

STATE OF EVALUATION IN CANADA

ARTS, CULTURE & RECREATION CHARITIES

Introduction

Arts, culture & recreation charities work in the areas of media and communications, visual, graphic and performing arts and architecture. They also include libraries, museums, zoos, aquariums and other like organizations as well as sport, recreation, social and service club organizations. There are approximately 8,600 arts, culture & recreation charities (equivalent to 10.1% of all charities). The vast majority of these (about 85%) focus on arts or culture and the remaining minority on recreation.¹

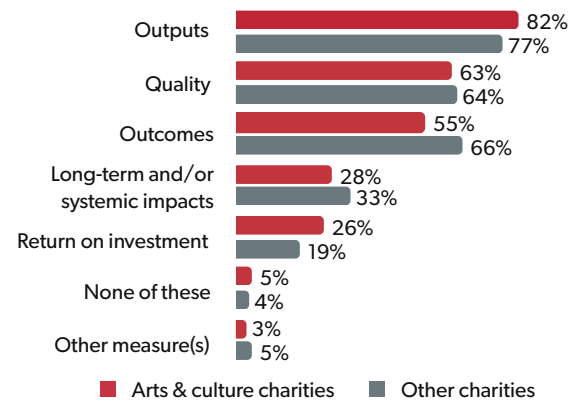
What aspects of their work do they evaluate?

As with other types of charities, arts, culture & recreation charities are most likely to focus on evaluating more fundamental aspects of their work such as outputs, quality and outcomes.² They are much less likely to evaluate their impact or the return on investment of their work. Judging from how arts, culture & recreation charities compare to other sub-sectors, they appear to give somewhat higher importance to evaluating their return on investment and lower importance to outcome and impact evaluation than is typical.

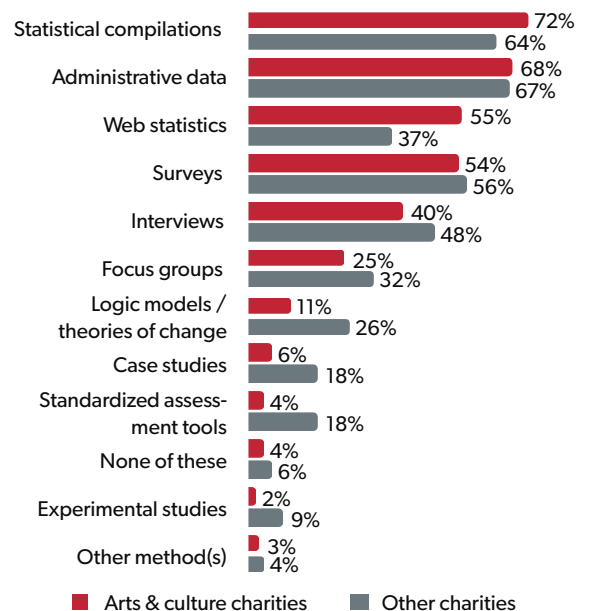
What techniques and resources do they use to evaluate their work?

Arts, culture & recreation charities use many different techniques and resources to measure their work. Compared to other charities they tend to use fewer measures, averaging 3.4 individual measures (vs. 3.8 for other charities).

Aspects of their work evaluated



Measures used to evaluate their work



¹ Because promotion of sport is not considered a charitable activity, the vast majority of organizations involved in sport are not charities and are outside the scope of this report.

² *Outputs* were defined as how much the charity did (e.g., number of events, patrons attending, etc.), *outcomes* as the direct effects of its work on the people or cause it serves, *quality* as how well it carried out the work, *impact* as broader long-term or systemic effects of the work beyond those directly served and *return on investment* as comparison of the social or economic value of the organization's work with its costs.

In terms of specific types of evaluation measures used, they tend to emphasize quantitative measures including statistical compilations of services delivered, administrative data, web statistics and surveys. Web statistics and statistical compilations appear to be particularly significant, given that they are much more common than in other sub-sectors. Other measures, particularly more involved or specialized methods such as the use of logic models / theories of change or experimental studies, appear to be less important.

How do they use evaluation results?

