

Nonprofit Sector – International Research and Initiatives

Governments have identified nonprofit organisations as a valuable mechanism for enhancing overall levels of community ICT access and skills through their social networks and their position as established social focal points within local communities. Below is a summary of some of the research and initiatives in selected countries on the nonprofit sector and its access and use of ICT.

World Summit for the Information Society (WSIS)

http://www.worldsummit2003.de/download_en/WSIS-CS-Decl-08Dec2003-en.pdf

The WSIS Declaration of Principles identified the important role for civil society in development of a global information society.

Europe

European Commission

http://europa.eu.int/comm/civil_society/index.htm

The European Commission has recognised the importance of voluntary nonprofit organisations in the evolution of the information society.

Irish Government Community Application of Information Technology Initiative (CAIT)

<http://www.pobail.ie/en/CAIT/>

The Irish Government's *Community Application of Information Technology Initiative (CAIT)* provided funding over 2001-2002 aimed at harnessing the experience, local knowledge and relationships of the community and voluntary sector to implement innovative ICT demonstration projects that benefit local communities.

United Kingdom

United Kingdom Government

<http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/00/08/28/04000828.pdf>

The UK Government has recognised the importance of the nonprofit sector by its release in 2001 of the major report *E-enabling the Voluntary and Community Sectors* and its establishment of a Voluntary and Community Sector Internet Task Force to help the sector get online. This has resulted in development of the *Policy Framework for a Mixed Economy in the Supply of e-Government Services: Implementation Guidelines* available at <http://www.e-envoy.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/00/59/68/04005968.pdf>.

The UK Government recognised that the voluntary and community sector had a mutual interest in building the capacity of voluntary and community organisations and ensuring they have the skills, knowledge, structures and resources to realise their full potential. In response to this, the first version of Implementation Guidelines in support of the Policy Framework for a mixed economy in the delivery of e-Government services has been produced and the UK Government announced it would make available £6.25 million "Early Spend" revenue funding to support the development of an infrastructure strategy for the VCS

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs2/earllyspend_exempdevfunds.html.

Citizens Online

<http://www.citizenonline.org.uk/>

Citizens Online is a registered charity established to explore the social and cultural impact of the Internet on society. Citizens Online believe that access to the Internet and all of its riches

is essential for every citizen in the 21st Century, and are committed to Universal Internet Access and to tackling the issues of the Digital Divide.

ICT Project of the NCVO

<http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk>

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) is the umbrella body for the voluntary sector in England. The NCVO has identified the Internet and ICT as being essential to the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) for carrying out trading and marketing, and managing their contacts and fundraising activities.

IT4Communities

<http://www.it4communities.org.uk/default.asp>

IT 4 Communities is an initiative to encourage companies, employees and individuals with professional IT skills to volunteer these skills for the benefit of local charities and community groups. IT 4 Communities is a joint initiative between Intellect (the UK's premier ICT industry body), the British Computer Society, the Worshipful Company of Information Technologists (WCIT), Business in the Community (BITC) and Citizens Online.

Sustain IT: delivering eWell-being

<http://www.sustainit.org>

SustainIT is an initiative of the UK Centre for Economic and Environmental Development (UK CEED), a not-for-profit research centre. It conducts research on and provides best practice examples of synergies between ICT and sustainable development. It is supported by British Telecom (BT) *Campaign for Digital Inclusion*.

WorkwithUS.org (Scotland's Voluntary Sector)

<http://www.workwithus.org>

Workwithus.org is Scotland's portal for the voluntary sector. The portal is supported by government and corporates such as Microsoft and BT Scotland.

Canada

VolNet: Connecting Voluntary Organisations to the Internet

<http://www.volnet.org>

The Canadian Government's Voluntary Sector Network Support Program (VolNet) ran from February 1999 to 31 March 2002. The four-year \$20 million program connected 10,000 voluntary organisations to the Internet while at the same time training more than 17,000 staff and volunteers. A Final Report on the outcomes of the VolNet program is available at:

http://www.volnet.org/e/final_report_e.asp.

The Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI)

<http://www.vsi-isbc.ca>

The Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) is an undertaking between the Government of Canada and the voluntary sector to enhance their relationship and strengthen the sector's capacity. The five-year initiative has involved working together to address issues such as funding practice, policy dialogue, technology, volunteering and research.

