CONVERSATIONS ON POLICY LEADERSHIP FOR CANADA'S CHARITABLE & NONPROFIT SECTOR: INTERVIEW RESULTS

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Authors:
Susan Phillips, Professor
Christopher Dougherty, PhD Candidate
Hannah Van Hofwegen, MPNL Student

Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership Program
School of Public Policy and Administration
Carleton University, Ottawa

The Max Bell Foundation and The Muttart Foundation asked Carleton University's School of Public Policy and Administration to carry out an examination of the potential for collective leadership in Canada's voluntary sector.

For years, both foundations have made clear their interest in supporting initiatives that give charities a significant voice in affecting public policy that impacts them and their beneficiaries.

Dr. Susan Phillips and her team have produced two reports. We encourage people inside and outside the sector to review them carefully and consider the possibilities that may emerge from them.

Our two foundations have made no decisions on what, if anything, to do as a result of these reports. Before making any decisions, we are very anxious to hear the views of others.

The Carleton University research team has agreed to collate comments and to produce a "What We Heard" supplement that will provide suggestions and critiques without attribution. We encourage you to offer your comments by sending them to the Carleton team's email: **SectorLeadershipProject@cunet.carleton.ca**

We ask that any comments be submitted by October 31, so that we can seek to publish the results by the end of the year.

Then, the two foundations, working with others in the sector, will decide if there are ideas worth pursuing, or whether there are ways we can assist sector organizations to create the vehicle or mechanisms by which their voices might best be amplified.

BOB WYATT   ALLAN NORTHCOTT
Executive Director   President
The Muttart Foundation   Max Bell Foundation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study considers how Canada's charitable, nonprofit and philanthropic sector could be more engaged in and have a greater impact on public policy so as to produce better outcomes for the many communities it serves. This project stems from a conviction that the sector could be more effective if it were more coordinated, more visible and more skilled in public policy advocacy. This report is the second part of an ongoing conversation; the first analyzed the literature on infrastructure organizations and leadership mechanisms. This report puts this background research in motion by taking a sounding of 41 nonprofit leaders across Canada (and some internationally), asking them: is a new leadership mechanism needed and, if so, what are the preferred options for its structure and operations?

The current policy leadership of the sector is seen to be limited by: a lack of coordination across organizations – the problem of "getting our act together;" ineffectiveness as policy advocates; and lack of equity-seeking group participation in existing sector leadership mechanisms. There is widespread agreement that sector policy leadership could be strengthened, although there are differing assessments of how best to do this. There is no appetite for a new organization, as a formal incorporated entity, that would take the place of existing infrastructure organizations. The preferred option for a new, more coordinated mechanism is one that operates as a network or umbrella, although we also heard interest in a participatory forum and a purpose-built advocacy 'shop.' Participants would be primarily national, provincial, and regional organizations but there is a clear concern that this must include equity-seeking and historically excluded groups (with an interest in policy engagement). A key challenge will be balancing inclusive participation by the breadth and diversity of the sector with the ability to act in a timely manner.

How a new mechanism is formed, and who leads the process, will affect its legitimacy and the willingness of others to participate. Some means of bringing together and animating collaboration among a variety of leaders and organizations is required, perhaps as an initial discussion, conference or 'forum.' But, this should not be a lengthy or onerous process. Financial resources will be required in this incubation and start-up phase, and most respondents looked to a consortium of foundations to fund this work, with the caveat that funders should not have an undue (real or perceived) influence on its goals, structure or operations.

This report is the second stage of a project initiated and supported by the Muttart Foundation and the Max Bell Foundation which is intended to start conversations about how Canada's charitable, nonprofit, and philanthropic sector could be more impactful in public policy on a pan-national scale. The aim is to help the sector and its leaders not only build back better from COVID-19 but also become more effective agents of change over the long term.

The first stage analyzed the academic and practitioner literature on infrastructure organizations and leadership mechanisms to produce a background paper, **Enhancing Policy Leadership for Canada's Charitable & Nonprofit Sector: A Conversation Starter** (Phillips, Dougherty, & Conway, November 2021).[1] That report laid out considerations and options for:

- The potential role and mandate of a national policy leadership mechanism;
- Options for a structure that would facilitate this work, recognizing that any given structure is better at achieving some things than others; and
- Process considerations, including incentives for participation and means of promoting diversity, equity and inclusion.