Arts, culture & recreation charities use evaluation results in many different ways. Compared to other types of charities they tend to make somewhat less intensive use of their results, averaging 8.7 individual uses (vs. 9.2 for other sub-sectors).

While arts and culture charities tend to make less intensive use of evaluation results, this does not translate into significant differences in their general use of results. The vast majority use results for some form of reporting (98% use results this way) and to inform their organizational or program-level decision making (96%). Somewhat fewer use results to learn about their work (83%), but less than two thirds use them to measure organizational performance (62%).³ Overall, these levels of general use are very comparable to those observed in other sub-sectors.

Looking at more specific uses for evaluation results, arts and culture charities stand out from other charities as being slightly more likely to use results to report to their board of directors, but less likely to report to senior management. Most likely, these reporting differences are driven by their generally smaller size compared to other charity types. Arts charities are also less likely than other charities to use evaluation results to learn about the outcomes of their work, to learn from how the work was implemented or to share evaluation findings with peer organizations. These differences seem most likely to be driven by the nature of the work that most arts and culture charities engage in. Finally, they are also somewhat less likely than others to use evaluation results to inform or influence government.

Uses of evaluation results



³ The comparatively small percentage of charities using evaluation results to monitor organizational performance is likely driven mainly by the fact that the survey devoted only two questions to this application of evaluation results.

Staffing for evaluation

In arts, culture & recreation charities, as in other sub-sectors, responsibility for evaluation tends to be shared across multiple positions / roles. Most commonly, evaluation involves the charity's most senior leader, but staff and volunteers in a range of roles may also be involved.

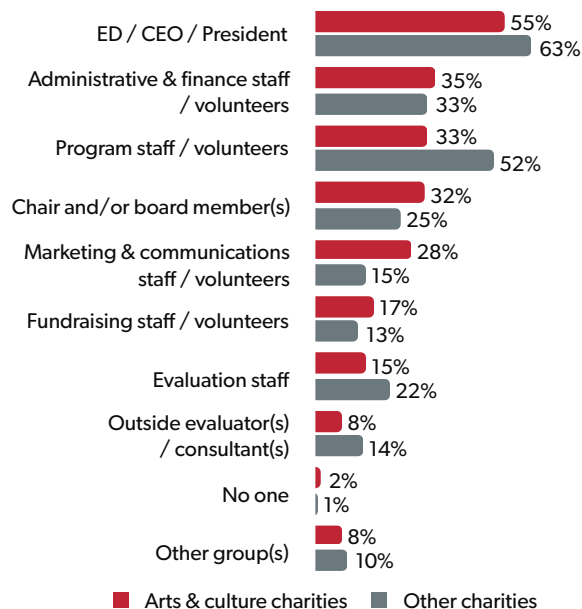
About one arts, culture & recreation charity in seven has at least one staff member primarily devoted to evaluation, a somewhat smaller proportion than in other sub-sectors. Compared to other types of charities, the most senior leader is less likely, and the chair and/or other board members more likely, to be involved in evaluation. As with the differences in reporting of evaluation results, this seems likely to be at least partially driven by organization size. Compared to other sub-sectors, marketing and communications staff are much more likely, and program staff noticeably less likely, to be involved in evaluation, likely due to the nature of the work. Finally, arts charities are less likely to involve outside consultants or evaluators, which is likely correlated with their lower emphasis on more involved evaluation techniques.

Evaluation networks

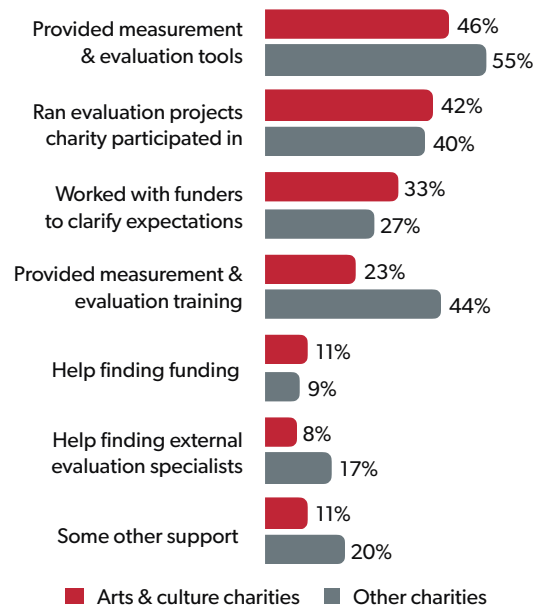
Arts, culture & recreation charities are about half as likely as charities in other sub-sectors to be involved with any form of evaluation-related group, network or association (14% vs. 27% of other charities).⁴

