



2020-2022 **Strategic Plan**

A note from the **Executive Director and Chairs of the Board**



We have developed a three-year strategy that emphasizes **sustained growth and operational improvement.**

Around the world LGBTQI people continue to face oppression worldwide; in over 70 countries there are laws that criminalize same sex intimacy and discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. In eight countries same sex intimacy is punishable by death.

The criminalization of the LGBTQI community puts many people in danger. They are rejected by their families, evicted from their homes, persecuted by their community and targeted by police. The result is a reality where lesbians experience sexual violence, trans people cannot live as their authentic selves and gay men are targets of state sponsored campaigns to entrap and torture them.

The global refugee crisis is exasperating the plight of LGBTQI people worldwide. According to The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, there are now over 70 million displaced people in the world – the largest number since the Second World War. For many reasons, LGBTQI people face unique challenges trying to claim refugee status.

Rainbow Railroad exists to provide a solution to this problem. Our ultimate goal is a world free of persecution, and we stand in solidarity with activists and organizations working towards that goal. However, until that day comes, we need to be able to provide solutions for individuals facing imminent danger.



Since our founding in 2006, we have helped over 800 people find safety. Of these 800, the vast majority have received assistance from us since 2016, when we implemented our three-year strategic plan. That plan focused on three goals: deepen and broaden services, expand reach to people with new tools and build capacity to meet the organization's needs. Ultimately we surpassed many of these goals, and grew at a rapid pace.

With this plan, by the end of 2022, we will:

- Double the amount of people we have helped
- Expand the definition of what it means to provide support
- Increase our regional diversity and the gender demographics of the people we serve; and
- Build the capacity necessary to accomplish these goals.

By 2022, we will be an even stronger and more robust organization, equipped to provide a lifeline to LGBTQI people facing imminent danger.

We invite you to join us.



Kimahli Powell
Executive Director, Rainbow Railroad
and Rainbow Railroad USA



Caleb Goodman
Chair, Board of Directors,
Rainbow Railroad



Michael Murphy
Chair, Board of Directors,
Rainbow Railroad USA

Our mission, vision and values

» Our mission

We help persecuted LGBTQI individuals get to safety.

» Our vision

A world where LGBTQI people have the freedom to live in a country where they can be free of persecution. Rainbow Railroad strives to be a trusted and globally connected organization that provides information and support to effectively help.

» Our values

- We are global leaders in providing information and support to help move LGBTQI people to safety.
- We effectively use our global networks to help LGBTQI people in danger around the world get to safety by providing high quality information, personal support and escape strategies.
- We respect and support the empowerment of the people we help.
- We are responsive and act/react with urgency.
- We are collaborative and build partnerships.

Guiding principles and assumptions

This strategic plan is based on a number of issues and assumptions about how the current landscape affects our work, in addition to the current make-up of the organization. These assumptions and issues have led to this plan.

» We will strive to help as many people as possible

The core of our work is based on the principle that we will use our resources to help as many people as we can. From 2017-2019, we helped 600 people, surpassing our goal of 400. And, in 2019, we received over 2800 requests for help. Given these numbers, our next strategic plan must be focused on continuing to help as many people as resources allow.

» Emergency travel is not the only type of support we provide

While emergency travel support (ETS) is the core way we help people find safety, we have often provided ad-hoc secondary support given the sheer number of requests. This support includes providing local resources or travel to a safer location within the country of origin.

» We need to continue to expand our regional and gender diversity

The 2016-2019 plan mandated that Rainbow Railroad expand its presence outside of the Caribbean, and due to interventions during state sponsored detentions of LGBTQI people in countries such as Chechnya, the organization successfully expanded its reach. However, there is still room to grow as far as regional diversity, and the majority of people Rainbow Railroad has been able to help are cisgendered men.

» We will have the capacity to do this work

Rainbow Railroad's transformational growth was based on leveraging a \$1M three-year commitment from the Upside Down Tree Foundation. This led to an expansion in our operations and overall budget. We have been able to grow as more people learn about our work; however, we need to make sure we have recurring, sustainable revenue sources.

Our Theory of Change



We have defined a theory of change which seeks to improve LGBTQI peoples' ability to access lives free of persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or self-expression.



THE PROBLEM

In a time when there are more displaced people than ever before...

LGBTQI people are uniquely vulnerable due to systemic, state-enabled homophobia and transphobia. These factors either displace them in their own country or prevent them from escaping harm.

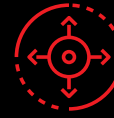
DESIRED SOCIAL IMPACT

As a result of Rainbow Railroad...

More LGBTQI individuals will be able to access lives free from persecution based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or self-expression. A key part of this will be providing multiple pathways to safety for LGBTQI migrants.

