



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

PROMOTING AND ENCOURAGING INTERGENERATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM

**Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources,
Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons
with Disabilities**

Robert Morrissey, Chair

**JUNE 2024
44th PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION**

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**Robert Morrissey
Chair**

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NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committees presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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**THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
HUMAN RESOURCES, SKILLS AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT AND THE STATUS OF PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES**

has the honour to present its

TWENTY-FIFTH REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the committee has studied Intergenerational Volunteerism and has agreed to report the following:

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SUMMARY

When generations come together to make a difference in their community, everyone benefits. In a context of declining volunteer participation and increased demand for many of the services charitable organizations provide, intergenerational volunteerism between youth and seniors presents an opportunity to boost engagement in volunteering, foster connections and harness each generation's unique skills.

Over the course of three meetings, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities heard from organizations that recruit volunteers, or that promote and advance volunteerism, about ways that the federal government can encourage intergenerational volunteerism between youth and seniors.

Through oral and written testimony, witnesses told the committee about the benefits of intergenerational volunteering experiences. They also shared information on the barriers facing prospective volunteers, as well as organizations that provide these experiences. In this report, the committee summarizes key testimony it received and makes recommendations to the federal government on how it can better facilitate intergenerational volunteering in Canada, including through the development of a national volunteer action strategy, data, investment in intergenerational volunteering through new or existing programming, support for volunteers and awareness.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

That Employment and Social Development Canada develop, in partnership with the provinces and territories and with charitable and non-profit sector stakeholders, a national volunteer action strategy to promote and support volunteering in Canada, including intergenerational volunteering..... 22

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada take action to strengthen the evidence base on intergenerational volunteerism, including by investing in the creation and dissemination of research and data on:

- **the benefits and impacts of intergenerational volunteerism;**
- **effective models for intergenerational volunteering opportunities; and**
- **the volunteering behaviour, motivations and barriers of diverse demographics, including youth and seniors of different backgrounds, and individuals living in urban versus rural locations. 23**

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada consider increasing the availability of both episodic and longer-term federal funding for intergenerational volunteering initiatives, for example, by:

- **introducing a distinct funding stream for intergenerational volunteerism; and/or**

- **amending existing programs that fund volunteering initiatives (such as the New Horizons for Seniors program and the Canada Service Corps) to better support intergenerational volunteering opportunities..... 26**

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada consider, through new or existing programming, increasing the funds available to charitable and non-profit organizations for creating incentives that help to recruit and retain volunteers, such as meals and transportation. 29

Recommendation 5

That Employment and Social Development Canada develop a program to support and encourage the acquisition of employment skills during intergenerational and other volunteering opportunities. 29

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada leverage opportunities such as National Volunteer Week and Intergenerational Day to bring awareness to intergenerational volunteering and shine a light on high-impact intergenerational volunteering initiatives. 30



PROMOTING AND ENCOURAGING INTERGENERATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM

INTRODUCTION

When generations come together to make a difference in their community, everyone benefits. In a context of declining volunteer participation and increased demand for many of the services charitable organizations provide, intergenerational volunteerism among youth and seniors presents an opportunity to boost engagement in volunteering, foster connections and harness each generation's unique skills.

On 21 November 2022, the House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA or the committee) adopted the following motion:

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study regarding the different ways that the government can promote and encourage intergenerational volunteerism between seniors and youth; that the committee hold a minimum of three meetings on this issue; that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request that the government table a comprehensive response to the report.¹

Between December 2023 and February 2024, the committee held three meetings on the topic of intergenerational volunteerism. It heard from nine witnesses, including from organizations that promote and advance volunteerism as well as non-profits that rely on volunteers. It also received six briefs. The committee sincerely thanks those who participated for their contributions to this study.

Following an overview of intergenerational volunteerism and relevant federal programs, this report summarizes key testimony regarding the benefits of intergenerational volunteering opportunities between youth and seniors as well as the barriers individuals and organizations may face in participating in or offering these opportunities. The report also explores ways to promote and encourage intergenerational volunteerism in Canada and puts forward recommendations for the federal government in this regard.

1 House of Commons Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities (HUMA), [Minutes](#), 21 November 2022.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

What Is Intergenerational Volunteerism?

Intergenerational volunteerism can be understood from a variety of perspectives and is often used to refer to volunteer experiences that build connections between people from different generations in a mutually beneficial way. Although a single, agreed-upon definition of intergenerational volunteerism did not arise from the testimony, witnesses commented on what, from their perspective, makes intergenerational volunteerism unique. For example, Jeanne Campeau, executive director of Le Petit Peuple, told the committee:

My definition of what constitutes intergenerational volunteerism is bringing together two different age groups that can benefit from each other. For me, it's about meeting needs that youth and seniors share by having those two groups interact.²

She elaborated that intergenerational volunteerism is “a matter of working together and bringing something to each other,” providing the caveat that “it is much more complex than putting a 14-year-old in a room with an 80-year-old and telling them to figure it out. A relationship of trust must be developed.”³

“While volunteering has historically served as a safeguard for the support systems we rely upon and as an avenue for social connection, there are signs that volunteering and participation are no longer givens.”

Christine Trauttmansdorff, executive director of Volunteer Ottawa, noted that she didn't “think about intergenerational volunteering as being something very distinct,” given that volunteering in general already involves “many collisions and meetings” that must be curated.⁴ However, she emphasized the role of intergenerational volunteerism in “breaking

“[I]t is much more complex than putting a 14-year-old in a room with an 80-year-old and telling them to figure it out. A relationship of trust must be developed.”

2 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1815 (Jeanne Campeau, Executive Director, Le Petit Peuple).

3 Ibid., 1840.

4 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1815 (Christine Trauttmansdorff, Executive Director, Volunteer Ottawa).

down silos” between people at different life stages, adding that it “brings people together to work together to accomplish something as simple and as complicated as building community.”⁵

Current State of Volunteerism

Witnesses told the committee about decreased participation in volunteerism, with Megan Conway, president of Volunteer Canada, stating that Canada is experiencing “an intensifying crisis in volunteering and participation.” She explained, “While volunteering has historically served as a safeguard for the support systems we rely upon and as an avenue for social connection, there are signs that volunteering and participation are no longer givens.”⁶ Indeed, in its brief, Volunteer Canada pointed to the results of the 2022 Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, with 65% of non-profit organizations that recruit volunteers reporting a shortage of new volunteers, 50% experiencing challenges with volunteer retention and 42% observing that volunteers are not able to commit to long-term roles.⁷

Noting that challenges have been felt across service sectors, Megan Conway nevertheless identified child and youth services (e.g., initiatives such as Girl Guides) as one sector that has “been hit significantly hard.”⁸ In addition, Jeanne Campeau specifically observed “a huge drop in engagement among young people, families and seniors.”⁹ The committee did not hear about whether the drop in engagement was affecting the gender balance among volunteers, although Kascha Cassaday, executive director of Cyber-Seniors: Connecting Generations, told the committee that the majority of her organization’s

“[T]he other thing that we’ve had to do is create satellite locations in our area for our clients, because they do not have the money to get on the bus to come and get food.”

