

THE DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP

Strategic Plan

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Submitted to:

Disability Partnership Working Group

Submitted by:

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1. PLANNING CONTEXT

BACKGROUND

History of the Disability Partnership

The Nova Scotia Disability Partnership (Partnership) is a group of individuals and organizations that share a common interest in developing and promoting a more inclusive province. Please see Appendix A for the list of members.

The Partnership was initiated in 2006 in response to the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) with the intent of bringing together individuals and organizations to form a strong unified voice on behalf of the cross-disability community in Nova Scotia. This work was the genesis of the concept of “nothing about us without us”.

The activity of the Partnership has depended primarily on volunteers with some administrative and coordination support provided by the Nova Scotia League for Equal Opportunity (NSLEO).

The Partnership consists of a somewhat fluid membership that includes individuals and groups who connect as issues and priorities of importance emerge. In 2012, the predecessor to the Partnership, then called the Nova Scotia Disability Strategy Partnership drafted terms of reference that defined a membership, steering committee and co-chair structure. This structure has been adhered to only loosely and at this time, there are about 35 members who meet quarterly. The membership includes first voices, NGOs and service providers, researchers, and special interest groups.

Current Situation

There is no funding to support the work of the Partnership except as specific projects are identified and funding can be secured, as with this strategic planning process. The Partnership has struggled to maintain coherence and build momentum, but it has been able to mobilize as the need has arisen to respond to and participate in various initiatives, including the recent implementation of the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.

The Partnership firmly believes it is essential that Nova Scotia accelerates the pace of progress in the protection and promotion of human rights, dignity and inclusion of all persons with disabilities. The progress that has been made is within a system that is fragmented, inconsistent, difficult to navigate and which gives preference to some disabilities while completely and systemically excluding others.

While several attempts at strategic planning have been made in the past with limited success, this planning process has been more comprehensive and deliberate. It is intended to provide the necessary support to seek sustainable funding to alleviate some of the reliance on volunteers and allow the Partnership’s work to move forward more quickly.

The process for developing this plan commenced in the fall of 2018 with the support of foundation funding to secure the services of a consultant. A call for proposals was sought from the consulting community to which Halifax Global responded and was selected as the successful proponent.

The Partnership had struck a Working Group of six members to work with the consultant to host a members' workshop which took place on February 27, 2019 with the objective of developing a strategic framework that would form the foundation of this plan. See Appendix B for the workshop agenda. Input received from the thirty-five members participating in the workshop and further work undertaken by the Working Group has resulted in this plan.

THE NOVA SCOTIA DISABILITY ENVIRONMENT

Nova Scotia's disability community is comprised of nearly 150,000 people and a vast array of voices representing many different priorities that frequently lack cohesion and a common agenda. The Government and other stakeholders often do not know who to turn to for expert input, advice or collaboration when addressing important issues.

Some of the recent landmark developments affecting the lives of persons with disabilities include the NS Accessibility Act passed in 2017, the third province in Canada to enact such legislation; the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which Canada ratified in 2010; and the Choice, Equality and Good Lives in Inclusive Communities, A Roadmap for Transforming the Nova Scotia Services to Persons with Disabilities Program submitted to Government in 2013. These are all in varying stages of progress with the Accessibility legislation being the most recent and representing a current area of focus for the Partnership and the disability community.

The Accessibility Directorate established within the Department of Justice in spring 2017 is responsible for:

- supporting the implementation and administration of the Accessibility Act and future accessibility regulations;
- addressing broader disability-related initiatives; and
- acting as the central mechanism for ensuring the concerns of persons with disabilities are heard and acted upon by government.¹

The Directorate has established an Advisory Board, and consulted widely with the disability community to assist with development of Access by Design 2030, a framework for how the province will achieve its goal for an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030 and the Government of NS Accessibility Plan 2018 – 2021 to ensure government meets its obligations under the Act.

Other priorities for the disability community include day care and young families, education, employment, health (including sexual health), supported community housing, poverty, respite services, transportation and justice.

¹ Minister's Annual Report on Accessibility 2017–2018; page 8

2. STRATEGIC OUTLOOK

COLLECTIVE IMPACT & COMMON AGENDA

Collective Impact

Collective impact is the commitment of groups from different sectors to a common agenda to solve a specific complex social problem.

Members participating in the Strategic Planning Workshop agreed that a collective impact approach would provide structure and coherence to achieving the Partnership's mission and vision.

Successful collective impact initiatives often include the following five conditions:

- **Common Agenda** – All participants share a vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem.
- **Shared Measurement** – All participating organizations agree on the ways in which success will be measured and reported.
- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities** – Stakeholders coordinate agreed upon activities through a plan of action.
- **Continuous Communication** – All players engage in frequent and structured open communication to build trust and create common motivation.
- **Backbone Support** – An independent, funded staff dedicated to the initiative provides ongoing support, coordination and administration to mobilize resources.

Members agreed on the Common Agenda and the need for a Backbone organization or a Secretariat to coordinate advocacy and other member activities and to provide administrative support to volunteer efforts. The Common Agenda is found immediately below, and the Secretariat is discussed as one of the strategic priorities. The other three elements of a successful collective impact effort will be the responsibility of the Secretariat to determine in collaboration with the membership once it is established.

