



**Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project &
Department of Economic & Rural Development
Collaborative Strategies Conference
Halifax 2011**

BUILDING A STRONG, EFFECTIVE LGBT COMMUNITY

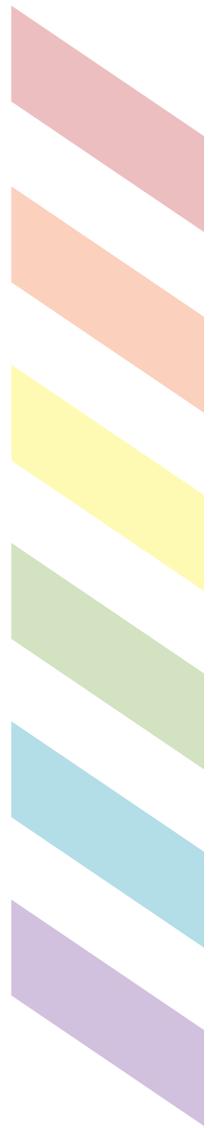
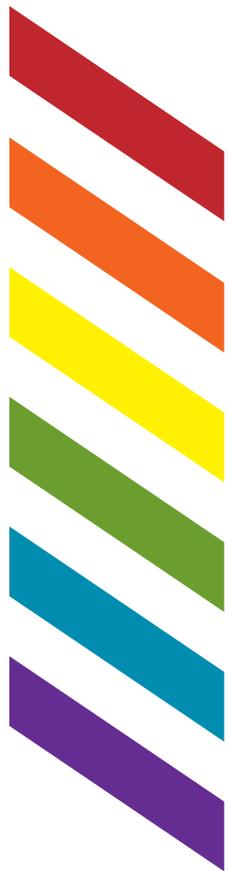


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INTRODUCTION

There are no available statistics for the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people in Nova Scotia. However, even if one rejects the admittedly unscientific estimation of 1 in 10, a reasonable estimation would put our population at anywhere from 60,000 to 90,000. This makes the LGBT community one of the most numerically significant in the province.

In the 20 years since the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act was amended to include sexual orientation, LGBTQ visibility has increased remarkably. There are LGBTQ businesses and non-profit organizations from Yarmouth to Cape Breton. Sydney, Truro, Antigonish and Cumberland County host annual Pride Festivals. Halifax Pride is the largest LGBTQ cultural event in Atlantic Canada, the fourth largest in Canada. In Halifax alone there are numerous LGBTQ sports teams, social and service organizations serving thousands of people. The impact of all this activity on the provincial economy is yet to be researched, but the sheer level of activity suggests it is considerable.

While the LGBTQ community has made many advances in recent years, significant social and political barriers remain. LGBTQ people are highly active in some branches of the civil service, but largely invisible on the province's major police forces. The Nova Scotia Teacher's Union now has an active LGBTQ caucus, yet five years after Lindsay Willow's human rights victory it remains difficult for LGBTQ teachers to be open about their lives and families in the staffroom. The inequality facing teachers pales in comparison to the homophobia and transphobia faced by LGBTQ youth (or those perceived to be) in Nova Scotia's school system.

The LGBTQ community has many strong allies in government, at all levels, yet LGBT people rarely seek political office, and openly LGBT elected politicians are few and far between. Several jurisdictions (Truro, Cumberland, Pictou County, and Antigonish), all passed bylaws to prevent the Rainbow Flag being flown from municipal flag poles during Pride Weeks. Four years later, these bylaws remain place.

There are also inequalities in health care. While the current government is to be commended for introducing cultural competency policies (and making those policies LGBTQ inclusive) into the health care system, it is going to take time and effort to eradicate the negative effects of decades of homophobia. We know, from studies conducted by the AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia (ACNS), that most gay men are not open about their sexual orientation to their primary care physicians. We also know that there consistently higher rates of substance use and depression within the LGBTQ community. The situation is grim for LGBTQ seniors, as both home care and continuing care facilities are woefully unprepared to deal with the unique needs of this population. The inadequacies of treatment, the outright discrimination, afforded to transgender and transsexual Nova Scotians are nothing short of a disgrace.





As we look at where we are now, as a community we can certainly say we have come a long way, but we're not there yet. Despite this, LGBTQ Nova Scotians, while continuing to press for equality and social justice, also continue to contribute to the society in which we all share. Whether that contribution finds expression in the renovation of historic properties in Yarmouth or Annapolis Royal; launching a B & B in Pictou; Tanya Davis opening the Canada Games and her appointment as Halifax Poet Laureate; a new feature film from Thom Fitzgerald; or a volunteer at Northwood visiting with an LGBTQ senior, the LGBTQ community unquestionably constitutes an integral thread running through the fabric of life in Nova Scotia.