This report puts this background research in motion by taking a sounding of leaders of Canada's nonprofit sector: Is a new leadership mechanism needed and, if so, what are the preferred options for its structure and operations? This study interviewed 41 sector leaders, including four outside Canada (a response rate of 66 percent) from late November 2021 through mid-March 2022. As indicated in Appendix C, the participants were selected to bring experience from a variety of subsectors, including equity-seeking groups, and from different locales. As a first conversation, however, the number and diversity are necessarily limited, with greater representation of national and provincial than grassroots organizations, and few from Quebec.

These discussions were not framed as a criticism of existing organizations or networks. Rather, we sought to understand how to better position the sector in an environment involving wicked problems and a pressing need for systemic change.

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[1] The background paper is available on **PANL Perspectives**.

FINDINGS

IS THERE AN ISSUE OF SECTOR LEADERSHIP?

Three concerns with the current state of leadership in Canada's nonprofit, charitable and philanthropic sector stand out:

- **A lack of coordination**: "the sector doesn't get its act together." In part, this reflects the sector's diversity. While diversity is a strength, it also manifests as fragmentation and unnecessary compartmentalization of issues. Organizations in different subsectors, as well as national organizations, are not perceived to communicate or work together as much as they could on matters of common interest. (++)[2]

- **Lack of action on policy matters and ineffectiveness as public policy advocates**: This concern was often raised as a byproduct of the lack of coordination. The concern was also described as not getting out in front of issues: "sometimes the sector seems to be waiting on permission from government to act." (++)

- **Lack of voice and participation of equity-seeking groups in sector leadership**: About a third of participants noted that leadership in the sector is dominated by the same people and same organizations, and this marginalizes those who are not perceived to be 'mainstream' or privileged. There is an urgent need to centre equity, be more inclusive and build stronger relationships that will better enable the sector to address the 'big' issues of our time. (+)

These concerns produced a general consensus that stronger cross-sector leadership is required. Only one participant indicated that things are fine as they are and that no change is needed. However, there were considerable differences in what the policy goals should be, and in the mandate, structure and governance of any new leadership mechanism.

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[2] ++ indicates strong agreement across participants; + agreement; +- no consensus; - low agreement and - - very low agreement.

WHAT SHOULD THE POLICY GOALS BE?

When asked what the policy priorities of the sector should be in rebuilding post-pandemic, responses can be roughly divided into three groups (with some spanning two groups), and this division affected how people responded to later questions.

Achieving better public policy outcomes and systems change by being more effective at policy engagement was the top concern for the vast majority of those interviewed. One group saw the primary policy goals for cross-sector leadership in a more focused and instrumental way – as pursuing process-oriented, policy and regulatory goals at the federal level that affect the sector as a whole. We refer to this as the **policy-specific** group.

A second set of leaders focused on sector capacity issues and **community outcomes**. These include issues over which the federal government has jurisdiction, but also involve provincial matters and local communities, for example: sector workforce recruitment and retention; funding models and availability; data collection and dissemination; and support for volunteerism.

A third group stressed the need for greater inclusion and participation within the sector in order to achieve any of these broader goals. They positioned the sector as a means to achieve progress on broad issues such as social justice, climate action, truth and reconciliation, and income inequality. But doing so requires relationship building and more meaningful participation of equity-seeking groups, marginalized communities and youth. This **equity-first** group overlapped substantially with those centred on community outcomes, and is comprised of a much broader cross-section of sector leaders than just those representing organizations with equity-seeking missions.

IS A NEW LEADERSHIP MECHANISM NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS?

The interviews did not focus on an examination or critique of the existing national, provincial and regional infrastructure organizations. Participants stressed that these organizations, such as Imagine Canada, Volunteer Canada, Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (CCVO) among others as well as subsector 'peak associations,' do valuable work and should not be replaced.

The shortcomings that were volunteered about Imagine Canada, widely seen as to be the national lead on policy for the sector, are: it lacks resources and capacity; is not perceived to be a natural 'convenor;' and its work has become quite diffused, spread across different activities so that its policy role is not as central or as strong as it could be. About ten percent of the

participants indicated that the ideal scenario would be to reorient the work of some of the existing peak organizations, to "just get the existing organizations to act differently," particularly being more engaged with and inclusive of the sector and to centre equity in their work. Most were somewhat skeptical that this would happen, however.

