

Building solidarity and supporting partners in challenging times: Lessons learned and best practices

ACTIF working group

The following lessons learned and best practices have been documented through the activities of the ACTIF working group. This working group brings together Canadian organizations that have received funding from the ACTIF Fund to carry out, in partnership with organizations in the South, projects that strengthen the respect, protection and fulfillment of the human rights of LGBTQ2I people.

Lessons learned

1 Every organization is unique and reacts differently to crises

Based on its values, resources or context, every organization handles crises in its own way. Some will react quickly, others will take a step back before acting. Some will have a highly committed response, while others will adopt a more composed tone. In a partnership, it's essential to respect these differences and support each organization in managing its challenges.

2 LGBTQI+ organizations are used to work in difficult contexts

Often confronted with hostile environments, LGBTQI+ organizations have developed great resilience and adaptability in navigating complex situations. It is crucial to value this expertise, while recognizing that LGBTQI+ organizations can be doubly affected by a new crisis, since they are already weakened by unfavorable socio-political and legislative conditions.

3 Solidarity helps achieve objectives, even in difficult times

When an organization faces difficulties, its partners are also affected, as joint projects may be delayed and shared resources put at risk. Solidarity and transparent communication make it possible to navigate more effectively through these challenges and maintain alignment on common objectives, even in difficult times.

Best practices

1 Opening spaces for exchange

Opening up spaces for dialogue enables us to share information that is essential for understanding the crisis and its impact on people and organizations. These moments of exchange strengthen collaboration and can become a lever for finding solutions and mitigating the effects of the crisis. Participation should remain optional, however, as some organizations may have other priorities or prefer not to engage in such discussions.

2 Prioritizing the well-being of those involved

Crises affect not only organizations and projects, but also individuals: staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and allies. Job loss, reduced services or uncertainty impact people emotionally, professionally and personally. It is essential to recognize the human impact of the crisis and prioritize the well-being of those affected.

3 Supporting partners in their decision-making

Each organization must be free to make decisions according to its own values, priorities and constraints. For example, when faced with budget restrictions, some may choose to reduce their services, while others may adjust their payroll. In a partnership, the aim is not to impose solutions, but to help the partner analyze the different options and support them in their decisions.

4 Demonstrate flexibility

In times of crisis, situations and priorities can change rapidly, especially when the rights of LGBTQI+ people are threatened. It's essential to be flexible in project management, adjusting deliverables and timelines to reflect new realities. This may involve reassessing targets, rethinking the implementation of activities or distributing responsibilities differently. The ability to adapt quickly promotes collective resilience and can minimize the effects of a crisis.

5 Ease administrative requirements where possible

Simplifying administrative procedures enables organizations to focus on the essentials in times of crisis. This includes reducing formalities, extending deadlines for submitting documents or easing reporting requirements. A more flexible administrative environment eases the workload and offers partners the chance to reorganize without adding extra pressure.

6 Being transparent about available support

When a partner organization encounters difficulties, it is essential to listen to its needs, while openly communicating what resources our organization has available to support it. This means clearly defining what is possible and what is not, to avoid any confusion or false expectations. By being honest about the limits of support, the partner can better organize itself and adjust its expectations, while maintaining a respectful and effective collaboration.

7 Promoting the sharing of resources and risk mitigation strategies

Some organizations have specialized expertise in risk management and have developed proven tools and strategies to ensure a rapid and coordinated response during times of crisis. Encouraging the sharing of these resources and skills, whether related to risk analysis, crisis management, or cybersecurity, helps strengthen the overall resilience of LGBTQI+ organizations. This sharing promotes collaboration, the pooling of best practices, and the adoption of innovative solutions, thus contributing to more robust preparedness in the face of challenges.

8 Listening and expressing solidarity

Partner organizations share values and objectives that go beyond a specific project. In some cases, they have been fighting side by side for the rights of LGBTQI+ people for many years. When an organization is going through a difficult period, it's vital to listen, understand and support. This empathetic approach humanizes relationships and builds trust. By expressing tangible solidarity, the organization will feel supported and will be able to overcome challenges with greater resilience.



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