Strengthening the Charitable Sector Leadership Gap in Ontario

by

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Abstract

The Ontario charitable sector is in a vulnerable situation, as the current leadership is approaching

retirement, resulting in a shortage of upcoming leaders to replace them. Excellent programs are

available to train new fundraisers, but not executive directors. This situation has resulted in a gap

between well-trained fundraisers, but not well-trained leaders. This research explored how the

Ontario charitable sector might build a succession plan of new executive directors from within

the sector. Adhering to Royal Roads University ethical requirements, this research included

current employees in the sector to rectify the problem. The key findings identified a willingness

on the part of employees, senior leaders, and supporting organization to train executive directors

and overcome the obstacles. The final recommendations are to develop new executive directors

and determine where the system needs to change to ensure the viability of the Ontario charitable

sector.

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Chapter 1: Focus and Framing

The Ontario charitable sector is the largest representation of charities and number of employees working within the sector in Canada. As referenced on the Ontario Nonprofit Network (n.d.-b) website, the Ontario nonprofit sector represents over 58,000 of the approximately 170,000 charities in Canada and employs over 1 million people with 600,000 of them working full time (Ontario Nonprofit Network, n.d.-a). The success of Ontario charities is dependent on the development of all stakeholders supporting a charity, including all levels of staff, donors, participants of the service, volunteers, and board members, but particular attention is required for the development of the executive director to lead the organization. Ontario charities are supported by organizations such as Imagine Canada and the Association for Fundraising Professionals (AFP) as well as a few large consulting companies like KCI Philanthropy. While these organizations are committed to the success of Ontario charities, they are focused on development of fundraising professionals, not on the development of the executive director who represents the future leaders of Ontario charities. Additionally, universities and colleges in Ontario offer formal training programs; however, upon research into their programs, I found their focus to be on developing fundraisers, not developing the skills for an executive director to lead a charity. There is no formal process for charitable executive director leadership development for aspiring new leaders through the education system, the consulting companies, or the associations supporting the industry, and it is often overlooked. In this paper, I examine the staff working within the Ontario charitable sector and how they are developed into an executive director leadership role from within their organizations or within the sector.

Personal experiences and those of my colleagues have identified a lack of executive director leadership development for employees in the sector. As a chief executive officer (CEO) working in the charitable sector, my path to obtaining that position began by acquiring the first formal university endorsed fundraising program certificate for the charitable industry and developing skills over two decades working in the industry to qualify for a CEO position. Although there are identified courses in the United States, for example the Evans School of Public Policy has a 6-day course to help develop executive directors (University of Washington, n.d.), few courses are offered in Canada with even fewer offered in Ontario. To further complicate the topic, authors have written very little about how to develop charitable sector executive director leadership skills, what skills are required to become an executive director, and why the development of executive director leadership skills is needed within the charitable sector. I conducted this research to determine how to improve the development of executive director leaders from within the sector, what the limitation to this development is, and how to introduce development of executive directors into the sector.

Through conducting this research, I attempted to engage different levels of employees currently working within the Ontario charitable sector to understand the current leadership development and the barriers to the development by asking the following question: How might the Ontario charitable sector build a succession plan of new executive directors from within the sector? The subsequent questions were as follows:

1. What does the Ontario charitable sector currently do to develop executive director leaders from within the sector?

2. Are there identifiable obstacles to developing new executive director leaders?

3. What tools need to be in place to develop new executive director leaders?

Significance of the Inquiry

Although private sector industries might have leadership programs that develop leaders from within their organizations with formal training programs, currently the charitable sector in Ontario does not have a development program for executive director leaders. Electing to not change the system could result in a shortage of executive director leaders. The industry boasts many development staff competent as fundraisers; however, as executive directors retire, the majority of these staff members have little or no leadership skills to help them assume positions of executive director leadership. The lack of upcoming leaders will affect the sector as a whole, including impacts to the volunteers and donors who support charities in Canada (McMullin, Cooke, & Downie, 2004). An executive director who is leading a charity can add to the direction and success of the organization. The repercussions of leaders ineffectively leading charities may include volunteers being unable to support the cause that they are passionate about, donors becoming frustrated with competent use of donated dollars, and those who rely on charities for assistance finding fewer places to turn for support. Currently, the charitable sector faces a decline in donations and volunteers, providing an opportunity for strong leadership to instil confidence and vision in the sector (Lammam, MacIntyre, Hunt, & Hasan, 2017). While organizations could possibly recruit executive directors from other sectors, such as corporate or government and have them utilize their leadership skills in the not-for-profit sector, most corporations face the same dilemma as charities, with their senior leadership rapidly approaching retirement age (Fields, Uppal, & LaRochelle-Côté, 2017). In my view, the corporate leader who assumes an executive

director position does not do well in the position. This observation, which is neither researched

nor published, is worthy of future research. Leadership development for all sectors may become

critical over the next few years as the baby boomer population begins to enter retirement age

(Statistics Canada, 2019); however, in this research, I focused on executive director leadership

development within the Ontario charitable sector.

The ideal future state would be to develop new executive director leaders from within the

Ontario charitable sector and create a sustainable pipeline of future executive director leaders for

charitable organizations in the province. In this research, I engaged all levels of employees in the

charitable sector as an opportunity to determine the current development opportunities and

barriers that might need to be examined to prepare more aspiring executive director leaders. The

Canada Revenue Agency stipulates that no more than 35% of the budget for charities can be

spent on administration (Blumberg, 2018), which creates budget constraints for most charities to

pay for staff to participate in development programs. This remains the case despite experts

considering leadership development to be a priority for charities to educate employees (Charity

Village, 2017). If the charities or the aspiring leader were to have to pay for the mentoring or

development program, this could limit participation, as much of the charitable sector's employee

remuneration is lower than corporate sector employment (Charity Village, 2017).

The key stakeholders who might benefit from the results of this research are AFP and

Imagine Canada. Each of these organizations has an accreditation program with a formal process

for gaining and maintaining the status of accreditation that fundraisers and organizations strive to

achieve. If being involved in the leadership development program was part of their accreditation,

the barrier of cost might be mitigated. Requiring current leaders to donate time to the program to

maintain their accreditation might also mitigate the barrier of time constraints. Having the

support and backing of both or either Imagine Canada and AFP is an integral part of the

outcomes of the research.

Imagine Canada has indicated an urgent requirement for this research due to the risk of

many of the current executive directors retiring with no obvious recruitment or training strategy

for new leaders to progress into the executive director role within the charitable sector (Baker,

2018). The issue is further complicated by the lack of research and written documentation on the

charitable sector in Canada outside of a few commissioned research projects by Canadian

governments such as *State of the Sector: Profile of Ontario's Not-for-Profits and Charitable*

Organizations (Government of Ontario, 2013). The active and ongoing development of new

executive director leaders will become critical to the charitable sector. Without attention to

developing new executive director leaders, charitable organizations might see inexperienced

leaders taking leadership roles, leaders being recruited from different industries with incomplete

skill sets, and an overall shortfall of strong leadership development for the future within the

sector.

Organizational Context and Systems Analysis

I limited the organizational context of this research to the Ontario charitable sector, which

represents a system of people who are interconnected, such as donors, volunteers, users of the

service, subject matter experts, board members, fundraisers, and CEOs. These roles are

interdependent and together form the system of the Ontario charitable sector. If the results of this

research are to apply a change to the system to develop new leaders from within the system, it is

beneficial to understand the charitable sector as a system and how each part of the system interacts prior to applying any change.

Changing the Ontario charitable sector will require a deep understanding gained through research on the system with participation from the system itself. The charitable sector is a complex, nonlinear system. As Svyantek and Brown (2009) explained, the nonlinear system has many different variables that interact with each other making the whole exceed the sum of the parts. As such, breaking down the parts of the system and understanding each part does not explain the behaviour of the system as a whole. To understand the charitable system in its entirety, research is required into the different parts of the system that affect the system's behaviour, how the different parts are interconnected, and how these parts ebb and flow and affect the patterns of behaviour of the system. This research focused on the employees working within the Ontario charitable sector as part of the system and how the system behaves in relation to employees who are aspiring to become executive director leaders from within.

The charitable sector is facing a crisis in leadership with a short fall of executive director leaders being anticipated within the next 5 years (Toupin & Plewes, 2009). To mitigate this anticipated problem and to develop executive director leaders from within the sector, not outside of it, there must be a change in the system and an understanding to determine where the best leverage point to introduce effective change should be. Leverage points are places in the system where change can be introduced that will shift the system and change the outcome (Meadows, 1999). A key lesson in leading this change will be understanding the employee's role in the charitable sector system and developing a road map of the employment journey in its present state. Developing an employment road map can assist in understanding the cause-and-effect

relationships that are reflected in the behaviour of employment within the Ontario charitable

sector system, in turn helping to determine the future. The road map can also create a plan for

moving forward positively while understanding the integration of the actions of the employees

and their leadership development (Stroh, 2015). I utilized this research to create a road map,

which enabled me to determine actions that are currently taken within the charitable system to

develop leadership, what limits or constraints the development of new leadership, and where in

the system to apply leverage points to change the system to support the development of new

leaders.

The charitable sector comprises volunteers, donors, board members, users of charitable

services, and employees. The employees fulfill many different roles within any organization,

including service providers, coordinating volunteers, and raising funds to support the charitable

work of the organization. As often discussed within Ontario NonProfit Network publications

(n.d.) and on its website, employees who excel at fundraising are typically promoted to a

leadership position, most often without any leadership development. Senge (2006) presented the

idea of feedback loops within a system by using the system itself to examine the characteristics

and interactions that lead to positive outcomes that leadership strives to achieve. By applying

Senge's theory of looping back on the system for input, I engaged with the employees in the

Ontario charitable sector for input into how the leadership development takes place in the

system, to assess if there is a more suitable leverage point within the system to apply leadership

development, and finally determine what barriers might exist to establishing leadership

development within the system.

The final stage of this research would incite a call to action for sustainable change to the Ontario charitable sector to develop executive director leaders from within. In what ways would the Ontario charitable sector have to change to sustain the leadership development employment road map that is designed from the research? Which stakeholders would have to be involved to ensure the successful change in the sector? The charitable sector is based on a positive and engaging system that supports volunteers with their desire to assist even if they do not have the skill set, to encourage donors to follow their passion and support causes that are important to them, and to engage staff and colleagues in new information, learnings, and support while delivering a service. Applying a small leverage point in the charitable system and creating an employee development process for new executive director leaders from within may assist building a pipeline of trained and experienced leaders that could mitigate the anticipated shortage of leaders from within the Ontario charitable sector. An additional advantage to applying a leverage point to change the system could be supporting the work of Imagine Canada, AFP, and other organizations that assist the Ontario charitable sector. These two approaches on leveraging systems change within the charitable sector would avoid the current direction of the shortage of executive director leaders.

The AFP in Toronto is the largest chapter worldwide. As such, I elected to include AFP in the inquiry and outcomes to make it easier to influence and adopt a new approach for developing leaders through their organization and to have it expand to other chapters worldwide. AFP has the ability to reach out to aspiring young leaders and long-standing industry leaders. At the onset of this inquiry, the anticipated outcome of this research was to create a training system or development program for leaders from within the charitable sector. This change could be

incorporated into the certification standing of the AFP organization, making it valuable to all those involved in obtaining and maintaining their certification. The second organization I considered as a stakeholder for implementation was Imagine Canada. Through their accreditation program, the mentoring of the leadership could be measurable criteria for obtaining the Imagine Canada accreditation. Both AFP and Imagine Canada have the ability to lead and sustain a change for leadership development in the charitable sector.

Overview of Thesis

Through the remainder of this document, I reviewed literature relevant to defining leadership skills, corporate and other sector leadership, and, finally, charitable sector leadership. I found the review of literature that studies the charitable sector in Canada to be limited and any research into the charitable sector in Ontario exclusively was also quite limited, which offered me an opportunity to add to the body of knowledge within the sector with the conclusions of this thesis.

The methodology that was used is based on Cooperrider, Whitney, and Stavros's (2003) appreciative inquiry action research but in a modified format to include a focus on the large system representing the Ontario charitable sector, not an individual charity. I began this research with a survey to execute the discovery phase of the research that engaged the whole system of people working in Ontario charities to identify strengths and best practices and then followed with a focus group that represented people who could make a change to the system to execute the dream and design phase of the research. The final stage of Cooperrider et al.'s appreciative inquiry is the destiny phase, which will follow after I have presented the recommendations of this research to stakeholders.

I present the research findings in an orderly sequence beginning with a discussion of the key findings from the survey, followed by a discussion on the key findings of the focus group, which in turn leads to the conclusions of the researcher. The conclusions are a culmination of the survey research key findings and the focus group key finding and include a discussion of on how those conclusions were derived. There are identified limitations to the research, explained following the conclusions, which also address the scope of the research inquiry to understand the context of the research.

In the final chapter, I provide the recommendations as a result of the research and addresses the follow-up action required from Cooperrider et al.'s (2003) action research model as the destiny phase. Once the final report has been submitted to stakeholders, implementing the recommendations is the next executional step in the action research model; this phase will influence a change in the system of the Ontario charitable sector. In the literature review that follows, I discuss the relevant literature available on leadership and how it applies to the Ontario charitable sector and why the basis of this research adds to the body of knowledge.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This literature review formed the basis of support to the research question: How might the Ontario charitable sector build a succession plan of new executive directors from within the sector? While I considered literature on general leadership skills from all sources and geographic locations, when selecting literature for review on developing leadership skills in other sectors and in the charitable sector, I intentionally omitted references from the United States of America, as their charitable sector differs from state to state and the political, social, and economic environments do not reflect those of Ontario. I chose to review literature from Australia and New Zealand because the governmental, the population, and some of the social issues are similar. I found few notable literature works from the United Kingdom that were applicable to the research project, which I considered for similar reasons as the Australian literature. I present this literature review from a board scale, beginning with leadership as a whole and moving to a much narrower scale to leadership within the charitable sector in Canada. Although I located some sources on leadership development, as I narrowed the scope from any sector leadership development to Canadian literature on leadership development and then finally to Canadian charitable sector literature, I found a decreasing amount of information to reference. Searches on Amazon, Chapters, Google Scholar, and the Royal Roads University library with their access to 98 different databases including the popular EBSCO Host, ProQuest, Emerald, Sage, Wiley, and Books24x7, resulted in no academic literature on Canadian charitable executive director leadership development.

I broke this literature review down into four sections. In the first topic, I review what academic literature views as skills of a good leader, which leads to the next topic, assessing

corporate and other sectors and how they develop leadership from within. I then explore how those sectors apply in Canada. Lastly, and perhaps the briefest, is a review of literature on the development of leadership in the charitable sector in Canada. As I found little literature to review on this specific topic, the prospects of reviewing literature on charitable leadership development in Ontario were obsolete and not considered. My review of these four topics was intentional to demonstrate that there is a vast number of literary works on the skills required to make a good leader as well as literature on how other sectors have established tools for leadership development, but the charitable sector in Canada (and, more specifically, Ontario) lacks such research, which supported the need for this research project.

Leadership Skills

I found many recognized literary articles and books on what skills are considered necessary to make a good leader. The topic of leadership has been widely written on by several scholars and people in leadership roles who reflect on their knowledge and ability to lead; as such, finding material on leadership is not a challenge. The number of written articles, research papers, journals, and books on leadership has saturated the market, making it necessary to separate the academic material from modern musings and pop culture. For this research, I chose to review academic and peer-reviewed articles written by recognized scholars in leadership to determine the leadership skills necessary to become a leader and the assessment of different types of leaders and which of those might be ideal for the charitable sector. This review does not encompass the reflection of a person who might be considered a celebrity in a leadership role, as this research focused on developing new leaders, not on how a single individual became the leader she or he is today. By focusing on defended studies of identified leadership skills and

styles and how these styles apply to the charitable sector leaders, instead of the journey a leader took to arrive where they currently are, the information can be transferred back to developing leaders in the charitable sector. I completed this review of the literature in an attempt to evaluate the predominant leadership skills, leadership style, and leadership style, as applied to the charitable sector, and how that would be helpful knowledge to develop charitable leaders from within the sector.

Predominant leadership skills. To develop a charitable sector leader, it might be prudent to begin by looking at the skills that are generally believed to be required to be a good leader. Many reputable professionals define the skills required to be a good leader by breaking them down into descriptive definitions. My choice of the literature was intentional, as I took into consideration the backgrounds of the authors from corporate to social services with a view to the possible future skills. Johansen (2012) examined the skill set of leaders based on the new emerging economies, communications, food supply chain, and different working environments and determined 10 skills are required to lead in the more modern world. In comparison to Johansen's 10 skills, Williams (2006) identified seven skills, Kouzes and Posner (2012) discussed five skills, Senge (2006) articulated five skills, and Collins (2001) described five skills. All of these authors independently arrived at very similar conclusions (see Table 1). Consistently, these scholars identified a leader with skills in vision, continuous learning, awareness of surroundings, and challenging thoughts and existing situations. I found this to be interesting, as it presents a dilemma for developing leaders from within the charitable sector. If the skill set is the same for each leader, as identified by five different scholars, then why train charitable leaders from within the sector, as they can be obtained from any sector. If this skill set

is similar or comparable, then there must be another attribute of leadership that distinguishes

different leaders that might be explained by leadership style.

Table 1

Leadership Skills Comparison

Johansen (2012)	Kouzes & Posner (2012)	Williams (2006)	Senge (2006)	Collins (2001)
Maker instinct: Inner drive, growth, connect with others	Encourage the heart in oneself	Upgrade learning always	Personal mastery	Will
Clarity: Ability to see the future others can't see	Inspire a shared vision	Lead, manage, transform change	Shared vision	Ferocious resolve
Dilemma flipping: Turn a dilemma into advantages & opportunities	Inspire a shared vision	Contextual awareness	Shared vision	Humility
Immersive learning ability: Unfamiliar environment and learn from it in a first person	Challenge the process	Keep learning open and up to date	Mental models	Take blame
Bio-empathy: Ability to see patterns in nature and learn from them	Enable others to act	Upgrade learning always	Systems thinking	Take blame
Constructive depolarizing: Calm in tense situations, brings people together with communication and positive engagement	Model the way	Contextual awareness	Mental models	Give credit
Open and honest without self-promotion	Model the way	Identify strengths and capitalize on them	Personal mastery	Humility

Johansen (2012)	Kouzes & Posner (2012)	Williams (2006)	Senge (2006)	Collins (2001)
Rapid prototyping: Learning from innovation and failure	Challenge the process	Identify weakness and learn to improve them	Team learning	Give credit
Smart mob organizing: Create, engage with all types of communication products to build business or social change	Encourage the heart in others	Keep learning open and up to date	Systems thinking	Will
Commons creating: Seed nurture grow all assets for all players	Enable others to act	Recruit people more knowledgeable than you are	Team learning	Ferocious resolve

Examining these five scholars who were published from 2001 to 2012 (Collins, 2001; Johansen, 2012; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Senge, 2006; Williams, 2006), provided a knowledge basis to begin looking at the skills of a leader of a not-for-profit organization. Each of the publications outlined the skills that the author or authors had researched and defended as traits and abilities necessary for a leader (Collins, 2001; Johansen, 2012; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Senge, 2006; Williams, 2006). I briefly review each source prior to delving into the subtopic of leadership style.

