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Indigenous African-Centred Organizational Change: Building Capacity at a Grassroots B3 Organization

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Abstract

Nakupenda Community Services (NCS) is a B3 organization based in Ontario Canada. At NCS there are several valuable programs serving the everyday needs of clients. While the services are valued by the community, the internal challenge within the organization is the lack of capacity to lead all programs. Compounding this problem is the demand for more programs and services given the impacts of the recent pandemic. The very active board of directors and employees have made significant efforts to meet the needs of clients, but the problem of capacity persists and negatively impacts service delivery as employees and leaders tend to experience burnout which therefore impacts the retention rate at the organization. The problem of practice being investigated is the lack of organizational capacity to meet outcome expectations at NCS. While funding plays a major role in the lack of human capital the organization possesses, three potential solutions were identified and a merging of two key solutions was selected as the best approach for this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP). This solution reduces the number of programs being facilitated by the organization and ensures that the programs that remain are managed and lead effectively. To supplement the program reduction, the active participation in a network of Black organizations, identified as a Black ecosystem, is established. Developed through an Indigenous African-centred lens, Ubuntu and highlighting the principles of the Nguzo Saba framework (unity, self-determination, collective-work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith) collective action will achieve the improvement necessary for NCS.

Keywords: Indigenous African-centred, capacity building, Black ecosystem, B3 organization, Nguzo Saba, Ubuntu

Executive Summary

Non-profit organizations play a critical role in the building and shaping of communities and the people within them - “they are the invisible backbone of communities” (National Council of Non-profits, 2018). Non-profit organizations host programs, facilitate services, and make referrals to support the needs of the local community and are fundamental spaces for marginalized communities. While most organizations focus their program to serve historically marginalized groups, including Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities, the majority of organizational leaders and board members are white and do not share the experiences of their clients (Faulk, et.al, 2021). The lack of cultural competence and culturally specific programming within these primarily white led organizations has led to more Black-led organizations being established to serve the culturally specific needs of Black communities and providing services from a lens that is more related to their lived experiences. Nakupenda Community Services (NCS) (a pseudonym) is a grassroots non-profit organization that has been operating in Ontario for over thirty years and serving the interests and specific needs of the local Black community.

Even with consistent efforts, Black-led organizations struggle with capacity due to the lack of funding being allocated to their organizations, which then impacts the organizations’ ability to serve their clients. Pereira et al. (2020) indicate that “inadequate data, a lack of representation of Black communities in philanthropy, and systemic barriers, including anti-Black racism, have led to a severe underfunding of Black communities in Canada” (p. 3). While funding is one of the key barriers that create ripple effects in the ways in which many organizations are impacted, this Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) addresses some of the residual effects of systemic discrimination that has impacted the organization. Specifically, the

OIP seeks to address the lack of capacity at NCS to meet outcome expectations. As the change initiator and being the most senior staff within the organization, I will help lead the organization from its current state to its desired future.

Chapter 1 provides a more through introduction to the organization and an extensive analysis of NCS' organizational context and structure. A description of NCS's organizational approaches to leadership alongside the historical context of the organization is shared. Additionally, as the change initiator, my agency in the change process is further discussed and my leadership style in relation to the leadership approaches at NCS are reviewed. The existing leadership style being used at NCS is transformational leadership and the collective values of Ubuntu framework, which is an African-centred approach to leadership. Strength-based leadership is also identified as an approach that will be taken up to help lead the change at NCS. My leadership approaches are also African-centred but transformative, which focuses on the importance of community, social justice, and unity in African ways of being, to ensure that NCS as a Black-led organization is getting the adequate support needed to lead to social change (Ncube, 2010). Chapter 1 draws on literature to investigate guiding questions that emerge from the PoP. These questions inquired about the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the organization's overall capacity, the importance of Indigenous African frameworks in leading change. The investigation leads into the vision for change and descriptions of organizational change readiness and change drivers.

Chapter 2 begins with a discussion of transformational and strength-based leadership as frameworks that connect with my agency to affect change. A critical gap analysis is explained, and the Holistic Change Theory (Allan, 1997) is identified as the theory being used to help diagnose the problem and to lead the change at NCS. While the Holistic Change Model is not

typically used to determine *what* needs to change, the model was used as its stages aligned with the process being taken to facilitate change. Following this, three potential solutions are explored, and the selected solution was a combination of two of the proposed solutions which included participating in a Black ecosystem and the reduction of programs to lead change.

Finally, Chapter 3 presents comprehensive implementation, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), and communication plans intended to take place over the course of two years. Critical in this chapter are connections being made between the strategies, frameworks, and analysis from Chapter 1 and 2 to ensure that the approaches taken to the planning are effective and relevant. The implementation plan provides details on each stage of the change implementation including the associated timelines, participants and actions that take place during those stages. The M&E is conducted using the strength-based Appreciative Inquiry (AI) model. Details on each stage of monitoring and evaluation are provided similarly to how the implementation plan is offered, with the participants, actions, and timeline for each stage. The communications plan presents strategies to ensure that all necessary stakeholders are provided clear and consistent messaging at each stage of the implementation plan. Chapter 3 is concluded a discussion on the next steps and future considerations for NCS.

Fundamentally, this OIP is being presented at a time where the non-profit and philanthropy sector are becoming more aware of the systemic discrimination that has impacted B3 organizations to reach their full capacity. While this OIP does not explicitly try to resolve the issue, in order to address the capacity of B3 organizations, the issue of funding must be acknowledged as “the systems of funding themselves lead to inequitable results” (Ayer & Anderson, 2022, p. 17). B3 organizations are organizations that are Black-led, Black serving and Black focused. Kim Nordbye, a manager at Suncor Energy Inc. explained, “[i]f there hadn’t been

the pandemic, where we clearly saw that money wasn't necessarily getting into the hands of those who needed it the most, I'm not sure our increased emphasis on being accessible and making our donation process more equitable would have happened" (Ayer & Anderson, 2022, p.17). Ultimately, this OIP seeks to bring awareness to the systemic issues impacting B3 organizations, while supporting NCS to reach its full capacity given the systemic challenges impacting the organization.

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Acronyms

CoP (Community of Practice)

CRT (Critical Race Theory)

M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation)

NCS (Nakupenda Community Services)

OIP (Organizational Improvement Plan)

PEST (Political, Economic, Social, Technological)

PoP (Problem of Practice)

Definitions

Africentric/Africentricity: An African-centred paradigm that represents human personhood and human socialization in the African context (Nowye, 2017).

Black Ecosystem: A network and community of B3 organizations who partner and support one another to ensure the growth and success of their mission to serve Black communities.

B3 Organization: Black led, Black Serving and Black focused organization (Network for the Advancement of Black Communities, n.d.).

Indigenous: “An existence prior to European colonization of land in the various continents” (specifically referring to the African context in this OIP) (Emeagwali & Dei, 2014, p. X).

Indigenous African/ African-Centred: “African Indigeneity must be read as both a process and a form of identity. It is an identity that defines who a people are at a particular point in time. But it is also a recognition that such identities are in a continual process of existence” (Emeagwali & Dei, 2014, p. X)

Nguzo Saba: An African value system that offers a framework for how people of Indigenous African descent can live their lives, do their work in the world, and wage their struggles for liberation and ever higher levels of human life (Karenga, 2016).

Ubuntu: “A comprehensive ancient African worldview based on the values of humanness, caring, sharing, respect, compassion and associated values, ensuring a happy and qualitative human community life in a spirit of family” (Letseka, 2013, p. 337).

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Problem

The Organizational Improvement Plan (OIP) concerns an African-centred, transformational approach to upholding and furthering the mission, vision and goals of a non-profit organization, which will be referred to as Nakupenda Community Services (NCS). NCS has a history of activism and educational support for the Black community in a small region in Ontario, Canada. While the organization has made valuable changes in the local community through their efforts, it is evident that NCS needs further organizational change and improvement in order to continue to advance their efforts and effectively serve the community. The OIP attempts to address the root of the need for change. This chapter begins by discussing the organizational context to get a more thorough understanding of the organization's history and the work that is being done internally. Next, there will be a discussion of the organization's leadership style and lens, followed by the introduction of the problem of practice. The chapter ends with a discussion of the vision for change, breaking down what the future desired state will look like for NCS, as well as an assessment of the change readiness of the organization.

Organizational Context

NCS is a Black-serving, Black-led, Black-focused (B3) (City of Toronto - Confronting Anti-Black Racism, n.d.) grassroots non-profit organization (NPO) that has been operating in Canada for over thirty years. NCS was established as an advocacy group that addresses systemic discrimination existing in the public school system. These efforts work to dismantle anti-Black racism and bring systemic change within the public school system and the local community. NCS grew to become the local voice of the Black community in its region by consistently promoting the interests of Black Canadians through their programming, initiatives, and efforts (Nakupenda Community Services, 2006). NCS has local recognition as a champion for Black

students and their families and has established working relationships with municipal and provincial government bodies as a form of continuous advocacy (Nakupenda Community Services, 2019). For example, NCS works directly with the local Mayor and police service to provide consultation and insight on matters that directly impact the Black community, like carding and racially biased policing (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, n.d.).

NCS has actively led change in the education system by engaging with policymakers and encouraging community members to share their stories to inform local leaders of the systemic racism within the school system (Nakupenda Community Services, 2021). One of the changes that was a direct result of NCS's advocacy is the development of a local adhoc anti-Black racism committee with the local police service, which comprises representatives from Black-led organizations. Additionally, the municipal government has developed a regional youth committee to support policy leaders better to understand the needs and experiences of Black youth. Furthermore, my role within the organization is a direct result of The Ministry of Social Services' responding to the community's concerns about the safety of Black youth in the public school system. My leadership role is a result of advocacy, as my role requires me to promote advocacy, influence policy, and further the dialogue on the needed change in both the public school system and the social service sector.

Three key pillars drive NCS: to demonstrate, to deliver, and to empower. The values of NCS remain steadfast and continue to inform the organizational outputs (Nakupenda Community Service, 2019). Organizational outputs are done through the number of programs and services offered to serve the intergenerational needs of the growing community; Appendix A indicates the list of NCS's current programs. NCS is governed by a volunteer board of directors who also act as the organization's senior leaders. There are eight official board positions that last for a one-

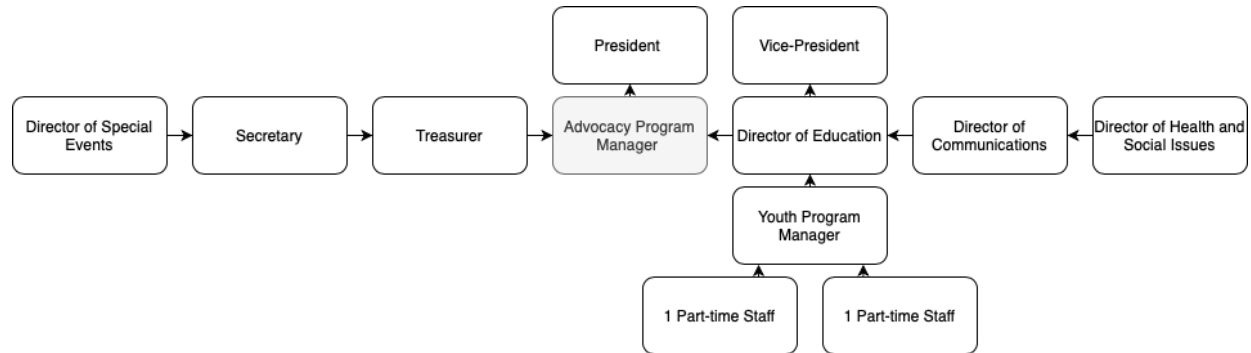
year term and are voted in yearly at the annual general meeting. Each board member leads a portfolio that helps manage the operations of the organization and direct service delivery. Portfolios in the organization include the Seniors Program, the Black History Month Program, and the Weekend School Program, all of which are led by the board of directors. NCS has four paid employees, which include two full-time managers and two part-time staff. As one of the full-time managers, I manage the organization's advocacy program and work alongside the youth program manager to facilitate services that meet the needs of Black youth and their families. The two part-time staff work under the youth program manager to conduct case management and lead program outreach. NCS currently has ten active programs. All four employees provide leadership across two essential programs, while the board of directors operates the remainder of the programming. Due to the programming expectations to serve over 300 families and various stakeholders (Nakupenda Community Services, 2021) and the minimal number of paid employees, there is now a lack of organizational capacity to effectively manage all programs. Additionally, since NCS is a small organization, there is an absence of a solidified system of communication, and communication is typically conducted via email or phone. Members communicate with each other in the way that they see is most suitable at the time.

As the advocacy program manager, I carry out the organization's mission to educate, lead, and train Black students and families to advocate for themselves within the school system and other adjacent systems. I am also the most senior staff at the organization; therefore, some of my responsibilities include consistent communication with the board of directors and offering suggestions and feedback on senior-level matters such as budget and hiring processes. Due to the size of the organization, my unique role grants me influence in many decision-making processes. Figure 1 represents the organizational structure by identifying all of the roles within the

organization and positioning them to reflect leadership power.

Figure 1

Nakupenda Community Services' Organizational Structure



Funding

NCS currently depends on government funding to sustain the organization. While there are some organizations that have acquired funding that can be used for various organizational needs, NCS's government funding must be used for specific programming. For example, some areas where the organization lacks capacity, such as governance, will not benefit from the funding received for the youth mentorship program because there are specific funding guidelines that prevent the use of funds for costs that are not directly related to the program. However, governance is a significant part of the organization's stability and capacity; thus, investing in governance can strengthen program delivery. Although guidelines are necessary, NCS would benefit from flexibility in budget guidelines. As a Black-led grassroots non-profit organization, one of the critical challenges in maintaining program sustainability is knowledge of resources and access to traditional funding, in the form of grants from funders and capacity building, which is support offered to organizations to help them better meet their organizational goals. Still, "Black-led organizations are often met with greater skepticism and scrutiny than their white counterparts when applying for funding" (Batten & Williams, 2017, p. 5). The

overall capacity of NCS is impacted due to a few factors that will be shared throughout the OIP; however, funding is a key factor that must be acknowledged and reconciled.

Theoretical Frameworks

The following theoretical frameworks represent the current structure of NCS and indicate the culturally-relevant approaches that guide the organization and its work. While there is a traditional hierarchy in the non-profit leadership structure, NCS operates from a horizontal/flat organizational structure. This means, that although there are designated roles such as president and manager, much of the work is shared across the board; and there is an emphasis on collaboration and collective efforts. This is part of the Africentric lens that the organization operates from, more specifically the Collective-Values Framework of Ubuntu (Molose, Goldman, & Thomas, 2018), that highlights the approach NCS takes to make the organization inclusive and community-centred at all levels.

Organizational Structure

The current framework that drives NCS is the horizontal organizational and leadership framework, which can also be referred to as “flat” (Antony, 2012). The horizontal structure is described as a framework that removes barriers between the executive level and the staff level, as well as encourages teamwork and collaboration (Quain, 2019). When staff share responsibilities and have a strong level of autonomy in their roles, they do not need to report to their supervisors constantly (Quain, 2019). Given that NCS is a small organization, this framework was viable for the organization and has been sustaining the structure of programming outputs. Additionally, staff are not required to wait on members of the board of directors to make certain decisions, as this structure mitigates delays to reach programming goals and encourages trust between employees and leadership. Thylefores and Persson (2014)

assert that "shared or horizontal team leadership is reported to be a better predictor of outcomes than vertical leadership" (p. 137). However, horizontal leadership can also blur the lines between roles and responsibilities and potentially cause more challenges within the organization if not exercised effectively (Craig, 2018). Although shared/horizontal leadership has been historically effective for NCS, the program demands have expanded throughout the years, and there is now a lack of organizational capacity to meet those demands. Therefore, exploring different leadership frameworks to lead the organization forward may be of benefit.

Afrocentricity

NCS is also driven by an Afrocentric organizational framework. The term Afrocentric is often used interchangeably with the terms, Africentric and African-centred. Some scholars have defined Afrocentricity differently; however, the centralization of Africanism remains evident in all the definitions. Afrocentricity is the "manner of thought and action in which the centrality of African interests, values and perspectives predominate" (Chawane, 2016, para. 6). This definition aligns with how NCS operates because there is an organization's conscious and intentional effort to see the clients and each other as part of the change. NCS centres the interests of people of Indigenous African descent and seeks to deliver specific services and demonstrate culturally-relevant approaches as indicated in the organization's pillars. Asante (2009) writes that "when Black people view themselves as centred and central in their history [and future], then they see themselves as agents, actors, and participants rather than marginals on the periphery of political and economic experiences" (para. 5). Through the Afrocentric worldview, the organization centers how colleagues work together through the spirit of Ubuntu, a term understood and commonly used by Africans that highlights the value of collective efforts.

Collective-Values of Ubuntu Framework

Although Ubuntu is an Indigenous African-centred framework, the Ubuntu framework's collective values explicitly highlight how NCS embraces cooperative efforts to lead the organization forward. Ubuntu allows a sense of understanding amongst colleagues, where team members feel and care for one another. "Understanding amongst colleagues enables team members to see themselves as belonging to a community even at work, and consequently, they are more willing to help each other and the organization" (Molose et al., 2018, p. 199).

NCS depends on its volunteer board of directors to manage more than half of the organization's programming. Board members join the organization, commit their time to the required work, and enter a community environment that NCS has curated. Figure 2 shows the four fundamental values of the collective values of the Ubuntu framework, which include; survival, compassion, respect and dignity, and solidarity. These values shape how the organization operates internally and how the organization serves its community and stakeholders.

Figure 2
Collective-Values of Ubuntu Framework



Note. Adapted from "Towards a Collective-Values Framework of Ubuntu: Implications for Workplace Commitment," by Molose, T., Goldman, G.A., & Thomas P. Entrepreneurial

Business and Economics Review, 6(3), 193-206.

