



Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton and Area)

**STRATEGIC RENEWAL,
...COLLECTIVE CONSENSUS
2018-2020**

Final Report: July, 2018

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Report Summary: Strategic Renewal, May 15, 2018

The Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton and Area), SACHA bases its work on the directions that are illuminated in their strategic and operational plans. The Strategic Plan of 2013-2016 and the foundational structures (Vision, Mission, and Values) formed the basis of a 3-hour 'renewal' session on May 15, 2018. Approximately 20 Members – staff and volunteers – were in attendance.

The overall purpose was to use the existing plan and reports to contemplate present-day contextual issues and activities and renew the basics of the most recent plan while augmenting the operational directions to reflect the current internal and external (community, social, political) contexts.

A situational analysis was completed through a pre-meeting, 10-item survey via email, regarding SACHA's strengths and challenges, among other questions. Member feedback was presented at the meeting after which small and large group work resulted in emerging short/immediate, mid-range, and longer-term efforts.

Key to the discussion was the current context that included timely social issues since the previous Strategic Plan. These included the #metoo movement, Truth and Reconciliation, Black Lives Matter, and recent funding opportunities, among several other matters.

The strategic directions from the 2013-2016 plan were carefully reviewed. After discussion and consensus on the various strategic elements and the situational analysis, the **Strategic Directions were reconfirmed by the participants:**

- 1. Increase and strengthen staff & volunteer resources**
- 2. Strengthen and augment internal and external communications and SACHA visibility**
- 3. Strengthen and increase inclusivity (enhancing services, Membership and space)**
- 4. Stabilize and increase funding and explore new revenue generators**

A small-group brainstorming session produced a slate of key priorities that fit within the Strategic Directions that were then shared for open consensus with the group as a whole. The activities were arranged into short term, mid-range and longer term considerations, moving forward.

In keeping with the modified collective structure of SACHA, the draft report was shared with all members for input and agreement prior to the generation of the final Strategic Renewal 2018-2020 document.

Strategic Renewal, Collective Consensus

1. Introduction/Background

The Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton and Area), SACHA, has been in operation since 1975. SACHA has had a long-standing record of service to victims and survivors of sexual violence, community education and advocacy for at risk and marginalized populations, and has forged robust partnerships with countless affiliates in the region. Fiscal support for SACHA's work is garnered through the Ministry of the Attorney General, the United Way, the City of Hamilton, donations and fundraising, among other sources for services and individually funded initiatives (e.g. grants, project-based funding).

Underpinned by SACHA's Vision, Mission and Values, strategic planning has been the basis for operations, services, and achieving explicit objectives. The prior Strategic Plan spanned 2013-2016 and extended into 2017. While most of the directions remained relevant and in active operation, there was collective agreement that, given changes in the social and political contexts in the past year, a session be organized as a 'renewal'; a reconfirmation of the strategic directions. The session aimed to fine-tune activities and achieve consensus on new considerations that would be undertaken with a 2020 horizon. To that end, an evening meeting was scheduled (May 15, 2018) with approximately 20 SACHA members. An external facilitator (Janet Rush, RN, PhD) was engaged to enable the discussion.

2. Purpose and Objectives of the Strategic Renewal Meeting

The overall purpose of the session was to review the current foundational elements and Strategic Plan (2013-2016) with a view to endorse, renew, and/or revise aspects of the strategic directions following a situational analysis. Given that the organizational model is fashioned on the concepts of a modified collective, transparency, collaboration, and a sharing of governance, consensus is valued at SACHA. Group endorsement at various times during the meeting was built in as well as consensus on the follow up report prior to a final version.

The meeting was organized on the following objectives:

- To discuss the key strategic directions and activities of the **current Strategic Plan** and other relevant documents;
- To review the **feedback** from the pre-meeting, 10-item survey;
- To work together to identify any **new directions** that logically fell from the situational analysis;
- To consider **actionable items**, strategies and responsibilities;
- To garner **consensus/agreement** on a renewed strategic plan;
- To identify **next steps**.

