



NOVA SCOTIA RAINBOW ACTION PROJECT

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT



INTRODUCTION

Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project (NSRAP) has had a very active and busy year in 2016-17. We mounted a major campaign, were a consistent voice in the media on Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (2SLGBTQIA+) issues, launched a training program to educate organizations on gender and sexuality and continued one-on-one advocacy with individuals from our communities.

In 2016, NSRAP started using the following revised mission statement, which highlights a stronger commitment to fighting for justice for our community members.

The Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project (NSRAP) seeks equity, justice, and human rights for 2SLGBTQIA+ people in Nova Scotia. NSRAP seeks to create change in our communities and our society at large so that all 2SLGBTQIA+ people are included, valued, and celebrated. We will achieve this through building community and developing strong networks outside of the community in addition to public outreach, education, and political action.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NSRAP Board of Directors in the 2016-17 year included:

Executive

Aine Morse – Co-Chair (resigned March 2017)
Emily Davidson – Co-Chair / Chair after March 2017
Michelle Leard – Vice President (resigned October 2016)
Tameera Mohamed – Vice President, after October 2016
Susanne Litke – Treasurer
Lewis Rendell – Secretary
Dee Morse – Member At Large (resigned March 2017), Truro

Directors

Ardath Whynacht
Craig Besaw – Sydney
Beatrix Yuan (resigned August 2016)
Allen Mandeville (joined October 2017 to fill vacant seat)
Michael Davies-Cole (joined October 2017 to fill vacant seat)
Rhys Alden (joined October 2017 to fill vacant seat)
Bertie Deveaux (joined October 2017 to fill vacant seat)

All members based in Halifax, unless otherwise noted.

CAMPAIGNS

NSRAP received a grant from the Canada Summer Jobs program to hire a Campaigns Coordinator. Jessica Durling, local trans rights activist and journalism student filled the position. NSRAP undertook work on two campaigns, running an anti-pinkwashing campaign to completion and beginning development of a campaign to include non-binary gender makers on Nova Scotian ID.

THERE'S NO PRIDE IN PINKWASHING CAMPAIGN

In spring 2016, NSRAP signed onto a letter supporting Queer Arabs of Halifax in their request to Halifax Pride to disallow the distribution of materials that promoted LGBTQ tourism to Israel and framed the state of Israel as a gay-friendly destination (including materials from the Size Doesn't Matter campaign) at the Halifax Pride Community Fair. Following Halifax Pride's decision to defer this issue to a community meeting after the Pride festival and to their Annual General Meeting (AGM) in the fall, NSRAP launched a petition and campaign in support of the Queer Arabs of Halifax, against practices of pinkwashing at Halifax Pride.

The NSRAP petition called for Halifax Pride to reject the inclusion of any organizations that promoted and directly, or indirectly, supported armed conflict where human rights and international humanitarian laws are being violated; and publicly commit to prioritizing queer and trans people of colour within the activities planned and supported by Halifax Pride. NSRAP collected over 500 signatures on this petition including in person and online signatures. NSRAP highlighted the anti-pinkwashing campaign at all Halifax Pride events in which NSRAP participated during the course of the

festival, including: the speech at the flag raising, the TimeOut lecture series, the Pride Parade and the Community Fair. NSRAP board members spoke at an action planned by Queer Arabs of Halifax outside the gates of the Community Fair.

Throughout the campaign NSRAP distributed information and did education on human rights abuses by the state of Israel, and how Israel uses supposed LGBTQ friendliness to 'pinkwash' (ie. draw attention away from) violations of international humanitarian law. Shortly after the Halifax Pride festival concluded, NSRAP supported an educational event hosted by Queer Arabs of Halifax on pinkwashing and the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement.

In August 2016, NSRAP board members met with Halifax Pride board members to discuss the NSRAP petition and to talk about upcoming Community Meeting and Halifax Pride Annual General Meeting. Both boards discussed and agreed upon the value of creating and implementing a set of guidelines for participation of organizations and businesses in Halifax Pride that would create a baseline of solidarity with the LGBTQ community for participants. The Halifax Pride board requested that NSRAP share this idea at the Community Meeting and put forward a motion to the Annual General Meeting to develop and implement participation guidelines for the Halifax Pride Festival.