In 1995 members of Nova Scotia's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Community gathered in Yarmouth. This meeting grew directly out of the response by activists in Pictou County to M.P. Roseanne Skokes' anti-gay attacks in Parliament. For the first time, activists from across the province met to discuss ideas around collective action on the issues facing our community. In the months of discussion following that gathering, the Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project (NSRAP) was created. Incorporated in 2000, NSRAP is a non-profit society made up primarily of volunteers working toward equity and social justice with specific regard to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community.

NSRAP Community Development Conference

As noted in the introduction, the LGBT community has made extraordinary advances, yet still remains under-represented and under-served in many areas. NSRAP has always been interested in community development. As an organization we have undertaken projects related to improving access to health care for LGBT people and we are currently engaged in issues relating to LGBT Elders and in establishing an LGBT community centre. We have always sought to engage the support of the community, although being based in Halifax often makes it challenging to connect with other regions.

A former Board member introduced us to the Department of Economic and Rural Development's Collaborative Strategies program. The Collaborative Strategies' model seemed to provide the perfect forum to gather LGBT community leaders from across the province, to address historic disparities and explore new possibilities. Ideally, a conference would bring government into conversation with LGBT leaders, including youth, allowing us to define current challenges and opportunities for growth.

Objectives

1. To bring together Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) business and cultural leaders from across Nova Scotia, together with LGBT community organizations and representatives of the Government of Nova Scotia,

2. To collectively examine the state of Nova Scotia's LGBT Community to determine strengths and challenges in relation to community development,

3. To provide recommendations for enhancing and promoting the LGBT Community in Nova Scotia.

The goal of the conference was to establish the goals and objectives of the Rainbow community and to draft ideas for their achievement. The Collaborative Strategies model, as developed by the Department of Economic and Rural Development, was ideally suited to this purpose.

In order to accommodate delegates from all regions of the province we proposed that the conference take place in Halifax over a day and a half, with sessions taking place from the morning of Friday to lunch on the following Saturday, (March 18 - 19, 2011).

In addition to the funding from the Department of Economic and Rural Development, NSRAP sought support from the business community. We were able to bring TD Canada Trust on board as our presenting partner and we were also supported by the Halifax Marriot Harbourfront. Without their contributions, we would not have been able to accommodate all our out-of-town delegates. We also received in-kind support from Wayves Magazine. Jeanie Cockell also joined us as co-facilitator. As one of the developers of the Collaborative Strategies model, her participation was highly valuable.

We aimed for attendance of 75 people, representing key LGBT organizations. We hoped that 25 % attendance of the delegates would be LGBT youth, aged 19 to 25. Over 100 people were directly invited, and organizations were asked to make their own selections. Ultimately, we had just over 50 delegates in attendance, roughly half of them from outside HRM. Sadly, partly due to the timing of the conference, there were not as many youth delegates as we would have wished.



What follows is a transcript of the conference prepared by Economic and Rural Development.



FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 2011

CONFERENCE THEME: Building a strong, effective, LGBTI Community

A – OPENING REMARKS – Key words overheard from participants

Where are we from?

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| - South Shore | - Cumberland |
| - Halifax Regional Municipality | - Pictou |
| - Valley – Kentville | - Truro |
| - Cape Breton | - Sydney |
| - South West Nova (Yarmouth) | |

What we do/what motivates us?

| | |
|--|------------------------|
| - Education sector | - Sports |
| - Policy | - Business |
| - Youth | - Volunteerism |
| - Research | - Student unions |
| - Activism | - Aboriginal community |
| - Community Development / Community involvement | - Advocates |
| - Law/legal | - Social justice |
| - Seniors | - Trans community |
| - Health | - Arts |
| - Spirituality | - Diversity |



Who we are?

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| - PFLAG | - Northern Aids Connection |
| - Elderberries | - Cumberland Pride |
| - South West Nova Pride | - Nova Scotia Rainbow Action Project |
| - AIDS Coalition of Cape Breton | - Wayves |
| - Valley Youth Project | - Atlantic Rainbow Business Association |
| - Transaction Society of Nova Scotia | - Out East Film Festival |
| - AIDS Coalition of Nova Scotia | - Nova Scotia Teachers Union |

B – THEMES –

What elements ensure a “Strong, Effective LGBTI Community”?

| | |
|---|--|
| - Similar/shared values | - Looking forward and/but respecting our past |
| - Persistence and resilience; fueled by passion across generations | - Taking risks; support will come/follow; power of collaboration when taking risks |
| - Visibility – i.e. social media | - “Turtle power” – coming out of our shells |
| - Shared purpose | - Empowerment |
| - Energy | - Hope and optimism in the future |
| - Breaking isolation | - Telling our stories; sharing our stories of success |
| - Determination and dedication | - Valuing differences/diversity; value integration |
| - Lending our voices/doing what we can | - Intersectionality |
| - Ideological transfers across boundaries to work together to change society; leadership development; being “trail blazers” | - Volunteering |
| - Inspire new people/inspire new allies | - Grasping educational opportunities and educating each other |
| - Opportunities for sexual education | - Support |
| - Humor | - Optimism/Hope |
| - Challenging underlying structures/causes of homophobia | - Advocacy |
| - Recognizing and building upon our strengths | - Respecting different needs of each generation |
| - Courage of our community leaders (past, present and future) | |

C – IMAGES OF OUR COMMUNITY What does a strong, effective LGBTI community look like?

