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COMMUNITY. CAMPUS. COLLABORATION. 

OUT ON THE SHELF: STRATEGIES FOR REBUILDING AND RECONNECTING

MARCH 2016

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Out on the Shelf: Strategies for Rebuilding and Reconnecting

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INTRODUCTION

This project, prepared for Out On The Shelf (OOTS), explores the ways in which not-for-profit organizations (NFPs), which serve the LGBTQ+ community, deliver their services and programming, meet the needs of the community, and adapt to change and difficulties. OOTS is a NFP in Guelph that offers a library and a resource centre for the LGBTQ+ community. The organization also hosts various social events to bring community members together.

The aim of this project was to provide OOTS with an analysis of the programming, outreach, operations, and the organizational and financial structure of NFPs which provide services to the LGBTQ+ community. In order to do so, we conducted six informational interviews with NFPs across Canada to support OOTS in their decision-making processes as they undergo organizational restructuring.

This report follows the interview questions developed by OOTS and the responses provided by the NFPs. Each section provides a brief description of the organization followed by the details of their programming, organizational structure, and financial structure.

This report can provide OOTS with relevant and in-depth information on the operations of other NFPs, which can assist the organization to rebuild and reconnect with the LGBTQ+ community in Guelph-Wellington.

METHODS

This research focused on understanding the programming, outreach, operations, and the organizational and financial structure of NFPs which provide services to the LGBTQ+ community in various locales. To accomplish this task, informational interviews were conducted using interview questions and a respondent list provided by the community partner. The researchers divided the list and conducted the interviews by phone over a three-week period (March 1, 2016 – March 21, 2016). This report provides a first step in understanding the programming and administration of a variety of organizations, as well as their individual strengths and challenges.



RESULTS/FINDINGS

The 519

The 519 is a large organization providing numerous services to the LGBTQ+ community in Toronto, Ontario. It is a City of Toronto body that evolves to meet the needs of the community.

Programs and Outreach

Programs:

- The 519 provides numerous services and programs for those who identify as LGBTQ+. They manage many partnerships and accommodate several groups.
- The 519 offers training for employment through their social enterprise which is a café as well as services for parents, sex worker workshops, services for the elderly, hot meal services, and refugee programs (one of the largest programs), among other services.
- All the programs are offered at no cost to clients. The complete list of programs can be found on their website: <http://www.the519.org/programs>.

Evaluation:

- The 519 carries out constant evaluations of all its programs and services. These include general evaluations of the space, as well as well as targeted program evaluations. Focus groups, questions, evaluations, and even some games are used to gather information from community members. An example of a game is “Extreme Community Centre Make Over” where the participants are asked to build a centre they want. This is an effective exercise to see exactly what the community expects from an organization.
- Focus group evaluations are conducted in a casual manner and include asking if the services are relevant, how to expand certain programs, and question whether programs are being responsive to the community.
- The 519 also has an annual meeting in January in which participants are asked questions relating to what they would like to see implemented. These meetings are informal sessions that provide the participants with ownership over programs.



- Anonymous written evaluations are also employed; however, the 519 has learned that a written question format does not work well. Rather than using a long list of questions, their clients are provided with one question at the beginning of a meeting. Although these questions are much shorter and take longer to complete (12 questions over the year, for example), this process encourages more consistent participation.
- The 519 is responsive to the community and is always “in the game”; it adapts to the changing needs and climate of the community.

Growth and Challenges:

- The programs and services have developed over time through word-of-mouth and the creation of strong community networks.
- The trauma framework is a top priority for the organization over the next three to five years, while time and effort are the largest associated challenges. Foreseeable changes in the future include expanding the 519’s capacity to support people with trauma by becoming a trauma-informed agency, and supporting a more holistic approach. Trauma support for the staff is also a goal.
- The 519 is also attempting to attract staff from racialized communities; until six years ago the programs were for only geared toward gay, white males.
- Sports inclusion is another goal; the organization recently received a donation for a Leisure Centre. Although the Leisure Centre is an exciting expansion opportunity, it presents its own challenges. The neighbourhood where the Centre is being planned already includes many services for marginalized populations. The community has expressed some fears that the 519 may take away existing services. The organization has expressed that they will be creating new partnerships with the existing services, and will continue to communicate with the community to ensure success of the integration of the Leisure Centre into the neighbourhood.
- Funding has always proven a challenge and creates a lot of stress for frontline, precariously employed staff. Staff turnover is therefore a subsequent challenge.