5 Ibid., 1845.

6 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 December 2023, 1110 (Megan Conway, President, Volunteer Canada).

7 HUMA, *Brief*, Volunteer Canada. See also Statistics Canada, “[Volunteers and challenges businesses face in volunteer recruitment and retention, fourth quarter of 2022](#),” Database, accessed 20 February 2024.

8 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 December 2023, 1155 (Conway).

9 HUMA, *Evidence*, 6 December 2023, 1815 (Campeau).



employees, as well as most of the seniors participating in its programming, were women.¹⁰

The committee heard that this reduced engagement with volunteerism is coinciding with a rise in demand for services from organizations that rely on volunteers, such as food banks and shelters.¹¹ Trevor Moss, chief executive officer of the Central Okanagan Food Bank, spoke to his organization’s experience:

What we’re seeing is an immense need in our region. Over the last nine months, we have seen a 32% increase in reference to that. What we are projecting is another 100% increase in the next three to four months because of inflation.¹²

He told the committee, “We are seeing huge rises in the number of seniors accessing the food bank”¹³ along with increased need from immigrants, single individuals and working families.¹⁴ Trevor Moss noted that transportation costs have been a challenge for clients, stating, “The number one request from our food bank right now is bus tickets, and the other thing that we’ve had to do is create satellite locations in our area for our clients, because they do not have the money to get on the bus to come and get food.”¹⁵

Federal Supports for Volunteerism

Currently, the federal government does not offer a program or funding stream dedicated to intergenerational volunteerism. However, it supports volunteerism in general through a range of programs.

For example, the New Horizons for Seniors program, run by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), provides grants and contributions for projects centred around a number of objectives, including promoting volunteerism among seniors, engaging seniors through mentorship and supporting social participation and inclusion of seniors. The program offers grants of up to \$25,000 over one year through its

10 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2023, 0920 (Kascha Cassaday, Executive Director, Cyber-Seniors: Connecting Generations).

11 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1120 (Trevor Moss, Chief Executive Officer, Central Okanagan Food Bank); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2023, 0835 (Christian Harvey, Executive Director, One City Peterborough).

12 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1120 (Moss).

13 *Ibid.*, 1145.

14 *Ibid.*, 1120.

15 *Ibid.*, 1125.

community-based projects stream and grants of between \$1 million and \$5 million for projects up to five years in duration through its pan-Canadian stream.¹⁶

The Canada Service Corps, under the responsibility of ESDC, promotes civic engagement for people aged 15 to 30 through two streams: 1) service placements, which funds organizations delivering volunteer placements to assist youth in gaining skills and experience; and 2) micro-grants of up to \$5,000 to help youth lead small-scale community service projects.¹⁷

Finally, the Canada’s Volunteer Awards program recognizes the contributions of volunteers, not-for-profit organizations, social enterprises and businesses.¹⁸

BENEFITS OF INTERGENERATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM

In addition to emphasizing the social and economic benefits of volunteerism as a whole,¹⁹ witnesses also discussed the distinct benefits associated with intergenerational volunteering experiences for different age groups and for society. Key themes that arose are summarized below.

Building Connections

Overwhelmingly, the committee heard that the personal connections built through intergenerational volunteerism can help address challenges such as ageism and loneliness, with benefits for participants’ mental and physical health.

“Ageism and social isolation are closely associated, leaving older adults and youth particularly at risk.”

Both Christina Bisanz, chief executive officer of Community and Home Assistance to Seniors, and Megan Conway discussed the role intergenerational volunteering can play in reducing ageism.²⁰ Christina Bisanz explained, “By spending more time with older

16 Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), [About the New Horizons for Seniors Program](#).

17 Government of Canada, [About the Canada Service Corps](#).

18 ESDC, [Canada’s Volunteer Awards Program](#).

19 See, for example, HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0830 (Cassaday); HUMA, [Brief](#), Laetitia Satam; HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Canada.

20 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1210 (Christina Bisanz, Chief Executive Officer, Community and Home Assistance to Seniors). See also HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1100 (Conway) and HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Canada.



adults and providing meaningful engagement opportunities that bring the generations together, we can encourage a sense of understanding and respect between them.”²¹ Megan Conway told the committee, “Ageism and social isolation are closely associated, leaving older adults and youth particularly at risk.”²²

The committee also heard about a “growing loneliness epidemic” affecting both seniors and youth.²³ The risk of loneliness is especially high for certain groups, such as women, newcomers, Indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities, as well as older adults who are “living alone, having compromised health, living with a low income or living in a rural area.”²⁴ In its brief, Volunteer Canada shared that “since 2015, rates of loneliness have increased by 67% among women aged 65–74 and by 45% among men in this age bracket,” and further that “one in four youth in Canada aged 15–24 reported always or often feeling lonely, with young women experiencing more significant degrees of loneliness.”²⁵

Witnesses highlighted the consequences of loneliness and isolation for seniors in particular—for example, Kascha Cassaday argued that these are “serious public health risks as they concurrently increase the risk of depression, anxiety, mortality, rehospitalization, falls and dementia among older adults.”²⁶ Christina Bisanz reiterated this, stating that social isolation of seniors “can lead to an increased risk of chronic diseases, depression and a diminished quality of life.”²⁷ Sharon MacKenzie, executive director of i2i Intergenerational Society of Canada, explained that addressing isolation can have positive knock-on effects for governments by putting “less pressure, not only on the health care system but also on social justice and policing systems.”²⁸

Witnesses shared information on ways intergenerational volunteerism can help decrease isolation and loneliness for youth and seniors.²⁹ Kascha Cassaday explained that her

21 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1210 (Bisanz).

22 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1110 (Conway).

23 Ibid.

24 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1110 (Conway); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0830 (Cassaday); HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Canada.

25 HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Canada.

26 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0830 (Cassaday).

27 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1210 (Bisanz).

