



# COVID-19 Challenge, Change and Innovation in Canadian Civil Society

*Final Report – Submitted to ESDC*

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## List of Acronyms

CEBA - Canada Emergency Business Account Loan

CECRA - Canadian Emergency Commercial Rental Assistance

CEWS - Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy

COVID-19 - Coronavirus Disease 2019

CSO - Civil Society Organization

ECSF - Emergency Community Support Fund

ESDC - Employment and Social Development Canada

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

IOG - Institute on Governance

LGBTQ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer or Questioning

NGO - Non-Governmental Organizations

NFP - Not-for-Profit

NSNVO - National Survey of Non-Profit and Voluntary Organizations

PWDs - Persons With Disabilities

*This report has been funded by ESDC from the Government of Canada; however, the views expressed are those of IOG and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.*



## Executive summary

This study set out to examine the implications of COVID-19 on the civil society sector and determine the lessons learned to date, how a sample of the sector have responded, and seek input on what actions might need to be considered by government to best position CSOs for the future.

The research is qualitative with a total 16 organizations surveyed through hour-long, structured interviews, generally with the Executive Director (or equivalent). The sample focused on those CSOs serving vulnerable groups, which for our purposes include: Persons With Disabilities (PWDs); women; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer or questioning (LGBTQ); Indigenous people; youth; and seniors.

The impact of COVID 19 on those surveyed is significant and organizations were forced to make substantive changes to their ways of doing business.

The ability to move services/programming to an on-line environment was important to success. Those that were more successful had existing on-line activities, fewer capacity constraints in resourcing and easier businesses to transform.

Those organizations that relied on fundraising as a significant share of their total revenue have faced particular challenges. Traditional models (e.g. breakfast fundraisers), have all but disappeared and on-line/virtual models have been challenging for most, as they seek new ways to raise money.

Federal government programs have been important but much more important to some than to others. The most widely used program has been the wage subsidy (CEWS).

Partnerships and collaborations have been important but most indicated that they have deepened relationships rather than forged new ones. Of significance has been the sharing of information with “sister/in sub-sector” organizations as challenges were confronted and lessons learned and shared.

Organizations surveyed are generally optimistic about the future and confident they can meet their medium-term priorities.



That's said, respondents indicated underlying concerns about the sector and its sustainability once COVID specific funding ends. This is compounded by a sense that some vulnerable populations' needs are not being met as the sectors' responses to COVID, while heroic, are not fully meeting all those in need.

COVID has necessitated change and many of these changes should be encouraged. Historically, the Not-for-Profit /charitable sector has been slower to innovate and adapt to technological change than the private sector<sup>1</sup>.

Our main recommendation is to develop a strategy that supports the long-term sustainability of the sector.

## Introduction and objectives

The civil society sector is an important sector of both Canadian society and its economy. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) within the sector – including charities, not-for-profit organizations and social enterprises - provide a range of essential services and programs that touch most aspects of our society. They also play a critical role in promoting active citizenship, supporting economic and community development and advocating on behalf of diverse communities and causes. The connections they establish between individuals, communities and governments build social capital and contribute to a vibrant democracy.

The sector faces significant challenges brought on by the COVID 19 pandemic which hit most CSOs in Canada beginning sometime in March 2020. These challenges are multifaceted and depend on the type of product or service, demand side or supply side pressures and the geographic location of the CSO.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example: Civil society fast forward: Getting ahead of technological change, together. Silvia Magnoni, Head of Civil Society Communities, World Economic Forum, May 22, 2019.



How CSOs have responded, are responding and plan to respond to COVID 19 is the subject of this report.

Specifically, the Institute on Governance (IOG) has been engaged by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to conduct a research study to examine the implications of COVID-19 on the civil society sector and determine the lessons learned to date, how CSOs have responded, what actions have worked and what have not, and seek input on what actions might need to be considered by government to best position CSOs for the future.

The COVID-19 challenges facing Canadian civil society organizations have implications on ESDC's mandate and priorities. This research will contribute to a better understanding of the civil society sector as it is shaped and changed by COVID-19 and in turn allow for a tuning of policy responses, if warranted.

Specifically, the objectives include:

- determine lessons learned, by community (local, provincial, national) not-for-profits and charities, including social enterprises, from their immediate responses to the pandemic and sustaining efforts to date
- identify what has changed, what responses have been considered and implemented, and what has worked (and what has not)
- seek input on what actions need to be taken to ensure these organizations can survive through the duration of the crisis and be positioned for the future
- examine which civil society partners have demonstrated resilience and which ones may be seriously impacted by the pandemic in a way that could challenge their sustainability, to help understand success factors and vulnerabilities examine the role of innovation, spearheaded by civil society partners, in response to the impact of the pandemic.