Communication:

- Social media is the most effective way that the 519 connects with its members; even newcomers and refugees are responsive to outreach conducted through technology and social media.

Organizational Structure and Operations

Structure:

- Although the 519 is a City of Toronto Agency, it is governed by their own committee. The province and federal government, (because the organization is a city agency), fund the 519; however, decisions are still largely made autonomously. Government funding only serves to pay for a small amount of the organization's bills. The 519 is a part of CUPE 2998 and does not use volunteers to do paid work; a majority of the staff is paid.
- A manager who is front-line and hands-on reports to the director of the program, and the director then reports to the executive director. Although this represents a bureaucratic hierarchical structure, it is needed for the big team.
- The leadership team has a passion for social justice and the team undertakes professional development with the other employees, while constantly learning about the various services.

Partnerships:

- The 519 has many partnerships believing that this is the way to build community capacity. This has included many short-term memorandums of understanding and collaborating with numerous other organizations.

Financial Structure

Funding:

- Funding is accomplished through multiple sources. However, as a City organization it still has to fundraise and apply for grants, which vary from year to year.
- No other revenue is substantially generated other than through fundraising and Fabernac, the social enterprise. Fabernac is a cafe that provides employment training, while also supporting young people with placements in the job industry.



- The 519 does not interact with private funders although private donors offer some funds; these include foundations which require the same application processes as grants.
- They work to mitigate risks through responsive mechanisms to ensure that they are responding to the ever changing demands of the community. The organization prefers to ask rather than to forecast.

Out Saskatoon

Out Saskatoon provides services for the LGBTQ+ community that cater to those who access the centre. The programs seek to address underlying issues of the community while countering heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia:

<http://www.outsaskatoon.ca>.

Programs and Outreach

Programs:

- Out Saskatoon has a drop-in centre throughout the week that provides snacks, internet access, a library and a safe place for LGBTQ+ people. The staff strives to provide a friendly and casual space, in order to make all members feel safe and comfortable.
- Counseling is offered by appointment or drop-in on Wednesdays. Nine support groups are also established which meet in the evenings (women, men, trans, asexual, bi-pan sexual, two-spirits, youth group and coming out), as well as many events and gatherings (big events include the provincial GSA Summit, Pink Revolution Anti-bullying Campaign, etc.).
- A sexual health clinic is offered on Thursdays by a nurse who provides health education. An education program, consisting of staff that travel to schools and businesses, is used to build awareness and provide information relating to inclusion and diversity, as well as sexual education. All programs are free to the community, unless they are fundraising events.

Evaluation:

- Statistics are kept for every program; each program has a different measuring metric, allowing the organization to measure the success of each service offered.



At the end of every year a large survey is conducted via *Survey Monkey*. It usually attracts 50-100 respondents.

Growth and Challenges:

- 25 years ago, the organization began as a drop-in centre with only 2 staff. The organization now has 7 full-time staff and more resources; the highest growth rate occurred particularly over the last 2 years in particular.
- The organization offers 11,000 units of service yearly, through drop-ins, groups, education, clinics and counseling (this does not include the events outside the centre. Over time, membership has doubled in numbers.
- The organization will be focusing on developing a strategy to overcome LGBTQ+ homelessness with a group home/youth housing project in the near future. The organization recently partnered with a property management company and hopes to provide services in the home.
- Out Saskatoon also hopes to increase the number of hours of the sexual health clinic beyond one night a week, as well as adding another education coordinator to relieve the current educator.
- Out Saskatoon aims to become more involved in public policy engagement by advising on policies in the medical field as well as in universities. It is currently writing policy reports for the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission. This has become a focus as they have identified a need for more vital statistics and advocacy.
- There is a large barrier due to funding (which is grant-heavy) and there is not enough funding from the government and fundraising efforts. With more funding, sustainability would be more attainable.
- The greatest challenge the organization has faced is retaining human resources due to the low salaries that are not commensurate with the amount of work. It makes it difficult to attract and retain experts. Although the team is incredible, they learn on the job. The organization, therefore, experiences high turnover due to the lack of compensation and high learning curves. Funding is an issue although there have been increases recently.

