

Scan of Research on Public Attitudes Towards the Voluntary Sector

Final Report

February 28, 2001

**Winston Husbands
A-J. McKechnie
Fleur Leslie**



Canadian Centre for Philanthropy™

Le Centre canadien de philanthropie MC

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A-J. McKechnie
Fleur Leslie**

Canadian Centre for Philanthropy
425 University Avenue, Suite 700
Toronto, Ontario, M5G 1T6
Telephone: (416) 597-2293, Fax: (416) 597-2294

www.ccp.ca

www.nonprofitscan.org

www.nsgvp.org

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Executive Summary

The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy conducted a scan of research on public attitudes towards the voluntary sector from February 6, 2001 to February 28, 2001. The scan was commissioned by the Joint Awareness Table of the Voluntary Sector Initiative. The Joint Awareness Table has a proposed mandate to ensure that various audiences (community leaders, business, media, government, youth, Canadians and parts of the sector itself) become informed about the vital role the voluntary sector plays in shaping and sustaining a high quality of life and a healthy society for Canadians, and, in turn, increase their engagement in community life. An important first step in considering how to build awareness of the sector is to gain an understanding of the public's current awareness of the sector.

The scan involved bibliographic searches of research available across Canada, and interviews with voluntary organizations and federal and provincial government departments to identify public opinion research they are conducting or intend to conduct in the near future.

The results of the Centre's work on the scan show that there is a limited amount of research on public attitudes towards the voluntary sector in Canada. The scan of research resulted in eight studies that address public attitudes substantively, in addition to a number of secondary reports and publications that address public attitudes in a limited way or are based on one of the eight major studies discussed in this report.

Existing public opinion research on public attitudes towards the voluntary sector suggests that, overall, Canadians view favourably the work, importance and contribution of the sector to Canadian society. However, Canadians do not want the delivery of services and programs by the voluntary sector to be a substitute for services and programs that governments ought to deliver. Canadians also invest a considerable amount of trust in voluntary and charitable organizations, while expressing concern about how organizations solicit, use and manage donations.

Introduction

The following provides results from a scan of research on public attitudes towards the voluntary sector that the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy conducted for the Voluntary Sector Initiative's Joint Awareness Table. The Joint Awareness Table has a proposed mandate to ensure that various audiences (community leaders, business, media, government, youth, Canadians and parts of the sector itself) become informed about the vital role the voluntary sector plays in shaping and sustaining a high quality of life and a healthy society for Canadians, and, in turn, increase their engagement in community life. An important first step in considering how to build awareness of the sector is to gain an understanding of the public's current awareness of the sector.

The scan was conducted over a three week period from February 6th to February 28, 2001, and involved the following tasks:

1. Conducting a scan of the existing public opinion research available across Canada including Quebec.
2. Identifying organizations that are in the process or have the intention of undertaking public opinion research in the near future.
3. Verifying the nature (if any) of public opinion research regarding the voluntary sector at provincial and federal levels of government.

Methods

The following activities were undertaken:

1. A bibliographic search of published literature involving searches of the University of Toronto library databases (including the UTCAT catalogue, various e-journals and e-indices).
2. A search of the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's voluntary sector research website: www.NonprofitsCan.org which includes a Research-in-Progress Catalogue of Canadian research and on-line library of published works. Both the Research-in-Progress Catalogue and the on-line library provide abstracts, contact information and links to research documents.
3. A review of research that has been conducted and/or collected by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and the Imagine Program.
4. A search for information via the Internet using Copernic 2000, a meta-search software program. In addition, certain voluntary sector websites not identified by Copernic 2000 were searched.

These activities are listed in greater detail in Appendix A.

We conducted interviews with major voluntary organizations and federal and provincial government departments and attempted to collect a copy of any research that is being undertaken by these organizations. A total of 121 calls were made to 45 organizations and government departments. The results of these calls are summarized in Appendix B.

The purpose of the calls was to ascertain 1) if any research was being conducted within these organizations, departments and foundations about public attitudes toward voluntary sector organizations and 2) whether respondents knew of any research that the Centre should access.

Overall, of the 29 organizations, Foundations and government departments that responded, the most frequent answer was that “No research was being done on this topic at this time.” Nonetheless, respondents were very helpful in referring the Centre to other staff and departments with more appropriate understanding and knowledge of the topic. Sixteen of the 45 organizations contacted did not respond within the short time frame allotted for the survey.

- 29 of 45 organizations responded to the survey (18 government departments, 11 voluntary organizations and Foundations)
- 16 of 45 organizations were unable to respond within the survey time frame
- 3 of 45 organizations stated that research on public attitudes was planned for the future
- 3 of 45 organizations sent information on current research about public attitudes toward the voluntary sector

Several respondents from government organizations and departments stated that although no research was presently being done, “budgets were in place and plans were underway to do such research”.

Three respondents sent copies of the research with which they were involved. Another respondent indicated that research that had been done on their behalf was not available due to confidentiality agreements with the research company that had produced the document.

The Extent of the Existing Research

Our scan uncovered only a limited amount of research on public attitudes towards voluntary organizations most of which focuses on charities rather than the larger voluntary sector. Eight studies have been identified. Although there are more than eight reports that discuss public attitudes, many of these rely on these eight studies. It should be noted that public attitudes towards voluntary organizations were usually only a minor component of most of these studies.

