



Charities and Non-Profits

A Strategic Component of Canada's Success

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Charities and non-profits are employers that produce social and economic value contributing to Canada's gross domestic product (GDP): two and one-half times the contribution of agriculture and six times as much as automobile manufacturing. The sector is an important one in terms of its contribution to economic activity and jobs.

In Canada, more than 165,000 charity and non-profit organizations work in a diverse range of social realms, including health care, arts, social services, education, international development and the environment. The impact and contribution of the charitable and non-profit sector in Canada is significant: 8.1% of GDP and 10.5% of the labour force.

But the importance of these organizations goes well beyond the economic benefits they provide. Charities and non-profits are a vitally important component of our overall success as a country: a strategic driver of our quality of life and an economy that generates jobs and prosperity now and in the future.

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Canadians want to be sustainably prosperous in a highly competitive world economy in which knowledge and information are increasingly valued and important, and in which services and technology play a growing role. Increasingly, *people* – with their talent, skills and education – will be Canada's most important resource.

But information and knowledge, services and people are all highly mobile. Talented people will move to countries where they can make a meaningful contribution to their own lives and to others. People want to lead lives of value and make a difference in a country that offers not only economic opportunity but also a high quality of life.

In this view of the future, charities and non-profits are not case-by-case responses to social, cultural and environmental problems that come up from time to time; rather, they are a crucial part of what makes Canada a desirable country in which to live and contribute. This is why the sustainability of charities and non-profits is important for governments and citizens.

The sector's strategic value will increase as business, government and charities continue to develop and nurture mutually supportive and creative relationships. Equally, the value of the sector to our quality of life depends on the extent to which charities and non-profits can rise to the challenge of keeping pace with a rapidly changing modern world. This will mean demonstrating to increasingly sophisticated donors, volunteers, governments and businesses that charities and non-profits are indeed making a difference in the communities they serve. It requires these organizations to keep pace with business models that are updated continuously and to create jobs that provide the quality of work experience that allows people to be successful throughout careers in which change will be the norm.

In this vision, governments, citizens and businesses together will provide funding and a supportive environment for charities and non-profits that, in turn, will impart an essential contribution to a robust economy and quality of life. The result: a country in which Canadians will continue to be happy and productive and proud to live.

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