

DRAFT REPORT

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT TO REVISION

**AN EVALUATION OF THE BLACK OUTREACH PROJECT
A Project of the Nova Scotia Persons With AIDS Coalition**

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February, 1996

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The author would like to express thanks to the following individuals who provided invaluable assistance in the completion of this project:

Deena Noseworthy, Community AIDS Educator, Black Outreach Project
Quenta Tynes, Research Assistant, Maroon Communications
and all the individuals who participated in the evaluation.

Introduction

An evaluation of the Black Outreach Project (BOP) was undertaken at the request of the project sponsors. When Phase II of the BOP was designed, provision for an evaluation was incorporated within the funding proposal.¹

The primary purpose of the Evaluation would be 1) to demonstrate how well the project met its mandate and objectives and 2) to identify what recommendations and follow-up would be necessary as a result of this project.

There was also an expressed wish that the resulting Evaluation Report be prepared in a manner suitable for widespread distribution within the African Nova Scotian community as a further overall public education goal related to AIDS/HIV awareness.

Terminology

- African Nova Scotian and Black are used interchangeably within this document.
- BOP : Black Outreach Project
- R: Respondent for Interviews and Questionnaires
- WP: Workshop Participant - NSPAC: Nova Scotia Persons With Aids Coalition
- CAE: Community Aids Educator

¹ "Black Outreach Project Phase II Application," Nova Scotia Persons With AIDS Coalition, August 1993.

BACKGROUND

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WHY AN AIDS PROJECT FOR THE AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITY.

How It All Began

The origins of the Black Outreach Project began in the spring of 1989 when members of the Nova Scotia Persons With AIDS Coalition (NSPWAC) began participating in workshops sponsored by Black community organizations. These sessions dealt with issues affecting the community from the perspective of community and health workers. Subsequently, representatives from the NSPWAC and from organizations such as the Black Cultural Centre, the Black United Front and the Afro-Canadian Caucus held discussions concerning community and culture, and how best to approach the emergence of HIV and AIDS as it affected individuals in Black communities.

At the time, increased numbers of Black women and men were seeking assistance from the NSPWAC. What became clear, was the presence of HIV infected individuals in the Halifax-Dartmouth area as well as in Black communities around the province. In contrast, however, within these communities, in churches and in neighbourhoods, the message was that AIDS did not exist in the Black community.

Issues of sexuality are not ones which have been actively discussed publicly within African Nova Scotian communities. Sexuality and sexual orientation have been considered private and personal matters.

Prior to the establishment of the Black Outreach Project, the NSPWAC attempted to carry out AIDS outreach within the metropolitan Black Community. The organization was made up of white individuals, many of whom had little experience in undertaking work in culturally specific settings. This factor, along with others, usually meant these efforts did not meet with much success.

The Black Outreach Project (Phase 1) was initiated by the NSPWAC in Nova Scotia in May 1991. Its primary goal was as follows.

to provide culturally specific information, education and support services to the African Nova Scotian community through a process of networking, reviewing literature, studying media profiles and developing a network of resources.²

Its objectives were

to prevent the spread of HIV, to provide culturally sensitive support, to advocate with and for those who are affected and infected in order to raise the awareness of HIV as it affects the Black communities.³

The project secured federal government funding for a two year period through the AIDS Community Action Program (ACAP) of Health Canada. An Outreach worker was hired in 1992. A significant milestone in the work of the Black Outreach Project was the development and completion of a comprehensive needs assessment which in 1993 produced a document entitled, **COMMUNITY AIDS EDUCATION FOR THE AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITY: NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT.**

This needs assessment revealed that within Black communities there was a lack of information and an alarming level of misinformation regarding HIV/AIDS related issues.

As the work in Phase I proceeded, the need for culturally-specific resources became apparent. During this phase a Black community Advisory Committee was established to provide support, advice and direction to the project. This Committee, which would continue throughout Phase II, was an essential element in the project.

