Strengthening Volunteer Engagement

A Reference Guide to Strengthen the Volunteer Engagement Strategy

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Strengthening Volunteer Engagement: A Reference Guide to Strengthen the Volunteer Engagement Strategy

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About this Resource
This reference guide was developed pursuant to the *Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario Volunteer Engagement Survey: Provincial Report*, published in March 2023. Its intended purpose is for centres to strengthen their volunteer engagement practices by applying a strategic volunteer engagement lens and adapting to changing trends in volunteerism.

Disclaimer
This reference guide does not offer legal advice. Readers should consult with a lawyer regarding their specific legal questions or concerns.

Readers must be aware that trends in volunteerism, legislation, social policy, and the specific procedures and practices of organizations, including police and insurance agencies, are continually changing.

Individuals and organizations should seek legal counsel or consult human resource experts and their insurance provider in planning their specific volunteer screening policies and procedures.

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About the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario

Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO) is a non-profit provincial organization, and registered charity, that represents 230+ not-for-profit, charity and municipally operated older adult centres, seniors' clubs/seniors' councils and associate members across Ontario. We continue to share a strong commitment to ongoing liaison and advocacy with the Government of Ontario and other provincial associations in matters which affect older adult centres, Seniors Active Living Centres (SALCs) and older adults.

Mission Statement: The Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OACAO) is a trusted partner and recognized leader in the development of quality and relevant resources, services, and support for community-based older adult centres.

Vision: A province where older adults age successfully, are connected to their community and remain active and engaged.

Contact: Older Adult Centres' Association
of Ontario
P.O. Box 65
Caledon East, ON L7C 3L8

www.oacao.org

Land Acknowledgment

We recognize that the work of the OACAO and our members takes place on traditional territories of many Indigenous peoples who have lived here and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the importance of the lands, and we do this to reaffirm our commitment and responsibility to enhancing relationships between nations and to improving our understanding of local indigenous peoples and their cultures.

We honour and respect Indigenous heritage and the long-lasting history of the land and strive to protect the land, water, plants and animals that have inhabited this land for centuries, and for the generations to come.

We acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of all the Inuit, Mètis, and First Nations people. We are grateful to have the opportunity to work and live on this land, and by doing so, we give our respect to its first inhabitants.

About Volunteer Canada

Volunteer Canada is a registered charity and since 1977, Volunteer Canada has acted as the national voice and leadership body for volunteerism. We are the sector's backbone organization providing leadership, expertise, standards of practice and resources for the public, private, and charitable sectors. With organizational members from across Canada, Volunteer Canada works with a diversity of corporate, charity, nonprofit, and education partners nationwide to strengthen the quality, quantity, and accessibility of volunteering.

Mission Statement: We advance volunteerism to grow connection, community, and belonging.

Vision: The value of one, the power of many.

Contact: Volunteer Canada
150 Isabella Street, Suite 609,
Ottawa, ON K1S 5H3

www.volunteer.ca

Territory Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the ceded and unceded traditional territories of First Nations People and express gratitude for being able to live, work, and volunteer as uninvited guests on Turtle Island.

Volunteer Canada recognizes that First Nations, Inuit, and Metis leaders, neighbours, and fellow volunteers have faced centuries of colonization and harm to their culture, safety, and economy.

We are committed to decolonizing volunteerism at Volunteer Canada, and we are working with others on this long path of truth, reconciliation, and decolonization.

1. Introduction

This reference guide was developed pursuant to the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario Volunteer Engagement Survey: Provincial Report, published in March 2023. The intended purpose of this resource is for centres to strengthen their volunteer engagement practices by applying a strategic volunteer engagement lens and adapting to changing trends in volunteerism.

The knowledge and insights found in this reference guide can be used to start conversations to bring volunteer engagement to the strategic table and/or strengthen your existing strategy.

Here is a brief introduction to the sections that follow.

