenges faced by governments and non-profits alike, in an attempt to build common ground, rather than focus on divergences.

*As has been the experience in other developed countries, reduced funding from all levels of government, a trend toward project-based and shorter-term funding, difficulty in recruiting and retaining staff and volunteers, increasing service demands, and variable capacity in terms of expertise and infrastructure have been causes for concern regarding the sustainability of BC's non-profit sector organizations.*<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> BC Government Non-Profit Initiative available online at: <http://www.nonprofitinitiative.gov.bc.ca/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.cnpm.ca/PDF%20Files/GNPI\\_ExSumm\\_V15\\_Sept2008.pdf](http://www.cnpm.ca/PDF%20Files/GNPI_ExSumm_V15_Sept2008.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> General details available online at: <http://www.nonprofitinitiative.gov.bc.ca/>

<sup>11</sup> [http://www.nonprofitinitiative.gov.bc.ca/docs/Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.nonprofitinitiative.gov.bc.ca/docs/Executive_Summary.pdf)

The same report also proposes some solutions for the problems it identifies, involving, like any good relationship, cooperation and communication; 'consultation and partnership.' The report's suggestions are relevant across the country, not only in British Columbia as it suggests that the two sectors must be working together on all levels; from top-end strategies to program-oriented work:

*The two sectors will work together at a number of levels ranging from high level sector-to-sector strategy such as the GNPI itself to program oriented work between a government department and an individual service delivery agency.*

The report identifies five goals and a series of strategies to see these goals come to fruition. These are broad-range and long-term objectives that may be useful across Canada for regions wishing to make a deliberate and forward-looking attempt at improving the relationship between government and the non-profit sector:

- Work proactively and intentionally in partnership to identify and act on mutual priorities.
- Invest strategically to promote and support stable, accountable and effective organizational capacity to deliver on mutual priorities.
- Enhance efficiency through accountability.
- Work across traditional silos to coordinate program efforts and more effectively address the multi-dimensional needs of individuals and communities.
- Modify and/or expand engagement where appropriate to meet the diverse community and cultural needs of British Columbians.

Volunteer BC [www.volunteerbc.bc.ca](http://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca)

VOCBC [www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/vocbc](http://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/vocbc)

VolWeb [www.volweb.ca](http://www.volweb.ca)

BC-AIRS [www.bc-airs.ca](http://www.bc-airs.ca)

GNPI [www.nonprofitinitiative.gov.bc.ca](http://www.nonprofitinitiative.gov.bc.ca)

## Alberta



### Context:

Grassroots movements have a place of honour in the nation of Canada, and while Alberta is no exception, high-level conversations, meetings, exchanges and relationships are currently having a strong impact on mobilizing sector-government cooperation. Senior officials from both sectors are continuing the discourse on 'how' and 'when' to bridge the divide between the provincial government and the non-profit and voluntary sector in Alberta. On the broader stage, the movement toward government-sector cooperation is in the primary phases of building and defining relationships, developing and agreeing to understandings and identifying and promoting common ground. Worker shortages, funding shortages in an age of economic uncertainty and growing demand are only a few of the many factors making the development of strong government-sector cooperation in Alberta more critical than ever before.

### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

The **Wild Rose Foundation** is an Alberta Government lottery funded foundation which was started in 1984 and provides numerous supports to the NPVS. The organization is responsible to:

- *Provide funding to non-profit/voluntary sector organizations that provide valuable services to Albertans;*
- *Foster or promote the use of volunteers, or assist those who volunteer or use the services of volunteers in Alberta; and,*
- *Foster or promote charitable, philanthropic, humanitarian, or public spirited acts or assist those who perform them.*<sup>12</sup>

The Foundation hosts the annual *Vitalize* conference. In the past the conference has featured many workshops including leadership development, and promotion of awareness and recognition events for volunteers. The Foundation will again host the conference from June 4-6, 2009 in Calgary where there will be a variety of educational and motivational sessions all geared towards enhancing Alberta's voluntary sector. It is a unique, professional development and training opportunity and is expected to include many provocative and interesting workshops and speakers.<sup>13</sup>

The **Muttart Foundation** continues to be a key player in the province, as a funder, initiator, and knowledge broker of several voluntary sector capacity-building programs. The Muttart

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.wildrosefoundation.ca/about.aspx>

<sup>13</sup> More information is available at: <http://www.wildrosefoundation.ca/vitalize/default.aspx>

Foundation funds a bi-annual survey to determine public attitudes towards Canadian charities. The results of the most recent survey, *Talking About Charities 2008*, were released in October 2008. The study found that although charities continue to enjoy high levels of trust; they need to be better at telling Canadians about how they operate. The Foundation is continuing in its pattern of charitable activism with initiatives including “policy research, public awareness research and analysis, consultations on the regulation of charities, seminars and workshops on key issues and concerns affecting charities as well as special projects.”<sup>14</sup>

As in the past, **Volunteer Alberta** is continuing to undertake province-wide volunteer promotion while actively connecting with rural communities. Activities include gearing up for National Volunteer Week, Global Youth Services Day, International Volunteer Day and International Volunteer Managers Appreciation Day, as well as on-going training seminars and promotion of regular volunteer-related events.<sup>15</sup>

**The Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO)** is a registered charity working to strengthen Calgary's diverse voluntary sector and provide leadership on matters affecting the sector as a whole. With the support of more than 440 members, CCVO takes an active role in policy discussion and is active in the development of emerging policy issues at the municipal, provincial and federal level, collaborating with other organizations at the provincial and national level to affect policy decisions. CCVO convenes numerous meetings during the course of the year, providing members of the sector opportunities to network, share ideas and learn about key issues. They organize an annual series of policy-related events aimed at developing the capacity of organizations to participate effectively in the policy process with government.

CCVO plays a lead role locally and provincially, in bringing together voluntary sector organizations and networks to address significant human resource issues challenging the sector in Alberta. Together with the Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, they are spearheading an initiative to establish an Alberta Workforce Council for the voluntary sector. CCVO collaborates extensively with other non-profit organizations working on behalf of the sector on a variety of projects and initiatives.

CCVO also acts as a clearinghouse for key resources and information, as well as conducting and disseminating important research on key issues affecting the sector. In January 2009, the CCVO released the results of an exploratory study of small nonprofit organizations in Calgary. “No Small Thing: Calgary’s small non-profits, charities and grassroots groups” examined the origins, identity, operations and structure of these organizations. The intention was to expand understanding about the sector, identify challenges, raise awareness and provide recommendations that might alleviate some of the barriers preventing small non-profits from reaching their full potential.

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<sup>14</sup> More information on the Muttart Foundation is available online at: <http://www.muttart.org>

<sup>15</sup> Details about these and other activities undertaken by Volunteer Alberta are available online at: <http://www.volunteerab.ca>.

**The Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO)** is a non-profit organization and registered charity whose mission is to strengthen, serve and support the non-profit/voluntary sector in the Edmonton region. The ECVO strives to empower the sector's capacity to deliver programs and services by providing key information and resources which strengthen organizational governance and operations, researching, analyzing and communicating information that significantly impacts the sector's viability and vitality and organizing and participating in conferences, seminars and workshops. They also, publish weekly E-Bulletins and quarterly publications that highlight current events, government policy and updates.

As a dynamic, collective voice for charities and non-profits, the ECVO tackles issues and leads the way by networking and building relationships with key personnel in government, business and non-profits. They are actively involved with a variety of programs and events which promote and advance the success of non-profits and charities including:

- University of Alberta Community Service-Learning program
- Workforce Strategy for Alberta's Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector
- Alberta Employment and Immigration-workshops, seminars and forums
- Alberta Non-profit/Voluntary Sector Initiative
- Partners For Better Boards
- Everyone For Edmonton
- Space and Accommodation for Non-profit Organizations

#### **Government Policies and Initiatives:**

The non-profit and voluntary sector in collaboration with the Ministry of Immigration and Employment released *A Workforce Strategy for Alberta's Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector*<sup>16</sup> on April 28, 2008. A number of priorities identified by the sector will impact government:

- *Funding from government sources is often inadequate, short-term and project-specific which makes it difficult for non-profits to offer competitive wages and permanent positions, fund staff training and development, and perform long-term organizational planning.*
- *Limited resources are instead focused on writing proposals for funding and meeting the funder's reporting requirements. Many of the workforce issues would be solved if the sector's funding issues were addressed.*

The draft strategy identifies 28 priority actions the non-profit and voluntary sector can take to address its specific labour-force issues and challenges. The following four priority actions relate to or directly impact government:

- Develop a strategy to educate all levels of government about:
  - The importance of the sector to the quality of life in the community.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WIA/WIA-BETW\\_nonprofit\\_strategy.pdf](http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/WIA/WIA-BETW_nonprofit_strategy.pdf)

- The importance of the sector to the economy of the province.
- The challenges the sector faces with the labour force shortfall.
- Advocate for government departments to establish common policies, procedures, and a standard format for granting and funding proposals.
- Advocate for improved scholarships, bursaries and ongoing funding to support board, staff and volunteer training and development.
- Advocate for funding levels that:
  - Allow for fair compensation of employees in the non-profit sector, through both wages and benefits.
  - Allow for long term planning and job security.
  - Support organizational sustainability.

### Sector-Government Joint Cooperation:

In July 2006, The Government of Alberta announced the establishment of **The Alberta Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Initiative (ANVSI)**<sup>17</sup> through the Ministry of Community Development (now the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing). The initiative has been guided by a Leadership Council, comprised of six leaders from the non-profit and voluntary sector and six senior government officials, with a co-chair from each sector. In August 2007, they signed a foundational agreement called the *Framework for Collaboration*.<sup>18</sup> The Leaders Council then developed a transition plan to establish a structure to guide and monitor the relationship between the Government of Alberta and the non-profit and voluntary sector.

**The Collaboration Committee** was appointed to oversee and provide leadership in reaching the goals set out in the Framework. This collaborative partnership plans to work toward mutually acceptable outcomes. It has incorporated balanced representation from the non-profit/voluntary sector and the Government of Alberta, and in addition, includes a delegate representing academia and another representing funders and foundations.

ANVSI has developed a three-year strategic plan, the mission of which is to develop a mutually supported interdependent partnership between the NPVS and the Government of Alberta that enables mechanisms and processes to address cross-cutting issues, build capacity of the sectors, and engage both sectors in policy dialogue. It fosters cooperation between the sector and the Government of Alberta in order to better meet their shared goals of building healthy, active and sustainable communities.

Wild Rose Foundation [www.wildrosefoundation.ca](http://www.wildrosefoundation.ca)

Muttart Foundation [www.muttart.org](http://www.muttart.org)

Volunteer Alberta [www.volunteeralberta.ab.ca](http://www.volunteeralberta.ab.ca).

CCVO [www.calgarycvo.org](http://www.calgarycvo.org)

ECVO [www.evco.ca](http://www.evco.ca)

Ministry of Immigration and Employment [www.employment.alberta.ca](http://www.employment.alberta.ca)

Alberta Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Initiative [www.culture.alberta.ca/anvsi](http://www.culture.alberta.ca/anvsi)

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<sup>17</sup> <http://culture.alberta.ca/anvsi/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://culture.alberta.ca/anvsi/collaborationframework.aspx>

## Saskatchewan



### Context:

In April 2002, The Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative was launched with the purpose of strengthening the relationship between the Government of Saskatchewan and Saskatchewan's voluntary sector so voluntary organizations could operate as effectively as possible in fulfilling their individual mandates. However, following the provincial election in 2007, activities were placed on hold and the initiative was never resumed. As with any province, the relationship between the government and the non-profit sector ebbs and flows as it develops. With the change of government, it seemed that the momentum within the sector had been lost, however recent government initiatives are re-establishing priorities and progress is again being made toward the goal of a stronger relationship between the two institutions.

### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

**The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association** has developed a resource centre which helps to link and improve elements of the non-profit and voluntary sector in the province. The Resource Centre for Sport, Culture and Recreation provides "access to information and research for members of the non-profit and voluntary sector in Saskatchewan, particularly the recreation, culture, and sport communities." Some very pertinent, cross-sectoral resources upon which they provide training include:

- Volunteer Management
- Non-profit Administration
- Community Development
- Wellness and Health Promotion
- Strategic Planning
- Board Governance
- Financial Management
- Fundraising Guides
- Grant Directories
- Human Resource Management

### Government Policies and Initiatives:

The **Saskatchewan Community Initiatives Fund (CIF)**<sup>19</sup> provides grants to community initiatives that enhance human development and community vitality. It was created by the provincial government to ensure that Saskatchewan communities received tangible benefits from casino profits. The CIF receives a portion of profits from casinos in Regina and Moose Jaw. The Fund is managed by an independent government-appointed board. Board members all have extensive experience as community volunteers. It focuses predominantly on:

1. *Developing opportunities for children, youth and families,*
2. *Constructive activities for young people at the local level, including physical activity, and arts and culture activities,*

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<sup>19</sup> <http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/CIF>

3. *Increased community leadership capacity, particularly leadership opportunities for youth; and*
4. *Inclusion of First Nations and Métis people as leaders in delivery of community activities.*

#### **Sector-Government Joint Cooperation:**

The Government of Saskatchewan, Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sports admits an “arms-length” relationship with the non-profit sector, though acknowledges problems within the sector in its 2007-2008 Annual Report, and recognizes what an important role they play in Saskatchewan’s communities.<sup>20</sup>

The percentage of non-profit and voluntary organizations identifying challenges in five key areas was surveyed as follows:

- Difficulty recruiting the type of volunteers the organization needs: 61%
- Difficulty planning for the future: 62%
- Difficulty participating in development of public policy: 39%
- Difficulty obtaining the type of paid staff the organization needs: 30%
- Unwillingness of funders to fund core operations (i.e., long-term programs, administrative expenses): 58%

On June 24, 2008 The Ministry of Social Services announced a summit series for community-based organizations (CBOs) to develop a new social policy direction for Saskatchewan. The content of the summits was posted ‘verbatim’ on the Ministry’s website to aid in public transparency. Five summits across the province examined topics such as recruitment and retention, funding, policy development, and accountability. It gave 800 representatives from Saskatchewan CBOs an avenue to express the needs of their industries and the short-comings of the system to those who might implement change. The objective was to listen to what human services CBOs had to say about the challenges they face and how the citizens of Saskatchewan might be better served.

The Ministry of Social Services hopes to be able to incorporate recommendations from the summits into their policies regarding CBOs. The Minister of Social Services said of the summits, “As a government, we are committed to considering the thoughts provided; to making the changes that are possible and to continuing to work with the CBO community to explore those ideas which require further consideration.”<sup>21</sup> At the present time, government and the sector are continuing to explore the ideas put forward during the summit process and Saskatchewan Government has already started to respond to what it has heard.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/adx.aspx/adxGetMedia.aspx?DocID=1810,395,94,88,Documents&MediaID=1618&Filename=TPCS+Annual+Report+2007-2008.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=9cfca45b-fd1b-4e83-89b1-5393c2914fbc>

In November 2008, addressing the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, the Minister said that the CBOs “challenged us to respond, not with shiny reports to sit on a shelf but rather with concrete actions.” In the address she made reference to a number of initiatives underway as a direct response to the concerns of the NPVS in Saskatchewan including; income support for those with disabilities, raising of social assistance mileage rates, funding for a 2-1-1 community services network and a number of other initiatives. She also announced increased funding (annualized 7%) to human services community-based agencies specifically to address recruitment and retention pressures experienced by CBOs. The Government has also committed to begin entering into long-term, predictable funding agreements with CBOs starting in 2009/10 which, it is believed, will further assist the sector.

Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association [www.spra.sk.ca](http://www.spra.sk.ca)  
Community Initiatives Fund [www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/CIF](http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/CIF)  
Department of Social Services [www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca](http://www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca)  
Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sports [www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca](http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca)

## Manitoba



### Context

In 2003, Manitoba Culture, Heritage, and Tourism, serving as the lead department for the Government of Manitoba, signed a framework agreement with the non-profit and voluntary sector, along with their counterparts representing business and organized labour, at the provincial and municipal level. While Manitoba's Department of Heritage, Culture, and Tourism was the lead ministry for much of the sector development during that time period, other departments were more engaged with voluntary and non-profit organizations through fee-for-service arrangements, grants, and contributions. More recently, other departments, and independent NPVSOs have taken over the lead on the development of the sector, and its relationship with the government.

### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

**Volunteer Manitoba (VM)** was established in 1978 (then known as the Central Volunteer Bureau) when the United Way and the Winnipeg Foundation realized a need to support the voluntary sector in Manitoba with a separate agency. Since then, its programs, services and partnerships have dramatically expanded and it now helps non-profit groups and individuals enhance their capacity to anticipate, understand and meet community needs throughout the province. Volunteer Manitoba's goal is to provide information, training and resources on all aspects of the voluntary sector and to build strong communities with working partners including governments, researchers, non-profit/charitable organizations, volunteers, funders, donors, labour and businesses.<sup>22</sup>

Recently, VM has been offering seminars on board development, organizational management, volunteer management services, and special event resources, as well as dozens of others across the province. Volunteer Manitoba is regularly running programs and training seminars. Its community involvement is extensive and its initiative is exciting, as prospects for government-sector relations are improving.

For some time, Volunteer Manitoba has been involved in helping the *Manitoba Provincial Labour Market Initiative*. VM has asked for an advisory group to be established. The Market Initiative has invited both NPVSOs and provincial parties to the table to help develop strategies for bridging into the sector. It is hoped that this initiative will continue to foster the improvement of governmental and sector relations in the future.

**The Voluntary and Non-Profit Sector Organization of Manitoba Inc. (VNPSOM)** is an umbrella of community organizations from around the province. Arising from the findings and efforts of

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.volunteermanitoba.ca/>

the Manitoba Voluntary Sector Initiative (MVSII), VNPSOM was created – *of the sector, by the sector, for the sector* - to take leadership in addressing the issues and challenges facing the sector and to support greater communication and co-ordination within and between organizations.<sup>23</sup>

#### **Government Policies and Initiatives:**

In May 2008, the Manitoba Family Services and Housing Ministry issued a *Community Engagement Framework* analyzing the degree to which Manitoban citizens are active in the community, as well as the extent to which that matters. The Framework discusses the importance of community engagement in community capacity building, and acknowledges the importance of the voluntary sector in the development of stronger communities.<sup>24</sup>

Volunteer Manitoba [www.volunteermanitoba.ca](http://www.volunteermanitoba.ca)

VNPSOM [www.voluntarysector.mb.ca](http://www.voluntarysector.mb.ca)

Manitoba Family Services and Housing Ministry [www.gov.mb.ca](http://www.gov.mb.ca)

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.voluntarysector.mb.ca/>

<sup>24</sup> [http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/ce/pubs/community\\_engagement\\_framework\\_May08.pdf](http://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/ce/pubs/community_engagement_framework_May08.pdf)

## Yukon



### Context:

A dynamic relationship between government and the non-profit sector exists in the Yukon today. Because it is such a small population, many of those sitting on boards for non-profit organizations happen also to be government employees. This lends itself to cooperation, as one who has experience in two unique fields, can more readily understand the needs and problems of both.

### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

The Yukon Department of Community Services provides funding for the **Yukon Volunteer Bureau** and both have continued over the past year trying to raise awareness, raise funds and mobilize volunteers. Programs and training seminars are dominantly geared toward teaching non-profit organizations, and voluntary community organizations about the use and retention of volunteers. Much of the work being done in the region at this time is foundational work, which if continued may be the beginning of a very productive trend.

On a smaller, grassroots scale, it is clear that community-level volunteerism in the Yukon is alive and well. In a 2008 Report on the Yukon's secondary school system for example, five-year pilot programs are using a 'project-based' approach to learning. The program moves most secondary learning into an 'experiential framework.' Community volunteers are expected to be an important component of this initiative.<sup>25</sup> This same report emphasizes a number of other opportunities to improve community involvement with the non-profit sector. It articulates the need to "connect schools to communities...through looking to partnerships with the voluntary sector." A large number of local initiatives are cropping up to meet his need including Historica, ArtsSmarts, Learning Though the Arts, Roots of Empathy, Evergreen Foundation, Green Your Space, and Active Living, to name a few.

### Government Policies and Initiatives:

The Yukon Department of Community Services is the primary governmental body responsible for interacting with the voluntary sector within the territory. One function provided by the Department's *Community Development* office is establishing and nurturing "partnerships with Yukon people, community organizations and the voluntary sector."<sup>26</sup> Beyond funding however, no specific plans or details on *how* the Department intends to establish and nurture these partnerships are available.

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<sup>25</sup> [http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/yukon\\_secondary\\_programming\\_report.pdf](http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/yukon_secondary_programming_report.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.community.gov.yk.ca/general/communitydevelopment.html>

**Sector-Government Joint Cooperation:**

A complicating factor that adds to the tapestry of community in this territory is that there are fourteen First Nations governments, as well as municipal, territorial and federal government interests at play. The voice of each First Nation Government and those of the federal and territorial governments are inter-mingled as they integrate with the local non-profit community. One example of the various levels of government and the non-profit sector working together is the previously discussed Yukon Volunteer Bureau, which receives its funding from the Trondek Gwitch'in First Nation and the Yukon Department of Education who jointly receive funding from the federal program: the Northern Strategy Initiative. Although it certainly presents greater challenges because of different mandates, needs and resources, the community overcomes such obstacles to attain mutually beneficial results.

## Northwest Territories



### Context:

In late 2003, **Volunteer NWT** was established as part of the federal Canada Volunteerism Initiative. It was the first territory-wide cross-sector network for the voluntary sector. It engaged the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs as a member. In late 2004, the department provided matching funds so Volunteer NWT could access additional funding. On March 2, 2005, the Government of the Northwest Territories adopted a Volunteer Support Initiative. The Initiative included a declaration, vision, principles, goals, and an action plan that committed the GNWT to a stronger relationship with volunteers and volunteer groups. The initiative had four goals: support volunteerism; build capacity; strengthen relationships; and, connect the NWT to federal initiatives that support the voluntary sector. After the closing of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative, the department of Municipal and Community Affairs provided transitional funding to Volunteer NWT. However, after a one-time grant, the organization was without the financial means to continue.

Without funding from any sources, public or private, operation inside the non-profit and voluntary sector in the Northwest Territories has come to a virtual standstill. Frustrated voluntary sector advocates have expressed that “there are so many battles for each organization to deal with; it is hard to focus on the big picture.” Recent government initiatives may yet be able to recover some of the strength in the non-profit sector.

### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

The promising organization, Volunteer NWT, has been forced to close its doors and shut down its services. As the only NWT cross-sector network, Volunteer NWT had been responsible for much of the sector research occurring in the NWT since its inception in 2003. The organization developed information and resources, connected volunteers and voluntary groups, shared training information, ideas and best practices, promoted funding opportunities, explored cross-sector unity strategies, built cross-sector, governmental and business community relations as well as advised national organizations about Northern interests.

However, as of June 30, 2008, all operations were cancelled and the following statement was issued:

*The members of the Volunteer NWT committee regret to announce that Volunteer NWT is ending its operations immediately, including email newsletters. Volunteer NWT began in December 2003 as part of a federal program, the Canada Volunteerism Initiative. When the federal program was eliminated, The Government of the Northwest Territories*

*(GNWT) provided one-time funding of \$50,000 last year. Volunteer NWT is currently without resources to continue our activities<sup>27</sup>.*

Prior to the shut-down, the non-profit sector in NWT was still in development and not very strong, so the loss of such a pivotal organization was difficult to manage for those working within the sector. Local organizations carry on individually but because of geography and a population spread out across a large territory the sector is increasingly fragmented and difficult to coordinate.

**The Inuvik Interagency Committee<sup>28</sup>** is a non-profit network of community representatives collaborating to implement community-driven social change. It is an umbrella organization in Inuvik under which interagency cooperation and voluntary sector communication can take place. They primarily tackle issues based on the expressed needs of the community. To accomplish this mission, they:

- *Facilitate communication between existing programs and services,*
- *Engage the community in consultations, needs assessments and issue-identification processes,*
- *Identify and resolve gaps in social programming,*
- *Act as a resource for service access; and,*
- *Foster the development of new social programs and services.*

The Interagency Committee helped set up the Inuvik Food Bank, Victims Services, Suicide Hotline and Alternative School.

### **Government Policies and Initiatives:**

In direct contrast to the sad expiration of Volunteer NWT, a stronger stance has recently been undertaken by the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT). The Government issued the following information in October 2008, revealing a seemingly renewed emphasis on improving the state of the voluntary sector in the Northwest Territories.

Over the next four years the GNWT plans to improve the long-term voluntary sector presence in the territory. One of the methods is the *Building Our Future* strategic initiative which will make significant investments in the long term well-being of the population. One of the ways they will do this is by enhancing support for the voluntary sector.

In 2005, the GNWT launched the **NWT Volunteer Support Initiative (VSI)<sup>29</sup>** which included a declaration in support of volunteers. The VSI Action Plan 2005-2008<sup>30</sup> had four primary goals at

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<sup>27</sup> <http://www.volunteernwt.ca/home/index.html>

<sup>28</sup> <http://inuvikinteragency.org/>

<sup>29</sup> More information on the VSI is available online at:

<http://www.volunteernwt.ca/home/docs/2005%20%20Volunteer%20Support%20Initiative.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.executive.gov.nt.ca/initiatives/>

its core: supporting volunteerism; building capacity; strengthening relationships; and connecting NWT and federal initiatives that support the voluntary sector. Though the 2005-2008 Action Plan was mainly ignored, it is being re-considered, re-vamped and restored, in such a fashion that it is hoped it will be the beginning of a turn-around in the territory.

As the GNWT lead on the voluntary sector, the Department of Municipal and Community Affairs (MACA) led implementation of the Initiative through the operation of programs such as the *Outstanding Volunteer Awards*, an annual *Fire Service Merit awards program* (a volunteer development fund that provides funding to groups for training), research on volunteer participation rates and the implementation of a youth volunteer plan through the NWT Youth Corps Program.

#### Sector-Government Joint Cooperation:

In March 2009, MACA will be hosting an NWT-wide Volunteer Summit to seek input from volunteers from across the NWT on an update to the Volunteer Support Initiative. It is anticipated that the updated version of the VSI will be announced later in 2009. The Summit will also be used to gather input from non-government-organizations (NGO) on related GNWT financial policies and to establish a schedule for consultation on other NGO issues.

MACA has received some criticism for solely focussing on volunteer promotion, rather than a larger picture, cross-sector, inter-organizational perspective.

Former Volunteer NWT [www.volunteernwt.ca](http://www.volunteernwt.ca)  
Inuvik Interagency Committee [inuvikinteragency.org](http://inuvikinteragency.org)  
Department of Executive [www.executive.gov.nt.ca/initiatives](http://www.executive.gov.nt.ca/initiatives)  
GNWT Municipal and Community Affairs [www.maca.gov.nt.ca](http://www.maca.gov.nt.ca)

## Nunavut



### Context:

It has been said that it is much easier to quantify outward growth than downward growth. It is easier to calculate the number of members than gauge the level of interest. Nunavut is in just such a phase and so it is important to emphasize that many people volunteer in the territory, some in formal organizations and others as individuals responding to community needs as they arise.

There is no Inuktitut word for 'volunteer' and the concept is often practiced in case-specific, non-traditional ways; usually interpreted more like 'one who helps'. There are many volunteers in every community who go about quietly helping when help is needed. These volunteer efforts are often not recognized when one does a survey of volunteer activities in Nunavut.

### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

After a push early in the new millennium, momentum seems to have dissipated in much of Nunavut. **Volunteer Nunavut** used to offer services in the territory, but has ceased operation since then. It is difficult to run voluntary community programs with no funds. Each town or hamlet in the territory, however, has a recreation office, which sometimes maintains a current list of volunteer opportunities to be used by potentially interested volunteers.

### Government Policies and Initiatives:

Currently, the territory of Nunavut does not have a volunteer centre, service or network. However, the Iqaluit Inter-Agency Contact Directory<sup>31</sup> is maintained by the Nunavut Court of Justice and lists a broad range of centres, services, agencies, programs and organizations that are both available to the public, and in need of volunteers for continued operation. The Directory includes both governmental and non-profit services, and in some small way, demonstrates the inter-dependence between the two.

### Sector-Government Joint Cooperation:

Although in previous years, the Premier of Nunavut has been actively involved in support of the Volunteer Nunavut, movement from the office, with regard to the voluntary sector has been very limited.

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<sup>31</sup> [www.nunavutcourtofjustice.ca/links.htm](http://www.nunavutcourtofjustice.ca/links.htm)

## Ontario



### Context

There have been a number of initiatives within and between the Government of Ontario and the Ontario voluntary sector, beginning with a Voluntary Sector Task Force in 1997, which led to the formation of the Coalition of Ontario Voluntary Organizations (1999) and the Premier's Voluntary Sector Round Table. In 2006, a group of leadership organizations began working together to create a broader and more sustainable mechanism through the Strengthening Voluntarism in Ontario Project. None of these groups are still in existence today, however others have joined the dialogue in their stead.

### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

Leading the non-profit and voluntary sector efforts in Ontario is the **Ontario Non-profit Network (ONN)**. ONN is a province-wide network of networks that helps to build communication and coordination amongst non-profit organizations working for the public benefit in Ontario. It is a loose coalition of individuals and organizations who operate across the breadth of the sector, including arts organizations, social service organizations, environmental organizations, community health agencies, international service organizations, social economy organizations and others.

ONN was formed in 2007 in response to the modernization of the Ontario Corporations Act, the legislation that governs the more than 45,000 organizations in the province. ONN brings together people and groups that want to work in a cross-sector context to strengthen the non-profit sector. It has the ability to be action focused, creating opportunities for the emergence of new ideas, and flexibly responding to opportunities and needs as they arise.

