

# **What does it mean to be national?**

Team Integrative Project  
McGill-McConnell Masters Program

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## 1.0 Introduction

National voluntary organizations (NVOs) have many different roles in Canada, for example they can advocate, fundraise, do research, or provide direct service delivery. Of the more than 75,000 registered charitable organizations in Canada, some focus on the needs of communities and organizations internationally. This variety of roles has helped foster the development of a range of organizational structures including organizations with one or up to three levels, and/or the traditional top down management style or a more grassroots federated model. These various roles and structures support and, in some cases, may restrict the ability of a voluntary organization to deliver its mandate. The type of mission, mandate, scope of service, funding sources, membership, and other factors can help determine the optimal structure.

The context in which NVOs act has changed significantly. Changes in the roles of governments have had consequences for the nature of their relationships with the voluntary sector. New federal provincial agreements can affect NVOs. Devolution of responsibility for service delivery to a provincial or municipal level, and the economic integration of globalization are further contextual factors impacting on national organizations. One of these impacts is the heightening of expectations about the sector's capacity to assume expanding roles.

This research project identifies and describes how various roles and structural practices allow organizations to work toward their maximum potential. While the report does not make specific recommendations on the best national role and/or structure, it does offer a process by which organizational leaders can explore their own role/structural issues and tensions within their organizations. Strengths and challenges have been identified within seven organizations in order to develop a sense of the climate and environment found in national organizations today. The final product of this research includes tools to help guide organizational discussion on national roles and structures towards positive future outcomes.

The importance of this project is illustrated by the paucity of other work in this area in Canada.<sup>1</sup> Leaders of national voluntary organizations require assistance in making strategic decisions regarding responses to the changing internal and external environments. The choice of responses for leaders can be only in those areas within their control – namely the roles their organization assumes and the structures that support achieving their mission.

National voluntary organizations in Canada range from traditional hierarchical, top down structures to grassroots federations; from organizations solely with a Canadian mandate to those with extensive international connections. Each model of organizational structure, with its inherent strengths and challenges, provides a window towards a fuller understanding of what works well and what requires modification. There is much to be learned from an appreciative inquiry into any organization.

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 5. Literature Review. Corinna Cook

Research has been conducted on seven organizations in a search for answers through questions that define the fabric of national organizations. Various themes have emerged to paint a picture of the critical elements in national organizations. These include an ability to reflect diversity, the use of traditional methods of communication and support mechanisms such as conventions and national meetings. Yet, no work that analyzes the strengths and weakness of different processes, types of roles and structures has been found. Given the increasingly complex environment in which organizations function, their leaders could benefit from tools to assist them in undertaking positively framed evaluations of their organizations' roles and structures in moving forward in the twenty-first century.

## 2.0 Approach and Methodology

We began our inquiry with the proposition: *At their best, national organizations mobilize people to accomplish a shared mission in Canada and beyond.*

The TIP (Team Integrative Project) group developed a series of questions in search of qualitative and provocative responses to “national” aspects of an organization’s role and structure. We agreed that a combination of Appreciative Inquiry and Wicked Questions could generate life-giving, meaningful stories as well as surface paradoxes and tensions about “being national”.

Wicked Questions is an approach to complexity that assumes no obvious answers are available when conducting an inquiry. It helps articulate embedded and contradictory assumptions. Wicked Questions gain information from respondents that more fully reflect their view of the subject matter.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an asset-based approach to planning and action. Its goal is to seek the root causes of success, not the root causes of failure. It stems from a biologic principle called the “heliotropic effect.” This refers to a plant’s natural tendency to turn towards the light. In social systems, it refers to the natural tendency that people and organizations have towards those things that give them energy and joy.

AI is a guided process of inquiry that contains four stages: *discovery* of what works and empowers people; *dreaming* to create a community vision; *design* of an action plan that will be the responsibility of the participants; *delivery*, i.e., taking action together.