On average, arts and culture charities that belong to these types of networks draw 1.7 individual supports from them, broadly comparable to the average in other sub-sectors. Measurement and evaluation-related tools and participation in evaluation projects or initiatives run by the network are the most common supports. Compared to other types of charities, arts charities are much less likely to draw on these networks for evaluation training or to find external evaluation expertise. This is consistent with both the lower likelihood of involving outside evaluators and the reduced emphasis on more involved or specialized evaluation techniques, compared to other types of charities.

Staff positions involved in evaluation

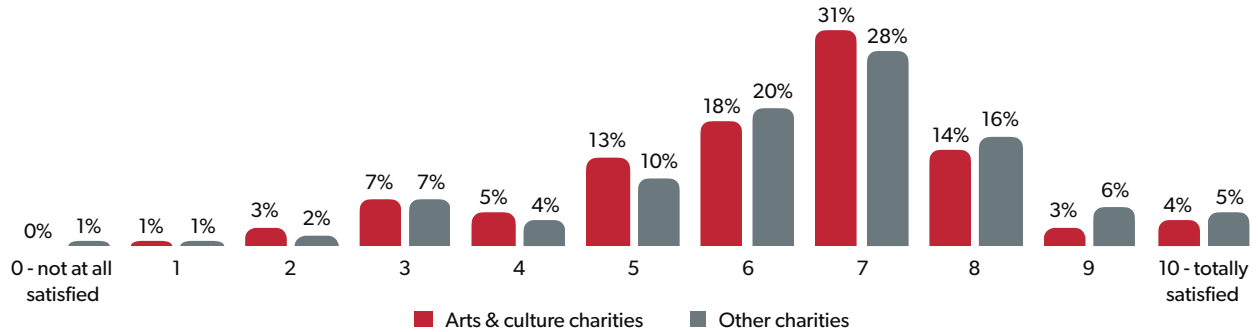


Resources & supports received from evaluation networks



⁴ The range of evaluation-related relationships described by survey respondents is extremely varied, ranging from periodic consultations with groups of peer organizations through to long-standing formal membership in national umbrella groups. Many charities reported being in multiple relationships related to evaluation.

Satisfaction with evaluation capacity



Opinions about evaluation

Overall, arts, culture & recreation charities are about as satisfied as other types of charities with their capacity to evaluate their work and apply evaluation findings. Using the 11-point scale depicted above, their average satisfaction score was 6.2 (vs. 6.4 for other sub-sectors).

The vast majority of arts charities see a need for evaluation in order to know whether they are achieving their objectives and most see sufficient value in the activity to justify the resources they devote to it. However, most also believe that the data they collect is not used to its full potential. This is particularly striking given that they tend to measure fairly basic quantitative elements of

their work. Arts charities are split on whether external pressures are driving them to evaluation and whether evaluation interferes with their relationships with those who they serve.

The opinions expressed by arts charities are quite consistent with those expressed by charities in other sub-sectors. Overall, the only statistically significant difference is that arts charities are somewhat less likely to believe that evaluation activities are a source of tension in their relationships with stakeholders. To a significant extent, this is likely due to the more passive nature of many evaluation measures emphasized by arts charities.