NSRAP organized community members to attend the Halifax Pride Community Meeting and the Halifax Pride AGM to show solidarity and support Queer Arabs of Halifax and the anti-pinkwashing campaign. At least 100 campaign supporters attended the 2016 Halifax Pride Annual General Meeting. The Atlantic Jewish Council also organized

members to attend the Halifax Pride AGM. The motion put forward by NSRAP did not pass.

Following the Halifax Pride AGM, on October 19, 2017 NSRAP released a statement calling for Halifax Pride to:

1. Recognize the illegitimacy of the AGM proceedings, including the board elections, and acknowledge that this illegitimacy represents an abject failure of Halifax Pride to meet its mandate;
2. Immediately call for a Special General Meeting to facilitate changes to the Board to ensure inclusivity through the allocation of seats for Black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) Board members. This policy on Director appointments must see that BIPOC positions are filled before the society is able to proceed with any of its work;
3. Amend its membership criteria at this Special General Meeting so that 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals are ensured the opportunity to have their concerns heard and addressed directly by the Board of Directors. In the event that the Board is unable to address the concerns, a non-oppositional, non-hierarchical space will be facilitated in which the concerns can be mediated by a third party.

In order to be consistent with our recommendations to Halifax Pride, NSRAP sought to revise our own bylaws to enshrine participation of BIPOC members at the Board level, and to remodel membership criteria to prioritize 2SLGBTQIA+ people within our organization. Investigation concluded that simply creating a BIPOC representative position on the Board of Directors NSRAP would be tokenizing and would not lead to a culture of meaningful collaboration among 2SLGBTQIA+ activists

of different races. Additionally, the Societies Act of Nova Scotia does not allow for membership requirements limited to persons of a certain identity. NSRAP chose not to remodel our membership requirements but recognizes that adding the statement of purpose and objects of the society as an appendix to our bylaws would help clarify the intention of the society, which all members of NSRAP must uphold.

Given our own organizational experience it is clear that our demands of Halifax Pride need to be re-examined to determine if the current demands provide the best course of action to push for accountability between Halifax Pride and the broader 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Re-examine previous demands of Halifax Pride to determine if these provide the best course of action to create change in our communities and our society at large so that all 2SLGBTQIA+ people are included, valued, and celebrated.

Continue to work in solidarity with Queer Arabs of Halifax and seek relationships of coalition and solidarity with other BIPOC lead 2SLGBTQIA+ groups throughout the province.

Continue to seek meaningful ways organizations can implement structures that centre experiences and participation of BIPOC people. Work towards implementing those structures within NSRAP and advocate that Halifax Pride take similar steps.

NON-BINARY GENDER MARKER CAMPAIGN

Campaigns Coordinator, Jessica Durling wrote a campaign plan and drafted petition text to campaign the provincial government on the creation of a non-binary gender marker option for Nova Scotia government issued identification. This campaign was not officially launched due to a lack of capacity at the Board level to bring this campaign to fruition.

RECOMMENDATION:

Review and update the campaign plan in order to launch a campaign for Non-Binary Gender Markers on Nova Scotia ID.

COMMUNITY ISSUES

In 2016-17 community members continued to reach out to NSRAP for advice, referrals, one-on-one advocacy and requests to join or spearhead broader initiatives. Requests from community ranged widely in topics including:

- Issues of sexual assault for queer and trans people;
- senior care for LGBTQ elders;
- promotion and support for queer and trans people of colour in the arts;
- best practices for gender neutral washroom signage;
- trans workers rights and best practices for trans inclusion in workplaces;
- improving conditions for incarcerated queer and trans prisoners; and
- homelessness and housing for queer and trans youth.

The following two themes are highlighted based on high frequency of requests or correspondence on these topics.

