



Title: Organisations Review:
summary findings and
recommendations

Client Name: Sikh Sanjog

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Undertaken by



Community Enterprise Ltd

In commercial confidence

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1 Introduction

Preface

Sikh Sanjog was established in 1990 with the core aim of helping Sikh and other disadvantaged women connect to broader Scottish life. 'Sanjog' means 'linking' in Punjabi. Services are currently offered exclusively in Edinburgh and focus on linking women and girls to social, educational and employment opportunities which build confidence, develop potential and lead to better life chances.

Sikh Sanjog has made a profound difference to the lives of many vulnerable Sikh and other bme women in Edinburgh. But it is not content to rest there. Sikh Sanjog is looking to make an evolutionary leap forward and take its place as a creative, inventive, resourceful and relevant force in the years ahead. In view of its 25th birthday, the Board of Sikh Sanjog felt now was the time. It has committed to critically examine its role in the context of a changing world and ensure it is fit for the future.

To assist in a fresh strategic direction, Sikh Sanjog appointed Community Enterprise to undertake an organisational review. The main focus of the review has been consultation with a range of stakeholders, both those connected to Sikh Sanjog and those in the wider community. To complement this work, Sikh Sanjog also appointed an interim Operations Manager to work in tandem and explore ways of strengthening the operational aspects.

Purpose of this Report

This report follows on from the full research report and presents

1. **a summary of the key findings of the consultation and operational review and**
2. **recommendations for future action.**

This review will lead to a positive and useful high level 5 year plan which will be a road map for all involved with Sikh Sanjog.

It should be noted that this is not an evaluation of Sikh Sanjog's work to date: evidence from other sources shows beneficiaries and wider stakeholders highly value the work of the organisation. The nature of this review demands a critical analysis of the needs of the community and the Sikh Sanjog's position in relation to that. At points, this review may be more constrictively critical than encouragingly positive but this is intended in a spirit of organisational development.

Approach & Methodology

Working closely with the interim Operations Manager, Community Enterprise Ltd has undertaken research using a participative process, involving consultations both within Sikh Sanjog itself and more broadly, the Sikh community in Edinburgh. Key stages in the methodology are:



2 Findings

1 Challenges for the Sikh Community in Edinburgh

- 1.1 The Edinburgh Sikh community has changed very little since its beginnings in the 1950s, retaining its strict social values of family hierarchy and strict segregation. Fears of mixing with others and diluting those values have resulted in the community living in isolation and increasingly at odds with wider society.
- 1.2 In comparison, Sikh communities (and other BME communities) in other cities both in the UK and abroad have, by and large, adopted more progressive attitudes and practices and integrated more effectively, thereby increasing the Edinburgh community's isolation.
- 1.3 Consultation with members of the community revealed a highly complex and challenging picture. There are particular issues with;
 - 1.3.1 Integration: The community is traditionally self-reliant with solutions being sought from within. This is in many ways a strength but prevents the community from establishing important relationships beyond and accessing resources that are available to it.
 - 1.3.2 Visibility: Despite being well established, the community is not well recognised or understood. There is a tendency to be 'lumped together' with other BME communities so that the unique identity and individual needs of Scottish Sikhs are often overlooked.
 - 1.3.3 Acting collectively: The community lacks a collective voice and is unable to work together to influence decision making at a local, regional or national level. There are no clear representatives, leaders or campaigners within the community and volunteering is minimal. The barriers to this were identified as:
 - Factions within the community and the geographic spread of members: there are limited opportunities to come together as a community.
 - Clear gender segregation within the community which prevents women from accessing important social and economic opportunities. Despite the emphasis on gender equality within the Sikh religion, cultural practices disempower women. Frequently, girls are withdrawn from education early, often women are not permitted to leave the home and have little voice in decisions

which affect them. Consequently, there is a failure to fulfill the potential for women's talent to promote both development and economic growth for the community.

