

**Survey of Not-for-Profit Organisations
Grey and Bruce Counties:
Organisational Governance**

Survey conducted by

**United Way Bruce Grey
Community Foundation Grey Bruce**

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Executive Summary

This report summarises data from a 31-question, on-line survey of area not-for-profits, charities, and similar organisations. The purpose of the survey was to help understand the barriers and opportunities for local charities and not-for-profits to engage people under the age of 40 in sitting on boards of directors and moving into leadership positions. Looking at the current situation the data reveal that responding organisations seem to have strong participation on boards of directors, reporting few vacant directors' seats and low meeting absenteeism. Organisations have, generally, an older cohort (50 years and older) of both management and directors. Many are interested in attracting younger members to sit on boards but have been unsuccessful, stating younger people are too busy and some are apathetic. Younger members, respondents state, would bring fresh ideas, energy and enthusiasm, new perspectives and insights, technical skills (social media), and connections. Presently the 30 to 50 years of age cohort is about one-third smaller than the 55 to 74 cohort, and if there is no growth in the former, organisations may be challenged in finding candidates for directors' seats.

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Introduction

The United Way Bruce Grey conducted a 31-question on-line survey of area not-for-profit and various other service-oriented organisations. Respondents opted-in to complete the survey (self-referral) via an email invitation. Responses were collected between 11th January and 10th March 2018 and generated 76 responses, from 65 organisations.

The purpose of the survey was to: "...help us understand the barriers and opportunities for local charities and not-for-profits to engage people under the age of 40 in sitting on boards of directors and moving into leadership positions." (From the introduction to the on-line survey.)

Note: The findings cannot be generalised to other or all organisations due to the nature of the sample, but may be used to get a general sense of the "lay of the land" regarding the not-for-profit and voluntarism sectors.

Profile of the Survey Respondents

Most responses were provided by volunteers (73%), with staff providing the rest (27%). Respondents varied in their board duties (Table 1).

Table 1: Respondents' Board Position

Position	N	%
Chair/president	23	36.5
General board member	14	22.2
Secretary	10	15.8
Vice chair/president	3	4.8
Treasurer	3	4.8
Past Chair/president	1	1.6
Other (1) (volunteers, ED / GM / CEO)	9	14.3
Total	63	100.0

(1) Although the question specifically asked about position on the board, the "other" choice generated responses that included positions that are typically "paid". The analysis could not determine if, indeed, these "other" positions were paid or voluntary.

Respondents to the survey were asked their age. Most (73.7%) were aged 55 and older, and 40.8% were aged 65 and older. Only 5.3% were under age 34 and none were under age 20.

Profile of Responding Organisations

Organisational Type

The 65 responding organisations represent 17 broad classifications of service types (Table 2). Many are limited to providing a specific or focused service although several provide multiple services within their mandates.

Years of Operation

Years of operation vary from one to 169 years. The mean is 35 years and the median is 30 years. This indicates a good amount of system-wide experience embedded in area organisations, and with volunteers.

Table 2: Organisational / Sectorial Type

Service Orientation	N	%
Social Service	14	21.5
Fraternal	11	16.9
Heritage	7	10.8
Health/Medical	7	10.8
Social/Recreation	5	7.7
Faith	5	7.7
Sport	4	6.2
Business Support	3	4.6
Education	2	3.1
Culture	1	1.5
Wellness	1	1.5
Animal Welfare	1	1.5
Municipal	1	1.5
Literacy	1	1.5
Event	1	1.5
Medical	1	1.5
Environment	1	1.5
Total	65	100.0

Table 3: Years in Existence / Operating

Measure of Central Tendency	Years
Median	30
Mean	35
Mode	50
Range	168
Minimum (Youngest)	1
Maximum (Oldest)	169
Standard Deviation	32

Some responses to this question provided a minimum number of years, such as 43+, which, for analysis purposes, was calculated as "45" and was used to calculate the statistics in Table 3.

Legal Status

Organisational legal status ranges from informal to branch office to incorporated as not-for-profit with charitable status. Many (about 27%) indicate they are not-for-profit, either affiliated with a national or provincial parent organisation, or incorporated as a local not-for-profit and charitable. About 12% indicate locally-operated charity. Many (about 39%) are not-for-profit and not a registered charity.

Type of Personnel

Just more than one-half (56%) indicate they operate with some paid staff, while the others are solely voluntary. It is likely that some of these organisations do operate with summer student staff, but this question was not asked directly. As the question was posed (Do you have any staff?) it is possible that some respondents stated "yes" to the question and included summer student staff, and, possibly, those receiving an honorarium.

