

# Understanding Organizational Development With a Continuum of Care Model

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## INTRODUCTION

Most non-profit organizations move through a life cycle of stages that are comparable to human development (Born, 2000). These stages define the change of organizational processes that contribute to the evolution of non-profit organizations. Although these stages are well defined in the literature, the manner in which a non-profit organization transitions between stages is driven by a myriad of factors, such as: leadership, governance, financial capacity, and staffing (Simon, 2012). These factors influence not only the development of non-profit organizations, but also their long-term sustainability.

In this article, a case study of the Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care will be presented to illustrate its development throughout the non-profit organizational life cycle. The Yee Hong Centre was specifically chosen as its adoption of a continuum of care model has become one of the primary drivers of the organization's development. However, as with other non-profit organizations, the Yee Hong Centre continues to face new challenges in maintaining its current level of success. This article will provide a conceptual understanding of how the continuum of care model can be applied to contribute to the organization's sustainability.

## BACKGROUND

According to Lester, Parnell, and Carraher (2003), most non-profit organizations follow a five-stage life cycle consisting of: existence; survival; success; renewal; and decline. Although the cycle is presented in a seemingly linear fashion, not all non-profit organizations proceed through the five stages in such a manner. In fact, some organizations may regress to an earlier stage or skip to a later stage, while others may remain in one stage for an extended period of time. Still, some organizations, such as the Yee Hong Centre, may transition through multiple stages, but remain far from the final stage of decline (Lester, Parnell & Carraher, 2003).

What accounts for the variance in organizational development? Simon (2012) argues that there are seven distinct factors that influence the development of a non-profit organization. These factors include:

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- Governance: the role of the board of directors in driving the long-term planning and development of the organization;
- Leadership: the role of senior executives in translating the organizational mission into reality;
- Financing: the organization's source of funding and fundraising to sustain its operation;
- Administrative systems: the establishment of formal systems, procedures, and policies within the organization;
- Products and services: the tangible or intangible benefits that customers gain from the use of the organization's products and services;
- Staffing: the human resources required to sustain the operation of the organization; and
- Marketing: the organization's promotional and outreach efforts (Simon, 2012; Varga Consulting, 2017).

The importance of each factor and the influence that it exerts on the organization depend largely on the stage of development that the organization is at (Simon, 2012). For example, in early stages where an organization is only beginning to form, leadership is considered to be more important than staffing, as the organization requires strong leaders with the capacity to gather resources and translate their vision into reality. Over time, however, staffing eventually becomes more important as the organization grows in stability and human resources become necessary to maintain daily operation (Simon, 2012).

Regardless of the developmental stage, most non-profit organizations, including the Yee Hong Centre, must consider the seven aforementioned factors in order to successfully plan for long-term sustainability (Simon, 2012). However, what sets the Yee Hong Centre apart from other non-profit organizations is its adoption of a continuum of care model that has provided guidance for the organization's planning and delivery of services (Gulliford, Naithani, & Morgan, 2006). Since its establishment in 1994, the Yee Hong Centre has dedicated itself to a mission of "enabling Chinese Canadian and other seniors to live their lives in the healthiest, most independent, and dignified way, through [a] continuum of excellent, culturally appropriate care" (Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care, 2017). This continuum of services assumes that:

- Aging is a dynamic process;
- Needs differ between individuals and change across the life course;
- Holistic health includes not only physical, but also emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being; and
- A continuum of services is necessary in order to meet these changing needs and promote quality of life (Liu, Wong, Chu, & Leung, 2017; Gulliford, Naithani, & Morgan, 2006).

With these assumptions, the Yee Hong Centre developed a diverse range of core and support services that cater to the changing needs of seniors and their families from retirement to end of life (see Figure 1) (Liu et al., 2017).

Core services form the foundation of the continuum and include: an active senior program, congregate dining, an adult day program, home support services and assisted living, long-term care, and residential hospice. Needs may change and seniors may be required to transition into other services that better meet their needs, as such, support services have also been developed to complement core services. These support services include: caregiver support and education, client intervention and assistance, friendly visiting, medical services, programs and services development, transportation, and volunteer development. Each of these services work in tandem to provide a seamless continuum of care that can address

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