



AGAPE TABLE

STRATEGIC PLAN

Background

Agape Table is amidst tremendous change and opportunities for growth with the recent purchase of a new building and a capital campaign underway. To provide direction over the next five years and inform development and design of the new space, Agape Table engaged EXG in a strategic planning process.

The process, guided by a Strategic Planning Committee comprised of the Executive Director, Board Chair and two Board Directors, included stakeholder engagement with staff, board, volunteers, guests, and partners:

- Staff focus group (n=7)
- Interviews with guests (n=10)
- Board member survey (n=10)
- Volunteer survey (n=45)

Participants provided feedback on the current mission statement, internal strengths, and challenges; opportunities and risks; and critical issues to consider moving forward.

A full day facilitated planning session (June 2022) provided an opportunity for board and staff (Executive Director and team member) to reflect on Agape Table's long-term impact and strategic priorities. The planning session was informed by data gathered from the internal and external stakeholders.

Based on the information gathered during the planning session, a draft framework, comprising of mission, vision, and strategic priorities was developed.

As Agape Table moves forward, an operational plan and reporting template with outputs and short-term outcomes will be implemented to measure progress on the strategic plan.

Mission

In small groups, participants reflected on Agape Table's current mission statement and together as a group drafted new language. The following mission statement was proposed:

Agape Table enhances the lives of those in need by welcoming everyone to our table, without judgement or bias, offering:

- **Food**
- **Fellowship**
- **Support**

Vision

In small groups, participants were asked to think about hopes for the future of Agape Table and what they would like to see the organization accomplish.

The following themes were identified:

- Agape Table has a **new** (paid for) **building**
- Agape Table is recognized in the community as a **leader**
- Agape Table provides meal service **7 days a week**
- Volunteers **represent the community** Agape Table serves
- Agape Table has an **expanded geographic service delivery area**, beyond the West Broadway community
- The Agape Table **general store** provides free or low-cost groceries and clothing to guests
- Agape Table has **maintained donation levels** over the years and has stable funding sources
- Volunteers, staff, and guests feel **safe and secure** at Agape Table

Obstacles

In small groups, participants considered obstacles or potential challenges that might get in the way of Agape Table achieving its vision. Each group shared obstacles with the larger group.

Obstacles identified include:

- **Inflation** is increasing the operational costs of Agape Table, including food, gas and other necessities, and could significantly impact the organization's ability to operate at its current capacity.
- **Negative press** could harm the reputation of Agape Table and impact donations
- **Mental health and substance use issues** in the community could make it increasingly challenging for Agape Table to safely operate.
- **Executive Director turnover** – current ED holds a great deal of knowledge and expertise and has strong relationships with donors and community members.
- **Burnout** of staff, board and/or volunteers could make it difficult for Agape Table to operate at its current capacity.
- **The current physical space** creates challenges for Agape Table to operate effectively.
- Further **public health restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic**, or other communicable diseases, could create obstacles for Agape Table to operate effectively and provide in-person meal services as well as recruit volunteers.
- There is **competition for donations** amongst charitable organizations, especially given current economic conditions.
- **Recruiting volunteers that reflect the community** is an ongoing challenge, including Indigenous Board Members and volunteers.
- An **increasing demand for Agape Table services** in the community could impact Agape Table's ability to serve all guests that attend the organization.
- A **lack of awareness of Agape Table** could impact the organization's ability to bring in donations and funding.

Resources

As a large group, participants were also asked to consider the resources that Agape Table has on its side, which will support the organization in achieving its visions.

Resources identified include:

- Agape Table has a **positive reputation** in the community and is recognized as an organization that does good work.
- Agape Table has **strong relationships and partnerships** in the community, including with universities, colleges, and local service providers.
- The organization has a **strong existing donor base**, both for food and financial donations.
- Agape Table's **Executive Director and staff team is well-known and well-liked** in the community, which has resulted in donations, volunteers, and other gains for the organization.
- Agape Table has **connections with local media** and is often featured in the news, radio and other outlets.
- Agape Table is **financially secure**, with a healthy savings account, regular donations, and a variety of potential fundraising opportunities.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Informed by the survey and interview responses, the following priority strategies were proposed during the facilitated session.