- Intergenerational conflict: whilst elders wish to preserve their customs and traditions, the younger generations want to integrate with Western culture. This divide has increased both with the loss of spoken Punjabi, the Mother tongue, and with growing economic pressures on younger members to spend less time with family and more time at work.
- Control: Core values of honour and respect, whilst positive in some ways, also work against the community. Bringing shame on the family (particularly by the women) is a key driver in keeping family members in line and a significant barrier to accessing support. The Sikh community in Edinburgh is small and inter-related and there are serious issues with confidentiality and trust: sensitive issues such as arranged marriage, ill health, depression, divorce and debt are not openly discussed and dealt with in a positive way either within families or the wider community.

"There's a real fear the women will bring dishonour to the family if they're given any freedom. Men can behave in certain ways- drink, socialise, have girlfriends but this would be totally unacceptable for women."

"Mental health is a real taboo: it affects a lot of people but no one talks about it because it would bring shame on a family."

2 Challenges for Women

2.1 Consultation with Sikh women of all ages found isolation, anxiety and frustration to be a common experience. Control by segregation is a major issue. Across all generations, women lack the freedom to make their own choices in life and their futures are planned for them by family members from a young age. All decisions, large and small, are made by husbands and parents in law more or less throughout life and reinforced by the wider community. Several issues emerge as a result of this;

2.1.1 Women feel they lack their own identity: because there's no freedom of choice and a sense of independence, women don't have a clear sense of who they are as individuals: their identity is determined by family rather than by themselves.

2.1.2 Women are taught early on to obey and keep opinions to themselves. Expressing a view can involve a complex series of stressful and discouraging

negotiations. Longer term, women can feel that they no longer have a mind worth expressing and are effectively silenced.

- 2.1.3 There is a lack of aspiration amongst women. No value is placed on higher education or developing career paths. The main focus for women is to get married and cook and clean in the home. Career aspirations are limited to child care and beauty.
 - 2.1.4 Women can feel profoundly isolated and alone: confined to the home and restricted from speaking to others and taking part in mixed activities either within the Sikh community or within wider Scottish society.
 - 2.1.5 There is a real fear amongst women of being seen to behave in dishonourable, disrespectful ways and bringing shame on the family. This puts enormous pressures on them to conform and perform to community norms often in very difficult circumstances. Issues such as domestic violence (perpetrated by parents in law as well as husbands) go unchallenged.
- 2.2 Some of the abuse and control is perpetrated against women by women, not just by men in the family. This makes the situation highly complex and sensitive.

"A woman's life is completely mapped out for her, her whole life, her daily routine, everything. There is no freedom of choice. We cook and clean and breed."

2.3 Older women

- 2.3.1 As Sikh culture is based on hierarchical relationships, older women enjoy more respect, status and freedoms than younger women. Particular issues for older women are therefore less about being controlled and more about being neglected by the younger generations. There is a sense that younger family members are too busy to look after them and they are being forgotten at a time when they need family support.
- 2.3.2 Older women fear the loss of traditional values as the young generations become more Westernised and worry about the impact of this on family life. The loss of Punjabi is a particular concern as they can no longer communicate effectively with their grandchildren.
- 2.3.3 This group feel emotionally isolated and unable to share their worries with those in the family or community. Honour is still a big driving force at this age and concerns are not easily shared. Older women feel more comfortable expressing their troubles to people outside the community but don't know how or where to access support.
- 2.3.4 These women also have health issues which cause worry: *who's going to look after the family if I can't?*

2.3 Women with grown up children

- 2.3.1. Women with grown up children are under pressure to bridge the gap between the younger generations and the older ones and as such, have pressure from above and below. There is a sense that they are in an impossible situation: *We can't keep different generations happy because they want different things.* There is a lack of sensitivity to these pressures by the younger and older generations so no willingness to compromise.
- 2.3.2. There's a strong sense that this group need to keep up appearances all the time. *Our children's mistakes are seen to reflect poor parenting so we're afraid of them making mistakes. If we give them freedom and they abuse it, we get the blame.*
- 2.3.3. Arranged marriages for children are a particular problem for this group: *Our children want to marry later and choose for themselves so we have to cover up what they're doing to the elders.*

"Sikh families are all about control: usually the mother in law controlling the daughter in law, with the father in law as the ultimate head of the family. Generations often live together so a daughter in law can't escape this hierarchy."

