



Presentation by Cathy Taylor, executive director, to
Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector (Special)
October 1, 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chair and thank you to all of the Senators for the invitation to join you today.

We have a vision for employment in the nonprofit and charitable sector. Our vision is to mobilize a decent work movement across the Ontario nonprofit sector that will allow organizations to more effectively achieve their missions because they provide decent work to their employees. We believe it is vital to build a deeper understanding of the sector's workforce if we are to develop effective, long-term solutions for employers and employees alike.

Our premise: With healthier, happier, and better-supported workers, nonprofits can simply do a better job in meeting their mission and delivering their programs and services. And this will benefit all of our communities.

The nonprofit and charitable sector in Ontario, and Canada, is a critical part of the country's economy and social fabric. As you have heard, the nonprofit sector in Canada employs approximately two million Canadians, about 11% of the economically active population. That doesn't include over thirteen million volunteers who contribute enough hours to equal one million more full-time jobs.

In Ontario alone, we know that there are 58,000 organizations and we estimate there are one million nonprofit sector employees. An estimate, as there is either no or limited current workforce data for the nonprofit sector which is problematic for funders, policy makers and organizations.

The nonprofit sector differs from other sectors with its own characteristics, challenges, and opportunities that significantly impact employment in the sector.

ONN has been exploring labour force issues in Ontario's nonprofit sector for a number of years. Our work thus far has resulted in using the framework of "decent work".

This concept was developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and was introduced to us by the Atkinson Foundation. The definition of decent work is "Opportunities...to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity."

It is a lens to think about fair, equitable, and stable work - not just about meeting minimum requirements but also about creating a work environment in which diverse people can thrive.

In September 2015, Canada and 192 other UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Goal Number 8 on that list is: Decent work and economic growth. It reads: "Canada's commitment by 2030, is to achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and

men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.”

Therefore, Canada is committed to implementing decent work in our communities and we should build on this momentum in the nonprofit sector.

There are seven indicators of decent work that we believe have particular resonance for the nonprofit sector, according to our ChangeWork report that I would be happy to elaborate on.

- Employment opportunities
- Fair income
- Health and retirement benefits
- Stable employment
- Opportunities for development and advancement
- Equality and rights at work, and
- Culture and leadership

I want to take a moment to particularly highlight the issue of women workers in Ontario’s nonprofit sector.

80% of the sector consists of women workers but we know very little about how they are faring in the sector.

Given the critical intersections between labour, the nonprofit sector, and women, ONN has been exploring this question by applying a gender-based intersectional lens (GBA+) to its decent work movement with the support of Status of Women Canada. We have been compiling women’s voices on their employment experience in the sector and are releasing a report this month.

We have learned that gender plays a significant role in the sector’s labour market. We know the sector is women-majority but not women-led. We have also learned that women workers experience sexism and other forms of discrimination in the sector.

We believe this is a situation with some urgency. Demographic shifts tell us that leaders and employees in the nonprofit sector are soon to retire. Succession planning is limited. We don’t have the resources, benefits and supports to entice younger and diverse workers. And never have the services our sector provides been more desperately needed by our communities - shelters, food banks, immigrant services, after school sport programs, community arts programming. We need to attract and retain talent for the benefit of all Canadians.

We believe:

- There is a power in convening the voices of the sector and listening to lived experiences.
- There is an appetite in the nonprofit sector - all types and sizes of organizations - to improve working conditions.
- The “charity narrative” and “overhead myth” has deep roots and has a negative impact on the sector’s workforce.
- The nonprofit sector is often in an impossible situation - choosing between investing in staff and serving their community.

We respectfully recommend the Senate to consider:

- Better labour market information and data collection at the federal and provincial levels, with the support of Statistics Canada;
- Supporting the development of a specific nonprofit sector workforce strategy, with a particular focus on the demographic shifts, their implications (such as succession planning) and funding opportunities to support the sector;
- How federal grants and contributions can be reformed to allow for appropriate investments in staffing and meaningful administrative burden reduction;
- Applying a GBA+ lens and diversity lens, and solutions, to the nonprofit sector workforce;
- Those systems-level changes the federal government can take that would benefit nonprofit sector employees - as well as all employees in Canada - such as an increased minimum wage and a commitment to paying a living wage, CPP enhancements, pay transparency, gender wage gap solutions, a national child care strategy; and
- Support retirement savings and registered pensions plans, particularly portability within sectors and between provinces.

We wish to thank the Senate for undertaking this study and we look forward to the possibilities we can co-create together.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Cathy Taylor
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