

March 6, 2015

**Makes  
Sense  
Consultants**

**PROGRAM REVIEW: A REPORT TO THE  
COMMUNITY SECTOR COUNCIL OF NOVA  
SCOTIA**

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

March 6, 2015

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**PROGRAM REVIEW: A REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY SECTOR  
COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA**

Program Review was conducted between December 15, 2014 and March 6, 2015  
by Makes Sense Consultants for  
The Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia.

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## Executive Summary

This Program Review is intended to assess the initial impact of Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia (Community Sector Council) activities on the non-profit sector in Nova Scotia. The Community Sector Council has been in existence only since December, 2012, and staffed since March, 2013, which is insufficient time for fundamental shift within the sector. It is possible, however, to identify initial impact and perceptions of the potential role of the Community Sector Council within the sector.

The consultants adopted three primary techniques in the Program Review: a review of background documents; an on-line survey; and confidential interviews with 21 individuals who are familiar with the Community Sector Council and its objectives, or who have participated in training offered by the Community Sector Council.

The Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia was established following extensive research by and consultation within the non-profit sector to bring non-profit and voluntary organizations together to help them meet the needs of Nova Scotia's citizens and communities and to work collaboratively to find innovative solutions to emerging and existing sector issues. The Community Sector Council was created in December, 2012 with a mandate to strengthen the sector through collaboration. The goals are:

- To improve human resources planning;
- To improve strategies for attracting and retaining staff and volunteers;
- To increase access to training opportunities;
- To increase a sense of identity as a sector and better capacity to form partnerships and act collectively.

The Community Sector Council received funding for just over two years from two sources within the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE): the Sector Council program provided funding for 27 months (January 2013-March 2015) and the Voluntary Sector Division (since moved to the Department of Community Services) provided start-up funds for 25 months (March 2013-March 2015), as a one-time only grant. This funding has allowed the Community Sector Council to engage staff and establish a strong regional network of six convenors throughout the Province. With the end of the 2014-15 fiscal year on March 31, the initial funding agreements will expire. The Community Sector Council has been assured of continued financial support through the Sector Council program, but the support provided by the Voluntary Sector Division, which supported the regional structure, will end.

### Conclusions

The consultants found significant support for the Community Sector Council, especially for the strong regional presence through the convenors. The Community Sector Council has established significant

presence and credibility within the sector through the delivery of high quality and relevant training programs, especially in human resources management. This is a valuable base from which to move to the strategic mandate of providing opportunities for the sector to engage in the collaborative definition of its vision and role in Nova Scotia's social, cultural and economic future. Across the province, the visibility of the Community Sector Council rests largely with the six regional convenors, who have maintained effective communications within their communities. The core funding available through the Sector Council Program does not pay for the regional services.

Financial sustainability is the most critical issue facing the Community Sector Council. With the end of a significant portion of the funding from the provincial government, the organization is challenged to find alternate sources of funding. This is especially important in light of the fact that much of the Community Sector Council strength and effectiveness is perceived to be in its regional structure.

The labour market challenges facing the non-profit sector are complex and will require full deployment of the Community Sector Council's convening role to ensure that the sector is fully engaged in the conversation and the eventual resolution. The questions of succession planning, and retirement provisions for long term employees in non-profit organizations become more pressing with the passage of time.

## **Recommendations**

The Community Sector Council should begin to develop opportunities for the sector to engage in the collaborative definition of its vision and role in Nova Scotia's social, cultural and economic future. The following recommendations are intended to assist the Community Sector Council establish the basis for an effective and productive strategic engagement with the non-profit sector across the Province.

1. Given the importance of the regional structure to the Community Sector Council's visibility and credibility within the sector, it is imperative that strong regional representation be maintained. The regional convenors can be strengthened in their roles by:
  - Employing the website to support regional communications
  - Establishing regional councils of non-profits to foster community support for convenors, and to ensure inclusivity in the Community Sector Council processes.
  
2. Financial sustainability must be achieved. The Community Sector Council is urged to consider the full range of available options for improving financial sustainability, including:
  - Ensuring budget priority is given to the regional convening function
  - Facilitating access to training from non-Community Sector Council sources
  - Considering sliding scale fees for membership and training
  - Reviewing funding relationships with host organizations.