Initially three Wicked Questions, each with a sub-set of appreciative questions, were drawn up. Each of the seven members of the TIP group agreed to test the questions on one member of their organization. The information received was then reviewed by the group and a fourth question added. Each member of the TIP group then asked four to six members of their organization (Board members and staff) to respond to the questions by email. E-mail was used as it provided a uniform way of collecting data from respondents

located in different geographical regions. In addition, one organization conducted interviews and focus groups as a means of comparing the results with e-mail responses.

The questions used were as follows:

1. **What does it mean to be national?** Describe when you experienced the national character of your organization. Where were you? Who else was part of the experience? What happened? What made the situation national? What was the longer-term impact?
2. **Is your organization organized to deliver its national mandate?** Describe a time or situation where you delivered your national mandate to the fullest. Who was involved? What happened? Where did it take place? What was the content of the delivery? What were the outcomes? What was it about your structure that enabled the national mandate to be delivered?
3. **How are you linked to the rest of the world?** Describe a time or situation when your organization benefited from organizational links with those outside Canada. How were the benefits realized/achieved? What was the impact on the national mandate of your organization?
4. **Thinking of the future of your organization, what would you like to see more of or less of to accomplish the organizational mission?**

Our objectives in conducting the interviews with our own seven organizations were twofold. First, we wished to determine whether the questions we devised would indeed surface a variety of themes about roles and structures in national organizations. Second, we also wanted to see whether similar themes would emerge across organizations with different roles and structures.

All seven organizations have different structural models, providing a broad sample. In addition, we needed to conduct a more limited field test of our process of inquiry before determining whether we should broaden the sample, keeping in mind that we were seeking qualitative data.

Combined, AI and Wicked Questions were able to provide the group with a rich collection of stories and anecdotes as well as paradoxes and tensions surrounding the integration of organizational mission and how it is played out in particular places and times.

The findings set out in this Report were generated using the qualitative analysis software NU\*DIST.

One of the participating organizations undertook a workshop approach to deepen the reach of this methodology into the layers of the organization. That work is expected to

enrich our understanding of the usefulness of the approach as an initiator of organizational change.

Throughout this report we have allowed the members of NVOs to speak for themselves.

### **3.0 Key Findings and Themes**

Analysis of the research data revealed several key themes relevant to the seven organizations -- Roles, Structures, Culture, and Context. Key findings suggest directions for further investigation by any organization that may choose to examine its effectiveness in promoting intra-organizational commitment to its mission.

#### **Organizational Findings**

1. Roles and structures directly influence how NVOs achieve their missions. Roles centre on service and program delivery, internal development responsibilities and advocacy. Structures include theoretical frameworks, operational structures, decision-making processes, leadership, and processes of affiliation among members and networks that promote the achievement of mission or fulfillment of mandate.
2. Culture (attitudes, values, and atmosphere within the NVO) and context (local, national, international NVO environment and relationships) are equally important in considering the efficiency and effectiveness of fulfillment of mandate.
3. The national levels of NVOs have important roles to play in helping volunteers (including board members) and staff throughout the organization to feel a part of the organization as a whole. This is achieved through national meetings, programs, mobilization projects, and the effective use of technology for dialogue and information dissemination.
4. Visibility and recognition of contributions provided by the national organization and sub-units are issues that create tensions.
5. Technology is seen as an important resource for improving linkage within NVOs, although this capacity is generally underutilized and is likely to be understood as an important contribution to strengthening the NVO's capacity.
6. NVOs are diverse and complex organizations, yet commonalities are evident across the seven organizations selected for analysis. It is expected that these commonalities also may apply across the voluntary sector:
  - The national mandate reflects a social cause of national scope
  - Membership is representative of all parts of the country

- Structures may mirror levels of government and this may lead to organizational complexities
- The national level is responsible for clearly articulating the mission/mandate
- National voluntary organizations can create affiliation opportunities, a sense of belonging and understanding through national conferences and projects
- A national issues /advocacy focus is desirable
- National voluntary organizations support their mission through opportunities for face to face contact among members across the country and by fostering organizational networking
- National voluntary organizations are proactive in the use of technology to link their membership and support information transfer
- National voluntary organizations encourage linkages with NVO's outside of Canada
- While national voluntary organizations have a coordinating and mobilizing role they are also challenged to foster the right amount of local autonomy with respect to service delivery
- Profile and awareness of national activities foster commitment throughout the organization.