Our interviews with representatives of government departments and voluntary organizations yielded only one additional study. Most of the individuals contacted were unaware of any planned or ongoing research in this area, although most appeared to have a good general knowledge of the sector. Many referred us to others in their own or other departments or organizations whom they believed would be knowledgeable on public attitudes, but these referrals were not especially productive.

Our scan indicates that there is a very limited amount of research on public attitudes towards voluntary organizations.

The Research

Although we have identified eight research studies that can provide information on attitudes towards the voluntary sector, only two of these examine attitudes towards the voluntary sector per se. The rest examine attitudes towards charities or specific types of charities. The two studies that address attitudes towards voluntary organizations are the 1997 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (Hall, Knighton, Reed, Bussi re, McRae, and Bowen, 1998) which has only two attitude questions, and Ekos' 1998 Reinventing Government study (Ekos, 1998) which has four items.

Of the studies that provide information about attitudes towards *charities*, the most recent and comprehensive study is one conducted by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy in August, 2000 for the Muttart Foundation and presented in the report *Talking About Charities: Canadians' Opinions on Charities and Issues Affecting Charities* (Hall, Greenberg, and McKeown, 2000). Other studies include an Angus Reid focus group commissioned by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (Angus Reid Group 1997a). Angus Reid also asked a small number of survey questions on attitudes towards charities in 1997 (Angus Reid 1997b). A 1998 survey conducted by the Institute for Social Research at York University for a consortium of health charities and the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy contains a small number of questions examining attitudes towards health charities. There is also one Quebec study (Le Centre canadien de philanthropie et Le Centre pour l'avancement des associations du Qu bec, 1993). Reaching back into the 1980's, a number of surveys were conducted for the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's Imagine program that provided a modest amount of information about public attitudes towards charities (Decima, 1987; Decima, 1998; Arlett, Phelps and Thompson, 1988).

There are a number of other studies that focus more on charitable giving and volunteering in Canada and attitudes towards charitable giving and volunteering (e.g., studies conducted for the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy by Decima (1987, 1989, 1991) and the 1997 NSGVP). These, however, were considered to lie outside the scope of the scan of research that the Joint Awareness Table requires.

The following provides a summary of the findings of the research that we have been able to identify and collect. We begin by presenting the results of research that pertains to

attitudes towards voluntary organizations in general and then present results from research concerning attitudes towards charitable organizations. Following this, the research results are organized thematically in Table 1.

Attitudes Towards Voluntary Organizations

The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating. The NSGVP has two general attitude questions about voluntary organizations. Ninety-one percent of Canadians agree “generally, charitable and voluntary organizations play a major role in making our communities better places to live.” However, 60% also agree that “there seems to be so many organizations seeking donations for one cause or another, sometimes you don’t feel like giving to any organizations.”

Ekos Rethinking Government Survey. According to Ekos Research (Graves, 1997), 81% of those surveyed were not familiar with the term “third sector.” Other findings are:

- Sixty-eight percent agree that “the increased use of the volunteer sector is a positive way of expanding citizen involvement.”
- When asked “to what extent to you think the third sector is capable of assuming increased responsibility for areas which have traditionally fallen under government jurisdiction,” 33% indicated “to a great extent” and 37% indicated “to some extent.”
- 56% think that “the increased use of the volunteer sector is just a way of offloading traditional government responsibilities.”
- 49% agree that “government should consider offering financial support for those who might want to work in the not-for-profit or non-governmental sector.”

Attitudes Towards Charities

Muttart - CCP Study of Public Attitudes. As Hall, Greenberg, and McKeown (2000) report, Canadians consider charities to be increasingly important and they have a high level of trust in these organizations. Although not a majority view, a large proportion of the population thinks that charities spend too much on operating expenses and most Canadians identify a need for information about the work that charities do and the way they spend their money.

Some of the significant findings are:

- 90% of Canadians agree that “charitable organizations are becoming increasingly important to many Canadians in Canada”

- 79% agree that “charitable organizations understand the needs of the average Canadian better than government”
- 69% agree that “charitable organizations do a better job than government in meeting the needs of Canadians”
- 84% agree that “the services provided by charitable organizations should not be a substitute for those services government can provide”
- 88% agree that “charitable organization should speak out on issues like the environment, poverty or health care”
- 59% indicate that “charities have too little money to do their work”
- 47% agree that “charities ask for money only when they really need it”
- 74% agree that there are “too many charities trying to get donations for the same cause”
- 84% agree that “charities are generally honest about the way they use donations”
- 54% endorse the view that “every organization has operating expenses and charitable organizations generally keep these expenses as low as they can”
- 58% endorse the view that “charitable organizations generally keep ... fundraising expenses as low as they can”
- 65% indicate that charities should provide more information about the programs and services they deliver; 75% indicate that charities should provide more information about how they use donations; 76% want more information about fundraising costs; and 75% want more information about the impact of their work on Canadians
- More than three-quarters of Canadians (77%) trust charities “some” or “a lot” -- only medical workers (nurses and doctors) are trusted more than charitable workers.

