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Foreword

The Advanced Diploma in Sustainability for the Third Sector (ADSITS) launched in November 2011 was one of the first programmes to kick-start the capacity building agenda for the Third Sector in Northern Ireland. The ADSITS is supported by Atlantic Philanthropies, Charity Bank, Big Lottery and the Building Change Trust in collaboration with its delivery partner - the Ulster Business School.

The programme was specifically designed for those practicing or aspiring managers and leaders who want to make change happen within the third sector. In doing so, they will play a key role in taking the sector to the next level in terms of enhanced strategic, financial, procurement, social impact measurement, advocacy and stakeholder marketing management capability as well as making their organisations sustainable.

Developing advocacy skills and capability is an integral part of the programme and the case studies profiled in this publication have been written by our current and past students of this practically orientated management development programme who set off on a voyage of shared learning and self-discovery which they very candidly share in this publication. They embraced the learning, worked through the challenges of the work based assignments and supported each other each step of the way. This advocacy publication is in itself an example of their hard-work and dedication to the Third Sector and to the programme.

On behalf of the Programme Partners – Atlantic Philanthropies, Charity Bank, Big Lottery and the Building Change Trust I would like to congratulate our Advanced Diploma in Sustainability for the Third Sector class of 2013 and our class of 2014 scheduled to graduate in July. We hope that their example will inspire more managers and leaders to avail of the opportunities afforded by this programme.

I would also like to thank Nancy Brown who has worked meticulously with the students and was instrumental in the design and creation of this publication.

Course Director

Janette Sheerman

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Overview of Advocacy

There are many different forms of advocacy and definitions vary. This publication focuses specifically on organisational advocacy and captures the advocacy work of 8 different third sector organisations in Northern Ireland (NI). A third sector organisation is defined as:

“A range of institutions which occupy the space between the state and the private sector. These include small community and voluntary groups, registered charities both large and small, foundations, trusts and the growing number of social enterprises and cooperatives.”

PwC recently completed research into the Third Sector in NI on behalf of DETI. They found that there were 3,821 Third Sector organisations in NI of which 3,348 (88%) were community and voluntary and 473 (12%) were social enterprises. The most common primary purpose identified for third sector organisations were community development, education and training. The three main goals characterising third sector organisations identified in the research included:

- To enhance communities
- To help people into employment
- To help improve the environment

Advocacy research is intended to assist in advocacy practice, for example to assemble and use information and resources to bring about improvements in people’s lives. This publication show cases 8 third sector organisations whose primary purpose is the provision of services, either directly or indirectly and who are engaged in significant advocacy work. It is important to establish the analytical differences between advocacy and service delivery:

‘Advocacy focuses on changing policies and securing collective goods, whereas service delivery creates divisible or individual benefits and may be provided without actual changes in policy’ (Jenkins, 1987: 297).

The activities of some of these organisations are restricted almost entirely to service-provision, often with a specific clientele and/or highly specialised services, with only a nominal advocacy role.

Advocacy goals of participating organisations in this publication are varied, but all strive to make a difference in the lives of their stakeholders. Goals include: raising the profile of an issue, providing for the needs of a particular segment of the community, protecting citizens from physical or economic harm, or steming a disease before it becomes epidemic.

This publication provides the reader with a background profile of each organisation, a case study on a specific advocacy activity, the aims, advocacy tools and approach, and highlights successes.

Advocacy themes include:

- **Research and Dissemination**: credible and robust research to raise the profile of the problem and explain the impact of a policy or condition on individuals, communities or a region/country
- **Raising Awareness**: increasing public consciousness about the nature and extent of the problem through: communications campaigns, media, speeches to influential audiences, public testimony before legislative bodies, regulatory bodies and commissions
- **Community Organising**: helping those at the local level to organise on their own behalf to voice their concerns and promote their own interests
- **Grassroots Mobilisation**: demonstrating broad-based public support for specific policy change by mobilising membership organisations, coalitions and others to contact elected officials and their staff or to generate greater public awareness of an issue
- **Building Capacity**: Supporting the development of the staff, infrastructure and membership of advocacy organisations. Providing core support over an extended period of time enables advocacy groups to build towards more effective efforts in the future
- **Policy Development**: Developing policy options can aid change by providing advocates, legislators and others with credible suggestions for solving problems. A specific policy suggestion can give focus to a campaign for change and provide supporters with a goal to rally around. Working with government to draft legislative proposals and to implement specific proposals
- **Lobbying**: Support for legislative changes or balloting initiatives to support social change
- **Litigation**: Taking legal action to achieve desired changes or fight undesired policies and practices. Litigation may be linked to other kinds of advocacy to ensure that court decisions are implemented vigorously
- **Electoral activity**: Encouraging more involvement in electoral activity by specific groups (e.g. young people) and general voter mobilisation, educating the public on public interest issues

Northern Ireland is a unique environment where politicians and government officials are more easily accessible than in other parts of Ireland and the UK. There is also a strong desire to collaborate and to build networks for the greater cause. The third sector continually push to advocate for their stakeholders to give them more opportunities and to have their voice heard. Whilst these case studies below are varied they all have similar characteristics that made their advocacy examples successful – addressing issues that their stakeholders have identified, empowering stakeholders to be engaged in making a difference and having their voice heard, leveraging the political environment, using messages that are meaningful and highlight the issues in order to create change.
Speedwell Trust: Diversity & Drums

Background
Speedwell Trust has been delivering cross community/good relations projects to schools in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties since 1991. Within a divided society Speedwell nurtures a philosophy of giving children the opportunity to learn about each other’s traditions, understand and respect their differences and recognise the values that they hold in common. It is a participative approach founded in learning environments where the ‘normality’ of crossing inter-cultural barriers becomes a routine element of school (and beyond school) life.