"Boys get away with a lot more and our girls feel really confused: they hear a lot of stuff about equality in school but don't experience it in their lives. They can't understand why they hear us complaining that our lives are rubbish and then trying to pressure them in to living the same way."

2.4 Women with young children

- 2.4.1 Moving from relative freedom as girls with some aspiration, many young married women feel very unprepared for the confines of marriage. Their sense of self is lost as they move in to someone else's house under constant supervision and control. The opening up of opportunities to have them closed down profoundly damages self esteem.
- 2.4.2 There's no equality. Husbands and in laws must be obeyed and permission needs to be sought for everything.
- 2.4.3 Isolation is also a significant issue at this stage. Young married women are seen as 'high risk' of bringing shame on the family so are controlled to a high degree. *We have no social life and no time to ourselves. There's no privacy within the home.* Women are restricted to cooking and cleaning for the extended family and have no time for other outlets.

- 2.4.4 Having children affects confidence and women can feel especially low at this stage. There's a lack of any support both within the family and wider community. *You're just expected to cope and expectations of us are very high.*
- 2.4.5 A number of women are suffering from post natal and longer term depression but can't access support. There's no confidentiality in the community and people can be very judgemental.
- 2.4.6 This is a group that are particularly hard to reach and fail to engage with Sikh Sanjog.

"You think marriage will be freedom but it's the biggest cage you walk into blindfolded. It's the crushing of hopes. You're totally stripped of your identity."

"I want my daughter to be able to do things that I can't, go on to further education, drive, contribute money to the household. I would have loved to go to uni..."

2.5 Young unmarried Women

- 2.5.1 Challenges for young women are essentially about balancing family wishes with their own aspirations. Young women want to be free to make their own choices and mistakes without upsetting family members and being cast out. They want the opportunity to be more integrated, more spontaneous and ambitious and create their own life map. *It's really hard to be yourself- our grandparents might think we're being disrespectful if we're too Western and it puts our parents in a difficult position. If we leave the community to follow our own path, the community will not accept us back.*
- 2.5.2 There is huge pressure on young women to marry from an early age and marriage proposals are based on beauty, not personality or intelligence. *We're on the market from a certain age whether we want to be or not.* This can be confusing and distressing: some have been encouraged to think independently as girls and aspire to more than their mothers' way of life but at some point there is overwhelming pressure from the community – and their own mothers- on them to marry and repeat the pattern.
- 2.5.3 There is recognition that brothers are allowed freedoms that young women are not and discrimination within the community is seen as much more difficult to tackle than discrimination from outside. *We're not trusted. They think we're going to disrespect the family if we go out so we try to avoid social arrangements with white Scottish friends. There are lots of judgements going on which we have no control over.*

- 2.5.4 Education for girls is not encouraged. *We're expected to marry, not work. Many of us leave school at 16. There are no career aspirations. If we're allowed to work, we're encouraged to work with babies or in beauty.* Some young women are keen to pursue further education, possibly even work abroad, but are prevented from doing so.

"We don't prepare our girls for the wider world. If they have to get a job, we tell them to go into beauty or childcare but there's so much more they could be doing- teaching for example. We don't help them reach their potential because the focus is only marriage."

"As young women, we have to be really careful about how we present ourselves in the community: any negative perceptions could affect marriage proposals."

"There are lots of judgements going on which we have no control over."

"There should be a lower age limit on marriage. People are getting their daughters engaged far too young. As soon as you finish school, parents are looking for husbands. If the limit was 21, this would provide a good window of opportunity for further education after school which we don't have at the moment. We need to get the community to buy into this."

