The Canadian CED Network
Strengthening Canada's Communities

Advocacy 101
The Art of Advocacy
Presentation in Saskatoon
May 22, 2008
## Kirk Hall 146

Introduction

While rebuilding communities, CED practitioners must occasionally work with civil servants and elected officials to shape a public policy environment that strengthens communities and enables local action.

In this *introductory* workshop, participants will be introduced to a framework to guide their CED organization's advocacy efforts.
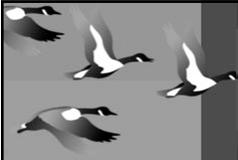
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Introduction

Agenda

- Welcome - Introductions
- What is Advocacy? What is not? Why is it important?
- Developing an Advocacy Strategy
- Case Study
- The Role of Partnership in Advocacy
- Advocacy Competencies

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Lobbying or Advocacy

Group Discussion

What is Advocacy?

What is not Advocacy?

Why is it important?

When do we do it?

Lobbying or Advocacy

Difference between Lobbying and Advocacy

Lobbying - lobbyists are defined as "individuals who are paid to communicate with federal public office holders in an attempt to influence government decisions". (Lobbyists Registration Act)

There are 3 categories of lobbyist each with its own filing requirements:

- consultant lobbyists;
- in-house lobbyists (corporate); and
- in-house lobbyists (organizations).

Lobbying or Advocacy

Difference between Lobbying and Advocacy

Advocacy - an advocate is someone who speaks up for others. The advocate may be an individual or an organization. Advocacy involves identifying, embracing and promoting a cause. Advocacy is an effort to shape public perception or to affect change that may or may not require legislation.

Lobbying or Advocacy

Can charitable groups lobby or advocate?

YES

While non-profits are not allowed to engage in "political activity" (like endorsing a candidate or political party), they are allowed to advocate for their cause.

Lobbying or Advocacy

A charity may make the public aware of its position on an issue provided:

- it does not explicitly connect its views to any political party or candidate for public office;
- the issue is connected to its purpose;
- its views are based on a well-reasoned position;
- public awareness campaigns do not become the charity's primary activity.

See Customs and Revenue Act (CRA) for guidelines for
Registered Charity Advocacy

Advocacy Checklist

Developing an Advocacy Strategy

Identify issue - what is your concern, problem or focus?

Set goals - what is your objective? What outcomes are acceptable and what alternatives are acceptable to the membership?

Advocacy Checklist

Developing an Advocacy Strategy

Research and get facts - facts make your argument more credible. Avoid anecdotes.

Determine your target audiences - with whom are you trying to communicate? Elected officials, public servants, media, public or membership?

Advocacy Checklist

Developing an Advocacy Strategy

Develop a formal position - develop statements, key messages, brief or scientific paper.

Develop tactical action plan - timelines, activities and assignment of responsibilities.

Advocacy Checklist

Developing an Advocacy Strategy

Communicate with your target audience - inform your target audience of your concerns. Establish communications and begin developing relationship.

Consult your membership - continue to seek input from your membership and involve your membership in the process.

Advocacy Checklist

Developing an Advocacy Strategy

Keep your membership informed - inform members of your progress along the way.

Build coalitions - look to develop relationships with organizations of common interest. Share information or join in more formal coalitions.

Advocacy Checklist

Developing an Advocacy Strategy

Review Campaign - make adjustments where necessary.

Feedback - seek feedback from members, media, public, officials. They can be good indicators of your future success.

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Case Study

CCEDNet Case Study

Case Study
- Review of CCEDNet's Communities Agenda

In small groups discuss the document
- Report back on what works well and what
  does not

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Grassroots Advocacy

Where do we fit in?

Grassroots members can play a key role in
advancing an organization's goals by
interacting with elected officials directly.
More importantly, organizations can
facilitate such meetings by establishing
grassroots advocacy programs.

Grassroots Advocacy

Keys to Success

- Effective advocacy relies on membership involvement.

- Grassroots communication of concerns has the greatest impact on local politicians.

- Broad-based communication will be more effective if it supports a central message.

Grassroots Advocacy

Keys to Success

- Using originality serves to break through the clutter.

- A sustained and coordinated approach managed centrally but applied locally is effective.

Grassroots Advocacy

Keys to Success

- Personalized approaches to political leaders works best. Real people explaining real concerns.

- Feedback to your organization following member letters and visits is critical.

Grassroots Advocacy

What doesn't work?

- Contact that looks purely bought and paid for, i.e. professional rather than grassroots;
- A confrontational style that harasses or insults politicians;
- Members who are under-informed or are speaking to issues without conviction;
- Providing members with tools that make them look like wound-up robots.

Partnerships

Building Coalitions

- Do the potential partners have a shared vision and shared goals? It is important to define success and get all the coalition players to sign-on to this definition before embarking on a coalition.

- Can the partners agree upon a workable advocacy plan?

Partnerships

Building Coalitions

- Are cost-sharing agreements clear and explicit? Many coalitions waste time and energy fighting over cost allocations that should be agreed upon as early as possible.

- Can the coalition partners take small workable steps in the early stage? By focussing on immediate action, coalitions can more easily demonstrate success to all the partners and ultimately help sustain the coalition in the long run.

Partnerships

Building Coalitions

- Do the partners have an exit strategy? Each organization should know under what terms and conditions it would abandon the coalition. An organization should also have plans to exit the coalition when it has achieved all of its goals.

Advocacy Competencies

- Develop an advocacy strategy.

- Select an effective spokesperson:
  - who is confident and has strong public speaking skills;
  - is knowledgeable of the issues, both internally and externally and appears trust worthy;
  - has the authority to speak on behalf of the organization and its members;
  - who is bilingual if possible.

Advocacy Competencies

- Develop a position using:
  - membership questionnaires;
  - issue specific committees;
  - contingency plans.

- Prepare a brief:
  - addressed to reach multiple audiences;
  - using facts, figures, case studies;
  - with an executive summary;
  - that avoids being negative.

Advocacy Competencies

- Make the most of technology:
  - to research a particular position;
  - monitor government positions;
  - organize, mobilize, and communicate with members;
  - to promote a viewpoint, attract supporters and organize campaigns.

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Resources

- The Art of Advocacy Handbook - A Handbook for Non-Profit Organizations
  http://www.ccednet-rcdec.ca

- A Guide to Government Relations for Directors of Not-for-Profit Organizations - Canadian Society of Association Executives
  http://www.csae.com

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Thank you

For more information on our activities and membership, please visit our website:

www.ccednet-rcdec.ca