Virtually all the interviewees indicated that leadership across the sector could be strengthened, although there are differing assessments of how best to do this. However, there is **no appetite for a new organization, as a formal incorporated entity**, that would take the place of existing infrastructure organizations. Interviewees stressed the need for greater coordination and convening to advance policy and community outcomes and build greater justice and equity into the process and the impacts.

WHAT FORM MIGHT A NEW MECHANISM TAKE?

Three potential structures for enhanced cross-sector leadership were identified:

- Policy advocacy shop (+)
- Coalition / network (++)
- Participatory forum (+)

PURPOSE-BUILT POLICY ADVOCACY 'SHOP'

This approach, recommended by those with a policy-specific perspective, takes a lesson from successful advocacy organizations in other sectors. Create a small, purpose-built entity focused solely on being a strong, consistent policy voice for the sector, mainly at the federal level, without becoming muddied by other organizational activities. This body would be located in Ottawa and have staff (including former public servants) who understand and can readily navigate the workings of government. There is full recognition that the work of this body would need to be informed by and accountable to the broader sector, but such engagement – a 'transmission belt' function – could rely on existing infrastructure and subsector organizations. This policy shop could be a separate operation, with such connections, or could be part of a networked mechanism.

The main challenges for this approach are the ability to listen to and be accountable to the sector and be seen by government as a legitimate representative of the sector. Substantial coordination with and trust by the sector would be key to its credibility.

COALITION / NETWORK

The emphasis in a coalition or network mechanism is on coordination and reach across the sector. It would build upon and knit together existing organizations across subsectors, and was often described as an 'umbrella of umbrellas' or a 'network of networks.' This networked model would have to serve two key stakeholder groups: policy makers (federally and possibly provincially) and sector organizations.

A key to its success in policy would be its ability to be seen as a policy actor for the sector as a whole. Policy makers will inevitably ask: "do you represent who you claim to represent?" and, "do you represent the local organizations that politicians know and work with on other files?" Building legitimacy with politicians could be complex. The mechanism structure would have to be broadly inclusive, with participation from and presence in as many federal ridings as possible. Ideally, advocacy would be coordinated between local advocacy targeting individual politicians within their ridings and national advocacy targeting Cabinet and senior bureaucrats. And, there would be an emphasis on developing a coherent set of positions on a small number of targeted issues.

A key element in its relationship to the sector would be that the breadth and diversity of the sector was actively engaged within it, but that this diversity did not stymie its ability to lead. Within-sector legitimacy would hinge on the question: "do the people that you claim to represent believe that you represent them?" Organizations participating on behalf of subsectors would also need to ensure that they have their own means of connecting with and speaking for their constituencies and for being accountable back to them (++).

There was general agreement that participants would be existing national and subsector peak associations and networks. The creation of the Voluntary Sector Roundtable (VSR) in the mid 1990s was seen by several participants (N = 5) as an example of such networked coordination: 12 leaders from national organizations worked together, with a rotating secretariat function provided by the participating organizations (and with support from a foundation), to improve dialogue with the federal government, achieve specific policy goals and enhance accountability of the sector. While the VSR was light in infrastructure and nimble, participants also recognized its primary flaw – its lack of inclusiveness.

The central tension in a network model, as with the VSR and as noted particularly by leaders with an equity-first perspective, is between the established, already privileged organizations and those who are marginalized, as well as between the nationals and grassroots. This inclusion-exclusion challenge is a longstanding one for the sector. When thinking about a new mechanism,

who is at the table, and the relationship of those at the table with broader constituencies is more important than ever.

PARTICIPATORY FORUM

The notion of a 'forum' builds from a diversity and equity perspective: meaningful, inclusive engagement and dialogue come first, then action. The basic premise is that a policy mechanism can't lead if it is not broadly inclusive of and has active engagement by the diversity of the sector, particularly by those who are often excluded from being at the table. In addition, no one organization could legitimately be seen as the 'one' for the whole of the sector. A broad, participatory mechanism could bring in new, historically excluded groups and organizations (including from Quebec) to deepen understanding of the issues within the sector and ensure that their perspectives and needs are reflected in advocacy work being done on behalf of the whole sector. 'Membership' in this model could look beyond existing formal organizations to include collectives and communities more broadly defined, or dialogue could operate as an open forum.

The aim of a forum would be to first discuss and debate what is working and what needs to change in the sector 'ecosystem' in order to develop and implement action plans. It would work in an open, transparent manner, for instance with public minutes and perhaps an open online sharing platform (such as the Nonprofit Vote in Alberta). Such dialogue and engagement would not only enable this body to be more effective at policy advocacy but also in advancing justice work and improving community outcomes.