Common Agenda

To drive systemic change that will enhance the quality of life for persons with disabilities and their families in Nova Scotia.

MISSION & VISION

Mission

To be a convener, an information sharing and learning hub, and an advocate and unifying voice for cross-disability issues.

Vision

Full participation in society for all persons with disabilities² through life-long individualized and person-directed supports and services.

NAME & TAGLINE

New Name for the Partnership

Disability Action Partnership (DAP)

Tagline

Nova Scotia's Force for Change

Note: Other suggested names and taglines are found in Appendix C.

VALUE PROPOSITION

A value proposition is a statement(s) which identifies clear, measurable and demonstrable benefits stakeholders get when engaging with a particular organization or group. It should convince stakeholders that there are advantages to these benefits that may not be available otherwise.³

The Partnership's value proposition is that -

- It represents the 25% of Nova Scotians who identify as having a disability.
- It speaks with a unified voice on priority areas of focus.
- It is an independent partnership that can advocate for and speak freely on behalf of its members and the disability community on agreed upon priority areas.
- It brings expertise in matters relevant to persons with disabilities.

² Nova Scotia Accessibility Act, 2017; "disability" includes a physical, mental, intellectual, learning or sensory impairment, including an episodic disability, that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders an individual's full and effective participation in society; page 4, Interpretation – Clause 3 (1) (i)

³ Adapted from Wikipedia - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Value_proposition

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Guiding Principles adopted by the Partnership include:

- A Human Rights based approach to disability in Nova Scotia which fully respects the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Nothing about us without us.
- First voice/lived experience engagement, including in government.
- Unity – a united voice and inclusive community (broader than just disability).

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & OBJECTIVES

Overview

The most significant decision made by members is that of establishing a secretariat or backbone organization. Members concluded that while volunteer efforts have been successful from time to time, there is a lack of consistency and ongoing momentum in the absence of a coordinating body. There was an understanding that establishing a backbone organization will require commitment to securing funding both for start-up purposes and on an ongoing basis for sustainability of the organization and the Partnership 'movement'.

The decision was made that the backbone organization does not 'own' member priorities and that these will continue to be driven by members and for members with the secretariat providing support and coordination as required.

There was recognition that there is a need for the Partnership to establish a brand that is recognizable as the unifying voice for members and the disability community, and that sustainability of the Partnership and the 'movement' is related not only to funding but also to engaging the membership and nurturing new leadership.

The five strategic priorities represent a mutually reinforcing model where each priority is strengthened by the others and as a whole, they provide the Partnership with a strong base to support achievement of its mission and vision. The following graphic provides an overview of this concept.

The Partnership's Strategic Priorities



1. **Secretariat / backbone organization** - Establish a platform through which members' priorities are coordinated, and harness resources for collaboration, sustainability, and community capacity building.
2. **Sustainability** - Develop and execute a sustainability plan that will allow the Partnership to flourish.
3. **Brand identity** - Create a recognizable brand that excites and engages members and stakeholders.
4. **Member engagement** - Develop a membership program that will attract new members and that is engaging and of value to the membership.
5. **Member priorities** - Influence public and private sector agendas and identify paths for collaborative, workable solutions.

Priorities and Objectives

1. SECRETARIAT / BACKBONE ORGANIZATION

Establish a platform through which members' priorities are coordinated, and harness resources for collaboration, sustainability, and community capacity building.

Objectives and Tactics:

- Determine the organization's structure
 - Options for consideration include:
 - ~ New standalone agency; or
 - ~ Collaboration / coalition of several agencies
 - The Partnership will need to consider its decision-making criteria (how will it decide which option to select)
 - Legal requirements will be dependent on the structure
- Establish the organization's governance structure
 - Develop the Board's / Steering Committee's
 - ~ Bylaws or Terms of Reference
 - ~ Committee structure
 - ~ Recruitment criteria and process
- Develop resourcing requirements including:
 - Start-up funding
 - ~ Determine the funds required to ensure start-up is not hampered by lack of funds
 - ~ Develop a start-up budget
 - ~ Identify options and secure funding
 - Staffing
 - ~ Determine staffing requirements (number of employees, number of hours)
 - ~ Determine the nature of the staffing relationship (permanent, contractual, consultant; and employment terms)
 - ~ Determine salaries and benefits
- Infrastructure
 - Develop a start-up budget
 - Determine location – virtual or physical space
 - Identify equipment needs e.g. computers, printers, phones, etc
 - Develop / establish administrative processes (payroll, supplier payments, purchasing, and other processes)

2. SUSTAINABILITY

Develop and execute a sustainability plan that will allow the Partnership to flourish.

Objectives & Tactics:

- Create and execute a fund development plan that might include:
 - Foundation funding
 - Corporate partnerships
 - Fee for service education and professional development offerings, events, conference / symposium, other revenue generating options
- Develop a succession plan that includes:
 - Development of new leaders in the disability community for advocacy, board and committee work, organizational leadership, etc
 - Include a succession plan for board progression

3. BRAND IDENTITY

Create a recognizable brand that excites and engages members and stakeholders.

