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## LETTER OF INFORMATION

### Principal Investigator

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The purpose of this study is to explore Canada's non-profit sector's role as the voice of Canadians. The results are expected to contribute to organizational listening's growing body of knowledge, while providing Canadian non-profits and charities best practices to support their advocacy work - something that may be needed more than ever during COVID-19 response and recovery.

There are two parts to this study, an online [survey](#) and personal interviews. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete, and is hosted by LimeSurvey, a platform approved by the McMaster Ethics Review Board. Within the survey, I ask participants general questions about their organizational listening, advocacy, and communications activities. The interviews will be approximately 60-minutes via Zoom, also a platform approved by the McMaster Ethics Review Board, or telephone. During the interview, I will explore with participants how their organization listens to its beneficiaries, i.e. those it serves, and how it acts as the voice of that population.

Participation in either part of this study is completely voluntary.

This research is the final component of my Master of Communication Management - similar to a thesis. Organizational listening and communications management in the non-profit sector are lines of research that I hope to continue, and may wish to use the data I collect in this study collected in future research.

### How would this study benefit me?

The study results are aimed to support non-profit communicators in their work by contributing to organizational listening's growing body of knowledge and the identification of best practices and tools to support advocacy work. Further, your participation may provide you an immediate professional development benefit, such as through the exploration of organizational listening theory as it pertains to your specific work environment.

### What are the risks to my participation?

As this is an exploratory study focussing on business practices, any risks to you individually are minimal. But as organizational listening is an emerging field of study; I acknowledge you may not be entirely sure how specific questions may relate to your organization, and that is perfectly fine – you can opt out of specific questions or the survey or interview in its entirety at any time.

### Who will know what I said in the study?

I am committed to respecting your privacy, and I will not use your name, your organization or any information that would allow you to be identified.

For those who participate in the survey, your responses will be anonymous. For those who participate in the interviews, your responses will be confidential.

### **How will you keep my responses confidential if I participate in the interviews?**

I will take every effort to protect your confidentiality and privacy. I will not use your name, your organization or any information in such a way that might lead to your identification.

I will do this by disconnecting your personal information - name, title, organization and contact information - from your responses. Specifically, I will use a unique code when collecting and analysing your responses, i.e. your name will only be associated with your consent, and all consent-related documentation will be permanently deleted on completion of the study.

Any data from this research that will be shared or published will be the combined data of all participants. That means it will be reported for the whole group not for individual persons.

### **Who else may have access to the raw data?**

For those who participate in the survey, LimeSurvey will store responses on their site, which will be encrypted and password-protected, accessible to myself only. I will delete the survey and responses from LimeSurvey once the study is complete. More info here: <https://www.limesurvey.org/en/privacy-policy>.

For those who participate in the interviews:

- If you grant permission to be audio or video recorded, the recording of the Zoom audio or video will be stored on Zoom, which will be encrypted and password-protected, accessible to myself only. I will delete the recording from Zoom once the transcript is verified as correct. More info here: <https://zoom.us/privacy>.
- I will use Trint transcription service to transcribe the recording, which means the recording and the transcript will be temporarily stored on Trint. The recording and transcript will be encrypted and password-protected, accessible to myself only. I will delete the recording and the transcript from Trint once I have verified the transcript as correct. More info here: <https://trint.com/privacy-platform>.
- I may share portions of the research data with my capstone advisor when needed, Dr. Alex Sévigny, via McMaster email. Select emails may be transferred to a secure location if necessary for future reference. All emails will be deleted from my and Dr. Alex Sévigny email accounts.

The use of the above platforms have been approved by the McMaster Ethics Review Board.

### **What if I change my mind about being in the study?**

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you are welcome to end the survey or interview at any time. If you chose to do so, simply quit the survey or notify me during the interview, and all data collected up to that point, including incomplete survey data, will be deleted.

If you decide after your interview you no longer wish to participate in this study, simply contact me by **December 11, 2020**. Your responses will be deleted unless you indicate otherwise. There will be no consequences to you.

I am not able to offer the same to those who complete the survey, as the survey is anonymous, i.e. I would not be able to identify which set of responses are yours to delete.

### **How do I find out what was learned in this study?**

I expect to have this study completed by **March 2021**. If you would like a summary of the results, please let me know and I will be happy to provide it to you. You will be specifically asked this question at the end of the survey and interview.

**What if I have questions before or after my interview or the survey?**

If you have questions or need more information about the study itself, please contact me at:

Peggy Kulmala.  
250 885-1297  
[kulmala@mcmaster.ca](mailto:kulmala@mcmaster.ca)

This study has been reviewed and cleared by the McMaster Research Ethics Board (MREB #4947). If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a participant or about the way the study is being conducted, please contact:

McMaster Research Ethics Board Secretariat  
905 525-9140 ext. 23142  
[ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ethicsoffice@mcmaster.ca)