National Volunteer Action Strategy

In response to the changing tides of volunteerism in Canada, and as a matter of fact, across the globe, Volunteer Canada embarked on spearheading a National Volunteer Action Strategy. As part of the effort, with generous support from the Lawson Foundation and Canada Life, we led an exploration of the feasibility and interest in a National Volunteer Action Strategy. This section highlights the trends in volunteerism and other factors that led to the need for a National Volunteer Action Strategy.

Standards for Volunteer Involvement

This section lists three resources introduced by Volunteer Canada to build a strong foundation for volunteer involvement across Canada. It highlights the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement, the Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteer Involvement, and The Screening Handbook.

Strategic Volunteer Engagement

Volunteer engagement is a critical operational function of a not-for-profit. An operational function needs an organizational strategy, supported by the governance and leadership teams and well-integrated with the service delivery and administration teams. It must be aligned with strategic priorities and sufficiently resourced for successful execution. This entire resource focuses on this aspect of strategic volunteer engagement, and this section provides considerations during the execution of the volunteer engagement function.

Data-driven Engagement

Senior management and the governance teams have long made decisions based on quantitative and qualitative data. Today, that approach is spreading vertically and horizontally in the social purpose sector to better adapt and pivot with rapidly changing tides. This section explores the significance of data-informed and evidence-based decision-making in volunteer engagement.

2. National Volunteer Action Strategy

In 1967, Canada launched a national volunteer strategy to coincide with the country's centennial celebration. The strategy aimed at fostering a spirit of unity, pride, and community involvement and encouraged everyone to contribute their time and skills to local events, community improvement, educational programs, and charitable initiatives. Thanks – in large part – to the lasting legacy of the 1967 national strategy, volunteering was tightly woven into the fabric of everyday community life.

However, we're seeing signs that volunteerism in Canada is on the decline.

Trends in Volunteerism

The 2018 General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering, and Participating (GSS-GVP) reported that over 24 million people in Canada volunteered for a pro-social activity, that is 8 in 10 people. It also showed that;

- 41% volunteered for a not-for-profit organization or group (formal volunteering). This is a drop from the 2013 survey, which was 44%
- 74% volunteered with activities and initiatives that are not organized by an organization or group (informal volunteering). This is a drop from the 2013 survey, which was 82%

To go a little deeper into data by age group, the 2018 GSS-GVP found that from those who volunteered for an organization;

- Youth aged 15-24 were the largest group with 52% who contributed 86 hours per year per person
- Seniors aged 75 years and older were the smallest group (31%) but with the

largest portion of hours per person (226 hours)

The decline in numbers was already in motion, and the COVID-19 pandemic only fast-tracked the crisis.

The Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario Volunteer Engagement Survey: Provincial Report, published in March 2023, reports that in 2020, there were 16,773 volunteers contributing 1,143,537 hours, and in 2022, that number drastically reduced to 8,420 volunteers contributing 482,617 hours.

Various local and provincial reports published between 2020 and 2023, such as the Canadian Survey on Business Conditions by Statistics Canada, the Giving Report by CanadaHelps, the State of The Sector report by Ontario Nonprofit Network – and many more – may report different statistics based on its survey population size and audience. However, the themes are consistently similar as follows;

- There is an increase in demand for services from not-for-profit organizations
- The revenue of not-for-profit organizations has not changed, or it has decreased, but the cost to deliver essential programs and services keeps increasing
- There are staff retention challenges faced by not-for-profit organizations
- There are volunteer shortages at organizations and a struggle to retain volunteers
- Volunteers seek remote, virtual, episodic (one-time), and micro (short-time commitment) types of engagement
- Calls to action to increase equity and inclusion by breaking down barriers to

provide diverse, equitable and inclusive volunteering experiences

The social purpose sector is in a crisis.

A National Effort

These challenges – and more – are the outlines of a crisis that has come into view. But we don't fully know why volunteers aren't coming in, or staying home, or what will make them come back or join for the first time. We're missing the data, and where we have data, it's patchy and limited.