Based on the above framework and values of NCS, strengths-based leadership is apparent and would be good to formally adopt as an approach. Strength-based leadership is a method of "maximizing the efficiency, productivity, and success of an organization by focusing on and continuously developing the strengths of the organizational resources, such as computer systems, tools and people" (Burkus, 2010, para. 1). Both the Ubuntu framework and the horizontal structure of the organization highlight team members' collective efforts, which requires a strength-based component. For example, the collective values of Ubuntu framework principles all express elements of support, which increases productivity and efficiency and ultimately focuses on each individual's strengths to reach the goals. Alongside strength-based leadership, transformational leadership raises the motivation and morality between leaders and followers within the organization (Northhouse, 2019). Additionally, "people who exhibit transformational leadership often have a set of internal values and ideals, and they are effective at motivating followers to act in ways that support the greater good rather than their interest" (Northhouse, 2019, p. 169). NCS actively seeks to transform the community's state by offering services and resources to help the community gain access to the necessary tools to meet individual and collective goals. Both strength-based leadership and transformational leadership are relevant approaches for the organization to espouse.

Furthermore, members of the organization are also inspired to transform, to experience a sense of motivation and become part of the change process. Understanding the organizational context and the different frameworks and approaches within the organization is critical to addressing the PoP. In this next section the leadership position and lens will be explored by

reviewing the capacity and role of the change initiator and the organization.

Leadership Position and Lens

I am currently considered the most senior staff member at NCS. We do not have an Executive Director, so much of the staff reporting is directed to me and is then passed on to the board president, if necessary. Due to this I carry an informal leadership position within the organization. As a senior staff member, I have a unique perspective and more agency to impact the change at NCS than the other staff. This section explores my role within NCS, focusing on my leadership philosophy and my scope and agency to enact change within the organization.

Leadership Philosophy

I am positioned as an Indigenous African, Black, immigrant woman, who is guided by my ancestors in everything that I do. With all my intersections, I also position myself as a social justice advocate, a community educator, and an African-centred education advocate. Given my personal lived experiences, alongside my education and professional experience in the social service sector and educational leadership, I have been able to bring diverse expertise to my organization. One of the key reasons I was hired for my initial role at NCS is my background in African-centred program development and educational leadership. Connected to my Indigenous African identity, I am a community-centered, thoughtful, and value-based professional leader committed to holistic organizational change. I believe there is value in including community in the change that they need and see participatory action as being fundamental in building a stronger community.

Transformative Leadership

My leadership philosophy incorporates transformative leadership that is rooted in an

Indigenous African-centred lens. Shields (2010) defines transformative leadership as "a form of leadership grounded in an activist agenda, one that combines a rights-based theory, and every individual is entitled to be treated with dignity, respect, and absolute regard with a social justice theory of ethics" (p. 571). Directly connected to my Indigenous African-centred worldview, the transformative leadership lens encourages a holistic approach to leading change. Transformative leadership builds on other critical leadership theories, including social justice leadership and culturally-relevant leadership (Brooks et al., 2017; Theoharis, 2007; Shields & Hesbol, 2019). Gunn (2015) asserts that "[a] transformative leader for social justice is one who observes the actions of those around them, reflects on what was seen and takes steps to address any inequality" (p. 2). In my advocacy role at NCS, I am committed to transforming the lives and experiences of Black students who are impacted by the discrimination that exists within the public school system. I act as a transformative leader by advancing equity, inclusion, and social justice for my clients and, by extension, the community (Gramby-Sobukwe, 2020).

Transformative leadership asserts that anyone can lead change, whether conscious of their agency or not (Montouri and Donnelly, 2018). Montouri and Donnelly (2018) assert that "it is an active decision to acknowledge the current transformative moment to develop agency by consciously participating in it, and to give this change a direction that allows individuals to embody higher values" (p. 3). While I may be an informal leader within the organization, I know I have the capacity to evoke influence and support to implement the change.

The transformative leadership approach resonates with the holistic Indigenous African approach of Ubuntu. As indicated earlier in this document, I identify my life philosophy as Ubuntu, a relational understanding of being human and deserving of justice,

peace, and prosperity. Seehawer (2018) agrees that "Ubuntu has been discussed as an African philosophy, worldview, moral ethics and a way of knowing" (p. 454). Using the Ubuntu philosophy as the centre of my worldview emphasizes the relationship between the individual, the community, and the organization, which underpins transformative leadership. In my role, I facilitate one-on-one informal counselling sessions with Black students and parents/guardians to better understand what type of supports they are seeking and offer resources or necessary referrals. I also plan and coordinate workshops that can serve stakeholders, such as de-escalation workshops for parents/guardians, and anti-Black racism seminars for community members. Through these sessions and workshops, I am offering tools and resources for Black community members to feel empowered to do for themselves as well as strengthen community capacity. I align my perspective of transformative leadership with Montouri and Donnelly (2018) definition, which states that transformative leadership "actively embraces the psychological and spiritual as well as the social world and the quest for social justice" (p. 4). Ubuntu features the spiritual and social aspects of transformative leadership. Ncube (2010) writes that "Ubuntu as a leadership philosophy emphasizes collectivism and relationships over material things, including ownership of opportunities, responsibilities, and challenges" (p. 79). Although centered on the African-centered worldview, Ubuntu is a transformative leadership philosophy that offers a distinct and culturally relevant approach to understanding leadership.

Agency

My leadership portfolio is centred around community advocacy and system navigation. However, I am often delegated tasks by the board of directors, which results in me taking on more of a "senior management" role within the organization. This gives me a unique position

at NCS because I influence several types of leadership decisions. Although this is a unique role, it is quite common in grassroots organizations with limited staff (Alessandrini, 2002). The Nonprofit HR (2019) reported that "non-profits with tight budgets and capacity challenges tend to fall in the trap of underpaying and overworking their employees. Non-profit staff frequently have responsibilities that traditionally fall outside the role their job titles suggestion" (p. 9). For example, when the president or vice president of the board of directors cannot attend a meeting with policymakers or potential funders, I attend on the organization's behalf. Representing the organization often positions me as a presenter for board meetings with knowledge and awareness of best practices. I am often providing support and feedback to the board of directors and have built strong working relationships. Therefore, I am one of the change agents within the organization and have a key role in the change process. Change agents are often responsible for initiating and managing the change process (Lunenburg, 2010). However, my role in the change process will specifically focus on initiating and investigating the problem and offering potential solutions through the organizational improvement plan. The implementation and integration of the proposed solutions in the OIP will be managed by the president of the board of directors, another critical change agent and champion. The initiators of change often recognize that the current system or processes are not working and are encouraged to help bring about change (Heathfield, 2020). As an initiator and investigator, my goal is to bring out deep and equitable change and work toward organizational transformation, which are crucial elements of transformative leadership (Bonaparte, 2015) and uphold the collective spirit of Ubuntu (Bennett, 2011).

My expertise in African-centred programming and my educational background in social service work, community education educational leadership has afforded me a level of

influence in the organization's decision-making. I am also being supervised by the president of the board of directors. In my manager role, I can see the impact of the organization's capacity on service delivery which offers valuable data to senior leaders. I work closely with the board of directors to offer insight and perspective to address service delivery symptoms. I will use my unique position and relationships as leverage to address the problem of practice. NCS has already built a foundation for change as the organization is aware that challenges exist but have yet to pinpoint the problem.

My intricate role as a program manager with senior leadership duties positions me as an informal leader who influences change. Since the organization currently operates using a horizontal organizational model, there is an emphasis on partnership and inclusion in most processes (Ferguson, n.d., p. 1), including change. The strength-based and transformational approach that the organization employs ties with my Indigenous African lens and transformative approach to leadership strengths and constructs an overall value-based structure to the potential change. Transformative leadership encourages the idea that everyone can lead, and everyone contributes, whether they are conscious of their agency or not (Montuori & Donnelly, 2017). My leadership lens will help address the problem of practice while introducing a holistic approach to leading change.

Leadership Problem of Practice

An existing challenge in the non-profit sector is the lack of funding resources available to grassroots organizations. B3 organizations often experience the impact of the systemic inequities of Canada's philanthropic sector when trying to build capacity. With millions of dollars awarded to organizations annually, B3 organizations like NCS represent a tiny number of successful recipients and receive less than 0.1 % of funds from Canadian foundations

(Gray, 2021; Pereira et al., 2020). Lack of adequate funds often results in decreased organizational performance and capacity as there is an inability to deliver programming and services effectively. Inadequate funds impact employee retention as staff may feel overwhelmed and overworked, which leads to a high turnover rate (Selden & Sowa, 2015). Program managers are not senior leaders, but in small organizations like NCS, the staff must work closely with senior leaders to develop and implement organizational goals. The PoP under investigation is the lack of organizational capacity to effectively meet program outcome expectations at NCS.

Communities rely on non-profit organizations for support and will continue to rely on their local organizations as the province recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic (Ontario Non- profit Network, 2020). NCS must explore new methods of serving these communities in order to meet the growing demands of some of the organization's programming. Some of the key organizational demands include:

1. Meeting the community's changing needs due to COVID-19 (less recreational programming and more COVID Relief support, primarily virtual programming).
2. Increasing the need for more tutoring programs for students experiencing challenges with hybrid or virtual learning.
3. Providing more employment and housing-related services due to the impact of COVID- 19.
4. Meeting funders output and outcome targets, although there has been a significant change to the method of service delivery due to COVID-19.
5. Increasing in mental health supports as a result of COVID-19.

6. Establishing more funding to facilitate the increased need of certain programs to strengthen employee capacity.

As mentioned previously, NCS operates several programs and services (Appendix A) that are vital to the community's health. Non-profit leaders are often viewed as the community's voice, and through the critical services offered at these organizations, they contribute to economic stability and mobility (Camper, 2016). There is an expectation of meeting the community needs and funder requirements to be renewed for funding and ultimately continue to provide the community with what they need. How can NCS deliver the same level of services or more, given that the global pandemic has caused the organization to pivot its approach to programming and service delivery? The role of non-profit organizations has become even more critical during the pandemic; these current conditions "are placing significant strain on the ability of non-profits to serve communities" (Choi et al., 2020, p. 2). Furthermore, "non-profits are facing more demand, less capacity, and anticipating more funds" (Choi et al., 2020, p. 4), which means NCS is not the only organization experiencing challenges. Ontario Non-profit Network (2020) writes that there are "gaps in the current government supports [as] revenue streams have taken a major hit" (p. 2). While a significant decrease to the revenue streams impacted the sector across the board, B3 organizations are impacted even more due to the systemic inequities in the funding sector. Like other instances of racial exclusion, Black-led organizations are often met with "greater skepticism and scrutiny than their white counterparts then applying for funding" (Batten & Williams, 2017, p. 5). The current organizational structure is highly dependent on the two full-time staff and on government funding to help build develop capacity. With a volunteer board of directors who also act as senior leaders, it is evident that there is a lack of

capacity for the workload necessary to move the organization forward. The restrictions placed by funders through short-term contracts are an obstacle alongside the need for greater capacity in staff and resources (Hebb, n.d.).

Framing Problem of Practice

To better understand the issues surrounding the organizational capacity within non-profit organizations, specifically NCS, a discussion of the history of the non-profit capacity building must occur. Following this, I will discuss the theoretical frameworks that will be used to address the PoP. Lastly, an analysis of the political, economic, and social context will be explored. Indigenous African-Centred Framework and Critical Race Theory (CRT) framework align with one another, as they both centre the interest of NCS and its Black-led and mandated leadership. While the African-centred framework maintains the organizational values, CRT addresses the systemic racial implications that NCS experiences.

Historical Overview

Capacity building is the process of strengthening an organization's ability to improve its performance, effectiveness, and impact (Wassem, et.al, 2019). Although there are many variations of the definition, capacity building intends to lead the organization forward. Capacity building is not a new concept; however, there has been a reintroduction of this concept into the non-profit sector as a new innovative phenomenon (Sobeck, 2008). Capacity building and organizational capacity development are used interchangeably and have been a part of the social sector and non-profit discourse since the 1970s (Raynor, 2014). In reviewing the history of capacity building, Raynor (2014) writes, "The practice field has changed considerably. The capacity-building 1.0 emergence as a critical component of effective social sector support and preparedness advanced to a 2.0 version that was more professionalized and focused on the non-

profit as a holistic entity" (para. 4). Capacity building was historically seen as the organization's ability to attract inputs, particularly funding from outside sources (Honadle, 1981; Raynor, 2014). However, the perspective has shifted and is now inclusive of all actors within the organization and sector. Capacity building in the context of NCS means the ability to build strong networks and relationships, source funding to manage programming, manage employee retention, and increase moral. Recognizing that these are the key areas, capacity building is required to bring the organization back to a place of consistency and growth.

Indigenous African-Centred Framework

NCS facilitates programming which is led through an African-centred lens. NCS believes in the power of maintaining the culture and community of African diasporic peoples (Nakupenda Community Services, 2021). The organization seeks to strengthen its approach and incorporate Indigenous African principles into its organizational structure. Indigenous African-centred approaches to change are holistic and include both internal members of the organization and external members, such as our beneficiaries in the community and stakeholders at large. Although NCS is Black-led and Black-mandated, the organization operates in a Western context and the predominantly white non-profit sector (Batten & Williams, 2017); for NCS to reach its vision, an Indigenous African-centred approach should be maintained. Gibson (2000) posits that the approach of a Black-led organization should "draw upon African values, as understood and articulated by Africans, rather than only on Western [organizational development] values, as the foundation upon which any [organizational development] approach or strategy should be based" (p. 123). As such, the African-centred approach will be used throughout this OIP to capture and centre the voices of Black leaders, community members, and stakeholders in the proposed solution.

Nguzo Saba

The Nguzo Saba is an Indigenous African-centred framework that highlights fundamental elements that centre the individual and an organization's collective (Baraka & Jones, 1969). It consists of seven fundamental principles that underline essential elements which offer reason and cultural relevance to the organizational structure and approaches, as seen in Table 1. This framework is key to the organization's conceptual framework as it resonates with the worldview and mission of the organization, which is to serve the needs of people of African descent. The Nguzo Saba nicely merges with the strength-based and transformational leadership approaches by complementing the holistic nature of each style, which focus on the positives that exists within the organization, as well as the values that will encourage members of the organization in the change process. The principles of this framework can be used to assess the organizational value systems and align them with the desired change. Using traditional values of the Nguzo Saba features the foundational aspects of the African culture and identity that persist today even after decades of oppression and injustice (Sun & Starks, 2018).

Table 1

The Nguzo Saba: Seven Principles

Principle	Description
Unity	To strive and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and race.
Self-Determination	To define ourselves, name ourselves, and speak for ourselves.
Collective Work and Responsibility	To build and maintain our community together, make our brothers' and sisters' problems our problems, and solve them together.

Co-operative Economics	To build and maintain our stores and shops and other business and to profit together from them.
Purpose	To make our collective vocation to building and developing our community to restore our people to their traditional greatness.
Creativity	To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it.
Faith	To believe with all of our heart in our parents, teachers, leaders, people, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

Note. Adapted from *A Black Value System* (p. 54), by Baraka, I. A., & Jones, L., 1969,

The Black Scholar.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is a theoretical framework that examines the appearance of race and racism across dominant cultures; it examines how victims of systemic racism are affected by the cultural perceptions of the race (Purdue University, n.d.). CRT first developed as a movement in the mid-1970s and grew out of the legal concept of critical legal studies (Delgado & Stefanicic, 2006). Seminal researchers Kimberlé Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, and Allen Freeman have helped expand the context of CRT beyond legal studies and into almost all social contexts. NCS is Black-led and mandated, so one could potentially conclude that race could not be the reasoning behind the challenges within the organization. However, NCS's problem is the lack of capacity. In order to explore how the organization can build capacity, it must acknowledge that capacity building not only involves the internal members of the organization, but it also includes external stakeholders such as policymakers, education

leaders, and funders; all of which are tied to systems that are historically anti-Black. De le-Graza and Ono (2016) posit, CRT "seeks to understand how white supremacy as a legal, cultural and political condition is reproduced and maintained" (p. 1) within systems.

Understanding white supremacy will be vital for NCS to explore, albeit the organization was founded on African-centred principles. Given the need to meet criteria for various adjacent systems such as funders, there is potential for the organization to have adapted aspects of Eurocentric belief systems and integrated them within the organization.

An example of the areas of capacity building that are also impacted by race is the funding sector. Given the systemic discrimination prevalent in the philanthropic and non-profit funding sector (Bahubeshi, 2021), the nature of funding discrepancies must be addressed using CRT. Not only will this address the potential need for specific African/Black-centered and culturally specific funding pools, but it will specifically tackle the structural mechanisms that continue to have the most significant impact on B3 organization funding capacity. With limited funding options for Black-led organizations, it has been reported that white-led organizations are being awarded Black-specific funding opportunities "despite their lack of connection and proximity to Black people" (Batten & Williams, 2017, p. 11).

White-led organizations are often in a position to access Black-specific funding pools. Meanwhile, Black-led organizations such as Black Lives Matter Canada, Somali Centre for Family Services, and Operation Black Vote "were denied government funding and often told they did not have sufficient Black leadership" (Bahubeshi, 2021, para. 6). Anti-Black racism is often characterized by its subtlety and ordinariness in predominately white spaces (Ford & Airhihenbuwa, 2010). However, the discrimination in the funding sector is not at all subtle. Anti- Black racism is systemic and must be directly named in its impact on our social,

political, and economic structures, including philanthropy.

Political, Economic, Social, and Technological Context: PEST

It is currently the seventh year of the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent. In the UN proclaiming this decree, "the international community is recognizing that people of African descent represent a distinct group whose human rights must be promoted and protected" (United Nations, n.d, 2). Although the government of Canada formally recognized the decree in 2018 (United Nations Association in Canada, n.d), Black Canadians have been doing the work to serve, protect, and honour their communities' rights, traditions, and lives for hundreds of years. One of the ways this is done is through non-profit organizations. A fundamental step in the change process is looking at the broad political, economic and social context that influences the organization. NCS has actively led change in the education system by engaging with policymakers and encouraging community members to share their stories to inform local leaders of the systemic racism within the school system (Nakupenda Community Services, 2021).