CCP - Angus Reid Focus Group Study. Hall and Parmegiani (1998) present the findings from a series of focus groups conducted by the Angus Reid Group for the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy in a Centre Research Bulletin entitled, *Public Opinion and Accountability in the Charitable Sector*. The focus groups revealed that although the public appears to know very little about the charitable sector, it generally has positive perceptions about it and believes that charitable organizations play an important role in society. Participants had difficulty defining the sector and describing it in any detail. In addition, the public did not seem to be aware of the broad range of services provided by

the charitable sector. When asked to describe the work of charities, people were most likely to indicate that charities provide community and social services such as: goods and services to people in need, material to help unfortunate families; disaster relief, medicine, food, clothing, shelter; and visiting the sick and elderly. Another frequent response was that charities conduct or support medical research.

Participants in the study initially expressed positive opinions about charities in general and appeared to trust those organizations with which they had a relationship. However, there also appeared to be an undercurrent of discontent and mistrust of charities overall, more so for those charities that people did not know. Participants appeared to be concerned about fundraising practices and expressed a need for information about how money is being used. In particular respondents expressed a desire for more information about the efficiency of charitable organizations (i.e., whether the money is being wasted) and about their effectiveness (i.e., what is being accomplished with the money).

1997 Angus Reid Survey. Angus Reid asked a small number of attitudinal questions in a larger survey on corporate social responsibility. They found that:

- 41% strongly agreed that “there are just too many charities asking people for money these days”
- 80% agreed “the work charitable and non-profit organizations do should not be a substitute for the government’s responsibility to provide services for the public.
- 46% agreed that “I have heard so many stories about corruption among charitable organizations, I am reluctant to give.
- 45% agreed that “many charities are run by disorganized amateurs”
- 77% agreed that “I am much more likely to support a community charity than a national or international charity

1987 Decima Survey. In a survey conducted for the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy’s Imagine program:

- 96% indicated that support for charities is very or somewhat important
- 78% agreed that “ the work that charitable and non-profit organizations do should not be a substitute for government’s responsibility to provide services for the public.”
- 91% of Canadians indicated that charities make a “positive” or “somewhat positive” contribution to the community

Quebec Study. In a survey conducted for the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and Le Centre pour l'avancement des in 1993, 80% of adults were satisfied with the solicitation strategies of charitable organizations, but almost two-thirds (62%) of adults expressed concern with the administrative costs of charities (Le Centre canadien de philanthropie et Le Centre pour l'avancement des associations du Québec, 1993).

Cooperative Health Consortium Study (1998). This survey assessed charitable giving and attitudes towards health charities (Northrup, 1998). Among its findings:

- 43% of those surveyed indicated that there are too many charitable organizations in Canada.
- Respondents were asked to rate the importance of the work of health charities in terms of its importance:
 - 81% rated the work that health charities do to support and fund research to be very important
 - 77% rated the work that health charities do in patient care to be very important
 - 67% rated work in educating professionals to be very important
 - 56% rated work in lobbying government to be very important.

Table 1.

Thematic Summary of Canadians' Attitudes to Voluntary Organizations and Charities

Public's knowledge of the voluntary sector

CCP - Angus Reid Focus Group Study (Hall and Parmegiani, 1998)

Public knows very little about the charitable sector, but generally believe that charitable organizations play an important role in society

Role and function of the voluntary sector

1987 Decima Survey (Decima Research, 1987)

96% of Canadians thought that support for charities is "very important"

91% think that charities make a "positive" or "somewhat positive" contribution to the community

Ekos Rethinking Government Survey (Graves, 1997)

68% of Canadians agree that "the increased use of the volunteer sector is a positive way of expanding citizen involvement"

CCP - Angus Reid Focus Group Study (Hall and Parmegiani, 1998)

Participants most likely to indicate that charities provide community and social services, including services/goods to people in need, disaster relief, etc.

Cooperative Health Consortium Survey (Northrup, 1998)

81% rated as "very important" the work of health charities in supporting and funding research

77% rated as "very important" health charities' work on patient care

67% rated as "very important" health charities' work on educating professionals

56% rated as "very important" health charities' work on lobbying government

Table 1. continued.

National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (Hall and Febrarro, 1999)

91% of Canadians agree that “charitable organizations play a major role in making our communities better places to live”

Muttart-CCP Study of Public Attitudes (Hall *et al.*, 2000)

90% agree that “charitable organizations are becoming increasingly important to many Canadians”

69% agree that “charitable organizations should speak out on issues like the environment, poverty and health”

79% agree that “charitable organizations do a better job than government in meeting the needs of Canadians”

Role of the voluntary sector and the responsibilities of government

1987 Decima Survey (Decima Research, 1987)

78% agree that “the work that charitable and non-profit organizations do should not be a substitute for government’s responsibility to provide services”

Ekos Rethinking Government Survey (Graves, 1997)

56% of Canadians think that “the increased use of the volunteer sector is just a way of offloading traditional government responsibilities”

Muttart-CCP Study of Public Attitudes (Hall *et al.*, 2000)

84% agree that “services provided by charitable organizations should not be a substitute for those services government can provide”

Attitudes to Giving and Management of Donations

Quebec Study (Le centre canadien de philanthropie et Le centre pour l’avancement des associations du Québec, 1993)

80% of Quebec residents were satisfied with the solicitation strategies of charitable organizations

62% expressed concern with the administrative costs of charities

1997 Angus Reid Survey (Angus Reid Group, 1997)

46% of Canadians agree that “I have heard so many stories about corruption among charitable organizations, I am reluctant to give”

Muttart-CCP Study of Public Attitudes (Hall *et al.*, 2000)

84% agree that “charities are generally honest about the way they use donations”

59% agree that “charitable organizations generally keep ... fundraising expenses as low as they can”

59% agree that “charities have too little money to do their work”

Table 1. continued.