3. Agenda

To guide the session, the participants were provided with a handout of the purpose, objectives and the agenda (Appendix A). Following introductions, a short exercise was undertaken to take the pulse of the general attributes of the group. In the ‘whole brain’ exercise, participants were to consider personal traits from a display of descriptors after which they considered the quadrant that most represented their predominant attributes. The four quadrants were organizational, experimentation, take action, and relational (see Table 1, below), representing the notion that members within SACHA’s collective should have a balance of skills and abilities from each quadrant. The participants’ attributes mostly fell into the take action and relational quadrants. As such, it was emphasized that this session would value their energy and passion while calling into play some critical thinking and visualization skills in moving forward with new ideas or plans.

Table 1: The Whole Brain Exercise*

Our Rational Selves	Our Experimentation Selves
Analyzes Logical Critical Realistic Quantifies Knows how things work	Adventurous Artistic Integrating Intuitive (ideas) Imagines Imaginative Takes Risks
Our Take-Action Selves	Our Relational Selves
Organized Persistent Articulate Industrious Practical	Enthusiastic Intuitive (feelings) Passionate Empathic Trusting Expressive

*public domain

Following a group discussion about the current sociopolitical climate (since the prior Strategic Plan), the agenda was laid out so that various key documents would be reviewed for opinion, discussion and consensus. The findings of an emailed, pre-meeting survey (Appendix B) served as a usual step in strategic thinking; a situational analysis, often referred to as a SWOT analysis (of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats). As new ideas and suggestions were generated from the feedback, small group work was undertaken to rank the ideas into a timeline of immediate (short term), mid-range and longer term considerations. The next steps included review and consensus on the draft report of the meeting. Consideration of the specific operational details was outside of the scope of the meeting.

4. The Current Context: Issues Driving Strategic Thinking

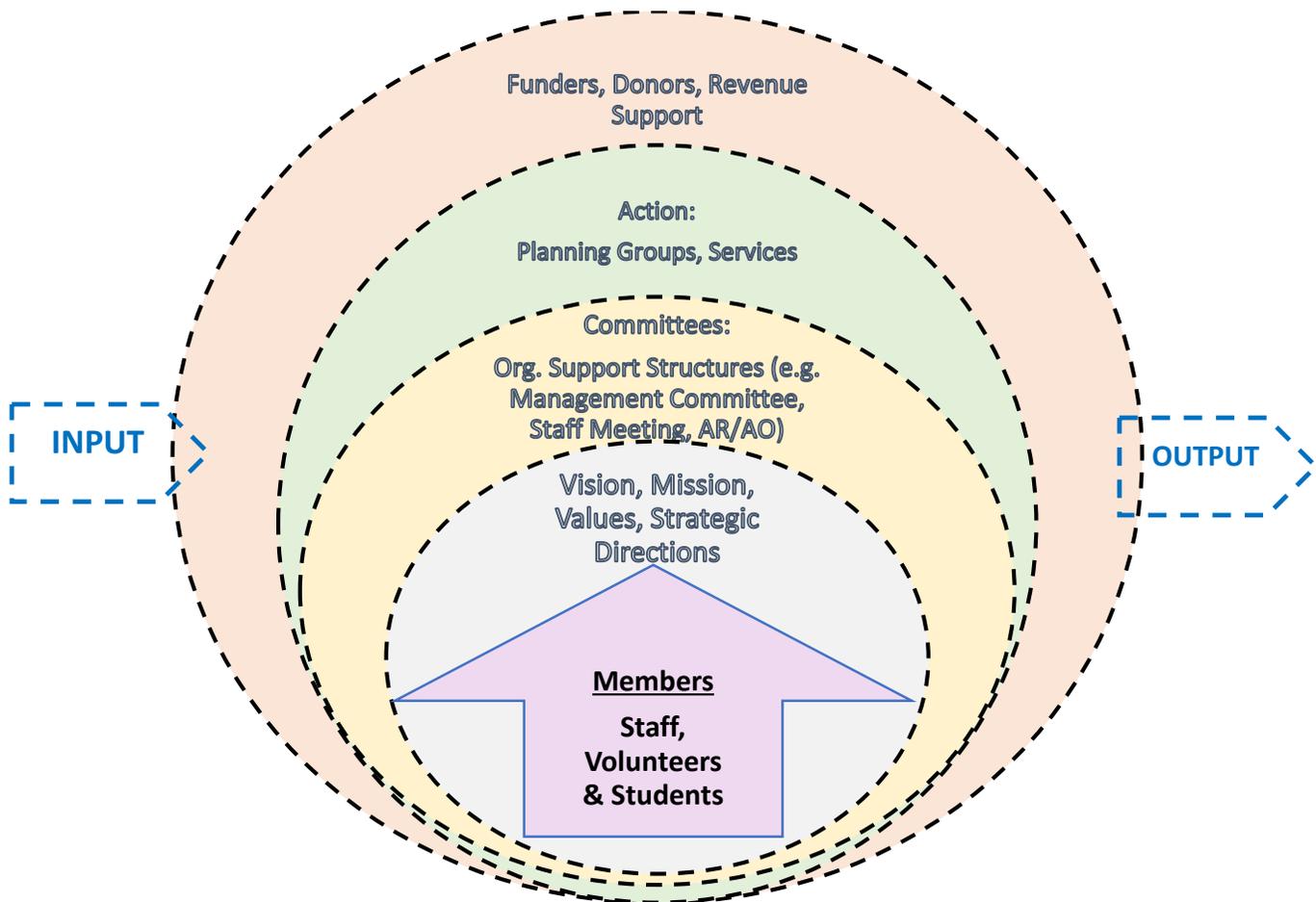
A variety of social and political factors have occurred since the prior Strategic Plan. In discussion, these factors illuminated the pressures relevant to the volume of current and impending work of SACHA:

- The **#metoo** and **#timesup** movements resulting from the mainstream media coverage of sexual violence accusations and charges of powerful, well known men. The coverage has stimulated an era of openness in disclosing personal experiences of sexual violence and harassment;
- **Backlash** and ‘haters’ defending their anti-feminist and/or misogynist positions and issues of victim blaming;
- **Movements** such as BLM (Black Lives Matter)
- Increases in Islamophobia, xenophobia and white nationalism;
- A stronger voice in **LGBTQ+** issues;
- **Women’s issues**, e.g., women’s marches, reproductive health education and policy debates (as reported in the general media and within the upcoming provincial **election**);
- The **Truth and Reconciliation** Commission (www.trc.ca) issues and the exposure of the volume of missing/murdered Indigenous women, girls and Trans folks;
- The Provincial and Federal **Gender Based Violence Strategies (GBVS)**
- More mainstream conversations and awareness of **privilege**;
- The sense that **education, programs, and policies** to address sexual violence are being rapidly developed within institutions that may not have considered the expertise of sexual violence workers (‘everyone’s an expert’)
- **Media** coverage – SACHA has experienced a *dramatic* increase in both mainstream and non-traditional media requests over the past 2 years;
- The issue of SACHA’s **visibility**. Despite its longstanding existence, there remains a question as to whether the community is fully aware of the services;
- **Sustainability** is an ever-present issue given that SACHA, as a non-profit, depends on funding that is not generally ‘fixed’ or guaranteed;
- The need for ‘upstream’ thinking - **prevention** of sexual violence and abuse and the attention needed for enhancing programs for boys and men;
- The question of identification and support for survivors not well serviced in “mainstream” organizations and/or who experience marginalization: sub-populations identified included women ‘trafficked’ for sex, people experiencing incarceration and poverty, seniors, racialized and immigrant women, trans and non-binary folks and new criteria to support the 12-15 year age group;
- The importance of **intersectional frameworks** ([http://www.criaw-icref.ca/images/userfiles/files/Intersectional%20Feminist%20Frameworks-%20An%20Emerging%20Vision\(2\).pdf](http://www.criaw-icref.ca/images/userfiles/files/Intersectional%20Feminist%20Frameworks-%20An%20Emerging%20Vision(2).pdf))
- The rapid **growth** of issues where strategy and priority setting are needed to cope with momentum (e.g., Youth Wellness Centre counselling, community outreach, other opportunities for growth and partnership);
- The need for clear, **written practice standards and competencies** for quality assurance and accountability; currently in progress with the Ministry of the Attorney General;
- **Operational** issues, e.g., support line coverage, staffing, workload, workload stress, space.