Using a Constellation Model of Governance,<sup>32</sup> ONN has a wide range of volunteers involved in action groups, or "constellations" that focus on issues such as the federal and provincial acts, the CRA fundraising guidelines, social finance, social economy, social enterprise, leadership, human resources, and more.

ONN collaborates with coalitions and sector groups on cross cutting issues, such as the nationally focused Imagine Canada, Tides Foundation, Causeway, University of Waterloo's Social Innovation Generation (SIG), MARS, and the Centre for Social Innovation.

Interest in creating a network for non-profit and voluntary organizations to work together has also emerged elsewhere in the province. At the local level, there is The Niagara Centre for Community Leadership and emerging networks in Thunder Bay and Windsor. The Ontario

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<sup>32</sup> <http://ontariononprofitnetwork.ca/page/constellations>

Trillium Foundation has been an active player in funding projects and networks to strengthen the capacity of the non-profit and voluntary sector.

**The Pillar Non-profit Network** supports non-profit organizations in fulfilling their missions in the community. They provide leadership, advocacy and support to the non-profit sector through the promotion of volunteerism, professional development, networking, and information. core priorities include:

- Strengthening the community through increased awareness and advocacy of the non-profit sector
- Supporting non-profits to develop an equitable workplace that is diverse, inclusive and accessible to the community
- Promoting best practices and policies for an effective non-profit sector
- Facilitating collaboration and connecting non-profit organizations to each other and to the public and private sectors.

Pillar Non-profit Network brings a voice to the non-profit sector. Providing leadership, advocacy and support to member organizations, core service areas include:

**Professional Development:** Increase the non-profit sector's effectiveness by offering professional development and networking opportunities, discussion forums, and resources.

**Volunteerism:** Engage the community in the non-profit sector by promoting volunteerism and effective volunteer management.

**Information:** Improve the capacity of our member organizations by increasing awareness of relevant information and opportunities. Promote and advance research efforts into the non-profit sector.

**Advocacy & Awareness:** Increase awareness and advocacy of the non-profit sector as well as celebrate non-profit sector success, organizational excellence and individual achievement.

**The Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (OCVO)** was officially launched in October 2002. It is a coalition of community organizations working together to have a greater impact on the vitality of the Ottawa community. It is governed by a steering committee comprised of representatives of a diverse cross-section of the voluntary sector in Ottawa and was established to:

- Champion the value of the voluntary sector and raise public awareness;
- Facilitate networking and the sharing of information and resources;
- Articulate the views of the voluntary sector and have input into public policy;
- Mobilize and engage the voluntary sector around issues of common concern; and
- Dialogue with other sectors including business, local government and labour.

Until late 2005, OCVO sustained itself through seed funding, shared resources of the steering committee and in-kind contributions from the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development (CVSRD). OCVO was innovative in its early efforts to establish itself in the community and to learn from its experiences as well as from those of other local or provincial voluntary sector networks. It has successfully hosted seminars, forums and roundtables with a view to sharing information, encouraging networking and raising the profile of the voluntary sector.

**The Certified General Accountants of Ontario** launched a free guide to Grassroots Governance for the non-profit sector in May 2008. This document is a user-friendly guide to good governance for the non-profit sector.<sup>33</sup>

### Government Policies and Initiatives:

The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) is active in its endeavors to strengthen the relationship between the sector and the government within Ontario. Some of the MCI's initiatives include:

- The MCI funded the project *Strengthening Voluntarism in Ontario: Collective Action on Common Issues (SVO)* which operated from 2006 until 2008. It focused on strengthening citizen and volunteer engagement in Ontario; addressing areas such as: Valuing Volunteer Leadership; Alignment across Sectors, and; Policy and Systems Change designed to enhance volunteerism and strengthen related operational and policy capacity.
- The MCI promotes cross-sectoral non-profit input in areas of provincial legislation and regulation, including:
  - Identifying representatives who can respond to development of the Privacy Act.
  - Encouraging The Ministry of Small Business and Consumer Services to maximize non-profit input into the *Corporations Act (CA)* modernization and to actively work with key sector representatives during consultation phase.
- The MCI maintains ongoing contact with non-profit umbrella organizations including, for example, the Ontario Non-profit Network, and encourages sector input into *Corporations Act* modernization and consideration of a broad range of sector-wide matters.
- For the past decade, the MCI has run partnership grant programs to promote non-profit use of technology and the current Strategic Partnership Initiatives (SPI) program. The SPI program helps non-profits, in particular small and medium sized groups strengthen their volunteer management and operational capacity using social enterprise and innovation.
- Within the Ontario government, the MCI convenes an *Inter-ministerial Committee on Volunteering and Non-profit Issues* to identify and address issues of common concern

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<sup>33</sup> [http://www.cga-ontario.org/contentfiles/publications\\_promotions/grassroots.pdf](http://www.cga-ontario.org/contentfiles/publications_promotions/grassroots.pdf)

affecting the voluntary sector. They also convene a *Community of Practice on Strengthening Ontario Public Service-Non-profit Relationships* to share information and best practices with more than 2000 professional staff across the Ontario Public Sector through electronic newsletters and speakers events.

Within the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Citizenship Branch, there is a newly named unit, **The Voluntary Sector Relations Unit** (formerly the Voluntarism Initiatives Unit). The Voluntary Sector Relations Unit coordinates the government's initiatives to strengthen volunteerism and the non-profit sector in Ontario. It builds voluntary sector, private sector and government partnerships and facilitates initiatives to recognize, encourage and support Ontario's volunteers and non-profit sector. This unit, under previous names has also supported the Ontario Screening Initiative, the Volunteer Action Online program to help non-profits use technology more effectively, and an annual conference on voluntarism.

Centre for Social Innovation [www.socialinnovation.ca](http://www.socialinnovation.ca)

Ontario Non-Profit Network [www.ontariononprofitnetwork.ca](http://www.ontariononprofitnetwork.ca)

Pillar Non-Profit Network [www.pillarnonprofit.ca](http://www.pillarnonprofit.ca)

Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Sector Organizations [www.cvsrd.org/eng/ocvo/events.htm](http://www.cvsrd.org/eng/ocvo/events.htm)

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration [www.citizenship.gov.on.ca](http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca)

## Québec



### Context

Since 1995, le Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec (The Secretariat for Autonomous Community Action), has represented the government in discussion with the sector and financially supported the Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome (The Advisory Committee for Autonomous Community Action or RQ-ACA). Established in 1996, the RQ-ACA has a mission to co-ordinate and represent sector-government initiatives on all questions related to autonomous community action. Although both of these initiatives are still in operation, much has changed.

### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

**The Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec (FCABQ)**<sup>34</sup> is another cross-sector organization active in the province which brings together volunteer resource centres in virtually every region. The FCABQ has four primary objectives in its mission: the cooperative unity of all the centres, advocacy, support to members and the promotion of volunteerism in Quebec. The organization also interacts with the Government as a representative voice on behalf of the voluntary sector, and it has partnered with the Government of Quebec on a number of initiatives recognizing the contributions of the voluntary sector to Quebec society. Some of the projects underway include Volunteer Awards and on-going training for those wishing to be active volunteers, as well as management and administrative training.

### Government Policies and Initiatives:

The Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MESS) contributes to Québec's social development and economic prosperity in ways that are interwoven with the non-profit and voluntary sector. Although the MESS works to promote employment, develop the labour force and improve labour market operations. It also provides financial support to economically disadvantaged people and combats poverty and social exclusion.<sup>35</sup> Many of the MESS' primary programs rely on volunteers and community members willing to step beyond the minimum requirements of society and help others.

Some of the programs and initiatives that incorporate community volunteer development and governmental and cross-sector cooperation include<sup>36</sup>:

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.fcabq.org>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/communiques/>

<sup>36</sup> All this information and more is available on the website [www.mess.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca)

- *Alternative jeunesse*: A program for people under 25 years of age who want to acquire personal, social and vocational self-sufficiency. This program offers young people personalized coaching in addition to financial assistance.
- *Découvrir*: A program designed to help participants discover an individually compatible trade or profession and make it possible for unemployed people under 25 years old to have quality job shadowing and workplace observation experiences. This can help validate their career choice or help them get a feel for a workplace first hand.
- *The Fonds d'aide à l'action communautaire autonome (FAACA) (The Fund for Independent Community Action)*: This program ensures financial assistance for organizations and umbrella organizations within the framework of the Financial support program for government orientations on community action and volunteer action including:
  - Financial support for group advocacy organizations.
  - Financial support for the mission of multi-sectoral organizations.
- *Interagir*: This program helps people whose access to the labour market can only be considered as a long-term project to a better future. The goal is to help people become involved in a process that will lead them to become more actively involved in their community.
- *Social and Community Initiative Support Program*: The community and volunteer action component of this program is aimed at supporting research, evaluation, training and pilot projects in the field of community and volunteer action (French only).
- *Young volunteers*: This program allows young people aged 16 to 29 to explore business projects, organize services in their community and carry out projects about which they feel strongly.

## Newfoundland and Labrador



### Context:

Numerous initiatives have laid the foundation for change in this province. Since 1976, the Community Services Council Newfoundland Labrador has been advocating the role of the voluntary sector and its relationship with governments. In 1996 the government formed the Social Policy Advisory Committee to conduct public consultations and submit recommendations. In response to one of its reports, the government launched the Strategic Social Plan in 1998, noting complementary roles for government and the voluntary sector. In 2004, discussions with the Premier's Deputy Minister and representatives of the sector culminated in the CSC report *The Non-profit Sector as a Force for Sustainability and Renewal in Newfoundland and Labrador* which laid out recommendations to maximize the role of the sector, including the appointment of a Minister. These are just a few of the many initiatives and developments that have led to the current state of openness toward the non-profit and voluntary sector in Newfoundland and Labrador.

### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

**The Community Services Council Newfoundland and Labrador (CSC)** continues to be committed to strengthening and promoting the essential contribution that non-profit organizations make to the quality of community life, province-wide. The CSC connects people and organizations to community resources, mentors new community organizations, delivers training and brings the non-profit sector and government together on important issues. The mission of CSC is to encourage citizen engagement, to promote the integration of social and economic development and to provide leadership in shaping public policies. CSC does this through:

- collaboration with individuals, organizations, the private sector and governments at local, provincial, national and international levels,
- information sharing and public dialogue,
- research and analysis,
- networks and strategic alliances,
- advancement of the voluntary sector and promotion of volunteerism,
- pioneering innovative programs,
- building bridges and cultivating collaboration; and,
- harnessing the power of technology.

Some of the CSC's Community Programs include:

#### *Vibrant Communities St. John's ....Together Creating Possibilities*

The Community Services Council Newfoundland and Labrador is convening a multi-sector, community driven initiative to reduce poverty. Vibrant Communities St. John's

has engaged both provincial and municipal governments and agencies, the private sector, non-profit groups and people living on low income.<sup>37</sup>

#### *Community Enterprise in the Social Economy*

The CSC has long recognized the value of community enterprise. After several years of province-wide research, discussion, and promotion, CSC is now delivering workshops throughout the province for community groups and agencies through a new Community Enterprise Development Program. This initiative ties in with a Voluntary and Non-profit Secretariat priority to enhance social economy enterprises.

#### *The Charities File*

The Charities File is a joint project of the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks and the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development to build the capacity of charitable organizations across Canada. CSC provides the technical platform for the website. It is expected to expand to include small and rural charities through an Atlantic Canada Learning Exchange.<sup>38</sup>

The CSC conducts research on social policy and voluntary sector issues. It espouses an approach to planning that melds social and economic perspectives and strives to put social policy matters in the public eye through research, public forums, media interviews, submissions to federal and provincial governments, and participation in multi-organization committees.<sup>39</sup>

#### *Values Added CURA*

The Community University Research Alliance with Memorial University combined the strength of academic and community-based researchers to assess policy shifts and approaches to new models of governance and service delivery. They focus in part, on innovative strategies for government-community collaboration and citizen engagement in public policy development.

#### *Leadership Gap*

This research was conducted with funding from the Canadian Rural Partnership. It explored the nature of leadership and volunteer service among people residing in several rural regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **Government Policies and Initiatives:**

**The Rural Secretariat (RS)**<sup>40</sup> was established in 2004 in response to community feedback and is intended to build upon the lessons learned from the Strategic Social Plan (SSP). The Rural Secretariat focuses on sustainable development in all of the province's regions. Expanding on

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<sup>37</sup> For more information see [www.envision.ca/vibrantcommunities](http://www.envision.ca/vibrantcommunities)

<sup>38</sup> [www.thecharitiesfile.ca](http://www.thecharitiesfile.ca)

<sup>39</sup> Research is available at the CSC's website: <http://www.envision.ca/>

<sup>40</sup> More information about the Rural Secretariat is available online at: [http://www.assembly.nl.ca/business/tailed/RuralSecretariat\\_AnnualReport2007-08.pdf](http://www.assembly.nl.ca/business/tailed/RuralSecretariat_AnnualReport2007-08.pdf)

the number of regions and changing the make-up of regional councils to include more community representation has allowed the RS to have stronger linkages at a community level. The RS facilitates information sharing, informed dialogue and collaboration within regions. It encourages integrated thinking and shared decision making on regional issues. The RS engages citizens and stakeholders through its Provincial and Regional Councils in discussions with the provincial government about long-term regional sustainability.

The Rural Secretariat established a series of goals which were laid out in the *Activity Plan 2006-2008*.<sup>41</sup> A number of the goals have been successfully met lending momentum to the development of the community-based sector in the province.<sup>42</sup>

- In 2007-2008 about 900 individuals attended citizen engagement sessions. This compares to approximately 100 individuals in 2006-07 (December 2006 to March 2007).
- The **Rural Lens** is a means of ensuring that rural/regional concerns and priorities are considered in government policy, programs, service and budgetary decisions. Through a series of 17 questions in five categories (Policy objective, Consultation considerations, Regional impacts, Unintended impacts and Service delivery) the Rural Lens guides decision makers to consider the direct, indirect and unintentional impacts of decisions, policies and initiatives on larger and smaller communities within a region and, on client groups within a region.

In 2007, the Provincial Government made the following promises:<sup>43</sup>

- Designate a Minister Responsible for the Volunteer and Non-profit Sector and establish in the government a Volunteer and Non-profit Sector Office.
- Formalize a policy and program framework to strengthen and support the community-based sector and to enhance the development of social economy enterprises, especially in rural regions, as means of improving services.
- Recognize and celebrate the work of community volunteers.
- Produce a scope of work document through discussions with community organizations in the voluntary sector, to set the terms for an initiative.
- Strengthen the relationship between the government and the volunteer sector, to improve the grants process, and to identify opportunities for cooperation and collaboration.
- Work with volunteer and non-profit organizations on measures to enhance employment stability for organizational staff.

