



Deliberate Relationships Between Government and the Non-Profit Sector: An Unfolding Picture

By: Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development, in partnership
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Introduction

This research is a scan of relationships between governments and the non-profit/voluntary sector in the many places where they have been developed or are developing. It focuses on deliberate relationships, where targeted strategies have been intentionally developed, as opposed to relationships that exist through regular interaction. The purpose of a deliberate relationship between government and the non-profit/voluntary sector is to build a more effective working relationship, and having built it, to maintain and use it into the future to produce better outcomes for governments, for sector organizations and ultimately for communities.

Methodology and Review Process:

This paper integrated a number approaches to the gathering and analysis of information and perspectives on non-profit/voluntary sector – government relationships. Firstly, the literature from Canadian and international sources was reviewed and synthesized. Secondly, interviews were held with project advisors to develop the analytical framework. Thirdly, a round table was convened with leaders from 14 Canadian local, regional, provincial and territorial voluntary sector networks to gain their insights. Public documents, reports, and web-sites were reviewed and summarized to provide the snapshots and samples of Canadian and international experiences. A draft paper was circulated back to the round table participants, project advisors, and Gathering of Counterparts planning committee members for validation of accuracy and clarity.

This paper examines:

- the nature of existing relationships between governments and the non-profit/voluntary sector across a number of countries;
- deliberate formal relationships between the whole of government and the whole of the sector – at national, sub-regional and local levels;
- driving forces behind the creation of these deliberate relationships and some of the preconditions for such processes;
- mechanisms and processes which occur in some form in the building and implementation of these relationships;
- proposals of what constitutes success; and
- success factors, as well as common challenges.

A snapshot of relationship-building across Canadian jurisdictions can be found in *Appendix A* and a sample of international experiences from selected countries can be found in *Appendix B*. A description of the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks can be found in *Appendix C*.

The Name and Scope of the Sector:

We know that there have been a number of terms used to describe the sector we are discussing and its relationship with governments. These include the Non-Profit Sector, NPO Sector (of non-profit organizations), Voluntary Sector, Community Sector, CBO Sector (of Community-Based Organizations), NGO Sector (of non-governmental organizations), Third Sector Independent Sector, Civil Society, and Autonomous Community Sector.

For the purpose of this paper, we have decided to use the combination of two terms; Non-Profit Sector and Voluntary Sector, ***non-profit/voluntary sector***, as they appear to be the most commonly used in Canadian jurisdictions. While we realize that there is not complete consensus on ***the name of the sector***, it is our understanding that there is a growing ***sense of sector***.

The importance of the non-profit/voluntary sector, in terms of its economic contribution, its critical role in the social infrastructure of communities, and in providing a democratic voice has been gaining recognition in recent years¹. The sector includes a wide range of organizations including those in health and social services, sports and recreation, arts and culture, environment, education, faith and spirituality, social justice, philanthropy, housing, and international development.

¹ Canada's non-profit/voluntary sector is comprised of over 161,000 legally incorporated organizations, makes up 6.8% of the Gross Domestic Product, employs close to one million paid workers, and engages nearly 12 million volunteers.

Context

Several meta-developments in governance and the way societies organize to manage themselves have created conditions which invite a larger role for the voluntary sector and clearer relationships between governments and the sector. The first of these is the move toward shared governance, referred to in Britain where it has been a cornerstone for the past decade as the Third Way, but adopted to some degree by a number of other countries including Canada. It refers to the notion that “the process of governing in the public interest is now distributed and shared among a wide range of actors for the public, private and voluntary sectors and that the state’s role has shifted from exercising direct control and operating through hierarchies to working collaboratively through networks.”²

The second development is the growing recognition of place-based policies and their importance in addressing so many of society’s critical issues. “In order to meet the policy challenges, new relations must be forged among state, civil society and the economy, and with different branches and levels of government”³. This is nowhere more true than in Canada with its multi-layered governance and the realization that so many issues from urban poverty to economic development and homelessness do not align with governments’ structures and that these “wicked problems” resist solutions by one agency – indeed they can only be tackled by crossing departmental and governmental boundaries with other players including the voluntary sector from the local level upward.⁴

(A note of caution is in order concerning some forms that these shifts can take: in some cases, they move toward shared governance and place-based policies have been used as a rationale for downsizing and downloading of public programs. Such responses in fact run counter to the overall objective of better outcomes for citizens and communities. While these shifts open the way for more collaboration, they highlight the importance of ‘getting these relationships right’ so that they can generate greater strength for both parties.)

In addition to such shifts in governance and policy development over the past decade has been a third major development - the growing strength and awareness within the non-profit/voluntary sector itself. The sector in Canada and elsewhere has experienced successes through coalitions and campaigns where civil society organizations teamed up to address particular issues. Such efforts at local levels had the ancillary benefits of building the ground for further collaboration and shared efforts. Internationally, the emergence of more intermediary

² Phillips, Susan D. “Intersection of Governance and Citizenship in Canada: Not Quite the Third Way” in IRPP Policy Matters Vol 7, #4 August 06, p.3

³ Bradford, Neil “Place-based Public Policy: Towards a New Urban and Community Agenda for Canada” Research Report F/51 Family Network, CPRN March 2005, p.10

⁴ Torjman, Sherri. In OpEd “No Small Answers to Big Problems” Toronto Star, Sept 17, 2007

organizations and the experience of global campaigns have also strengthened the sector's awareness of its own capacities and laid the groundwork for further collaboration and for the sharing of experiences and approaches.

In terms of relations between the sector and government, the past decade has seen a certain amount of "policy transfer" underway across the non-profit sector. The concepts of defined relationships with government, capacity-building tools for the sector and financial underpinnings for the sector have all been spread primarily by the sector itself: for example, initiatives in the UK have provided models of defined relationships and capacity-building with government which have been picked up on in countries around the world; in Europe, particularly Eastern Europe, the concept of the 1% tax [a measure that allows citizens to direct 1% of their individual income tax to a non-profit of their choice] has spread quickly and widely. Inside Canada the past decade has seen initiatives taken by the sector at the national level to engage the federal government and draw awareness and attention to the critical importance of the sector; some of these activities too have spread virally across the sector and are being developed between the sector and other governments, as described in the appendix.

Existing Relationships between Governments and the Sector

The way that voluntary sector organizations and governments understand and treat one another is distinct, shaped by the size and circumstances of the particular city or region, province or country, and by the level of development of each of the parties. These pre-existing or "implicit" relationships can be described in broad terms before turning to the creation of a deliberate government-wide policy or relationship with the non-profit/voluntary sector.

Relationships between governments and the sector tend to be of three varieties – often co-existing, with one coming to the fore in one era and another in the next. First is the **service delivery or contract agency** mode where sector organizations are contracted to carry out government programs that have already been shaped and determined where the role for sector organizations is as delivery agent. Second is the potential **partnership** mode where government support is provided to organizations working in fields such as international development or local economic development where each party contributes according to its resources or expertise. And the third mode could be described as the **policy involvement** where governments engage the sector in the development of policy approaches and in designing ways to address issues.

Existing relationships are primarily bilateral, government department by department and even within departments often vary considerably by program and issue. The relationships evolve and are guided by the orientation of the party in power and shift with political change: a government elected on a platform of social inclusion will probably ensure that all departments find ways to

engage the sector more; a government committed to smaller government will likely devolve programs and expect them to be picked up by sector or other agencies or other governments.

The understanding and perception of the sector, both in governments and in the sector itself, tend to shape the form of the relationship. In approaching the sector, some governments focus primarily on the sector as 'all about **volunteerism**' and undertake efforts to laud and strengthen volunteering. A second lens has been that of **oversight or regulation**: some jurisdictions undertake initiatives to develop a legal/regulatory framework to govern the sector or to regulate and scrutinize particular activities such as fundraising. The third approach has been to approach the sector as an important but struggling partner and look at investing in **building sector capacity** in order to enhance the delivery of public programs.

The relationships also vary according to the strength and effectiveness of sector organizations and the energy being put into a particular issue by them and by the public at a given point in time.

These relationships are not always harmonious nor do they always draw on the best of what each has to offer. Sector organizations are likely to view governments, at least the governments they relate to most closely, first as their primary source of funding and secondly as creating all the policies and making all the rules that are often arbitrary, inappropriate and capricious (i.e. changing yearly). Sector organizations often view governments as custodians of the treasury, poorly informed about the reality of the issues on the ground. They often hold back from speaking out for fear of jeopardizing current or future funding. Governments in turn often view sector organizations as poorly organized, not speaking with one voice, meddlesome and frequently vocal supplicants for public resources.