Speedwell Trust have been involved in a PEACE III EU funded Cultural Identity and Diversity Awareness Programme – “Diversity and Drums” to increase awareness and acceptance of diversity and cultural identity differences. The programme involved 10 primary schools and 250 children aged 9 to 11 years across the Lisburn-Castlereagh cluster area. The need for this project is necessary due to: children being educated separately, lack of provision and opportunity in the Lisburn/Castlereagh area to allow children to engage with children, teachers and parents from different sectors/cultural backgrounds to build relationships with others. An educational teaching resource for teaching staff was also developed as part of this programme.

Aims
- To have a positive impact on behavioural patterns resulting in reduced levels of sectarianism and racism within local communities
- To allow parents and school communities to come together thus increasing community cohesion and increasing respect, trust and tolerance within and between communities
- To assist teachers to become more confident about dealing with sensitive issues in Northern Ireland.
- To develop good relations in the community through an vision of a shared and equitable society
- To encourage children, their parents and associated primary school staff to become more understanding, tolerant and inclusive towards those from different cultural or religious backgrounds

Tools and Approach
Speedwell utilised the following tools: Raising Awareness by increasing awareness of the issues of diversity and Building Capacity by supporting the infrastructure of collaborative learning and cultural openness within their community. After sending a flyer to all 60 primary schools in the Lisburn/Castlereagh council areas, 28 schools expressed an interest in participating in the project – 10 schools were selected.

The outputs of the project included:
- 250 children from 10 schools participated in 6 individual workshops of joint programmes of activities
- 10 schools from controlled, maintained and integrated sectors joined together with a partner school to participate in shared activities which explored diversity in their community
- 27 workshops were facilitated by Speedwell staff and Joe Loughlin from the Gathering Drum
- 5 community events took place where children from both schools showcased their learning for their parents and the wider school community
- 10 teachers from each school participated in a teacher training workshop and accessed an education thematic unit which focuses on diversity issues
- The PSNI provided support in the delivery of the programmes
Advocacy Success

The Diversity and Drums project was evaluated internally through the collection of statistics of participants’ pre, during and post project behavioural patterns. This included evaluations by teachers, principals and students throughout the different stages of the project.

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“I’ve been teaching for 10 years and this has been the most valuable and meaningful project I’ve ever been involved in. The fact it took place over a period of months meant that the children had time to reflect on each day.” “I asked the children to state their favourite parts of the project and I noticed a large number of boys said the PSNI visit was their favourite part of the project. They said they liked to meet ‘real’ police officers.” “The children loved the project and coming from ‘sheltered’ backgrounds were exposed due to the contents of the programme re. the diversity that exists within our society.”
Positive Futures: Planning for a Better Future

Background
Across Northern Ireland, many older parents/carers of people with a learning disability, autistic spectrum disorder or acquired brain injury are coping alone with their greatest fear – that they will die before the adult child they care for. Positive Futures has established a pioneering project to support them and to advocate on their behalf.

Our ‘Careful Plans’ Report (2010) found that the majority of older carers described their caring duties as ‘non-stop’. They also feel isolated and have physical health problems and emotional stress associated with caring. Most are worried about the future, have little support to plan for that future. Despite the obvious need, there are no dedicated community based support services for older carers in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland has a higher proportion of people with a learning disability living in the family home and cared for by an ageing family member than anywhere else in the UK or Ireland. Most family carers are mothers trying to cope alone. Ageing fathers are more likely to take on the caring role later in life when their wife dies, which brings a different set of challenges.

Positive Futures is the lead partner for the Better Futures project, which is a three year project run in partnership with the South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust (SEHSCT), Carers NI, Age NI, Lisburn Carers’ Forum on Learning Disability, University of Ulster and Dame Philippa Russell, Chair of the Standing Commission on Carers. It will operate in Lisburn, North Down and Ards and support 90 carers over the age of 60. It’s hoped that ultimately it will contribute to the development of better services for older carers, locally, nationally and internationally. The Big Lottery supported programme is helping people plan for the future and make provision for their loved ones.