TRANS HEALTH

NSRAP fielded over 25 requests for one-on-one advocacy support on issues of health for Transgender Nova Scotians. Many of these requests for support required continued communication from the NSRAP board. These requests included referrals to services such as legal aid, mental health professionals, and trans-inclusive shelters along with advice navigating access to medical transition and trans affirming clothing like chest binders and gaffs, schools and the education system, and name and gender marker changes. Many requests came from parents of young people that were seeking support for themselves to learn more about being transgender and other ways of supporting their children.

NSRAP also received requests from individuals seeking to generate broader campaign initiatives on issues of trans health. These campaigns would include NSRAP spearheading advocacy to address gaps in current MSI coverage of gender affirming surgery and to address shortcomings in the gate-keeper model; continuing to push for a system that centres the needs of trans people and operates as an informed consent model. Initiatives

are also needed to address how trans health care is taught to care providers in university and those already working in the field of health care.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Reactivate NSRAP health committee with goal of public campaign on addressing needs brought forward by the community on issues of trans health.

Continue one-on-one advocacy by tasking a board member with a focused portfolio dedicated to deal with correspondence and offer support and referrals for community member. Work towards hiring a part-time staff member to take on one-on-one advocacy, referrals and support work.

**TRANSMISOGYNY,
TRANSPHOBIA AND ONLINE
VIOLENCE**

Since January 2017, NSRAP has witnessed an intense spike in incidences of online hate, violence and threats against trans people (especially trans women, trans femmes and non-binary people) in our communities. The tensions deepened by reactions to a community member's Facebook post in March 2017. Several NSRAP Board members resigned and many were caught up in the discourse, causing harm and discontent, as well as having a negative impact on NSRAP as an organization. A former Board member launched a letter writing campaign and Board members received personal correspondence from community members calling on NSRAP to take action on these issues and to

support trans people experiencing online violence.

In March 2017 NSRAP released a statement condemning online violence against trans people and stating our continued commitment to supporting and including trans women and trans femmes within our organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Hold a private accountability/ resolution session for present and past NSRAP board members who were involved or affected by the Facebook posts to mediate the conflict with the aim of repairing relationships to enable future work with NSRAP and within the broader community (motion passed at May NSRAP board meeting).

Continue with the commitments put forward in our public statement, including: aiming to make NSRAP more welcoming to trans women and trans femmes and working to examine and address manifestations of transphobia and transmisogyny within 2SLGBTQIA+ spaces.

Hold a public event on how to build a collective strategy for combating online violence (especially transphobic and transmisogynistic hate), lateral violence within communities and the effects of incidences of discord in community organizing.

Hold a session for new Board members annually to cover orientation, legal obligations and Board member responsibilities.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

NSRAP struck a Training Committee in December 2016, which developed training curricula and facilitated training sessions for Halifax-based organizations and businesses. NSRAP has received significant interest and requests for training, educational resources and consultation services throughout the past 2 years. Training requests have mostly focused on increasing understanding of gender and sexuality, with the aim of trans inclusion and LGBTQ cultural competence in workplaces.

NSRAP provided training sessions on gender and sexuality for employment support organizations: Team Work Cooperative, Job Junction, and Opportunity Place as well as Scotiabank and Metro Regional Housing Authority. Throughout the first quarter of 2017, training provided a significant source of funds for the organization. Organizations gave positive feedback about training sessions facilitated by NSRAP. However, coordinating and facilitating training sessions proved time consuming, labour intensive and challenging for volunteer Board members commit to on an ongoing basis.

NSRAP has grant funding to develop a training manual and resources to improve LGBTQ cultural competencies for senior care workers. There is an opportunity to expand the scope of training and education to include both general gender and sexuality training for organizations and specific training for those who work with LGBTQ elders.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Task Summer Education Coordinator (Canada Summer Jobs position) with setting up NSRAP training program, developing curriculum and outreach strategy and to beginning work deliverables on LGBTQ seniors cultural competency grant.

Create a long-term part-time employee position to continue develop training and education resources, facilitate training sessions, and outreach to organizations requiring training across the province.