28 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0825 (Sharon McKenzie, Executive Director, i2i Intergenerational Society of Canada).

29 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1110 (Conway); HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Canada; HUMA, [Brief](#), University of Waterloo.

organization’s Cyber-Seniors program, in which seniors are partnered with teens and young adults to receive technology training, “provides a significant boost of feelings of community enrichment and inclusion,” including for young people, who “feel as though their place in the community is validated through their participation.”³⁰ Trevor Moss stated that seniors participating in intergenerational volunteering at the Central Okanagan Food Bank experience “enhanced socialization and a sense of purpose.”³¹ Jeanne Campeau told the committee that intergenerational interactions “provide crucial emotional support,” and that support networks created through volunteering “can help seniors face the emotional challenges of aging, thereby improving their mental well-being.”³²

Sharon MacKenzie shared an example of these principles in action, particularly in the context of long-term care. She referred to a research study that took place in New York, in which seniors living in a care home worked with young artists and experienced positive health effects, such as taking less medication, when compared to a control group.³³

Given the extent of these benefits, when asked about “national standards” for long-term care homes, Sharon MacKenzie recommended that intergenerational volunteerism be included.³⁴

Developing Transferable Skills

Another major benefit witnesses highlighted, particularly for youth, was the opportunity to develop transferable skills for employment.³⁵ A brief submitted by current

“Each generation brings a unique perspective and skill set to volunteer positions that impact their fellow volunteers, the organization they are working with and the community at large.”

30 HUMA, *Evidence*, 1 February 2024, 0830 (Cassaday).

31 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 December 2023, 1105 (Moss).

32 HUMA, *Evidence*, 6 December 2023, 1745 (Campeau).

33 HUMA, *Evidence*, 1 February 2024, 0900 (Sharon MacKenzie, Executive Director, i2i Intergenerational Society of Canada). This may refer to the following study: Gene D. Cohen, The Center on Aging, Health & Humanities, The George Washington University, *The Creativity and Aging Study: The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on Older Adults*, National Collaborative on Aging, 30 April 2006.

34 HUMA, *Evidence*, 1 February 2024, 0900 (MacKenzie).

35 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 December 2023, 1105 (Moss); HUMA, *Evidence*, 1 February 2024, 0830 (Cassaday); HUMA, *Brief*, Marianne Kramchynsky.



and former members of Kids Help Phone’s National Youth Council and the Mood Disorders Society of Canada’s National Youth Advisory Council (Laetitia Satam et al.) pointed to data from Statistics Canada’s 2018 General Social Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating, indicating that individuals born in or after 1996 are more likely than other generations to cite improving job opportunities as a top reason for volunteering, at 38%.³⁶ Trevor Moss explained that intergenerational volunteering opportunities can provide “experience in leadership, communication, project management and teamwork,” and help develop “interpersonal skills such as empathy, cultural sensitivity and adaptability.”³⁷

In a brief submitted to the committee, Marianne Kramchynsky noted that membership in a volunteer organization can develop transferable skills through “opportunities to learn about parliamentary procedure, planning events, how to take minutes, working in committees, budgeting, applying for permits, complying with local regulations, working in partnership with other organizations, conducting needs assessments, and learning from other clubs or councils in your organization.”³⁸

Other Benefits

Witnesses discussed a range of other benefits associated with intergenerational volunteerism. For example, the committee heard that it can bring together the unique skill sets of different age cohorts, resulting in more effective initiatives: youth bring “energy, enthusiasm and willingness to embrace innovation,” digital fluency, a connection to contemporary issues, and new ways of solving problems;³⁹ middle-aged adults provide a “wealth of expertise and a strong sense of responsibility toward community development”; and seniors share wisdom and a “wealth of experience” and “become essential mentors, offering valuable guidance to ... younger volunteers.”⁴⁰ Trevor Moss explained:

36 HUMA, [Brief](#), Laetitia Satam; Tara Hahmann, “[Volunteering counts: Formal and informal contributions of Canadians in 2018](#),” *Insights on Canadian Society*, 23 April 2021.

37 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1105 (Moss).

38 HUMA, [Brief](#), Marianne Kramchynsky.

39 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1105 (Moss); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1125 (Conway); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1210 (Bisanz).

40 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1105 (Moss).

Each generation brings a unique perspective and skill set to volunteer positions that impact their fellow volunteers, the organization they are working with and the community at large. It's this diversity that evokes real and impactful change in our communities.⁴¹

“[Students are] doing more part-time jobs. They’re working longer hours to fuel their funding for rent as well as for the cost of living in general.”

In addition, briefs from Volunteer Grandparents and Volunteer Canada highlighted how intergenerational volunteerism can be important for passing down history and family stories or for transmitting cultural knowledge, including in Indigenous communities.⁴²

Finally, witnesses such as Megan Conway and Sharon MacKenzie framed intergenerational volunteerism as an investment in the future of volunteering, highlighting it as an “opportunity to re-engage youth” and enhance the sustainability of volunteering going forward.⁴³

BARRIERS TO INTERGENERATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM

Witnesses explained that organizations are having difficulty recruiting and retaining volunteers, an issue that has intensified since the COVID-19 pandemic. They described potential barriers preventing individuals from participating in intergenerational volunteering opportunities as well as roadblocks facing organizations that rely on volunteers.

Barriers Faced by Volunteers

Cost of Living

Many witnesses told the committee about difficulties recruiting volunteers as a result of the rising cost of living and limited disposable income. Christian Harvey, executive director of One City Peterborough, and Jeanne Campeau commented that individuals can be less likely to volunteer if they are focusing on survival and worried about meeting

41 Ibid.

42 HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Grandparents; HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Canada.

43 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1125 (Conway); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0825 (MacKenzie).



basic needs.⁴⁴ Other witnesses described situations where youth and seniors are taking on additional jobs or shifts and, as a result, have less availability to volunteer.⁴⁵

In addition, Shiven Khera, treasurer of the Age Link Society, stated that “[students are] doing more part-time jobs. They’re working longer hours to fuel their funding for rent as well as for the cost of living in general—for groceries and other things.”⁴⁶ The committee also heard from Trevor Moss, who indicated:

[T]here are three stories that come to my mind. One is seniors who, because of their fixed incomes, have to go and get more occasional jobs to meet the growing need. The second is more in reference to our youth, because they need the money for education, for schooling and those types of things, and the third area is the area of immigration. That’s another area where we are seeing that people can’t volunteer as much.⁴⁷

When asked whether the cost of living is having a direct impact on recruiting and retaining volunteers, especially seniors, Christine Trauttmansdorff stated, “I think there’s no one who doesn’t recognize that the cost of living impacts all aspects of our lives.”⁴⁸ Megan Conway commented, “The cost of living across the board presents a barrier for diverse demographics.”⁴⁹

Transportation

Linked to challenges with the cost of living, the committee also heard that transportation was a barrier for prospective volunteers. Kascha Cassaday told the committee:

[T]ransportation is a major factor for participating in person a lot of the time, not only in our program but in any kind of volunteer space. Youth and older adults don’t typically have access to reliable transportation. They might rely on public transportation like ride-sharing, taxis and public transportation, but all of these can be out of their budgets.⁵⁰

44 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1825 (Campeau); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0835 (Harvey).

