



## NCVO Campaigning and Advocacy workstream

# Impact report

April 2008 to March 2011

Our partners:



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### 1. Introduction

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.

This summary report highlights the key outcomes, impact and learning from the project.

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.

“Where would I be without the access to support, resources, information and training that I’ve had? I’d be an individual in a small organisation, thrashing about in the dark, trying (ineffectively) to reinvent the wheel.” Richard Bennett evaluation 2010

## 2. 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.

### 2.1 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.

In addition to leading the Campaigning and Advocacy workstream, we also ran the Policy Skills Development programme (called Forum for Change) with Big Lottery funding for three years from 2008.

“I believe in Campaigning Effectiveness as an organisation – it’s massively important.”  
Richard Bennett evaluation 2010

### 2.2 Flexible approach

We work with and support a very wide range of organisations from small community-led charities to large national operations. We appreciate that the people and organisations we support have different needs and may be at different stages in both their organisational and personal learning journeys and we design our programmes to address these different needs.

Similarly, we make available both our learning opportunities and resources in a variety of formats in recognition of the fact that the people and organisations we support have different learning preferences and circumstances.

“Most interviewees highlighted the value of the workshops and training provided by this workstream. They said that these were well thought-out, authoritative, well organised and well delivered; pitched at the right level; interesting, especially the interactive elements; and accompanied by useful handouts and other materials, which were on the whole clearly expressed and free of jargon.” Roehampton University evaluation

### 2.3 Strengthened by NCVO

We benefit from being part of NCVO (the National Council for Voluntary Organisations), a respected organisation with extensive experience and knowledge, a solid skills base and established networks. NCVO led four of the Capacitybuilders national workstreams (Responding to Social change, HR and Employment, Leadership and Governance and Campaigning and Advocacy). This helped to integrate approaches and share learning and innovation.

“A number of interviewees expressed very positive views about NCVO, its services and its staff. They described it as a ‘good solid organisation you could depend on’ which was responsive and effective. They felt that NCVO was honest about what it offered, did not oversell its product and essentially did what it said it would do and did it well.” Roehampton University evaluation

“It appears that overall interviewees felt they had gained from having access to *all* services provided by NCVO, those funded by Capacitybuilders as well as other sources. This suggests that recipients of the Capacitybuilders funded workstreams at NCVO gained additional support due to ‘added value’ of having several programmes awarded to teams in one organisation, or to partnerships with the lead or co-ordinating body based at NCVO.”  
Roehampton University evaluation

## 2.4 Professional partnerships

The workstream's activities were designed and delivered by NCVO's Campaigning Effectiveness team with, initially, 10 partners. Later the number of partners was narrowed to six to deliver a more focused range of activities with increased impact and facilitate partnership collaboration. The partners in the final year were:

Bond | Bassac | National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) | People and Planet | SiteWriters | British Institute of Human Rights

In our first year, during which we piloted projects and made some difficult decisions not to continue some areas of work, our partners also included the Directory of Social Change, Media Trust, Westminster Explained and Novas Scarman.

"The scope and reach of the activities delivered by the workstreams were extended in key ways. In the first place, many services were delivered through partnership arrangements involving national organisations which specialised in particular areas of work or user groups, or regional bodies which had a knowledge and understanding of the local sector and its needs. NCVO in particular, and support providers more generally, can learn from and build on the successes of this experience." Roehampton University evaluation

Commenting on concerns about relationships between national and local organisations and infrastructure and frontline organisations:  
"It is also noteworthy that interviewees specifically excluded NCVO and its partners from the criticism in respect of these two issues. They felt that NCVO and its partners had acted in a sensitive and professional way, avoiding the pitfall of 'parachuting' in to a geographical area or specialist sector. The collaborative nature of partnership with both local organisations and infrastructure were commented on as key successes across each of the workstreams." Roehampton University evaluation

"One member of staff in a regional body which had collaborated on a successful training event for *Campaigning & Advocacy* felt that the partnership had been 'very professionally organised' and that there had been adequate time for planning and clarity about roles and responsibilities." Roehampton University evaluation

## 3. Overall aims

As the National Support Service for Campaigning and Advocacy, we aimed for the following outcomes:

1. Support providers will deliver high-quality support relevant to the needs of diverse frontline organisations, to improve their own, and frontline organisations' effectiveness in influencing the local, regional and national public policy environment:

- Delivery partners will have equipped support providers with the confidence, skills and knowledge to influence decisions made by policy and practice makers and, in particular, funders.
- The knowledge of national and local government and political processes will be significantly improved.