PROVINCIAL PRIDE CELEBRATIONS

TRURO

Board members and community members participated in the first ever Truro Pride Parade, on Saturday, July 6, 2016. The NSRAP contingent was a lively group of about 10 people including members traveling from Halifax and Dee Morse, who, at the time, was a board member based in Truro. The community turnout for the event was high and the experience was very positive and celebratory.

HALIFAX

In July 2016, NSRAP had an introductory letter published in the Pride Guide, highlighting the history of NSRAP and grassroots LGBTQ activism. NSRAP spoke at the flag raising ceremony delivering statements of solidarity with Queer Arabs of Halifax in their campaign against pinkwashing at Halifax Pride, with Black Lives Matter Toronto’s action against marginalization of black queers and over-policing of black bodies, with the Latinx and Afro-Latinx communities in the wake of the Pulse shootings in Orlando, Florida.

NSRAP delivered the TimeOut Lecture series as a part of Halifax Pride programming. Events were well attended, with 50 to 100 people attending each lecture. The free lecture series ran at noon from Monday, July 18 to Thursday, July 20, 2016, in Paul O’Regan Hall at the Halifax Central Public Library. Topics included:

- Transitioning on the Job
- Along the Asexual & Aromatic Spectrum
- With Pulp Please: The Significance of Lesbian Pulp Fiction (co-presented by Mount Saint Vincent University Library)
- Taking the Bait: Queer and Trans Representation in the Media (co-presented by the Youth Project)

NSRAP participated in the Halifax Pride Parade, displaying signs with anti-pinkwashing campaign slogans. NSRAP participated in the Halifax Pride Commu-

nity Fair, with a booth where we collected signatures for the anti-pinkwashing campaign petition, gave out general information on NSRAP and information on name and gender maker changes for Nova Scotia ID.

In April 2017, NSRAP chose not to collaborate with Halifax Pride to host the TimeOut Lecture Series for the 2017 Halifax Pride festival and is not currently signed up to participate in any Halifax Pride festival events this year.

CAPE BRETON

On August 7, 2016, NSRAP had a contingent in the Cape Breton Pride Parade in Sydney, Nova Scotia. Board members and community members from Halifax traveled to Sydney to participate, meeting up with board member, Craig Besaw, who is based in Cape Breton. Board members also attended the community picnic in the afternoon and Pride dance in the evening.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Continue participating in Pride celebrations across the Province with the goal of participating in and supporting the work of more province-wide Pride events.

Work to develop local contacts with organizers of Pride events and members across the province to increase local member participation with NSRAP at various Pride events.

Continue dialogue with Halifax Pride to seek systemic change at Halifax Pride to centre BIPOC voices and to address the root causes of the harms experienced by those who attended the 2016 AGM, with the goal of continued participation by NSRAP in the Halifax Pride festival in the future.

MEDIA

NSRAP continued to be an active voice in the media on issues for the 2SLGBQIA+ community, with over 20 media appearances or quotes in stories over the 2016-17 year. The Co-Chairs primarily took on media spokesperson duties, and most media requests came from Halifax-based publications or stations. The following is a list of all NSRAP media for 2016-17:

July 14th: <https://nsadvocate.org/2016/07/14/tel-aviv-promotion-causes-queer-arabs-to-feel-excluded-from-halifax-pride/>

July 19th: <http://www.thecoast.ca/halifax/tel-aviv-tourism-concerns-are-misplaced-says-atlantic-jewish-council-board-member/Content?oid=5518143>

Aug 30th: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/transgender-unemployed-business-jobs-discrimination-1.3740571>

Oct 2nd: <http://www.thecoast.ca/RealityBites/archives/2016/10/02/halifax-pride-draws-ire-over-proposed-pinkwashing-motion>

Oct 3rd: <http://www.metronews.ca/news/canada/2016/10/03/halifax-pride-under-fire-for-resolution-targeting-pro-israel-materials.html>

Oct 4th: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/halifax-pride-israel-queer-arabs-jamie-bailie-1.3789706>

<http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/halifax-pride-under-fire-for-resolution-targeting-pro-israel-materials-1.3100634>

