PUTTING EQUITY INTO ACTION

Building capacity across Vancouver non-profits to operationalize equity, diversity, and inclusion

REPORT BY:

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Healthy City Scholar 2021

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Land acknowledgement

I acknowledge my privilege as a white setter on the unceded ancestral lands of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. Given that this project focused on equity, we must recognize the many ways in which Indigenous peoples have been systemically excluded and marginalized both historically and into the present day. While efforts to bring about equity can support Indigenous communities, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion must not replace or supersede acts of reconciliation. It is essential, then, that the work to embed equity values in Vancouver's non-profit sector meaningfully engages with, and learns from, the Indigenous peoples whose land we call home. As the City's equity work with non-profits moves forward, it welcomes input, critique, and advice for how it can do this work in right relationship with local Nations and Vancouver's urban Indigenous communities.

Acknowledgements

About the author

Emily Van Halem is completing her Master of Arts in Education Studies at the University of British Columbia with a specialization in adult learning and education. Her research explores how Canadian charities are working to adopt anti-oppressive organizational culture. She holds a BA in Environmental Studies from the University of Toronto. Previously, she worked in non-profit food security organizations in training and knowledge exchange roles.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the pursuit of a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable city for all, equity must be at the centre. The City defines equity as both an outcome and a process: as an outcome it means one's identity would have no bearing on their life experience or access to opportunities. As a process, an equity orientation ensures that policy and practice do not lead to uneven outcomes across communities. As the City of Vancouver works towards realizing its Healthy City Strategy, it is seeking ways to meaningfully embed values such as equity, diversity, and inclusion into all facets of this work. The past 18 months have been marked by a global COVID-19 pandemic, escalations in anti-Asian racism, mass mobilizations towards racial justice, and the ongoing discovery of unmarked children's graves at former Indian residential schools. Together, these events have led communities across Canada to call for deep and meaningful action against systemic injustice and inequity. Amidst all this, equity is emerging as a central priority for the City of Vancouver. In 2021, City Council adopted an Equity Framework that will guide the City's internal equity work, fostering a consistent and coordinated approach to equity across the institution. In response, the City's many divisions are stepping up their own commitments to equity in relevant ways.

The Social Policy & Projects Division is a grantor and data hub for Vancouver's community-based non-profits. As such, it is currently exploring how equity can be further embedded in its granting program and how its own research and data initiatives can play a role in helping organizations deepen their impact. Acknowledging that both the City and its non-profit grantees are on a learning journey when it comes to equity work, there is exciting potential right now to explore knowledge sharing and capacity-building synergies between Social Policy & Projects and Vancouver's community-based non-profits.

This report is the culmination of a research project undertaken between May-August 2021 by UBC Healthy City Scholar, Emily Van Halem. The research goals were to:

1. **Support organizational learning** by capturing the many ways community-based non-profits are promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion through policy and practice

2. **Build capacity** in the **non-profit sector** and in **the Social Policy grants team** around integrating an equity approach by sharing knowledge between and amongst the City and its non-profit grantees

3. **Identify opportunities** for Social Policy to leverage its role as a funder to build capacity for non-profits to act on equity issues

The three key sources of data used for this research were: 1) 49 organizational policies relating to equity submitted through Social Policy's 2021 grant intake round; 2) answers provided by these same 49 grant applicants that spoke to how organizations were applying an equity lens internally at their organization; and 3) notes taken during group break-out discussions in a virtual knowledge sharing event held with ~30 Vancouver social service agencies in June 2021.

With this data, the Scholar undertook qualitative analysis to surface both broad and specific insights about the state of local non-profit engagement in equity work. These insights will help staff in Social Policy better understand how organizations are conceptualizing equity work and equity-related policy, and how it can enhance its support for non-profits as they continue this important work. While this report surfaces a range of actions organizations are taking on equity, it is not intended as a toolkit or guide for non-profits, nor does it instruct Social Policy on how to embed an equity lens into its granting, although these may be appropriate next steps.

Appendix B lists links to tools/resources on non-profit equity policies.

Appendix C features **s**elected equity-focused granting resources.

Key findings

The research centred around understanding how Vancouver non-profits conceive of and deploy "equity policy." An equity policy is a document that identifies how an organization upholds values of equity in its internal and external-facing work. The review of policies submitted revealed that many organizations do not have a formalized central policy, but have introduced various equity-related values into existing policies (e.g. hiring policy) and/or have made public statements supporting equity in its various forms. This is understandable since a formalized policy is usually

Appendix A offers a full list of ways non-profits are taking action on equity across their organizations, as well as the challenges they are encountering in this process.

the product of a lot of discussion, time, and collaboration at the senior leadership and board level. An equity policy in particular tends to require a certain level of common understanding about equity issues as well, which can add additional steps to the process. Yet the lack of a formally articulated policy did not mean organizations weren't active on equity issues; in fact, so much activity was underway that "actions on equity" were expanded into a dedicated section of this report and comprise the 20-page Appendix A.

Additionally, it's important to note that while an equity policy can help enshrine values of equity, justice, and inclusion into organizational practice, *policy does not create culture* (COCo, 2019). For smaller organizations especially, a bottom-up approach could be a more accessible and effective way to foster a culture of equity across a team, with the important note that an equity lens should still be applied to existing policies such as hiring practices, events, and program evaluation (COCo, 2019). That said, there is still a place for an overarching

equity policy to bring together the many threads of this work, to bring staff and leadership through a learning journey together, and to ensure an organization is held accountable to its commitments.

5 elements of policy

Based on the review of organizational equity policies submitted, the research surfaced five key elements that tended to comprise policy which are further discussed in the findings section. Rarely were all five elements present in one policy, but these elements showed up consistently enough to verify that their presence would be useful in a fulsome policy:

1	• KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS
2	• RATIONALE FOR EQUITY WORK
3	• SELF-ASSESSMENT/ AUDIT
4	• COMMITTMENTS TO ACTION
5	• IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

11 action areas

Additionally, organizational equity work was taking place across 11 action areas. Drawing on the "onion model" of organizational development,[1] the 11 action areas were categorized under three layers of organizational work – core, internal, and external.

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[1] See: CommunityWise Resource Centre (2017)

CORE	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
Organizational Foundations	Hiring & Recruitment	Programs & Services
Strategy & Theory of Change	Human Resources	Partnerships
Governance	Learning	Communications & Advocacy
Finances	Accessibility	
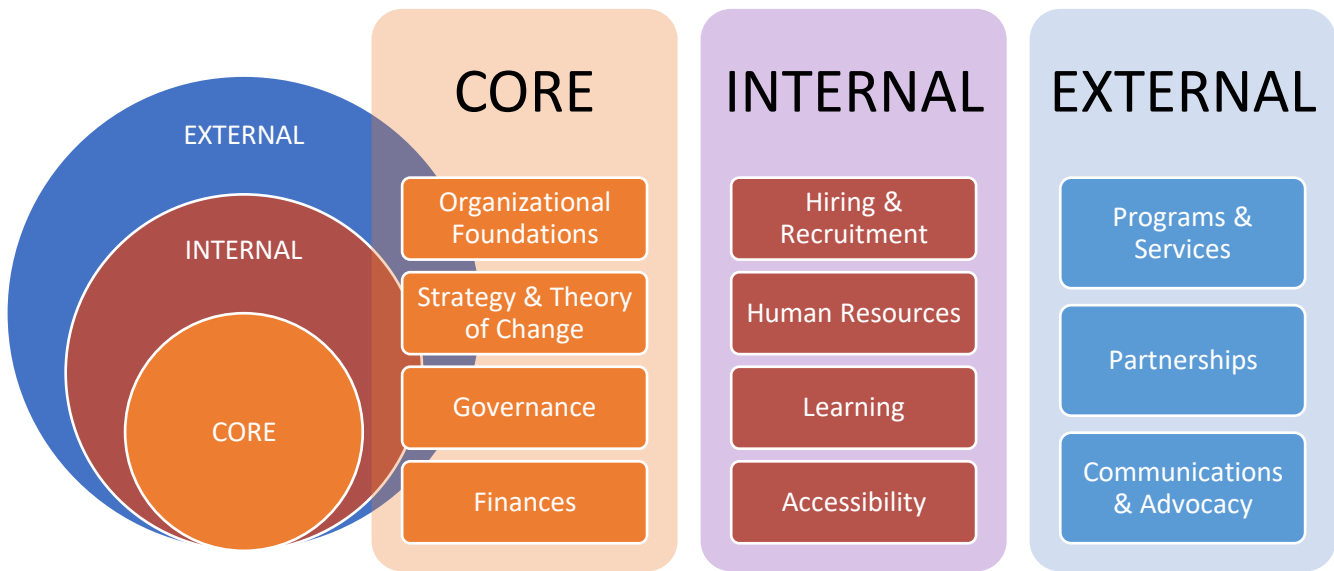
To both celebrate the wide range of work being undertaken and to offer inspiration and guidance for organizations to learn from one another, a number of common interventions are highlighted in the findings section, with a full summary of findings included in Appendix A.

Challenges in operationalizing equity

In their efforts to move equity into action, Vancouver's non-profits face a number of overarching challenges. Perhaps most significant, funding is a perennial barrier. So many non-profits are dependent on grants, and these tend to be short-term (1-3 year) and tied to program delivery instead of supporting core operations. This means that the organizational change efforts equity requires are chronically under-resourced and tend to happen "off the side of one's desk" instead of getting the dedicated time and attention they need. Many non-profits also live out a paradoxical reality of serving the unabating needs of their target communities with too few staff and limited budgets. This results in a prevailing culture of over-work and burnout, and ultimately leaves little room to undertake important long-term organizational change. It is against this backdrop that the organizations participating in this research identified the following specific challenges under each of the three above areas – core, internal, and external:

Core challenges:

- Uncertainty as to where to focus equity work, and how to identify priorities

- Boards struggle to champion equity work due to their own gaps in knowledge and perspective which often inhibited organizational progress

- A lack of funding and staff time available for undertaking organizational change work

- Insufficient data/statistics about less visible (smaller and less researched) equity-seeking groups makes it difficult to mobilize resources towards these communities

- Funding is rarely available for core operations, professional development, or organizational change initiatives; it is more often short-term and program-driven

Internal challenges:

- Lack of diversity at senior management and board level deters those from equity-seeking groups from applying to jobs or progressing into leadership roles

- Participants speak many languages and staff/volunteer language skills don't cover this breadth

- Neurodiverse and physically disabled staff/job candidates continue to be excluded

- Training for staff, leadership, and boards is costly and financially inaccessible for many agencies

- Meaningfully pursuing equity-related training and learning takes time and focus yet is consistently happening off the side of people's desks

External challenges:

- Changing the organization's programming and practices to increase equity can mean an interruption of programs/services

- Struggle to make programs accessible to diverse clientele (tech, language, and physical space barriers)

- Fears of being denied or losing charitable status if doing advocacy work

- Challenge to authentically raise organization's voice on equity issues without being performative while also while fearing negative repercussions from funders

Recommendations

One of Social Policy & Project's primary goals is to enhance the resilience, strength, and impact of the non-profit sector. To do so, the department has identified three key roles it can play (see City of Vancouver Social Policy & Projects, 2019):

Convener

Call people together; facilitate partnerships

Broker

Leverage knowledge, power, funding for community benefit

Steward

Identify high level issues + drive change through shared leadership and advocacy

Based on the challenges and needs identified through this research, this report concludes with **9 recommendations** for how Social Policy's grants and data teams can step further into these roles to support non-profits in their equity journeys:

Convener:

1. Convene a learning network for community-based non-profits that guides organizations through some high priority topics as identified in the research

2. Help resource a centralized system that links multi-lingual volunteers with organizations serving multicultural communities

Broker:

3. Introduce an equity lens into Social Policy's grants program/strategy

4. Undertake research that will help non-profits meet their equity goals

5. Create accessible knowledge translation resources by leveraging access to existing research

6. Facilitate access to secure and functional space so organizations can focus on delivery of services to equity-seeking groups

Steward:

7. Advocate for decent work for all across the non-profit sector

8. Streamline granting and capacity-building efforts on equity across Vancouver funders beyond the City

9. Streamline granting and capacity-building efforts happening across City of Vancouver departments

Next steps

While this report lays out how non-profit equity work is being undertaken across core, internal, and external levels, so too must the City's own engagement with equity. Ultimately, the City is on a learning journey alongside community organizations and staff on both sides of this table can learn a lot from one another. Embarking on this work with an openness to learn and be challenged will be central, as there will inevitably be missteps along the way.

Social Policy & Projects is at a pivotal moment as it seeks to further embed equity into its internal and external work. Examining how it resources and supports the non-profit sector is a critical piece of this puzzle if it is committed to putting equity into action.

INTRODUCTION

As a municipal government, as a landowner, as a funder, and as a decision-maker, the City of Vancouver plays an important role in setting direction and allocating resources towards key social change goals. While higher levels of government play a critical role here, the City is rightfully being called on to leverage its available resources and power to take action in service of a healthier, more inclusive city for all – especially for those who have been traditionally excluded or marginalized.

Canadian society has its roots in a colonial and supremacist culture that privileges certain groups – namely those who are white, male, cis-gendered, heterosexual, able-bodied, and wealthy – over those whose identities and lived experiences land outside of these privileged positionalities. Intersecting with this is Canada's colonial history that dispossessed Indigenous Peoples of their land and culture – a process that, in spite of reconciliation efforts, is still ongoing to this day. As a municipal government situated on the unceded lands of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətaɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples, the City of Vancouver's role in reconciliation and upholding the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) must underpin and live alongside all its efforts to foster greater equity and inclusion.

Furthermore, the past 18 months have shone a light on disparities that have long plagued our society along class, gender, and racial lines. The COVID-19 pandemic took a disproportionate toll on low-income and racialized communities (Subedi, Greenberg & Turcotte, 2020); George Floyd's murder reignited #BlackLivesMatter and sparked a global movement for racial justice; and Indigenous communities across Canada continue to discover what will surely be thousands of unmarked children's graves at former residential schools. All of this has intensified the need to take deep and meaningful action against systemic injustices.

The City of Vancouver has long been working to address inequities experienced by Vancouver's diverse communities. This work has been guided by numerous strategies and action plans that have shepherded progress forward. Among them are the Healthy City Strategy (2014), the Framework for the City of Reconciliation (2014), the Poverty Reduction Plan (2017), the Accessibility Strategy (2018), and the Women's Equity Strategy (2018). City Council has now adopted an institution-wide Equity Framework (2021) which, under the newly formed Equity Office, will ensure there is a common understanding and united approach to equity across all City departments.

Project Purpose

As part of its commitment to further embed equity values into its work and community relationships, this research was commissioned by the Social Policy and Projects Division within the Arts, Culture, and Community Services Department (ACCS). Among many other functions, a core part of Social Policy's mandate is to

support non-profits in Vancouver with grants and other capacity-building resources to enhance the resilience, strength, and impact of the sector.

This research aims to foster multi-directional learning between and within Social Policy & Projects and the non-profits it supports. Both City staff and Vancouver's non-profit sector are on a learning journey when it comes to equity work. The potential to collaborate and share learning in this process is significant, and something this research aims to illuminate.

The two Social Policy teams leading this research are the grants team and the research and data team. When it comes to deepening their commitments to equity, they each hold different but complementary learning goals:

The grants team is exploring how to further embed equity values into its granting process, both in terms of *what* it funds but also *how* it funds. The "how" includes the granting process as well as the scope of its role as funder and capacity-builder for the sector.

The data team is interested in conducting research that is relevant to community-based non-profits and analyzing existing data in ways that will help us all better understand the needs of equity-seeking groups. Having relevant research and data means non-profits are more equipped to evolve their policy and practice accordingly.

In addition, Vancouver's **non-profits** are interested in learning how fellow organizations are operationalizing equity and applying the lessons learned back into their own work. They are also interested in the role funders like the City of Vancouver can play in supporting them in their equity journeys.

As an initial step towards these learning objectives, this research project is guided by three key goals:

1. **Support organizational learning** by capturing the many ways community-based non-profits are promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion through policy and practice

2. **Build capacity** in the **non-profit sector** and in **the Social Policy grants team** around integrating an equity approach by sharing knowledge between and amongst the City and its non-profit grantees

3. **Identify opportunities** for Social Policy to leverage its role as a funder to build capacity for non-profits to act on equity issues

While this research aims to shed light on how Vancouver non-profits are currently operationalizing equity and will help organizations gauge where the sector is at, this document is not intended to be a guide or a toolkit for community organizations. We made this decision intentionally for two reasons: First, there are a wide range of resources freely available online that can support non-profits in their organizational equity work (Appendix B features a small slice of what is available); second, Social Policy staff consulted on this project felt that the City still very much needs to take a

learning orientation and is not in a position to advise non-profits on "best practices." A number of recommendations emerging from this research point to ways Social Policy & Projects can support multi-directional learning with non-profits and developing practical tools and templates could be part of this. Ultimately, this research aims to highlight to relevant City staff/units what is needed to better support non-profit organizations in reaching their equity goals.

What is equity?

The City of Vancouver defines equity as both an outcome and a process. As articulated in the Equity Framework (City of Vancouver Equity Office, 2021)…
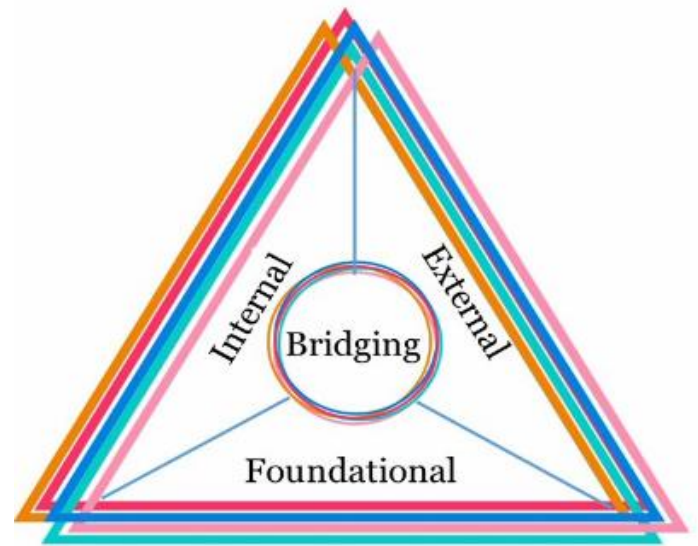
Figure 1 The City's priority areas for equity work

Equity as an outcome is the condition that would be achieved if one's identity no longer predicted how one fares.

This acknowledges that someone's identity (e.g. race, Indigeneity, gender, sexual orientation and their various overlaps) significantly determine someone's life experience and access to opportunities.

Equity as a process is the replacement of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes or fail to eliminate them.

In pursuit of equity as an outcome, the City is exploring how its internal and external work can embody equity as a process. For Social Policy & Projects, this includes how the Division works with non-profits and how its grants programs may facilitate equity as both an outcome and a process.