Aims
• Improve physical and mental health
• Increase social inclusion and more community connectedness
• Promote coping and resilience
• Develop new thinking and models of services for older carers and their families

Tools and Approach
Positive Futures are using a number of tools including community organising for the older carers, raising awareness of the issues and building capacity. For every carer referred to the project, home visits are undertaken to establish the needs of the carer and their son/ daughter with a learning disability. On the basis of this work, individualised person-centred support is provided:

• Access to practical advice and emotional support through regular home visits
• Completion of ‘How Best to Support Our Family’ plans and, where required, individual support plans for the adult with a learning disability
• Completion of a ‘Message in a Bottle’ (storing and retaining emergency information in a hard copy format and on a waterproof memory stick kept in a bottle in the family home and/or in other locations e.g. cars)
• For those carers physically and emotionally able to undertake more detailed planning, work is underway to complete comprehensive ‘Better Futures’ plans that provide activities to plan support over an extended period of time including: practical support, emergency support and preparation for the future
• Provision of individualised, person-centred support for carers. This support includes short-term crisis support (often linked to significant medical/ health challenges or planned support following surgery or medical procedures) which has included emotional support, advocacy and practical support with everyday tasks such as shopping, ironing and attending medical appointments. Also support has included discrete periods of “respite breaks” to enable carers to become involved in social, community and training activities
• Provision of regular support for adults with a learning disability to enable carers to access Project activities, events and training
• Provision of 3 COSY (Carers Over Sixty) personal development programmes delivered by MeUnltd: The personal development programmes include individual mentoring and access to an on-going programme of activities to promote health, well-being and mutual support from other carers
• Programme of group training events and activities for carers to provide practical support and access to local resources for carers and their families (including sessions from PSNI, Fire and Rescue, Benefits and Legal Issues)
• Provision of individualised training and support (e.g. IT, manual handling) for more isolated or hard to reach carers who cannot access group training activities and events
Advocacy Success

The full impact of the advocacy aspect of Better Futures will not be known until the initial Big Lottery-funded project ends in 2015. We will measure its success by the influence it has had on health and social care providers to establish similar projects with statutory funding. However, we are already seeing other benefits. The project has helped strengthen our links with MLAs and councillors. This lays the foundations for further advocacy work on behalf of those we support. A launch in the Long Gallery at Stormont attracted the attention of many Assembly members and the issue has been brought to the attention of the All Party Group on Learning Disability. One of those benefiting from the support of Better Futures is John Powell, who has cared for his daughter Jacqueline since birth. Jacqueline (51) has problems with her balance and speech and has a learning disability. John, who is 82, lost his wife, Winnie, two years ago. Since then he has had sole responsibility for Jacqueline.

“Until Better Futures came along, most of the time we couldn’t go out of the house,” he says. “If Jacqueline needed to go to the bathroom, I had to ask a stranger to take her. It was easier not to go out at all. Apart from that, I’m not as fit as I used to be. . . I also have problems with all the forms we need to fill in. It’s hard coping with everything alone. Better Futures has made a huge difference.”

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Include Youth: Policy Advocacy Project

Background

Include Youth’s (IY) Policy Advocacy Project is funded by Atlantic Philanthropies. The creation of the project was accompanied by significant change, most importantly the establishment of a policy staff team for the first time in IY’s history. Include Youth’s wanted to change policy in regards to Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) so that it was accessible to more young people. This Policy Advocacy Project has significantly impacted on policy decisions in the areas of youth employability.

Aims

- To change policy in regards to Education Maintenance Allowance opening it up to prevocational
- Empower young people to have advocate government to take action to make a difference in regards to legislation and issues that impact them

Tools and Approach

Those involved directly in the development of policy in this area stated that Include Youth (IY) played a crucial role not only in placing and keeping the issue of EMA on the agenda, but also in providing support and information to MLAs on the NI Assembly’s Employment and Learning (EL) Committee. IY was an important conduit between Department officials and the Assembly in relation the development of realistic options for the introduction of a training allowance. As one interviewee said, the fact that IY briefed MLAs regularly meant that the work could progress quicker and that the EL Committee was well prepared to consider all the available options.

Those who worked with IY on the issue of EMA/Training allowance were clear that the organisation built and then capitalised on cross-party support for an introduction of financial support to young people on pre-vocational schemes. The organisation seized the political opportunity created by the debate around the needs of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET), and brought the issue to the attention of political representatives. One interviewee said that IY ‘were there from the very start’ and constructively used their influence with the EL Committee in particular to ‘focus’ the minds of DEL officials to seek solutions even if the possibility of the original EMA eligibility criteria being extended was limited. Another described IY’s lobbying on the issue as ‘super-efficient’, targeting all relevant actors in equal measure (MLAs, department officials, the Minister for Employment and Learning).

The direct involvement of young people affected by the lack of financial support when taking part on pre-vocational schemes (such as the Give and Take Scheme) in a letter writing campaign created the most important impact in the lobbying strategy by making the issues ‘real’ for decision-makers. The work of IY’s regional offices was also praised for building support for the introduction of the training allowance on a constituency level. Thanks to the contact with young people, MLAs were able to place the issue on the agenda as part of their constituency business which significantly impacted on their engagement with the EL Committee and in Assembly debates.

Advocacy Success

While the lobbying involved working with external partners, including those on the NEETs Forum, the success in relation to the introduction of the training allowance can be attributed to IY’s work. IY has become ‘a go-to organisation when it comes to youth employability issues’. IY’s work on the extension of the EMA/introduction of the training allowance was lobbying at its best. The combined strategy of selecting an issue of direct concern to young people, the letter writing campaign, work with MLAs on Assembly motions and Assembly questions, provision of evidence to and gaining the support of the EL Committee, production of briefing papers, researching and outlining options from other jurisdictions, co-ordinated work with Department officials and political representatives, kept the issue on the political agenda when it was possible to build cross-party support.