(Theme: Mission Statement)

- Global inclusivity and equality: Bridge the gap
- Coming together: Be fearless
- Education, integration, and understanding: No fear to educate, and no fear to learn.

“A child shall lead them”

- Compassion and hope: We are united. We are inclusive. We are working together.
- Coming together: Talk. Laugh. Create. Work. Play. Love. Pray. Tweet.
- Cross generational and cross community collaboration:
 - Deeper rooted communities shaped by the winds of change through generations.
- Empowerment: Canadian - “Gaynadian”/Queer Heritage Moments: Tell/record our stories
- De-segregation by education: Free to be me: Humanity is a symphony in progress.
- Creating an unbound future: We are free of gender, race, and other life limiting structures

- Vibrant elder LGBT community:

- Strong outreach to shut-ins and long term care LGBT elders
- Advocacy for elder issues
- How to identify elders (lack of social contacts)
- How to communicate (isolated elders)
- Transportation issues
- Develop budget and fundraising plan to accomplish outreach goals
- Programs and activities for general membership
- Elderberries as volunteers
- Support goals of NSRAP



Vision statement – 5 to 10 years:

- Stable group of elders committees which focus on outreach
- Solvent and increasingly self-supporting
- Recognition of Elderberries as a prominent force advocating for LGBT elders
- 10-15 elderberries groups across the province participating in a province-wide LGBT Elder Cooperative



Provocative statement:

A cooperative network of 10-15 Elderberries groups around the province of Nova Scotia providing a voice for 10,000 LGBT elders with a special focus on isolated LGBT elders. Elderberries programs are the envy of elders' groups nationwide.

Note: Current name of “Elderberries” is, of course, subject to change.



D – CLUSTERING POTENTIAL INITIATIVES

See Appendix A

E- PROJECT GROUP REPORTS – 5 projects in total

Project 1 – LGBT History Month

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of this session/project | - LGBT History Month |
| What are the main (two or three) outcomes of your work together – in terms of learning support or action? | - “Recognize GLBT Community as official community” - SS, posters. policy bias by omission - Original research and documents - Archiving materials, ask for stories - SS to write a book – 1 st decade in Queer Nova Scotia - documentation |
| Next steps/follow-up | - Gathering history now - Establish working group - Request NSRAP to coordinate - Develop proposals for existing funding cycles regarding history (cross-divisional); collecting/dissemination |
| What CD Principles will be engaged through this work? How? | - Social inclusion - Focus on history as community asset - Funding/acknowledgment from government - Local leadership (documenting their stories) - Collaborative approach - Community Building |



Project 2 – Breaking Down Intergenerational Barriers

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of this session/project | - Breaking Down Intergenerational Barriers |
| What are the main (two or three) outcomes of your work together – in terms of learning support or action? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Creating and fostering conversation, collaboration, and learning between the generations - Creating accessible space in terms of physical space, age (no alcohol), time (no late nights or school days), gender neutral washrooms, etc. - Creating safe spaces in terms of respect for identities, in language, with pronouns, as well as avoiding hyper-sexualization and assumptions, age appreciation |
| Next steps/follow-up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Include conversations about barriers in networking opportunities - Engage trained facilitators in the process to help adhere to guidelines and mutual respect - Keep the conversation going (Needs change, groups change, time changes, etc.) - Go to where youth and elders are |
| What CD Principles will be engaged through this work? How? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Common vision - Respect for local values - Collaborative approach - Social inclusion |

Project 3 – Skype Network/Virtual Group

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of this session/project | Skype Network/Virtual Group (Discussion group/educational sessions) |
| What are the main (two or three) outcomes of your work together – in terms of learning support or action? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3-4 people across the province to spearhead initiative, rotating (but may repeat), plus 1 expert, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - younger (late teens; connect with teens) - middle - trans - 1-2 hours weekly - Discuss “though stuff/subjects”, but positive subjects too, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - university students of today connected with elders who fought during their own university years (sharing stories) - Email questions – If many people have question(s) on one particular subject - On night/weekly mention – advocacy and events that will start |
| Next steps/follow-up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timeline – communications plan for spearheading group - Commit hours - Voices of the province – voices from different regions (e.g. YouTube video) - Skype weekly (1-2 hours per session) – facilitators – rotating (3 different people each week); special guests e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health care workers (psychologist, social worker, etc.) - Social aspect, questioning - Professors - Advertise |
| What CD Principles will be engaged through this work? How? | |