A forum could develop and evolve quite organically, as ONN did from a series of tables, and its infrastructure could be quite light. Leadership of a forum could be collective, with a secretariat to support its work. However, leaders warned that if this support were attached to an existing (established) organization that it should be firewalled from the main body (+). The concern is that its policy positions could be watered-down and advocacy efforts tempered by an established host or backbone organization.

The main drawback of a broadly-based dialogue forum is that consensus is not crafted from the diversity so that little progress on policy is actually achieved. It may be difficult for leaders to attain the authority to lead; internal power relationships among those with policy expertise and capacity and those with more limited resources (and perhaps little interest in policy) need to be carefully managed. How and by whom they are managed can be tricky, however.

The conversations included sector leaders who had first-hand experience with previous and existing leadership mechanisms in Canada and internationally.

CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

Many Canadian leaders talked about the VSR, as being a nimble body that came together with limited resources and that had some policy successes. The VSR formed as a result of drastic federal funding cuts and a restructuring of the welfare state in the 1990s with the purpose of responding to these cuts as well as addressing concerns about the representativeness and accountability of the sector. It was focused on several issues of national scope with the federal government as the target of its work. The ensuing Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) – a joint, government-funded mechanism aimed at enhancing government-sector relationships that lasted from 2000 to 2005 – provides lessons of things to avoid. These messages are:

- **Start with a clear purpose and an overriding narrative that can bring people together**. Take a 'quick wins' approach that focuses on several achievable issues with wide resonance across the sector. Have a "clear line of sight on how participation will help the sector." "Identify the 'right' problem(s), don't skip to solutions." This lesson was reinforced by the creation of ONN which started with a strategic focus on several specific issues and thus succeeded when a previous attempt at a provincial leadership organization had failed.

- **Balance representation/participation with manageability**. The VSR was able to act with alacrity because its membership was small – 12 white people from major organizations, mainly in central Canada. However, this lack of inclusiveness compromised its legitimacy, and today's sector is more complex than that of 1995.

- **Multiple funders are preferable**. The VSR was funded only by the McConnell Foundation (and in-kind contributions from the participating organizations), whereas a consortium could provide a broader base of financial (and non-financial) support.

By comparison, the VSI lost focus and momentum because it had several dozen priorities, without priorities among them. There was no definition of what success would look like; few

decision points to keep politicians engaged; and government controlled the funding and the timing.[3]

When speaking about other intermediary organizations in Canada, including Imagine Canada, Volunteer Canada, Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), ONN, CCVO, and sub-sector specific bodies, participants noted that they share some limitations in serving as a national, sector-wide leadership mechanism.

- Lack of a mandate – from a geographic, subsector, or organizational mission perspective – to advocate on behalf of the whole sector.
- Lack of mechanisms to build trust with, effectively engage and represent sub-sectors across the whole country.
- Inadequate human and financial resources needed to advocate effectively. For some organizations, this includes not having a physical presence in Ottawa or, alternatively, not having connections with local charities in ridings across the country.
- Lack of specific expertise in advocacy at the federal level.

It is important to note, however, that each of these bodies is seen to be doing important work and should be at the table if a new mechanism were created.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

From our conversations with key informants familiar with national leadership bodies in the US, England, Scotland and Australia, two lessons stand out. First, success occurs when the sector works together and people feel part of collective action. In addition, the narrative needs to be framed in terms of community outcomes, not as 'saving' the sector. As we heard from Scotland, the leadership body must concentrate on policy, rather than being transactional or fall into a service delivery model. An engaged membership is a strength and can be enhanced by having larger organizations subsidize the costs of participation by small ones. An advocacy agenda dominated by a small number of organizations is a barrier to legitimacy. The negative effects of fragmentation are evident in the US. The Independent Sector, which is perceived to represent large nonprofits and be dominated by foundation-specific policy concerns was described as "a head without a body," whereas the National Council of Nonprofits (a network of 25,000 organizations and state nonprofit associations) is seen as a "body without a head."

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[3] See also SDC - Social Development Canada. Audit and Evaluation Directorate. (2004) *The Voluntary Sector Initiative Process Evaluation*. Ottawa, ON: Social Development Canada.