### **Validity of Approach**

In our work we were interested not only to learn about the processes and impact of national roles, structures and relationships, but to test the use of two methodologies introduced during the McGill-McConnell Masters Program. We concluded the following:

1. The combination of Wicked Questions and Appreciative Inquiry can be a useful tool to take the pulse and probe the unique aspects and tensions within NVOs.
2. Survey participants recognized the value of this methodological approach in researching their organizations to better understand what they are and how they work.
3. E-mail surveys are of value, but richer data is generated through semi-structured interviews.

4. The wording of the questions was less applicable to transnational or international NGOs, but adaptations to the questions could provide similar results in analyzing these organizations.

## **4.0 Implications for Organizations in the Voluntary Sector**

The seven organizations within this study have several characteristics in common – they are charitable entities, rely on volunteers for matters of governance and in some cases for program or service delivery. They differ significantly in purpose or mission, in structure and organization, and in the relationships between the national organization and its members. Most of the organizations are well established, while one is a relatively new grassroots initiative. Two organizations have international operations and relations, but with differences in mandate, governance and size.

### **4.1 Roles**

The role of a national organization is not a simple one, nor is it one that has a common description within each organization. In general, the roles of NVOs can be understood as both service or program delivery and internal development. In service delivery organizations respondents generally regard service delivery as a local responsibility, while promoting public awareness is best done from national level. Advocacy is carried out at the level where decisions are made. The structure of NVOs often mirrors that of the governments to whom their mandates relate.

One of the most striking findings of this study is that “national” is less a structural matter and more a sense of belonging or affiliation; it is what generates the connection between people and issues across the country. This sense of affiliation requires a common purpose while allowing for an expression of a diversity of viewpoints. Regardless of the internal structure of an organization, this sense of affiliation is most sharply experienced when people physically come together. Respondents noted that meetings, conferences, and other national events provide the occasions when affiliation is most strongly felt. International NGOs are more likely to give expression to their affiliation with the national organization when they witness coordinated response to international disasters. The sense of affiliation to an organization and national mission was enhanced in all organizations that conducted public education campaigns across the country through the use of a single advertising strategy or the mounting of concurrent activities in different regions.

It is important to note that the term “national” can create other issues for some members or participants from Quebec. “National” is too easily linked with federal-provincial relations or with hierarchy – national to local. One organization prefers the notion of pan-Canadian, a concept of “sea to sea to sea”, in describing its Canada-wide operations. (We can anticipate that First Peoples’ understanding of national will also differ from that of the majority of respondents in this survey.)

*..Canadians have a responsibility to the rest of the world to provide leadership - a responsibility that comes with our non-threatening reputation and global status and the abundance of our natural resources.*

*..we delivered on a very important issue and continue to advocate for better services for consumers across the country.*

*There was the enduring impression of the other presenters, especially the woman speaking as a First Nations person, and the wish that, as soon as I had said what I had chosen to say, I could start over again with the benefit of afterthoughts.*

*I found myself carrying the influences and effects of the occasion back to my home context, seeking more of the same perspective...The longer term impact was, ironically that this face-to-face contact and networking led to more national and inter-provincial understanding, assistance and support than our current "information rich and information easy" situation.*

*It feels great to be part of something bigger—appreciation in the regions for overarching organizational mission to respond to global poverty.*

*Organizationally, we need to be more fully bilingual to be truly national.*

## 4.2 Structures

The structure of an organization includes its role and processes of work. Structures include theoretical frameworks, operational structures, decision-making and leadership, and affiliation through membership and networks. What sets the voluntary sector apart from the private or public sectors is its focus on mission or mandate driven by a cause or purpose that is shared by its membership. It is crucial that all members of an organization be aware of the NVO's mission and that they are provided with opportunities for regular review or revision of the mission.