**Communication:**

- Social media and email blasts are used to communicate with the community (an email blast is sent every 2 weeks with 600 people on the email list).

Organizational Structure and Operations**Structure:**

- There are seven paid, full-time staff: an Executive Director, a Program Manager, an Administrative Coordinator, a Drop-in Coordinator, an Outreach and Support Services worker, a Two-Spirits Coordinator, a Youth and Education Coordinator, and a Communications and an Events Manager (whose position is also shared with Saskatoon Pride). There is also a bookkeeper, but they only work part-time.
- Other people affiliated with the organization are volunteers, who represent a huge component of the organization. The volunteers run the sexual health programs, and evening groups. There are also one or two summer students for federally funded summer events.
- There is also a Board of Directors, which includes twelve people (some members have been on the Board for 10 years). They provide direction on governance, budgeting and fundraising. A professional development fund is available for the staff to use toward increasing their leadership skills.

Partnerships:

- The organization does not regularly interact with the municipal government, although they are provided with a \$15,000 grant from the city each year, as well as some funding from the provincial government. Out Saskatoon maintains a good working relationship with the Minister of Health and Minister of Social Services, and have received positive support from some provincial politicians.
- Out Saskatoon has extensive community collaborations, such as with AIDS Saskatoon whom they've partnered with for 25 years by sharing knowledge and resources. The Sexual Health Centre in Saskatoon (formerly Planned Parenthood) also shares a grant with Out Saskatoon. They work with READ Saskatoon on diversity education and Legal Services by exchanging services.



Financial Structure

Funding:

- Out Saskatoon has a budget of \$500,000 a year; most of this money goes toward staff and \$55,000 is spent on rent. The organization is provided with numerous grants from the province regarding operations and federal funding tied to public health, as well as from United Way Saskatoon and the Saskatoon Health Region.
- Other funding is related to other grants for smaller projects, and the organization fundraises approximately \$25,000 a year.
- Donations from individuals and organizations amount to approximately \$10 -15 000 per year, which includes about \$4 000 from individuals. Individual donors are provided tax-deductible receipts and, if they would like to be recognized, can have their names in newsletters.
- Organizations that provide funding are placed on a sponsorship recognition plan, and the organization is planning to place a wall in a hallway to showcase sponsors' names, as well as formalizing their contribution on the website.
- The Executive Director speaks with private funders frequently. The organization has recently submitted a grant for the youth housing project, which requires a grant of \$500,000. Out Saskatoon does not generate any revenue, although the organization is looking into a social enterprise similar to the 519 model to acquire more sustainability and control over programming, services, etc.
- The organization depends heavily on the Board for troubleshooting and managing risk. Cautious and safe budgets also contribute to managing risks so that the organization does not finish the year over budget.
- Two years ago the organization conducted a risk assessment that highlighted the need for more fundraising. The organization is also in the third year of their current strategic plan, which is revisited every year.



Rainbow Resource Centre

The Rainbow Resource Centre was established in the 1970's and has evolved into a large organization providing leadership and resources to the LGBTQ+ community in Manitoba. The organization provides services, education, outreach, political awareness, and activism: <http://www.rainbowresourcecentre.org/>.

Programs and Outreach

Programs:

- The Rainbow Resource Centre provides various services and programs to the community. Education programs are offered including workshops for the government, service providers and schools. In 2015, education programs included 268 workshops and 6,600 participants.
- Counseling programming is also offered. In 2015 there were 136 drop-in appointments and 646 scheduled appointments; currently the organization offers same week appointments as well.
- There are 10 social support groups every month (men's, women's, trans, non-binary, newcomer, parents/families/friends). Approximately 3,000 people attended the support groups last year. The organization also offers "Totally Outright" which is a leadership program offering 4 day training for queer/gay/bi men about healthy relationships, STI's, community building, holistic health community building and safer sex.
- There is also a youth drop-in program offered twice a week and one Saturday a month for those in the city, with 180 new youth joining last year. 3,000 youth were in attendance in over 112 open programs.
- The organization will be decreasing their emphasis on HIV education as they feel other organizations could be providing this information; this programming can also be combined and used within other programs. Summer camps for LGBTQ+ and allied youth are also provided every year.
- All services to the LGBTQ+ community are free, however the organization asks for donations for all programs (they suggest that this is important for new and small organizations as well). Donations are encouraged.