For instance, a lack of consistent flow of volunteers will not always mean that there are no volunteers. It could mean that volunteers are looking for different ways of participating, such as virtual, remote, episodic, and micro-volunteering and that organizations may not yet be ready to re-design the volunteer roles. Or the fact that volunteers' lifestyles are changing, such as people seeking hobbies and recreation that keep them occupied and socially active. Inflation too has a direct impact by changing the economic circumstances, sometimes increasing the cost of volunteering.

Furthermore, the difficulty recruiting new volunteers could be that organizations may not be reaching the right audience with their volunteer recruitment effort. Not going to the right place to look for volunteers.

Canada has changed significantly since the 1967 national volunteering strategy. To keep Canadians engaged and participating in ways that benefit themselves and their communities, we need to know more about the current state of the volunteer sector to restore it.

In 2019, as part of a broader effort to modernize the charitable sector, a Special Senate Committee on Canada's Charitable Sector recommended that the Canadian government

"implement a national volunteer strategy to encourage volunteerism by all Canadians in their communities". The committee made the recommendation in recognition that "the needs of northern, rural and urban communities are unique." It recommended that Volunteer Canada lead this work.

In response to the changing tides of volunteerism, Volunteer Canada rose to the challenge and is spearheading a National Volunteer Action Strategy. As part of the effort, with generous support from the Lawson Foundation and Canada Life, in 2023, Volunteer Canada led an exploration of the feasibility and interest in a National Volunteer Action Strategy.

Your contribution makes you part of a new participation movement in Canada by helping us set the stage for a National Volunteer Action Strategy.

To get involved, visit www.volunteerstrategy.ca.

3. Standards for Volunteer Involvement

Volunteers play a key role in supporting the delivery of various initiatives that keep older adults active and socially engaged. Therefore, strategic and efficient volunteer management processes and policies are crucial to match prospective volunteers to the right roles and help them succeed in their roles. Strategic volunteer engagement ensures the quality and safety of programs and services, reduces liabilities and risks to all concerned, and builds the organizational capacity for mission delivery. To help social purpose organizations develop organizational volunteer engagement strategies, Volunteer Canada has introduced a wealth of resources which can be accessed through www.volunteer.ca. The following are three key resources that are worth exploring.

Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement (CCVI)

Volunteer Canada's Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement (CCVI or the Code) has integrated many of the trends in volunteering into its Values, Guiding Principles, and Standards of Practice. The Code provides non-profit organizations with a framework to start the discussion about developing safe, inclusive and effective volunteer involvement. By adopting the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement, non-profit organizations commit not only to strengthening their volunteer engagement strategy, but also to strengthening the capacity of the organization to meet its mandate and contribute to strong and connected communities.

The code highlights that there are two guiding principles; volunteers have rights, and volunteers have responsibilities.

Volunteers have rights. Charitable and non-profit organizations recognize that volunteers are a vital human resource and will commit to the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteer involvement.

Volunteers have responsibilities. Volunteers make a commitment and are accountable to the organization.

The Code is periodically reviewed and updated to keep it relevant and current with the trends in volunteerism.

Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering (CCESV)

Increasingly, workplaces are recognizing the value of Employer-Supported Volunteering (ESV) and the positive effects it has on companies, employees and the quality of life in their communities. The Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering (CCESV) was designed to align with the CCVI with the flexibility to be adapted to the context, language and business objectives of Canadian workplaces of all sizes and within all sectors. While this resource is designed to provide guidance to workplaces on developing and enhancing their ESV programs, understanding the CCESV will provide not-for-profit organizations valuable insights on how to design and implement corporate volunteer engagement initiatives in their organizations.

