

In August 2021, Word Made Flesh International (WMF) engaged Becca Spradlin of On Mission Incorporated and Dr. Vanessa Snyder of Resilience Source, LLC to complete two independent assessments of the organization.



Becca Spradlin, founder of **On Mission, Inc.**, specializes in executive facilitation, organizational assessment, strategic planning, and change management. On Mission services were incubated during her time at HOPE International, following the publication of *Mission Drift*. In 2020, she co-authored the *Mission True Workbook* with the authors of *Mission Drift*. She brings 15 years of experience leading workshops and evaluations of businesses and nonprofits on five continents. She is certified in change management, adult learning, and human-centered design. She holds a master's degree in applied economics from Johns Hopkins University and undergraduate degrees in business and communications from Grove City College. She resides in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.



Vanessa Snyder, Ph.D. founded **Resilience Source, LLC**, in Roswell, Georgia. Resilience Source exists to train and consult in the area of acute and complex trauma, trauma-informed care, compassion fatigue, as well as organizational and systemic trauma. Clinically, she specializes in the treatment of sexual abuse and trauma, complex trauma, dissociative disorders, sexual and gender identity issues, and marital and family crisis. Dr. Snyder is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Sex Therapist, Master Traumatologist, an AAMFT Approved Supervisor, Approved Clinical Supervisor, Certified Sex Addiction Therapist Candidate, and a Green Cross Certified Trainer. She is the Chief Clinical Officer at No Longer Bound, a 12-month men's residential addiction recovery program in Cumming, Georgia and adjunct professor at Richmond Graduate University in Atlanta. She is also the consulting International Clinical Director of Uncaged, a global trafficking organization that focuses on rescue and restoration. Dr. Snyder earned her Ph.D. in Counselor Education and Supervision from Regent University. She holds her Master's Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy with a specialization in Christian Sex Therapy from Richmond Graduate University.

On Mission conducted its Nonprofit Organizational Assessment, which included surveys of the board, leadership, and staff, interviews, document review, final report, and presentations of the findings to the board, staff, and leadership teams. On Mission's Nonprofit Organizational Assessment analyzes following areas:

- Mission & Strategy
- Human Resources
- People (Outcomes-focused)
- Organization & Operations
- Leadership
- Governance
- External Communication & Funding

Resilience Source led a trauma-informed organizational assessment to measure the following constructs:

- Supporting Staff Development
- Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment

PURPOSE

These assessments were requested by WMF's board and leadership to understand the current state for continued improvement. These evaluations were due, in part, to respond to a request by current and former employees for a thorough review of workplace culture in order to provide accountability and help chart a path for WMF to be a better organization.

SCOPE

The areas of review requested for this assessment included the following with a focus on the U.S.-based international office (IO) and its activities:

- International Office Operations
- Human Resources
- Leadership & Staff
- Governance

In addition to human resources ("community care") and overall leadership of the organization, WMF's U.S.-based international office provides marketing and communications, finance, and administrative support. An assessment of organizational change over time was also requested. No field-based analysis of policies and practices were requested.

These assessments included a survey of staff and board members, interviews, and a document review. On Mission's staff survey was completed by 96% of staff (24 out of 25). On Mission's board survey was completed by 100% of board members (10 out of 10) for the organizational assessment and 70% (7 out of 10) for Resilience Source's trauma-informed care assessment. The board includes two WMF staff members – the international executive director/CEO and the regional coordinator of Africa & Europe.

On Mission and Resilience Source conducted virtual interviews with six staff members and two board members as a complement to the surveys and document review. The document review by On Mission included governance, operational, managerial, human resources, and financial information. The document review of Resilience Source included public responses to historic traumatization.

RESULTS – On Mission:

WMF is stabilizing after a season of turmoil. The current international executive director joined in 2015, and since that time the organization’s financial position has improved. WMF has also made progress in addressing wrongdoings and missteps of previous leaders.

While the organization began operations 30 years ago, certain aspects are still developing. Since 2015, eight communities have been added and seven have exited. Current communication and response rhythms, combined with past hurts, have led to discord among certain staff. Lack of clarity around decisions to start or add new communities has raised concerns of mission drift.

While staff share a passion for the WMF vision and culture, there is opportunity to align the team around a future direction. A global strategic plan that addresses identified concerns and leverages the organization’s strengths to move toward the vision, would improve global coordination and mission fulfillment. A regular review of progress toward the plan would cultivate transparency and alignment.

Strengths

- Staff passion and commitment to the mission
- Individual and organizational spiritual disciplines that reinforce the centrality of Christ in the work
- Intentional community care planning and support to staff, staff feel cared for by their colleagues
- Increase in organizational stability

Growth Opportunities

- Communication: discern appropriate on-going listening and response rhythms and engage in annual, anonymous feedback loops to improve staff engagement
- Establish succession plans for key leadership positions
- Create a strategic plan with measurable goals to support healthy growth
- Define and cultivate alignment around the “DNA” of WMF communities
- Improve reporting on field and operational activities to inform strategy, decision making, and mission fulfillment
- Create a board development plan
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RESULTS – Resilience Source:

WMF leadership is committed to an internal healing process and has taken initiative to become a trauma-informed organization. The implementation of the Vulnerable Person Policy has created an environment of physical and emotional safety for current staff.

WMF is an organization that has experienced and lived with systemic trauma for close to 30 years. This has been due, in part, to abusive leadership in the past as well as a low level of trauma-informed care training and implementation within the organization. Symptoms evident due to organizational trauma include a breakdown of communication, breakdown of trust, lowered productivity and feelings of powerlessness, hopelessness, and loss. The result has led to themes including lack of trust in leadership, lack of communication around personal and professional crisis, as well as a perceived lack of support and lack of ownership by leadership in response to accusations of deficits in trauma-informed and survivor-centered approaches to care.

Strengths

- Continued sense of hope for rebuilding trust
- Appreciation of policies that have been put in place
- Continued support for current leadership
- Leadership's desire to cultivate a trauma-informed, client-centered organization
- A thorough, non-biased review of WMF's official public responses to historic traumatization by previous leadership has been completed

Growth Opportunities

- Continued education and training in a variety of topics including, but not limited to understanding traumatic stress and its impact, impact of trauma on children and adults, compassion fatigue and vicarious traumatization, how to respond and engage with consumers in order to avoid re-traumatization, and resilience building
- Establishing working relationships with external entities with expertise in trauma will provide continued organizational support
- Results offered from the review of WMF's official public responses to historic traumatization by previous leadership can be a best-practices guide for current staff leadership
- Implementation of trauma-informed and survivor-centered language woven into the organizational system to convey the message of the value placed on providing trauma-sensitive care
- Creation of a trauma-informed, survivor-centered committee, including a combination of current and past stakeholders as well as organizational trauma survivors with a heart for the ministry and vision and a willingness to collaborate on best practices for the organization moving forward