

We're On Our Way

Supporting Durham's Non-Profit Sector through
(and post) the COVID-19 Pandemic

January 12, 2022

Presented by Joy Angelique Agres

- **Social Researcher, CDCD**

***THIS MEETING IS BEING RECORDED - BY
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CONSENTING TO BEING RECORDED.***

Agenda

- **Welcome and Introductions**
- **Acknowledgements**
- **Project Overview**
- **Major Findings**
- **Next Steps**
- **Thank You and Adjournment**

Acknowledgements

Thank you to:

Nathan Gardner, Former Team Lead, CDCD

Neemarie Alam, Former Lead Social Researcher, CDCD

Project Partners

- Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade
- Ajax-Pickering Hospital Foundation
- Durham Child and Youth Planning Network
- Durham Community Foundation
- United Way Durham Region

All the Organizations that participated as Key Informants

- AIDS Committee of Durham Region
- Boys and Girls Club of Durham
- Feed the Need Durham
- Oshawa Seniors Community Centre
- Salvation Army
- Scientists in Schools
- Their Opportunity
- Whitby Chamber of Commerce
- Women's Multicultural Resource and Counselling Centre

Stakeholders who participated as our Orientation Informants

- Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade
- Community Development Council Durham
- Durham Community Foundation
- Municipality of Clarington
- Region of Durham
- Town of Ajax

Focus Group Participants

- 1855 Whitby-Technology Accelerator
- A Gift of Art
- Bowmanville Older Adults Association
- Community Care Durham
- Community Justice Alternatives of Durham Region
- Durham Association for Family Resources and Support
- Durham Children's Aid Foundation
- Gate 3:16 Outreach Centre
- John Howard Society of Durham Region
- Precious Minds Support Services

Project Overview

About This Report

- In March 2020, Community Development Council Durham (CDCD) came together with community partners to distribute a survey on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the non-profit sector in the Durham region.
- The "Connected Through Uncertainty" report depicted how the pandemic created a landscape of uncertainty for many Durham non-profits - with questions about how non-profits would continue to remain operational and service vulnerable communities.
- Six months after the start of the pandemic, non-profit challenges and needs shifted, and most sought sustainability.

Project Overview



5 Advisory Group Members

Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade, Ajax-Pickering Hospital Foundation, Durham Child and Youth Planning Network, Durham Community Foundation, and United Way Durham Region

91

Key Stakeholders were identified as potential project participants



2 Focus Groups of 12 Non-profit Stakeholders

6 Orientation Interviews

10 Key Interviews

Project Overview

Report Limitations

As with all qualitative data analysis, there are several limitations to consider. In comparison to quantitative data analysis, it is difficult to maintain and assess the rigour of the data.

While efforts were made to report content accurately, the report may not have always captured the exact intention of certain statements - the research team made a concerted effort to re-connect with participants to clarify statements where possible.

The research team responsible for this report made it a priority to mitigate and minimize researcher bias through the analysis and writing.

Lastly, despite considerable outreach efforts, there was unequal cross representation of stakeholders and non-profit sub-sectors. Larger organizations with more staff were more likely to participate than grassroots and smaller organizations and efforts. Therefore, the report may more accurately reflect more established organizational input and feedback, and may not be accurate for grassroots or smaller organizations.

Project Overview

Where We Are Now

- Early in the pandemic, Durham non-profits struggled with their daily needs and fulfilling their mission and mandate in the middle of unprecedented uncertainty.
- With determination and resilience, non-profits have adapted to the ever-changing provincial and municipal conditions and mandates.
- However, recovery is a long road. Building avenues for non-profits to genuinely collaborate and share ideologies to combat structural and systemic issues without competition will be the foundation for the sector to equitably recover.

Project Overview

Where We Are Now (cont.)


- What are the most important recommendations for your organization? Why?
- Whom do we need to connect and engage with to carry out these recommendations?
- What information and/or recommendations did you find most relevant to enhancing your organization's work?
- What information and/or recommendations did you find most surprising?

Project Overview

Information collected was organized into the following sections:

Key Point 1	Key Point 2	Key Point 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector Description • Operational Challenges • Staff Specific Challenges • Impact of COVID-19 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding • Collaboration and Innovation • Competition in the Non-Profit Sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Building • Relationship with the Regional Government • Grassroots

Major Findings

Key Point 1 	Key Point 2 	Key Point 3 
<p>COVID-19 highlighted existing infrastructural challenges in Durham's non-profit sector.</p>	<p>Durham's non-profit sector collaborates often for project delivery and to address issues specific to a particular sub-sector but there is little to no collaboration for sector-wide convening and planning.</p> <p>Barriers to sector-wide collaboration include competitive funding structures and limited resources.</p>	<p>Governments and private investors must intentionally find new ways to ensure non-profit engagement and participation with a multitude of voices.</p>

Major Findings

Key Point 1



COVID-19 highlighted existing infrastructural challenges in Durham's non-profit sector.

Key Recommendations

Sector Description

- Recovery strategies intended for Durham region must consider several regional nuances, including geography and proximity to Toronto, and sub-sectoral representation.

Operational Challenges

- Staff retention strategies should be considered, updated, and included in strategic planning and organizational policies.