Project 4 – LGBTQ Education Public Service Announcement

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of this session/project | LGBTQ Education Public Service Announcement – “The Love Bus” |
| What are the main (two or three) outcomes of your work together – in terms of learning support or action? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A vehicle to challenge perceptions about relationships and assumptions, and its utilization to affect change - This is a message in/used/issued by the Department of Health and Wellness (former Health Promotion and Protection) and the Department of Education - Visibility of diversity in our communities and public facilities |
| Next steps/follow-up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce the public service announcement (PSA) and introduce it into public consciousness - Children/teen/adult books of inclusion - Accessibility to all – read and shared - Adults reading to children, and children reading to children - Visibility and celebration of difference |
| What CD Principles will be engaged through this work? How? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The production will involve representatives of each generation. - We would be liaising with government and community agencies to partner with our completed PSA. - Local leadership - Government support - Collaborative approach - Balance - Respect for local values - Social inclusion - Transparency and accountability - Partnerships/shared interests - Common vision - Volunteerism - Focus on community assets |

PSA content notes:

Learning outcome: The PSA will be a vehicle to challenge perceptions about relationships and assumptions.

Support outcome: This is a message in/from the Department of Health Promotion and Protection and the Department of Education

Connecting with government and community agencies.

Action outcome: Visibility of diversity in our communities and public facilities. The utilization of the vehicle to affect change.

Featuring: Elderberries, adults, and children

Project 5 – Rainbow Center

| | |
|---|--|
| Name of this session/project | - Rainbow Center (both a physical space and a virtual component) |
| What are the main (two or three) outcomes of your work together – in terms of learning support or action? | - Begin with discussion groups between the younger and not so younger members of the community (intergenerational) - Interact in a positive environment working towards developing a center where social events can take place - Supportive atmosphere |
| Next steps/follow-up | - Make a banner advertising the attempt to close the generation gap in our community; display this banner at Halifax Pride Parade - Begin this center in Halifax area where the funding and participants would be more available - Develop a Skype and Facebook function |
| What CD Principles will be engaged through this work? How? | - Volunteerism - Focus on community assets - Social inclusion - Common vision - Respect for local values |

Challenge/question put to the group for reflection:

- How do you overcome the lack of participation of LGBTQ people to community events? How do you increase the community's participation? How do you expand/better coordinate outreach?



F – CLOSING REMARKS

Hugo (on behalf of NSRAP):

- Thank you to NSRAP Board Members who made this event possible and helped organize it. It is a privilege to work with these individuals.
- Hopefully this conference will take NSRAP to a new place where we can truly become a Nova Scotian organization – where we can represent the interests of the Rainbow communities throughout the province.

What are you taking out of this day? What can I/we bring forward? Appreciations?

- We must keep communications going between participants from today. We must share our expertise, and knowledge to be able to refer people/questions/issues among each other – particularly in rural areas where resources are not as well known.

ACTION ITEM: Create a contact sheet/distribution list of all participants. Name – Organization(s) represented, email (and other contact information (as appropriate))

- Appreciated chance to learn from different people and to ask questions.
- “I have a renewed sense of community collaboration and a feeling we can go forward together.”
- “I am walking away with a sense of community. We need to speak to each other. To build on our gifts.”
- “I have a sense of empowerment and of belonging. I feel reconnected. I appreciate the strength people have to actually make change.”
- “I find it so energizing to keep doing what I am doing and to encourage others to persevere.”
- Looking forward to taking the ideas/projects discussed and implementing them in different parts of Nova Scotia
- “I look forward to collecting more stories from “proud people”. I appreciated seeing how many people have mentioned or highlighted how storytelling is important for the LGBTI community.”

- “I feel less isolated than I did yesterday, before this conference.”
- “None of us is alone! We have each other. We must remind ourselves of this during lonely times, specifically in rural communities.”
- Appreciated meeting people from smaller centers/communities, where it may be a greater struggle. I leave with a greater appreciation for the work they do and what they accomplish. I leave with gladness in my heart.
- I am taking back/sharing all the information I received to my community.
- “There is no much difference within our communities after all. We are all working towards the same or similar goals.”
- We represent a very diverse community. There have been changes since the early days. Community advocacy started in kitchens after events such as Stonewall, with only a few people originally. The encouragement of these people and their determination brought us to where we are today.”
- “Today’s event helped me connect the dots. I am looking forward to move ideas forward and to turn them into actions.”
- “It was encouraging to see many ideas but also to see the passion to move things forward.”



LGBT Community Development Conference 2011



 Canada Trust

 **Marriott.**
HALIFAX
HARBOURFRONT

 **NOVA SCOTIA**
NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE
Economic and Rural Development
Développement économique et rural

 **NSRAPP**
NOVA SCOTIA RURAL ADJUSTMENT PROGRAM
Equity for All

SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2011

G – OPENING REMARKS – Saturday, March 19, 2011

What we/I want to see happen today?

