2022 STRATEGIC PLAN: IT GETS BETTER

It Gets Better envisions a world where all LGBTQ+ youth are free to live equally and know their worthiness and power as individuals – its mission is to uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ+ youth around the globe through the power of storytelling, educational programming, and global community building. Now entering its fourteenth year as a leader in the LGBTQ+ youth empowerment space, it was deemed a critical priority to review the progress of the organization and to ensure its continued relevance.

The framework of It Gets Better’s 2020 strategic planning effort was approved by the organization’s Board of Directors on July 8, 2020 with the understanding that adjustments may be required based on unforeseen circumstances impacting the LGBTQ+ community or broader population. As such, the plan was reviewed by the Board of Directors for continued relevance in 2022, anticipating that, in the wake of an unprecedented global pandemic and the incredible growth of It Gets Better in both staff and programming, some modifications were in order. Consensus remained in favor of maintaining the core objectives of the plan except for a few adjustments in the spirit of continuous improvement.

It was determined that the realization of It Gets Better’s vision would still be contingent upon the success of the following three strategies:

STRATEGY #1: REFINE EXISTING PROGRAMS TO MAXIMIZE RESOURCES, ALIGN PROGRAM COMPONENTS, ENSURE QUALITY, AND ENHANCE PROGRAMMATIC STRENGTHS

It Gets Better centers its work around three main programs: Media/Storytelling, Global/Community Building, and It Gets Better EDU. Independently, these programs have experienced tremendous growth and successes over the last decade; however, when organizational objectives allow for holistic, cross-program collaboration and synergy, there is a correlative positive impact on all program outcomes.

Priorities include:

● Prioritizing the integration of youth perspectives into program design and execution.

● Strengthening relationships within the It Gets Better Global Affiliate Network to support adherence to trademark guidelines and continuous program improvement and excellence. Standardizing technical assistance offerings and other support It Gets Better can provide to members of the It Gets Better Global Affiliate Network.

● Exploring capacity building opportunities to fuel a more aggressive global grantmaking and/or global expansion effort.

● Expanding the reach of It Gets Better EDU, including the consistent introduction of high-quality education guides and educator training opportunities, to communities poised to gain the most value from It Gets Better educational programming.
● Exploring mutually beneficial, strategic partnerships with allied organizations to expand the reach of It Gets Better programming.

● Identifying opportunities for rapid response communications aligned with current events to elevate the It Gets Better message.

STRATEGY #2: STRENGTHEN ENGAGEMENT AND DEEPEN RELATIONSHIP WITH TARGET AUDIENCE

An essential, and ongoing, priority for It Gets Better is to develop a keen understanding of its ever-evolving target audience. As of 2020, this includes the entirety of Generation Z, defined by those born after 1997. This strategy also extends to audiences engaged via the It Gets Better Global Affiliate Network.

Priorities include:

● Engaging academics, mental health providers, child development specialists, educators, and other thought leaders around the evaluation of storytelling and other forms of It Gets Better-produced media content to ensure optimization for target audiences.

● Expanding the It Gets Better Global Affiliate Network in Latin America. Nearly half of the It Gets Better Global Affiliate Network represents countries in Central and South America. With a combined general population of more than 650 million, proactive cultivation of this region could impact tens of millions of young LGBTQ+ people.

   o Developing and launching It Gets Better Español initiative, including the introduction of Spanish language social channels to support and promote content generated by It Gets Better Global Affiliates representing Spanish-speaking markets; and prioritizing accessibility to all levels of It Gets Better programming for Spanish-speaking audiences in the US and abroad.

● Leveraging It Gets Better’s special brand of storytelling to support the advocacy efforts of LGBTQ+ individuals and other organizations.

● Improving It Gets Better brand knowledge, especially among target populations.

STRATEGY #3 IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND GOVERNANCE TO SUPPORT THE EXPANSION AND REFINEMENT OF IT GETS BETTER PROGRAMMING AND OVERALL REACH OF THE IT GETS BETTER MESSAGE.

The leadership behind the It Gets Better brand is as important to the sustainability of the organization as are effective programs and services. All Board service opportunities should be coupled with the opportunity for continuous improvement, as Board performance is directly connected to overall organizational performance.

Priorities include:
• Introducing tools and resources to better clarify the It Gets Better story to the public and other key stakeholders.

• Establishing a board education program to include governance training and opportunities to engage with subject matter experts on various aspects of the LGBTQ+ youth community.

• Continuing to focus board recruitment efforts on diverse and underrepresented audiences with additional prioritization of membership that brings diverse skills and abilities ideally aligning with organizational priorities in governance and programs.

• Diversifying revenue sources to include increased institutional and individual giving.

• Ensuring all board members continue to invest in the financial stability of the organization at a level commensurate with capacity.

• Cultivating staff skills with definitive training opportunities in support of career and/or program advancement, including leadership succession.