This report provides a summary of overall findings and recommendations.



## Approach and methodology

The Civil Society Sector is large and varied. Civil society - also referred to as the “third sector” alongside the public (government) and private sectors - has traditionally been understood as organizations with social mandates that operate in the pursuit of a public interest. The World Bank, for example, defines the term as: “the wide array of non-governmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life, expressing the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) therefore refer to a wide of array of organizations: community groups, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations”.<sup>2</sup>

For the purposes of this study we have taken a subset of this broader sector, namely that of *charities and non-profit organizations*<sup>3</sup> which are defined as those organizations meeting the following criteria:

- non-governmental (i.e., are institutionally separate from governments)
- non-profit distributing (i.e., do not return any profits generated to their owners or directors)
- self-governing (i.e., are independent and able to regulate their own activities)
- voluntary (i.e., benefit to some degree from voluntary contributions of time or money)
- formally incorporated or registered under specific legislation with provincial, territorial or federal governments.

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank (2013) Defining Civil Society, available here: <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/CSO/0,,contentMDK:20101499~menuPK:244752~pagePK:220503~piPK>. The OECD, World Economic Forum and others have similar definitions.

<sup>3</sup> This recently changed from “non-profit and voluntary organizations”



The scope of the charities and non-profit organizations excludes grass-roots organizations or citizens' groups that are not formally incorporated or registered with provincial, territorial or federal governments. It also excludes some registered charities that are considered to be public sector agencies (e.g., school boards, public libraries and public schools).<sup>4</sup>

Given the proposed modest sample size of between 15-20 organizations it was decided to further focus on those charities and not-for-profits serving vulnerable groups. Vulnerable groups for our sample include Persons With Disabilities (PWDs), women, LGBTQ, Indigenous people, youth, and seniors.

Some sample partner organization lists were provided by ESDC (for example PWDs and those receiving Emergency Community Support Fund<sup>5</sup> - ECSF - funding) while others were generated from Community Foundation of Canada memberships, a comprehensive list of many CSO's.

The sample was further refined based on geography (location and market served), size of organization: small (less than \$ 2m/yr.); medium (\$2m/yr. to \$5m/yr.); and, large (more than \$5m/yr.).

The final sampling list of 19 organizations was developed in consultation with ESDC and is found in Annex 1. Summary statistics of the 16 organizations with completed surveys are in Table 1, below.

Steps were taken to be broadly representative of the sector and targeted populations, but this is not, technically, a statistically representative sample being too small and biasing (by choice) those receiving ESDC funding (through the ECSF for example).

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<sup>4</sup> Source <https://www150.statscan.gc.ca/n1/pub.61-533-x/2004001/420353-eng.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Launched on May 19, 2020 ECSF is a \$350M investment from the Government of Canada to support charities and non-profit organizations serving vulnerable populations as they manage the impacts of COVID-19.



Table 1. Interview sample summary metrics of organizations surveyed

Geography		Vulnerable groups		Organization type	
National	6	PWDs	5	Social Enterprise	3
North	2	Women	4	NFP	13
West	3	LGBTQ	1	TOTAL	16
Ontario	2	Indigenous	2	Size by revenue	
Quebec	2	Youth	4	Small (< \$2m)	8
Atlantic	1	Senior	2	Medium (\$2m-\$5m)	4
				Large (>\$5m)	4
TOTAL	16	TOTAL	16	TOTAL	16

As important to the identification of the organization itself is ensuring the right contact. Here we generally sought to speak to the executive director or the person with general operational oversight of the organization. Names and roles in each organization is provided in Annex 1.

A questionnaire (Discussion Guide) was developed and refined with ESDC input and approved for distribution on October 23, 2020. This is found in Annex 2 (English) & 3 (French). An email invited each sample contact beginning the week of October 26 to an interview and select a date and time (using an on-line tool). The Discussion Guide was distributed in the same email for respondents to review in advance of the interview itself.

The research is qualitative in nature and the aim of the assignment is to explore in the course of the hour those areas that can help understand success factors, vulnerabilities and the role of innovation in response to the impact of the pandemic.

The IOG explored the themes described above in hour-long, structured interviews over the Zoom platform with some combination of IOG staff including either David Murchison, Laura Edgar or Bronwyn Roszell participating (and generally two from IOG's side).

Following the interview, notes were compiled for each organization following the format of the discussion guide and results aggregated. No direct attribution is



accorded to any individual in the report itself. Permission has been provided to publish the name of the organization and the name of the person interviewed.

Sixteen interviews were completed of nineteen planned. Interviews started November 3 and were completed by November 20, 2020.