5. SACHA's Organizational Framework

SACHA operates from a modified collective organizational structure. Similar to the concepts of shared governance, the model is not hierarchical, rather a round, decentralized approach to management, services/programs, and decision making. A graphic representation was presented for discussion and to visualize the inputs (to SACHA's work), the components of the collective, and the outcomes that then inform new inputs. Dashed lines between all elements indicate how each of the elements influence each other. Consensus on the diagram was agreed upon after the inclusion of prevention as an input and the positioning of Members (staff and volunteers) as foundational to SACHA's work.

Figure 1: Graphic representation of SACHA'S modified collective organizational structure



INPUT: Victims, survivors, marginalized populations within the community, social/political issues, feminism, intersectionality, grants/funding – existing/new, community need(s), partners/allies collaboration

OUTPUT: Statistics (crisis calls, counselling, group programs, community prevention activities, outreach), reports, media announcements ... **loops back to INPUT**

6. Existing Strategic/Operational Plans and Activities

The facilitator provided a broad summary of the remarkable volume of work that has been undertaken and outcomes achieved since the prior strategic planning process. Within the limitation of time, the factors needed to achieve the ongoing objectives and directions were identified as per the most recent annual report. The five factors were:

- **Commitment:** all Members as advocates of SACHA's mission and directional plans/programs
- **Marketing:** SACHA's message, outcomes, and programs
- **Staff:** an ongoing issue for growth, support line, counselling, prevention and outreach programming
- **Funding:** a consistent concern to assure stability and sustainability
- **Allies in the community:** to broaden support, collaboration, and the political base

The above factors were discussed and a consensus was achieved regarding the continued relevance. Further, the 4 key directions of the 2013-2016 remained relevant and current.

7. Vision, Mission, Values, Strategic Directions

The fundamental building blocks for strategic planning include an endorsement of SACHA's Vision, Mission, and Directions. In preparation for the strategic planning process, the Vision, Mission and (newly created) Value statements were reviewed and revised and all collective members were given opportunities to share feedback. Final endorsement of the statements occurred at SACHA's June Annual General Meeting.

Vision: *SACHA envisions a world free of violence and oppression.*

Mission: *SACHA is a feminist, non-profit, community-based organization that provides supports to people who have experienced sexualized violence at any point in their lives. We work to end violence and oppression through education, advocacy, outreach, coalition building, community partnerships, and activism.*

Values: *SACHA will challenge social and political structures and systems that contribute to the experience of violence, oppression, and exploitation of all people.*

While not specifically discussed, the participants were informed that there has been some excellent work recently done by SACHA's Strategic Planning Committee to draft the breakdown of the values relating to the **definition and roots of sexual violence, survivor rights and organizational culture** (May 2018 Draft, Appendix C).

In summary, there was agreement on **the key themes** that thread through the base documents:

Service ● Education ● Advocacy ● Partnerships ● Action ● Inclusion ● Voice.

The four key strategic directions remain current as reconfirmed by the group, and were considered 'renewed'.

8. Situational Analysis (pre-meeting survey)

Important to the planning is the voice of the members of SACHA in terms of their perspectives of organizational strengths, challenges, areas that require reframing, change, or additional support. Time would not allow for a situational analysis exercise to be undertaken at the session so an email survey was sent to members approximately three weeks prior to the strategic renewal session (see Appendix B). The email was sent by the external facilitator and responses were similarly received. One reminder message was extended by the SACHA's Director. All responses (n = 12) were collated, summarized, and presented to the participants. Table 2 represents a summary of the responses