As articulated in the Equity Framework, the City's equity commitments are six-fold:

1. **A commitment to doing equity work long-term**
2. **A commitment to creating spaces for accountable learning**
3. **A commitment to reflecting equity in City leadership**
4. **A commitment to fostering strong relationships**
5. **A commitment to adequately resourcing equity work**
6. **A commitment to shared accountability**

In order to follow-through on these commitments, the Equity Framework is drawing on the Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmark (GDEIB) tool that delineates the work to be done into four key categories of work:

1. **Foundational: vision, leadership, governance**
2. **Internal: human resource functions**
3. **Bridging: learning, communications, finance**
4. **External: community-facing functions**

The GDEIB tool is applicable to all kinds of organizations, so while the City will be applying it to its own institutional context, non-profits may also find it a relevant tool they can adapt to their needs.

The role of an equity policy

This research took the orientation that **equity work is most impactful when enshrined in organizational policy**. An equity policy is a document that identifies how an organization upholds values of equity in its internal and external-facing work. It articulates the organization's equity commitments and a process for remaining accountable to them. As a unique document, it demonstrates how a value for equity (and/or related terms like justice, diversity, inclusion, or anti-oppression) is woven throughout all facets of an organization's work.

Once a policy has been developed, many organizations will find it helpful to also embed their equity commitments into other relevant documents/policies to ensure that equity isn't siloed but rather integrated into all facets of work. Here is an example of how specific organizational policies/procedure documents could embed the goals of a broader equity plan:

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                        Equity Policy
    ┌──────────────┬──────────────┬──────────────┐
 Staff         Anti-harassment  Recruitment &   Departmental
 handbook         policy          hiring         work plans
                                 procedures
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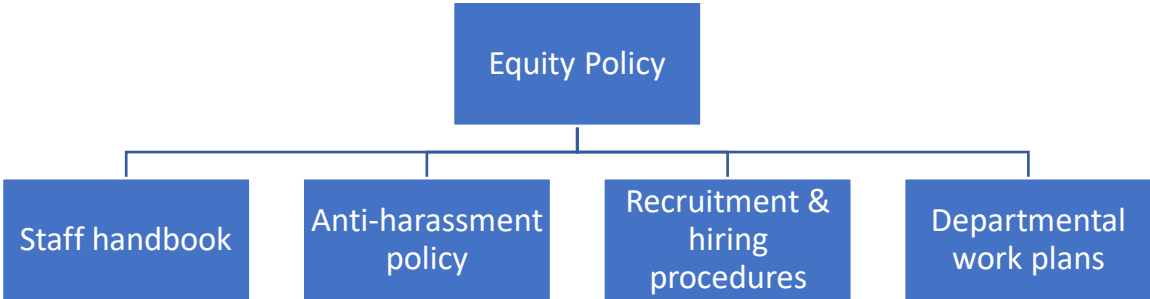
It's important to note that in this research *we considered policy not just to be a final formal document, but also all the steps along the way required to get there*. This reflects a much longer and often iterative process that is just as important as the product. For example, a key component to an equity policy is articulating a rationale. However various key actors like senior management and the board will need to arrive

at a common understanding of what equity means and why they think it is worth the organization's focused attention. Some learning and discussion will therefore be needed to help the group arrive at an articulated rationale. Other key elements of equity policy are the commitments the organization makes. But in order to identify priority actions that are relevant to the needs of the staff or communities served, some research may be needed via an organizational equity audit or survey. All of these steps are in service of the equity policy and are therefore considered here as part of the policy development process. The findings articulated later in this report highlight the wide range of interventions organizations are undertaking that fall under the umbrella of equity policy, whether or not these organizations had developed a formal policy or explicitly call what they are doing 'equity.'

Limits to developing equity policy in community-based non-profits

There are some important caveats when considering equity policy in the non-profit context. Here are two that emerged throughout the research process:

Equity policy does not create equity culture: According to Montreal-based COCo (the Centre for Community Organizations) (2019), such policies only work "if they are well understood by the people using them, make sense for the specific organizational context, and reflect the values and intent of the organization." This is why they encourage small and medium-sized organizations to start with a bottom-up and relationship-centred approach to culture change. Yet if an organization already has a core value like equity in place, embedding it in policy increases the likelihood that it remains a long-term organizational commitment. It also reduces the chances of equity work getting sidelined due to changes in staffing, board, senior leadership, or funding priorities. For a lot of organizations, enshrining something into policy is a significant undertaking that entails organizational change which may or may not be difficult depending on the organization's existing culture and values.

Developing policy is time and resource-intensive: Policy development of any kind tends to be a process in which patience and perseverance are assets. While larger organizations might have more resources (including operations-type staff) to dedicate to such a process, it is often slow and involves a lot of discussion, education, and potentially bureaucracy. Conversely, what smaller organizations lack in resources they gain in agility, meaning there are fewer people to be consulted and policy can be drafted and enacted more quickly – especially if a culture of equity and justice is already in place. That said, the high-level work of organizational change and policy development is chronically under-resourced in small community-based non-profits which means equity efforts are usually piecemeal and not prioritized given other pressing demands.

RESEARCH
METHODS

Data for this research was procured from three key sources: 1) equity policies non-profits submitted via Social Policy's 2021 grant application round, 2) answers non-profits provided to a question on equity in this same grant application, and 3) findings gleaned from a virtual knowledge exchange workshop held in June 2021 with Vancouver non-profits. These three methods are further detailed below.

Method 1: Analysis of non-profit equity policies

For the past two years, Social Policy & Projects has asked grant applicants to attach their organization's equity policy if they had one. 49 documents (policies, equity statements, principles) were submitted under the 2021 grant round and these were reviewed and analyzed to identify a) elements that comprised policy and b) the range of commitments or actions non-profits are taking to operationalize equity. Due to the short timeframe of this project, only the more recent of the two years' policy submissions were used for this research.

Data analysis was conducted using NVIVO qualitative data analysis software. After an initial review of the policies, a preliminary code book was developed. Two types of codes were used. A preliminary set of codes was developed for components of policy based on a brief review of literature. What actually commonly emerged in the policy review became the "5 key elements of policy" described in the findings. The second set of preliminary codes was based on layers of organizational development created by INTRAC[2] and later adapted by
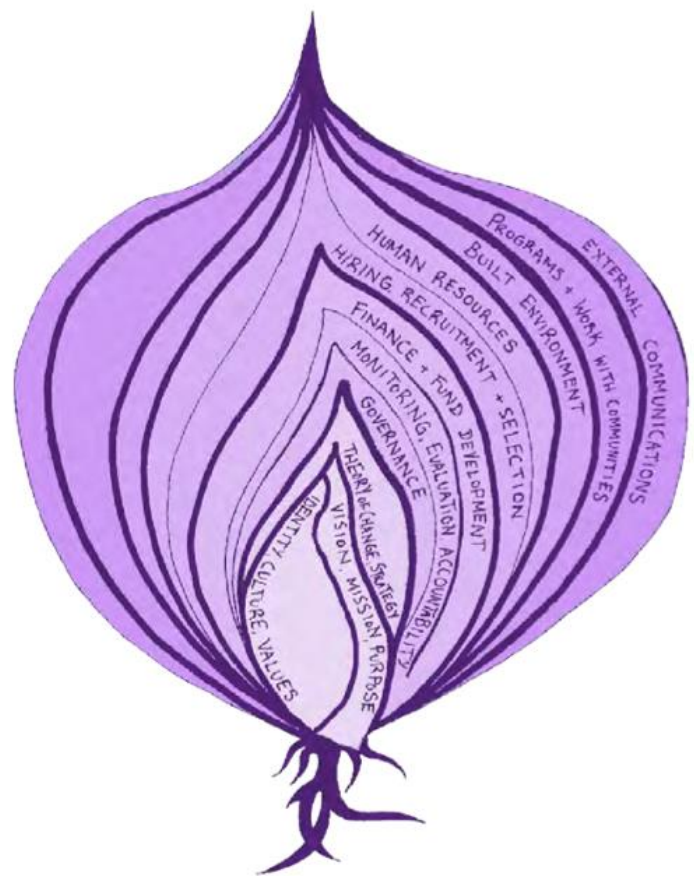

Figure 2 The onion model used by CommunityWise Resource Centre that constituted the original 11 codes applied to the data

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[2] INTRAC (www.intrac.org) is a UK organization dedicated to building organizational capacity in non-profits.

CommunityWise Resource Centre[3] as part of its anti-racist organizational change (CommunityWise Resource Centre, 2017). These organizations presented the layers of organizational development as an onion, with core organizational work like values, vision, and mission at the centre, moving outwards to more external aspects of work. These 11 layers formed the initial coding structure, however as coding proceeded, the model was adapted to make it more conducive to equity work by pulling the "evaluation" section out as its own key element to equity policy and by renaming the "built environment" category "accessibility" to account for the physical, virtual, and even social environments that make a space feel accessible.

Method 2: Analysis of answers to an equity question in 2021 grant application

Another component of Social Policy's recent grant intake process asked applicants to describe how they apply an equity lens internally at their organization. They were provided with an open text box so answers ranged from a few lines to several paragraphs. Again, while we had submissions from 2020 and 2021 grant rounds, only answers from the 2021 grant round were analyzed due to time constraints for this project. Answers were compiled in a spreadsheet, imported into NVIVO, and coded using the aforementioned codes.

Once the initial coding was completed on both equity policies and the long-form answers from the grant applications, several codes were renamed or merged into broader categories that better reflected the findings. For example, a number of the core level codes were folded into an overarching "organizational foundations" since actions in these areas were less frequently mentioned in the policies and seemed to fall under the same area of work.

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[3] CommunityWise Resource Centre (https://communitywise.net) is a Calgary-based non-profit that began an anti-racist organizational change initiative in 2016 that they continue to share the learnings from.

The results were 11 key "action areas" that generally aligned with the layers of organizational development, under three broader meta-categories:

CORE	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
Organizational Foundations	Hiring & Recruitment	Programs & Services
Strategy & Theory of Change	Human Resources	Partnerships
Governance	Learning	Communications & Advocacy
Finances	Accessibility	

The nested circles are labeled EXTERNAL (outer), INTERNAL (middle), and CORE (inner).
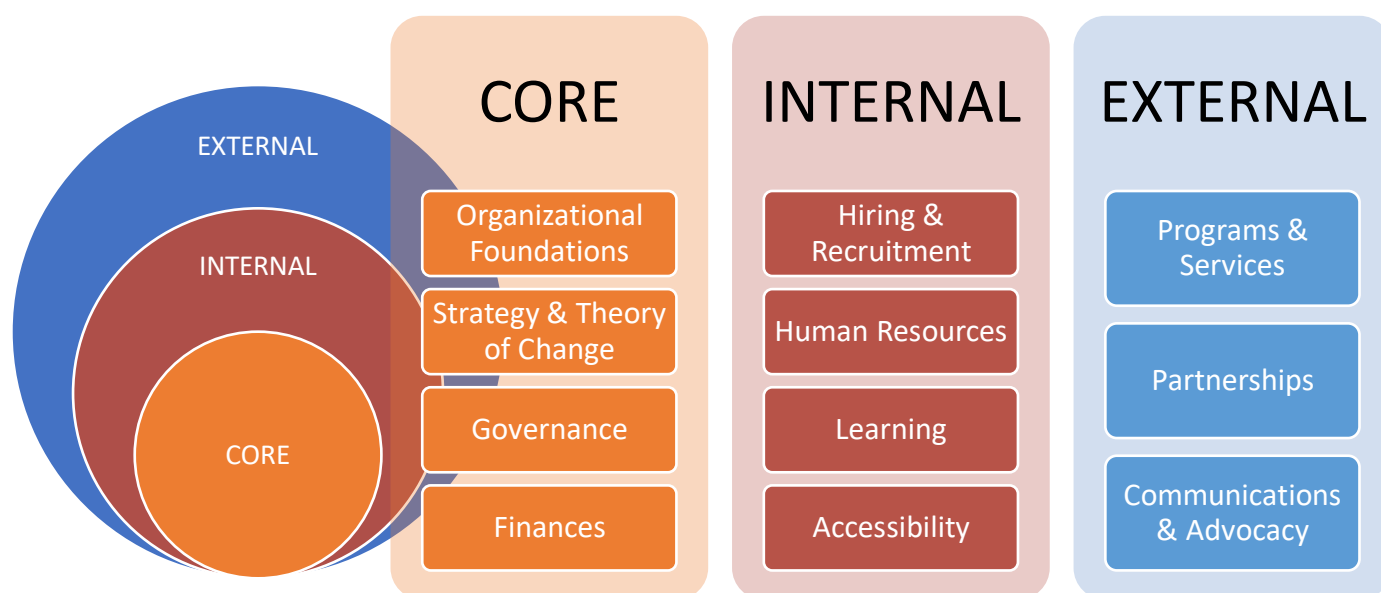
Method 3: Virtual knowledge exchange workshop with non-profits

Organizational policies and form-based entries only provide so much insight into how community-based non-profits are working towards greater equity, diversity, and inclusion. To dig deeper, the researcher worked closely with staff on Social Policy's grants and data teams to run an online interactive workshop with representatives of Vancouver's diverse social service agencies. The objective was to deepen understanding of how organizations are operationalizing equity, the challenges they are facing, and what supports could help them grow their impact. The event also doubled as a chance for Social Policy to pilot a knowledge sharing/capacity-building event with non-profits – a type of programming that they are considering expanding.

Representatives from approximately 30 organizations attended the two-hour session. The researcher presented preliminary findings based on methods #1-2 including a framework for elements of policy and a summary of the equity-related actions uncovered to date. Then participants then dove into a "World Café" style session that involved two rounds of break-out groups across 10 different topics (pulled from key policy elements and the action areas described above). Each topic was facilitated by Social Policy staff who acted as "table hosts" and took notes on behalf of the group. With each breakout session lasting 30 minutes, participants were able to attend two discussion groups. They were also given an opportunity to add points to other topic areas after the event.

While tailored to each topic, the three prompts generally asked: **1)** What actions is your organization taking in this area? **2)** What challenges have you encountered in the process? **3)** What supports would help you deepen your work in this area?

Figure 3 Sample slide from Equity into Action workshop's "World Café"

This new data was then manually analyzed and integrated into the initial findings. Responses to questions #2 and #3 heavily informed this report's recommendations.

With the large amount of data on hand, the full findings were included in Appendix A for reference. Key actions that reflected common themes in the data are included in the body of the report and presented as either "foundational work" or "deepening work" to note what kinds of actions may be necessary precursors to others, though this delineation is certainly not set in stone.

Study limitations

In spite of drawing findings from the three data sources described above, we know that this still only scratches the surface of how organizations are tackling equity work, and the challenges they are encountering in the process. While the virtual "Equity into Action" workshop aimed to dig deeper, the reality of trying to tackle a wide range of topics in a short amount of time meant that much was left unexplored. Nevertheless, enough information was gathered to confirm existing findings on how organizations are operationalizing equity, and to get a preliminary sense of what their challenges and needs are. There was much more that could have been unpacked regarding challenges and needs, and a number of participants indicated in the workshop's debrief that they would appreciate the opportunity to do so in the future, which has informed recommendations in this report.

RESEARCH
FINDINGS

This section unpacks both broad and specific findings uncovered throughout the research. First, some overarching themes are explored which may inform how non-profits develop their own equity policies. The second subsection unpacks in detail five elements found in equity policies and how these were conveyed in the various policies reviewed. The third subsection details how community-based non-profits are operationalizing equity across 11 "action areas." This is to showcase the wide range of innovative and exciting ways equity is being embedded in Vancouver non-profits, and to offer inspiration and guidance to organizations who want to deepen their work in this area.

KEY THEMES

The review of organizational equity policies revealed some key themes that are worth noting.

How organizations conceive of "policy" ranges widely

When Social Policy & Projects asked organizations to submit their equity policies in its recent grant application round, they came in many shapes and sizes: policies on non-discrimination, anti-harassment, hiring, gender inclusion, and human rights were common, as were full length employee handbooks, and shorter diversity and inclusion statements. It was beyond the scope of this research to understand why there was a general absence of overarching equity policy but several reasons for this could include 1) there is no widely distributed definition of what an "equity policy" is and therefore it's not well understood across the sector; 2) many organizations may have opted to embed equity into existing policies rather than in a central document; 3) it has been more urgent and important to embed equity into discrete aspects of work rather than produce a single central policy given the lack of time/resources needed to do so; and/or 4) organizations (especially smaller ones) have focused on building a *culture* of equity rather than pursuing change through policy.

While equity may not be enshrined in a central document for most organizations, it is clear from the data that Vancouver's community-based non-profits are doing *a lot* of work on equity. Policy is the culmination of time and effort. It is clear is that organizations are very much putting in that time and effort now to the best of their abilities.

A full-fledged equity policy is a fairly advanced move. As discussed below, equity policies tend to feature a clear rationale, definitions, commitments to action, and an

evaluation or accountability plan. Policies also require leadership, board, and likely staff involvement to craft and approve. All this takes time and resources which, for many community-based non-profits, are in short supply. Yet Social Policy & Projects is of the view that organizational policies are worthwhile as they formally capture organizational values and commitments in a way that helps ensure they are adequately resourced and upheld by staff, board, and volunteers far into the future.

How organizations conceive of "equity" ranges widely

In reviewing the documents submitted a number of then did not make mention of "equity" at all. This isn't to say that these organizations were not taking concrete actions towards equity (or justice, diversity, inclusion, or other related terms). In fact, when they were asked to describe their approach to equity (via the grant application question – Method #2 described above) their answers were incredibly robust, clearly indicating Vancouver's community-based non-profits are very active on equity issues. While organizations all understand and define equity a bit differently, and bringing the sector's understanding of the issue into greater alignment could be worthwhile, not mentioning equity in an organizational policy is likely more a factor of simply not yet having developed an equity policy than it is an issue of lack of understanding.

Naming the issue

While the term "equity" is used here as a catch-all term for various concepts including justice, diversity, and inclusion, it's important for policies to *specify the issues of concern* as a first step towards correcting them. Terms like equity, inclusion, and diversity are used liberally these days and all too easily lose their meaning if not explicitly unpacked.

In the policy documents reviewed, many organizations spoke about diversity and inclusion generally but stopped short of describing exactly which groups might be inadvertently excluded, or what increased diversity might look like. As discussed below under 5 Elements of Equity Policy (p. 25), defining key terms and articulating a rationale for equity work are important parts of an equity policy. Doing so helps clarify exactly what the issue is, why the organization cares, and how it will take action.

Taking an intersectional lens

Similarly, while a generic equity policy can serve a purpose to convey an overall intention to ensure inclusion for all people, it may be worthwhile to identify any groups that need particular supports accessing services and/or feeling included as staff. An organizational self-assessment (p. 30) may help identify groups that could benefit from explicit attention in an equity policy or strategy. To that end, a number of equity policies/statements naturally focused on a specific group related to the primary community served, such as fostering inclusion for women, Indigenous people, youth, or LGBTQ2S+. As an initial step, this makes sense as an organization will want to ensure it is meeting the needs of its immediate target audience. Yet equity is not a single-issue issue! And a growing number of organizations are

acknowledging this by taking an intersectional approach. This means that they acknowledged the ways in which people hold multiple identities and that these overlapping identities influence their life experience. For example, an organization dedicated to supporting women had a policy that explicitly named the ways in which the women they serve may hold other intersecting identities (e.g. racialized, queer or trans-gender) and took steps to name how they could tailor their supports to address these overlapping factors.