Six Strategic Priorities

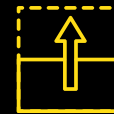
to be completed by the end of 2022



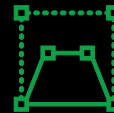
Expand our service delivery mix.



Diversify the demographics we serve.



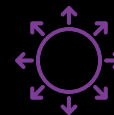
Improve our social delivery model.



Drive social impact through strategic advocacy.



Build a more sustainable fundraising mix in Canada and the U.S.



Enhance organizational capacity.



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES ONE TO FOUR



Expanding and diversifying our programming

Our programming aspirations

By the end of 2022, we will improve our programming model by expanding our geographic and demographic base. We will:

» Expand our service delivery mix

1500 people supported:

- 700 people relocated
- 800 people either provided with information or referred to partners on the ground that results in relocation or in-country support

» Diversify the demographics we serve

- Ensure women and trans persons make up 25% of successful cases from the Caribbean
- Diversify our regional reach outside of the Caribbean

» Improve our service delivery model

- 60% reduction in first inquiry response time
- 25% improvement in cost estimates
- Accurate and automated monthly reporting of KPIs in place

» Drive social impact through advocacy

- Appropriate advocacy channels in place to support mission

The strategic path forward

We will help more people by diversifying where and who we serve.

- We will expand our regional footprint within the Middle East, Northern Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa through targeted growth activities and transit country research.
- We will improve sexual orientation and gender identity diversity, beginning with a pilot program in the Caribbean.
- We will continue to drive movement of persons through our emergency travel support.
- We will develop and deepen partnerships in destination countries to support programs such as post-travel support.
- We will improve operational efficiency within our programs, strengthen consistency and streamline operations.
- We will maintain relationships with targeted advocacy stakeholders (e.g., governments, civil society organizations and coalitions/networks, human rights defenders).
- We will invest in a monitoring and evaluation framework to improve outcomes.
- We will maintain our sponsorship program, pursuing expansion under specific conditions.

CANADIAN RAINBOW COALITION FOR REFUGEE -
LEADERS ON LGTBQI RESETTLEMENT IN CANADA





Expand our service delivery mix

Rainbow Railroad's goal is to help 1500 people by the end of 2022, more than double the number assisted from 2017-2019. Of this 1500, 700 will be assisted through emergency travel support. The remainder will be assisted through other ways we provide help including organizational referrals, access to information and providing support.

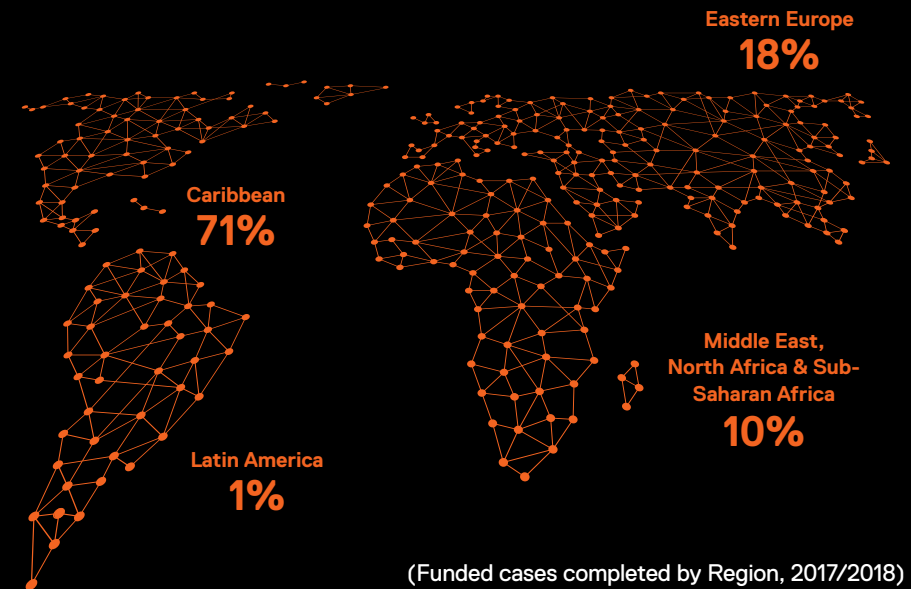
- ♦ **1500** people helped:
 - ♦ **700** emergency travel support
 - ♦ **800** information, access and referrals

-
- Providing additional support to 800 people through in-country relocation and additional resources is a powerful opportunity to help save lives without travel to a western country.
 - We endeavour to deepen our relationships with partners to support execution of our service delivery model (e.g., facilitating post-travel support from individuals and organizations).



Diversify the demographics we serve

Rainbow Railroad's path to growth will also focus on improving gender diversity and expanding our regional footprint to help more individuals.



