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# The Local Charity Strategic Plan

## Introduction

Every youth has the potential to take control of their own future, if they are given the tools and skills to succeed.

The Toronto Local Charity (TLC), a registered Canadian charity, has been a **completely volunteer-based organization**, focused on breaking the cycle of poverty for marginalized youth, since 2013. TLC believes in the youth, and works to empower youth to become the author of their own story.

TLC began its work by helping to address food insecurity through its program *Cook-With-Love*, where healthy and delicious meals were prepared for community partners. These included: the Red Door Family Shelter, Horizons for Youth, Eva's Initiatives, and Youth Without Shelter.

In 2019, after conducting an internal review of the strengths of its volunteers, TLC identified that educational programming was a primary gap for youth that it could be best equipped to address.

Today, TLC offers both one-off workshops and multi-week leadership courses. One off workshop, without prerequisites, provide low-barrier access to participation suitable for the transient nature of many youth. Multi-week programming is available for youth that are ready to take steps to make a greater net positive impact to their lives.

Programs are open to all young people between the ages of 16 and 29, regardless of socio-economic background, gender-identity, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, race or physical ability. TLC partners closely with non-profit organizations that have



similar missions, and supports youth experiencing homelessness, abuse or involvement with the criminal justice system, and/or those who self-identify as having experienced mental illness. Programs are free to all users, and have been supported through a combination of individual and corporate donations, and charitable grants.

Program offerings have centered around four (4) key pillars: Education, Mental Wellbeing, Emotional Intelligence and Technology. Examples of programs over the years have included:

#### Education

- Financial Literacy programming.
- Author Your Life programming (goal setting, productivity, essential life skills, etc.)

#### Mental Wellbeing

- Wellness Series (Body, Mind and Soul): Facilitated workshops to guide youth in understanding the connection between how emotions affect our physical, mental and emotional state and learning mindfulness.
- 1-on-1 Life Coaching

#### Emotional Intelligence

- Self-Mastery Series (Elevating Emotional Intelligence using the EQi-2.0 model): Facilitated series designed to increase effective use of their competencies around self-perception, self-expression, interpersonal relationships, decision making, and stress management.

#### Technology

- Introduction to Computing workshop and a computer library program at Horizons For Youth (a shelter for youth).
- In 2022 TLC facilitated a broader computer donation program.
- Both of these programs are intended to help facilitate computer literacy, as well as access to education and employment opportunities.



In support of all of these areas, TLC has offered One-on-one Life Coaching, and has delivered over 75 hours of coaching services across 11 youth in the last fiscal year.

In past years, with an all-volunteer staff, TLC delivered 7 programs, 150 hours of programming, attended by 188 clients, and has delivered workshop programming in conjunction with 2 youth support organizations.

In 2022, TLC has begun promoting its offerings under a new brand, the **Success Accelerator (SA)**, as described here: [Success Accelerator Community Partner](#)

Through SA, 14 workshops/programs have been delivered so far this year, attended by 4 to 23 youth per program, and TLC has worked with 16 partner organizations.

## Our Cause: Looking to the Future

While not all vulnerable youth are necessarily homeless, as of January 2021, Statistics Canada reported that more than 235,000 people in Canada experience homelessness in any given year. Of that, 35,000-40,000 are youth between the ages of 13-24 years old, with between 6,000-7,000 young people experiencing homelessness on any given night. Homeless youth represent on average ~20% of the homeless population. Since these figures were last updated, the issues of homelessness, poverty, and mental health have all been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

**TLC, with its current small volunteer based organization, has only begun to scratch the surface in reaching out to vulnerable youth (homeless or otherwise) , either directly, or with the 75 - 100 potential organizations that it can partner with.**

**In order to ensure program offerings can be expanded further, more resources are desperately needed. By obtaining ongoing base funding for full-time staff, TLC will be better positioned to serve more youth by increasing the number of program offerings, better support continuous quality improvement of the programs offered, improve our attraction and retention of volunteers, and explore a greater number of partnerships with similarly aligned organizations.**

This strategic plan, prepared by a recently expanded Board of Directors and led by the founder of TLC, Laney Lui, articulates a vision and a shared understanding of what the organization is capable of achieving, over the next 18 months, and in the



longer term. The plan is intended to create clarity and alignment as to the organization's priorities, for the Board, TLC staff, TLC stakeholders, and for potential donors.

