



Organizations in Transformation Series

Canadian Federation
for Sexual Health



Fédération canadienne
pour la santé sexuelle

Canadian Federation for Sexual Health

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NACY  **ANEJ**
National Alliance for Children and Youth L'alliance nationale pour l'enfance et la jeunesse

Preamble

The past five years have seen significant challenges for many organizations in the social sector, particularly those whose projects and activities address Pan-Canadian issues and who have been funded through programs of the Government of Canada.

The fourth issue of [Imagine Canada's Sector Monitor](#) (Vol. 2, No. 2) continues to report serious concern, with 29% of charities reporting high stress, 51% reporting increased demand for services, 49% reporting difficulty in fulfilling their mission, and 26% reporting that their very existence is at risk. In addition, 27% of charities report decreased revenues and 49% report increased expenditures, a trend which is increasing.

In recent conversations with [NACY members](#), many organizations described serious financial challenges - some have even had to close their doors. Many of those that remain have limited resources, with few staff, many reduced to part time and working at home or in shared offices.

Clearly there have been significant changes in the sector since the federal government began restructuring in 2008. But while resources are reduced and restrained, we were also impressed by the many stories of adaptation and transformation that we heard from our members and through the work we are doing on the ground via the [Taking Stock project](#).

This prompted us to try to capture and share some of these stories, which we found to be quite interesting and encouraging, in a series of articles that we are calling "*Organizations in Transformation*". Larry Gemmel, former Executive Director of NACY, who currently works as a consultant specializing in organizational development and transformation has kindly taken on authoring these articles for us.

We will be sending out articles over the next few months with a view of sharing interesting stories and encouraging others to share their own transformation experience and advice. At the same time, this research has suggested a number of ways in which NACY can help its members to work together to be more effective, both in terms of sharing resources, building capacity, and creating collective approaches to public policy in support of children and youth.

If you would like to share your *Organizations in Transformation* story, please don't hesitate to write to us at info@nacy.ca. You can view the other articles in the series in NACY's online [Resource Centre](#).

Organizations in Transformation:



Canadian Federation for Sexual Health

When **Jolanta Scott-Parker** became Executive Director of the **Canadian Federation of Sexual Health** (CFSH) in July 2008, she inherited a drastically changing situation as several large projects which had occupied the agency for years were not renewed. Staff was dramatically reduced from 8 to 2 as the role of CFSH as reproductive health affiliate in the Canadian Health Network funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada ended and their international projects in Brazil, Jamaica, and Belize funded by the Canadian International Development Agency were wound up. As federal government grants ended, the federation became almost completely reliant on the generosity of its donors to sustain basic operations. Fortunately, in February 2009, CFSH was able to assign the lease for its Ottawa office space to two other compatible non-profit organizations and sublease some of its own space back to allow it to retain its offices.

These challenges prompted an opportunity to reflect, review, and redefine the organization's purpose and future. In a consultation with its members in March 2009, there was a strong consensus that there continued *"to be a very important role for CFSH to serve as a national voice for sexual and reproductive health and rights, to monitor developments in the area of sexual and reproductive health and to provide leadership to a network of member organizations across Canada who bring tremendous diversity of experiences, expertise and wisdom"*¹.

Needless to say, the changed size and capacity of the organization still represented a pretty dramatic shift for the 45 year old organization, which has played a key role in promoting universal access to reliable information on sexual and reproductive health for individuals in Canada and internationally since it was initially formed as an informal network of family planning associations in 1964, *"a time when birth control was not yet legal and issues regarding sexual and reproductive health were largely shrouded in secrecy"*². Registered as a charitable organization in 1969, the name Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada was adopted in 1974 and they joined the International Planned Parenthood Federation.

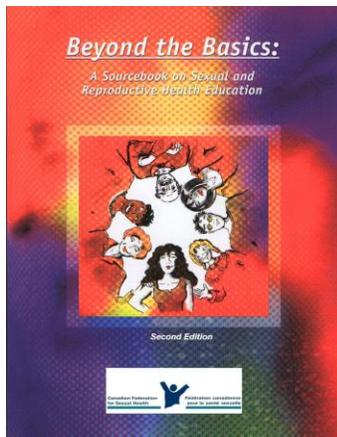
This is not the first major transformation for the organization: In October 2005 they changed their name to the Canadian Federation for Sexual Health in order to more accurately reflect their mission and to speak more directly to new generations, and for the first time in their history expanded membership to invite individuals to become supporting members along with their 22 member organizations. This shift was accompanied by more proactive activities to engage and learn from youth such as supporting the formation of the Canadian Youth for Choice coalition and the "Know Your Rights!" campaign³.

¹ Dr. John Lamont, President, CFSH Annual Report 2008-09

² About Us/History of CFSH, www.cfsh.ca

³ Annual Report 2005-06.

Jolanta Scott-Parker describes the transformation over the past three years as “a *subtle evolution from supporting individuals to supporting service providers*”⁴. While the federation had always functioned as a network of local service providers (more than 600 service providers are supported through 30 official members, who pay modest fees to help fund operations), much of the government funded activities in recent years had been in the form of direct services and resources for the general public. While a great wealth of information continues to be freely available on the website in the “Your Sexual Health” section, many of the key resources are in the form of publications and curriculums designed for use by public health and educational service providers and are sold to generate revenue.



For example, ***Beyond the Basics: A Sourcebook on Sexual and Reproductive Health Education*** is an extensive 400-page manual comprised of 8 modules designed for educators who deliver sexual and reproductive health education to 9 – 18 year olds and adheres to the goals and principles of comprehensive sexual health education outlined by the federal government in the [Canadian Guidelines for Sexual Health Education](#).