3. Partnerships are vital components of the financial sustainability plan, as well as being critical to achieving a broader understanding of the non-profit sector and its role in the health of communities. It is recommended that the Community Sector Council develop and implement a partnership framework that identifies:
  - Potential partners within the non-profit sector to enhance collaborative initiatives to address the key issues, challenges and opportunities affecting the sector
  - Clear objectives and priorities, supported by practical strategies, to recruit partners from the private sector and academia
  - A government relations strategy to support partnerships between government departments and the non-profit sector.
  
4. The Community Sector Council can build on the success and strength of the human resource management training to begin the process of resolving the questions of succession planning, recruitment and retention, and the establishment of benefits and pensions for non-profit sector employees. It is vital that voices from the sector be recognized in a process that is focused on achieving a resolution and an action plan on these urgent issues.

## Purpose of the Report

This report is intended to provide an assessment of the Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia's activities, which will help to guide the development of future activities in consultation with the non-profit sector, based on consideration of the following:

- Quantitative and qualitative overview of early impacts of the Community Sector Council's activities in support of the non-profit sector organizations in Nova Scotia;
- Assessment of sector perception of the Community Sector Council's role in strengthening the sector.

## Background and Context

The Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia (Community Sector Council) is the result of several years of research and consultation about the issues confronting the non-profit sector in the Province. In particular, the research report *At the Same Table*<sup>1</sup> by Phoenix and the Federation of Community Organizations (FOCO) recommended the creation of a "formal structure to represent the common interests of the non-profit sector in Nova Scotia". The same report indicated that "such a body should:

- Be accountable to the sector with effective multi-directional communication and be responsive to feedback;
- Be autonomous, not housed within government;
- Be inclusive of minority voices and voices on the margins, including women, Francophone, African Nova Scotian, Aboriginal and LGBTQ communities;
- Be action oriented;
- Be consultative with stakeholders; and,
- Be sustainable, able to survive changes in government."

The sector saw an opportunity to address labour force issues when the Sector Council funding was announced by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (LAE) in 2011. A consultant was engaged to consider the sector's interest in pursuing this opportunity. The resulting report, *Proposal to Develop a Provincial Council for the Non-profit Sector in Nova Scotia*, provided a strategic plan for what was to become the Community Sector Council. The Board of Directors was established, and the new Community Sector Council announced in December, 2012. An executive director was hired in March, 2013, and a regional coordinator in July, 2013.

In common with other Sector Councils, the focus of the Community Sector Council is the wide range of labour issues confronting the sector, including the need to attract and retain younger employees and employees from diverse communities, succession planning, and the provision of pension benefits to allow aging senior employees to retire.

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<sup>1</sup> At the Same Table, Phoenix & FOCO, p 3

Additional funding secured through the Voluntary Sector Division of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (now part of the Department of Community Services) would allow the Community Sector Council to establish a regional presence throughout the Province, and provide no-cost training for the sector.

The Program Review considered research reports which identified issues and challenges facing the non-profit sector in Nova Scotia, as well as a proposal for the creation of the Community Sector Council. As background to the role and purpose of the Community Sector Council, these documents highlighted an immediate challenge in human resource planning and management. Both the research reports and the subsequent proposal for establishment of the Community Sector Council established a need to engage the entire sector in a conversation about the immediate challenges, as well as to generate an overarching vision and identity for the non-profit sector.

The objectives identified in the agreements with the Sector Council Program and the Volunteerism and Non-Profit Sector Division address those two priorities.

A logic model developed by the Community Sector Council (Appendix A) defines the actions, and short, medium and long-term outcomes in five critical areas: human resource planning; attraction and retention; training; capacity building; and evaluation.

Although it is anticipated that the Community Sector Council will retain the core Sector Council funding moving into the 2015-16 budget year, the early “start-up” funding stream from the Voluntary Sector Division was a one-time only grant. In addition to this anticipated budget adjustment, it is expected that the next provincial budget will reflect the results of a government-wide program review and will require reductions by departments.

In order to retain provincial funding, and generate support from other sectors, it is critical that the Community Sector Council demonstrate value to the non-profit organizations, and the communities and citizens they serve.

