

In Good Company

Outcomes from OUTBermuda's invitation to LGBTQ people, friends and allies to engage in conversation on LGBTQ issues in Bermuda

January 28, 2017





We are OUTBermuda



OUTBermuda promotes and supports the wellbeing, health, dignity, security, safety and protection of the LGBTQ community in Bermuda by providing educational resources on issues of diversity, inclusiveness, awareness and acceptance as regards LGBTQ people, and seeks generally to advance human rights, conflict resolution and the promotion of equality and diversity relating to the LGBTQ community in Bermuda.

Structurally, OUTBermuda is a non-profit company, 'limited by guarantee'. It became a registered charity on 22 May 2016. We have a Board of Directors and appointed Officers who manage the work of the charity on a volunteer basis.



“Want to help
someone? Shut up
and listen!”

Ernesto Sirolli

The issues facing the Bermuda's LGBTQ people are as diverse as the community itself.

To be an effective advocate and community representative, we believe it was necessary to first engage with our stakeholders to better understand where there are opportunities to make a positive difference.

By demonstrating a willingness to listen and to learn we believe OUTBermuda has the potential to foster community building while creating trust, legitimacy and also accountability.



“True community is based on equality, mutuality and reciprocity. It affirms the richness of individual diversity as well as the common human ties that bind us.”

Pauli Murray

World Café

We utilised a World Café to facilitate honest and direct conversation among attendees. Participants were invited to sit in groups of 4, ideally with people they did not already know. The simulated café setting proved an effective way for building community, highlighting concerns and sharing ideas.

The conversation was directed by posing 3 broad questions:

- (1) Why did you accept our invitation to be here today?
- (2) What are your hopes and dreams for our Bermuda?
- (3) How can OUTBermuda help to realise your hopes and dreams for our Bermuda?



“The future of every community lies in capturing the passion, imagination, and resources of its people”

Ernesto Sirolli

Open Space Technology (OST)

Prior to this event OUTBermuda had no community led mandate. 12 individuals each volunteered to share an initiative they were passionate about and that they wanted to see made a reality.

Participants who were inspired by one or more initiatives were then given the opportunity to learn more about and also contribute to an initial discussion on bringing each of those 12 ideas to fruition. OST created a marketplace of ideas that empowered participants to tell OUTBermuda about the issues and initiatives of interest to them.



World Café

What we learned



Identified Themes

- There is a need for safe spaces and for building community.
- To create positive change we must engage with others who are not LGBTQ or allies.
- The needs of LGBTQ youth are not being addressed.
- Giving LGBTQ people and allies the tools to make their voices heard.

What we heard

There is a need for safe spaces and for building community.

"We need more healthy safe spaces."

"I don't feel safe since the referendum."

"We need more events like this... events that allow for a safe welcoming, comforting space."

"Let's create resources for people who feel discriminated against."

"I don't feel comfortable about being out in the workplace."

"There should be a safe apace to go and talk."

"We need to heal."

"Living in Bermuda has put me back in the closet and it makes me feel a bit ashamed."

"Focus on bringing LGBTQ people together."



What we heard

To create positive change we must engage with others who are not LGBTQ or allies.

"Laws don't change hearts."

"OUTBermuda can foster difficult conversations."

"Exposure can destroy prejudice."

"How do we invite others into the conversation?"

"Challenge ourselves... take risks... Be uncomfortable."

"Build bridges."

"Look at disenfranchisement as a whole... Understand disenfranchisement of others."

"Having OUTBermuda become a watchdog of sorts... countering misinformation."



What we heard

The needs of LGBTQ youth are not being addressed.

"Our intolerance affects the children of Bermuda."

"Safety for children who come out."

"Provide a program for kids who lack support."

"Promote education and awareness."

"Protecting children who are coming out so they can be themselves."

"Resources for kids coming out."

"Speak to the younger generation to change their mindset about people, equality and anti-discrimination."



What we heard

Giving LGBTQ people and allies the tools to make their voices heard

"Humanise the conversation on right of LGBTQ people."

"This topic is talked about every day... need to make sure our voices are heard."

"Relationship building with churches requires us to take the highroad not take the bait."

"Go into other/new spaces to engage with more diverse people."

"Don't alienate... join on what you have in common."

"Move to 'we' from 'us' and 'them'."

"More outreach."

"Help educate future generations more openly."



Open Space Technology

1. Carnival Band Partnership
2. Sharing Power
3. Building Bridges Between LGBTQ and Straight Communities
4. Addressing Trans Issues
5. Anti-Bullying in Schools
6. Town Hall Meetings
7. Support Groups
8. Hotline (1-800 number)
9. Family Day
10. \$\$\$ Talks
11. Recognition Banquet
12. Creating Safe Spaces



A Note About Proposed Timeframes

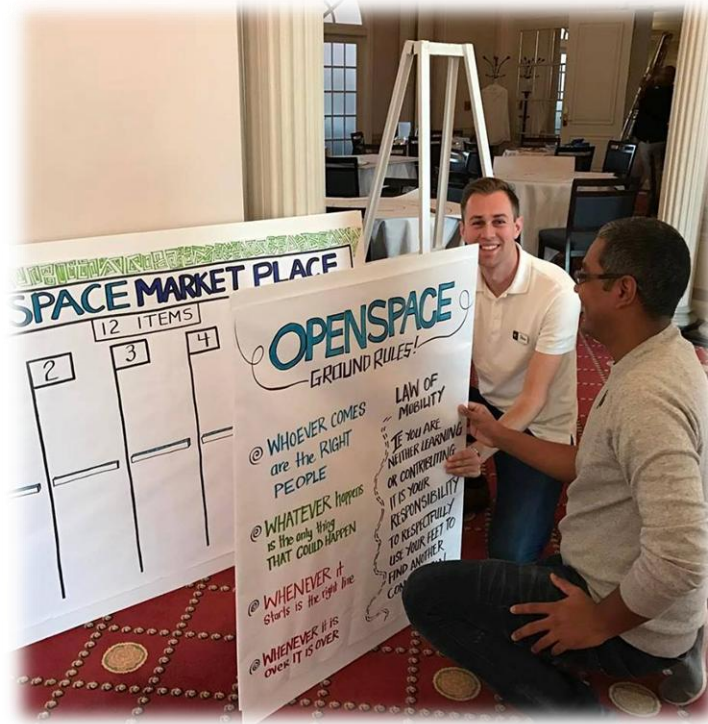
With input from several of the initiators, OUTBermuda has attempted to categorize the initiatives proposed during OST by using the following timeframes:

1. Initiatives that can be completed in the short term, i.e. within 1 year
2. Initiatives that can be completed in the medium term, i.e. within 2 – 3 years
3. Initiatives that can be completed in the longer term, i.e. within 3 – 5 years

If long term initiatives are to be achieved within a 3 – 5 year timeframe, steps will have to be taken towards achieving those ends beginning in the near term, i.e. beginning this year. For example, although OUTBermuda believes it may take between 3 – 5 years to see meaningful advancement of Trans issues in Bermuda, we will nonetheless have to identify next steps for doing so and begin moving in that direction within the next 12 months.



Short Term Within 1 year



What's possible in the short term given current resources?

- Family Day
- Carnival Band Partnership
- Town Hall Meetings
- \$\$\$ Talks
- Recognition Banquet

Medium Term

2 - 3 years

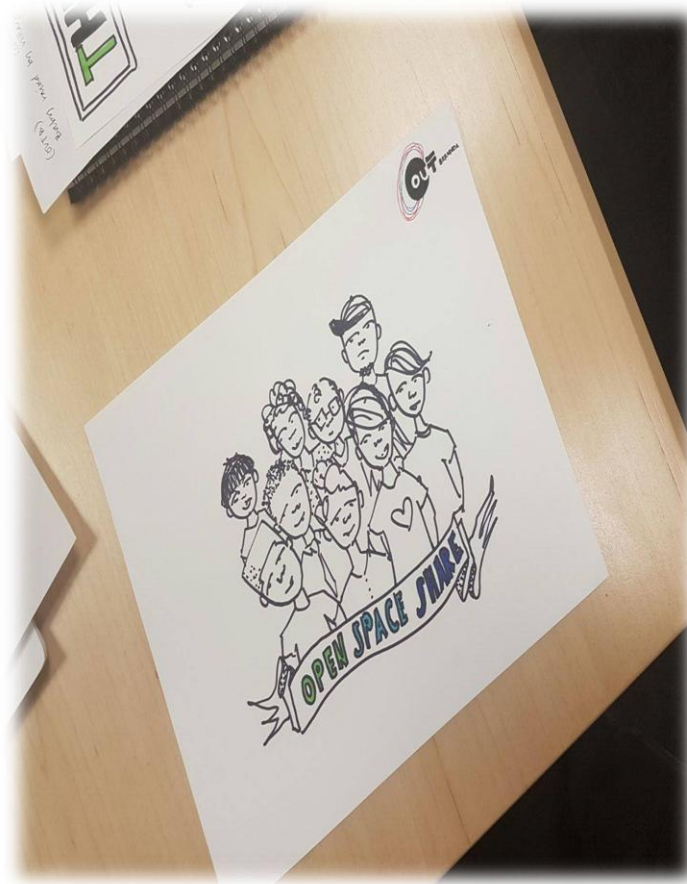


What is possible in the near term if we have access to funding, people and other resources?

- Building Bridges between LGBTQ and Straight Communities
- Hotline
- Support Groups
- Safe Spaces
- Sharing Power
- Support Groups

Long Term

3 - 5 years



What initiatives require a longer term strategy?

- Addressing Trans Issues
- Anti-Bullying in all Schools

“If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.”

Martin Luther King Jr



What's next for OUTBermuda?

Dates In the Diary for This Year

- Book Club with Jamaican-American author Nicole Dennis-Benn, April 12 2017
- Family Fun Day, July 2017

To be Arranged

- Support Groups - OUTBermuda to arrange follow-up meeting with the Initiator, Solstice Bermuda & other interested individuals.
- Trans Issues – OUTBermuda arrange follow-up meeting with the Initiator and HRC
- Sharing Power – OUTBermuda to arrange follow-up conversation with Gordon Johnson, and reach out to friendly societies re: governance

“I came here to
be brave, to
help effectuate
a better
Bermuda”

World Café Participant