The Screening Handbook

Screening is a process that helps match people with volunteer positions while improving the quality and safety of community programs and services. It's an ongoing 10-step process performed by an organization to ensure that volunteers' involvement meets the needs of the organizations, the populations they serve, and the volunteers themselves. It is important to

note that volunteer screening is always based on the position and not on the person.

The benefits of screening are threefold:
1. To better match people's skills and experience to the needs and opportunities of organizations
2. To improve the quality and safety of programs and services in communities
3. To reduce the risks and liability for both people and organizations

Screening involves much more than police record checks. While police record checks are one of the 10 Steps of Screening, screening is a comprehensive process that begins long before a volunteer is selected and continues beyond his or her involvement with the organization.

Volunteer Canada developed *The Screening Handbook (2012 ed.)* on behalf of Public Safety Canada. The handbook elaborates on *The10 Steps of Screening* and provides information and resources to support ongoing screening practices. It is designed to suit organizations of all sizes and mandates. It is meant to provide guidelines for screening volunteers and deciding which steps apply and at what time.

To access these resources and more, visit www.volunteer.ca.

4. Strategic Volunteer Engagement

Not-for-profit organizations (non-profits and charities) rely on volunteers to build their capacity to deliver essential programs and services that address the community's most pressing social issues. Volunteers bring a wealth of expertise, experience and fresh perspectives that will be an asset to attaining the organization's vision, mission, and mandate. Volunteer engagement, therefore, is a critical operational function of a not-for-profit.

An operational function needs an organizational strategy, supported by the governance and leadership teams and well-integrated with the service delivery and administration teams. It must be aligned with strategic priorities and sufficiently resourced for successful execution.

As you engage in conversations to develop your Volunteer Engagement Strategy, reflect on the following questions.

About Volunteer Engagement:
1. What key changes related to volunteerism have we experienced? (Identify)
2. What effect might these trends have on our work? (Understand)
3. What steps can we take to further strengthen our volunteer engagement? (Plan)

About the Organizational Response:
1. What steps have we taken to; a) optimize processes, b) integrate our work, c) strengthen our culture, and d) build our team's capacity? (Identify)
2. What are we learning about a) our team, b) our relationships, and c) our behaviours? (Understand)
3. How can we build our organizational capacity, and what resources would we need to do this? (Plan)

While the previous sections provided insights into trends in volunteer engagement and available resources to develop standards and policies, this section will provide useful tips for effectively and efficiently executing the volunteer engagement function.

Stages of Volunteer Engagement

The stages of volunteer engagement are grounded on the fact that volunteer engagement thrives on building relationships to mobilize the community towards civic participation.

These stages are:

1. **Planning:** Strategizing, volunteer needs analysis, establishing processes, and risk assessment.

2. **Outreach:** Strategic Outreach and Storytelling to share the impact, meet the target audience and identify the most effective marketing channel.

3. **Engagement:** An organized effort for recruitment and role assignment.

4. **Support:** Leadership to volunteers and providing the necessary skills and tools.

5. **Recognition:** Celebrate, commemorate and nominate to recognize the volunteers' contributions.

6. **Evaluation:** Measuring what matters in all stages to keep improving and identifying trends and impact. As well as periodically reviewing the organizational volunteer engagement strategy for relevancy and to keep it current.

A recurring challenge highlighted by Leaders of volunteers is volunteer retention. Volunteer retention is a result of an accumulation of positive experiences during each stage of a volunteer's journey with the organization and it is not just a single activity. Retention is a collection of moments, and every moment matters.

The following chart will identify special considerations during each stage.