2. More support providers will be able to inspire and support creative and innovative campaigns led by voluntary and community sector organisations and have the knowledge, skills and credibility to strengthen campaigning leadership, resulting in improved capacity for innovation at regional, national and community levels:

- Standards would be set and best practice promoted in effective campaign and advocacy planning, implementation and evaluation.
- Support providers and regional and local voluntary and community sector organisations will have an increased understanding of the importance of and methods required for influencing policy making in the European Union.
- Innovative capacity building techniques will have been developed and implemented.

3. A significantly greater number of support providers will have the knowledge, skills and credibility to enable third sector organisations to conceive, manage and integrate campaigning and advocacy into wider organisational plans. More support providers will demonstrate to frontline organisations the link between good management, good governance, organisational coherence – and effective campaigning and advocacy:



- Good practice on organisational coherence for campaigning and advocacy impact will be shared at regional, local and community level.
- Regional and local campaigning and advocacy (e.g. beneficiary participation, monitoring and evaluation) will be better understood.

4. A greater number of support providers will understand the aims and objectives of campaigning and be able to build the capacity of others, particularly at regional, local and community levels. Existing confusion about evaluation methodology and purpose will be overcome:

- Case studies and wider communication will begin to demonstrate the ways in which charitable trusts and foundations support and fund campaigning and advocacy.
- Independent campaign evaluations will provide evidence-based assessments of the effectiveness of a voluntary and community sector campaigns programme and the extent that this learning can be applied at the local and community level will be analysed.

5. Support providers will fully appreciate the issues of independence, legitimacy, accountability and credibility within campaigning and advocacy and be able to support third sector organisations operating at regional, local and community levels.

- The national support service will deliver a wide range of support including an accredited Certificate of Professional Practice in Campaigning, residential training events for students, workshops in local influencing, seminars on involving beneficiaries and inspiring supporters, web-based resources, research and publications on a range of subjects including the use of freedom of information in campaigning, power and social change, supporter action, involving beneficiaries and a guide for trustees on campaigning and influencing.

## 4. Overall impact

This was a large and diverse workstream, which delivered multiple projects with many partners thereby increasing our reach but also presenting challenges at times. Some projects achieved greater impact than others but overall the evaluations conclude that our work was successfully delivered, achieved a wide reach and made a real difference, particularly through the university-accredited Certificate in Campaigning.

“All interviewees had significantly adapted and improved their practice as a result of their contact with Campaigning Effectiveness. It is clear that Campaigning Effectiveness has a very significant impact on the quality of work of the campaigners with whom it works. This is particularly important in light of the fact that, for six of the interviewees, it was the only source of professional development; and for the remaining four it is the main source. On the basis of this range of campaign workers, Campaigning Effectiveness is a vital and influential part of the sector’s infrastructure. Richard Bennett evaluation 2010

### 4.1 High user satisfaction

The Roehampton University evaluation found that there was a considerably high degree of satisfaction on the part of the users of the services provided by the four workstreams.

This outcome was attributed to:

- the success of the national support services in identifying and meeting key needs
- the quality and relevance of the services
- the use of a range of methods and approaches to reach organisations and
- the competence of NCVO and its partners in provision.

Interestingly, 79% of respondents were willing to recommend the services they had used to colleagues.

#### Helpfulness

Campaigning and Advocacy’s average score for ‘helpfulness’ was the highest of the four workstreams led by NCVO, at 4.2 out of a possible 5.

It is particularly notable that our partner **People and Planet** scored an average of 4.9 out of 5 for ‘helpfulness’ in relation to the Summer Gathering student campaigning events.