Opinions about evaluation



The role of external evaluators

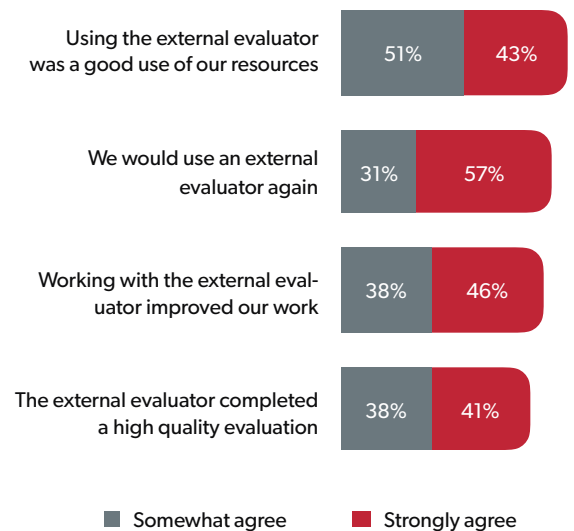
Just under one in five arts, culture & recreation charities (18%) worked with an external evaluation consultant or organization over the previous year (vs. 22% of charities in other sub-sectors). Arts charities without dedicated evaluation staff do not appear to be any more likely to engage external expertise – to the extent that there is a meaningful difference, they are slightly less likely to do so (17% vs. 22% of charities with dedicated evaluation staff). Similarly, dissatisfaction with their evaluation capacity does not seem to be a significant motivating factor. Statistically speaking, average satisfaction scores for charities working with and not working with external evaluators are virtually identical (6.1 vs. 6.3 for charities not drawing on external expertise).

Arts charities engaging external evaluation consultants or organizations do appear to have slightly different opinions about evaluation and its role. Charities engaging outside consultants are much less likely to believe that evaluation can interfere with their stakeholder relationships (19% believe this vs. 33% of arts charities not engaging external consultants). They are also more likely to evaluate their work on their own initiative – 50% of arts charities working with external parties disagree that there is too much external pressure to evaluate their work, compared to 37% of charities not working with external consultants or organizations.

Overall, arts charities engaging external evaluators appear to be fairly satisfied with the experience. More than nine in ten viewed using an external evaluator as a good use of resources and just under nine in ten would use one again in the future. Over four in five found that the external evaluator improved the quality of the work and slightly fewer received a high quality evaluation from the external evaluator. The only major difference in these responses compared to other sub-sectors is that arts charities are somewhat more likely to view the experience as an efficient use of resources (94% vs. 85% of charities in other sub-sectors).

Arts charities working with external evaluators are more likely to do a couple of key things. They are more likely to evaluate the quality of their work (83% vs. 62% of those not working with external evaluators), to use evaluation results to develop new programs (85% vs. 66%) and revise existing existing programs (84% vs. 69%).