The organisation’s success in positively influencing the policy agenda is largely based on its ability to facilitate the views of young people being heard through its policy submissions and through direct engagement of young people with decision makers. Young people’s experiences form a sound evidential base on which to build both the responses to government policy initiatives and the pro-active placing of issues on policy agenda in the future.

Interviews with young people showed that those in the community really enjoyed working with the project, and especially appreciated direct engagement with government decision-makers. Young people felt that it was important to put their points across, and although understanding that change may take time, were very keen to engage in policy and lobbying activities in order to create change for themselves and others. Young people also considered it was important to learn about their own rights through the project.
Over the nearly three years since the establishment of the Policy Advocacy Project, IY has considerably enhanced its already strong position and increased its level of engagement with core policy makers and the media. The strategic engagement of young people and IY practice staff with decision-makers, has been core to the impact the organisation’s lobbying and public awareness activities have had in that time. IY was fundamental to the success of initiatives such as the introduction of the Training Allowance.

Note: The evaluation of Include Youth’s policy advocacy work was complete by Linda Moore and Agnieszka Martynowicz from the University of Ulster.

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“I enjoyed working on this project. It was interesting to see how government works and it allowed us to make a real difference. It is important for government to know what we care about and not to think we are all just hoods. This made us aware of our own rights and that we need to stand up for ourselves. No one will know what we want if we do not speak up.”
RNIB: ‘This is Working’ campaign

Background
The RNIB NI Employment Service provides work preparation support to blind and partially sighted people who are looking for work and mentoring and advice to people who are in employment and experiencing difficulty due to sight loss. A key element in the success of getting blind and partially sighted people into employment and keeping them in work is through effectively engaging with employers. RNIB have facilitated a number of ‘employer engagement’ events where local employers had the opportunity to meet blind and partially sighted people who are in employment and learn about how they do their jobs.

Through these events, RNIB gained a clear insight into the main concerns that employers have in the recruitment of blind and partially sighted people. Employer feedback from the events also told us that employers valued the opportunity to hear first-hand from blind and partially sighted people at these events about how they do their jobs. They also got answers and solutions to the concerns that they raised from the blind and partially sighted people themselves. Employers feel that whilst there is an abundance of information in circulation about disability support agencies, there are not enough actual case examples of success stories by disabled people themselves.

We identified the need for a clear message to go out to people about the ‘success stories’ that exist in relation to employment and sight loss. We know that many people find it extremely stressful to admit to an employer that they are struggling in their work because of deterioration in their sight. However, once people find out about the support that is available it becomes a lot easier to have that conversation with an employer. Unfortunately, so many people still do not know that there is support available and continue to struggle to do their job. The creation of the publication ‘This is Working’, we felt, was the most effective way of communicating this important message.

Aims
- Increase the number of blind and partially sighted people who get into employment
- Reduce the number of people who give up work due to sight loss

Tools and Approach
The publication will tell the story of 11 blind and partially sighted men and women who are working in a wide range of jobs, supporting themselves and their families, contributing to their employer’s success and using their energies and talents to further the wealth and well-being of our society. Through reading the stories we want employers and blind and partially sighted people to learn how the challenges of sight loss can be overcome. We want employers to understand the key role that they play in the recruitment and retention of blind and partially sighted people in employment but to know that they are not alone in doing this and that there is help available to support them.

In order to identify the 11 people who feature in our ‘This is Working’ publication, we had to analyse our case load of blind and partially sighted people who have used our employment service either to find or stay in employment. So as to communicate as broad a message as possible, we chose people doing a range of jobs with varying levels of sight loss. The stories have been written as personal accounts and use everyday language. We did not want to focus too much on the diagnosis of sight loss and the medical jargon connected with it. The content is more focused on the ‘functional’ aspects of someone’s eye condition, i.e. how sight loss affects how they do their job. Each case example is no more than two pages long so as to avoid bombarding people with too much information and also to allow people to dip in and out of the booklet. Photos were used to personalise the stories and the direct quotes from employers and employees emphasise the points made and add credibility to the stories.

Advocacy Success
The publication was launched at an event at BT’s Riverside Tower, Lanyon Place, Belfast, on Thursday 26 September 2013. Winner of The VoiceUK, Andrea Begley who is featured in the booklet, spoke of her time working in the Civil Service and the visual awareness training her colleagues received from RNIB NI. She also outlined how RNIB NI came to her workplace and assessed what technology and equipment would enable her to undertake her job. Andrea’s former employer Stephen Galway, Assistant Director of Primary Care, spoke on behalf of the Department of Health and Social Services Public Safety (DHSSPS) on how the challenges of sight loss can be overcome in the workplace.
The minister for Employment and Learning, Dr Stephen Farry also attended the event and said:

“The personal stories about blind and partially sighted people’s experience of the world of work contained within this publication can act as inspiration and catalyst for both people with a disability and employers alike. This IS working in Northern Ireland shows how the challenges of sight loss can be overcome in the workplace. It also explains how employers can play their part in providing equal opportunities in the job market and details the resources and support available to employers and to blind and partially sighted job seekers.”

The launch was followed up by a presentation to the DEL Committee at Stormont in October 2013 by the RNIB Employment team on the key messages contained in the publication and requested assistance from the government representatives on the committee in moving more people with sight loss into employment.