Following up on its public commitments, in 2007 Premier Williams named the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs also Responsible for the Volunteer and Non-Profit Sector. Shortly

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<sup>41</sup> <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/plans/plan2006-08.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> [http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/pdf/regional\\_activity\\_reports/2007-08/AR0708RSR0.pdf](http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/pdf/regional_activity_reports/2007-08/AR0708RSR0.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.pcparty.nf.net/blueprint200706.htm>

thereafter a Deputy Minister was named. In November 2007, the Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat (VNPS) was established within the Executive Council to respond to the needs of the voluntary and non-profit sector. The VNPS enhances and supports the provision of services by the non-profit and voluntary sector by:

- Strengthening the relationship and improving collaboration between the provincial government and the voluntary, non-profit sector.
- Enhancing the ability of the voluntary, non-profit sector to meet changing community needs.
- Promoting volunteerism and social enterprise.
- Facilitating the development of provincial government programs and policies which support the voluntary, non-profit sector.
- Fostering innovative and creative collaborative approaches.

Rural Secretariat [www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural](http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural)

Community Services Council Newfoundland and Labrador [www.envision.ca](http://www.envision.ca)

Executive Council, Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat [www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec](http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec)

## Prince Edward Island



### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

**The Human Resources Association of Nova Scotia (HRANS)** is the professional association for Human Resources in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. With more than 1,000 members representing more than 550 organizations, HRANS represents a diverse group of HR professionals and business leaders, including non-profit and voluntary sector organizations. Through regular programming HRANS offers many professional development and training opportunities to its members.

The **Voluntary Resource Centre** is small organization in Charlottetown seeking to bridge the gap between non-profit organizations across PEI. The VRC is composed of a number of member organizations that provide catalytic logistical support for those that are too small, or unable to invest in such supports internally. The VRC provides a permanent office facility and administrative and clerical support, such as a permanent mailing address to local voluntary organizations. Also, many vital inter-organizational connections are forged at the Centre, as it is a hub of activity for those involved in the non-profit community.

## New Brunswick



### Context

On December 5, 2006, the Premier of New Brunswick announced the Community Non-profit Task Force. The mandate of the Task Force was to examine challenges facing the non-profit sector in New Brunswick and to engage community organizations in identifying emerging community needs through a broad-based province-wide consultation process. The report was released in September 2007. Then in November 2007, the premier appointed a Minister and Deputy Minister responsible for the new portfolio of Community Non-Profit Organizations. The announcement positioned the appointment as a response to one of the key recommendations in the task force report.

### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

**The Volunteer Centre of Southeastern New Brunswick Inc. (VCB)** has over 150 registered agencies and organizations that offer numerous volunteer opportunities. The vision of the Volunteer Centre of Southeastern New Brunswick Inc. is to foster, promote and coordinate people and resources to deliver unique and creative solutions in serving the needs of the community.

The VCB is an umbrella organization that focuses on building capacity for volunteers in the community. It encourages local organizations to utilize volunteers to their full potential and celebrates the contribution of those volunteers. Training opportunities focus on volunteer management and board governance. Over the course of its 33 years of operation, the VCB has incubated many of the local non-profit agencies that continue to serve the community today; agencies such as the CARA Help-line, Ergon, Healthy Active Living for Older Adults, Senior's Information Centre, Support Group for Parent's of Multiple Births, Hospice of Greater Moncton and we are Host organization of Findmyway.ca Community Network.

The VCB plays a vital role in bringing attention to the impact of the voluntary sector in the community. Recently, VCB partnered with Enterprise Greater Moncton and United Way to conduct a survey of the economic impact of the voluntary sector in Greater Moncton. This information demonstrated the direct link between economic development and quality of life.

### Sector-Government Joint Cooperation:

It seems that a new relationship is in the making between the Government of New Brunswick and the non-profit sector in the province. As of March 2008 several steps were being taken to improve the connection between the non-profit sector and the Government:

- The provincial government responded favourably to the report produced by the Premier's Community Non-Profit Task Force, *Blueprint for Action*<sup>44</sup> with their own document: *Delivering on the Blueprint*.<sup>45</sup>
- The Community Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat has been established and is expected to be a fundamental component in forging the government-sector relationship.
- It is also expected that a process to allow NPVSOs to retain any budgetary surplus will be underway by the end of the 2008-09 fiscal year as well as access to multi-year funding for qualifying organizations.
- Access to government services and resources for the sector is also being communicated via a monthly newsletter, regional conferences, and the website.
- Government will encourage people to appreciate the value and importance of the voluntary sector and promote volunteerism and awareness across the province. It has taken on the organization of the NB Family and Community Volunteer Awards which will be granted in April 2009 during Volunteer Week.
- There will be an emphasis on heightening protection for volunteers and organizations.<sup>46</sup> There are several insurance options now available directly to the non-profit sector. The Secretariat will be promoting those options.

Between June 2008 and January 2009 the **Community Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat** has co-hosted five of seven regional conferences with the non-profit sector. The goal of these conferences has been to provide updates and communicate progress on actions from *Delivering on the Blueprint*. It has been an excellent opportunity for the sector to share experiences, exchange ideas about service delivery, and continue forging relationships to establish a stronger presence in New Brunswick. Participation at these five conferences has included a total of almost 300 individuals.

In the fall of 2008, four Topic Tables (working groups) were formed with the non-profit sector allowing them to provide direct input to the Secretariat on how to take action on specific recommendations. The topics for the working groups include:

- Multi-year funding - As part of their commitment to revamp the government-sector relationship, the province is going to "ensure that groups receive stable, multi-year funding [to offer organizations more predictability as they work on

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<sup>44</sup> [http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/promos/nptf/plan\\_en.pdf](http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/promos/nptf/plan_en.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/Promos/CNP/Report-e.pdf>

<sup>46</sup> The bullets above are all available at: <http://www.gnb.ca/0012/CNPO-OCSB/index-e.asp>

budgets]; work to reduce red tape and supply costs; and build better communications between government and Non-Profit groups.”<sup>47</sup>

- Environmental Trust Fund
- Summer employment (SEED Program)
- Employment of seniors during tourist season

In January 2009, the membership for a new Advisory Committee was finalized. The Committee includes non-profit representatives from all seven regions of the province as well as a chair person. Its mandate is to advise the Community Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat on the development of strategies and policies as they relate to the *Delivering on the Blueprint* recommendations.

Government of New Brunswick [www.gnb.ca](http://www.gnb.ca)

Community Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat [www.gnb.ca/volunteer](http://www.gnb.ca/volunteer)

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<sup>47</sup> <http://www.hrcouncil.ca/about/news-details.cfm?nid=42>



## Nova Scotia

### Context:

The Maritime Provinces are easily recognizable as a current focus of voluntary sector development. Nova Scotia's Volunteer Protection Act received Royal Assent in May 2002 and since that time; incredible developments have taken off across the province. In 2005, the Federation of Community Organizations was formed. In 2006, the first Minister of Volunteerism was appointed. The Department of Health Protection and Promotion (HPP) was asked to lead the volunteerism portfolio and in May 2007, an Advisory Council was formed. These developments are merely the tip of the iceberg with respect to the growth of the NPVS in Nova Scotia.

### Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Policies and Initiatives:

The **Federation of Community Organizations (FOCO)** currently provides services and development opportunities to voluntary sector organizations in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Their role is to:

- Build the capacity and strength of member agencies.
- Provide a unified voice on issues of relevance to the sustainability and growth of the sector.
- Provide networking opportunities to share good practice ideas and ways of working.
- Develop and extend training and educational opportunities.
- Deliver advocacy where appropriate.
- Support the voluntary sector to interact positively and proactively with other voluntary agencies, with government and with the public and private sectors by fostering good working relations and inclusion.

FOCO is involved in a number of development and leadership activities within and across the non-profit and voluntary sectors. Some successful initiatives include:

- FOCO acts as a resource and clearing house for a wide range of information and is a contact point between and amongst agencies.
- FOCO has developed a number of active alliances across sectors and has co-hosted information and training sessions in partnership with the United Way and with Dalhousie Non-Profit Leadership Program.
- FOCO is a national partner in the *Innovations – Shared Services – Adding Value to Non-Profit Agencies* project.
- FOCO is currently partnering on a province-wide research application to provide an in-depth report on salaries and compensation packages for voluntary sector agencies across Nova Scotia.
- FOCO's Executive Director sits on the Nova Scotia Volunteer Community Advisory Council.

In January 2006, **The Nova Scotia Canada Volunteerism Initiative (CVI)** released a report: *Talking with Volunteers . . . Recommendations for Government Action* which has provided the Government of Nova Scotia with a starting point, and a focused direction to assess the challenges and opportunities facing volunteers in the province. Former Minister of Volunteerism, The Honourable Barry Barnett has said of the report that it "presented the Government with a clear indication of the challenges facing volunteers in Nova Scotia. The recommendations in this report are a starting point as we move forward in developing a government action plan to support the role of the volunteers and the voluntary sector in Nova Scotia."<sup>48</sup>

### **Government Policies and Initiatives:**

In August 2008, the Government of Nova Scotia issued a progress report: *The Progress Report on Recommendations from the Nova Scotia–Canada Volunteerism Initiative Report: "Talking with Volunteers...Recommendations for Government Action"*<sup>49</sup> which shows what the Government of Nova Scotia is doing to address these concerns.

Some of the progress being made by the Government of Nova Scotia as it responds to the non-profit sector's needs includes:

### **Volunteerism and Insurance**

- Making insurance more accessible. Insurance is a complex matter with high costs. The voluntary sector has asked government to help organizations wade through this issue with training, education and some means of making insurance accessible and affordable.<sup>50</sup>
- Providing insurance information in layperson's terms. In April 2008, the Nova Scotia Government announced \$775,000 to support the issues surrounding insurance as it relates to volunteers and the voluntary sector.<sup>51</sup>
- Health Promotion and Protection will support the launch of the Volunteer Insurance Protection program, being spearheaded by Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, in partnership with the insurance industry. The first year of the program will involve an information outreach program to help volunteers and the community organizations learn about their risk assessment and insurance needs.
- An *Information Outreach Program* will be established in April 2009. This program will help demystify a group's insurance needs and outline how to conduct a risk management assessment based on the type of work it does in the community.

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/volunteerism/progress-update.pdf>

<sup>49</sup> [http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/repPub/CVI\\_Roundtable\\_Report.pdf](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/repPub/CVI_Roundtable_Report.pdf)

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

## Communication and Collaboration

- In a move toward greater communication, Health Promotion and Protection has established an informal network of volunteer coordinators from across the province to support communication and the sharing of best practices among regional volunteer groups.
- The newly formed Nova Scotia Volunteer Community Advisory Council (discussed below) completed its first year of quarterly meetings, and held its December meeting with the signing of the Collaboration Agreement between the Government of Nova Scotia and the voluntary sector. The Council will continue its work on the identification of key issues, development of recommendations, developing a relationship with government, and providing input on public policy.
- The Government supports the use of Round Tables to encourage networking, information sharing and the growth of partnerships between the voluntary sector and various provincial departments.

Building on the connections formed through the Table of Champions (Youth Secretariat) and the directions set out in the Child and Youth Strategy, the Youth Engagement Strategy will identify internal and external partners to encourage the recruitment of youth volunteers and support youth as community leaders.

The Nova Scotia Department of Health Promotion and Protection (HPP), which has continued to serve as the lead department on volunteerism is working with the voluntary sector to address opportunities and challenges in the sector. With the appointment of the Minister of Volunteerism in May 2006, HPP was asked to lead the volunteerism portfolio and includes volunteerism as one of nine *Responsibility Centres* under its jurisdiction.

The HPP's 2008-2009 Business Plan identifies the scope of its responsibility:

*Health Promotion and Protection is responsible for responding to emerging public health threats, preventing chronic disease and injury, and promoting health among Nova Scotians. Its role spans all aspects of public health, physical activity, sport and recreation, addiction services and volunteerism.*<sup>52</sup>

*Retirees as Volunteers Program:* The development of this new program will include identifying how Nova Scotians in their retired years can transfer the skill set developed throughout their careers to volunteer organizations in their community. The program will focus on information and awareness, promoting the value of volunteerism for sustainable communities, and the opportunities that exist in the province.

*Regional Volunteer Networks:* This program exists in communities and regions around the province, supporting the work of volunteer organizations and volunteers. HPP supports the

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/repPub/HPPBusinessPlan08-09.pdf>

work of these networks and helps to establish new networks. The formation of the 'Network of Networks' by HPP has provided the opportunity for sharing of best practices, identification of new opportunities and the coordination of funding options among participating organizations.

*Volunteer Resource Collection:* HPP and the Department of Education have worked with the voluntary sector throughout 2008 to identify a wide range of valuable volunteer resources to be made available to non-profit organizations, volunteers and community groups. Completion of this phase of work includes purchase of the materials and resources and their placement in nine Nova Scotia regional libraries.

*Internal Review of Government Interaction with the Voluntary Sector:* An inter-departmental government committee focused on volunteerism will coordinate discussions around more consistent procedures to apply for and account for public sector funding. This committee will also be undertaking an internal scan of departmental interaction with the sector to better understand the types of relationships that government has with the voluntary sector, and the ways to improve these connections. This is an important part of the implementation of the Collaboration Agreement, and the creation of the right environment for healthy dialogue and relationships.

#### **Sector-Government Joint Cooperation:**

Publically commissioned in April 2008, the **Nova Scotia Volunteer Community Advisory Council (NSVCAC)** brings together representatives from the voluntary sector as well as government to unite towards mutually beneficial outcomes.<sup>53</sup>

*The council will develop action plans to address key issues affecting volunteers, increase the number of volunteers and act as a communications link between the volunteer community and government. A new province-wide volunteer advisory council will help strengthen and increase the profile of volunteers. The 21-person council has representatives from a number of volunteer sectors including health, religion, environment, arts and culture, social development, sport and recreation, philanthropic and volunteerism promotion, and international development. The council also reflects the diversity of the province with members representing Acadian, African Nova Scotian, Aboriginal communities, as well as immigrants, persons with disabilities, seniors and youth. The advisory council will meet four times per year with the Minister of Volunteerism.*<sup>54</sup>

Building on recommendations made in the Nova Scotia-Canada Volunteerism Initiative Report, NSVCAC has helped develop a Collaboration Agreement with the Government of Nova Scotia. Signed in December 2008, it is a general framework and mechanism for enhancing the many

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<sup>53</sup> More information on the Nova Scotia Community Advisory Council is available online at:

[http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/volunteer\\_community\\_council.html](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/volunteer_community_council.html)

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20080428005>

relationships between government staff and non-profit organizations. It is not intended to prescribe specific actions, but provide some key principles to guide actions and outcomes. It does so by codifying numerous commitments both parties have made to one another including:

- Recognize the importance of sustained dialogue and collaboration to achieve common goals and objectives.
- Work toward the implementation of those common goals and objectives.
- Develop action plans, build relationships, develop and maintain accountability and provide stewardship and leadership.

**The Volunteerism Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee (VICC)** is a horizontal governmental committee dedicated to supporting and growing volunteerism and the voluntary sector in Nova Scotia. It is under the authority of the HPP, and has been established to investigate and recommend a provincial strategy and action plan for government through the Minister Responsible for Volunteerism. The VICC will work collaboratively with sector stakeholders to determine priorities for government action.