- “We need to let go of certain elements of the past, but keep the memories, battles, successes, and strengths we gained to move forward; to empower our youth.”
- “We are not in isolation. We can accomplish things by working together.”
- “Education sector is the world’s last closet, particularly in rural community schools. Our communities need to stand behind the professionals who support our youth.”
- It is important for us youth to hear the stories of/from LGBTI elders, of those advocates who have come before us. There is strength and wisdom to be gained from these stories.
- We need to continue our efforts to honor what has been done in the past. We need to carry these actions forward.
- We, as community leaders, must constantly keep our ears and eyes open to our communities’ stories.
- “I have been reacquainted with my passion to continue my efforts; to continue moving our stories forward.”
- Pain, hardships, and struggles are still very much present within our communities. A task force should be created to eliminate homophobia in our schools.
- We need to address the homophobia [and inequalities] which exists within our own communities, within our own selves (e.g. transphobia, racism).
- We can all express ourselves and tell our stories, each in our own individual way and style, and express the beauty of our communities. We have to keep communicating, respectfully.
- We need to hear our own stories. They strengthen the ties that bind us all together.
- “I am filled with hope.”

- Where is the diversity within our own community in these types of conferences? The African Nova Scotian community, Asians, Aboriginals, etc.?

- It is too easy as advocates to burn out. We need to take time to re-energize and re-focus. We need to have an “eagle vision”; to look at the whole and broader picture of our communities and our efforts.

- “I feel I now have a community, something that I didn’t feel I had before this event. We need more spaces where we can connect, as a community, and push forward.”

- We must thank our allies who help us communicate to youth that “It does get better.”

- “I haven’t felt community for a long time. But I feel community today, here at this event. I don’t feel so small anymore.”

- Suggested follow-ups: Facebook group for conference participants and a contact list of conference participants.



H – PROJECTS – March 19, 2011

Project 1 – Educational Outreach

We want – Training for educators and students

We plan – To work toward representation in the NSTU and community of educators.
We are developing an external taskforce to advise an internal, representing body.

Elements of educational outreach:

- Coordination through a taskforce
- Diversity at large
- Training for educators
- (“Men of Depth”) (peer programming);
- Active witnessing
- “Cards listing prejudicial language”
- Gay, Straight Alliances (GSAs)

- Department of Education (Gérard Cormier);
- Facebook group
- “Stand up, Stand out”
- Equitable treatment of students and teachers in Nova Scotia
- G. L. E. N. S.



Project 2 – Intergenerational Sharing

- Children's books (write, buy, read, share, discuss)
- Education
- Collaboration (work together in how to write and share experiences)
- Volunteerism
- Social media – events, stories, connections
- Passion (“free love”)
- Laughter/humor
- Picket signs
- Deliver with confidence
- Justice
- Bring in more people and experiences
- Tapping new ideas
- Documenting activities
- Participate in community events
- As one ages, encourage others to do the same – make ‘old’ not a bad word
- Think out loud...Get the message out!
- Organize events...Get people out.
- Continue educating ourselves
- Intergenerational knowledge sharing





Project 3 – LGBTQ History Month

- Intergenerational stories
- Collect the stories
 - Sam
 - Inclusive/cultural stories – Mi'kmaq, Acadian, etc.
- History month
 - Through NSRAP (committee); organizations host events together
 - Presentations
 - Public service announcements (PSAs)
- Making use of stories/history
 - Publish book/zines
 - Blog – Peter (possible web space @ NSRAP)
 - In school library/presentations
 - GSAs
- Creative
 - Art
 - Writings
 - Plays
 - Gayme
 - Lecture series

Project 4 – Intergenerational Stories

- Get into schools
 - o GSA
 - Get and have elders talk and dialogue
 - o Share experiences
 - o Question and answers – lead into other things

- Listen to youth
 - o Validate youth (mutual benefits)

- Training module for things coming up – for speakers

- Break down intergenerational barriers

- Talk with/about inclusivity of different cultural stories

- Coordinate GSA involvement (so one GSA does not hear same stories twice)
 - o Video of GSA

- Publishing
 - o Include cross generational dialogue stories with history group

- Potluck, meal – foster dialogue/talk
 - o Robert Streets – zines
 - o Casual
 - o Specific group of youth

- Will interrelate – history group, youth stories, education outreach

- Courses – high school and university regarding oral history

- Elders have memory – of coming out, etc.