*A note on those participating in the survey.*

*Respondents proved to be highly engaged, capable and dedicated individuals. They generally had long tenure in the sector, often in the organization in question, and were seasoned “heads of the organization” (usually Executive Directors). Response rates were high, with interviews completed with 16 organizations of 19 contacted.*

## The macro environment – CSOs and the COVID-19 pandemic

The pandemic has had a significant economic impact on the Canadian economy with annual GDP losses estimated at about 6 per cent<sup>6</sup>, higher than the 2008-09 recession and approaching those losses estimated at the depression of 1930. This is a global phenomenon with Canada experiencing the mid-range of impacts. Notable outliers have included South Korea and parts of Asia who have, to date, weathered the event significantly better than other nations.

The Canadian CSO sector has, unsurprisingly, not been spared in this impact.

Statistics Canada’s Business Conditions Survey reporting in June 2020 of the non-profits serving households<sup>7</sup> found that 62 per cent of non-profits experienced some revenue fall in April 2020 and an estimated 21 per cent experienced a

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<sup>6</sup> The Economist – Economic & financial indicators November 28, 2020. 5.8 per cent.

<sup>7</sup> “Non-profits serving households” includes both registered charities and non-profit organizations; excludes non-profits serving businesses and non-profits serving governments. The survey was designed to be representative of the full non-profit sector.



revenue fall of over 50 per cent. A little over 10 per cent of the sector is estimated to have laid off 30 per cent or more of their workforce.

These impacts are slightly better than those of private business but broadly in line<sup>8</sup>.

It is worth noting that these results are early in the pandemic and do not fully account for the internal responses the sector made to economic conditions nor those who took advantage of the government support that was at various stages of roll-out at that time. For this reason, we have asked respondents to consider the period from spring through to fall 2020 to try and provide a sufficient timeframe that captures these events.

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<sup>8</sup> ibid



## The impacts and responses to COVID

### Introduction

The impact from COVID on those surveyed has been significant. From COVID's impact beginning in approximately March 2020 through to those being surveyed in November 2020, all organizations surveyed have been forced to make significant changes to their ways of doing business, some more successfully than others. None carried on through this period with "business as usual".

Notwithstanding these challenges, all organizations surveyed have been able to meet their underlying mandate or mission although several have done so at diminished levels (e.g. fewer clients served or fewer services delivered).

### Financial impact

*"In my whole 25 plus years, March to September were the worst months [the organization] ever had."*

The financial impact of COVID is varied. On average, most organizations surveyed have seen net financial impacts that are modest (flat or slightly down) when compared to either plan or the prior year.<sup>9</sup> A few have actually seen revenue increase as government support has more than offset

*Traditionally, the organization would have a [large] in-person event, raising about \$120,000, which is huge for an organization with an annual revenue of under half a million. With a move to an on-line fundraiser the organization only received about \$10,000. Without government support programs the organization could have closed.*

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<sup>9</sup> As noted in the methodological section, we have been careful in the interviews to try and ensure we have not just captured immediate impacts in the spring (which were quite negative financially as many organizations closed and scrambled to adapt) but also those through to November 2020 as organizations responded, adapted and took advantage of government support. Note that the quantitative research cited (being spring 2020) consequently probably overstates the negative financial impacts.



negative financial impacts. Most have been able to retain staff although some modest percentage were forced to lay off staff.

For those organizations that have seen a more significant financial impact than others, the reasons tend to be that they are organizations that have had business approaches which are either “in person” and/or have relied to a greater extent on “in person” fundraising events (e.g. fundraiser breakfasts/dinners) and for which no easy substitutes have been found (although they are moving quickly to do so). More often than not both of these factors come into play.

The factors contributing to the financial impacts being more moderate than otherwise might have been the case include:

*The organization expects to be about \$2 million dollars short, about 70% of expected fundraising. Even before the pandemic there were issues raising money, often leaning on donations from private businesses that served the vulnerable population in the community. This year the organization is still scrambling to make ends meet and don't expect to see a recovery for the losses in the next two years.*

1. The ability of the organization to pivot their services to a virtual environment. Those that already had on-line offerings tended to be able to both move more quickly and more successfully than others.
2. To be both eligible for and to receive, government financial support.
3. The ability to reduce costs (esp. overhead).

These factors are ranked in importance with the first factor being the most critical. Notwithstanding that comment, government support (and especially at the margin), has been considered critical for some and especially for those who have not found easy substitutes to their fund-raising efforts. These same organizations also express the most uncertainty about their future with uncertain future funding from both government and their own fundraising efforts.

Importantly, having responded to COVID, no organizations surveyed reported impacts on resources, financial or otherwise, that were significant enough to have affected their capacities to deliver against their core mandates and missions.