Deliberate Government-Sector Relationships: Origins and Starting Points

Formal, deliberate relationships between governments and the sector are undertaken for different reasons and in different contexts. But they have very quickly become a policy tool of choice. The English foundation piece, the Compact, was signed in 1997. Since then, formal deliberate relationships have been developed in many jurisdictions around the world. All the countries of the UK have formal relationships; a number of the countries of continental Europe including France and Italy have done likewise; as have several of the new democracies from Estonia and Croatia to Poland and Hungary as well as Chile, South Africa and New Zealand and Canada - and this list is far from exhaustive. These examples are strictly at national levels: in addition, a raft of states and provinces in many of these countries and others have formalized relationships as have hundreds of cities and towns in the UK, in Poland, and several in Canada.

All of these formal relationships have some form of framing document of agreement (explored in more detail below) and all are government-wide and sector-wide - that is they stretch across all

government departments and include all components of the non-profit/voluntary sector. What are the origins of these undertakings? What are the motivations and the starting points? Why undertake to develop a formal relationship with the non-profit sector – and conversely why, from the sector perspective, be willing or interested in developing and codifying the relationship with government?

The origins or underlying rationales fall into three general categories: ideological, pragmatic and transferred. The **ideological** basis relates to an underpinnings provided by the concept of 'shared governance' as espoused by the New Labour Government in the UK in the 1990's and by many countries elsewhere. For a government, shared governance can give rise to new understandings with the private sector and with the voluntary sector about the roles that each can play, and be a catalyst for developing a formalized relationship. Another motivation of the ideological variety exists in the Province of Quebec where the non-profit or community sector is seen as the legitimate voice of communities and governments best discharge their responsibilities through a close association with that community sector.

Pragmatic motivations would include the growing recognition by governments that smaller government cannot do it alone and particularly cannot wrestle the "wicked problems" to the ground on their own. The growing value of place-based policies flows to a large degree from being able to operate across the usual boundaries, with governments operating horizontally across departments (what the British call 'joined up') and operating in conjunction with other agencies and players particularly the voluntary sector with its on-the-ground expertise. In the US, the Empowerment Zones developed contracts that specified the role to be played by and the relationships with community organizations. The Polish Pact lays out how the economic development that is to occur in each district is to be implemented in conjunction with the local NGOs. In Canada, government interest in the flourishing Social Economy is tangible evidence of the importance accorded practices rooted in communities. Even the Urban Development Agreements in Canada lay out very concretely the relationship with the non-profit/voluntary sector in those communities.

A formal or deliberate relationship can also be **transferred** or imported from elsewhere. This can take different forms: it can be directed, top down, as in Britain, Poland and elsewhere where national governments instruct local governments to develop agreements with the sector, based on those developed at the national level but tailored to suit local circumstances. But in many other cases the transfer has been more of a "policy transfer" where the concept has crossed borders through shared learning and been adopted – and adapted – to fit particular circumstances. (And after a while it seems that not to have such an agreement is to be behind the times).

The non-profit/voluntary sector also has concrete reasons to see the potential in such deliberate relationship-building. A formal understanding with government can allow a greater degree of stability and predictability in the relationship with their largest partner and supporter, and can also bring greater recognition and legitimacy to sector organizations. In many cases, the move

to develop a deliberate government-sector relationship has started with the sector itself. It has often been the non-profit/voluntary sector that has brought formal relationships to the attention of their own governments and argued for their benefits based on information about the experience of other countries and the advice and expertise shared by the sector in other countries.

[Canada, as so often, has distinct patterns of policy transfer. A formal relationship was developed at the national level in the early 2000's jointly by the federal government and a coalition of voluntary sector organizations. This Initiative provided some funding to facilitate the emergence of coalitions in several provinces. Consultations across the country at that time provided further opportunities for sector organizations in cities and towns to meet and identify possibilities for collaboration.

Over the past three years a number of government-sector relationships in some provinces and cities have been discussed and developed. These are described in the attachment. But what is notable is that they are developing largely independently from one another. This is consistent with a long-standing Canadian tradition: "Health care, labour market policy, industrial strategy and child care are all examples where provincial experimentation has helped reshape the national policy landscape. Lasting change occurs as the federal government scales up the initiatives, or the provinces share lessons among themselves about the new strategies"⁵ In this case, the federal initiative occurred first but does not appear to have been transferred to provincial level – in fact the inspiration for many of the provincial initiatives appears to have come more from the US and the UK and horizontally from the recent big cities initiatives in Canada. Nevertheless, the potential for learning and sharing support across provincial level initiatives remains as a potential building block.]

Undertaking a Formal Government-Sector Relationship: Preconditions

The above describes origins of formal or deliberate relationships; this section identifies some of the preconditions – i.e.: the absence of which make the creation of a formal relationship unlikely or at least much more difficult and unstable according to prevailing experience.

The first precondition is a **well-organized non-profit/voluntary sector**. The sector must be sufficiently well-organized to have a strong voice that can speak on behalf of the sector and sufficient breadth of support and consensus across the sector that they do so without contradiction. This collective sector voice comes from either a cross-sector coalition (like the Voluntary Sector Roundtable did in Canada representing all the major subsectors nationally) or from a preponderantly large umbrella organization (like the National Coalition of Voluntary

⁵ Bradford, Neil. Ibid, p.45

Organizations, NCVO, in England) or a professional organization with a large proportion of the sector organizations as members (like the California Association of Nonprofits) or a cross-sector organization that is recognized for its convening capacity and influence on social development (such as the Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador). Whatever form, in interacting with government, it needs to include a broad enough cross-section of the sector and the populations they serve that they are and are perceived to be legitimate.

Mobilizing and building cohesion within the non-profit/voluntary sector requires strong leadership and dedicated resources. Very often, it is the larger organizations that have the capacity to delegate staff and volunteer resources to move such initiatives forward: however, it remains essential that the smaller organizations, that comprise the majority of the sector, are included or able to influence or taken into account.

Leadership and resources from an organization like a foundation that is not dependent upon government for funding can be critical to the success of the sector organizing itself and engaging with government.

Many believe that the non-profit/voluntary sector will be motivated to organize itself only when a specific threat, pending policy or legislative issues emerges. When a coalition arises to deal collectively with a short-term issue, transitioning to a more robust, longer-term entity can put the sector in good shape to engage in ongoing dialogue with government, having gained confidence from their first public policy venture.

A second precondition is a sector with a **well-developed profile and public credibility**. The first step in building credibility needs to be the public understanding that there is a non-profit/voluntary sector (and that it constitutes a big piece of the economy and of the social infrastructure). Such profile can be built in a number of ways. Having a high profile champion for the non-profit and voluntary sector, from outside the sector, can capture the attention of politicians and raise public awareness of the value of the sector and its key issues: the roles of the Deakin Commission in the UK and the Broadbent Panel in Canada were key in the lead up to a new relationship taking shape between sector and government. Both were lead by well-recognized senior public figures with the ability to attract both media and public attention, respect and trust.

(Even prior to the establishment of profile and public credibility for the sector is the understanding of what the sector is – particularly the fact that, despite its most widespread name, it is not synonymous with volunteerism. The confusion caused by the name “voluntary sector” is an on-going challenge, referred to again later in this paper.)

A third pre-condition is **government interest** in developing a formal relationship with the non-profit/voluntary sector. The section above outlined some of the reasons why governments over the past decade have pursued such relationships: for ideological reasons such as shared governance (Third Way) or associating closely with the credibility that sector links bring; pragmatic, in order to connect with sector organizations and others in community building and in

pursuing place-based solutions to persistent issues; or transferred from elsewhere, either directed by a higher level of government or inspired by developments in other places and seen as ‘the thing to do.’ Governments’ interest in engaging more formally with the non-profit and voluntary sector can be precipitated by shifts in Government fortunes and a willingness to explore initiatives with broad appeal.

Linked to government incentive for such relationship-building is **government capacity** to undertake it. The presence of strong champions at the political level and within government is a critical precondition, as is the organizational capacity of government to undertake horizontal management and policy initiatives. Having dedicated staff at the senior level of the bureaucracy with enough support to actually make things happen is essential.

It is the confluence of strong leadership in the non-profit and voluntary sector and receptivity within government that is needed. Successful initiatives are dependent upon the delicate timing of these synergies within the backdrop of what else is happening in the public arena.

Components of Deliberate Relationships: Framework Agreement

Framework agreements are a common feature of nearly all relationships – in fact there are a number of sector/government relationships that consist only of a framework agreement. Framework Agreements go by many names: Compact, Accord, Declaration, Statement, Pact, Policy, Scheme, *Charte* and various legislative names where the agreement takes the form of a law. All set out principles to guide and govern the working relationship between the two parties, and what each commits to in that relationship. They are variously described as memoranda of understanding or rules of engagement. While most of the framework agreements are bilateral, some are tripartite including business umbrella groups (Poland) and the Manitoba Declaration is even more ambitious including six parties (voluntary sector, city and provincial governments, business, labour and the aboriginal community).

