Community Organizing
Ideas | Challenges | Opportunities
Community Organizing: Issues, Challenges, Opportunities

Why build local organizing capacity?

Notes on organizing capacity in the U.S.

Looking back: 2004 Ford analysis

Looking forward: committing to expand our reach and capacity

AFC’s mobilizing program

Midwest AIDS Policy Alliance

Improving capacity: key issues

Discussion

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VP, Policy & Communications
AIDS Foundation of Chicago

Pfizer’s HIV/AIDS R&D Days
February 27-28, 2008
AIDS Foundation of Chicago (AFC)

MISSION: AFC's mission is to lead the fight against HIV/AIDS and improve the lives of people affected by the epidemic. We pursue our mission through:

Advocacy
Funding
Collaboration
What is community organizing?

**SOCIAL WORK TRADITION**

**A Culture of Participation**
- Develop leadership
- Improve skills, knowledge and ownership
- Help people advocate for themselves

**Inclusiveness**
- Draw members/leaders from the community
- Foster participation among groups that have been “absent from the table”

**Breadth of Mission and Vision**
- Work on diverse set of issue affecting the community
- Holistic

**Critical Perspective**
- Seek to change policies and institutions
- Promote institutional accountability and responsiveness
- Take a critical stance

**ISSUE ORGANIZING**

1. organize a coalition in support of the issue
2. develop a plan, a strategy and a timetable
3. anticipate your opponent’s objections
4. do not lie or mislead a policy-maker
5. **activate your grassroots support**
6. be ready to compromise
7. don’t forget to notice or thank anyone who has helped you
8. be ready to follow through
9. use the media
10. “when you are crossed politically, don’t get mad; get even” (Bobby Kennedy)

*Community Organizing Toolbox*
http://www.nfg.org/cotb/index.htm#toc

**TEN COMMANDMENTS OF LOBBYING & POLICY ADVOCACY** (prepared by Julie E. Hamos & Associates, October 1992)
Why Build Advocacy Capacity

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<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>FEDERAL</th>
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<td>- Medicaid policy</td>
<td>- Medicaid and Medicare</td>
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<td>- Healthcare reform</td>
<td>- National healthcare reform</td>
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<td>- Housing, prevention, corrections, human services expansion/reform</td>
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<td>- State HIV/AIDS investment</td>
<td>- Increased appropriations</td>
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<td>- Coordinated services</td>
<td>- Coordinated services</td>
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<td>- Responsive, rational and science-based AIDS policy and law</td>
<td>- Global AIDS investment</td>
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<td>- Anti-discrimination measures</td>
<td>- National AIDS Strategy</td>
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“New activists are not being developed.
The number of activists has substantially decreased over five years.”

Randy Tressler, MD
Pfizer, Director Specialty Markets HIV/AIDS

I used to think that we needed to mobilize a million people ... but maybe we just need to mobilize and better utilize our existing networks.
Observations on HIV/AIDS Community Organizing Capacity in the U.S.

Strong local programs are isolated to key cities and states.

Many parts of the country have little or no AIDS advocacy.

National organizations provide important leadership in distinct categories of work.

Better coordination between and among national and local groups is needed to expand organizing capacity.
“In early 2000, with the run-up to the presidential election, it became clear that the HIV/AIDS policy and advocacy movement was surprisingly subdued ... Through its uncharacteristic silence, it seemed as if the movement had somehow lost focus and potency.”

At the Crossroads: A Study of Federal HIV/AIDS Advocacy Institutions

Ford Foundation: May 2004

FINDINGS:

- Many groups conduct advocacy but on a narrow set of issues, particularly on areas of self interest (i.e. funding streams)
- Focus on categorical funding detracts from other priorities
- Specialization means little attention to constituencies such as Medicaid and welfare recipients, people at risk for HIV, marginalized groups
- Unclear whether FAPP can facilitate policy development, broker compromises, or build consensus
- Leadership is needed to inspire stakeholders on vision larger than individual groups/funding streams and negotiate broad consensus
Looking forward:
Committing to expanding our reach and capacity
AIDS Foundation of Chicago’s Community Organizing Program

- Maintain 3000+ member Statewide Advocacy Network
- Issue weekly action alerts and policy updates
- Plan annual Springfield lobby days
- Support IL participation in AIDSWatch
- Conduct policy/advocacy trainings and district visits
- Involve community members in development and implementation of annual priorities
- Lead gay men’s health, microbicides, and candidate engagement networks; expanding regional network
In 2005, AFC formed the Midwest AIDS Policy Alliance

- AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin*
- AIDS Network (Madison, WI)
- AIDS Task Force of Greater Cleveland
- Brothers Uplifting Brothers (Gary, IN)
- Community HIV/Hepatitis Advocates of Iowa Network (West Des Moines, IA)
- Damien Center (Indianapolis, IN)
- Doorways (St. Louis, MO)
- Heart of America Community AIDS Partnership (Kansas City, MO)
- HIV/AIDS Alliance of Michigan (Detroit)
- Minnesota AIDS Project (Minneapolis)
- Nebraska AIDS Project
- Ohio AIDS Coalition (Columbus, OH)
- STEP Up (Indianapolis, IN)
- University of Wisconsin (Madison, WI)

* New partner in 2008

**GOALS:**
- Develop statewide advocacy networks
- Spur advocacy on state issues
- Raise AIDS visibility in state capitols
- Support federal advocacy engagement

**ACTIVITIES:**
- Active listserv
- Quarterly conference calls
- Annual training session
- Information exchange
- Joint fundraising
Outcomes of MAPA Participants

**CHAIN in Des Moines**
- Secured nearly $1M in state funding for ADAP and HCV
- Linked PLWHA with nearly all presidential candidates

**MAP in Minneapolis**
- Secured $250K for prevention in immigrant communities
- Advanced comp sex ed bill

**HAAM in Detroit**
- Prevented HIV funding cuts

**IN, MO, WI advocated on**
- PEPFAR reauthorization
- Microbicide Development Act
- Early Treatment for HIV Act

**ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES:**
- MAPA supports and inspires but doesn’t do the work for partners
- Partners must define & implement their own advocacy plans
- Prioritize community engagement and develop active advocacy networks
- Focus first on state issues

**HOW MAPA HELPS SMALL GROUPS:**
- Help suggest and edit actions
- Establish context, relevance
- Inform on political considerations
- Make actions easy and quick
- Celebrate successes
- Support development of new ideas
Issues AFC is thinking about to improve capacity

2007 Illinois Lobby Day rally
Focusing on the human element

Black AIDS Institute
Cover of 2007 publication

Campaign to End AIDS
2005 caravans promotions

ACT UP
2004 Republican National Convention, New York City
Keep it simple

- Sound bites
- Simple language
- No jargon
- Limit acronyms

Messages people will remember and are likely to repeat
People are hungry to learn and contribute.

Input and education opportunities foster better prepared and more loyal advocates.

Working in coalition exposes other sectors to HIV/AIDS issues. Examples:

- Medicare Part D
- Food Stamps
- Housing
- Domestic violence
- Healthcare expansion
Here’s a sample script, but you should feel free to modify it:

“Hi, my name is _______ and I’m from ___(organization)___.

Today is Youth AIDS Day, and I’m calling to encourage Senator Lugar to work with Senator Biden to craft a bill to reauthorize the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. President Bush began this program in 2003, and it has been an immense success and must continue. But we need to make sure that we do the most good possible, and I hope Senator Lugar can support a bill that continues the progress President Bush started - the bill should include $50 billion over five years in funding, an end to the

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Measure metrics, set benchmarks, evaluate performance

Rate of AFC alerts opened:

**15-30%** (450-1000)

Rate that take action:

**2-4%** (30-120)

Better performance on:

- Tues-Thurs
- Mornings
- Clever subject lines
- Alerts related to:
  Bush, global, or sex

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Is anyone opening our emails and taking action?
Keep it fresh and fun

Pictures in alerts

Catchy subjects

Use humor
Eccentric sells

Generating our own news with:

- Blogs
- Streaming video
- Websites

No Bad News is Good News for Microbicides

Blog Category: HIV prevention, microbicides — Blogged by: Emily on February 21, 2008 at 9:41 am

Advocates for a new HIV prevention that would provide men and women with an alternative to condoms are reveling in our moment. The results of the first ever completed – not closed – microbicide trial of the product Carraguard are absorbing the trial’s results released today. The short answer to this study showed Carraguard, a microbicide derived from
For small agencies without dedicated policy staff, helping them select, edit and prioritize actions and alerts is enormously helpful.
Sustainability

Adequate and qualified staff

Policy and advocacy expertise

Trying new ideas

Software and systems

Information technology

Materials (signs, petitions, banners, ads, flyers, reports)

Staff travel (statewide and national)

Meeting costs (food, participant travel, equipment and supplies)
Discussion

- Do you have a process to evaluate your community organizing/engagement?

- Are you obtaining input from your constituents about your activities?

- With regard to community organizing, what’s working and what’s not?

- How might you help expand capacity for organizing and community mobilization in states and communities without visible advocacy or organizing capacity?
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