



Lynn Eakin and Associates

Advancing the Nonprofit Sector in Ontario

By Lynn Eakin

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This paper is my work, and the opinions expressed are not necessarily the view of the staff and board of the Metcalf Foundation.

I am very interested in receiving feedback on this paper. Please e-mail your comments to lynn@lynneakin.com.

Are you interested in being kept informed of organizing efforts? Let me know at the e-mail address above.

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Executive Summary

If there is one galvanizing issue that should unite the nonprofit sector in Ontario, it is the financing and regulatory problems that currently threaten the sector's well-being.

Katherine Scott of the Canada Council on Social Development describes the cumulative impact of these problems as a "perfect storm" in the making.

The sector needs to take action, but it is faced with a dilemma. It has neither the capacity to mount a change initiative on the issues that affects the sector as a whole, nor does it have an umbrella organization that can effectively speak to its concerns at the provincial level. Yet the challenges facing the sector's health are so critical that those interested in its long-term viability must explore new ways to act to influence change in the nonprofit financing and regulatory environment.

This report outlines promising strategies for creating change in the regulatory and financing of nonprofit organizations in Ontario based on a review of sector organizing efforts in regional, national and international contexts.

It highlights the need to take a pragmatic approach to organizing the sector in Ontario. In other words, given the breadth and diversity of the nonprofit sector, the most feasible course of action is to focus on results first – to form a coalition of interested parties that can begin to mount a campaign on behalf of the sector. The work of this coalition would allow the sector to experience the impact of joint action, and help the sector understand the important role its collective voice has in creating compassionate, creative and sustainable communities. The experience of working together over a period of time would also enable nonprofit organizations and their associations to determine if a more permanent structure is desired and what form it might take.

The following are the key considerations in developing a campaign that would unite the nonprofit sector in Ontario:

The sector needs to come together to articulate the value and importance of the sector and tackle the regulation and finance issues that are undermining capacity.

- a.) Associations, groups, and individual organizations interested in stepping up to address this issue need to come together.
- b.) An attempt should be made to have a cross section of key sub-sectors and interests represented from the beginning, recognizing that the effort will begin with a core of committed leaders and will build as the initiative becomes known and people understand its potential.
- c.) Leadership for the initiative should be recruited to provide sufficient energy and expertise to allow the initiative to hit the ground running.

The organizational structure should be open and functional, and can evolve and become more organized over time.

- d.) Membership in the group should be open and should allow people, organizations, and associations to join as they become interested and learn about the initiative.
- e.) Volunteer leadership should include high-profile volunteers who have experience in successful campaigns with government and media and who are prepared to make a significant commitment to see the task through.

Campaign financing needs to be secured to allow the coalition time to prove itself and, eventually, should the sector decide, to put a more permanent structure in place.

- f.) Initially the organization will need seed financing from associations and foundations to mount a coalition campaign. The initial period of development will likely take five years; two-three years of active campaign and 2-3 years of consolidation. After that time it should be clear what revenue the sector would be able to generate from services, consulting, foundations, and fees.

The initiative needs to build on expertise and capacity within the sector.

- g.) It should use existing association communication channels to reach frontline organizations, piggyback on existing conferences or survey activities, pool media contacts, share government contacts, coordinate press releases, mobilize board members and volunteers.

The sector cannot leave it to “others” to undertake or lead us in this work. It is a collective responsibility that we owe our communities. The public will find the nonprofit sector wanting when, one day, they find the cohesion, creativity and caring they have come to expect in their communities is no longer there and no one warned them of its imminent demise.

Introduction

When I began this work in the fall of 2005, there was new research emerging about the state of the nonprofit sector.¹ On the one hand, the research identified the size, reach, and importance of the nonprofit sector; on the other hand, it identified the significant challenges for the sector, particularly in the area of regulation and finance. Many nonprofit organizations, researchers, and funders of nonprofit organizations were expressing concern. Here in Ontario, small informal groups sprang up to discuss what could be done. There was a wide-spread sense that our nonprofit organizations were at risk. There was discussion about how best to create change in the regulatory and funding environment. How could our nonprofit sector obtain the attention of governments to address these serious issues?

This project and the Innovation Fellowship from the Metcalf Foundation emerged from these discussions. I undertook to explore how the nonprofit sector in Ontario could best move forward to address regulatory and finance issues. Because the bulk of government revenues and much sector regulation come from provincial governments, I rapidly focused in on the need for a provincial response capacity, which I believe is essential. In addition, the newly created Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks provides a mechanism to work with other provinces on pan-Canadian issues. As part of my work, I undertook the following:

1. I looked to other jurisdictions, particularly in similar political systems such as United Kingdom, Australia, and the other Canadian provinces, for successful change strategies that address nonprofit sector interests.
2. I identified key strategies and opportunities and, with the assistance of the Metcalf Foundation, tested objectives for a provincial reform agenda by consulting with change strategists and government relations experts and with a small group of knowledgeable individuals working in different fields in the nonprofit sector.
3. I undertook this analysis while at the same time observing and sometimes participating in events that happened in the past year in the area of regulation and finance. These included the sector's collective protest against HRDC's new funding and tendering practices, the Gomery Commission, the Blue Ribbon Panel on Grants and Contributions, and Toronto Safe Cities Initiative.

This paper is the result of the sum of all these activities. It is not a research paper. There is no definitive research on creating social change, no single way forward - just a series of options and choices. Moreover, there are many more examples of failed attempts at change than there are successes. For a sector described as on the verge of a perfect

¹Scott, 2003; Eakin, 2004; Statistics Canada, 2004a; Statistics Canada, 2004b; City of Toronto, 2004; Saunders, 2004.

storm,² there is little energy to waste, but the cost of inaction is extraordinarily high. We need to get it right.

In this paper, I put forward my best thinking on the choices for action for the nonprofit sector in Ontario in the hope that it will provide a beginning point for a move to action among sector leaders and others concerned about the healthy and well-being of the nonprofit sector.

Because everyone is pressed for time, I have set this paper up “backwards.” I start with the key findings and directions, followed by my understanding of the Ontario landscape, the Canadian landscape, and international and for-profit organizational examples. Appendix A provides a structured summary of the organizations discussed in this paper; Appendix B contains a bibliography and listing of helpful websites. This background information will be useful to those who wish to better understand how I have arrived at my conclusions. Some of the information will also be useful down the road, should the sector decide it is ready for a more structured and permanent presence.

Key Findings

Organize Around Regulation and Finance Issues

The diversity of the sector and the constraints under which it operates make it unlikely that members of the sector will invest significant energy in a sector-wide coalition unless they believe it will result in improvements in the conditions under which they work. A focus group consisting of a small sample of leaders drawn from a cross-section of the sector, felt that the different parts of the sector might have common interests but the need for a coalition would have to be compelling. It was their opinion that the sector would only come together to organize around a critical issue that affects all types of organizations within the sector. They identified finance and regulation problems as such an issue.