The process of developing the framework agreement usually **involves both parties** to some degree; in some cases (such as the Canadian Voluntary Sector Initiative) the process itself is designed to model the eventual joint nature of the relationship and so the process itself is a joint one with all of the groups and committees that carry out the work having equal representation and being co-chaired. The Canadian framework agreement, the Accord, was developed in this way. Other frameworks have been developed by one party or the other and then negotiated extensively – the English Compact was drafted initially by a sector working group, whereas the Quebec Policy was drafted by the government. (The pros and cons of different approaches and the resulting documents have been analyzed fairly extensively; the findings need to be viewed

in the context of their particular political context but they are an excellent source of guidance for new initiatives).⁶

In a number of jurisdictions, the process has moved on from the framework agreement and developed **codes of good practice** to outline what the principles of the framework agreement look like in practice. The British Isles all developed codes of good practice in the areas of Funding, Consultation and Policy Appraisal, Volunteering and Black and Minority Ethnic Groups. Scotland has a Good Practice Guide on Funding, Consultation, Partnership and Proofing (the practice of reviewing and screening proposed legislation or regulations for their potential impact). In Canada, there are codes of good practice on Funding and Policy Dialogue.

Framework Agreements are **ratified or signed off** and the form this takes can have lasting significance. Often they are 'signed off' or issued in the name of the responsible minister or leader, and a senior representative for the non-profit/voluntary sector. In some instances, it has involved a prime minister or president, thereby ensuring its government-wide status. In other cases, it has been further elevated: Estonia, Croatia and Scotland have had their framework agreements approved by Parliament and in some countries they have received all-party endorsement in their legislature, thereby increasing the chances of continuing beyond the life of a given government. In some countries, the ratification process has taken a different form; in Wales and Poland the framework agreement and codes have been turned into legislation.

There is frequently a debate about whether framework agreements are an important step in the development of a formal relationship, where the process of developing the agreement is at least as important as its wording, or whether it has more value as a synthesis document capturing all the pieces of the relationship that have been put in place. In other words, should it come at the beginning or the end of the relationship-building process? In the final analysis most develop a framework agreement at the outset where it serves as a very visible 'deliverable' and a compass or guide for the rest of the process.

Components of Deliberate Relationships: Implementation and Capacity Building

If the framework agreement describes how the relationship should work, then the next stage consists of implementing or building the relationship. This process of building the relationship can be termed an initiative, a program or even a plan of action. The work tends to fall into three categories:

- A. funding and the legal and regulatory framework: what can be seen as the **architecture** of the relationship?⁷: The parties often work together on both the forms and the

⁶ Brock, Kathy and Susan D. Phillips, Multiple Sources

processes of government funding to sector organizations including areas such as providing full cost recovery for projects, streamlined funding applications and approval processes and funding durations: further they examine and often revise the legislation and regulations that govern sector organizations, and several cases have seen the development of new legislation to govern charities;

- B. **capacity-building** where work is undertaken by both parties to improve knowledge about the sector (research), capacity in areas of human resources, management, policy and technology through creation of centres of shared expertise (networks and hubs), public investment, tools and the sharing of learnings across the sector
- C. the third arena where relationship building typically occurs is in **policy involvement**: methods are developed to enhance the sector's involvement in public policy and the government's capacity to engage it, along with implementation of the good practices set out in codes of good practice on policy involvement.

Implementation can occur among the same players who developed the framework; sometimes a framework is developed at a central point in government and then each department is told to implement it in conjunction with those parts of the sector to which they relate. In some countries, implementation occurs in state or city governments at the direction of the national government with clear guidelines for monitoring and reporting such implementation.

Components of Deliberate Relationships: Sustaining and Maintaining

The final component concerns entrenching the relationship and maintaining it over time. **Where does the responsibility for the relationship lie in government?** Often a special or dedicated government unit will be created for this purpose. The location of this unit is often critical to its effectiveness: a unit located in a line department, even if that department has a lead role, has been demonstrated to be less effective in reaching across the whole of government than a unit based in a central location (in England the unit began in a central location, was moved to a line department and then back again within a year at the recommendation of the sector).

In order to monitor and nurture the relationship, some countries have put in place a system of **regular reporting** on the relationship including an annual report and annual meeting between the sector and ministers (UK). Some jurisdictions have a Minister responsible for relations with the sector, sometimes in combination with mechanisms such as the above. Other jurisdictions have built responsibility for maintaining the relationship with the sector into the on-going mandates of senior public servants.

⁷ Phillips, Susan D. Ibid, p.13

It is also important for the **non-profit/voluntary sector** role to entrench and maintain the relationship. Follow-up often depends particularly on intermediary and umbrella organizations: (the British umbrella organization NCVO has a division dedicated to monitoring the relationship and recommending corrections.) The sector can also play a key role in breathing new life into the relationship in cases where the momentum in implementing and maintaining the relationship appears to have waned or stalled: in the UK a renewal or second wave of building has been launched recently with considerable new financial investment by government and commitment by the sector.

What does success look like – stronger relationships, better outcomes

If the purpose of these deliberate sector/government relations is about a better relationship in order to achieve better outcomes, does this mean the relationship is about sharing governance? About getting along better? About having stronger partners in the work to be done? It is probably some or all of these. But an effective relationship does have certain characteristics and results:

- Stronger, on-going relationship between all parts of government (departments) as well as centrally, and all parts of the sector;
- A relationship that is comprehensive, including architecture, capacity and policy involvement;
- A relationship that is on-going and enduring with mechanisms to regularly review issues and renew as required; processes in place to monitor the relationship, identify issues and find remedies, and agree on priorities;
- Both government and the sector are accountable and able to demonstrate accountability to their respective constituents and bring inputs from their respective constituents to the table;
- Sector on level playing field with private sector in terms of relationship with government and access to tools of investment, capacity building and policy input;
- Mutual respect and appreciation of what each party can bring to building civil society and community; and
- A strong non-profit sector recognized and viewed with pride within the sector, in governments and by the public.

Factors of Success

Looking across formal, deliberate relationships in many jurisdictions, what are some of the key factors that contribute to success, or without which success proves elusive?

- Building the relationship jointly or at least having both closely involved;
- Having the right people from government participating: those with sufficient seniority and authority to commit, the longevity to see it through and collectively the breadth to reflect across all the departments relating to all parts of the sector;
- Having the right people from the sector participating: those who can bring the full diversity of the sector to bear while also being able to represent and speak for that part of sector, as well as those from key intermediary organizations;
- Making it clear who each party is speaking for, and what authority and commitment they have at the table;
- Taking the time - and continuity - required to build necessary trust (“political inspiration gets them to the table but trust is necessary to keep them there”);
- Making it clear what objectives each party is looking to come out of the relationship, and maintaining this ‘compass’;
- Respecting the autonomy of the sector and promoting awareness and value of the sector;
- Planning for succession and continuity in carrying forward the relationship;
- Respecting and making use of intermediary organizations in the sector given their critical role as conveners and interlocutors;
- Ensuring that entrenchment and ratification of agreement is done in a way not tied to political tides in order to endure beyond the life of a single government;
- Institutionalizing the relationship through mechanisms such as clear lead roles and responsibilities and locating the responsible government unit either centrally or at arms length;
- Having a strong sector voice speaking for a large number of organizations and staying connected with them (keeping them up to date and providing for ongoing input);
- For the sector, maintaining that independent voice through intermediate organizations and lead coalitions and effective networks;
- Adequate resources for sector organizations to be able to play the three roles, as participants in the relationship-building process, as leaders in their subsector and as service or voice providers to their constituents; and

- Finding ways to share learnings from such relationship-building so that every initiative does not have to learn from scratch

Challenges in Building Deliberate Government-Sector Relationships

For the Sector

- Creating and maintaining a co-ordinated concerted network/voice;
- Maintaining independence and political voice, even when engaged with government or when faced with the differing resource pressures;
- Common government perception of sector organizations as units of service or supplicants, sometimes vocal or critical;
- Expectation of being representative and reflecting all diverse elements of the non-profit sector as well as all the geography and population characteristics of the country (although there is no comparable expectation of the government representation);
- Making the relationship with government relevant to all parts of the sector (small, remote) or explaining why not;
- Recognition that the task of capacity-building in the sector is on-going as new organizations and new needs are always emerging;
- Confusion with the name of the sector, between volunteering and voluntary sector;
- Conflicting attention between the needs of the sector and the social issues that the sector is working on;
- Continuity – building and maintaining key relationships between people in both the voluntary and public sector; and
- Competition between infrastructure, leadership, and intermediary organizations...who represents the sector? Who gets the profile?