As an organization that serves the Black community, NCS recognizes that it is not only seeking safety in the public school system, but all other adjacent systems. As NCS navigates the "post George Floyd" era, there is a constant reminder as to why the work being done as an organization is necessary. The social, physical, emotional and psychological safety of NCS' clients and community is one of the organizations unwritten priorities. NCS has attended to several racial justice events and has recognized the intersection between COVID-19 and racial violence. It was evident that some of the policies that were in place during this time, such as police carding during the 2020 lockdown in Ontario disproportionately impacted Black and racialized communities, especially youth. The issue with that mandate is that police would have had the authority to stop, search, question and detain individuals who they believed were not out for essential purposes (Desai &

Dawson, 2021). Given the history of systemic racism in our policing system, this raised concerns about the safety of clients.

As an organization, NCS did have moments of panic as there were concerns about what would happen to the youth participants who may find themselves interacting with the police. There was already a lack of manpower which impacted the organization's capacity but making sure that staff prioritized client needs required NCS to develop new ways of working and attending to the youth. NCS' youth participants were more at risk of being carded because many of them walk to school or support their parents by doing simple things like grocery runs. To mitigate and prevent any potential interaction with the police, NCS began to give out non-perishable food items and meals to families through our Covid-Relief program. NCS encouraged youth to inform their parents to pick up these items from the head office if they had the capacity, or if they did not, one of the staff members would drive the items to their homes. While NCS does not have all the resources required to facilitate all of the organization programs effectively, what NCS does have is a collective commitment to enhancing the lives of the Black community (Nakupenda Community Services, 2019).

NCS relies on several resources to efficiently manage the organization. While the philanthropic sector has been exposed for its racial discrimination (Allen et al., 2020), NCS still must create revenue to meet the community's needs. Anti-Black racism needs to be named as it is the root cause of much of the racial inequity that B3 organizations face (Batten & Williams, 2017.). The anti-Black racism in the sector impacts the organizations that do not get awarded funding. It also greatly impacts Black philanthropists and fundraisers working in the field. For the Black community, philanthropy is not just about giving; it is about survival (Freeman, 2020). The foundation of this Organizational Improvement Plan is situated in an equity and social justice context, as giving helps maintain the necessary work being done to

serve the community's needs and interests.

COVID-19 played a major role in how programs and services now operate at NCS. In some cases, clients have been offered the convenience of not having to leave their home to access services such as the Youth Mentorship Program and COVID-19 Support Program. However, the downside of this change is that many families do not have access to adequate technology to attend the required programs and access the needed services. NCS staff had to think of innovative ways to support those who do not have access to the internet or to technology at home. Through our Youth Mentorship Program funding, NCS was able to purchase electronics including laptops, headphones and USB sticks to support our students. Many participants who did not have access to technology at home meant that they also had trouble completing homework due to the lack of access. This technology supports NCS' youth participants both for programming and educational purposes.

NCS' Seniors Program had a reduction in participants when programming went online. Senior participants were used to meeting twice a week in person, and many were consistent in attendance as it was an outlet for them to engage and build friendships, as well as stay active through the healthy living series. Unfortunately, the challenges with using technology reduced the number of participants who joined programming weekly from home. While technology is seen as an innovative approach to leadership in many settings, it caused a barrier in many of the human connections that NCS is used to building and fostering.

I began with NCS at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a result the advocacy and support that I have been offering to families and communities has been primarily virtual. While this is a benefit because I am still able to work and make a living, the program was created and structured to be an in-person, community-based program where I

am engaging, supporting, and attending community events, school meetings and other important sessions. My role was intended to be very hands on, however like many other organizations, we had to learn how to pivot and do the best we can using technology to support our clients.

Guiding Questions from the Problem of Practice

NCS is a non-profit organization that serves the best interest of the Black community in a region located in Ontario. With several years of actively serving communities to combat the challenges impacting Black students in the school system, NCS has expanded to offer programs and services that reach multiple generations. From the Seniors Program to the Weekend School Program, there are services available for people of all generations. While multigenerational programming is extremely important to preserving African-centred values in the Black community (Waites, 2009), it is evident that NCS is facing challenges in managing all of its programming. The questions posed to guide the investigation of the Problem of Practice are: What are the necessary factors to consider when addressing the organizational capacity of NCS? How does the current organizational structure affect the long-term goals of NCS? How has COVID 19 impacted the organization's ability to manage programs? Why is it essential to incorporate African-centred values and principles in the change management of NCS? Each question is explored more in depth so that there is a clear understanding of the various elements that impact this issue of building organizational capacity and the realities to consider when working towards addressing those elements.

What are the factors that influence the organizational capacity at NCS?

Many challenges have emerged due to this problem. For example, if the organization cannot facilitate its programming, the clients do not get the services they need. Another

challenge that has emerged is that the organization has experienced high turnover rates due to the lack of capacity, impacting service delivery and organizational performance (Wynen et al., 2019). The current organizational structure is highly dependent on the two full-time staff. With a volunteer board of directors, it is evident that there is a lack of capacity for the workload necessary to move the organization forward. Additionally, the restrictions placed by funders through short-term contracts are an obstacle alongside the need for greater capacity in staff and resources (Hebb, n.d). Today, many funders limit contract timelines which does not provide the organization with the long-term stability to manage programs. The COVID-19 Support Program at NCS mentioned earlier in this document exemplifies one of these funding opportunities. NCS funding lasted one year, but the need for the program has grown and is still needed after the end of the contract. These are the major factors that impact the organizations capacity.

How does the current organizational structure affect the long-term goals of NCS?

NCS lacks capacity in many areas, including employee retention, funding, and organizational structure/governance model (Nakupenda Community Services, 2019). To have higher employee retention, the governance model and organizational structure must be effective. For there to be a capacity to hire more employees to strengthen the organizational structure, more funding is needed to pay new staff. NCS staff and volunteer board work tirelessly to meet the community's needs through the programming, but what happens if the staff and board members become burnt out because of the demands of the programs? These are some of the lines of inquiry that are being considered when exploring the context of the problem. Due to NCS being a small grassroots level organization, there is a high dependence on collaborative efforts;

however, the organization has yet to master this.

Effective communication is necessary to establish an operative work structure that will contribute to the organization's overall culture. Although the organizational structure is horizontal and communication flows amongst all organization members, NCS requires robust communication tools and mechanisms to establish more efficient communication. Due to this, there is often an overlap in responsibilities; for example, the president may assign a task to me, but the VP also completes it, not knowing it has already been assigned. These are some of the challenges that impact the capacity of NCS.

How has COVID 19 impacted the organization's capacity?

The COVID 19 pandemic has interfered with the organization's overall capacity. As this document centralizes the community's unmet needs due to the lack of capacity within the organization, it is essential to discuss how the COVID 19 pandemic has led to aspects of this lack. Organizational leaders often have high expectations, especially in times of crisis, like the global pandemic. When organizations experience environmental turbulence, such as the pandemic, change leaders play an essential role of "articulating a vision for the future and garnering support to mobilize resources and make changes happen" (McMullin & Rago, 2020, p. 1184). NCS's board members have been actively trying to pivot with the ongoing changes within the non-profit sector, which often leads to board members being overwhelmed with their workload. This current climate is taking an emotional, physical, and psychological toll on leaders of colour (Building Movement Project, 2020). There is now a greater need to incorporate mental health and wellness services for leadership and staff going forward. Although NCS was able to adapt and "survive" over the past two years since the emergence of the pandemic, Building Movement Project (2020) predicts that "a hugely

disproportionate number of leaders of colour will disappear from this work because of burnout" (p. 4).

Why is it important to incorporate African-centred values and principles in the change management of NCS?

Given the extensive challenges impacting the organization, maintaining an African-centred worldview or framework in the change process will help keep the organization and community members grounded and trusting in the process. The principles of the Nguzo Saba framework can support NCS to navigate the current organizational challenges. The principles of collective work and responsibility, purpose and creativity encourage collaborative problem solving and the merging of ideas to leave the community in a better position than it was when first entered (Johnson, 2001).

Leadership-focused Vision for Change

A significant component of NCS's two-year strategic plan highlights a vision for change. NCS has committed to enhancing the existing programs and continued service to the Black community through social justice, safety, sustainability, and dignity (Nakupenda Community Services, 2019). This OIP intends to support the change process by providing recommendations on how to reach the intended vision. Additionally, my vision for change includes updating the constitution to revise the organizational structure and specifically creating distinctions between the board of directors, the staff, and senior leadership. While this may not be fully achieved as a part of this OIP, it is a long-term vision for the desired state at NCS. Modifying the organizational structure will increase efficacy and potentially employee retention to cultivate a more positive work environment (Campbell, 2011). Before diving deeply into discussing the future envisioned state we must first discuss the current state of

NCS.

Current State

NCS currently serves over three hundred active clients through ten different programs but only has two full-time staff and two part-time staff. While the programming offered is in high demand, there is also demand for more staff to manage and operate the existing programs effectively. As mentioned above, the organizational capacity when it comes to programming management is not sufficient. Employees are managing and leading several programs that are not under their work portfolio so that the clients can access their required services.

Additionally, volunteer board members are responsible for leading full-time portfolios. Still, they do not have the capacity when it comes time to lead at the level necessary to meet program output and outcome goals. While there is a capacity issue, the organization's current state is in transition as the current strategic plan expires at the end of the 2021 year (Nakupenda Community Services, 2019). Although there has been some progress regarding the sustainability of programming, NCS could benefit from a new strategic plan and incorporate internal communication tools as a focus area. While these growth areas are required to meet the organization's desired state, they are further compounded by the systemic funding issues prevalent in the non-profit sector. Challenges in funding make operations challenging as NCS is "primarily dependent on highly restricted grant support that does not cover general operations" (GEO Funders, 2015, p. 1), which could potentially relieve some areas experiencing issues with capacity. If funding were open to cover costs of general operations of the organization, then rent for the head office space and other operational necessities like the phone bill and administrative fees would not be a burden.

Desired Future State

The desired future state of NCS centres members on meeting organizational goals, from the president to the staff and volunteers. This future state encompasses an operational and capacity filled team that can manage and successfully meet program deliverables. Program deliverables would include a flexible governance structure, consisting of a solid and transferrable communication model where all organization members are aware of their roles and responsibilities and have the necessary support. One of the five focus areas in NCS' current strategic plan is governance (Nakupenda Community Services, 2019). It is common for grassroots organization boards to "become so busy doing the work that members don't take the time to make sure that they understand the work" (Renz, 2007, p. 1). Consequently, this phenomenon leads to more challenges. Prioritizing training for board members and staff will allow organizational leaders to feel more confident and informed in their roles. Training programs "provide an opportunity to build an effective service delivery team whose members fully understand the organization's vision and goals" (Herman, n.d., para. 3). Enhancing the governance model will lead to stronger employee retention and meet staff needs. Wynen et al. (2019) assert that "turnover negatively affects organizational performance because of a loss of organizational memory as well as a loss of the knowledge, skills, and abilities that employees have developed through experience and training" (p. 671). When the staff understand their role and are not burnt out, they can better manage their responsibilities and meet program outcome expectations. Staff comprehension of their role will better situate the organization to continue to pursue its vision to transform communities, empower youth and become more sustainable.

Finally, I envision NCS being financially stable and in a position where funding is

not a barrier to reaching the organization's success. Funding has impacted much of the organization's capacity. While funding resources are currently slim, NCS has indicated securing funding and creating a stronger relationship with stakeholders as additional focus areas on the current strategic plan (Nakupenda Community Services, 2019). If NCS can leverage stakeholder relationships, this will better position the organization to access different funding avenues. However, while aspects of capacity building through stakeholder relationships can help lead to more funding opportunities, solidifying sources of funding and building on the stakeholder relationships will be a long-term goal that is fostered outside of the OIP.

Priorities for Change

One of the key change priorities for NCS to achieve its envisioned state and address the problem of practice is convincing the board of directors that there is a capacity issue. While it is evident to members of the organization that there is a need for change, the capacity issue surrounding minimal employees and funding needs to be prioritized to ensure that all actors are on the same page about seeking change. Additionally, the challenge surrounding employee burnout and its connection to high turnover is a key priority. Understanding how NCS can better support the current clients and increasing its capacity by finding a solution that will reduce turnover rates and eliminate burn out will be prioritized. While being rooted in Ubuntu and utilizing transformational and strength-based approaches to leadership, I believe NCS has the necessary tools to meet the organization's desired change.

Change Drivers

NCS is ready for change and is currently seeking funding to hire an Executive Director who will work full-time and head senior leadership until there is enough funding to hire more

leadership positions. Therefore, NCS will release the board of directors of some of their duties and better position the organization to meet its program outcome expectations. NCS has also recognized the need for capacity building. The organization is prepared to begin the capacity-building journey as "change in one area often impacts others, thereby requiring further change" (Claussen, 2011, p. 17). NCS has joined a community of practice group for B3 organizations and local grassroots groups. These relationships may support in offering resources so that NCS can be better positioned when applying for funding. I will ensure that the change plan fits within the organization's context by considering all stakeholder perspectives. The organization members have identified their readiness for change individually and collectively and have identified the change drivers. The change drivers include increased community demands for services, a high turnover rate, and an expiring strategic plan.

Community Demands

As indicated throughout this document, one of the key change drivers is the growing demand that the community has on the services being offered at Nakupenda Community Services. While NCS is trying to establish a new way forward due to the pandemic, there is also a growing need from within the organization for more community engagement to help meet their demands. Community engagement "is a process by which community members come together to reflect on and make decisions about the future of their community" (Fedorowicz et al., 2020, p. 2). One of the strengths of NCS's community is that people become actively involved when they want to see change and engage in the process. However, one of the increasing challenges presented to NCS is how much change can be promised. While it is within the mission of NCS to serve the community, in considering a holistic perspective, the

community must also work together with NCS as the organization explores new methods to meet their needs.

High Turnover

Another critical change driver is the increase in the high turnover rate at NCS within the past few years. NCS has been doing great volunteer and passion-driven work to serve the needs of the community. Also, NCS's funding was to help supplement the workload on volunteers and increase organizational capacity. What is evident in NCS's context is that the increase in funding also increased demand for services, and hiring staff took the workload off volunteers but overburdened the paid staff. Selden and Sowa (2015) state that "even when feeling a strong connection to the mission of a non-profit, staff may not stay with that non-profit if they are not treated well and if the organization does not invest in their development" (p. 183). Not investing in employees' development does not mean that the organization is intentionally mistreating its employees. It can simply mean that the organization's capacity cannot invest in its employees, which therefore causes an increase in turnover.

Expiring Strategic Plan

NCS' strategic plan expired at the end of 2021, and this means that it is a perfect time to review the successes, failures, and areas that need to be addressed within the organization. While NCS continues to do valuable work in the community, having strong goals to help advance the organization while including the community in the development process can help in leading change at NCS. Strategic planning is meant to be inclusive, so all stakeholders and those invested in strengthening their community should be a part of the experience (Bittle & Darling, 1991). Organizational stakeholders are the reason why the organization exists. As highlighted in the Nguzo Saba framework, a guide for investigating the Problem of Practice, all

organization members, including the stakeholders, are equally valuable to the success or breakdown of the organization (Baraka & Jones, 1969); we are all in this together.

Equity and Social Justice

NCS centres an Indigenous African-centred framework, the Nguzo Saba, to manage the organization. There is intentionality behind this decision to maintain an African-centred perspective as a B3 organization. NCS, alongside many B3 organizations, serves clients from a culturally-relevant lens to preserve culture through the programming offered. NCS has operationalized racial justice at the foundation of the organization's inception and speaks to the community's need for more culturally specific programming. NCS's work is decolonial. Decolonization, which is a progressive term, seeks to dismantle hierarchies and has various definitions. The definition that most resonates with me and my work at NCS is "disappearance of empire as a political form, and the end of racial hierarchy as a widely accepted political ideology and structuring principle of world order" (Jasen & Osterhammel, 2017, p. 1). While NCS seeks to change, a decolonial framework will be engrained within the change. It is not simply enough to declare that an Indigenous African-centred framework within the organization makes it decolonial. Decolonizing an organization requires an intentional review of all the organization processes and structures. Colonialism left many Black people and communities with an inferiority complex, "which in some ways made a psychological cripple of the postcolonial subject" (Oelofsen, 2015, p. 133).

While NCS and other Black-lead and mandated organizations directly challenge this idea of inferiority, the non-profit sector exemplifies the systemic racial discrimination pervasive throughout the sector. Allen et al. (2020) speak on the various intersections for Black communities and leaders in the non-profit and philanthropy sector. When individuals described

their lived experiences as professionals in the sector; one person writes that a seasoned white man who worked in the sector warned her about the racism that she would face and that she should "not be fooled by the label, charitable" (Allen et al., 2020, p. 17). From the COVID 19 pandemic execrating the health disparities within the Black communities to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless others, we are reminded (whether in Canada or the United States) that we are not beyond racism.

The killing of George Floyd in 2020 highlighted a level of racial discrimination and anti- Black racism that has existed for centuries. After this incident, there have been grant opportunities made available for Black-led organizations, but this does not come without its challenges. An extensive amount of dismantling work must be done in the non-profit sector; therefore, building Black ecosystems is key. Activists have shared that "we need to mobilize resources to build a Black-led movement ecosystem with the strength and capacity to dismantle oppressive systems; and advance visionary ideas and strategies for creating a more just, equitable, and liberated future" (Bhansali & Agbo, 2020, para. 4). There is a broader reckoning about anti-Black racism that is taking place on a national level, yet there are micro realizations about the non-profit sector and funding that is impacting organization such as NCS and increasing the need to change. In the following section there will be a discussion surrounding the change readiness of NCS.