### 4.2 Reach and sharing learning

During the three years of activity, the Campaigning and Advocacy workstream delivered, with its partners, 151 events attended by a total of 3,053 participants throughout the regions.

We also shared information, resources and learning with support providers through the Improving Support website, magazine and e-bulletin and our partners’ own and NCVO’s websites.

### 4.3 Overall improvement and benefits achieved

#### Roehampton University evaluation 2011

Campaigning and Advocacy respondents to the University of Roehampton surveys indicated that high levels of improvement and benefits were achieved:

#### Knowledge, confidence and skills gained

- 77% reported that their use of the services had increased their knowledge, 72% had increased confidence and 67% had improved skills

## Use of learning for the benefit of organisations and their beneficiaries

- 78% said that they would use this learning now and 80% in future

An even high proportion of respondents felt that this learning would improve the practices or change the behaviour of their members and/or beneficiaries:

- 88% said that they would use this learning now and 88% in future

“Those interviewees who had participated in the Certificate in Campaigning course felt it had provided them with a broader and deeper understanding of campaigning which had not only contributed to their personal education but also provided them with the means of changing the way their organisations went about their work.

“One individual stated that ‘it’s changed the way I think about what I’m doing... It’s improved my capacity immensely. The great thing [was] the opportunity of the bursary; I wouldn’t have been able to attend otherwise’. Roehampton University evaluation

A total of 856 people responded to Roehampton University’s surveys across the four workstreams – an overall response rate of 12.9%. Campaigning & Advocacy achieved an extremely high response rate of 17% from 133 people, referencing 50 activities.

## 4.4 Overall improvement and benefits achieved

Richard Bennett evaluation 2010

Between July and October 2010 we commissioned consultant Richard Bennett to interview 10 individuals who had been involved with Campaigning Effectiveness to record the impact of the training and support they had received. Overall he found:

- Exceptionally strong results
- Unambiguously high level impact on practice
- Significant influence on organisational change
- Unusually strong results linking Campaigning Effectiveness to campaign outcomes.

“A huge boon; it’s changed the way I think about what I’m doing... improved my capacity immensely... even after working in an organisation whose main activity was campaigning, I’d not thought about it in a strategic way like that.” Interviewee, Richard Bennett evaluation 2010

“It gave me the confidence and discipline to develop plans that put outcomes first and foremost rather than ticking boxes on what we’d done before.” Richard Bennett evaluation 2010

## 5. Project impacts

The Campaigning and Advocacy workstream delivered a very wide range of support including training (residential and non-residential), workshops, seminars, web-based resources, research and publications. In this section we summarise the impact and outcomes of key projects.

### 5.1 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.

## 5.2 Louder

The Louder website ([www.louder.org.uk](http://www.louder.org.uk)) has successfully established itself as the new home for e-campaigning. Developed with our partner **SiteWriters**, it is an accessible, free resource that enables people to create and run campaigns and link up with others. In just a few clicks users get access to a targeted set of tools to run campaigns, track progress and turn supporters into activists.



“My local groups weren’t online previously; they directed people locally to the site. It was easy to set up and manage, stress-free.” [louder.org.uk](http://louder.org.uk) user

### 5.3 Voice

This discussion-based tool, developed with our partner **Bassac**, enables groups and networks to explore what influence is, discuss and record how influential community groups feel, plot and evidence how influential they are and plan how to increase their influence. (Voice was formerly called Axis of Influence.)

“Specifically what Voice does is give us a framework for the things we need to do – a precise map of a journey... we have had lots of writing on different walls - now it’s all on the same wall.” **Voice user**

“It has been a really useful benchmarking tool to see where we are and identify the areas we need to pay attention to... it has completely shifted my thinking.” **Voice user**

### 5.4 Human Rights training and resources

With our partner, the **British Institute of Human Rights**, we developed training and resources on a Human Rights Based Approach to campaigning. This included short taster sessions as well as a two-day training module and campaigning toolkit.

“Even though my knowledge on the subject isn’t great, I felt I understood and related to the subject in my job role.”