Older publications, like the work of Collins (2001), provide insight into initial thoughts on leadership and defining measurable criteria for leadership skills from any field. Senge (2006) is well recognized by academic leadership studies as a thought leader on criteria for successful leadership. He applied learning to the whole system as a way to move forward (Senge, 2006). Williams (2006), although published at the same time as Senge, is not as succinct in the

application of the skills required to be a leader, but is consistent with previously identified skills for leaders. As the study of leadership skills advanced, Kouzes and Posner (2012) built upon the knowledge base and developed further the skills of the leader and how they could be applied. Kouzes and Posner also continued to build a brand around leadership with courses, social media, websites, and seminars, working to build leaders instead of just studying them. Johansen (2012) took the established leadership research and projected into the future what some of the skills and applications might be required for a successful leader. Each author provided value to this research by understanding the skills that might be required to be a leader of any organization. I strove to take this knowledge one step further and determine the skills required to be a leader in any sector and then understand what leadership skills might be required to be a leader within the charitable sector. Understanding the skills required for leadership in any sector led to questioning which predominant skills are displayed in different leadership styles.

        Leadership styles. Goethals, Sorenson, and Burns (2004) broke down different types of leaders by the prominent skill sets employed, which results in different leadership types. Leaders use different skills to provide vision or to encourage others to act to achieve the direction or goal of the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2012). The skill sets, although similar (as shown in Table 1), are used in different ways, making certain skills more prominent than others and resulting in different kinds of leadership types. The leadership style could impact why certain leaders are considered ideal in some sectors while others are better suited for the charitable sector. Accepted types of leaders could be broken down into several different categories. As reviewing the different types of leadership might assist in understanding what makes a good leader for the charitable sector, I reviewed nine of the most common types of leadership: autocratic,

transformational, transactional, bureaucratic, charismatic, laissez-faire, situational, democratic, and servant. Although referred to by slightly different titles, most types of leadership fall into these categories (Williams, 2006).

      Autocratic leadership. I anticipated comparing traditional autocratic leaders and the skills they employ in the corporate world to the new more modern and accepted form of transformational leadership would provide insight into the difference between good leadership for the charitable sector and those from other sectors. The autocratic leadership is familiar to many, as it, along with the hierarchy model, has dominated the last century as the business model to achieve success. These leaders control everything and everyone with little input from those who are beneath them in the hierarchy. Collins (2001) described the skill set this leader relies on as ferocious resolve—they lead, set the path, and expect everyone to follow to achieve the desired goal.

      Transformational leadership. In contrast, the transformational leader might be considered the more desired type in today's current economy, where the leader is inspirational and communicates with everyone to create an environment in which people can envision new possibilities in the future and embrace change by utilizing the skill set, which Kouzes and Posner (2012) described as inspiring a shared vision.

      Transactional leadership. This form of leadership is based on the principle of rewarding good behaviour and punishing bad. The leader sets the goals then achieves them through positive reinforcement for good performance while ignoring or demoting those who do not aspire to achieve the leader's goals. These leaders practise a skill set of a combination of traits similar to what Williams (2006) described as lead, manage, transform, and change.

Bureaucratic leadership. Like the transactional style, bureaucratic leadership is highly regulated with strict rules that everyone must follow. The best example of this style might be the military leadership structure, in which the leader uses constructive depolarizing skills (Johansen, 2012) and is able to calm people in tense situations. Kouzes and Posner (2012) described this as modeling the way. With this leadership style, each person follows the same path, the structure is rigid and formal, expectations of roles are understood, and testing the process is frowned upon, resulting in conflict and possible punitive actions.

Charismatic leadership. Most people are familiar with the charismatic type of leader, as this form of leadership is often employed by public figures. These leaders use skills like charm and positive persuasion to lead and are often the type to write books on how they achieved their leadership role. Collins (2001) described this predominant skill as "will" (p. 66). Charismatic leaders focus on their will to lead and to persuade people to act through adoration. This leadership style is the opposite of what Johansen (2012) described as quiet transparency, which is open, honest, and without self-promotion.

Laissez-faire leadership. This leadership style, as the description suggests, is a hands-off approach to leadership and allows the followers to execute tasks in the way they would like to achieve the outcome with little or no instruction from the leader. Williams (2006) described this skill set as the ability to recruit people more knowledgeable than the leader, and Kouzes and Posner (2012) noted this skill involves empowering others to act. The leader with this style of leadership relies upon employees or followers to just get the work done.

Situational leadership. Perhaps the most difficult to execute is the situational leadership style. These leaders use skills depending on the situation they find themselves in. In some cases,

the leader might need to be autocratic to achieve a task or goal, while at other times, she or he

might need to be democratic to encourage others to help form a vision for success. Senge (2006)

described this as personal mastery, a form of leadership that can employ many different skills

depending on the environment or the circumstances at hand.

       Democratic leadership. Democratic leadership is a familiar style, as it is represented in

the election process for governments in Canada. The leader asks all followers to participate in the

decision-making process prior to setting a goal or implementing a process in an effort to

represent the majority of what result people would like to see. Williams (2006) described the

skills that these leaders employ as always learning and upgrading. Pursuing the democratic style

a bit further results in servant leadership, which I discuss next.

       Servant leadership. The servant leader changes the focus from the leader to the followers

and encourages staff members to lead and learn from their mistakes, making everyone a part of

the process and a leader in their own roles and responsibilities. Senge (2006) referred to this as

team learning, describing the action as all participants are learning, leading, and contributing

simultaneously.

       Summary of leadership styles. Reviewing the literature to compare the skills to the

leadership style enabled me to identify which leadership skills are predominant in the various

leadership styles. Fully grasping the transition from understanding a given skill to implementing

it enabled me distinguish the skills necessary for charitable sector leaders. This, in turn, helped

me to understand how to develop new charitable sector leaders from within and develop a basis

for this research in the charitable sector. This approach assisted in achieving the inquiry aim to

develop the skills and styles for new charitable sector leaders from within, as it revealed existing

leaders who are already successful and the types of leadership they employed.

Leadership style applied to the charitable sector. Given the nature of the charitable

sector, which responds to the demands of an unmet need within society, certain types of

leadership might be more conducive to leaders within this sector than others. In conducting this

review, I explored the following question: Do the leaders who are currently leading charities

display different styles from the business sector and if so what styles would they be?

Through drawing on the different types of leadership styles discussed in the previous

section and reflecting on how they might be employed within a charitable setting, I determined

the top-down, autocratic leadership style would not likely be accepted or viewed as desirable

because the demands in this sector come from the ground up, not from the top down, as in a

traditional hierarchy (Collins, 2001). Charities that do not fulfil the demands of society are not

supported by donors or users of the system and, therefore, become obsolete. As Sims and Quatro

(2015) explained, there is a delicate balance between achieving the mission and being

operational. The transformational leader is likely best suited to lead within the charitable sector

so the organization can respond to change and encourage all the stakeholders to participate in

fulfilling a vision and making change happen. Schneider and George (2011) described the

transformational leader in the voluntary sector as someone who builds relationships and provides

a positive vision for people to follow.

Through reviewing transactional leadership (Williams, 2006) and bureaucratic leadership

(Johansen, 2012), I learned that these styles might not lend themselves to the charitable sector

due to their similarities to autocratic leadership, as the expectation of the leader is that everyone

will follow and the leader will provide the vision and direct the action to achieve the outcomes

(Johansen, 2012). Although transactional leadership and bureaucratic leadership are practised

and prevalent in society, and they may also be employed in charitable organizations, these

leadership styles do not lend themselves to working with volunteers and responding to the users

of the charity. It is important to note that the charitable sector leader works with a number of

volunteers who may not necessarily be skilled but are passionate about what they are doing.

Expecting volunteers to fit into a formal structure and then rewarding only good outcomes and

punishing the bad would likely be unacceptable to most volunteers (Williams, 2006), as their

intention for being involved in the organization is usually motivated by a passion to help a cause

with the skills they have, not fit into a formal structure.

Charities do, from time to time, have charismatic leaders (Collins, 2001), but given the

nature of the users of the charity and the need that these organizations meet within society,

charm and charisma do not matter to people who are struggling or looking to have needs met;

rather, these stakeholders seek action and results that will help or affect their lives, not the

charismatic leader's life or well-being. Parolini et al. (as cited in Schneider & George, 2011)

compared the charismatic leader to the transformational leader and found they use similar skills

of vision and inspiration, but the charismatic leader relies entirely on charm alone to lead. The

ability for a charity to continue once the charismatic leader has moved on puts the organization at

risk, since the direction of the charity is based on the charismatic leader's vision, not on the

team's.

In the charitable sector the laissez-faire style (Williams, 2006) might become problematic

because for this style to be successful the worker must have a high level of experience and skill

to execute the outcome. In the charitable sector, volunteers, who usually lack experience,

complete most of the work, because the tasks and responsibilities are not the full-time work these

individuals undertake on a daily basis and they are sometimes absent for long periods of time.

Situational leaders might be beneficial in the charitable sector, as leaders of charities

must work with various stakeholders in an organization, which may require them to employ a

number of different skills depending on who they are working with (Senge, 2006). For example,

the board of directors, which comprises volunteers offering to assist a charity with their skill set,

must understand the vision and mission of the organization to be successful, and the leader of the

organization must use her or his own leadership skills to share that vision. The leader of the

charitable sector must also work with staff to encourage them to learn, grow, and make mistakes,

and at the same time interact with the users of the charity, with whom they must be humble but

encouraging in order to bring people together for a common cause. The situational leader would

be able to employ different leadership skills working with each of these different stakeholders

within the charity.

The skills required for a democratic leadership style might be better suited to the

charitable sector, as this would enable all stakeholders to have input into the direction of the

charity regardless of their role (Williams, 2006). The democratic leadership type considers

volunteers, staff, users of the system, and board members with the same validity and level of

input. Asking each stakeholder for input and valuing knowledge and data gives each stakeholder

a sense of responsibility and belonging into the organization.

Similar to the democratic style, the servant leadership lends itself well to dealing with

volunteers and users of the system as well as board members of a charity. All stakeholders in a

charity have the ability to lead and contribute; even if mistakes are encountered, they are viewed as a learning opportunity. Schneider and George (2011) concluded that the servant leadership style, which empowers the followers (volunteers), appears to be a more successful approach to leading a not-for-profit organization.

As noted earlier in the report, I found limited research on the different styles of leadership as they apply to the charitable sector. The research into the comparison of leadership style that Thach and Thompson (2007) executed determined honesty and integrity, being collaborative, and developing others as three competencies considered necessary to be a leader with the nonprofit sector. Thach and Thompson found leaders scored higher in all three categories but they did not link these results back to leadership style. Thach and Thompson concluded that the various skills do indicate a difference between competencies required for not-for-profit and for-profit leaders, but indicated that further research is required to determine exact skills. Given the limited literature available on this topic, I reviewed works discussing other sector leadership development to assist in determining how to develop charitable sector leaders from within.

Summary of leadership styles. I reviewed literature that broke down the styles of leadership and discussed which styles are displayed in certain industries; this provided me with insight into how to frame the research on current leadership in the charitable sector for this thesis. To assist in developing research into the existing charitable sector leaders, it is helpful to understand the types of styles that might exist. With an understanding of the style of leader, the framework for developing new leaders in the charitable sector can build on the academic knowledge of skills that different styles of leaders employ to lead.

Corporate and Other Sectors Leadership Development

At the onset of this research, I determined that assessing how other industries develop leaders from within could provide insight and understanding of the opportunities for the charitable sector to obtain best practices. As there are leadership development programs in other sectors and in other countries, I anticipated that reviewing the literature would assist in understanding how leadership development is practised and what the common themes might be that align to Canada and then to the charitable sector within Canada.

To begin the review, I examined literature on leadership develop within any sector in countries like Canada. As explained earlier, I chose to omit research conducted in the United States of America due to the difference in the nature of how charities operate within the two countries. I sought to explore what industries other than the charitable sector had leadership development programs to build a pipeline and ensure viability of their industry. Although I found many publications on leadership, industry-specific leadership development was less prevalent and mainly focused on the corporate sector. Through my review, I found some fundamental points on building a succession plan. Cacioppe's (1998) article discussed personal development, but his information is now 20 years old, and, although people develop personally, that does not necessarily mean they become leaders within their sector. In their research, Hind, Wilson, and Lenssen (2009) examined 11 businesses in the United Kingdom, and they identified skills that need to be developed internally to encourage employees to take management or leadership positions. Other industries that have specific leadership development programs include law enforcement and the military. These two industries have a structure to develop leaders from within in a regimented, formal process that expects conformity and is heavily disciplined in

nature, by highlighting mistakes and rewarding positive behaviour. Kark, Karazi-Presler, and

Tubi (2016) reviewed the state of the military leadership structure and process for leadership

development and found that the reward for engaging in the structure was to be promoted and

provided with further knowledge to enhance leadership skills outlining the training and

development from within.

Other industries that have leadership development programs from within include the

education and health care sector. Even as long ago as 1982 research, when Moore conducted a

review of literature, he revealed a process for developing leaders from within the education

system by a means of mentoring. This is a similar approach to health care, as Le Comte and

McClelland (2017) outlined that leadership training while on the job in the workplace was the

predominant method for training from within. As Le Comte and McClelland and Moore

discussed, these positions require training from within in a mentoring style of development to

understand the intricacies of the workplace. Predominantly, the models of leadership

development in most of these industries are the responsibility of the Human Resources

department (Collins & Holton, 2004) that might be part of a corporation or a service provider.

Although other sectors might have leadership development programs as part of their

succession planning for their industry, the predominant industries are corporate businesses,

military and law enforcement, education, and health care. Of the sectors that have leadership

development programs that train from within, health care and education have the most

similarities to the charitable sector, while military, law enforcement, and corporate have less in

common and, therefore, offer fewer opportunities to transfer the learnings from those industries

to charities.

The focus of this research was to determine how to develop leadership of a charity from within the charitable sector. A search of the literature available, within the parameters previously explained, into other sectors that currently develop leaders from within their sector provided insight that might be transferable to the charitable sector (Iles & Preece, 2006). The review of the literature on other sectors indicated lessons learned within the fields of education and health care might be applicable to charities and provide already established knowledge and practices for developing leaders from within.

Sectors in Canada with leadership development programs. After reviewing literature from corporate and other sectors on leadership development outside of Canada, I began to examine relevant literature from within Canada, focusing on corporate and other sectors' approaches for leadership development. I discovered the results were similar to the larger geographic scope, as the corporate sector relied heavily on general leadership training delivered through Human Resources departments and outside training programs (Marcus, 2004; Miller & Desmarais, 2007). Corporate leadership development employed similar trends in Canada as it did for research conducted in other countries.

The Canadian military leadership development review of literature resulted in articles focused on the leaders of the past and the skills of leaders within the military (Bradley, Nicol, Charbonneau, & Meyer, 2002). Hammond (1998) has offered insight into how controls, practices, and skills have led to the leaders in the past and how this will require change from within in the future. Given the military structure of organization and transparency that has evolved in news articles and media reports since the publication of Hammond's work 20 years ago, Ivey and Kline (2010) suggested the military leadership development structure has

transitioned to a transformational leadership style with some degree of success. The Canadian

military does have a leadership development program that trains from within the ranks of the

system but with a more transparent participatory structure than it had in the past (Ivey & Kline,

2010).

The Canadian health care and education sectors place a focus on leadership development

programs and were comparable to the larger geographic scope of this research, but the programs

had a different theme. The literature on the larger geographic scope focused more on mentorship

as the Canadian health care sector is based on a ground-up approach (Bharwani, Kline, &

Patterson, 2017). Similar to the health care sector, the field of education focuses more on a

learning model of the whole system and there is specific literature that compares Canada and

Australia on educational leadership development that provides insight into how this system

would work and is applicable in both countries (Scott & Webber, 2008). The review of Canadian

literature on leadership development resulted in a similar conclusion as the larger geographic

literature review. Both corporate and the military leadership development have structures to

promote leaders from within (Hammond, 1998; Leskiw & Singh, 2007). These approaches may

be too structured to apply easily to the charitable sector in Canada. The two prominent industries

that develop leaders from within are the education and health care sector, each providing some

best practices for the Canadian charitable sector to learn from.

The literature on Canadian leadership development programs that I reviewed provided an

opportunity for me to examine best practices and preestablished knowledge on how to develop

sector leaders from within with a Canadian focus. As this research project topic is charitable

sector leader development within Canada and specifically Ontario, the literature provided an

awareness and understanding of some of the uniquely Canadian features of other sector

leadership development that strengthen the research for this project.

       Sectors with leadership development programs like charities. The health care and

education sectors were more specific about developing leadership skills from learning and

evidence of best practices (Scott & Webber, 2008; Sharlow, Langenhoff, Bhatti, Spiers, &

Cummings, 2009). I also discovered a few articles on storytelling as a process to develop leaders

from within organizations (Ann & Carr, 2011), which were not specific to any organization, but

did surface as a practice to develop leaders. The process of storytelling to teach leadership skills

might have some transferable practices to Canadian charities if the organization is on the smaller

side, with all the employees being in contact with each other on a regular basis. The disadvantage

is that this model does not scale up well; thus it would not be applicable to large charitable

organizations with employees who are not in regular contact with each other (Ann & Carr,

2011). The learning models of best practices and evidenced-based leadership development

presented some transferable insights that might be applicable to the Canadian charitable sector.

