



ACOMI Organizational Clarity & Strategic Planning Report

Presented by:

Patrick Friesen

Consultant

Homefield People & Strategy

patrick.friesen@myhomefield.ca

Introduction

On November 14th and 19th the Board of Directors of African Communities of Manitoba Inc. (ACOMI) along with staff and representatives from partnering organizations gathered to consider and plan for the future of the organization.

On day one, they engaged in an Organizational Clarity session. This session was designed to discuss and align clarity on these questions:

- Why do we exist?
- How do we behave?
- What do we do?
- How will we succeed?

On day two, those same individuals engaged in crafting the strategic plan for the next five years of the organization.

This session starts at a very high-level view of the organization and ends with crafting an action plan to ensure success. Together, we built:

- Goals
- Priorities
- Measures
- Action Steps

What follows in this report is a summary of our conversations.

Contents

- 3 Organization Clarity – Why Now?
- 4 Organization Clarity – Statements
- 5 Organization Clarity – Background Information
- 6 Strategic Planning – Introduction
- 7 Strategic Planning – SWOT
- 8 Strategic Planning – Strengths and Weaknesses
- 9 Strategic Planning – Opportunities and Threats
- 10 Strategic Planning – The Plan
- 11 Next Steps



Organizational Clarity

Why are we doing this now?

Anytime an organization engages in a process like this, there are many different perspectives and opinions. Reviewing “Why Now” is critically important to shifting the organizational mindset so these statements remain integral. The following stood out to the group:

- Organization has grown in scope and capacity in the past 5 years.
- The pandemic disrupted previous strategic plan changed priorities.
- Need a plan to help bring unity with all the partners that collaborate with ACOMI.
- Know where we need to invest resources for the future.
- There is funding available to be able to invest in improving the organization.

Organizational Clarity Statements

Why do we exist?

This is our Core Purpose

ACOMI exists as a unifying agent within the African communities of Manitoba to promote holistic prosperity within the communities and serve as an advocate for the needs of the community.

How will we behave?

These are our Core Values

ACOMI will demonstrate integrity in all its activity, respect in all its relationships, and offer a sense of belonging to all within the African communities of Manitoba.

How will we Succeed?

Our Strategic Anchors

1. We will seek to be culturally informed in all that we undertake.
2. Our collaboration with other organizations will be the strength that supports our work.
3. We will use our collective strength to advocate for those who need representation.
4. Through education, capacity building, and training programs our communities will be strengthened to achieve their own goals.

What do we do?

This is our Organizational Definition

Provide programs that assist the African communities of Manitoba to work together and advocate for the success of our communities.

Core Value Background Information

During the session, participants are asked to indicate all the values they see within the organization. Then, together, we put them into their relevant categories. What ends up in the core values section is the foundation for How We Behave. This is included for informational purposes only.

Core Values

These are the values that we will not knowingly violate. We hire around these. We coach around these.

Belonging – We seek to include all people keeping our programs community-oriented.

Integrity – We are an organization accountable internally and more broadly to the African communities. We seek to operate with transparency and shared responsibility.

Respect – We give and receive mutual respect for the uniqueness of cultural differences and operate in way that recognizes the value of each person.

Accidental Values

Values that are evident, but came about accidentally

Supportive, Impact

Aspirational Values

Values you wished you had throughout the team

Self-sustaining

Permission-to-Play Values

Values that don't differentiate. These are the minimum standard to work here.

Honest, Polite, Culturally-sensitive

What is Strategic Planning?

In the process of Strategic Planning, there are many critical elements that need to be discussed. This process allow for the leadership group to come together to share their good ideas so that the great ones rise to the top. This session covers:

- Why you should do strategic planning and its value.
- How it benefits the organization, staff, and the people you serve
- How to remain accountable to this process
- And how to communicate it and ensure it sticks.

For this conversation, we focus on four main areas:

- Goals – What we want to be true of the organization in three to five years.
- Priorities – The things we will focus on inside each of those goals in order to see the goals become reality.
- Measures – an objective statement to allow us to know when we have been successful.
- Action Steps – the step-by-step process that we will achieve the priorities (and goals) we set out to achieve.



Strengths

These are things to build on. We directly impact these things. They are what we do well and provide a competitive edge.

Culture

- Diverse African representation unique within the province of Manitoba.
- The organization has a long history with 25 years of existence.

Team

- Committed team of staff and board members.

Network

- Strong network of member organizations
- Different levels of government represented within the organization.

Programs

- Provides a variety of quality programs like:
 - Film festival
 - Clothing and Food security programs
 - Promote share culture

Weaknesses

These are things to shore up. We have a direct impact on these things and need to improve. Here we often find our operational or people goals.

Funding

- Need for greater grant funding for member organizations
- Limited paid staff

Unity within African Community

- Women and youth under-represented within some programming.
- Different levels of engagement between French speaking and English speaking communities.

Brand/Image

- Need for increased awareness of organization with newcomers.
- Need for a marketing strategy including social media presence

Organizational Structure

- Leverage increased leadership capacity with board
- Need greater diversity of representation in leadership

Opportunities

These are external to the organization. While we can influence these things, we can not directly impact. Here we often find our growth goals.

- Youth population is increasing among newcomer groups.
- Opportunity to leverage advancements in virtual platforms and software
- Growing African population in Manitoba
- Increasing number of professionals in the community.
- Federal Government commitment to raise the number of immigrants to Canada.

Threats

These are factors that are external to the organization. We may have influence, but we cannot directly control.