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Employers Experience - Paul McAuley, Andrea Begley’s line manager
“Since arriving in the Department, Andrea has been like a breath of fresh air. Each task she is set is dealt with a willingness and enthusiasm that is both refreshing and inspiring. Her sight impairment holds her back in no shape or form; she is confident, independent and outgoing and is an important and invaluable member of the team.”

Annmarie, Sam Bowers’ line manager
“Working closely with the RNIB employment officer, HR and line management, any apprehensions or issues were looked at, discussed and solutions found. IT equipment required due to his sight impairment to allow him to carry out his office duties was identified and purchased, resulting in Sam becoming a fully competent member of the team.”

Experience of blind and partially sighted employees:
‘Prior to starting my job, RNIB came out to meet with me and assessed what technology and equipment would enable me to do my job.’ Andrea Begley

‘NI Water has been incredibly supportive over the last three years... one of doom and gloom, but thanks to a supportive employer, I can honestly say that it wasn’t.’ Sam Bowers, NI Water.”
Brook NI: Never on a Sunday

Background

Brook NI was established in 1992 to provide sexual health services to young people. This came about as a result of the high rates of birth amongst young people and the lack of provision in meeting their needs in terms of their sexual health. A major conference was held in March 1991 examining the issues facing young people in accessing sexual health services and the high rates of teenage pregnancies. As a result of this a list of recommendations were put forward one of which was for the establishment of a dedicated young person’s clinic service.

In the early 90s the thought of sexual health services for young people were viewed with distain, repulsion and vehement opposition. However, given the rising rates of teenage pregnancy in NI, the then Director of Public Health, Dr Gabriel Scally, had recommended in his second Annual Report that action needed to be taken to help young people avoid unplanned pregnancies. He invited Brook to open and was convinced after the barrage of criticism that not only would Brook help young people but that it was also important that as a society ‘...we could not afford to lose what became a highly publicised and polarised battle.’

At the time of opening, Brook NI was called the Belfast Brook Advisory Centre and ran two clinic sessions per week. A judicial review was instigated by a Medico-Legal Group on the process used by the Eastern Health and Social Services Board (EHSSB) to invite Brook to open in NI. In the midst of this vitriolic conservative response the media played an important role in raising and maintaining the issue of young people’s sexual health. So much so that there was no need to advertise the service as everyone was talking about it. Young people slowly began to work their way through the pickets or wait until the pickets had gone to access the building. Very early on in the life of Brook NI the targets set by the then Eastern Health and Social Services Board were met.

Brook NI works on a needs led rights approach incorporating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Aims

• To increase access to sexual education and sexual health services to young people
• To open the Brook NI clinic 7 days a week

Approach and Tools

In terms of establishing the service the initial steering group had played a campaigning role, raising the awareness of the needs of young people, using information and research from other countries, in particular Scandinavian research, ensuring broad based support and appearing in the local media, TV and radio.

Once the centre was open and numbers were coming in the door the next phase began which concentrated on three aspects: services, organisation and advocacy. Brook NI always intended to expand the clinic service provision and during the following decade the emphasis was on continuing to build capacity within the organisation, become involved in the policy work of the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety, for the Director to become the spokesperson for Brook, to influence policy at a local Health and Social Care Trust level, to work with all sections of the community in dispelling the myths around the service and working to meeting the sexual health needs of young people.

The main area of lobbying work was with MPs through the House of Commons, speaking at select committees and fringe meetings of the political parties. Visits to the Centre by local politicians, civil servants, health professionals and young people were within the strategic plan for the development of the service as well as encouraging MPs who had an interest in NI to visit, Lembit Opik (Liberal Democrat) being an early visitor.

Brook NI has always been at the cutting edge of sexual health issues and had raised the issue of Sunday opening during the development of the Teenage Pregnancy and Parenthood Strategy and Action Plan (2002-2007). This clinic service would be primarily to offer emergency contraception. Brook reacted by reassuring the commissioners that if money was available staff would be found. At the time when the EHSSB provided the funding that allowed Brook NI to open a session on Sundays the lead contact for the EHSSB was Alan Cowie. It was this relationship that was pivotal in the commissioning of the service.

Advocacy Success

When Brook NI contacted Alan Cowie to raise the issue of additional funding for the Sunday session, we were to an extent “pushing on an open door”. The Strategic Planning Group (within the EHSSB) tasked with identifying the sexual health needs of the resident population was well aware that the teenage pregnancy rate for the EHSSB area was the highest in NI and that there was a real need for young people to have access to a seven days per week emergency contraception service, amongst a range of other preventative services. Emergency contraception services were available six days per week at that time, albeit that on a Saturday they had to be accessed through the Royal Victoria Hospital.
After considerable debate, the EHSSB agreed the cost of the service. It was also agreed that the session would be referred to as the “seventh” session with Brook NI identifying the timing of the session to meet greatest need. The “seventh session” which Brook identified as the Sunday clinic opened in November 2003. The session proved to be popular, successful and continues to this day.

Brook NI had a strategic aim of opening seven days a week right from the start of the service provision. It took ten years to achieve this aim. The success of achieving this clinic, which in 1992 would have been viewed as scandalous and salacious, lies in the ability of Brook NI to nurture relationships, network, influence policy at all levels, use research and lobby effectively.