## **Overall Goals of the Community Sector Council**

The goals of the Community Sector Council are reflected in two agreements with the Province of Nova Scotia. The first of these is the partnership funding agreement with Sector Council Program of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (Appendix B) to support a sector-led approach to human resource development in the non-profit sector. The agreement states that the Community Sector Council “will take leadership on bringing together sector organizations, with a particular focus on collectively and collaboratively addressing the identified labour force and human resource challenges. For the first three years of its mandate, the Community Sector Council has set the following goals and outcomes:

- 1) To improve human resource planning in the non-profit sector with the outcome that non-profits are better supported in managing their paid human resources.
- 2) To improve attraction and retention in the non-profit sector. The outcomes from this goal are: better understanding of the concept of total compensation and how it can be used in the non-profit sector; and, shared knowledge about workplace diversity.
- 3) To improve training for non-profits with the outcome that there is access to information about existing training and learning opportunities for paid employees in the sector.
- 4) To further develop the non-profit sector by convening, communicating and connecting with non-profit organizations across the province. The outcome from this goal is an increased sense of belonging in the non-profit sector.”<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the Community Sector Council received funding from the NPV Sector Capacity Partnership Fund administered by the Volunteerism and Non-profit Sector Division of the NS Department of Labour and Advanced Education (Appendix C).

The Fund “provides resources to support learning and development initiatives that build the management and organizational capacity and competencies of the sector. It also builds the capacity of the Sector Council to meet its priorities of: human resources planning; attraction and retention; and training.

The Sector Council’s work will be grounded in communities across the province to ensure local ownership and engagement.”<sup>3</sup>

Specific outcomes identified in the March, 2013 Agreement were:

- Outcome #1 – Enhanced funding support for work of regional hubs
- Outcome #2 – Full time staff person coordinating all aspects of the outreach and learning activities for the Sector Council
- Outcome #3 - Training and development funds that build management and organizational capacity and competencies of the Nova Scotia Non-profit Voluntary Sector (NPVS)
- Outcome #4 – Collaboration, coordination and shared learning amongst all partners<sup>4</sup>

## **Overall Review Goals**

This Review assesses the initial impact of the Community Sector Council’s activities on the non-profit sector in Nova Scotia, and provides recommendations on the future direction and activities of the Community Sector Council.

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<sup>2</sup> Sector Council Program Partnership Funding Agreement, p. 1

<sup>3</sup> Statement of Work, NPV Sector Capacity Partnership Fund, p. 2

<sup>4</sup> Statement of Work, NPV Sector Capacity Partnership Fund, p. 3

## Methodology

The consultants reviewed the background materials and reports provided by the Community Sector Council, as well as reports leading up to the creation of the Community Council (Appendix D). In addition, a general survey was distributed to the 1800-person contact list held by the Community Sector Council, including those of the regional convenors. (The Community Sector Council's contact list had been rebuilt in compliance with federal legislation introduced July 1, 2014.) A link to the seven question online survey was distributed January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, which was accessed through the internet. There were 316 responses to the survey.

The survey questions and statistical results are shown in Appendix E.

Survey participants were invited to identify themselves if they were interested in doing a more detailed interview with the consultant. Thirty-six of the participants volunteered to be interviewed, and a selection was made based on geographic and sub-sector distribution.

A total of 21 confidential interviews was conducted by the consultants. In addition to the selected survey participants who volunteered to be interviewed, the consultants interviewed regional convenors, board members, members of the advisory group that established the Community Sector Council and other members of the sector, as well as government officials in partner organizations. Every effort was made within the time available to ensure a broadly representative sample. Based on an interpretation of the Community Sector Council outcomes and objectives for this program review, consultants employed the following interview guide for the interviews which helped identify trends and continuity in analysis.

- **Awareness** of the Community Sector Council, and local convenors, and of the mandate and activities of the organization.
- **Training** programs provided by the Community Sector Council, including web-based resources.
- **Networking and Connecting** opportunities, and their effectiveness in allowing the sector to become more aware of its own diversity and common issues, and in uniting the sector.
- **The Community Sector Council as Catalyst for Change**, and the potential for the Community Sector Council beyond the current training focus.