3 Men

- 3.1 Older generations of men have nowhere to go and nothing to do. They often hang out at the gurdwara because there's nothing else for them.
- 3.2 There are economic pressures on working men who need to support the wider family. Working wives and daughters are not acceptable in some families.
- 3.3 Younger men can be caught between the wishes of their parents and those of their wives and daughters.

4 Children and Young People

- 4.1 Issues for children focus on experiences at school: being bullied for having hair tied back and experiencing racist attitudes, a lack of understanding of Sikhism and its practices and assumptions they are muslim.

5 Aspirations

- 5.1 In general terms, the Sikh community in Edinburgh aspires to be a more integrated, better connected community whilst retaining its unique identity. It wants the confidence to take its place in society without denying its core values. There is a strong desire to be more visible, more understood, more accommodated and able to access mainstream services and benefits to the same degree as other minority communities.

5.2 There is an aspiration for the community to overcome divisions and be more harmonious, working together more effectively for the benefit of all in the community.

5.3 Aspirations for gender equality within the community are more ambiguous. Female empowerment is not easily understood or talked about: there is a powerful element within the community who want to preserve the status quo (particularly by men but also by female elders) and this is largely unchallenged by women who are unwilling or unable to speak up.

5.4 Some of the aspirations expressed in the consultation are captured in the following:



6 Learning from elsewhere

6.1 Similar organisations operating elsewhere in the UK were explored as part of the research and Sikh Mari Manch in Erdington, Birmingham was of particular interest. It aims to empower and raise the self esteem of women of all ages and backgrounds particularly of Sikh women. Although it is a Sikh organisation, it is open to the wider community and actively seeks to engage with it. The Sikh faith underpins all of their work and activities are founded on the 3 pillars of the Sikh religion; earning a living through honest means; sharing the fruits of one's labour; and giving time through volunteering. In essence, they take the Sikh ethos as a concept and give it a practical application in a mainstream, inclusive project. Inter-race relations are an important element of their work. The group has invited Sikh Sanjog to share learning.

7 A new approach

7.1 Based on the range of needs across the community, the research points towards a continuing, key role for Sikh Sanjog. Despite some progress, many of the issues felt today within the Sikh community are the same as generations ago and in some cases, have become more amplified over time.

7.2 Whilst Sikh Sanjog has played a critical role in supporting individuals, for many acting as a "life line," their impact has not translated sufficiently into wider community development and research found that Sikh women in particular, want to see Sikh Sanjog shift its position and take a more active role in challenging and shaping the community.

7.3 There is evidence to support the continuing need for Sikh Sanjog to empower women by taking a *whole* community approach but there are also profound needs across the whole community. In particular, those consulted wanted to see Sikh Sanjog:

- Playing a part in representing the Sikh community and Sikh women in terms of policy reform and to create conditions for more positive integration and race relations
- Increasing the capacity and confidence of the community by promoting integration through increased links with the wider community and better partnership working
- Providing relevant, easy to access information and signposting people to other services
- Working with the gurdwara to contribute to and influence key community decisions
- Working more with men and boys in a community setting (possibly through the gurdwara / more community outreach work) and encouraging more mixed gender activity

- Working across all age groups. There is a desire to see more intergenerational working using cross cutting themes rather than division into age categories
- More employability and training support for women to develop skills, build confidence and increase aspirations.

"We need to start doing proper outreach work and attract more people in...not just sitting on the phone but be out there."

"We shouldn't just have a Sikh service, but be much more open and inclusive, facilitate connections between people... Sikh women don't just want to mix with other Sikh women, they want to mix with white Scottish women too, share learning and friendship."

"We need to be having a conversation about how to mainstream what we do."