Table 2: Summary of the pre-meeting email survey

Strengths	Challenges
<p>Safe space provision, work culture Inclusivity, welcoming, "the people" Experts - respectful, understanding, reflexive nature Teamwork - <i>'we walk the talk'</i> Volunteers – hard-working, dedicated, <i>'it's a collective'</i></p> <p>The governance model Core values, Commitment to ARAO Data</p> <p>Services (to survivors, to most vulnerable in patriarchal system) – high quality programs <i>'the real deal'</i>, presence/work in the community Creativity in program design</p> <p>Prevention work; Survivor work; Outreach</p>	<p>Staff: our own limitations; Risk of burnout (workload/support line, fighting patriarchy and other oppressive systems)</p> <p>Fiscal Constraints: inconsistent funding limits service (crisis line – need a sustainable fix) and support for staff Long wait-list (6mo)</p> <p>Services: creating a culture of consent with boys and men; Large-scale prevention; More pub Ed More collaboration within programs Need more training re: social trends, technologies Better computer programs (for public/flyers, social media etc.)</p> <p>What would make SACHA run more smoothly? Team: consistent support line coverage, more staff, enhanced communication between programs, role & responsibility clarity (coordinators)</p> <p>Support: Funding +++; for technology (may provide additional supports to crisis line users and volunteers)</p>
Threats: What if no SACHA?	Social media? Anything to 'stop'?
<p>Victims/Survivors - No options, resources, references, no place to access, no crisis or counselling support, interruption of healing journeys, no voice</p> <p>Community - gap in education; loss of priority, possibility for more assault (with no ed'n), no advocacy for ARAO & policy work</p>	<p>DNK (do not know), Can't tell, doing OK</p> <p>DNK, no, ask Lenore!</p>
New opportunities? New outreach?	
<p>Should be reaching: COMMUNITY: Diverse Community Outreach (funded program), NGEN, St Joseph's Youth Wellness Centre counseling High risk communities – People experiencing homelessness, substance use problems, mental health challenges, incarceration, trafficking (sexual exploitation and "domestic" workers), disAbilities seniors (all), youth 16-30, children <16, STAFF/Volunteers: recruiting more racialized folks for the Management Committee</p>	

In terms of the final questions on the survey, **the issues for refocusing** included staff (volunteer coverage and commitment, reconsidering of the stipend for volunteers), more streamlined communication, more attention and resources to address vicarious trauma and self-care, and enhanced programming (better technology support, strategies for the long wait times, delivering individual counselling using technology (Zoom, text supports), and a suggestion about pre/post group work or ‘drop in’ for those on the wait list.

The final questions related to **‘what one thing would make the biggest difference to SACHA’s work’** and operations. Several comments were received:

- Training and closer work with the Trans community
- More staff; re-energizing staff team; one more counsellor needed at least
- Taking stock of programs and work/planning
- Better collaboration and partnerships
- Enhanced computer programs (for tools, flyers, informational documents)
- Prevention programs especially for boys and men
- A plan for enhancing support line (coverage)
- More funding, commitment from core funders, and fund-raising

The feedback was discussed. Once again, consensus was requested and received on the situational analysis with the addition of:

- New age criteria (mature minors, age 12-15 years)
- Compensation,
- Written standards of practice (foundational competencies) as a SACHA accountability for quality programming.

9. Next steps: slate of considerations for ongoing planning

The feedback from the pre-meeting survey resonated **with current four directions (re., staffing, visibility, inclusivity, and funding)** while identifying several enhancements and new ideas. The discussion formed the basis for the final agenda item; the ranking of SACHA priorities that logically fell from the situational analysis. The participants worked in their small groups of 2-4 to organize their ‘priorities’ into three time periods. There was general agreement on the timing parameters (short term, mid-range, and longer term) but ranking within the times was not undertaken at the session.

Short term (immediate, one-year)

- Strategies for managing/reducing the wait list
- Project planning and management of multiple priorities (current services and impending projects)
- Support line workload/coverage
- Volunteer recruitment and retention
- Gender Based Violence Strategy – addressing/implementing the recent Ontario initiative*
- Resolution of physical space needs (offices for new members)
- New recruitment and hiring

- Strategies for addressing vicarious trauma (stress/burnout among members)
- Strategies for enhancing SACHA's visibility and voice

Mid-range (year two)

- Protocols for a new age range for services - 12-15 yrs. children/adolescents
- Enhanced technology considerations and implementation (Support Line and Counselling)
- Upstream, prevention education – focus on the younger demographic
- Considerations: attention to 'new' populations(s)
- Brainstorming new fund raising initiatives
- Assuring client privacy in current and future technological/social media platforms

Longer Term

- Strategies for senior (elder) victims/survivors among other new populations
- Communication and other strategies re., being recognized as experts on sexual violence within the community
- Branding/marketing plan
- Exploring new space (location) for SACHA
- Enhancing /expanding work with boys and men
- Strengthening the reserve fund

*Follow up note: Since SACHA's Strategic Renewal meeting, Ontario has elected a new government; early indicators suggest that they will not implement the GBVS. This will impact SACHA's funding and ability to address a number of priorities outlined in this plan.