Oct 6th: <http://www.thecoast.ca/RealityBites/archives/2016/10/06/pinkwashing-motion-voted-down-at-halifax-pride-agm>

<https://www.halifaxexaminer.ca/featured/the-coup-at-the-pride-meeting/>

Oct 24th: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/halifax-pride-boycott-lgbt-community-members-1.3817854>

Oct 27th: Info Morning: <http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2696837568>

Nov 2nd: http://talkingradical.ca/2016/11/02/trr-nsrap_anti_pinkwashing/

Nov 20th: <http://signalhfx.ca/halifax-pride-meeting-resulted-in-a-lot-of-hurt/>
<http://rightswatch.ca/2016/11/20/nova-scotia-bill-to-respect-gender-neutral-identification-on-provincial-identification-cards/>

Nov 28th: <http://www.news957.com/local/2016/11/28/local-lgbt-advocate-calls-government-leadership-discriminatory-incident-scotiabank/>

Nov 29th: <http://www.metronews.ca/news/halifax/2016/11/29/ns-rainbow-action-project-co-chair-discriminatory-experience.html>

Dec 29th: <http://www.thecoast.ca/RealityBites/archives/2016/12/29/halifax-prides-new-director-uncertain-direction>

Feb 4th: <http://www.cbc.ca/beta/news/canada/nova-scotia/halifax-pride-concerns-letter-apology-1.3967432>

Feb 6th: <http://www.thecoast.ca/RealityBites/archives/2017/02/06/halifax-police-opt-out-of-pride-parade>

Feb 6th: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=1051472>

April 25th: <http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/transgender-n-s-woman-speaks-out-after-being-denied-breast-implant-surgery-1.3384475>

Social media also played a key role in communication and outreach with NSRAP members. Consistent posting on our drive, increases in our page likes and engagement with almost 2000 people currently following the NSRAP Facebook and over 2000 followers on Twitter.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Reactivate NSRAP Communications Committee with the goal of sharing spokesperson work more equitably among board members, with focus on centering voices of people affected by the story being reported (trans people, asexual people, QTBIPOC people, etc.).

Develop guidelines for media representation of NSRAP.

Develop a more consistent social media strategy and task Communications Committee members with maintaining a lively social media presence.

Develop media contacts and deliver press release more broadly throughout the province with the goal of getting media areas other than Halifax.

BYLAW REFORM & POLICY DEVELOPMENT

During the 2016-17 year the NSRAP board undertook the process of reviewing and updating our bylaws. We recommended a total of 17 changes to the bylaws to the Annual General Meeting with the goal of aligning our governing documents with best practices for not-for-profit societies, contemporary communications technology, and gender-neutral language.

NSRAP noted some areas not currently covered in our operations policies that need attention, but were unable to develop new policies on the following topics:

- Policy to guide Board of Directors decision making via email;
- Confidentiality policy for Board members and staff, especially where Board members and staff are participating in one-on-one advocacy with individual community members on issues of health, housing and employment; and

- Outreach policy that specifically covers best practices to prioritize inclusion of BIPOC and trans members of our communities in general outreach, Board of Directors recruitment and job postings.

RECOMMENDATION:

Create NSRAP policies on Email Decision Making, Confidentiality and Outreach focused on BIPOC and Trans inclusion.

COMMUNITY HERO AWARDS

In January 2017, NSRAP began planning to host the Community Hero Awards event. This formerly annual event had been on hiatus since 2014 and NSRAP Board members sought to revive this initiative with the goal of having the event co-incident with the 2017 NSRAP AGM in May 2017. New award categories were developed including a Social Justice Arts Award and a Special Recognition Award (intended to be an open category award to recognize achievements that didn't fit into other categories). The nomination period for the awards

was announced in late February, but due to a low number of nominations and limited Board capacity during the months of March and April the Community Hero Awards were postponed indefinitely.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Host a Community Hero Awards event during the 2017-18 Board term.



TREASURER'S REPORT

**PREPARED BY SUSANNE LITKE
FOR AGM - MAY 24, 2017**

I took on the role of Treasurer on July 6, 2016 following the AGM held on June 26, 2016, well into the fiscal year which started April 1, 2016.