Nova Scotia Community Advisory Council

[www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/volunteer\\_community\\_council.html](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/volunteer_community_council.html)

Federation of Community Organizations (FOCO) [www.foco.ca](http://www.foco.ca)

Department of Health Protection and Promotion [www.gov.ns.ca/hpp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp)

Volunteerism Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee [www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/vicc](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/vicc)

## Canada



The Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) was a joint undertaking to build a deliberate relationship between the Government of Canada and the voluntary sector. Much of the impetus for this relationship-building came from the Voluntary Sector Roundtable (VSR), a coalition of 13 national organizations that reflected much of the sector in Canada. The VSR was formed in 1995 and with the support of a private foundation, lobbied the federal government to undertake action in the areas of capacity building, legal and regulatory reform for the sector and the creation of a deliberate and productive relationship with the entire voluntary sector

The Voluntary Sector Initiative was launched in June 2000, with \$95 million to be invested over the course of five years, and ended in 2005. The initiative was conducted jointly with a series of working groups co-chaired by sector and government representatives. The VSI engaged most parts of the sector in most parts of the country. Over 5000 people were involved in discussions and consultations. Their contact network proved to be one of the most enduring legacies of the VSI since many constituted the starting point for other coalitions across the country. Unfortunately, the relationship built through the VSI has not endured to any degree beyond the five years of the building period.

As for Canada as a whole, most provinces and territories are experiencing growth within the non-profit and voluntary sector. On a national stage however, it is difficult to map and measure its growth. Different mandates, population demographics, geography, management tactics and funding availability affect the status of the sector across the nation and make it very difficult to calculate and analyze comparable statistics. Nevertheless, national organizations are making great headway in identifying and strengthening the relationship between governments and NPVSOs.

The **HR Council for the Voluntary & Non-profit Sector (HR Council)**<sup>55</sup> works with organizations, educators, labour and government to identify and address issues related to paid employment in the voluntary and non-profit sector. The HR Council is one of more than 30 sector councils funded by the Government of Canada's Sector Council Program. Operating at arm's length from the government, sector councils are a platform for stakeholders to share ideas, concerns and perspectives about human resource issues and find solutions that benefit the sector in a collaborative and sustained manner.

The HR Council also publishes a monthly electronic newsletter and a range of research reports. It undertakes projects that respond to HR needs and challenges identified by the sector and reflects the interests of a broad range of stakeholders. Current projects include:

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<sup>55</sup> The HR Council's website, [www.hrcouncil.ca](http://www.hrcouncil.ca) is the premiere source of information, tools and research related to human resources in the voluntary and non-profit sector in Canada. The site includes a number of free tools and resources for non-profit organizations including a comprehensive HR Toolkit, an index of non-profit learning and training and a discussion forum.

- Core Competencies for Small Organizations,
- Developing Standards/Guidelines for Effective HR Management,
- Engaging Sub-sector Organizations in the Non-Profit Sector,
- Shared Services - Adding Value to Non-Profits,
- Tapping into the Talents of Early and Late Career,
- Voluntary and Non-Profit Labour Force Study; and,
- Workforce Strategies for the Voluntary & Non-Profit Sector.

**The Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP)** includes interesting information for the national stage in its Government Relations Yearly Review – issued in December 2007. They indicate that non-profit groups are calling for a National Charities Strategy to:

*Centralize a federal approach to the non-profit sector by incorporating tax and complementary measures that stimulate private donations, improving access to financing, and implementing reforms to the federal system of grants and contributions. Continued availability of data collected in the Satellite Account of Non-Profit Institutions and Volunteering, which is currently at risk of being eliminated as part of the Federal Expenditure Review, is a vital component of the National Charities Strategy.*

**The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD)** has been particularly active in promoting the importance of and providing advice on poverty reduction strategies for Canada. For example, the chair-elect of the Board represented the CCSD at a full-day consultation in Calgary that was organized by Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty for representatives of 20 industry and voluntary sector organizations.<sup>56</sup>

**Volunteer Canada** strives to engage in government relations and public policy dialogue, and to advance issues of importance to volunteerism in Canada from a public policy perspective. A Government Relations strategy has been developed that allows work in Government Relations to remain flexible and more operational from the strategic direction of the public policy initiatives.

Thanks to the leadership of Volunteer Canada through a letter writing campaign and contact with key government officials, the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating was saved from government cuts. Volunteer Canada met with the office of the Minister of Industry and was successful in communicating the importance of the survey to the non-profit sector. The Minister reported that he heard from many individuals and organizations that depend on the Survey to fulfill their missions.

Creative new means of building and maintaining volunteerism in communities are being explored, including a new initiative by Volunteer Canada. Volunteer Canada purchased the licensing to administer *the Points of Light and Hands On* network model in Canada and an initial *train-the-trainer* session was held in Toronto in February 2008 for interested volunteer centres

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.ccsd.ca/pubs/2007/ar0708.pdf>

and other national volunteer related organizations. This model offers valuable tools for individuals to become effective volunteers and for organizations to increase efficiency in volunteer program creation and delivery. Plans are in place to deliver more sessions for those volunteer centres unable to participate in the initial round.

**Imagine Canada** resulted from the union of two of Canada's leading charitable umbrella organizations: the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (CCP), and the Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations (NVO). Together they created Imagine Canada in 2003 and developed the goal of: *Advancing knowledge and relationships to foster effective and sustainable charitable and non-profit organizations.*

Imagine Canada's research describes the sector and how Canadians engage with it and identifies trends, issues and opportunities of concern while it serves to raise the sector's profile in the minds of Canadians. Its insights have helped influence and shape public policy and build both support and engagement from businesses, government, media and individual Canadians. The programs and services offered provide the sector with timely information and tools and ensure that community resources are available when required. Imagine Canada's library provides information for and about non-profits and charities. It is the largest collection of online non-profit resources in Canada.

**The Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks (the Federation)** was formed in July 2002 and now has 14 local, regional, provincial, and territorial non-profit and voluntary sector networks. Though different in structure, scope, and stage of development, they share a common purpose; to build connections, cohesion, and capacity among diverse organizations and enhance community vitality. The vision of the Federation says:

*The non-profit and voluntary sector is recognized and celebrated as an essential player in building the capacity of communities across Canada towards a caring and just society. The sector is well networked and actively engaged in public policy dialogue, at a local, regional, territorial, provincial and national level.*

The Federation's mission is to build connections, cohesion, and capacity in the non-profit and voluntary sector, in all regions of Canada, by strengthening cross-sector networks and by facilitating pan-Canadian public policy dialogue, through the following key objectives:

- To increase linkages and collaboration and to build capacity of cross sector non-profit and voluntary sector networks, that have emerged in communities, regions, provinces, and territories across Canada.
- To bring grassroots, locally-based, provincial, and territorial voices to pan-Canadian public policy dialogue.
- To convene and facilitate community, regional, provincial and territorial mobilization and engagement.

HR Council [www.hrcouncil.ca](http://www.hrcouncil.ca)

Volunteer Canada's [www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca)

Canadian Council on Social Development [www.ccsd.ca](http://www.ccsd.ca)

Imagine Canada [www.imaginecanada.ca](http://www.imaginecanada.ca)

Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks [www.voluntarynetwork.ca](http://www.voluntarynetwork.ca)

Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development [www.cvsrd.org](http://www.cvsrd.org)

## Quick Reference Guide to Major Online Resources

### British Columbia

Volunteer BC [www.volunteerbc.bc.ca](http://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca)  
VOCBC [www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/vocbc](http://www.volunteerbc.bc.ca/vocbc)  
VolWeb [www.volweb.ca](http://www.volweb.ca)  
BC-AIRS [www.bc-air.ca](http://www.bc-air.ca)  
BC GNPI [www.nonprofitinitiative.gov.bc.ca](http://www.nonprofitinitiative.gov.bc.ca)

### Alberta

Wild Rose Foundation [www.wildrosefoundation.ca](http://www.wildrosefoundation.ca)  
Muttart Foundation [www.muttart.org](http://www.muttart.org)  
Volunteer Alberta [www.volunteeralberta.ab.ca](http://www.volunteeralberta.ab.ca).  
CCVO [www.calgarycvo.org](http://www.calgarycvo.org)  
ECVO [www.evco.ca](http://www.evco.ca)  
Ministry of Immigration and Employment [www.employment.alberta.ca](http://www.employment.alberta.ca)  
Alberta Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Initiative [www.culture.alberta.ca/anvsi](http://www.culture.alberta.ca/anvsi)

### Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association [www.spra.sk.ca](http://www.spra.sk.ca)  
Community Initiatives Fund [www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/CIF](http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca/CIF)  
Department of Social Services [www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca](http://www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca)  
Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sports [www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca](http://www.tpcs.gov.sk.ca)

### Manitoba

Volunteer Manitoba [www.volunteermanitoba.ca](http://www.volunteermanitoba.ca)  
VNPSOM [www.voluntarysector.mb.ca](http://www.voluntarysector.mb.ca)  
Manitoba Family Services and Housing Ministry [www.gov.mb.ca](http://www.gov.mb.ca)

### Yukon

Department of Community Services [www.community.gov.yk.ca](http://www.community.gov.yk.ca)  
Yukon Volunteer Bureau [www.volunteerbureau.yk.ca](http://www.volunteerbureau.yk.ca)

### Northwest Territories

Former Volunteer NWT [www.volunteernwt.ca](http://www.volunteernwt.ca)  
Inuvik Interagency Committee [inuvikinteragency.org](http://inuvikinteragency.org)  
Department of Executive [www.executive.gov.nt.ca/initiatives](http://www.executive.gov.nt.ca/initiatives)  
GWNT Municipal and Community Affairs [www.maca.gov.nt.ca](http://www.maca.gov.nt.ca)

### Ontario

Centre for Social Innovation [www.socialinnovation.ca](http://www.socialinnovation.ca)  
Ontario Non-Profit Network [www.ontariononprofitnetwork.ca](http://www.ontariononprofitnetwork.ca)  
Pillar Non-Profit Network [www.pillarnonprofit.ca](http://www.pillarnonprofit.ca)

Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Sector Organizations [www.cvsrd.org/eng/ocvo/events.htm](http://www.cvsrd.org/eng/ocvo/events.htm)  
Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration [www.citizenship.gov.on.ca](http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca)

### **Québec**

Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec [www.fcabq.org](http://www.fcabq.org)  
Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale [www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/communiques](http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/communiques)

### **Newfoundland and Labrador**

Rural Secretariat [www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural](http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural)  
Community Services Council Newfoundland and Labrador [www.envision.ca](http://www.envision.ca)  
Executive Council, Voluntary and Non-Profit Secretariat [www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec](http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/exec)

### **New Brunswick**

Government of New Brunswick [www.gnb.ca](http://www.gnb.ca)  
Community Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat [www.gnb.ca/volunteer](http://www.gnb.ca/volunteer)

### **Nova Scotia**

Nova Scotia Community Advisory Council  
[www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/volunteer\\_community\\_council.html](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/volunteer_community_council.html)  
Federation of Community Organizations (FOCO) [www.foco.ca](http://www.foco.ca)  
Department of Health Protection and Promotion [www.gov.ns.ca/hpp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp)  
Volunteerism Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee [www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/vicc](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/vicc)

### **Canada**

HR Council [www.hrcouncil.ca](http://www.hrcouncil.ca)  
Volunteer Canada's [www.volunteer.ca](http://www.volunteer.ca)  
Canadian Council on Social Development [www.ccsd.ca](http://www.ccsd.ca)  
Imagine Canada [www.imaginecanada.ca](http://www.imaginecanada.ca)  
Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks [www.voluntarynetwork.ca](http://www.voluntarynetwork.ca)  
Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development [www.cvsrd.org](http://www.cvsrd.org)

### **Keeping this Snapshot Current:**

The information contained in this snapshot was based on publically available material at the time of research in December 2008 and January 2009. We apologize for any information that was incorrect or outdated. We hope to continue updating this snapshot periodically. Please send us any feedback, corrections or new information as it becomes available.

### **For More Information:**

If you have any questions pertaining to the content of this document, please contact the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development using the information below.

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## **Part B:**

**Summary of the Gathering of Counterparts II  
February 9-10, 2009. Halifax, Nova Scotia  
Building *Sustainable* Relationships Between the Non-  
Profit/Voluntary Sector and Provincial/Territorial  
Governments**

## Introduction

The second annual Gathering of Counterparts Conference took place in Halifax, Nova Scotia on February 9th and 10<sup>th</sup> 2009. 41 leaders from non-profit/voluntary sector networks and provincial/territorial governments came together to share their experiences and explore strategies to strengthen their relationships. This summary provides highlights of the many rich conversations that took place during the conference and identifies the next steps required for moving forward both individually and collectively.

## Purpose:

The on-going purpose of the Gathering of Counterparts is to facilitate the sharing of experiences, resources, and strategies, among those actively working to build intentional relationships between the non-profit/voluntary sector and provincial/territorial governments, and to promote collaboration across jurisdictions within each sector and between the two.

## Focus and Themes:

At our first Gathering in 2008, we explored numerous elements of intentional relationship-building including framework agreements, leadership organizations, infrastructure, and joint mechanisms to guide and monitor the implementation of the collaborative initiative. One of the concerns that emerged out of last year's conversation was *the challenge of continuity* - keeping up the momentum and weathering changes in government despite the shifting social-political climate. The focus of this year's Gathering was, therefore, on the importance of developing *long-term, ongoing* relationships, hence our theme: **Building Sustainable Relationships between the Non-Profit/Voluntary Sector and Provincial/Territorial Governments**. We identified the following three sub-themes to be used as conversation starters:

- Strengthening our capacity to participate in collaborative relationships
- Broadening the engagement (across the non-profit/voluntary sector and across government)
- Promoting the value – making the case for collaboration

## Format:

For each of the above sub-themes, selected participants provided a brief presentation to serve as a spring board for the table discussions which followed. Time was also set aside for government and non-profit/voluntary sector counterparts to meet together and to explore challenges that are unique to their sector, within the context of the culture in which they work. The agenda was designed to provide a balance of structured information-sharing, facilitated table discussion, and informal networking.

*Please see Appendix A for the Agenda and Appendix B for a list of Participants.*

## Day One – Monday, February 9, 2009

### Welcome and Opening Remarks

The day was co-facilitated by Anne Perigo, the Director of Regional Services and Volunteerism with the Nova Scotia Department Health Promotion and Protection and Annette Vautour-MacKay, Executive Director of the Volunteer Centre of Eastern New Brunswick. The Honourable Brian Kenny, Minister of New Brunswick's Community Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat and The Honourable Barry Barnet, Minister for Energy, previously Minister of Health Promotion and Protection, on behalf of The Honourable Pat Dunn, Nova Scotia's Minister of Health, opened the day with official greetings on behalf of their governments, emphasizing the importance of non-profit/voluntary sector-government collaboration and wishing participants a vibrant and productive conversation.