The study *The Capacity to Serve: A Qualitative Study of the Challenges Facing Canada's Nonprofit and Voluntary Organisations* can be found at: http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/knowledge/pdf/capacity_to_serve.pdf

Volunteer@ction.Online (V@O) program

<http://www.gov.on.ca/MCZCR/english/citdiv/voluntar/vao-brochure.htm>

In order to respond to the growing need for technology-funding for Ontario's voluntary sector, the Provincial government through its Ministry of Citizenship launched the Volunteer@ction.Online (V@O) program in 1998. From 1998 to 2002, the V@O program invested \$11.5 million to fund over 110 innovative Internet-based projects that enhanced the voluntary sector's work. V@O Projects resulted in over 3,000 volunteers and staff trained and 85,000 volunteers being recruited online. The program helped the creation of over 3,500 tools, resources and community information directories and benefited over 10,000 voluntary organisations being accessible online.

Making IT Work for Volunteers (MITW)

<http://www.volunteersonline.ca>

MITW is a collaborative, cross-sector initiative that encourages and supports the effective use of Information Technology (IT) by charities and not-for-profits. MITW creates opportunities for the high-tech sector and the voluntary sector to assist one another bridging and ultimately closing the digital divide.

New Zealand

Connecting Communities Strategy

http://www.ceg.govt.nz/DOCs/connecting_comms.pdf

The NZ Government's *Connecting Communities: A Strategy for Government Support of Community Access to ICT* (2002) recognised the relationship between government and community and voluntary organisations as an essential element for building an inclusive information society.

United States of America

Connections for Tomorrow

<http://www.ctcnet.org/c4t>

The *Connections For Tomorrow (C4T)* is a government funded project which supports nonprofit organisations in capacity building and best practices development by providing grants and technical assistance to community technology programs starting up, expanding and improving services to better equip them in the provision of assistance to at-risk youth or homeless.

Technology Opportunities Program (TOP)

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/top>

The *Technology Opportunities Program (TOP)* is a competitive, merit-based grant program that brings the benefits of digital network technologies to communities throughout the United States (US). TOP awards matching grants to public and non-profit organisations to demonstrate practical applications of telecommunications and information technologies.

US Community and Private Sector Initiatives

Compumentor

<http://www.compumentor.org>

Compumentor is a nonprofit organisation specialising in technology assistance for community-based organisations and schools. It offers technology planning, implementation,

and support services. CompuMentor is also the home of TechSoup.org, the technology website for the nonprofit sector.

IT Resource Centre

<http://www.itresourcecenter.org>

The IT Resource Center enables nonprofit organisations to achieve their goals through effective use of technology. This mission is accomplished through providing constituents services in planning and implementing technology approaches to nonprofit activities; technology consulting, training, and problem-solving for nonprofits; providing objective information regarding technology as it pertains to nonprofits and advocacy regarding the importance of technology to nonprofits.

Nonprofit Technology Enterprise Network (NTEN)

<http://www.nten.org>

The Nonprofit Technology Enterprise Network (N-TEN) helps nonprofits make more effective use of technology to advance their missions. N-TEN supports the people who provide technology services to the nonprofit sector by creating opportunities to identify peers and develop professional support networks, share information and resources, and work together on a range of projects. N-TEN operates as a membership association of nonprofit staff, technology support organisations, Circuit Riders and independent consultants, for-profit technology companies and funders.

Npower

<http://www.npower.org>

NPower is a network of independent, locally based nonprofits dedicated to putting technology know-how in the hands of nonprofits. NPower's mission is to ensure all nonprofits can use technology to expand the reach and impact of their work.

ONE/Northwest ("Online Networking for the Environment")

<http://www.onenw.org>

ONE/Northwest ("Online Networking for the Environment") is a non-profit organisation based in Seattle, providing technology assistance to conservation activists and organisations in Alaska, British Columbia, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington. ONE/Northwest offers environmental groups a range of technology services and resources, aimed at improving their capacity to achieve their missions.

TechFoundation

<http://www.techfoundation.org>

TechFoundation is a nonprofit organisation that delivers technology, expertise and capital to help nonprofit organisations serve humanity. TechFoundation envisions a world where nonprofit organisations can access the same resources to serve humanity that businesses use to create wealth.

Techsoup

<http://www.techsoup.org>

Powered by CompuMentor, one of the US's oldest and largest nonprofit technology assistance agencies, TechSoup.org offers nonprofits a one-stop resource for technology needs by providing free information, resources, and support. TechSoup also works with its technology partners to provide nonprofits access to donated and discounted technology products through its *DiscounTech* service.