For Governments

- Understanding that the sector is not synonymous with social sector and extends well beyond to include many other fields of activity;
- Sector's partial (imperfect) understanding of operations and constraints of government;

Deliberate Relationships between Governments and the Non-Profit / Voluntary Sector

- Fitting the non-profit sector into the structure of departmental Mandates;
- Finding resources for relationship with sector among competing priorities;
- Developing and managing horizontal initiatives, particularly in collaboration with other actors;
- Maintaining multi-year commitments to on-going initiatives;
- Engaging and being open with sector organizations while continuing to steer and be responsible for spending decisions; and
- Maintaining relationship with and support for sector and organizations that publicly criticize.

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Appendix A

Pan-Canadian Snapshot of Non-profit/Voluntary Sector - Government Relations by Province and Territory

Over the past two years, we have seen significant developments in a number of Canadian provinces and territories, with the emergence of task forces, ministerial appointments, policies, and special initiatives dedicated to strengthening the relationship between the non-profit/voluntary sector and government. This snapshot describes the current activity in each province and territory, captures the patterns and trends that have occurred, and identifies common themes.

In order to have a better appreciation for the landscape in each jurisdiction, we have also included information about related initiatives and drivers that have influenced the developments, including the emergence of several local networks, chambers, coalitions, federations, and councils, working at the community and municipal level. The primary sources of information have been the members of the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks and their counterparts in the public sector. In addition to their answers to the questions below, we have reviewed numerous reports and included excerpts from various web-sites, public sector documents, as well as other research carried in this area.

1. Is there a deliberate relationship existing or proposed in your province or territory?
 - a) Is there an identified **lead Ministry** (unit, branch department) that interacts with the non-profit/voluntary sector?
 - b) How has the **sector organized** itself and what structures exist to provide leadership and co-ordination?
 - c) Is there a formal **policy framework** agreement that deals with the role of the sector or the relationship between the sector and government? If so, what is the status?
2. Are there other initiatives, **infrastructure organizations** or foundations dedicated to the sector?

While this snapshot focuses on the current situation, it is also interesting to note what has changed. When we compare our information to what existed five years ago, we see significant shifts in scope, location, and language used:

- From a focus on volunteers to a focus on the voluntary sector;
- From recognizing the value of volunteers to recognizing the value of non-profit/voluntary organizations;

- From increasing voluntary action to increasing the capacity of voluntary organizations; and
- From a bullet point in a planning document to the inclusion in the title of the unit, department, or ministry.

Patterns and Trends Observed from the Document Review:

By the beginning of the millennium, all provinces and territories had some form of volunteer services award that was administered by a ministry with a mandate for community or social services. This may have been spurred on by the International Year of Volunteers 2001. Some governments provided special funding for National Volunteer Week, held in April. Others had special initiatives to address issues related to the promotion, screening, or recognition of volunteers, with a focus on specific populations groups such as youth or new-comers. At the same time, several jurisdictions implemented community service hours as a high school graduation requirement, and other mandatory community services programs linked to social assistances or the justice system.

While it was understood that volunteers were largely engaged by non-profit and voluntary organizations and that these diverse organizations made up the non-profit and voluntary sector, it is only within the past few years that the scope has been broadened to deal with the organizations and the sector as a whole. Some provincial and territorial governments have become involved with such sector-wide issues as insurance and human resources.

In addition to the changes seen in communications material, from both governments and the non-profit and voluntary sector, there is a growing sense of optimism in many locales that the recognition of the importance of the sector and its relationship with government will be followed by the resources, structures, and profile to move forward in a sustainable way.

Policy Transfer:

It has been interesting to follow the cross-jurisdictional influences that have occurred, within regions, across the country, as well as from international experiences. There are many terms and phrases that have appeared in several documents describing a particular provincial or territorial initiative, policy, or framework agreements. For example, we have seen several references to “the critical role that the non-profit and voluntary sector plays in the quality of life of citizens, community vitality...” (**recognition of the value of the sector**) and “the importance of government and the non-profit and voluntary sector working together to carry out their complementary roles in providing services and building healthy communities...” (**acknowledgement of the value of collaboration**).

Limitations of the Snapshot:

This snapshot was based on documents and material that was publicly available at the time of the research in early December 2007, the access of which was facilitated by voluntary sector leaders actively involved with the Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks. We intentionally kept our descriptions brief and limited to a single page and realize that there are many more historic and current details available. Our hope is to regularly update this snapshot and to include more substantial information about Yukon, Prince Edward Island, and Nunavut, and welcome all feedback and new information.

British Columbia:

Many ministries in British Columbia interact with the non-profit/voluntary sector through grants, contributions and contracts for service and, over the past twenty years, there have been concentrated efforts made by the sector or senior officials to build a stronger relationship. In the 1990's there was **Ministry of Community Development, Cooperatives & Volunteers**, which provided funding for voluntary organization development, demonstration and best practice models as well as promotion and research. It was closed in 2001, with the change in government. In 2005, the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and the Arts was given a portfolio for volunteers

*The **Sport, Recreation and Volunteers Branch** – Supports increased activity for all ages, through the development of an effective recreation and sport system, promotes enhanced opportunities for communities to host major sport events, coordinates Government's involvement with the voluntary sector, and works in partnership to enhance volunteer capacity. (From the Tourism, Recreation, and Arts Strategic Plan 2006-2009)*

In May 2007, the Centre for Non-Profit Management and the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria, with the support of the CEO of the Vancouver Foundation and the Deputy Solicitor General of B.C., convened a **Round Table** with more than 85 participants from across the non-profit and voluntary sector and various provincial government departments.

***Their purpose:** To explore the strengths and challenges of the relationship between the non-profit sector and the government and to find ways to enhance this relationship to the benefit of the citizens of B.C. (An excerpt from the Round Table Report.)*

Leaders from the non-profit and voluntary sector and senior government officials have been planning follow-up steps to the round table. They are exploring various models for creating a joint mechanism or initiative to strengthen their relationship, including a framework agreement. The joint leads on this initiative are the **Vancouver Foundation** and the **Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General**. Updates are available on www.cnpm.com.

Other significant initiatives within the province include **LegaciesNow**, **LiteracyNOW**, **ActNOW**, and **VolunteersNOW**, all connected to the Olympics (www.2010legaciesnow.com). **The BC-211** initiative is being supported by the Ministry of Labour and Citizenship.

Within the province, there are a number of voluntary sector infrastructure organizations including, **Voluntary Organizations Consortium of BC (VOC-BC)**, **The Centre for Sustainability**, **Volunteer BC**, and the **Centre for Non-Profit Management**.

Alberta:

In July 2006, The Government of Alberta announced the establishment of **The Alberta Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Initiative (ANVSI)**, through the Ministry of Community Development, later moved to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. The initiative has been guided by a Leadership Council, comprised of six leaders from the non-profit and voluntary sector and six senior government officials, with a co-chair from each sector. *The purpose of the ANVSI is to ensure a strong and sustainable non-profit and voluntary sector that has the ability to provide the services and supports that Albertans expect to be part of their communities.*

In August 2007, the framework agreement was signed and the Leaders Council developed a transition plan to establish a structure to guide and monitor the relationship between the Government of Alberta and the non-profit and voluntary sector.

Whereas the Government of Alberta (GOA) and the Non-profit/Voluntary Sector (NPVSO) share a common vision for Albertans achieving exceptional quality of life through healthy, active communities;

...share common interests and many areas of mutual concern

...each through their vital contributions to society, fulfill complementary roles in the development and delivery of public policy and services

...respect each other's autonomy and ability to act independently

...recognize that a collaborative partnership is essential to enable their working together to improve services to Albertans and to build vibrant communities.

(an excerpt from the Framework Agreement August 2007)

The **Wild Rose Foundation**, hosts the annual Vitalize conference, as well as workshops on leadership development and awareness and recognition events for volunteers. The **Muttart Foundation** is a key player in the province, as a funder, initiator, and knowledge broker of several voluntary sector capacity building programs. **Volunteer Alberta** undertakes province-wide volunteer promotion and recognition activities and actively connects with rural communities. The **Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO)** and the **Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO)** work with local voluntary organizations on cross-cutting sector-wide issues to strengthen policy, capacity, and public awareness, and to facilitate collaboration and collective action on issues of common concern.

For more information, visit: www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/mc_volunteer_initiative.cfm

Saskatchewan:

In April 2002, **The Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative** was launched with the purpose of *strengthening the relationship between the Government and Saskatchewan's voluntary sector so that voluntary organizations can operate as effectively as possible in fulfilling their individual mandates.*

The Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation has a mandate that supports and celebrates Saskatchewan as a great place to live and work. The Department serves as the secretariat for the Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative.

*The specific objectives of the **Premier's Voluntary Sector Initiative** are:*

- *To build a formal relationship between the public sector (Government of Saskatchewan) and the voluntary sector.*
- *To build capacity within Saskatchewan's voluntary sector.*
- *To build awareness:*
 - *of the value of the voluntary sector and volunteers to our society;*
 - *of the ways in which voluntary sector organizations structure themselves; and*
 - *of the structure of the relationship between the public and voluntary sectors (an excerpt from the Press Release in April 2002)*

There was an advisory council established with representatives from the non-profit and voluntary sector and senior government officials that met sporadically, in the years following the launch, to develop an action plan to move forward with the initiative. Following the provincial elections in 2007, activities have been on hold, pending news regarding the status of the initiative.