*The short duration of the Community Sector Council's activities makes it difficult to discern any significant shifts within the sector as a result of their training or information sharing. Thus, the impact of the Community Sector Council has been assessed on the basis of perceptions of value expressed by the participants in training and other programs.*

## Findings

Although it is too soon to determine even short-term outcomes of the Community Sector Council activities and programs, there are clear indications and perceptions of impact and potential impact within the sector. Findings are organized under the organization's four goals:

- To improve human resources planning;
- To improve strategies for attracting and retaining staff and volunteers;
- To increase access to training opportunities;
- To increase a sense of identity as a sector and better capacity to form partnerships and act collectively.

#### **A. Document Review**

In addition to the early research and background documents and the formal agreements cited above, the consultants reviewed reports submitted by the Community Sector Council to its funders, as well as reports submitted by the host organizations to the Community Sector Council and online evaluations completed by workshop participants. The Community Sector Council website was a resource for current information. For comparison, the consultants reviewed the websites of the eight other Nova Scotia Sector Councils, and the website of the Community Sector Council of Newfoundland and Labrador.

These documents demonstrated the following progress:

**Human Resource Planning-** The Community Sector Council adopted the comprehensive human resource training model developed by the HR Council for the Nonprofit Sector and managed by Community Foundations of Canada, and ensured that facilitators were trained to deliver the program in English and French. Training was delivered in all regions of the Province to 274 individuals (representing 222 organizations), exceeding the Community Sector Council's goal of 180 organizations. Similarly the Community Sector Council adopted the National Guidelines for Volunteer Screening developed by Volunteer Canada to offer volunteer screening workshops through a partnership with Volunteer Canada. To date, the Community Sector Council has delivered volunteer workshops to 213 individuals (representing 143 organizations). The Community Sector Council plans to eventually deliver volunteer screening workshops to 500 organizations.

**Attraction and Retention-** Workshops were conducted to foster youth engagement; 238 individuals participated in the Youth Engagement workshops. The Community Sector Council has participated in panel discussions to inform students about careers in the non-profit sector, and organized other non-profits in order to have a strong sector presence at the Halifax Career Fair in September 2014. A session on employee benefit plans for the non-profit sector formed a major part of the Community Sector Council's conference in June, 2014.

**Access to Training-** In addition to the Human Resource, Volunteer Management, and Youth Engagement training, the Community Sector Council developed and delivered workshops in labour, safety and human rights management, grant-writing, organizational branding, fund development, social media, and Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation (Appendix F). In

partnership with Tamarack Institute, the Community Sector Council provided workshops on evaluation (*Measuring Impact*) between December 2014 and March 2015. The Community Sector Council has also identified and promoted training opportunities offered by other organizations, including government initiatives, such as Skills on Line, and Workplace Education Initiatives. The Community Sector Council also promoted the online self-assessment tool *Take Stock*, which helps organizations to identify training gaps. Evaluations conducted after each training session provided the Community Sector Council with feedback about other training gaps and requirements.

***Sense of Identity as a Sector***- This includes raising the profile of the Community Sector Council and creating a regional hub structure to establish a presence across the Province. The Community Sector Council has developed a website and social media profiles to raise awareness of and promote their activities. The establishment of the regional convenors within host organizations facilitated regional network building and communication. The Community Sector Council also sponsored a provincial conference in June, 2014; 200 people registered for the conference and 75 joined via live-streaming. The Community Sector Council has undertaken outreach opportunities to government and community leaders.

The Community Sector Council reports refer to the development of partnerships as an indicator of success, and it has developed partnerships with a wide range of organizations, as delineated in Appendix G. An overall partnership framework, outlining objectives and principles, has not been developed.

To help meet its goal to develop a sense of identity within the sector, the Community Sector Council identified the collection and analysis of data about the non-profit sector, and the development and dissemination of evaluation strategies and methods throughout the sector. The Community Sector Council was represented on a government research initiative on the non-profit sector and served on an advisory committee.