The above ideas and enhancements fit within the current strategic directions:

- To increase and strengthen staff and volunteers
- Strengthen and augment internal and external communication and visibility
- Strengthen and enhance inclusivity – services, membership, space
- Stabilize and increase funding; explore new sources of revenue

10. Summary

Consensus: As a collective, consensus on virtually all matters relative to directional planning is based on transparency, collaborative discussion, and shared responsibility within the governance of SACHA. The strategic renewal session was limited by time and therefore, while consensus was received at many points along the meeting's agenda, agreement on the final, ranked priorities will be completed after reflecting on the draft report. Participants were encouraged to review the list (above), reflecting on the acronym 'RUMBA', that is that new work should be reasonable/realistic, understandable/understood by all, measurable (outcomes clear and can be measured or quantified), in behavioural terms (what SACHA will "do", be, behave like specifically), and achievable (feasible and doable). Only after member review and feedback will a final report be generated.

Infrastructure matrix: A comprehensive evaluation of any department or organization involves a review of various **program elements** (the role[s] of and in SACHA), relationships, and support factors (human, material, and fiscal) **that are in dynamic interplay with partners, processes and outcomes.** In reviewing the draft report, participants were encouraged to think about SACHA with the infrastructure matrix in mind (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Infrastructure Matrix*

	Partners with SACHA ↓	Processes within SACHA ↓	Outcome data ("RUMBA") ↓
Roles of the Members of SACHA →	Service Users Survivors Community Media Affiliates/Allies Cross-sectoral partners (e.g., health, law & order, education)	Vision, Mission, Values Strategic Plan The policies, procedures, protocols <i>'The work of SACHA'</i>	Changes Papers written Reports Quality monitoring of roles and program indicators
Relationships →	Internal and External	Communication processes inside of and external to SACHA Integrated programs Collaboration	Evidence of visibility in the community Tangible respect Marketing/branding – the 'elevator' description Involvement – students from relevant programs Invitations to speak or educate Requests to volunteer
Support →	Human Resources (members – staff, volunteers and students) Material (supplies, space, technology) Fiscal (budget, donations, funding)	Role clarity Proposals Requests received Data management Forecasts, projections Templates – documents, written reports	Budget, HR, space targets met Adequate supplies Data at hand/current

*J. Rush, 2003

SACHA 'word cloud': As a summary exercise, the facilitator constructed a word cloud (sometimes called a 'wordle' or 'WordItOut') that displays words commonly used or seen in the SACHA documents. An example is presented, below (Figure 3, following page). Word clouds offer an interesting visual aid for resource materials and posters where no one message covers the volume of elements, concepts, and terms at play in a program or organization.

Figure 3: Example of a SACHA word cloud



Appendix A: Pre-meeting Email Survey

Dear SACHA colleagues:

Think about today's 'context', like the politics, culture/diversity, technology, the economy, and other things happening in our society these days. Because SACHA aims to be a relevant, responsive, and recognized, please give some thought to the following 10 questions. Your comments will be summarized for the upcoming Strategic Renewal meeting.

You can respond directly on this email and 'reply' to me (janetrushhamilton@gmail.com).

I would like your responses by **May 1st**. *Thank you for your help and valuable input to the process!*

PLEASE NOTE: Your feedback is entirely secret and I don't need any names. I'll delete your email when I organize the answers as a group summary.

<i>In your opinion...</i>	Your comments here ↓
1. What is SACHA's biggest strength? What's the best thing (or things) we do?	
2. What challenges SACHA the most right now? ... what's the hardest thing to deal with?	
3. Is there anything at all that we should stop doing?	
4. Should anything be changed or re-focused to be more effective?	
5. Where should we re-focus our work to be more effective?	
6. Who (individuals or group[s]/partners) should we be reaching that we might be missing right now?	
7. Is there anything that might make SACHA itself run more smoothly?	
8. What's the worst thing that would happen if SACHA stopped its work?	
9. Are we making the most of social networking? If not, what's missing?	
10. What <u>one thing</u> would make the <u>biggest difference</u> to the work and effectiveness of SACHA over the next couple of years?	