² "Community AIDS Education For the African Nova Scotian Community. Needs Assessment Report", Kimberley Bernard, p. 2, Nova Scotia Persons With AIDS Coalition, Black Outreach Project, August 1993.

³ Ibid.

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³ Ibid.

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The Black Outreach Project Phase II mandate and goals evolved directly from ground work and the needs assessment carried out during the initial phase project. Moreover, this early work underlined the pressing need for the project to continue.

THE BLACK OUTREACH PROJECT, PHASE II (BOP)

The Black Outreach Project, Phase 2 was sponsored by NSPWAC and received a two year funding commitment from ACAP. The project began in January 1991 with the appointment of a new Community AIDS Educator. The following mandate and broad goals are set out in the project proposal:

Mandate/Statement of Intent

The Black Outreach Project will be centred upon a specific goal plan that spans two years and objectives that will result in the development of a culturally-specific prevention education and health promotion model, and the development and nurturance of the human and material resources that will encourage and support the Nova Scotian Black communities and other Black communities around the Atlantic Region to increase their capacity to respond to increase their capacity to respond to community members infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Goals

- 1) To provide a culturally-specific model for prevention education and health promotion by and for the Black urban and rural communities in Nova Scotia and with Regional applicability.

- 2) To encourage and support social environments within the Black communities to expand their capacity to respond to community members infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.
- 3) To raise the profile and awareness of HIV/AIDS as it affects the Black communities thereby dispelling the myths and misrepresentations that encourage racial prejudice.

Working in partnership with a range of Black community organizations and with the support of Project Advisory Committee and NSPWAC, the Community Aids Educator (CAE) was assigned to carry out these goals.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The Evaluation seeks to assess the degree to which the Black Outreach Project Phase II goals have been successfully achieved.

Three key questions would need to be answered:

- 1) Is the Black Outreach Project effective in the Nova Scotian community?
- 2) Are Black Nova Scotians receiving specific HIV/AIDS resources, presentations and support services?
- 3) What form, if any should future HIV/AIDS work in the Black Nova Scotian community take?

The evaluation methodology combined several techniques:

- 1) Documentation review and analysis:
 - . review of objectives from Phase One and Needs Assessment
 - . review of objectives and proposal from Phase II
 - . selected file review: approximately 60 files (including documentation such as minutes of meetings, evaluations of presentations, correspondence, staff reports etc.)
 - . review of pamphlets, resource kit and other information
- 2) Interviews and Questionnaires

Interviews and questionnaires were used to gather direct feedback from respondents who have either worked with or had significant contact with the project.

A list of potential respondents from across Nova Scotia was developed in consultation with the Community Aids Educator. Initial phone calls were made to inform them of the evaluation and the follow-up letter and confidential questionnaire which would be sent to them. These calls also emphasized the importance of the evaluation to any follow-up work and sought the co-operation of the respondents. Selected personal interviews were completed with representatives of several of the contact organizations and with representatives of government and the sponsoring organization (NSPWAC).

In total, thirty-five (35) contacts were made regarding the evaluation. Twenty-five (25) questionnaires/interviews were successfully completed.

Project files which included reports, evaluations, minutes, correspondence and other miscellaneous documents were reviewed. Separate interviews, both formal and informal were carried out with the Community Aids Educator.

The resulting recommendations were developed from an analysis of the findings and include specific suggestions offered by respondents.

The BOP: How it Operates

The Community Aids Educator (CAE) functions as a member of the staff of the Nova Scotia Persons With AIDS Coalition. Structurally, the Community Aids Educator is directly accountable to the Coalition's Administrative Co-ordinator and the Black Outreach Project is the responsibility of the Board of Directors of the Coalition.

The BOP benefited from a core group of people who were active from the earliest stages of the project. At the start of Phase II, new volunteer members were added to this core group to establish the Project Advisory Board which would guide the project and provide advice and support to the Project staff.