1) AGAPE TABLE NEW FACILITY

- **Status: In Progress**
- Lead a capital fundraising campaign to support the design and build of Agape Table's new facility

2) REVENUE

- **Status: High Priority Short Term**
- Develop sustainable revenue sources
- Design and promote a successful annual general fundraising campaign

3) HUMAN RESOURCES

- **Status: Mid-term Priority**
- Increase human resources complement to meet the needs
- Implement a recruitment & retention volunteer strategy

4) EXPANDED SERVICES

- **Status: Long Term Priority**
- Provide resource navigation supports
- Expand the geographic reach of Agape Table

IN PROGRESS

Lead a capital fundraising campaign to support design and build of new facility

Leading a capital fundraising campaign to secure funding for Agape Table's new space is a top priority and currently underway. Securing funds to design a space that addresses challenges experienced in the current physical space and meets Agape Table's needs moving forward is critical.

Agape Table will do this by:

- Launching a new building capital campaign
- Hiring a professional to lead the capital campaign
- Hiring a well-respected architectural firm to lead the design of the building

Addressing the challenges created by the current physical space and designing a building that meets Agape Table's needs and priorities moving forward is critical.

Important features and elements of the new space include:

- A reputable, professional firm should lead the development of the new building
- Clean, safe, and secure
- Welcoming / warm environment
- Clear signage
- Adequate space to feed people indoors, without feeling cramped
- Programming space
- Storage space
- Loading space/capacity
- Space planning flexibility
- Quiet spaces and offices
- Extra offices for partner organizations to provide services
- A welcoming, green front door
- Greenspace, including landscaping, outdoor seating, and a garden
- A space for smudging
- Agape General Store

SHORT-TERM PRIORITY

Develop sustainable revenue sources

With significant growth and development of a new facility, Agape Table must consider its financial sustainability. Diversifying and expanding fund development will enhance the financial security of the organization, support the sustainability of service delivery.

Agape Table will do this by:

- Securing revenue through the new building, by leasing space
- Develop a family fund
- Enhancing local media presence of Agape Table
- Hiring a donor relations staff person
- Facilitating regular fundraising event
- Partnering with business and corporations on fundraising campaigns

Design and promote a successful annual general fundraising campaign

A well-known annual general fundraising campaign will help to increase the profile and presence of Agape Table and provide a reliable fund source for the organization.

Potential events for Agape Table to consider are:

- Annual January general store campaign to restock the shelves
- Feed Winnipeg events
- Partnership with other organizations for “Feed Winnipeg” events
- Golf tournaments
- Newsletter
- Thanksgiving event
- Convention Centre breakfast

MID-TERM PRIORITY

Increase human resources complement to meet the need

Given the current context and significant organizational changes with a new building under development, Agape Table will provide additional support and attention toward organizational health – more specifically, staff recruitment and retention, staff wellbeing and operational effectiveness.

Agape Table will do this by:

- Ensuring the staff complement meets the needs of the organization and create new positions where necessary, including security staff, administration, and communications.
- New facility requirements
- Reviewing and adapting policies to ensure safe and effective service delivery
- Implementing strategies to improve retention of staff, including fair compensation
- Enhancing professional development opportunities for staff and volunteers
- Developing succession plans for key positions within the organization, including the Executive Director position

Implement a recruitment & retention volunteer strategy

Agape Table relies heavily on volunteers for day-to-day service provision. Strengthening organizational governance will support decision-making and the overall effectiveness of Agape Table.

Agape Table will do this by:

- Increasing the number of volunteers to support enhanced training program offerings and weekend/evening service
- Partnering with external organizations, particularly Indigenous organizations, to recruit volunteers and ensure it's a safe space
- Developing an Indigenous committee to provide recommendations around Agape Table policies and practices
- Developing a board succession plan

Monitor and evaluate impact

Increased monitoring and evaluation are required to support Agape Table in identifying trends, strengths, and challenges of the work, and make changes accordingly.

LONG-TERM PRIORITY

Provide resource navigation support

As the need in the community continues to grow, Agape Table is challenged to address a wide range of complex issues. Recognizing the variety of physical, mental and social needs community members experience, and that Agape Table is a community hub, a resource coordinator position will be developed to provide additional supports as needed.

Agape Table will do this by:

- Developing a resource navigation coordinator staff position to support guests and provide referrals to relevant service providers and supports
- Partnering with service provision organizations to have onsite support workers at Agape Table (including addictions and mental health services)
- Strengthening relationships with service provision organizations in the community

Expand geographic reach

Food insecurity is a growing issue, affecting communities throughout the city. Recognizing Agape Table has established resources, relationships and expertise, there is a desire to expand the geographic reach of the organization and offer supports beyond the current community area.

Agape Table will do this by:

- Conducting a needs assessment to identifying where services are most required in the city, looking to current municipal data and evaluations (e.g., consulting the World Trade Centre Winnipeg)
- Offering satellite food service, potentially including mobile van service or pop-up tents in communities with the highest need
- Partnering with other community-based organizations to provide food or food service
- Agape Gives program