

Graduation of OEF Partnership Organizations

Background

The Current core partners of the One Eleuthera Foundation are seen to be:

Island Journeys (IJ)	- A destination management company providing an alternative destination for volunteer tourism
South Eleuthera Emergency Program (SEEP)	- Provides emergency Ambulance and Fire Services to all persons in South Eleuthera
South Eleuthera Mission (SEM)	- Provide literacy and literacy support to K – Grade 12 as well as training support for teachers
Eleuthera Arts and Cultural Centre (EACC)	- Centre for the promotion of Arts and Cultural Heritage and training
Centre for training and Innovation (CTI)	- Centre for the promotion of training and Entrepreneurship - Social enterprise comprising of a hotel, restaurant and farm
Cancer Society of Eleuthera	- Focused on health and wellness and the support of persons living with cancer.

January of 2018, a high-level assessment of these of the entities was undertaken based on Corporation for National and Community Service’s organizational assessment tool. Deficiencies were found in all of the organizations in the five areas reviewed; Leadership capacity, Management and Operations, Community Engagement, Service Capacity and Monitoring and Evaluation. With respect to the Leadership capacity and Management, it was found that in many cases the Boards were deficient, there was no clear strategic direction, inadequate financial management and few if any dedicated human capital resources. Many of these organizations operated as voluntary organizations, but volunteer management, recruitment and retention were weak. There was a high degree of interconnectivity with and a dependency relationship the One Eleuthera Foundation (OEF). In addition, all of these organizations would measure low on a sustainability index as fundraising and development was not well cultivated.

While it was evident that the close links between OEF and the partner organizations served a symbiotic purpose to allow for the full execution of the Shared Vision through the sharing of resources to achieve economies of scale, there has been some push back against the perceived dominance of OEF. In light of some concerns related to the need to the partner organizations of OEF to blossom, a proposal was requested to identify the required steps for graduation and improvement of the performance and sustainability of four of the partner organizations; IJ, SEEP, SEM and EACC. The following represents a summary proposal to allow for the graduation and independence of these entities.

Proposal

Board Operations

The role of the Board of any organization is critical for success. The key rules of success for a well-functioning Board can be identified as:

1. Develop a strategic plan for the organization and establish broad based policies to govern operations based on the plan;
2. Ensure that the organization is implementing the policies. Where there are staff (paid or volunteer) ensure that the efforts are evaluated and replace if necessary;
3. Ensure that the entity is financially sustainable; inclusive of managing and monitoring budgets and expenditures, raising funds, stewarding donors and donor funds to ensure that the funds are utilized in line with donor expectations;
4. Have strong relationships and communication links with communities, funders and other stakeholders and
5. Consistently evaluate projects and progress and performance against plans.

A review of the Boards of the four entities suggested that these boards are not functioning at optimum and may be detrimental to success. Of the four entities both SEM and EACC do not have duly constituted boards. Elections are overdue for both entities and discussions with current members suggest that board documents are not well constituted. The other two institutions indicated that elections are held. Notwithstanding the holding of elections, membership on the boards is narrow with most of the members related to OEF or the founding members of OEF in some manner. Access to Board is also perceived to be limited as opportunities and the process required to join the organizations are not clearly detailed. Further, IJ is essentially a closed operation which has no membership base. Membership on the Board of IJ and EACC is by invitation only. Further although OEF does not hold a formal seat on any of the Boards, it wields considerable influence.

Board training is limited, and the board members interviewed noted that they would benefit from training on Leadership, Board responsibilities, financial management, grant writing and entrepreneurship.

Sustainability

Financial and human capital resource sustainability is a major challenge. Of the entities under consideration, only IJ is financially viable but that may also be related to the heavy dependency on volunteer resources, which are stretched. Further the resource pool used by these entities is heavily intertwined (and in many cases are related to OEF) such that growth from one entity can cannibalize another. There is a tremendous need for well-functioning volunteer and member recruitment and retentions plans so as to increase the diversity and size of the base. Further, a resource management plan would allow for efficient utilization of volunteers and members and allow for growth of the entities.

The issue of financial stability must also be addressed. Many of the entities could be better positioned to take advantage of local and international grant or social enterprise opportunities however, there is little focus on this aspect of operations. Two of the entities indicated that they received some grant funding, but this has predominantly been from a founding donor and the Cotton Bay Fund which is administered by OEF. There needs to be a greater effort to re-orient their message and operations to seek alternative funding if these entities are to be successful as independent organizations. Of the entities IJ is well poised to expand its operations and given its very closed governance structure may

want to consider converting to a for-profit operation that provides a social service as one of its product offerings. SEEP, particularly at the Tarpum Bay location also have commercial opportunities that can be exploited to support operations. The Wemyss Bight property may also have some potential, but this is a much bigger undertaking and will require additional work to bring it to reality. SEM is well respected for its work reducing the level of literacy and numeracy in South Eleuthera. Unfortunately, like the other entities, SEM is under resourced and under financed. Its main financial sustainability measure may be through grant and endowment opportunities to support its education program, but insufficient attention is currently paid to developing the appropriate programs and to fundraising.

In developing a plan for the graduation of the OEF core partners, consideration was given to the identification of ways in which the above identified deficiencies could be buttressed. It was felt that these were the minimum requirements if the entities were to have any chance of surviving a separation from OEF.