Second, advocacy is a skill and policy moves quickly. Politicians like to hear from people 'on the ground' so an ability to coordinate local or regional action with a national strategy is advantageous. It is also important to work 'both sides of the aisle' – maintain linkages with the governing and opposition parties – and make effective use of data and evidence. While Australia lacks a national peak association of not-for-profits (in contrast to Philanthropy Australia representing mainly foundations), the sector has had some significant recent policy successes. The quickly formed Charities Crisis Cabinet (comprised of 19 CEOs of the largest nonprofits) obtained important supports for the sector during the pandemic. The sector now appears to be on the national policy agenda with the commitment by the recently elected Labor Government to develop a blueprint for the sector and undertake policy reform "informed by a fundamental commitment to working with charities."[4]

HOW TO IMPLEMENT?

Whatever the form of a new leadership mechanism, it seems clear from our study that leaders do not believe that a mechanism will form spontaneously or organically. As one interviewee notes, this is not 1995 when the VSR was created. For those who had reflected on possible implementation of such a mechanism, three factors were emphasized (++).

A CATALYST: THE PROCESS OF COMING TOGETHER

How a new mechanism is formed, and who leads the process, will affect its legitimacy and the willingness of others to come on board. There was a clear sense that the catalyst should not be a single organization, as this does not instill confidence that the new mechanism will not be controlled by it (whether by design or inadvertently). Rather, some means of bringing together and animating collaboration among a variety of leaders and organizations would be more constructive – perhaps as an initial discussion, conference or 'forum.' At the same time, this should not be a lengthy or onerous process. As one interviewee suggested, bring together 10-20 people, then another 20-40 as a start.

Who participates matters: ensure it is not just the "same old, same old." The start-up process needs to signal in meaningful ways that there will be broad reach across the sector, including of equity-seeking groups.

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[4] D. Kutchel, Sector looks ahead to priorities as new Prime Minister sworn in, *ProBono Australia,* 23 May, 2022.

From the outset, a compelling narrative has to be articulated and a set of issues with wide resonance across the sector needs to be identified that will guide the early work of this entity.

INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATION, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

The primary incentive for participation is meaningful, tangible progress on issues that sector organizations and their communities care about. The participants were very clear that this should not be a structure or mechanism for the sake of building a mechanism, but it must be tied to progress on identifiable issues (++).

RESOURCING

Financial resources are generally regarded as the greatest barrier to the creation and sustainability of a cross-sector leadership mechanism, given the challenges of adequately resourcing existing infrastructure organizations. How to generate the requisite resources does not have a clear or easy answer. In general:

- **Foundation funding,** ideally from a consortium of foundations, was the top candidate for the start-up phase, with the caveat that large funders may have an undue real or perceived influence on the goals of a mechanism. This power relationship would need to carefully managed.

- **Membership dues** are seen as insufficient to support an organization, although a membership may be vital to maintaining engagement. If a formal membership with dues is used, consideration should be given to having large organizations subsidize the costs of small ones to reduce barriers to participation.

- **Donations or secondments** of staff and services from participating organizations was suggested by those recommending a smaller, centralized structure with the acknowledgement that this could be unstable or could be used as a lever by larger organizations to overly influence the goals and work of a mechanism.

- **Government funding** was not recommended due to the risk it would dampen advocacy efforts, unless it came with no strings attached.

In addition to financial resources for a new mechanism, a variety of ancillary measures for advocacy efforts were suggested including: more advocacy training to support existing organizations and networks in developing their capacity; foundation funding for advocacy efforts on specific issues like climate action, equity and inclusion, or truth and reconciliation; and

greater support for existing sector organizations that are already engaged in federal advocacy so that they can be more effective.

CONCLUSION: NEXT STEPS?

This report is the second step of what is intended to become larger, constructive conversations about enhancing the engagement in of Canada's nonprofit sector in public policy to produce better outcomes for communities. It builds on background research on nonprofit leadership mechanisms and infrastructure organizations that assessed the pros and cons of various options with a view to better understanding some of the tradeoffs inherent in different structures and processes. This phase advanced the conversation through interviews with a diversity of sector leaders as to the potential mandate, structure and operations of a new leadership model in the Canadian context.

The findings indicate support for such a mechanism – one that builds upon and coordinates among existing organizations, and does so in a manner that is more inclusive and equity-oriented than current leadership models. There is still much to be worked out, but it is apparent that this is the time for action.