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The role of the Advisory Board was defined as follows:

- 1) to advise the Community AIDS Educator on procedures and conduct that best meet the purpose of the Black Outreach Project.
- 2) to advise the Community AIDS Educator on the development of specific materials as well as other goals and objectives pertaining to the Black Outreach project.
- 3) to channel ideas and thoughts that would contribute to the betterment and advancement of the Black Outreach Project.
- 4) to assist in representing the Project and Project tasks where appropriate.
- 5) to support the Community AIDS Educator where appropriate

The Advisory Board provided an essential point of community contact since its membership was drawn primarily from the African Nova Scotian community. Beyond the BOP, the membership base and the staff of the sponsoring organization was made up of white individuals who had little or no direct experience with the constituency and clientele of the BOP. (In an effort to maintain open lines of communications and in order to represent the interests of the project, the Advisory Board appointed two (?) of its members to sit on the Board of Directors of the NSPWAC. Similarly, a member of the Coalition Board became a member of the BOP Advisory Board.

To facilitate the work of the BOP and to assist the Community AIDS Educator, the Advisory Board established several committees. During the early months of the project, Board members assisted in conducting information presentations and thorough the committees took on specific responsibilities such as church outreach. The CAE expanded the community base of contacts established during Phase 1 and began the development of new contacts. Using a network of individuals, the CAE organized and carried out various public education presentations throughout Nova Scotia. Sessions were either initiated by the CAE or were conducted in response to the requests which came forward from the contacts.

Two significant contact points which provided opportunities for BOP presentations in various communities were the Black Learners Advisory Committee (BLAC) and the Literacy Section of the Department of Education. The BLAC has Regional Educators in communities across Nova Scotia who worked jointly with the Aids Educator by both participating in sessions themselves and by helping to set up public presentations. Through the Literacy Section's Community Learning Initiatives Project, an agreement was reached to incorporate information on HIV/AIDS as part of the literacy curriculum. (Training in HIV/AIDS information for the literacy tutors would be given to ensure accurate information is presented. ?)

SERVICES

The BOP offered services in three primary areas:

- 1) public education workshops, presentations, and displays dealing with HIV/AIDS
- 2) training sessions and educational materials for volunteers interested in carrying out HIV/AIDS education
- 3) referral and support services for persons and families infected and affected by HIV/AIDS (services include legal, financial, treatment information, counselling among others)

Demand for presentations and workshops remained consistently high over the course of Phase II. More than seventy presentations were completed throughout Nova Scotia during the two year period. In addition to staff time allocated to the BOP, volunteers contributed approximately forty-eight hours, on a monthly basis, to the project. Their work included committee and Advisory Board meetings, office tasks and provision of support services. The CAE completed four training sessions (including two pilot sessions to test resource material) with a total of thirty-seven participants.

In offering the various services to meet community and individual needs, project staff became aware of a number of the needs of gay and lesbian members of the Black community who were not being reached. Due to the continuing stigma attached to homosexuality within many sectors of the Black community, some gay and lesbian individuals find themselves without much support. In March 1995, the BOP spearheaded the establishment of a Black gay and lesbian support group which became known as "Juka". Juka, which is an African word meaning 'rise up' has a membership of fifteen people. The group meets monthly to respond to AIDS and other issues by its members.

This manual is well constructed and gives you exactly what you need to do a presentation Everything is right in front of you so you don't have to be nervous about the presentation because you can refer to your manual. (WP)

One of the recommendations from the Needs Assessment called for the development of material which could be used in community outreach activities. The development of a **Training Manual** became one of the main goals of the BOP Phase II.

The CAE began the preparation of this manual during the early stages of the project. A draft manual was prepared and pilot tested with small groups of individuals who had agreed to be contacts who could use the manual in community based HIV/AIDS public education activities.