The nature of membership in national organizations gives rise to different expressions of internal tension. Those national organizations made up of provincial and autonomous organizations are more likely to experience conflicts about the allocation of resources and power. The local organizations seek support for their community work while the national organization seeks local support for national scale programs. A concern emerging from this study was that in some NVOs the activities of the national organization are not well known and rarely reviewed by the vast majority of the membership.

Of growing importance are the networks developing inside NVOs and through relationships with other organizations. Representative governing structures enhance relationships among the regional membership of an NVO. Although advocating for

"bottom-up" decision-making, most regional or local level respondents acknowledged the need for some centralization of administration and for national level leadership.

*What is required is a commitment from a "renewed" and "enlarged" networks of interests not dominated by one ideology and one instrumentality with their one inevitability and their one individual right answer which we know before hand.*

*Our structure allowed me to feel quite comfortable in expressing the views I did (to the media) because we share a common mission, vision and values.*

*The representation on the board of individuals from different walks of life certainly supports the philosophy of a national program.*

*It has involved bringing ideas, experiences and proposed changes from several sites. Each site/branch provided leadership...*

*layers of governance were eliminated and ..improved relationships and communication (occurred).*

*It feels often that our provincial offices are leading our national office...*

*Let us think of all stakeholders who have an interest in the future of education. Build Bridges.*

*...less control of information and decision-making - along with greater responsibility for everyone.*

### 4.3 Culture

Culture includes attitudes, values and atmosphere within the organization. The NVO has a significant role in promoting a healthy and optimistic climate within the organization through both explicit and implicit means. Organizations seeking to increase the sense of "national" -- an atmosphere of commitment, cohesion and progress -- would do well to consider the format of events and meetings to ensure that learning results from social interaction requiring respectful and thoughtful conversation.

*...a forum for the expression of common interest....not having preconceived and predetermined outcomes of meetings but a desire to engage..*

*Personal ambassadorship simply can't be replaced by any amount of print, electronic media or visual communications*

*The discussions centred on our common issues and areas of interest.*

*The national conferences over the last few years have been critically important to the reinvigoration of the national nature of our movement.*

*There was a spirit of welcome for his thoughts among those present which combined in a collage of other events and statements, all of which combined to "draw me in" to the "national sense of the conversation....*

*The core values are a unifying factor, as well as the particular way in which (the organization) does its work...These change over time of course, but they change within the organizational culture.*

*I often think of Mary and her infectious smile when my commitment begins to wane.*

#### 4.4 Resources

Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) are identified as a vehicle for dialogue, information dissemination, and information acquisition. However, the use of technology by NVOs has not reached a level commensurate with the capabilities achieved in the private sector. Many respondents identified the desire for more resources – time, people and money – when asked "What would you like more of. Invariably the "more" was related to a desire to more adequately meet organizational missions. In our study some reported concern about the overworking of staff, out dated equipment and inadequate technology.

*These opportunities should not and cannot be confined to the traditional conference or symposia media., though such occasions are important to maintain where possible and appropriate. But this age brings the fortunate prospect of a variety of media for such contact.*

*There is so much that we'd like to do – to have every Canadian know about our work. We need to raise our profile to raise more funds to do more.*

*In future, I would like to see a more concentrated effort and resources into research.*

*More resources: financial, human and technical in order to increase scale and to be able to serve large and small communities throughout the country.*

*Rather than more or less, I would rather like to see us increasing the depth of what we provide.*

*More high quality training available on a national basis – especially in organizational management and organizational change.*

## 4.5 Context

When considering the roles and relationships of NVOs, it is important to recognize that the national and local contexts are likely to be different. These differences may influence the capacity of the local organization to implement national strategies or programs. NVOs with an international mandate or that operate as a part of an umbrella international organization, are influenced by international as well as national and local contexts.