Organizational Change Readiness

For organizational change to occur, there needs to be an understanding of the organization's readiness. Cawsey et al. (2016) provide a questionnaire that NCS can use to determine readiness for change. This questionnaire highlights readiness dimensions with several assessment questions that are to be scored. For example, one of the questions is, "is the

executive success dependent on the change occurring?" (Cawsey et al., 2016, p. 105). Many of the questions listed on the questionnaire have been asked and explored by members of the organization. The score for the questionnaire can range from -10 to +35; if it scores below 10, the organization is not ready for change (Cawsey et al., 2016). Appendix B shows a completed version of the assessment. My organizational change readiness assessment score was +25, which means that NCS is ready for change based on my assessment. However, in the openness to change dimension, I struggled to answer whether the organization has scanning mechanisms to monitor the organization's environment. I also struggled with questions about whether the organization "has" mechanism because I was trying to determine whether that is part of the capacity that NCS lacks. The struggle regarding the scanning mechanisms is yet another sign that NCS lacks capacity and acts as further evidence that the problem exists. Based on my results NCS scored the strongest in the "credible leadership and change champions" section.

There were no negative scores and there is a clear indication that senior leaders are ready to participate and contribute to the change. NCS has change champions, the key champions being the president of the board of directors and myself as an implementor. The credible leadership and change champions mechanism is particularly strong because the organization has been actively seeking change, therefore it is evident in their efforts and actions to date that there will be active participation in the change process. In conclusion, based on the assessment results, NCS is ready for growth and change. Although many tools are there, there is room for innovation, support, and overall capacity building to strengthen the change process further.

Chapter 1 Conclusion

The first chapter of the OIP highlighted the fundamental information needed to guide

the change for NCS. The lack of capacity to meet program output expectations was introduced and explored. The Problem of Practice identified a clear and relevant gap between the existing and desired state. Furthermore, strength-based leadership and transformational leadership were the key approaches acknowledged to lead the change, and the holistic change theory was the selected framework to lead the change process. At the centre of this conceptual framework, the collective-values of Ubuntu framework is an Indigenous African approach that upholds the organizations values and beliefs and will also be used to help lead the change. My overall leadership approach is transformative leadership that is rooted in an Indigenous African-Centred lens. The change leaders and implementers were identified as the president of the board of directors at NCS and me. Both of us play key roles as change agents and initiators of the change process within the organization. Lastly, the guiding questions to help lead to the Organizational Improvement Plan solution were shared. The questions primarily focus on better understanding the factors that have impacted the capacity of the organization and determining whether the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the organization. These questions also further explored the importance of the Indigenous African lens in how the organization operates and if it is needed to lead the change.

Chapter 2: Planning and Development

In this chapter, an in-depth analysis of various leadership approaches will be conducted. These approaches will propel the change forward in relation to the problem of practice. To select the most appropriate framework for leading the change, a discussion of the Holistic Change Theory and Kotter's Change Theory will be undertaken. The potential solutions to solve the Problem of Practice will be analyzed by looking at the benefits and drawbacks of each solution, and one solution is selected to lead the change of this Organizational Improvement Plan. There

will also be a brief discussion around the ethical and social justice implications. Finally, the Holistic Change Theory will be utilized to conduct a critical organizational analysis of the problem of practice.

Leadership Approaches to Change

Leadership approaches help to guide the change process. With the right leadership approaches, there will be an alignment between the intended change and the approaches used to lead that change. NCS is an organization that is actively seeking to better their structure and to resolve the problem of practice, which is the lack of organizational capacity to meet the output and outcome expectations of the organization. The following leadership approaches are aligned with NCS's values and are approaches that will support the transformation of NCS for the long-term. Transformational leadership and strengths-based leadership are approaches that uplift and support all members of the organization to lead towards change, just as the Ubuntu framework does.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership first emerged in writings of James MacGregor Burns, a political psychologist who was working to make the connection between leadership and followership (Northouse, 2019). Transformational leadership is defined as “the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and follower” (Northouse, 2019, p. 164). Transformational leaders integrate persistence, energy and sensitivity to the needs of others, making the culture of the organization more collaborative (Bass & Avolio, 1993). Transformational leadership is well suited as a leadership approach at NCS, given the already existing transformational approaches in use by some leaders. As an African-centred and transformative leader and an initiator of

change within the organization, my perspective and role can help lead to more transformational change. As a transformative leader there will be some alignment between the ways in which I lead and the transformational leadership approach being used to lead the change. Shields (2010) writes; “[t]ransformational leadership focuses on improving organizational qualities, dimensions, and effectiveness; and transformative educational leadership begins by challenging inappropriate uses of power and privilege that create or perpetuate inequity and injustice” (p. 564).

Transformational leadership is intended to be relational, as this is what helps organizations thrive in the change process (Ngara, 2013). Both transformational and transformative approaches make an excellent combination when seeking organizational change, especially in the context of NCS.

NCS’s president often discusses the need for training and encourages staff to seek out training opportunities that can help develop their skillsets. The president believes that the more knowledge and awareness that one has, the more capable they are to be future leaders and be active agents of change. This support for employee development will also “influence organizational and individual outcomes to achieve competitive advantage” (Alqatawenh, 2018, p. 17). The motivation from leadership and desire to influence others are aspects of charismatic leadership, which can be seen a subsection of transformational leadership. Charismatic leaders are dominant, have a strong desire to influence others and have a strong sense of moral (Northouse, 2019). Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. are often referred to as charismatic leaders; through their efforts and behaviours, they were able to build trust with followers to where the followers began to exhibit the same leadership behaviours (Northouse, 2019). Transformational leaders in essence are building future transformational leaders.

While transformational leadership is one of the selected leadership approaches that I believe will propel the change forward, there are some critiques of this leadership approach that

must be named. For example, transformational leadership was a leadership approach intended for the political realm but has now been used in management frequently; there is a belief that some of the key elements may be lost (Yousaf, 2017; Northouse, 2019). This aligns with the critique that transformational leadership lacks conceptual clarity (Lee, 2014; Northouse, 2019), which therefore impacts the use of this leadership approach. Additionally, some believe this leadership approach puts too high of an expectation on followers and does not have the same expectation of leaders (Lee, 2014). This leads followers to constantly feel pressure to perform at a higher level than the leaders. Finally, Northouse (2019) indicates that transformational leadership may not be attractive to millennials, who are the generation that are now replacing baby boomers in the workplace. It is predicted that millennials will be “less willing to collaborate with others to achieve common goals” (Northouse, 2019, p. 182). However, as a millennial leader I recognize the strengths of transformational leadership and how it can make positive changes both individually and collectively. Millennials preach the opposite of what has been assumed: millennials are about individual and collective gain, essentially recognizing that if one does not empower themselves and learn, then they will not be able to effectively contribute to the group.

I agree with Suyanto et al. (2019) as they state that although millennials have more access to technology and the internet which changes the way in which they work, this generation still displays high confidence, high self-esteem and are more open and tolerant to change which aligns with transformational leadership. Additionally, while millennials often question the status-quo, “millennials are likely to respond favorably to encouragement, challenging goals and creative thinking that transformational leadership embody” (Davids et al., 2021). NCS has been actively recruiting younger professionals, including millennials onto the board of directors to help bring more perspective and a different level of change to the organization. This is working

to resolve the lack of capacity. By having younger professionals as part of the leadership, newer knowledge will become a part of the organization and may increase the organization's overall capacity. Transformational leadership incorporates both the leader and follower needs and shares aligned values with African-centred leadership. The Ubuntu philosophy is an African-centred approach with transformational leadership attributes as “our ancestors...bequeathed to us the idea that leaders are accountable to the community” (Ngara, 2013, p. 8). For me, the strengths of transformational leadership supersede the criticisms of this approach. While transformational leadership and Ubuntu align, strengths-based leadership also adds value to the change at NCS.

Strengths-Based Leadership

Strengths-based leadership studies have been pioneered by researchers such as Dr. Donald O. Clifton and colleagues at Gallup, a research consulting firm (Rath & Conchie, 2008). Strengths-based leadership is about focusing on individual and collective strengths with the goal of all participants adding value to the group or organization in the best ways that they can (MindTools, 2016). There is often an expectation of leaders to perform at a high level and to have all the answers to resolve issues that arise within the organization, however, with strengths-based leadership team members are empowered by recognizing that they too add value to the organization through their own strengths. By focusing in on individual strengths rather than weaknesses, I believe it will propel board members and employees to feel more encouraged to contribute to the organization and lead towards lasting change.

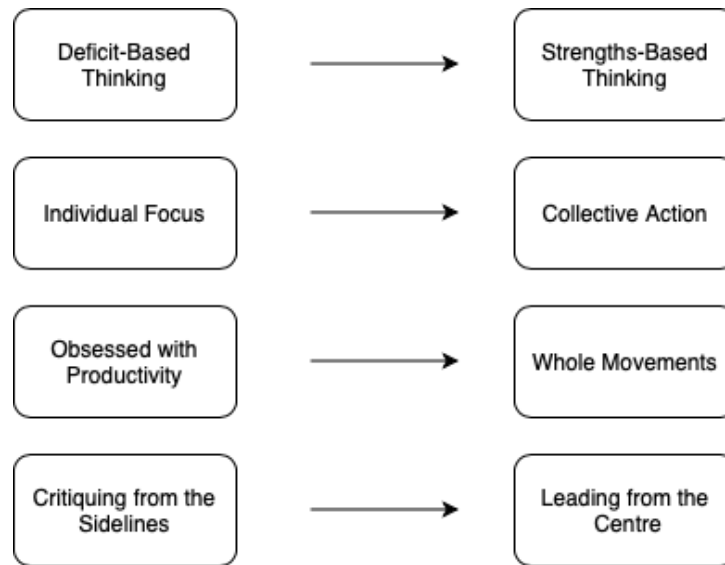
As NCS works to address and resolve the issue around capacity, strengths-based leadership will offer a higher level of motivation as employees are uplifted and reminded of the value of their contribution to the organization. This can also lead members of the organization to begin thinking about innovative solutions to help lead to change. There may even be a possibility

to fill the gaps around capacity by engaging in the strengths-based approach. NCS needs and wants change, however based on how the organization currently operates, the challenges are viewed from a deficit perspective and must shift to a strengths-based approach. This not only shifts mindsets, but it also opens doors for new opportunities and invisible resources that the organization may not have noticed before. In this context invisible resources are referred to as assets, resources and skillsets that exist within the organization which may have been overlooked, but when explored a “significant difference can be observed between teams” (Gosi & Géczi, 2015, p. 108). Discovering the value of invisibles resources, which include the strengths of individuals within the organization, is part of the process of shifting from a deficit to a strengths-based approach. Deficit thinking blames the organization for not being able to meet outcome expectations by viewing the organization itself as having major deficiencies and therefore it struggles to meet the organizations expectations (Weiner, 2003). However, the reality is that it is more than just not being able to meet the expectations; the social context of the organization influences the Problem of Practice. This includes the impact of COVID-19, systemic racism, and lack of resources across the sector as discussed previously in this document. Figure 3 indicates the shift from the deficit to the strengths-based approach.

While the strength-based approach is one of the selected approaches for leading change a NCS, it is not without its critiques. One valid critique surrounds the typecasting of employees (MindTools, 2016). If employees and team members are only focusing on their strengths, can they tap into different aspects of their work and learn new skills?

Figure 3

Depiction of Shift from Deficit-Based Thinking Approach to Strengths-Based Thinking



Note. Adapted from Catalyst Project (n.d.). *Culture Shifts* <https://collectiveliberation.org/culture-shifts-2/>

There is also a concern that if leaders centre strengths, does this mean that they are ignoring weaknesses? While these questions and critiques are valid, strengths-based leadership, if used correctly, can help individuals overcome their weaknesses by learning new skills, while amplifying their strengths. These leadership approaches are an important part of the change process and will be of value when developing the framework to lead the change.

Framework for Leading the Change Process

With the disproportionate effect of COVID-19 on Black-led organizations (Ahl, 2020), topped with the changes regarding available resources for organizations in the non-profit sector, NCS is experiencing a crisis around organizational capacity. When thinking about organizational change, it is imperative to acknowledge that systems are not built overnight, and neither is organizational culture (Ibidunni & Agboola, 2013). Organizations take time to develop and become what we see and know them as. For NCS to make effective organizational change, there must be theories and frameworks guiding the change. There are two potential theories that are

being explored as a guide to change, they include Holistic Change Theory and Kotter's Change Management Theory. Both theories present characteristics that can be of value to bringing organizational change to NCS.

Holistic Change Theory

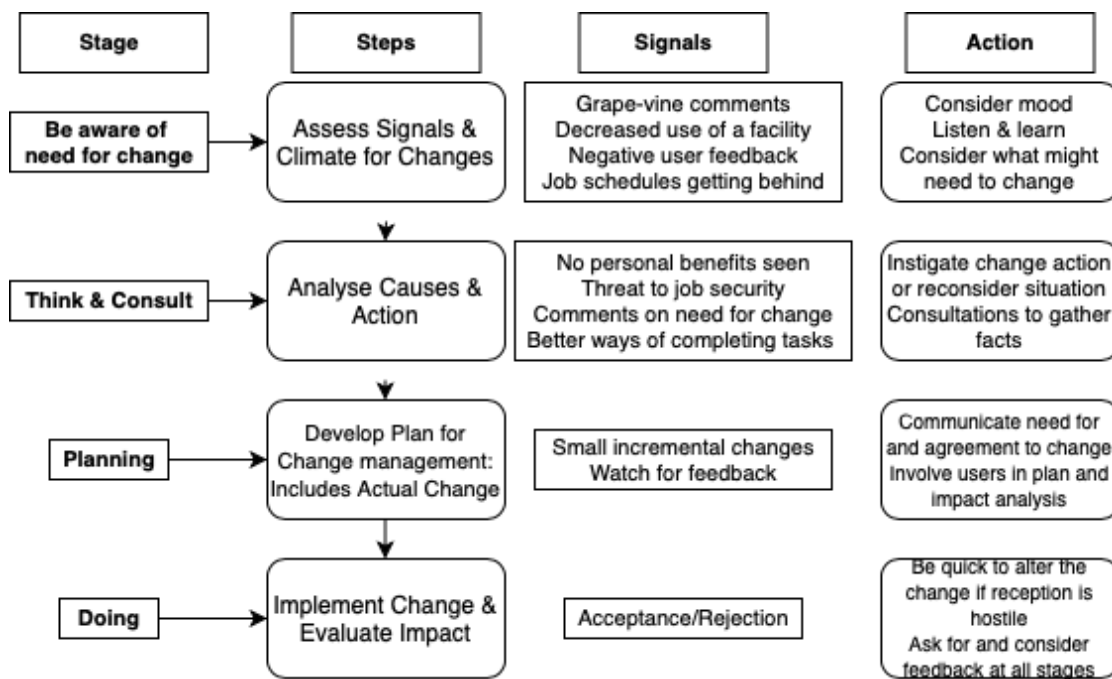
The holistic change theory applies a human-centred approach which focuses on the roles of individuals, the ways in which they navigate their roles within the organization, as well as how this collectively binds the organizational efforts (Atkins, 2001). Change is often seen as an authoritative process that is determined by organizational powers who maintain control. Allan (1997) suggests that rather than control being seen in isolation, control should be seen as holistic and inclusive. Allan (1997) further states that “[c]ontrol can mean feedback to stay on course, using plans to monitor progress” (p. 704). At NCS there are ongoing efforts to be more inclusive and to operate from an organized, yet non-hierarchical structure. In doing this, all members of the organization can experience a level of leadership, while highlighting individual strengths. Ngara (2013) highlights this sentiment in an African-centred leadership context through the following phrase “a king is a king on account of the people” (p. 3). Meaning, leadership involves interaction and interdependence; the followers have just as much knowledge and strength to contribute to the change as the leader; and with this, change is possible. This neutralizes the idea of hierarchical power and rather focuses on the roles of all members in the change process..

By using the holistic change model, there will be more collective responsibility to strengthening the organization structure. There is a human-centric element that lies in the centre of the holistic change framework (Smith, 2019). This approach supports the Ubuntu philosophy, which can be described as “the capacity in an African culture to express compassion, reciprocity, dignity, humanity in the interest of building and maintaining communities with justice and

mutual caring” (University of Pretoria, n.d., p. 127). Additionally, the holistic change framework is also well supported by transformational leadership, which serves the interest of the community. Transformational leadership is desirable to community because it sacrifices self-interests and focuses in on the needs of the followers (Yousaf, 2017). There is an emphasis on community, unity, and the ability for all to lead hand in hand by combining personal and social transformation as a part of the leadership process.

Figure 4

Holistic Change Theory



Note. Adapted from Allan, G. (1997). An Holistic Model for Change Management. *Systems for Sustainability*, 703-707.

Figure 4 is a holistic change diagram that highlights the systemic nature for the holistic change theory. It is broken up into four columns of which include stage, steps, signals, and actions. The four stages include (1) be aware of needs for change, which requires leaders to be attentive to what is taking place at all levels of the organization; (2) think and consult, this which

offers an opportunity for collective thought on the next steps; (3) planning, which highlights the importance of developing strong steps to organizational change; (4) doing, which is the final stage of implementation. In a holistic change model, incremental changes are beneficial as it allows for processes to truly be vetted which leads to more effective change, long term.

One major criticism of this model is that due to incremental change, there is potential for change makers to believe that it is not the best model to action as the outcomes are not immediate (Allan, 1997). Another criticism is that the holistic change theory does not have clear incorporation of the vision and desired state like the Kotter's change theory.

Kotter's Change Theory

Kotter's theory is a commonly adopted model for change management and organizational change (Smith, 2018). There are eight stages of this particular change model, and they are easy to understand and apply. The Kotter change theory presents a strong and thorough model which highlights necessary stages of the change process. The eight steps include:

- (1) create a sense of urgency, which focuses on supporting others in seeing the need for change and its importance
- (2) building a coalition of people who are willing to work towards making this change through all levels
- (3) forming a strategic vision and initiatives that clearly indicate how the future is going to be more beneficial than the past
- (4) building a large volunteer base that can rally around common goal and have the same direction
- (5) enabling actions by removing barriers such as hierarchies which will provide the freedom necessary to create real impact

- (6) generating short-term wins as all wins must be recognized and celebrated
- (7) sustain acceleration, which requires all team members to work even harder after achieving the first win
- (8) instituting change, articulate connections between new behaviours, and organizational success (8-Step Process for Leading Change, 2020).