Based upon feedback, revisions were made and the completed Manual was used in training sessions with participants drawn from commun across Nova Scotia. (see Appendix) The Manual is divided into four sessions: Your Role as Community Educator, Understanding AIDS in Your Community, Guidelines for Education and The Larger Picture. It also provides a snapshot of African Nova Scotian History, information on the reality of AIDS, guidelines for using the manual and a listing of vocabulary used throughout the manual.

Participants who attended the Training Workshops commented favourably on session indicating a high degree of satisfaction and appreciation.

In summary participants felt:

- the content of the workshop was appropriate, informative, and practical
- the facilitators were excellent and effectively involved participants and made the session interesting; they created a comfortable atmosphere and participants felt at ease asking questions.
- they received factual information and clarification on many questions related to HIV/AIDS
- the Manual is "excellent" and very easy to use and will assist individuals in undertaking HIV/AIDS education
- there is a need for follow-up training sessions
- the main drawback of the session was the amount of time allocated; more time was needed

Participants were conscious of the role they could play in the area of community public education and noted their hope for continued contact and support from the BOP.

Organizational Structure and the BOP: Defining the Issues

The Nova Scotia Persons With Aids Coalition, the original sponsor of the Black Outreach Project was established in 1988 by a small group of people who were HIV positive. It operated on a self-help model and developed activities to support individuals to help themselves and collectively, to assist others who were living with HIV/AIDS.

In the early years its client base was primarily white gay males. Gradually the organization began to recognize it needed to expand to reach all people living with HIV/AIDS.

While there was some irregular contact on an individual basis with a few members of the Black community, the launch of the Black Outreach project brought the organization into direct, face to face, contact with this community.

During the first phase of the BOP, the relationship was relatively positive between the sponsoring organization, the project and the BOP Advisory Board.

However, during this Evaluation, some respondents commented that a significant change occurred at the Annual General Meeting of 1993 when issues of racism within the organization became very evident. The Community Aids Educator was making a presentation regarding the project. The validity and necessity of the BOP was called into question during the meeting. Under discussion was a major needs assessment of the African Nova Scotian community, and the resulting report which presented a blue print for activities to be implemented by sponsoring organization to meet these needs.

Reflecting on the events at the time, several respondents commented that the questions being raised were inappropriate and were racist in tone and content. The result was the staff person and by extension, the BOP, were placed in an uncomfortable and compromised position.

While there was exchange of correspondence among several parties regarding the issues raised at the AGM, and the manner in which they were raised, the situation was left unresolved not only from the point of view of the Advisory Board of the BOP, but from the point of view of the Nova Scotia Persons With AIDS Coalition, sponsoring organization.

As Phase II of the BOP began in January 1994, these issues and a series of recommendations from the Needs Assessment, which required action on the part of the NSPWAC, were in limbo. In June 1994, AIDS Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Persons With Aids Coalition moved into the same office space, beginning a merger process which would not be complete until the fall of 1995.⁴

While the staff of the NSPWAC participated in anti-racism workshops, there was no planned, overall approach regarding dealing with racism, on the part of the organization itself. In addition, the merging of the two organizations --with differing mandates, philosophies, working styles, personnel and managing boards became the priority of both organizations and not much time was left to address issues and concerns of the Black community.

Determining how then to deal with the issues raised about racism or indeed, how to best serve the African Nova Scotian client base (for example, specific follow-up of the Needs Assessment) did not appear to figure in the meetings and discussions regarding the merger, organizational structures and services.

Lingering questions about the BOP remained in some sectors of the organization and while it appears that there was some awareness of issues of racism, there was an overall inability to collectively and directly address institutional racism.

Operationally, the Black Outreach Project simply had to continue to get its job done inspite of the major changes and disruptions taking place in the workplace environment. BOP Project staff participated in overall staff meetings and events, and often worked jointly with project staff from the Women and Aids project, a initiative similar to the BOP but targetted to a client base of women.