If there is one galvanizing issue that should unite the nonprofit sector, it is the financing and regulation problems that threaten the sector’s well-being. Is there a single nonprofit organization that has not been affected by the changes in funding practice and regulation that have occurred over the past fifteen years? Every part of the nonprofit sector – arts and culture, sports and recreation, education and research, health, social services, environment, development and housing, law advocacy and politics, philanthropy, voluntarism, and religion – has been impacted.

The government’s funding approaches and accounting methods have also spilled over to other funders. Many foundations, corporations, and United Ways have altered their practices and accountability requirements, sometimes to copy government, at other times to adapt to the increase in requests for funding as government retrenched. Even nonprofits that rely on fees and charitable donations have felt the domino effect of the

² Katherine Scott, *Pan-Canadian Funding Practices in Communities: Challenges and Opportunities for the Government of Canada, Executive Summary*, CCSD. 2006

changes in funding. Never before have so many organizations sought charitable donations; large organizations are crowding out smaller organizations in the fundraising marketplace. More nonprofit providers are resorting to charging fees, leaving fee-paying participants with less disposable income. At the same time, nonprofits are faced with escalating operating costs – everything from soaring insurance premiums to “market rent” for school gyms -- as all types of organizations scramble to increase revenues.

Katherine Scott sums it up well in her new report *Pan-Canadian Funding in Communities: Challenges and Opportunities for the Government of Canada*:

“Funders have shifted from giving general “mission support” to providing targeted funding for specific projects and programs. They have imposed more stringent controls over how money is spent and for what purposes. Non-profits with a patchwork of short-term funding have seen their capacity to tailor their programs to local community needs diminish, along with their ability to identify and plan for emerging needs. Meanwhile, societal forces are affecting the sector. These include declining levels of civic participation alongside increasing demand for services (many delivered by the sector on governments’ behalf). This has been described as “a perfect storm” scenario in the making.”

Focus on Organizing Ontario

Ontario, with almost 40% of the Canadian population and the largest nonprofit sector in the country, has felt the impact of the funding changes rippling through its communities. Ontario has approximately 45,000 nonprofit organizations with annual revenues of \$29 billion. One of every eleven Ontarians works in the nonprofit sector and 7.8 million volunteers contribute 791 million hours of volunteer time each year. (These figures do not include the hospital, university and college sectors). Ontario is home to 28% of Canadian nonprofit organizations and accounts for 43% of sector revenues.

In Ontario we have a broad array of strong and well-organized associations that serve the many different clusters of nonprofit organizations. Moreover, in a few communities we have broad-based, cross-sector organizations that meet, plan, and advocate locally. These associations represent different sub-sectors and fields of interest within the nonprofit sector. They have lobbied for additional funding and regulatory changes for their specific sub-sectors and, on occasion, have been successful in obtaining temporary relief for their member agencies. But the underlying issues of an outdated regulatory and funding regime remain. Ontario is hindered by the lack of a cross-sector umbrella group that can address issues that cut across the whole sector.

In addition, one of the challenges facing the nonprofit sector at the national level has been the lack of organization in the provinces. Work being done at the national level on issues of concern to the nonprofit sector would be strengthened if there were a strong capacity at the provincial level to inform, support, and extend that work. This is particularly important because the bulk of funding to the sector is provincial while charitable regulation is federal.

Some progress has been made toward building provincial involvement. The Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks is a group of organizations from the provinces and territories. Membership in the Federation is informal. Where a provincial organization for the sector exists, it tends to be the provincial member in the Federation; in provinces that lack a provincial voice, other local organizations that expressed interest in the Federation have joined.³ The Federation is still in the early stages of development and has not yet formalized its structure, but it is making attempts to build linkages between national, provincial, and local nonprofit organizations and associations.⁴

We Need To Do It Ourselves - Financing Sector Organization

When I began this analysis, I was pressed by sector problems and focused on how the nonprofit sector could better attract the attention of government in order to address regulation and finance issues – in other words, I adopted a practical “let’s get to it” approach. I very quickly observed, however, that the successful examples of action taken by the nonprofit sector occurred where and when the sector was self-organized, whereas, the examples of where the sector had failed or had achieved incomplete or poor outcomes occurred where and when government financed the sector to participate. In the latter instances, sector participants reported that government tended to control the agenda, and when funding was withdrawn (and with the exception of Quebec, government support for sector organization has always been short term), the sector’s momentum and organizational capacity was lost.⁵

I surveyed a number of jurisdictions⁶ for promising examples of nonprofit sector organization and have profiled in Appendix A the National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO) in Britain and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits in the United States. The Minnesota Council is state-based and has federal reach through its membership in the National Council of Nonprofit Associations. Forty-five states have state based organizations.

In addition, I looked outside the nonprofit sector to the private sector and found that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) provides an effective voice for small and mid-sized businesses. Interestingly, CFIB members are as diverse and varied as organizations in the nonprofit sector. Also of interest, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business began in response to a government initiative that was particularly disadvantageous for small and medium-sized businesses. These businesses organized to fight the initiative and then went on to create a more structured, permanent organization. Operating on membership fees and earned income CFIB continues to be an effective voice for small and medium-sized businesses. The parallels to the situation in the nonprofit sector today are striking.

³ Ontario has three local groups participating: Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, Pillar Nonprofit Network (London), and Niagara College Center for Community Leadership.

⁴ For more description of the Canadian landscape, see Appendix A.

⁵ The exception is Quebec where the provincial government has a long tradition of funding the sector to participate in policy development and has provided stable funding for a provincial secretariat for the sector.

⁶ Primarily Australia, United States, United Kingdom, and New Zealand.

Nonprofit organizations that have their own independent organization and financing have been able to sustain and promote the sector's interests through thick and thin, as the interests and priorities of government and the public inevitably ebb and flow. NCVO and The Minnesota Council have a mix of revenues comprising membership fees, consulting/earned revenue, and foundation support. This core funding gives these organizations their independence. NCVO in Britain has doubled its budget with project funds from government, but its core organization is independent of government funds.⁷

Find Common Cause – Between Sector Members and Political and Public Agendas

Successful nonprofit sector organizations are skillful and strategic in aligning their interests with political and public agendas. They are able to communicate their interests and needs in ways that the public and government can understand and endorse. Sometimes this is easier to do than at other times. In Britain, for example the Tony Blair government has, for the past decade, had a focus on strengthening the nonprofit sector as a provider of services for government. In addition, it has had an interest in updating British charities legislation. NCVO has helped to create this agenda and has worked with government to achieve gains for the nonprofit sector. NCVO remains active in policy development in Britain and represents the interests of the sector.

The Minnesota Council is very involved in tracking new legislation and in communicating to its members the key messages and approaches that they should use in making their interests known. In the U.S., groups, including the nonprofit sector, play an active role in influencing legislation and policy development. By helping the sector align its messaging, the Minnesota Council strengthens the sector's ability to play an active role in shaping civil society.