Age of Key Leadership Position

Most key leadership position holders (executive director, co-ordinator, etc.) are 50 years and older (about 76%), with about 31% are 65 years of age and older. The median age is about 60 years.

Board / Committee Positions and Vacancy Rate

Respondent organisations have a total of about 725 board positions with a vacancy rate of 13%. The average number of board positions is 9.7 per organisation with a reported range for board seats of three to 20.

Age Range of Current Board Members

Respondents report that the ages of board members range from 15-19 years to 90+ (Figure 1). The graph highlights the mature age of the majority of the board members but indicates a good number of younger individuals are currently involved. The responses represent 57 organisations and 559 individuals.

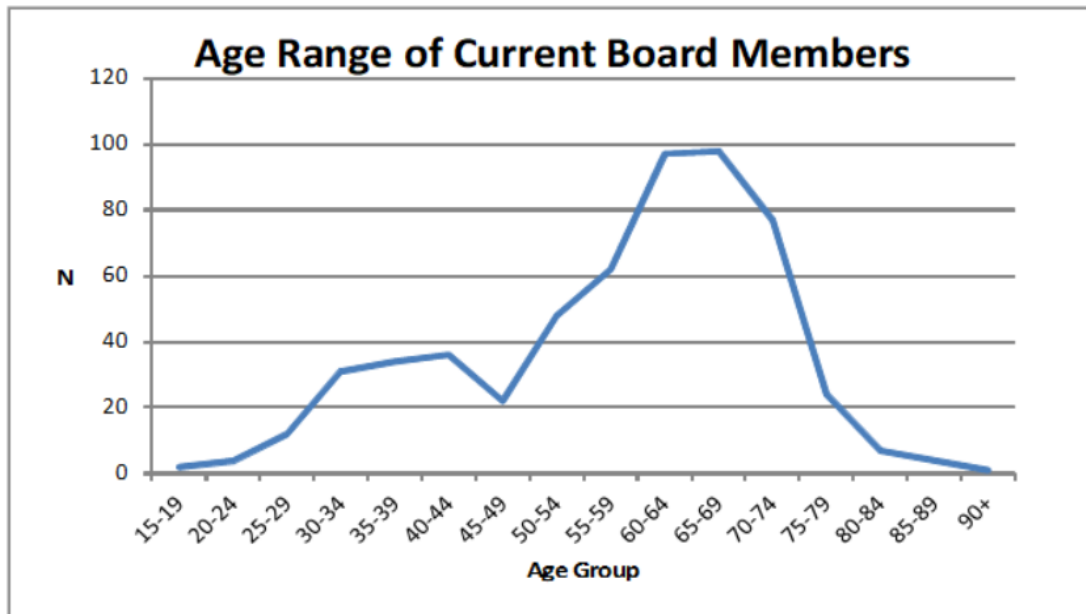


Figure 1: Age Range of Current Board Members

Hours of Monthly Commitment

Respondents (including staff and directors) contribute a wide-range of per-person hours to their respective organisations (Figure 2). Using the mid-point hours for each age group, a total of about 1380 hours per month are contributed by 74 respondents for a mean of 18 hours per respondent. This equates to a total of about 15,600 hours per year, just for the individuals that responded.

Removing one outlier and those that reported part- or full-time hours (which are staff), respondents contributed about a total of 810 hours or a mean of 14 hours per person.