In April of 2022, the expanded TLC Board held a Strategy Retreat which began the process for the development of this strategic plan. The Board first did a **Situational Assessment/Environmental Scan**, (details to follow), exploring the organizations' strengths and weaknesses and external environment opportunities and threats.

Following from the analysis, the Board developed a **Mission, Vision and Values** for the organization in late spring/early summer of 2022, also documented here.

**Goals and Strategic Objectives**, consistent with the Mission, Vision, and Values, are documented. TLC anticipates that achievement of these will not likely be a "straight line" process. We will be adaptable and flexible based on the needs of our clients and other stakeholders, sources of funding, and those of our future partners.

## Situation Assessment/ Environmental Scan

The following summarizes key insights coming out of the Board's April 22nd meeting. These insights in turn have informed TLC's development of its Mission, Vision, Values, Goals and Objectives that follow.

### Strengths

Key strengths that TLC brings to our youth as an organization, based on survey feedback obtained from past attendees and partner organizations, are:

- TLC programming has had a significant positive impact on attendees and is very well received, as documented in past annual reports: [Annual Reports - The Local Charity](#)
- TLC's program offerings are **unique** in that they emphasize a mindset transformation driven approach - mental wellbeing and emotional intelligence themes are universally important and have been very well received.



- Relative to where programming is delivered by internal youth organization staff, clients are often more receptive to education provided from an external source.
- There is often less of a perception of “blaming”, and youth are often “less jaded” compared to internal program deliverers.
- An external program is perceived as new, a different style, and provides a different relationship with the youth compared to an internal source.

Recruited TLC volunteers have specific training and education expertise. Volunteers bring their subject matter expertise forward to support TLC in that they:

- Are Innovative, youth driven.
- Can tailor delivery to specific audiences.
- Have an instructional design background, who often bring in Subject Matter Experts (SME's) who work with them to develop programming curriculum.



## Weaknesses

### **Lack of financial resources and volunteers severely limits further growth.**

- High risk of volunteer attrition, especially for management/supervisory roles.
- Lack of clarity regarding current and future organization structure, and the role of Board vs. staff. For example, the current Success Accelerator (SA) Executive Director (ED) is a volunteer, working 5 - 10 hours per week.
- Current SA staff are wearing "multiple hats", and lack clarity as to what the priorities are.
- Lack of understanding to date regarding what resources are needed, and what the organization should look like, in order to grow.
- The Success Accelerator brand is new, and needs to be strengthened/built. As well, more thought is needed to clarify how the brand is distinct from TLC organizationally, so as to not confuse youths, potential funders, and other stakeholders.
- TLC's social media presence is, to date, minimal to non-existent.
- Although TLC's one-off workshops are well received, there is concern with the number of participants and subsequent effort involved to promote unique/individualized programs each time they are identified/requested.

## Opportunities

There is a large network of youth shelters, alternative schools, and youth justice organizations that are aligned to the vision, mission and values of TLC and could offer a huge opportunity to increase TLC program offerings to more youth:

- TLC estimates there are 75 - 100 potential partner organizations in the Greater Toronto Area.

Some of these partners are mandated to deliver some type of programming every day. At the same time, these and other organizations may also have resource/capacity constraints:

- Partnering with them to leverage resources is an opportunity to effectively utilize donated funds for both organizations.
- TLC's offerings address known gaps in knowledge and skills (wellness, financial literacy, life skills) for disadvantaged youth. Some youth support



organizations provide some similar programming for their clients, but not others. Some youth organizations do not have any resources for this type of programming. Others may be providing this type of programming ineffectively - as referred to above, an independent external source might provide a better experience.