### Overview:

Building on the conversations of the first Gathering of Counterparts, participants were provided with an overview of the event, background papers,<sup>57</sup> and a Pan-Canadian Snapshot of the year. In the past two years, there have been significant developments in many provinces and territories with respect to building intentional relationships between the non-profit/voluntary sector and government. While many governments have demonstrated a long standing interest in promoting and recognizing *volunteers*, we are now seeing a growing interest in building the capacity of *voluntary organizations* and *the non-profit/voluntary sector* as a whole.

In government, lead ministries, branches, departments, and units have been established with an explicit mandate to connect with the non-profit/volunteer sector, to develop capacity building programs, and to improve public policy and the legislative environment. "Responsible for the voluntary sector" and other similar titles are a new dimension being added to the portfolio of many ministers and deputy ministers recently. This trend clearly indicates the government's shift toward relationship development.

At the same time, leadership organizations in the non-profit/voluntary sector; networks, chambers, councils, and consortia are growing both in number and strength in many provinces, territories, and municipalities. While they are different in size, structure, and name, they share a common purpose to build connection, cohesion, and capacity in the sector, bringing together diverse organizations, and dealing with cross-sector issues. Many of these networks are linked together through the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks.

These developments are taking place within the context of a number of key global trends including:

- The development of civil society
- Holistic and integrated approaches (working across sub-sectors)

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<sup>57</sup> Carter, Susan and Paula Speevak Sladowski, *Deliberate Relationships between the Non-profit/Voluntary Sector and Governments: An Unfolding Story*, Wellesley Institute 2008

- Horizontality (working across government departments)
- Multi-sector and cross-jurisdictional initiatives
- Place-based decision-making
- Emergency preparedness and community resiliency

*Please see presentation in Appendix C*

### **Round Table Introductions**

The first morning involved an extended round table, where all participants introduced themselves and provided an overview of their organization, department, or initiative, as well as their particular role. It was noted that all initiatives mentioned last year still exist and have made tremendous progress; that there were more jurisdictions present, and that there were larger delegations from most provinces/territories.

*Details of activities in each jurisdiction appear in Part A – Pan-Canadian Snapshot.*

On the following page, we have created a Features Table, describing components of the relationship between the government and the sector based on the observations mentioned by participants in the round table introductions. It should be noted that no jurisdiction has all the features and each will continue to develop in their own way and at its own pace.

## Features of Non-Profit/Voluntary Sector – Government Relationship

<b>Non-Profit/Voluntary Sector – Government Initiative</b>
Joint initiative to create an intentional relationship between government and the non-profit/voluntary sector
<b>Framework Agreement</b>
Declaration, accord, or policy that articulates the value of the sector, the importance of non-profit/voluntary sector-government collaboration, principles of engagement, and common purposes
<b>Lead Ministry</b>
Responsible for linking with the non-profit/voluntary sector
<b>Minister</b>
Responsible for the non-profit/voluntary sector in Portfolio
<b>Secretariat</b>
Bureaucratic structure, within government, with staff to undertake the implementation and promotion of non-profit/voluntary sector-government collaboration
<b>Advisory Council</b>
Members of the non-profit/voluntary sector to provide advice to government on programs and policies
<b>Non-Profit/Voluntary Sector Leadership Organization</b>
Network, council, chamber, or consortium that reflects the diversity, deals with sector-wide issues, and builds connection, cohesion, and capacity of the sector
<b>Government Relations Committee</b>
Individuals from the public, private, and non-profit/voluntary sector to develop strategies for the non-profit/voluntary sector to relate to government
<b>Joint Mechanism</b>
Comprised of leaders from the non-profit/voluntary sector and government to guide, promote, and monitor the collaborative relationship
<b>Horizontality Vehicle</b>
Inter-departmental, inter-ministerial body that is convened and mobilized to generate interest and involvement across government
<b>Engagement Strategy</b>
Cross-sector consultation, information-sharing, and mobilization around emerging issues and development of collective agenda
<b>Knowledge Hub &amp; Communications</b>
Web-site containing information and resources related to the non-profit/voluntary sector, e-bulletins, newsletters, and alerts

## Background for Table Discussion #1

### Strengthening our Capacity to Participate in Collaborative Relationships

Participating in a collaborative relationship requires capacity in a variety of areas including leadership, financial and human resources, and basic infrastructure. Whether in the non-profit/voluntary sector or in government, success will depend upon the capacity to convene and communicate with respective constituencies and to be seen as a knowledge hub or centre of expertise.

As a springboard for the round table discussions, we had two brief presentations, one by Constance Exley, Director of the Ontario Non-Profit Network and another by Mark Medgyesi and Barbara Grantham, co-chairs of the British Columbia Government Non-Profit Initiative. See summary below:

***The Ontario Non-profit Network's (ONN)*** strength has been the organic nature of its evolution and structure. Constance described it as *“A network of networks that helps to build communication and coordination amongst non-profit organizations working for the public benefit in Ontario.”* The network led an effective mobilization around the proposed amendments to the Ontario Corporations Act, providing clear and accessible policy analysis, working with the Government of Ontario to extend and augment the consultation process, and distributing quality and timely information to the sector.

The network has a relatively small centre or infrastructure, leveraging the strengths and assets of its members to carry out its work. Constellations are created around themes where clusters of people and organizations agree to work together on a shared area of interest. A web-site provides transparency and opportunities for organizations to engage, participate, and shape the work of the network.

***The British Columbia Government Non-Profit Initiative (GNPI)*** has emerged over the past eighteen months as a joint initiative between the Government of British Columbia and the Non-Profit/Voluntary Sector with the stated purpose of developing a *“proactive, intentional and purposeful working relationship to produce better outcomes for communities and citizens, recognize separate but complementary strengths, and find the best use of combined strengths.”* The success of the initiative to date can be attributed to the careful attention paid to ensuring symmetry in leadership, use of resources, and decision-making authority. One co-chair comes from government and the other comes from the non-profit/voluntary sector, demonstrating this symmetry.

### Broadening the Engagement

As important as it is for government departments and non-profit/voluntary sector networks to have capacity to provide leadership, it is essential that they are also able to build relationships with other departments and a diverse range of organizations. How can we broaden the engagement so that we are seen as credible and relevant sector-wide or government-wide? To

illustrate the challenges and successes of this sub-theme, Katherine Van Kooy, Russ Dahms and Tom Thackeray presented on the Alberta Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Initiative.

***The Alberta Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Initiative (ANVSI)***, guided by a Collaboration Committee made up of even numbers of government and non-profit/voluntary sector representatives is described as *“a collaborative partnership between the Government of Alberta (GOA) and the non-profit/voluntary sector (NPVS) with a commitment to work towards solutions for commonly shared, cross-departmental/cross-sectoral issues.”* In the first phase leaders were involved in the development of the Framework Agreement which was signed in August 2007. Since that time, each sector has been exploring strategies to broaden the engagement and solidify their respective infrastructure.

*Please see all three presentations in Appendix D*

### **Highlights of Table Discussion #1 - Capacity to Collaborate and Broadening the Engagement**

Following these presentations, participants worked at their tables addressing the following questions:

- *What are we currently doing to build capacity to collaborate and to broaden the engagement?*
- *What could we do more of or better?*

Highlights of these conversations were recorded on flip-charts and reported back to the plenary session. These are captured on the table that follows.

Current Practices	Strategies for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Websites (Both government sponsored and non-profit/voluntary sector sponsored)</li> <li>• Information hub</li> <li>• E-bulletins</li> <li>• Face-to-face meetings</li> <li>• Training opportunities</li> <li>• Regional conferences</li> <li>• Advisory committees</li> <li>• Secretariats (within government).</li> <li>• Networks/umbrella organizations (within the non-profit/voluntary sector)</li> <li>• Inter-ministerial tables</li> <li>• Framework Agreements</li> <li>• Ministers appointed with sector portfolio</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High speed internet access</li> <li>• Create single point of entry for sector (within government)</li> <li>• Build platform that is not based on personalities (one that is sustainable after personalities change)</li> <li>• Need to create common language</li> <li>• Streamline applications for common application processes (Reduce red tape)</li> <li>• Get information to small communities</li> <li>• More engagement within diverse communities</li> <li>• Focus on positive elements: asset-based community development</li> <li>• Engage youth</li> <li>• More partnerships with academic institutions</li> <li>• Need for focus on immigration integration, etc.</li> <li>• Work with the private sector for promotion of social enterprise</li> <li>• Funding for long-term planning</li> <li>• More sharing of resources without a reduction of funding (but for the purpose of enhancing service)</li> <li>• Use four dimensions of sustainability (environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability)</li> <li>• We need a department/minister responsible <i>and</i> we need commitment and action from all departments and government and the sector</li> <li>• Promote the value (intrinsic, economic, social) of what the non-profit/voluntary sector does</li> <li>• Evidence based data/research needed for making the case</li> <li>• Link between social and economic development</li> <li>• Joint policy development (structures needed to promote this)</li> <li>• Put egos and territory aside to create leadership entity within the non-profit/voluntary sector</li> <li>• Look at what is currently working and build upon existing systems</li> <li>• Promote multi-sector joint service delivery approach</li> <li>• Go away from this event → each person to pick an action/activity to follow up on</li> </ul>

**Plenary Discussion on Capacity to Collaborate and Broadening the Engagement:**

Several common themes emerged from among the table discussions, for instance; the recognition that, while we may be talking about building relationships between sectors or between institutions/organizations, we are still talking about relationships among and between *people*. Two primary problems were identified. Because of the transitional nature of civil service and the volatility within the sector, it can be difficult to have the same players around the table for more than a year. The other problem is that there are still leaders in both sectors that can become mired in old paradigms and sometimes propagate misconceptions about the other sector. The starting point and end point should be the recognition of our shared interests in improving quality of life for citizens and building resilient communities.

**Reception at Pier 21**

Hosted by The Honourable Brian Kenny, Minister of New Brunswick's Community Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat and The Honourable Barry Barnet, Minister for Energy, previously Minister of Health Promotion and Protection, on behalf of The Honourable Pat Dunn, Nova Scotia's Minister of Health, participants visited the Pier 21 Exhibit, which was then followed by a reception.

## Day Two, Tuesday, February 10, 2009

The second day was co-facilitated by Margaret Fraser, Executive Director of the Federation of Community Organizations (Halifax Regional Municipality), and Nicole Smith, Executive Director of the Community Non-Profit Organizations Secretariat.

### Background for Table Discussion #2 Promoting the Value – The Case for Collaboration

Relationships between the government and the non-profit/voluntary sector seem to go in cycles. There are times when we feel we are starting all over again; re-inventing the wheel. With changes in government, turnover of sector leadership and financing issues can create periodical hibernation. How can we develop a basic case for collaboration that can weather such changes? As a springboard for this discussion, the delegation from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick jointly reflected on basic interventions that can help both sectors overcome a government change:

- |                                         |                                    |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Making the connection                | 4. Generating awareness            |
| 2. Solidifying deliberate relationships | 5. Building resources and capacity |
| 3. Working horizontally                 | 6. Understanding the partners      |

*Making the connection* involves aligning the work in and with the non-profit/voluntary sector to specific government priorities, programs and policies so that the value and contributions made by the sector are more explicit. *Solidifying the deliberate relationships* requires formal structure and dedicated resources to ensure that collaboration is institutionalized and ongoing. *Working horizontally* involves linking with other government departments, outside the one that has the lead/mandate to connect with the sector. *Generating awareness* incorporates promoting the value of the non-profit/voluntary sector to society and the importance of government intentionally collaborating with the sector. *Building resources and capacity* requires enough infrastructure (designated staff, web-site, communications vehicles) to keep things moving, support the collaboration, and cover the costs of participation, including travel. Finally, *Understanding the partners* involves learning about each others' culture, realities, and context and trying to see through the lens of the other without judgment.

**Highlights of Table Discussion #2 Promoting the Value – Building the Case**

Following the presentation, participants worked at tables and were once again asked; what are we currently doing and what strategies could help us move forward? Each table recorded the findings of their discussion on flip-charts. The highlights are detailed below.

<b>Current Practice</b>	<b>Strategies for Moving Forward</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public declaration of value and commitment</li> <li>• Dissemination of information                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Talking</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Code(s) of practice</li> <li>• Collaboration agreements</li> <li>• Describe basis of relationships</li> <li>• Government departments sharing information</li> <li>• Pan-Canadian collaboration                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Gathering of Counterparts</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Three partners: politicians, public service and non-profit sector</li> <li>• Formal mechanism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep the overarching purpose in mind – solving social issues and improving community health</li> <li>• Make enough difference to celebrate your wins</li> <li>• Recognize collaboration takes time and <i>resources</i></li> <li>• Pan-Canadian process for sharing best practices</li> <li>• Move from talking about issues to action with a focus on outcomes</li> <li>• Develop succession planning and knowledge transfer strategies in both sectors</li> <li>• Build enough structure so that when governments/ministers change the connection to the sector is entrenched</li> <li>• Ensure buy-in among senior leadership (deputy minister/CEO and executive directors.)</li> <li>• Continuously educate new leaders (both sectors)</li> <li>• Raise awareness among politicians</li> <li>• Clarify expectations for government and sector (capacity/limitations)</li> <li>• Increase horizontal dialogue (across government and across the sector)</li> <li>• Need to be more honest and trusting of each other when sharing information and concerns</li> <li>• Build allies (business) to say what non-profit supports/does best Engage in more joint policy development</li> <li>• Take equal responsibility to understand each others’ cultures</li> <li>• Increase media relations activities</li> </ul>

**Plenary on Promoting the Value – Making the Case**

Having a significant number of participants assembled at the Gathering from different jurisdictions was seen to be a positive step towards building the case. Politicians and senior public servants can use the

models from other jurisdictions to lend legitimacy and influence developments at home. The documents produced by individual organizations or department, across the country, and through the Gathering of Counterparts, were also seen to be a valuable resource for making the case locally.

A number of tensions were described. We explored benefits of having a *focal point*, within a single department or organization, versus the importance of having *broader engagement*, across departments or across the sector. There was discussion about the effectiveness of individual champions versus an institutional mandate. We looked at models that promoted *continuity and commitment* of individuals versus those that encouraged *rotational participation*. Comparisons were made between leadership organizations and government secretariats that were positioned as being experts versus those that saw themselves as facilitators with more inclusive involvement.

Finally, it was understood that we need to create a vision or long-term strategic plan for the non-profit/voluntary sector which includes its relationship with government. Governments can support and participate in the development of a broad-based policy framework that articulates the respective roles of each sector. One group explored the elements of collaboration and strategies for improvement.

It was underscored that *strong leadership* in each sector is fundamental to the relationship building process. We need champions, catalysts, facilitators, navigators, implementers, allies, supporters, and engaged constituents.

Elements of Collaboration	Strategies for Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity of purpose</li> <li>• Common goal</li> <li>• Trust</li> <li>• Mutual value and respect</li> <li>• Open conversation</li> <li>• Understanding – leads to practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Really listening</li> <li>• Two way conversation – feedback</li> <li>• The right participants</li> <li>• Learning from others</li> <li>• Continue to invest</li> </ul>

**Sector Lunches:**

While most of the gathering was spent in mixed groups, space was created at lunch time for the government counterparts to meet together as a group and the non-profit/voluntary sector counterparts to meet on their own. The objectives for these sessions were as follows:

1. Review last year’s comments – what progress has been made?
2. Priority actions for next year?
3. Any mechanisms for follow through?
4. What have you heard at this session you would like to discuss?
5. Other issues?