Trust and Accountability

CCP - Angus Reid Focus Group Study

People need proof that their donations are going to a good cause

Muttart-CCP Study of Public Attitudes (Hall *et al.*, 2000)

28% of Canadians have a lot of trust in charitable workers, versus 68% having a lot of trust in nurses and 56% having a lot of trust in doctors

77% of Canadians have “some” or “a lot” of trust in charities

65% indicate that charities should provide more information about their programs and services

75% indicate that charities should provide more information about how they use donations

76% want more information about fundraising costs

75% want more information from charities about the impact of their work on Canadians

Are there too many charities in Canada?

1997 Angus Reid Survey (Angus Reid Group, 1997)

41% of Canadians strongly agree that “there are just too many charities asking people for money these days”

Cooperative Health Consortium Study (Northrup, 1998)

43% of Canadians thought there were too many charities

National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (Hall and Febrarro, 1999)

60% of Canadians agree that “there seems to be so many organizations seeking donations ... sometimes you don't feel like giving to any organizations”.

Muttart-CCP Study of Public Attitudes (Hall *et al.*, 2000)

74% of Canadians agree that “there are too many charities trying to get donations for the same cause.”

Annotated References

The following references provide information about attitudes towards voluntary organizations. Many of these draw on the same eight studies discussed in detail above. We have provided a brief annotation of their findings. Some have only an indirect bearing, but are included in case the Joint Awareness Table has an interest in them.

Angus Reid Group. (March 1997). *Public Opinion in Canada Concerning Corporate Respondents and Charitable Organizations*. Ottawa: Author.

This national random sample survey of 1,500 Canadians older than 18 years was conducted between August 26 and September 3, 1997. Sixty five percent of respondent strongly agree that giving to charity is important because you never know when you may need help yourself. Fifty-seven percent of respondents with household incomes of \$60,000 strongly agree with this premise but 80% agree that charitable and nonprofit organizations should not be a substitute for government's responsibility to provide services for the public.

Forty-one percent agree that there are too many charities asking people for money these days and this feeling is more widespread among people aged 55 or older than those aged 18-34 years.

Angus Reid Group. (1997). *Perceptions of Charitable Organizations*, #209302. Ottawa: Author.

Six focus groups were held in Vancouver, Toronto, and Saskatoon with two groups per city with an average of nine respondents per group. Overall, respondents had positive impressions of the role of the charitable sector organizations, though there are strong undercurrents of mistrust about charitable organizations.

Respondents were easily influenced by one or two articles about the charitable sector which they have read, heard or seen in media. On the other hand, respondents have a positive impression of individual organizations but not necessarily about the sector as a whole. People preferred to work for local rather than national or international organizations. Charities are seen as filling gaps vacated by government and as primary providers of support in healthcare.

In order to increase support for charitable organizations, issues of credibility need to be addressed. Charitable organizations must be seen to provide real benefits to individuals and society. People need proof that their donations are going to a good cause. It was clear from the initial discussions that respondents generally know very little about the charitable sector and that it is not a "top-of-need issues for most."

Angus Reid Group. (December 1995). *The Public's Agenda, Assessment of 1995, the Death of the Middle Class, and Charities/Luxuries.* Ottawa: Author.

A telephone poll of 1,506 Canadian adults conducted between December 6 –13, 1995 states that 80% of Canadians give money to charity. This number is derived from a provincial breakdown that shows Atlantic Canada to be the most generous at 92%. Manitoba and Saskatchewan follow at 89% Alberta at 87%; Ontario at 84%, B.C. at 80% and Quebec at 71%. The most popular charity in terms of the percentage of people donating to it is 29% of donating Canadians gave to foundations that fund health-related research such as cancer and heart disease.

Respondents (54%) particularly wealthy donors (66%) cited moral obligation as a reason for donating.

Arlett, A., Phelps, B. & Thompson, R. (1998). *Canada Gives: Trend attitudes towards charitable giving and voluntarism.* Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

This report is based on a survey conducted by Decima Research in 1987. Decima Research interviewed a random sample of 1,000 adult residents of Canada. An additional 1,149 residents of Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax were interviewed, for a total sample of 2,149.

The survey reveals that Canadians hold a positive attitude toward the sector. Ninety-six percent of Canadians (94% in Quebec) identified the importance of support for charities as somewhat or very important (57% very important, Quebec 46%).

Azmier, J. (2000). *Canadian Gambling Behaviour and Attitudes: Summary Report, Gambling in Canada Research Report.* No. 8. Calgary: Canada West Foundation.