- Arrange to meet the Youth Project (at their location)
 - o What to they want us to do – priorities?
 - Stories
 - School system
 - Gay, Straight Alliances
 - Elders speakers bureau training for facilitators
 - Our major role may not be to speak, but to listen to their (youth's) stories

- Have a social event – meet youth on their own grounds
- Let discussions emerge gradually



Project 5 – Rainbow Community Centre

Notes:

- Think of NSRAP taking the lead on all programs that we have outlined over the conference
- Maybe NSRAP can hold the responsibility of trying to reach out to rural communities
- Need to create a business model to present to start to figure out how to fund this work
- Need to build the principles and values of this community centre
- Would it be helpful to consider (where?) the centre would be, like other areas of Nova Scotia
- It is hard to create a plan for a centre when we don't know its true "purpose" (What is the "what" that we want to define, how will we get it - identify clear areas while also leaving room for future steps.
- Model of transition houses /long term modes

Location/Building - Bus, online, what city/multi city, schools; old/young building



CONCLUSION

Despite the challenges of gathering a representative group across ages, gender identities etc. that may have increased the perspectives and collaborative efforts, this conference was of great benefit most of participants and the organizations involved. Amidst the recruitment challenges were exams at local universities, concurrent conferences held by other organizations including the Department of Health conference to more effectively address cultural competency in health care delivery.

Nevertheless, the conference itself unquestionably achieved its stated objectives of: (1) bringing together LGBTQ community leaders from across the province; (2) examining the state of Nova Scotia's LGBTQ Community to determine strengths and challenges in relation to community development; (3) providing ideas for enhancing and promoting the LGBTQ Community in Nova Scotia. These ideas will be addressed in more depth in the Recommendations section.

The morning session on Friday opened with remarks from then NSRAP Executive Director Hugo Dann, largely reflected in the introduction to this report. Hugo was followed by a welcoming speech from Justin Milne, on behalf our presenting partner TD Canada Trust. We then quickly moved into the work of the day, as the Collaborative Strategies principles were outlined by Co-facilitators Jeanie Cockell and Ross MacDonald.

We began sharing stories in small groups. These stories were then shared with more and more people, and we began to address issues that were important to us as individuals. As the day progressed, groups formed around particular ideas and projects were developed, as shown in the transcripts.

Saturday began somewhat differently. We began the day in a large circle. Many of those present on the first day had been challenged in different ways. Michelle, a delegate from the Yarmouth area shared a poem that she had written the night before (See Appendix X). Michelle's poem opened a floodgate of people's reactions to the previous day's discussion, as well as personal anecdotes, all related to the experience of being a member of the LGBTQ Community. Responding to the expressed need of the group to allow the sharing to continue, the facilitators accordingly altered the flow of the day. Truly awful stories about homophobia in schools, facing both students and teachers, were recounted. Personal experiences of the AIDS epidemic and the early years of LGBTQ activism in Nova Scotia were



shared. Served as a kind of collective articulation that we are all, in one way or another, still fighting to counter the tragic effects of heterosexism and homophobia.

The morning continued with a focus on some of the initiatives discussed on the previous day. We shared a lunch and then the delegates dispersed.

There was some disappointment, both among NSRAP organizers and certain delegates, that the economic issues of the community were not addressed during the conference. Certainly if the community is to become both effective and self-sustaining, it will need to a solid base of well-founded, stable LGBTQ business to draw upon for support. Indeed the very nature of this conference meant that the delegates themselves were responsible for setting the agenda. Future conferences might be more focused on issues such as tourism, business, and cultural development, health care and education, and transgender community development.

NSRAP hoped that we would end this conference with the beginning of a provincial network of people interested in furthering the ideas brought forward; that hope was fulfilled. We were also given a number of initiatives to pursue, many of which were already in our sights. Furthermore the delegates recognized the importance of giving NSRAP the lead on these projects, as strong as any unelected non-profit organization might wish from its core constituency. We often referred to this conference as an historic gathering.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Leadership within the LGBTQ Community is paramount to the success of ongoing projects. Community groups engaged in advocacy and community building should be equipped with the tools and resources to effectively communicate across the province.
2. Conference delegates and other interested parties should continue to communicate and collaborate using all available resources including facebook, twitter and other methods.
3. Business leaders, in partnership with the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage should begin to collaborate on strategies to develop LGBTQ tourism, culture and entrepreneurial development.
4. Efforts to create an LGBTQ Community Centre should continue to engage with individuals and organizations outside HRM. Indeed multimodal forms of communication and collaboration should be a key component of the evolution of the community centre. Efforts should be made to utilize mediums such as “virtual space” to include regions of Nova Scotia that fall outside HRM.