Planned Activities

Increasing Diversity in the Membership/ Volunteer base and Board (October 2018 – January 2019)

As was noted by one Board member, the association with OEF can have negative connotations. While the entities may benefit from any positive reputational image of OEF, it was felt that the association could also limit the ability to secure volunteers for the entities based on a perception that OEF is overly dominant in the affairs of the organization, that it has money and can afford to assist the organizations with paying for help and that it was a closed shop. Whether this perception is representative of the entire story behind the lackluster membership and volunteer bases of the entities, the development of a large and strong membership/ volunteer base that would allow for a greater selection of person to sit on the board. It would also communities to see themselves in these organizations rising the potential for support and improved execution of programs. This will be done primarily through three main activities:

1. Hosting of a Town Hall meetings in key settlements to share information on the activities and mission of the core partners and invite persons to become members and volunteer their time;
2. Educational seminar (open) on the NGOs, their role in the Economy of Bahamas and the Roles and responsibilities of NGO Boards; and
3. Hosting of AGM's for core partner and election of Board members. Consideration should also be given to having some positions on the boards reserved for the communities in which the NGO serve.

Provide training to Boards and Members of Core Partners (Q1 2019)

Limited knowledge of NGO management and board responsibilities, business management, fundraising, resource mobilization and donor management were identified as critical weaknesses in all of the entities. It was felt that through CTI, a course or workshop on NGO management inclusive of topic on Leadership, Financial management and budgeting, Monitoring and Evaluation, Donor management and Resource mobilization could be held. It is also recommended that a separate workshop on grant writing be held. It was noted that members of the core partners may have already attended grant writing workshops hosted by OEF/CTI. It is anticipated however, that with the open

call for membership and the re-energizing of Boards, persons previously unexposed to the grant writing and fundraising aspect of NGO business would be interested in attending these courses providing additional strength for these organizations.

1. 3-day Workshop on NGO Management; and
2. 1- day Grant Writing and Fundraising session. Include a Fair in the after in the afternoon for NGO's to get hands on pointers and assistance with challenges associated with Fundraising

Provide support for Strategic Planning and Developing Sustainability Plans (Q2-Q4 2019)

As part of the maturity and long-term sustainability of these entities, it is critical that newly appointed Boards seek to develop or confirm the strategic vision and mission of the organization. Given the lack of experience of many of these new boards it would be beneficial if OEF could through CTI provide support or facilitate the strategic planning sessions for the partners. This would include providing some training on what is involved in the process and acting as facilitator for the strategic planning sessions. Ideally these sections should take place over a 2-6-week period to allow for full generation of ideas, feedback from stakeholders and by-in from the communities.

In terms of financial stability and sustainability for partners it is recommended that many of them take a proactive approach to fundraising and grant seeking. The competition for door funds however is relatively tight and there are an increasing number of NGOs seeking to provide support services to Bahamians, many of whom are seeking the same donors. Partners will be encouraged to partner with other similarly focused NGO in regional economies to submit joint proposals to international agencies focused on their core areas. This may also require a tweaking of their corporate documents and messaging to ensure that they are in line with the requirements and areas of interest of the international donor communities. Given the assets held by SEEP (recycling and building), SEM (building), and EACC (building) and the business model of IJ, these entities should also be encouraged to explore potential commercial opportunities to support their business. A course in Entrepreneurship or social enterprise may be useful to assist these entities in the identification and execution of any opportunity. There is also benefit for them to combine their assets to create a group of products cooperatively, which given the small population and competition for recourses may be a preferred approach.

Resource management and mobilization can also be tackled collectively so that the pressure on persons with high valued skills that may be in limited supply is reduced. This would include potentially sharing the cost of a professional grant writer or grant identification as well as for accounting and financial management. OEF/ CTI could assist with the development of resource mobilization plans for the entities to allow them to recruit and manage human capital assets.

Key activities include:

1. Facilitate strategic planning sessions for core partners over 2- 6 week periods.
2. Offering partners a 40% discount to attend Entrepreneurship and Financial management courses to offered by CTI in the first half of 2019;
3. Assist entities with the development of financial sustainability and development plans; and
4. Assist with the development of resource mobilization plans.

Monitoring and Evaluation/ Graduation (Q1 2020)

While many of the core partners can be considered to some degree incubators of OEF, these entities have been significantly stilted in their growth as the close relationship between the various partners and the competition for the shared resources has meant that many of them have not focused on the growth of the individual entities. This fast-paced graduation process must be carefully monitored. This would allow for speedy resolution of concerns or revisions to the plan. Should will include:

1. Ongoing monitoring of the graduation process, and revisions to the plan to ensure that it can be successfully executed;
2. An interim progress report;
3. A final report; and
4. Formal graduation or core partners and resigning of agreements.

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ACTIVITIES	Q4 2018			Q1 2019		Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB - MAR				
Host Town Hall meetings in key settlements to share information on the activities and mission of the core partners and invite persons to become members and volunteer their time.									
Educational seminar (open to public) on the NGOs, their role in the Economy of Bahamas and the Roles and responsibilities of NGO Boards.									
Hosting of AGMs by core partner and election of Board members. Consideration should also be given to having some positions on the boards reserved for the communities in which the NGO serve.									
3-day Workshop on NGO Management									
1- day Grant Writing and Fundraising session. Including a Fair in the afternoon for NGO's to get hands on pointers and assistance with challenges associated with Fundraising									
Facilitate strategic planning sessions for core partners									
Offering of a 40% discount to attend Entrepreneurship and									

ACTIVITIES	Q4 2018			Q1 2019		Q2 2019	Q3 2019	Q4 2019	Q1 2020
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB - MAR				
Financial management courses offered by CTI.									
Assist entities with the development of financial sustainability and development plans									
Assist entities with the development of resource mobilization plans.									
Ongoing monitoring									
Interim progress report									
Ending report									
Graduation									