### Voluntary Sector Lunch-time Session

Themes	Potential Strategies/Next Steps
1. Response to the current economic situation	1. Raise this issue with leadership organizations, government secretariats, and joint meetings
2. Engage with municipalities	2. Connect with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to explore collaboration (possibility of getting involved with their next conference)
3. Move the issue into the political arena	3. Connect with the Council of the Federation (possibility get on the agenda of the next meeting)
4. Relationship with national organizations	4. Initiate contact and explore relationships
5. The role of the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks	5. Share information with all participants about the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks
6. Facilitating exchanges of information	6. A) Hold quarterly tele-conferences to do round table updates with non-profit/voluntary sector participants B) Organize regional meetings or calls C) Host themed tele-conferences led by those with an interest or area of expertise
7. Collective vs. individual agendas	7. Support each others' work through information sharing and identify any common themes
8. Raise the profile of the sector and our work in our respective provinces and territories	8. Exchange promotional material that each has produced for adaptation as appropriate

It was noted that several of the networks participating in the gathering had already done some work with respect to the impact of the economy on the non-profit/voluntary sector and this could be shared among participants. For example, consultations with organizations have been held in many communities, surveys have been conducted, and briefs have been written, with recommendations to government for consideration to the sector in any stimulus package that is created.

**Government Counterparts Lunch-time Discussion:****Strategic directions for government representatives**

1. National roundtable
  - Conference calls
  - Extension to Counterparts Gathering meeting
2. Investigate further directions for databases i.e. Guidestar
3. What are the strategic policies/drivers to which we can connect?
4. Reduce administrative burden to benefit service delivery
5. Leveraging additional funding sources to align with priority areas

As part of the meeting of government counterparts, there was agreement to find a way to continue the dialogue through tele-conferences and electronic communications. A matrix was also created to track the developments in each jurisdiction and to keep an inventory of models and resources to be shared.

**Connecting with National Organizations and the Federation Government**

The question of how to connect with national organizations and federal departments came up a number of times during the discussions. While it was agreed that time is needed for provincial/territorial counterparts to connect around their particular issues, future Gathering of Counterparts conferences could also include time for national conversations, around common interests. This could involve adding a day to the event or expanding on our efforts to engage outside the formal agenda as we did this year. For example, the day before our event we worked with the Human Resource Council to hold a session about their work in provinces and territories. In the morning of our second day, a breakfast session was organized for Imagine Canada to make a presentation about Guidestar (See Appendix E for presentation) and to explore potential collaboration with the provinces and territories.

**Conclusion**

Overall, there was a sense of satisfaction in the progress made in many of the jurisdictions over the past year. Several counterparts had been in contact with one another to exchange information and resources. It was noted that we need to continue to expand the engagement to include Quebec and Nunavut. There was also consensus that we should find a meaningful way to connect with national organizations and federal departments. There was a definite interest among participants to hold another Gathering of Counterparts and for each of the sectors to find ways to connect with one another, in a more systematic way, through regular teleconferences and other electronic communications. Participants left with a sense of optimism about the progress that has been made to-date and the foundation that has been laid for the coming year.

*Please see evaluation results in Appendix E*

**Documents and Resources:**

All documents referred to in this report have been posted on the web-site of the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development ([www.cvsrd.org/connections/counterparts](http://www.cvsrd.org/connections/counterparts)). If you have any reports, studies, articles, policies, or other material relevant to this work, we are happy to add to this collection.

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613-520-2600 ext. 1835

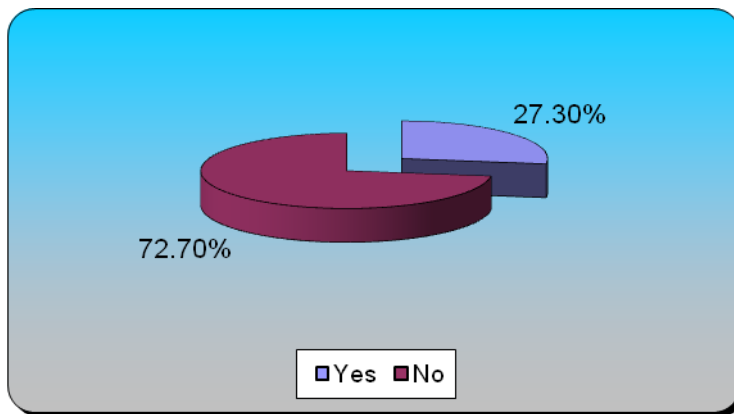
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**Evaluations:**

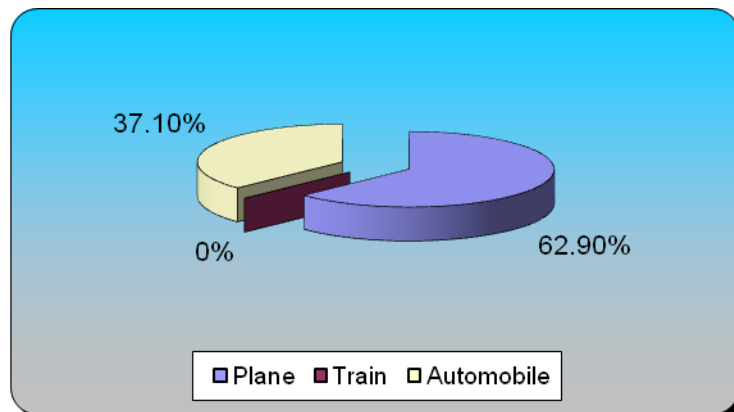
**Turning Graphical Results by Question**

**Session Name: Counterparts Opening – Icebreaker Results**

1.) Are you currently suffering from jet lag?		Responses
Yes	9	27.27%
No	24	72.73%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100%</b>

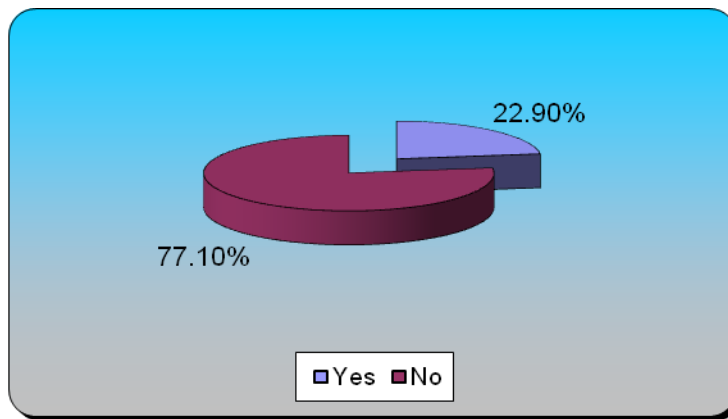


2.) What was your main mode of transportation for getting here?		Responses
Plane	22	62.86%
Train	0	0%
Automobile	13	37.14%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100%</b>



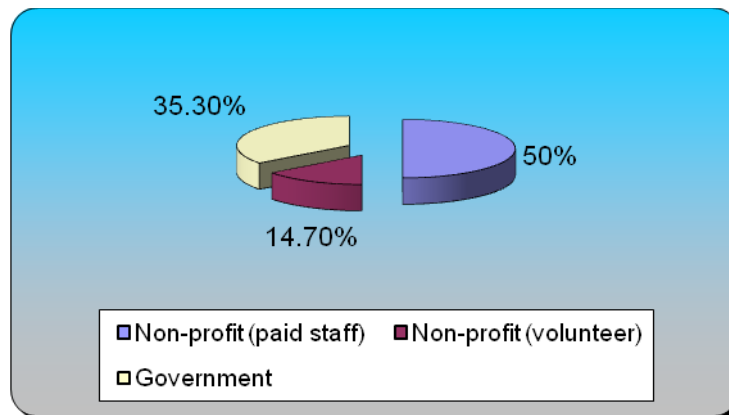
**3.) Did you participate in last year's Counterparts gathering in Calgary?**

	<b>Responses</b>	
Yes	8	22.86%
No	27	77.14%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100%</b>



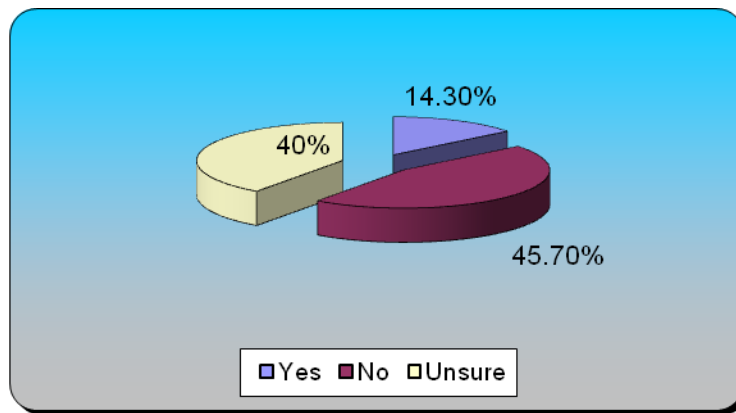
**4.) Are you...**

	<b>Responses</b>	
Non-profit (paid staff)	17	50%
Non-profit (volunteer)	5	14.71%
Government	12	35.29%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>



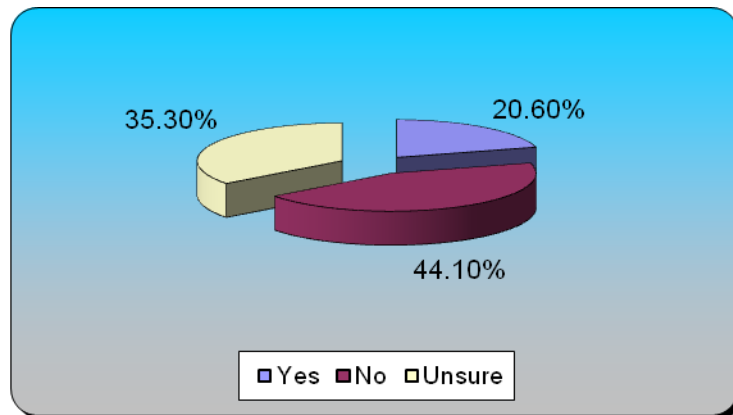
**5.) Does your province have a directory of provincial government services available to the non-profit sector ?**

		Responses
Yes	5	14.29%
No	16	45.71%
Unsure	14	40%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100%</b>



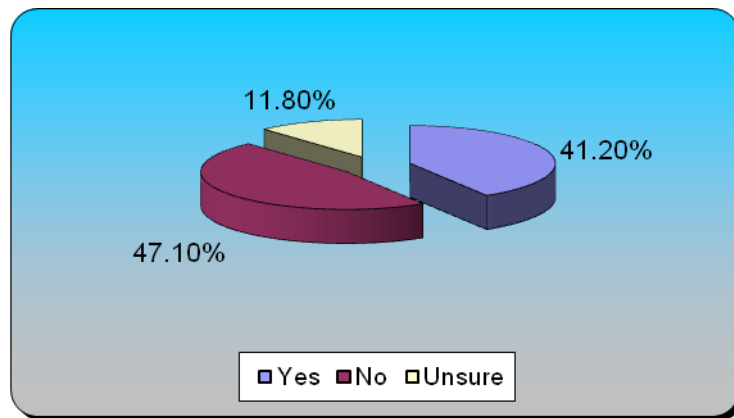
**6.) Does your province have a directory of provincial community services available to the non-profit sector ?**

		Responses
Yes	7	20.59%
No	15	44.12%
Unsure	12	35.29%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>



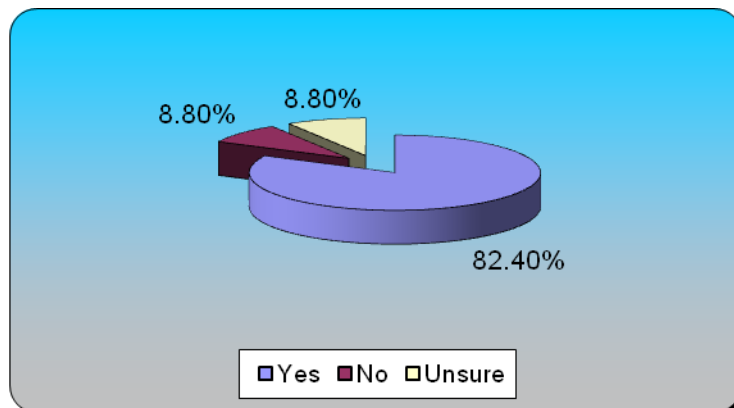
**7.) Have you created any partnerships with another province during the past year (either government or non-profit)?**

	<b>Responses</b>	
Yes	14	41.18%
No	16	47.06%
Unsure	4	11.76%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>



**8.) Do you feel that your province has made progress since last year's Counterparts Gathering in strengthening the relationship between government and the non-profit sector ?**

	<b>Responses</b>	
Yes	28	82.35%
No	3	8.82%
Unsure	3	8.82%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100%</b>



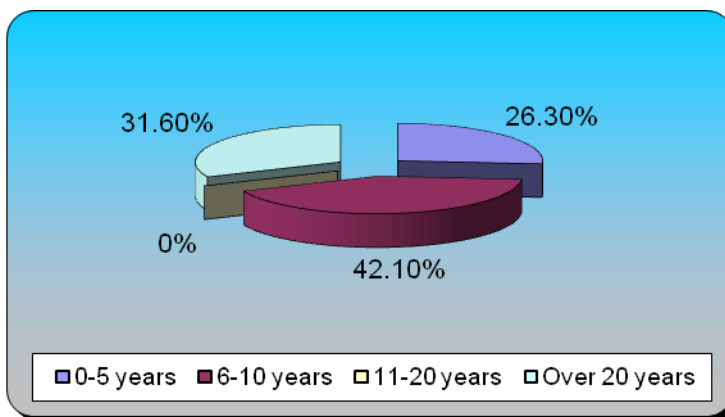
### Turning Graphical Results by Question

#### Session Name: Counterparts Evaluation: Feedback

1.) If you are a non-profit sector organization, how old is your group?

Responses

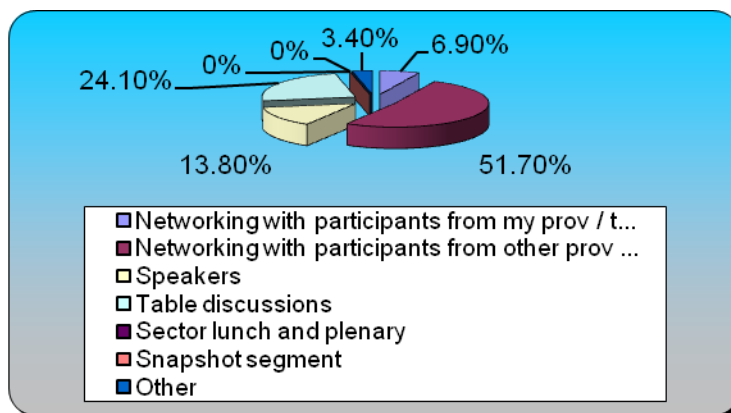
Age Group	Count	Percentage
0-5 years	5	26.32%
6-10 years	8	42.11%
11-20 years	0	0%
Over 20 years	6	31.58%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100%</b>



2.) What did you enjoy most about Monday's session?