“As a not-for-profit I think the challenges are probably the same as most as funding is always an issue. Finding qualified people to be able to handle that changing environment is difficult and retention of employees is difficult. We always know in the [Organization] that we are often a stepping stone because we just don't have the capacity to pay high salaries. Our retention has been pretty good in the last five, six years, but oftentimes there could be a high turnover in certain things, and then they go off and get a big, high paying job with the government.”

Major Findings

Key Point 1



COVID-19 highlighted existing infrastructural challenges in Durham's non-profit sector.

Key Recommendations

Operational Challenges (cont.)

- Encourage non-profits who are operating with ample space to consider how to safely use space more collectively.
- Provide access to non-profits requiring bigger spaces, as well as innovative opportunities to safely utilize excess space available throughout the pandemic.

People Problems

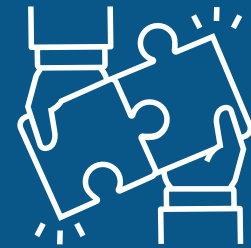
- The non-profit sector must review policies and work-life imbalances that disproportionately impact women (i.e., childcare, maternity leave).

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Major Findings

"We have no core funding. We have to rely [on] grants to grants; projects to projects...sometimes when you get lucky, you have some stability with two to three year, 5 year grants. Organizations need to be supported, especially [administrative personnel]."

Key Point 2



Key Recommendations

Durham's non-profit sector collaborates often for project delivery and to address issues specific to a particular sub-sector but there is little to no collaboration for sector-wide convening and planning.

Barriers to sector-wide collaboration include competitive funding structures and limited resources.

Funding

- Invest in more administrative, core, and operational funding - including staff funding.
- Encourage and support organizational policy development.
- Invest in grassroots and small organizations who may require support to develop suitable infrastructure.
- Support reserve funding, and allow for fund retention post-funding cycle.
- Continue to display unprecedented adaptability.
- Clearly showcase non-profit needs and successes, and encourage openness and vulnerability about financial realities.

Major Findings

"We have no core funding. We have to rely [on] grants to grants; projects to projects...sometimes when you get lucky, you have some stability with two to three year, 5 year grants. Organizations need to be supported, especially [administrative personnel]."

Key Point 2



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Key Recommendations

Collaboration and Innovation

- Create a Collective Impact Stream of funding that focuses on collaboration and planning for collective issues rather than implementation - include salaried positions responsible for coordination.
- Introduce different models of collaboration and how it can be applied to the non-profit sector in Durham - participants noted that we need to collaborate outside of the immediate sector.
- Fund and host forums on collaboration with project partners.

Major Findings

"We have no core funding. We have to rely [on] grants to grants; projects to projects...sometimes when you get lucky, you have some stability with two to three year, 5 year grants. Organizations need to be supported, especially [administrative personnel]."

Key Point 2



Durham's non-profit sector collaborates often for project delivery and to address issues specific to a particular sub-sector but there is little to no collaboration for sector-wide convening and planning.

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Key Recommendations

Collaboration and Innovation (cont.)

- Create a centralized location that houses important shared resources such as needs and program assessment; organizational policies; terms of reference; and templates.
- A centralized, virtual location can provide current and future community projects with resources for collaboration and marketing.
- Encouraging non-profits to set aside organizational agendas, and create a "common agenda."

Major Findings

Key Point 3

Governments and private investors must intentionally find new ways to ensure non-profit engagement and participation with a multitude of voices.

Key Recommendations

Relationship with Durham Region

- Establish a formal relationship or framework on how the non-profit sector and the Region could work together - it can include the following elements:
 - Change the narrative around the non-profit sector.
 - Re-imagine the non-profit sector as part of various leaderships tables.

"So these funders and [the] Region need to make sure that they have an understanding of all the players and they need to have an understanding of when they're making decisions about resources or partnerships or who should be at what table that they're reaching out to the people who have the expertise in whatever area they're working on."

Major Findings

Key Point 3

Governments and private investors must intentionally find new ways to ensure non-profit engagement and participation with a multitude of voices.

Key Recommendations

Relationship with Durham Region (cont.)

- Establish a community of practice table.
- Keep an eye to the future.
- Develop iterative processes with continual feedback mechanisms.

Grassroots

- Offer grassroots groups that are seeking formal registration as a non-profit the support needed.
- Create more streams of funding for grassroots in a mentor or trustee model.
- Offer service mapping and information sharing and informal integration into service plans to establish better working relationships.

"So these funders and [the] Region need to make sure that they have an understanding of all the players and they need to have an understanding of when they're making decisions about resources or partnerships or who should be at what table that they're reaching out to the people who have the expertise in whatever area they're working on."

Questions

- What are the most important recommendations for your organization? Why?
- Whom do we need to connect and engage with to carry out these recommendations?
- What information and/or recommendations did you find most relevant to enhancing your organization's work?
- What information and/or recommendations did you find most surprising?

Next Steps

- Release the finalized and full Phase II Report.
- Present the finalized Phase II Report at an official launch event / upcoming forum.
- Identify and purchase software and technology to be shared amongst Durham non-profits to enhance our work - today and beyond the pandemic ([please see link in the comments for the SurveyMonkey](#)).
- Host 3 webinars and workshops on topics of interest for Durham non-profits from now until February 28 ([please see link in the comments for the SurveyMonkey](#)).
- ACTION: Continue to collaborate with our partners and stakeholders to strategize and carry out these recommendations together.

Contact Us

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