8 Specific Service suggestions

- 8.1 Education and Information. The majority of those consulted felt that 'help to improve education and life skills' was the biggest gap in service provision at present. Suggestions spanned both formal and informal education, for example, teaching the difference between the Sikh religion and cultural practices; educating boys and men in the rights of women, celebrating the strong contribution of historical women in Sikhism, running Punjabi classes, rights and benefits education, employability and training including SVQ accredited courses, mentoring programmes and peer networks, inter-racial supper clubs, health and wellbeing sessions.
- 8.2 Youth work: This was seen as critical for preparing the next generation of young Sikhs and opening up opportunities. Most felt the work carried out by Sikh Sanjog to be very relevant and in particular challenging boundaries in terms of accessing mainstream activities, for example, participation in Duke of Edinburgh Awards. It was felt more could be done to promote and accommodate Sikhism within a school setting.
- 8.3 Whilst an intergenerational approach was felt to be very important, there was a strong focus on young women – post school and pre-marriage- a need to increase aspiration and support for them to make independent life choices.
- 8.4 Overall, social opportunities were felt to be the least important of all provisions, however, there was strong support for more and larger community events: to provide opportunities for the community to come together and celebrate their identity as well as increase visibility in wider society.
- 8.5 A Community Centre was favoured as the delivery mechanism for these services, bringing the community together for meetings and celebratory events, acting as an information and signposting point and accommodating activities for all generations including a youth space, crèche, health and wellbeing and counselling / advocacy centre.

9 External challenges for Sikh Sanjog

- 9.1 Research revealed that whilst many direct beneficiaries and people outside the community highly rate Sikh Sanjog, there are some negative attitudes within the Sikh community, largely driven by those who want to maintain the status quo. Sikh Sanjog can be seen as corrupting and troublesome, acknowledging issues within the community which are uncomfortable.
- 9.2 There is also a lack of buy in across the community: this may be partly due to the point above, but there is also disinclination generally to 'get involved', volunteer and participate in community based activity. Community activism is not the norm.
- 9.3 There is also an issue of positioning: Sikh Sanjog is widely known as a supporter of the very vulnerable and many Sikhs simply don't see themselves in this light. Sikh Sanjog has no relevance to them. Sikhs care about understanding educational choices for their children or accessing good health care in old age: issues which it doesn't see Sikh Sanjog as championing.
- 9.4 A core aim of Sikh Sanjog is to link women in to other resources and partnership working is crucial to achieving this. In addition, research showed that across the sector, there is a much greater need for mutuality, achieving more resources for less funding. Research identified two key groups: the gurdwara (the only other Sikh specific service) and Saheliya (a near neighbour and significant competitor of Sikh Sanjog's which aims to support and empower women from a diverse range of ethnic minority backgrounds). Research suggests that Sikh Sanjog's relationships with both need developing, particularly at a strategic / Board level to increase understanding and develop a coherent approach.
- 9.5 The name Sikh Sanjog can be viewed as exclusive and off putting to potential beneficiaries from a non Sikh background. If Sikh Sanjog is to continue targeting other bme groups, there is a need for better promotion as an open and inclusive organisation.

10 Internal challenges for Sikh Sanjog

- 10.1 Sikh Sanjog has some internal operational challenges. The organisation aims to recruit within the Sikh community which enables the organisation to reflect the community and work more effectively within it. However, the organisation can be limited by the skills available to it and can be held back by the same negative attitudes and practices it is aiming to address.
- 10.2 The organisation is mostly controlled and managed by highly respected, older Sikh women. Responsibility in the form of decision making and service design is not typically devolved to younger / junior members. The shift to more collective decision making would be welcomed by staff and would be excellent opportunities for building confidence and empowerment at the front line.