- The Rainbow Resource Centre charges for the education programs (approximately \$75-125 an hour) and has recently added a \$1,000 keynote fee for very large groups in order to deter them. They do not believe that large groups are productive and want to build capacity for organizations to offer these programs themselves.

Evaluation:

- Each program has its own evaluation model and plan. Output numbers of those who attend programs are required because of the funding provided by the province. Follow-up surveys are completed with participants and sometimes programs use focus groups.
- Word-of-mouth is used to gather information as well, with constant conversations in support groups. Funders have recently become more interested in the quality of programs rather than attendance numbers.
- The Centre is a member of *Centre Link* from Florida which has 80 members across North America (4 Canadian members). This network includes various LGBTQ+ organizations. *Centre Link* helped the Rainbow Resource Centre with leadership development, and survey implementation, prior to the start of their strategic plan. These actions have aided the organization to be more realistic with the services they can provide.

Growth and Challenges:

- Programs are constantly changing and accessibility has become an important aspect. Two new social support groups are being planned for the future including a program for trans children that can meet in a playgroup and a support group for partners of trans individuals.
- Goals for the future include diversifying staff, board and volunteers, re-examining programming, looking for overlap with other organizations, improving donor relations, diversifying funding, and increasing communications between programs.
- The organization is praised for being welcoming, trusting, and for creating a supportive environment for the community. Events are also used to engage with the community, with Fall Suppers, golf tournaments, fundraising gala (this raises approximately \$70,000 a year), and an open house.



Communication:

- The most effective ways of communicating with the community include social media and newsletters (mainly for the seniors).

Organizational Structure and Operations

Structure:

- The organization has eight full time staff, two part time staff, six casual staff, an eight-member board, an Executive Director, and specific volunteers for each program.
- The leadership team has strict planning and evaluation policies, even around technology and infrastructure, in-depth knowledge of NFPs, and has funds for professional development (current focus is on diversity training).
- The organization is looking at compiling a list of essential skills for the staff in order to use in-house programming skills.
- Over the past three to five years, the organization has experienced a deficit budget, which required them to close some programs. The organization is therefore currently abstaining from any further growth in order to tailor needs more specifically and not set unattainable goals until they are more responsive and effective in their existing programming.

Partnerships:

- The organization does not have a strong relationship with the local government although they hope to work on this relationship.
- The organization does however have a number of networks and coalitions, and sit on various boards as the LGBTQ+ voice. It is also working on building relationships with Two Spirit organizations.

Financial Structure

Funding:

- The province is the largest funder of the organization, as well as the United Way for the youth programming. However, there will soon be a provincial election, and



the organization is worried about a loss of funding. As such, they will be looking to diversify funding through donors and sponsorships.

- Some funding is also provided by foundations (\$30,000).
- The Centre is starting to build sponsorships with business partners (i.e. a telephone company that provides telephone and internet services).
- The community, through donation, provides approximately a third of the funding.
- Corporate funders are new relationships for the organization; they are aware that the community will be critical. If OOTS intends to undertake similar funding strategies, the Executive Director suggests spending money on donor and client tracking software from the beginning to centralize the information.
- The organization is scaling back to manage risk and so it is constantly changing. They have some funders such as the United Way that review their bylaws and also provide feedback as external sources which help with managing risks.

PFLAG Charter in Peterborough, ON

PFLAG, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, is a national organization; the Peterborough location is a chapter of the larger organization. Parents whose children had recently come out created this specific chapter in 1991. It began as a monthly, small drop-in program and it has grown to its current state.