## **B. Host Organization Reports**

There are six regional convenors employed by the Community Sector Council and each is located within a host organization. The host organizations receive stipends from the Community Sector Council to provide office and administrative support to the convenors. As part of the agreement with the Community Sector Council, the host organizations submit quarterly reports which describe the impact of the regional hubs and convenors have had on the host organizations' regions. The reports clearly indicate that the host organizations see value in this arrangement and more specifically believe that:

- they enjoy heightened awareness and profile of their own organization due to the convenors' presence

- they are able to promote the Community Sector Council and to leverage the Community Sector Council's resources
- they witness strong networks being formed as a result of the convenors' work
- they have increased knowledge of funding and training opportunities
- they have a better understanding of the value of creating partnerships within the sector
- they have a greater appreciation of the challenges facing non-profits in their region and within the sector as a whole
- they have a stronger awareness of the need for regionalized training

### **C. Survey**

The 316 returned surveys represent an overall survey response rate of 17.5% which is a remarkably positive result for any online survey. In addition to this relatively high response rate is the overwhelmingly positive reaction to both the establishment of the Community Sector Council, particularly the regional convener model, and the no fee access to training delivered in the six regions across the province. The following numbers highlight the survey findings (rounded to the nearest whole number).

#### ***Human Resource Planning***

- Comments related to HR Planning include:
  - *"I attended the HR sessions last year and really enjoyed it. It was very educational and helpful."*
  - *"We enjoyed the workshops and look forward to future workshops."*
  - *"Two of the several we've attended were the volunteer screening and the HR course, both of which were of very high quality and increased my knowledge and skill level as well as the capacity of my organization. "*
  - *"The resources and calibre of training were above expectations."*
  - *"The HR workshops provided excellent info that I use regularly. Info was great was great and facilitator was great."*

#### **Attraction & Retention**

- Comments related to attraction and retention issues include:
  - *"recruitment and retention issues remain a big concern..."*
  - *"Our greatest asset is our people' – one rallying cry heard by the One NS Report. It is initiatives, such as the work accomplished by CSC which make this statement true."*
  - *"I work for an non-profit and also I am currently chair of another, and we are both taking advantage of workshops [offered by CSC]"*

**Access to Training**

- 78% of respondents have accessed training offered by CSC, with 91% of those stating that it “has improved the capacity of [our] organization.”
- Respondents who did not participate in the training (68 responses) indicated that their reasons ranged from scheduling conflicts, found out too late to register, had not heard of the Community Sector Council, already taken similar training or too expensive to travel or just not enough time at all for training.
- Most stated that the training is meeting a need and the fact it is within their region and free of charge made it highly accessible. “really enjoyed the training opportunities”, “The workshops have been easy to access thanks to their free cost and local availability, which cuts time on time spent away from the office.”
- Other comments include
  - “Availability of online training courses for front line workers would be extremely beneficial, as replacement time is costly for offsite training.”
  - “The workshops are very beneficial and applicable to the work we do.”
  - “Thank you for making training available for organizations that would otherwise not be able to afford workshops.”
  - “Keep up the good work – and start to charge reasonable prices for it.”

**Sense of Identity as a Sector**

- Many respondents noted the value of the networking and information sharing. The regional Community Sector Council newsletters struck a positive note and desire to know what is going on and “learning about all the opportunities available to the nfp sector.”
- A number commented on not knowing anything about the Community Sector Council and its need to improve its profile and reach to particular components of the sector, for instance the arts and heritage organizations.
- Many comments expressed support for the Community Sector Council to continue its mandate to reach out to the sector organizations and some stated for instance, “I am hopeful that the Council will move into more advocacy work for the sector.”
- 59% have accessed the Community Sector Council on-line resources.  
87% agree that the Community Sector Council has been effective in improving communication and connections within the sector.
- 84% agree that the Community Sector Council has been effective in increasing awareness of the scope and diversity of the sector.
- Comments include:
  - “We enjoy have found useful the monthly bulletins”.
  - “The networking opportunities and the knowledge exchanges ...provide an additional benefit to any of the workshops I have attended. These have proven to establish new partnerships and opportunities to collaborate on

projects. This enhances the work we do in a meaningful and cost-effective way.”

- “Great way to connect with other members in my community as well as other communities.”
- “I would like to see information about the size and impact of the sector. More communications from the council and more networking opportunities...”

#### D. Interviews

**Human Resource Planning** – There was general praise among the interviewees for the quality of the training in human resource management. Non-profit employees who had participated in the training, especially, were pleased that they were able to employ the techniques and practices learned in the sessions, and felt that the training had allowed them to strengthen their organizations, and make better use of financial and other resources as a result.