- 10.3 There are some essential skills gaps in the organisation which can slow progress. There are opportunities to address these either by bringing in skills from outside or through more robust learning and development internally.
- 10.4 Investment in professional and personal development of staff (personal development plans, goal setting etc) is limited due to other priorities. Focus on this area is beginning to happen with positive practices becoming embedded in organisational processes. Sikh Sanjog has enjoyed success through investment in its youth workers, a number of whom have achieved SVQs in the field and have gone on to further training or paid work elsewhere. There is strong evidence therefore that continued and consistent focus on career development will increase the capacity of individuals (and therefore of the organisation as a whole) and prepare people better for other work environments.
- 10.5 Sikh Sanjog can appear insular and unconventional to the outside eye. As a whole, the organisation could benefit from stronger links with other similar organisations and make better use of shared learning including work shadow opportunities, exchange and mentoring programmes.
- 10.6. Sikh Sanjog's purpose is to link women with other people and services and be a stepping stone for new and wider opportunities. Over the last 5 years, around 25 women have achieved SVQs and 30-40 women have progressed to employment. This is very positive, however, a number of beneficiaries have been involved with Sikh Sanjog for many years suggesting some people fail to move on. This is not uncommon in 'nurturing' organisations, however, forging stronger links externally would open up new and interesting progression routes for service users.

Governance

- 10.7 The Board make up consists of 50% Sikh women and 50% Scottish women. The contributions of the Scottish women in the last 5 years have been fundamental in helping the organisation survive. The 50% Sikh women have historically been long serving, predominantly older Sikh women. Sikh Sanjog acknowledges that this has brought some stability to the organisation but has prevented younger women being involved and those with specific, required skill sets (finance, legal, marketing, volunteer management). This is being actively addressed through a new recruitment drive targeting younger Sikh women and others who will bring a fresh perspective and a broader set of skills. At the time of this report, a number of new Trustees are now already in place.
- 10.8 The Board has in the past tended to focus on small operational issues rather than taking a broader, strategic perspective. Sikh Sanjog intends for its new Board to take a more critical strategic function and entrust staff to deal with the day to day running of the organisation. This has involved minor restructuring and changes to the terms of engagement at Board level.

Leadership

- 10.9 Sikh Sanjog has evolved from being an informal group of women to a registered charity with a staff complement, accommodation and multiple funding streams. Leadership requirements over time have increased considerably.
- 10.10 With a desire for a new strategic direction and improved operational practices, the period ahead will be challenging. Sikh Sanjog requires strong and clear leadership and an individual with a broad range of competencies. The current senior management structure is being reviewed to ensure these organisational needs can be fully met.

Staff

- 10.11 Sikh Sanjog benefits from a dedicated and committed staff team, however, it acknowledges there are some challenges which need to be overcome: the practice of recruiting Sikh women (who have been traditionally excluded from the work place) means that most staff have limited experience and capacity. Positively, staff are keen to develop professionally.
- 10.12 There is an issue with staff retention with a relatively high turnover, particularly of managers. Feedback from current and exiting staff suggests that job satisfaction would be enhanced through more (and consistent) support, a better understanding of roles and responsibilities across the organisation and being empowered to be involved in decisions which affect them.
- 10.13 Staff also suggested a lack of structure and set practices across the organisation can lead to confusion. Sikh Sanjog has set about putting a suite of staff policies and procedures in place but these now need to be firmly embedded across the staff teams. These also need to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they are fit for a growing and evolving organisation.

Financial Management

- 10.14 Resource planning at Sikh Sanjog has tended to be reactive rather than proactive. Budget setting and cash flow projections could be used as effective management tools and enable staff (and Board) to feel more in control, anticipate issues ahead of time and plan for the future.
- 10.15 Sikh Sanjog is working towards bringing more financial management skills on to the Board but in addition, would benefit from creating a finance sub group to more closely scrutinise the finances and support the wider Board to make critical financial decisions.
- 10.16 As is common with many charitable organisations, approach to funding can be short term and reactive rather than planned in good time. Sikh Sanjog has 6 sources of income and whilst these represent a relatively good mix, there are several key sources which may be vulnerable in the months ahead. A funding strategy is a good

way of ensuring new streams of income can come online as old ones are ending, thereby avoiding disruptive gaps.