APPENDIX A – CLUSTERING POTENTIAL INITIATIVES

| Funding | Social media - events - stories - connections | Increase visibility Normalizati on Break the stereotype Identity education (open to all unique identities) | Create a Rainbow “Centre” | Have each other’s back | Have gender neutral washro oms | Volunteeris m | Youth and elderberry dialogue | Comfort the disturbed, disturb the comfortab le | Worksho ps |
|---------|--|---|------------------------------------|---|--|------------------|---|---|---------------|
| | Need for - association - forum - blogging - Facebook | Develop a <u>truly</u> inclusive curriculum (education sector) | Have a LGBT history month | Stand together | Challenge the “norm” | | Intergenerati onal knowledge sharing | | |
| | Think out loud / Get your message out | Create a GBLT Educators’ Association | Tell your story | Collaboration networking | Organize communit y-building events | | Connect youth and elders | | |
| | | | Listen, speak, write | Coordinated collaboratio n | Inclusion (in governme nt posters) | | | | |
| | | | Educate (Children’s books) | Persevere – Continue doing what we are doing | | | | | |
| | | | | Interconnecte d | | | | | |
| | | | | Within/with out | | | | | |
| | | | | Network and reach out | | | | | |



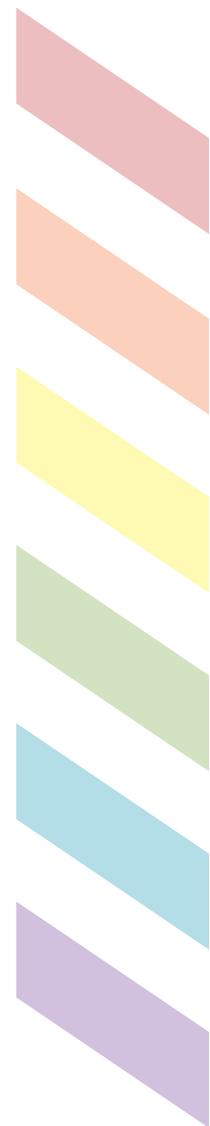
APPENDIX B – EVALUATION NOTES

What did you appreciate about this workshop?

- Having the Opportunity to network with other members of the community to share thought provoking ideas.
- The sense of community within the delegates. Great ideas to proceed forward.
- It's existence, content and participants. It's energy and hope.
- Strong sense of extended community.
- Community of passionate volunteers.
- A renewed positive sense of my future volunteerism.
- Networking.
- Communicating with amazing human beings and learning so much.
- The chance to hear what everyone else is doing to connect with them. Find possibilities to work together. Thank you for the opportunity.
- Hearing stories from individuals.
- The bringing together of the diverse LGBTQ community to brainstorm.
- Personal stories.
- Meeting my community.
- The honesty from the participants.
- The (limited) opportunity to focus on practical projects.
- Real energy of our community such as what happened that morning and the formation of a task force on homophobia.
- A great sharing of ideas and passion with excellent guiding by our facilitators. We've got a solid beginning on some strong themes.
- The opportunity to come together and fund ways to work together.
- The fact we all share common ideas.
- The ability to gather together to discuss important issues. To share stories and hear the stories of others. I am reenergized about the importance of this work.
- Being invited to attend.
- Putting faces to names.
- Hearing others' stories that sound familiar – and the validation that comes with not being the only one.
- Ending with plans to go forward.

What did you learn?

- Everyone has many great ideas. Primarily working with elderly, education and community initiatives.
- How strong a group of likeminded people are when they work together.
- That there's a lot of good stuff happening and that there might be more on the horizon.
- Our stories are all similar.
- That our past experiences and growth needs to be shared.
- That there is still a lot of enthusiasm for projects and progress.
- Where do I start? People need each other willing to listen, learn and respect each other.
- That there are a lot of opportunities to work with others if we can find the time and focus.
- Priorities of our community. Battles still to be fought (what and where).
- That potentially our community does have a future.
- The scope of people's commitment to this cause. Excellent.
- How hard it still is to be queer.
- I feel in my life that I had it easy. I want to make a difference in life and really found I learned other people's perspectives and challenges that they face.
- I learned the priorities of the people in the room representing their communities.
- Not much really.
- Most importantly I learned that I'm not alone in my advocacy efforts and that I have many, many new resources.
- There is a lot of work to do and a lot of work being done.
- We all have our special gifts to spread good leadership in our communities.
- I learned many things, most important, the need to move forward and continue this work. The need for coordinated collaboration.
- I don't know yet.



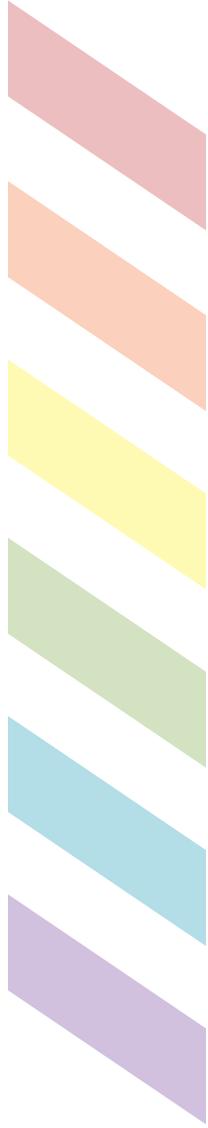
What suggestions do you have for changes to this workshop? What else is important for us to know?