**Attraction and Retention** – Interview participants believed that the Community Sector Council could play a useful role in developing a sector wide approach to benefits and pensions, but most were not aware of any activity in that area. Those who mentioned the session at the June, 2014 conference did not believe there had been any further discussion.

**Training** – The non-profit employees who were interviewed were very aware of the training role of the Community Sector Council. Although some were aware of the resources available on the website, this does not appear to be an established source of information and guidance for the sector. In contrast, the newsletters and updates provided by individual convenors within their regions were highly valued and considered a significant resource.

The interviewees were unanimous in their praise for the quality and the value of the training programs. Most had participated in the human resources management training, and many of those had immediately implemented the learning from the sessions. Both the course material and the leaders were scored highly by the interviewees.

Although the no-cost provision of training was recognized and appreciated by the participants, most felt that a small (or sliding scale) cost would be appropriate. The availability of high quality training in the local area was also a positive factor.

It should be noted that people working in the non-profit sector, especially small organizations, have less access to training and professional development than other sectors, and therefore tend to be appreciative of most opportunities. The response to the

Community Sector Council training was far beyond this level, and people were very specific in identifying the very practical improvements the training had allowed them to effect in their own organizations—from the creation of human resource policies to the development of an effective strategy to identify potential funding sources.

In addition to the intrinsic value of the training, most people expressed an appreciation of the opportunity to meet others in the non-profit sector, and some participants explicitly identified a better understanding of the common issues across organizations with diverse mandates and client bases.

***Sense of Identity as a Sector*** - Awareness of the Community Sector Council was high among those who participated in the survey and follow-up interviews. There was less clarity around the awareness of the mandate of the Community Sector Council, especially the broader (and probably more challenging) role of bringing the sector together around common issues and goals. Interviewees who had considered this role confirmed that the Community Sector Council had made progress in establishing awareness and credibility with the strength of the training programs, but felt it was important to move onto some of the strategic issues facing the sector. The role is not to speak on behalf of, or represent the sector, but to ensure that the sector has an opportunity to discuss the issues and explore resolutions. One interviewee identified that role as “creating a space for different voices to speak of common issues”.

Most people interviewed felt that the regional structure of the Community Sector Council was a critical factor in its success. The structure allows the Community Sector Council to deliver training close to many organizations who could afford neither time nor cost of travelling to Halifax or some other centre for training. Great value was placed on the role of individual convenors in keeping the sector informed of upcoming events (in time to plan for attendance) and general information of interest to the sector.

Most of the convenors have become part of existing networks within their regions, and are assessing the needs and aspirations of the sector in their region. They are also aware of their role as “convenors”, rather than coordinators or representatives, and are beginning to consider how they can effectively serve as convenors of strategic conversations to support the sector.

While interviewees did not express any interest in traditional “networking” for the sake of getting together, they see a role for the Community Sector Council in leading conversations about and efforts to resolve issues such as pensions and benefits, or working with government to standardize information requirements for grant applications. There was also interest in the Community Sector Council as an advocate for non-profits with the public and private sectors, and as a clearing house of reliable information on the non-profit sector.

## E. Additional Findings

The following observations do not fit neatly into the previous categories, but were raised with sufficient frequency to make them important considerations for the Community Sector Council.

***The Community Sector Council as catalyst for change*** - While many interviewees had not considered the role of the Community Sector Council as a change agent, there was significant interest among the convenors and members of the sector in seeing the Community Sector Council step up to a more strategic and stronger role in identifying and addressing the issues. There is also a sense that the Community Sector Council is in a position to reinforce the importance of the non-profit sector in delivering public and community services, and in strengthening the fabric of communities.

It was noted by some interviewees that the Community Sector Council had not conducted analysis of or research on the sector.

***Organizational Strength***- Although not asked specifically in the interviews, concern for the organizational strength of the Community Sector Council informed many comments by interviewees, and was reflected in the background documents. At present, all funding is provided by government under agreements that expire at the end of March, 2015. This places the organization at considerable risk, especially with respect to the regional structure which has been identified as a key strength.