The Centre for Collaboration (formerly Community Based Organizations of Regina) has been serving as a convener for the voluntary sector within the region. They are hosted by the United Way of Regina, which also serves as the focal point for many other voluntary sector activities.

Yukon and Nunavut:

The Yukon Department of Community Services provides funding for the Yukon Volunteer Bureau, building on the initiative in 2002 of the Executive Council of Cabinet. The Nunavut Premier is actively involved and supports Volunteer Nunavut, as does the Commissioner Peter Irniq. Culture, Languages, Elders and Youth is the key.⁸

Manitoba:

In 2003, Manitoba Culture, Heritage, and Tourism, serving as the lead department for the Government of Manitoba, signed a **Declaration** with the non-profit and voluntary sector, along with their counterparts representing business and organized labour, at the provincial and municipal level. Work leading up to the development of this framework agreement was largely supported by the Manitoba Voluntary Sector Initiative, funded through the (federal) Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI), through the Sector Involvement in Policy Development (SIDP). The initiative included some comprehensive research on the nature and scope of the non-profit and voluntary sector in Manitoba, a multi-sector policy summit, and a web-site, containing valuable resources and links.

Whereas the Government of Manitoba acknowledges and supports the vital contributions of volunteers and voluntary organizations to the quality of life in Manitoba's communities; and

...supports the voluntary sector through consultation, financial assistance, and legislation; and

...recognizes active citizenship, democracy, social justice and social inclusion as fundamental values to ensure opportunity for full participation shaping society

⁸ Trent Gow, Scan of Existing Structures, Policies and Practices Related to Volunteerism within Provincial and Territorial Governments Across Canada Prepared For: Ontario Network, Canada Volunteerism Initiative

...will continue to engage in open, informed and sustained dialogue with the voluntary sector. (an excerpt for the Declaration signed in 2003)

While the Department of Heritage, Culture, and Tourism was the lead ministry for this initiative, other departments were more engaged with the voluntary and non-profit organizations through fee-for-service arrangements, grants, and contributions. **Healthy Child Manitoba**, established in 2004, works with eight key ministries and is currently providing some leadership around strengthening the relationship between the Government of Manitoba and the non-profit and voluntary sector.

Upon the conclusion of the Manitoba Voluntary Sector Initiative in 2004, the sector established an organization to serve as the focal point for coordinating its efforts and dialoguing with other sectors. **The Voluntary and Non-Profit Sector Organizations of Manitoba (VNPSOM)** has had cycles of various levels of activity, as it explores various financing models and develops new strategies for moving forward.

For more information, visit: www.voluntarysector.mb.ca www.gov.mb.ca/healthychild/

Northwest Territories:

The **Department of Municipal and Community Affairs** has supported volunteers for many years through Outstanding Volunteer Awards, a volunteer development fund that provides limited funding to groups for training, and the Aurora College tuition subsidy for groups accessing education or training through the college.

In late 2003, **Volunteer NWT** was established as part of the federal Canada Volunteerism Initiative. It was the first territory-wide cross-sector network for the voluntary sector. It engaged the Department of Municipal and community Affairs as a member. In late 2004, the department provided matching funds so Volunteer NWT could access funding from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, through the Voluntary Sector Forum, for a Finance Action Group. Research was conducted into financing and relationship issues between the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and the voluntary sector. So far, the recommendations have not been acted upon, though the government has clarified its financing policies.

On March 2, 2005, the Government of the Northwest Territories adopted a **Volunteer Support Initiative**. The Initiative includes a declaration, vision, principles and goals, and an action plan that commits the GNWT to a stronger relationship with volunteers and volunteer groups. The Volunteer Support Initiative refers to voluntary sector, volunteers and voluntary organizations.

The initiative has four goals: supporting volunteerism; building capacity; strengthening relationships; and, connecting NWT and federal initiatives that support the voluntary sector. Through this initiative a Declaration on Volunteering was developed.

The Government of the Northwest Territories recognizes that helping others is a shared tradition of northerners regardless of their cultural background;

...values, respect and appreciates the contributions of all volunteers and voluntary organizations to improving social, economic cultural and environmental conditions in the NWT; advocating for the marginalized or under-represented individuals, groups, and causes; and providing services to meet local needs;

...recognizes the importance of open, informed and sustained dialogue with the NWT voluntary sector in all its diversity. (an excerpt from the Declaration signed in 2005)

After the closing of the Canada Volunteerism Initiative, the department of Municipal and Community Affairs provided transitional funding to Volunteer NWT.

For more information, visit: www.volunteernwt.ca

Ontario:

There have been a number of initiatives within and between the Government of Ontario and the Ontario voluntary sector, beginning with a Voluntary Sector Task Force in 1997, which led to the forming of the **Coalition of Ontario Voluntary Organizations (1999)** and the **Premier's Voluntary Sector Round Table**, none of which are still in existence today. In 2006, group of leadership organizations began working together to create a broader and more sustainable mechanism through the Strengthening Voluntarism in Ontario Project, with Parks and Recreation Ontario serving as the administrative lead. Around this same time, the Metcalfe Foundation initiated exploration of the need, issues, and possible models for the voluntary sector in Ontario to work together.

The **Ontario Non-Profit Network** came together in 2007, engaging more than 90 organizations in efforts to co-ordinate their views on proposed amendments to the Ontario Corporations Act.

Within the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, Citizenship Branch, there is a newly named unit, The Voluntary Sector Relations Unit (formerly the Voluntarism Initiatives Unit), which has been identified as the lead for strengthening the government's relationship and building the capacity of the voluntary sector. This unit, under previous names has also

supported the Ontario Screening Initiative, the Volunteer Action Online program, to help non-profits use technology more effectively, and an annual conference on voluntarism. The unit works within government to help ministries strengthen their non-profit stakeholder relationships and partners with key stakeholders to address non-profit challenges and opportunities. Current projects are designed to:

- Help non-profits plan collaborative responses to community and sector needs;
- Promote volunteering and newcomer participation and support effective governance, youth and senior engagement;and
- Help non-profits improve risk management and access appropriate insurance coverage (www.insuranceinfo.imaginecanada.ca).

Efforts and interest in creating a network for non-profit and voluntary organizations to work together have emerged elsewhere in the province. The Public Policy Committee, convened by the United Way of Greater Toronto has been discussing this, the Social Planning Councils of Ontario have been exploring ways to support the sector's efforts in organizing itself, and the Wellesley Institute has been addressing this issue through their work with the sector on collaboration. At the local level, there is Pillar Non-Profit Network in London, The Niagara Centre for Community Leadership, The Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Organizations, and emerging networks in Thunder Bay and Windsor. The Ontario Trillium Foundation has been an active player in funding projects and networks to strengthen the capacity of the non-profit and voluntary sector.

For more information, visit: <http://www.strengthenvoluntarism.on.ca/>

Quebec:

The Quebec Government has the Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale which serves as the lead ministry for relating to the non-profit and voluntary sector in the province. Since 1995, there has been **le Secrétariat à l'action communautaire autonome du Québec (The Secretariat for Autonomous Community Action)**, which represents the Government in discussions with the Sector and financially supports the Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome (The Advisory Committee for Autonomous Community Action).

The Réseau québécois de l'action communautaire autonome (RQ-ACA) was established in 1996 with a mission **to co-ordinate and represent the movement on all questions related to autonomous community action**. They meet at least quarterly and bring together representatives from 20 key sub-sector and population-specific provincial organizations

including, health, social services, women, voluntary action, education, refugees, youth, and the environment.

The RQ-ACA's activities include consultation around cross-sector issues, publications on themes of common interest, dialogue with government (liaison with the Secretariat for Autonomous Community Action), mobilizing organizations are shared issues, and negotiating with government around legislative and financing arrangements.

After extensive negotiations between the sector and government, the policy which outlined the Government of Quebec's strategy for working with the autonomous community sector, L'Action communautaire: une contribution essentielle à l'exercice de la citoyenneté et au développement social du Québec was adopted in 06-2001. The policy was comprised of four components; Volunteer Quebec Service Awards, Financial Support, and a Director of Government Programs Support Community Actions, and Publications.