       Predominantly, the models of leadership development in most of these articles are the

responsibility of the Human Resources department (Collins & Holton, 2004) that might be part

of a corporation or a service provider. While this is interesting insight into the responsibility of

leadership development within organizations, it is difficult to transfer to the Ontario charitable

sector, as most charities in Ontario do not have a designated Human Resources department. The

literature that I found most applicable was in the education (Moore, 1982) and health care sectors

(Le Comte & McClelland, 2017), as it reflected leadership training while on the job in the

workplace with a mentoring model. This is similar to the Canadian charitable sector, in which

inspiring leaders are required to fulfill their employment obligations and acquire skills to develop as a leader simultaneously. The Canadian charitable sector does not have a mentoring program, making the literature relevant for exploring possible opportunities to introduce best practices from these industries. The models of mentoring and developing leaders while in the workplace might reflect an approach that the Canadian charitable sector could adopt to assist in building a leadership pipeline.

I found the literature on sectors that are similar to charitable sector to be helpful for developing and framing the survey questions for this research. Given that the mentoring model of developing leaders while on the job is the focus of the sectors that are most like the Canadian charitable sector, I framed the questions on the survey to determine if this is actually the case and if this is a possibility for the Canadian charitable sector. I also found it equally important to focus the research on other practices of leadership development that are being used in sectors that are dissimilar to the Canadian charitable sector. To ensure that I took into consideration the many different types of leadership development that are currently being practised within the sector, I developed the survey questions using the knowledge from the literature on these other sectors for example, Bharwani et al.'s (2017) bottom-up approach, which they employed when examining the development of leaders within the medical industry. I also utilized the information on possible barriers to developing leaders within the charitable sector from Santora, Sarros, and Esposito's (2010) research, in which the authors identified the lack of budget and capacity to develop leaders from within small- to mid-sized charitable organizations. This information was helpful in determining survey questions on obstacles for leadership development.

Charitable Leadership Development in Canada

I reviewed literature on how other sectors develop leaders from within their respective industries, as I chose to research how the Canadian charitable sector develops leaders for comparison and contrast. I determined that examining charitable leadership development across Canada could assist in building best practices for the Ontario sector leadership development.

Canadian charitable leadership development. Researching the literature available on charitable sector leadership development in Canada presented me with a significant problem. I found most of the literature on leadership to be focused on board development or the relationship between boards and executive directors or CEO, not about developing executive director leadership skills for employees in the charitable sector. Typically, a trade-level publication would not be included in a literature review of this nature, but given the limited number of academic resources for this study, I needed to consider other sources. I discovered a program initiated by the Ontario Nonprofit Network (n.d.) that attempted to connect younger professionals with senior staff to encourage learning. I found no reported outcomes on the success or failure of the program and no academic studies on the results. *The Philanthropist* magazine strove to address this growing issue in a series of articles that reported the executive directors of not-for-profit organizations in Canada are not focusing on the growing crisis of a lack of upcoming leaders in the sector (Abel, Mazurk, & Romaldi, 2017). According to McIsaac, Park, and Toupin (2013), in their study executed in Ontario only, most leaders arrived in their roles from inside the charitable sector with what they described as an accidental, challenging career path that involved steep learning curves. This research resulted in no formal training program or clearly identified avenue to achieving the role of executive director of a charitable

organization in Canada. One of the outcomes of the study was the recommendation of structure

that can create the development of leadership from within organizations.

Imagine Canada is an advocacy group that works with Canadian charities on issues that

face the industry and policies with the federal government of Canada. Cordeaux (2017)

conducted a research study of young people in the Province of Ontario who were interested in

working within the nonprofit sector to assist in building the pipeline of upcoming leaders.

Cordeaux's research resulted in similar findings as those of McIsaac et al. (2013), indicating no

clear path or training program is available to assist youth in developing leadership skills to

assume the role of executive director in the future.

The HR Council of Canada funded a study produced by Morris and Cottle (2012) on the

nonprofit sector, specifically studying the executive leaders. Morris and Cottle concluded their

report with nine key findings on the skills that are required to be an executive director and what

makes people choose this career path. Similar findings to the studies executed in Ontario resulted

in the need for leadership skills and possibly even leadership skills over management experience

(Toupin & Plewes, 2009); however, again, no insight emerged on how to develop the skills that

are required to lead a not-for-profit organization. Each of these studies offered insight into the

need for leadership skills and the priority to develop new leaders; however, they did not address

how the development is to be done (Arundel & Clutterbuck, 2017; Morris & Cottle, 2012;

Toupin & Plewes, 2009).

My review of the literature highlighted the need to develop charitable sector leaders in

Canada. The literature also helped establish that, to date, no clear path exists for individuals

seeking to become an executive director of a charitable organization in Canada. I conducted this

research with the aim to answer the question that surfaced as a result of the literature reviewed. Experts appear to agree that something must be done to build a pipeline of leaders for the charitable sector (Arundel & Clutterbuck, 2017; Morris & Cottle, 2012; Toupin & Plewes, 2009). As such, I conducted this research with an aim to provide a plan on how to execute and fulfil the void of leadership development within the charitable sector.

Canadian charitable leadership development programs in Ontario. Despite an extensive search on Google Scholar, Royal Roads University library with access to 98 different search engines including the popular EBSCO, ProQuest and Emerald, Amazon, and Chapters/Indigo, I was unable to find literature on developing executive director leaders from within the charitable sector in Canada. The literature I reviewed included government-funded studies of the industry and the leadership skills that are considered necessary to sustain leadership in the charitable sector, but not how to develop them (Arundel & Clutterbuck 2017). Although researchers identified leadership development as a need in studies conducted by the Ontario Nonprofit Network (McIsaac et al., 2013) and Imagine Canada (Cordeaux, 2017), I found no literature on how the skills to be an executive director can be developed. National organizations and nationally funded studies do not specifically address the needs of charitable organizations in Ontario. The insight I gained from this literature review provided knowledge of a gap in evidenced-based academic research to further support the Ontario charitable sector in leadership development. As such, the goal of this research project was to fill the void by providing literature and an action suggestion on how to solve the identified gap in executive director leadership development in Ontario's charitable sector.

Summary of the Literature Review

In conclusion, I found no literature available to develop executive director leaders from within charitable organizations, making it difficult to transfer best practices of leadership development to the charitable sector, and specifically the charitable sector in Ontario. I did find some relevant materials from the education and health care sectors (Leskiw & Singh, 2007; Scott & Webber, 2008), and the experiences from other sectors like the corporate sector (Hind et al., 2009); however, the need for literature and research on the development of charitable sector executive director leaders remains. The literature that is available stops short of taking the next step on proposing suggestions on how the charitable sector should develop leaders from within (McIsaac et al., 2013). Researchers identified why leadership development is crucial (Toupin & Plewes, 2009), given the shortage of identified leaders to assume the roles of current charitable sector leaders. Through conducting this research project, l attempted to address how to achieve this goal. Building on the knowledge gained through the academic research and knowledge sources currently available (Arundel & Clutterbuck, 2017; Morris & Cottle, 2012), I strove to supplement the existing information and provide new knowledge to the sector as a whole.

Chapter 3: Methodology

I conducted this research in an effort to inform a desired change in the charitable sector

and the development of new executive director leaders from within the sector. For this inquiry, I

chose to employ an appreciative inquiry (AI) action research method, which Cooperrider and

Whitney (2005) described through the 4-D cycle (see Figure 1).
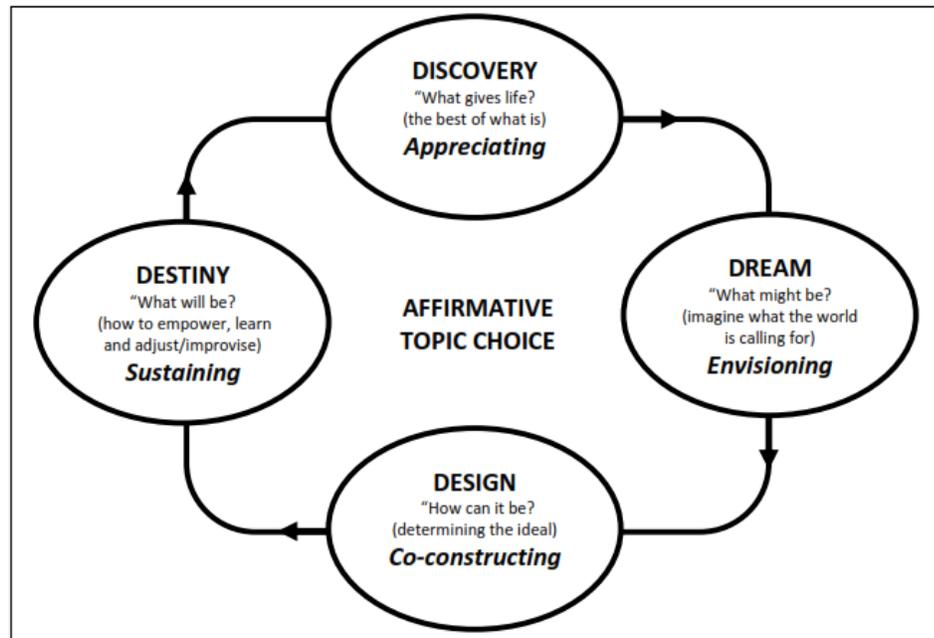
Figure 1. The appreciative inquiry 4-D cycle.
Note. From *Appreciative Inquiry: A Positive Revolution in Change* (p. 16), by D. L. Cooperrider
& D. K. Whitney, 2005, San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler. Copyright 2005 by Cooperrider &
Whitney. Reprinted with permission.

Cooperrider and Whitney's (2005) 4-D cycle consists of (a) discovery, which engages all

the system and stakeholders to describe the strengths and best practices; (b) dream, which is the

cycle of creating a results oriented vision of greater potential; (c) design, which involves creating

a positive design of the dream that engages a new state; and, the final stage, (d) destiny, which is

the ongoing positive change for the system. I selected this methodology because AI is a good fit

for collaborative organizations that see value in each stakeholder's input and diversity and are

positive in their approach (Johnson & Leavitt, 2001). The positive, collaborative approach of AI

action research is well suited to the charitable sector because these approaches are based on

"abiding respect for people's knowledge and for their ability to understand and address the issues

confronting them and their communities" (Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, & Maguire, 2003, p. 12).

The positive collaborative approach to research with AI encourages people to participate in

change by studying the theory and testing the practice of their work in a collaborative and natural

setting. The participants assume the roles of studying the system and testing their own theories.

I provide a full explanation of the methods used to collect data and the study conduct in

the following sections; the research methodology and the challenges are discussed here. I

circulated a survey to employees working in the charitable sector in Ontario. I used participants'

responses to the survey to frame the discovery cycle and obtain quantitative data that formulated

the questions for qualitative data collection from a focus group. I invited charitable sector leaders

in Ontario to take part in a focus group using an AI format to execute the dream cycle and finally

inform the design cycle of the research. The AI format was a good approach for the focus group

in particular, as the participants are active leaders in the charitable sector who are able to see the

change and develop the steps to create the change and then implement the change. By being in a

leadership role, they are seeking success for the charitable sector and the opportunities to create

that environment.

Although the AI action research model was well suited for this research, I found some

limitations that needed to be addressed. These limitations included the scalability from local

smaller organizations to larger organizations or those with national reach. Applying AI research

to the Ontario charitable sector is a larger scale system than examining just one organization unto

itself. The second limitation involves the participants of the research study, as each participant needed to feel safe to express their thoughts and opinions with no one having more power than the other in the information-sharing sessions. Lastly, always focusing on the positive might lead to missing valuable information shared from a negative experience.

To address the scalability issue of AI action research, I asked the participants in the survey to identify the size of their organization based on annual revenues, which are available to the public through the Canada Revenue Agency website. The participants were not identified in their responses, but the revenue size of the organization was utilized for analysis. Further addressing the scalability issue with the qualitative research in the focus group, I invited executive directors from different sized organizations, the owner of a placement agency that focuses exclusively on the charitable sector, and AFP Canada to attend.

I addressed the second limitation of AI action research involving participants being safe and able to express their thoughts and opinions through choosing to conduct a survey in which the participants were not identified through their responses, participation was anonymous, and all survey respondents were informed of this information prior to their participation. To ensure participants understood they were free to express their thoughts and opinions safely, I ensured participants were notified that their participation was voluntary and under no means did they have to participate. During the focus group qualitative research method, having all executive directors or owners of companies as participants ensured that no one had power over, as each person was at the same level of employment, thereby making each participant feel safe and valued for their opinions. By conducting the research with a survey and focus group in this

manner, I was able to minimize the second limitation of action research in regard to participant

safety and participation.

Lastly, it was important for me to address the issue of some experiences being positive

for some participants but negative for others. Due to the format and the scales used for survey

responses, the quantitative research was not affected by the positive or negative responses, as

both positive and negative responses were captured; however, the focus group method might

have been limited by a solely positive collaborate approach. Using a positive approach to change

with the AI model, it was possible for an opportunity to be missed and valuable research

information involving negative experiences to not be included (Bushe, 2011). Using a negative

situation to discover a positive outcome or positive reflections on situations could direct the

conversations and discoveries back to a positive approach (Johnson, 2011). Throughout this AI

research, I addressed the identification of negative situations by encouraging other participants to

speak out about how those experiences led to better outcomes in the end. The participants

themselves concluded the positive from a negative situation and how that could contribute to the

change required to develop more leadership skills for employees. Using these approaches

enabled me to ensure the information I gathered for the research was authentic and compensated

for the disadvantages of using an AI action research approach.

Survey Methodology

The survey began the discovery cycle of the AI process and explored the question with

research participants about what the charitable sector does well to develop executive director

leaders from within the industry and framed the positioning to "cultivate an ongoing, non-

judgmental first-person awareness of how we are acting in the larger world" (Torbert & Taylor,

2008, p. 242). Using a survey implementing first-person inquiry encouraged the participants to

reflect, study, and examine their thoughts on leadership; develop their views on how they lead;

encourage others to lead; and determine how they wanted to lead and how this is demonstrated

within their organization. The first stage is the discovery phase and the beginning of the AI

process. This phase looks at the reality from an objective and subjective viewpoint. I chose to

conduct a survey because it offered the advantage of being able to reach a large audience of

participants within a short time frame, the ability to reach different sizes of organizations and

various levels of employment within the organizations, as well as the opportunity to measure the

data obtained on a quantitative basis. The second advantage of data collection through a survey

was the anonymity of the responses. Participants were not identifiable in the results of the

survey, which alleviated any coercion or positions of power influencing respondents' responses.

These advantages provided authentic responses from participants, as they could not be identified.

The survey method also provided the opportunity to collect a large amount of information from

across Ontario without incurring the cost to travel.

The most significant disadvantage of the survey method is that this form of data

collection often results in a low response rate. To offset this disadvantage and try to encourage as

many responses as possible, I circulated the survey to as many employees in the Ontario

charitable sector as I could identify using an interactive voice response (IVR) approach. The IVR

is an automated telephone call that dials out to a phone number and begins the recorded message

when someone answers the phone and then records the responses the participant chooses during

the survey, capturing the data. The survey company called individual numbers three times in an

attempt to gain participation. To encourage additional responses to the survey, a call-in line was

established so people could call into a phone number to complete the survey with the same

interactive response methodology. I mitigated the risk of low responses to the survey through the

combination of approaches to the IVR survey.

Other disadvantages to surveys are the ways people respond based on their interpretations

of the questions and lack of attention. To mitigate this challenge, I developed questions that were

short and simple to ensure consistent interpretation and willingness to respond with honest

information. Surveys are also limited to the data collected based on the questions asked. I

addressed this by following up the survey results with a focus group to understand the results of

the survey.

Focus Group Methodology

The focus group research began the dream cycle of AI (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). I

conducted this method with leaders from different sizes of Ontario charities and people who

influence the industry to test the results of the survey. The leaders had no power over each other,

as each participant independently led their own organization, making all focus group attendees

the same level of employment.

The focus group method of qualitative research data had advantages and disadvantages in

relation to this research project. The advantage of the focus group is the collaborative building on

ideas with people engaged in the discussions. This enabled all attendees to participate and

present multiple perspectives and ideas. In addition, participants' responses encouraged

conversation and triggered memories of other events and idea generation (Saldaña & Omasta,

2017). This was important to the AI dream cycle, as it enabled participants to imagine how the

development of new charitable executive director leaders might take place in an ideal world. As

noted earlier, I used the survey results to frame the questions posed to the focus group to acquire

data for the dream cycle. The research data gathered during the focus group came from the

discussions and observations about what was found to be the ideal future, which made the

questions being asked at this stage consequential to the inquiry, because asking the question

initiates the intervention and influences people's thoughts around change (Cooperrider et al.,

2003).

One of the disadvantages to focus groups includes participants' desire to conform to the

group dynamic with their possible reluctance to express barriers or disagree with others in the

session. This disadvantage may lead to less data and input from some participants in the group,

thereby restricting the range of perspectives from all participants that represent the whole of the

system in the AI process. To minimize this concern, I chose to limit the focus group to 13 people

to ensure all voices could be heard and acknowledged and that executive directors from different

sizes of organizations were included so each participant would have something in common with

the colleagues and associates in attendance, thereby creating a comfortable environment for

participation.

Another disadvantage to focus groups is the balance of power between participants. To

ensure the ability for each participant to freely express her or his responses and opinions, I

ensured the participants were leaders of their own organization, so no individual within the group

had power or influence over others with respect to the employment role, thereby eliminating the

power balance between participants. The data I collected during the focus group were qualitative,

and I held the session in a neutral setting with participants voluntarily participating in the study.

Practising the AI process, the design phase followed (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). In this phase, I focused on what should be done. I did not look at trying to fix an already existing system; rather, I sought to determine how the Ontario charitable sector could build succession plans for new leadership from within the sector through learning and designing a new organizational system that responds to the ideal future state envisioned in the dream cycle (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Like the dream phase, Cooperrider and Whitney's (2005) design cycle engaged the leaders of different organizations in a focus group. The whole charitable sector in Ontario was represented through the leaders who gathered together in a room representing various sizes of organizations from multiple geographical areas in Ontario and different influencing stakeholders in the industry, making it diverse and inclusive. Cooperrider and Whitney's (2005) design cycle included identifying and overcoming barriers that might exist in achieving the desired outcome while executing a design for the charitable sector to develop executive director leaders from within.