⁴ "Two AIDS groups amalgamate forces", Flick Conrad, p. A-5, Halifax Mail Star, August 29, 1995.

The BOP: Challenges and Opportunities

In a newspaper article regarding public awareness of HIV/AIDS, a prominent activist wrote about the many issues facing people with HIV/AIDS. Of continuing concern is the level of secrecy which still surrounds those who have AIDS.

With many of the 18 people I know of who have died this year of an AIDS related illness, there has been no mention that these individuals struggled with HIV/AIDS. This indicates to me that a part of their lives did not happen. ⁵

There have been a number of high profile public events aimed at increasing awareness of the disease; on a national and international level many celebrities have been involved and at the local level, organizations such as AIDS Nova Scotia and the NSPWAC have carried out a number of public education activities. Prominent sports figures making public they have HIV/AIDS, the Canadian Keaver Inquiry and debates over funding for HIV/AIDS research serve to bring the issue into the public domain.⁶ However, while these issues are present in the media, the main question to be addressed is whether in any way, this public visibility translates into increased knowledge about the disease, greater sensitivity and assistance for those battling it, and behavioural change to prevent its spread.

As documented in the Needs Assessment, awareness within the African Nova Scotian community is at a most basic awareness level for a variety of reasons, some of which are raised in the findings from the evaluation questionnaires used in this report.

⁵ "AIDS Victims: truth is the purest of all memorials," James Bigney, p B-2, The Mail Star, August 22, 1995

⁶ Morrison confirms positive HIV test", Gerald Eskenazi, p.A-16, Halifax Mail Star, February 13, 1996.

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For example, one respondent noted that the session on HIV/AIDS Awareness held in the respondent's community was well attended by both parents and young people. The lingering question raised by the respondent was whether the young people, once armed with appropriate information, would change their behaviour. It was noted that the number of teen pregnancies in the particular locale indicated a number of teens were having unprotected sex. For young females, unprotected sex not only meant the risk of pregnancy, but also the possibility of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS.

It was noted earlier that issues of sexuality are rarely discussed publicly within Black communities. This factor coupled with homophobia, and the various misconceptions regarding HIV/AIDS, has meant the BOP faces particular challenges in determining how best to carry out its public education and information mandate.

As the work and contacts began to develop, the CAE found that the work expanded based upon community need. One of the difficulties faced by the CAE was having sufficient time to provide the needed services and to complete all the work necessary on the development of the Training Manual.

Consequently, the completion of the Manual and accompanying volunteer training sessions did not follow the initial timeplan laid out in the project outline. Faced with an ever expanding workload and the need to respond in the areas of direct support, counselling, and public presentations, the CAE was constantly juggling and adjusting priorities. This experience points to a common difficulty encountered in poorly resourced projects where one individual is expected to simultaneously serve a variety of needs and to have the necessary skills and resources to do so.

Future projects should consider finding alternative ways to meet the various needs of the client base. In the area of public education resources, consideration could be given to finding individuals with expertise in the development of such resource material who could assist in fulfilling these objectives either as volunteers (in kind contribution to the project by professionals or agencies) or as hired consultants. A recommendation which focusses on this area appears later in this document.

The BOP faced other challenges:

- an expanded mandate
- working with a client base affected by poverty, unemployment and racism
- institutional racism

Coping with institutional racism became one of the most difficult challenges. BOP staff and Advisory Board had to operate an effective project which was directed at the African Nova Scotian community but which was housed within an all white organization. The BOP not only had external work to undertake, but had much internal work related to issues of racism which often detracted from the project's overall objectives. It was a battle on two fronts.

With these challenges came opportunities. A significant one being the opportunity to link-up with similar organizations and projects across the country for information sharing and exchange, support and joint planning.

