
EDITORIAL

WELCOME to the second issue of *The Philanthropist* online. The first, in May 2009, has been well received, with good suggestions for further improvements. *The Philanthropist* is intended to serve the voluntary/nonprofit/charitable sector in Canada; to do so, we need to hear from you.

The editorial in the May issue highlighted changes for *The Philanthropist* – changes not only in technology but also in approach. The purpose of the changes is to meet better the needs of the sector in the 21st Century. The sector is facing substantial change itself and, arguably, is not ready for the future.

There are at least two ways to face the future – to respond to it or to help define it. *The Philanthropist* wants to do the latter. In this issue, Lynn Eakin’s article, “The Invisible Public Benefit Economy – Implications for the Non-profit Sector,” begins a discussion that is needed both within and outside the sector. Michael Edward’s speech, “Oil and Water or the Perfect Margarita?” Where is the “Social” in the “Social Economy?,” last spring added perspective to this discussion. What is the language of the sector? How does the sector relate to the “commercial economy?” Ian Smillie’s article, “Learning, Development, and Money: Lessons from Bangladesh,” describes the lessons to be learned from the world’s largest nonprofit organization. Bob Wyatt’s article, “Overview from Canada: Modernising Charity Law,” reminds us of how the environment for charities and nonprofits is evolving. And, Martin Garber-Conrad’s “A Crisis is a Terrible Thing to Waste” looks at the weight of uncertainties for the nonprofit sector during times of economic crisis. Aiden Selsick and Samantha Young’s “*The Philanthropist* in Review,” and subsequent anthology, rounds out this issue.

The next several issues of *The Philanthropist* will explore a number of topics of broad and pressing interest. They will do so in two major ways:

- 1) **Through conversations.** Imagine Canada started Community Conversations earlier this year as the first phase in an engagement process. Under Marcel Lauzière’s leadership, Imagine Canada is both being reinvigorated and helping to define the future. To do so for a single entity is difficult enough; to attempt to do so for a diverse sector is a Herculean task. But if we want a strong charitable and not-for-profit sector (or “public benefit

economy”), we need to create a sustainable convening and engagement strategy across Canada. *The Philanthropist* will assist this effort throughout 2010 and 2011 by supporting Imagine Canada’s regional gatherings and a pan-Canadian symposium through the publication of analytical and topical articles. Martin Garber Conrad’s article in this issue sets the stage for these conversations. The purpose of these articles is not to define the future but rather to stimulate thought and discussion of the matters at stake.

2) **Through theme issues.** Issues of *The Philanthropist* will include articles focussed on themes or topics important to the sector. Theme issues will be future oriented, in support of the Imagine Canada engagement strategy, without losing sight of current challenges and opportunities. While it is important to define our future, we must also, as a sector and as individual organizations, meet today’s needs. In many cases, there will be an inevitable crossover. Leadership, for example, is both critical today and central to defining the sector’s future. Similarly, finding new organizational models to deliver public benefits is necessary now and tomorrow. There will always be a need for training and education, volunteering, public policy advocacy, and law reform, to note just a few of the possible themes.

You will be seeing other changes in *The Philanthropist*. For example, if our plans succeed, this issue will be last of our “traditional” style issues as we further the transition from a print to an online journal. Content will develop to reflect the needs and wishes of the sector. Besides the thematic groupings of articles mentioned above, *The Philanthropist* online will offer thought pieces, results of research, letters to the editor, commentary, interviews (video and written), webinars, moderated forums, book reviews, podcasts, case studies, and other similar content. Our focus will be on an informed discussion of issues facing the sector.

But we also want to do so in an entertaining style. As a result, articles will be shorter than in the past – but with links to longer versions where appropriate. We will also introduce a regular “Point/Counterpoint” column to cover opposing views on a topic. Some readers may remember Saturday Night Live’s version of Point/Counterpoint with Jane Curtin and Dan Aykroyd. While we cannot promise the same level of entertainment, we will do our best to be both audacious and insightful.

DON BOURGEOIS

Editor