



NCVO Campaigning and Advocacy workstream

Impact report

Certificate in Campaigning summary

April 2008 to March 2011

Our partners:



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Background

At NCVO we use the word campaigning to embrace a range of activities including influencing, advocacy, direct action and raising issues in the media.

We define campaigning as the mobilisation of forces by organisations or individuals to influence others to make happen social, economic, environmental or political change. Whether trying to save a local community centre or lobbying national government, it is all campaigning and it's about creating change. Effective campaigns maximise impact by changing the policies or behaviours of, for example, institutions, local government and corporations.

In 2008 the Campaigning Effectiveness team at NCVO was appointed by Capacitybuilders, following a competitive process, to lead the *National Support Service for Campaigning and Advocacy* with funding of £1.8 million over three years.

Capacitybuilders identified the following shared outcomes across all the national support services in relation to third sector support organisations (also called infrastructure organisations), the primary beneficiaries of the programme:

- increased confidence
- increased knowledge and skills
- improved practice or changed behaviour, including increases in collaborative ways of working.

Our report draws on the findings of a formal evaluation conducted by Roehampton University in 2011 of the three national support services, and the national priority programme led by NCVO, together with a separate evaluation of Campaigning Effectiveness carried out by consultant Richard Bennett in 2010, and feedback from our partners and beneficiaries gathered through ongoing assessment and case studies.

This is a summary of the report which focuses on the key outcomes, impact and learning from the Certificate in Campaigning.



About Campaigning Effectiveness and NCVO

The Campaigning Effectiveness programme at NCVO was established in 2006 to support and empower people and organisations to make change happen through campaigning. We believe that campaigning is critical, not optional, to a healthy civil and democratic society.

What we do

We bring together experience and expertise and promote excellence in campaigning and policy work across civil society by developing and delivering education, training and support, events, knowledge, tools, resources and publications.

Certificate in Campaigning

During the grant period we established and ran four series of the Certificate in Campaigning, a flagship new course and the first of its kind for campaign and policy workers. During the grant period we succeeded in achieving degree level accreditation by the University of Roehampton. The 10 modules cover all aspects of good practice campaigning from applying the Freedom of Information Act to dealing with the Charity Commission and forging alliances with European and international organisations. It also offers tutorial support for participants developing their own campaign strategy.

In order to remove cost barriers to attendance, we made bursaries available for infrastructure and equalities organisations, providing much subsidised access to a highly intensive and effective intervention.

The course, which has been very well evaluated, attracted considerable repeat custom, i.e. after the initial experience, organisations enrolled more members of staff. These organisations included:

Leonard Cheshire Disability | National Autistic Society | RSPCA | Rethink | Citizens Advice | Guide Dogs | Breakthrough Breast Cancer

Participant feedback

- 93% of students on Series 6 and 100% of students on Series 5 said they felt the course had increased their confidence to campaign.

“I think it was probably the best and most useful course I have followed since my degree and I am sure I will use what I have learnt and develop better skills, for a long time to come.” Rosalind Moffitt, Certificate in Campaigning participant

“I am a very new ‘professional’ campaigner and found the NCVO campaigning course utterly invaluable. It takes complex projects and breaks them down into accessible chunks, is packed full of excellent practical tips and tricks and has introduced me to a community of friendly, supportive and encouraging peers and trainers. For a campaigner in a small organisation this really matters.” Amy Hailwood, Certificate in Campaigning participant

“Now I can consider collaborating on work on European and global levels. This now seems like a useful thing to do. We might extend our partnership working to a wider range of organisations.” Lucy Jaffé, acting chair of the Women’s Resource Centre, Certificate in Campaigning participant

“The course has helped me to think, from the start, about using our work to best effect. It will help us disseminate our work in a more focused way, and help other charities and organisations to understand and use what we do.” Dr Debi Roker, Co-director, Young People in Focus, Certificate in Campaigning participant

See **Appendix 1** for three in-depth case studies developed with Certificate in Campaigning participants.

Appendix 1

Certificate in Campaigning case studies (3)

Clear aims, buy-in, useful research vital for strong campaigning

NCVO certificate empowers with knowledge and skills

Is our research relevant? Are we using it properly? Can we really influence policy? These are the questions Lucy Jaffé, acting chair of the Women's Resource Centre, asks of her organisation and thanks to the Certificate in Campaigning course she now knows how to make any campaigning and advocacy efficient and effective.

"I am now aware of the elements needed to make a change and to influence policy and legislation. I know how the Women's Resource Centre might do that. The course has helped me to know how to use the knowledge I've got," says Lucy

The Women's Resource Centre supports 400 women's organisations in England to be more effective and sustainable by providing resources and training. The WRC also advocate for the women's sector at national level.

Lucy is participating in the 7th Certificate in Campaigning course run by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and accredited by the University of Roehampton. The course, launched four years ago, is the first of its kind for campaigning and policy professionals. It covers 10 one-day modules on key areas from governance best practice to dealing with the Charity Commission and forging alliances with European and international organisations. The course also offers tutorial support for participants developing their own campaign strategy.

The current course is attended by 18 students with campaigning, fund-raising or policy backgrounds. Previous courses have been attended by 15-20 participants.