A survey of 2,202 adult Canadians in June 1999 revealed that 72% of Canadians participated in some form of gambling in the last twelve months. However, 57% of Canadians either do not gamble or do not seek out gambling opportunities. Hence researchers conclude that gambling is widespread but not favourably viewed. When asked who should benefit from gambling revenues – 43% said charities, however when asked what is the best way to fund charities, respondents equally split between gambling revenue (19%), individual donations (21%) and corporate donations (20%); only (14%) said government grants.

Corrections Canada - Environics Research Group. (October 2000). *Public Attitudes Toward Correctional Issues In Kingston Ontario.* A Report of Survey and Focus Group Research. Final Report PN4661. Toronto: Author.

This research project included a public opinion survey of 600 residents of Kingston and area between July 24 and 30, 2000 and the implementation of six focus groups between August 22-24, 2000.

Of particular interest are questions 16 a) and 16 b) and 17 a) and 17 b). The first two questions solicited public opinion on the role of community volunteer support through halfway houses, programs and mentoring. The second question asks whether respondents would assist their community by getting involved in corrections and in what activities they would become involved.

Residents were divided as to whether the community had a role to play in helping inmates reintegrate into society. Those opposed to the role expressed a number of concerns: Kingston has done enough based on the number of correctional facilities housed by the city; paying taxes to fund the correctional service is enough; high recidivism rates suggest little return for the time and money expended; treating inmates like everyone else is the best way to help them.

The majority of respondents felt that the community did have role to play helping inmates reintegrate, but some felt at a loss as to how this could be accomplished. On a personal basis those who were unwilling to help cited feeling unsafe interacting with inmates as the primary argument; others suggested being too busy; yet others suggested that other causes were more worthy of their time or that they were unqualified to help.

Decima Research Group Inc. (1991). *Report to Imagine*. Toronto: Author.

A telephone interview was administered to a random sample of 1,000 adult Canadians between August 31 and September 15, 1991. Three quarters of Canadians (74%) agree with the statement "I feel strongly about the need to get involved and make the community a better place to live." Yet only 55% agree that "one important way of expressing my care and compassion is to give to charitable organizations" reveals some resistance to the idea of giving to charities.

"Canadians overall show a resistance to greater giving, [but] our analysis indicates that there are two segments that have the potential to donate both time and money." These two segments comprise 45% of the population and are defined as 1) "Heart in the right place" segment which is 22% of the population and come from all income and educational groups although their incomes are slightly above average; and 2) "Affluent givers" who make up 23% of the population, have above average household incomes, are more likely to be professionals or managers and are usually better educated than the overall population.

Decima Research Group. (September 1989). *Imagine Survey: Nation-wide attitude survey, # 3980-03*. Toronto: Author.

One thousand adults 18 years and over were interviewed between September 11 and 20, 1989. This survey revealed that giving to charities is a low priority for most people: only 12% indicated that they would donate to charity if they won the lottery. However, the survey also revealed that older Canadians were more likely to donate than younger Canadians (18% of those aged 50-59, and 25% of those aged 60 or older, compared to 7% of those aged 30-39 and 6% of those aged 40-49). Three-quarters of Canadians disagreed with the statement "I don't see any point in volunteering . . . because one person can do so little." Residents of Quebec and Atlantic Canada were the least likely to disagree. The public is divided regarding the potential for renewed interest in the charitable sector. Only 14% of Canadians thought it "very likely" that Canadians would be more altruistic in the 1990s.

Ekos Research Associates. (April 17, 1998). *Rethinking Citizen Engagement*.

Presentation to: PCO/CCMD Seminar Series. Ottawa: Author.

The findings reviewed in this presentation were based on 2,042 detailed telephone interviews conducted with a stratified random sample of Canadians aged 18 and over, in addition to 13 focus groups conducted between March 12th and 23rd, 1998.

This survey was structured according to three subsections: Power, Influence and Civic Culture, Views on Engagement and Models and Behavioral Testing. The questions centred around various issues of public policy and civil society. According to this study, two thirds of Canadians (68%) believe that the Third Sector voluntary organizations have a moderately important role and that few people view such organizations as special interest groups with an established agenda beyond seeking to attain public policy improvements.

Graves, F. & Reed, P. (1999). Canadian Attitudes and their public institutions.

In Optimum, The Journal of Public Sector Management. 28 (4:1-8)

This article is based on a study entitled Rethinking Government, conducted by Ekos Research in 1998. The article examines current attitudes concerning government and other public institutions. The definition for public institution includes schools, non-profit and voluntary organizations, public employees, the media and religious organizations. For comparison purposes large private companies were included in several of the questions. The study surveyed respondents regarding general assessments of, and levels of confidence in the designated public institutions; their impact on quality of life; how well they serve the public interest; ratings of their performance; preferred roles that selected public institutions should play; and the importance of public institutions in supporting Canadian identity.

The patterns of opinion outlined indicate surprising commitment by the majority of Canadians to their public institutions and a willingness to give more tax dollars to public institutions under

specific circumstances. Canadians are divided about the services they receive relative to the costs (40% believe they are well-served, 40% disagree and 20% are ambivalent).

Findings suggest that Canadians are as unhappy with ethical standards of government, and with a lack of attention to the public interest on the part of governments and public employees.

