



**Tuesday March 22, 2005**

**Canada's nonprofit and voluntary sector 2<sup>nd</sup> largest in world**  
*Considerably bigger than that of United States*  
*Workforce of 2 million Canadians – both paid and volunteer*

**Toronto, March 22, 2005.** Canada's nonprofit and voluntary sector is the second largest in the world, according to groundbreaking research released today by Imagine Canada (formerly the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy). Second only to the Netherlands, Canada's sector is larger than that of the United States, long considered to have the world's most fully developed charitable and nonprofit sector.

These findings are the result of a two-year research project conducted by Imagine Canada and Baltimore's Johns Hopkins University. This is the first study of its kind that measures the Canadian nonprofit and voluntary sector against similar sectors in 36 countries around the world.

"This research shows that while we rank well internationally, Canada's charities and nonprofits are still at risk," says Georgina Steinsky-Schwartz, president and CEO of Imagine Canada. "We need a collective commitment to help the sector realize its full potential. That means more flexible funding, continued support from individuals, more volunteers, new partnerships with businesses, and better leadership from government," says Steinsky-Schwartz.

The nonprofit and voluntary sector is a significant economic force in Canada. When the value of volunteer effort is included, this sector contributes 8.5% to Canada's GDP and is almost as large an employer as the country's entire manufacturing industry. Relative to other countries, the Canadian nonprofit sector focuses more on the delivery of services in such areas as health, development and housing, education, and social welfare, and relies more on paid staff than volunteers to deliver such services.

"This is a uniquely Canadian asset that until recently, has been largely hidden," says Dr. Michael Hall, vice president of research at Imagine Canada and lead author of the report. "Our research reveals it to be the second largest charitable and nonprofit sector in the world with a composition and scope that is unlike any other. Looking to the future, our challenge is to determine how to build upon this asset to better serve Canadians."

Other highlights of the research:

- Health care organizations employ 31% of the nonprofit and voluntary sector workforce in Canada, compared to 14% on average in other countries.
- Two million Canadians are employed in the nonprofit and voluntary sector – that's almost two-and-one-half times more workers than the country's construction industry employs.

*Funding for the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project was provided by the Government of Canada as part of the Voluntary Sector Initiative.*

*Imagine Canada supports Canada's charities, nonprofit organizations and socially conscious businesses and champions the work they do in our communities. Visit [www.imaginecanada.ca](http://www.imaginecanada.ca) for more information*

- The participating countries with the top-ten largest nonprofit and voluntary sectors are, in order, the Netherlands, Canada, Belgium, Ireland, U.S., U.K., Israel, France, Norway, and Sweden.

To download a copy of the “*The Canadian Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector in Comparative Perspective*” report please visit [www.imaginecanada.ca](http://www.imaginecanada.ca). For more information about the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, visit [www.jhu.edu/cnp](http://www.jhu.edu/cnp).

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