“It was very engaging and stimulating session, allowing a brilliant platform for open discussion on various issues affecting society today.” (BSWN participant- Bristol)

### 5.5 Campaigning resources produced with Bond

In partnership with **Bond** (a network of UK based NGOs), we shared learning and good practice between development organisations and domestically focused organisations through seminars and resources on three key topics:

**Campaigning for change at the European level:** to help maximise opportunities to achieve policy change and hold European decision makers to account. The programme achieved:

- 83% average participant approval rating (January 2009) and 93% (June 2009)

“It was a really useful introduction to the EU institutions and stimulated initial thoughts about how to go about influencing European policy. A very valuable experience.”  
**Emily Hard, Tearfund**

**Beneficiary Voice:** to help organisations fully involve beneficiaries in all stages of a campaign.

“Great session: informative, very interactive and powerful. Definitely keen to follow up!”  
**Steve Cockburn**

**Inspiring Supporter Action:** exploring how best to provide opportunities for actions that will make a difference and supporters will want to take, as well as looking into new media and learning from other industries.

Bond and NCVO jointly produced two short guides on Beneficiary Voice and Inspiring Supporter Action, nearly 1,500 copies of each guide have been distributed.

### 5.6 People and Planet

We worked with **People and Planet**, the largest student campaign network in Britain, to develop the campaigning capacity of universities, colleges, schools and individual

supporters. Our key event was the Summer Gathering, a national training event aimed at improving students' knowledge and skills in campaigning.

"It was really awesome. I am inspired to spread the word and campaign for change that's for the better. The skills I have learnt will help a lot along the way." Summer Gathering participant

"Thank you for an amazing few days and for finally giving me some tools to act on what I think." Summer Gathering participant

## 5.7 Advocating Intelligent Commissioning

Delivered with our partner **NAVCA** this programme offered training and opportunities to share knowledge and good practice in commissioning processes. It was aimed at local support organisations, rural community councils and sub-regional consortia.

### Participant feedback (Taunton event)

- 56% of event participants said they felt more 'familiar with principals and concepts of good practice in commissioning public services'
- 50% felt that they had increased understanding/knowledge/skills in relation to supporting third sector groups

"Excellent workshop really pleased to have been invited. Learned a lot from the day and would welcome more future events." Advocating Intelligent Commissioning event participant

## 5.8 Skilling up for Stronger Voices

This programme, supported by **NAVCA's Improving Local Partnerships Team**, involved a 'train the trainer' approach to help voluntary and community sector representatives develop their knowledge and skills and feel more confident in their roles within local public decision-making structures.

### Participant feedback

- 71% felt that the event had 'fully' increased their knowledge/skills for supporting representatives in partnership working (Birmingham event)

"I thought it was really good in terms of how it was delivered, that you could learn how other people approach things and deal with issues. Being able to reflect around behaviour and attitude and have time to analyse; learning from others and their experiences and the self analysis part was really useful." Course participant

Another participant found that their confidence had increased dramatically: "I've been contacting the City Council and social care professionals within the LSP [Local Strategic Partnership] and have also joined the steering committee of the Link, the training has empowered me, given me the confidence to do this." Course participant

## 5.9 Campaigning Effectiveness – research and publications

The workstream produced a series of detailed publications addressing issues around campaigning.

**Power and social change** – a web-based publication for a wide audience investigating the nature of power, how change happens and can be influenced – it has attracted nearly 1,000 website views.

"As campaigners our work needs to be based in an understanding of power and social change. This book brings them together in a practical manner, and provides a theoretical background to campaign planning. A must-read for all campaigners!"  
Lee Webster, Campaigns Manager, CARE International UK

**Campaigning in confidence guides** – two summary guides, one aimed at boards and trustees and the other at funders and trusts – outlining the principles of campaigning and influencing policy.

We have distributed nearly 2,000 copies of the trustee guide and logged approximately 1,500 downloads from the website.

