Assessing Non-Profit Resilience in Response to COVID-19

Principal Investigators

Dr. Brent McKnight
416-788-4097
bmcknight@mcmaster.ca

Dr. Sandra Lapointe
lapointe@mcmaster.ca

Collaborators

Mrs. Lynn Fergusson
905-467-2033
lynn@socialimpactadvisors.ca

Dr. Julie Gouweloos
gouwelj@mcmaster.ca

Purpose of the Study:

You are invited to take part in this study on non-profit resilience in response to COVID-19. The crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has been far reaching. Some of the biggest impacts have been felt in the non-profit sector. This indicates a critical challenge to the resilience—set of capabilities or capacities to respond under adversity—of the sector. Our research seeks to examine the factors that lead to more, or less resilient responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through interviews with key managers in diverse non-profit organizations, we will examine factors such as leadership, risk-tolerance, funding diversity, networks, and organizational culture to assess non-profit resilience.

This is a two-phase study. Phase 1 involves a single semi-structured interview that will take approximately 45-60 minutes. Broadly speaking, participants will be asked questions about how their organization is responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants will not be required to prepare anything prior to the interview. Phase 2 acts as a 'touch-point' in the research process. Participants will be contacted by a member of the research team approximately every quarter (i.e. 3-4 times) over a 12-month period to request a series of shorter follow-up interviews. Interviews conducted in phase 2 will be approximately 30 minutes each. All interviews will be conducted either over the phone or using web conferencing. Specifically, this study will use the Skype and/or Zoom platforms to collect data, which is an externally hosted cloud-based service. A link to their privacy policy is available here:

Skype: https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-ca/privacystatement

Zoom: https://zoom.us/privacy

Please note that whilst this service is approved for collecting data in this study by the McMaster Research Ethics Board, there is a small risk with any platform such as this of data that is collected on external servers falling outside the control of the research team. If you are concerned about this, we would be happy to make alternative arrangements for you to participate, perhaps via telephone. We will be also taking handwritten notes and with your permission, we will also record the interview for accuracy purposes.

Potential Harms, Risks or Discomforts

The risks involved in participating in this study are minimal. Based on our commitment to minimizing any risks associated with your participation, all information that you provide will be confidential. While we intend to use direct quotes from the interview, no quotes will be attributed to you nor will names be used. However, people are often identifiable through the stories they tell, therefore please only share information that you would feel comfortable sharing with one of your acquaintances. We will make every effort to avoid using stories that appear likely to identify. We will also go to great lengths to ensure that the organization you are affiliated with is also kept confidential. Similarly, we will remove any information that could potentially identify your organization in an effort to ensure confidentiality.

Further, discussing responses to a public health issue can be personal and potentially distressing. We would like to remind you that you are not required to answer questions that you do not want to answer or that make you feel uncomfortable without penalty. We also recognize that the current COVID-19 pandemic has introduced new anxieties for some people. If you are experiencing increased levels of anxiety due to the current COVID-19 situation, please consult the following resource: https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel- coronavirus-infection/mental-health.html

Potential Benefits

As a gesture of appreciation for your time, participants will receive $40 cash (or a $40 donation to your organization if you so choose) for participation in the initial interview. Participants will also receive an additional $10 per interview conducted in phase 2 of the research process. Beyond the financial incentive, participants have the opportunity to improve their own capacity for resilience by reflecting on organizational practices and contributing to a greater understanding of resilience capacity in non-profit organizations.

Confidentiality

Your participation in this study is confidential. We will not reproduce your name nor other identifying information. Only the research team will know your identity, and even this will be protected (blinded) following transcription of the interview. Names will be redacted following transcription and audio recordings will be deleted. Every effort will be made to protect your confidentiality and privacy.

Transcriptions will be made by a research team member, E-Transcription services or through NVivo's transcription services. Team members will be required to sign an oath of confidentiality, and both E-Transcriptions and NVivo have stringent privacy standards. For more information on the privacy standards please visit the following:

https://www.etranscription.ca/aboutus
https://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo-qualitative-data-analysis-software/resources/blog/nvivo-transcription-is-hipaa-compliant.

The paper copies of information/data you provide will be kept in a locked desk/cabinet where only Dr. McKnight, Dr. Lapointe and the research team will have access to it. All information within will be encrypted on a password protected computer. Once the study is complete, only an archive of the data, without identifying information will be maintained. The archived data will be held for ten years.

Please note that this research is being done in collaboration with Lynn Fergusson of Social Impact Advisors. While Lynn and her team will not have direct access to the interview transcripts, she has applied her non-profit industry expertise to help us identify suitable respondents and thus you should assume that she will be able to identify respondents commentary from quotations and high-level descriptions of your organization (i.e. the nature of your organization and title).

Participation and Withdrawal:

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. It is your choice to be part of the study. If you decide to participate in the study, you also have the option to skip any questions in the interview. You can also stop (withdraw) from the research process for whatever reason, after providing consent, part-way through the study, or up to two weeks following your final interview. If you decide to withdraw, there will be no negative

consequences to you including your ability to retain the monetary incentive(s) already afforded to you.

If you would like to withdraw from the study at any time, please email the lead investigator, Dr. Brent McKnight at bmcknight@mcmaster.ca and the withdrawal option you would like to pursue:

Option 1: “I would like to withdraw from the study going forward”. In this case, we will continue to use the information you have provided up your withdrawal; however, you will not be contacted for the remainder of the study.

Option 2: “I would like to withdraw from the study. I would also like to withdraw all of my past contributions”. In this case, we will remove all of the previous contributions you have made to the project and you will not be contacted for the remainder of the study.

Questions about the Study:

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact a member of the research team.

This study has been reviewed by the McMaster University Research Ethics Board and received ethics clearance. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Secretariat
Telephone: (905) 525-9140 ext. 23142
C/o Research Office for Administrative Development and Support E-mail: ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca

CONSENT

The consent process will be verbally confirmed prior to your initial interview. At this point, the researcher will ask if you consent to one or more of the following:

- I have read the information above regarding this research study, I have had the opportunity to ask questions about my involvement in this study and to receive additional details I requested, I understand that if I agree to participate in this study, I may withdraw (either partially or entirely) from the study anytime up to 2 weeks following the final interview, and I agree to participate in the study.
- I agree that the interview can be recorded.
- I consent to being contacted for phase 2 of the study which includes follow-up interviews.
- I would like to receive a summary of the study’s results.