- 10.17 Punjabi Junction is not yet sustainable although this is being seriously addressed through improved planning. The employability element has compromised the commercial viability of the café and future direction is being seriously considered. New budgets are now in place and work is being carried out towards reducing costs and increasing sales.

Partnerships

- 10.18 Sikh Sanjog has nurtured a number of positive links over the years: recent youth work undertaken by Sikh Sanjog demonstrates the value of innovative joint working: work with the Duke of Edinburgh and the Rathbone Trust have opened up a number of very valuable opportunities for young Sikh women who would otherwise be excluded. Equally, good relationships have been forged with Scottish Women's Aid. Awareness raising by Sikh Sanjog has enabled this service provider organisation to become more responsive and accessible to the needs of bme women.

- 10.19 There is evidence that some beneficiaries do not move on to engage with other services, groups and activities, suggesting that integration is not happening in a meaningful and sustained way. Feedback from partners / professional stakeholders pointed towards stronger partnership working to facilitate this. In general terms, partnerships need more active investment and nurturing.

- 10.20 Partnership opportunities suggested by stakeholders included links with Edinburgh Leisure (to open up opportunities for sporting activities) and Skills Development Scotland (to help women move into work). In fact, a number of these links already exist but awareness of them appears to be low.

- 10.21 Developing better working relationships with the Gurdwara and Saheliya could have a number of positive benefits for Sikh Sanjog.

Accommodation

- 10.28 The office units on Leith Walk are not ideal for the type of work Sikh Sanjog is currently delivering: accessibility and visibility are issues. There is no youth space and the layout can mean there is a lack of confidentiality. Sikh Sanjog will be considering its options in terms of need for better space balanced against the cost implications.

11 Recommendations

11.1 Positioning

- In our view, Sikh Sanjog should broaden its remit to work much more across the Sikh community. Focussing on women is not impacting on broader negative attitudes and given the needs across the community, there is a strong case for delivering more community wide services. There are two possible strategic positions: the first represents a continuation of mission, the focus being on Sikh (and other BME) women but taking a new approach: the second is a more radical departure, with a new focus on the whole Sikh community.

Direction 1: Continue to focus on empowering Sikh / other vulnerable women by taking a whole community approach. The mission statement would be along the lines of:

To empower Sikh and other ethnic minority women to fulfil their potential and overcome barriers to be more confident, more skilled, better educated and better connected. We aim to do this through a whole community approach, challenging and changing negative attitudes and creating a more positive environment for women to thrive.

Direction 2: Widen the focus to empower the Sikh community. The mission statement would then be more along the lines of:

To empower the Sikh community in Edinburgh to be better educated, more visible, to have a strong, collective voice and be better connected to each other and wider society. We aim to do this through a whole community approach and creating a more positive environment for Sikh people to thrive.

11.2 Beneficiaries and Outcomes- General Overview

- Sikh Sanjog should extend its reach to include all members of the Sikh community as evidence suggests this is an untapped market with an unmet need. This should include men, women and children of all ages and not just those who would typically be seen as 'vulnerable'.
- Given the importance of integration and 'linking,' Sikh Sanjog should consider continuing work with other bme communities and individuals where appropriate to create 'communities of interest'.

11.3 Approach

- Ensure the approach is whole family (as well as whole community) and intergenerational rather than exclusively focussing support on individuals wherever possible. Activities should include cross cutting themes rather than being age specific.
- Ensure integration is at the heart: this is integration both within the Sikh community (men and women mixing as equals) and outside it (facilitating connections with other groups, services, policy makers) and encouraging beneficiaries to access mainstream services wherever appropriate.
- Being positive and celebratory about Sikhism will raise the profile of the community and build the confidence and self esteem of its members. An asset based approach would work well in this context (starting from the position of 'what's good about our community?' and building on the skills, talents, knowledge and other assets already available locally).
- Sikh Sanjog should focus its efforts on the Edinburgh area where there is a clear need. Extending services to other geographic areas would put too much pressure on the organisation at this time. However, there is scope to create links with like minded organisations and groups beyond Edinburgh to share learning and possibly resources.