"Well done – this guide [Trustee guide to campaigning and influencing] condenses such a vast subject into something so succinct, readable and useful." Miranda Lewis, Advocacy Associates

"Another interviewee stated that the campaigns guide for trustees was also very helpful. She has used the pocketsize version many times and takes it with her on a number of occasions. The publication clarifies expectations and legal questions for trustees. It really helped her to work with trustees and to discuss potential changes to the organisation's legal status." Roehampton University evaluation

**Voicing your right to know: A guide to using Freedom of Information in Campaigning** – this guide has achieved over 1,000 website views and more than 350 downloads.

"We looked at the NCVO guide. Particularly useful were the case studies, which showed the importance of framing your questions in the right way in order to get meaningful replies. They also highlighted the value of going through the appeal process if the information you want is not immediately forthcoming." Financial journalist Andrew Newby used NCVO's guide in an investigative reporting training workshop

Other publications included:

- Campaigning for change: Learning from the United States
- A new campaigning landscape? Implications of the 2010 general election.

These and other resources are available free on the NCVO website at [www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/campaigningeffectiveness](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/campaigningeffectiveness)

## 6. Key learning points for the future

### Overall learning and principles to carry forward

The following summarises Roehampton University's comments and three key principles for building on the successful experience of the four workstreams led by NCVO.

#### 6.1 Clear targeting

The workstreams appear to have met the needs of the many organisations they targeted to a considerable degree and, successfully, reached their target audiences. However, their services were not designed to address directly the requirements of the full range of organisations within the sector, especially the smallest. A more comprehensive set of services, extending range and variety, could more closely reflect the diverse nature of the sector.

## 6.2 A collaborative strategy

The scope and reach of the activities were extended by delivery through national, specialist and regional partnerships. NCVO and other support providers can learn from and build on the successes of this experience.

## 6.3 An holistic approach

The third key principle is the continued need for a comprehensive and integrated package of services. The value of individual services is enhanced by its use in conjunction with other activities.

## 6.3 Final remarks

A key theme of the evaluations was how the Campaigning and Advocacy workstream has promoted effective campaigning – through the delivery of a broad, comprehensive, and unique package of services, enabling participants to develop systematic, focused and varied strategies to achieve change.

It has developed a philosophy of effective campaigning grounded in practice. As one participant to the evaluation conducted by Richard Bennett noted: *“our work will be even more effective and targeted... I have much more of a sense of thinking about aims first. We’d worked out the demands, but mainly concentrated on activities; now I’d do it differently”*.

The success of this approach is evidenced by the positive outcomes and impacts noted above. Richard Bennett’s evaluation, for example, notes the remarkably successful contribution of Campaigning Effectiveness for a capacity building program – leading to substantial changes in the practice of campaigning by individuals, to positive campaign outcomes and to embedding change within organisations. These conclusions are reinforced by Roehampton’s evaluation in regard to the positive findings for user satisfaction, knowledge, skills and learning gained, as well as individual project impacts.

The project has also strengthened the overall reputation and impact of our project partners through the high-quality of services offered and a greater engagement with voluntary and community organisations and individuals. There have been further gains for the campaigning and advocacy of project partners - Campaigning Effectiveness, for example, have been able to channel research, project outputs and themes into NCVO’s advocacy work on behalf of civil society.

## 7. Thanks and acknowledgements

The Campaigning and Advocacy workstream would not have been possible without NCVO's dedicated team: Susie Rabin, Amelia Gudgion, Davinder Kaur, Philip Hadley, Helen Donohoe, Liam Barrington-Bush, Rosemary Frazer, Tanja Canning and Sakthi Suriyaprakasam.

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- Neil Cleavelly and Helen Oparinde at NAVCA
- Adam Ramsay and Emily Cantrell at People and Planet
- John Sargent and Adam Sergeant at SiteWriters
- Amanuel Woldesus at the Media Trust
- Titus Alexander at Novas Scarman
- Graham Leigh at the Directory of Social Change
- Evelien Storme at Westminster Explained

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- Richard Bennett
- Emma Taggart
- Steve Lawson
- Ruth Mayne
- Jim Coe
- The Campaigning Effectiveness Advisory Group and particularly our Chair, Brian Lamb

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Registered charity number 225922



## 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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.