The Black Outreach Project while unique in the Atlantic Region, is similar in mandate to outreach projects in Toronto (Black Coalition for Aids Prevention, BLACP) and Vancouver (BLACK AIDSNETWORK). Staff and Advisory Board members networked and shared information with these groups and working co-operatively helped to establish the Ethno-cultural Diversity Committee of the Canadian AIDS Society in (). Advisory Board members have been very active by taking leadership roles on this Committee which has been working to bring issues to diversity into the centre of HIV/AIDS work at national level.

THE FINDINGS

1. Overall Project Effectiveness

The majority of the respondents became aware of the project through personal contact. Respondents clearly understood the goals of the project and many became involved with the BOP as community contacts.

All respondents surveyed commented very favourably on the overall effectiveness of the BOP and the work being carried out by the Community Aids Educator. The vast majority of the respondents stated the project was effective in the Black Nova Scotian community. There were particularly positive comments regarding the significant efforts made by the BOP to reach communities beyond the Halifax-Dartmouth metro area.

The major concern expressed focussed on the level of support for the project from various sectors of the community and the sponsoring organization. Some respondents raised concern about the amount of support provided to the AIDS Educator.

Respondents overwhelmingly emphasized that the amount of work accomplished by the BOP was not in proportion, to the level of resources allocated to the project. They attributed the effectiveness of the project to the amount of information being disseminated, the contacts established and the public presentations organized to the dedication and commitment of the Outreach Worker. In short, there is more work than one person can handle.

{The Educator }is amazing, but overworked. At times, perhaps the rest of the community isn't always as supportive as possible (Black community and AIDS community). I have found their research methodology (BOP), their outreach programs and their work in general to be excellent."

(R13)

Many of the respondents work in community based volunteer organizations within the African Nova Scotian community and thorough their work come in contact with individuals of all ages and both urban and rural residents.

While for the most part they indicated that awareness levels regarding HIV/AIDS was increasing, they also commented that there remains a fair degree of ignorance about the disease. It was noted that some people within the community were unwilling to take the issue seriously. For others, "pride" seemed to be a factor in why the issue was not being dealt with, or why individuals felt it could not happen to them, or someone they knew.

Many community members still believe HIV/AIDS only infects gay/lesbians and drug users. Therefore they believe they will not be infected because they are neither". (R-14)

People are still in denial. (R-15)

The fear expressed by most people in the areas of my experience means that people are afraid not knowledgeable about AIDS but afraid. (R-14)

It was noted that a distinction needed to be made between a general awareness which people may have about AIDS as compared with AIDS as an issue to be directly dealt with by the Black community. People may know it is a problem, but because of both a lack of information and misinformation, mistakenly believe it does not affect them.

2. Resources and Support Services

The majority of the respondents felt the BOP was providing excellent resources, presentations and support services to members of the community, within the limits of the project. Here again, comments were expressed regarding the large task faced by the BOP as compared with the level of resources (financial and human) available to complete it.

Approximately 70 presentations and workshops have been organized by the BOP during Phase II. These have taken place in Halifax. ? ?

Evaluations from a selection of these sessions indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the quality, content and style of the presentations.

I felt very comfortable and I could ask any question without feeling stupid.

(Workshop Participant)

The BOP has helped to dispel many of the myths surrounding AIDS.

(Workshop Participant)

The age range of the audience for the presentations and workshops varied. It included adults as well as junior and senior high school students. Participants commented that they learned things they had not known before and especially learned valuable information about the stereotypes connected to HIV/AIDS.

Sessions were run in manner which made it easy for individuals to ask questions and to raise issues. Some participants noted that persons with HIV/AIDS could serve as resource people in the workshop/presentations to speak from their point of view.

It was also felt that more audio -visual and print resources reflecting people of African descent were needed.