Sixty-six percent of the general public indicated that they have “a lot of confidence” in non-profit and voluntary organizations, as opposed to only 48% of decision makers. 77% of respondents indicated that non-profit and voluntary organizations serve the public interest “well.” 90% of Canadians believe the performance of non-profit and voluntary organizations has either improved or remained the same.

Key roles identified for the non-profit sector are:

- Building a country that can be a source of pride to all citizens
- Promoting tolerance and understanding
- Protecting our environment

Graves, F. (April 24, 1997). *Options for the Third Sector: Civic virtue or discount government?* Speech Presented to the Canadian Leader’s Forum on Third Sector Banff, Alberta. Ottawa: Ekos Research Associates.

Chapter Two of this report entitled *Awareness of Third Sector* indicates that 81% of the respondents were not aware of the term “Third Sector”, while only 12% were somewhat familiar and 7% were very familiar. Awareness was greater among people of Quebec as well as respondents with a university education and a higher income.

Chapter Six of this report entitled *Perceived Impacts* provided relevant statistics referring to public attitudes on the third sector. Sixty-eight percent of respondents believed that expanding the use of the third sector is a positive way of expanding citizen involvement. Fifty-six percent believed that expanding the third sector is just a way of offloading traditional government responsibilities. Attitudes on the use of the third sector for workfare and young offender boot camps, were highly diverse. Those who support this kind of mandatory volunteering, believe that values such as hard work and self-reliance can be transmitted this way. Others believe such activities destroy the virtue of volunteerism.

Hall, M., Greenberg, L. & McKeown, L. (2000). *Talking About Charities. Canadians’ opinions on charities and issues affecting charities.* Prepared for The Muttart Foundation. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

This report is based on telephone survey of 3,863 Canadians 18 years and older. Canadians have generally positive perceptions of charities. Ninety percent agree that charities are becoming increasingly important to Canadians while 79% agree that charities understand the need of

average Canadians better than government, and 69% agree that charities do a better job than government in meeting the needs of Canadians. Eighty-eight percent agree that charities should speak-out on issues like environment, poverty and health care but respondents evenly split about whether charities should limit the amount of time and money they spend on advocacy.

Fifty-nine percent think charities have too little money to do their work and 90% agree that charities need to put a lot more effort into raising money. Seventy-seven percent have some or a lot of faith in charities, while 85% agree that charities generally are honest about the way they use donations.

Only nurses and medical doctors were trusted more than charitable workers but the difference is large – 68% have a lot of trust in nurses, 56% in doctors but only 28% have a lot of trust in charitable workers.

Generally, Canadians think that charities should be providing more information about their programs and activities with 65% thinking that charities should provide more information about programs and services, 75% about how they use donations, 76% about fundraising costs and 75% about the impact of charity's work.

Hall, M & Febrarro, A. (1999). The Public's Concerns About Fundraising and the Use of Donated Dollars. *Research Bulletin*. 6 (3). Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

This Bulletin is based on the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP), conducted in 1997. Over 18,000 Canadians responded to the survey. Although 91% of Canadians agree that charitable and voluntary organizations play a major role in making our communities better places to live, the majority of Canadians (61% of donors and 58% of non-donors) feel there are too many charities.

Donors expressed some hesitation about the financial affairs of charities. For example, 40% of donors do not like the way requests for donations are made and think that their money will not be used efficiently. Similarly, 40% of donors suggest that money spent by charities on administration or fundraising is excessive, while 43% of the largest donors (\$ 206 or more per average donation) think that charities spend too much on these two items.

Concerns about fundraising are likely to result in small donations. Donors who agree that "there seem to be so many charities, sometimes I do not feel like giving to any" made average annual donations of \$195 versus annual average donations of \$315 for those who disagree with the statement. Some trend for agreement (disagreement with "I think the money will not be used efficiently" and "money spent by charity on administration or fundraising is too much or about right."

Hall, M & Parmegiani, M. (Summer 1998). Public Opinion and Accountability in the Charitable Sector. *Research Bulletin*. 5 (2). Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

This Bulletin is based on research conducted by Angus Reid for Imagine in February and June 1997. Results indicate that the public knows very little about the charitable sector, but generally have positive perceptions about charities. The public's main source of information about charities is through fundraising solicitations. Therefore, if a request for money is the most prevalent form of communication with the public, it is not surprising that the public's concerns about charities revolve around how money is used. Also, media coverage about charities often focuses on allegations about misuse or mismanagement of funds.

Le Centre canadien de philanthropie et Le Centre pour l'avancement des associations du Québec. (1993). *Perceptions et Comportements de la Population Québécoise Face au Don, Sondage du Forum Québécois de la philanthropie 1993*. Montréal: Le Groupe Léger & Léger institut de sondage.

Respondents for this survey were largely francophone (84.6%) and represented regions throughout the province of Quebec. Survey highlights from this 1993 Quebec Forum on Philanthropy study show that 62% of respondents say they are either concerned, or very concerned with the administrative costs of charities, whereas 37% of respondents say they are somewhat or not at all concerned with administrative costs. Slightly over 80% of respondents report that they are either satisfied, or very satisfied with the solicitation strategies of charitable organizations. Respondents had the most confidence in health and welfare charities, and the least confidence in international, environmental and cultural nonprofit organizations.