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“My friend told me it’s better to get the morning after pill as soon as you can so it’s good if you’re out on a Saturday night that you don’t have to wait until Monday to get it.”
Mencap: Stand by Me

Background

Mencap is a voluntary organisation which works alongside and represents the interests and views of people with a learning disability of all ages and their families.

In June 1999 Mencap produced a campaigns report into the bullying and harassment experienced by people with a learning disability including those living in Northern Ireland. The report contained accounts from people with a learning disability about the bullying and harassment they are subjected to regularly and often in a public place. This ranged from daily name-calling to threats and physical assault. The level of bullying and harassment was a shocking indication of the prejudice and discrimination faced by people with a learning disability in their local communities.

In 2004, when government proposals to introduce legislation in Northern Ireland to tackle hate crime failed to extend to disabled people, Mencap, RNIB, Disability Action and other organisations successfully lobbied the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee by presenting evidence and by facilitating a meeting between Committee members and disabled people in Northern Ireland. The government accepted the recommendation of the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee to extend the protections of the legislation on tackling hate crime to disabled people in NI.

In 2007 the Criminal Justice Inspection report drew attention to the low levels of reporting by disabled people and the difficulties faced by people with disabilities, such as people with a learning disability, in doing so.

In 2009, the Institute for Conflict Research carried out research into Community Safety and Hate Crime issues. Mencap provided advice on the approach and facilitated and supported people with a learning disability to take part in the research. In 2011 the Police Ombudsman’s Office for Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Policing Board produced research into the views and experiences of people with a learning disability of the police service in Northern Ireland. Mencap contributed as part of the advisory group set up to guide the research, advised on methodology, facilitated and supported the active involvement of people with a learning disability in the research itself and in the launch of the report.

Aims

• To raise awareness of the issue of harassment and bullying towards people with a learning disability
• Create links between people with a learning disability and local statutory agencies
• Create awareness of what supports are available for people with a learning disability

Tools and Approach

Mencap decided in 2011 to launch Stand by me – a targeted, high profile campaign to raise awareness of this often hidden and unreported crime and the long lasting and devastating impact of hate crime on how people with a learning disability live their lives. For the campaign in Northern Ireland, the recent devolution of policing and justice powers to the Assembly provided an important opportunity to highlight the issue and promote change.

As part of the campaign Mencap works with other organisations, such as Victim Support and other justice agencies. The formal launch of the campaign in 2011 has been followed by local public events, including a walk in Omagh attended by over 200 people from the local community, to raise awareness about the issue and create links between people with a learning disability and local agencies who can provide help if they are victims of hate crime and to provide opportunities for individuals to talk about their own experiences.

The campaign recognised the good work that was being carried out but argued that improvements were not going far enough or happening fast enough. In 2012, the campaign produced a research report highlighting examples of good practice across police services in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and to encourage improvement in service delivery and create awareness of how police services can stand by people with a learning disability.

One of the barriers that the campaign wished to challenge was the perception that for the victim this was a relatively trivial experience. The campaign also wanted to highlight that hate crime against people with disabilities may show some characteristics that are not evident in other type of hate crime such as the victim of the crime being befriended by the perpetrator, the victim usually being in an isolated situation, with few friends or social support networks as well as barriers in enjoying equal access to justice along with other groups. The campaign produced a booklet of real life stories to aid understanding of the crime and its impact on people with a learning disability.
Advocacy Success

In 2011 the NI Policing Board, Human Rights Annual Report made a number of recommendations to the PSNI on hate crime and learning disability. The Police Promise, asking police services to commit to 10 promises on tackling hate crime, was developed as part of the campaign and was signed by The Police Service of Northern Ireland in 2012.

PSNI have continued to progress implementation of the recommendations made in the NI Policing Board and Police Ombudsman’s research report such as the production of a leaflet to help officers to identify someone with a learning disability, training on disability, and disaggregation of the data it collects on disability to include a separate category of learning disability, looking at additional training on disability and agreement to fund a disability advocate to help disabled people who are victims of hate crime.

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“For 20 years, I have lived in fear of hate crime. Just because they see me as ‘different’, kids have spat at me, pushed and shoved me in the street. I don’t want to go on living in fear. I want to be able to go out, confident that I am not going to be attacked. I know this can happen but we need the police to take disability hate crime seriously. We need to make the government live up to its promises to listen and to act.”
Bóthar: 80 Goats for 80 Years

Background

Advocating on behalf of someone that is living thousands of miles away is difficult, advocating on behalf of thousands of people living thousands of miles away without knowing each and every individual story is more than difficult, but it is necessary. Bóthar advocates on behalf of families living in great poverty in the developing world, they educate people in Northern Ireland about the plight of the families living with poverty, in the hope that they will support Bóthar’s livestock projects which help families to help themselves out of poverty. Bóthar gives families in the developing world the gift of livestock; families are able to help themselves out of poverty through the sale of milk, cheese, eggs, honey. The project was launched in April 2010.

To advocate on behalf of families in the developing world Bóthar are telling their stories, educating people in NI about the plight which families face each day, not enough food to eat, unable to pay school fees, buy medicines, simple things that are taken for granted. Through telling their stories, such as the story of Beatrice Biira from Uganda, Bóthar is able to help people to help themselves out of poverty.