How to move forward? This study identified the value of having several organizations, rather than a single organization, or a set of sector leaders stepping up to animate further conversations and bring others together for action. In doing so, this cannot be the same old players, but needs to be more expansive than in the past – without paralyzing the process. This next phase, and the start-up of any new leadership mechanism, will require financial resources. We leave that discussion to those who can move the next steps forward.

It is important to note that our background paper and the interviews have surfaced various tensions and challenges that will need to be resolved. Any new leadership mechanism cannot be all things to everyone, and achieving agreement and commitment as to what works, for whom and how, will be a fundamental part of the next phase.

The study team welcomes feedback on this report and ideas for moving forward that could inform next steps by the foundations that initiated this work or by others. **Please email comments and ideas to:** sectorleadershipproject@cunet.carleton.ca. Comments will be treated confidentially, without identifying individuals or organizations, in any further reporting.

APPENDIX A: COMPARISON WITH A PARALLEL STUDY

After the Carleton research team had undertaken the background study and as we were beginning the interview process, we learned that a similar study had been commissioned by Imagine Canada and was being conducted by Yves Savoie. In the interests of working collectively for the benefit of the sector, we collaborated in several ways to enrich both processes. The participants for each study were selected independently, the interview questions developed separately, and the analysis conducted independently. However, we shared key informant lists and acknowledged each other's study to participants who overlapped our respective lists (there is an overlap of 9 sector leaders from a total of 41 in this study and 22 in the Savoie study). We had periodic check-ins about our work while protecting the confidentiality of the information each collected. Phillips and Savoie discussed themes from our preliminary findings before the reports were produced.

As indicated in the following table, there is considerable convergence in the findings. First, there is clear agreement of leaders on the need for the sector to have greater policy impact, but no interest in a new corporate body to replace any of the existing infrastructure organizations. Rather, there is support for an additional 'mechanism,' although we assess this support to be stronger than does the Savoie report.

If a new mechanism were created, both studies indicate a first preference for a coordination among organizations or a networked model, but our study also identified interest in a forum and a purpose-built policy shop. Attention to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion – breaking down the barriers of existing narrowness and privilege – were strong themes in both studies. Whereas the participants in the Savoie study suggested a range of roles for such a mechanism (e.g. convening, advocacy, capacity building, data collection), the participants in our study were more focused on policy advocacy and sector engagement (as facilitating advocacy).

Both studies identified the need for a secretariat to support a new network or 'umbrella;' the Savoie study finds some support that this might be done by Imagine Canada, while this study did not ask about a specific host – although a number of our respondents expressed concern that a secretariat be 'firewalled' from any host in order to prevent it from falling into 'old ways.' The need for external support to launch such a mechanism is consistent in both studies, which could potentially come from a consortium of foundations as long as they do not control the outcomes and operations.

Dimension	Muttart / Max Bell study conducted by Phillips et al.	Imagine Canada study conducted by Savoie
Need for greater policy impact	+ +	+ +
New organization to replace existing	- -	- -
Need for a new mechanism	+ +	+ - (more limited)
General themes / groupings of perspectives	Policy-specific Community outcomes Equity-first	Policy / Instrumental Justice, Equity, Diversity
If new mechanism, its suggested form	Network / Umbrella + + Forum + Policy Shop + -	Network + +
Activities	Policy advocacy (supported by data) Engagement / Convening Visibility / Awareness	Engagement / Convening Policy Advocacy Capacity Building Policy Research/Data Collection/Analysis
Participants	Organizations; importance of reach across the sector, including equity-seeking (potential of collectives); need for accountability to their communities	Organizations but skepticism of ability of large organizations to share power; importance of reach across the sector, including equity-seeking (potential of collectives); need for accountability to their communities
Support	Secretariat; if an existing organization hosts, need for a 'firewall;' specific hosts not addressed	Existing organization; mixed support for Imagine Canada; need for independence/firewall from any existing organization
Key Challenge	Need for compelling vision/narrative	Unity of purpose/defining boundaries (some doubt about a compelling vision)
Resources	Foundations (consortium); not government; membership as secondary; specifics not addressed	Foundations (consortium); membership as secondary; annual budget of $500k to $1 m

APPENDIX B: METHODOLOGY

As the research team is based within the Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership program at Carleton University's School of Public Policy and Administration, ethics clearance was first obtained from the Carleton University Research Ethics Board-A. (Protocol Clearance #114821).

