



Strategies identified on Friday March 23rd 2007, at the Changing Times Forum

Funding

An example of a strategy that worked for funding:

When a particular network of community organizations were uncomfortable with the funding criteria of a particular government program, the members of the network applying for funding came to a collective decision to all submit proposals that conflicted with the criteria. Due to the fact that the government is mandated to distribute the money, the department was forced to put aside their funding criteria and instead accept proposals that were in line with the priorities and philosophy of the community organizations.)

Networking and Partnerships to increase our funding from governmental agencies

- Build relationships with other organizations in area (physical or area of work)
- Go to the umbrella organization one step bigger than yours, and then another step bigger and so on
- Be strong
- Be strategic
- Push to get those closed doors open

Sources of funding outside of governmental sources

- Speak to your MNAs
- Let's not be shy to use banks and other commercial institutions to support our work

Increase visibility

- Use Media of all kinds to increase our visibility and importance
- Get a celebrity to champion your cause

Poverty

General discussion

- our positions renders us more vulnerable (disability, sex, age, etc)
- poverty is economic but also cultural and social. Issues of class
- we need to 'name' issues of poverty more clearly to address them
- Community Economic Development (CED) addresses issues of poverty but very bureaucratic and difficult
- we need to meet the needs for services AND work with our people to challenge the system
- immigration is needed in Canada but so is having people living in poverty (meets the markets needs when necessary for low income workers)

Strategies

- work with more of a systems approach
- explore alternative economics (barter, collective shopping, etc)
- use popular education more (create a resurgence?)
- push for a political environment that supports alternative economies
- support issues others work on (ie Collectif contre la pauvreté, housing, bus passes etc) through our organizations.

Increasing the Visibility of Community Organizations

Branding and marketing in society is growing in intensity, both on the part of large corporations and large nonprofit organizations, with no end in sight, drowning out the voices of community organizations. We need to embrace this trend, while, at the same time, sticking to what we believe in - doing it in a way that reflects our values.

Current strategies to share and build on

- Having an in-house graphic designer who works to create a culture of positive thinking and skill development around social marketing/social enterprise throughout the organization.
- Hosting interns with marketing, branding and communication skills:
- Community Experiences Initiative (CEI) is a national nonprofit organization, based in Montreal, that creates internship opportunities for business students in community organizations. Santropol Roulant, COCo, Musical Alliance, Kids Help Phone / Jeunesse J'Écoute, and Canadian Human Rights Foundation have all hosted CEI interns in the past. (for more information go to (www.cei-iec.ca))
- Concordia University's Institute for Cooperative Learning is a division of the university that places students in internships. Students from the John Molson School of Business participate. (www.co-op.concordia.ca)
- Helping volunteers with a professional background in marketing, branding, and communication apply their skills to the organization.
- Joining shared spaces on the internet such as www.rethos.com, the world's first social networking platform and media portal devoted to uniting individuals, non-profit organizations and socially responsible businesses for the purpose of generating solutions to social and environmental issues.
- Get coaching from a professional on how to articulate what our organization is about clearly, succinctly, passionately, and in a way that sets us apart and highlights our unique competencies (i.e., "The 30 second elevator speech"- the ability to effectively get across what your organization is about to someone during an elevator ride). This includes moving away from using acronyms to describe who we are. The ability to do this not only helps us communicate to community members and the general public, but also helps us communicate with each other, opening doors for more collaboration between community organizations.

New strategies to try out

- Organizations that do similar things (women centres, environmental organizations, etc.) could develop ways of marketing/branding themselves collectively, but in a way that still celebrates their individual identities.
- The Montreal Volunteer Bureau or COCo could offer workshops that invite organizations that are using successful strategies to share their successes with other organizations.
- COCo could recruit someone with social marketing expertise to its facilitator team.
- COCo could help connect organizations to professionals willing to provide their services at a lower fee or on a voluntary basis.

How to increase volunteer participation

- Put a mentorship program into place for new recruits
- Write task descriptions for volunteers
- Make policies regarding volunteer participation in organizations