You will note that for the first time since 2013 we had a surplus (income less expenditures) in the amount of \$959 with a further \$750 receivable for training that was conducted in February 2017. This leaves us in a good position to consider once again hiring contract staff in the near future.

Three volunteer board members, Aine Morse, Tameera Mohamed and Rhys Alden, deserve accolades for bringing NSRAP out of the RED by designing training materials and offering training to various entities for a fee. We are in a good place to continue this training with volunteers or paid staff as a result of their joint efforts. Kudos!!

NSRAP was also the recipient of several large donations from the RCMP, MSVU, OutLaw, Living Lighting, Mount Allison and several individual members. Membership fees and donations have increased each year since 2014.

Wages and expenses for our summer student were entirely covered by the Canada Summer Jobs grant and our expenditures were generally lower than in past years.

We presently hold \$9,594 in restricted funds for grants relating to seniors. The Positive Ageing Grant project was completed in 2016 and those funds were mostly spent with \$158 remaining. The Elders Project has yet to be completed and this outstanding project requires the focus of the incoming board.

In addition to general accounting and banking responsibilities, I completed the following tasks:

- Set up signing authorities at Scotiabank, initially and following resignations of board members who held signing authority throughout the year
- Reinstated the NSRAP post office box and mailing address that had been cancelled for non-payment in 2015

- Negotiated a \$376 refund with Moneris who had been charging us \$26.84 per month for their services for 14 months after the service was canceled
- Managed payroll and remittances to CRA for Canada Summer Jobs grant
- Resolved bank statement retrieval and on line access problems with Scotiabank and received refund for charged statement fees
- Updated NS Registry of Joint Stocks Company with filings and brought NSRAP out of default status for non-payment of annual renewal fee (February 2016) and for non-filing of financial statements since 2009
- Prepared invoices for training sessions
- Negotiated lower annual fee with website provider and had late fees for non-payment reversed
- Settled Rogers phone bill from September 2015 that had gone to collections and legal recovery and paid 80% of outstanding amount in full and final settlement of account.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To ensure Canada Post, NS Joint Stocks and Website fees are paid annually when due;

To ensure complete annual filings are made to NS Joint Stocks;

To focus energy on completing the Elders Project; and

To focus energy on fundraising via training project.

Submitted by,

Susanne Litke
Treasurer



BALANCE SHEET FOR

NOVA SCOTIA RAINBOW ACTION PROJECT SOCIETY For the fiscal period ending March 31, 2017

ASSETS

Current Assets

Cash (Scotia Bank Account)	3,503
Cash (PayPal Account)	822
Restricted Funds (Positive Ageing Grant)	158
Restricted Funds (Seniors Grant)	9,436
Accounts Receivable (Training MRHA)	750

Total Assets

\$14,669

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities

Amounts Payable	
Registry of Joint Stocks	(62)
Training Expenses	(121)
Rogers Settlement	(271)

Total Liabilities

(\$454)

TOTAL EQUITY

\$14,215



STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES

NOVA SCOTIA RAINBOW ACTION PROJECT SOCIETY For the fiscal period ending March 31, 2017

	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>
INCOME			
Fundraising Events (Gala)	-	-	7855
Membership fees and Donations	2299	1969	886
Canada Summer Jobs Grant	3352	-	-
Training	800	-	-
A. Total Income	6451	1969	8741
EXPENDITURES			
Fundraising Events (Gala)	-	-	5621
Coordinator Wages/Expenses	-	1041	3600
Summer Student Wages/Expenses	3325	-	-
Positive Ageing Grant	1150	1511	6770
Events (AGM, Pride, BIPOCalypse)	557	330	1270
Bank Fees (Scotia Bank, Moneris, PayPal)	55	724	394
Phone	-	575	850
Website	182	167	167
Post Office Box Fee	223	-	-
B. Total Expenditures	5492	4348	18672
Net Surplus or (Deficit)	959	(2379)	(9931)