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Author: Catherine Chandler-Crichlow

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150 Profiles: Catherine Chandler-Crichlow

By Catherine Chandler-Crichlow

As we mark the 150th anniversary of confederation, The Philanthropist is profiling Canadians from across the non-profit sector and putting a face to 150 individuals who work or volunteer in Canada's social sector.

Name: Dr. Catherine Chandler-Crichlow

Current role in the sector: Member of the Planning & Partnership Table: The Ontario Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy of the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development (MAESD); Member of the External Advisory Committee on Inclusion and Diversity – Secretary of Cabinet (Ontario Public Service – OPS); Chair – Toronto Region Immigration and Employment Council (TRIEC); Board Member – Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB); Chair and Co-Founder: The African and Caribbean Board of Industry & Trade; Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Francophone Workforce Development Council; and former Chair: Black Business and Professionals Council Advisory Body – City of Toronto.

Years working and/or volunteering in the non-profit sector: 27 years.



What was your first job in the sector or a defining moment?

I was an executive director, responsible for the development and launch of an international leadership development resource for financial services regulators – at the Toronto International Leadership Centre for Financial Sector Supervision. It was an excellent introduction to non-profits in Canada. The organization is well-established and has a number of strategic partners. The role taught me the importance of non-profits having strong strategic partnerships to secure funding and access international markets.

Describe your desk/workspace.

Because of the work I do in international human capital research, I deal with a number of companies in different parts of the world. So in my workspace, I'm surrounded by tons of books and articles—anything that gives me insights into the area of research I'm focusing on, and the region in which I'm doing the work. I like to keep abreast of what's happening globally and locally. My computer is always on!

What are you reading or following that has expanded your understanding of the non-profit sector?

Because of the number of boards I'm on, I am most concerned about how a board works effectively with an organization. I read a lot of different reports on board governance, and one of the interesting things I've read this year was a report by Deloitte, *The Effective Not-for-Profit Board – a value-driving force*. It's a good report to help board members think through how they can work with an organization. It covers topics like financial strategy and risk management. I found it helpful not just as a board member but also as a Chair, in reflecting on how I can improve the effectiveness of the board.

What do you think our sector needs to be thinking about?

I feel that the non-profit sector is continuously concerned about its financial resources, its sustainability.

Different organizations face different challenges e.g. some colleges and universities get government funding but must make sure they maintain levels of enrolment, while other organizations must find funding from different sources—but at its heart, the issue is still the same.

Organizations get into a cycle of short termism, because we can only plan based on the funding we have available. I think for me the real key question to consider is, how can non-profits move beyond short termism, thinking about the funding models we have to deal with? There is a huge opportunity for non-profits to work more effectively and synergistically to ensure long term benefits to our stakeholders, and drive the sustainable change we want to see.

Do you know someone we should profile as part of this series? Email us at philanthropistprofiles@gmail.com