Opinions about external evaluators



Enablers and barriers

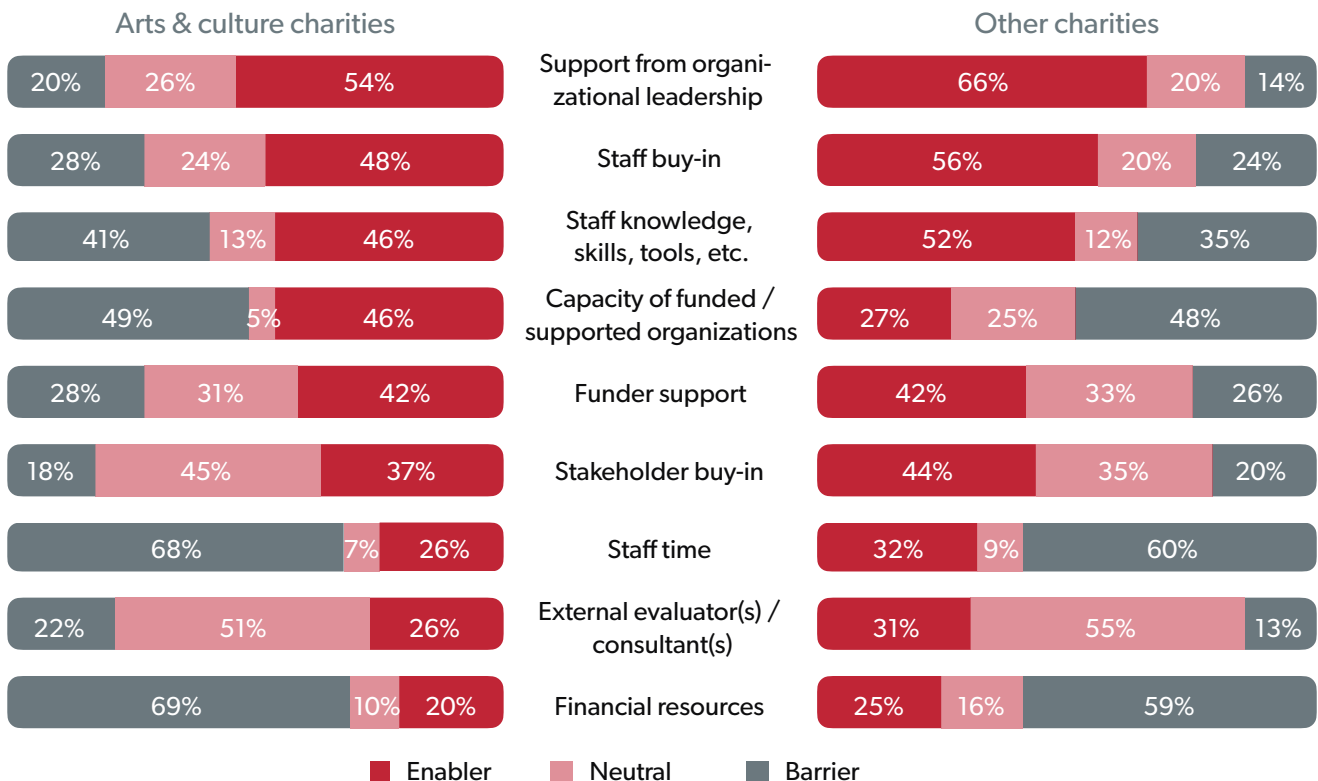
Survey respondents were asked whether any of nine potential factors functioned as enablers or barriers to effective evaluation for their organization. For arts, culture & recreation organizations, the most commonly reported enablers are support from organizational leadership and buy-in from staff. Compared to other sub-sectors, arts charities are somewhat less likely to view these factors as enablers. On balance, arts charities tend to view funder support and stakeholder buy-in as enabling factors, but they appear to be significantly less potent than the first two factors.

The opinions of arts charities related to staff knowledge, skills and tools, the capacities of funded or supported organizations and external evaluators or consultants are all quite divided, with roughly equal percentages of charities viewing each individual factor as an enabler and barrier. Quite few charities are neutral about the role of staff knowledge and skills or the capacity of funded / supported organizations, suggesting

that charities have quite different experiences in these areas as opposed to simply being unsure, as may be the case with external evaluators. Compared to other types of charities, arts organizations are somewhat less likely to view staff knowledge, skills and tools as an enabling factor but somewhat more likely to view the capacities of funded or supported organizations as an enabler.

The most potent barriers appear to be resource related. Over two thirds of arts, culture & recreation charities cite lack of financial and staff time as barriers. These constraints appear to be particularly significant for arts charities as they are noticeably more likely than charities in other sub-sectors to view these factors as barriers. The frequency with which these constraints are reported may go some way towards explaining why arts charities are less likely than other types of charities to evaluate some aspects of their work, tend to use fewer measures to evaluate their work and make less intensive use of evaluation results.

Enablers and barriers of evaluation



Methodology

SUMMARY. The survey was conducted between May 10 and July 8, 2018. Potential respondents received an invitation e-mail directing them to an interactive survey website where they could complete the survey. Periodic reminders spaced roughly two weeks apart were sent during the survey period to help increase the response rates. Survey invitations were sent to 7,529 charities from across Canada, including 1,364 arts, culture & recreation charities. In total, we received 1,884 useable responses, including 399 from arts, culture & recreation charities. Once e-mails known not to have reached the intended recipient are taken into account, the net response rate was 24.6% (31.4% for arts, culture & recreation charities).

RESPONDENTS. Executive Directors / CEOs (64%) and board chairs / members (12%) accounted for the majority of respondents. Administration and finance staff accounted for 7%, program and evaluation staff 3% and fundraising, marketing and communications staff 3%. Other staff and volunteer roles accounted for the remaining 11%.