Survey respondents identified barriers to developing leaders from within the charitable sector. The focus group executed the design cycle, focusing on what a new system of charitable leadership development would encompass and how to overcome barriers that had been identified through the survey. The participants who took part in Cooperrider and Whitney's (2005) dream and design cycles will also be involved in delivering the change and, through their ownership, and they have a positive drive and way forward. With a positive view of the future as framed through the AI method, change within the charitable sector will have a positive outcome. As Cooperrider et al. (2003) stated, the effects of positive thinking and momentum will create long-lasting change, and only through positive visions of the future will positive change occur. The

limitation of time on the research project provided little opportunity to research the destiny cycle

of Cooperrider and Whitney's (2005) 4-D process, although a number of recommendations

surfaced and a follow-up meeting have been suggested.

Project Participants

To represent the whole of the AI system, I recruited the participants for this study through

two different methods. For the first group, I identified and recruited individuals employed at

different levels in the Ontario charitable sector. The second group included individuals identified

as executive leadership, all of whom were in a position to effect change in the Ontario charitable

sector. The survey participants provided data for the discovery cycle of AI (Cooperrider &

Whitney, 2005), and the sector leaders who can influence change in the system provided the data

for the dream and design cycles of AI (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005).

Survey. In Phase 1 of the research, I sought to establish the current state of leadership in

the charitable sector in the Province of Ontario, as outlined in the discovery cycle of AI

(Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). As mentioned earlier in the report, I engaged participants from

different charitable organizations through an IVR survey by telephone. Participants also had the

opportunity to call into a dedicated line to complete the survey. According to the Ontario Non-

Profit Network (n.d.-a), the charitable sector in the Province of Ontario includes approximately

600,000 full-time employees. For the survey, I specifically targeted people working in fund

development in the charitable sector in Ontario who might want to become an executive director

of an organization. Charities in Ontario include religious organizations, hospitals, universities,

colleges, and libraries, and the staff employed at these organizations would not necessarily be the

target audience, as they have their own employment criteria, such as doctors and professors. For

example, the Archdiocese of Toronto has 197 staff, according to Charity Intelligence Canada

(n.d.-a), but according to the notes, they hired external fundraising staff to secure needed funds,

so although the organization is a registered charity and employs almost 200 people, no one in

that organization fell within the target audience for this inquiry. Using the Charity Intelligence

Canada (n.d.-b) website to establish how many people work in hospital foundations in the

Province of Ontario, I found the total was 1,172 individuals in 39 different institutions in 2016.

Of these staff, there would be professionals who would not identify with working for a charity,

but rather in their profession, and were not necessarily interested in becoming a CEO or an

executive director of a charitable organization. These employees might include, for example,

chartered accountants and human resources specialists. I also found an overrepresentation of

national organizations situated in Ontario; for example, the Alzheimer Society of Canada, the

Alzheimer Society of Ontario, and the Alzheimer Society of Toronto are all based in Toronto and

all three have attained charitable status.

Based on the current AFP Toronto membership list, which is the largest chapter in

Canada, there are more than 3,500 members in Canada, and approximately 15% of the

membership are not employed by charities (AFP Canada, n.d.), but are running for-profit

businesses that support charities. In addition, many people who are members of other AFP

organizations in Ontario are also members of the Toronto chapter, which makes the number for

the target market difficult to assess. However, according to AFP Toronto (n.d.), the total target

audience is approximately 2200–2600 in the Province of Ontario. To clarify, the participant

audience did not include the employees of religious organizations and those who are specialized

in their professions, despite the fact that they lead their organizations. It also did not include

hospitals, college, or university leaders. For example, the hospital for Sick Kids in Toronto

employs over 8,900 people (Canada Revenue Agency, 2018b), but the foundation only employs

201 staff (Canada Revenue Agency, 2018a). The audience for participation includes the

foundation staff, but not the medical professionals or support staff of the hospital itself. To reach

as many people as possible working within the sector, given the definition of the target audience

as well as the constraints on time zones, geographical reach, and the ability to obtain as many

responses as possible within a short time frame, an IVR survey and a dedicated call-in line

facilitated outreach to participants. The IVR approach, which is an automated call that initializes

when someone answers the phone, was used during the day when participants are at their place

of work. By using a survey, the information provided a broad base of knowledge from the sector.

I compiled the list of participants by amalgamating several sources, including information

provided by Global Philanthropic, existing public directories, and public T3010 CRA files. The

company I hired circulated the telephone IVR survey to as many participants as possible at all

levels of employment within the charity.

The second part of the survey offering was to use the same directories and public services

like LinkedIn (n.d.) to encourage people to call the dedicated line to complete the survey

anonymously. The data were originally held in Canada on computer databases owned by

Mainstreet Research, and are now in my possession and also held by Mainstreet Research, which

has guaranteed participant anonymity. All participants in the survey had the opportunity to

terminate the survey at any point, but data already submitted were included in the results, as it

was not possible to identify individual answers to separate them from other data already

collected. I used quantitative data analysis methods for Likert-scale data. This helped me to

identify themes by compiling an average score based on five consistent options for answers:

Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree Nor Disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree.

Focus group. In Phase 2 of the study, I used an AI approach in a focus group with the

discussion based on the results from the survey. I engaged focus group participants to theme the

data gathered from the survey and to execute the dream and design cycles of the AI approach

(Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Using a focus group of executive directors representing

different sized charities from different parts of Ontario and key stakeholders from the Ontario

charitable sector ensured that the sector was well represented and the results can be scaled out to

the balance of sector. I included executive directors from different sized organizations in the

focus group to gain insight into their personal experiences and challenges on their path to

leadership and their ability to deploy the outcomes of the research study. Using key stakeholders

from the sector in the focus group also provided an opportunity to look at the system as whole.

These key stakeholders included the owner of a placement agency who is focused solely on the

charitable sector, a university program professor who designed and teaches one of the education

programs, and the executive director of AFP Canada.

I chose to not include all levels of employees in focus group session, as that would pose

challenges given the timeframe of the research and could become problematic when rolling out

the research results, as employees would expect results at each level. Including only executive

directors and key stakeholders presented a slight disadvantage, as other employees at different

levels within organizations did not have a voice in the focus group discussions. To address this

disadvantage, I invited employees across Ontario to take part in the surveys, and I only selected

focus group participants who had worked their way up through organizations to obtain their current position.

As noted earlier, I derived the questions for the focus group from the quantitative data obtained from the survey results for the dream and design AI cycles (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). Involving executive directors in the inquiry ensured all participants were in a safe position to share their observations and opinions, as no one else in their group had additional information than the others, and no one was in a position of power over other attendees (Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, & Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, 2014).

I invited participants to a focus group session by email with help from the partner organization, Global Philanthropic. I specifically targeted Global Philanthropic to ensure that stakeholders who represented the whole system would be in the room (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). The focus group took place at a neutral location owned by Regus where no one was employed. Participation was voluntary, and I notified participants and provided an opportunity to leave the focus group at any time. Data identifiable to participants were not included in the research. I advised participants that only nonidentifiable data would be included in the research. The participants included good balance of genders (six men and seven women) as well as size of charity (six smaller-sized, five larger-sized charities, and the two key stakeholders), thereby representing a good cross section of the charitable sector in Ontario. This also adhered to the AI approach of ensuring the whole system is in the room (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) when dialoguing and exploring solutions to system-wide problems. This selection of participants was

an effort to ensure the charitable sector in Ontario was represented and results of the research could be scaled out to other organizations regardless of size or location.

Data Collection Method

Survey. As previously noted**,** the first method of data collection was an IVR survey with a dedicated call-in line for participants to complete the anonymous survey on their own time. The target audience for the survey included people employed in the Ontario charitable sector. The IVR is an automated call that initializes when someone answers the phone and then captures the data from the participant's responses to the survey. This survey produced measurable and comparable data that resulted in a perception of leadership in the Ontario charitable sector (Kraut, 1996). I chose to employ a survey method for various reasons. Using a survey provides the ability to collect data in a short period of time, such as 1–3 days, while reaching a large population spread over a wide geographical area (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The survey was also able to reach all levels of employees within the charitable sector without ethical issues of power over within the workplace. Lastly, I conducted this method as it could provide a large sample size by reaching as many people as possible.

The main drawback associated with using a survey is the potential for a low response rate, which occurred in this research, as approximately 8–10% of individuals invited chose to participate in the survey method. At the onset of this inquiry, I had no way of determining if the response rate to the survey would be low, and it was, in fact, the case in this research. A third-party company, Mainstreet Research, circulated the survey to as many organizations and employees in the Ontario charitable sector as possible. They compiled the list of potential participants using a combination of data available online, T3010 information from the Canada

Revenue Agency's (2018c) website, and information from my research partner, Global

Philanthropic. The approach of using a third-party research company helped to ensure participant

anonymity. In addition, as they are professionals who execute these types of surveys frequently,

they could offer support on question wording and following the rules outlined by the Canadian

Radio-television Telecommunications Commission (2018). The survey included a statement

about why the information was being collected, by whom, that data would only be used for this

research project, and that the data would be stored in Canada. The survey preamble clearly

indicated that were invited to participate voluntarily for approximately 3 minutes to answer 11

questions and that they could opt out of the survey at any time. The survey questions posed to

participants are included in Appendix A. While survey respondents' participation and answers

were anonymous, they were advised that all the data they had contributed would be part of the

research data and included in a summarized form in this report, as there was no way to identify

data submitted by one individual to remove it from the collective data set.

  The first two survey questions identified the size of the organization and the level

employment of the person in the organization. I gathered this information in an attempt to

measure the differences in responses, if any, to the size of organization and the respondent's

position within the organization. The subsequent nine survey questions utilized the Likert scale

and addressed five levels of agreement or disagreement: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree

Nor Disagree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Using a mix of both agree and disagree

questions in the survey helped mitigate the Likert-scale disadvantage in which participants often

want the research to seem positive or negative about themselves or their organization (Mrug,

2010). The data sample produced sufficient information to validate the comparisons of the sizes

of organizations and the levels of the employees.

In total, 97 people from across Ontario responded to the survey. The margin of error,

based on the target population of approximately 2,200–2,600 individuals is approximately

+/- 8-10 and the confidence level is 95%.

Focus group. In the second method, I invited executive directors and key stakeholders in

the Ontario charitable sector to take part in a focus group to test the information that was gained

through the survey. Using a focus group provided the participants and I an opportunity to

examine the information gathered and how it is reflected in the sector (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017)

I asked three questions in the focus group session (see Appendix B). In arranging this session, I

paid particular attention to ensuring no single individual was in a role more powerful than

another and that all participants took part willingly and did not feel coerced. The focus group

questions were semistructured and grounded in AI theory. Using AI helped facilitate a positive

approach to examining the system of the Ontario charitable sector and the executive director

leadership gap, encouraging the participants to produce innovative results (Cooperrider, 2012). I

presented the questions to the participants live, and the executive directors and key stakeholders

were all in the same room (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) and same setting to ensure I could

capture the discussion and actions between the members of the group (Miles, Huberman, &

Saldaña, 2013). A positive point to having all participants in the same room at the same time is

the opportunity to build on ideas during the dream and design phases of the AI approach (Bushe,

2007). Another advantage to having all participants in the same place was that it enabled me to

capture data between interactions that might represent the charitable sector as a whole.

There are a few disadvantages to using an AI focus group approach. Firstly, members of the group who want to belong or conform to the group may not speak up or may change their responses in order to conform with popular views within the group (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017). I began the focus group with an exercise that asked participants present to introduce themselves and their roles and organizations with the intention to mitigate conformity within the group. The other drawback to using an AI research approach is the limitation on the participants to avoid expressing negative experiences as part of the development of a new strategy as well as to avoid mentioning pitfalls or elements they wish to not incorporate, since AI is based on a positive discovery (Duncan, 2015). To neutralize this disadvantage, I encouraged the participants to identified negative experiences and then express what they learned from the experience and how others could benefit from their learnings, thereby turning the negative into a positive.

I gathered data through audio-recording discussions, by observing the group, as well as incorporating written outcomes that participants voluntarily submitted at the end of the focus group. The data collection during the focus group targeted the participation of the executive directors and stakeholders, as a representation of the whole system of the charitable sector in Ontario.

I transcribed the recorded interactive discussions into written material and then coded the data to derive themes. I did this by condensing the large amount of data using an analytical method of descriptive coding that resulted in a summary and essence of the discussion on the questions asked of the focus group. I used Quirkos (n.d.), a computer assisted qualitative data analysis software, to complete the descriptive coding, which enabled me to summarize the topics and themes produced by participants for the dream and design cycle of AI.

Study Conduct

  Survey. After receiving Royal Roads University Research Ethics Board approval, I

began the research project with Phase 1, the survey. The IVR survey was circulated to a list of

2200–2600 people over 3 days. These survey respondents included individuals employed at any

level within the charitable sector in Ontario. As people responded to the survey, their phone

numbers were removed from the list; any nonresponsive phone numbers were left in the call

cycle, and those numbers were re-called. The full list of nonresponsive survey responders was

called three times. The list was compiled using public online information, Revenue Canada

Agency's (2018c) public information, and the input from Global Philanthropic. I compiled these

three sources of information into a list, which Mainstreet Research then formatted, reviewed, and

circulated to ensure anonymity of responses. Using Mainstreet Research ensured ethics

compliance with the *Tri-Council Policy Statement* (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al.,

2014) and Royal Roads University standards, including storage of all data and back up data in

Canada and ensuring compliance with Canada's privacy laws as well as opportunities for

participants to opt out of the survey. Mainstreet Research acted as an inquiry team as well, as

they are experts in their field for survey execution and knowledge. As previously noted, the

response to the IVR was very low, and, on the recommendation of Mainstreet Research, they

established a dedicated line for people to call in to complete the survey. The invitation to

complete the survey was circulated online through LinkedIn (n.d.), sent by email to any contacts

from Global Philanthropic, and published by AFP leaders, Golden Horseshoe AFP, and

Peterborough area fundraising network to encourage people to participate in the survey by

calling in. This approach resulted in a higher response, and the final participation was 97 surveys

completed between the two methods with a margin of error of +/- 8–10 and a confidence level of

95% based on the population target of approximately 2200–2600. The survey included a

recorded introduction for participants (see Appendix C) at the beginning of the call that

identified the respondent's consent, willingness to participate of her or his own free will, the

anonymity of participants' responses, the ability to opt out at any time, and the recognition that

the data collected could not be eliminated from the process once the survey had been submitted.

This survey approach enabled me to ensure a widespread knowledge base that can reach all parts

of Ontario regardless of time zone, geographical location, size of organization, or level of

employee participating.

The survey included 11 questions (see Appendix A) and identified the level of the

employee based on three tiers of employment within most charities and the size of the

organization based on three levels of revenue, as revenue details are public information available

on the Canada Revenue Agency website (2018c). The remaining questions on the survey offered

a list of response options that remained the same for each question so that the results could be

quantitatively measured to obtain a score for each question and the average difference between

scores based on the size of organization and the employment level of employee participating. I

scored the responses as follows: Strongly Agree (100 points), Agree (75 points), Neither Agree

Nor Disagree (50 points), Disagree (25 points), and Strongly Disagree (0 points). I then

segmented the results of the survey into size of organization and level of employee to measure

the distance off the neutral response and to identify themes that were used and tested in a focus

group. The scores with the highest and lowest numbers from neutral were considered for framing

the questions in the focus groups.

Focus group. Phase 2 of the study included executive directors and key stakeholders to study how the themed results of the survey could be applied in a neutral setting. I chose to include only executive leadership in order to adhere to the ethical standards for the Tri-Council Policy Statement (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2014) and Royal Roads University as this ensured no one person had power over another at the table while sharing ideas.

I identified participants through online sources such as AFP Toronto, Global Philanthropic contacts, and Charity Intelligence Canada (n.d.-b) as well as any key stakeholder in the charitable sector who could execute a change in the industry, such as people who research the industry for trends to position employees as well as those who design academic programs for universities and colleges in the industry. With help from Global Philanthropic, I issued email invitations only to CEOs and executive directors to attend the focus group session, and the letter of invitation (see Appendix D) was circulated to 1,503 participants. The response was very positive, with 16 people agreeing to attend, and 13 people actually attending. I acknowledged each positive response, and I sent a copy of the consent form (see Appendix E) to participate to the attendees. I also sent a reminder email to the confirmed attendees 1 week and then again 2 days in advance of the session (see Appendix F).

The focus group was held from 8:30 a.m. until 10:30 a.m. in a boardroom in a shared office space owned by Regus. Each person signed the consent form and was given a copy of the form to ensure voluntary participation and advisement that the participant could opt out at any time and data could only be removed the information gathered was identifiable to the participant, and, if not, the research information would remain in the data set. I also reminded attendees that the focus group would be recorded. To ensure that all participants felt their voices would be

heard within the focus group, I requested all participants introduce themselves, state the organization they represent, and share why they felt it was important to participate in the research. This provided an opportunity for each person to speak and set the stage for all attendees to feel comfortable participating moving forward. Many participants already knew each other because, due to the size of the industry, they often attend the same conferences or events.

Phase 2 of the study began with an AI positive question on the ideal state of executive director leadership development within the charitable sector, which corresponded with the dream phase of the AI process (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005). As stated earlier, I developed the focus group questions from the themes identified from the survey and in consultation with Mainstreet Research and Global Philanthropic (see Appendix B).

At the start of the focus group discussion, I verbally reminded participants of the information contained in the consent form: they could opt out at any time, they were voluntarily participating, and their input data could only be removed if the information was identifiable to them, and if not, the information would remain in data set.

I took part in the focus group as a participant, as I had no power over other participants. I arranged for the discussions to be audio recorded, and I then later transcribed the recording using Google (n.d.) voice to text. As there was a limited timeline on the collection of survey data, the focus group data provided an authentic measurement of the validity of the survey (Fowler, 2009). I gathered qualitative data through the audio recording, observations, notes, and written input from the group. I have stored the focus group data on my personal, password-encrypted cloud, which is only accessible from my personal computer.

In this inquiry, the dream cycle led to the design cycle of AI (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005), which enabled the research participants to develop a change process that can be implemented for improvement by identifying the barriers to achieving the desired change. All participants took part in the design and creation of the organizational change that could be actionable to take the Ontario charitable sector to a new position that will develop executive directors from within the system.

My intention in conducting this research was to create recommendations relating to the organizational design that would be positive and actionable. Bushe (2007) noted, "Instead of trying to solve the problem, AI generates a collective agreement about what people want to do together and enough structure and energy to mobilize action in the service of those agreements" (p. 7). The conclusion of the focus group was the creation of a direction that the whole group agreed will enable charitable organizations to move forward in spurring the needed change the system so that executive directors could be developed within the system.