This model has some attractive elements, one of them being the recognition and importance of all stakeholders in the change process. However, the steps of this model are closely tied together and seem as though they are dependent on each other in order to be effective. Aldemir (2010) writes that “the model requires all steps to be worked through order, and completely, otherwise will completely fail the process” (p. 9). Consequently, this theory presents a rigid process that may be too fragile to lead the change needed in this OIP.

Chosen Change Model

For NCS to establish long-lasting effective change, the holistic change theory is recommended. Kotter’s approach presents some similarities between the two approaches (Scammell, 2013). The holistic model not only creates room to adjust the order of each stage in the change model, but there are some overlapping understandings between the two. Both theories emphasize the human connection and the importance of having voices and perspectives heard. These are also elements of transformational leadership, as it is motivational and enabling in the change process (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Given the Indigenous African-centred lens that I offer in the change process, having less steps and a flexible model allows for there to be more integration of knowledges that can inform the holistic model overall. Change is a process that does not need to be quick, but rather be impactful. The African shadow corpse theory is an Indigenous African-centred approach that is used to understand and facilitate change. It is a

collectivist approach that seeks to identify the fears (shadows) of various members and groups within the organization and to constructively face these fears to lead to organizational improvement (Swartz & Davies, 1997).

This approach can be embedded in the holistic change theory in the *Think and Consult* stage by centering the voices of the community. Swartz and Davies (1997) write, “organizations need to listen to and identify the fears (shadows) of the different groups and then to help them to come to terms with such fears” (p. 291). This emphasizes the need for engagement and participation of all actors in the change process. Such processes require incremental change, in order to effectively address these fears and support individuals in the process. Incremental change is beneficial as it does not produce short term outcomes, but rather long-term system changes (McKendrick & Wade, 2009). It allows for the dismantling and rebuilding of the organizational systems and structure through intentional processes that are reflective of all members of the organization. The Ubuntu philosophy “sees communities and leadership holistically” (Khosa, 2012, para. 8). Ubuntu fits with the holistic change theory as it is about seeing the people around us, our colleagues as a part of why we exist and as the motivation behind our work. The only way to truly see this value is by working towards holistic change.

Critical Organizational Analysis

For there to be effective change within an organization, there must be an understanding of the distinction between what to change within an organization and how to facilitate the change. This critical organizational analysis section will include a gap analysis of the current and desired state of the organization, it will also further discuss the change readiness findings introduced in Chapter One. Lastly, this section will use the holistic change model indicated in the previous section to diagnose and analyze the change.

Gap Analysis

This Organizational Improvement Plan seeks to provide potential solutions to address what has been identified as the Problem of Practice. When determining the type of change that needs to be takes place, there was an identification of what the desired future state of the organization would consist of. This then shone light on what the current state of the organization is lacking and “what ought to be” (Kim & Jin, 2018, p. 1). NCS currently delivers necessary programs and services that meets the growing needs of the local Black community in its region. While running these programs NCS has experienced a lack of “manpower” and has therefore encountered issues surrounding the organizational capacity to function at the intended level (Ebrahim & Ragan, 2010). However, what is at the core of the financial challenge that NCS is experiencing is the dependency on government sourced funding. Lu and Zhao (2019) write that “government funding may compromise nonprofit operations and lead to unintended consequences” (p. 2). As government policies surrounding funding changes and more organizations begin to seek the same funding sources, there becomes more competition on one side of the spectrum and a lack of consistency on the other end, resulting in a negative impact on the organizations ability to meet long-term deliverables and outcomes. The desired future state consists of stability and consistency of program structure so that NCS is better positioned to meet program outcome expectations. Alongside this, NCS’s current governance model is not aligned with the future desired state. Presently the organization is operating from an outdated governance model, which was adopted in 2006 (Nakupenda Community Services, 2006).

This model situates board members as the key senior leaders of the organization, which means that the pertinent roles such as the Executive Director and other leadership roles are being taken up by members of the board of directors. Board members are volunteers, however they are

now completing tasks and committing hours that a full-time employee within the organization regularly would. This leads to burn out of board members and the constant delegation of tasks to full-time employees, which further perpetuates burnout and ultimately leads to employee turnover. This gap is what directly impacts clients, as the more turnover and burnout exists among employees and team members, the less efficient the service delivery. Due to the internal organizational inconsistencies and its negative impact on employees, the most vulnerable populations accessing services are exposed to more risk and harm (Skhosana, 2020). NCS needs change to address the lack of organizational capacity that impacts the input and output expectations as presented in this analysis.

Change Readiness Findings

The change readiness findings determined that NCS is ready for change. Appendix B provides the results of the readiness questionnaire completed in Chapter 1. There were six readiness dimensions in the questionnaire; including (1) previous change experiences, (2) executive support, (3) credible leadership and change champions, (4) openness to change, (5) rewards for change, and lastly (6) measures for change and accountability (Cawsey et al., 2016). Each of the sections presented a series of questions with the intention of better understanding if the organization is truly ready to work towards addressing the lack of capacity to provide effective programming. The section that was easiest for me to fill in was about three, credible leadership and change champions. NCS's senior leaders and board members are trusted. They actively work to find the best solutions to problems or challenges that they know exists and are intentional about attracting champions to lead the change.

However, while "organizational readiness for change is considered a critical precursor to the successful implementation of change" (Weiner, 2009, p. 2), I noticed that I had to do more

thinking in the openness to change dimension which made it more challenging to score. This section specifically asked questions around the organizational structure, more particularly around organizational capacity which is the area that NCS is seeking to strengthen. For example, question number twenty-five asks whether the organization has communication channels that work effectively. This is one of the areas that NCS must enhance as a part of their governance structure. Question number sixteen asks whether the organization has scanning mechanisms to monitor the environment. Although I came to the realization that it does have mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate, I continued to think as to whether NCS has capacity to monitor change effectively at this time. If that was the case, then I may have answered differently. Some of the questions were not simple to answer, which made me question whether the hesitancy meant that the organization was not ready for change. However, Weiner (2009) reminded me that “organizational readiness for change is not a homologous multi-level construct” (p. 2); it is a multifaceted one. Understanding this helped me understand what areas need growth, without discounting the organizations overall readiness.

Holistic Change Theory – Diagnosis and Analysis of Problem

The holistic change model, also known as the Holistic Model for Change Management has four stages along with four steps, signals and actions associated with each stage. The holistic change model is typically used to determine *how* to create change within an organization and not *what* to change. In this section I have opted to use this change model to determine *what* to change and diagnosing the problem by highlighting the key areas that need change at each step of the model. In the following subsections I will briefly highlight the different stages of change required for NCS, while identifying what stage of the model it will align with. The holistic change model is also used later in Chapter 3 to show *how* the change will take place in the

change implementation plan. By using the same model to indicate what needs to change, it will help align the process of creating change in the implementation and lead to smoother transition to the different phases of the change process.

Stage 1 – Sharing of Work and Responsibilities

In this stage the need for change will be assessed, while reviewing the climate of the organization. While there are many areas where the NCS can grow, one of the areas which impacted me directly is the excessive delegation of tasks from board members to the two full time employees. Prior to transitioning into the Advocacy Program Manager role, I had another managerial role which had less of a senior leadership responsibility, however board members would still delegate their tasks with the purpose of removing the workload from their responsibilities. That is when I began my observation around the organization's capacity. It was also quite evident that change was necessary based on how tasks became delayed, and the organization was no longer meeting programming expectations, especially when it came to service delivery. Given the African-centred and holistic leadership environment of the organization, there were often collective dialogues that were inclusive of all organization members to discuss change; this is where the mention of funding capacity and governance were introduced. The Action column of this stage in the holistic model asks one to listen and learn and consider what may need to change.

Stage 2 – Determining Cause of the Problem

This section is about analysing the causes of the problem and confirming that this problem truly exists. Some of the signals in this stage make mention of potential grapevine comments within the organization on the need for change or better way to complete tasks (Allan, 1997). This is accurate to the dialogues that were taking place amongst employees and board

members. There were often informal conversations between organization members where a challenge existing within the organization was mentioned. I used these instances to gather more knowledge on the consensus about the requirement for change and was able to later identify these challenges as being a capacity related issue that impacts the organization. I agree with Brown and Arriaza (1999) that organizational change requires consensus building as it creates avenues for strong teamwork in the implementation process.

Stage 3 & 4 – Championing Change

The final two stages represent what is currently being articulated through this Organizational Improvement Plan, the planning as well as what will be implemented. The planning stage mentions to involve users in the planning and analysis. In Chapter 1, I identified two change agents, myself and the president of the board of directors who will be the lead in championing the change within the organization. Champions of organizational change “are key to helping organizations sustain high performance” (Thakhathi, 2018, p. 270). The president already possesses transformational leadership attributes. This will help increase the level of awareness about the problem and the change process by increasing the confidence of team members and helping them see the value in the change for the betterment of the organization (Abazeed, 2018). This leads to the Doing stage which is all about the implementation of change. This holistic model emphasizes the importance of asking for feedback and making necessary changes during the implementation process. Although the plan may be attainable in the theory, being open to feedback allows for real time change during implementation while engaging key stakeholders.

Solutions to Address the Problem of Practice

In this section, three possible solutions to the Problem of Practice will be introduced and

each solution will be discussed and analyzed by acknowledging both their benefits and drawbacks. Following this, there will be a discussion around the chosen model; however, given the nature of the non-profit sector, an increase in funding will be required for all solutions presented. Finally, there will then be a short discussion on how the appreciative inquiry model will be engaged as part of the organizational improvement process.

Solution #1: Establish a Fee for Service Initiative as an Alternative Funding Source

This proposed solution aims for NCS to develop innovative funding strategies that do not depend on the current federal government funding. Throughout this document the different issues involving funding disparities have been identified. Some of these issues include the non-profit sector experiencing limited funds due to a decrease in overall funding. Canada has the second largest non-profit sector globally yet has faced issues nationally surrounding the sustainability of organizations due to the lack of funding and minimal sources available to organizations (Wright, 2015). Another issue and major challenge that impacts NCS specifically is the limited access to funding as a B3 organization. Given the already existing funding crisis in the sector, organizations are having a difficult time obtaining consistent funding; however, the intertwined systemic discrimination that exists in the funding sector makes it even more challenging for B3 organizations and NCS in particular (Batten & Williams, 2017). Therefore, establishing new methods to generate income for the organization may lead NCS to a more sustainable financial position and ultimately lead to the strengthening of the organization's capacity.

One strategy that is being used by non-profits is the development of social enterprises as revenue generating divisions of their organizations. A social enterprise “signals the imperative to drive social change, and it is that potential payoff, with its lasting, transformational benefit to

society” (Martin & Osberg, 2007, para. 3). Social enterprises have a mission to tackle social, environmental, and economic problems and have been increasingly established by non-profit organizations as additional funding models in the past few years (Green for All, 2012). Unlike loans and grants, social enterprise funds that are generated by the services and products produced by the organization are considered “earned income”. This means that the organization is putting out their own resources to drive revenue (Green for All, 2012). As a part of the social enterprise NCS can begin to charge minor fees for various programming and services; for example, there can be a yearly membership fee that offers additional perks to paid members.

NCS can also review program structures and determine whether a new paid program can be introduced or whether an already existing program can begin to charge fees. The idea of earned income is attractive to NCS whose funding is stagnant and unreliable due the various economic and sector trends. It is also more attractive because NCS and other B3 organizations cannot depend on “crisis funding,” which is funding that has been established to recover from the impacts of COVID-19 on the organization, as well as funding that has been established for B3 organizations after the murder of George Floyd and other Black people in 2020. Given the tragedies of the global pandemic and implications of systemic racism on Black life which has resulted to violence and murder of innocent Black lives, there has been an influx of philanthropic funding sources (Minnesota Council on Foundations, 2020). However, “crisis funding is not a sustainable model for long-term resource generation” (McShane, 2020, para. 8). Instead organizations should be more focused on the ways in which these temporary funds can be invested for long-term impact (McShane, 2020). One of the key concerns surrounds the fact that the funding sources are temporary. Given the impact of COVID-19 on Black and racialized communities and organizations, these funding sources are relied on. Making them temporary

does not provide security for the organization or the community members accessing the services.

Creating a social enterprise at NCS may be a beneficial solution to help mitigate the strict dependency on government funding and donations, which have proven to not be sustainable. By advancing NCS's social mission through market strategies, the organization will still be operating in a manner that serves the community, but also emphasizes the importance of the community contributing financially to the sustainability of the organization. This is strongly connected to the Indigenous African-centred principles highlighted in the *Nguzo Saba*, specifically principle number four, cooperative economics. The cooperative economics principle also known as Ujamaa focuses on the building and maintenance of the shops, stores and business that belong in the community and to profit from them together (Johnson, 2001). The ideology that the wealth of NCS belongs to the people it serves is deeply rooted in Indigenous African identities and belief systems (Lateef & Anthony, 2018). This holistic framework holds emphasis on the importance of the system as a whole and how all aspects of the organization can contribute to its development and sustainability. This solution addresses the lack of organizational capacity as the fee for service and social enterprise will help increase the organizations financial capacity and decrease its dependency on government funding.

Drawbacks of this Solution

While a social enterprise or fee for service can be a possible solution for NCS to overcome its financial struggle and help to increase organizational capacity with more stable funding, there are also some drawbacks to this solution. First, If NCS introduces paid services and fees there may be long-term clients who may question why fees are being included and may challenge this decision. Non-profits seek to serve communities and often offer services to low-income communities. If there is not an effective transition from free to fee services then it may

negatively impact the clients and end up causing more challenges in practicing the organization's mission (Mohammed, 2010). The second drawback is that earned income from the social enterprise may not fully replace the need for funding from other sources. Social enterprises typically need start-up costs to get off the ground, as the organization cannot simply depend on service fees. Thus, applying for loans or grants for the social enterprise may be necessary to get the business going (Green for All, 2012). Attaching the organization to another funding body may continue to perpetuate the current challenge the organization is facing around the capacity to manage the funding as well as meeting the funders requirements. Lastly, starting a new division of the organization would require resources such as, time, more employees and training. While the organization is working to strengthen its capacity, trying to develop a social enterprise at this time may be further contribute to lack of capacity. Many start-ups fail due to the lack of preparedness. If NCS is not able to commit to the many stages that come with creating a social enterprise it may "self-destruct" and cause greater challenges for the organization (Petch, 2016). Consequently, these drawbacks have proven that this solution may not be the most suitable for NCS.

Solution #2: Reduce Number of Programs

This proposed solution seeks to reduce the number of programs operated at NCS. One of the main issues affecting the organization is the inability to meet all of the program output expectations. These issues are mainly due to the organization's inability to manage all ten programs with limited staff and a volunteer board of directors. Our economic and technological era has changed immensely over the past ten years; however, the global pandemic has increased the push for more digital and virtual programming that makes it possible for many people to be able to access support and services that they may not have been able to previously. However, a

perspective that is not often discussed is the experiences of vulnerable populations who have had more challenges accessing services during the pandemic due to the lack of access to technology (OECD, 2020).

The NCS Youth Mentorship Program was an in-person program that had strong weekly participation before the pandemic with consistently at least thirty participants. When the program transitioned to being online, there were less participants and less interest. Weekly, the number of participants decreased, and it became harder to conduct outreach. The Youth Mentorship Program has the largest budget out of all the programs at NCS; however the budget is restricted to items that are specific to the program. This limits the ability to use funds for other programs that have more demand. The program outcome expectations are not being met for the mentorship program, but there is higher demand in the tutoring program that typically runs over the summer, the Seniors Program, and the COVID-19 Support Program, all of which have limited budgets. This impacts staff's ability to manage the programs because the increase of clients. This also puts pressure of board of directors to complete more volunteer hours to meet deadlines. The impacts of the pandemic are blurred across both personal and professional boundaries and have shifted the way everyone views themselves and their work (Shipman, 2020). When staff and volunteers are overworked, it leads to exhaustion and a loss of productivity, some members may even lose the passion for the work and leave the organization (Ahmed, 2020); this is what NCS wants to avoid.

Reducing the number of programs at NCS will address the lack of organizational capacity as offering fewer programs requires less funding and may ultimately increase the organizational efficacy and lead to a more balanced workload for staff and the board of directors. This may also give the organization time to reevaluate what the organization programs will look like going

forward and how to better situate programming at NCS with the new normal due to COVID.

Shipman (2020) stresses that non-profit organizations should update their operations to account for the impact of COVID-19, more specifically how the programming and mission delivery has been impacted or changed. Shipman (2020) further states that staffing and resources should be directed to programs that are in line with the organizations strategic plan. Given that NCS is closing out its final year of its strategic plan, the updated strategic plan can indicate the new set of programs that will be facilitated and include the community and stakeholders in the strategic planning process so that they are informed as to why some programs will not be active. The community can also help determine which programs should stay and how they can serve the priority needs of the community.

Drawbacks of this solution

One of the main drawbacks of this solution is that some NCS community members may lose access to services that they receive at the organization. Although with this solution there would be a referral process for clients to access similar services at other organizations, clients tend to build relationships and connections with staff and members at agencies that they attend, and it can be challenging to part ways. Clients prefer to have “ongoing relationships with one organization rather than switch continuously to similar organizations” (Hussain, 2016, p. 3). This can lead to greater challenges for these clients. Another potential drawback is that reducing the number of programs may decrease success for certain funding opportunities for the organization. More programs open more doors for specific funding pools; without these existing program types, it can be challenging to be successful with funding.