## Responding to COVID

*“There have been some interesting learnings to help evolve strategy through the next few years, [the organization] pivoted immediately to remain open and accessible and gained a better sense of what motivates the community, created better services and has a better understanding of what resonates with our donors.”*

Most organizations closed sometime in March as the pandemic swept across Canada. Health protocols were implemented and work started from home. A number of larger organizations dusted off H1N1 risk management plans but most were in panic mode as they sought to take steps to make sure services continued and their client services/demands were being provided or met.

All organizations moved on-line. Electronic platforms were accessed, subscriptions purchased and plans drawn up. Most organizations made adjustments through the spring and summer and with the easing of restrictions had at least a partial return to the office by August of 2020 but were, at the time of our interviews, coping with a second wave. Those organizations that had on-line offerings pre COVID (e.g. virtual training, fundraising) were able to make the transition more easily than others. Many had to make substantial changes to their business models and try completely new approaches, in those cases where moving to on-line wasn't practical or possible. Those with in-person activities, services and programming had the most difficulty while those providing learning and training, which were easily moved to an on-line environment, the least. For example, a provider of meals in a community hall had to consider a different way to get warm food that met health protocols. Still another that provided in person counselling services had to try and do that virtually but to a community that lacked access to computers and/or the internet. Moreover, that

*As a community centre, being open to support the community is a core part of our business and mission and we knew that there would be a major impact with the closure of the centre in terms of drop-ins and other in-person services, overnight. By the Monday after lockdown, the centre had pivoted to open in a park adjacent to the main building to provide an accessible food program, clean clothes, public washrooms and other harm reduction supplies.*



organization also had to find an electronic platform that met counselling privacy guidelines as platforms like Zoom do not.

These were and are busy, stressful times. Indeed, one long serving Executive Director described this year as the most challenging ever faced by the organization.

While COVID has been difficult and trying, respondents also made it clear that they have learned a lot and, in some cases, had been trying to do certain things for years but members, clients or staff were resistant to change. COVID has disrupted and forced change that in many cases has been beneficial. In this sense COVID **has been a positive catalyst for change now and the future.**

### Use and importance of (federal) government programs

*“It is great that the federal government has kept us funded so we would be more focused on what we can do for our clients.”*

The interviews specifically probed on the use and importance of the various government programs. Most organizations have some form of (usually) core provincial government funding, supplemented by (generally federal) grants.

*The organization made sure to get involved in city wide meetings, advocating for their population and focused their advocacy efforts to respond to the immediate needs of their community, elevating the issues of neighborhood safety, violence, and the impact on the queer community.*

Most of the organizations surveyed accessed at least one of the COVID designed federal government programs, with the most accessed being the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) at slightly over 50 per cent of our sample. In a number of cases organizations would have liked to have done so but were ineligible (for example because they were unionized city employees). Three organizations used The Canada Emergency Business Account Loan (CEBA) and two the Canadian Emergency Commercial Rental Assistance (CECRA). There were modest complaints concerning the difficulty of filling out the applications and understanding the evolving changes to the programming available. Those facing

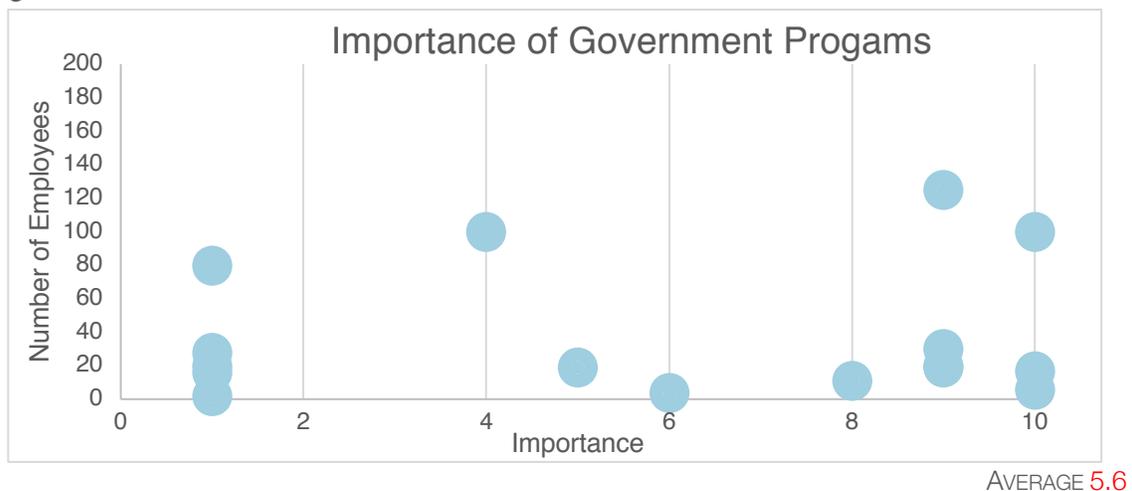


rents, especially at a time of often unusable space, noted the lack of targeted rent relief programs and felt more could have been done there.