Beatrice lived in the village of Kinsinga outside Kampala, Uganda. When she was 9 her family received the gift of a goat from Bóthar. Beatrice was able to sell the milk and cheese; the family was able to earn a living for the first time. From this Beatrice attended school for the first time; she studied hard and went on to win a scholarship to university in Connecticut, USA. After graduation Beatrice completed an internship in Hilary Clinton’s office in New York, this all stemmed from the sale of goats’ milk!

In 2008 Bóthar opened a full time office in Northern Ireland with the aim of expanding the brand, raise awareness and raise funds for projects in the developing world. The secret to Bóthar’s success is that families who receive the gift of a goat for example must agree to pass on the first female off-spring to the next family in need. The staff in NI were inspired by Beatrice’s story and wanted to replicate this as much as possible.

To ensure the largest impact and greatest sustainable value for families in the developing world, Bóthar understood the need to undertake a large fundraising project. From research it was decided to approach the Young Farmers Clubs’ of Ulster in the run up to their 80th Anniversary celebrations. The project title is 80 Goats for 80 Years. The cost of placing a goat with a family including training, development and veterinary costs within the community in Uganda is £225. Bóthar’s proposal and aim of the project was to raise enough money to send 80 goats to Uganda to celebrate Young Farmers’ Clubs of Ulster’s 80th Anniversary.

Aims

• Raise enough money to send 80 goats to Uganda
• Raise £18,000 which would enable 80 families to get a hand up out of poverty.
• To increase awareness of Bothar’s work amongst the general public in Northern Ireland, and more especially the agricultural community.

‘Give a man a fish and feed him for a day, teach him to fish and feed him for the rest of his life’

Approach and Tools

The advocacy tools used included: Research and Dissemination, Raising Awareness (communication campaigns, media, speeches), Community organising, Grassroots mobilisation and Building capacity.

In order to achieve the aims of the project, Bóthar was aware that to partner with an organisation with an excellent reputation and good ethnic values, would benefit the brand building and fundraising opportunity. Through research Bóthar staff saw that the Young Farmers Clubs’ of Ulster as the ideal organisation to partner with, they had the agricultural background, and their organisational structure allowed for information to be disseminate from presidential team to county representatives and to club members. YFCU are renowned for being very active and supportive of charitable causes.

Bóthar Northern Ireland Representative approached YFCU and was invited to pitch to their 80th Anniversary Committee. The pitch took place in form of a presentation and beneficiaries were clearly stated.

• Young Farmers Clubs of Ulster will benefit from good PR and team spirit raised through working together in the knowledge that they are changing families’ lives.
• Bóthar will benefit from much needed funds for the developing world, and from much needed PR in Northern Ireland.
• Most importantly 80 families who receive the 80 goats would benefit and more families through time will receive the gift of livestock through the passing on celebrations

After the pitch YFCU governing committee adopted the idea and the project was put in place. Firstly the information had to be disseminated amongst all members, this took place through county and club meetings and then Bóthar along with YFCU’s press team ensured media coverage, newspapers, online and radio. Bóthar staff assisted YFCU with fundraising ideas, resources and spoke at many individual club events around Northern Ireland.
Advocacy Success

The success of the project was measured by: press coverage, numbers participating in fundraising events and the funds raised. Bóthar exceeded its target of £18,000 and raised over £21,000 enabling 93 goats to be delivered to 93 families in the developing world! There was increased brand awareness evidenced by the press coverage achieved across the regional newspapers. Bóthar also recruited new donors and supporters, including corporate donations from Ulster Bank, via the Ulster Farmers’ Union.

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Sophia Namata - “When we look at our dairy goat with its kids, we see positive benefits in our family and the community (milk, income and pass on gift). This project of Bothar is a sustainable one to be engaged in.”
Age NI: We Agree

Background

Societies across the world are ageing, a fact which the United Nations has described as unprecedented, pervasive, profound and enduring. This transition is occurring in Northern Ireland currently and has significant implications for services and policies that affect not only older people, but our society as a whole.

In 2007, older people and the age sector prioritised the idea of establishing an Independent Older People’s Commissioner, with a primary role to safeguard and promote the rights and interests of older people as part of the sector’s manifesto for the 2007 Assembly Election Campaign. Through the sector’s campaign, all of the 5 main parties made some form of commitment to ‘explore’ or to ‘support’ the establishment of such an office in their manifestos. In December 2007, the First Minister and deputy First Minister announced their intention to bring forward legislation to establish an Office of Older People’s Commissioner. This announcement saw the commitment from Help the Aged in Northern Ireland, Age Concern Northern Ireland (later to merge in 2009 to become Age NI) and the Age Sector Platform, to develop and implement a 30 month campaign to ensure that the legislation was robust, and ensured the Office of the Commissioner had strong duties and powers in order to affect change. The campaign was supported with a grant from Atlantic Philanthropies.

Aims

• To raise awareness of the need for an Older People’s Commissioner and promote opportunities to get involved in campaigning and lobbying at grass roots level.
• To motivate engagement with, and public participation in campaigning and lobbying activity by providing enabling resources and actively promoting clear, easy to enact, calls to action.
• To have direct influence at policymaking level through carefully targeted briefings to decision makers and timely lobbying activity.
• To develop, support and enable a strong coalition of organisations in support of the campaign policy position for the purposes of strengthening the position, promoting the campaign agenda and demonstrating an authoritative, united campaign voice.