Solution #3: Formalize a Black Ecosystem

This solution is a transformational and systems approach that formalizes a Black

ecosystem for NCS. Black-led organizations are what I call “a lifeline to the community”. Not only do these organizations create safe spaces and culturally specific resources for members of the Black community, but the community are also what sustains the organizations that exist. Black people’s philanthropy has a long history which stems from slavery; “[t]he enslaved people sought to improve their condition by developing cultures that provided relief from their daily struggle” (Shrestha, McKinley-Floyd & Gillespie, 2007, p. 202). However, up until today only a few members of the Black community consider their giving of time and money as philanthropic; most community members see their efforts as part of their duty to serve and maintain their community (Shrestha, McKinley-Floyd & Gillespie, 2007). While Black communities have maintained this giving, this same level of emphasis to unite Black-led organizations and increase capacity exists as a Black ecosystem that is yet to be realized by NCS. I consider the Black ecosystem as a network of B3 organizations and initiatives that exist to enhance the organization’s capacity, as well as establish a network for long-term support and success of all members.

Before and during the COVID-19 crisis, Black-led organizations have been developing networks to better support one another through partnerships, capacity building and training. When an organization is a part of at least one network, then they can easily have access to the others. NCS is a part of several networks that make up this ecosystem and can offer holistic approaches to tackling many of the challenges leading to the lack of capacity within the organization. The change drivers indicated earlier in this document can be addressed if NCS realizes and formalizes the Black ecosystem. A list of some of the key networks and groups in this ecosystem can be found in Appendix C.

Joining the Black ecosystem ensures that the organization has access to the necessary

supports to help overcome the issue of capacity. This ecosystem embodies teamwork and collaboration, just as the Ubuntu philosophy emulates. Lundin and Nelson (2010) remind us that Ubuntu asks the following questions: What do we have in common? How can we best work together? These prompts are commonly discussed when establishing groups and initiatives that serve the best interest of fellow B3 organizations. Black to the Future (BTTF) is a capacity building initiative that supports B3 organizations to strengthen their leadership and scale through three key methods: a community of practice, grants, and yearly summit. Communities of practice (CoP) “are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger-Trayner, 2015, p. 1). NCS is a part of the community of practice which provides access to support with identifying gaps within the organization, support with problem solving and collaboratively developing solutions to organization challenges. While NCS is currently a part of this CoP, the organization does not have consistent attendance to these meetings; and, therefore NCS is not benefiting from the resource that already exists. NCS will formalize this ecosystem by actively participating in the available networks and intentionally seeking support and partnerships within these networks that can help advance the organization.

Drawbacks of the solution

One of the drawbacks to this solution is that NCS would have to formalize the ecosystem by conducting a rigorous review of the networks and systems they are a part of and continue to formally include themselves as a part of the Black ecosystem. Another potential drawback is that there are elements of maintaining the status quo as a part of this solution. While the other solutions introduce a new idea to address the problem, this solution draws on what already exists within the organization but seeks for the organization to change its perspective to improve use of

these existing mechanisms. This solution seeks for NCS to take its invisible resources, which are the partnerships and networks that they are a part of, and use them in their full capacity.

Selected solution

The selected solution that will help lead NCS to change is a combination between Solution 2 and 3. Reducing the number of programs offers more positive outcomes than negative. While clients may lose some programs that they access from NCS, the goal is to make referrals to other programs and services that are similar at other organizations to ensure that our clients are still getting the support required to flourish. In this process NCS will be making use of the Black ecosystem by networking with other Black-led organizations to learn about their programming, as well as building partnerships for the transition that NCS is making with its services. Solutions 2 and 3 complement each other well as they fill in potential gaps that may be evident if one solution was being selected solely. For example, making use of the networks and communities of practice that already exist makes the networking to find compatible programs in other organizations easier. This reduces time, which is an important resource when considering the 12-month timeline for the implementation of this Organizational Improvement Plan. There is also a level of familiarity with the networks which also makes the communication easier, especially given the fact that these groups are intended to support organizations in advancing their work. Appendix D compares the three solutions presented above and the solution selected to lead the change at NCS.

NCS cannot attempt to foster systems change “without building the capacity to see systems” (Kania, Kramer & Senge, 2018, p. 15). This solution is congruent with the transformational leadership, specifically from an African-centred lens as there is an interdependence between leadership, followership and all aspects of the system as understood

through Ubuntu (Ngara, 2013). While a critique of this solution may be that actively participating in the Black ecosystem may increase the workload and maintain the problem; reducing the programs opens up availability and time for employees and board of directors, which means there can be more active participation in the Black ecosystem.

Appreciative Inquiry Cycle

As part of the organizational improvement process, I will engage the strengths-based appreciative inquiry cycle (Acosta & Douthwaite, 2005). There are five steps to this cycle, including (1) Definition, (2) Discovery, (3) Dream, (4) Design and (5) Destiny. In the definition phase I will highlight the lack of organizational capacity as being the key area where intervention is needed while also acknowledging the strengths of NCS and their efforts to maintain a collaborative organization environment. In the discovery phases I will highlight what is good and has worked at the organization while putting an emphasis on collective stories and individual efforts of team members in the organization as a whole (Acosta & Douthwaite, 2005; Macpherson, 2015). In the final three stages I will review the future desired state and design an effective implementation plan for the organization with a focus on relationship building to maintain the strengths-based momentum to drive change (Rath and Conchie, 2008).

Leadership Ethics, Equity and Social Justice

The Ubuntu philosophy centres compassion; but, when the group is threatened by an individual or systemic behaviours, those individuals or systems must be challenged (Lundin & Nelson, 2010). Ubuntu is ethical as there is a direct response to inconsistencies that may negatively impact an individual which therefore impacts the collective. There are a set of values that define the ethics of Ubuntu which include reciprocity, common good, peaceful relations, human dignity, and the value of human life, as well as consensus tolerance and lastly, mutual

respect (Ujomudike, 2016). All these values contribute to effective and authentic leadership. Effective leadership and organizational change are about the ethics of caring for everyone (Dei, 2019). This is critical to the implementation of the Organizational Improvement Plan, as there is a major emphasis on collaboration in the solution presented to lead the change.

Many of the key elements that make up the Problem of Practice are situated within a social justice context. As described throughout this document, discrimination and systemic racism in the philanthropic sector has made it challenging for NCS and other B3 organizations to access equitable funding and capacity building. Furthermore, the social and political climate regarding the social injustice Black communities face at the hands of institutional structures are what may cause challenges in various stages of the change process. Black people, their communities and organizations have always played a pivotal role in advancing social change. For this reason, NCS is not only an organization that serves the interests of the Black community, but also serving other minority and vulnerable communities through allyship (Krueger et al., 2021). When there are issues impacting vulnerable communities, regardless of race, NCS has been active in being a part of the movements. However, due to NCS often being called on to participate and speak at various movements impacting underrepresented or underserved communities, members are being overworked while feeling an obligation and commitment to the cause. NCS alongside other B3 organizations must recognize and differentiate when they are being tokenized from when their service and presence is needed (Hirji & Brooks, 2021). These are features of the challenges that may be faced, which leads to the following question: how does NCS still participate in social movements while managing their organizational commitments?

Part of the ethical responsibilities of NCS is to evaluate program outcomes and submit

reporting that will determine the release of fund installments. Even when in crisis, NCS has to maintain ethics in reporting and submit accurate representations of what the organization has experienced and how much money has been spent from the programming budgets. These reports must also indicate whether the output and outcome expectations are being met. A fundamental virtue in Indigenous African-centred approaches is to remain honest and ethical even if it does not benefit the individual or the collective, as “good character is the essence of the African moral system” (Gyekye, 2010, para. 13). This also aligns with transformational leadership as leaders have a highly developed set of moral values and listen to followers rather than be intolerant about opposing viewpoints or perspectives (Northouse, 2019).

The realization and formalization of a Black ecosystem is the proposed solution to the current lack of organizational capacity. Many of the organizations that are a part of this ecosystem are also stakeholders who can assist NCS in reaching its full potential through the networks established. This ecosystem with other B3 organizations offers a renewed sense of camaraderie and community that underscores the idea of Ubuntu, that we are in this together and we can get through anything together (Purnell et al., 2020). Furthermore, NCS and B3 organizations play a vital role in the ecosystem of social change and justice. By formalizing this system it will lead to stronger partnerships and increased funding opportunities for the collective (Purnell et al., 2020).

Chapter 2 Conclusion

The second chapter of this OIP focused on the different frameworks and elements that are being considered to lead the change. Transformational leadership and strengths-based leadership were identified as the leadership approaches to lead the change at NCS. Additionally, holistic change theory was introduced as the change model that will guide the implementation of the

Organizational Improvement Plan, which will be further explored in Chapter 3. Following this, three potential solutions were shared; they included fee for service, reduction of programs, and formalizing the Black ecosystem. The chosen solution was a combination of Solution 1 and 2. This ensured the reduction of programs to increase capacity and effectiveness in service delivery. Given that there will be more time, actively participating in the ecosystem will help bring knowledge and resources back to the organization and further increase its capacity. Finally, after discussing solutions there was a brief discussion on leadership, ethics, and social justice in the context of NCS. Chapter 3 will focus on the implementation of the selected solution and provide a detailed description of the required steps to succeed with the change.

Chapter 3: Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation and Communication

Chapter 1 introduced Nakupenda Community Services and identified the Problem of Practice, and in Chapter 2 the reduction of programs and actively participating in the Black Ecosystem was selected as the solution to help lead to change. In Chapter 3, all relevant information, including the Holistic Change Model as well as the monitoring and evaluation and communication plans are compiled and presented.

Change Implementation Plan

This section describes a plan for implementing change at NCS. Connecting with the organizational analysis in Chapter 2, the proposed solution involves reducing the number of community programs being offered at the organization, as well as participating in the Black Ecosystem to improve organizational capacity. The goal of the implementation plan is to strengthen the organizational capacity at NCS, to meet program output expectations. The following subsections will examine each phase of the Holistic Change Model (Allan, 1997) when applied to the proposed solution. The Holistic Change Model will therefore be used to facilitate

the implementation plan and support continuous organizational improvement.

Holistic Change Model

This change model strongly aligns with the organizational structure at NCS. It offers people-oriented actions that centre the members of the organization, which are approaches that are closely tied to African-centred practices. Ubuntu is relational, communitarian, and interdependent; a people-oriented world view that is at the foundation of the Indigenous African way of being (Banda, 2019). The Holistic Change Model emphasizes incremental change. This is an important practice, as the solution selected would require for there to be a gradual transition into the desired state. There is also a recognition that effective communication to key stakeholders plays an important role in the change management, which will then reduce the impact on the organization's changing systems (Allan, 1997). Allen's (1997) model to leading the change offers a steady and realistic process that ultimately leads to a successful transition from the current state to the future desired state. Allan (1997) indicates that "change management is a disciplined system for planning, implementing, [and] monitoring...one of the most important objectives of the change management is to preserve the sustainability of the changing organization" (p. 704). The goal at NCS is for there to be sustainability in the current structure while acknowledging the need for further growth.

One of the benefits of using this model is that it is very intuitive and ensures that all the key areas of the change plan for NCS are acknowledged, such as stakeholder opinions in Stage 3. Additionally, the stages are not linear and are people-oriented. This ensures that our clients who are the stakeholders in this change can be active participants in the change process and therefore bring true communal and effective change to NCS. Allan (1997) states that, "any proposal for active change within an established system must provide due cognizance of the human resource

as the most influential factor which will both help and hinder any proposed change. Changes can only be understood and actioned by people” (p. 705). NCS’ Indigenous African-Centred operational framework is people centered; therefore, the Holistic Change Model complements the process and is well suited to help lead the change. The four stages of the Holistic Change Model application in the change process are described below. The detailed implementation plan as seen in Appendix E will provide a breakdown of each stage and the associated tasks and goals.

Be Aware of Need for Change

This stage is primarily focused on understanding the problem that exists and determining whether this problem is seen and acknowledged across the organization and with key stakeholders, like clients. This stage will take place over the course of four months. The problem will be identified by the change initiator who will interview staff/volunteers both formally and informally. Formal interviews will be preplanned and consist of a list of specific questions being asked to staff; and informal interviews will be “water cooler” or unplanned conversations about the organization that take place. Team meetings will be used to engage about the organization’s current state and address some of the ways that the organization can grow. As shared earlier in the document, NCS’ current strategic plan is coming to expiry. This stage will review the previous strategic plan, including an analysis of areas were successfully addressed and what areas need further development in the next plan. This is a great opportunity to consider the current problem around capacity and suggest for it be included in the next strategic plan to encourage the implementation of the OIP. Additionally, since the capacity issue is due to the successful number of programs that currently exist within the organization, conducting program reviews during this stage will help the change initiator and leader to gain a

better understanding of the success of the programs in relation to the needs of the community.

Think and Consult

The Think and Consult Stage will take place throughout the course of six months. During this time there will be engagement with NCS' community via surveys, focus groups and one-on-one interviews with clients and members of the Black Ecosystem. The goal of connecting with the community is to learn about their experiences at the organization. NCS needs to get a better understanding of what change key stakeholders want to see and reflect on how it aligns with the problem that has been observed from within the organization and its leadership. Once this information is collected, it will help to develop best approaches to change. There will also be a thorough development of what the future desired state of the organization will look like. By understanding where the organization wants to be versus where it currently is, it will help to measure the time and resources necessary to meet the goal. To lead to change there will be a set of three steering committees that will have different roles to contribute to the plan. The internal committee will include staff, volunteers, and board members. There will be a member represented from each level of the organization. The external committee will represent the community stakeholders including clients, members of local organizations and funders. Lastly, the youth committee will comprise of youth program members who can specifically speak to their experiences attending programming. By engaging these committees, NCS will be able to increase their understanding of the ways in which the problem impacts different groups, and how these groups perceive change at the organization.

Planning

This stage will be facilitated over six months and will conclude year 1 of the implementation plan. The planning stage requires patience and consistency to ensure effectiveness. This incremental process allows for NCS to nurture what is working and benefiting the organization, while discovering what causes a negative impact and how to mitigate it. The planning includes substantial communication to stakeholders and amongst internal members of the organization to ensure that the doing stage runs smoothly. There will be a review of all NCS programs, and with help from the youth and external steering committees, the official programs that are to be reduced will be identified. There will be several methods used to communicate the change plan to key stakeholders, such as town halls, interviews, and focus groups. NCS will communicate with funders that there will be change to some of the funded programs and learn if it will impact their funding distribution. Learning this information in the planning stage will allow for the organization to think about the overall impact that the funder's decisions may have on the intended change. Alongside other elements of the planning, an official schedule for participants involved in the implementation plan will be developed.

Doing

The Doing Stage focuses on the actions taken to implement the plan that was developed in the Planning Stage. This is where the reduction of the programs takes place as well as the development of relationships with members of the Black ecosystem takes effect. Throughout each phase, the various committees will be involved to help monitor and evaluate the process and ensure that NCS is keeping to the timelines and meeting the intended targets and goals. This stage of the implementation will be 1 year. Allocating this amount of time to facilitate this final stage will ensure that NCS is not rushing their process but rather taking the incremental steps

necessary to be successful with the overall implementation.

As indicated in Chapter 2, some potential implementation issues that may occur include pushback from clients and other stakeholders about the chosen solution. Fritz (2020) states that cultivating and nurturing stakeholders is just as crucial as the organization's prime activities. This means that decisions will be made on what is perceived to be the best interests of both the organization and the community. Another implementation issue that may occur yet is not anticipated is the potential for the solution to not be successful. While the goal of reducing programming is to relieve employees and board members from being overworked; if the implementation does not happen smoothly then there may be potential for an increased workload to mitigate the lack of success in the implementation. One of the most important elements of the implementation plan is professional development training. The goal is to learn how to efficiently facilitate a limited number of programs but also participate in trainings that can support with managing capacity and other skills needed to lead in task heavy or extremely busy environments.

Short-Term and Long-Term Goals

The implementation process will benefit from the development of short-term and long-term goals that can be monitored and evaluated. These goals will help NCS to celebrate the wins throughout the process, as well as consider some changes if the goals are not being met. A key short-term goal to help lead to the desired state is the development of the various steering committees. Members of the steering committees play a significant role, as they use their perspectives and experiences with NCS to provide feedback on best practices and approaches in the change process. Establishing the internal, external and youth steering committees early in the change process will help create an informed transition between each stage of the implementation. This short-term goal is a milestone in the larger change process and will be celebrated by

announcing the committee members at NCS board meetings, town halls and via email to our stakeholders. Transparency about who is represented on the committees is important and acknowledging the efforts of the committees before, during each stage and after participation will help increase morale.

A long-term goal required to achieve the desired state is the ongoing relationship building with different organizations that are members of the Black ecosystem. As mentioned throughout the OIP, the Black ecosystem consists of several B3 organizations that intend to support one another through different ways, one of them being a Community of Practice (CoP). Through the CoP as well as direct interactions and relationship with individual organizations, NCS will begin to learn different approaches to leadership and organizing that can help with internal challenges. This is a long-term goal because it is ongoing, as time allotted to build relationships within the ecosystem cannot be determined. However, the goal is to thrive using the knowledge and resources acquired from being a part of the ecosystem. As relationships are built and partnerships are made, NCS will do public recognitions by celebrating the partnerships via newsletters and other communications to the community and to stakeholders.

Change Process Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation processes offer the change leader valuable tools to successfully lead the change process at large. This section will use the Appreciative Inquiry Cycle (AI) introduced in Chapter 1 to guide the monitoring and evaluation plan. In conjunction with AI, the Integrative (Adaptive) Evaluation Framework (IAE) will highlight a more African-centred approach that is inclusive to stakeholders as being part of the evaluation process.

Integrative (Adaptive) Evaluation Framework

This framework involves the collaboration between Western evaluation methodologies

and African evaluation methodologies. Although more value is placed on the African worldviews, it does not make one worldview more dominant over the other (Gaotlhabogwe et al., 2018). The Western evaluation models, theories and instruments in this framework are adapted, contextualized, and made culturally relevant and inclusive of NCS' stakeholders (Gaotlhabogwe et al., 2018). African cultures and communities are seen as critical in this approach, which makes it an ideal framework to use for the implementation plan. The evaluated are also the evaluators themselves; and, therefore, the framework preserves the spirit of Ubuntu, even through the evaluation process. This contrasts with Western evaluation approaches as Western approaches “do not always serve the interests of non-Western (racialized) people” (Uwizeyimana, 2020, p. 117). Western approaches are often rooted in individualism, and Indigenous African approaches centre communalism and are decolonial. While the “self” is important, the community is what shapes the worldviews and experiences; and therefore, the collective must be included in how NCS approaches the evaluation of the implementation plan.