By design, approximately half of those interviewed had received ECSF funding for COVID related activities and programming. This funding was highly appreciated and, according to recipients, relatively light in the application process (which we gather is not generally the case for federal programs). Many had not yet spent this money, most often because it was relatively recently received. Several respondents lamented things they thought should be funded but weren't. These included federal participation in capital programs, federal funding of national organizations and certain very targeted funding to address specific issues.

Table 3 shows the federal government programs varied in importance to the organizations, with a wide dispersion from the mean. Some indicated that the programs were not at all important, while others indicated they were critically important and that without the funding they wouldn't have survived.

*Table 3: How important were the federal government programs to your organization?*



Those who found the programs less important for their organizations had made significant changes necessary to cope, had more secure funding sources and



were otherwise on reasonable financial footing. They thus viewed CEWS, for example, opportunistically while also being highly uncertain as to what the future might bring and delighted to be able to have an opportunity to put a modest financial cushion in place.

### Board engagement

*"My engagement with the board has gone up significantly during COVID. They have been supportive and more attuned to the daily program struggles while helping me think through contingency plans"*

Unsurprisingly, the degree and type of board engagement varied. Virtually all those surveyed have capable, functional boards with only one small organization in the sample lacking a full board (no chair and missing members ) and being without a current strategic plan (in progress). Some executive directors (or equivalent) use the board to inform and apprise while others use the board as a sounding mechanism and in exceptional cases to address problems or think through how things might be done differently. Larger organizations made use of board committees to take on specific tasks. Whatever approach was being used, board engagement has been frequent, and typically monthly. If there is one activity that Executive Directors have tended to use the boards for beyond sharing and informing, it has been in the area of fundraising. This is especially the case for those organizations that have relied on fundraisers for a significant share of their revenue and have found it challenging in these COVID times.

While many have adjusted their strategic plans or are in course of doing so due to COVID impacts, many indicate that their underlying strategic plans remain sound but the “how” of what they might be doing has changed. The extent of change to these plans often turns therefore on how granular the strategic plans are.



## Partnerships and collaborations

*“The [organization] tried to get better at collaborating on National fundraising, previously only doing independent fundraising activities, now there is a more creative and collaborative approach.”*

In general organizations have tended to try and deepen their existing relationships rather than forge new ones, with the possible exception in the fundraising space where those in need have pulled out all stops. Of most benefit has been those organizations that have sought to work more closely with their national umbrella organization (if they are part of one) or reached out to within sector organizations to meet in a forum that share experiences, tools and learnings.

Those larger organizations with more capacity have benefited still more by reaching out and collaborating outside of their own sector to seek new tools and application of those tools.

This is rich area that should be explored further with some low hanging fruit.

*The organization worked to partner with a group that would give out food security boxes to the community through centres, when these were shut down they were handing out food boxes from a van in an empty parking lot. The organization saw this need and offered their building they were putting through renovations as a distribution hub.*



## Assessment of capacity to meet future demands

*“The future will be a hybrid, we have discovered new and better ways of doing some things, and will keep doing those. There are other things that have suffered, and will go back to doing them the ‘old’ way if there is ever an opportunity to do that.”*

Respondents are optimistic about the future and are generally confident that their organization has sufficient capacity to meet their medium-term priorities.

*In-person fundraising was a significant part of community [sourced] revenue, transferring these online by creating donor lists and sending monthly emails actually saw donations increase for the organization.*

Respondents indicate that the COVID adaptations recently made will be at least part of any business mix as they chart their future courses, even as they contemplate a return to normal life post COVID (which none see to be in the near term). Some indicate significant changes while others indicate a more modest portion.

A number of organizations see opportunities to expand their geographic/service reach as a consequence of the new tools/practises they have been forced to adapt to and are consequently enthusiastic and see it as a “bright spot” on the horizon. Those that have started new business lines expect to continue them even as the traditional lines come back.

There is however a general underlying concern that the populations these organizations serve are facing unprecedented strain – especially those serving the most vulnerable which is the focus of our work– and they worry about the stress, mental well-being and the struggles of these populations as the pandemic continues. There is no clear understanding of the longer-term impacts to these vulnerable populations but a general overhang of worry that another shoe will drop at some point. Finally, there is a general weariness and fatigue as many have worked extraordinarily hard only to find themselves with no clear end in sight



## Overall findings and recommendations

### Findings

The impact of COVID 19 on those surveyed is significant and organizations were forced to make substantive changes to their ways of doing business. However, the financial effects noted by headlines in the early summer (e.g. “two thirds of charities have seen revenues fall by one third”) appear to have moderated as CSOs have responded to the challenges, worked hard to take activities on-line, apply for & get government funding, cut costs and find efficiencies.