## Conclusions

The Community Sector Council has established significant presence and credibility within the sector through the delivery of high quality and relevant training programs, especially in human resources management. This is a valuable base from which to move to the strategic mandate of providing opportunities for the sector to engage in the collaborative definition of its vision and role in Nova Scotia's social, cultural and economic future. Across the province, the visibility of the Community Sector Council rests largely with the six regional convenors, who have maintained effective communications within their communities. The core funding available through the Sector Council Program does not pay for the regional services.

Financial sustainability is the most critical issue facing the Community Sector Council. With the end of a significant portion of the funding from the provincial government, the organization is challenged to find alternate sources of funding. This is especially important in light of the fact that much of the Community Sector Council strength and effectiveness is perceived to be in its regional structure.

The labour market challenges facing the non-profit sector are complex and will require full deployment of the Community Sector Council's convening role to ensure that the sector is fully engaged in the conversation and the eventual resolution. The questions of succession planning, and reasonable retirement provisions for long term employees in non-profit organizations become more pressing with the passage of time.

## **Recommendations**

The Community Sector Council should begin to develop opportunities for the sector to engage in the collaborative definition of its vision and role in Nova Scotia's social, cultural and economic future. The following recommendations are intended to assist the Community Sector Council establish the basis for an effective and productive strategic engagement with the non-profit sector across the Province.

1. Given the importance of the regional structure to the Community Sector Council's visibility and credibility within the sector, it is imperative that strong regional representation be maintained. The regional convenors can be strengthened in their roles by:
  - Employing the website to support regional communications
  - Establishing regional councils of non-profits to foster community support for convenors, and to ensure inclusivity in the Community Sector Council processes.
2. Financial sustainability must be achieved. The Community Sector Council is urged to consider the full range of available options for improving financial sustainability, including:
  - Ensuring budget priority is given to the regional convening function
  - Facilitating access to training from non-Community Sector Council sources
  - Considering sliding scale fees for membership and training
  - Reviewing funding relationships with host organizations.
3. Partnerships are vital components of the financial sustainability plan, as well as being critical to achieving a broader understanding of the non-profit sector and its role in the health of communities. It is recommended that the Community Sector Council develop and implement a partnership framework that identifies:
  - Potential partners within the non-profit sector to enhance collaborative initiatives to address the key issues, challenges and opportunities affecting the sector
  - Clear objectives and priorities, supported by practical strategies, to recruit partners from the private sector and academia

- A government relations strategy to support partnerships between government departments and the non-profit sector.
4. The Community Sector Council can build on the success and strength of the human resource management training to begin the process of resolving the questions of succession planning, recruitment and retention, and the establishment of benefits and pensions for non-profit sector employees. It is vital that voices from the sector be recognized in a process that is focussed on achieving a resolution and an action plan on these urgent issues.

March 6, 2015

## Appendix A Logic Model

Available at

<http://csc-ns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Appendix-A-Logic-Model.pdf>

**Appendix B**

**Partnership Funding Agreement between the  
Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia**

**And**

**The Department of Labour and Advanced Education**

**January 2013 – March 31, 2015**

**Available at**

<http://csc-ns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Appendix-B-SCP-Funding-Agreement.pdf>

## Appendix C

### Statement of Work (SOW)

To be undertaken by

**Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia**

For

**Volunteerism and Non-Profit Sector Division**

**NS Department of Labour and Advanced Education**

**NVP Sector Capacity Partnership Fund**

**March 2013**

**Available at:**

<http://csc-ns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Appendix-C-Statement-of-Work-VSD-Mar-2013.pdf>

## **Appendix D**

### **List of Documents Reviewed**

*At the Table Report* (Phoenix and FOCO)

Proposal to Develop a Provincial Council for the Nonprofit Sector in Nova Scotia (Lynn Toupin)

Partnership Funding Agreement with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education (Dec. 2012)

“Statement of Work” To be undertaken by Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia For Volunteerism and Non-Profit Sector Division NS Department of Labour and Advanced Education NVP Sector Capacity Partnership Fund , March 2013

Community Sector Council Logic Model

Year-End Reports Submitted to the Sector Council Program

Reports to the Voluntary Sector Division of the NS Department of Labour and Advanced Education

Fluid Survey – Various Evaluation Reports

Community Sector Council’s Communication Strategy

Community Sector Council’s Information Sheet (October 2014)