1. Improving Demographic Diversity

- Rainbow Railroad will define and engage in programming to increase demographic diversity in the Caribbean. This means building capacity to support more travel for women and trans persons.
- Due to our presence in the Caribbean, Rainbow Railroad believes launching diversification programming activities will reduce risk and help us evaluate outcomes to scale to other regions.

2. Expanding our Regional Footprint

- By the end of 2022, Rainbow Railroad will develop an expansion plan to target up to 5 regions across the Middle East, Northern Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. These countries will be assessed and re-evaluated on a bi-annual basis.
- We will also monitor and respond to ongoing crises in various regions.
- In parallel, we will explore transit country viability to streamline movement and provide alternative route options for emergency travel.



Improve our service delivery model

To support our growth targets, Rainbow Railroad will place immediate focus on improving the operational efficiency of our programs and better outcome evaluation through increased tracking and monitoring.

Our focus areas:

Case Intake

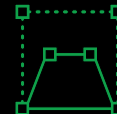
- We will evaluate the existing case intake process for our emergency travel support and sponsorship programs.
- We will execute on operational improvements to streamline our case intake process in support of increased volumes.

Post-Travel Support

- We will evaluate our existing mix of post-travel support offered.
- We will leverage stakeholder feedback in understanding post-travel support user needs and preferences.
- We will explore the viability and scope of post-travel support offerings.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- We will use Salesforce, a technology platform, to track metrics and evaluate areas of process improvement on an ongoing basis.
- We will continue to invest in in-country stakeholder (e.g., newcomer and partner organizations) roundtables as a monitoring and evaluation mechanism.
- The team will also monitor and assess the volunteer program for efficient program services as well as additional operational resources.



Driving social impact through advocacy

In addition to improving our services, we recognize the important role we play in driving social impact through strategic advocacy. We aspire to strengthen our social impact through work with advocacy stakeholders.

Building and maintaining stakeholder relationships:

- We believe our continued advocacy efforts strengthen our relationships with stakeholders and improve outcomes for the individuals we help.
- We will evaluate our relationships with our advocacy partners to better understand them and develop new ways to engage.
- We will assess the current domestic (Canada and the U.S.) and international political landscape to determine potential partners.

THE DIGNITY NETWORK





STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FIVE AND SIX



Building our capacity to do this work

Our capacity building aspirations

By the end of 2022, we will establish a predictable and sustainable revenue stream as well as increased capacity to support our programming targets. We will:

» Build a more sustainable fundraising mix in Canada and the U.S.

- Increase multi-year major/leadership pledges from one to 30
- Increase monthly donors by 100%
- Secure 180 new major donors
- Obtain 10 new leadership donors

» Enhance organizational capacity

- Ensure the right staff are in place to achieve the organization's goals
- Ensure the board of directors is equipped to support the organization
- Emphasize resource development as a substantial board function

The strategic path forward

We will build more sustainable sources of revenue to pursue our programming goals.

- We will focus primarily on recurring and major donors through enhanced donor stewardship.
- We will focus on individual donors, corporations and foundations through robust digital tools and campaigns.
- We will dramatically increase our efforts to grow our stakeholder and donor base in the U.S., while maintaining fundraising efforts in Canada.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KIMAHLI POWELL





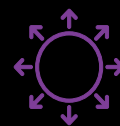
Build a more sustainable fundraising target mix

Enhanced stewardship will be emphasized to best serve major and leadership donors and to drive recurring donations and increased gift amounts.

How we will do it:

1. Further engage our major and leadership donors (including corporations and foundations) through enhanced donor stewardship leading to annual pledges and renewals.
2. Activate our existing donor base to move from one-time donations to monthly and multi-year pledges.
3. We will focus on our All Aboard Committees of senior volunteers to drive fundraising efforts.
4. We will launch a monthly giving program.
5. We will enhance our donor stewardship by improving how we share the impact of our work with our stakeholders.

TD BANK WITH RAINBOW RAILROAD STAFF



Enhance organizational capacity

Ultimately, in order to help more people, with increased regional and gender diversity, we need to build our capacity.

How we will do it:

1. Ensure that we have the necessary staff capacity to achieve our targets. This will include evaluating staff performance, investing in current staff and determining if increasing staffing levels is necessary.
2. Undertake a board development strategy to ensure the board of directors is positioned to help the organization achieve its goals.
3. Clarify and solidify the governance relationship between Rainbow Railroad and Rainbow Railroad USA and recruit new board members as appropriate.
4. Shift our board standing committees to include our All Aboard Committee.
5. Continue to develop a risk framework, and improve our operational effectiveness.

RAINBOW RAILROAD BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF





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