Appendix B: Strategic Renewal Agenda

SACHA Strategic Renewal - May 15, 2018, 5:15 – 8:00 - YWCA Green Room (Senior's Centre, 1st floor)

Purpose: The overall purpose of the session is to review the current Strategic Plan (2020 horizon) with a view to endorse, renew, and/or revise aspects of the strategic directions following a situational analysis and consensus.

Objectives:

- To discuss the key strategic directions and activities of the **current Strategic Plan** and other relevant documents;
- To review the **feedback** from the pre-meeting, 10-item survey;
- To work together to identify any **new directions** that logically fall from the situational analysis;
- To consider **actionable items**, strategies and responsibilities;
- To garner **consensus/agreement** on a renewed strategic plan;
- To identify **next steps**.

AGENDA

1. Welcome - Introductions	Lenore/Janet
2. Purpose/objectives: Mine. Your expectations?	Team
3. Guidelines for working together	Janet & Team
4. Underpinning the Strategic Plan (Vision, Mission, Mandate)	Discussion
5. Summary: current Strategic Plan	Janet
6. Situational analysis: Feedback – from documents and from the team ...how are you doing?	Janet; input from Team
7. New key directions to strengthen the plan	Facilitated Teamwork
8. Next steps	Group Discussion
9. Wrap up	Lenore

Appendix C: Mission, Vision and Values: Recent draft document (May 2018)

Vision: SACHA envisions a world free of violence and oppression.

Mission:

SACHA is a feminist, non-profit, community-based organization that provides supports to people who have experienced sexualized violence (hyper-link) at any point in their lives. We work to end violence and oppression through education, advocacy, outreach, coalition building, community partnerships, and activism.

Values:

SACHA will challenge social and political structures and systems that contribute to the experience of violence, oppression, and exploitation of all people.

We believe that:

Definition & Roots of Sexualized Violence

- Sexualized violence is an act of power and control expressed in sexual means. Although committed by an individual, such sexualized violence is a result of gender and power dynamics and is structurally supported in our culture and institutions.
- Sexualized violence is a gendered issue. This violence takes place within a social, political, cultural and economic, historical and still ongoing, context of male domination and the disadvantage and oppression of women and children. Both boys and girls are socialized to fit into this system and to perpetuate it, creating a model of toxic masculinity which harms people of all genders.
- Therefore, SACHA works from intersectional, equitable, feminist, anti-racist and anti-oppressive frameworks. Working toward the elimination of sexualized violence means recognizing and addressing the layered ways multiple forms of violence are perpetuated in our society.
- A consent culture, based on equity, is essential to ending sexualized violence.
- It is essential that we recognize and honour the historical contribution to the anti-sexual violence movement made by women with intersecting identities; criticism that the feminist movement has excluded racialized, trans, Indigenous, lesbian, disAbled and other women is valid and these voices must be heard at SACHA.

Survivors' Rights

- Our efforts must be grounded and informed by survivors, who founded our organization.
- Supporting survivors of sexualized violence to heal requires us to acknowledge that people have multiple identities and experiences of oppression that shape the way they experience and respond to sexualized violence as individuals and communities.
- People respond to and resist sexualized violence in diverse ways, and it is a person's right to self-determine how to access safety when experiencing violence or oppression in their life.
- Survivors of sexualized violence have the right to control their own bodies and their own path to healing.

- Survivors are never responsible for violence perpetrated against them.
- Men’s socialization can serve as barriers to male-identified survivors reaching out and receiving support; we are committed to making our services accessible to all genders.

SACHA Organizational Culture

- SACHA operates as a modified collective, using consensus and collaboration, to ensure all members of SACHA – volunteers, staff, and students – have their voices heard.
- Self-care and wellness of those working and volunteering at SACHA are political tools that sustain us in our work.