- There appears to be no organization focussed on promoting and delivering access to educational services available to vulnerable youth. This indicates a unique market niche that the TLC could expand and become “best in class” in.

## Threats

Organizations, including potential partners, have their own mandates which may duplicate TLC/SA proposed programs, and/or may not be a priority for them, and/or they are promoting their own programs which may negatively impact TLC/SA program offerings.

- Vulnerable youth and youth organizations often do not have the technical hardware (computers, smart phones, etc.) to support virtual programming.
- Potential funders may not perceive our offer to be unique or persuasive.





The TLC Board developed a **Mission, Vision and Values** for the organization in late spring/early summer of 2022, as follows:

## Vision

A world where all youth can see their full potential and have the resources, inspiration, and courage to pursue it. Nothing stands in their way.

## Mission

The Toronto Local Charity (TLC) empowers young people to break the cycle of poverty by providing life skills training, employment-related skills, leadership training, and mental health and wellness programs; and by enhancing access to technology. Our programs support young people to build a life where they live in dignity, that enhances their resilience and security, and that provides them with greater opportunities for future leadership. TLC strives to be the best-in-class source for these offerings.

## Values

Our core values serve as the framework for everything we do, from daily decisions to long term planning. Our values keep us aligned, and ensure that we build a safe, inspiring environment for all stakeholders.

The following core values and beliefs define what is important to us at TLC:

- **Integrity.** We always do what we say we'll do; we know our words are powerful and we act with uncompromising honesty in everything we do.
- **Empathy.** We are a compassionate and understanding organization and team. We care deeply and do not judge. Your unique perspective and situation matter to us.



- **Agency.** We work to ensure that everyone has the power and autonomy to own their future. We also believe that ownership demands accountability and we model that in everything we do.
- **Resilience.** As individuals and as an organization, we get stronger every day. When we fall down, we get back up and pivot if necessary. We also know that we'll never have to struggle alone.
- **Innovation.** We're always challenging the old ways. We seek out new ideas and opportunities, and we daringly pursue a better way forward.
- **Collaboration.** We are dedicated to understanding, learning from, and working cooperatively with our partner organizations.



# Goals and Strategic Objectives

The goals and objectives that follow indicate deliverables in both the shorter and longer term. Meeting longer term deliverables will depend on the actual achievement of the shorter-term targets first, which includes those related to funding support. Without a doubt, there will be aspects within each goal that could be achieved earlier, or later, than outlined here.

## Goal One: Develop and Maintain a Best-in-Class Organization

**Short Term (next 18 months):** Obtain appropriate funding and build TLC's volunteer-based organization to deliver the Success Accelerator (SA) Program as currently envisioned, and to support a complementary computer donation program. Targets indicated below.

### **Longer Term:**

By June Of 2024, TLC has the resources in place (paid + volunteer as needed) and has delivered the SA program, and has demonstrated that the programming is well received and is best -in-class. It has established and documented organizational policies and procedures both for the organization itself and for its governance by the Board of Directors. These policies and procedures focus around a volunteer-based organization, and should clarify clearly the roles and responsibilities of staff vs volunteers vs. Board members. It begins to identify and secure additional sources of funding for both staffing and additional expenses (if/as needed) to support continued client and partnership growth in the second half of 2024 and onwards.

### **Objectives (Next 18 months)**

1. By December 2022, develop a fundraising plan to secure \$110,000 of ongoing funding to support the hiring of 1 full-time staff, and to secure \$25,000 of



ongoing funding to support expenses associated with scaling up and growing the offerings of SA programs, for the next 18 months.