11.4 Service development

The following service suggestions should be considered and debated by the Board:

- Representation of and advocacy for bme women and potentially the Sikh community to influence decisions in policy and delivery. This may include representation on policy and practice advisory groups at national and local government level, and regular consultations within the bme women / Sikh community to create a positive two way information flow.
- Awareness raising of the Sikh community / bme women more widely: in schools, in the local community and other service providers. This could focus not just on 'needs', but also be a celebration of culture.
- Youth work to expand and include participation by Sikh boys.
- Establishment of a cultural community centre for Sikh and other bme communities.
- Acting as an information hub, providing support for individuals and signposting to other agencies to help people connect to mainstream and specialist services. This could be aimed at the particularly isolated, but not exclusively.

- Themed based activities for all age groups (health and wellbeing / employability and training etc.) which should aim to be cross generational where appropriate rather than age group specific.
- Punjabi Junction - Funding for Punjabi Junction will be coming to an end and the priority should now be on commercial viability. The café is an important 'window' in to the community and could play an important role in visibility / community integration in the future but it needs to be financially sustainable to achieve this.

11.5 Organisational development

Generally

- Changes need to be made within the organisation to achieve positive change in the wider community. This will require clear direction from the Board and strong leadership to guide and support staff.
- In the light of any proposed service changes, the board will need to ensure it has the financial strategies in place to sustain the service.
- There will also need to be a review of accommodation. Consideration needs to be given to accessibility, visibility and the extent to which services are to be delivered in conjunction with other agencies.
- Partnerships should be centred on the idea of mutuality rather than formal arrangements. Sikh Sanjog works most effectively when influencing and raising awareness of bme women's issues, in return for services becoming more accessible to the needs of that group.

Board

- Sikh Sanjog is already taking positive steps to ensure broader representation on the Board and bring in new skills to enable it to take a more strategic approach. It should continue to invest in this development and support trustees to increase and enhance their skills for the benefit of the organisation where possible.
- An advisory group of older women made up of ex Board members would ensure the experience and skills are not lost. There needs to be a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities, the relationship between the groups and reporting mechanisms to ensure this structure is beneficial rather than overly bureaucratic.
- Sikh Sanjog would also benefit from having a finance subgroup working with senior management staff to review management accounts, set budgets, develop a funding strategy and so on.

Leadership

- Strong, consistent leadership is required to guide the organisation in a fresh and potentially challenging direction. Sikh Sanjog should continue to explore the options in terms of a senior management structure to ensure it is making the most of people's skills and talents and that the organisation is able to manage the changes ahead. The Board is aware of the need for succession planning.

Staffing

- Some improvements have been made to policies and practices in recent months to improve levels of support to staff and provide clarity over structure and direction. These should be extended and consolidated in the future.
- A culture of 'staff empowerment' should be encouraged with more responsibility devolved to staff members (for example involvement in service design and decision making) but ensuring this is underpinned with proper support and training.
- Staff are committed to the organisation but can feel they lack the skills and confidence to do their job. Investment in training / mentoring should ideally be embedded in organisational practice. Annual appraisals and regular supervision could include constructive feedback on performance and identify training / support needs but also help staff to goal plan and find routes to success. Staff with more limited work place experience would for example, benefit from work shadowing opportunities in other similar organisations.
- Some staff would also benefit from literacy and numeracy training and IT / excel training. Financial competency needs strengthening where staff are managing and reporting to budgets.
- Recruiting from within the community is a reasonable practice but where there is too big a skills gap, Sikh Sanjog should widen the net.
- With the inclusion of men and boys as beneficiaries, Sikh Sanjog needs to consider the potential recruitment of male employees and Board members.