Equality vs. Equity

Another common observation in the policy review was that were was some confusion between the terms "equity" and "equality." Some policies emphasized equality while others used an equity framing, and some organizations used the terms interchangeably. While confusion is understandable, there is a critical difference between these terms and understanding this and employing the concepts accordingly will help organizations get clearer in their goals and actions.

Equality is offering everyone the same supports and protections to the same degree. Meanwhile, the term *equity* recognizes the way in which certain groups are systemically marginalized and offers a response that considers these uneven impacts (Milken Institute of Public Health, 2020). Namely, an equity response is more likely to give increased attention to these groups acknowledging their need for increased supports to achieve the same outcomes of other groups. In short, it helps level an uneven playing field.

An adaptation of the much-circulated graphic,[4] Figure 4 differentiates between an equality- and equity-driven approach. The first image demonstrates how equal treatment or distribution of the same type of resources still results in unequal outcomes. The second image shows how tailored interventions (an equity approach) helps achieve equal outcomes.
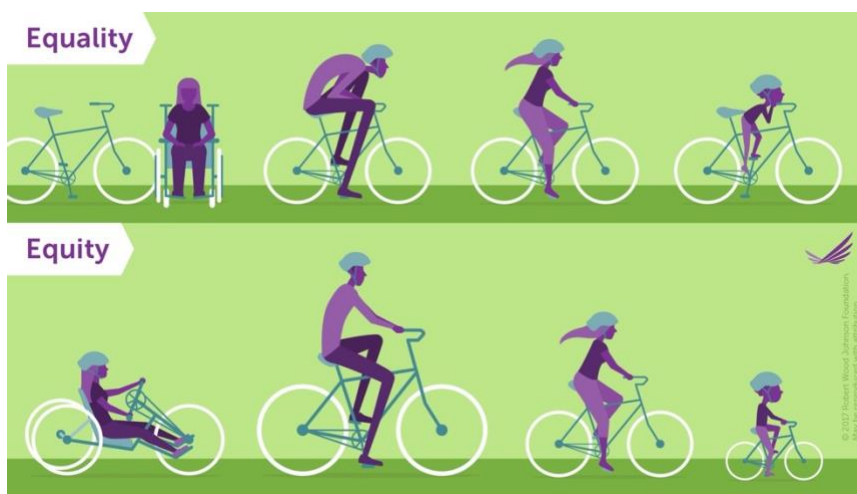
Figure 4 Equality vs Equity (credit: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation)

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[4] https://interactioninstitute.org/illustrating-equality-vs-equity/

Here are some examples of how these two concepts could play out in organizational policy:

Equality	Equity
Our programs and services are available to all.	We acknowledge that individuals and families on lower incomes are at a significantly higher risk of poor health. We therefore commit to targeting our outreach efforts to low-income communities so they can access the health services they need in a way that is within their means.
We commit to ensuring all employees are treated fairly and respectfully.	We recognize that racialized staff (e.g. Indigenous, Black, People of Colour) face increased barriers in the workplace. As part of our work to understand and eliminate these barriers, we have implemented affinity groups that meet monthly as a space for staff to safely discuss these issues with those who share such identities.

5 ELEMENTS OF EQUITY POLICY

Community-based non-profits are developing and shaping their equity policies in many ways. The research uncovered five different elements that went into a policy. Not all organizational policies included all five – in fact none of them did! However, these five elements appeared enough to see them as potentially core elements to a holistic organizational equity policy. The following sections unpack each of these five policy elements, identifying the range of ways organizations went about including them in their policies.

For the elements that were discussed in breakout groups in the June 2021 Equity into Action workshop (4 & 5 only), a summary of challenges and needed supports are provided at the end of each corresponding section.

1	• KEY TERMS & DEFINITIONS
2	• RATIONALE FOR EQUITY WORK
3	• SELF-ASSESSMENT/ AUDIT
4	• COMMITTMENTS TO ACTION
5	• IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

Element 1 KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

When it comes to equity issues, words matter. We all carry different ideas in our heads as to what different terms mean, and definitions are constantly evolving. At best, this can lead to confusion, but at worst it can result in divisiveness and conflict, especially around issues that are as personal as identity. It's essential, then, that equity-related terms are carefully considered and defined in an equity policy. Coming to full consensus is unlikely though, so determining how much agreement on terms will be acceptable to move forward will help prevent the process from stalling.

When creating an equity policy, organizations will want to identify and define relevant terms. 'Relevant' are those that will be central to the policy. For example, if the policy's focus is on "equity, diversity, and inclusion" then at minimum these three terms should be unpacked. Similarly, if the focus of the policy is on "accessibility" then terms like accessibility, ableism, ageism, and inclusion could be defined.

See Appendix B for links to equity-related terms and definitions

A number of equity policies reviewed began by defining key terms used in the policy or statement. Terms defined across these policies included:

- Equity
- Discrimination
- Inclusion
- Intersectionality
- Ageism
- Harassment
- Racism, Anti-racism
- Colonialism
- Accessibility
- Ableism
- Class
- Cisgender, Transgender, Gender inclusivity
- Sexual orientation
- LGBTQ2S+
- Ally

Here are a few examples of how organizations presented and defined key terms:

"**DIVERSITY** is the quality of being different or unique at the individual or group level. This includes age; ethnicity; gender; gender identity; language differences; nationality; parental status; physical, mental and developmental abilities; race; religion; sexual orientation; skin color; socio-economic status; work and behavioral styles; the perspectives of each individual shaped by their nation, experiences and culture—and more. While diversity always exists in societies, **INCLUSION** must be created intentionally. We strive to create an environment where people feel supported and welcomed."

– Big Brothers of Greater Vancouver

ANTI-RACISM

"A set of practices and systems designed to eliminate racism. Racism includes racist ideologies, prejudiced attitudes, discriminatory behaviours, structural arrangements, and institutionalized practices resulting in racial inequality as well as the fallacious notion that discriminatory relations between groups are morally and scientifically justifiable."

– Network of Inner City Community Services Society

ABLEISM

"Something we're probably all familiar with is the tie between feeling productive and feeling self-worth, especially in terms of employment. Especially at a workplace that helps others get into employment, it is important to be reminded that people's worth does not lie in their productivity. This can often lead to "ableism," assuming disabled people require 'fixing' and defining people by their disability. It is important to emphasize that people have inherent worth and that seeing people through a strengths-based lens will foster an inclusive and caring work environment. As much as we emphasize the importance of work and purpose, it is essential that we demonstrate respect for people no matter their productivity levels."

– Mission Possible

INTERSECTIONALITY

"A theoretical framework to understand how aspects of a person's social and political identities (e.g. age, gender, sex, race, class, immigration status, language proficiency, economic status. etc.) combine and overlap to create unique modes of discrimination and stigma."

– 411 Seniors

Element 2 RATIONALE

What is your why? Articulating a rationale for undertaking organizational change around equity is critical to making the case to staff, the board, funders, and the public. It's no easy task though! Coming up with a clear rationale that staff and the board in particular can get behind may require taking time to learn, reflect, and discuss these issues in depth.

The City's Equity Office has articulated three key reasons to undertake equity work: the **justice** rationale seeks to 'do the right thing' and sees systemic inequities as something that we ought to rectify; the **compliance** rationale sees equity work as a means to upholding legal commitments under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the BC Human Rights Code, or WorkSafe BC; and the **effectiveness** argument sees equity, diversity, and inclusion work as a means to increased organizational effectiveness or impact, and diverse perspectives as leading to better performance outcomes (City of Vancouver Equity Office, 2021).

Drawing from the non-profit equity policies reviewed, here are some examples of how organizations have made the case for doing equity work under each of these three orientations:

Justice rationale:

- "Frontier College is committed to education and employment equity for BIPOC and low-income Canadians. While we believe that potential is evenly distributed, we know that opportunity is not. Barriers created by systemic racism play a key role in keeping people further from opportunity."

- "SUCCESS recognizes and believes that the value of diversity and inclusion promotes the safety, health, and well-being of all members of our communities, and supports our vision of a world of multicultural harmony. We recognize and acknowledge our communities' shared histories of injustice and discrimination and uphold that it is our joint responsibility to actively work toward achieving healthy and inclusive communities and environments."

- "At Vancouver Neighbourhood Food Network we recognize that working in food justice means working toward racial justice and that food insecurity is directly linked to historical ties of racial inequity. Our collective work involves advocating for food justice that is fair, just, and equitable for our communities."

Compliance rationale:

- "We subscribe to the principles of the Human Rights Code of British Columbia and as such will not tolerate unjust, unfair, or unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, political belief, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, gender, sex, sexual orientation or age." - YWCA Metro Vancouver

Effectiveness rationale:

- "We believe that the wide array of perspectives resulting from diversity and inclusion allows 411 Seniors Centre Society to be more effective. As such, we are committed to promoting diversity and inclusion in our organization and the communities we serve."

- "We recognize that our diverse staff is an essential asset to our organization, and we value and embrace the different approaches and perspectives that internationally educated professionals bring to our workplaces. By accommodating all cultures and faiths in our workplace, we benefit more innovation, increased productivity, reduced turnover and an ability to attract the best talent." – MakeWay

Element 3 SELF-ASSESSMENT

An organizational self-assessment or audit can be done at the outset of an equity policy development process as it can help establish baseline data and identify priorities for future work. Several organizations had either recently completed or planned to soon conduct an organizational equity audit. There are various tools and templates available online to support such an audit. Alternatively, and if budget allows, equity and inclusion consultants are experts at guiding organizations through such a process.

Non-profits may want to peruse Appendix B for some self-assessment resources

While the research didn't investigate how organizations went about conducting a self-assessment, a few organizations described their assessment processes as follows:

Gender diversity audit:

- "We conducted a 12+ month audit with a gender inclusion consulting agency with the goal to make the organization more gender inclusive. Through this audit, we are reviewing our programs and practices, and adjusting to increase access and service uptake among trans, non-binary and two-spirit people by improving communications, policy, and programs."

General equity audit:

- "We recently completed an assessment of our board and leadership team and we are now working with a consultant to address equity at an organizational level."

Diversity and Inclusion self-assessment tool:

- "We are currently implementing the Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmark (GDEIB) initiative which is a tool to assess the current state of the organization in terms of diversity and inclusion practices, determine short-term and long-term goals and measure progress in managing diversity and fostering inclusion. The outcome of this project will develop a strong rationale for D&I vision and strategy that will be aligned to organizational goals by holding leadership accountable for implementing diversity and inclusion best practices. All aspects of the organization, HR, Communications, Services and Programs, Community & Stakeholder Relations will be redesigned in the light of this assessment to reflect this approach in their practices."

Staff survey:

- "We are conducting an all-staff survey on inclusion which will inform research into best practices on inclusive policies, procedures, and work culture."

Element 4 COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

This is perhaps the most essential part of an equity policy as it clearly identifies what the organization is doing or will soon do to operationalize equity. Like any organizational goal, a commitment to equity should be specific and realistic based on available capacity and resources.
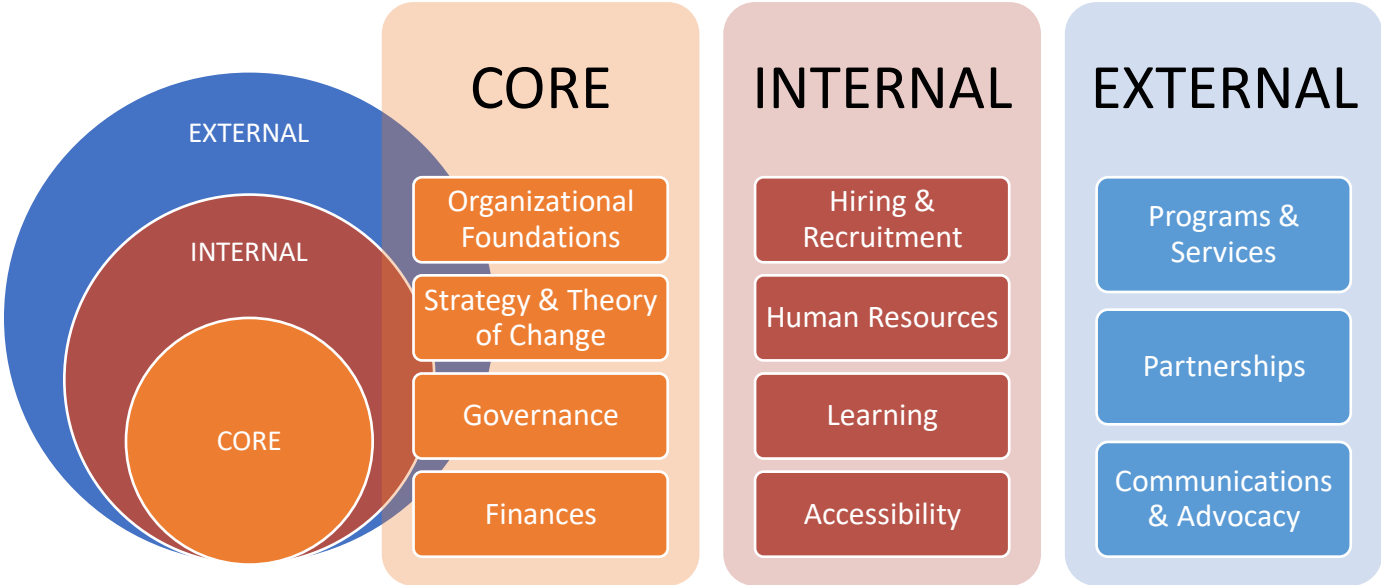
Figure 5 The 11 action areas falling under core, internal, and external areas of work

The research revealed organizations were acting on equity in a wide range of ways, from re-evaluating their core values and governance structures to outward-facing programming and communications. From core, to internal, to external areas of work, 11 action areas were identified that reflected typical layers of non-profit organizations.

See the box below for an example of how one organization framed its equity commitments in policy

While the equity policies reviewed comprised the initial data set, many more areas of work were revealed through the other forms of data gathered later in the research process. Most of this later data reflected *actions* organizations had taken or were currently taking in service of equity. While these were not presented as "commitments" per se, they offer wide-ranging inspiration for organizations considering the kinds of commitments they may want to make. While the 11 equity "action areas" form their own section of this report, they are in a way an extension of the commitments section as they may help non-profits identify what kinds of commitments are relevant and accessible to their circumstances.

Excerpt from Pacific Legal Education and Outreach Society's Indigenous Recognition and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Policy:

PLEO abides by the following action items to help promote diversity and inclusion in our work:

- Pursue cultural competency throughout our organization by creating substantive learning opportunities and formal, transparent policies.

- Generate quantitative and qualitative research related to equity to make incremental, measurable progress toward the visibility of our diversity, inclusion, and equity efforts. Once the content is curated it will be added to our website so others can access.

- Improve our cultural leadership pipeline by creating and supporting programs and policies that foster leadership that reflects the diversity of our society.

- Pool resources and expand offerings for underrepresented constituents by connecting with other organizations committed to diversity and inclusion.

- Develop and present sessions on diversity, inclusion, and equity to provide information and resources internally, and to members, the community, and our sector.

- Develop a system for being more intentional and conscious of bias during the hiring, promoting, or evaluating process. Train our hiring team on equitable practices.

- Include a salary range with all job descriptions.

- Advocate for public and private-sector policy that promotes diversity, inclusion, and equity. Challenge systems and policies that create, reproduce or entrench colonialism, inequity, oppression and disparity.

Element 5 IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY ON EQUITY GOALS

Leadership & Accountability

With a rationale and clear commitments in place, leadership is needed to move things forward. Equity policies therefore tend to identify *who* will be involved in implementing the policy, what their specific roles will be, and how they will engage the rest of the organization. Articulating this establishes a layer of accountability to the equity work being undertaken, which in turn, helps ensure it doesn't fall off the organizational agenda.

Leadership and accountability can take different forms. Many organizations indicated they had formed some kind of committee or working group to lead the equity work. Senior leadership, consultants, or a dedicated staff person were also named as central to heading up the equity work, including liaising with the equity working group, board, and senior leadership.

Equity committees

Forming some kind of equity, diversity, and inclusion committee to lead the organization's equity work featured prominently in the research findings. In accordance with the scope of the equity policy or plan, some committees covered many aspects of equity, while others focused on a specific element such as gender or racial equity.

Membership in equity committees or working groups usually included staff and leaders from across the organization with attention paid to diversity in various forms. These committees had support from leadership and were in a position to advise senior management on the organization's equity goals.

> *"It took time to get past pre-existing expectations and colonial practices and recognize the damage those systems inflict. There was a lot of up-front work for our committee, and we needed to dedicate time, create infrastructure, and build trust within committee. It's been challenging but exciting!"*

Activities equity committees undertake, based on the policy review:

- Developing equity goals/strategy in consultation with staff/leadership/board

- Supporting managers and/or staff teams to develop action plans based on organizational equity goals / policy

- Ensuring the organization's equity-related commitments goals are actualized

- Coordinating equity-related training/learning initiatives for staff, board, and/or volunteers

- Reviewing current policies and practices through an equity lens and identifying areas for improvement

- Writing or revising organizational policies to incorporate an equity lens

- Recommending and developing new programs to better serve equity-seeking groups

- Monitoring and reporting on progress made toward equity goals

The focus of an equity committee will vary based on the organization's mandate and what it hopes to achieve with its equity plan/goals. Here are some of the areas in which committees or working groups focused their efforts:

- Gender inclusion
- Racial equity/anti-racism
- Anti-exclusion
- Truth and reconciliation
- Decolonization
- Diversity and inclusion

Here are two examples of how an equity committee's role and scope of work was framed by one organization:

"We have created an inter divisional staff Diversity & Inclusion Committee and Anti-Racism Working Group, which is tasked with developing action plans to further the organization's efforts in achieving equity."

"We have formed a Truth and Reconciliation Committee whose role is to coordinate TRC training for employees and explore how we can advocate alongside Indigenous leaders for substantive equality; integrate TRC calls to action; implement a monitoring and evaluation process to ensure we meet our goals in this area."

The role of senior leadership, consultants, and staff

While many organizations discussed how they implemented some kind of equity and inclusion committee to drive their equity work, a few organizations indicated they hired someone (a consultant or dedicated staff person) to lead this work. An equity and inclusion consultant (or even a key leader from an equity-seeking group) can offer the experience, tools, and gravitas necessary to mobilize an organization and efficiently propel it down an equity path. Consultants bring tested processes and tools, like internal equity audits or staff surveys to the table, which can help an

organization chart its course. Because consultants come in for briefer periods (offering training, research, or advice) they tend to work with someone in a senior leadership role who is better positioned to liaise with the staff and board in a more ongoing way. Consultants are not essential, however, as things like equity audits, equity policies, and training can be developed internally. But keep in mind a "do-it-yourself" approach also takes staff time and may result in pulling people away from their important roles in management or programs.