Advocacy Approach and Tools

It was anticipated that the campaign objectives could best be achieved by;

• Developing a strong policy position through research and engagement with sector stakeholders
• Building support across the sector (and beyond) for this position
• Building understanding among decision makers and securing their consensus
• Galvanising the campaign position by mobilising older people to demonstrate their support and lobby their elected representatives at critical stages
• Maintaining a close watch on developments and counteracting any potential challenges
• Continually building evidence to support and strengthen the campaign policy position
The advocacy undertaken through this campaign was aimed at securing a robust piece of legislation containing strong, and in some cases innovative powers and duties for the Office of Older People’s Commissioner.

A range of advocacy tools were deployed at different stages throughout the campaign, reflecting the different stages of the legislative development process.

Electoral activity: Electoral activity was crucial to building support of the political parties to include the issue of an Older People’s Commissioner within their manifestos for the 2007 Assembly election. This activity focused on working with older people to agree a platform for the election campaign and lobbying of parties and candidates.

Research and dissemination: A consultant was commissioned to scope up possible legal models for the Office of Commissioner, and to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each model against a set of criteria agreed by the age sector. This research considered the strengths and weakness of an Ombudsman model; an Advocate model; a Commissioner model; and an enhanced Commissioner model.

Policy Development: Using the research commissioned, the age organisations facilitated 4 roundtables with others in the voluntary sector to establish a single policy position, underpinned by evidence, of what the powers and duties of the Office of Commissioner should be. This activity was undertaken in the early stages of the campaign and the position agreed was presented to the Legislative team and acted as the foundation for all campaign activity.

Raising Awareness: This activity was undertaken throughout the duration of the campaign, and focused on different target groups, namely older people; older people’s groups; MLA’s; Political party members; voluntary organisations and members of the general public which was facilitated through publications, events, PR and face to face briefings.

Community organising & grassroots mobilisation: Working through the network of older people’s groups, a significant feature was to organise and mobilise older people, primarily on a constituency basis. This activity focused on letter writing and telephone calls to MLA’s constituency offices, as well as older people writing to local newspapers. A large number of older people participated in the public consultation events which were facilitated across Northern Ireland. Through the final stages of the legislative process, Committee scrutiny and Plenary debates, mass lobbying events were held in Stormont to ensure that older people met with MLA’s and represent their views.

Lobbying: Lobbying featured as a significant area of activity throughout the lifetime of the campaign. A range of lobbying targets were agreed and identified at the start of the campaign. Specifically, these targets focused on the Ministerial team at OFMdFM; members of the OFMdFM Committee who were responsible for scrutinising the legislation; and the Older Persons spokespeople from within each of the political parties. Lobbying was undertaken primarily through face to face meetings as well as through the dissemination of briefing materials.

Throughout the legislative process, some bodies began to present an analysis that empowering the Office of the Commissioner with robust powers and duties would in fact replicate the powers and duties of existing public bodies, and did not necessarily represent value for money. Against the emerging backdrop of austerity and public expenditure cuts, this argument became a significant feature of the political debate, and one which required strong evidence to counter. The sector organisations, working with older people, were able to present the Legislative Team at OFMdFM with a paper detailing a range of examples of issues experienced by older people where no existing public body had the powers to act. This evidence was significant in ensuring that the Committee of OFMdFM supported the strong powers and duties being proposed for the Office.

Advocacy Success

Age NI measures success in a range of different ways knowing that results may take a long period of time to achieve. In the case of this legislation, the age sector have promoted this ask since approximately 2004, with the first Commissioner being appointed in November 2011. In an effort to better evaluate the incremental changes that lead to a significant policy/legislative result, Age NI also look at monitoring outputs and outcomes focused on process and relationships. The data collated below seeks to outline the key success metrics that led to robust legislation being passed by the Northern Ireland Assembly.

The initial success of the preliminary campaigning on this issue resulted in a PfG Commitment to pass legislation in the Assembly by the end of the lifetime of the 2007 Assembly. In terms of the focused strand of influencing the development and passing of the legislation itself, key success metrics were:

- 95% of the Age Sector’s asks were contained in the powers and duties of the final legislation
- 68 representatives from voluntary sector organisations participated in 4 roundtable events focused on developing consensus with all organisations signing up to the position
- 79 print media articles and 8 broadcast media pieces (4 radio; 4 tv)
• 19,633 campaign materials disseminated to campaigners (postcards; campaigner’s booklet; promotional DVD; Q & A document; promotional magazine)
• 8 briefing papers targeting older campaigners were produced and 317 copies distributed to people attending the lobby events prior to key Committee meetings and Plenary debates.
• 2,784 older people from across Northern Ireland signed up to the campaign
• 120 organisations signed up to the campaign
• 77 people attended 3 campaign workshops
• 23 briefing papers were developed to target key decision makers at various points throughout the campaign. A total of 1,776 copies of these papers were disseminated
• 951 contacts with elected representatives (MLAs; MP’s and Councillors) were made across the lifetime of the campaign
• 235 contacts with public officials were made during the lifetime of the campaign.
• 3,536 older people were directly involved in supporting the campaign through campaign sign up; letter writing and acting as spokespeople

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