The government relations experts who were consulted in the course of this project all delivered the same message, particularly in relation to the finance and regulation agenda. Government and the public are not interested in the sustainability problems of nonprofit organizations unless it can be shown what these problems mean for individuals and communities. In Ontario, for example, some fields, such as the performing arts, have been able to communicate their message in ways that allow government and the public to grasp the implications. Sector wide, however there is considerable room for improvement.

Leadership, Leadership, Leadership

Successful nonprofit sector organizations recruit high-profile volunteers and support them with knowledgeable sector leaders to provide skilled and dynamic leadership that is able to attract the attention and ear of government and the public. This leadership is supported by ongoing and open consultation with the organization's members. Membership participation in conferences, planning exercises, surveys, committees, and

⁷ Some British Key informants expressed concern about the amount of joint projects NCVO had with government and worried that NCVO had become too entwined with government.

task forces keeps sector leadership aware of emerging issues and the field aware of the work of the sector leadership.

Both the NCVO and Minnesota Council have broad cross-sector representation; they also have boards of directors that are recruited for their leadership. Having the necessary strength around the board table is a key priority. The sector is too big and diverse for every group to be represented at the board level. NCVO has a college system of broad sector groupings that ensures a diverse board. It advertises for its high-profile volunteer board positions and selects from the people who respond. The Minnesota Council elects its board members from across the sector and those members actively recruit volunteer members to serve on the board.

Stable Structures, Collective Capacity, Clear Positions

The most successful nonprofit sector organizations have stable ongoing structures that are financed independently of government. They build on and utilize the expertise of their members and can communicate across the sector on issues that affect the sector as a whole. They have the ability to communicate with and mobilize across the sector so their collective voices can be heard.

In the nonprofit sector in Ontario, we have considerable expertise. We have many strong associations of nonprofit organizations in different fields such as arts and culture, social services, and sports and recreation. Harnessing these associations and their members' energies to address issues that affect the sector as a whole will be important. Just think how powerful an impact the sector could make if it engaged even a quarter of the nonprofits operating in Ontario to speak out on issues of concern to the sector.

In 2006, the nonprofit organizations working with the federal Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) department to provide services to Canadians in the area of employment training collectively protested the new funding and tendering practices implemented by the department. This "push back" attracted the interest of politicians and the media and gained traction. The outcome was that HRDC, through Service Canada, has made changes in the way it does business and is working to roll out its new approach to funding across the country.

At times like these, an independent sector-wide provincial organization could coordinate, document, translate, and communicate the impact of funding changes and funding cuts. Moreover, they could engage all three levels of government and the public in the broader discussion of the need for investment in the social, cultural, and physical well-being of Canadians.

Survey Conclusions

The survey of organizations in other countries and across Canada allowed me to draw two main conclusions:

- 1. Nonprofit sector groups in other jurisdictions that have an ongoing and independent sector-wide organization with strong leadership and deep links back into the field provide an effective and independent voice for the sector and make it easier for coalitions of groups and associations to come together around common issues.**

Linkages are made more easily between sectors and between communities with common interests and issues. The profile of the whole nonprofit sector is raised, facilitating the work of all the sub-groups and associations. As issues arise that affect the sector as a whole, the sector can respond quickly, with authority, and in a coordinated fashion.

- 2. The Ontario nonprofit sector has the capacity to come together around key sector-wide issues with a strong, articulate, and effective voice.**

Such a coalition would be able to address, with government, the key issues of finance and regulation that are impeding the work of the sector. In so doing it would raise awareness among the people of Ontario regarding the role and contribution of the nonprofit sector to the quality of life in Ontario. A provincial nonprofit sector coalition would be well positioned to work with similar groups in other provinces through the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks to address federal regulation and financing of the sector.

Moving Forward

The lack of ability in the sector to effectively push back makes the sector extraordinarily vulnerable to chronic under financing, over regulation and even funding cuts. The sector needs to come together to take action. The most recent public opinion survey funded by Muttart Foundation and undertaken by IPSO-Reid, *Talking about Charities 2006*, shows the Canadian public continues to hold nonprofit sector organizations in high regard and believes they are the most able to understand and meet the needs of communities.⁸ We need to harness this interest and concern.

⁸ Talking about Charities 2006, www.muttart.org/surveys/htm

Clearly the nonprofit sector has the public's trust but until the public understands the implications for our communities of the current financing and regulatory practices of funders, particularly government funders, we cannot harness that trust and good will. The sector has little to lose and everything to gain from a campaign to raise public awareness of the importance of the sector's contribution to our communities and our quality of life. The public needs to understand the fragility of the organizations and services that they take for granted and they need to understand the cumulative picture not just - arts groups today, social services tomorrow, and the environment the next day. Taken together, the challenges facing the nonprofit sector threaten the quality of life of everyone in Ontario.

The most feasible course of action is to focus on a "results first" campaign – to form a coalition of interested parties that can mount a public campaign. We need to move forward to harness our collective capacity by:

- Creating an organizational structure that is open and functional, and can evolve and become more organized over time.
- Secure campaign financing that is independent of government to allow the coalition time to prove itself and, eventually, put a more permanent structure in place.
- Take advantage of sector strengths by building on existing expertise and capacity within the sector.
- Carve out a role for the nonprofit sector in shaping civil society.

Backgrounder: An Annotated Overview

This section contains:

- the history of efforts to organize the sector in Ontario;
- an overview of sector organization nationally and in other provinces;
- promising organizational approaches, using international, for profit and Canadian examples;
- Appendix A: a structured summary of Canadian and international organizations, including an overview of their history and purpose, financing, governance, key relationships, advocacy activities, and the services they provided; and
- Appendix B: a bibliography and list of organization websites.

This information is based on information that is publicly available, on key informant interviews, and on my own knowledge of the sector. Information on organizational governance, membership, and financing, etc. was not evenly available for all of the organizations surveyed; key informant interviews provided assessments of how things operate. The views of key informants may not be shared by everyone. I apologize if I have made errors in interpretation or drawn conclusions that some may feel are inaccurate.

Overview of the Organization of Ontario's Nonprofit Sector

Nonprofit organizations in Ontario are active in many fields. Within these different fields, groups of nonprofit organizations that provide similar services or that are funded under the same legislation have formed associations. e.g., performing arts organizations, associations for people with disabilities, sports groups, associations of children, and seniors service organizations. These associations provide support services for their members, liaise with government, and engage in public policy discourse. In Ontario we have a broad array of strong and well-organized associations that serve the many different clusters of nonprofit organizations. Moreover, in some communities, we have broad-based, cross-sector organizations that meet, plan, and advocate locally.⁹

Periodically, attempts at regulatory and finance reform have been undertaken by association and groups within the nonprofit sector. Associations representing different sub-sectors and fields of interest have been active,¹⁰ but campaigns undertaken by these organizations have most often been fragmented and scattered. Associations have lobbied for additional funding and regulatory changes for their specific sub-sectors and on

⁹ Examples of local cross sector organizations are Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Organizations and Halton Region Chairman's Table.

¹⁰ Such as Ontario Arts Council, Children's Mental Health Ontario, Ontario Council of Associations Serving Immigrants, Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, Ontario Sports Federation, Parks and Recreation Ontario. etc.

occasion have been successful in obtaining temporary relief for their member agencies, but the underlying issues of an outdated regulatory and funding regime remain.

