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*September 7, 2023*



## Inspiring Communities Implements Innovative Leadership Transition

Inspiring Communities (IC) is known for exploring innovative ways to achieve equity-centered systems change and sharing their learnings from this work. Now, the organization is exploring how to embed greater equity and resilience into the organization's leadership.

On August 30, the Inspiring Communities Board of Directors accepted a recommendation to implement a co-leadership model, with Jocelyn Li, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, being appointed interim co-director along with Louise Adongo, current Executive Director.

Benny Welter-Nolan, a consultant and past executive director of Visual Arts Nova Scotia, will work with the Board and the new interim co-leader

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Louise Adongo, who has held the role of Executive Director since April 2021, will leave the organization on October 31.

During Louise's time with the organization, Inspiring Communities has matured in its commitment to centering equity and clarified its position as an intermediary organization, supporting systems change through convening, connecting, sustaining and measuring. Along with initiatives in Digby, Dartmouth and Cape Breton, Inspiring Communities is examining new ways to bring diverse voices to decision-making in communities across this region. During this time, IC has also built its reputation in social innovation thought-leadership through a new Fellowship program, discussion-catalyzing webinars, participating in events like Future of Good's Digital Equity conferences and hosting the Art of City Building.

Louise Adongo and Benny Welter-Nolan have recently published [a blog series highlighting some of the challenges they have identified in nonprofit leadership and governance](#). These challenges, the two note, lead to burnout and make the positions unsustainable and untenable, particularly for those from equity-deserving communities. They identified a co-leadership model as having potential to alleviate problems such as:

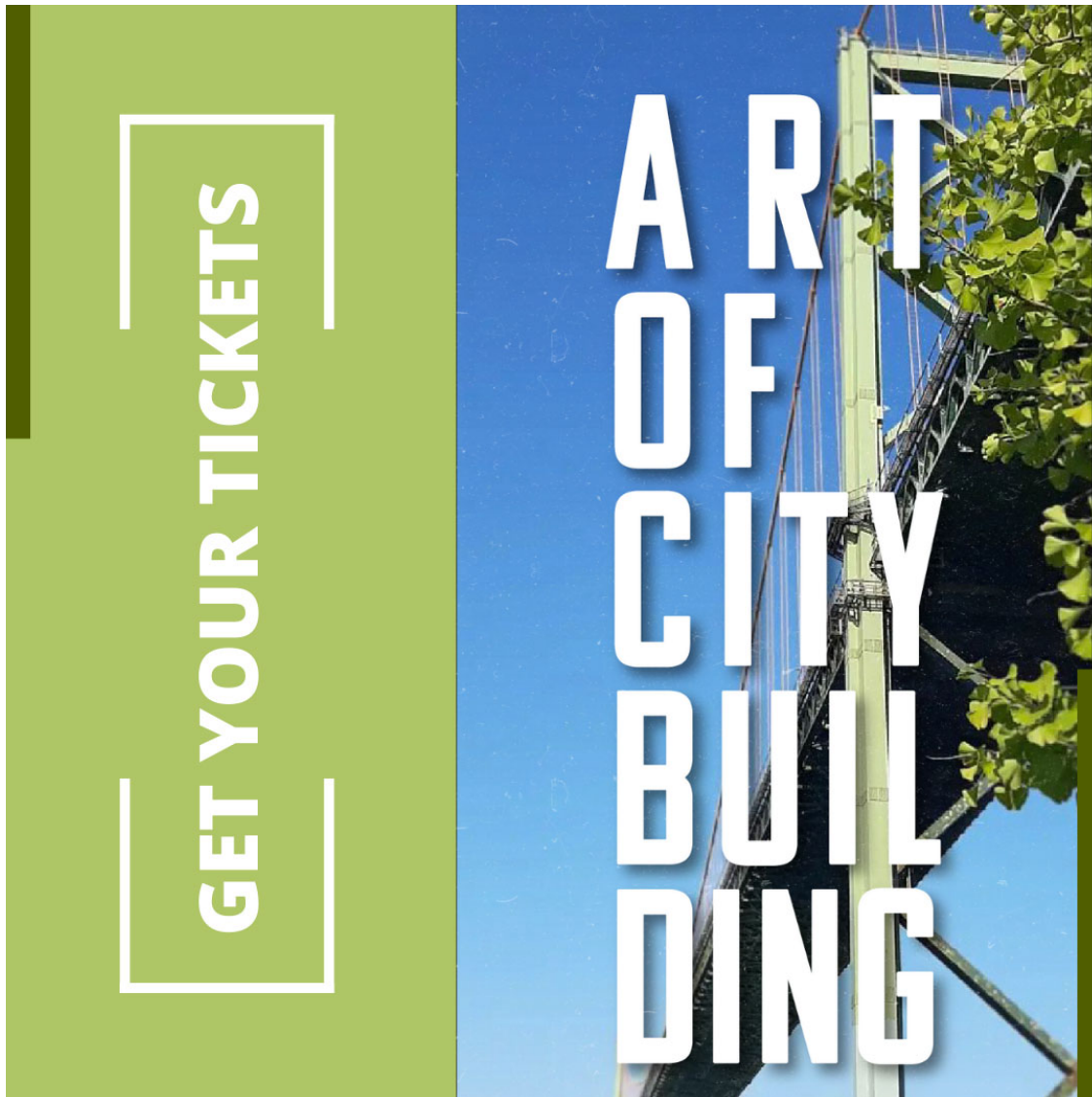
- Pressure from above and below, which results in leaders occupying a 'pinch point';
- Stepping away for recuperative time off being nearly impossible, particularly long stretches as with vacations or sick leave;
- Over reliance on a single leader to hold the organization's vision and their personality can disrupt an organization's culture and lead to instability;
- In the past, holders of these positions usually had financial, class and social personal support systems that a new generation of leaders often don't;
- All of these challenges are then magnified when a leader is a member of a BIPOC community.

Board Chair Mary Ellen Gurnham said, "Co-leadership aligns with Inspiring Communities' commitment to center equity in our work." She adds, "Our board and organization are committed to modelling alternatives to dominant colonial, hierarchical systems."

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Download our recent learning report, "High-Hanging Fruit"

## UPCOMING EVENTS



### ART OF CITY BUILDING: 2023 RE(DEFINE)

Join us on September 18<sup>th</sup> at Alderney Landing Theatre. This is our first year in beautiful downtown Dartmouth!

The annual Art of City Building conference aims to inspire residents, planners, thinkers, doers and dreamers from across Atlantic Canada and the world to

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Our theme this year is RE(DEFINE). Let's normalize collaboration and community participation in city development. What power dynamics & controls shape our urban landscapes? World-class speakers will help explore how to empower all residents and bring everyone's voice to the decision-making process.

Inspiring Communities is proud to be hosting this year's event, soon to be renamed to be more inclusive of all our communities!

**Learn more and get your free Art of City Building tickets now!**



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