Objectives and Tactics:

- Develop a brand package that includes:
 - The Partnership's 'story' to support the vision and mission
 - Drawing on the members to share their stories
 - A compelling logo and other creative digital and hard copy collateral e.g. brochures, business cards, etc
 - A website that has a sign-in member page where members can share information
 - A Facebook page and other social media engagement

4. MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Develop a membership program that will attract new members and that is engaging and of value to the membership

Objectives and Tactics:

- Develop a membership program that includes:
 - A flexible membership model that relies on members to engage when their priorities are active
 - Professional and leadership development opportunities that are easily accessible and relevant to the community
 - Communication that is regular and consistent and of value to the members

- Events that bring the community together socially, professionally and for planning and other purposes
- Committees or teams that are structured to engage and encourage member involvement
- Other member benefits that might include access to health insurance, affinity programs and other advantages that members may find attractive

5. MEMBER PRIORITIES

Influence public and private sector agendas and identify paths for collaborative, workable solutions.

Objectives and Tactics:

- Determine how best to support and advance members' priorities by -
 - Identifying and achieving agreement on an approach to prioritize members' issues
 - Conducting environmental scans from time to time, to understand government's agenda, private sector initiatives, educational priorities, etc
 - Developing relationships with stakeholders to build trust and seek opportunities for development of collaborative solutions.

3. THE PATH FORWARD

NEXT STEPS

Members agreed to the following two key initiatives to move the plan forward:

1. Establish a Steering Committee to develop an implementation plan and begin the work of designing the backbone organization. Members who volunteered to serve on the committee include:
 - Alice Evans, Club Inclusion
 - Carrie Ernst, ILNS
 - Donna Williamson, March of Dimes
 - Elliott Richman
 - Terry Lynn Almeda, Accessibility Directorate
2. Establish a Funding Committee to secure start-up funding and develop a plan for long term sustainable funding. Members include:
 - Cynthia Carroll, Autism Nova Scotia
 - Sherry Costa, NSLEO

APPENDIX A - DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP MEMBERS

1. Autism Nova Scotia
2. Benjamin Davis
3. Brain Injury Nova Scotia
4. Canadian Council of the Blind
5. Capital Health
6. Charlie MacDonald
7. CNIB
8. Community Housing Action Group
9. Elliott Richman
10. Emily Duffett
11. Faye Joudrey
12. Frank O' Sullivan
13. Heather Mackenzie
14. Huntington's Society of Nova Scotia
15. ILNS
16. ISANS
17. Janice Ainsworth
18. Judy Turner
19. Lloyd Brown
20. March of Dimes
21. Marty Wexler
22. Melissa Myers
23. Metro Community Housing
24. MS Society
25. Nancy Beaton
26. Nova Scotia Down Syndrome Society
27. NSACL
28. NSLEO
29. Pamela Magee
30. Pat Gates
31. People First Nova Scotia
32. Ryan Delehanty
33. Sara Abdo
34. Steven Estey
35. Terry Wilson
36. Wenche Gausdal

Note: this list may not be complete.

APPENDIX B - WORKSHOP AGENDA

#	Agenda Item	Presenter / Facilitator	Time Allocation
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome & Opening • Workshop Objectives 	Cynthia Carroll	9:30 – 9:35
2.	Introductions / Warm-up	Chris Hornberger	9:35 – 9:50
3.	Planning Context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History • Current status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sherry Costa • Cynthia Carroll 	9:50 – 10:10
4.	Collective Impact Model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation • Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Benefits of the model – How it works – Other options • Establishing a Common Agenda 	Cynthia Carroll Chris Hornberger	10:10 – 11:10
5.	Workshop Discussion Framework	Chris Hornberger	11:10 – 11:20
6.	Mission, Vision & Guiding Principles / Values	Chris Hornberger	11:20 – 12:00
7.	Lunch		12:00 – 12:30
8.	Strategic Priorities (Proposed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Partnership Operations – Enablers & Sustainability – Governance – Membership 	Chris Hornberger / All	12:30 – 1:15
9.	Objectives Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 groups • Report back 	All	1:15 – 2:15
10.	Action Plan - Discussion	Chris Hornberger / All	2:15 – 2:45
11.	Next Steps	Chris Hornberger	2:45 – 2:55
12.	Closing & Adjournment	Sherry Costa	2:55 – 3:00

APPENDIX C – OTHER SUGGESTED NAMES & TAGLINES

Suggested Names

Disability Nova Scotia
Disability Action Group
Disabilities Unite(d) Nova Scotia
Disability Action Collaborative / Collective
Unity Nova Scotia
Abilities Partnership
Disabilities Partnership of Nova Scotia
Nova Scotia Disability Champions
(dis)Abilities Partnership

Suggested Taglines

Nova Scotia without Barriers
Disability without Barriers
United Force
United We Fly / Stand
Breaking Barriers Today
Many Voices – One Vision
Force 4 Good
Force 4 Change
Force One
Many Abilities, One Voice