Data Analysis and Validity

Survey. I analyzed the survey data using a quantitative Likert-scale method of analysis. This was a typical five-level Likert measurement of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree Nor Disagree, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Each question had a numerical equivalent and the average score was calculated for each question, with Strongly Agree at 100 points, Agree at 75, Neither Agree Nor Disagree at 50, Disagree at 25 and Strongly Disagree at 0. The data produced an average score between 100–0 and a distance off neutral was established. The distance from a neutral position was measured positively and negatively against the neutral position (Clark-Carter, 2004). I studied and analyzed the raw survey data, which came from a diverse group of

participants from different sizes of organizations and various levels of staff employment levels.

Comparing the subgroup data based on the size of charity and the level of position within the

charity enabled me to derive major themes. I used frequency distribution to represent the size of

the organization of the respondents to the survey and a weighting of answers need to be

considered to accurately represent the results (Fowler, 2009). The distribution of survey resulted

in half of the respondents coming from larger charities, with two thirds of the remaining

respondents from medium charities and one third from smaller charities. Based on the average

scores on each question, I determined major themes for all charities regardless of size or the level

of employment. The results of the survey showed limitations to the information acquired through

this method but did help to then frame the questions for the focus groups.

       Focus group. By employing a qualitative methodology as a follow up to the quantitative

survey, I ensured the research had an added human condition that further revealed the current

leadership situation in the charitable sector. I listened to the participants and made notes while

recording the focus group sessions. The focus group format is a good method for "data collection

. . . for multiple voices and perspectives to be discussed and shared" (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017,

p. 93). I further captured data by transcribing the focus group discussions and analyzing for

themes based on frequency of occurrence. I completed the transcription using an online Google

(n.d.) voice-to-text transcription service and analyzed the information using descriptive coding

produced by Quirkos (n.d.). The Quirkos software assisted in organizing the data into a

spreadsheet by code and the frequency of data that was added to each code. With the coding

completed, I identified patterns that assisted in identifying the relationship between different

themes. I also identified consistencies and contrasted the themes and then analyzed and

interpreted the data for logical, evidence-based conclusions that could be used in the AI deployment cycle.

By employing the action research method with an AI stance, I collaborated with the participants to develop a desired change to the current situation of leadership development in the charitable sector in Ontario (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017). Throughout the inquiry process, I consulted with my research partner, Global Philanthropic, to challenge my assumptions around the data and decisions about which data would be used, what was relevant to the research, and what data should be considered. Global Philanthropic has a full complement of staff at different levels who participated in feedback regarding my assumptions as a researcher. I also engaged in self-reflection, as my experience and involvement in the industry may have attributed to bias that I wished to mitigate as much as possible.

The data collected in this research consisted of a mix of quantitative and qualitative information. I used extremely positive or negative quantitative data to frame the questions for the qualitative data method, and I used the information gathered through the focus groups to look for the themes. The benefit of approaching the research in this way was the ability to assess if there is a consistent theme between messages in words and responses in numbers (Saldaña & Omasta, 2017). The outcome of the data analysis did provide a consistent theme between the methods of quantitative and qualitative and a negative contradictory outcome did not occur. Using the descriptive coding table from the focus group data and applying the numerical data to the same themes, I determined that the numeric data were consistent with the qualitative data from the focus groups. After integrating the two sets of data, I analyzed the data to answer the inquiry subquestions:

1. What does the Ontario charitable sector currently do to develop executive director

    leaders from within the sector?

2. Are there identifiable obstacles to developing new executive director leaders?

3. What tools need to be in place to develop new executive director leaders?

In conclusion, the quantitative and qualitative data and the responses to the subquestions

provided an answer to the primary question that I explored through this research: How might the

Ontario charitable sector build a succession plan of new executive directors from within the

sector?

With the answer to the question, the next step in the AI process is the deployment of the

results. Given the time constraints on this research, I have outlined the deployment cycle in this

final report, which I will present to the participants of the focus group for them to move forward

with execution. I will also share the study outcomes with AFP and Global Philanthropy for

further circulation. This final report contains the results of the study (see Chapter 4) with the

recommendations to implement change (see Chapter 5), which I ascertained through the AI

action research method of discovery, dream, design, and delivery (Cooperrider & Whitney,

2005). I have also developed a slideshow presentation to be shared with the participants of the

focus group shortly after this report has been accepted by Royal Roads University.

Ethical Issues

This research conforms to the *Tri-Council Policy Statement*'s ethical guidelines and three

core principles of respect for persons, concern for welfare, and justice (Canadian Institutes of

Health Research et al., 2014). Respect for persons requires that the researcher values each person

involved in the inquiry as a human being and shows consideration for individuals' participation,

input, the value they have as human beings, and the data and insight they bring to the research

(Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2014). Concern for welfare addresses the

requirement for the quality of the research and the participant's experience including, but not

limited to, the impact of physical, mental, spiritual health and economic and social circumstances

(Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2014). Finally, researchers ensure justice is upheld

by treating people fairly and equitably with equal respect and concern for each participant

(Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2014).

I addressed the research ethics of this study by ensuring that participants voluntarily gave

consent to take part and acknowledging that consent could be withdrawn at any time. I ensured

participants understood that their data could only be removed if the information was identifiable

to them, and if not, the data gathered would remain in the final research data collection. I notified

participants prior to their giving consent that the data could not be withdrawn at a certain point

because it could no longer be identified. This ensured that any participant who took part in the

research had chosen to do so voluntarily, according to her or his own values and interests. For

Phase 1, the survey, I arranged for a third-party company to solicit participation. This

organization had no interest in the results and approached potential respondents and invited them

to voluntarily participate. This company also protected the anonymity of the information. Prior to

participants taking part in the survey, I ensured they were informed of their rights to withdraw,

the anonymity of the survey, where the data would be kept and for how long, and I gained their

acknowledgment that they were voluntarily participating in the survey. For Phase 2, the focus

group, I only invited executive directors and CEOs to take part so that not one person at the table

had more knowledge or authority than others and to eliminate power-over issues. Additionally, I

informed the participants of their right to withdraw from the study, how information could be

withdrawn, as well as where the data would be kept, by whom, and for how long. I issued

electronic consent forms for participants to read and then asked them to sign these forms when

they arrived for participation at the focus group session. I also provided signed copies for their

own records.

Chapter 4: Inquiry Project Findings

Through this research study I looked at the Ontario charitable sector as a whole system with the intention to answer the question: How might the Ontario charitable sector build a succession plan of new executive directors from within the sector? There is a shortage of new executive director leaders to replace the current leaders who will soon retire, but it seems that there is no clear path on how aspiring leaders might take the place of those who are retiring. This brought me to further questions that I sought to answer through this research:

1. What does the Ontario charitable sector currently do to develop executive director leaders from within the sector?

2. Are there identifiable obstacles to developing new executive director leaders?

3. What tools need to be in place to develop new executive director leaders?

In this chapter, I break down the key findings by research type, explaining the findings of the survey and the focus group under two separate subtitles. I then combine these into the key findings, which I summarize in the study conclusions.

The research findings and conclusions are then used to provide recommendations (see Chapter 5) on change to the Ontario charitable sector to develop new leaders from within the sector to ensure that the viability of the sector continues in the future. To begin, I present the key findings of the survey and the focus group.

Key Findings

Survey. I conducted the survey as an IVR and a call-in anonymous survey that Mainstreet Research circulated on my behalf in the Province of Ontario to over 2200–2600 people. In total, 97 people completed the survey. Although the survey participation was lower

than I had expected, this information was useful as an indicator for the focus group research.

Tables 2 through to 4 present the key findings from the survey and my analysis of the results

Table 2

Overall Survey results

No.	Question	Overall Average	DFN
Q3.	Do you agree or disagree that currently there are leadership development opportunities for staff working in your organization Example, AFP, College programs, Webinars?	70	+ 20
Q4.	Do you agree or disagree that currently the leadership of your organization encourages developing leadership.	71	+ 21
Q5.	Do you agree or disagree that you can identify leaders with expertise that you would like to learn from within the industry.	74	+ 24
Q6.	Do you agree or disagree that time constraints would be an obstacle for developing leadership skills for staff	77	+ 27
Q7.	Do you agree or disagree that budget constraints would be an obstacle for developing leadership skills for staff	81	+ 31
Q8.	How likely would you be to participate in a formal charitable leadership program for aspiring leaders	80	+ 30
Q9.	How likely would you be to support charitable leadership development programs led by Association of Fundraising Professionals	68	+ 18
Q10.	How likely would you be to support charitable leadership development programs led by Imagine Canada	69	+ 19
Q11.	Charitable leadership development programs should be delivered in college or university programs	73	+ 23

Note. AFP = Association for Fundraising Professionals; DFN = Distance from Neutral; Q = Question.

Participants' responses were scored follows: Strongly Agree (100 points), Agree (75 points), Neither Agree Nor Disagree (50 points), Disagree (25 points), and Strongly Disagree (0 points).

The distance from neutral indicates how far the numbers are from the neutral number of 50 (+/-).

Table 3

Results by Organizational Budget

Question No.	< $1 M Average	> $1 M DFN	$1–5 M Average	$1–5 M DFN	$5–10 M Average	$5–10 M DFN
Q3	65	+ 15	67	+ 17	74	+ 24
Q4	57	+ 7	73	+ 23	74	+ 24
Q5	68	+ 18	73	+ 23	76	+ 26
Q6	72	+ 22	79	+ 29	78	+ 28
Q7	83	+ 33	83	+ 33	80	+ 30
Q8	82	+ 32	83	+ 33	80	+ 30
Q9	73	+ 23	67	+ 17	70	+ 20
Q10	70	+ 20	76	+ 26	63	+ 13
Q11	77	+ 27	77	+ 27	70	+ 20

Note. M = million; DFN = Distance from Neutral; Q = Question.

Participants' responses were scored follows: Strongly Agree (100 points), Agree (75 points), Neither Agree Nor Disagree (50 points), Disagree (25 points), and Strongly Disagree (0 points).

The distance from neutral indicates how far the numbers are from the neutral number of 50 (+/-).

Table 4

Results by Employment Position

Question No.	Coordinator Average	Coordinator DFN	Middle Average	Middle DFN	Senior Average	Senior DFN
Q3	63	+ 13	67	+ 17	77	+ 27
Q4	68	+ 18	65	+ 15	77	+ 27
Q5	69	+ 19	79	+ 29	73	+ 23
Q6	80	+ 30	73	+ 23	79	+ 29
Q7	78	+ 28	79	+ 29	85	+ 35
Q8	83	+ 38	81	+ 31	77	+ 27
Q9	72	+ 22	66	+ 16	68	+ 18
Q10	70	+ 20	65	+ 15	71	+ 21
Q11	76	+ 26	73	+ 23	72	+ 22

Note. DFN = Distance from Neutral; Q = Question.

Participants' responses were scored follows: Strongly Agree (100 points), Agree (75 points), Neither Agree Nor Disagree (50 points), Disagree (25 points), and Strongly Disagree (0 points).

The distance from neutral indicates how far the numbers are from the neutral number of 50 (+/-).

The following four themes surfaced from the survey data:

1. Survey respondents noted the need for leadership development. Regardless of the size of the organization or the participant's level of employment in the organization, respondents considered leadership development necessary skills that needs to be evolved.

2. Survey respondents expressed fairly strong agreement that, in the charitable sector in Ontario, mentorships are an effective way to support aspiring leaders.

3. Participants identified time and budget to be obstacles for leadership development.

4. Participants offered little or no difference of opinion on where the best place to offer leadership skill development would be. It could be offered at industry-specific organizations or through academic organizations.

Survey finding 1: Need for leadership development. Regardless of the size of the organization or participants' level of employment in the organization, respondents considered leadership to be a skill that needs to be developed. This surfaced as the first key finding in the survey. In response to Question 4 on the survey, participants indicated that their current organizational leadership encouraged staff to develop skills, with a weighted average of 71 points on the Likert scale. This indicated that participants largely agreed with the statement, as survey responses were scored follows: Strongly Agree (100 points), Agree (75 points), Neither Agree Nor Disagree (50 points), Disagree (25 points), and Strongly Disagree (0 points).

In response to Question 3 on the survey, participants noted some opportunities and support within their organizations, with a weighted average of 70 points to develop skills. The distance from neutral (DFN) difference with combined scores of all participants was 20 points,

and breaking down the employment role revealed that those in an upper level employment role or those employed by larger organizations had a higher DFN of 24 and 27 points difference.

In response to Question 8 on the survey, participants expressed a very strong desire to take part in leadership development, with a weighted average of 80 points and a DFN of 30 points to participate in programs if one were to be offered. The DFN broken down by employment level or organization size indicated that there was a larger DFN for the employees at the coordinator level; however, the point spread was only a difference of 27-31 points at the middle or senior management level, reflecting closely to the combined results.

The average response findings in the higher range from 70–80 points on the Likert scale are positive for leadership development and participants are interested in taking part and consider their organizations to be invested in developing leaders as well. The 97 respondents, who collectively represented a number of different sized charities, supported a need for leadership development with a DFN of 30 points on the survey question that was intended to measure the current charitable sector employees' thoughts on leadership development needs. The DFN was slightly larger at 38 points if the participant was at a lower employment level or 32 points if the organization was smaller in size. The survey participants responded to all the questions in the positive range of Agree to Strongly Agree, making the results of the survey a positive indication of the need for leadership development in the Ontario charitable sector.

Survey finding 2: Mentoring. Another key finding of the survey was a fairly strong agreement that mentorship is something that could be identified as an option in the charitable sector, as indicated in Question 5 on the survey, which asked about support for aspiring leaders. Most respondents to the survey were able to identify people whom they could learn from in a

mentoring capacity. The combined results showed weighted average of 74 points with a DFN of 24 points, suggesting that respondents could identify someone within the industry whom they could learn from as a mentor. Studying the results based on level of employment or budget size of the organization, the findings revealed a smaller DFN score for the smaller organizations or lower employment level. Interestingly, the midlevel employee had the largest DFN of 29 points compared to the senior leaders who had a DFN of 23 points, making the midlevel employee able to identify mentors and senior leaders not as likely. This may be due to members of senior leadership being in a position to mentor someone and not necessarily looking for mentorship themselves. This is a key finding, as there are currently no mentoring programs offered in the Ontario charitable sector to develop aspiring leaders, yet when asked the question, regardless of level of employment, most respondents agreed that there were identifiable opportunities for them personally.

Survey finding 3: Obstacles. Participants identified two obstacles in the survey in response to Questions 6 and 7: time constraints and budget constraints. Although respondents of the survey strongly agreed that these obstacles for leadership development exist, the obstacle of budget was more of a constraint than time. The combined results revealed a weighted average of 81 points and a DFN of 31 points, indicating participants found budget to be an obstacle for leadership development. When comparing level of employment or size or organization, the findings were consistent; budget is an obstacle with the weighted average between 78–85 points and a consistent DFN of 28-35 points.

Participants identified time as an obstacle to leadership development in the survey, with the weighted average of 77 indicating agreement that time was an obstacle. The results from the

level of employment were consistent with the combined results with a weighted average between

73–80 points. The only outlier was the respondents who work in organizations with the smallest

budget of under $1 million with a weighted average of 72 points and a DFN of 22 points. As

such, there might not be a consensus on time as an obstacle in that circumstance. With the

exception of organizations under $1 million, participants reported time constraints to be an

obstacle to leadership development. This key finding indicated that even though there is a slight

difference, the agreement is still positive that budget and time are an issue in the Ontario

charitable sector to accessing leadership development opportunities regardless of size of budget

or level of employment in the industry.

     Survey finding 4: Where to offer leadership development. Participants expressed little or

no difference of opinion on where the best place to offer leadership skill development would be,

as indicated in Questions 9, 10, and 11 on the survey; it could be offered at industry specific

organizations, or it could be offered at academic organizations. The combined results put

academic organizations at a slightly higher rate, with a weighted average of 73 compared to

supportive agencies like AFP at 68 or Imagine Canada at 69, and the DFN was between 18-23

points for all the combined results. Analyzing the results based on level of employment the

overall weighted averages ranged between 65–76 points, with higher DFN between 15 and 26

points, possibly indicating an uncertainty about the best place to offer a leadership development

program. I noted consensus amongst survey participants that any of the options, academic, AFP

or Imagine Canada, would be considered positively for development programs regardless of the

respondents current level of employment. Further analysis of survey results on the best place to

offer a leadership development program broken down by size of organization budget comes to a

similar conclusion for organizations that are between $1–5 million; however, organizations with budgets of less than $1 million had a larger DFN. The smaller organizations rated both AFP and Imagine Canada similarly, between 70–73 points, but with a DFN of 20-23 points, indicating that either of these might be a good option, and academic organizations higher at a weighted average of 77 points, with more of a DFN at 27 points, indicating a tendency toward academic over the industry support organizations of AFP and Imagine Canada. Regardless of the size of revenue budget, or level of employment, the key finding was leadership development programs could be offered through the AFP association, Imagine Canada, or academic institutions with a slight overall preference for academic programs and positive results to offering a formal program on leadership development.

Summary of survey findings. In conclusion, the survey, despite low participation, did provide data and an initial baseline on the perception of leadership from the people working in the Ontario charitable sector. The overall results indicated the themes were positive toward leadership development but with a few obstacles that make achieving goals of leadership difficult. Another positive result was the indication that there are currently leaders in the sector who could mentor and assist in developing leaders, but again with uncertainty on where that should happen and how. As previously noted, I used the analysis of the survey data to guide the focus group.

Focus group. The conclusion of the survey and the key findings helped to inform the questions for the focus group. I posed three questions to address the issue of developing leaders from within the Ontario charitable sector. The first question focused on what organizations do internally to develop leaders, the second question centred on what skills leaders are required to

develop to assume those roles, and the final question explored what the sector as a whole system

could do to help develop aspiring leaders from within the sector. In total, 13 people attended the

session, and they represented the Ontario charitable sector system as a whole. In some cases,

excerpts from the session are directly quoted to substantiate the focus group conclusions. To

maintain anonymity and confidentiality, I have used the participant codes P-1 through P-13 when

citing these sources.

The key findings and themes from the focus group are culture, skill development,

academic research, and mentoring. I briefly expand on these in the list that follows, and then

delve more deeply into each theme in the subsequent subsections:

1. The culture of organizations and the industry is what will drive the change required to

   develop new executive director leaders.

2. In regard to skill development, there is a difference between skill sets of fundraisers

   and executive directors that needs to be developed, but board development must be

   addressed as well, and individuals must accept part of the responsibility themselves to

   develop the skills for their roles.