45 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1205 (Shiven Khera, Treasurer, Age-Link Society); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1800 (Campeau); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0830 (Cassaday).

46 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1205 (Khera).

47 Ibid., 1120 (Moss).

48 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1755 (Trauttmansdorff).

49 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1150 (Conway).

50 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0830 (Cassaday).

“[T]here are three stories that come to my mind. One is seniors who, because of their fixed incomes, have to go and get more occasional jobs to meet the growing need. The second is more in reference to our youth, because they need the money for education, for schooling and those types of things, and the third area is the area of immigration. That’s another area where we are seeing that people can’t volunteer as much.”

In a brief submitted to the committee, Marianne Kramchynsky added, “In much of rural Canada, public transportation is not an option as buses and trains simply do not exist.”⁵¹ Christine Trauttmansdorff noted that some non-profit organizations are providing transportation subsidies to volunteers or ensuring parking is available when they come to volunteer.⁵²

Screening Processes

Megan Conway and Christine Trauttmansdorff both highlighted multiple security screenings as a barrier for prospective volunteers. For example, individuals may be required to obtain separate police record checks for different opportunities.⁵³ Christine Trauttmansdorff proposed carefully considering when police checks are necessary, explaining that they could create barriers for individuals such as newcomers who do not

have police records in Canada. She suggested that the volunteer screening process could be made easier and more efficient with a common platform developed at the national or provincial level, highlighting that this would also reduce costs for organizations.⁵⁴

Similarly, Megan Conway suggested that the process be streamlined to increase efficiency while still managing risks, identifying the Blue Card system in Australia as a potential model.⁵⁵

51 HUMA, [Brief](#), Marianne Kramchynsky.

52 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1755 (Trauttmansdorff).

53 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1155 (Conway).

54 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1810, 1830 (Trauttmansdorff).

55 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1155 (Conway). See Australia, Queensland Government, [Understanding the blue card system](#).



Awareness and Invitation to Participate

“I think there’s no one who doesn’t recognize that the cost of living impacts all aspects of our lives.”

The committee heard that some individuals may wish to participate in their communities but do not know how.⁵⁶ Megan Conway and Trevor Moss both raised a concern that youth do not feel they are being asked to participate, or that volunteering “is a domain ... for perhaps an older demographic.”⁵⁷ Megan Conway stated that asking youth to participate is therefore “critical.”⁵⁸ Christine Trauttmansdorff noted the importance of having individuals be asked to volunteer by people they can relate to and highlighted Volunteer Ottawa’s Youth Volunteer Advocates program, which empowers youth with the skills to speak to their peers about volunteering.⁵⁹

Other Barriers Faced by Volunteers

In a brief submitted to the committee, Marianne Kramchynsky highlighted membership fees as well as other costs, such as training fees and liability insurance, as a potential barrier for individuals wishing to join service organizations that provide volunteer opportunities. The brief recommended that the federal government offer a tax credit or deduction to address this issue, capped at \$1,000 per family per year.⁶⁰

The committee also heard about changes to volunteer engagement that have resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. Megan Conway explained that in the wake of the pandemic, many older adults are not returning to volunteer roles due to health concerns.⁶¹ Some have had to prioritize other obligations over volunteering, such as childcare responsibilities in relation to grandchildren.⁶²

56 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 December 2023, 1135 (Conway).

57 Ibid., 1110, 1125 (Conway).

58 Ibid., 1125.

59 HUMA, *Evidence*, 6 December 2023, 1800 (Trauttmansdorff).

60 HUMA, *Brief*, Marianne Kramchynsky.

61 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 December 2023, 1110 (Conway).

62 Ibid., 1150.

Barriers Faced by Organizations

Need for Sustainable, Multi-Year Funding

“Every year starts with zero in the budget. You have to build it up over the course of the year. That uncertainty just takes a toll.”

Witnesses pointed out that much of the funding available to support charities and non-profit organizations is short-term and highlighted the challenges of operating without core funding. For example, Megan Conway explained that “[a]pplying episodically for funding” results in “dips in funding or lack of continuity.”⁶³ She identified that charities and the non-profit sector “lack core and sustainable funding to do their work effectively.”⁶⁴ Christine Trauttmansdorff illustrated how this makes long-term planning difficult, noting that in 2023, Volunteer

Ottawa accessed 12 project-based grants from 11 different funders without any core funding from government.⁶⁵ She stated:

Every grant I have, except for one, is for one year or less. Your timing horizon or planning horizon is always short-term. There’s no such thing as a permanent job. Every year starts with zero in the budget. You have to build it up over the course of the year. That uncertainty just takes a toll.⁶⁶

Commenting on episodic funding available under the New Horizons for Seniors program, Jeanne Campeau highlighted the challenge of coming up with a new project for every application. She stated that “we already have our project. We already have activities. We have a formula that works. We would simply like it to continue. ... Above all, we need recurrent, long-term funding to avoid having to think and create new projects every year.”⁶⁷ Further, Sharon MacKenzie noted that the smaller grants available under the New Horizons for Seniors program (for example, up to \$25,000 under the program’s community-based projects stream⁶⁸) are “great for small projects” but are “not an

63 Ibid., 1140.

64 Ibid., 1135–1140.

65 HUMA, *Evidence*, 6 December 2023, 1750 (Trauttmansdorff).

66 Ibid., 1825.

67 Ibid., 1815, 1840 (Campeau).

68 ESDC, *About the New Horizons for Seniors Program*.



answer to the kind of work that we're doing where we're trying to work nationally, encouraging people to train for intergenerational activities."⁶⁹

At the same time, Kascha Cassaday spoke to the advantages of maintaining existing episodic funding programs. She explained that larger, multi-year grants are often awarded to the same well-established programs, while "episodic grants are what allow smaller organizations to get their foot in the door to show government and to show other grant programs that we are capable." She further elaborated that episodic grants should include amounts for operational costs and supporting volunteers.⁷⁰

Funding Application Process

“[E]pisodic grants are what allow smaller organizations to get their foot in the door to show government and to show other grant programs that we are capable.”