Consequently, we find that some 7 to 8 months into the pandemic, those surveyed have seen financial impacts that are only modestly net negative compared to pre COVID, given the cumulative effect of actions undertaken (internally and in combination with external government support), but only after a lot of hard, stressful work. All those surveyed indicated that they have been able to meet their core mandates and mission notwithstanding these difficulties.

The ability to move services/programming to an on-line environment was important to success. Those that were more successful had existing on-line activities, fewer capacity constraints in resourcing and easier businesses to transform.

Those organizations that relied on fundraising as a significant share of their total revenue have faced particular challenges. Traditional models (e.g. breakfast fundraisers), have all but disappeared and on-line/virtual models have been challenging for most as they seek new ways to raise money. Others who rely, at least in part, on social enterprises to both fund and deliver programming have also faced challenges.<sup>10</sup>

Federal government programs have been important (but much more important to some than to others) as we see a bi-modal distribution in the responses in asking respondents to rate the importance of these programs to their own organizations

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<sup>10</sup> Only two social enterprises were directly in the surveyed sample. They tended to be involved in activities that involved in-person interface (e.g. food preparation) and were particularly impacted.



(1 being not at all and 10 being very important). The most widely used program has been the wage subsidy (CEWS).

Partnerships and collaborations have been important but most indicated that they have deepened relationships rather than forged new ones. Of significance has been the sharing of information with “sister/in sub-sector” organizations as challenges were confronted and lessons learned and shared. Very few organizations have done this sharing across sub-sectors.

Organizations surveyed are generally optimistic about the future and confident they can meet their medium-term priorities.

Respondents indicated underlying concerns about the sector and its sustainability once COVID specific funding ends. This is compounded by a sense that some vulnerable populations needs are not being met as the sectors’ responses to COVID, while heroic, are not fully meeting all those in need.

## Recommendations

COVID has necessitated change and many of these changes should be encouraged. Historically, the NFP/charitable sector has been slower to innovate and adapt to technological change than the private sector. Building on the positive momentum sparked by the pandemic affords a major opportunity to institute more effective services, programs, fairer access to them and to do so more efficiently.

Our main recommendation is to develop a strategy that supports the long-term sustainability of the sector.

We suggest in the very near term to:

1. Convene a follow-up group meeting (virtually) with each of the respondents of this survey to both provide an overview of findings and to then facilitate a deeper discussion exploring the issue of sustainability (including post-COVID) and the role for government. This might be facilitated in two groups of 8 and consideration given to having a senior or elected official lead the discussions.
2. More broadly, consider ways and means to promote information sharing across the sector that would draw on lessons learned and innovative



solutions to common problems identified that support long-term sustainability. The Department might consider, for example, sponsoring a conference or a series of sessions that sought to bring the CSOs together to do that.

3. Develop specific training sessions online and available to the sector that promote innovative practices & technological tools and how use them. Here, for example, one could make good use of IOG's digital governance practice to develop some tailored courses with a partner like [canadahelps.org](http://canadahelps.org) who provide digital platforms<sup>11</sup> for fundraising and promote access to effective technology and education in the charitable/NFP sector. There are other providers of course and a first step would be to understand what is both required and what exists to meet the needs identified.

And in the near term:

4. That those Government of Canada initiatives that support the long-term sustainability of the for-profit sectors be extended to the charitable/NFP sector.
5. That ESDC consider targeted funding to both fund and incent organizations to better use technology and innovative practices with the where organizations are able to deliver on their missions more effectively and efficiently.
6. To better support the long-term sustainability of the sector, that one Department be responsible for the sector's health, and the interaction and overall relationship with it. Today many federal departments touch the sector but there is no one government wide window. The responsible department would coordinate across the federal government for those connected to the sector and also on a federal/provincial and territorial basis. We note the Senate Report of June 2019 recommended the

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<sup>11</sup> The charitable sector in Canada is an estimated \$17 b of which \$7 b is corporate and \$10 b is individual giving. The largest and most widely used platform is [canadahelps.org](http://canadahelps.org) who processed 'giving' of some \$300m.



Department of Innovation, Science and Technology fulfill this role for the charitable sector.<sup>12</sup>

7. That work be undertaken to develop better data of the sector and especially the NFP sub-sector. This assignment revealed a lack of basic data. This should be corrected. One near term action would be to update the Statistics Canada Study of the National Survey of Non-Profit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO) last done in 2003. More broadly, one would look at federal mechanisms to capture and then report on data going forward (organization filings and CRA reporting for example). Funding a comprehensive national study similar to Imagine Canada's 2006 study of the Ontario nonprofit and voluntary Sector in Ontario<sup>13</sup> would also be very beneficial.