- If at all possible more time for group brainstorming. At one point I felt pressure from not having enough time and when the pressure sets in this creates tension and decreases the natural flow and creativity that fuel ideas, bringing them into fruition.
- More time to share.
- Repeat or follow up a year from now.
- Time should be allotted for those personal stories (like the Saturday circle).
- Less things on day 1 - it was a rush and confusing and there was a serious disconnect in the stories - summarization - world café - 30 second spot process that didn't work well.
- More diverse folk. Very young and interested folk, black, native, trans etc. (sharing home) areas and addresses . Facebook site for newsletter luddites.
- Make sure outcomes are attainable and only one of two so we can work on them. That there is strength in numbers.
- I would like to have enough examples for a concept, use powerpoint with the question / activity at task.
- Lack of diversity in group. Eurocentric based - more inclusion of visible minorities.
- I absolutely hate this format for a workshop. The focus on creative, value-statements and personal stories impedes the ability for concrete action. I think the theory behind doing it this way but time after time I see it fail in practice. I am more and more convinced that people should be encouraged to bond and socialize and share informally, outside the structure of a workshop and that workshop time should be structured, controlled and outcomes driven.
- More coffee breaks, pee breaks so there is more opportunities to network and get to know each other, that is what community development is all about. Also: let the real stuff come out.
- I think an extra hour to start the first day. "What brought you to the workshop? Why is it important?" A sharing of stories and common backgrounds launches a cohesive workforce.
- More opportunity to look at what is being done right now and how we can support each others work. A little bit more direction for discussion and group work.
- More clear about activities, steps and purpose.
- You could do it again.
- Your presence has value beyond measurable outcomes.

Commitments: What commitments will you make to further strengthen the LGBTQ community in Nova Scotia? What next steps will you take? What supports do you need? Who else will you work with? How will you know you've achieved your goals?

- My next steps are to take this ideas back to CB and try to create a stronger foundation from this area, working collaboratively with the whole province.
- Work on boards and networking within the community.
- More support within the community here in Halifax.
- When I can see things happen – less talking about it and more getting it done.
- Tell my stories, assess where I can best contribute.
- Not certain yet.
- History – stories – blog
- Create blog and collect stories – make media contacts to introduce project and blog.
- Everyone who has a story.
- When homophobia disappears.
- Work with NSRAP on funding for history research. And continue with my existing publishing.
- To attempt to be check in on the youth groups – keep my ears open and stay connected so we can visit if we are in the home areas.
- I will make more of an effort to maintain communication across the province.
- I'll see what elements of these discussions I can weave into my own work with queer and trans youth.
- \$\$ needed in way of supports.
- Continue my work with NSRAP
- Establish queer History Project / Month.
- Supports - \$ (for researcher and publishing resources).
- Work with NSRAP; researcher, GSA's.
- Achievements = published materials (paper; online; in schools)
- I will make myself to be an active participant. Join any active group or committee to produce outcomes. Keep me informed!!
- Will work with any member who needs my assistance.
- Success – when our goals are obtained.
- Keep on keeping on.
- I am on NSRAP now.
- Focusing my efforts from the sports leagues into more political action.
- I am committed to the idea of the History Project and will continue to try to facilitate this through NSRAP.
- Involvement in Task force on homophobia in the education system in NS and I will pay attention to this issue in my business.



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- Stay in touch with NSRAP for coordination of task force.
 - Goals achieved = when the LGBT suicide rate decreases.
 - Working toward a task force for educators to bring policy and training that will affect real change.
 - Working with NSRAP and the NSTU with a plan to reach out to the Department of Education.
 - Our goals will be reached and visible in classrooms and communities across the province.
 - I commit to continuing to do the incredible work that is being done by my organization and reach out to partners with LGBTQ people doing similar work.
 - Reach out more provincially – work as a provincial community.
 - We need to appreciate and be knowledgeable about the work we are already doing.
 - Get out and learn what is being done before starting something new.
 - I want to be involved!
 - Speak and converse with all that wish to learn about diversity, such as youth groups, community service groups and members of the LGBTQ community.
 - I am interested in governance for the community centre.
 - I need leadership and guidance to move work forward and the resources involved.
 - Not sure what the full vision look like yet. Would like to see a hub body that reaches out to rural areas.
 - Right now – be present in the Queer Community.
 - Continue to build the Valley Youth Project.
 - (What supports do you need) Don't worry I'll come knocking when I need something.
 - (Who else will you work with?) Other Youth Project volunteers.
 - When I'm present and active I'll have achieved my goals.



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NOVA SCOTIA RAINBOW ACTION PROJECT

Equality for All