Following discussion of the prospective participant list with the leads at the Muttart Foundation and Max Bell Foundation, email invitations were sent to a diverse group of sector leaders from across Canada in late November 2021. Some additional interviews were later added to ensure greater participation from those outside the traditional 'mainstream' of the sector.

Before interviews began, individuals were informed of the nature and purpose of the study and signed an informed consent form which, among other measures, ensured confidentiality of the information provided and anonymity of individuals and their organizations. Of those who agreed to participate, none have withdrawn their consent. A summary of the participating sector leaders is in Appendix D.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted by phone or by Zoom by Megan Conway (then a post-doctoral fellow at Carleton University), Christopher Dougherty (PhD candidate), and Hannah Van Hoffwegen (MPNL student) from late November 2021 through mid-March 2022. The full interview guide appears as Appendix D. Interviews lasted about 30-40 minutes with the interviewers taking notes rather than recording the sessions. These notes were reviewed multiple times by Phillips and the research team, then coded by themes so that the extent and saturation points of key themes could be assessed. Rather than reporting numbers or percentages, we present the degree of support for these themes as:

- ++ strong agreement across participants
- + agreement
- +- no consensus
- - low agreement, or
- - - very low agreement

The research team thanks all the participants who shared their experiences and insights with us. We appreciate your candor and your desire to produce a stronger sector and better outcomes for those it serves. This table lists participants by general subsector, or 'category' only given our commitment to their anonymity.

Category	Sub-Category	Number of Interviews
All Participants	Number of sector leaders initially contacted	61
	Total participants	41
Geography	Located in Ontario	22
	Located in Canada outside Ontario	15
	Located outside Canada	4
Sub-sector	Advocacy and Capacity Building	16
	Primarily Equity Seeking Organizations	4
	Arts	1
	Environment	1
	Faith	1
	Health	1
	Housing and Homelessness	1
	International Development	1
Funders	Community / Public Foundations	3
	Private Foundations	5
	United Way / Centraide	1
Individual Leaders	Consultants, lawyers, and other independent professionals serving the sector	13

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Explanation of the study and ethical requirements were first stated. Consent forms had been returned by email in advance of interviews.

Note that the interviews and discussion groups were semi-structured, so that ideas could be explored in more depth when appropriate. Given that the style was conversational, the following questions provide a structure but may not be exhaustive.

1. As the charitable and nonprofit sector tries to rebuild post-pandemic, what do you see as the three issues that should be its main policy priorities?
   a. Follow-up: if the issues are sub-sector specific, we asked: Are there policy issues that affect the sector as a whole?
2. How do you see the sector developing an agenda around and pursuing these issues?
   a. For example, which organizations might take the lead?
   b. Can this process build a strong enough consensus and action to be taken seriously by governments in policy development?
3. If your organization or subsector organizations wish to engage in shaping public policies nationally or provincially, how do currently to this?
   a. Follow-up: What are the strengths and limitations of this approach?
4. Does the sector need additional or new mechanisms, processes or organizations to advance its policy concerns?
   a. Follow-up: Please explain why or why not.
   b. Do existing mechanisms, processes and organizations need to be strengthened, and if so, what would this take?

The following questions depended on whether the participant indicated a new mechanism is needed:

If no new mechanism, we jumped to:

Is there anything else you would recommend to strengthen the policy effectiveness, at a national scale, of Canada's charities and nonprofits?

Is there anything else you would like to add for us to understand your perspectives on how your subsector, and the sector as a whole, might more effectively engage in public policy development?

If yes, we asked:

5. If something more is required, what is the problem(s) we are trying to address with it?
6. On that basis, what should be the mandate or role of a new mechanism?
7. How might it be structured?

a. Follow-up: What do you see as the pros and cons of different models?
b. How might its leadership be determined?
c. How could it be made sufficiently inclusive of the diversity of the sector?
d. How would it be accountable to/have a relationship with subsectors and the breadth of the sector?
8. What would be the incentives for people or organizations to participate?
9. How might it be funded and sustained financially?
10. What might be an effective process to creating such a mechanism?
11. Is there anything that governments need to do to strengthen their relationship and policy engagement with the sector?
12. Is there anything else you would recommend to strengthen the policy effectiveness, at a national scale, of Canada's charities and nonprofits?
13. Is there anything else you would like to add for us to understand your perspectives on how your subsector Sand the sector as a whole might more effectively engage in public policy development?