Lucy, who is also an independent communications consultant, says that too often civil society groups conduct research which has a lot of recommendations but lacks a focused campaign plan, rendering it ineffective. The campaigning course has helped her clearly identify the aims and objectives of any project she undertakes by showing her how to engage and consult the relevant stakeholders.

One key example is the planning of a Strategy Day for the Women's Resource Centre where the organisation will develop its strategy for the next three years.

"We consulted the board, staff and members. We have considered their needs and viewpoints and also how we can involve them in the actual process," says Lucy.

"When it comes to research it has helped me to ask the question: are we making the best use of the research we do?" she adds. "How can we best influence policy makers to further the cause of women's organisations and how in turn can we advise them best how to lobby themselves." The NCVO course has increased her understanding and knowledge of the range of possibilities and models for achieving social and political change.

The course also encourages collaborative working in order to have a greater impact when it comes to campaigning. Lucy says that six months ago she would never have considered working with organisations outside of England.

"Now I can consider collaborating on work on European and global levels. This now seems like a useful thing to do. We might extend our partnership working to a wider range of organisations."

Campaigning course helps Brighton CVSF with strategic planning

NCVO certificate helps clarify civil society objectives

“When we think of campaigning there is a tendency to think of rallies and placard waving. But campaigning is not only about highly visible actions but also about finding out the best way to change something and working out who it is you most need to talk to,” says Katy McGrory, Communications Manager for Brighton and Hove Community and Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF).

Katy is participating in the 7th Certificate in Campaigning course run by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and accredited by the University of Roehampton. The course, launched four years ago, seeks to equip participants with the skills to more efficiently research issues and more effectively apply their knowledge to influence targeted individuals and bring about policy change.

Katy -- tasked with creating and implementing a strategic communications strategy for Brighton and Hove CVSF -- is not a campaign professional but she believes the course is valuable to anyone working with Civil Society groups who wants to learn about strategic planning and different routes that can be used to influence matters.

“We are fortunate in having a good working relationship with our local authority but it is also useful to look beyond them, to other people they work with, thereby identifying useful links and partnerships,” she says.

The course’s 10 one-day modules cover key areas from governance best practice to applying the Freedom of Information Act and dealing with the Charity Commission. The course, which is currently attended by 18 students, also offers tutorial support for participants developing their own campaign strategy. Previous courses were attended by 15-20 participants.

Brighton and Hove CVSF supports its members by providing information to enable them to be better represented at a strategic level. It has over 70 representatives on a range of citywide boards, including the Strategic Partnership; Children and Young People’s Trust and Crime and Disorder Partnership. Katy says the course has enabled her to think more clearly about how to identify and set aims and objectives when she wants to get something done.

“A colleague working on health issues was keen to do something to make public loos in the city more accessible and, rather than taking an ad-hoc approach to mentioning it in meetings when she can, we now have a very clear understanding about how to plan a campaign. The techniques I’ve acquired through the course mean we have a much greater chance of success,” Katy says.

Katy also found that attending the course with people who had more high-profile campaigning backgrounds enriched her experience. Learning more about the Freedom of Information Act and how to find answers was also particularly useful.

“The course walked us through how to get the best from this Act and how to work more closely with Freedom of Information officers,” she says.

Course shows charities how to apply effective research widely

Campaigning course encourages information sharing for bigger impact

Too often civil society research and evaluation is carried out without achieving its maximum potential to influence decision-makers and bring about change. Research is often conducted for individual charities with little opportunity to apply any information or lessons learned to other, similar organisations.

Dr Debi Roker, Co-director of Young People in Focus (YPF), says that the Certificate in Campaigning course -- run by the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and accredited by the University of Roehampton -- has helped her think more strategically about how to use research she gathers more effectively.

YPF supports individuals and organisations working with young people and families by carrying out research and evaluating services; training professionals in a wide range of topics; producing publications; and influencing policy-makers.

Debi says the Brighton-based organisation is commissioned by individuals and groups to conduct research on their behalf. Young People in Focus delivers the research and often has to then move quickly on to the next research request. Debi wants to see the learning, the key messages, from projects used more widely.

"I don't want the research to be ad hoc. I'd like to see us being able to plan more strategically and thoughtfully before we even begin. The course has prompted me to do more advanced planning, identifying the methods that are most appropriate and showing me the ways to get the messages out," she says.

The course, launched four years ago, seeks to equip participants with the skills to more efficiently research issues and more effectively apply their knowledge to influence targeted individuals and bring about policy change. Its 10 one-day modules cover key areas from governance best practice to applying the Freedom of Information Act and dealing with the Charity Commission. The course also offers tutorial support for participants developing their own campaign strategy.

Debi says the course, which provided helpful checklists and tips, also helps participants understand the importance of identifying from the beginning which individuals most need to be reached to achieve change.

Through attending the course, she has been challenged to think beyond producing a long report or summary and then sending it out to a long list of people, hoping that it will be read and key messages addressed. Debi now feels more confident to plan ahead, use limited resources more effectively and target the dissemination of YPF's work to those who can best use it.

"The course has helped me to think, from the start, about using our work to best effect. It will help us disseminate our work more in a more focussed way, and help other charities and organisations to understand and use what we do," she says.