Stages and Considerations for Execution

Stage	Considerations
1. Planning	Include volunteer engagement in the strategic discussions. Conduct a volunteer needs assessment to build organizational capacity for mission delivery.
	Invest in volunteer engagement. Identify the required resources and infrastructure. Hire a qualified Leader of Volunteers or appoint a dedicated person to coordinate the organization-wide volunteer engagement effort. Follow through to support the volunteer engagement team with professional development.
	Map out the processes in relation to these stages in volunteer engagement and establish policies, procedures and processes.
	Remove barriers to volunteering. Advance an inclusive and equitable practice in volunteer engagement.
	The trends show a preference for remote, virtual, episodic, or micro-volunteering, and hybrid engagement opportunities. Consider the current trends in volunteerism and see if your roles need to be redesigned.
	Acknowledge that there are also generational differences to consider related to their objectives, availability and capabilities.
	Adopt the Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement with the support of the Board of Directors, management, operational staff and volunteers.
2. Outreach	Identify the prospect profile and target audience from which to recruit volunteers based on a clear understanding of the volunteer positions.
	There is a distinct difference between a Volunteer Position Description and a volunteer recruitment advertisement. Customize the recruitment advertisement to attract the target audience.

	Map out who from the community can support with recruitment. Consider local Volunteer Centres, immigration and settlement organizations, schools and post-secondary educational institutions, employer-supported volunteer programs, local sports teams, and social service organizations for greater reach for recruitment. Consider drip campaigns with your volunteer recruitment advertisements and make them storytelling in nature.
3. Engagement	This stage is when the recruitment and role assignment is carried out. Follow clearly designed volunteer recruitment processes. An organized effort builds credibility and drives impact. Support the Leader of Volunteers with the right tools and infrastructure to manage a streamlined volunteer recruitment experience for the volunteer. Leverage technology and ensure that the technology used supports a streamlined experience. Be guided by the *Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement* and *The Screening Handbook*. The right volunteer, sufficiently screened and assigned to the right role, is a meaningful experience for the volunteer. It adds to their positive experience, thereby fostering affiliation and commitment to the organization.
4. Support	This stage is about the organization providing a safe, secure and supportive environment for the volunteers. During this stage, relationship-building matters the most. A volunteer's journey with an organization is at its most crucial stage when they are serving in their roles. This is when volunteers usually move from being excited to work with you to assessing their impact and deciding whether to continue with the role or the organization. The orientation and training provided for the volunteers will help them start on the right note. It is crucial to have a welcoming meet-and-greet moment with the volunteer's supervisor, an introduction to the rest of the staff and volunteers, and an ongoing relationship with the volunteer. Checking in on the volunteer, engaging in conversation, and keeping lines of communication open build camaraderie. Volunteers bring fresh perspectives. Encourage feedback with innovative ideas. Assess the potential of their ideas 'with them' – it shows that the organization cares about their contributions.

	Considering the socio-economic circumstances and being open to flexibility in shifts and schedules shows them that they are a valuable addition to the organization.
	Highlighting the impact of their contribution shows them that you pay attention. It is a morale boost.
5. Recognition	Recognition is imperative in the volunteer engagement strategy.
	Make it a 12-month plan rather than a one-time activity. Consider the following 3 forms of recognition: celebrate, commemorate, and nominate.
	Celebrate: Celebrate their contribution and impact on a one-to-one basis, praise them publicly if the volunteer is comfortable with public praise, and spotlight volunteers in social media channels through storytelling.
	Commemorate: Leverage commemorative days such as the National Volunteer Week in April by Volunteer Canada, International Volunteer Managers Day on November 5, and International Volunteer Day on December 5. Leverage these days for storytelling and gatherings if possible.
	Nominate: Nominate the volunteers for your internal awards and the local, provincial, and national awards programs.
	It is important to acknowledge that recognition activities are subjective to the volunteers' preferences, stages in life, and their perception of recognition.
6. Evaluation	This stage highlights the importance of evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of each stage. This stage overlaps with every other stage. The key is to measure what matters. The quality of service matters just as much as the number of clients reached.

	Another example would be to evaluate the application rates for positions. From your application rates for positions, discern preferences such as;
	   - long-term vs episodic vs micro-volunteering roles, and
	   - place based vs virtual vs remote working roles.

