



Dr. Eric Hoskins
Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment
Communications and Public Affairs Branch
8th Floor, Hearst Block
900 Bay Street, Toronto, ON
M7A 1E1

November 29, 2013

Dear Minister Hoskins:

On behalf of the Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN), please accept our congratulations on the recent launch of “Impact: A Social Enterprise Strategy for Ontario.” ONN is very pleased to see your Ministry’s active leadership and strong recognition of social enterprise as playing a vital role in building a fairer and more prosperous province. The “Impact” strategy also provides a welcomed opportunity to deepen and expand the dialogue with key stakeholders on the policy and regulatory frame for social enterprise while taking concrete actions described in the strategy.

As you noted in your introductory message on Page 1: “Doing good is important. Doing it well is just as important.” As you may know, over the past number of years, leaders from the community nonprofit and cooperative sectors have pioneered the field of social enterprise. These organizations have been working diligently, despite many policy and regulatory challenges, at developing effective social enterprises. As a result, these organizations employ marginalized people and build community wealth and assets. It is gratifying to note that almost every example profiled in the strategy paper is a community-based, nonprofit social enterprise.

To this end, many of these same sector leaders with a strong social enterprise mandate have shared their concerns with us regarding the “Impact Strategy,” as the recommendations focus predominantly on emerging for-profit social enterprises. There is general agreement that the involvement of for-profit social enterprises is an exciting trend with significant possibilities. However, ONN believes that the strategy would be more effective if recommendations and their implementation were balanced by more deliberately supporting the growth and development of nonprofit social enterprises/cooperatives by creating an enabling environment through legislative, regulatory, policy and investment changes.

As highlighted in the “Impact Strategy,” the Mowat Centre’s Sector Signal Report identified the need for active research, debate and discussion about the current and future values and goals for the social enterprise movement. In short, this dialogue requires a high level of transparency involving a cross section of stakeholders to ensure the implementation of the strategy achieves this balance between profit and social impact.



Community-based, nonprofit social entrepreneurs need to be active participants in shaping the future social enterprise ecosystem envisioned by a strong and sustainable social enterprise strategy like “Impact.” New models of financing social programs and enterprises, including social impact bonds or hybrid for-profit corporations, must meet important tests of public interest, not just the ability to make a return on investment. This is particularly important given Ontario’s increasingly complex social and economic environment.

To advance the conversation on the implementation of the “Impact: A Social Enterprise Strategy for Ontario,” and to ensure broad participation in it, ONN respectfully requests a meeting with you and officials from the Office of Social Enterprise, to discuss ways that the implementation of this strategy can utilize the experience and expertise of nonprofit social entrepreneurs and their community-based organizations.

Thank you once again for your leadership in supporting and building social enterprise in Ontario. ONN shares your vision – “by making social enterprises stronger, we make our communities stronger and we build a prosperous and fair Ontario for everyone” – and looks forward to working collaboratively with you and your officials to achieve this vision for all Ontarians.

Sincerely yours,

Jini Stolk
Steering Committee Chair
Ontario Nonprofit Network

Cathy Taylor
Executive Director
Ontario Nonprofit Network