*...made our "national scope transcend a simple intellectual recognition of others, to one of complete awareness and a feeling of belonging to a greater entity.*

*Build loosely coupled links with other national and international organizations.*

*My conversations with other people have led me to conclude that people are far more supportive of spending funds for foreign aid than they are about dealing with issues in Canada, where they feel the government already spends plenty.*

*Like, I think we could come up with some really good stuff out of this project. This sort of thing really rejuvenates an organization when you do something like this and you really look at what it's all about, how people participate in it.*

## 5.0 Conclusions

Our analysis of themes suggests that while structures and roles within national voluntary organizations enable the mission, it is relationships within NVO's that really matter. How NVO's communicate a sense of mission among their organizational units and how they connect people on national issues through the use of technology and face-to-face meetings are key issues that need to be discussed within NVO's. Finding the right balance between local autonomy and collaborative, coordinated effort is also critical.

The tools for data gathering and the results of our analysis of the qualitative data generated by our questions, have resulted in two tools to foster discussion of these and other issues within national voluntary organizations. Appendices 3 and 4)

The checklist of the Characteristics of National Voluntary Organizations can be used to start discussions on what it means to be national. The survey questions can also be used in a variety of formats – email, focus groups, interviews or workshops -- to foster conversation at the national and other levels. The key learning for us is that asking the right questions within our organizations and listening to the dialogue that emerges within NVO's is an important first step toward reframing NVO roles and structures in the new millennium.

And it is a timely step. Within the organizations studied, "national" is most keenly felt as a sense of belonging or affiliation. That happens more often when people come together in settings that allow for conversation. We can no longer rely on unidirectional communications from the national office to its regional affiliates. We need to cultivate shared understandings. Kenneth Gergen offers a description of the current context which helps explain the need for opportunities for members of national organizations to talk with each other. He writes,

The post-modern condition more generally is marked by a plurality of voices vying for the right to reality – to be accepted as legitimate expressions of the true and the good. As the voices expand in power and presence, all that seemed proper, right-minded, and well understood is subverted. In the post-modern world we become increasingly aware that objects about which we speak are not so much “in the world” as they are products of perspective.

And,

In this era the self is defined as no longer an essence in itself, but relational. In the post-modern world, selves may become the manifestations of relationship, thus placing relationships in the central position occupied by the individual self for the last several hundred years of Western history.<sup>2</sup>

And,

Life in organizations is dynamic. Everywhere within the organization -from the mail room to the board room- participants are continuously generating their local sense of the real and the good or bad.<sup>3</sup>

Meaning-making in national voluntary organizations usually takes place through representative structures. Although governance structures and decision-making processes are necessary, relatively small numbers of people are able to participate in them. Most of the respondents in our study do participate in these governance activities but they were unlikely to identify them as examples of occasions when they felt a national affiliation. This occurs more frequently through conferences and workshops.

We recommend that national organizations think about processes for governance that allow greater participation in the important conversations about the mission and context of the national organization. And further, that thought be given to newer forms of conversation such as used in Appreciative Inquiry and Future Search. Some of these approaches could replace at least in part our expert-led, information giving workshops and conferences. Not only would we generate a stronger sense of affiliation with the national organization, we would also find richer responses to the societal issues and organizational issues with which, as national voluntary organizations, we struggle.