The significant organizational changes which took place during 1994-95 had a negative impact on the BOP. Unresolved issues of racism and on-going questions regarding the credibility of the BOP meant that Project Staff and Advisory Committee members were often working in a stressful environment at the same time as facing the challenge of introducing the issue of HIV/AIDS into Black communities where there was fear and lack of understanding about the disease. The effectiveness and credibility of any future work undertaken by the sponsor organization within African Nova Scotian communities will be hampered unless these matters are honestly and directly dealt with.

The five recommendations focus on the continuation of the project, the management of the project by the Advisory Board, the development of public education and service delivery components, the role of the sponsoring organization and on-going program and organizational evaluation.

Each recommendation is followed by suggested options for implementation. Further suggestions and models appear in Appendix . These recommendations are preceded by a summary of specific suggestions offered by respondents regarding future HIV/AIDS work in the African Nova Scotian community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following suggestions for future HIV/AIDS work within the African Nova Scotian community are summarized from feedback provided by the respondents.

1. Develop more print and audio visual resources showing people of African descent and that are culturally sensitive; include posters, videos and develop displays which can be mounted in community settings and at community activities.
2. Develop special educational packages for teens and an adult educational package.
3. There needs to be more community visibility: re-consider the location of the office.
4. Organize a conference and training sessions and "hands-on" forums to raise awareness and to build support.
5. Develop a 1-800- Information Phone Line
6. Develop more research and statistics related to African Nova Scotians and HIV/AIDS
7. Review the Recommendations of the Needs Assessment to follow-up
8. Develop support services such as counselling for individuals and families dealing with HIV/AIDS and death and dying ; develop ways to assist with housing, medical, home care and other needs.
9. Develop training for Black care-givers
10. Develop and expand outreach programs: door to door information, rural outreach.
11. Develop more adult volunteers from the Black community and hire education workers in communities to carry out educational programs and to offer services.
12. Develop ways for greater Church involvement at community level.
13. Offer anti-racism workshops; more work to dispel homophobia and myths and stereotypes about origin of AIDS.
14. Develop networks with other community groups and use community resources such as hairdressers to get info out; develop newsletter for distribution to individuals which was directed at the African Nova Scotian community

Recommendation 1: Continuation of the BOP

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It is recommended that the BLACK OUTREACH PROJECT be continued for a minimum of two years.

The groundwork established during this phase of the project needs to be expanded upon in order to ensure that resources already expended have the greatest impact. The demographics of the African Nova Scotian community dictate there must be resources adequate to serve the various sectors of the population. (youth, women and men)

The specific objectives of a renewed project should address issues raised in this report and developing issues as defined by the Advisory Board of the Black Outreach in consultation with the sponsor organization. The role and responsibility of the sponsor organization is dealt with in a separate recommendation.

Recommendation 2: Structure and Operation of the BOP

It is recommended that the Advisory Board of the BOP re-examine its mandate and structure (including standing committees and their mandates) with a view to:

- a) reestablishing its position within the NSPWAC, as sponsor organization*
- b) developing strong working committees with clear mandates, goals, and timeframes for carrying out work*
- c) developing a broader volunteer base for the Board and its committees*
- d) forging more formal links with community based agencies working on behalf of African Nova Scotians.*

The Advisory Board can make its work more effective if it re-examines its mandate and structure to best determine how it can meet the needs of its clientele.

This could be achieved through a planning and priority setting process in which the mandate and objectives would be reviewed, and the committee structure evaluated to determine which committees are no longer needed and what new committees need to be struck. For example, the project could benefit from a larger volunteer base which could assist the work on several levels.

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However, the recruitment and training of volunteers who would be willing to commit time to this work is a significant task which itself requires work and planning. A volunteer recruitment committee could be charged with this task and could be made of members from the existing Board, or it could be a special project. In some cases, graduate students (trained in the social sciences, social work or education) seek placement with community organizations. The development and implementation of a specific volunteer recruitment program might be a project which a graduate student could undertake under the direction and supervision of the Advisory Board.

As part of its mandate review, the Advisory Committee can re-establish and re-define its position with the NSPWAC. In so doing, it can outline its expectations for a new relationship with NSPAC as sponsor organization.