Governmental Policy on Community Action:

The government's general objectives reflected in this policy are:

- *Acknowledging, promoting, and supporting community action in the broad sense;*
- *Acknowledging, promoting, and consolidating independent community action, more specifically, rights and advocacy organizations; and*
- *Ensuring the sustainability of community action through general operations and broad national guidelines that apply to all government departments and agencies (an excerpt from the Governmental Policy on Community Action, updated in July 2006).*

For more information, visit: <http://www.comavis-aca.org/> <http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/saca/>

New Brunswick:

On December 5, 2006, Premier Shawn Graham announced that Claudette Bradshaw would lead the newly established **Community Nonprofit Task Force**. The mandate of the task was to examine challenges facing the non-profit sector in New Brunswick and to engage community organizations in identifying emerging community needs, through a broad-based province-wide consultation process. The task force report was released in September 2007.

The report included recommendations on how to strengthen the non-profit sector and strategies to enhance relations between non-profits and government. Members of the task force outlined the importance of the non-profit sector in relation to quality of life, economic strength, and vitality of democratic institutions. (From the press release, September 2007)

In November 2007, the premier appointed Carmel Robichaud as **Minister responsible for the new portfolio of Community Non-Profit Organizations**. The announcement positioned the appointment as a response to one of the key recommendations in the task force report that called for **“a revitalized partnership between the provincial government and the voluntary sector.”**

PolicyLink New Brunswick was established in 2002, along with the Manitoba Voluntary Sector Initiative, through the Sector Involvement in Policy Development (SIDP) funding, as part of the (federal) Voluntary Sector Initiative. Through a multi-sector engagement process, it brought together a diverse range of non-profit and voluntary organizations, including an English, French and bilingual service-providers, provincial, regional, and federal public officials, and a range of leaders from business, labour, and the academic community.

Forging Links: Investing in New Brunswick, a policy forum hosted by PolicyLink in October 2004, brought together 150 practitioners and volunteers from the non-profit and voluntary sector, with federal and provincial policy-makers to identify and explore issues that impact on the quality of life for people of New Brunswick. This positioned PolicyLink as the connector and convener for numerous consultations, training, and networking sessions in the province. The Moncton Volunteer Centre, which had hosted the New Brunswick Canada Volunteerism Initiative Network, has also played an active role in building capacity of the voluntary sector in the province.

For more information, visit: <http://www.policylink.nb.ca/>

<http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/promos/nptf/index-e.asp> <http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/promos/nptf/index-f.asp>

Nova Scotia:

Nova Scotia's **Volunteer Protection Act**, received Royal Assent in May of 2002. It was designed to limit liability for those volunteers who meet certain conditions during the course of the volunteer activity.

The Honourable Barry Barnett was appointed the first **Minister of Volunteerism** 2006, following the Government of Nova Scotia's recognition of "*the valuable contributions made by volunteers in all communities across Nova Scotia*", in the Speech from the Throne. The **Department of Health Promotion and Protection** serves as the lead department and is tasked with working with the non-profit sector to develop a strategy for working together. The Department of Health Promotion and Protection was asked to lead the volunteerism portfolio and includes volunteerism as one of the 11 responsibility centres under Health Promotion and Protection.

In May 2007, a meeting was held with representatives from a range of non-profit and voluntary organizations to explore a variety of models to create a structure or mechanism, through which the sector could co-ordinate its efforts. The recommendation that emerged was the establishment of a **Nova Scotia volunteer community advisory committee**, that would be comprised of 20-25 sector representatives, meet four times each year, with a portion of their meeting to be a forum with the Minister Responsible for Volunteerism.

Membership Recommendations for Provincial Structure/Mechanism:

Committee members would represent specifically targeted sectors, traditionally marginalized or population - based communities, and be based on the nine geographic regions of the District Health Authorities. Membership would also be based upon the eight voluntary sub sectors and the population-based communities. These communities include the Acadian, African Nova Scotian, Aboriginal, Immigrants, Persons with Disabilities, Seniors, and Youth. (an excerpt from the meeting report July 2007)

Within the province, there are a number of key leadership organizations in the non-profit and voluntary sector. Recreation Nova Scotia has taken the lead on a number of provincial initiatives, had served as host for the provincial network for the Canada Volunteerism Initiative, and provides training around volunteer resources management issues. The United Way of Halifax and Region has also served as a convener and incubator for several voluntary sector activities, consultations, and networks. The Federation of Community Organizations (FOCO, Halifax Region) was formed in 2005 to create cohesion within the non-profit and voluntary sector in the region. Their vision is a "*Unified, the voluntary sector is an influential player in sustaining communities, by taking a role as an equal partner with the private, public and business sectors*" and their mission is "*To connect and strengthen the voluntary sector in the Halifax Regional Municipality*".

For more information, visit: www.foco.ca www.nsvolunteerforum.ca

Newfoundland and Labrador:

In 2007, Premier Williams named a **Minister Responsible for the Volunteer and Non-Profit Sector** (also Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, thus placing responsibility within a central agency). The appointment flows from the 2005 Throne Speech. A Volunteer and Non-profit Sector Office will action items from the election platform, e.g:

- *Formalize a **policy and program framework** to strengthen and support the community-based sector and to enhance the development of social economy enterprises, especially in rural regions, as means of improving services, providing additional employment;*
- *Recognize and celebrate the work of **community volunteers**; and*
- *Through discussions with the Community Services Council and other community organizations in the volunteer sector, produce a scope of work document to set the terms for an initiative to **strengthen the relationship between the government and the volunteer sector**, to improve the grants process, and to identify opportunities for cooperation and collaboration (as previously cited in the 2005 Throne Speech).*

Numerous initiatives laid the foundation for this action. Since 1976, the **Community Services Council Newfoundland Labrador** (CSC) has been advocating the role of the voluntary sector and its relationship with governments. CSC brings the sector together through regional and provincial forums, consultations and research reports including *Values Added: Recommended Action Plans for a Flourishing Voluntary Community-based Sector* (1999); *the Values Added Provincial Forum* (2000) and the *Provincial Roundtable on the Social Economy and Social Enterprise* (2006). CSC promotes the role of the sector in presentations to Premiers and Social Policy Committee of Cabinet, and in 2001 launched www.enVision.ca building a voice for the voluntary sector.

In 1996 Government formed the Social Policy Advisory Committee (chaired by the CSC's Executive Director) to conduct public consultations and submit recommendations. The Committee's report, *Investing In People and Communities - A Framework for Social Development* (1997), highlighted the voluntary, community-based sector. In response, in 1998 the Government launched the **Strategic Social Plan** (SSP) noting complementary roles for government and the voluntary sector. The Premier's Council on Social Development (a component of the SSP) was requested to give advice "on the specific actions government could take to support the further development of the voluntary sector and to strengthen its links with government.. *Building Community Partnerships: Recommendations of the Premier's Council on Social Development to Support and Strengthen the Community Based Sector in Newfoundland and Labrador* (2002) led to the formation of a joint government - sector committee co-chaired by a senior official and CEO of CSC. With the advent of a new administration in 2003, the SSP was replaced by the **Rural Secretariat**, comprising nine regional councils of individuals from all sectors acting in a volunteer capacity. Their mandate is to create a long term vision for the province. They have placed considerable focus on the voluntary sector. Representatives from each council along with leaders from education, culture, business, labour and CSC form a Provincial Council to advise on policy matters.

In 2004, discussions with the Premier's Deputy Minister and representatives of the sector culminated in the CSC report *The Nonprofit Sector as a Force for Sustainability and Renewal in Newfoundland and Labrador* which laid out recommendations to maximize the role of the sector, including the appointment of a Minister.

For more information, visit: www.envision.ca/

Prince Edward Island:

The **Access PEI Concept** is an important tool of PEI's Department of Development and *Technology to strengthen communities*. **Multi-level, single window service delivery in local communities:** connects the community to a range of government services; makes government services at all levels accessible; facilitates successful efforts to utilize government services; eliminates red-tape barriers to business and social development; keeps people in home communities and encourages investment in those communities; and provides a centre for community development efforts.⁹

Canada – The Voluntary Sector Initiative

The Voluntary Sector Initiative was a joint undertaking to build a deliberate relationship between the Government of Canada and the voluntary sector. Much of the impetus for this relationship building came from the Voluntary Sector Roundtable (VSR), a coalition of 13 national organizations that, among them, reflected most of the sector in Canada. The VSR was formed in 1995 and with the support of a private foundation, lobbied the federal government to undertake action in the areas of capacity building, legal and regulatory reform for the sector and to create a deliberate and productive relationship with the whole of the voluntary sector. The VSR moved its work forward by creating an arms-length, high profile Panel to study the needs of the voluntary sector and make recommendations for its future growth and stability.

The Voluntary Sector Initiative was launched in June 2000, with \$95 million to be invested over five years in the three areas identified above. The initiative was conducted jointly with a series of working groups co-chaired by sector and government representatives. A framework agreement, the Accord, was developed and signed setting out the principles to govern the relationship, along with codes of good practice outlining how the principles of the Accord could be applied to the fields of funding and policy dialogue. Steps were taken to improve the legal

⁹ Trent Gow

and regulatory framework including the issue of liability. Work was undertaken to strengthen capacities in the sector in the fields of policy involvement, human resources, knowledge, technology, financing, awareness and understanding. The system of Satellite Accounts that measures the economic output of the sector on a regular basis, the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations, the organizations strengthened through the SIDPD, the Human Resources Council on the Voluntary Sector and the Canada Volunteerism Initiative – these and much more are the legacies of the VSI.