Regardless of who leads the work, staff will inevitably play a key role as equity goals are integrated into team workplans and portfolios. Whether it's at the initial learning and planning stages or at the implementation phase, it's important that those involved in operationalizing equity goals are given the time and space to do so. All too often the work of equity and inclusion gets added to people's workloads without actually freeing them up from other responsibilities which is why many organizations relay that they feel equity work too often happens "off the side of their desks."

Monitoring and evaluating progress on equity

With equity goals or commitments in place, and groups or individuals clearly tasked with leading this work, the final key piece is having some mechanisms to track progress on commitments. There are many ways to monitor and evaluate progress made towards equity goals and they don't all have to be quantitative by any stretch. Identifying some key indicators based on data the organization is already collecting – such as staff, board, and client/participant demographics – may be an easy route into tracking progress. If organizations are already conducting some evaluation on an annual basis, such as a staff or community member survey, these can be adapted to include questions on equity and inclusion. For areas of work that are new, developing mechanisms to report back on progress made, perhaps through an annual report or an internal memo, are viable ways to bring both intention and attention to tracking progress towards an organization's equity commitments.

Below is a summary of what emerged in the research for how organizations are monitoring and evaluating their progress on equity:

- Implementing clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to a) establish equity-specific benchmarks and b) track progress along key indicators or data points.

- Collecting data via staff/participant surveys, focus groups/ dialogue sessions, feedback forms, and/or informal feedback (tailoring feedback collection to the audience)

- Collecting data via an equity-focused organizational self-assessment tool

- Tracking and collecting data such as demographics of target community served vs participants/service users (e.g. age, gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, religion)

- Participant feedback on themes of equity and inclusion

- Staff feedback on equity and inclusion themes

- Progress made on equity commitments across departmental portfolios

- Monitoring and reporting out on progress towards equity goals on a regular basis (e.g. semi-annual / annual)

- Periodically reviewing existing policies and procedures to ensure they are in line with our equity values

- Designating funds to hire consultants and contractors who can help support our work towards greater equity, diversity, and inclusion

Be sure to explore Appendix C for some alterative data collection tools organizations mentioned

IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY	**CHALLENGES**
	• Forming and supporting an equity committee requires staff time and labour which are in short supply; such committees can also require a large amount of emotional labour for those with lived experience of marginalization
	• Lack of resources to hire consultants or advisors to guide organizational change work
	• Uncertainty on what kind of equity data to collect and monitor
	• Lack of evaluation capacity and know-how
	• Staff are stretched even further during COVID-19 as demands for services have increased while funding has declined
	NEEDED SUPPORTS
	• Organizational change work needs to be recognized as long-term, ongoing work and resourced accordingly (e.g. core funding)
	• Access to ready-made tools, toolkits to help plan and evaluate equity work
	• Knowledge sharing opportunities with other non-profits

ACTION AREAS

In the previous section, the five elements of an equity policy were outlined. One of these was "commitments to action" in which an organization identifies its equity goals or specific actions it will take over a period of time. For organizations wondering where to focus their efforts or trying to decide what kinds of commitments to make, this section describes the range of equity-related interventions organizations shared. All three data sources contributed to these findings: the organizational equity policies, the answers to the equity question in the 2021 grant application form, and the notes taken in the online workshop held in June 2021 with Vancouver non-profits. Some of them were shared as formal commitments, while others were presented reflectively, demonstrating the work that has been done or is currently in process.

This section explores 11 different "action areas" that correspond to the layers of a typical non-profit organization's work, from core building blocks of an organization to more external-facing aspects of work. The 11 action areas are divided into three sections: core, internal, and external.
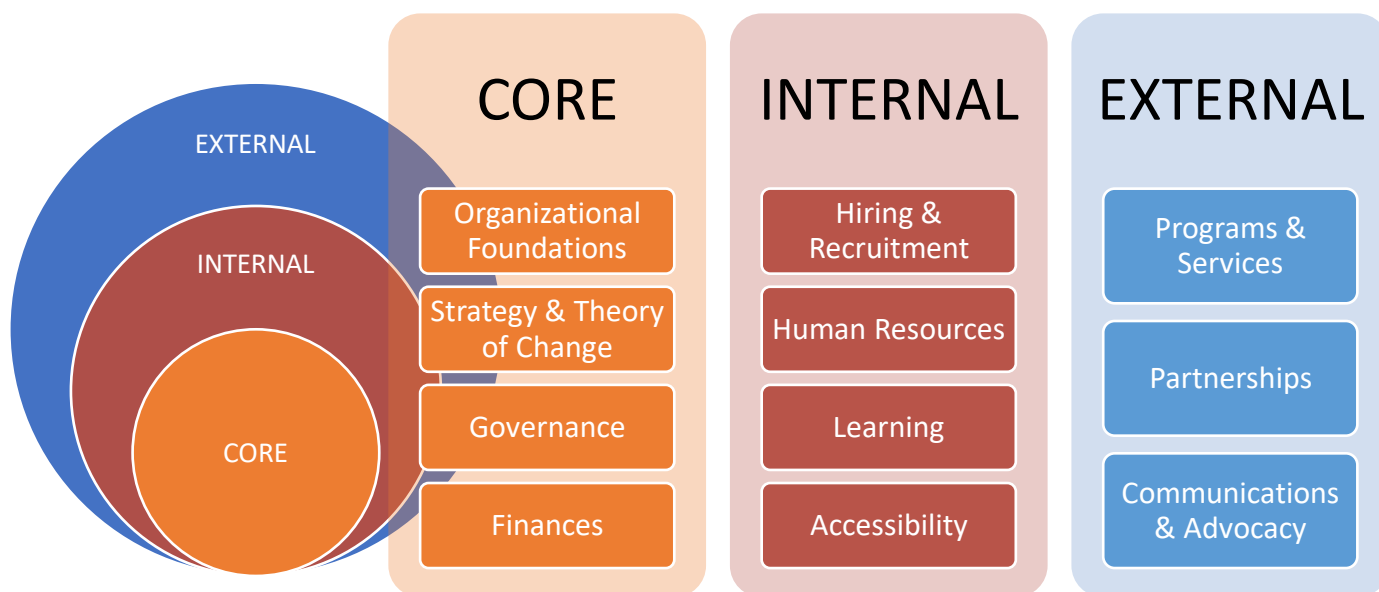
Note that there is significant overlap between this framing and the framing used by the Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) (Molefl, O'Mara, Richter, 2021) which the City of Vancouver's Equity Office is recommending the City use internally to set and track progress towards its equity-related goals. They key difference is that the GDEIB model focuses on the elements of an equity strategy across 15 categories, whereas the approach presented here foregrounds how equity can be embedded across an organization's existing areas work.

For each action area, a brief overview of the category is provided, any overarching patterns from the data are highlighted, and a simple chart is presented that lists

selected actions. These charts present actions as either "foundational work" or "deepening work" to emphasize that it makes sense to take certain actions before branching out into other valuable territory. For example, in the Governance / Board section, "running equity and/or decolonization training for the board" is placed under foundational work because it doesn't make sense to recruit more diverse board members when the current board may not yet understand or see the value in diverse representation. Recruiting before educating can lead to an unsafe environment for new board members. That said, these delineations are not set in stone, and it's important for organizations to gauge for themselves what kinds of interventions are most appropriate for their unique contexts.

CORE ACTIONS

CORE	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
Organizational Foundations	Hiring & Recruitment	Programs & Services
Strategy & Theory of Change	Human Resources	Partnerships
Governance	Learning	Communications & Advocacy
Finances	Accessibility	
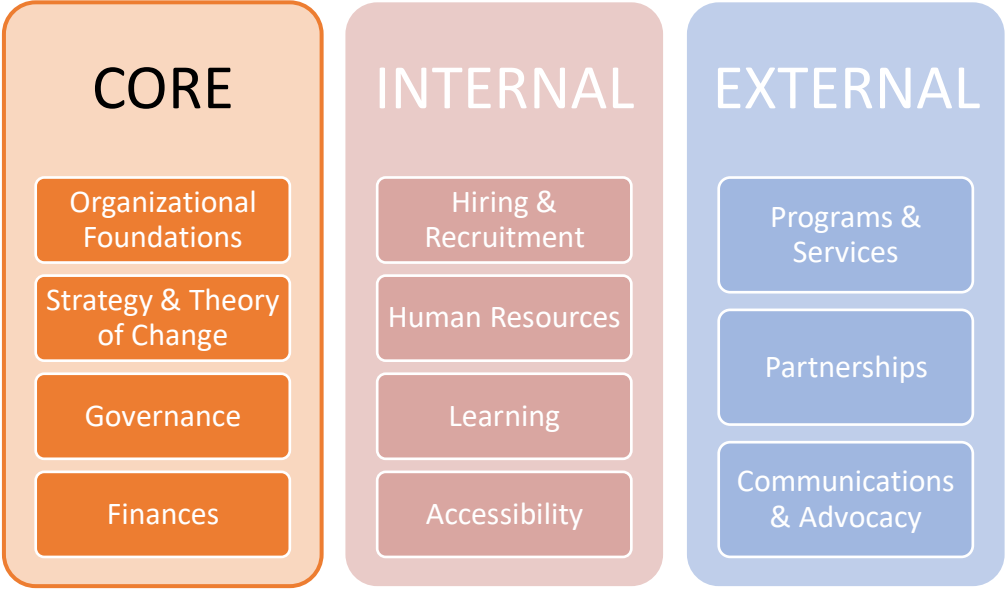
ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

"If it's not embedded in your theory of change and values then it can fall away. It's where change happens."

This quote from a participant in the Equity into Action workshop captured the importance of foundational organizational statements well. **Mission**, **vision**, and **values** statements are kind of like a non-profit's DNA as they are decided upon early on in an organization's life. In turn, they inform everything from organizational culture and strategy to programs and communications. While things like mission and vision statements don't tend to change drastically over time, they might be tweaked as the organization evolves. Values statements in particular may change or expand to incorporate new priorities, and equity is a good example of this. As community-based non-profits strive to bring more focus to values of equity, diversity, and inclusion, they may decide to add or revise their values statements and may tweak their mission and vision statements accordingly.

The research showed that organizations identified and integrated various framings of equity into their value statements. Some of the concepts that surfaced as part of new/revised organizational values included diversity, reconciliation, intersectionality, accessibility, and collaboration.

Here are some examples of how equity was articulated in value statements:

We value diversity and strive to reflect the diversity of our community in our membership, our Board of Directors, our Community Boards, our volunteers, and our staff.

Our vision is a resilient organizational culture, which is inclusive and diverse in all its aspects. Individual differences are not only accepted but are strongly valued and encouraged. We recognize that our diversity, the many different and unique things we individually and collectively bring to work each day, contributes to building a stronger workplace and healthier communities.

As an Indigenous organization, we are guided by principles upheld by the Elders of our respective nations. Our approach to services, staffing, and leadership reflects a shared commitment to diversity, respect, understanding, gratitude, and accountability. These common values and teachings protect our spirituality, our culture, and our land.

To embed equity into foundational organizational statements like mission, vision, and values, leaders must engage the board, although staff, community members, and/or advisory groups may also be involved. Undertaking a change at this "DNA" level requires some important preparatory work – usually in the form of reflection, discussion, and training to establish a common understanding of equity issues across the organization's leadership.

→ **See related sections on [Governance](#) and [Learning](#) below**

Foundational work	Deepening work
Senior leadership (upper management and board/advisory group) comes to a common understanding of equity issues.	With a common understanding of equity issues and their relevance to the organization, adjustments to an organization's mission, vision, or values can be made.
See [Appendix A](#) for a full list of activities identified in the research.	

STRATEGY & THEORY OF CHANGE

With equity embedded into foundational statements like mission, vision, and values, it can then naturally flow into the organization's overarching strategy or theory of change. Strategic planning moments can be a good opportunity to reflect on how equity and inclusion objectives can be further embedded into organizational priorities in the coming years. A number of organizations indicated they were doing just that. Here are some examples of how they framed this work:

Our strategic plan includes specific deliverables associated with Truth and Reconciliation and anti-racism.

We are embedding equity into our new strategic plan and will be using an equity lens to inform any new programming.

As we enter into a new strategic planning phase, we will implement concrete practices to tackle systemic racism and entrenched prominent Western worldview toward a decolonized and more equitable organization.

Under our new strategy, we have included Equity as one of four distinct areas of focus for our work. This builds on our existing equity principle, but this new area of focus calls on us to deepen and strengthen our total equity mandate.

Foundational work	Deepening work
Equity is identified as a key strategic focus through discussion among senior leadership, and staff. This emerging focus is informed by evaluation or priorities identified by staff and/or community members. An equity lens may be broad, or it may home in on specific aspects of equity such as anti-racism, reconciliation, or capacity-building among equity-seeking groups.	With a common understanding of equity across staff and board, and evidence that can make the case for an equity lens/focus, equity can be centred in the organization's theory of change or next strategic plan. Working with a consultant or leader from equity-seeking groups can help support a wider process to embed equity into the organization's work, including but not limited to devising a new strategic plan.
See Appendix A for a full list of activities identified in the research.	

GOVERNANCE

As the governing body for the organization, the board of directors influences organizational priorities, establishes policies and governing procedures, and holds fiscal accountability for the organization. While some boards are more engaged in the organization's programming and operations, they more often operate at an arm's length, with most communication between staff/programs and board happening through the executive director or senior management. Because of this separation, it's common for knowledge and values around equity to not be the same between the community, staff, and board levels. Ensuring the board is supportive of a greater organizational focus on equity, however, is critical to ensuring the success of any initiatives that touch on things like organizational policy, strategic plans, or programming directions.

All work at the board level is inherently "foundational work," however it makes sense to start with certain steps before moving forward. For example, working with the existing board to foster an equity lens is a valuable early-stage piece of work as it will help ensure subsequent steps to diversify the board and recruit from equity-seeking groups are done in a transparent, authentic, and non-tokenizing way.

Foundational work	Deepening work
Running equity and/or decolonization training for the board. Dedicating time and resources to help the board develop and equity lens. Developing a transparent nomination process for prospective board members and conduct outreach beyond the usual circles to attract the diversity needed.	Recruiting new board members with an eye to equity-seeking groups, especially those that reflect the communities served by the organization. Seeking out key community leaders (e.g. Indigenous elders or BIPOC community leaders) to advise the organization on how to best serve their respective communities.
See Appendix A for a full list of activities identified in the research.	

→ **See also: Leadership and accountability for how organizations developed equity committees to lead the work, and how the board, senior management, and staff were involved in this.**

FINANCES

For many organizations, undertaking equity and inclusion work tends to happen, at least initially, 'off the side of your desk.' Needless to say, this isn't a sustainable approach, and resourcing the extra work that is involved in learning about equity and implementing changes at the program or policy level is critical if the work is to be sustained and enacted in a meaningful way. While some interventions can happen within the usual organizational activities and processes, dedicated funds can help boost capacity to take on deeper organizational change pieces, or enable action on equity-related goals through programming, wages, renovations, and more.

The research revealed non-profit organizations were considering equity in their funding and fundraising work in a range of ways. Here is a synthesis of these interventions:

Foundational work	Deepening work
Seeking funding for initiatives that will enable action on internal and external equity goals. Reviewing the operations budget through an equity lens, especially when costs need to be cut; examining what is considered a negotiable vs non-negotiable expense. Engaging funders in issues of equity and diversity (e.g. sharing the organization's equity policy and other equity work underway). Designating funds to work with consultants / community advisors who can guide the org in working towards equity.	Developing systems to flow resources to equity-seeking groups wherever possible. Making charitable status available to grassroots groups in the community via grant trusteeships to help them access funding. Undertaking participatory budgeting and/or wage-setting process when facing significant budget cuts.
See Appendix A for a full list of activities identified in the research.	

CORE

CHALLENGES

- Despite core areas of work being foundational to other facets of operations and programming, it's a struggle to prioritize equity work at this level because few resources exist to undertake organizational change. Evolving organizational mandates, strategic direction, and governance approaches requires widespread support from senior leadership, the board, and even staff which take time to achieve.

- Entrenched culture at the board level makes introducing equity perspectives challenging.

- Funders are not necessarily aligned with organization's equity goals (embedding equity requires longer term and flexible funding, and developmental over summative evaluation mechanisms).

- Power is concentrated in funder hands which doesn't reflect an equity-informed approach (e.g., funders dictate application, reporting, evaluation mechanisms, funding priorities, and length of funding periods).

NEEDED SUPPORTS

- Support to work with consultants that can help guide an organizational change process, including conducting an equity audit and working with the board to embed equity values into organizational statements and strategy

- Board support to implement equity-related accountability

- Resources to run training for the board on equity and how to operationalize it across the organization

- Knowledge sharing opportunities to learn how other boards are implementing equity and diversity goals

- Access to data about less visible/researched equity-seeking groups

- Funding that can be allocated to organizational change/development work

- Longer-term funding for organizational change

- Relationships with funders who share value and vision for equity work

INTERNAL ACTIONS

CORE	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
Organizational Foundations	Hiring & Recruitment	Programs & Services
Strategy & Theory of Change	Human Resources	Partnerships
Governance	Learning	Communications & Advocacy
Finance & Fundraising	Accessibility	
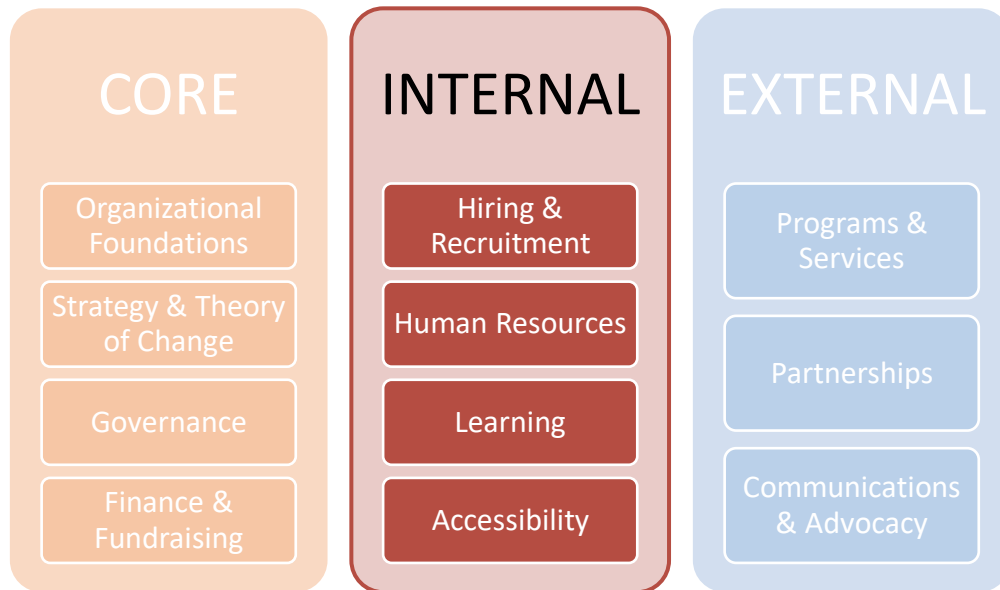
RECRUITMENT & HIRING

Representation from equity-seeking groups is a crucial early step to organizational change as it brings in valuable new perspectives that in turn inform subsequent policy and practice. Diversifying the staff is also an immediate and tangible way to start flowing resources to people from non-dominant groups. Yet rushing to recruit diverse staff and volunteers can have negative impacts on those new hires if the organization's leadership has not yet done the work to foster an inclusive and equity-oriented culture. Important groundwork needs to be done to ensure new team members will be well-supported to succeed. A compelling infographic from Montreal-based COCo depicts a cycle of exclusion and oppression that racialized women often experience in the non-profit workplace.[5] To counter this, a number of the steps outlined earlier in this report are helping non-profits embed equity in their overall culture, values, governance, and strategy. Ensuring equity is centered in these core ways helps avoid hiring diverse candidates as a knee-jerk or tokenistic reaction.