SAMPLE. Registered charities with annual revenues of \$30,000 or more that were not religious congregations were considered in-scope for this survey. For more details on how the sample was constructed, please refer to the Methodology section of the national highlights report entitled *The State of Evaluation in Canada*.

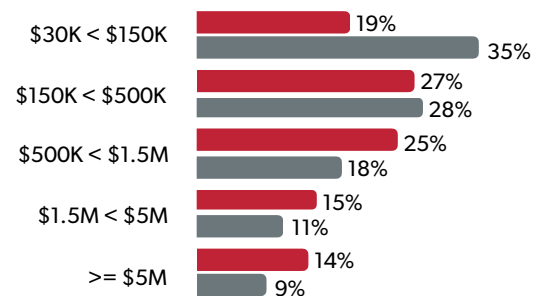
RESPONSE RATES. Response rates varied according to organizational characteristics. They were lower among charities with annual revenues less than \$150,000, located in British Columbia or working in the education or grantmaking, fundraising & voluntarism sub-sectors. Response rates were higher among charities with annual revenues between \$500,000 and \$1,499,999, located in the Prairies or working in the arts, culture & recreation sub-sector.

WEIGHTING STRATEGY. Responses were weighted according to revenue size, sub-sector and region in or-

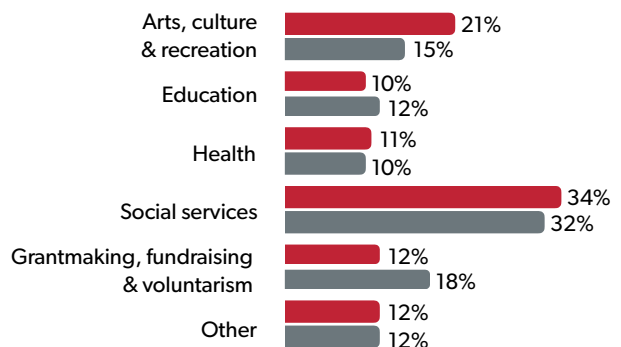
der to account for differences between the survey sample and the population of in-scope charities and for variations in the response rate. Population counts were based on the 2016 distribution of registered charities. For more details of how weights tended to vary by organizational characteristics, please refer to the Methodology section of the national highlights report.

Weighted and unweighted distributions of survey respondents by key variables

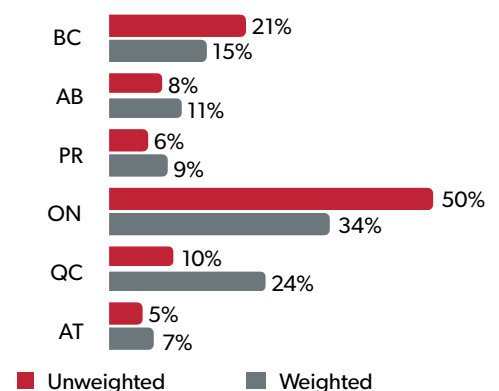
Annual revenue size



Sub-sector



Region



State of Evaluation in Canada: Arts, Culture & Recreation Charities

David Lasby

Published by

Imagine Canada

65 St. Clair Avenue East, Suite 700

Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4T 2Y3

T 416 597 2293 | F 416 597 2294 | W www.imaginecanada.ca

Copyright ©2019 Imagine Canada

ISBN 978-1-55401-412-5

For more information about evaluation practices among Canadian charities, please see our national highlights report *The State of Evaluation: Measurement and evaluation practices in Canada's charitable sector* available at <http://imaginecanada.ca/resources-and-tools/research-and-facts/state-evaluation-canada>.

Supported by



Foundation

Imagine Canada is a national charitable organization whose cause is Canada's charities. Our three broad aims are to amplify the collective voice of charities, create opportunities to connect and learn from each other and build our capacity to succeed.

Evaluation plays an integral part in our vision for a stronger Canada. Through our research, our goal is to support a sector-wide culture where organizations and individuals use data, information and knowledge to make better decisions.

This report is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. For uses not covered by this license, contact us at the points above. All other rights reserved.