The VSI engaged most parts of the sector in most parts of the country. Over 5000 were involved in discussions and consultations. These contacts have proved to be one of the most enduring legacies of the VSI since they constituted the starting point for many other coalitions across the country. The relationship built through the VSI has not endured to any degree beyond the five years of the building period. A large evaluation of the VSI and what can be learned from it is nearing completion. Further information about the VSI and lists of its many available products, tools and resources can be found at www.vsi-isbc.org/

For More Information:

We have attempted to provide web-sites where you can find more information, download reports and press releases, check for updated information, or contact those involved with the various initiatives. If you are not able to find what or who you are looking for, please get in touch with us, at the contact information below.

Keeping this Snapshot Current:

As noted, the information contained in this snapshot was based on publically available material at the time of this research, in early December 2007. We apologize for any information that was incorrect or outdated. We hope to keep this snapshot current by updating it periodically. Please send us any feedback, corrections, or new information, as it becomes available.

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Appendix B

A Sample of International Experiences with Relationships between Governments and the Non- Profit and Voluntary Sector

This sampling of international experiences is based on two key sources: a scan carried out by the Network of Estonian Nonprofit Organizations¹⁰, comparing agreements between governments and the non-profit and voluntary sector and a snapshot of voluntary sector leadership organizations¹¹ it also draws from a variety of documents referenced in the bibliography of this paper as well as key web-sites. Again, our intention was to only briefly describe these experiences, pointing you to the sources for more information.

England:

A Compact was signed between the Government of England and the Voluntary Sector in 1998 which sets out principles and undertakings for both government and the voluntary sector to promote good working relationships, including recognition and support for the independence of the sector. The key issues that the Compact deals with are the development of Local Compacts, the integration of the values and principles of the compact through departmental and agency practices, influencing grant and procurement practices and raising awareness of the values outlined in the Compact.

In 2006, **The Office of the Third Sector** was established to renew the government's effort to move forward on the values and principles set out in the Compact. Together with the HM Treasury's Charity and Third Sector Finance Unit, the office reviewed funding issues, through a broad-based consultation with the sector and concluded that longer-term funding arrangements were in order.

The Office of Civil Renewal released a policy framework in 2005, **Firm Foundations – the Government's Framework for Community Capacity Building**. Since that time, a number of programs have been rolled out in local communities throughout the country aimed at supporting community organizations to serve as community development agents.

The National Council of Voluntary Organizations (NCVO), founded in 1919, is the largest umbrella body for the non-profit and voluntary sector in England. It works to give voice and

¹⁰ Miand, Kristina, Network of Estonian Non-Profit Organizations, National Conference 2004

¹¹ Carter, Susan and Paula Speevak Sladowski, Setting the Table for a Stronger Voluntary Sector in Ontario, 2007

support to the voluntary and community sector and to create an environment in which voluntary organizations can flourish. NCVO is a lobbying organization that represents the views of its members and the wider non-profit and voluntary sector to government, the Charity Commission, the European Union and other bodies. It campaigns on generic issues affecting the whole of the voluntary sector such as the role of the voluntary sector in public service delivery, the National Lottery, and the Charities Bill.

For more information, visit: www.thecomcompact.org.uk or www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

Prior to the devolution, membership included voluntary organizations in Wales and Scotland, until they formed independent counterpart organizations and pursued the development of Compacts with their respective governments.

Wales:

The Compact was approved by the National Assembly for Wales in 2000, as part of the Voluntary Sector Scheme. It was later revised and re-adopted in 2004 following the elections. Its initial purpose was to promote the interests of relevant voluntary organizations.

The Wales Council of Voluntary Action represents the voluntary sector in dialogue with government and serves as the delivery agent for a number of programs, funded by government, to build the capacity of voluntary organizations and promoting voluntary action.

The Wales Council of Voluntary Action is the voice of the voluntary sector in Wales, representing and campaigning for voluntary organizations, volunteers and communities.

For more information, visit: www.wcva.org.uk

Scotland:

The Scottish Compact was originally committed to in 1997, prior to the election of the Scottish Parliament. It was later revised and re-adopted in 2004. It outlines the principles of partnership, based on mutual understanding of distinctive values and roles of the government and the voluntary sector.

The Scottish Council of Voluntary Organizations (SCVO) approved the Compact and has been actively involved in implementing and monitoring on behalf of the voluntary sector. Their mission is to advance the values and interests shared by voluntary organizations by fostering co-operation, promoting best practice and delivering sustainable common services. SCVO services gradually focused more on training, information and advice and in 1982, a Policy Committee was created to reflect the growing importance of public policy and advocacy. SCVO is a registered charitable organization. It has 10 regional offices and has a total staff of 155.

There is a management board of 10 and a separate policy committee both elected by the membership.

For more information, visit: www.scotland.gov.uk or www.scvo.org.uk

Estonia:

The Estonian Civil Society Development Concept was approved by parliament in 2002. It outlines a framework for co-operation to develop public policies and implement programs to build civil society in Estonia. It is monitored by a joint committee comprised of government and civil society organizations chaired by the Minister for Regional Affairs.

The Network of Estonian Non-Profit Organizations serves as the umbrella organization for the non-profit sector and was a key player in the promoting the Concept. Its mission is to present development trends and provide support services to Estonian non-profits, increase public awareness, advocate in the interest of its members and deepen working relationships with the public and business sectors.

For more information, visit: www.emy.ee or www.ngo.ee

Croatia:

The National Program for the Co-operation between the Republic of Croatia and Croatian Civil Society was approved by Parliament in 2000. It is a strategic document that outlines a framework for co-operation between the government and civil society in developing and implementing public policy to build civil society.

For more information, visit: www.uzuvrh.hr

South Australia:

The Government of South Australia launched its strategy to build a stronger relationship with the non-profit and voluntary sector in the state through its **Advancing the Community Together (ACT) Partnership**. This document outlines the essential role the voluntary sector plays in communities, the importance of collaboration between the sector and the state, and calls for two key structures to guide the strategy.

The first is the **Volunteer Ministerial Advisory Group (VMAG)**, which consists of representatives from across the non-profit and voluntary sector, including Arts, Sport Y

Recreation, and Welfare. The role of this group is to provide input into public policies and program priorities.

The second body is the **Volunteer Partnership Action Committee (VPAC)**, made up of senior public servant from different government agencies. Their key role is to *“ensure that the impact on the voluntary sector of government legislation or actions is given high priority and that there is consistency through all government departments.”* (excerpt from the ACT strategy document).

This joint initiative has resulted in a number of concrete services and policy changes:

- *Free training for volunteers;*
- *Annual gala events that recognise and honour volunteers;*
- *Volunteer awards programs;*
- *Support for seminars and conferences;*
- *Information web-sites developed;*
- *Fact Sheets and other sources of information;*
- *Simplified grant application and acquittal; and*
- *Information Technology and communications assistance from South Australian universities fro community organisations*

For more information visit ofv@saugov.sa.gov.au

Queensland, Australia:

In 2005, **Ministry for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors** developed a foundational policy document, **Strengthening Non-Government Organizations Strategy**, aimed at promoting collaboration between government and the NGO (Non-Government Organizations) sector, to build the capacity for organizations to provide services to senior adults and people with disabilities and to streamline the administration of government funding.

The **Department of Communities and Disabilities** has been designated as the lead department to implement the strategy. The department co-ordinates a number of community services as well as administer contracts to NGO to provide programs and support to vulnerable populations. There is a policy team that works with the NGO sector to develop public policies on a variety of areas including volunteering and community engagement.¹²

For more information, visit www.communities.qld.gov.au/

¹² Banasiak, Krista Polic Support to the NPO Sector: A Quick Scan of Other Jurisdictions, Wellesley Institute 2007

New Zealand:

In December 2001, the Government of New Zealand issued a **Statement of Government Intentions for an Improved Community-Government Relationship**, outlining its new policy direction to strengthen its relationship and build the capacity of the voluntary sector. It includes “streamlining and restructuring its NPO-funding procedures, supports to build NPO organizational capacity, and new consultation processes between government and the community and NPO sector”¹³.

Within the Ministry of Social Development, **The Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector**, was established in 2003, as the central hub for coordinating the government’s activities and formally engaging with the voluntary sector. Activities include organizational development support, research about the scope, nature, and impact of the voluntary sector, and promoting policies in other departments that facilitate and support the work of community organizations. Two key capacity-building resources that they have produced are **Managing Well** and the **Community Resource Kit**.