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[5] COCo's "The 'Problem' Woman of Colour in the Workplace" https://coco-net.org/problem-woman-colour-nonprofit-organizations/

Foundational work	Deepening work
Identifying barriers to employment for equity-seeking groups and taking steps to remove them (e.g. reviewing job postings/descriptions, accessing training, doing targeted advertising) Ensuring the necessary time and resources are allocated to support intentional recruitment of equity-seeking groups Hiring staff and volunteers that are connected to the communities served by the organization and striving for representation that is, on the whole, reflective of the make-up of these communities Learning how unconscious bias can influence recruitment and promotion, and taking steps to prevent this (e.g. hiding names/genders from job/volunteer applications) Ensuring new staff/volunteer orientation articulates diversity values in the workplace, including recognizing and accepting differences and stressing diversity-specific accountability for staff and volunteers	Recognizing both formal education and lived experience as valid sources of knowledge and experience when hiring new staff and volunteers Inviting alternatives to the traditional written application (e.g. video/audio) Including a salary range for all job postings Making the interview process less stressful (e.g. sending questions in advance, having applicants complete an assignment instead of an interview)
See Appendix A for a full list of activities identified in the research.	

HUMAN RESOURCES

Hiring practices are just the beginning; ensuring the organization is inherently an inclusive place to work that both celebrates diversity and openly engages with issues of inequity and injustice will help staff and volunteers form equity-seeking groups feel more supported. As discussed in the previous section, recruiting more diverse staff and volunteers is great so long as the overarching organizational culture, structures, and policies also support equity efforts. The following interventions highlight how community-based non-profits are embedding equity in their HR structures, leadership approaches, employee and volunteer onboarding, and benefits/compensation policies.

Foundational work	Deepening work
Developing HR policies with an intersectional equity lens (e.g. DEI policy; hiring policy) Becoming a Living Wage Employer Paying staff fair wages with extended health benefits and ample paid vacation to support them in unplugging and restoring themselves from the impacts of front-line work Reviewing job descriptions and pay grid to ensure equal pay for similar work Offering employees flexibility in work hours so they can observe their religious holidays and attend to family/personal responsibilities Striving toward more diversity at leadership level by creating and supporting programs and policies that foster leadership for staff and volunteers from equity-seeking groups	Moving toward a shared leadership model to ensure all staff can participate in organizational decision-making Revising pay grid to acknowledge the greater labour associated with frontline work and/or leading equity work Developing an equitable pay scale by paying the staff who face the largest systemic barriers, the highest wages Rewriting employee and volunteer handbooks in language that is inclusive to diverse abilities and genders (e.g. non-binary)
See Appendix A for a full list of activities identified in the research.	

LEARNING

Learning comes in many forms. Certainly, accessing training, webinars, and learning resources on different facets of equity featured prominently in the data. However, equally important was building a culture of learning about equity and justice. Spaces to reflect and discuss equity issues as a staff team were cited often, as was the importance of learning from fellow colleagues and community members.

Foundational work	Deepening work
Situating the leadership team as learners Learning from the communities served Offering (and in some cases mandating) 101 level staff training on different aspects of equity/justice to help everyone develop a baseline level of knowledge (e.g. anti-oppression; anti-racism; decolonization and reconciliation; gender inclusion) Hosting staff/team discussions to explore different facets of equity and justice and how these issues impact individuals, organizations, and society at large Running a series of dialogue sessions for staff, board, and participants to discuss difficult questions and develop action plans to ensure the organization is working in right relations with Indigenous and other marginalized communities Attending webinars / online workshops	Sharing learning resources within the staff team, with possible discussion forums connected to them (e.g. discuss an article) Creating "affinity caucuses" for staff to share experiences of how their intersecting identities impact their experience in the organization (e.g. people of colour and white caucuses; sexual and gender diverse caucus, straight caucus) Offering more advanced equity-related training to deepen knowledge in key areas, moving past 101 level to more nuanced understandings Researching best practices to inform the organization's policies, procedures, and work culture
See Appendix A for a full list of activities identified in the research.	

ACCESSIBILITY

When we walk into a space – be it a community centre, an office, an online meeting or public event – we are greeted with a range of signals that communicate 'welcome' or lack thereof. Many organizations are actively reviewing their physical and virtual environments and taking concerted steps towards making them more inclusive of diverse identities and abilities. And it's more than visual cues too: a number of organizations named social or communicative practices as part of their effort to become more accessible and inclusive, such as asking folks what they need to feel comfortable in the space.

Foundational work	Deepening work
Conducting an accessibility audit of physical and virtual spaces Using CARF's Accessibility Benchmark to ensure websites, virtual and in-person meetings, events and workspaces are accessible to all Normalizing the practice of asking people to state any needs they have to feel comfortable in a physical or virtual space	Installing inclusive signage to make the space more welcoming to diverse abilities and identities (e.g. multi-lingual signs, signs of welcome to LGBTQIA2S+ community) Physical space interventions (e.g. ramps, elevators, gender-neutral washrooms) Virtual space interventions (e.g. live transcription/closed captioning, hosting viewing parties for those without internet)
See Appendix A for a full list of activities identified in the research.	

INTERNAL

CHALLENGES

- Difficult to attract diversity when it is not reflected in leadership/board

- Challenge to find staff that speak languages relevant to the community

- Logistical concerns about setting hiring targets for systemically marginalized identity groups (How to prioritize? Is it tokenizing?)

- Legal concerns about setting diversity hiring targets

- High staff turnover means institutional knowledge and learning about equity are readily lost

- Training/capacity-building is financially inaccessible

- Lack of organizational learning plan and leadership to drive it forward

- Community members lack internet access or are uncomfortable with technology and are therefore excluded from a lot of communications/programming

NEEDED SUPPORTS

- Boards need clarity on the legal aspects of implementing equity in hiring processes

- Knowledge sharing opportunities with other non-profits on embedding equity in recruitment, hiring, and HR practices

- Mentorship opportunities from other non-profits

- Grants for organizational / staff training

- Opportunities to share and adapt HR policies between non-profits to avoid reinventing the wheel (e.g. HR, conflict resolution, anti-harassment, parental leave)

- A centralized 'system' for linking seniors and other groups with multicultural organizations with volunteers who speak other languages

EXTERNAL ACTIONS

CORE	INTERNAL	EXTERNAL
Organizational Foundations	Hiring & Recruitment	Programs & Services
Strategy & Theory of Change	Human Resources	Partnerships
Governance	Learning	Communications & Advocacy
Finance & Fundraising	Accessibility	
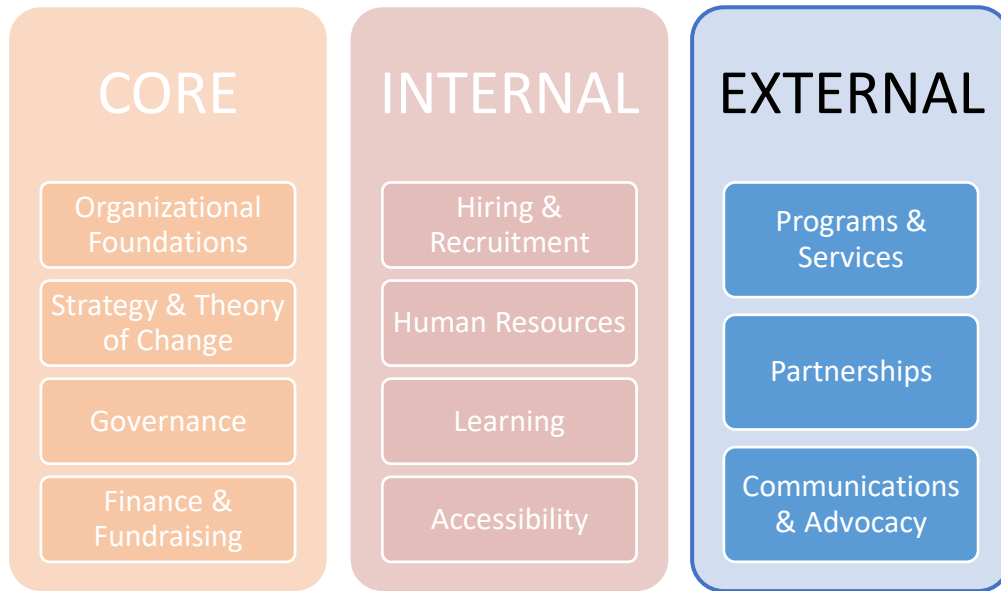
PROGRAMS & SERVICES

For community-based non-profits, programs and services are their raison d'être: they exist to serve some kind of community need and programs and/or services are the way to do that. It is also the place where an organization's equity work is most visible to the communities being served, and therefore a critical area to direct equity efforts. From the program's content, to the lens through which it is offered, to the ways in which community members are consulted, equity and inclusion can be embedded into programs and services in truly unlimited ways. Here is a selection of some particularly salient interventions:

Foundational work	Deepening work
Identifying and eliminating barriers to accessing programs (e.g. no fees/costs, providing meals and transit tickets, not requiring sobriety) Developing an accessibility checklist that all program staff must complete	Delivering programs through an anti-oppressive, anti-racist, intersectional, and safe(r) spaces lens (and hiring staff who are well positioned to do this) Offering programs that intentionally build skills and leadership capacity of participants

Offering programs in multiple languages relevant to the communities served (also offering translated materials, interpretation services) Offering programs for specific identity groups to ensure they feel safe in receiving treatment/support; these programs are staffed by members of these communities (e.g. LGBTQ2S+, Indigenous, youth) Doing targeted outreach to specific identity groups (e.g. isolated seniors, non-English speakers, racialized groups, LGBTQ2S+)	Consulting with community and/or hiring leaders of relevant communities to advise on programs (especially when this perspective is underrepresented within the staff/leadership); paying people for such contributions
See Appendix A for a full list of activities identified in the research.	

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are central to community-based non-profits. They are formed with fellow agencies to collaborate on programs or service delivery; with academic institutions to conduct research or access educational programming; with First Nations to better support Indigenous communities; or with other sectors to provide the organization with key services such as consultation or translation. Partnerships pose an opportunity for resource sharing, mutual learning, and innovative synergies.

Foundational work	Deepening work
Pooling resources and expanding offerings for underrepresented constituents by collaborating with other organizations in the sector committed to diversity and inclusion efforts Collaborating and building connections with local Indigenous communities	Encouraging partner organizations who are exclusionary of gender-diverse people to change these exclusionary practices Working with partner organizations to advocate for systemic change

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS & ADVOCACY

Finally, the most public-facing side of an organization's work shows itself in its external communications and advocacy efforts. An organization's website, social media accounts, annual reports, outreach and promotional materials (videos, pamphlets, posters), public statements, news coverage, and advocacy campaigns are generally what constitute this category.

Foundational work	Deepening work
Ensuring public communications reflect the diversity of the community served Communicating, when appropriate, in different languages Including preferred pronouns in email signatures	Conducting an internal audit of outreach and communications to ensure these are accessible to diverse communities
See Appendix A for a full list of activities identified in the research.	

EXTERNAL

CHALLENGES

- Changing organization's practices can interrupt programs/services

- Lack of funding to hire Indigenous culture liaisons that would make programming more inclusive

- Finding balance between weighing in on social media quickly and doing so in a way that is researched and nuanced

- Navigating the desire to speak up about important issues but not overshare or be performative

- Risk of angering funders when taking a stance or making public solidarity statements

- Fear of being denied charitable status if doing advocacy work

- After taking a public stance on an issue, it can take up to a year for organizational changes to be approved

NEEDED SUPPORTS

- Funding to hire staff who can implement a growth in equity-focused work (e.g. Indigenous cultural liaisons or program advisors)

- Funding that allows staff time to learn about equity issues including colonialism and reconciliation

- Education on what kind of and how much advocacy is allowed for registered charities

- Collaborating with City / other non-profits to get benefits for casual, part-time staff working at multiple sites in the sector (e.g. senior care, adult ed programs, childcare)

RECOMMENDATIONS

Scope of recommendations

This section identifies 9 key recommendations that fall within the purview of the Social Policy grants team and/or research and data team within the City of Vancouver's Social Policy & Projects Division. The grants team is closely connected to Vancouver's community-based non-profits as it currently plays a funding and capacity-building role for the sector. Additionally, the research and data team is able to conduct research, analyze existing datasets, and share research-backed insights with community agencies via the Division's granting relationships or by publicly releasing research insights.

Recommendations directed to other City of Vancouver departments were outside the scope of this research, but the City should continue its efforts toward internal alignment on its own equity policies and practices. Similarly, recommendations directed towards community-based non-profits are also not included here because the Social Policy teams involved in this project felt that the City was still very much working "getting its house in order" and therefore not in a position to advise grantees on how to best undertake their work on equity.

Context

As a government institution, the City of Vancouver is expected to be a leader on equity and is increasingly being called to demonstrate its own internal leadership on these issues. The creation of a dedicated City-wide Equity Office in 2020 is evidence of this emerging leadership, as is the recently released Equity Framework (unanimously adopted by Council in July 2021) that will see equity values coherently embedded into all City departments and their respective community-level work. Given their close relationship with non-profit agencies in Vancouver, the grants team and research and data teams within Social Policy & Projects are well-positioned to support community organizations with funding, knowledge, and data to help them operationalize equity.

In 2019, Social Policy & Projects put forward a framework to support Vancouver's community-based non-profits. The framework identified five elements that would enhance the non-profit sector's resilience, strength, and impact:
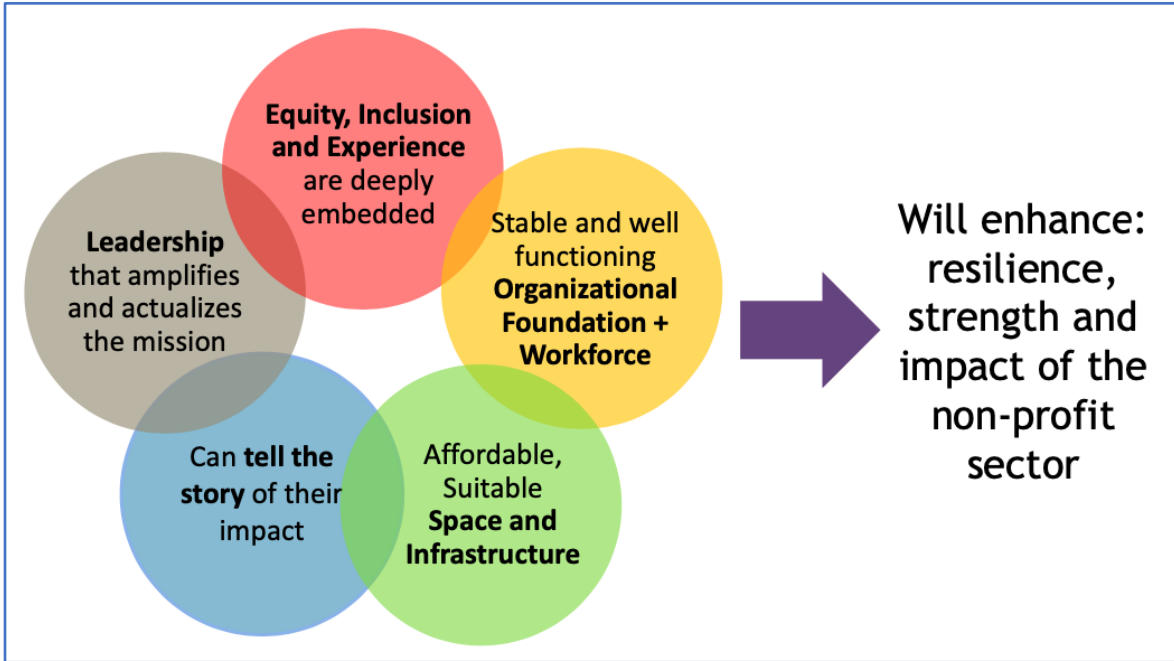
(City of Vancouver Social Policy & Projects, 2019)

This framework then identified three key roles the City could play in helping non-profits realize these objectives: 1) convenor, 2) broker, and 3) steward:

Convener

Call people together; facilitate partnerships

Broker

Leverage knowledge, power, funding for community benefit

Steward

Identify high level issues + drive change through shared leadership and advocacy
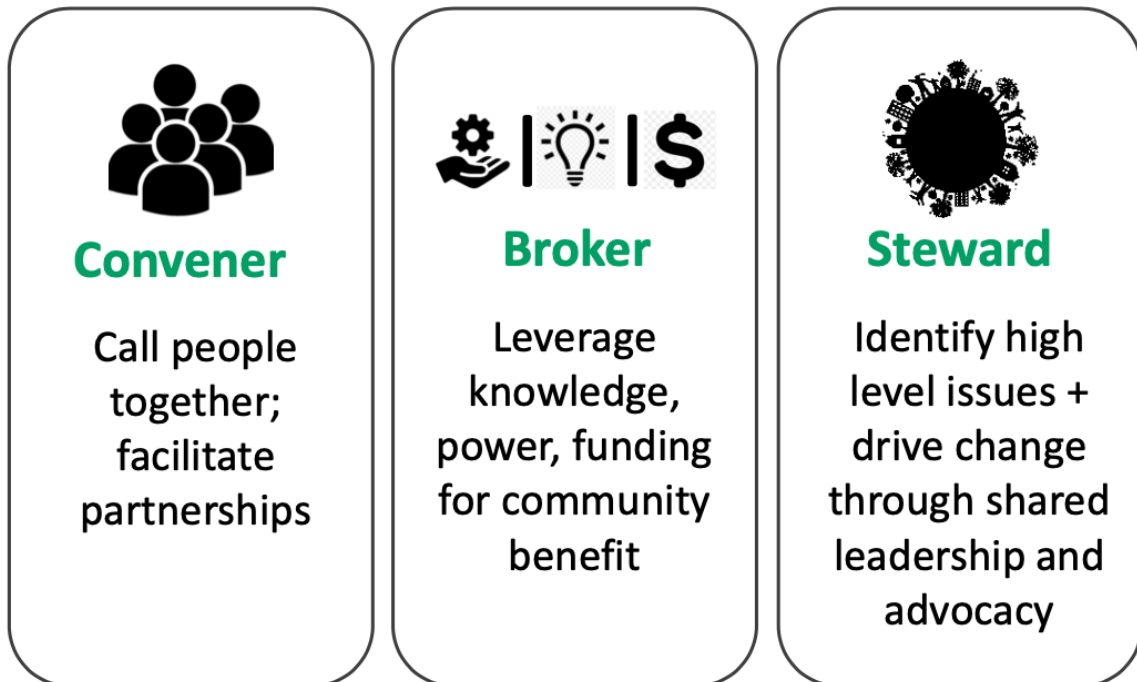
(City of Vancouver Social Policy & Projects, 2019)

CONVENER | The City can draw on its proximity to power and influence to act as a convener that calls people and groups together.