Recommendation 3: Public Education and Service Delivery

It is recommended that a continued BLACK OUTREACH PROJECT develop objectives related to public education and information and service delivery which would be achievable within the designated timeframe of the project.

The continued need for public education and information was emphasized throughout the responses received to the evaluation. Specific resources which are culturally sensitive were seen to be an essential element to any further public education program for African Nova Scotians.

A sub-committee of the Advisory Board and NSPWAC could be given a mandate to develop the necessary resources such as posters, short videos, brochures etc. Since this initiative will require human and financial resources, the Committee would need to explore ways to prepare these resources with help from other community based organizations and volunteers. (See Appendix)

A second key to effective public education programming is a well-trained volunteer base. This base would be drawn from the new volunteers mentioned in an earlier recommendation.

The Training Manual developed during Phase II will be the model used for training the new volunteers. Along with additional public education resources, the volunteers would be well-equipped to carry forward public education programming at the community level.

The area of service delivery is one which will place increased demands on the Advisory Board of the BOP as the needs of individuals and families grow. If the bulk of public education work can be managed by a base of trained volunteers, this will allow more concentrated time to develop an approach to service delivery which will match the resources available to the project with the needs of its clientele.

In defining the approach to service delivery, the type and range of services to be offered, and the evaluation of same, the Advisory Board will be required to identify the level and variety of skills required by those staffing and working in volunteer capacities with the project.

Recommendation 4: NSPWAC--Sponsor Organization Responsibilities

It is recommended that NSPWAC immediately develop an anti-racism policy along with a series of on-going training and awareness sessions for staff, board and volunteers of the organization. A timeframe for this undertaking must be clearly outlined and it must be given high priority within the organization.

1995 saw the merging of two province wide organizations dealing with HIV/AIDS related issues. The Nova Scotia Persons With Aids Coalition, the original sponsor of the Black Outreach project and AIDS NOVA SCOTIA formally merged in 1995 to become the Nova Scotia Persons With AIDS (NSPWAC).⁷

AIDS Coalition of N.S.

⁷ Two AIDS groups amalgamate forces. Mail Star, August 29, 1995 p. A 5

This transition was not a smooth one and the upheaval experienced with two organizations undergoing major change lent an air of uncertainty around the BOP. Respondents commented that it was a testament to the BOP, its dedicated staff and its Advisory Board that the work of the project continued so successfully within such an environment.

Since the transition has been completed, it is now imperative for NSPWAC to take very seriously the matter of developing anti-racist practises for the organization as a whole. This does not mean the occasional workshop, but rather, a planned approach which can draw upon the variety of resources which exist within the community which can be used to develop policies and programs which can benefit the entire organization.

Recommendation 5: On-Going Program/organizational Evaluation

It is recommended that the Advisory Board of the Black Outreach Project and the NSPWAC develop a joint mechanism for on-going evaluation of programs and projects.

Evaluation is tool which organizations can use to identify strengths and weaknesses within its operations and its programs. Through a process of periodic evaluation problems can be brought forward in an open manner and through constructive dialogue and planning, improvements implemented. New and emerging issues can be raised and responses developed. In moving forward to continue to serve the needs of the African Nova Scotian community, both the Advisory Board and the NSPWAC would benefit at the outset from the setting up of a joint evaluation mechanism.

Conclusion

The demands placed upon organizations such as the Nova Scotia Persons with AIDS Coalition will continue to increase as the number of reported HIV/AIDS cases steadily rises in Canada. The on-going need for public education, the expanding service delivery needs and the shrinking level of public funding present significant challenges to all those involved in the organization. Within this context are the needs and expectations of the African Nova Scotian community to whom the NSPWAC has extended a social and moral commitment by way of the Black Outreach Project. This report has attempted to offer recommendations which would enable the organization to fulfil this commitment.