Witnesses pointed to challenges navigating federal programming and applying for funding. For example, referring to the New Horizons for Seniors Program, Jeanne Campeau told the committee that applications are time-consuming and labour-intensive, leaving "less time to help the community."⁷¹ Christine Trauttmansdorff reiterated these concerns, stating with regard to filling out forms for grants, "There's no relation between the amount of money involved and the amount of time involved. If anything, they're in inverse order to each other."⁷² Trevor Moss spoke to the time and energy needed to apply for grants and meet

reporting requirements, recommending that funding opportunities be "streamlined ... nationally, so that there is a very clear understanding of where we can go to get those resources."⁷³

69 HUMA, *Evidence*, 1 February 2024, 0915 (MacKenzie).

70 HUMA, *Evidence*, 1 February 2024, 0855 (Cassaday).

71 HUMA, *Evidence*, 6 December 2023, 1815 (Campeau).

72 Ibid., 1825 (Trauttmansdorff).

73 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 December 2023, 1140 (Moss).

Christine Trauttmansdorff also raised concerns about the amount of time between applying for a grant and receiving the funds, which she noted could take a full year. She commented, “That’s not a planning horizon that a really small organization like mine can work on. It doesn’t bring out the best in any of the organizations that those funding sources support.”⁷⁴ Finally, she suggested existing grant mechanisms can hinder collaboration between organizations, as “[g]rant mechanisms are usually set up for one applicant, one funder, one project or one organization.”⁷⁵

“There’s no relation between the amount of money involved and the amount of time involved. If anything, they’re in inverse order to each other.”

Other Funding Challenges

Witnesses specifically identified a need for infrastructure funding.⁷⁶ Megan Conway identified that “the landscape of intergenerational volunteering programs across the country is very chaotic and disparate” and that “Canada lacks the infrastructure necessary to promote and support purpose-fit and inclusive intergenerational programming and services.”⁷⁷ She pointed to a need for investment in volunteer management capacity, noting that volunteer manager positions were the first ones to be cut during the pandemic and that many of these positions have not returned.⁷⁸ Jeanne Campeau spoke to physical infrastructure needs, such as adapted buildings with ramps for people with reduced mobility.⁷⁹

74 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1825 (Trauttmansdorff).

75 Ibid., 1835.

76 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1135–1140 (Conway); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1750 (Trauttmansdorff).

77 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1110, 1125 (Conway).

78 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1135, 1110 (Conway).

79 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1820 (Campeau).



Finally, the committee heard that existing funding programs do not always align well with the characteristics of intergenerational volunteering initiatives. Jeanne Campeau explained that the complexity of the target clientele—both young people and seniors—can make it difficult to demonstrate an initiative’s impact on the community.⁸⁰ She added, “Since we have two very different client groups, we do not always meet a number of the criteria for grants, which are either for young people or for seniors.”⁸¹ She suggested that challenges obtaining long-term funding for intergenerational initiatives result in part from a lack of awareness around intergenerational volunteerism.⁸²

“Canada lacks the infrastructure necessary to promote and support purpose-fit and inclusive intergenerational programming and services.”

PROMOTING AND ENCOURAGING INTERGENERATIONAL VOLUNTEERISM

Over the course of the study, witnesses shared numerous ideas on how the federal government can help to promote and encourage intergenerational volunteerism in Canada, including by supporting the development of a national volunteer action strategy, addressing data gaps, making new investments in intergenerational volunteering, leveraging existing programming, supporting volunteers and raising awareness.

National Volunteer Action Strategy

Two witnesses and one brief recommended that the federal government develop a national volunteer action strategy. Megan Conway proposed “that the Government of Canada commit to engaging and strategically investing in the development and implementation of a national volunteer action strategy,” suggesting this would help address concerns with the volunteering landscape stemming “from the lack of a cohesive and integrated national approach to promoting, supporting and facilitating

80 Ibid., 1745.

81 Ibid., 1810.

82 Ibid., 1745.

volunteering.”⁸³ She highlighted the 2019 report from the Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector, *Catalyst for Change: A Roadmap to a Stronger Charitable Sector*, which recommended that the Government of Canada “develop and implement a national volunteer strategy to encourage volunteerism by all Canadians in their communities.”⁸⁴

Volunteer Canada’s brief reiterated this recommendation, noting that a strategy would “support volunteering and participation across the country and ... build the infrastructure necessary to revitalize social connection at scale and support the organizations that rely on volunteers to serve communities.”⁸⁵ It stated:

While excellent examples of public policy that protects, supports, and facilitates volunteering exist in municipalities, provinces, and territories, we lack an integrated, consistent, and cohesive approach at the national level. Volunteer Canada, along with a growing network of stakeholders from across the country, is laying the foundation for a National Volunteer Action Strategy to optimize and futureproof volunteering so that everyone in Canada can participate and benefit. Promoting and supporting intergenerational volunteering is an integral facet of this work.⁸⁶

“Since we have two very different client groups, we do not always meet a number of the criteria for grants, which are either for young people or for seniors.”

Finally, Christine Trauttmansdorff recommended “the development of a national action strategy on volunteering to unleash the full economic and social potential of Canada’s volunteers.” She suggested that the strategy “find a way to create stable funding mechanisms for volunteer centres and for volunteer management capacity in charities and non-profits.”⁸⁷ Christine Trauttmansdorff also spoke to the strategy’s potential to “strengthen the infrastructure that supports volunteering,” highlighting a desire to recapture capacity that has been lost in recent years.⁸⁸

83 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 December 2023, 1115 (Conway).

84 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 December 2023, 1125 (Conway); Special Senate Committee on the Charitable Sector, *Catalyst for Change: A Roadmap To a Stronger Charitable Sector*, June 2019, p. 29.

85 HUMA, *Brief*, Volunteer Canada.

86 Ibid.

87 HUMA, *Evidence*, 6 December 2023, 1750 (Trauttmansdorff).

88 Ibid., 1750.



Taking this testimony into consideration, the committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 1

That Employment and Social Development Canada develop, in partnership with the provinces and territories and with charitable and non-profit sector stakeholders, a national volunteer action strategy to promote and support volunteering in Canada, including intergenerational volunteering.

