

Provincial Gathering of Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Organizations
Nov. 4 and 5, 2010
Holiday Inn Harbourview, Dartmouth, NS
Summary Report

Agenda Overview:

- Morning:** Welcome and Opening Remarks by Minister Marilyn More
Imagine Canada Drivers
Provincial Context – Challenges and Opportunities
Table Discussions
- Afternoon:** Possible Actions
Selection of Priorities
Discussion Review, Wrap up
Reception

Nov 5th Workshops

Welcome and Opening

Emcee and conference organizer Sandra Murphy welcomed the 71 participants. Hon Marilyn More, Minister of the Voluntary Sector, provided welcome and highlighted a number of recent events and reports that can shape the strategic direction for the voluntary sector and the province. Minister More announced a new initiative, the Voluntary Sector Professional Improvement Initiative that will provide \$800,000 for sector capacity development. The Minister also announced the shift of “Volunteerism” within NS Health Promotion and Protection, to “Voluntary Sector” to be situated within Nova Scotia Labour and Workforce Development.

Imagine Canada: Framework for Action and Drivers of Change

Michelle Gauthier, VP of Public Policy and Outreach, Imagine Canada, provided national context for recent engagement sessions, and highlights of session results to date. Overarching driver in the changing demography of Canadian society: an aging population, increased urbanization, increasing cultural diversity and a growing aboriginal youth population.

Seven drivers of change that impact upon the voluntary sector:

Driver 1: *the increasing importance of social innovation, including new products, services and behaviors*

Driver 2: *structural shifts in the revenue base supporting charities and nonprofits, including an increase in the public’s demand for clarification of what charities and or not do for revenue generation or funding programs*

Driver 3: *shortage of talent to strengthen and lead charitable and nonprofit organizations.*

Driver 4: *lack of growth in the number of volunteers to govern, support and promote civic and community organizations.*

Driver 5: *heightened demand for transparency, accountability, communication of impact and public policy engagement.*

Driver 6: *growing need for transformative partnerships among charities and nonprofits and with other sectors.*

Driver 7: *Increased use of social media and new technologies for community engagement, outreach to youth and networking*

Provincial Context: Challenges and Opportunities

Andrea Caven, Program coordinator, Volunteerism, NS Labour and Workforce Development, reviewed common key points made at 11 Local Gatherings held in communities across Nova Scotia, and linked these points to the above Drivers.

Challenges:

1. Funding
2. Volunteerism
3. Organizational Capacity
4. Legal/Liability Requirements
5. Appreciation for the Voluntary Non-Profit Sector

Opportunities:

1. Communications, Social Connections and Community
2. Technology
3. Employers and Businesses
4. Training and Capacity Building
5. Expanding notion of Volunteer
6. Resources

Table Discussions, Challenges, Opportunities and Drivers

Participants discussed any surprises that came out of the presentations on Drivers and the provincial Challenges and Opportunities. Examples of innovations within these areas were noted, and the top three drivers were listed. The drivers that rose to the top of these discussions include:

Driver 6: *growing need for transformative partnerships among charities and nonprofits and with other sectors.*

Driver 7: *Increased use of social media and new technologies for community engagement, outreach to youth and networking*

Driver 2: *structural shifts in the revenue base supporting charities and nonprofits*

Driver 3: *shortage of talent to strengthen and lead charitable and nonprofit organizations.*

Possible Actions

Participants sat at one of the seven tables that were designated for discussion of seven possible actions, and developed one or two priorities to support each of the possible actions.

Possible Actions:

1. Solidifying the funding base
2. Investing in Human Resources and Build Capacity
3. Introduce more Sustainable Operating Models
4. Foster Knowledge mobilization and social innovation
5. Strengthen governance, transparency, accountability and public policy engagement
6. Develop greater awareness of the sector's contributions
7. Build strong infrastructure to support volunteerism

Selection of Priorities

Participants viewed the results of the discussions - all priorities listed under each possible action – and voted with four stickers for their top priorities. Voting results indicated:

1. Establish a sector council
2. Establish a provincial voice
3. Develop regional volunteer service centres, with a physical space
4. Provide sustained funding for compensation benefits: pension and medical

Discussion review, wrap up and reception

Andrea Caven, Michelle Gauthier and Sandra Murphy provided closing remarks on the day's discussions. Michelle invited participants to attend the 2011 National Summit, Nov. 28 and 29 in Ottawa. Further details on the National Engagement Strategy, Framework for Action and the Summit are available at www.imaginecanada.ca/node/239

Reception speakers included: Chris Fyles, Lake City Employment, Mary Lu Redden, Humanities 101, and Carol Pickings-Anthony, Lunenburg-Queens Volunteer Partnership.

November 5th Workshops

Participants attended one of three workshops: 1) Risk Management offered by Dr. Norman O'Reilly on behalf of Imagine Canada; 2) Social Financing offered by Nora Sobolov, manager and CEO of Community Forward Fund; and 3) Volunteer Recruitment and Retention offered by Max Chauvin at the request of the local planning committee.