BROKER | The City acts as a core funder, has access to rich data, and is connected to knowledge, funding, resources, and expertise in many areas that can be leveraged.

STEWARD | The City can leverage its power base within and beyond municipal government in service of long-term community resilience and success.

The recommendations outlined below are best contextualized by a set of unique circumstances and challenges that BC's non-profit sector faces as outlined in "A Framework to Support Vancouver's Non-profit Social Services Sector" (City of Vancouver Social Policy & Projects, 2019):

- **Lack of professional development capacity:** 41% of BC non-profits spend <1% of budget on professional development.

- **Little strategic planning or core support**: <6% of BC non-profits have dedicated strategic planning, communications, human resources, or IT staff.

- **Reliance on precarious employment**: 32% of BC non-profits employ contract workers.

- **High staff turnover rate, especially for staff under 35**: The average yearly turnover rate for non-profits in the Lower Mainland is 19.3% (as of 2017) compared to 3.5% at the City of Vancouver (as of 2018).

- **Funding for core operations is restricted**: 86% of BC non-profit revenue goes to program operations with only 10% going to management/administration.

On top of these persistent issues, the COVID-19 pandemic as put significant additional strain on most non-profits. According to a research report produced by Social Policy & Projects (City of Vancouver Social Policy & Projects, 2020), key impacts on the sector include:

- depleted operating reserves and a loss of earned revenue amidst increasing COVID-19-related costs;

- service disruption and a need to overhaul program delivery methods by using virtual platforms or by adopting new COVID-safety measures;

- increased demand for services, especially among social service agencies; and

- layoffs, staff burnout, and loss of volunteers.

All of this points to the non-profit sector's vulnerability to shocks in our economic and social systems. As agencies dedicated to offering important services for public benefit, governments in particular must examine how they can better support non-profits so they can continue to serve their important functions and remain resilient in times of crisis.

While the City of Vancouver is a minor funder for Vancouver non-profits, its grants represent an important source of stable funding for much needed core operations. Among 2019 recipients of Direct Social Services and Organizational Capacity Building grants, City grants comprised 17% of their combined organizational revenue (CoV Social Policy & Projects Division, 2019).

As a convener, funder, and policymaker, the City is well-placed to leverage its resources in service of the non-profit sector's capacity on many fronts, including equity issues. While offering this support, the City must maintain a learning orientation that reflects its own early stage of organizational development on equity.

9 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on the above realities facing Vancouver's community-based non-profits, the broader context and opportunities unfolding at the City of Vancouver, and the data collected at the "Equity into Action" workshop held with non-profits in June 2021, the following 9 recommendations are relevant and timely next steps Social Policy & Projects can take to help the sector achieve its equity goals. The recommendations are presented according to the three roles Social Policy has said it is well-positioned to play.

Convener

1. Convene a learning network or community of practice (CoP) for grantees

At the June 2021 "Equity into Action" workshop, participants from community-based non-profits appreciated the opportunity to gather online to learn from one another and many indicated they would appreciate the chance to do so more regularly going forward with the City acting as convener.

Convener

Call people together; facilitate partnerships

Most non-profits have little time to undertake research and learn about what their fellow organizations are doing. Having the City do the legwork

of bringing community agencies together for learning and exchange frees them up to focus on delivering their important programs and services. We know that some organizations are already engaged in other learning spaces and there is potential to further identify what these other learning communities entail and potentially collaborate with them. However, especially for those receiving the City's Social Policy grants, offering equity-themed capacity-building events could dovetail well as a multi-directional learning opportunity for both the City's Social Policy staff and its non-profit grantees. These events would be an opportunity for grantees to share their approach to operationalizing equity, identify challenges, and seek supports from fellow non-profits and the City. In turn, the City could share what it is doing around equity both departmentally and institution-wide under the guidance of the Equity Office and recently passed Equity Framework.

A more detailed proposal and budget for a CoP could be further developed through questions posed in the 2022 grant application stage that gauge desired frequency, structure, priority topics, and other accessibility needs for participation. With more feedback on this idea in hand, the grants team could then articulate a CoP/learning plan that will guide this convening work over the course of 1-2 years as a pilot. The plan should be informed by best practices in communities of practice; work in concert and complementarity to other related non-profit learning networks in the Lower Mainland; and fill a gap in supports within the local non-profit sector.

Resourcing and structural considerations:

A community of practice can be more or less structured. A more structured approach might involve a series of workshops or training sessions along different aspects of equity work, while a less structured format might be more discussion-based and unfold according to emerging needs of the group.

Structured sessions could be facilitated by a mix of hired trainers and City staff with relevant expertise. Currently, Social Policy offers training bursaries for non-profits to access Vantage Point workshops for free. A benefit to this current approach is that non-profits can pursue specific training opportunities (as available) based on their current circumstances. On the other hand, a centrally coordinated training series for a cohort of non-profits offers valuable co-learning opportunities within a community context, could be tailored to the group's needs, could engage trainers that are well-suited to the specific topic, and may lead to some cost savings for the City. Further investigation into different avenues and associated costs could be a useful first step before charting a course forward.

Finally, it's important to acknowledge that if the City hosted a community of practice for its grantees, there is a possibility that non-profits would feel pressured to participate or see their funding as contingent on their participation. A few ways to mitigate this are:

1. Invite the non-profit sector to be co-creators of the CoP it so leadership is shared with the City and better reflects the needs of participating organizations. This could be resourced through up to 6 honoraria flowing to members of a CoP leadership team of non-profit representatives, or by paying a portion of 1-2 non-

profit staff peoples' time. To the latter point, some non-profits are looking to hire staff dedicated to equity work so co-funding such a position could offer mutual benefit. Regardless of the approach, leadership contributions must be remunerated as non-profits already lack core funding to pay staff time outside of programming.

2. Make participation in the CoP available to non-profits beyond those funded by Social Policy (e.g. former grantees, or grantees of other CoV funding programs) so it decentres any one granting department.

3. Clearly communicate what kinds of organizations or levels of readiness are good fits for the CoP – it will be a more valuable experience if those who participate are there because they are ready and willing

4. Consider making the CoP a learning community that non-profits apply to (a simple application will do it), so those who participate are truly those who want to/are ready to be there. This approach may also make sense for a pilot phase.

Curriculum considerations:

If a more structured learning series is the preferred route, then it seems appropriate and strategic to align the curriculum with the five elements of equity policy. This makes sense for two reasons: 1) equity policy is the culmination of a wide range of work that falls within these five areas and 2) in asking applicants to submit their organization's equity policies, Social Policy and Projects clearly sees value in the presence of such policy. A learning agenda would likely need to be more nuanced than merely offering a session pegged to each of the five policy elements. Therefore, the five layers of policy are summarized below along with specific sub-topics based on what research participants identified as being high priority:

1. Developing a rationale for centring equity

    - Connecting equity to the organizational mission
    - Exploring various rationales and determining which approach aligns best

2. Defining key equity-related terms

    - The importance of defining key terms
    - How to identify and define the issues most pertinent to the organization's equity work
    - Who to involve and how to make decisions

3. Conducting an organizational self-assessment/ equity audit

    - Available tools and how to use them
    - Who to involve in the self-assessment process
    - Identifying priorities for action

4. Making commitments to action across core, internal, and external levels of organizational work (see the 11 action areas and the challenges/supports identified at the end of each section).

   - Setting realistic goals rooted in current organizational realities
   - Sessions on specific 'action areas' across core, internal, and external areas of organizational work (e.g. mobilizing the board; hiring and recruitment; advocating publicly on equity issues)

5. Developing a strategy to monitor progress and stay accountable on equity goals

   - Selecting key indicators, securing baseline data where possible, and reporting on progress
   - Forming and sustaining an equity committee or working group
   - Clarifying roles, relationships, and accountability mechanisms at the board, senior leadership, and equity committee levels

While these topics came through in the research, Social Policy's grants team may opt to survey organizations to get a more fulsome understanding of learning priorities.

Designing a community of practice

There are many resources available publicly on how to launch and sustain a vibrant community of practice or learning series. However here are a few recommendations for how an equity-focused CoP could support non-profits in particular:

- Use the CoP to **share organizational policies** from within and beyond the network so organizations don't have to start from scratch (e.g. HR policies, staff handbooks, equity policies, etc.).

- **Foreground the work and learning of other non-profits** through feature presentations: there are many examples of organizations creatively leading in this work and their insight and expertise is highly valuable.

- **Consider aligning session themes with the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmark tool** as it is a widely accepted resource and the one that the City will likely be using internally. It covers areas of organizational work similar to those presented in this report but focuses explicitly on how to develop and implement an EDI strategy.

- CoP leadership can **source and disseminate publicly available EDI resources**, templates, and tools that are tailored to non-profit sector and sharing them through the CoP.

- **Avoid creating an exclusive virtual knowledge sharing platform**. It's often quite tempting to create a members-only resource portal or discussion forum for learning networks. In theory, these can be valuable spaces to extend

learning beyond workshops/conferences, but in practice, they are prone to be expensive to develop and tend to go under-utilized given the high rates of staff turnover and already hectic schedules of non-profit staff. Hosting or linking to learning resources via the CoV website could be all that is needed as a knowledge hub, and keeping communication to the CoP live sessions and email in between those sessions (i.e. what non-profit staff already use) is probably the best way to start.

2. Help resource a centralized system that links multi-lingual volunteers with organizations serving multicultural communities

Many organizations serve new immigrants and seniors from a multitude of backgrounds and thus require a wide range of language skills on hand to ensure these diverse community members feel welcome and included. Yet access to staff and volunteers who speak such languages was repeatedly cited as a challenge by non-profits involved in this study. In the "Equity into Action" workshop, one group discussed the possibility of having the City help develop a centralized system that links multi-lingual volunteers with multicultural organizations in need of translation and language supports – essentially a city-wide volunteer matching system. While the coordination of such a program may not necessarily be within the City's purview, it could play a critical role as sustainable funding source for such an initiative.

Ultimately, this recommendation requires more research to understand what the scope of this work would entail and what the role of the City ought to be, but it is worth noting as such a system would not only facilitate the coordination of language services via volunteers but could also potentially facilitate other cross-agency collaboration by helping part-time/casual staff pick up shifts at other agencies (see #2) or help connect clients/participants to other nearby agencies to help fill service gaps.

Broker

3. Introduce an equity lens into Social Policy's grants program/strategy

Social Policy's Grants team is already on its way to embedding equity into its non-profit grants as evidenced by asking grant applicants to speak to how they are operationalizing equity and by undertaking this equity policy research. The Grants team is also involved in a City-wide Solutions Lab to decolonize granting and is working to evolve its granting program towards a more trust-based model of philanthropy. With the Equity

Broker

Leverage knowledge, power, funding for community benefit

Framework recently passed by City Council, all City of Vancouver departments are being called on to embed equity into their work and so this recommendation comes at an opportune time.

There are many ways funders can embed an equity lens into granting, ranging from the focus of the funding and bounding how resources are used, to the grant application and reporting process, to the non-monetary ways they support grantees. While it is beyond the scope of this project to provide detailed guidance on how Social Policy's grants could adopt an equity orientation, additional research could help inform a strategy to embed equity into this grant stream. Below is a brief list of some common ways grantors are adopting an equity lens:

- Prioritizing funding for organizations and groups whose missions explicitly aim to dismantle systemic inequity, and especially those led by people who identify as having lived experience of marginalization. This could be accomplished through a dedicated funding stream.

- Reflecting on how implicit bias towards certain norms may influence granting decisions and potentially deprioritizing traditionally lauded attributes like past relationships, extensive data, strong writing, or alignment with familiar structures/systems.

- Making grants flexible and longer term (5+ years) – systems change and equity work are both long term undertakings and must therefore be funded over multiple years and in a way that remains flexible to evolving organizational capacities and needs

- Simple and streamlined grant application processes that reduce the time and effort required of applicants

- Disbursing funds quickly (< 1 month)

- Reducing the burden of grant reporting (e.g. less frequent reporting, accepting reports written for other funders or having a conversation rather than requesting written reports)

- Embedding an equity lens into their grant evaluation processes

In keeping with the City's own definition of equity as process, we must acknowledge that equity work takes time and is ongoing – and should never become another checkbox to tick off. For example, making an equity policy a requirement to receive City funding reflects a transactional approach to equity and will result in a transactional response. It will encourage applicants to push through policy-development processes in ways that are likely to be rushed and without the necessary thought, care, and inclusion required of them. Similarly, imposing targets for staff or board diversity privileges outcome over process in problematic ways. Instead of asking for certain markers of equity to be present organizationally, the City should meet organizations where they are4 at, and enter into a collaborative process rooted in mutual learning and change.

What needs resourcing?

If non-profits are to embed an equity lens in their work and undertake the kind of organizational change required to make this happen, it needs to be adequately resourced. Funding from Social Policy is well positioned to directly support this. Drawing from the research findings, the non-profits involved in this study indicated that funding could support their equity work in the following ways:

- Hiring consultant(s) to support an organizational change process (e.g. guide them on an equity audit, identify priority action areas, develop a strategy, write policy)

- Hiring trainers to run JEDI training / workshops for staff and board to help establish foundational knowledge and then level up this knowledge as organization progresses through action/reflection

- Enrolling staff (beyond just management) in professional development activities related to themes of equity (including reconciliation, decolonization, cultural sensitivity/implicit bias…)

- Proactively embedding evaluation mechanisms into various facets of organizational work on equity

- Training on embedding equity into HR/hiring processes

- Hiring dedicated staff to lead equity work

- Hiring Indigenous cultural advisors

4. Undertake research that will help community-based non-profits meet their equity goals

A number of participants in the Equity into Action workshop identified that they needed access to data on certain equity-seeking groups, especially those that are less visible or experience intersecting oppressions for which little data exists. More details about the scope of this need are needed, and there may be other unarticulated research needs across the non-profit sector.

Social Policy's Research & Data team is well-placed to undertake research and/or analyze existing data sets to provide valuable community-based insights through quantitative and qualitative data. With better research and data on hand, non-profits will be able to better serve their communities and also make a stronger case for funding this emergent work.

More insight into the nature of current equity-informed research needs within the non-profit sector is needed to propose a way forward. This could be collected via additional consultation or through a more structured approach that regularly engages

the non-profit community in setting a research agenda. The latter approach could be informed by the Sector Narrative Peer Network currently being convened by Vantage Point that aims to build a common platform to advocate for non-profit sector data and research.[6] A similar group dedicated to equity-related data could dovetail well with what is already underway here.

5. Create accessible knowledge translation resources by leveraging access to existing research

As this research confirmed, one of the biggest barriers non-profits face is a lack of time and capacity to invest in learning and/or organizational change initiatives. Finding, reviewing, and interpreting research is something that few non-profit staff have time for. Therefore, Social Policy's Research & Data team is well-positioned to create knowledge translation resources that digest and disseminate relevant research/data to the non-profit sector. Producing accessible, concise, and relevant tools/resources out of this research report as well as other bodies of work produced by the City will help non-profits better understand the local/community need and build a stronger case for their work. Useful formats could include 1-2 page research briefs, infographics, or topical excerpts from longer form research reports.

Out of this research report, for example, the findings for each of the 5 policy elements and/or 11 action areas could be pulled out and arranged into separate mini documents that are available on the City's website. Such resources can efficiently communicate how non-profits are operationalizing equity and can in turn inspire and inform this evolving area of work.

6. Facilitate access to secure and functional space so organizations can focus on delivery of services to equity-seeking groups

Access to space is a chronic challenge for Vancouver's community-serving agencies. Rent is extremely expensive, as are renovations to make spaces more functional, welcoming, and physically accessible. As a property owner and leaseholder of various sites across the city, there is potential for the City of Vancouver to facilitate access to larger, more accessible, or more permanent spaces for organizations to operate out of. What City-managed spaces could be part of the solution?

Through the Vancouver Social Infrastructure Strategy (VSIS), the City is currently exploring how it can better support non-profit spaces across Vancouver. This is still underway, and recommendations will emerge in the coming year or so, but the VSIS

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[6] See Vantage Point's webpage on Peer Networks https://thevantagepoint.ca/join/peer-networks/

is one mechanism by which the City could support the space/infrastructure needs of non-profits to better undertake equity work.

Steward

7. Advocate for decent work for all across the non-profit sector

Many agencies employ casual, part-time staff in senior care, adult education, and childcare programs. Not only are such positions lower wage, but their part-time/casual nature means they aren't able to access employee benefits, adding to the precarity of their roles. Yet such positions exist in many community-based non-profits across the city meaning there is a large number of unprotected staff employed in the sector.

In 2015, Canada committed to achieving a set of 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030. One of these is to achieve full employment and decent work for all. This includes "equal pay for work of equal value," "protect[ing] labour rights and promot[ing] safe and secure working environments for all workers including […] those in precarious employment" (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2021). While municipalities have no formal obligation to move on these goals, Vancouver's City Council unanimously carried a motion in early 2021 to align its upcoming refresh of the Healthy City Strategy with the 17 SDGs. This would make it the first large city in Canada to adopt the SDGs.

To help non-profits offer decent work, funders of all types would need to normalize investments in core costs like overhead, permanent staff positions, extended health benefit packages, and living wages. For the City's part, it could commit to such investments for all the non-profits it funds. In addition to working closely with the non-profit sector on this initiative, the City will want to engage CUPE 1936 - Community Social Services of Greater Vancouver and possibly The Federation of Community Social services of BC as key partners. In tandem, the City can engage other funders to follow suit so that all local non-profits, no matter their funding source, are able to offer decent work to all their employees.

To move on this rather large undertaking, Social Policy could conduct a review of existing literature on non-profit labour issues and begin consulting with non-profits, related unions, and other funders to explore the potential of coordinated action in service of decent work for Vancouver's non-profit sector.

8. Streamline granting and capacity-building efforts on equity across Vancouver funders (beyond CoV)

As a large institution that is working to embed equity in its own operations, the City is well placed to convene other funding and government agencies to explore how they can collectively embed equity values into their own granting programs. Sharing knowledge horizontally with fellow funders and institutions can lead to more coherent and streamlined supports for organizations in the non-profit/social service space and help to fill funding gaps for the sector.