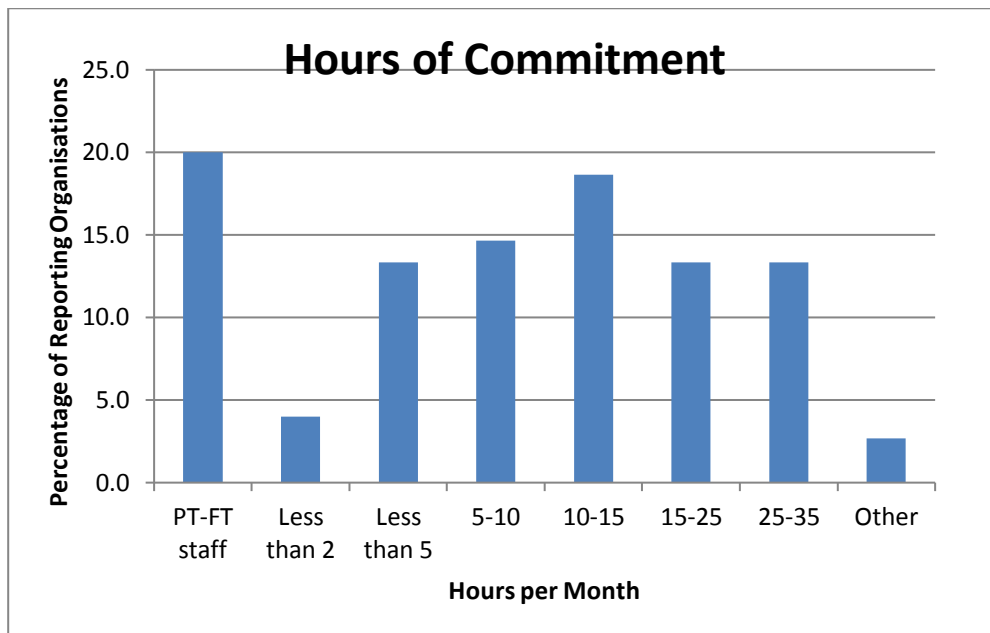


Figure 2: Hours of Commitment to Board and Organisation

Organisational Approaches to Board Development and Recruitment

Directors' Terms of Office

For most organisations (about 60%), directors are elected for a term of four years or less. About 10% have a term of five or six years. Some organisations (28%) are elected with no fixed term, in other words there is no limit.

For the majority of organisations (73%) terms are renewable and 23% stated a director must take time off between terms. The majority of organisations (78%) allow directors to serve for three or more terms with some of those allowing unlimited terms.

Frequency of board meetings are mostly monthly (88%) with some meeting quarterly or semi-annual (12%).

Attendance at Board Meetings

Generally there are few directors missing at meetings (62%), less than about three people. A minority of respondents indicate general attendance at 75%. Only about 5% indicated a challenge of getting quorum at meetings.

Alternative Methods to Attend Board Meetings

A significant majority (66%) do not offer alternative means of attending board meetings with only 34% offering teleconferencing, skype / skype-like, and webinar software. Sectors most likely to use alternate methods are health and

social service.

Board Member Recruitment and Succession

Policies relating to recruitment and/or succession planning are in-place with 36% of responding organisations (n=70). Some (11%) have an orientation strategy, and 51% have no policies relating to recruitment, succession, orientation, and youth engagement.

Of those with policies are more likely to be in the arts and culture, social services, and health and diseases sectors, with succession (n=8), orientation (n=7), and recruitment (n=6) policies.

Recruitment strategies vary and include word-of-mouth (69%), invitation (54%), organisation's website (29%), print media (15%), on-line recruitment platforms / volunteer recruitment websites (22%). About 22% did not respond to this question.

Youth and "Under 40" and Board Recruitment

There are 35 organisations that stated they actively recruit people under 20 (19%), under 30 (25%), and under 40 (56%). Those not responding (54%) likely do not actively recruit from these demographics but may have a more general or non-age-specific, approach to recruitment.¹ About one-half (49%) of the respondents indicated they were not successful in their age demographic targeting. Sectors reporting "active" recruitment of those under 40 years of age were arts and culture, adult sports, social services, and heritage and historical organisations.

Respondents were asked (in an open-ended question) why they were successful in recruitment, with 22 valid responses with a total of 39 written comments². The most common response was word-of-mouth, personal ask, and targeted recruitment based on demographic need for the board. Others indicated the importance of the reputation and work of the organisation.

Respondents were asked (in an open-ended question) why they were not successful in recruitment, with 28 valid responses with a total of 33 written comments. The most common answer was that young people have a "lack of time" (57%). Other responses stated lack of interest / apathy by public (n=7), no recruitment strategy (n=4). Several responses indicate the problem is the growing older adult population, likely pertains especially to rural communities, including towns and villages.

¹ One respondent stated recruitment based on board needs, "age isn't a factor". Several other responses echoed this thought.

²Valid responses include only answers that directly responded to the question.

Respondents were asked (in an open-ended question) what they thought would increase recruitment of younger board members, with 35 valid responses with a total of 44 written comments. The most common response (n=11, 31%) centred on better recruitment strategies although none defined what that would look like. Some (n=6, 17%) stated they simply did not know what might work. Other responses mentioned the shortage of a younger population from which to recruit, better awareness of what the organisation does (i.e., higher profile), flexible meeting times, childcare for meetings, and young-recruiting-young.