3. Relating to academic research, there is no focus on research in the sector or the

   academic programs that add to the body of knowledge or define the professionalism

   of the sector.

4. Mentoring offers an opportunity to use best practices from outside the industry,

   looking to other industries to see how they are developing new leaders and have

   leaders from within the sector assist in developing new leaders within the sector.

Theme 1: Culture. The first theme to emerge from the focus group was the culture of the industry reflected in organizations and boards of directors. The focus group agreed that the commitment from the industry must be to change the culture and focus on a culture that supports development and learning from within. As participant P-7 stated, "The CEO and the board of directors must challenge the status quo and raise funds for development." The focus group continued discussions on culture and indicated that the commitment to changing the culture has to be driven by the current leadership within the industry. Change to the culture of developing succession plans within the industry needs to be executed at the board level: "Culture needs to be set by the board organizations to flourish. They have to invest in people development and there has to be board training" (P-3).

Further discussions over all three questions identified culture as an ongoing theme, moving fluidly between the responsibility of the CEO and the board of directors to establish the culture. One of the issues in the industry that might be creating the lack of development is the way the CEO sets an example for leadership and working style. As an example, participant P-3 stated, "The leader sets the tone. I did it wrong, myself; to stop them following what I did by working on weekends, evenings, overtime etc., you need to set the right tone as a leader." The group agreed that this does not set the correct culture that encourages people to invest in themselves or take extra training when the expectation is to work all the time. Participant P-10 also addressed the same issue by saying,

> When they do get time off they don't want to go to training, so don't do development
>
> work with their time. It is a balance. They don't want to do it on the weekend [and] they

don't want to do it on the weekday [because] they end up working a lot of those times

anyway. The bottom of the pile is training and development.

The focus group identified examples of poor leadership and how that sets the tone for the

culture. Attendees noted simple changes could be undertaken to improve the culture of

leadership skill development.

The cultural change required included another example of how to shift the current culture

around the issue of budget and donors' expectations of the balance between the administration

and investment to the cause. Participant P-4 expressed, "Donors are also focused on it, on

budget. You can't have redundancy on stuff; you can't have extra money for stuff, because

donors are always constantly looking at your bottom line." This can become a challenge in a

smaller agency.

Culturally, the conversation between the stakeholders within the charity and supporting

the charity requires a cultural shift from the current leadership in the Ontario charitable sector.

Participant P-12 expressed, "We need to arm the CEOs with the information and to challenge up

and the skills to do that to help the boards with culture. It is critical." Changing the conversation

about the focus on budgets needs to be part of the cultural change that CEOs have with boards

and donors. This cultural shift example would have to be deeply rooted in all conversations with

stakeholders over a number of different circumstances to bring a new understanding about the

administration costs and why investing in employees is necessary for organizational longevity

and effectiveness

The key finding from the focus group was that, currently, the industry and organizations

do not put value on developing new leaders and further that the stakeholders involved with

charities do not recognize that developing leaders should be part of the responsibility of the

charity and the current leadership. With a change in the culture, this could become a priority and

result in different outcomes. Regardless of what level the culture change is required, either at the

board or CEO levels, the agreement from the focus group was a change in culture is paramount

to the development of a leadership development training program.

Theme 2: Skill development. The second theme that emerged during the focus group

across all questions was the requirement to develop skills. Different skills are required from the

role of a fundraiser in the industry to becoming a CEO. Vision was the one skill that was

identified numerous times as a necessity for leadership development. As participant P-8

communicated, when he moved into a management position, his mentor had advised him that

"the most important thing you need to learn is that your time horizon is 1 year right now but

around strategy, your thinking is going to have to change to 3 to 5 years." Participant P-8

identified a skill that his mentor indicated he did not currently have or use. In general, focus

group participants agreed being able to think and learn and have a broad sense of the future was a

skill that did not come naturally to people and would need to be learned so future leaders could

develop a vision for their organizations. Participant P-11 agreed and indicated, to lead an

organization, "You have to be able to create a vision and a 4- to 5-year plan." This ongoing

theme was expressed in a number of different ways, including being a global thinker, being

aware of the work environment, and anticipating things that might affect the organization. The

skill of vision included the ability to incorporate new developments in technology,

communication platforms, hiring practices, and new trends.

The skill development theme was not just identified for CEOs but also for board members of organizations. The focus group discussions revolved around the theme of board development to support the organization but also as a learning on how to develop staff and CEOs as well. Participant P-4 communicated, "By the board developing their own skills, they will see the need to develop the organization's skills." Although focus group participants suggested that some skill development could come from outside the industry, much skill development could come from inside the industry, which supports Focus Group Theme 4. Organizations with multiple stakeholders must focus on the skill development of board members and governance to be successful: "We have to deal with multiple stakeholder environments and manage the expectations, problem solving, transparency—we have to understand how to work in that environment" (P-7). This facilitates the success of the organization. As participant P-5 stated,

> Part of the governance of boards should be the development, not just help the organization raise money or support the organization. They don't always bring their business minds, so we really should be developing the board as well. They're intelligent, they'll get it.

There was a common theme that boards of directors need to develop skills to be effective board members, which requires investing in their skill development to further round out the skill development theme.

The skills development theme also focused on stakeholders accepting responsibility for their own development, not just relying on the system or their organization. As participant P-6 explained, "It's our goal to maximize people's passion and development as leaders, but it's also up to our team and the people in our team to drive their own development." People who want to

become CEOs or executive directors must want to invest in themselves. Further, focusing solely on individuals, the members of the boards should also invest in their own learning and development: "To flourish, they have to invest in people development and that has to be it, has to be board training" (P-2). The focus group expressed that the members of the board of directors are responsible to not only understand the charity, but also to access training and gain knowledge on becoming an effective board member. Further to the board of directors, the employees within the industry must have a commitment to themselves to develop skills to assume the leadership roles.

The skills development key finding revealed all focus group participants found there is a need to enhance skills and help fundraisers transition to become CEOs; however, further, boards need to develop skills to effectively support the organization. The shared responsibility in developing skills is between the board and the employees. All participants in leadership development must accept some responsibility themselves to learn the necessary skills and to participate in their own education.

Theme 3: Academic research. Based on the data gathered, the third key finding focused on research and adding to the formal body of knowledge relating to the Ontario charitable sector. Participant P-12 observed,

We go to conferences and we download information but we have no research as part of our conferences, we need to. We have no encouragement or no new bodies of knowledge or research as part to our conferences and that cycle needs to begin.

The focus group pointed out that other industries that have conferences and educational meetings often offer a research track that informs the industry on new trends, best practices, and

other key topics, but the charitable sector does not offer this. Participant P-2 indicated similar

reflection on the Ontario charitable sector, stating,

> We see technical research, but we don't see systemic research. We see a lot about how to
>
> do something. Those that do have white papers and the time and resources are for-profit
>
> companies like Blackbaud that support our industry and use it to sell their product.

Interestingly, participant P-3 has recently begun producing white papers because of a lack

of information to provide to boards of directors that require training on succession planning for

CEO's. Participant P-3 stated, "There's no benchmarking available on the charitable sector.

Currently, we are doing a research study right now on retention and development in the sector."

The only challenge that was identified to producing white papers and research was the lack of

funding, although participants did discuss how to secure funds for research, particularly when

most in the industry are skilled at fundraising.

Participants agreed that the charitable industry is not usually a career choice for people.

Providing research and academic programs that would help identify the career path from entry

level to executive director or CEO might help. According to P-12, "If you look at us as a

profession, then I'm also going to circle back to research. As a profession, we need to constantly

test and research our professional rules." This indicates the need for formal academic research to

become a priority for the sector. Although there are a few programs at colleges and universities

that educate people on the career path into the charitable sector, there is a gap in understanding

what needs to be taught. Participant P-13 observed,

It goes to the ministry, but no one from the sector actually approves it. What does the

provincial government know about fundraising? How do they know that the curriculum is

appropriate? So does the sector play a role, are there any standards?

The discussion with the focus group around curriculum identified that although there are

academic programs, they do not include adding to the body of knowledge or the responsibility to

the sector as an employee to contribute to the success of the sector.

The theme that emerged during the focus group was that if the industry were to develop

leaders from within there must be a commitment to academic development at all levels of the

organizations and within the industry, including the professional associations that support the

industry and academic institutions that develop education programs. Currently, the organizations

that add to the research in the industry are for-profit companies that sell products to the

charitable sector. The sector itself does little to add to the body of knowledge.

Theme 4: Mentoring. The last key finding was the theme of mentoring, there is an

opportunity to use best practices from outside the industry and look to other industries to see how

they are developing new leaders. This theme reoccurred throughout the discussions on how to

develop leaders, and although there was a great deal of support for mentoring from within the

industry, participants stressed that lessons could be learned from outside the charitable sector.

Participant P-11 observed that the "charitable sector is one-dimensional and insular, and I need

to have more input from outside CEOs to bring a better perspective." This participant noted that

other industries could help the charitable sector without having to recreate a mentoring structure.

(P-11). Participant P-2 echoed this view, stating, "We also must stop being myopic and look at

other sectors . . . to see what they can pull from other sectors that might be helpful." There are

other options for the charitable sector to deliver mentoring program. The key finding relating to

mentoring new leaders was that other industries mentor aspiring leaders. As such, the charitable

sector could accept best practices and have current leaders mentor aspiring leaders within the

industry.

The mentoring from within the industry was seen to be the responsibility of today's

leaders and their commitment to the industry to add to the body of knowledge and mentor

aspiring leaders. As participant P-7 expressed, "The industry needs to take responsibility for

mentorship and then use that as a partner within the industry." Each leader within an

organization should be mentoring aspiring new leaders. Although participants reported the

obstacle of the lack of a formal opportunity to do that within the industry, today's leaders should

be contributing to mentoring within their own organizations at the minimum. As an example, one

participant in the focus group expressed that this was already part of the performance

measurement for the senior staff of the organization. The senior staff were expected to

> present at one or two conferences a year. We have an internal mentorship program where
>
> they can apply and be partnered with another senior leader. The board of directors is
>
> expecting the [organization] to build a succession plan and put it in the performance
>
> review. (P-7)

The focus group agreed that, through performance measures, there would be an

opportunity to help facilitate current leaders to mentor aspiring leaders to elevated positions

within the organization. This level of commitment from the leader would need to be supported at

the board level as well, but the overall key theme was that mentoring is a necessity to support

new aspiring leaders from within the industry.

The mentoring program discussions were not limited to CEOs, as participants addressed

mentoring boards as well. For example P-8 provided an example of learning through experience:

Boards start with patient stories. Let's help set the tone for the culture and it can be a

disaster that can be learned from. It doesn't have to be a success; it can be a failure. Then

you have to figure out how to recover from that and through a learning mentoring

opportunity for developing leaders, but it's done through culture with the board.

Participant P-5 explained a similar situation for board mentoring, communicating the

following during the focus group:

Boards need to be mentored as well and they need to be trained and for directors although

they're passionate they're understanding of what it takes to accomplish it as a board

member is not very clear there's very little training.

Were there opportunities to mentor board members and help them understand their key

role in the organization, this would reflect well for the CEO and the aspiring leaders within

organizations

Summary of focus group findings. The theme around mentoring extended to the current

leadership and other key stakeholders like the boards of directors. The focus group returned to

the theme of mentoring a number of times, with many discussions about where in the industry

the mentoring program would be best suited, how to execute a mentoring program, and how to

measure the success of mentoring. Participants indicated mentorship is a priority, it should be

executed in a number of different places within the system, and although there was one example

of how a mentorship program could work, the charitable sector currently does not do this

formally and could look to other industries for best practices.

Conclusions

This research was conducted to answer the following question: How might the Ontario

charitable sector build a succession plan of new executive directors from within the sector. The

conclusions form answers to the subquestions, as shown in Table 5. Each of the study

conclusions is then discussed in full under the subquestion headings that follow.

Table 5

Study Conclusions by Subquestion

Inquiry Subquestion	Study Conclusions
1. What does the Ontario charitable sector currently do to develop executive director leaders from within the sector?	Conclusion 1: There is no identifiable route to becoming an executive director. Conclusion 2: There is no academic or industry association responsible for leadership development.
2. Are there identifiable obstacles to developing new executive director leaders?	Conclusion 3: There is a push–pull situation between saying that people are supported in developing leadership skills and putting that in practice. Conclusion 4: Currently, no research component relating to the industry adds to the body of knowledge.
3. What tools need to be in place to develop new executive director leaders?	Conclusion 5: The culture of the industry needs to change to allow for more development. Conclusion 6: The sector requires an identifiable route for executive director training offered within the sector that is consistent and measurable.

Conclusions relating to Subquestion 1: What does the Ontario charitable sector

currently do to develop executive director leaders from within the sector? Two study

conclusions address this question. The first conclusion is that there is no identifiable route to

becoming an executive director. The second conclusion is here is no academic or industry

association responsible for leadership development.

Conclusion 1: There is no identifiable route to becoming an executive director. From

the research study, it seems clear that the Ontario charitable sector currently does little to develop

executive directors to assume leadership roles. This conclusion is consistent with McIsaac et al.

(2013) statement that there is no clear path for becoming a CEO, and this is supported by the

research conducted in this study. Throughout the research with the focus group, which

represented the system as a whole, I found no concise agreement to provide direction to an

aspiring leader on what steps to take to become an executive director. In at least one instance, in

a larger charitable organization, employees are presented with some opportunities to develop

skills while on the job, much like what Le Comte and McClelland (2017) described as leadership

training while on the job in the workplace. The unfortunate conclusion to the question about

what the Ontario charitable sector currently does to develop executive directors from within the

sector is that nothing is specifically being done to address this. This conclusion leads into the

second conclusion about the sector leadership development relating to a lack of responsibility for

leadership development.

Conclusion 2: There is no academic or industry association responsible for leadership

development. As an aspiring leader who might be seeking to become an executive director, there

is no one organization or academic program that is responsible or that has taken the lead in

offering this type of instruction. The supporting organizations like AFP and Imagine Canada do

not have programs for leadership development, and the academic programs are focused on

developing fundraising professionals, not executive directors. As I noted in Chapter 2 in my

review of five scholars, there are skills that are required to be a leader and these skills need to be

developed and learned and then applied in a certain style (Sims & Quatro, 2015). As I outlined in

the literature review, the transformational leader style is well suited to the Ontario charitable

sector (Schneider & George, 2011). Schneider and George (2011) described the transformational

leader in the voluntary sector as someone who can build relationships and provide a positive

vision for people to follow. Since there is no organization accountable to developing this type of

leader within the sector, the aspiring leaders not only struggle to obtain skills, there is the

possibility that the skills that are developed might not be the most appropriate for sector. For

example, employing an autocratic leadership style, as outlined in Chapter 2, in which everyone is

expected to follow, might not be the best leadership style to develop, as volunteers often do not

just follow the orders given. In conclusion, given that there is currently no organization

responsible and no clear path for aspiring leaders to follow, the Ontario charitable sector does a

poor job currently on building a pipeline of executive directors.

Conclusions relating to Subquestion 2: Are there identifiable obstacles to developing new executive director leaders? Two study conclusions address this question. The first

conclusion is that there is a push–pull situation between saying that people are supported in

developing leadership skills and putting that in practice. The second conclusion is that, currently,

no research component relating to the industry adds to the body of knowledge.

Conclusion 3: There is a push–pull situation between saying that people are supported in developing leadership skills and putting that in practice. Analyzing the results of the

research, the charitable sector currently identifies the need to support leadership development,

but participants reported time and budget allocation to be constraints. This creates a push–pull

situation between stating that people are supported in developing leadership skills and then

actually executing and putting that in practice. Reviewing the literature that was identified in

Chapter 2, the Human Resources department is predominantly responsible for the development

of leadership within organizations (Collins & Holton, 2004). As many charities in Ontario do not

have a Human Resources department, and the responsibility falls on the CEO, this could be a

contributing factor to the push–pull dilemma. If it is the responsibility of the CEO to be the

Human Resources department and manage budget development, this creates a push–pull

situation where the commitment is identified but the path to execution is not. The Ontario

charitable sector recognizes the need for leadership development as a result of this study through

the survey and the focus group; however, the inquiry results revealed factors that make offering

leadership development difficult for the current leadership. Further to the push–pull dilemma that

presents as an obstacle, there is an additional barrier for developing aspiring leaders and that can

be attributed to the lack of academic research that adds to the body of knowledge within the

sector.

>   ***Conclusion 4: Currently, no research component relating to the industry adds to the***

body of knowledge. As a conclusion, the second obstacle that became clear during the research

study was the lack of information that is being developed by the industry on the industry. As I

outlined in Chapter 2, it was difficult to find validated research on the Ontario charitable sector

that outlined how to develop executive directors. With little or no substantiated research, it is

unclear how aspiring leaders learn skills, styles, and best practices on leadership development.

The lack of research that adds to the body of knowledge within the industry might be a reason

why there is no clear path to becoming a CEO of a charity. The professional associations that

support the charitable sector in Ontario need to add to the knowledge base with their own

academic contributions to the industry on leadership development. There are a number of

academic research studies on the need for leadership development, but no academic research on

how to do this or how to sustain a pipeline of leadership development within the industry.

Adding this type of academic knowledge to the sector on an ongoing basis will have the industry

respond to current trends and changes in leadership style and structure and therefore remove the

obstacle that is created by no new learnings within the industry.

Conclusions relating to Subquestion 3: What tools need to be in place to develop

new executive director leaders? Two study conclusions address this question. The first

conclusion is the culture of the industry needs to change to allow for more development. The

second conclusion is that the sector requires an identifiable route for executive director training

offered within the sector that is consistent and measurable.

Conclusion 5: The culture of the industry needs to change to allow for more

development. The culture of the Ontario charitable sector does not reflect any focus on the

development of aspiring leaders. If the current leadership could change the culture to reflect a

more positive rewarding approach to developing new leaders, this would transform the industry.

As I previously reviewed in Chapter 2, the health care sector and the education sector both

reward the leadership by providing opportunities to develop leadership skills, and this is not

reflected in the culture of the Ontario charitable sector. Even for military and law enforcement

agencies, leadership development structures are embedded in the culture of the system,

rewarding those who aspire to gain more knowledge and progress in leadership roles with

training and mentoring. The conclusion from this research outlines a lack of support for current

leaders, boards of directors, and aspiring leaders to develop a nurturing culture that provides

mentorship and on-the-job training that is met with the rewards of further development. If the

culture of the industry were to shift with a focus on rewards for developing new leaders, the supporting organizations such as AFP and Imagine Canada would respond, and the culture would be reflected in the programs and services they deliver. Further, if the current leadership were to include a measurement in performance reviews on leadership development, the culture of mentoring and developing skills would become more of a focus rather than the obstacles of time and budget. The cultural shift would be necessary throughout the industry and would include all stakeholders in the importance of developing new leaders from within the industry to ensure that the sector continues to flourish and provide services.