The ideal solicitation techniques are categorized as (in decreasing order): telethon, door to door canvassing, personal letter, direct mail, publicity, phone, and fundraising campaign in the workplace.

Northrup, D. (1998). *Health Charity Consortium Survey*. Toronto: Institute for Social Research, York University.

This survey, conducted in 1998, involved interviews with 1,525 Canadians. This survey was commissioned by a consortium of health charities. In 1998, 43% of Canadians believed that there are too many charities.

Royal Bank - Angus Reid Group. (June 1997). *Building Bridges. new perspectives on the nexus generation*. Toronto: Royal Bank.

This research was conducted by the Angus Reid Group on behalf of Royal Bank. For the survey, 1,500 adult Canadians with a sub-sample of 598 aged 18-35 were interviewed between April 20th and April 25th 1997. The Nexus generation comprises 7.7 million Canadians (26% of the Canadian population) born between the early 1960s and the late 1970s (aged 18-35 years), Fully 64% say they will volunteer (26% of all volunteers in Ontario are between 22-30 years old).

Wilson, M. & Hegarty, N. (1997). *Public Perceptions of Nonprofit Organizations in Michigan. Briefing Paper No. 97-28.* Michigan: Michigan State University.

This telephone survey of 975 adult residents of the state of Michigan between February 18 and April 7, 1997. The key findings revealed that 59% of residents define nonprofit as “not allowed to make a profit”, while half of the residents associate charities with giving, donating providing or helping others. Eighty-three percent agree that nonprofits more effective in providing services than five years ago. Seventy-five percent agree that nonprofit organizations are honest and ethical in their use of funds. Eighty-four percent believe that Michigan-based charitable organizations are more effective than national ones.

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Wilson, M. & Hegarty, N. (1997). *Public Perceptions of Nonprofit Organizations in Michigan. Briefing Paper No. 97-28*. Michigan: Michigan State University.

Appendix A

Summary of On-line and bibliographic searches for Scan of Public Attitudes Report

On-line searches

1. Nonprofitscan site

- www.nonprofitscan.org Research-in-Progress Catalogue
- www.nonprofitscan.org On-line Library

2. Copernic 2000

- Meta searches for published research and research in progress

3. Selected Individual Sector-Related Sites

- [Http://www.nlc-bnc.ca](http://www.nlc-bnc.ca) National Library of Canada
- <http://www.nvo-onb.ca/> The Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations
- <http://www.charityvillage.com/> Charity Village
- <http://www.nsfre.org/> National Society of Fund Raising Executives
- <http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/> The Frasier Institute
- www.caledoninst.org The Caledon Institute
- <http://www.cwf.ca/> Canada West Foundation
- <http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb/arb-home.shtml> Human Resources Development Canada – Applied Research
- <http://www.nsi-ins.ca/> The North-South Institute
- <http://www.cprm.com/> Canadian Policy Research Networks
- <http://www.ccsd.ca/> Canadian Council on Social Development
- <http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/> Canadian Social Research Index

- <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/> Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- <http://www.volnet.org/english/index.html> Volnet

4. Polling Firms

- <http://erg.environics.net/> Environics Research Group
- <http://www.ekos.com/> Ekos Research Associates Inc.

Bibliographic Searches

1. University of Toronto Libraries site <http://www.library.utoronto.ca/>

- UTCAT catalogue

- E-indices

Social Science Abstracts

Social Services Abstracts

Sociological Abstracts

- E-journals:

Nonprofit World

Public Opinion Quarterly

Public Administration Review

Social Indicators Research.

Appendix B

Table 2. Government Departments and Agencies

Governmental Organization	Contacts	Status	Calls Made
Federal			
Agriculture and Agri-food Canada	Carol Evoy, Policy & Coordination Officer Co-operate Secretariat	No knowledge of research being done	3
Canadian Heritage	Don McRae, Senior Policy Officer	No research being done now; Information must be accessed through Research groups such as Environics	2
	Martin Lagace, Policy Analyst		
CCRA Charities Divison	Carl Juneau, Director, Policy & Communications Charities Division	No research being done but budgeted & planned for the future	4
Correctional Services Canada	Chris Stafford	Yes, Sent research information-presently working on project/design phase/public attitudes	3
	Public Outreach Coordinator		
Department of Justice Canada	Merielle Provost, Program Analyst	No research being done	3
Environment Canada	No response	No response	2

Table 2. Government Departments and Agencies (Continued)

Governmental Organization	Contacts	Status	Calls Made
Finance Canada	Konstantinos Georgaras, Tax Policy Officer	No research being done	3
Fisheries and Oceans Canada	Danielle Pereault, Vol. Programmes in Earth Sciences	No research being done	3
Foreign Affairs and International Trade	Jean Belanger, Director General Policy and Operations	No research being done	2
Health Canada	Timna Gorber, Policy Analyst, Strategic Policy Directorate, Population and Public Health Branch	No research being done; mentioned Ekos' work	2
Human Resources Development Canada	Cheryl Spencer, Programme Officer, VSI	Seeking research information; No response within time frame	3
Industry Canada	Bernard Chabot	No response within the time frame	3
Solicitor General	Richard Sanell, Program with Work of Excellence Division	No research being done	3
Statistics Canada	Paul Reed, Senior Social Scientist	Yes, Sent research information - presently working on project/design	2