Various workshop, conference and course Evaluations

Quarterly Host Organization Reports

Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia’s Website and on-line resources

Newfoundland & Labrador Sector Council Website

## Appendix E

### Survey Questions and Statistical Results and Comments

Available at

<http://csc-ns.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Appendix-E-Survey-questions-and-Statistical-results.pdf>

## **Appendix F**

### **List of Training Courses Offered**

HR Management Standards workshops Volunteer

Screening & Management workshops Labour

Standards, Safety, Human Rights workshops Fund

Development & Fundraising

Organizational Branding

Youth Engagement & Volunteerism

Organizational Communications

Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation & the non-profit sector

Social Media for Non-Profits

Financial Sustainability for Non-Profits

Evaluation & Measuring Impact

Video Story-telling

**APPENDIX G: Partnership**

Since December 2012, the Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia has established partnerships with a growing list of national, provincial, and regional organizations.

<p><b>Host organizations</b> CSC’s regional hubs are located within non-profit organizations who host CSC’s six convenors.</p>	Antigonish County Adult Learning Association, Antigonish
	Association of Western Valley CAP Sites, Bridgetown
	Clean Foundation, Dartmouth
	Lunenburg Queens Volunteer Partnership, Lunenburg
	New Dawn Enterprises, Sydney
	Tatamagouche Centre, Tatamagouche
	Yarmouth Shelburne Municipal Recreation Association, Shelburne
<p><b>Workshop partners</b> CSC has developed partnerships with NS non-profit organizations for many purposes including the co-sponsoring of workshops and other capacity-building initiatives designed for the non-profit sector.</p>	Confederacy of Mainland Mi’kmaq, Truro
	Dalhousie’s School of Continuing Education, Halifax
	Federation of Community Organizations, Halifax
	Heartwood Centre, Halifax
	Kings Volunteer Resource Centre, Kentville
	Mi’kmaq Employment/Training Secretariat, Halifax
	Nova Scotia Community College, Kentville (Kingstec Campus) and Dartmouth (Waterfront Campus)
<p><b>Provincial partners</b> CSC has developed partnerships with province-wide organizations for networking and information-sharing.</p>	<p><b>Association of Industry Sector Councils</b> The ten sector councils meet quarterly to share ideas and assistance.</p>
	<p><b>211 Services</b> CSC and 211 are in conversation about a partnership to analyze and disseminate data collected by 211, to facilitate the sector’s capacity for workforce and program planning and development.</p>
	<p><b>La Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse and Université Sainte-Anne</b> CSC has worked with La FANE to offer a 7-module program on HR Management to its members, using Université Sainte-Anne’s videoconference facilities.</p>
<p><b>National partners</b> CSC has developed partnerships with pan-Canadian organizations for networking, information-sharing, and workshops.</p>	<p><b>Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks</b> A partnership of 14 non-profit and voluntary sector networks across Canada, the Federation meets monthly. Its members share experiences and ideas. The Federation frequently invites key national organizations to share information and programs on current and emerging issues at the pan-Canadian level. This information is passed along to the NS sector.</p>
	<p><b>Community Foundations of Canada (CFC)</b> CSC works with CFC in delivering the 7-module program on HR Management in French and English. The program has been offered five times, and 276 participants have received certificates.</p>
	<p><b>Volunteer Canada, Tamarack Institute, Imagine Canada, and others</b></p>
<p><b>Private Sector</b></p>	<p><b>Knightsbridge Robertson Surette</b> Through a partnership with CSC, this executive search firm has agreed to disseminate information about non-profits seeking board members to a registry of interested individuals</p>
<p><b>Service Providers</b></p>	<p><b>Community Services Trust Fund (CSBT)</b> CSC is in discussion with CSBT to facilitate participation in collective employee benefits plans among non-profits.</p>
	<p><b>Common Good Solutions</b> CSC is in discussion with Common Good about helping non-profits develop social enterprise initiatives.</p>

March 6, 2015

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COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA**

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**Government of Nova Scotia**

Representing the non-profit and voluntary sector, CSC works with LAE, DCS, CCH, ERDT, Communities Nova Scotia, Voluntary Sector Division, Workplace Education Initiatives, Skills-on-Line, etc.