

Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating

Final Report

March 2003

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Mandate and Objectives

In June 2000, Treasury Board and Cabinet approved funding for a five-year period, beginning in fiscal year 2000-01, for Statistics Canada to conduct two iterations of the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) as a Labour Force Survey supplement. In November 2001, Treasury Board and Cabinet approved the concept of and funding for this survey and renamed it the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (CSGVP). Statistics Canada is responsible for delivering the survey. On December 5, 2001, the Prime Minister's announcement of [*An Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector*](#) referred to ongoing funding for an enhanced CSGVP.

The goals of the CSGVP are to:

- Collect national data about individual contributory behaviours (including volunteering, charitable giving and participation) in Canada;
- Examine flows in and out of volunteering, giving and participating in Canada;
- Provide reliable and timely data to the System of National Accounts;
- Inform public policy decisions that relate to the charitable and voluntary sector; and
- Provide voluntary organizations with information that will allow them to plan and assess programs.

The CSGVP gives governments a solid base of information to develop, administer and evaluate programs directed to the voluntary sector. This is particularly important for the federal government, which is actively engaging the voluntary sector through the Voluntary Sector Initiative. Trend data from regular repetition of the survey will allow all governments to monitor the health of the voluntary sector and track the effectiveness of its current policy initiatives over time. The CSGVP will also provide information relevant to other dimensions of government policy that touch on the voluntary sector.

Membership and Staff

The 2000 NSGVP was developed and implemented under the direction of a joint steering committee. Following the joint tables model, the steering committee has both government and voluntary sector members, including representatives from the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Volunteer Canada, Human Resources Development Canada, Health Canada, Canadian Heritage, the Voluntary Sector Task Force and Statistics Canada. The steering committee is co-chaired by a voluntary sector representative and a senior manager from Statistics Canada.

Co-chairs

Michael Hall
Vice-President, Research
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Sange De Silva
Director General, Labour and Household
Surveys
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Members

Catherine Bertrand
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Human Resources Development Canada

Karen Wilson
Director General
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Statistics Canada

Karen Roberts
Acting Project Manager/Chief
Health and Volunteer Surveys
Special Survey Division
Statistics Canada

Terms of Reference and Operating Principles

The CSGVP is a component of the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) and is linked to it through the Capacity Joint Table (CJT). The CSGVP is managed through a joint steering committee relating to the VSI through the CJT with representation from the voluntary sector and government. The co-chairs of the CSGVP steering committee are ex-officio members of the CJT. The CSGVP project is conducted within the legal framework of the [Statistics Act](#) and the policy framework of Statistics Canada.

Work Plan

The 2000 NSGVP was successfully conducted in partnership with the voluntary sector, which was represented by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and Volunteer Canada, and three federal departments, Human Resources Development Canada, Canadian Heritage and Health Canada. Survey results were released on August 17, 2001.

In December 2001, the federal government announced permanent funding for a redesigned and renamed NSGVP: the Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating. It will be conducted in 2003 and every three years following. In the same collection year as the main survey, a portion of respondents from the previous round will be re-interviewed to estimate flows into and out of volunteering, giving and participating and the motivations behind these flows. The new survey will include the three territories.

Work Completed and Process Used

Statistics Canada conducted the 2000 NSGVP in October 2000. Survey results were processed and products developed during the first seven months of 2001. As planned, on August 17, 2001, Statistics Canada officially released survey results. The same day, voluntary sector representatives on the steering committee presented key findings to a special session of the Canadian Forum on Volunteerism. The two events received extensive media coverage.

An analytical overview report, written by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy under contract to Statistics Canada, and a data file were available to the public as of the release day. The analytical report *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating*, provides a picture of Canada's volunteers, charitable donors and civic participators, and the ways in which they contribute to our society, either on their own or through their involvement with charitable and non-profit organizations. After the release, a summary of major findings was broadly distributed within the voluntary sector and made available on a website operated jointly by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and Volunteer Canada. Analysis of survey results is continuing in the government, voluntary and academic sectors.

Research products

- Statistics Canada's *Daily* release of the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating
<http://dissemination.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010817/d010817c.htm>
- Public Use Microdata file available to users
<http://dissemination.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/89M0017XCB.htm#compreg>
- Analytical Report: *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (Catalogue no. 71-542-XPE)*
<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/71-542-XIE/free.htm>

Note: These products are available on the Statistics Canada website at <http://www.statcan.ca>

Consultation

As part of the CSGVP development plans, a series of national consultation sessions were conducted from February to April 2002. The Canadian Centre for Philanthropy led sessions with representatives from the voluntary and academic sectors. Concurrently, Statistics Canada facilitated sessions involving other federal government departments and various levels of government across the country. The government sessions were organized jointly by the Questionnaire Design Resource Centre and Special Surveys Division at Statistics Canada. The consultations provided participants with background information that is currently available from the survey and solicited their input on future content, particularly any new or unique data requirements that might be met by the CSGVP.