Table 2. Government Departments and Agencies (Continued)

Governmental Organization	Contacts	Status	Calls Made
Status of Women Canada	Nancy-Jean Waugh, Director, Communications and Consultations	No research being done	2
Library of Parliament	Denis Charette, Technician	No research is being done	4
Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation	David Metzak, Manager, Housing, Finance & Affordability, Research Department	June 2000 Study by Manifest Communications will send February 28	3
	Jamey Burr, Dir. Partnership Development Officer	No response	1
Canada Information Office	Jean-Pierre Lamarche, A/Dir. Client Advisory & Public Opinion Research Directorate	No research being done	2
Alberta			
The Wild Rose Foundation	Pat Blakeney Manager, Volunteer Services Sector	No research being done	3
Cooperatives & Voluntary Sector Initiative	Gilda Good, Principal Pathways Consulting (Contract)	No research being done	3

Table 2. Government Departments and Agencies (Continued)

Governmental Organization	Contacts	Status	Calls Made
Manitoba			
All Charities	Kelly Stevens, Associate	No research being done	2
Consumer & Corporate Affairs, Consumers Bureau	Terry Bossup and Irene deGraff Associates	No research being done	2
Culture, Heritage and Tourism	Jim Evanchuk, Fitness Directorate	No response	4
Ontario			
Citizenship, Culture and Recreation	Michael Kilpatrick, Senior Policy Advisor	No research being done	2
Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs	Denise Edwards, Volunteer Management Specialist	No research being done; Referred to: U of Guelph Rural Planning; Innovation & Risk Management Branch	3
Quebec			
University of Quebec and Montreal	Danielle Dagenais-Perusse, Director of Major Donations Plans		2
Total telephone calls made:			71

Table 3. Voluntary Organizations and Foundations

Voluntary Organizations and Foundations	Contacts	Status	Calls Made
Institute of Research & Public Policy	Keith Banting, Director, School of Policy Studies	No response within time frame	3
The Vanier Institute	Bob Glossop, Executive Director, Programs/ Research	No research being done	3
The Caledon Institute	Sherri Torjman, Vice-President	No research being done	2
C.D. Howe Institute	Finn Poschmann, Senior Policy Analyst	No research being done	2
Canadian Centre of Policy Alternatives	Ed Finn, Senior Editor	No response within time frame	2
Canadian Policy Research Networks	Gisele Lacelle, Publications & Conference Services	No research being done	2
Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations	Dianne Bascombe, Director of Children's Issues	No response within time frame	3
The Kahanoff Foundation	Shira Herzog, Vice-President	No research being done	3

Table 3. Voluntary Organizations and Foundations (Continued)

Voluntary Organizations and Foundations	Contacts	Status of Scan	Calls Made
The Laidlaw Foundation	Nathan Gilbert, Executive Director	No research being done	2
The Muttart Foundation	Bob Wyatt, Executive Director	No research being done	3
The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation	Joyce Mulner, Assistant Tim Brodhead, President & CEO	No research being done	2
The Trillium Foundation	B.J. Richmond, Research Analyst	No research being done	2
Community Foundations of Canada	Elizabeth Orton, Manager for Member Services	No research being done	2
United Way/Centreaide	Lynn Lovell, Policy Advisor	No research being done	2
Salvation Army	Margery Simmons, Major	No research being done	3
Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada	Sharon Edwards, Executive Director	No response within time frame	2

Table 3. Voluntary Organizations and Foundations (Continued)

Voluntary Organizations and Foundations	Contacts	Status of Scan	Calls Made
Canadian Cancer Society	Rebecca Finlay, Communications & Marketing	No response within time frame	3
Canadian Diabetes Association	Chris Myer, Manager/Corporate Communications	No response within time frame	2
Canadian Environmental Network	No response		4
Greenpeace	Peter Tavens, Executive Director	No response within time frame	4
Total telephone calls made:			50

Appendix C Public Attitudes Survey

Date	Time	Message
Location / Division:		
Contact:		
Position:	Dep't:	
Phone:	Email:	

I am calling from the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy on behalf of the Joint Awareness Table (*which is part of the Federal government and Voluntary Sector Initiatives to develop new and increasingly strategic ways to improve the quality of life of Canadians*). The Centre is conducting research to determine public attitudes toward charities and voluntary organizations in the voluntary sector on behalf of the Joint Awareness Table as it considers how to mobilize resources about the sector's role and importance.

I would like to speak with someone (in your department/organization) who has knowledge about the voluntary sector. This survey will take approximately 15 minutes of your time.

Finally, before we begin, we would like to know if you are willing to have your name included in our list of survey participants in our final report/publication? Y / N

We are approaching a variety of sources such as spokespersons for federal and provincial government departments and organizations and voluntary organizations and foundations. This information will be used in two ways: 1) to inform various audiences (community leaders, business leaders, media, government, youth, Canadians and parts of the sector itself) about the role of the voluntary sector in shaping and sustaining a high quality of life and a healthy society for Canadians and 2) to increase engagement in community life.