Respondents were asked (in an open-ended question) what concerns about involvement of younger board members and what capacity-building is needed to “welcome” younger members, with 34 valid responses with a total of 58 written comments. The most frequent response was that there are no concerns about involving younger people as directors and capacity is in place to accommodate (n=24, (71%). Some mentioned the need for meeting flexibility (time, alternate meeting attendance methods) (n=4) and several mentioned younger people lack understanding of governance (n=2).

Respondents were asked (in an open-ended question) what opportunities younger board members would bring to the organisation, with 61 valid responses (Table 4). Responses centre around what might be called “fresh thinking” that will help an organisation become more relevant and with a focus to the future, including survival. A need for additional board personnel, or as one response stated -“bodies”, was mentioned five times.

Table 4: What Younger Members Bring to an Organisation

Opportunity	N	%
Ideas (fresh, new)	34	55.0
Energy and Enthusiasm	15	24.6
Perspective (new, youthful)	11	18.0
Technical Skills (social media)	7	11.5
Personnel (“bodies”)	5	8.2
Insight (fresh, new, youthful)	5	8.2
Community Connections	5	8.2
Opinions (new, fresh)	2	3.3
Total	84	-

Organisational Issues of Concern

Respondents were asked (in an open-ended question), what is “keeping you awake at night?” regarding the “future of your board membership”, with 61 valid responses (Table 5), with a total of 66 written comments.

Table 5: Issues of Concern for Board

Issue	N	%
None	32	52.5
Recruitment / Succession	14	23.0
Ageing Board / Need for Youth	4	6.6
Funding	3	5.0
Too Much Work / Burn-out	2	3.3
Other (need staff, board diversity)	2	3.3
Total	57	-

Summary Discussion

Generally, the respondents to the survey indicate that they are able to manage the affairs of their organisations and have few problems, at this time. But, they do identify some potential problems, likely to be applicable in the near future.

Boards have low vacancy rates (with a mean of 13%) and generally have acceptable attendance rates, with 62% indicating non-attendance of three or fewer members per meeting. Policies for alternate ways of attending meetings (i.e., electronic) are non-existent in about 66% of responding organisations, although low absenteeism at meetings suggest this is not an issue, at this time. Only 3.3% of respondents stated burn-out or too much work is a concern.

There is evidence that boards are, for the most part, populated with an older demographic and that recruitment of younger people (40 years and younger) has been a challenge, and largely unsuccessful. Currently board member numbers fall within one of two “spikes or peaks”; those aged 35 to 44 years, which is a smaller group and a larger one aged 60 to 74 years. Respondents indicate concerns regarding an ageing board, succession and recruitment planning but 51% have no policies directing succession or recruitment, and about 50% have been unsuccessful attracting younger board members. Currently the 30 to 49 cohort is about one-third smaller than the 55 to 74 cohort, which, if unchanged in growth rate, indicates area organisations will be challenged in finding people to serve on boards and committees into the near future -10 to 20 years.

Although boards seem to be able to function well enough to meet the needs of the organisation (low meeting absenteeism, low board vacancy rates) the reality is that many organisations have director terms of four to six years, 28% have no

defined terms, and 78% allow directors to serve for three or more terms and some are unlimited. What is not knowable, given the limits of the survey, is whether directors are under pressure to stay because of unsuccessful recruitment.

And, are boards adequately meeting the needs of demographic diversity and technical expertise, which may be compromised due to long and unlimited director terms? As stated above, recruitment and succession is an issue for boards but at the same time they do not have high vacancy rates.

There is clear indication that organisations would like to recruit younger members but have been unsuccessful. Respondents indicate apathy and lack of interest as reasons for a lack of younger involvement, but the main reason cited is busyness and lack of time. Respondents are keen to have younger members, stating they will bring fresh ideas, energy, new and youthful perspectives, and insight, as well as technical expertise (e.g., social media).

Respondents were asked about age related to key leadership positions and the responses indicate a median age of about 60 years, with about 31% aged 65 and older. Retirement is likely to change this in the coming years.

Interestingly, the majority of respondents stated that, overall, they have no issues "that keep them awake at night" (52.5%). Some are concerned about an ageing board, lack of youthful involvement (6.6%), recruitment and succession (23%); only 5% mentioned funding.

Survey responses seem to give a nod to concerns for the future but that at present organisations are managing. The involvement of people less than 40 years is low at present and unless involvement increases, as a result of lessening family, work, and personal demands, there will be a personnel recruitment crunch to meet board needs, likely in the next ten to twenty years.