2. By December 2022, develop a communications plan to increase awareness of the Toronto Local Charity as a not-for-profit organization across the GTA and Ontario.
3. By March 2023, obtain an additional 50 donated laptops (and/or other tech equipment) from partner organizations to be used for laptop donation programs.
4. By December 2022, develop a job description for the first (1) Local Charity full-time staff member.
5. By December 2022, create a viable organizational structure that is scalable for future growth (current and future state).
6. By March 2023, document clear roles and responsibilities: Board members vs. Staff vs. Volunteers, so as to avoid duplication and conflicts and to clarify funding needs over the longer term.
7. By March 2023, develop and document organizational policies and procedures for the TLC and SA and for the Board of Directors, with reference to the Canadian Code of Volunteer Involvement best practices.
8. By March 2023, develop standardized performance measurement process and mechanism to assess impact of SA programs towards supporting youth goal achievement and communicate this on a quarterly basis for board and staff review.
9. By June 2023, hire 1 full-time Local Charity full-time Director of Programs.

## **Goal 2: Achieve Best-In-Class program delivery for Success Accelerator**

**Short Term (next 18 months):** Delivery of the Success Accelerator (SA) Program as currently envisioned, and the complementary computer donation program. Targets indicated below.



**Longer Term:** Programs offered to be changed, numbers rolled out , and/or curriculum to be improved based on achievement of the targets below, client feedback, and lessons learned.

**Objectives (18 months)**

1. By December 2023, deliver the 10 programs to 150 clients.
2. By December 2023, deliver 12 workshops to 200 clients.
3. By December 2023, achieve 90% of program participants stating that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the programs they participated in (post-program survey).
4. By December 2023, achieve 90% rating of program participants reporting that they feel empowered or very empowered to pursue their goals following participation (post-program survey).
5. By December 2023, achieve 50 net new program participants in attendance who were enrolled in programs via referrals.
6. By January 2023, donate 50 additional laptops (and/or other technical hardware), to complement the SA program, to youth based on predetermined needs criteria.

## **Goal 3: Maximize Impact through growth of both clients and partners**

**Short Term (next 18 months):** Targets as indicated below

**Longer Term:** Complete identifying and securing future clients and partners, and develop a rollout plan for expanded delivery of the SA Program. Such a plan to be flexible, and responsive to community needs: could be on-line, in person, train-the-trainer, for some or all of SA's existing programs, etc. - determined in collaboration with partners. Overall goal is a larger but still primarily volunteer-based, scalable organizational structure and level of funding to deliver a potential expanded SA program to its greatest potential number of clients and partners. Overall goal is: by the end of 2024, TLC's impact has grown substantially. It becomes known as the go-to best-in-class source for its educational offerings. TLC has funding stability to support a more permanent looking organization structure, organized to support a best-in-class volunteer-based organization.



### **Objectives (18 months)**

- By December 2022, identify and secure 10 partners who have expressed interest in supporting the delivery of SA programming.
- By June 2023, identify and secure 60 clients who have expressed interest in SA programming.
- By October 2023 revisit/review organizational structure to quantify exact additional funding needed to support maximum rollout.
- By November 2023, deliver SA Program workshops to the 60 clients (all 60 having enrolled and attended at least 1 workshop by this date).

## **Goal 4: Create Diverse Leaders of Tomorrow**

**Short Term: (18 months)** Targets as indicated below

**Longer Term:** Potential expanded organizational mandate to address leadership more specifically, and to provide a resource capacity within and outside the organization to address a wider set of poverty issues and solutions. TLC creates new leadership volunteers to not only take on leadership roles within the organization, but to become known as a source of leaders that take on advocacy, food security, and community organizing roles and responsibilities either within TLC, or within other organizations, helping young people break the cycle of poverty.

### **Objectives (18 months)**

- By December 2022, create a strategy and plan for the successful implementation of the Ambassadors program.
- By December 2022, identify 10 potential trainees that could take on leadership roles in advocacy, community organization, food security, and other poverty related issues in the community.



## Conclusion

This strategic plan is a first step for transforming the Local Charity from an all-volunteer start-up organization to a stable and effective organization that continuously improves as it strives to achieve its Mission.

TLC and its Board of Directors will seek advice and input from its stakeholders: clients, staff, partner organizations, and potential donors, with respect to this plan, and will update the plan annually based on implementation experience and lessons learned.

Your comments and suggestions are welcome!