Over the years, there have been a number of attempts by government to involve the sector in public policy. Under the NDP government, Premier Bob Rae established the Premiers Council, and during this period nonprofit groups participated with government in social planning. But as governments changed, so did the involvement of the sector.

The Conservative government of Mike Harris commissioned a report on the nonprofit sector, and in 1997 the Ontario government acted on the report's recommendations. The government expanded the reach of volunteer awards, simplified the incorporation process and allowed charities to purchase liability insurance for board members.

The report also recommended that the provincial government "support the voluntary sector in establishing a means for voluntary organizations to address their common challenges" by convening a forum of and for the voluntary sector. The government moved on this recommendation, and in 1998 provincial staff convened the Ontario Voluntary Forum. A joint steering committee worked on an agenda, and invitations were issued to a broad and diverse group of sector organizations. Coming out of that conference, voluntary sector participants recommended the creation of a Coalition of Ontario Voluntary Organizations.

The Coalition would become a starting point for a collective sector leadership mechanism. A follow up/coordinating committee was formed to shepherd the new mechanism into being and to coordinate follow-up on all Forum recommendations. The Forum had determined that the initial roles of the Coalition would include advocacy on behalf of the sector, relationship building within the sector and with government and others, communication on sector wide issues, developing quality standards for the sector and building capacity through information sharing and the development of a knowledge strategy.¹¹ Funding for the coalition, however, was not forthcoming from the Ontario government, and it was not until August 2000 (two years later) that the group incorporated, and received a five-year Ontario Trillium Foundation grant. In 2002 (four years after the Forum), a staff person was hired.

By 2002, nonprofit organizations were internally focused, trying to cope with new accountability measures and a difficult funding environment. It would not be until 2004 when the Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) published *Funding Matters* that many nonprofit organizations understood that their individual organizational struggles were systemic - part of a larger sector-wide problem.

As awareness in Ontario has grown of the challenges facing the sector, there have been small groups gathering to consider how to address the serious underlying problems. Some communities have organized themselves and several different groups of funders, particularly foundation and United Way funders have begun meeting. Groups of organizations in the different sub-sectors have met to discuss how to move forward; mixed groups of funders and agencies have also met.¹² All groups have found the

¹¹ <http://www.covo.on.ca/background.htm>

¹² These include groups such as the Little Funders Group, Voluntary and Community Sector Financing Alliance, Steering Committee of the Strengthening Voluntarism in Ontario Project,

challenge daunting. The very size and complexity of the nonprofit sector in the province make beginning any organizational effort seem challenging.

Overview of the Organization of the Sector: Other Provinces and Nationally

By understanding some of the history of the sector's attempts at forging relationships with government nationally and in other provinces, we can learn from their experiences. Understanding the current situation regarding efforts of the nonprofit sector to organize itself in the rest of Canada informs our efforts in Ontario.

The National Context

In 1995, thirteen national umbrella organizations came together to form the Voluntary Sector Roundtable (VSR) to respond to issues of widespread concern to the sector. Their activity led to the creation of the Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector chaired by Edward Broadbent. The panel's report *Building on Strength: Improving Governance and Accountability in Canada's Voluntary Sector* (1997) made recommendations regarding nonprofit governance and enhancement of civil society. The Voluntary Sector Roundtable continued to engage the federal government in discussions regarding sector concerns, and in 1999 the federal government launched a major initiative on voluntary organizations.

The government engaged members of national nonprofit sector organizations in a broad consultative process - the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI). Seven joint tables were established, including tables on developing an Accord between the nonprofit sector and the federal government, increasing the capacity of the sector, improving the regulatory framework, increasing Canadian public awareness of the sector, promoting volunteerism, and information technology. A five-year initiative, the work of the "joint tables" was compressed into the first two-year period between 2000 and 2002. That first phase of the VSI received substantial federal government funding and staffing for the work of the "joint tables."

The primary three overarching goals of the initiative were to build a new relationship between the government and the sector, to strengthen the capacity of the sector, and to improve the legal and regulatory framework.¹³ A key product of the VSI, from the perspective of the nonprofit sector, was the *Voluntary Sector Accord, and the Codes of Good Practice on Funding and Policy*. Once negotiated, however, implementation stalled and, to date, the *Accord* and the *Codes* have not had much traction in the field.¹⁴ For the most part, the *Accord* and *Codes of Good Practice* have not yet been implemented by federal departments nor have they had significant impact on other levels of government.

After the work of the "joint tables," the implementation phase began. The government and the voluntary sector representatives formed a joint Federal/Voluntary Sector

Halton's Chairman's, Round Table on the Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector, Pillar Nonprofit Network, and Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Organizations.

¹³ <http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/about/history.cfm>

¹⁴ Eakin, L. *Policy and Practice Gap*, Voluntary Sector Forum, March 2005

Steering Committee to oversee the process.¹⁵ With the end of the “joint tables,” government funding stopped flowing to the Voluntary Sector Roundtable. The government established an internal tracking process, but as VSI momentum stalled, the nonprofit sector found itself without organizational capacity for effective follow-up. Organizations that were involved nationally in representing the nonprofit sector reorganized themselves and, adding some new members, reconstituted themselves as the *Voluntary Sector Forum*. After much negotiation, the federal government funded a small secretariat for the Forum to complete a few outstanding projects from the VSI.

As of May 2006, the Voluntary Sector Forum has been without funding. Negotiations are ongoing with the federal government to obtain funding for the work of the Forum. Meanwhile, the Forum has no staff and its actions are limited to in-kind contributions of participating organizations.

One of the challenges faced by the Voluntary Sector Forum has been the lack of nonprofit sector organization in the provinces. Work being done at the national level on issues of concern to the nonprofit sector would be strengthened if there were a strong capacity at the provincial level to inform, support, and extend that work. Some progress has been made in building provincial involvement. The Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks has three representatives at the Voluntary Sector Forum. The Federation is a group of organizations from the provinces and territories. Membership in the Federation is informal. Where a provincial organization for the sector exists, it tends to be the provincial member in the Federation; in provinces that lack a unified provincial voice, other local organizations that have expressed interest have joined. The Federation is still in the early stages of development and has not yet formalized its structure, but it is making attempts to build links between national, provincial, and local nonprofit organizations. Ontario has four groups participating: Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, Pillar Nonprofit Network (London), and Niagara College Center for Community Leadership, The Coalition of Ontario Voluntary Sector Organizations.

A Snapshot of How the Nonprofit Sector is Organized in Other Provinces

Across Canada, the organization of the nonprofit sector in the provinces is very mixed. The Quebec and Saskatchewan governments provide financial support for nonprofit organizations to work with government. The sector in these provinces is dependent on this support for their organization. The remaining provincial governments do not provide financial support. Nonprofit sector organizations in Alberta, Newfoundland, Manitoba, and New Brunswick are actively searching for ways to have independently funded nonprofit sector organizations.