Table 2

Western Individualism vs. Indigenous African Communalism Evaluation Approaches

Western Individualism	Indigenous African Communalism
Individual self-concept	Communal self-concept (Ubuntu)
Independence	Interdependence
Survival of the individual	Survival of the community
Personal gratification	Group assurance
Competition and conflict	Co-operation and harmony
Ownership	Affiliation
Individual rights	Shared duties

Note. Adapted from: Uwizeyimana, D. (2020). Ubuntu and the Challenges of Africa-Rooted

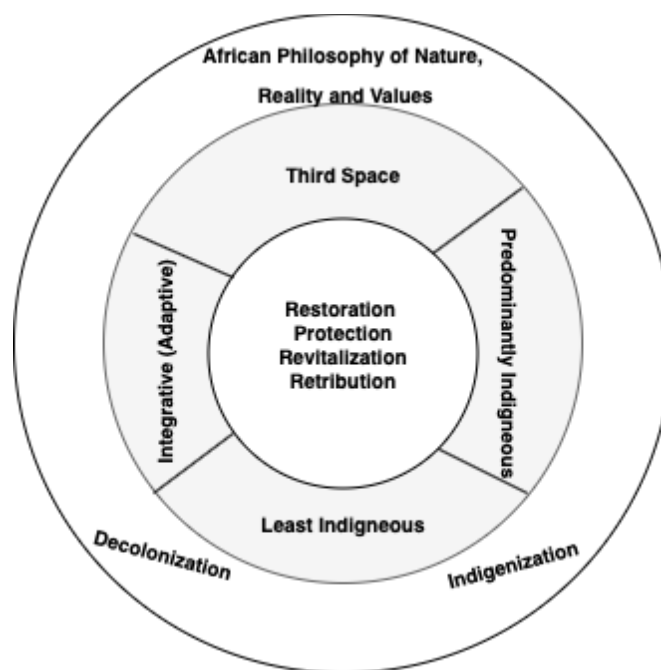
Public Policy Evaluation Approach. *Journal of African Foreign Affairs*, 7 (3), 113-129.

Table 2 shows the differing approaches of Western individualism versus Indigenous African communalism. The Integrative (Adaptive) Evaluation Framework is one of four evaluation frameworks listed under the African Evaluations Frameworks Model. This overarching model highlights several African-centred evaluation frameworks that can be used depending on organizational context or challenge.

As seen in Figure 5, there are several important elements to observe as a part of this framework. The outer circle represents decolonization, Indigenization, as well as the African

Figure 5

An African Evaluations Framework Model



Note. Adapted from: Gaotlhobogwe, M., Major, T. E., Koloi-Keaikitse, S., & Chilisa, B. (2018).

Conceptualizing Evaluation in African contexts. In F. Cram, K. A. Tibbetts, & J. LaFrance (Eds.), *Indigenous Evaluation. New Directions for Evaluation*, 159, 47–62.

philosophy of nature, which is what leads African values systems. The outer layer represents the

intention of the four frameworks in the inner circle, where the Integrative (Adaptive) framework is represented. The other frameworks in this inner circle include the Third Space, the Least Indigenous and lastly, the Predominantly Indigenous frameworks. These frameworks are to carry the intention of the outer circle and lead to embody what is represented at the centre of the model. The centre of the model represents restoration, protection, revitalization, and retribution. These are fundamental principles that help to maintain Indigenous African identity, which is vital in the evaluation of this implementation plan (Gaotlhabogwe et al., 2018). Given that NCS is guided by African-centred principles yet is currently dependent on the Western system to maintain capacity through funding, the Integrative (Adaptive) evaluation framework is suitable to support the monitoring and evaluation of change.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative inquiry (AI) is a strengths-based approach to improving systems (Macpherson, 2015). This approach is focused on the existing strengths of the group, which is aligned with the African-centred and transformational frameworks that are leading the change in this Organizational Improvement Plan. On one hand, AI encourages leaders to review systems that already work in the organization and amplify these systems to work in their favour. Seniwoliba (2014) writes, “AI leads systems to move toward the generative and creative images that reside in their most positive core – their values, visions, achievements” (186). On the other hand, this framework encourages leaders to try to find new solutions and approaches to issues that may need further changes. This suggests that as much as there is change needed, there are some strengths that exist and can be leveraged to further the intended change.

The original version of AI developed by Dr. David Cooperrider and Dr. Ron Fry in the late 1980’s only had four key stages (Bushe, 2012); however, “a number of practitioner critiques

pointed out that the 4D model omitted an important first step in the AI process of identifying the focus of the inquiry itself” (Bushe, 2012, p.3). Cooperrider and Fry initially wanted there to be a focus on the philosophy behind the AI approach and for it to not be seen as a technique, as a result, “many different ways of doing AI have proliferated and it is inaccurate to say AI is done in any one way” (Bushe, 2012, p. 1). The model that will be used for this OIP is the 5D AI Model which is one of the more commonly used models, “The Clergy Leadership Institute in the U.S. suggested “Define/Definition” as the first step” (Bushe, 2012). The only significant difference observed between the two versions of the AI model is that the Definition stage was included and was not originally in Cooperrider’s 4D model.

The 5D AI model was selected because it includes the Definition stage, which is relevant to any change. Change leaders must be able to define the problem before trying to discover how the problem is impacting the organization. The model offers flexibility in how each phase is applied to the unique scenarios of the organization using the process; and, it functions differently depending on the organization and their challenges. Mohr and Watkins (2002) explain “you can consider these processes a roadmap rather than a prescription for applying AI. You should customize them to fit each situation, with its unique opportunities and constraints” (p. 5). AI is a strength-based and whole system approach; therefore, it is not a rigid framework.

The five core processes of the AI approach include (1) definition, (2) discovery, (3) dream, (4) design and (5) destiny. This approach is holistic as it sees each stage as being valuable in the process, which is the benefit of using a whole systems approach. The following subsections will describe the stages of the AI core process to further understand the elements of each. It will also highlight how this model will be of use in the monitoring and evaluation of this OIP.

Definition

The Definition Stage will specifically focus on understanding the problem and the awareness that staff and stakeholders have surrounding the lack of organizational capacity. To successfully complete this stage, there will be an anonymous electronic survey utilized to better understand the impact that the current organizational capacity has on all key stakeholders, including staff, volunteers and clients. As a change initiator, I will be involved in developing the survey questions that go out to the various stakeholders and will review the impact that the organizational capacity, of lack thereof, has had on the community. I will also involve the internal committee to help develop the survey questions which will capture qualitative and quantitative data, as well as support with the analysis of the results of the survey. Within these surveys, there will also be questions to gauge what type of change stakeholders would like to see and to better understand the best approaches to apply to the change process going forward. The monitoring and evaluating of the qualitative and quantitative data will be reviewed by the internal committee which includes members of the board of directors, the change initiator and potentially one part-time staff member. In doing this, NCS can get perspectives from members within the organization at different hierarchical levels. Although the organization works from an African-centred collaborative perspective, there is still a sense of hierarchy in terms of the type of work that is being conducted and the level of power that exists within those positions. By having members from various leadership levels within the organization sit on the committee, it will help bring all perspectives to the evaluation of the data. Since the solution includes suggesting the reduction of some of NCS' programs to strengthen the organizational capacity, engaging in the Black ecosystem in the survey data analysis will be helpful in determining what programs and services are needed as well as what services can be removed.

Discovery

In the Discovery Stage there will be an emphasis on what has worked at the organization, what programs have been successful, and where most of the capacity is required at this time. NCS is in the process of developing its newest strategic plan. By assessing the strengths of the organization and articulating areas of improvement, a strong tailored strategic plan will be developed and can act as a secondary implementation plan. Given that the AI model is a strengths-based model, this will also be a time to determine where the strengths are within the current organizational model. NCS will begin to consider how to leverage the current model to benefit the approach to the new solution. This stage is also about mobilization. Two sets of focus group sessions will be facilitated for community and program participants. Due to capacity being an ongoing issue, the two focus group sessions with clients will take place during two of our lead program sessions, which are the Youth Program and the Education Program. The Education Program serves students and their families, and most of the communication is done with parents as they are the main point of contact for students in this program. This makes it easier to encourage parents to join the sessions. The intention of these focus groups will be to continue the evaluation and reach participants and stakeholders who may not have been able to access the survey, as well as those who may want to further express their opinions and concerns about the change within the organization and programs that are being removed. This phase focuses specifically on discovery through qualitative data. Given that NCS is directly linked to several organizations like BTTF, through the Black Ecosystem, their support with capacity building will be sought. The intention is to also have BTTF support in the evaluation of the data and to be an external organization that could support in the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation plan.

Dream

The Dream Stage explores the future desired state. This stage will also encourage stakeholders and community members to understand the sense of urgency and following through with the chosen solution of removing programs to better the capacity of the organization. LaFond and Brown (2003) explain that “systematic measurement of capacity contributes to results-based management of programs where capacity building is part of the overall strategy for improving performance” (p.12). Understanding what the final goal is, and being clear and specific about what this future looks like, will create more motivation. AI has five core principles which include the constructionist principle, the principle of simultaneity, the anticipatory principle, the poetic principle and the positive principle (Mohr and Watkins, 2002). These five principles serve as the foundation for the model. The poetic model encourages one to embody the spirit of a poet and dream about the future of the organization without boundaries or constraints. With that approach, NCS will not limit perspectives on what the organization is capable to achieve.

Design

Both the African-centred principles and transformational leadership practices highlight that followers and community are an important part of the design and implementation process. As mentioned in the Nguzo Saba framework in Chapter One, principle number three, collective work and responsibility, is an important factor in the monitoring and evaluation process. It is vital to maintain inclusivity in the approach that NSC takes to lead to a solution that serves the community. Therefore, the community and stakeholders must be a part of the evaluation and transformation process. While there are committees to complete the data assessment in the previous stages and there are focus groups for both stakeholders and internal employees and volunteers, the Design Stage will encourage the assessment of where the organization is within the implementation plan and whether the organization is meeting its targets and goals. The IAEF

as mentioned above will also be used during this Design Stage. The model uses both Western and African-Centred frameworks to help lead to organizational change. This is where the stories and the experiences of stakeholders (community members, employees, volunteers, and board of directors) from the overall implementation process are analyzed to capture how these stories contribute to the overall change. Goatlhobogwe et.al (2018), indicate that in the IAEF, “African cultures and communities are very critical. The evaluated are also the evaluators of themselves. The African communities play a significant role in the evaluation. They are not viewed as simple participants in the evaluation process but active evaluators” (p.54). By joining both the IAEF and AI, a holistic monitoring and evaluation process is established.

Destiny

In this final stage there will be an overall assessment of the change and implementation process to date. Table 3 breaks down the monitoring and evaluation plan and highlights each stage as well as the timelines and actions associated. An intensive review via an assessment, observations and conversations will be done to conclude whether the future desired state at NCS has been met. The assessment will look at how well each stage was executed and will be done via team meetings of all of the committees. The observation portion will investigate what was learned during the process, for example, what worked and did not work and what changes can be made to be more successful going forward. Lastly, the conversation portion will focus on engaging in intentional dialogue with stakeholder groups about the changes to get an understanding of how the change has impacted them and what their perspectives are to strengthen the change.

As mentioned previously NCS intends to utilize BTTF as a community partner for support in capacity building, which can be done by helping to monitor and evaluate change.

Table 3
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan of the Change Implementation at NCS

AI Stage	Action	Timeline	Holistic Change Model	Participants
Definition	Assess and consolidate data from initial community survey and town hall and one-on-one interviews with staff regarding need for change.	March 2023 – June 2023	Be aware of need for change	Change implementer, internal committee
Discovery	Review previous organization program surveys and assess strengths and weakness. The goal is to see the value that the current structure has when considering new ideas.	July 2023 – August 2023	Think & Consult	Change implementer, internal committee, external committee (Black Ecosystem)
	Liaise with the Black ecosystem through monthly consultations around capacity to ensure that the capacity building plan is being enacted in a way that meets future goals.	March 2023 – January 2024 1x monthly		
Dream	Review communications plan and assess response rates. Example: How did people respond to information shared at the town hall? Is there a sense of urgency from stakeholders?	December 2023	Planning	Internal committee, external committee
	Meet with partnering organizations to see how transition of referred clients will take place to ensure that they thrive.	December 2023- June 2024 1x monthly		Change implementer, internal committee, community partners
Design	Review of employee workload and capacity status. Example: has capacity lessened or increased.	Every 4 months: July 2024 November 2024 March 2025	Doing	Change implementor, internal committee, external committee (Black Ecosystem)
	Review processes to ensure the Indigenous African lens has been applied throughout all stages of the change plan.			
Destiny	Perform change plan audit and thorough output and outcome data analysis	March 2024 & March 2025		Internal committee, external committee
	Conduct interviews with community stakeholders to see how transition has impact them			Internal committee, external committee (youth advisory & community-centred group)

In the case that NCS requires a change in the implementation process, the organization will be prepared to conduct an annual audit to confirm any areas of change and improvement that are required and may not have been acknowledged or captured in the previous process. While the removal of programs at NCS is a first but necessary step towards building organizational change, these are the beginning stages that will help propel the organization forward. Furthermore, there must be a strong communication plan to ensure that the plan is facilitated smoothly. Both internal and external communication is essential. The following section will further discuss a plan designed to enhance the communication of the organization to ensure strong execution.

Communication Plan

Communication is a necessary component to the change plan implementation. Without a strong communication plan that considers the internal members of NCS and its external stakeholders, NCS will experience challenges reaching the future envisioned state. Though a strong communication plan is necessary, it should be seen as a framework and an evolving structure that can be revised when appropriate (Zakaria, 2012). This section will discuss how the need for change will be communicated to the various stakeholders at NCS as well as present a summary of the knowledge mobilization plan. It is important to note that NCS is a small organization, therefore there the communication strategies are limited and straightforward. The communication methods shared in this section are what is best suited for the structure at NCS.

Communication Throughout the Building Awareness of the Need for Change Stage

At NCS there is an existing understanding amongst members that change is needed. Dialogues surrounding capacity building has been a part of board meeting agendas and “water cooler” conversations for a long time. NCS already has an awareness that there is a need for change however, building awareness about potential ways in which NCS can bring about change

is a step that the organization requires more development. Step 1 of the change implementation plan is, Be Aware of the Need for Change, the first phase of the Holistic Change Model (Allan, 1997). In this step there will be one-on-one conversations with different staff members, volunteers, and board members to help gauge their view of the existing challenge and whether they see a need for change. By engaging in one-on-one conversations, it will support as the change implementer to view the diverse ways in which staff, board members, and volunteers see the need for change. This will also be an opportunity for me to express what I believe is a priority in the change process. Priorities include ensuring that there is a common understand of what the future desired state is, which will help guide the processes going forward. Also, effectively communicating the change plan to our valued clients to prevent negative impacts on their experience at NCS is a key priority.

Communication Throughout the Think and Consult Stage

This stage of the communication plan maintains focus on the internal members of NCS like the previous stage. Using the same communication methods as indicated in the first stage (face to face meetings, virtual meetings, and emails), there will be intentional conversations amongst NCS about what the future desired state of NCS will look like and how it will operate. Since NCS already has pre-existing team and board meetings, those meeting times will be leveraged, and messaging will be communicated then. This way it will not create a challenge to schedule and bring staff and board members together. The goal is to generate enthusiasm about the change and encourage a sense of unity and cohesiveness as NCS moves to the Planning and Doing stages of the change plan. Drawing on transformational leadership, this stage allows for organizational members to challenge their existing beliefs and attitudes about NCS and dream big. Internal members are encouraged to be innovative and creative about how they foresee the

future (Ngara, 2013). This will allow for a strong transition into the Planning stage.

Communication Throughout the Planning Stage

While this stage includes planning with the internal members of NCS, it also includes the key organization stakeholders who will be a part of the change from this point forward. The external stakeholders include clients, funders, and community members. The communication from NCS must be effectively received by external stakeholders to ensure a smooth and collaborative transition. The Indigenous African worldview encourages collaborative efforts to lead to change as the principle of interdependence “entails consultation with and listening to the people” (Ngara, 2013, p. 3). NCS will inform stakeholders of the need for change and the future envisioned state; NCS will then hold space where feedback is given by stakeholders and is heard, especially by clients who will be most impacted by the change. Furthermore, NCS will then inform clients and the community on how they can get involved and contribute to the change process. Lastly, funders will be notified on why change is necessary and we will be asked whether the change will interfere with any of the funder requirements. Given that there are different groups of stakeholders there are also different methods in communicating with each group. The list below highlights how each group will be communicated to by NCS.

Clients

NCS serves a diverse demographic of intergenerational clients who receive information in different ways. The two distinct groups are seniors and youth.

- Seniors: At NCS’ seniors mainly communicate via phone calls, in person sessions and emails. To ensure that they receive the communication about the change and how they can become involved in the change process, these methods will be prioritized to communicate with the senior clients.

- Youth: NCS's youth are often communicated to via emails, texts, social media posts and during face to face programming. To ensure that the youth receive communication about the changes, the communication tools and styles mentioned will be prioritized to communicate with the youth clients.

Funders

The current funders for NCS' programming are primarily contacted via email. All correspondence or requests are submitted via email; and, if any further communication is necessary via phone or virtual meetings, it is scheduled on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, communication via email and phone will be prioritized for this stakeholder group.

Greater Community

NCS has a very supportive community that believes in the mission and vision of NCS. Community members are often present at town halls to learn about what is changing at NCS and how they can be of support. Many community members also receive information from social media posts and are responsive to emails. To ensure greater community involvement in the change plan and maintain the communities support during the process, town halls, emails and social media posts are going to be prioritized for this stakeholder group.