CFSH now functions very much as a federation whose members share common principles, but do not have common branding and who provide a range of services from education and counselling through to direct clinical services, most of which are free or covered under provincial health care programs. CFSH estimates that its member network reaches more than 310,000 Canadians each year, the majority of whom are women and under 30 years of age.

While one assumes that much has been accomplished in this field over the past 45 years, CFSH asserts that “*its work continues to be imperative as people continue to be denied access to sexual and reproductive health education and services because of their age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and geography or due to economic or anti-choice barriers*”⁵. Overall, CFSH is dedicated to supporting access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health education, information and services in every community, including the rights⁶ to:

- Education and Knowledge
- Choice
- Health Care
- Safety

Organizationally, the Canadian Federation for Sexual Health continues in a lean but effective mode, relying principally on donations to support its modest operations. CFSH encourages donations on its website through a variety of methods including through CanadaHelps.org and received a total of \$213,081 in 2010/11⁷. They also encourage in-kind support such as their partnership with a major sponsor to provide free condoms and related products to their members to support public education. As Executive Director, Scott-Parker works four days per week and is supported by a part-time Resource and Information Coordinator. When their original lease expired, the now much smaller staff moved to a new location together with their local member, Planned Parenthood Ottawa, where they share office space, meeting space, and bookkeeping services in an affordable Win/Win scenario.

⁴ Interview with Jolanta Scott-Parker, December 2011

⁵ About Us/History of CFSH, www.cfsh.ca

⁶ See appendix **Canadian Charter of Sexual and Reproductive Rights** for details

⁷ Canada Revenue Agency, www.cra-arc.gc.ca/chrts-gvng/lstngs/menu-eng.html

They are also taking advantage of the low cost of readily available social media platforms to reach their key target audience of young people – This year’s February 12th Sexual and Reproductive Health Week campaign “[Not everything has to go Viral](#)” will include a social media toolkit intended to help health and social service providers in Canada to disseminate sexual and reproductive health information by means of online social networking tools. Additional resources for youth and service providers are made freely available through this annual awareness event⁸.

However, the challenge remains to achieve their mission in a sustainable way, ensuring relevance, and supporting Members with limited resources. Going forward, Scott-Parker expects that creating new alliances and connecting with like-minded organizations will be critical to leveraging their core strengths.

For further information, contact:

Jolanta Scott-Parker, Executive Director
Canadian Federation for Sexual Health
2197 Riverside Drive, Suite 403
Ottawa, Ontario K1H 7X3

Telephone: (613) 241-4474

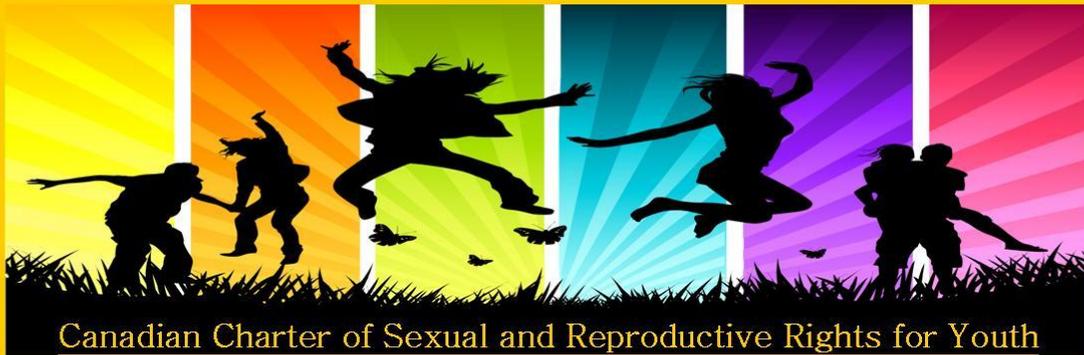
Website: www.cfsh.ca

Email: jolanta@cfsh.ca

*About the author: [Larry Gemmel](#) is a former Executive Director of the **National Alliance for Children and Youth** who currently works as a consultant specializing in organizational development and transformation. If you would like to share your **Organizational Resilience** story, write to info@nacy.ca.*

⁸ Resources/Public Awareness www.cfsh.ca/Resources/Public_Awareness/SRHDay2012.aspx

Canadian Charter of Sexual and Reproductive Rights for Youth



Young people between the ages of 12 and 29 are entitled to sexual and reproductive health rights. These rights include the right to education and knowledge, choice, health care and safety.

Education and Knowledge Rights

You have the right to learn about all aspects of sexuality at school. Teachers should be fully trained about sexual education, and they should discuss all aspects of sexuality in their teachings, including healthy relationships, anatomy, sexually transmitted infections, sexual orientation, contraception, barrier methods and three pregnancy options (parenting, adoption and abortion).

Choice Rights

You have the right to make your own decisions concerning your sexual life. This means being able to choose whether and when to have children, whether, when and with whom to have sexual experiences and relationships, whether to get married, how to respond to pregnancy (whether by parenting, adoption, or abortion), whether to advocate for these sexual rights, and whether to include your parents or guardians in the decisions you make about your sexual life.

Health care Rights

You have the right to access sexual health services that are confidential and nonjudgmental and that do not require anyone else's permission, services that use recent information and technology, and health care.

Safety Rights

You have the right to safety and protection against sexually transmitted infections, any forms of sexual abuse, exploitation or violence, forced sterilization, abortion or pregnancy, unsafe sex and/or genital mutilation.



CYC is supported by the Canadian Federation for Sexual Health

WWW.CYOUTH.CA / WWW.CFSH.CA