Programs and Outreach

Programs:

- The organization runs in two directions. In the more personal direction, meetings are offered to community members, either as a group or individually in-person, on the phone or online.
- In addition, PFLAG offers educational literature, participates in various events in the community, and acts as a conduit, connecting newcomers and others in the community to various other organizations.
- Recently, PFLAG has started working with a nearby federal prison and other organizations that provide programming to LGBTQ+ prisoners, as well as



creating partnerships with local churches (some of which have become affirming churches).

- PFLAG has a strong partnership with the Peterborough Aids Resource Network (PARN), which provides a lot of the literature to the organization (it was suggested that talking to PARN would be beneficial to OOTS for literature).
- The organization began by focusing on youth, and has recently begun to focus on the elderly as a target population.

Evaluation:

- The organization does not have an evaluation structure but is working on incorporating an evaluation system in the near future; at the moment, they simply use the turnout at events and word-of-mouth to measure success. The prison programming is fairly new (last 6 months) so no evaluation systems have yet been created.
- A recent improvement has been the addition of someone who has expertise in technology and has therefore helped the organization with the website and social media.
- In the future, the organization plans to expand and continue to support prison programming as well as build more relationships with churches and around the community.
- The organization is known to be accessible, dependable, and confidential by the community, which explains the high turn-out at their events.

Growth and Challenges:

- The organization is hoping to advertise (they have been restricted due to a lack of funding). Priorities for the future include providing a safe space for the conversation of equality and working with institutions (churches and prisons).

Communication:

- Events are the main way that the organization engages with the community, although social media has also been a good source of communication as well. Their relationships with other partners have helped the organization get their name out; the relationship with the school board facilitates being invited to many workshops.



Organizational Structure and Operations

Structure:

- The organization has six committed members and volunteers that help with events. The work is divided, although the number has only recently grown to allow for some positions (elections will be help to determine this in the next few weeks). The members are not paid and it is all volunteer based.
- The leadership team includes many individuals with varying skills including, for example, a retired teacher who is creating the program for the elderly. The main challenge for the organization has been funding, which has prevented growth.

Partnerships:

- Their relationship with the city government is funding-oriented rather than focused on actual coordination.
- Close relationships with community partners have been created including with PARN, Rainbow Service, and the Rainbow Youth Coalition. These partnerships are mainly to support one another and to update each other, for mutual admiration and cooperation.

Financial Structure

Funding:

- No revenue is generated; grants and donations are the main source of funding. Community members do not incur any costs, although PFLAG asks periodically for donations, specifically at events with donation jars.
- Donations at events are usually large enough to allow the organization to break even and at times make a small profit. The dependency on grants and donations will not be changing in the future, although the organization is considering asking for more donations through advertising and potentially a membership fee.
- The organization receives funding from one private funder on an annual basis, but does not receive any other private or corporate funding. Some companies will donate supplies for events such as treats and coffee (Tim Horton's).
- The organization believes that the best way to manage risk is to keep talking to the community and adapting to their demands.



Pride Centre of Edmonton

The Pride Centre of Edmonton does a lot of programming for the local LGBTQ+ community including programming, a safe space, a library and special events (<http://www.pridecentreofedmonton.org/index.html>).

Programs and Outreach

Programs:

- The Pride Centre of Edmonton offers a variety of programs and services to the LGBTQ+ community including a drop-in centre, counselling services once a week, STI testing, sexual health education, diversity/inclusion training, healthy relationship education, GSA development, numerous support groups (AA meetings, trans support, men and women's groups, cross-dressing), a mentorship program with Boys and Girls Club and Brothers and Sisters, as well as fun events including yoga, swimming, movies and games.

Evaluation:

- Programs are generally evaluated under the requirements for grants (usually quantitative measures). The organization also talks regularly with volunteers and participants to remain in tune with the community. Focus groups are convened prior to implementing a new program, in order to align the needs of the population with the organization. The Youth Programs complete yearly surveys.

Growth and Challenges:

- The organization is currently working on a refugee and newcomer program based on demand. A grant has been submitted to the City and the organization is waiting for the funding.
- The main challenge the Pride Centre of Edmonton has experienced is a lack of capacity; they are low in resources both financial and human, in delivering programming and services. Although the whole team has high expectations for the organization, realizing them is proving difficult.
- Grant-writing is very time-consuming. The organization's space has also proven challenging, because the organization is near a dance studio. However, this challenge will soon be resolved; the Centre is moving to a difference space with double the amount of square footage. Growth is planned for the near future.