Some overall funding dynamics that have chronically plagued the sector include:

- Non-profits are often placed in competition with one another for funding
- Grant application and reporting requirements are cumbersome and often differ widely between funders. This comes with a heavy administrative burden and thus privileges organizations with more grant-writing resources.
- While purporting to work towards systems change, funders do not tend to collaborate with one another resulting in uncoordinated movement toward divergent outcomes.

Additionally, through this research, a number of non-profits reported that their funders did not share their equity lens and that this prevented them from accessing supports needed to fully act on their equity objectives. The City could therefore play a leadership role in granting circles, inviting other funders to learn alongside them how granting strategies can better reflect a value for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

9. Streamline granting and capacity-building efforts happening across City of Vancouver departments

Across the City of Vancouver, 11 departments offer non-profit grants through a total of 49 grant streams. At present, this is little coordination between these departments at all, let alone on how they might bring a consistent approach to equity. This is, in part, what led to the internal Social Innovation Lab to Decolonize Granting at the City. Since, with the support of the Equity Office, all City departments will be exploring how they can further embed an equity lens into their work, now is an opportune time to coordinate across the units that work with non-profits to streamline how equity is addressed through granting and other capacity-building initiatives. Doing so can reduce redundancy, streamline communication, and ultimately support the City to act on equity in a more consistent way.

CONCLUSION

Vancouver's non-profits are at varying stages of their organizational journeys toward equity. It's clear, however, that the issue is top-of-mind, and many are actively working to ensure values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are reflected in their practices. Persistent challenges continue to bar organizations from fully realizing their equity goals, however, such as lack of time and resources to dedicate to organizational change, and a lack of clear guidance on how to best move this important work forward. And while developing an equity policy is a viable path towards embedding organizational values into practice, many non-profits seem to be focusing their efforts on more immediate or urgent actions that might build a foundation for policy such as evolving hiring practices, pursuing learning initiatives for staff and board members, and applying an equity lens to programming and communications. Ultimately, an equity policy is more effective when it reflects existing rather than aspirational organizational values, so this groundwork is equally important in achieving sustainable change.

The City of Vancouver is well-positioned to support community-based non-profits as they embark on their journeys towards equity. The recent creation of a central Equity Office, City Council's 2021 adoption of the Equity Framework, and the many initiatives currently underway across the City to support social justice and sustainability suggest an internal readiness for meaningful change.

Social Policy & Projects is poised to play an important role in this change by embedding an equity lens throughout its research and granting initiatives and by seeking out ways to fund equity work that will help these organizations make tangible social impacts. Social Policy is also well-placed to collaborate with grantors beyond the City as well as across City departments to help create more consistent and equity-informed granting processes that will ultimately benefit the non-profits it supports.

In its efforts to support the sector, however, the City must take care to meet non-profits where they are at. Organizational change works best when it is internally motivated, not another demand from external funders. Importantly, the City is also on its own learning journey when it comes to equity work. There is a significant opportunity here, then, for the City and the community-based non-profit sector to work in concert, learning from one another, and co-creating what more equity-informed social change work can look like. If equity is to be an outcome, it must be part of the process too.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DETAILED RESEARCH FINDINGS: ACTIONS & CHALLENGES FOR SELECTED EQUITY POLICY ELEMENTS

For additional inspiration and insight, the following is a full list of examples shared by organizations of the types of actions they are taking across the 5 elements of policy. At the end of each section, the list of challenges organizations identified is included too, based on what was shared in break-out discussions at the "Equity into Action" workshop held in June 2021 with 30 non-profits. If examples of actions taken or challenges are absent, this means that data for these topics were unavailable (e.g. were not included as break-out discussion topics). For Policy Elements 1-3, the body of the report presented all available data therefore no additional examples are provided here.

Policy Element 4 COMMITMENTS TO ACTION

Core Actions

ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATIONS

Actions taken | Centring equity in organizational values:

- Revising or re-writing core organizational values to include or centre equity. The equity values organizations identified and integrated into their core values include:

    o Equity, diversity and inclusion
    o Reconciliation
    o Community-engagement
    o Intersectionality
    o Accessibility to all
    o Place-based (programs are community-derived and aligned to community needs)
    o Collaboration between community members

- - Everyone has something to contribute

- We have formalized our core values of equity, inclusion, and diversity into a **values** statement that will inform all the work we do to advance our **mission**.

- To provide informed, authentic leadership for cultural equity, we strive to see diversity, inclusion, and equity as connected to our **mission** and critical to ensure the well-being of our staff and the communities we serve.

  Examples of how equity value is articulated:

- "We value diversity and strive to reflect the diversity of our community in our membership, our Boards of Directors, our Community Boards, our volunteers and our staff."

- "We expect all employees to lead with respect and tolerance in all their workplace interactions."

- Our vision is a resilient organizational culture, which is inclusive and diverse in all its aspects. Individual differences are not only accepted, but are strongly valued and encouraged. We recognize that our diversity, the many different and unique things we individually and collectively bring to work each day, contributes to building a stronger workplace and healthier communities.

Actions taken | How equity shows up in culture

- We work collaboratively and recognize power imbalances that can emerge based on personal and professional privileges. We actively work to decrease such power imbalances and create safe(r) spaces for everyone.

- We work "with" rather than "for" the community we serve.

- As an Indigenous organization, we are guided by principles upheld by the Elders of our respective nations. Our approach to services, staffing, and leadership reflects a shared commitment to diversity, respect, understanding, gratitude, and accountability. These common values and teachings protect our spirituality, our culture, and our land.

- We celebrate the richness of international cultures by organizing activities such as diversity potlucks, showcasing music, art, traditional dress, etc. thereby offering an opportunity for staff to honour their heritage and share and learn with one another.

- We attune to one another's personal lives to better understand the effects of oppression and to modify the impacts (both positive and negative) on all us as we organize against it.

- We respect and value the diverse life experiences of our employees, volunteers, partners, and clients. We are committed to creating a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace.

Challenges

- Deciding how deeply equity needs to be embedded in DNA/guiding statements
- If values are articulated, there is no guarantee that the staff share them

Core Actions

STRATEGY & THEORY OF CHANGE

Actions taken

- We are developing a new Strategic Plan with an Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) lens

- Our Strategic Plan includes specific deliverables associated with Truth and Reconciliation and anti-racism.

- Our strategic plan includes a number of implementation working groups, one of which is focused on equity. The equity implementation group ensures accountability on our equity initiatives, and also develops structures to build capacity and amplify voices of queer and racialized staff.

- We are embedding equity into our new strategic plan and will be using an equity lens to inform any new programming.

- As we enter into a new strategic planning phase, we will implement concrete practices to tackle systemic racism and entrenched prominent western world view toward a decolonized and more equitable organization.

- Under our new strategy, we have included Equity as one of four distinct areas of focus for our work. This builds on our existing equity principle, but this new area of focus calls on us to deepen and strengthen our total equity mandate.

- We are overhauling our organizational approach/mandate to address a gap that our community has named and is calling on us to fill. This change is in alignment with our anti-oppressive values and the needs of our team to do work we can truly stand behind.

- To support our reconciliation efforts, we brought in an Indigenous witness to give our board feedback our strategic planning process

Challenges:

- n/a – not included as a discussion topic

GOVERNANCE

Actions taken:

- Diversifying the makeup of the board (e.g. race, gender, socio-economic, ability)

- Reserving a number of seats for representatives of key equity-seeking communities, often prioritizing those that the organization strives to serve. For example, an organization dedicated to ending gender-based violence might strive to have a number of survivors of sexual violence on the board, while a youth-serving organization might strive to recruit young people with diverse racial and gender identities.

- Seeking out key community leaders (e.g. Indigenous elders or BIPOC community leaders) to advise the organization on how to best serve their respective communities

- Developing a transparent nomination process for prospective board members and conduct outreach beyond the usual circles to attract the diversity needed

- Dedicating resources to running equity or decolonization training for the board

- Dedicating time and resources to help the board foster an equity focus

- Developing a skills framework for the organization (including the board) that names diversity as bringing valuable skills/perspectives to the work

- Conducting an audit of the board roles and responsibilities; identifying opportunities to change

- Having the board pull together organizational policies falling under 'equity'

- Exploring the potential to develop an external community advisory group to help the us transition to a non-hierarchical model and to guide us on revising our membership model to better reflect values of equity, intersectionality, and decolonization

- Developing an Indigenous Advisory Committee as an extension of our Community Board

Challenges:

- Lack of diversity at board and senior leadership levels means it's hard to break through the limiting perspective that this brings (e.g. predominantly White)

- An established board brings with it an established culture that is hard to change

- Hard to attract diversity to the board when, for example, racialized folks have been excluded for a long time

- Knowledge gap: board members 'don't know what they don't know'

- Holding the board accountable on equity initiatives

- Needing to ensure that efforts to diversify the board are more than tokenism

- Emotional labour for equity-seeking board members can lead to burn out

- Organizational equity policies are not necessarily operationalized at the board level and more accountability mechanisms are needed

- Lack of certainly on how often to review or develop new board policies

- Governance structure needs another level that includes a diversity lens

Core Actions

FINANCES

Actions taken:

- Naming financial sustainability as key to distributing resources to equity-seeking groups

- Developing systems to flow resources to equity-seeking groups wherever possible (e.g. through contracts/services provided to the organization or by resourcing key groups like youth to support the organization in its mandate)

- Actively seeking out and prioritizing funding opportunities that enable outreach and project work with, by, and for underrepresented groups

- Making funding available to grassroots groups by sharing our charitable status via grant trusteeships

- Engaging our funders in issues of diversity; e.g. sharing our equity policy and other equity work we are undertaking

- Undertaking a participatory wage setting and budgeting process when a loss of revenue due to COVID required budget cuts

- Designating funds to work with consultants / community advisors who can guide us in working towards equity

- Finding funding to create initiatives that reach equity-seeking groups

- Reviewing the operations budget through an equity lens (e.g. Is accessibility such as closed captioning and translation being considered a non-negotiable expense/what costs get cut when the budget tightens?)

Challenges:

- A lack of data/statistics about smaller/less visible equity-seeking groups makes it hard to make the case for funding this work

- Funders are not always aligned with our sector

- Lack of flexible funding as priorities are dictated by funders

- Funding comes with KPIs (key performance indicators) from funders, which can limit organizational vision and work toward longer-term goals

- Confusion about the City's role and responsibilities

- Communication between City staff (as funder) and organization happens at the senior management level which means purpose of funding may not be effectively communicated to the organization's staff. This also reinforces hierarchy and doesn't foster an environment of equity and inclusion.

- Balancing a desire to ensure donors are value-aligned with the urgent need for funding

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Internal Actions

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RECRUITMENT & HIRING

Actions taken:

General

- Conducting an equity, diversity, and inclusion audit of hiring and volunteer recruitment practices

- Identifying systemic and other barriers to employment and taking steps to remove them (e.g. reviewing job postings/descriptions, accessing training, doing targeted advertising)

Staff and volunteer demographic representation

- Striving towards a staff and volunteer team that reflects the demographics of communities served by the organization as a way to ensure culturally relevant programming and equity values are lived out in their internal and external work

- Setting targets for how many / what percentage of staff/volunteers should come from certain equity-seeking groups, especially if a particular group was the primary community served (e.g. former sex workers, youth, Indigenous)

Recruitment and job postings

- Ensuring the necessary time and resources are allocated to support intentional recruitment of equity-seeking groups

- Including diversity or equity statements in job and volunteer postings to attract diverse candidates

- Recognizing both formal education and lived experience as valid sources of knowledge and experience when hiring new staff

- Inviting applicants to self-identify as being from an equity seeking group and tracking such applications to evaluate our outreach efforts

- Including a salary range for all job postings

- Inviting alternate types of job applications (e.g. audio/visual) from candidates

- Promoting ourselves as an "equal opportunity employer" in accordance with the Employment Equity Act of Canada.

Interview process/hiring decisions

- Receiving training on how unconscious bias may inadvertently influence hiring processes

- Ensuring policies of non-discrimination are applied to hiring

- Redacting applicant names and gender referents to reduce bias

- Making interview process less stressful (e.g. sending questions in advance, having applicants complete an assignment instead of an interview)

Employee and volunteer onboarding

- Ensuring new employee and volunteer orientation outlines the value of diversity in the workplace, including recognizing and accepting differences and stressing diversity-specific accountability for staff and volunteers

Volunteer engagement

- For organizations who engage volunteers, providing low-barrier volunteer positions so the communities served can also have a hand in giving back and developing their skills

Challenges:

- Setting hiring targets to reflect the demographic makeup of the local community is easier said than done with so many different communities being served, and the influence of intersecting identities. How do you prioritize? How do we ensure this is actually serving the needs of the community and not a tokenizing effort?

- Board struggles with how to implement equity in hiring practices in the context of legality and liability

- Hard to find staff who speak specific languages relevant to the community

- While frontline staff are diverse, the leadership/board is not and therefore it's hard to attract diversity if prospective applicants do not see themselves represented in leadership roles

- Neurodiverse applicants/physically disabled candidates are struggling to be included.

Internal Actions

HUMAN RESOURCES

Actions taken:

Staffing (general)

- Ensuring staff are personally connected to the communities that participate in our programming (e.g. Youth staff work directly with youth communities; Queer and trans staff of colour work with sexually and gender diverse communities)

Employee policies

- Writing staff and volunteer handbooks in gender-neutral language

- Requiring staff to complete an Indigenous cultural competency training within 2 years of hiring

- Maintaining an environment free from all forms of discriminatory treatment, behaviour or practice. Discrimination does not have to be intentional. It can result from practices or policies that appear to be neutral but, in reality, have a negative effect on groups or individuals based on race, religion, gender, etc.

- Making accommodations:

- o Supporting employees' diverse religious observances through flexible work hours and the opportunity to telecommute

- o Accommodating family and personal responsibilities (e.g. leave and flexible work hours wherever possible)

- Creating our employee manual with an intersectional lens; this includes a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy as well as an Intersectional Framework for hiring

Leadership

- Striving toward more diversity at leadership level by creating and supporting programs and policies that foster leadership for equity-seeking groups

- Adopting a shared leadership model to ensure all staff have a say in broader organizational issues/decisions (e.g. team-based collaboration on organizational goals) which allows the organization to benefit from the staff's diversity of knowledge, culture, and lived experience

- Reducing structural power imbalance inherent in hierarchies by implementing co-executive director positions or working towards eliminating hierarchy altogether

- Challenging assumptions about what it takes to be a strong leader and who can provide leadership

- Working toward resourcing peer-participants so that the program may one day be run entirely by people with lived experience. This will involve 1) an expansion of trained peers who can participate as speakers, coordinators and facilitators, and 2) the development of mentorship programs that increasingly take staff out of the training process.

HR—compensation & benefits

- Paying temporary staff higher hourly wages relative to permanent staff in order to account for the fact that they are in precarious roles and don't have access to benefits.

- Developing a job transition fund to support youth staff as they moved onto other opportunities (this organization's mandate was to serve youth)

- Paying staff fair wages with extended health benefits including dental and offering six weeks of paid holidays per year in order to support them in unplugging and restoring themselves from the impacts of their intense front-line work

- Developing an equitable pay scale by paying the staff who face the largest systemic barriers, the highest wages

- Offering casual/part-time staff job training programs that not only increase their skills for their work but will help them pursue a career path that moves them away from low-wage jobs

- Being a Living Wage Employer, with the lowest paid employee being paid more than the living wage

- Reviewing our job descriptions and pay grid to ensure that we provide equal pay for similar work

- Providing mentorship and professional development support to help staff build staff capacity (and sometimes to help them acquire formal credentials/training that will help them in their careers)

Advancement

- Developing a system to be more intentional and conscious of bias during the promotion and staff evaluation process.

Challenges:

- Limited opportunities to advance into leadership (and if staff don't see diverse leadership they may not seek out such positions)

- A strong push from staff to do more about equity across aspects of HR creates tensions with leadership

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Internal Actions

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LEARNING

Actions taken:

Learning (general)

- Situating our leadership team as learners has been important to the development of our equity strategy

- Learning from the communities we serve

Group reflection/discussion spaces

- Using group discussion to encourage staff to examine the organization through a justice/equity lens and to identify barriers to inclusive and equitable participation to programs and services

- Engaging as a team in uncomfortable dialogue about privilege, assumptions, equity, identifying and honoring intersectionality in our daily interactions

- Running "lunch and learns" to foster cross-cultural dialogue and awareness and to help staff become more attuned to diverse working and communication styles

- Running an organization-wide staff development session on the Black Lives Matter Movement and its impact on individuals, organizations, and society at large which opened up space for staff to express themselves in a supported way

- Actively reflecting on our own organizational behaviours through an anti-oppression framework, identifying ways in which we perpetuate what Jones and Okun call "characteristics of white supremacy culture" such as perfectionism and a sense of urgency, and trying to unlearn some of these biases we have absorbed

- Running a series of dialogue sessions for staff, board, and participants to discuss difficult questions and develop action plans to ensure our organization is working in right relations with Indigenous and other marginalized communities

- Creating "affinity caucuses" for staff to share experiences of how their intersecting identities impact their experience in our organization. Caucuses are intended to be safe spaces where staff members can both reflect on past and current practices to directly inform future directions of the organization. Examples of current affinity caucuses include 'POC' (People of Color) and 'SGD' (Sexual and Gender Diverse) caucuses, as well as respective allyship groups including a 'White caucus'' as well as a 'Straight caucus.'

Sharing resources / peer-based learning
- Creating an employee-led EDI library program

- Staff take turns sharing a news article, video, TedTalk and/or book recommendation that expands our knowledge on inequalities and embracing differences

- Developing and presenting sessions on DEI to provide information and resources internally

- Asking staff at weekly staff meetings to do the Land Acknowledgement and bring meaning to what that actually means when they say it.

Training & Education
- Offering training to various combinations of staff, senior leadership, board, volunteers, and partners to be able to offer programs, services, and an internal organizational culture that is equity-informed; some of these trainings were mandatory and others were optional

- Prioritizing training and education in instances where staff make-up lacked capacity to work with, affirm and/or meaningfully support members and clients from particular demographics

- Supporting staff from equity-seeking groups to enhance their leadership skills and ability to self-assert within the organization

- Prioritizing people from equity-seeking groups when hiring consultants, facilitators, etc. for internal purposes ('professional development')

- Pursuing webinars and online courses

- Training covered various topics including:
  - Cultural competency and safety
  - Diversity and inclusion (e.g. recognizing and accepting differences; diversity-specific accountability for staff)
  - Decolonization
  - Disability justice (an analytic framework that considers ableism as it relates to other forms of oppression)
  - Trans-inclusive advocacy and trans-inclusive workplaces
  - Systemic oppression / Anti-oppression
  - Equity
  - Gender inclusion
  - Allyship
  - Race/anti-racism; micro-aggressions in the workplace
  - Privilege
  - Implicit bias
  - Intersectionality
  - Digital equity
  - Trauma-informed practices
  - Inclusive language

Research
- We are researching best practices to inform our policies, procedures, and work culture

- Staff review research on racial and gender diversity and on how to apply diversity and equity into programming

Challenges

- Staff turn-over: How do you maintain a clear channel/consistency when you take into consideration staff changes/turnover?