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<sup>12</sup> *A Roadmap to a Stronger Charitable Sector* Report of the Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector, June 2019.

<sup>13</sup> *The Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector in Ontario* Imagine Canada 2006



## Annex 1 - List of sample organizations

Name	Vulnerable Population	Type	Geography	Annual revenue	Contact
Inclusion Canada	PWDs	NFP	National	\$ 2.7 m	Krista Carr, Executive Vice President
Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work	PWDs	SE	National	\$7 m	Maureen Haan, President & CEO
Spinal Cord Injury Canada	PWDs	NFP	National	\$ 420 k	Bill Adair, Executive Director
Neil Squire Society	PWDs	NFP	National	\$ 10 m	Gary Birch, Executive Director
L'Arche Canada	PWDs	NFP	QC/National	\$ 64 m	Dr. John Rietschlin, Chair
Youth Opportunities Unlimited	Youth	SE	ON	\$ 9 m	Steve Cordes, CEO
Operation Come Home	Youth	SE	ON	\$ 2 m	Elsbeth McKay, Executive Director
Ka Ni Kanichihk *	Indigenous	NFP	MB	\$ 5 m	
Circle Project Association	Indigenous	NFP	SK	\$ 1.7 m	Ann Perry, Executive Director
Bridges for Women Society	Women	NFP	BC	\$ 1.6 m	Patricia Rawson, Executive Director
The 519	LGTBQ+	NFP	ON	\$ 7 m	Maura Lawless, Executive Director



Archwood 55 Plus Inc.	Senior	NFP	MB	\$ 66 k	Bill Bees, Vice President
Canadian Mental Health Association, Yukon Division	Variety	NFP	YK	\$ 1.2 m	Tiffanie Tasane, Executive Director
Immigrant Women Services of Ottawa	Women	NFP	ON	\$ 1.5 m	Mercy Lawluvi, Executive Director
Youth Emergency Shelter society of Edmonton *	Youth	NFP	AB	\$ 4.2 m	
Projet Intervention Prostitution Quebec	Sex Workers	NFP	QC	\$ 1.3 m	Genevieve Quinty, Director
Ilitagsiniq - Nunavut Literacy Council	Indigenous	NFP	NU	\$ 4 m	Adriana Kusugak, Executive Director
Halifax Transition House Association *	Women & Children	NFP	NS	\$ 2.2 m	
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Eastern Newfoundland	Youth	NFP	NL	\$ 450 k	Kelly Leach, Executive Director
Canada Helps**	Charities	NFP	National	\$200 m	Marina Glogovac, CEO
					Total Contacted: 19 Total Interviewed: 16
					<i>*Unable to secure interview</i>
					<i>**Additional interview, not included in samples</i>



## Annex 2 – Discussion guide interview questions (E)

The Institute on Governance (IOG) has been engaged by the Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to conduct a research study to examine the implications of COVID-19 on the civil society sector and determine the lessons learned to date, how CSOs have responded, what actions have worked and what have not, and seek input on what actions might need to be considered by government to best position CSOs for the future.

As part of this research, the IOG will interview a sample of CSO's across Canada in an effort to gain a better understanding of these implications and to ultimately better inform policy and policy makers.

These interviews will be scheduled individually by telephone by members of the IOG.

Interviews will be confidential with no direct attribution to individuals.

Below are the suggested questions IOG would like to cover. Respondents should feel free to raise other issues during individual interviews.

Each interview will last no more than one hour. Thank-you in advance for your participation.

### Questions

1. Could you briefly describe your organization, its mission and key metrics (for example geographic reach, number of employees, annual revenue and sources of revenue before any impacts from COVID)?
  - Can you also tell us a bit about yourself, personal background and time with this organization?
2. CSO's have in particular been impacted by COVID. Could you describe the impact of COVID on your organization?
  - What factors contributed to that impact? Specifically, what financial and staffing impact has it had?
  - Has the impact been significant enough to affect your ability to deliver on your mandate/mission?



3. Could you describe your organizations response to these conditions? Specifically, what did you start doing differently in the spring and how might that have changed or evolved through to this fall?
  - What in your view has worked and what hasn't worked?
  - Which of those is the most important?
4. Have you sought to build partnerships, collaborations or secure other, new sources of revenue to ensure continued delivery of mandate and sustainability?
  - How successful have you been?
  - Are there any other actions undertaken?
5. Governments have put in place a number of programs to help CSO's. Are you aware of these?
  - Have you made use of these?
  - Were they helpful? If not why not?
6. On a scale of 1-10, could you rate the importance of these federal government COVID programs to your own CSO?
7. As you think about the future and your organization's ability to best meet its mission, are you optimistic that your organization has adequate capacity (financial or otherwise) to do so?
  - Have you revised your medium-term planning because of COVID and if so how?
  - What role, if any, do you see for government as you consider your organizations medium term priorities?