	Evaluate the volunteers' experience and this will help course-correct if there are any barriers and challenges. Volunteers too are brand ambassadors and refer others or even become potential donors. Is the experience you provide the volunteers driving word-of-mouth advertising?
	The evaluation stage also highlights the importance of establishing a strategy review period. Volunteer trends change with socio-economic trends. Assign a validity period for the volunteer engagement strategy so that it can be periodically reviewed for relevance and renewal (if necessary).

5. Data-Driven Engagement

The Significance of Data-Informed and Evidence-Based Decision-Making in Canada's Not-for-Profit Sector [Article]
Written by Shaminda Perera, MEd., Knowledge, Practice and Learning Lead, Volunteer Canada

First Published in the Canadian Knowledge Hub for Giving and Volunteering on November 27, 2023.

Since before the COVID-19 pandemic, with advancements in technology, the significance of data-informed and evidence-based decision-making has been highlighted on many fronts. We have repeatedly heard, witnessed and experienced that Canada's not-for-profit sector is rapidly changing. Primarily, not-for-profit organizations are faced with the growing demands of delivering their programs and services yet with limited resources, including a scarcity of volunteers and funds. These are not just anecdotal; they are backed by national and local data. Senior management and the governance teams have made decisions based on quantitative and qualitative data for many years. Today, that approach is spreading vertically and horizontally in the sector to better adapt and pivot with rapidly changing tides.

In this article, the data that we refer to are those that are available within an organization's information systems, reports and records, and community-based data on the not-for-profit sector and giving and volunteering trends.

What is data-informed and evidence-based decision-making?

Data-informed decision-making uses raw data to guide strategic decisions. In contrast, evidence-based decision-making interprets empirical evidence towards insights. During times of rapid change, data-informed and evidence-based decision-making in the not-for-profit sector becomes a critical approach to ensure effective program planning, volunteer engagement

strategies, diversified fund development strategies, and laying the foundations for the sector's sustainability.

Let's explore the significance.

1. A Stronger Case for Support

Taking just 2 variables as examples out of the many insights, the 2022 4th Quarter Report on the Canadian Survey on Business Conditions by Statistics Canada highlights that 32% of participating organizations experienced a demand for services, and 65% reported a shortage of volunteers. The 2023 Giving Report by CanadaHelps highlights that 40% of charities have experienced demand, and 55% have reported fewer volunteers. The data shows a trend in high demand from not-for-profits and a shortage of volunteers affected by the pandemic. Complemented with the organizational data demonstrating its capacity to make a positive impact, these statistics can help a not-for-profit build a stronger case for support. Data is indeed a point-in-time reflection, yet data that is, for example, gathered 5 years earlier are also valuable data to show the year-over-year trends impacting the sector.

2. Impactful Programming

Data and evidence can show the trends and outcomes of an organization's activities and the external trends influencing the ultimate impact. A data-informed and evidence-based decision-

Welcome to the Canadian Knowledge Hub for Giving and Volunteering!

Learn how data can inform your work and help you meet your mission.

EXPLORE THE DATA

How the Knowledge Hub Can Help You

The knowledge hub is an online centre for data about giving and volunteering. It uses data from a variety of sources, including Statistics Canada's General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (GSS-GVP), to show you how data can make an impact on your work.

On the data hub you will find:

Information about the GSS-GVP

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Data Literacy Resources

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making practice enables an organization to identify the best possible strategies and tactics. It helps to keep track of what is working and what is not, efficient allocation of resources, and more significant community impact. At the same time, with rapid change comes the need to be agile - and agility warrants efficient use of resources, especially when the resources are by the community for the community.

3. Community's Trust

Volunteers, donors and stakeholders of not-for-profit organizations take a vested interest in their impact on the community. They want assurance that their contributions are making a difference. Organizations that demonstrate data-informed and evidence-based decisions are more likely to gain and retain the community's trust. These organizations can engage the stakeholders more effectively by showcasing their commitment to transparency and accountability.