Future deliverables

Statistics Canada has undertaken the following survey improvements:

- The redevelopment of the CSGVP as a fully autonomous survey rather than as a supplement to Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey;
- The extension of geographic coverage of the survey to include the territories;
- The expansion of the survey sample to permit better estimates for Census Metropolitan Areas and sub-populations, such as immigrants; and
- The longitudinal follow-up of respondents to each cycle of the survey on the occasion of the next triennial survey.

Following the consultations, and in conjunction with government and voluntary sector partners, survey content has been developed and qualitatively tested in preparation for a pilot test in the spring of 2003. Main data collection for both the CSGVP and the follow-up survey will take place in the fall of 2003. Plans are being developed to undertake data collection in the territories separately in 2004.

These deliverables and results will allow better, and evidence-based, policy and program decisions. By understanding the nature of giving and volunteering in Canada, voluntary organizations' capacity to engage volunteers and raise funds, for example, will be improved.

Dissemination, delivery mechanisms and knowledge transfer

The CSGVP will continue to collect data on a regular basis that will in turn help to inform key stakeholders and strengthen their knowledge capacity.

Committees

The CSGVP is managed through a steering committee with representation from the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and Volunteer Canada for the voluntary sector, as well as three federal departments, Human Resources Development Canada, Canadian Heritage and Health Canada. In addition, the Steering Committee established a working group subcommittee to liaise with the CSGVP project manager on specific project tasks or phases. The membership of the working group represented the voluntary sector and federal government partners at the steering committee level.

Meetings of the CSGVP Steering Committee

The CSGVP Steering Committee met 14 times during 2000-2001, and 9 times in 2002, including conference calls. All meetings were held in Ottawa, primarily hosted by Statistics Canada. Formal minutes of these meetings were not recorded.

Lessons Learned from the Joint Table Process

The 2000 NSGVP demonstrated that the survey program needed adjusting to deal with a number of issues, including:

- Survey size (a stand-alone platform required for future iterations);
- Inclusion of the northern territories in future cycles;
- Longitudinal component (to track flows into and out of volunteering, giving and participating);
- Expanded sample to improve the quality of the estimates for both cross-sectional and longitudinal objectives; and
- Ongoing funding for research and dissemination support for the voluntary sector.

Next Steps

The CSGVP will continue to collect data on a regular basis that will in turn help to inform key stakeholders and strengthen the knowledge capacity. Wide public availability of information from the CSGVP will promote research and meaningful policy debate on the role of the voluntary sector in Canadian life.

The steering committee will continue to provide direction to the CSGVP on an ongoing basis and will, as required, conduct periodic consultations on the survey's content and methods to ensure its continued relevance to all users.

Outstanding Issues and Recommendations

During the consultation sessions, a number of new information needs and research issues were identified. The wide diversity and in-depth nature of many of these issues were such that they could not be addressed by a single survey on individual contributory behaviour. For example, participants in the government consultation sessions suggested a number of new information needs: history of volunteering (for both current volunteers and those who once volunteered but no longer do so); patterns of volunteering across an individual's lifetime; challenges faced by volunteers; and cultural influences on volunteering, to name a few.

In addition, both voluntary sector and academic participants identified a need for information that would aid in recruiting and retaining volunteers and donors, as well as information that would contribute to a better understanding of the social phenomena of giving, volunteering and participating.

To address some of these wide-ranging data requirements, it may be necessary in future cycles to implement a modular design or move to an alternating long version and short version of the survey instrument. Periodic consultations will be held on survey content and methods to ensure its continued relevance to all users and to explore ways in which both government and voluntary sector information needs can be addressed.

In summary, the CSGVP encompasses many dimensions of individual contributory behaviour including volunteering, charitable giving and participation. Information needs of both public sector policy analysts and policy makers and voluntary sector decision-makers will continue to be met through future iterations of this survey.

Relevant Documents List

These publications and research products were funded through the Voluntary Sector Initiative.

- Statistics Canada's *Daily* release of the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating
<http://dissemination.statcan.ca/Daily/English/010817/d010817c.htm>
- Public Use Microdata file available to users
<http://dissemination.statcan.ca/english/IPS/Data/89M0017XCB.htm#compreg>
- Analytical Report: *Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating* (Catalogue no. 71-542-XPE)
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Note: These products are available on the Statistics Canada website: <http://www.statcan.ca>

Canada Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating

<http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca>