

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN • 2027–2032

FOCAS Canada

Five-Year Strategic Plan 2027 – 2032

Executive Summary

This Five-Year Strategic Plan integrates findings and recommendations from the comprehensive organizational evaluation conducted across four key service areas: office operations, children's tutoring programs, co-sponsorship experiences, and AYYO Women's services. The plan is structured around five strategic pillars, with initiatives prioritized and phased across a five-year timeline to ensure sustainable growth, organizational capacity-building, and meaningful community impact.

Strategic Pillars

1	Organizational Sustainability and Healthy Growth
2	Education and Learning Excellence
3	Sponsorship and Meaningful Resettlement
4	Community Economic Self-Sufficiency
5	Building Networks and Relationships

Priority Framework

Primary Priorities Years 1–3 <i>Foundation and Capacity Building</i> • Organizational Sustainability • Education and Learning Excellence • Sponsorship and Resettlement	Secondary Priorities Years 3–5 <i>Expansion and Legacy Building</i> • Community Economic Self-Sufficiency • Building Networks and Relationships
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YEAR

1

Foundation and Clarity

Establish clear structures, stabilize operations, and set baselines for growth

PILLAR 1: Organizational Sustainability and Healthy Growth

Administrative Efficiency and Staff Care

- Establish boundaries and reduce interruptions through structural clarity in office operations
- Clarify staff roles, expectations, and workflows in collaboration with office staff and tutors
- Begin implementing staff wellbeing and workload balance systems
- Create ongoing hiring and training plan based on identified roles and training needs

Board Development

- Increase active board member participation in problem-solving during meetings
- Focus board on its employer responsibilities for the Executive Director
- Begin board training on governance roles and evaluation processes
- Launch HR policy review, including exploration of salary grid and benefits structure

Member Engagement

- Conduct survey or focus groups to uncover member needs and changes since 2024
- Increase membership understanding of benefits and value proposition

PILLAR 2: Education and Learning Excellence

Philosophy and Strategic Direction

- Define and publish FOCAS Children and Youth Education guiding philosophy based on the Gada System principle of "learn and teach what you know to others"
- Clarify overarching goals for children, youth, and summer programs
- Publish educational philosophy and goals on website

Program Planning

- Engage Coordinator and Tutors in drafting strategic learning plan
- Link tutoring areas (English, Math, Heritage Language, Early Literacy) to clear learning outcomes
- Develop community awareness plan around tutoring benefits and program quality

PILLAR 3: Sponsorship and Meaningful Resettlement

Structure and Communication Foundations

- Map sponsorship process into clear stages from entry to completion
- Identify default communication points and touchpoints throughout process
- Develop multilingual communication templates
- Ensure process visibility across all communications and platforms
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for co-sponsors and FOCAS staff

YEAR

2

Strengthening Systems and Quality*Improve efficiency, digital capacity, and consistent delivery quality***PILLAR 1: Organizational Sustainability and Healthy Growth****Efficiency and Digital Literacy**

- Shift repetitive tasks into structured group delivery models
- Develop external partnerships for digital literacy and administrative support
- Consolidate digital systems to streamline workflows

Financial Transparency and Alignment

- Implement quarterly financial transparency reviews with board participation
- Transparently show funding sources, allocations, and address discrepancies
- Ensure clear alignment between budget allocations, grants, and operating/program expenses
- Encourage board questions and collaborative problem-solving around finances

Volunteer and Translation Capacity

- Strengthen practicum student integration
- Address language bottlenecks through expanded translation partnerships

PILLAR 2: Education and Learning Excellence**Strategic Program Implementation**

- Implement strategic learning plan with clear outcomes for all program areas
- Train tutors in new curriculum tools and assessment indicators
- Develop structured communication to parents about program goals and student progress

Subject-Specific Skills Development

- Enhance English Language Development: deepen comprehension, improve written expression, strengthen grammar and spelling fluency
- Mathematics and Language Integration: build fluency and confidence in word problems by reducing language barriers
- Heritage Language Growth (Arabic and Oromo): strengthen literacy and grammar skills alongside oral fluency; connect language learning to cultural identity
- Social Skills and Confidence Building: promote respectful communication, teamwork, and learner confidence across ages

PILLAR 3: Sponsorship and Meaningful Resettlement

Financial Literacy and Cultural Understanding

- Develop and pilot pictorial, first-language financial literacy sessions
- Deliver sessions for men, women, and couples at 1, 3, and 9-month intervals
- Address gender equity and household money management
- Balance co-sponsor workload through improved role clarity

Emotional Wellness and Cultural Learning

- Introduce gender-specific small discussion circles (men's and women's groups)
- Address cultural norms, conflict resolution, and family balance
- Embed cultural learning to strengthen emotional resilience for clients and co-sponsors

YEAR

3

Expansion and Integration

Deepen collaboration, launch key social enterprise initiatives, and strengthen cross-program partnerships

PILLAR 1: Organizational Sustainability and Healthy Growth

Leadership and Professional Development

- Launch staff professional development systems
- Implement leadership support models
- Institutionalize wellbeing practices and workload balance strategies

Sustainable Funding

- Strengthen existing external partnerships
- Develop sustainable funding models for long-term organizational investment
- Secure multi-year funding commitments where possible

Human Resources

- Finalize HR policy development including staff salary grid
- Include provisions for inflation increases, benefits, vacation, health spending, and professional development

Social Enterprise Launch

- Finalize partnership agreement with chosen Daycare Business partner
- Create strategic plan for daycare including research, location, staffing, and funding
- Begin training local women in certified childcare programs
- Develop community awareness and fundraising strategy for daycare
- Continue exploratory research on Welcome House concept in collaboration with other immigrant-serving organizations and City of Edmonton
- Table any new social enterprise ideas until Daycare is operational and Welcome House project is more developed

Social Enterprise Note

The daycare social enterprise is a secondary priority that becomes active in Year 3 only after the foundational systems of Years 1–2 are in place. The Welcome House concept remains exploratory and should not divert resources from the daycare priority.

PILLAR 2: Education and Learning Excellence

Assessment and Communication

- Formalize learning assessment metrics for all program areas
- Share program outcomes publicly through website and community communications
- Demonstrate tangible benefits and student progress

Leadership Development

- Introduce leadership and peer support elements in tutoring programs
- Leverage natural leadership to encourage peer learning and balanced participation

PILLAR 3: Sponsorship and Meaningful Resettlement

Documentation and Best Practices

- Begin documentation for "FOCAS Co-Sponsorship Handbook"
- Compile best practices, boundary tools, and multilingual resources
- Include lessons learned and successful strategies

Education-to-Employment Pathways

- Strengthen long-term settlement outcomes through structured pathways
- Utilize "job plus pathway" approach: pair initial employment with language study or training steps in every first-year settlement plan
- Broaden participation beyond single community

YEAR

4

Consolidation and Empowerment*Empower economic and community initiatives; consolidate organizational best practices***PILLAR 1: Organizational Sustainability and Healthy Growth****Financial Sustainability**

- Secure multi-year funding streams to sustain staff structure
- Ensure funding for social enterprise operations and development

Governance and Evaluation

- Review governance systems and board performance evaluation processes
- Build board collaboration and research skills through small committee task-specific roles
- Strengthen board's role in evaluating Executive Director performance and organizational progress

PILLAR 3: Sponsorship and Meaningful Resettlement**Consolidation and Legacy Building**

- Finalize and publish "FOCAS Co-Sponsorship Handbook"
- Launch handbook as community resource and training tool
- Disseminate best practices to broader settlement sector

Inclusion and Cross-Cultural Understanding

- Initiate cross-cultural friendship development events
- Seek opportunities for connection between Oromo and other communities
- Improve understanding between cultures
- Support increased educational and employment goal attainment through broader networks

PILLAR 4: Community Economic Self-Sufficiency (AYYO Women)**Identity and Partnership**

- Continually reinforce AYYO Women as safe "mother" community with clear values
- Formalize AYYO-FOCAS partnership agreements on entrepreneurship and family wellbeing goals
- Emphasize partnership in building entrepreneurial skills

Social Support and System Navigation

- Stabilize regular women-only gatherings (year-round) with peer-support circles
- Focus on overcoming isolation, stress, and building shared problem-solving
- Co-design simple, language-accessible workshops on schools, health, social services, banking, and conflict resolution
- Develop handouts and resources in first languages

Economic Empowerment

- Expand catering partnership and pursue other small contracts
- Build group income opportunities and track reliability
- Document social and economic outcomes; begin tracking impact metrics for women's economic participation

Daycare Development

- Use savings and partnership history to seek dedicated funding for community-based daycare
- Identify partners for culturally safe daycare operations
- Create employment and practicum slots for community members

YEAR

5

Legacy and Influence

Scale impact, evaluate long-term outcomes, and institutionalize organizational learning

PILLAR 4: Community Economic Self-Sufficiency (AYYO Women)

Daycare Operations

- Operate community-based daycare as anchor social enterprise project
- Blend childcare service delivery, skills training, and employment creation
- Create culturally safe environment reflecting community values

Impact Documentation

- Document women's economic empowerment outcomes comprehensively
- Publish findings for sector-wide learning
- Share stories of transformation and community impact

PILLAR 5: Building Networks and Relationships

Partnership Enhancement

- Deepen existing partnerships through ongoing conversations about organizational experiences
- Share challenges and successes transparently with partners
- Create regular forums for Executive Director and Board partnership discussions

Mutual Benefit Analysis

- Evaluate current partnerships: what each contributes to FOCAS and what FOCAS contributes
- Assess both tangible (financial) and intangible (learning, capacity-building) benefits
- Document reciprocal value and shared learning outcomes

Partnership Outreach and Learning Dissemination

- Expand partnership conversations to include Board-level engagement
- Participate in regional and municipal collaborations for advocacy
- Share organizational learning in community forums and sector gatherings

Member Awareness

- Highlight tangible and intangible benefits of each partnership at AGM
- Report annually on partnership outcomes and value created
- Demonstrate how partnerships strengthen organizational capacity and community impact

ALL PILLARS · Evaluation and Organizational Learning

Strategic Plan Evaluation

- Conduct comprehensive 5-year evaluation of strategic plan achievements
- Assess progress against goals across all five pillars
- Identify lessons learned and areas for continued growth

Organizational Learning Documentation

- Document organizational resilience practices and adaptation strategies
- Capture partnership benefits and collaborative learning models
- Publish findings to contribute to broader settlement and nonprofit sectors
- Prepare foundation for next strategic planning cycle

Implementation Timeline Overview

Year	Strategic Theme	Primary Focus Areas
1	Foundation and Clarity	Roles, governance, educational philosophy, sponsorship pathways
2	Systems and Quality	Efficiency, financial transparency, program quality enhancement
3	Expansion and Integration	Social enterprise launch, handbook development, funding strategy
4	Consolidation and Empowerment	Women's economic empowerment, daycare establishment, inclusion
5	Legacy and Influence	Evaluation, network expansion, sustainability documentation

Table 1: Five-Year Implementation Timeline Summary

Success Indicators

Success across this five-year plan will be measured through both quantitative and qualitative indicators aligned with each pillar:

Pillar 1 — Organizational Sustainability

- Clear role descriptions and reduced staff interruptions
- Quarterly financial reviews completed with active board engagement
- Multi-year funding secured
- Staff retention and satisfaction metrics
- HR policies implemented including benefits and professional development

Pillar 2 — Education and Learning Excellence

- Published education philosophy and learning outcomes
- Increased program registrations and consistent attendance
- Documented student progress in subject-specific skills
- Parent and student satisfaction feedback

Pillar 3 — Sponsorship and Meaningful Resettlement

- Co-Sponsorship Handbook published and distributed
- Financial literacy session attendance and feedback
- Employment outcomes for newcomers in first 12 months
- Co-sponsor satisfaction and retention rates
- Cross-cultural friendship development events held

Pillar 4 — Community Economic Self-Sufficiency

- AYYO women's catering contracts secured and completed
- Number of women participating in economic empowerment activities
- Community daycare operational with licensed staff
- Women's income generation and employment outcomes documented

Pillar 5 — Building Networks and Relationships

- Partnership mutual benefit assessments completed
- Number of active partnerships with documented outcomes
- AGM partnership highlights shared with members
- Board participation in partnership forums

Next Steps for Board Review

This draft strategic plan framework requires Board refinement and approval. The following next steps are recommended:

1. **Board Strategic Planning Session:** Convene dedicated session to review, discuss, and refine priorities and timeline
2. **Executive Director Input:** Integrate Executive Director's operational insights and capacity assessment
3. **Staff and Community Consultation:** Gather feedback from staff, tutors, AYYO women, and key community stakeholders
4. **Financial Alignment Review:** Ensure proposed initiatives align with current and projected funding realities
5. **Finalization and Approval:** Board approves final strategic plan for implementation beginning fiscal year 2026–2027
6. **Communication Plan:** Develop plan to communicate strategic priorities to members, partners, and funders
7. **Implementation Accountability:** Establish quarterly review process and assign Board committee responsibilities

Board Note

This plan is a draft framework intended to prompt discussion. The FOCAS Board and Executive Director should review, adapt, and formally approve this plan before implementation begins. Financial alignment and staff capacity assessments are essential before committing to specific timelines.

Conclusion

This Five-Year Strategic Plan positions FOCAS to build on evaluation findings with intentional, phased growth that prioritizes organizational health, program excellence, and meaningful community impact. By distinguishing between foundational work (Years 1–3) and expansion initiatives (Years 3–5), the plan ensures sustainable capacity-building that will enable FOCAS to deepen its service to the Oromo community and broader newcomer populations in Edmonton.

The plan honors FOCAS's cultural values, including the Gada System principle of learning and teaching, while addressing contemporary organizational challenges and opportunities. Through careful attention to staff wellbeing, financial sustainability, partnership development, and community-driven social enterprise, FOCAS can continue its vital role in supporting newcomer settlement, education, and economic self-sufficiency for years to come.

Gada Principle

"Learn, and teach what you know to others." This foundational Oromo value guides the educational philosophy of FOCAS programs and inspires the peer-learning and mentorship model embedded throughout this strategic plan.