Communication Throughout the Doing Stage

Campbell, Carmichael and Naidoo (2015) explain that within the change process, all parties must have a genuine concern for one another, rather than thinking about their own individual concerns. The Doing Stage is a collaborative effort amongst the internal members of NCS and the external stakeholders. This stage is capturing the learnings that have taken place during the implementation process. With the help of the internal and external committees, NCS will communicate updates about the progress and outcomes to the various groups through the

prioritized communication methods. The implementation is currently a two-year plan at NCS.

There is an Annual General Meeting (AGM) that takes place and will be one of the key methods of communication, as it is a space where all stakeholders are in one place at one time. At the AGM, NCS will collect feedback which will inform future practices and processes and will consider updating strategies and processes for implementation if necessary.

Dufrene and Lehman (2014) state that, “whether organizational change is prompted by shifting competition, financial challenges, a new strategic direction, or strides for greater efficiencies, effective communication is essential to combat inevitable dips in morale” (p. 444). Developing a strong communication model will help aid the change process at NCS and help to maintain staff morale and motivation. Moreover, along with the communication plan the knowledge mobilization of the implementation plan will ensure relevant stakeholders are engaged in the process. Table 4 provides a structured outline of the communication plan, as it indicates the different stages of the plan, the communication needs, the audience, the communication methods and the timeline predicted for each stage.

Knowledge Mobilization Efforts

Knowledge mobilization (KM) ensures that the learning and efforts that have taken place during the process of the implementation plan is disseminated to all relevant stakeholders.

Knowledge mobilization is an integral part of re-establishing NCS’ culture (German, Urquhart & Wilson, 2008) and therefore ensures long-term change. However, there must be a dedicated effort to the KM process as it does not happen by itself. This effort can happen over the course of a few years and requires a sustainable structure and resources to be successful (Levin, 2008).

KM is highly important in the non-profit sector as it boosts the efficiency of an organization’s decision-making ability (KMS Lighthouse, 2020) and encourages cooperation,

Table 4*Plan to Communicate Change at NCS*

Stage	Communication Need	Audience	Communication Methods	Timeline
Be aware of the need for change	Gain support and approval to follow through with change plan from organization members	Board of directors, staff, volunteers	Face to face – monthly board meetings, virtual meetings. Emails, presentations	March 2023 – June 2023
Think and consult	Ensure all NCS members understand the goal of the change and what the desired future state looks like; generate enthusiasm and a sense of unity and urgency	Same as above	Same as above	July 2023 – December 2023
Planning	Inform people of progress; request and listen to feedback; inform community of how they can get involved and help support the change	Same as above Plus external audience/stake holders (Clients, funders, community members)	Same as above plus 2 town halls every 3 months (all stakeholders); Social media posts and live sessions (youth); In-person pre and post program sessions (seniors); Phone calls (seniors)	December 2023 – June 2024
Doing	Capture learnings; communicate progress and outcomes; update process, if necessary	Same as above	Same as above – plus; Annual General Meeting	July 2024 – March 2025

collaboration and knowledge sharing amongst different organizations within the sector (Zarinpoush, Sychowski & Sperling, 2007). NCS is not only a non-profit organization and shares unique experiences with other non-profits within the sector, but it is also part of a minority group of organizations identified throughout the document as B3. The intention of the B3 Ecosystem is for there to be shared knowledge and resources amongst one another to ensure that organizations are learning from one another and supporting each other's growth. All B3 organizations are working to serve the Black community and serve various demographics and host various programming. By encouraging KM amongst the Ecosystem, more B3 organizations will have access to relevant information that can help inform their future practices.

In the Indigenous African tradition of the Balanda peoples from the region that is now called South Sudan there is a practice that is called *Fenjü* or *Kóònjü*. This is a practice of community building and sharing of resources amongst the local community, whereby families would take turns to work on the farms of their neighbours for a period of time and rotate their services to ensure that all families are able to successfully benefit from the services (Bringi, 2021). The intention of this sacred tradition is to ensure that everyone in the community is taken care of and that resources are shared so that all could benefit. The KM at NCS will focus on paying it forward and ensuring that the Black Ecosystem continues to thrive.

NCS plans to mobilize the successful development of NCS' improvement plan to support grassroots B3 organizations. This Organizational Improvement Plan will support organizations that are having challenges around the issue of capacity and who are limited in the number of staff and resources, which is the experience of many B3 grassroots organizations (Centre for Young Black Professionals, 2022). The OIP can also be seen as a guide for other B3 organizations who may not necessarily have similar challenges, but privy to learning about NCS' experience and

potentially avoiding some of the hard lessons that NCS had to learn through the change process. For example, an organization may see how NCS' board of directors were not a diverse demographic and many of overstayed their terms and how this impacted NCS. NCS in this case would think more deeply about how to diversify their board of directors so that different worldviews and perspectives are represented and that there are transitions into and out of roles at the beginning and end of terms.

This mobilization will be done via BTTF's community of practice network that is already established and has a significant number of B3 grassroots organization as a part of the community. Members of the CoP share best practices, create new knowledge to enhance existing practices and relies on ongoing engagement through in-person collaboration or virtually, via online meetings, workshops, and forums (Black to The Future, 2021). NCS will request to present its learnings at one or more of the meetings and potentially have the presentation recorded and added to the CoP *Learning Lab*, which will be shared on the virtual forum permanently.

Chapter 3 Conclusion

Chapter 3 solidified the importance of organizational change at NCS to reach its full potential. In discussing the implementation plan and timeline, the Holistic Change Theory was used to inform the plan. In the implementation, evaluation and communication plan, the use of a holistic Indigenous African lens was apparent in the inclusion of stakeholders and other beneficiaries in the process.

Future Considerations

The goal with the change process is for there to be consistency with the plan and the tangible actions that take place. There needs to be a strong effort from NCS to follow the

timeline and effectively monitor and evaluate the process. The change implementation plan is currently twenty-four months long; however, it is up to the discretion of NCS to determine whether more or less time is needed at each stage of the plan. One of the key future considerations for NCS is the evaluation of whether there needs to be an active recruitment for new board members. As mentioned earlier in the document, one of the challenges that exists is that majority of NCS board members have been active for longer than the average board appointment of two years. Some have been on the board for at least ten years. This may impact NCS's progression as the lack of diversification on the board of directors may hinder NCS from learning from new perspectives. Additionally, sourcing funding to hire an Executive Director is seen as a prominent consideration as having a formal lead of the organization will help to better manage employees and take leadership tasks off the volunteer board members.

Another important consideration that should be monitored following the implementation of this OIP is the reestablishing of the programs that are removed. While the selected solution indicates that programs will be removed and reintroduced once NCS regains capacity, it may be best for NCS to initiate an assessment process to consider whether the previous programs will still align with NCS after the successful completion of the implementation plan. NCS has potential to be one of the leading B3 organizations in Canada. By implementing this OIP and managing the issue with capacity NCS can flourish and continue to serve the community in the ways in which they intend. Appendix F offers a list of the resources needed for the implementation of these considerations, which include employees, time, training, and funding capital.

Furthermore, it is evident throughout the OIP that one of the major challenges that NCS has experienced which has impacted the capacity of NCS is funding. While the selected solution

is focusing on immediate capacity issues, having more consistent funding can help NCS reach other goals in ways that will not require NCS to reduce programing any further. NCS should consider the different funding methods that currently exist and potentially partnering with other organizations to collectively seek funding. Collaborating with the Black ecosystem in this way encourages the maintenance of this system and emphasizes the need for community to help advance NCS as future sector leaders.

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Appendix A- List of Programs at Nakupenda Community Services

List of Programs at Nakupenda Community Services

1. Youth Internship Program
2. Youth Mentorship Program
3. Advocacy Program
4. Scholarship Program
5. Weekend School Program
6. Cultural Arts Program
7. STEM Program
8. Seniors Program
9. COVID-19 Support Program
10. Black History Month Program

Appendix B – Change Readiness Assessment of Nakupenda Community Services

Readiness Dimensions	Readiness Score
Previous Change Experiences	
1. Has the organization had generally positive experiences with change?	+1
2. Has the organization had recent failure experiences with change?	-1
3. What is the mood of the organization: upbeat and positive?	+2
4. What is the mood of the organization: negative and cynical?	-2
5. Does the organization appear to be resting on its laurels?	-1
Executive Support	
6. Any senior managers directly involved in sponsoring the change?	+1
7. Is there a clear picture of the future?	+1
8. Is executive success dependent on the change occurring?	-1
9. Has management ever demonstrated lack of support?	-1
Credible Leadership and Change Champions	
10. Are senior leaders in the organization trusted?	+2
11. Are senior leaders able to credibly show others how to achieve their collective goals?	+1
12. Is the organization able to attract and retain capable and respected change champions?	+1
13. Are middle managers able to effectively link senior managers with the rest of the organization?	+1
14. Are senior leaders likely to view the proposed change as generally appropriate for the organization?	+1
15. Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by the senior leaders?	+1
Openness to Change	
16. Does the organization have scanning mechanisms to monitor the environment?	+1
17. Is there a culture of scanning and paying attention to those scans?	+1

18. Does the organization have the ability to focus on root causes and recognize interdependencies both inside and outside the organization's boundaries	+1
19. Does "turf" protection exist in the organization?	-1
20. Are the senior managers hidebound or locked into the use of past strategies, approaches, and solutions?	-1
21. Are employees able to constructively voice their concerns or support	+1
22. Is conflict dealt with openly, with a focus on resolution?	+1
23. Is conflict suppressed and smoothed over?	-1
24. Does the organization have a culture that is innovative and encourages innovative activities?	+1
25. Does the organization have communication channels that work effectively in all directions?	-1
26. Will the proposed change be viewed as generally appropriate for the organization by those not in senior leadership roles?	+1
27. Will the proposed change be viewed as needed by those not in senior leadership roles?	-1
28. Do those who will be affected believe they have the energy needed to undertake the change?	+1
29. Do those who will be affected believe there will be access to sufficient resources to support the change?	-1
Rewards for Change	
30. Does the reward system value innovation and change?	+1
31. Does the reward system focus exclusivity on short-term results?	-1
32. Are people censured for attempting change and failing?	-2
Measures for Change and Accountability	
33. Are there good measures available for assessing the need for change and tracking progress?	+1

34. Does the organization attend to the data that is collects?	+1
35. Does the organization measure and evaluate customer satisfaction?	+1
36. Is the organization able to carefully steward resources and successfully mee predetermined deadlines?	+1

Adapted from: Cawsey, T. F., Deszca, G., & Ingols, C. (2016). *Organizational change: An action-oriented Toolkit*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Appendix C – List of Organizations in the Black Ecosystem Network

Black Ecosystem Network	Description
The Black Resilience Cluster	The CABR-led Black Resilience Cluster (BRC) facilitated collaborative coordination, communication, problem-solving, and issue-identification between the City, UWGT and agencies and organizations supporting African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) communities in Toronto. The BRC included 26 B3 organizations and met weekly to collaborate, coordinate and resolve urgent and immediate issues in areas such as food security, housing and shelter, health and wellness, social services and other needs identified as critical to an ACB COVID-19 resilience response. Thematic areas of the BRC included food security; policing & justice; mental health; health promotion; Black business; housing and shelter; and community services.
B3 COVID-19 Response Funding	City of Toronto with the guidance of the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit provided COVID-19 emergency relief funding to B3 organizations. Funding recipients utilized the funds to support Black community emergency response intervention in the areas of mental Health, emergency food, social supports and safety and wellbeing. The funding also offered core staffing supports to the organizations with an aim to be responsive to the fact that chronic underinvestment in B3 organizations in the past led to unprecedented levels of stress on Toronto's Black-led COVID-19 frontline agency responses.
TO Support Response	Social Development Finance & Administration (SDFA) established and led the TO Supports initiative to deepen systems alignment and divisional collaboration for a coordinated City response to serving the City's most vulnerable populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. TO supports active input on the needs of Black Torontonians with the effect of mainstreaming a focus on

	Black residents and communities throughout the TO Support model
Black Mental Health Services	The CABR Units participated in the City's TO Supports initiative helped facilitate COVID-19 emergency investments in culturally responsive mental health supports for Black residents.
Black to the Future (BTTF)	<p>Black to The Future (BTTF), is a capacity-building initiative to strengthen leadership and organizational scale of Black focused, Black Lead and/or Black Serving non-profits and grassroots organizations in Toronto.</p> <p>BTTF was shaped through a collaborative process between the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit at the City of Toronto and Black community organizations and leaders who joined together to co-create and deliver three capacity-building initiatives: Action Grant, community of practice and the BTTF summit.</p>

Appendix D – Solution Breakdown for the Change Implementation

Solution	1 Fee for Service	2 Reduce Programs	3 Formalize Black Ecosystem	Chosen Solution Combination between Solutions 2 and 3
Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCS to develop innovative funding strategies that do not depend on the current federal government funding - development of social enterprises as revenue generating divisions of their organizations. - a social enterprise at NCS may be a beneficial solution to help mitigate the strict dependency on government funding and donations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - less programs requires less funding, and may ultimately increase the organizational efficacy and lead to a more balanced workload for staff and the board of directors - give the organization time to reevaluate what the organizations programs will look like going forward and how to better situate programming at NCS with the new normal due to COVID 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joining the Black ecosystem ensures that the organization has access to the necessary supports to help overcome the issue of capacity. - This ecosystem embodies teamwork and collaboration, just as the Ubuntu philosophy emulates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -While clients may lose some programs that they access from NCS, the goal is to make referrals to other programs and services that are similar at other organizations to ensure that our clients are still getting the support required to flourish - In this process NCS will be making use of the Black ecosystem by networking with other Black-led organizations to learn about their programming, as well as building partnerships for the transition that NCS is making with its services.
Drawbacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -long-term clients who may question and challenge new fees - earned income from the social enterprise may 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCS community members may lose access to services that they receive at the organization - reducing the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -elements of maintaining the status quo as a part of this solution. -this solution draws on what already exists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NCS community members may lose access to services that they receive at the organization

	not fully replace the need for funding from other sources	number of programs may decrease success for certain funding opportunities for the organization	within the organization but seeks for the organization to change its perspective to make use of these existing mechanisms	
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - time - People - training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - time - networking - research - people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - time - networking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - time - networking - people - research

Appendix E - Nakupenda Community Services Implementation Plan Breakdown

Stage	Timeline	Participants	Action
Be aware of the need for change	March 2023-June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change initiator Change leader Board of directors Staff Volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify problem by engaging staff and board members via one-on-one conversations as well as team meetings Ask leaders, staff, and volunteers during meetings and informally whether they feel that there is a need for change Identify areas that need to be addressed in next strategic plan. Since the current strategic plan is expiring, a review of the success and failures can be beneficial Conduct program assessments that include reviewing program output and outcomes success to determine whether there is a need for change in how programs are run and operated Engage in formal and informal dialogue with clients before and after sessions and ask them about their experience at the organization and whether they would like to see change around the capacity
Think and consult	July 2023-December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change initiator Board of directors Staff Volunteers Change leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage community members via surveys, focus groups and one-on-one interviews to learn about their experiences at the organization and whether they see a need for change Establish understanding of what the future desired state looks like and determine whether achieving the desired state requires an organized and structured change process Compile a list of all stakeholders to inform and engage as a part of the change Develop steering committees [internal, external & youth] to help provide feedback during the change process
Planning	December 2023 – June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change leader Internal committee External committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review all NCS programs and the required capacity to manage each program. Also identify how many programs will need to be reduced temporarily or indefinitely Review and compare program attendance to determine which programs are accessed the most by clients
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal committee 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize town hall for the local community and stakeholders about the program changes Join and actively participate in BTTF capacity building programs to learn how to better manage once programs are reduced Finalize new strategic plan with feedback from external committees to ensure that community voices and needs are being represented alongside the organizations needs Consult with funders about program plans and learn about options available to maintain funding if programs are reduced Provide different committees their task and responsibilities and develop a timeline for all deliverables Work with youth steering committee through monthly focus groups to assess program needs and gauge what programs are most valued or should be prioritized

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop partnerships with local organizations for future referrals of clients • Begin outlining what the Black ecosystem entails and how to ensure that it is formalized. • Develop schedule to review the implementation plan progress and to evaluate status of the plan • External evaluation committee will be selected
Doing	12-24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change leader • Internal and external committees • Employees and staff • Board of directors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officially reduce programs and make client referrals to other community organizations • External evaluation committee will meet once monthly during this stage to ensure effective transition of programming • Maintain relationships with other organizations that contribute to the Black ecosystem via monthly meetings as a community of practice. • Engage staff and board in professional development training on capacity building and other relevant training

Appendix F- Required Resources for Implementation of the Future Considerations at NCS

Resource	Description	Action
People	There is a need for at least 3 new full-time staff and an Executive Director in order to share responsibilities and spread workload for the different programs that are being run. There also needs to be a differentiation between the ED roles and that of the board of directors.	Each employee will work under the two current managers to help facilitate programming under their portfolios. One employee will join the Youth Programs team and the other two employees will join the Education Program Manager. The Executive Director will officially lead NCS.
Time	Reducing programming requires thorough planning for an effective transition. By reducing programs by 50%, it will be more manageable for the full-time and part-time staff. Staff will have more time to manage their program portfolios.	With a 50% reduction of programs, staff will have more time to participate in the Black ecosystem community of practice and other relevant trainings that will help them build knowledge and capacity.
Training	Employees, board members and volunteers could benefit from monthly professional development training to increase communication and moral. BTTF offers a free resource of trainings and workshops for members of their Community of Practice. Participating in this capacity keeps training at no cost.	Attend monthly trainings and actively apply new skills to the workplace to help increase knowledge and capacity.
Funding	Additional funding can support program costs, including employee salary, program expenses like food, equipment, space, guest facilitators and marketing. \$250,000 – Total Additional Annual Funding \$90,000 – Executive Director \$50,000 x 3 – Full-time employees \$10,000 – Program expenses	The Executive Director will be the official organizational lead which will remove duties from the board of directors and staff. To reach this funding goal there needs to be a number of fundraising methods used including: Direct mail, events, grants, crowdfunding