Conclusion 6: The sector requires an identifiable route for executive director training offered within the sector that is consistent and measurable. The final conclusion regarding what tools need to be in place to develop new executive directors for the charitable sector is a clear path for executive director training offered within the sector that is consistent, measurable, and identifiable. If the Ontario charitable sector is not providing a training program, mentoring programs, or a culture of leadership development, the conclusion is to develop a clear understanding of what is required to be a leader of a charity, provide the skills and training, and continually measure the success of the leadership development program to ensure it responds to the changes in the Ontario charitable sector environment. The literature in Chapter 2 identified the health care and education sectors as two industries that could provide framework and best practices for the Ontario charitable sector to develop a formal training program. The training program would require measureable results that can provide consistent skills sets at the outcome and completion of the training so the new leaders are competent in their roles and are met with success when leading charities into the future.

Summary of study conclusions. I drew conclusions based on the literature reviewed and the data gathered through the survey and focus group to answer the original research question: How might the Ontario charitable sector build a succession plan of new executive directors from within the sector? The conclusions, which also answer the inquiry subquestions, indicate a need for a significant shift within the sector. There must be a commitment to removing obstacles that confine the ability to focus on development, rather than time and budget, and that commitment must come from the current leadership and the other key stakeholders such as boards of directors and donors.

The implication of not developing leaders to assume the roles might be the failure of the charity that does not build a good succession plan, resulting in a void or gap for the users of the system as well as other stakeholders. Further conclusions indicate the need for the development of a clear path to training new leaders as well as the ability to deliver the program on an ongoing basis with measureable outcomes. Aspiring leaders are required to enhance skills and leadership styles that will lead them and the industry to success. Building this type of program will also add to the body of knowledge within the industry, making the leaders able to respond to changing environments. By changing the culture of the industry to focus on developing leaders from within using best practices outlined in some of the literature found in Chapter 2, the Ontario charitable sector could build a succession plan for new leaders while enriching the knowledge base within the sector as well as strengthening the service delivered by the supporting agencies like AFP and Imagine Canada. If AFP and Imagine Canada were to respond to the change in culture, their focus would be reflected in the products and services that are offered to the Ontario charitable sector, making a change to the system as a whole.

Scope and Limitations of the Inquiry

The intended scope of this inquiry encompassed people working in the charitable sector in Ontario on the fund development side, not the service delivery side. To further illustrate using a hospital as an example, this is akin to focusing on a charity, such as the hospital foundation, as the target of the research, not the people who work in the hospital. I did not include charities that do not raise funds as a means of delivering their mission; as such, daycares that have fees for service that are registered charities were not part of this study. This intended exclusion also applied to other charities that are transfer agencies from government funds and most religious organizations such as churches because, again, they do not fundraise to fulfill their mission. My intention was to include employees working in the Ontario charitable sector that provide a service or fulfill a need in society and they do so by raising funds and engaging stakeholders.

The largest drawback to the research was the participation in the survey. Although surveys have a traditionally low participation, this research survey was very limited, with only 97 participants. Although the outreach was extensive, not all charities have unique numbers for each employee, which made reaching different employees within charities difficult. In an attempt to rectify the problem, I arranged for a call-in number to be set up, and Mainstreet Research, acting as my inquiry team, used social media and industry associations to assist in encouraging participation. The second shortcoming was the time frame of the survey, as there was only a one-week window to encourage participation. Were I to execute the survey again in the future, I would use a combination of both online email surveys and call-in/call-out surveys over a longer period of time to improve participation rates and possibly generate more refined results.

My intention in conducting the focus group was to ensure full representation of the Ontario charitable sector. The focus group was successful in achieving this goal by having representation from industry support organizations, academic programs, large charities, smaller charities, and charities from different parts of Ontario. At the onset of this research, I determined that if the Ontario charitable sector is to be considered a system for action research, all parts of the system must be represented in the focus group. The limitation to the focus group was the time constraints, as attendees met once and discussed the three questions that I had developed based upon the results of the survey. Had I more time to conduct this inquiry, I would take results from the focus group to a "make it happen" session and then reevaluate the information gathered at a following focus group; however, the time span for this research only included the results of the focus group.

Another limitation to this research might be other obstacles that were not identified or researched in this study. Although participants identified the obstacles of time and budget, it is possible other barriers could be further identified and researched for their impact on the Ontario charitable sector. A survey to the identified participants on their perception of limitations and obstacles to leadership development might further the understanding of barriers and constraints within the industry.

Lastly, the Ontario charitable sector is comprised of the majority of charities in Canada, with many of the national offices located in the greater Toronto area. This research might reflect a larger national situation given the location of many of the charities and the employees who were the target participants of the survey all being located in the province of Ontario. There is an opportunity in the future to scale the research out to other provinces to compare the difference

nationally or provincially to Ontario to test if the Ontario results are consistent with the balance

of the country.

Chapter 5: Inquiry Implications

I undertook this research in response to a growing concern in the Ontario charitable sector about the future leadership within the industry based on the impending retirement of a number of the Ontario charitable sector leaders and a lack of new leaders to assume those positions left vacant by the departure of the current leadership. I conducted this research to answer the following question: How might the Ontario charitable sector build a succession plan of new executive directors from within the sector? I also explored the following subquestions:

1. What does the Ontario charitable sector currently do to develop executive director leaders from within the sector?

2. Are there identifiable obstacles to developing new executive director leaders?

3. What tools need to be in place to develop new executive director leaders?

I developed study conclusions in answer to each of the inquiry subquestions. Table 5 in Chapter 4 maps each conclusion to the inquiry subquestion that it answers. In this chapter, I present the study recommendations, grounded in the study conclusions and the organizational implications of both implementing and electing to not implement the recommendations. I also discuss areas of future inquiry and provide a summary of this thesis.

Study Recommendations

Based on the findings and themes identified in Chapter 4, I developed recommendations that could be executed in the Ontario charitable sector to influence change within the industry and alter the current trajectory leading to a shortage of new executive directors and CEOs. I have also identified organizational implications for leverage points (Meadows, 1999) within the system, such as AFP, Imagine Canada, and academic institutions. Further actions that might be

considered outside of the scope of the Ontario charitable sector could be the basis of future research. The final stage of Cooperrider and Whitney's (2005) AI methodology is the destiny phase, putting into action the results of the dream and design phases and the findings from the focus group that corresponded to these phases. The following recommendations are the culmination of the research and the make-it-happen phase recommendations in Cooperrider and Whitney's (2005) AI cycle:

1. Create and offer a leadership development program.

2. Offer leadership development programs within the AFP structure for accreditation.

3. Recognize charities that institute succession plans.

4. Add to the academic body of knowledge within the Ontario charitable sector.

5. Change the culture within the sector.

6. Measure the outcomes of the leadership program for ongoing success.

Table 6 presents the conclusions and their linked recommendations. I then delve into each of the inquiry recommendations.

Table 6

Study Conclusions and Related Study Recommendations

Study Conclusions	Recommendations
Conclusion 1: There is no identifiable route to becoming an executive director.	Recommendation 1: Create and offer a leadership development program.
Conclusion 2: There is no academic or industry association responsible for leadership development.	Recommendation 2: Offer leadership development programs within the AFP structure for accreditation.
Conclusion 3: There is a push–pull situation between saying that people are supported in developing leadership skills and putting that in practice.	Recommendation 3: Recognize charities that institute succession plans.
Conclusion 4: Currently, no research component relating to the industry adds to the body of knowledge.	Recommendation 4: Add to the academic body of knowledge within the Ontario charitable sector.
Conclusion 5: The culture of the industry needs to change to allow for more development	Recommendation 5: Change the culture within the sector.
Conclusion 6: The sector requires an identifiable route for executive director training offered within the sector that is consistent and measurable.	Recommendation 6: Measure the outcomes of the leadership program for ongoing success.

Recommendation 1: Create and offer a leadership development program. The first

recommendation is to offer a program within the industry that is developed, recognized, and

measured by the industry for ongoing success. The key research findings that led to the

conclusion indicating a need for an identifiable route to becoming an executive director, as

discussed in Chapter 4, highlight the interest of employees within the sector to participate in the

training as well as the lack of identifiable opportunities. Part of this recommendation includes a

mentoring program referenced in Chapter 2 similar to the health care industry, as Le Comte and

McClelland (2017) outlined in their research, or education industry, which Moore (1982)

discussed. Although much of the literature I reviewed for development programs from within the industry was delivered through the human resources departments (Collins & Holton, 2004), the Ontario charitable sector could turn to outside support organizations to deliver this program. As found in the research conclusion outlined in Chapter 4, most of the participants in the survey could identify someone they believed they could learn from, and mentoring also surfaced within the focus group, suggesting that there is expertise within the industry. This recommendation also includes the support and guidance from the current leadership to add to the content of the program and participate in the program as discussed in Recommendation 2.

Recommendation 2: Offer leadership development programs within the AFP structure for accreditation. This recommendation identifies AFP as the provider of a leadership development program for aspiring leaders to develop skills to qualify for and assume the role of executive director or CEO. I recommend the Ontario charitable sector turn to the AFP association to take the leadership role in developing this program for aspiring leaders. A formalized leadership training program would assist the learning of aspiring leaders. To further the credibility within the industry, the leadership development program and those who are instructors of the course material could be recognized as a portion of the Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE, n.d.) designation that is currently offered by AFP. The CFRE is a worldwide designation for fundraising professional, but does not have a leadership development component. Once the CFRE designation is obtained, there are requirements within the industry to continue to pursue ongoing education, either by assisting others with lectures at conferences or taking further educational opportunities oneself, which supports the mentoring model of leadership development that the current leadership could participate in. As indicated in McIsaac et al.'s

(2013) research, the leadership of Ontario charities needs a clear path forward with training and input from today's leaders to build a pipeline of leaders for tomorrow. The leadership development program could be a further offering from AFP to employees within the Ontario charitable sector and an identifiable path with accreditation, providing the aspiring leaders a format and opportunity to become an executive director or CEO.

Recommendation 3: Recognize charities that institute succession plans. This recommendation supports the need for all stakeholders to recognize the need for building a succession plan while also assisting by putting measurable criteria in place. Imagine Canada (n.d.) has an accreditation process much like the International Organization for Standardization (n.d.) process for corporate organizations that is used by many stakeholders, including donors, to assess the viability of a charity. Interestingly, Imagine Canada's accreditation program does not currently measure if the charity has a succession planning process or any formal development programs for learning within the industry to develop leaders. This seems counterintuitive, because if the donor is passionate about the charity and wants to see the continued contribution to society, one would assume that the donor would want to ensure the charity was taking the steps needed to maintain or excel in leadership development and not leave succession planning to chance. Referring to research by Marcus (2004), who outlined how other organizations are actively adding a leadership training element to their organizations, having Imagine Canada lead this change is consistent with other corporate industries already initiating leadership development. Adding an element of leadership development to the charitable accreditation would bring attention to the need within the industry and within each organization. Furthermore, this would help to inform stakeholders that succession planning is a priority within the sector and

provide an opportunity for Ontario charities to offer programs to aspiring leaders while fulfilling their obligations to the accreditations, thereby alleviating the push–pull situation identified by inquiry participants.

Recommendation 4: Add to the academic body of knowledge within the Ontario charitable sector. Currently, there is no focus on research of charitable organizations in the academic programs that are offered at universities. Based upon the study findings and conclusions. I recommend that academic programs add to their studies an academic research component on leadership development that can be used by the industry to test existing theories for ongoing relevance while also beginning to incorporate new theories. Research on the Ontario charitable sector leadership can ensure that the industry is keeping up with new trends, such as the growth of technology, which might change the way charities develop in the future. New research added to the body of knowledge might solve new emerging issues in the future or may anticipate areas of concern and provide strategies to navigate those issues. As noted in Chapter 2, in which I reviewed the leadership skills development in any industry researched by five different scholars (Collins, 2001; Johansen, 2012; Kouzes & Posner, 2012; Senge, 2006; Williams, 2006), I found no academic research specific to the leadership development of the Canadian charitable sector, and certainly not the Ontario charitable sector. Organizations that are offering fundraising development programs must begin to focus on a research component that will allow the industry to accurately develop the skills required for aspiring leaders in the Ontario charitable sector. This research could focus on the current leadership skills within the industry to begin to add to the body of knowledge that identifies skills that are currently used by leaders within the sector and how this could be applied to the learnings for new aspiring leaders.

Further, relating solely to the skills required to be an executive director, a specific style of

leadership might be better suited to a charitable leader, and this should be further explored by

academia.

As I outlined in Chapter 2, leadership styles vary, and some are better suited to different

types of careers or industries. Current academic research that has outlined and identified different

leadership styles (e.g., Goethals et al., 2004; Senge, 2006; Williams, 2006; see the "Leadership

Styles" subsection under the "Leadership Skills" section in Chapter 2 for more information)

could be used as a starting point to begin further academic research into the charitable leadership

style to identify approaches best suited for the charitable sector. Academic institutions should

take part in active research to examine the current leadership style of today's charitable sector

leaders in Ontario that could be contrasted with the existing styles in other sectors to provide new

knowledge to the leadership development for successful transitions into executive director roles

for those aspiring to the position.

This research knowledge can be presented as key learnings at conferences, seminars,

webinars, and other sector events to ensure the Ontario charitable sector will continue to thrive

and prosper under new developing leaders as they assume the positions of executive directors

and CEOs with the skills they require and styles that might lead to success. Academic research

on the Ontario charitable sector would be invaluable for providing insight into gaps in

knowledge, testing theories, gaining new information, and furthering the development of the

sector as a whole, not merely focusing on new leaders.

Recommendation 5: Change the culture within the sector. To achieve a change in

culture, stakeholders must place greater emphasis on developing new leaders and supporting the

sector and organizations with all stakeholders to ensure there is an understanding of the

importance of succession planning within the sector. To achieve this, stakeholders such as

donors, board members, and users of the charitable system must be engaged in the change.

Several suitable leverage points (Meadows, 1999) can assist in creating a cultural change within

the sector. The first leverage point (Meadows, 1999) is the current leadership of charities in

Ontario working with board members to ensure they recognize the need and value of succession

planning and ongoing leadership development for staff within the organizations they are

supporting. It would be counterintuitive for staff to leave the organization they have supported

and are usually very passionate about to chance leadership in the future. The current leadership

of the Ontario charitable sector must accept responsibility for educating volunteer board

members on the importance of succession planning to ensure a viable future for their

organizations, and this includes addressing the obstacles identified in the research, such as time

restrictions and budgets. This cultural change could be introduced through key performance

indicators for executive directors and CEOs, which supports Recommendation 1 by having

CEOs contribute to the leadership development programs or by sending staff to the programs as

well as with the support of the board of directors. Another place to introduce a leverage point

(Meadows, 1999) in the system is to create a cultural change through the accreditation program

run by Imagine Canada (n.d.).

Recommendation 6: Measure the outcomes of the leadership program for ongoing

success. Once the leadership development program has been established, to ensure the

sustainability of the program, I recommend ongoing academic research be conducted after the

completion of each term of the program. Measuring the program in this way ensures that leaders

loop back on the changes within the industry so any adjustments to outcomes can be made to ensure the viability (Senge, 2006). Stakeholders, industry support organizations, and aspiring leaders will understand the measurement criteria and accreditation that is offered by the program. By offering this recommendation, the leadership development program will maintain consistency and relevance by quickly responding to changes in the system, making the program the recognized route for executive director training within the industry.

Recommendations outside the scope of this research. A final recommendation that could be considered, but is outside of the scope of this project, is the obstacle of budget considerations for charities. The current regulations for charities stipulate a 35% of budget maximum administration fee (Blumberg, 2018), and the balance of revenue must go to cause-related activities as identified in the charitable mission statement. I recommend that the Canada Revenue Agency consider a 5% allocation of the budget to education or staff development that falls outside of the administration restriction and outside of the mission statement, providing charities with an opportunity to commit to developing succession plans that do not interfere with the operation of the charity and provide stability to the sector as a whole. This would have to be a national initiative, but it would help to improve the culture within the sector to support the work of the charities. It is also important to note here that the aspiring leaders who took part in this inquiry have indicated an interest in obtaining more development training, if it were to be offered. This type of change in the industry would assist all stakeholders in understanding the value of succession planning to ensure the contribution that each charity provides to society continues to be supported with skilled leadership. As this recommendation falls outside of the scope of this research, it would be a beneficial for researchers to consider conducting inquiries to

further to assess the impact of a revenue distribution. The other three recommendations can be applied to the Ontario charitable sector to change the current trajectory of the shortage of upcoming leaders.

Summary of study recommendations. I have presented six study recommendations, which I derived from the study findings, conclusions, and literature reviewed as a part of this research, including (a) creating and offering a leadership development program, (b) offering leadership development programs within the AFP structure for accreditation, (c) recognizing charities that institute succession plans, (d) adding to the body of knowledge within the charitable sector, (e) changing the culture within the sector, and (f) measuring the outcomes of the leadership program for ongoing success. Each of these recommendations surfaced from the research conducted with survey and the focus group participants and provides further direction on where in the system to apply the leverage points (Meadows, 1999) to successfully execute the recommendations. Although there is a further recommendation, of addressing the obstacle of budget considerations for charities, this is beyond the scope of this research to implement. The implications of this research within the system will require change from the current leadership and the supporting organizations and academic programs within the sector.

Organizational Implications

The engagement of the whole system of the Ontario charitable sector in the research and the recommendations requires changes within the system in a number of areas to ensure that charitable organizations in Ontario can develop new leaders from within the sector on a clear path to success. The implications of the study recommendations require changes and will impact three key stakeholders: AFP, Imagine Canada, and the academic institutions that deliver fund

development programs. In this section, I review implications for each of the key stakeholders and the processes required to successfully implement the recommendations. I also briefly address outcomes, which might be a result of not implementing the recommendations.