The **Ministry of Health** launched a separate policy in 2000, **Framework for Relations between the Ministry of Health and Health and disability Non-Government Organizations**. This office convenes a Forum twice a year with health and disability organizations to facilitate the sharing of common issues and to recommend policy and program changes to the Ministry. In 2003, The NGO (Non-Government Organizations) Desk was created to serve as a central communications point for distributing information and coordinating collective action on issues identified at the forum.

For more information, visit www.ocvs.govt.nz/

Other Models of Government Relations Activities

United States:

While there have been a number of national programs and foundations created by the Government of the United States to promote voluntary action such as Ameri-corps and The Points of Light Foundation, there has not been an initiative to create a deliberate relationship between the non-profit and voluntary sector and national government. However, at the state level, there are more than 40 councils and associations of non-profit organizations that have spearheaded efforts to engage government in policy dialogue at the state level.

There is also the National Council of Non-Profit Associations that serves primarily as a network of the state councils and associations and does limited national policy work. It is interesting to

¹³ Ibid

note that the predominant approach in the United States is to focus on strong leadership and infrastructure organizations within the sector itself to enhance the sector's policy capacity and to co-ordinate its policy voice.

The **National Council of Nonprofit Associations (NCNA)** is the network of state and regional non-profit associations serving over 20,000 members in 41 states and the District of Columbia. NCNA links local organizations to a national audience through state associations and helps small and midsize non-profits: manage and lead more effectively; collaborate and exchange solutions; engage in critical policy issues affecting the sector; and achieve greater impact in their communities.

For more information, visit www.ncna.org

The California Association of Nonprofits (CAN) was formed in 1983 in response to an insurance crisis that caused non-profit rates to rise dramatically. In 1986, it developed a state-wide group insurance plan. In 1989, it founded the National Council of Nonprofit Associations. In that year there were 11 state-wide non-profit associations across the US and today there are 40. CAN's mission is to promote, strengthen, and advance the influence, professionalism, accountability and effectiveness of non-profit organizations in a manner that builds their capacity to accomplish their missions and preserves the idealism and value of non-profit organizations in California.

CAN operates many programs and services to strengthen capacity and provide a strong voice as an advocate for the sector. Many seminars and workshops provide training and a range of services from a web site and help line provide tools and advice. Research is commissioned and made available for the use of organizations. They operate insurance services, educational programs, bulk discounts, work to develop accountability measures, awards for leadership and excellence, ethical framework, and public policy advocacy.

For more information, visit www.canonprofits.org

The Minnesota Council of Nonprofits was created in 1987 in order to inform, promote, connect and strengthen individual non-profit organizations and the non-profit sector as a whole. Their mandate is an association of non-profits whose aim is to strengthen the state's non-profit sector, particularly in the areas of management, governance and public policy. It works to inform, involve, strengthen, and increase the capacity and effectiveness of non-profits and the non-profit sector in Minnesota.

They operate a variety of programs and services in the areas of education and awareness, public policy, research, advocacy and member services. They hold many workshops on subjects across the span of governance, administration, policy engagement, sustainability and provide many tools, publications and hot line services to address legal, administrative, human resource, and financial issues. They organize conferences to address both public policy and sector-specific issues. In addition, they speak and advocate on behalf of the sector on cross-sector issues.

For more information, visit: www.mncn.org/

For More Information:

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Appendix C

Canadian Federation of Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Networks

The Canadian Federation of Non-Profit and Voluntary Sector Networks was formed in July of 2002 and now has 14 local, regional, provincial, and territorial non-profit and voluntary sector networks. Though there are differences in their structure, name, scope, and stage of development, we share a common purpose - to build connections, cohesion, and capacity among diverse organizations, to enhance community vitality.

VISION

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

MISSION

To build connections, cohesion, and capacity in the non-profit and voluntary sector, in all regions of Canada, by strengthening cross-sector networks and by facilitating pan-Canadian public policy dialogue.

STRATEGIC GOALS:

- I To increase linkages and collaboration and to build capacity of cross sector non-profit and voluntary sector networks, that have emerged in communities, regions, provinces, and territories across Canada
- II To bring grassroots locally based, provincial, and territorial voices to pan-Canadian public policy dialogue
- III To provide leadership on common issues and engage in collective responses
- IV To convene and facilitate community, regional, provincial and territorial mobilization and engagement

GOVERNANCE

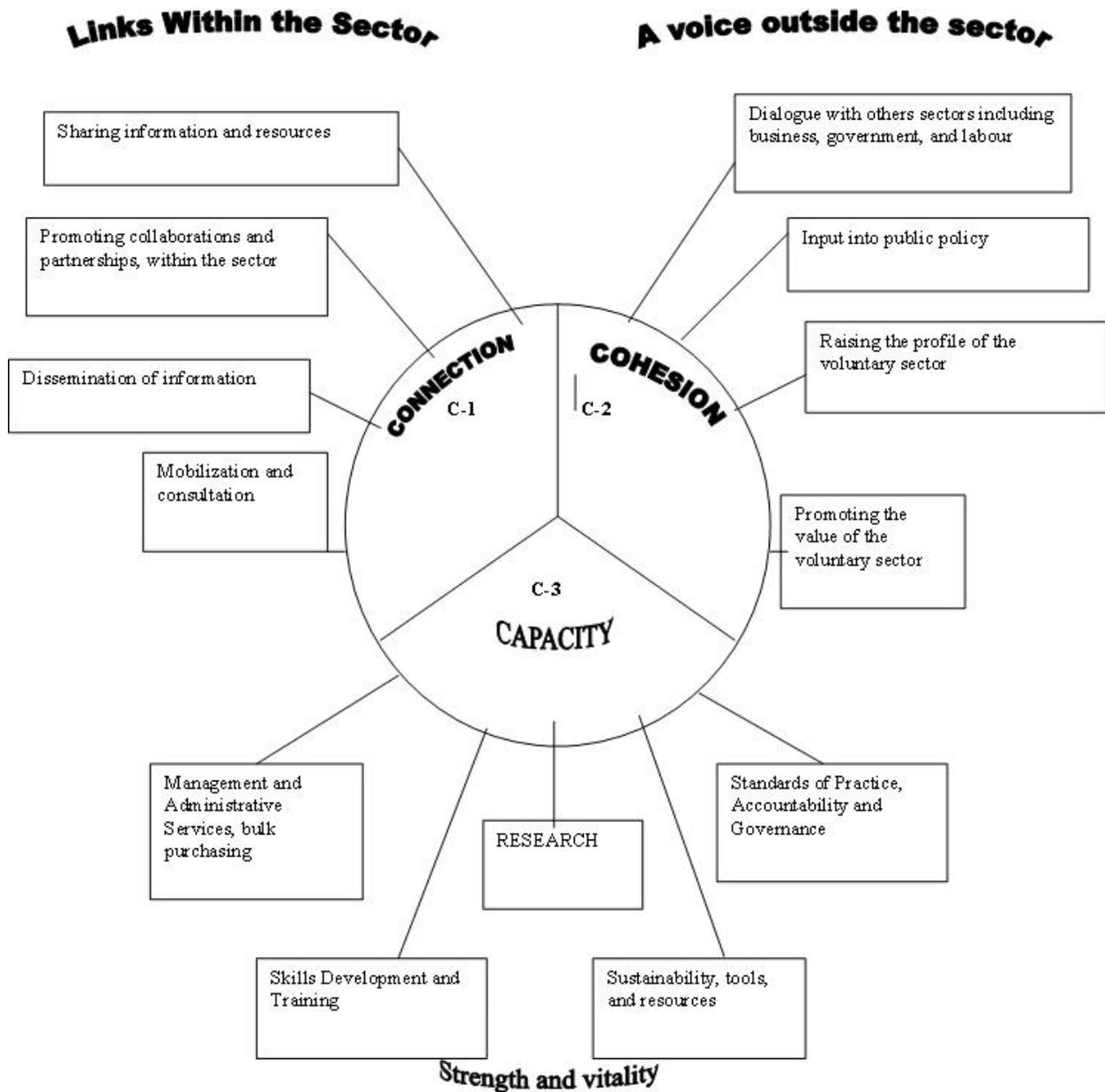
The Steering Committee works with the secretariat at the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development to ensure communications among members, to guide the collective work, and to respond to emerging issues. Steering Committee members are:

Kathryn Van Kooy	Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
Pierre Riley	Fédération des centres d'action bénévole du Québec
Rick Hutchins	Policy Link New Brunswick
Penelope Rowe	Community Services Council of Newfoundland/Labrador

For more information visit www.cvsrd.org or www.voluntarygateway.ca

This diagram illustrates the functions that the member non-profit and voluntary sector networks play within their own jurisdiction (in the local community, region, province, or territory).

3-C Model for Voluntary Sector Networks: Building Connection, Cohesion, and Capacity



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