Addressing Data Gaps

Several witnesses and briefs identified a role for the federal government in enhancing the availability of data and research on intergenerational volunteerism.⁸⁹

One area where witnesses identified a significant data gap relates to the diversity of potential volunteers. For example, Christine Trauttmansdorff outlined a need for organizations hosting volunteers to have access to “deep research and policy thinking about equity, diversity and inclusion,” noting that seniors are a diverse group “in terms of language, cultural background and ability to participate in activities.”⁹⁰ Megan Conway identified “a substantial data gap in understanding how older adults and youth engage in volunteering, especially when it comes to different ethnic and cultural groups, intersectional identities, religious affiliations, generational trends and rural versus urban volunteering.”⁹¹ She called for “better data about what the picture of volunteering looks like across communities and by diverse demographics” and diverse ethnocultural groups.⁹² The brief from Volunteer Canada indicated that the evidence base should collate and strengthen research in areas such as “trends across diverse ethnocultural groups and intersectional identity factors; the motivations and barriers to volunteering across generations”; and “rural vs. urban volunteering.”⁹³

Other data gaps identified included evidence on effective volunteer models and “high-impact practices;”⁹⁴ accessibility and volunteering; digital pathways to volunteering; and

89 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1115 (Conway); HUMA, [Brief](#), University of Waterloo; HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Canada.

90 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1810 (Trauttmansdorff).

91 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1115 (Conway); HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Canada.

92 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1125 (Conway).

93 HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Canada.

94 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1155 (Conway).

the impacts and benefits of intergenerational volunteering programs.⁹⁵ One brief, submitted by Sharon MacKenzie, cautioned against allocating funding to collecting further data specifically on the benefits of intergenerational volunteerism, asserting that existing research is sufficient to show its benefit.⁹⁶

Based on the testimony calling for stronger data and research on intergenerational volunteering, the committee makes the following recommendation:

Recommendation 2

That the Government of Canada take action to strengthen the evidence base on intergenerational volunteerism, including by investing in the creation and dissemination of research and data on:

- **the benefits and impacts of intergenerational volunteerism;**
- **effective models for intergenerational volunteering opportunities; and**
- **the volunteering behaviour, motivations and barriers of diverse demographics, including youth and seniors of different backgrounds, and individuals living in urban versus rural locations.**

New Investments in Intergenerational Volunteering

Multiple witnesses called for additional federal investment in the non-profit sector or in intergenerational volunteering initiatives more specifically.⁹⁷

The brief from Volunteer Canada recommended that “the Government of Canada deepen and expand its investment in long-term, high-impact intergenerational volunteering initiatives that increase the number and diversity of participants in intergenerational volunteering.”⁹⁸ Similarly, the brief from Volunteer Grandparents suggested that the federal government provide “ongoing and multi-year financial

95 HUMA, *Brief*, Volunteer Canada.

96 HUMA, *Brief*, Sharon MacKenzie.

97 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 December 2023, 1120 (Moss); HUMA, *Evidence*, 6 December 2023, 1835 (Trauttmansdorff); HUMA, *Evidence*, 1 February 2024, 0835 (Harvey); HUMA, *Brief*, Volunteer Canada; HUMA, *Brief*, Volunteer Grandparents.

98 HUMA, *Brief*, Volunteer Canada.



assistance to support non-profit organizations that offer intergenerational programming.”⁹⁹

Witnesses also called for specific federal grants targeting intergenerational volunteerism, having identified this as a gap in the government’s existing funding schemes.¹⁰⁰ Jeanne Campeau commented that “it would be helpful to consider specific funding mechanisms that recognize the uniqueness of [intergenerational volunteering] programs. Specific grants or financial support programs for intergenerational volunteerism organizations could help ensure the continuity and growth of these crucial initiatives.”¹⁰¹ In her brief, Marianne Kramchynsky suggested that financial incentives such as grants for intergenerational projects would be welcome, “provided the application and payment process is reasonably easy to navigate and provided the administration of the grant program does not create a whole new level of bureaucracy.”¹⁰²

When asked about important criteria that would enable federal programming to boost intergenerational volunteerism, Megan Conway highlighted several conditions conducive to the creation of effective, high-impact intergenerational volunteering programs identified by the World Health Organization, including “involving participants in the design of those programs, making them inclusive, having them be universal and basing them on the concept of friendship.” She also emphasized “principles of equality” as well as sustainability over the long term.¹⁰³

In their brief, Laetitia Satam et al. spoke to the importance of equality in intergenerational programs, noting that power imbalances between youth and older adults can “impede equitable partnerships,” and recommended that the government incentivize intergenerational volunteering programs “to engage youth as equal partners in the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of projects.”¹⁰⁴

Applying a gender and diversity lens on investments in intergenerational volunteering was also a topic raised by witnesses. Sharon MacKenzie asserted, “I think there’s an awareness now within all the groups across Canada that this lens has to be applied, or should be applied, and that all people should be treated equally who are coming into

99 HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Grandparents.

100 HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Grandparents; HUMA, [Brief](#), Marianne Kramchynsky; HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1840 (Campeau).

101 Ibid., 1745 (Campeau).

102 HUMA, [Brief](#), Marianne Kramchynsky.

103 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1130 (Conway).

104 HUMA, [Brief](#), Laetitia Satam.

the area of interest.”¹⁰⁵ Christine Trauttmansdorff and Sharon MacKenzie both discussed the importance of diverse non-profit board tables that include both seniors and youth, with Christine Trauttmansdorff explaining that “a particular challenge is making sure that youth are really welcome at those tables, that they get the support and the mentorship they need and that their voices are really heard.”¹⁰⁶

Leveraging Existing Programming

Amending Existing Funding Schemes

Witnesses told the committee about their use of existing federal funding programs and suggested ways that these could be adjusted to further encourage intergenerational experiences.

In its brief, Volunteer Canada identified the New Horizons for Seniors Program as an initiative that funds “high-impact programming that promotes and facilitates intergenerational volunteering.”¹⁰⁷ Christina Bisanz told the committee that this program is “an excellent example of the direction we must continue to pursue” and could continue to support projects designed for seniors by seniors while also including “youth-driven proposals or collaboration projects to find new models of intergenerational activity.”¹⁰⁸

Although the Canada Summer Jobs program—a federal government program that subsidizes paid summer work experience for youth—targets employment rather than volunteerism, some witnesses spoke to their use of the program to hire youth¹⁰⁹ and suggested ways to incorporate intergenerational experiences. Trevor Moss indicated that Canada Summer Jobs could be modified to include some volunteerism,¹¹⁰ and Laetitia

“Specific grants or financial support programs for intergenerational volunteerism organizations could help ensure the continuity and growth of these crucial initiatives.”