Some provinces have organizations with a membership primarily composed of community health and social service organizations, but others, like Alberta and BC, have developed broad and inclusive memberships with all categories of nonprofit organizations. Hospitals, colleges, and universities are typically not members as they have their own provincial and national associations and are so much larger. Members tend to come from sports, recreation, arts, housing, social justice, community health, and social service organizations and from volunteer associations. In Voluntary Organizations Consortium, British Columbia (VOC BC), members are the associations of service

¹⁵ <http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/about/management.cfm>

providers whereas in Calgary, Alberta, members are the individual organizations reflecting the city focus of the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations. (CCVO)

There is wide variation in nonprofit sector organization and the approach taken among the various provinces. Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia are not yet members of the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks. Neither province has a sector wide nonprofit structure. The nonprofit sectors in other provinces are at various stages of organizing a sector-wide presence.

Newfoundland and Labrador has had an organization, the Community Services Council, since 1976. The Community Services Council concerns itself with community service development in that province. Traditionally, it funded its activities with project grants, but in recent years this is becoming increasingly difficult as grants become more and more restrictive.

New Brunswick Policy Link received federal VSI funding in 2000-2002 and during that time brought together nonprofit organizations, volunteers, and business leaders to participate in policy development with the provincial government. However, since the end of the VSI grant in 2002, Policy Link has been unable to obtain stable funding and has therefore had to decrease its level of activity. Many connections and relationships with government and throughout the sector have been lost as the group focuses on rebuilding.

Quebec has the most stable province-wide voluntary sector presence. The provincial government has provided funding for a secretariat for the sector since 1995. Quebec is the only province with a deeply embedded tradition of government funding of community groups and organizations to participate in policy development with government. The Secretariat draws heavily from its member associations to represent the sector on various government committees and at various tables. Recent activities have included involvement in legislation for letters patent that would have adversely affected the sector, work on police and background check regulation, and other cross-sector issues.

Manitoba has a similar story to New Brunswick. The Voluntary and Non-Profit Sector of Manitoba Inc. also had a VSI grant (2000-2002) and worked closely with the provincial government. Since the grant ended, they have been unable to secure ongoing stable funding and are now trying to move forward with shared services for smaller organizations, awareness raising, and other activities to put the organization on a stable financial footing while moving the sector agenda forward with the provincial government.

Saskatchewan's provincial government has provided support for a government/voluntary sector initiative since 2002. The initiative has been active in issues such as board liability and the new nonprofit corporations act, promoting voluntarism, and organizing an annual conference for government and the nonprofit sector.

Alberta's Muttart Foundation has provided seed funding for the Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO). CCVO is membership based and is actively trying to be self sustaining. It has organized events on issues of interest to Calgary nonprofits, is coordinating sector input into a strategic plan for the fast growing city of Calgary, is undertaking research into the financial health of the sector, and is speaking out on issues of concern. The nonprofit sector in the City of Edmonton has also become organized and, together with the provincial volunteer association, is in discussion with provincial civil servants regarding how they can better work with the provincial government on common agenda.

British Columbia's former NDP government provided funding to support the promotion of voluntarism in BC, and a province-wide network was developed. However, when the Liberal government was elected in 2001, the funding was cancelled. A small volunteer group has persevered and reached out to all nonprofit organizations to form Volunteer Organization Consortium of British Columbia (VOC BC) Twenty-five provincial associations are members and, while the group has no core funding, it has survived on tiny bits of project funding. VOC BC's leadership consists of volunteers. It sees itself as a consortium managed by a steering committee with a convening role. It is waiting for word on whether the provincial government will contribute some funding.

Northwest Territories contacts report that efforts to organize the nonprofit sector have been abandoned due to lack of local capacity. While nonprofit organizations are active in the Territories and see each other at meetings, they do not have time to discuss or address issues that affect the sector as a whole.

Looking across the country, we find the nonprofit sector in the different provinces and territories in various states of organizing, with many provincial groups actively trying to address their challenges. The many efforts to organize indicate that many provincial sector groups feel that an organization would be helpful, if it could be financed. (See Appendix A for individual profiles of federal and provincial organizational efforts.)

Observing Others: Promising Organizational Approaches

We surveyed a number of jurisdictions¹⁶ for promising examples of nonprofit sector organization and have profiled in this report the National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO) in Britain and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits in the United States. These two were selected because of the lessons they provide and their relevance for the situation in Ontario. In addition, we looked outside the nonprofit sector to the private sector and found that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business provides an effective voice for small and mid-sized businesses.

In this section, we identify key learning from the survey of these organizations. These lessons are drawn from both the successful and the less successful attempts at organizing. They are as follows:

1. When government pays, government controls the agenda.

In the jurisdictions where collaboration between the nonprofit sector and government was undertaken without strong nonprofit self-organization, participants reported two things. First, the government tended to drive both the process and the agenda and the sector was unable to ensure that its issues were addressed because it could not effectively communicate with or mobilize the sector. Second, in the instances where the government provided the sector with financing to engage in the process and then withdrew that financing, the crisis of resources that followed seriously set back the fledgling organizations at a critical stage in their development. Both of these scenarios have played themselves out in various provinces and at the national level in Canada.

2. Strong effective organizations provide strong leadership.

The National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO) in Britain and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits in the United States operate in very different political and regulatory systems. We can learn from both. Our political system and culture is closely modeled after the British political system, but the Canadian federation with its provinces and territories has characteristics that are similar to the state and federal government relationships in the USA. What NCVO and the Minnesota Council have in common is they are both strong nonprofit sector organizations that provide strong, articulate leadership.

3. Successful organizations keep a focus on issues that are of broad concern to their members.

NCVO and the Minnesota Council focus on issues that are of broad concern and that are important to the sector. For example, the definition and regulation of charities, proposed changes to lottery legislation, and implementation of an agreement governing the relationship between the sector and the government (the Compact) are issues of broad concern to nonprofits in Britain; proposals to eliminate the estate tax and the Sarbanes-Oxley (post Enron director accountability legislation) are important issues for nonprofits in Minnesota.

¹⁶ Primarily Australia, United States, United Kingdom, New Zealand.

In the private sector in Canada, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) focuses on issues of broad concern to its members and ensures that government policy and regulation of the private sector is sensitive to the needs of small and medium-sized businesses, e.g., it advocated for reducing the GST, has raised concerns about the cost and ineffectiveness of CAIS as an income stabilization program for farmers, and does ongoing work to reduce the *red tape* faced by small business.

4. A common structure is affiliated provincial and federal organizations.

The Minnesota Council monitors state legislative bills on behalf of the sector, intervenes on its behalf, and alerts and briefs the sector on issues of concern. The Minnesota Council is a member of the National Council of Nonprofit Associations, the federation of state associations that works at the federal level. The National Council of Nonprofit Associations has thirty-nine state associations as members and nine additional emerging members. It supports state organizations and provides information on federal issues of concern that the states in turn push out to their members. The Canadian Federation of Independent Business has a similar structure in Canada with provincial and federal organizations to monitor provincial and federal activities.