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<sup>2</sup> Gergen, Kenneth The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life. Basic Books. New York 1991

<sup>3</sup> Gergen, Kenneth Invitation to Social Connection. Sage Publications. 1999. 176

Barrie Evans, a participant in an on-line forum on complexity moderated by Professor Brenda Zimmerman wrote:

I would like to offer some brief thoughts on "community" from an anthropologist whom I know and respect greatly, Dr Joseph Schaffer. ...He talks about moving from "Dominant Societies" to "Partnership Societies". Partnership Societies require an expression of certain "qualities of character": genuine interest in self/others exemplified by a sense of curiosity and respect rather than judgement; acknowledgement and appreciation (e.g. Cooperrider's Appreciative Inquiry), empathy, altruism and mutual trust. How we communicate with each other, how we make meanings together, is central to the creation of a partnership society. I can already see evidence of these qualities in the communications which I have already been privileged to receive and I would like to be a part of an organization that allows these qualities to emerge in spades.<sup>4</sup>

We too, the TIP Group on National Roles and Structures, would like to be part of such an organization. From our small study we suspect that such yearnings may run deep within those who volunteer and work in national voluntary organizations. The challenge to the leaders is to move our organizations closer to this ideal.

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<sup>4</sup> Provided by Brenda Zimmerman. Personal communication to Steve Lurie. February 2001

## Appendix 1

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Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector. (1999). **Building on strength: Improving in governance and accountability on Canada's voluntary sector**. [online] Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

Weisbord, Marvin and Sandra Janoff, **Future Search**, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2000, 45-47, 197-198. Describes “whole system in the room”, a participatory approach to organizational change. Can be adapted to organizational discussions about roles and structures.

## Appendix 2

### What Does It Mean To Be National ?

#### A Checklist of National Characteristics of NVOs

- The national mandate reflects a social cause of national scope
- Membership is representative of all parts of the country
- Structures may mirror levels of government and this leads to organizational complexities
- The national level is responsible for clearly articulating the mission/mandate
- National voluntary organizations can create affiliation opportunities, a sense of belonging and understanding through national conferences and projects
- A national issues /advocacy focus is desirable
- National voluntary organizations support their mission through opportunities for face to face contact among members across the country and by fostering organizational networking
- National voluntary organizations are proactive in the use of technology to link their membership and support information transfer
- National voluntary organizations encourage linkages with NVO's outside of Canada
- While national voluntary organizations have a coordinating and mobilizing role they are also challenged to foster the right amount of local autonomy with respect to service delivery
- Profile and awareness of national activities foster commitment throughout the organization

## Appendix 3

### What Does It Mean To Be National? A Question Worth Asking

The tool is a set of **four questions** that can be used in a variety of formats: paper or email survey, interviews, or focus groups. The questions are effective in surfacing issues about NVO involvement or activities. The issues are then canvassed using appreciative inquiry, which helps people focus on positive aspects of their experience rather than negatives. This gives rise to possibilities for change.

#### THE QUESTIONS

##### What does it mean to be national?

1. Describe when you experienced the “national” character of your organization. Where were you; who else was part of the experience; what happened; what made the situation “national”; what was the longer-term impact?
2. Are we organized to deliver our national mandate? Describe a time or situation when you delivered your national mandate in its fullest sense. Who was involved; where; what was the content of the delivery, what were the outcomes? What was it about your structure that enabled the national mandate to be delivered?
3. How are we linked to the rest of the world? Describe a time or situation when your organization benefited from organizational links with those outside Canada. How were the benefits realized/achieved? What was the impact on the national mandate of your organization?
4. Thinking about the future, what would you like to see more or less of to accomplish our organizational mission?

#### COLLECTING DATA

These questions are discussion starters and will generate rich qualitative data. Several methods of data collection are effective. Choose the one best suited to your organization.

**Paper or email surveys** can be mailed out or posted on a web site, or emailed to individuals. Input is sometimes less rich, but well considered.

**Interviews:** the questions can be used as semi structured interviews, with the interviewer adding probes as needed. This approach, while time consuming, produces very rich perspectives.

**Focus groups:** All questions can be used in focus groups. Brainstorming will help generate ideas. The group facilitator may wish to help the group identify key themes for each question. While not essential, it allows for deeper probing of experience.