- Training for boards and staff is costly and financially inaccessible for many agencies. Are their agencies being funded to help NPO's do this work?

- Training / learning initiatives take time; can't be done off the side of your desk
- How do we stay accountable?
- How to assess progress?
- Lack of leadership to push learning forward
- Lack of learning plan for the organization

Internal Actions

ACCESSIBILITY

Actions taken:

- Making our physical and virtual spaces more welcoming and inclusive to those with different identities and abilities via signage, public statements, and space design

- Conducting an accessibility audit of our space

- Using the Accessibility Benchmark recommended by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) to ensure our website, virtual and in-person meetings, events and workspaces are accessible to all

- Installing gender-neutral washrooms with corresponding signage (e.g. "Gender diverse people welcome")

- Offering translated materials and interpretation services in many languages including ASL

- Inclusive signage:

  o Displaying signage in multiple languages
  o Adapting signage to be more accessible to seniors with dementia
  o Building moveable signs that can be wheeled in/out of the space as needed
  o Displaying signage is welcoming to those from the LGBTQIA2S+ community

- Ensuring our facilities are accessible to all. In circumstances where service locations may have access barriers due to factors beyond our control, we make every attempt to provide alternative or modified offerings of our services or ameliorate those limitations to the best of our ability.

- Taking our clientele's diverse needs into consideration when designing our new building

- Inviting an Indigenous witness to review our drop-in space and give staff feedback on how to align our centre with Indigenous competencies and our vision for reconciliation-in-action

- Practicing the concept of "access needs" — saying what you need to feel comfortable in the space in that moment which normalizes the fact that we all have different needs to "show up" (e.g. need to turn camera off, need to fidget). In addition, it also creates an open space for someone for stigmatized access needs to come forward easily (e.g. speak louder for hearing aids, need to stretch because of arthritis, etc.).

- Offering staff "the right to pass" during team discussions as some folks with intersectional identities may feel vulnerable to speak up on certain topics. We are striving to create a space where your work ethic is not judged by how active your participation is in group meetings.

Challenges:

- Majority of members don't have internet access and are therefore excluded from many things

- Significant 'tech hesitancy' among members/clients

- Lack of resources to support seniors to engage in online programs and support

- Participants/members speak many languages and staff/volunteer language skills don't cover this breadth

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External Actions

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PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Actions taken:

Anti-oppressive programming

- Developing programs with an anti-oppressive lens that works carefully to hold and structure spaces that are safer for staff and community members who experience multiple axes of oppression

- Inviting participants to share parts of their identities that they feel comfortable sharing, including: pronouns, access needs, relationship to territory, communities they are connected to and communities they would like to be connected to. This has helped us hold space that is reflexive to feedback and responsive to participant needs.

- Creating spaces with community that are representative of the communities most impacted by systemic oppression (e.g. Two-Spirit Healing Circle, 2SQTBIPOC Youth Space, Black & Indigenous feast days)

- Making our program intake forms gender neutral

- Not requiring that individuals be sober to access our cultural programming

Celebrating diversity

- Our programs encourage diverse social interactions in an intercultural environment to practice cross-cultural communication. Cultural traditions and perspectives are respected and incorporated within our class settings (such as sharing food from different cultures and celebrating important religious or cultural holidays)

- Celebrating diverse cultural holidays throughout the year (Lunar New Year, Diwali, Orange Shirt Day, Indigenous Peoples Day and Pride)

- Taking into account diverse religious holidays and culture-specific dietary needs when planning meetings and events

Community capacity-building

- Providing training and support for participants to build skills that may lead to part-time or permanent employment

- Running a peer program that promotes equity by giving additional supports and opportunities to individuals that face discrimination to achieve meaningful employment

- Welcoming youth program participants back as mentors, which helps build up leaders within their own communities and peer groups

Community-specific programming

- Ensuring our programs, processes, policies and practices are tailored to meet the diverse needs of our community

- Offering specialized programming for specific identity groups to ensure they feel safe in receiving treatment and support (e.g. LGBTQ2S+, Indigenous communities, Father's circle)

- Embodying a strength-based practice in all programs to promote the self-determination of participants.

- Having staff with lived experience and community connections to lead on projects

Indigenous lens

- We adhere to The First Nations Principles of [OCAP](#)™ (Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession) which means we co-design all aspects and methodologies related to program facilitation, community outreach & engagement, support and provisions delivery, data collection and analysis, and report dissemination.

- To address racial disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth, we reserve one-third of our enrolment space to Indigenous-identified youth

- Through our program, and with the support of our Indigenous networks, we assist Indigenous women to access Coast Salish ceremonies as well as we help to organize other Indigenous ceremonies such as smudges, moon ceremony, sun dance, and sweats

- Employing an Elder in Residence to advise us on cultural aspects our programs

- Running Indigenous reconciliation programs and events (e.g. KAIROS Blanket Exercise, Indigenous basket weaving, Aboriginal family support programs, guest speakers, and related program materials)

- As many of those who access our supports are Indigenous, we use the Indigenous model of community organizing which focuses on the four directions. This approach allows us to focus on the physical safety of our community and it accounts for the spiritual, mental, and emotional sides of those we encounter.

- Hiring Indigenous staff to deliver Indigenous-focused programs

- Meaningfully engaging Elders and Youth in development, delivery and evaluation of programs

- Having local elders and Indigenous community members be involved in our programs (e.g. land acknowledgements, advisory groups)

- Recognizing the differences across Indigenous communities in Canada; not seeing the Indigenous experience as homogenous

Barrier-free programming

- All of our snacks are now halal

- Affordable / Free events and programs (e.g. pay what you can)

- All programs seek to include a bilingual component to serve our multi-lingual community // In addition to running English language classes, we run classes in different languages relevant to our community

- All our programs must complete an accessibility checklist

- Our membership fee structure is on a sliding scale. No member is required to pay the fee if they do not have funds to do so making membership accessible to all.

- We tailor our outreach to engage more vulnerable groups who often face barriers to participation (e.g. single parent households, at-risk youth, isolated seniors, non-English speakers, persons with disabilities, persons experiencing mental health or additions, marginally housed/persons experiencing homelessness, racialized groups, LGBTQIA+, etc.)

Consultation & Community expertise

- To address any gaps in knowledge among our staff, we consult Indigenous community leaders, hire translators and learn about the needs of equity-seeking groups in our community.

- In prioritizing process over outputs, we are also seeking to engage community in our program development processes (e.g. engaging YFN members in grant applications specific to youth projects)

- Compensation of the time/labor that a group/individual provides engaging with us – e.g. when we want to get consultation from folks with lived experiences or invite them to provide their input on a project/program

- We have a client advisory group whom we consult with on our programs and processes to ensure their perspectives are taken into account in decision making

Services

- Offering a sliding scale rate for our services for groups that are grassroots or face financial barriers

- We shift services to meet people where they are at as opposed to maintaining rigid processes.

- We strive to eliminate any barriers to our services. We have no membership fees, all our programs are free, and we provide meals, transit tickets and materials to our participants.

- Holding workshops/events/webinars on aspects of equity most relevant to the organization's work (e.g. gender inclusion, youth engagement)

- Offering food security supports to participants (non-perishable food kits or chef's choice meal kits for the week)

- Offering a number of Black-led groups free access to our workshops to reduce barriers to Vancouver's Black community

Challenges:

- Lack of funding to hire Indigenous cultural liaisons
- Staff need more support and time to learn about Canada's colonial history
- Changing the organization's programming and practices can mean an interruption of programs/services

PARTNERSHIPS

Actions taken:

- Striving to partner with other organizations that share our commitment to diversity and inclusion

- Encouraging our partner organizations who are exclusionary of gender-diverse people to change these exclusionary practices

- Collaborating and building connections with Indigenous communities whose territories we reside on

- Pooling our resources and expanding offerings for underrepresented constituents by connecting with other organizations in our sector committed to diversity and inclusion efforts

- Prioritizing community partnerships that centre leadership from diverse communities.

- Working with partner organizations to advocate for systemic change

- Working with outside agencies who can offer specialized services where we lack expertise within our agency (e.g. translation or consultation on specific issues)

Challenges:

- n/a – not included as a discussion topic

EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS & ADVOCACY

Actions taken:

Communications

- Ensuring our public communications reflect the diversity of our community

- Communicating, when appropriate, in different languages

- Disseminating information about our equity policies to our funders and regulatory bodies

- Including preferred pronouns in our organization's email signatures (and running a training about this for staff in advance of rolling this out)

- Auditing our outreach and communications to ensure that these are accessible to diverse communities

- Committing to "learning out loud" -- If we make a mistake, we intentionally communicate the error with various stakeholders with the intent of sharing our learning and acknowledge what we'll do moving forward

Advocacy

- Publishing articles and podcasts on equity and intersectionality to raise awareness of these issues and how they relate to our work

- Releasing public statements on issues of note, which we believe is important if we are to be consistent with these values

- Advocating for our clients when they are impacted by barriers embedded in policies and practices that prevent them from accessing supports

- Including equity as one of our new policy priority areas that define and guide our work

- Engaging in building solidarity with larger calls to action for systemic change within and beyond our sector

- Releasing statements and the actions our organization will be taking and what actions community members can take

Challenges:

- Using social media there can be a pressure to respond immediately. Need to balance with research, accountability, and authenticity

- Navigating the desire to speak up about important issues but not overshare or be performative

- It can take up to a year to have an organizational change approved after making a statement or taking a stance on an issue publicly

- Risk of angering funders when taking a stance or making public solidarity statements

- Fear of being denied or removal of charitable status if doing advocacy work

Element 5 IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY ON EQUITY GOALS

Leadership & Accountability

Actions taken:

- We implemented a Diversity & Inclusion Committee and a Decolonization Committee made up of staff, Elders, and leadership across our programs with diverse lived experiences and specialization. This group has identified diversity gap in our board which the board is now acting on.

- We have created an inter divisional staff Diversity & Inclusion Committee and Anti-Racism Working Group, which is tasked with developing action plans to further the organization's efforts in achieving equity.

- We have formed three aligned cross-departmental committees – gender inclusion committee, racial equity committee, and truth and reconciliation committee. These groups are working to apply a more intersectional and anti-oppressive lens into our internal practices and external community work.

- TRC committee's role: coordinate TRC training for employees and explores how we can advocate alongside Indigenous leaders for substantive equality; integrates TRC calls to action; implemented a monitoring & evaluation process to ensure we meet our goals in this area

- Racial equity committee: makes recommendations, guides racial equity work, and coordinates training, reviewing internal systems and structures and developing a framework for action for staff and board to implement.

- Committee might audit structures/practices across the org (e.g. culture and values, mission and purpose, governance, accountability, hiring and recruitment, HR, programs, communications and brand)

- Hired a staff this summer to help further our work in Anti-Racism and Community Engagement this summer and to help us with that process.

Challenges:

- Small organizations have a greater challenge putting together committees and processes

- For those with lived experience of marginalization, putting together or even serving on a committee can be a significant amount of emotional labour – especially when everyone isn't on the same page

- Little capacity to undertake this work during COVID as demands for services have increased, funding has been reduced, and staff are very stretched

- Lack of resources to hire consultants

Monitoring and evaluating progress on equity

Actions taken:

- Hiring a consultant to conduct an initial equity audit that covers many aspects of our internal and external work

- Monitoring the demographic makeup of our staff/board to ensure that it is reflective of the communities we serve (e.g. age, gender, race, sexual orientation, disability, religion)

- Embedding equity goals/targets into staff / team / committee portfolios, and leadership / board is held accountable.

- Looking to program participants, who have experienced discrimination and exclusion, to help us highlight where existing policies, practices, structures, and systems are having a negative impact on certain groups. They are a part of articulating changes and engaging with community members to bring about change.

- Conducting an employee survey to gather demographic, accessibility, and mental wellness feedback.

- Holding a focus group for staff from systemically marginalized groups to discover how they have adapted to the work culture and use their feedback to improve organizational practices

- Hiring an Indigenous witness to provide feedback on how the space and strategic planning process could better reflect reconciliation-in-action

- Reviewing our equity and inclusion statement yearly and continuing to designate funds to work with consultants and contractors who can guide us in the ongoing process of working towards being and serving a more diverse community.

- Running dialogue sessions with our community to identify key issues and barriers they are facing, and to define better practices to address these issues at an individual, organizational, and community level.

- Creating opportunities for those least likely to be heard to share their specific concerns, which becomes data we can measure against

- Periodically reviewing existing policies and procedures to ensure they are in line with our equity values

- Using Statistics Canada data to understand which communities need certain supports

Challenges:

- Hard to think through and operationalize
- Difficulty knowing what kind of data to collect
- Hesitation to collect demographic data as it is more sensitive and asking can be intrusive
- Resistance from board in general
- Monitoring and evaluation are resource-intensive (time/labour)
- Working remotely due to COVID makes it hard to implement evaluation
- Lacking knowledge and confidence to select and deploy evaluation tools in a strategic way

APPENDIX B

EQUITY POLICY RESOURCES FOR NON-PROFITS

Defining key terms

BerkeleyHaas's Equity Fluent Leader Glossary of Key Terms
https://haas.berkeley.edu/equity/industry/efl-knowledge-bank/glossary-of-key-terms/

Racial Equity Tools Glossary https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary

Organizational self-assessment/audit tools

Centre for Global Inclusion. (2021). "Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World."
https://centreforglobalinclusion.org/

CommunityWise Resource Centre. (2017). Anti-Racist Organizational Change Resources: Tools for Nonprofits. (Story of organizational change/process, tools for organizations to self-assess and plan for change; uses the "onion model" described in this report) https://communitywise.net/learning-from-aroc/

Thomas, B. & Lopes, T. (2006). *Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations.* Between the Lines Press. https://btlbooks.com/book/dancing-on-live-embers

Racial Equity Tools. (no date). Organizational assessment tools and resources. (a database of equity and justice tools/resources)
https://www.racialequitytools.org/resources/plan/informing-the-plan/organizational-assessment-tools-and-resources

Equity policy template

Bloomerang (no date). "Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity Policy Template." (designed for small non-profits) https://bloomerang.co/resources/templates/diversity-inclusion-and-equity-policy-template/

Additional reading

COCo. (2019). "Why we don't believe in having an anti-oppression policy."
https://coco-net.org/why-we-dont-believe-in-an-anti-oppression-policy/

Equity in the Center (2020). "Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture." https://equityinthecenter.org/aww/

National Council of Nonprofits. (no date). "Why Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Matter for Nonprofits." (Guidance and links to useful readings/tools) https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/why-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-matter-nonprofits

NEO Law Group. (2018). "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Nonprofit Bylaws." (How to integrate equity into existing policies/bylaws) https://nonprofitlawblog.com/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-nonprofit-bylaws/

Pillar Nonprofit Network. (no date). "Best practices in equity and inclusion for the nonprofit sector." (guidance and links to resources with a Canadian perspective) https://network.pillarnonprofit.ca/equity-and-inclusion/best-practices-in-equity-and-inclusion-for-the-nonprofit-sector/

USC Southern California School of Social Work. (2020). "Diversity Toolkit: A Guide to Discussing Identity, Power, and Privilege." (a DIY workshop guide to facilitate reflection with staff team) https://msw.usc.edu/mswusc-blog/diversity-workshop-guide-to-discussing-identity-power-and-privilege/

APPENDIX C

RESOURCES NON-PROFITS SHARED

The following resources, tools, and organizations were mentioned by community-based non-profits in various facets of the research process.

Local equity-related educators / workshops

AMSSA

- Safe Harbour: Respect for All workshop
- Cultural Safety: Diversity and Inclusion workshop
- Customized workshops

Bakau Consulting (formerly Cicely Blain Consulting)

- Anti-oppression 101 workshop
- leadership/staff training on DEI

BCIT
- Indigenous Cultural Competency training

Canadian Diversity Initiative

- Unconscious bias
- Respect and Inclusion in the workplace
- Diversity and Inclusion training for volunteers
- LGBT+ Diversity and Inclusion training for workplaces
- Canadian Indigenous Cultural Training: The Truth & Reconciliation Edition

Hawa Mire
- Actioning Diversity Training

Michelle Nahanee / Nahanee Creative

- Decolonizing Practices workshop

Mi'Tel'Newx (MTN) Leadership Society
- Transforming Leadership training

[Monique Gray Smith](#)

- "The Ripple Effect of Resilience - An Indigenous Perspective" online course

[Qmunity](#)
- Queer competency training

[San'yas](#)

- Indigenous Cultural Safety Training

[Intercultural Strategies](#)
- Belonging Matters Training

Equity resources/tools

- Gender Inclusivity:
    - [Qmunity](#) – BC's Queer, Trans, and Two-Spirit Resource Centre
- Accessibility:
    - Accessibility Benchmark recommended by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities ([CARF](#)) to ensure websites, virtual and in-person meetings, events and workspaces are accessible to all.

Communications & Advocacy Resources

- [Carnegie Community Centre's Youtube Channel: Elder Chats series](#)
- [TOOLBOX](#) for anyone who wants to do things more creatively and collaboratively in their team or organization. (It's a collection of methods and activities)

Alternative data collection tools (for evaluation/accountability)

- [Slam books](#) (a notebook that is passed around by youth in which participants pose and answer questions to one another on an issue)
- [Clothesline Project](#) (adapted)
- Talking Maps ("*mappa de parlante*") get participants to draw or map the issue and why its important with key notes

APPENDIX D

RESOURCES FOR FUNDERS

Below is an initial list of resources that may be useful as Social Policy's grants team works to further embed equity into its granting program and processes.

InWithForward. (2020). "Six opportunities to deepen equity and impact." Preliminary report on the BetaPhil project with Vancouver Foundation and InWithForward. Retrieved from: https://www.betaphil.org/blog-all/68zd1pxhnk8ytob86makputyzzie7r

Nonprofit AF & RVC Seattle (2021) Equitable Grantmaking Continuum. (grantor self-assessment tool) Retrieved from: https://nonprofitaf.com/2021/03/funders-heres-a-tool-to-make-your-grantmaking-more-equitable/

Pall, R. (2019 – Oct 16). "Rethinking equity: the changing role of funders in philanthropy." *Charity Village.* Retrieved from: https://charityvillage.com/rethinking_equity_the_changing_role_of_funders_in_philanthropy/

Philanthropic Foundations of Canada. (2019). Governance and Grantmaking: Approaches to achieve greater diversity, equity and inclusion. A toolkit for Canadian Philanthropic Foundations. Retrieved from: https://pfc.ca/resources/pfc-publications/

Sen, R. & Villarosa, L. (2019). "Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens: A Practical Guide." *Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity.* Retrieved from: https://racialequity.org/grantmaking-with-a-racial-justice-lens/