5. Member support and communication are key activities.

NCVO, the Minnesota Council, and CFIB spend considerable amounts of their time on supporting and communicating with their members. The Minnesota Council provides training to the nonprofit sector on political lobbying and hosts conferences in addition to orchestrating coherent and coordinated sector responses on issues of concern to members. In Britain, NCVO provides a number of support services, including training and tools for agencies on full cost-recovery accounting and coaching on negotiating service agreements. It also delivers a number of programs in partnership with government; these are aimed at strengthening the nonprofit sector. NCVO uses conferences, newsletters, and briefings for the sector to keep members abreast of legislative and regulatory developments. In Canada, CFIB undertakes regular surveys of members and provides daily news bulletins and offers online courses.

6. Revenue comes from fees, services, and foundation support.

The Minnesota Council is independently funded. It receives almost half of its \$1.7 million budget from membership fees, services, conferences, publications, etc. The remainder, just over half of its budget, comes from three independent donors. (The U.S. has a large and active foundation sector and little tradition of government funding for infrastructure organizations.)

The British NCVO has some independent base funding from a 1919 endowment, grants from trusts (foundations), and sliding-scale membership fees that fund the core budget. NCVO also has considerable government project funding for many of the programs it delivers to the sector in partnership with government. (Several British key informants expressed concern that the overly close relationship with government is sometimes problematic and might make NCVO vulnerable in the longer term.)

Looking outside the nonprofit sector, we find other groups that are funded by their own member organizations and are the stronger for it. Members of the Canadian Federation of Independent Business and of the Chambers of Commerce pay membership fees to their organizations that fund the provincial and national infrastructure. Other groups, such as farmers and chief executives, have also self-funded their organizations.

7. Attention is paid to messaging - linking nonprofit issues to issues of broad public concern and political directions.

NCVO and the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits have been very strategic in aligning and linking the well-being and needs of the nonprofit sector with the interests and concerns of politicians and the public. They have worked with their members to hone key messages and helped their members communicate more effectively.

8. Successful organizations take strategic action to ensure that the sector is heard.

Both NCVO and the Minnesota Council have effective links and alliances with their members and the broader nonprofit sector so that they can communicate effectively with the sector and can canvas the field efficiently. In one instance, the British Government approached NCVO about an issue on which the nonprofit sector had differing viewpoints. NCVO ensured that government consultations heard these differing views. In another instance, where the sector was united in its concern over the negative effect that repealing the estate tax would have on charitable donations, the Minnesota Council provided briefing information to organizations in the sector and made strong representations on behalf of the sector.

Given the formative state of nonprofit sector organization in Canada, we are not yet in a position to effectively harness the full potential of the nonprofit sector for strategic action. The sector requires collective strategies and a strong common voice such as that heard from small business and other organized sectors of the economy.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business is an interesting and successful example of the power of banding together around common issues. Its small and medium-sized business members are as diverse and varied as the organizations in the nonprofit sector. Its members include dry cleaners, florists, auto body shops, printers, and so on, yet CFIB finds common ground and advocates for regulation, taxation, and financial policy that is small-business friendly. It also continually promotes the value of small and medium-sized businesses as the economic engine of Canadian communities and its message is accepted and well known by the public. There is no reason why similar successful positioning could not be undertaken in the nonprofit sector.

9. Successful organizations have effective, dynamic governance.

In the most effective organizations, governance is designed to provide effective and responsive leadership (getting the right people involved at the right time). While regional representation and cross-sector diversity are important, effective organizations also focus on recruiting individuals with the skills, knowledge, and expertise. Both NSVO and the Minnesota Council recruit a mix of board members from among senior staff and leadership volunteers in the sector for their boards. In the private sector, CFIB recruits a mix of business representatives and business leaders to provide effective leadership.

10. Successful organizations conduct ongoing open consultation with the sector.

Broad consultation directly with the sector can take place through conferences, planning exercises, surveys, participation on committees and task forces, and outreach to even the smallest nonprofits. Regular two-way communication keeps organizations in the field aware of the work of the sector-wide organization, and the sector-wide organizations aware of issues emerging from the field. Sector-wide organizations tend to be lean leadership organizations that draw on the expertise and interests of members for task forces and change initiatives.

There are many ways to solicit the views of sector organizations. For example, NCVO recently completed an extensive strategic planning process with the nonprofit sector in Britain, which helped shape the NCVO change agenda. Conferences on specific topics will draw in the organizations that are particularly interested in that issue. Task forces and committees with government are another way to gather the views of the sector; participants are often drawn from interested sub-sectors who have the needed expertise. The NCVO focuses on cross-sector issues and leaves sub-sector and regional issues to associations and local groups. Increasingly there is more collaboration between local planning and coordinating groups and NCVO, especially on efforts to implement funding reform.

11. Successful organizations recruit high-profile volunteers to key leadership positions.

High-profile volunteers are used to gain access, provide credibility, and communicate key messages. These volunteers are supported by dynamic staff and experienced members from the sector.

The NCVO views organizational governance from the perspective of effectiveness and expertise. Its board is always led by a high-profile volunteer, and selected positions on the board, such as treasurer, are filled by open calls for nominations of individuals with explicit expertise and are recruited from the ranks of high profile volunteers. Other positions are filled from a call for nominations from the colleges (we would call them sub-sectors). The expertise and leadership needed for organizational governance ultimately drives the nominating process.

Appendix A: Organizational Profiles

Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN), USA

Overview	
History and Purpose	Begun in 1987 to meet the increasing information needs of nonprofits and to convene nonprofits to address issues facing the sector. MCN is an association of more than 1500 members formed to strengthen the state's nonprofit sector, particularly with regard to management, governance, and public policy. MCN works to continually inform, involve, strengthen, and increase the capacity and effectiveness of nonprofits and the nonprofit sector in Minnesota.
Financing	2004 budget: \$1.7million. Revenue comes from membership fees and services, foundations and corporations. 52% of revenue comes from three donors. MCN has reserves of \$745,000. Annual membership dues: budget under \$200,000: \$50 \$200,001 - \$400,000: \$100 \$400,001 - \$700,000: \$200 \$700,001 - \$1,000,000: \$300 \$1,000,001 - \$2,000,000: \$400 over \$2,000,000: \$500
Governance	All nonprofits eligible for membership, subject to subscribing to council objects. Board consists of 15-21 directors - 4 regional representatives, 10 directors from membership (broadly diverse, elected by members), 7 directors from the community at large (volunteer, elected by other directors); three-year terms, with a maximum terms of six years.
Key Relationships – government & other	Government: makes representations on issues such as the impact of new accountability and legal compliance measures; protested the proposal to eliminate estate tax, which would have a negative impact on charitable giving. Other state-based relationships: partnerships in sector to do training, etc. Active member of the National Council of Nonprofit Associations.
Advocacy and Services	Provides support to organizations. Undertakes public policy initiatives. Promotes civil involvement (voting).