### **CUSTOMISING THE QUESTIONS**

Appropriate modifications for specific organizational contexts provoke richer feed back.

- 1. What does it mean to be part of CMHA New Brunswick?  
Describe when you felt you were really connected to Division?  
What does it mean to be part of the Kidney Foundation in Calgary?  
Describe when you experienced our regional character/ felt you were really connected to our region.*
- 2. Are we organized to deliver our branch/ division/ national mandate etc. depending on what areas of organizational structure you want people to comment on.*
- 3. How is your organization connected to the rest of your province, the rest of Canada?*

### **INTERPRETATION**

Keep in mind that the search is for ideas for strengthening roles and relationships.

Keep in mind that participants speak from experience. What matters to them should matter to their leaders.

Keep an open mind. We must hear what people say. Watch for ideas. Take notice of what is important to the interviewees.

And remember, since participants have experienced the value of national engagement, they will be eager to have more of it!

For further information or assistance please contact:

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## Appendix 4

### Organizations Studied

<b>Organization:</b>	<b>Big Brothers and Sisters of Canada</b>
<b>National Office</b>	Burlington, Ontario
<b>Year established:</b>	Movement begun in 1913. National office established in 1966
<b>Mission/purpose:</b>	To provide mentoring relationships to children and youth across Canada.
<b>Structure:</b>	<b>Two tiered, national and local.</b> A federation of members, federally incorporated charity. 15 Board members. Membership comprised of local chapters and individual directors.

<b>Organization:</b>	<b>Canadian Education Association</b>
<b>Central office location:</b>	Toronto, Ontario
<b>Year established:</b>	1891
<b>Mission/purpose:</b>	The Canadian Education Association advances public commitment to education by engaging diverse perspectives in finding common ground on the issues that affect the learning of all children and youth in our society.
<b>Structure:</b>	<b>Single corporation:</b> national, open, cross-sectoral membership. Federally incorporated charity. 35 member representative Board of Directors.

<b>Organization:</b>	<b>Canadian Mental Health Association</b>
<b>National office</b>	Toronto, Ontario
<b>Year established:</b>	1918
<b>Mission/purpose:</b>	To promote the mental health of all people.
<b>Structure:</b>	<b>Tri-level: a national office, 12 divisions (provinces &amp; territories) and over 100 branches.</b> The national office delegates operational authority and charters divisions which, in turn, delegate authority to branches or regional levels.

<b>Organization:</b>	<b>Canadian Youth Business Foundation</b>
<b>Central office location:</b>	Head office, Toronto. Branch offices: West- Calgary, East –Halifax, Central – Toronto.
<b>Year established:</b>	1996
<b>Mission/purpose:</b>	To assist young people to chose entrepreneurship as a career option through micro-credit financing, mentoring and electronic networking and resource provision.
<b>Structure:</b>	<b>National initiative supporting grassroots, community based partnerships.</b> Federal charitable incorporation. 12 member national board of directors.

<b>Organization:</b>	<b>The Kidney Foundation of Canada</b>
<b>National Office</b>	Montreal
<b>Year established:</b>	1964
<b>Mission/purpose:</b>	The Kidney Foundation of Canada is a national volunteer driven organization dedicated to improving the health and quality of life of people living with kidney disease.
<b>Structure:</b>	<b>Tri-level: national, provincial branches, local chapters.</b> Each branch has its own board. Federally incorporated.

<b>Organization:</b>	<b>S. O. S. Children’s Villages</b>
<b>National Office</b>	Ottawa
<b>Year established:</b>	1969
<b>Mission/purpose:</b>	To provide care for children who are orphaned, abandoned, or whose parents cannot care for them in a family setting on a long-term basis.
<b>Structure:</b>	<b>Multi-level international.</b> The national office is a member of the international alliance. Local offices are affiliated to the national office by agreement.