Grant approvals will allow for hiring a housing support worker and a refugee settlement services worker.

Communication:

- Communication with the community usually occurs through word-of-mouth and social media, in order to keep the community informed about upcoming events and programming.

Organizational Structure and Operations

Partnerships:

- The Centre has a good relationship with the local government. It also sits on several committees (such as the suicide prevention taskforce) with the City, provincial employees and service workers, which provide diversity and sensitivity training with many LGBTQ+ government employees.
- The Centre also interacts and cooperates with many other community organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club, the Calgary Sexual Health Centre, various school districts for GSA's, newcomer organizations, family centres and many others.
- The partnerships allow the organization to connect community members with all necessary services, and to promote networking and distributing event invites.

Financial Structure

Funding:

- The Pride Centre of Edmonton employs 4 paid full-time workers (3 are salaried and 1 is on contract) and has many volunteers. Core funding comes from the City of Edmonton through the Family Community Support Services and provincial grants.
- The organization also relies on fundraisers and private donations. Private funders usually approach the organization; the organization does not often approach them.



QMUNITY

QMUNITY is a safe space for LGBTQ+ community members in Vancouver and in British Columbia who wish to fully self-express without fear. It serves as a catalyzer for community initiatives and collective strength. It focuses on education, support, connection-making, and advocacy (<http://qmunity.ca/about/>).

Programs and Outreach

Programs:

- QMUNITY offers a number of programs across the province: youth and generation; volunteer, education and training; and information and referrals.
- The youth and generation program are demographic specific. The youth have a physical space where they can play board games, video games, etc., which volunteers help facilitate. A youth drop-in program is also in place twice a week.
- There are annual events such as Queer prom, and a youth specific Pride event, which is limited to 14-24 year olds. The youth program also includes unplanned events such as an after-hours night at the museum, or a barbecue at Sunset beach. It is the same case for the seniors' program. For example, they have a formal dinner during the holidays.
- The information and referrals program provides one-on-one advocacy. For example, QMUNITY provides counselling for lesbian couples who want to adopt.
- The education and training program facilitates workshops between 80-90 times a year to sectors such as healthcare, social services, education, and sometimes even private and for-profit businesses. QMUNITY also holds monthly donor events, and three large, fundraising events per year.
- There are generally no costs for any of the programs that are youth or senior. Fundraising is an exception, and the workshops are for-profit. The costs for a workshop range from \$200-\$2000.

Evaluation:

- QMUNITY is in the process of revising their evaluation and measurement metrics. In the past, their feedback and program evaluation were program specific. In their revision, they are aiming to clarify their larger goal and mission,



which entails broadening their evaluation criteria. For example, they are asking themselves, “How do programs meet our mission? How do we then evaluate what we are trying to accomplish?”

- Currently, every single person who accesses services is asked to complete a standard survey and a specific survey on the program they attended. Therefore, QMUNITY is quite experienced with checking in with members, remaining relevant and meeting demands and needs. It is also very diverse.
- In 2015-2016, QMUNITY worked with Simon Fraser University’s Centre for Dialogue in order to conduct a community-wide consultation to identify the perspectives of LGBTQ+ communities on QMUNITY’s future roles and its programming priorities¹.
- At the end of the consultation, QMUNITY had enough information to start the planning; developing and launching of a new community centre (funded through a \$10 million grant from the City of Vancouver). Please see the link for more information: <https://www.sfu.ca/dialogue/news-and-events/archives/2016/building-qmunity--report-on-community-consultation.html>

Growth and Challenges:

- As the organization is 36 years old, it holds a wealth of institutional knowledge.
- Five years ago, QMUNITY used to be a comprehensive organization that provided any sort of programming to the entire community. Now, they are attempting to become more intentional, and to focus their attention on specific services, by delegating out tasks to other organizations. They have also increased to 12 staff over the past 2-4 years.
- QMUNITY is also very focused on outreach. As recently as five years ago, they would do workshops and training, and also put on ad hoc events. They would have outreach at every event; however, they found that this was ineffective because there was not a lot of uptake.

¹ The consultation comprised a multi-pronged engagement strategy including feedback from community partners, scoping interviews with stakeholders, a one day community dialogue, eight small dialogue sessions with focused LGBTQ+ communities, and a survey (online as well as paper-based). The consultation was initiated to provide feedback to QMUNITY useful for defining the organization’s direction.



- QMUNITY's online presence has been greatly expanded; engagement online is really active. Since updating their website three years ago, traffic has increased.
- In 2015 they implemented a three year strategic plan. They are hoping to open the new facility within the next five years.
- There will be a continued focus on development and fundraising, which accounts for approximately one quarter of the operating budget; greater fundraising is required because they are generally more flexible than grants, which can be rigid and structured.

Communication:

- Social media and email are the best ways to stay in touch with community members. Sometimes they also conduct small focus groups. Within the staff, there is peer-peer dialogue, weekly check-in meetings, and connections with other organizations like PRISM (which support trans folk in navigating healthcare).

Organizational Structure and Operations**Structure:**

- QMUNITY has a Board of Directors whose members serve two year terms. There is 12 paid staff, three of whom are in management. There are support staff in operations, communications, and social media. There are two and a half positions in development and fundraising. Finally, there are also student counsellors and regular volunteers. Their volunteer roster comprises of 500 volunteers, while there are 100 active volunteers.
- The Board of Directors is very active and present. They have placed a priority on investing in capacity-building. The Board is a strong advocate for sending management on leadership retreats.
- Program staff are given autonomy and independence as experts in their respective positions, which engender a high degree of trust in decision-making.
- Although turnover is not a huge issue, there are challenges around retaining staff knowledge (regarding, for example, fundraising) when staff leave. The Executive Director is leaving in early 2016.



Partnerships:

- The City of Vancouver is very keen to engage with QMUNITY.
- Program staff do monthly reporting on community partnerships. QMUNITY often collaborates with other organizations. They also liase with school districts and are fairly familiar with them (they often set up meetings with superintendents, school trustees etc.).
- Other collaborations are event specific. For example, QMUNITY has co-hosted events about LGBTQ+ history. QMUNITY is also a hub for other community organizations to unite around. They have meeting space, and are also a lead on an advisory committee for other organizations. They are a leader in trying to bring folks together.

Financial Structure

Funding:

- They receive approximately half of their funding from Vancouver Coastal Health, who is the regional health authority in this area. They fund certain staff and programs, but are very hands-off.
- They receive approximately 25% of their funding from fundraising, and about 6-8% from workshops. The proportion of revenue for next year will come from similar sources; the only change would be increases from fundraising.
- An Engagement Coordinator was hired for the purpose of connecting with private donors (via thank you cards, tax receipts etc.). They are developing a strategy to build in monthly donorship, increase the capacity for recognition, and to expand their donor base.
- QMUNITY characterizes their management team and board of directors as risk-takers. As long as ideas for growth are connected to the mission plan and their strategic vision, they are open to options.



CONCLUSIONS

The organizations that were selected for an interview were forthcoming in their willingness to share practices, opportunities and barriers in maintaining and expanding their NFP. The organizations interviewed voiced similar goals surrounding diversifying staff; focusing efforts on specific activities while delegating others to partners and organizations; and targeting unique areas of importance to their community (homelessness, growing their spaces etc.). The main issue for concern for OOTS could be that these organizations have fairly extensive funding mechanisms, and paid staff. As such, they might not be accurately comparable. Looking across the six organizations, we were able to draw some key similarities and challenges:

- Similar strengths of these associations include contact through social media, community responsiveness and strong partnerships with community groups.
- The organizations also voiced similar challenges surrounding funding, capacity, staff retention, and lack of time.

This report concludes that there are a variety of ways in which OOTS can maintain and expand their services. The main limitation of this report is the dearth of input from the side of community, which we would need to capture their needs, priorities and goals. This limitation will be overcome by Phase II of the project which includes the community survey component. This is the next step we intend to take.



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