The 2018 CanadaHelps Giving Report highlighted the significance of transparency in building donor trust. Donors appreciate organizations sharing data-driven reports fostering stronger and long-term partnerships.

4. Effective Resource Allocation

When resources are often limited, such is the reality in the not-for-profit sector, informed decisions about resource allocation are crucial. Data and evidence-based decision-making can help organizations identify where resources, including volunteers, funds and in-kind donations, make the most significant impact.

The COVID-19 pandemic shook the not-for-profit sector to its core. Organizations with data-informed practices were better equipped to pivot and adapt to the rapidly changing environment. Many capacity-building

organizations across Canada, such as volunteer centres and not-for-profit networks, studied the impact of COVID-19 on civic participation, including gathering data on giving and volunteering. Significant insights from these studies helped the not-for-profit sector re-organize programming, volunteer engagement and fund development strategies.

5. Risk Management and Accountability

Data-informed and evidence-based decisions also aid in risk management by clearly understanding potential challenges and opportunities. Further, as the governance teams have done for many years, data and evidence provide the big picture in finance and operations to keep their organizations accountable. This helps organizations comply with regulations, apply wise practices and foster trust and transparency with stakeholders, donors and the public.

6. Strategy and Innovation

Data can also uncover collaborations, correlations, opportunities and target audiences that not-for-profit organizations are yet to realize were within their reach. Realizations of new or unexpected relationships combined with creative solutions can take a not-for-profit organization and a community in new and exciting strategic directions.

"As we inspire a volunteerism movement across Canada through a National Volunteer Action Strategy, it is important that we look to data and evidence as our compass rather than 'just navigating'. The community calls on us to consider the big picture but with an understanding of the reality of diverse individual groups and organizations. Data and evidence aren't just information; they are a map to what's working and what needs improvement. That is why it is important to bring community data directly to the desks of

those whom the data is in service to," says Dr. Megan Conway, President and CEO of Volunteer Canada.

An Online Hub for Data on Giving and Volunteering

To make it convenient for social purpose, philanthropic, and government organizations to access data and reports related to civic participation, Volunteer Canada, together with the project partners Imagine Canada, Association of Fundraising Professionals, and Volunteer Management Professionals of Canada, brings you an online data centre called the Canadian Knowledge Hub for Giving and Volunteering. This data centre is a hub for data and reports from various sources, including Statistics Canada's General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (GSS-GVP), Satellite Account of Non-profit Institutions and Volunteering (SANIV), and Canadian Survey on Business Conditions (CSBC). All you need to do is to simply visit the site and explore the data stories and other resources.

Canadian Knowledge Hub for Giving and Volunteering: www.GivingAndVolunteering.ca

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In conclusion, the significance of data-informed and evidence-based decision-making in Canada's not-for-profit sector is crucial now more than ever in this post-COVID-19 pandemic era. It helps to build a stronger case for support, drives impact, enhances engagement, optimizes resource allocation, ensures risk management, keeps an organization accountable, and helps progress in new strategic directions. Thereby continuing to make a meaningful impact in our communities. To support the sector with data-informed and evidence-based decision-making, the Canadian Knowledge Hub for Giving and Volunteering brings these data to you to harness the power of a data-driven engagement.

Useful Resources

- The Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario

  - Volunteer Engagement Survey: Provincial Report, published in March 2023:

    https://www.oacao.org/resources

- Volunteer Canada: www.volunteer.ca

  - Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement

  - Canadian Code for Employer-Supported Volunteering

  - The Screening Handbook

  - List of Volunteer Centres Across Canada

  - Value of Volunteering Wheel

- National Volunteer Action Strategy: www.volunteerstrategy.ca

- Canadian Knowledge Hub for Giving and Volunteering: www.givingandvolunteering.ca

- Data Management for Creating Impactful Volunteer Programs [Article]:

  https://www.vmpc.ca/cgi/page.cgi/member_blog.html

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