105 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0925 (MacKenzie).

106 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1815 (Trauttmansdorff); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1820 (Campeau).

107 HUMA, [Brief](#), Volunteer Canada.

108 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1210 (Bisanz).

109 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1840 (Campeau).

110 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1140 (Moss).



“[D]oing things differently, not doing different things”

Satam et al. recommended in their brief that the program’s application guide be amended to explicitly prioritize collaboration between youth and older adults.¹¹¹

The same brief suggested that intergenerational volunteerism be made an explicit priority for Canada Service Corps grants.¹¹²

Considering the testimony provided on funding, including new investments in intergenerational volunteering and opportunities to leverage existing funding streams, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada consider increasing the availability of both episodic and longer-term federal funding for intergenerational volunteering initiatives, for example, by:

- **introducing a distinct funding stream for intergenerational volunteerism; and/or**
- **amending existing programs that fund volunteering initiatives (such as the New Horizons for Seniors program and the Canada Service Corps) to better support intergenerational volunteering opportunities.**

Doing Things Differently

Emphasizing the motto of i2i Intergenerational Society of Canada—“doing things differently, not doing different things”¹¹³—Sharon MacKenzie highlighted opportunities to integrate intergenerational elements into various activities, such as bringing together existing youth and senior book clubs and having them read and discuss a book together. She elaborated:

It’s not adding on to your workload but taking the two generations and bringing them together to do together what they are already doing. It really is just a shift in the way we do things. As a result, it’s not expensive, and it really doesn’t make extra work for

111 HUMA, *Brief*, Laetitia Satam.

112 Ibid.

113 i2i Intergenerational Society of Canada, *About Us*.

anyone. In fact, it actually lessens the workload for a lot of people, because they are so engaged with each other.¹¹⁴

Similarly, the brief from Laetitia Satam et al. recommended encouraging non-profits and non-governmental organizations to include both youth and older adults in their existing programs, elaborating that “[programs] that primarily involve youth could also include older individuals, and vice versa.”¹¹⁵

Supporting Volunteers

Witnesses shared ways their organizations are supporting volunteers to improve recruitment and retention and provided recommendations to the committee on how the federal government can further strengthen these efforts.

One theme that emerged was providing meals and covering transportation costs. Trevor Moss supported the idea of federal funding for meals and transportation,¹¹⁶ while Megan Conway stated, “Supporting youth with any kind of honorarium relative to their travel costs is important because they are experiencing costs relative to participation.”¹¹⁷ Jeanne Campeau noted that her organization offers transportation for seniors but relies on grants to be able to do so.¹¹⁸ On providing food, she told the committee, “In some cases, offering a meal changes everything for volunteers.”¹¹⁹

Kascha Cassaday suggested providing funding for a guaranteed stipend or grant to encourage young people to volunteer and to help address concerns that youth may have to choose between volunteering and a part-time job. She recommended having a “level of ‘tierism’—if you have this many hours of volunteerism, you’re guaranteed this stipend or you’re guaranteed this scholarship opportunity—I think those types of things financially really help us.”¹²⁰

Witnesses also highlighted training opportunities as a way to provide a positive experience for volunteers. Christian Harvey noted that his organization offers volunteers a three-hour training session on the values and vision of the organization so that

114 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0850 (MacKenzie).

115 HUMA, [Brief](#), Laetitia Satam.

116 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1140 (Moss).

117 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1125 (Conway).

118 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1805, 1825 (Campeau).

119 Ibid., 1805.

120 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0855 (Cassaday).



regardless of the tasks volunteers are performing, they can “see what they do as embodying the mission and values of the organization.” He added, “We find that that’s how we are able to retain volunteers.”¹²¹ Kascha Cassaday explained that her organization, Cyber-Seniors, offers youth volunteers training for their role as technology mentors as well as certificates that can be included in applications for school and work experiences (although she noted that “youth are always looking for federally recognized certificates”).¹²² She indicated that Cyber-Seniors provides youth volunteers with additional training opportunities when funding permits, such as work readiness webinars.¹²³

In relation to volunteering as an opportunity to build skills, Megan Conway suggested the federal government could consider “a skill-building program that supports a volunteer-to-career pathway” for newcomers to Canada as well as for youth. She added that newcomers are “often acclimatized to Canadian community through deep and supportive volunteering experiences” and that “youth, oftentimes, gain critical skills through mandatory volunteer service in high school.”¹²⁴

Other witnesses mentioned supporting volunteers by creating a welcoming culture where they feel appreciated¹²⁵ or by allowing them to volunteer or complete training virtually.¹²⁶ Christine Trauttmansdorff suggested that ultimately, “[t]he best thing to do is ask people what they need and what they expect—what kind of supports they’re going to need, whether it’s a bus ticket or some recognition—and then make sure that the volunteering adapts accordingly.”¹²⁷

Considering the testimony received on supporting volunteers, the committee recommends:

121 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0915 (Harvey).

122 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0830 (Cassaday).

123 Ibid., 0855.

124 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1200 (Conway).

125 Ibid., 1130 (Moss).

126 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1800 (Trauttmansdorff); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0855 (Cassaday).

127 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1800 (Trauttmansdorff).

Recommendation 4

That the Government of Canada consider, through new or existing programming, increasing the funds available to charitable and non-profit organizations for creating incentives that help to recruit and retain volunteers, such as meals and transportation.

Recommendation 5

That Employment and Social Development Canada develop a program to support and encourage the acquisition of employment skills during intergenerational and other volunteering opportunities.