National Council for Voluntary Organizations (NCVO), Britain

Overview	
History and Purpose	<p>Began in 1919 with an endowment of £ 1000 and has continued adapting to an ever changing social background.</p> <p>An effective lobbying organization; represents the views of its members and the wider voluntary sector to government, the Charity Commission, the European Union and other bodies.</p> <p>Undertakes research on the sector.</p> <p>Focuses on generic issues affecting the whole of the voluntary sector and the compact team</p>
Financing	<p>2004 budget: £5.6 million.</p> <p>Revenues come from membership fees 12%; donations, 13%; earned income, 24%; Home office (government), 15%; and project grants. 35%.</p> <p>Membership fees: sliding scale, with no charge for nonprofit organizations with budgets of less than £10,000 up to £950 for those with budgets greater than £ 1million. Also has corporate membership on a sliding scale and membership for public organizations, e.g... Local governments (£600/annum).</p>
Governance	<p>25 elected trustees, 4 honorary officers (volunteers), and ex officio representatives from Wales, Ireland, and Scotland.</p> <p>Elected trustees from electoral colleges and geographic representation.</p>
Key Relationships – government & other	<p>Responsible for Compact implementation/negotiation with Government; working on issues that affect the sector as a whole (e.g., a project to download government services to be delivered by the voluntary sector), input to Lotteries and Charities legislation, municipal government/sector relationships, and positioning sector with government.</p> <p>Partners with sector members on research, training, and work with government.</p>
Advocacy and Services	<p>Compact Advocacy Program: helps voluntary organizations interpret and use national, regional, and local Compacts, does dispute resolution/advocacy.</p> <p>Offers advisory services and information; undertakes campaigns and publicity, education and training, policy, and research.</p>

Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB)

Overview	
History and Purpose	<p>Since 1971, CFIB has been giving small firms a big voice in the public arena.</p> <p>Began in response to a proposal from government to tax small business at 50%. After a first, quick success, CFIB almost foundered, but slowly built membership.</p> <p>CFIB is a political action organization for small and medium-sized enterprises.</p> <p>Works Canada-wide, with local organizations and provincial offices.</p>
Financing	Financed by membership fees.
Governance	105,000 members; Board of Governors represent a cross-section of entrepreneurs from all regions and industry sectors. Board members selected for their record of service and strong voice.
Key Relationships – government & other	<p>Strong government relations/lobby.</p> <p>Non-partisan.</p> <p>Consults with members through ballots, surveys, face to face consultations, etc.</p>
Advocacy and Services	<p>Recent achievements: small business reduced corporate tax rate, changed RRSP rules.</p> <p>CFIB monitors and participates in issues of interest to its members, e.g., municipal tax powers, and provides advice and support to members in their dealings with government.</p>

National - Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF)

Overview	
History and Purpose	Emerging from the joint government/sector Voluntary Sector Initiative, the Voluntary Sector Forum has brought together organizations operating at a national level and added representatives from the newly formed Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks comprising provincial and more local network organizations from the provinces and territories.
Financing	None except in-kind contributions from the various member organizations. VSF is in the process of trying to secure (three-year) funding from Social Development Canada.
Governance	VSF has standing members from a number of organizations that operate at the national level (9 representatives), from the Canadian Federation's provincial organizations (3 representatives), and from philanthropic foundations and community funds.(3 representatives). It has taken a functional rather than a sector approach to representation (see diagram above).
Key Relationships – government & other	VSF has joined with other organizations and/or endorsed the work of its member organizations to make submissions on issues of interest or concern to the voluntary sector, e.g., the federal budget and the Gomery Commission.
Advocacy and Services	VSF is at a formative stage in its development. Its member organizations are currently the ones delivering services to the sector and undertaking advocacy work in specific areas. A “coordinated collaboration” describes how the Forum currently operates.

Community Services Council Newfoundland and Labrador

Overview	
History and Purpose	The Council was founded in 1976 to lay the groundwork for new social programs, to encourage cooperation in the sector and with government, and to support citizen participation. It acts as a springboard for new ideas and initiatives.
Financing	Dependent on project/program grants and ad hoc funding.
Governance	The Council is an independent voluntary organization and registered charity. Its 17-member board comprises a mixture of volunteers and CEO/staff from nonprofit organizations that provide a broad skill base and regional and sector diversity. The Council recruits its members and board.
Key Relationships	The government consults with the Council when it wants to

<p>– government & other</p>	<p>convene the sector around a particular issue or get the sector's perspective on an issue Communicates with the sector through the envision website. Networks with the sector about key issues. Represents Newfoundland and Labrador on many national groups, e.g., VSF board, Provincial Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks, SSHRC, etc.</p>
<p>Advocacy and Services</p>	<p>Advocates for the sector as a renewal force in Newfoundland and Labrador. Promotes local growth through social economy. Provides information, training, and support to sector organizations. Launches new programs, e.g., student placements, volunteer resources, etc. Undertakes sector research. Is recognized as a sector leader in IT and was contracted to develop a national portal for the nonprofit sector providing a gateway to information needed by nonprofit organizations.</p>

New Brunswick Policy Link

Overview	
History and Purpose	Nonprofit sector, volunteers, and businesses interested in increasing voluntary sectors involvement in policy with government came together in 2000. Received VSI funding for two years.
Financing	Funded by project grants. Following the end of VSI funding, Policy Link has been seeking stable funding.
Governance	19-member board with a mixed membership consisting of government representatives, network groups, and volunteers.
Key Relationships – government & other	Held “Forging Links” conference to develop voluntary sector in New Brunswick.
Advocacy and Services	Undertakes research on sector. Convenes meetings.

Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec (FCABQ)

Overview	
History and Purpose	<p>Renamed in 1984, the mission of the FCABQ comprises four points: collaboration among volunteer centres, representing the centers collective interests, support for members, and promotion of volunteerism in Quebec.</p> <p>Within the FCABQ is the Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec (SACA). SACA oversees numerous programs and various training activities aimed at supporting the work of organizations and volunteers. It devotes a great deal of its efforts to informing the public and encouraging young people to volunteer. It also participates in national and international conventions. The steps it has taken to obtain official recognition by the government of acts of mutual aid and solidarity accomplished by Quebecers contributed to the creation of the Hommage bénévolat-Québec Award.</p>
Financing	Since 1996, the Quebec government has provided \$217,000 per year for a staff of three.
Governance	20-person board of directors. members include groups working in the areas of health services, adult education, leisure and recreation services, communications, consumer, youth, housing, international, and disabilities.
Key Relationships – government & other	Builds solidarity among member organizations. Government has tradition of consulting with sector. Representatives from the sector sit on may committees
Advocacy and Services	Has organized the sector when needed, most recently around a proposal by government to allow individuals to become nonprofits for the purpose of contracting with the government.