- Greater competition for funding and grants with other community organizations.
- Increased complexity as greater diversity of ethnicities and needs can challenge the vision of unity within the African communities.
- Inflation creating a greater cost within essential categories like groceries, housing, etc.
- Increasing polarity within the wider culture dividing groups over issues.

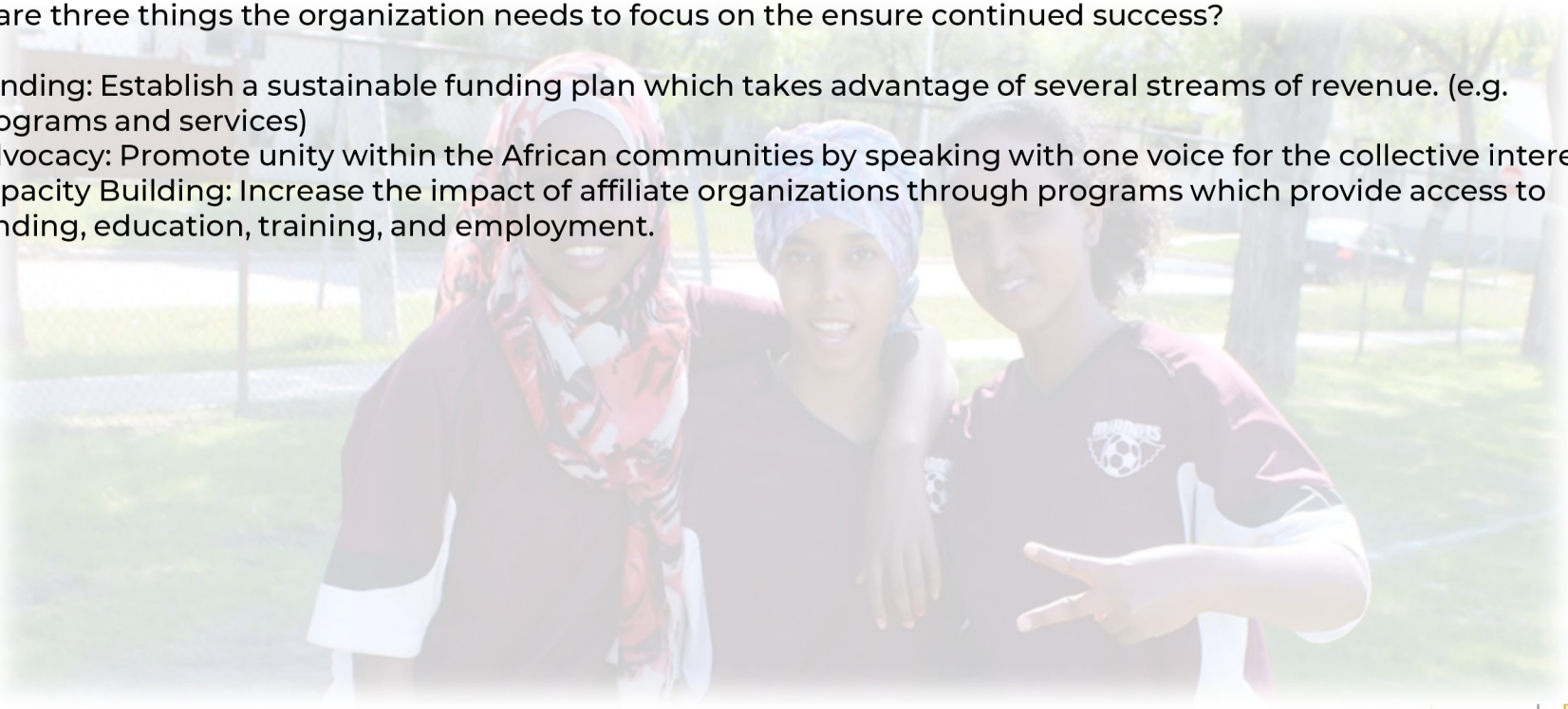
SWOT Analysis

The organizational strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats are determined by electronic survey and industry research. Ultimately, this is a conversation and process to determine where the organization is today so we can discuss where we want to go in the future.

During the session, these are discussed and edited, as needed.

What are three things the organization needs to focus on to ensure continued success?

1. **Funding:** Establish a sustainable funding plan which takes advantage of several streams of revenue. (e.g. programs and services)
2. **Advocacy:** Promote unity within the African communities by speaking with one voice for the collective interest.
3. **Capacity Building:** Increase the impact of affiliate organizations through programs which provide access to funding, education, training, and employment.



The Strategic Plan

Introduction

This following is a visual representation of the plan that was created. The key component to seeing this come to life is to have a proper process that ensures elements like visibility, tracking, and accountability.



Next Steps

Summary

A conversation like this is foundational and it sets the stage for some very important work. This is a reminder, however, that the work is not done yet. In fact, it is just beginning. Here are some of the ways you can allow this work to become foundational within the organization

Organizational Clarity

- Review the organizational statements with your team. Use them often and repeat them until people start imitating you.
- Incorporate your organization clarity statements into things like job postings, job descriptions, websites, and performance reviews.
- Invest in merchandise, signage or advertising to ensure they remain visible.
- Celebrate often when people live them out and coach gently when they don't.

Strategic Planning

- Communicate the plan to the entire team and include them in this process.
- Create a regular meeting (weekly or monthly) to review, update, and adjust your strategic plans.
- Visit and update your strategic planning document often (no less frequently than every week)
- Invite the staff input and have them work on some of the elements where talents and gifts allow.
- When you hit a milestone, celebrate it!



Thank You!

Research and Report Compiled By:

Patrick D. Friesen

Consultant

Homefield People & Strategy

Report Dated: January 3, 2024