<b>Organization</b>	<b>World Vision of Canada</b>
<b>National Office</b>	Mississauga, Ontario
<b>Year established:</b>	1950
<b>Mission/purpose:</b>	World Vision is a Christian, humanitarian, relief and development organization founded in 1950. WV is active in some 95 countries helping children, families and communities to overcome poverty and injustice.
<b>Structure:</b>	An <b>autonomous national office</b> and a member of the World Vision International Partnership. Five regional offices report to the national office.

## Appendix 5

### **Understanding Characteristics of National Voluntary Organizations** Corinna D. Cook, University of Toronto

#### *Literature Review*

Voluntary organizations are difficult to define and difficult to research due to their complex structures and the immense variation between them. Organizations labeled as voluntary include charities, religious organizations, grass roots organizations, community development organizations, and advocacy groups. Despite a long history as an integral part of society, the voluntary sector is much less researched than the corporate sector.

A literature search of organizational and voluntary sector research reveals few, if any, qualitative studies on NVOs. At present there appears to be a significant lack of clarity in the typology of these organizations. For example, some large national and international organizations have taken on characteristics of corporations including hierarchies, fixed policies, large scale financing, and board control. Others remain grass-roots organizations where decision-making occurs from the bottom up. Despite this diversity, they share many commonalities that are important to explore .

There are a select number of studies that analyze particular roles and structures of NVOs. In 1996, Young and Bania surveyed various types of NVO umbrella structures within the sector to find out how they work and to assess their potential for performing the role of self-regulation. Their significant sample of 183 responses from 829 associations revealed three typologies of organizations according to their roles: trade associations, federal associations and corporate associations. Young's interest in the evolving top-down structure of national organizations and the increasing centralization of organizations within the voluntary sector dates back to 1989 when he hypothesized that, NVOs were becoming more homogeneous and franchise-like. This research of NVOs using a randomized sample was the first of its kind and paved the way for the later study in 1996. However, not all NVOs are centralized like the sample's in Young's studies and it is important to include an even greater array of organization types in research.

In 1993, Hunter added some qualitative research to the literature on the role of NVOs in linking micro and macro levels of society. To support his proposal that national voluntary federations (NVF's) were the link between these two sectors and vital to their co-existence in a civil society, he used qualitative methodology including interviews, observation, archival reports, budget reports and newsletters. Hunter used NVF's as research vehicles to explore micro and macro levels of society. He concludes that indeed NVOs are multi-dimensional organizations that play a crucial role in maintaining a civil society. However, neither his study nor those of Young (1989), and Young and Bania (1996), address the need for tool development in this area in order to continue to evaluate NVOs. The only study that refers both to tool development and NVOs was done in Herman and Heimovics (1994) using a quantitative factorial method for cross-national comparison of voluntary sectors, not of individual NVOs.

Two other salient studies include reviews of voluntary sector literature. Both Smith (1994) and James (1997) outline some of the understudied aspects of the voluntary sector. They conclude that there are some basic aspects of the sector that require exploration.

Smith pleads for more research on leadership structures in large organizations and James states that research is necessary to distinguish large voluntary organizations from governments and corporations. Both reviewers conclude that studies on international organizations are also insufficient

Even more recently within Canada, a number of initiatives have been put into place to deal with issues facing this sector. In 1999 the Panel on Accountability and Governance in the Voluntary Sector, composed of businesses, voluntary organizations, and government representatives, gathered to the their respective responsibilities to the voluntary sector. From the Roundtable discussion summed up in the executive summary, it is evident there needs to be increased emphasis on the sector's accountability, capacity building, and relationship with its funders, including the government, and the corporate sector. The report concludes that NVOs must take responsibility to improve their transparency and accountability to other sectors, which entails the development of an evaluation tool to enable self-accreditation and self-regulation within the sector. The findings of the Roundtable were important and the discussion was valuable. However, discussion is in vain if action does not result.

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