**Would you like to add anything else?**

**About the IOG**

The Institute on Governance is an independent, Canada-based, not-for-profit public interest institution with its head office in Ottawa. The IOG's mission is



advancing better governance in the public interest, which we accomplish by exploring, developing and promoting the principles, standards and practices which underlie good governance in the public sphere. [www.iog.ca](http://www.iog.ca)



## Annex 3 – Discussion guide interview questions (F)

Emploi et Développement social Canada (EDSC) a embauché l'Institut sur la gouvernance (IOG) pour mener une étude afin d'examiner les effets de l'écllosion la COVID-19 sur le secteur des organismes la société civile (OSC) et de déterminer les leçons tirées à ce jour, la façon dont les OSC ont réagi, les mesures prises qui ont fonctionné et celles qui n'ont pas fonctionné, et d'obtenir des propositions sur les mesures que le gouvernement devrait considérer afin de mieux appuyer les OSC pour l'avenir.

Dans le cadre de cette étude, l'IOG propose interviewer un échantillon d'OSC à travers le Canada, afin de mieux comprendre ces répercussions, et, en définitive, afin d'informer le développement des politiques et les décideurs politiques.

Ces entrevues seront organisées individuellement par téléphone par les membres de l'IOG.

Les entrevues seront confidentielles et aucune déclaration ne sera attribuée individuellement aux répondants.

Vous trouverez ci-dessous les questions que l'IOG aimerait aborder. Les répondants doivent se sentir libres de soulever d'autres questions lors des entrevues individuelles.

Chaque entrevue durera une heure, tout au plus. Nous vous remercions d'avance de votre participation.

### Questions

1. Pourriez-vous décrire brièvement votre organisme, son mandat/ mission et donner quelques chiffres clés (par exemple, la portée géographique, le nombre d'employés, les revenus annuels et les sources de revenus avant la COVID-19)?
  - Pouvez-vous également nous parler un peu de vous, de votre parcours personnel et du temps passé avec cet organisme?



2. Les OSC ont été particulièrement touchées par la COVID-19. Pouvez-vous décrire les répercussions de la COVID-19 sur votre organisme?
  - Quels facteurs ont contribué à ces répercussions? Plus précisément, quelles ont été les répercussions sur les finances et les effectifs?
  - Les répercussions ont-elles été suffisamment importantes pour nuire à votre capacité de remplir votre mandat/mission?
  
3. Pourriez-vous décrire la réponse de votre organisme face à cette situation? Plus précisément, qu'avez-vous commencé à faire différemment au printemps et comment cela a-t-il pu changer ou évoluer jusqu'à cet automne?
  - Selon vous, qu'est-ce qui a fonctionné et qu'est-ce qui n'a pas fonctionné?
  - Parmi ces éléments, lequel est le plus important?
  
4. Avez-vous cherché à établir des partenariats, des collaborations ou à trouver de nouvelles sources de revenus pour garantir l'exécution permanente de votre mandat et votre viabilité?
  - Dans quelle mesure avez-vous réussi?
  - Avez-vous pris d'autres mesures?
  
5. Les gouvernements ont mis en place plusieurs programmes pour appuyer les OSC. Êtes-vous au courant de ces programmes?
  - Les avez-vous utilisés?
  - Ont-ils été utiles? Si non, pourquoi?
  
6. Sur une échelle de 1 à 10, comment évaluez-vous l'importance de ces programmes COVID-19 du gouvernement fédéral pour votre propre OSC?
  
7. En pensant à l'avenir et à la capacité de votre organisme de remplir au mieux son mandat ou sa mission, êtes-vous optimiste quant à ses capacités (financières ou autre) d'y parvenir?
  - Avez-vous révisé votre planification à moyen terme en raison de la COVID-19 et si oui, comment?



- Quel rôle, le cas échéant, envisagez-vous pour le gouvernement lorsque vous examinez les priorités à moyen terme de votre organisme?

### **Souhaitez-vous ajouter autre chose?**

### **À propos de l'IOG**

L'Institut sur la gouvernance est un organisme canadien indépendant, sans but lucratif et d'utilité publique dont le siège social est situé à Ottawa. La mission de l'IOG consiste à faire progresser la bonne gouvernance au nom de l'intérêt public. Nous nous acquittons de cette mission en explorant, en développant et en promouvant les principes, les normes et les pratiques sous-jacents à la bonne gouvernance dans le domaine public. <http://www.iog.ca/>