Responses

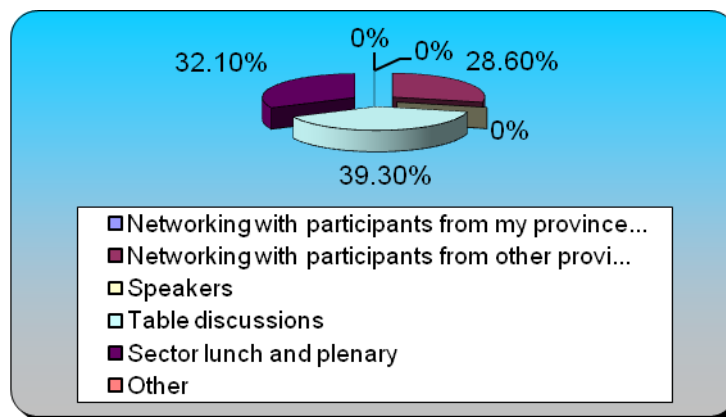
Activity	Count	Percentage
Networking with participants from my prov / t...	2	6.90%
Networking with participants from other prov ...	15	51.72%
Speakers	4	13.79%
Table discussions	7	24.14%
Sector lunch and plenary	0	0%
Snapshot segment	0	0%
Other	1	3.45%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>



**3.) What did you enjoy most about today's session?**

**Responses**

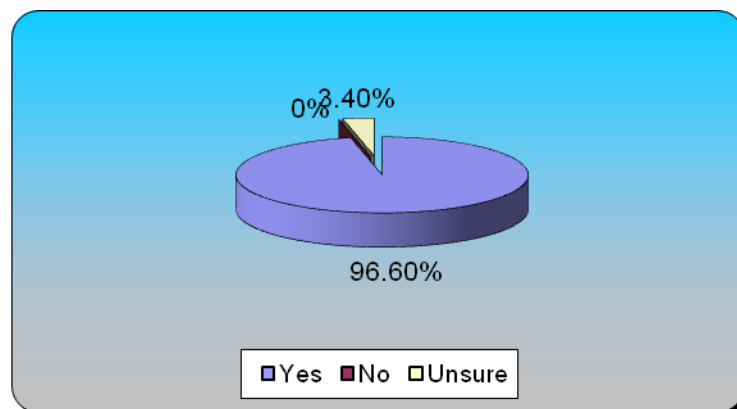
Networking with participants from my province...	0	0%
Networking with participants from other provi...	8	28.57%
Speakers	0	0%
Table discussions	11	39.29%
Sector lunch and plenary	9	32.14%
Other	0	0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>



**4.) Did you find this Gathering to be an effective use of your time?**

**Responses**

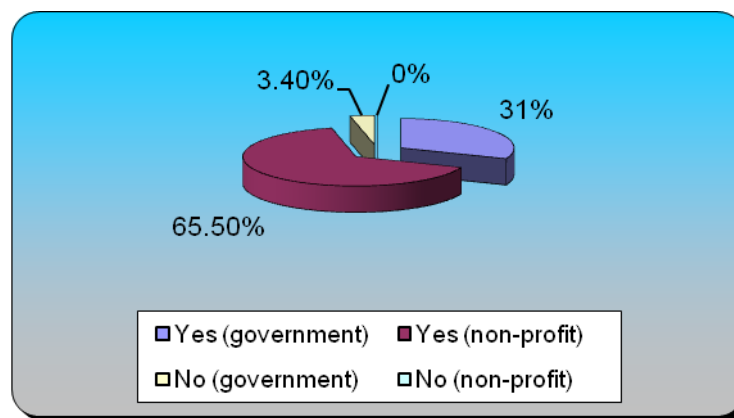
Yes	28	96.55%
No	0	0%
Unsure	1	3.45%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>



**5.) Did you feel that you were the appropriate person to have attended this Gathering?**

**Responses**

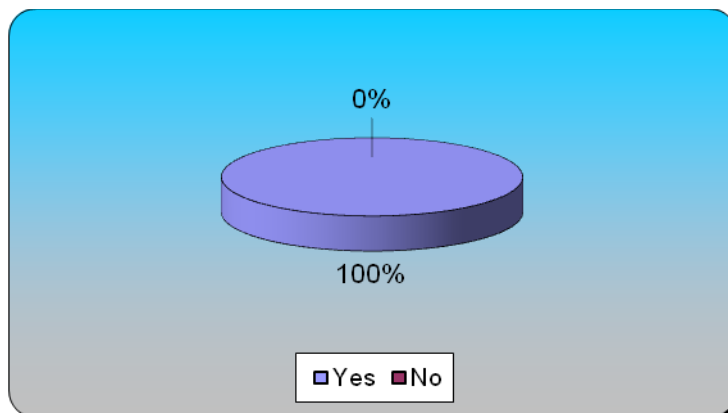
Yes (government)	9	31.03%
Yes (non-profit)	19	65.52%
No (government)	1	3.45%
No (non-profit)	0	0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>



**6.) Would you like to see another Counterparts Gathering occur in the Future?**

**Responses**

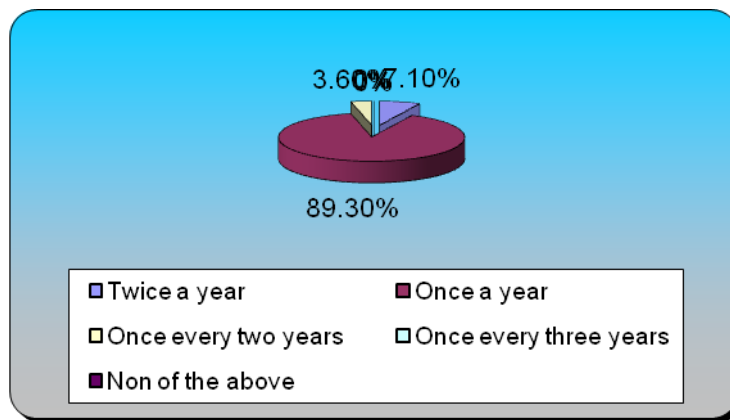
Yes	27	100%
No	0	0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>



**7.) If yes, what frequency would you recommend?**

**Responses**

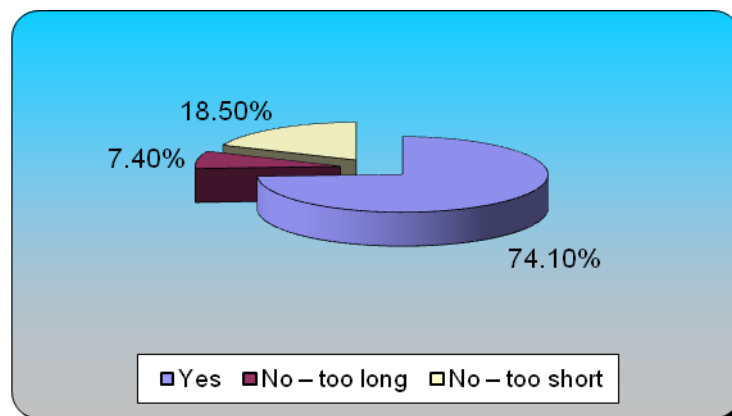
Twice a year	2	7.14%
Once a year	25	89.29%
Once every two years	1	3.57%
Once every three years	0	0%
None of the above	0	0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>



**8.) Was the length of this Gathering appropriate?**

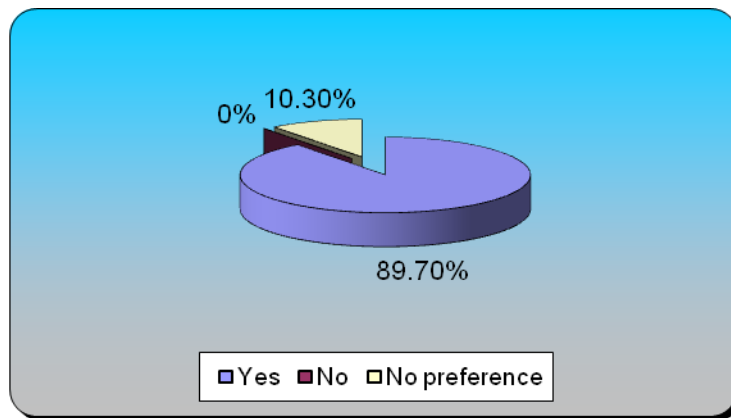
**Responses**

Yes	20	74.07%
No – too long	2	7.41%
No – too short	5	18.52%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>



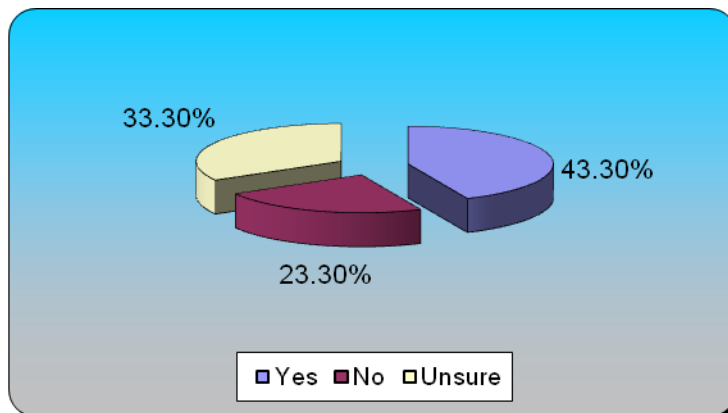
**9.) Would you like to see the location of the Counterparts Gathering continue to be rotated around the country?**

	<b>Responses</b>	
Yes	26	89.66%
No	0	0%
No preference	3	10.34%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100%</b>



**10.) Should national non-profit organizations be invited to participate in the next Counterparts Gathering ?**

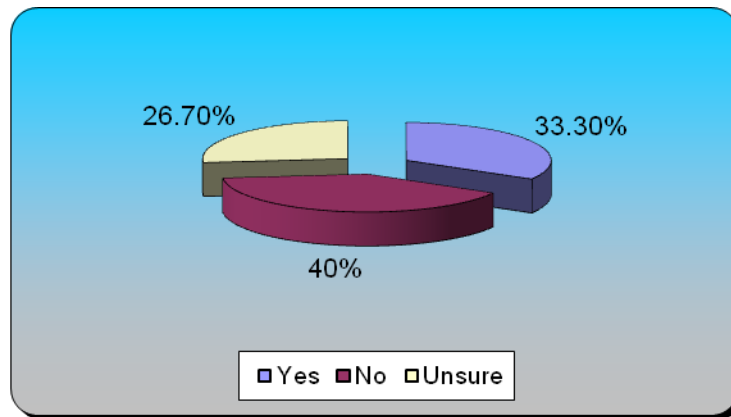
	<b>Responses</b>	
Yes	13	43.33%
No	7	23.33%
Unsure	10	33.33%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>



**11.) Should Federal Government agencies be invited to participate in the next Counterparts Gathering ?**

**Responses**

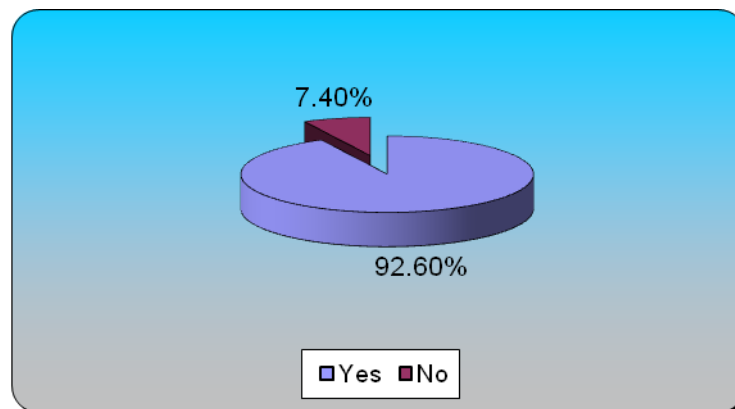
Yes	10	33.33%
No	12	40%
Unsure	8	26.67%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100%</b>



**12.) Were the registration rates for the Counterparts Gathering reasonable?**

**Responses**

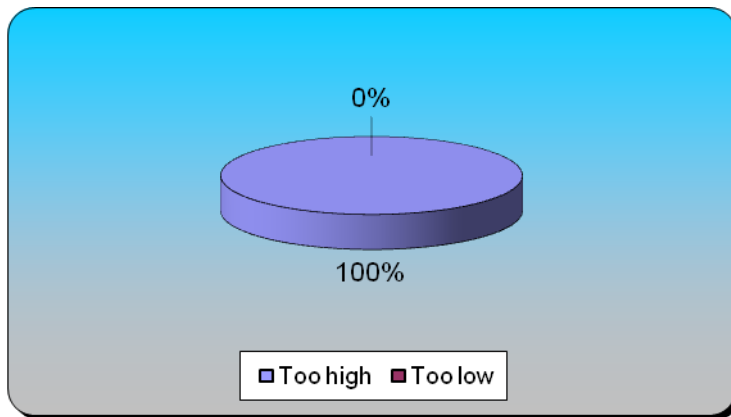
Yes	25	92.59%
No	2	7.41%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100%</b>



**13.) If no, were the rates:**

**Responses**

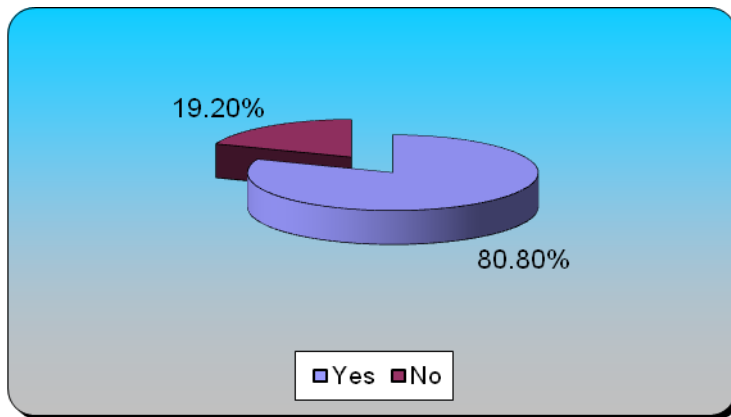
Too high	1	100%
Too low	0	0%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>100%</b>



**14.) Should non-profit organizations pay a registration fee?**

**Responses**

Yes	21	80.77%
No	5	19.23%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100%</b>



**15.) Should this Counterparts Gathering continue to be by invitation only?**

**Responses**

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Yes	24	85.71%
No	4	14.29%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100%</b>