To add a leadership development program, AFP should develop a strategic plan and key deliverables of the program with measurable outcomes to ensure the ongoing success of the program and the ability to loop back to examine the system process (Senge, 2006). The strategic plan would be best executed with the current leadership of charitable organizations in Ontario to provide input into the program by offering best practices, timelines, and examples of failures and successes. A further step should be to solicit support of current leaders to mentor upcoming aspiring leaders so they can gain practical experience, as noted in Chapter 2 literature review of other industries. The continuation of the CFRE (n.d.) program into leadership development would require the approval of the governing body of AFP and the recognition of the program to add to the credentials of the recipients of the designation. This could be a further CFRE distinction with a notation of leadership development added to the designation so it is differentiated from the CFRE. This change in distinction would provide the AFP an opportunity to track the development of aspiring leaders to ensure the success of the program. By offering this program and the distinction that accompanies it, aspiring leaders would have a clearer path to developing the skills of becoming an executive director and stakeholders would have a framework to understand the training that these leaders have acquired, providing a suitable structure for hiring new leaders to fulfill the roles that the retiring leaders will be leaving. Stakeholders from AFP who participated in this research study have indicated the possibility of executing this recommendation in a make-it-happen outcome. Implementing this

recommendation would require AFP to shift their focus from solely training fundraisers to

encompass training leaders as well; however, without a change in strategy, the current situation

of a lack of well-trained executive directors will continue. Engaging the current leadership of

Ontario charities will assist in creating a cultural change within the sector.

The cultural change required must be implemented by the current leadership in Ontario

charities who are closer to retirement and will be responsible for the gap in upcoming aspiring

leaders. To execute this recommendation, the current leaders can support AFP in creating the

leadership program and can act as mentors to aspiring leaders. This change in culture should be

implemented by changing the key performance indicators of the current leadership to include the

succession planning within the organization and the current leadership's commitment to the

process. This change could be executed by setting this as a practice across the industry.

Furthermore, current leaders can communicate their commitment to the development of aspiring

leaders and to fostering the change in the culture of the sector at conferences, seminars, and

webinars. Another critical step in changing the culture is the education of the stakeholders within

each organization, which is also the responsibility of the current leadership. This education

process could be supported by Imagine Canada and their recommendations for succession

planning and educational development that would be attached to their accreditation process

(Imagine Canada, n.d.). For Imagine Canada, making this change in their accreditation process

would require input from key stakeholders of their organization and from the current charitable

sector leadership to develop criteria that would indicate succession planning by the charity

seeking accreditation as well as to establish a process to measure the results. If current leadership

within the sector were to encourage participation in the Imagine Canada (n.d.) accreditation for

their organizations, the learnings that lead to succession planning would be implemented within the charity. The recommendation on cultural change could be reflected in the system through a few leverage points (Meadows, 1999), such as AFP and Imagine Canada, but must be led by the current leadership of the Ontario charitable sector and must be taken one step further to the final recommendation implementation at the academic institutions.

The changes in the academic institutes to add a research component to the Ontario charitable sector might be the most complex to implement, as the Ontario charitable sector system would intersect with the academic sector and would have to meet the criteria for academic research. Unfortunately, continuing on the current path and not adding to the body of knowledge in the leadership development of Ontario charitable sector leaders will result in the failure of the system that is currently in place, in which there is no clear path to becoming an executive director. Adding to the academic body of knowledge within the sector will offer an opportunity for experts in the field to test the results of a new leadership program by researching the leaders who have completed the program. Measuring the success of these new leaders will replicate the full looping back of the process of action research by testing the change within the system (Senge, 2006). The most likely opportunity would be to approach the current academic organizations that offer fundraising programs and present the current situation of the lack of upcoming leaders, share the outcomes of this research, and express the need for research within the industry. Some of the participants in the focus group indicated they would be prepared to help implement this recommendation in a make-it-happen action at academic organizations that could support an academic leadership development research component to the current program offerings. I would participate by further presenting the outcomes of this research and its

recommendations and by working with the academic institution and other charitable sector

leaders to develop the research initiative so the industry continues to add to the body of

knowledge. Given the lack of an abundance of research on charitable sector leadership in Canada

(see Chapter 2), with a particular absence of information relating to Ontario, this would be a

critical next step for Ontario charities to ensure a viable sector and the participants of the

research who were involved in the dream and design cycle of the AI process (Cooperrider &

Whitney, 2005), are interested in creating the change in sector.

The next steps for each of these stakeholders involved in the development and for me will

be a further review of implementation based on the research and recommendations of this study

and their participation to assist in making the destiny stage of Cooperrider and Whitney's (2005)

AI a success in a make-it-happen series of events. The leaders of the system who participated in

the development of a change in the system will each take an active role in executing the

recommendations of this research. The action research model would provide the loop-back step

(Senge, 2006) in the implementation, to test the results once the changes have been applied to the

system to ensure that the change is positive and effective. I suggest that this be executed within a

2-year period after the implementation of the recommendations. Adding this research to the body

of knowledge within the sector offers an opportunity to make a change that can be implemented

and measured.

Implications for Future Inquiry

Through conducting this research study based on the charitable sector of Ontario I

discovered other inquiries that could follow this research and continue to add to the body of

knowledge on the charitable sector leadership. There are opportunities to pursue further research

studies such as conducting similar inquiries in other provinces within Canada, replicating this study with the Canadian charitable sector as a whole, or by incorporating other levels of employment with in the sector. In addition, further research could be done to identify other obstacles or barriers to leadership development that I did not measure in this research that might be contributing factors. The larger scope of the impact of budgets and revenue on charities would involve a national charitable study and would require a large number of different stakeholders, but could produce promising measurable results that would assist in changing the emphasis on education within the system of the charitable sector in Canada.

The further implication to this process, beyond identifying further research projects, was raising and highlighting the issue with other stakeholders in the Ontario charitable sector. Working with the leaders of different organizations and staff employed in the sector prompted conversations with boards of directors and donors around the issue of succession planning. In many cases, these are not conversations that executive director or staff have with other stakeholders within their organizations. I found this to be a positive unintended consequence of the research. In addition, it provides a further opportunity to engage in research with different stakeholders in the future and leads to new opportunities to add to the body of knowledge.

There are a number of opportunities to add to the body of knowledge with further research as identified here, and many more that will be identified by continued research. With the many charitable sector leaders willing to participate in the change that is required within the sector there is a clear indication that the situation of a shortage of leaders is recognized within the industry. The Ontario charitable sector leadership and the organizations that support it, such as AFP, Imagine Canada, as well as the academic institutes, could implement changes that will

impact the system. With changes to their organizations, the current path that is unclear about the

future of leaders within the Ontario charitable sector will be altered and the charities that the

current leaders represent will continue to add to society with well-trained leaders who have skills

and styles that will meet with success.

Thesis Summary

I undertook this research with the intent to build a succession plan for new leaders within

the Ontario charitable sector. Through quantitative and qualitative research, the key findings and

themes were clear: there is an understanding for the need to train new leaders, aspiring leaders

are anxious to learn and develop skills and styles to lead charities, but the path to becoming an

executive director is very unclear. With the study of literature on this topic and using industry

specific publications, the answer remained unclear on how to develop aspiring leaders. By

conducting this research, a new path to developing leaders emerged.

Based on my inquiry, I put forward six clear recommendations to change the system. This

includes AFP, as a leverage point (Meadows, 1999), to provide a leadership development

program for aspiring leaders in the Ontario charitable sector system to enhance their skills and

qualify for the roles of executive director and CEO. I also recommend that Imagine Canada, as a

leverage point, assess the viability of a charity by offering an accreditation to organizations that

build a succession plan into their charities. Further, I advise the sector add an academic research

profile, which currently does not exist, as this will provide an opportunity to study current

leadership, test old theories, and develop new leaders. Following, I recommend a change in

culture be initiated for all charitable organizations in Ontario that could be fostered by the

current leadership and stakeholders in the system. The final recommendation is to provide an

opportunity to continually loop back on the system (Senge, 2006) to ensure the development of new leaders continues and is successful. In conducting this inquiry, I noted many different opportunities to conduct other research as well as to continue research on the Ontario charitable sector, not only on the leadership development but also on educating other stakeholders within the sector.

This research explored the implications for each of these leverage points within the system and how the leadership would need to change to embrace the recommendations and what might be the drawback to not implementing the recommendations. As the researcher, I am committed to making these recommendations happen with some of the participants of the focus group and others within the sector who are interested in seeing the sector continue to advance and develop. Further to the idea of making the change within the system, I would like to have the opportunity to loop back (Senge, 2006) on the changes and do further research on the outcomes to ensure the change is positive and ongoing after the implementation of the recommendations and the make-it-happen events.

Charities in Ontario fulfil a social and cultural role that involve a number of stakeholders, including donors, volunteers, and users of the charitable system. The leadership of these organizations provide vitality and sustainability to the sector and are passionate about the work they do. With their continued commitment to the sector, the leadership gap that has been identified can certainly be overcome by their passion and ability to problem solve social issues, and I have no doubt that this leadership shortage will lead to changes within the sector that will not only inspire employees currently working in the sector to step into leadership roles but also

attract others from outside the sector to want to participate in the development to one day lead a

charity themselves.

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Appendix A: Survey Questions

Survey Questions

1) What is the revenue budget of the charity where you are currently employed?
   Press 1 if your Charity has revenue less than $1 million
   Press 2 if your Charity has revenue over $1 million but less than $5 million
   Press 3 if your Charity has a revenue over $5 million

2) What is your current level of employment within the organization?
   Press 1 if you work in Senior Leadership
   Press 2 if you work in Middle Management
   Press 3 if you work in Coordinator/Administration

3) Do you agree or disagree that currently there are leadership development opportunities for staff working in your organization
   Example, AFP, College programs, Webinars?
   Press 1 if you Strongly Agree
   Press 2 if you Agree
   Press 3 if you Neither agree or disagree
   Press 4 if you Disagree
   Press 5 if you Strongly Disagree

4) Do you agree or disagree that currently the leadership of your organization encourages developing leadership.
   Press 1 if you Strongly Agree
   Press 2 if you Agree
   Press 3 if you Neither agree or disagree
   Press 4 if you Disagree
   Press 5 if you Strongly Disagree

5) Do you agree or disagree that you can identify leaders with expertise that you would like to learn from within the industry.
   Press 1 if you Strongly Agree
   Press 2 if you Agree
   Press 3 if you Neither agree or disagree
   Press 4 if you Disagree
   Press 5 if you Strongly Disagree

6) Do you agree or disagree that time constraints would be an obstacle for developing leadership skills for staff
   Press 1 if you Strongly Agree
   Press 2 if you Agree
   Press 3 if you Neither agree or disagree
   Press 4 if you Disagree
   Press 5 if you Strongly Disagree

7) Do you agree or disagree that budget constraints would be an obstacle for developing leadership skills for staff
   Press 1 if you Strongly Agree
   Press 2 if you Agree
   Press 3 if you Neither agree or disagree
   Press 4 if you Disagree
   Press 5 if you Strongly Disagree

8) How likely would you be to participate in a formal charitable leadership program for aspiring leaders
   Press 1 if you Strongly Agree
   Press 2 if you Agree
   Press 3 if you Neither agree or disagree
   Press 4 if you Disagree
   Press 5 if you Strongly Disagree

9) How likely would you be to support charitable leadership development programs led by Association of Fundraising Professionals
   Press 1 if you Strongly Agree
   Press 2 if you Agree
   Press 3 if you Neither agree or disagree
   Press 4 if you Disagree
   Press 5 if you Strongly Disagree

10) How likely would you be to support charitable leadership development programs led by Imagine Canada
   Press 1 if you Strongly Agree
   Press 2 if you Agree
   Press 3 if you Neither agree or disagree
   Press 4 if you Disagree
   Press 5 if you Strongly Disagree

11) Charitable leadership development programs should be delivered in college or university programs
   Press 1 if you Strongly Agree
   Press 2 if you Agree
   Press 3 if you Neither agree or disagree
   Press 4 if you Disagree
   Press 5 if you Strongly Disagree

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

Round table introduction

Principal investigator provides introduction to the research and the process
Each person introduces themselves and the charity they represent

Questions

Q1. Most organizations agree that there are formal and informal opportunities for leadership development available to their staff, but are constrained by budget and in allocating time for this purpose. Could you offer three key strategies that could help free up resources for staff to benefit from the available opportunities?

Q2. There is a knowledge base on fundraising within the sector, and a recognition that leadership development is required to become an executive director. If the charitable sector were to create a program to develop leaders from within the sector, what would be the top five things aspiring leaders would need to learn?

Q3. Change is required within the charitable sector to support the development of aspiring leaders so the balance between the desire to learn to lead and the obstacles are removed. What would be the top three initiatives we could recommend for change in the sector to allow for training?

Appendix C: Voice Invitation

Hello, my name is Kimberly Carson and I am doing a Master of Arts degree at Royal Roads University. I would appreciate it if you could complete the following 11 question, 3 minute anonymous survey. My credentials can be established by contacting Dr. Catherine Etmanski, Director, School of Leadership, at [telephone number] or email [email address].

I can be reached at [telephone number] or by email at [email address]

By continuing onto the survey you will be giving your consent to participate and can hang up at any time, but your results will be recorded.

Outro: (Must be said at the end of the broadcast, per CRTC regulations):

Thank you for participating.

My credentials can be established by contacting Dr. Catherine Etmanski, Director, School of Leadership, at [telephone number] or email [email address].

Appendix D: Focus Group Invitation

Dear [Participant Name],

I would like to invite you to participate in a focus group as part of a Master of Arts degree in Leadership that a colleague of ours, Kimberly Carson, CEO of the Breast Cancer Society of Canada, is completing at Royal Roads University. Her credentials can be established by contacting Dr. Catherine Etmanski, Director, School of Leadership, at [telephone number] or email [email address].

The aim of the research is to understand and facilitate how to develop leaders from within the charitable sector to lead charitable sector organizations in the future. As a result of a recent survey that was circulated to employees in the Ontario charitable sector, the focus group will be asked approximately three questions to help understand how to facilitate change in the industry as a result of the survey.

The focus group is expected to take approximately an hour and a half to two hours to complete and will take place face to face at Waterpark Place, 88 Queens Quay West, Suite 2500, Toronto, ON, M5J 0B8 on April 10th beginning with coffee and breakfast at 8:30 am and the focus group will commence at 9:00 am until no later than 11:00 am.

I would really appreciate you participating in this focus group to help us understand how people employed in the charitable sector become leaders of organizations so we can encourage others to lead and build a strong charitable sector. If you would like to find out more about the research project and participate, please respond to this email.

You are receiving this invitation because you are currently employed in a leadership role in the Ontario charitable sector. Participation will be recorded and used as part of the research study and will be published. Results of the focus group could be used in the future at presentations and conferences. Participants are free to leave the focus group at any time.

Thank you again for your consideration! If you have any questions about Kimberly's research project, please contact her via email at [email address] or by telephone at [telephone number].

With warm regards and best wishes.

Appendix E: Informed Consent Letter and Form

CHARITABLE SECTOR LEADERSHIP GAP

KIMBERLY CARSON

ROYAL ROADS UNIVERSITY

[Mailing Address]

[email address]

[telephone number]

PURPOSE OF STUDY

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide to participate in this study, it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully. Please ask the researcher if there is anything that is not clear or if you need more information.

The purpose of the research is to change the current trajectory of a shortage of leaders to lead charities in the upcoming years. With a majority of leaders about to retire, there is no formal training process for new aspiring leaders from within the charitable sector to take on the leadership positions that will be left vacant by those that are retiring. If as a sector, we could develop a program that supported aspiring leaders from within the sector to lead, we could ensure success for the charitable sector as a whole moving into the next five years.

STUDY PROCEDURES

Mainstreet Research will circulate a IVR survey to employees of charitable organizations in Ontario with a target of three different categories of revenue breakdown. The questions on the survey should take less than 10 minutes and will frame what the employees in the sector see as a successful leadership development process now, if there is any. The survey will also frame some ideas around potentially how to fill the gap of aspiring leaders and what the existing leaders can do to assist in the process.

With the results of the survey I will do a focus groups with CEO's and ED's which would last approximately half a day to discuss how these suggestions and current processes might work on a larger scale across the industry and where the best place to introduce them into the industry might be to ensure the results are successful in creating a change for leadership development within the charitable sector. The focus groups will be recorded by a voice recorder.

RISKS

There is no risk or perceived risk to participating in this research.

You may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

BENEFITS

Participants	Possible involvement in program design for aspiring leaders providing industry acknowledgement
Partner/Sponsor	Possible introduction to organizations not familiar with their work
Society	Change in how charitable sector rewards leaders within the sector
Researcher	Part of the MA Leadership requirements, so potential to obtain a graduate degree

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your responses to this survey will be anonymous. Please do not say any identifying information on your survey. Only Mainstreet Research and the researcher will have access to the raw data from the survey.

Data from the survey may be stored on Canadian servers.

For the purposes of the focus groups, this research part of the study, your comments will not be anonymous. Every effort will be made by the researcher to preserve your confidentiality including the following:

Measures taken to ensure confidentiality:

- Assigning code names/numbers for participants that will be used on all research notes and documents
- Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying participant information in a locked file cabinet in the personal possession of the researcher
- Participants names will not appear in the final document
- Only the recorder and the researcher will have access to the raw data

Participant data will be kept confidential except in cases where the researcher is legally obligated to report specific incidents. These incidents include, but may not be limited to, incidents of abuse and suicide risk.

If the participant leaves the research study prematurely, any information collected in the survey will be included in the results. Only information that has been provided by consent will remain in the focus group's data.

The record retention plan is a one-year period from the conclusion of the project and then all documentation will be destroyed.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have questions at any time about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information is provided on the first page. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or if problems arise which you do not feel you can discuss with the Primary Investigator, please contact Dr. Catherine Etmanski, Director, School of Leadership, at [telephone number] or email [email address].

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be asked to sign a consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before focus group data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or destroyed and will not be included in the final report. Survey data will not identify you as a participant and cannot be removed from the results.

CONSENT FORM

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I understand that I will be given a copy of this consent form. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participants Name _____

Participant's signature _____ Date _____

Researchers Name: Kimberly Carson
Researcher's signature _____ Date _____

Appendix F: Focus Group Email Reminder

Hello,

I look forward to meeting with you tomorrow for the focus group!!

The focus group is expected to take approximately an hour and a half to two hours

(1 ½ - 2) to complete and will take place face-to-face at:

April 10, 2019

[Address]

Suite 2500

Toronto, ON, M5J 0B8

8:30 – 11:00

Warmly,

Kimberly Carson

[telephone number]