Ontario - Multiple groups

Overview	
History and Purpose	Ontario does not have a provincial organization that represents the nonprofit sector; however, there are a number of geographic and/ or sub-sector groups including Pillar Voluntary Sector Network and the Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Organizations. Ontario has a history of attempting to organize the sector. In 1997 the government of Ontario convened a forum that resulted in a resolve to move forward with a steering committee in 1998. In 2000, the organization was incorporated as the Coalition of Voluntary Organizations of Ontario (COVO). A 2001 Ontario Trillium Foundation grant gave the organization five years to achieve sustainability. In 2002, COVO hired an executive director. The Trillium grant runs out in 2006. Ongoing sustainability remains an issue.
Sector Organization	Local organizations such as Pillar and the Ottawa Chamber draw local cross-sector groups together. Ontario has many strong associations, but they are not united into a single group.

Saskatchewan's Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative (PVSII)

Overview	
History and Purpose	In 2002, the provincial government commissioned a report on relations between government and the voluntary sector. The result was the establishment of the Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative (PVSII). PVSII is co-chaired by an MPP and voluntary sector leader and has a steering committee. Goals: To strengthen the relationship between government and voluntary sector, to build capacity in the sector, and to build awareness of the voluntary sector among the general public.
Financing	PVSII is supported and led by government. In 2005, the annual budget allocation was \$175,000 to cover the cost of operations.
Governance	A steering committee appointed by government includes major sector associations such as United Ways, Saskculture, the health authority, and representatives for youth, aboriginals, and visible minorities. Also at the table are representatives of all the government departments involved with the voluntary sector.
Key Relationships – government & other	Hold an annual forum that brings the sector and government together. Is attempting to build collaboration between government and the sector.
Advocacy and Services	PVSII was active on board liability issues and the new nonprofit corporations act. It undertook major review of best practices in government/sector relations, and sponsors annual volunteer week and annual volunteer awards.

Voluntary and NonProfit Sector Organization of Manitoba Inc

Overview	
History and Purpose	<p>Received seed funding from the federal Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI). Following the end of VSI, ongoing funding has been difficult to find.</p> <p>Mission: The Manitoba Voluntary and Nonprofit Sector uses its collective voice and strength to build and sustain healthy and thriving communities in which all Manitobans are engaged and actively involved community building.</p> <p>The organization is a voice for the sector.</p> <p>They are developing services that can be shared by organizations in the sector such benefits and insurance, bulk purchasing.</p>
Financing	Plan is to raise financing from shared services, events, and consultant fees.
Governance	<p>Governed by a board of directors.</p> <p>Is a membership organization that operates on the basis of diverse distributive leadership. In addition to engaging nonprofit organizations, it also attempts to include activists and immigrant and aboriginal communities.</p> <p>Plans to renew its leadership with new generation of leaders.</p> <p>Is beginning a membership recruitment drive.</p>
Key Relationships – government & other	The organization needs to reengage with government, business, and labour.
Advocacy and Services	<p>Facilitates researches, engages and animates member organizations and groups for broad policy development.</p> <p>Participates in improving organizational and service effectiveness and builds awareness of the importance of the sector for Manitobans through its website and brown bag lunches.</p>

Alberta - Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO)

Overview	
History and Purpose	<p>Began in March 2004 in Calgary with a three-year grant from the Muttart Foundation.</p> <p>Mission: to work with business and government to build a strong vibrant community; engage members of the sector; promote awareness of the sector; undertake research; provide leadership on policy issues; and act as clearinghouse.</p>
Financing	<p>Multi-year start-up grant from the Muttart Foundation, gradually shifting to self-funding through memberships, fees for service, and contracts. Start up funding has allowed CCVO to have a high level of activity and to provide quality leadership to sector. Membership takes time to build; it is working at being self-sustaining.</p> <p>Sliding scale membership fees: budget under \$500,000: \$50 \$500,000-\$1.5 million: \$250 over \$1.5 million: \$500 Business, government, and individuals: \$100 Sustaining members/associates: \$1000-\$5000</p>
Governance	Elected board of directors comprising a mix of sector volunteers and sector leaders. Elected by members.
Key Relationships – government & other	<p>Convenes meetings between sector and government.</p> <p>Works with Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations and Volunteer Alberta to establish relationship with provincial bureaucrats.</p> <p>Supports networking within the sector and with others outside the sector.</p>
Advocacy and Services	<p>Represents sector on issues that affect the sector as a whole and on common interests, e.g., campaign to have Ralph bucks donated to charity, pre-budget consultation, campaign to continue free urban transportation for welfare recipients, etc.</p> <p>Services: undertakes research, produces an e-bulletin, maintains a website, coordinates and sponsors workshops and lectures, runs a job-posting service on its website, hosts forums and speakers and tracks policy issues for sector.</p>

Volunteer Organization Consortium of British Columbia (VOC BC)

Overview	
History and Purpose	<p>In 1998, a government initiative to improve the voluntary sector failed with a change in government. VOC BC was launched September 2002.</p> <p>Mission: To maximize the impact of the contributions of volunteers and voluntary organizations in British Columbia.</p> <p>The Composition of the Consortium Participating organizations must have the capacity and commitment to communicate within their own sub-sector, in order to hear concerns and to disseminate information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provincial organizations that represent the diversity of groups that involve volunteers: health, education, social services, sport, recreation and leisure, arts, culture, multicultural, aboriginal, children's/youth; business, environment, service groups, faith and others ➤ Organizational representation may be by leadership volunteers and/or senior staff. Staff/board partnerships are encouraged. ➤ Members are provincial organizations that are coalitions of the groups they represent, or provincial organizations, where no coalitions exist, or community organizations that are coalitions of the groups they represent. Initial focus was on volunteers rather than the nonprofit sector however recently the group is open to sector associations and groups and they are joining.
Financing	<p>Administrative support to the consortium is provided by Volunteer BC and any other partners who agree to provide support.</p> <p>Group has seen only tiny bits of money in the last three years. Waiting to see if the provincial government will provide funding.</p>
Governance	<p>The consortium is led by representatives from different member organizations, elected by the membership. Committees are formed as decided by the consortium, and VOCBC is sponsored by Volunteer BC. Participating organizations become members of Volunteer BC.</p>
Key Relationships – government & other	<p>The consortium functions as a think tank and convenes the sector on key issues.</p>
Advocacy and Services	<p>Still developing their services.</p>

Social Planning Coalition of the Northwest Territories

Overview	
History and Purpose	Social Planning Coalition of NWT has been disbanded for approximately three years due to lack of capacity. The objective of the group was to undertake planning and raise awareness in NWT.
Context	NWT is small enough that nonprofit organizations see each other regularly at meetings but do not make time to speak about common agenda for the sector; they are too busy doing the work.

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Coalition of Ontario Voluntary Organizations: www.covo.on.ca

Community Sector Task Force (NZ): www.nzfwo.org.nz

Community Services Council Newfoundland and Labrador: www.envision.ca

Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec: www.fcabq.org

Minnesota Council of Nonprofits: www.mncn.org

National Council of Nonprofit Associations (USA): www.ncna.org

National Council of Voluntary Organizations (UK): www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

New Brunswick Policy Link: www.policylink.nb.ca

Saskatchewan Premiers Voluntary Sector Council: www.gov.sk.ca

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