



Crisis Coming for Ontario Communities

TORONTO, October 20, 2009

Hard Hit, a new research report from the Social Planning Network of Ontario (SPNO) documents the one-two punch affecting Ontario's nonprofit community services – an increasing demand for services and lost revenue from funding cuts driven by the economic downturn.

The survey of more than 400 Ontario agencies found that 60% had experienced mostly increases in service demand since September 2008. Three-quarters of these agencies attributed the increase in demand, at least in part, to the recession. Half of the organizations surveyed also experienced a cut in at least one funding source during 2009 and 65% anticipate they will have further funding cuts in 2010. This combination of increased demands and cuts in resources spells an impending crisis in communities across Ontario.

While agencies are trying everything to meet the increasing needs of community members including increasing staff workloads, and putting more reliance on volunteers, this can't be maintained for long. "This is simply not enough" said Peter Clutterbuck, Senior Consultant with SPNO. "The coping strategies reported by agencies across the province are not sustainable. Overloading staff, relying on volunteers for service delivery and cutting essential supports will cause a crisis for communities across Ontario."

Ben Earle, Manager of Social Research and Planning with Community Development Council Durham, noted, "We are at the point where organizations are not able to meet the needs in local communities. Half of agencies reporting on key programs experiencing increased service demands told us they were unable to respond."

Funding cuts from individual donors, self-generated revenues such as fees, and United Ways and community foundations topped the list of affected revenue sources. "We were aware that there was funding insecurity but what did come as a surprise was that agencies that reported their ability to fundraise has been eroded as well," commented Trudy Beaulne, Executive Director of the Social Planning Council of Kitchener-Waterloo.

Hard Hit: Impact of the Economic Downturn on Nonprofit Community Services in Ontario is available at www.spno.ca

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