Boosting Awareness of Intergenerational Volunteerism

As highlighted previously, witnesses identified lack of awareness as a barrier not only for individuals who may wish to participate in intergenerational volunteerism opportunities but also for organizations seeking funding to support their intergenerational programming. Witnesses such as Sharon MacKenzie and Megan Conway, as well as Volunteer Grandparents in its brief, pointed to a federal role in supporting an intergenerational volunteerism hub. Sharon MacKenzie suggested that this hub could highlight organizations and available activities, while Volunteer Grandparents called for “a central government database that the public could access that provides information on innovative intergenerational programs offered in different communities.”¹²⁸ Megan Conway noted that Volunteer Canada has received funding from an anonymous donor to develop such a hub.¹²⁹ Finally, Megan Conway and Sharon MacKenzie both mentioned Generations United—an organization in the United States that, among other things, maintains a program directory featuring over 600 intergenerational programs¹³⁰—as an existing model of such an initiative. Sharon Mackenzie explained:

It is funded and secure, and it’s a national entity for intergenerational activity. It does webinars, but it allows awareness and access to all people within the country. If you want to find out about something intergenerational in the States, you type in “intergenerational” and up comes Generations United. It’s been around for a really long time, and you can go there and get assistance and help and ideas for all sorts of things that you can do in various fields.¹³¹

128 HUMA, *Brief*, Volunteer Grandparents.

129 HUMA, *Evidence*, 4 December 2023, 1140 (Conway).

130 Generations United, *Our Results*.

131 HUMA, *Evidence*, 1 February 2024, 0845 (MacKenzie).



Other witnesses identified specific opportunities to boost awareness of intergenerational volunteerism for government or other actors. For example:

- Christina Bisanz stated, “The creation of Intergenerational Day¹³² provides a launch pad for numerous opportunities and education to raise awareness and garner support.”¹³³
- Megan Conway highlighted the opportunity to leverage National Volunteer Week (which takes place in April each year) to recruit and retain volunteers.¹³⁴
- Megan Conway recommended reinvesting in volunteer centres, which “help amplify and communicate what volunteering opportunities exist across the community.”¹³⁵

Several witnesses spoke to the successes of partnering with schools to disseminate information on intergenerational volunteering opportunities and enhance recruitment of youth.¹³⁶

Based on the testimony received on boosting awareness of intergenerational volunteerism, the committee recommends:

Recommendation 6

That the Government of Canada leverage opportunities such as National Volunteer Week and Intergenerational Day to bring awareness to intergenerational volunteering and shine a light on high-impact intergenerational volunteering initiatives.

CONCLUSION

During this study, the committee received a wealth of testimony on the individual and societal benefits of intergenerational volunteering experiences involving youth and seniors. It also heard about barriers that may prevent prospective volunteers from

132 i2i Intergenerational Society of Canada, [IG Day June 1st](#).

133 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 4 December 2023, 1215 (Bisanz).

134 Ibid., 1200 (Conway).

135 Ibid., 1135.

136 HUMA, [Evidence](#), 6 December 2023, 1840 (Campeau); HUMA, [Evidence](#), 1 February 2024, 0845 (MacKenzie); HUMA, [Brief](#), Laetitia Satam.

engaging in such experiences, as well as challenges facing the charitable and non-profit organizations that offer intergenerational programming. The committee sees opportunities for the federal government to play a greater role in promoting and encouraging intergenerational volunteering initiatives, including by supporting the development of a national volunteer action strategy, addressing data gaps, making new investments in intergenerational volunteering, leveraging existing programming, supporting volunteers and raising awareness.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF WITNESSES

The following table lists the witnesses who appeared before the committee at its meetings related to this report. Transcripts of all public meetings related to this report are available on the committee’s [webpage for this study](#).

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
Age Link Society Shiven Khera, Treasurer	2023/12/04	93
Central Okanagan Food Bank Trevor Moss, Chief Executive Officer	2023/12/04	93
Community and Home Assistance to Seniors Christina Bisanz, Chief Executive Officer	2023/12/04	93
Cyber-Seniors: Connecting Generations Kascha Cassaday, Executive Director	2024/02/01	97
I2i Intergenerational Society of Canada Sharon MacKenzie, Executive Director	2024/02/01	97
Le Petit Peuple Jeanne Campeau, Executive Director	2023/12/06	94
One City Peterborough Christian Harvey, Executive Director	2024/02/01	97
Volunteer Canada Megan Conway, President	2023/12/04	93
Volunteer Ottawa Christine Trauttmansdorff, Executive Director	2023/12/06	94

APPENDIX B: LIST OF BRIEFS

The following is an alphabetical list of organizations and individuals who submitted briefs to the committee related to this report. For more information, please consult the committee's [webpage for this study](#).

Kramchynsky, Marianne

MacKenzie, Sharon

Satam, Laetitia

University of Waterloo

Volunteer Canada

Volunteer Grandparents

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this report.

A copy of the relevant *Minutes of Proceedings* ([Meetings Nos. 93, 94, 97 and 115](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Morrissey
Chair

Supplementary Report to the

Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities Committee Report on Intergenerational Volunteerism

Conservative Party of Canada

The value of intergenerational volunteerism between youth and seniors is clearly demonstrated in this report as providing numerous social benefits across generations while helping to tackle serious social ills such as ageism or increasing loneliness amongst Canada's aging population.

Both witness testimony and briefs laid out how intergenerational volunteerism is vital to the efforts of Canada's not-for-profit, volunteer and charity sector. Numerous witnesses laid out the severe financial challenges they are facing in offering services and retaining volunteers because of *"rising cost of living and limited disposable income"* in paragraph 30 of the report.

On December 4th, 2023, when asked about their ability to recruit volunteers, the CEO of the Central Okanagan Food Bank, specifically referenced the effects of inflation on the demand for his organization's services: *"what we are projecting is another 100% increase in the next three to four months because of inflation."*

He also confirmed that seniors were telling his organization that *"they need to go back to work"* because of inflation rates reaching *"the highest in 40 years."*

Lastly Mr. Moss confirmed that *"physical donations have dropped over 50% in reference to food drives."*

During the appearance of the Treasurer of the Age Link Society, on December 4th with respect to referencing students taking on more part-time jobs: *"They're working longer hours to fuel their funding for rent as well as for the cost of living in general—for groceries and other things."*

Witness testimony clearly lays out Canada's 40-year high inflationary pressures on groceries, gas and rent, which was referenced as reducing the ability of Canadians young and old to volunteer and donate to vital not-for-profits and charities.

Canada's record-high inflation has been widely referenced as a result of the present Liberal government's deficit spending with the Bank of Canada Governor Tiff Macklem confirming at the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Finance that fiscal and monetary policy are rowing in opposite directions, making it harder to bring inflation down.

However, the report would be improved by placing the current family cost of living crisis into consideration and look to solutions to these inflationary challenges that were created as a result of poor federal government policies.

Only by the federal government following a real plan to reduce inflationary deficits at the federal level, will the challenges negatively impacting intergenerational volunteerism in Canada's not-for-profit, volunteer and charity sector be reduced; and the benefits of intergenerational volunteerism unlocked for the millions of Canadians, young and old, who stand to benefit from closer collaboration.