Models of Advocacy

A Study of the models of Advocacy and the practice of them within International children's organizations.

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Advocacy Models

Courtney C. Shea

Introduction

For any organization that champions the rights of others, advocacy plays a major role in bringing about change. This report will examine what advocacy is, the different types of advocacy, and the different models of advocacy including case studies to illustrate each model, as well as how Barnardos uses these different models. The information contained in this report is based on data, statistics, and information on the advocacy practices of international children's organizations. Finally, conclusions will be drawn about what advocacy models are best for successful advocacy.

Definition of Advocacy

According to the Cambridgeshire County Council Social Services Advocacy Handbook, "Advocacy is speaking up for, or acting on behalf of, yourself or another person. The other person is often receiving a service from a statutory or voluntary organization" (www.camcnty.gov.uk/sub/ssd/advocacy/adad.htm).
This source also states that advocacy can help service users by:

1. clarifying their own views and wishes;
2. assisting with expressing their views effectively;
3. representing their views faithfully and effectively;
4. providing independent advice and accurate information;
5. enabling negotiation and resolution of conflict to take place.

"Some people lack awareness of their rights as citizens, or have difficulty in fully understanding these rights. Others may find it hard to speak up for themselves. Advocacy can enable people to take more responsibility and control for the decisions which affect their lives".

Another definition of advocacy, given by the Roll Back Malaria Advocacy guide states: "Advocacy is winning the support of key constituencies in order to influence policies and spending, and bring about social change. Successful advocates usually start by identifying the people they need to influence and planning the best ways to communicate with them. They do their homework on an issue and build a persuasive case. They organize networks and coalitions to create a groundswell of support that can influence key decision –makers. They work with the media to help communicate the message" (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg.5).

Types of Advocacy

There are several different types of advocacy, which can range from one individual speaking out for themselves, to a large organization advocating the rights of millions of people. The following are the different types of advocacy as presented in the Cambridgeshire County Council Social Services Advocacy Handbook (www.camcnty.gov.uk/sub.ssd.advocacy/adad.htm), followed by a brief example of each type.

I. Self Advocacy

This is where an individual, or group of people, speak or act on their own behalf in pursuit of their own needs and interests - speaking up for yourself. Speaking up may be difficult because of a disability or illness or simply because people don't take service users seriously or think they are incapable of making decisions.

Example: The Self Advocacy Association of New York State, Inc. (www.capital.net/com/sanys/)

> The Self-Advocacy Association of NYS is an organization for and led by people with the challenge of disability to assure the civil rights and responsibilities that include the opportunities and choices of equal citizenship. These people work to advocate for themselves and therefore are practicing self advocacy.

II. Citizen Advocacy

This is where someone else speaks up on behalf of the service user or helps them to speak up for themselves. It is based on the idea of a 'valued citizen' (i.e. someone who does not have a problem getting heard), working with a person who is discriminated against. The relationship may develop into friendship or just working together to develop the service user's skills or confidence to manage their own situation. Citizen Advocates usually come from a recognized and co-ordinated scheme.

Example: Citizen Advocacy Eastside (http://www.citadv.asn.au/)

> Citizen Advocacy Eastside is an advocacy center located in Bondi Junction, Australia. CA Eastside seeks to promote, protect and defend the rights and interest of people who have an intellectual disability. These people are unable to advocate for themselves, so others at the center speak up for them.

III. Crisis Advocacy

This is where an advocate is found to help with a one-off difficult situation or crisis. The advocate may be someone who is already a Citizen's Advocate.

Example: Looking After Children (www.janetwebster.com/crisis/)

> Looking After children is a crisis advocacy organization that advocates for children in the care of the government in the Yukon, Canada. Looking After children believes that, "children are vulnerable and children without loving parents to nurture and protect them are the most vulnerable of all. Children who are taken into the care of the government inevitably enter a bureaucracy. Children in care need an advocate who is independent of the government and can ensure that the best interests of the child are served". By dealing with the difficult occurrences which go along with such a situation and advocating for these children, Looking After Children is practicing Crisis Advocacy.

IV. Peer Advocacy

This is where service users who have experienced similar problems of not being listened to, may help others to speak up for themselves. A peer advocate is likely to have a very good understanding of what other service users are going through.

Example: The Tenderloin AIDS Resource Center (www.tarcsf.org/home)

> TARC, which is based in California, USA, practices peer advocacy within its organization. Here people who have experienced the problem of AIDS help others speak out for their rights and for better care.

V. Professional Advocacy

This can mean experts in a professional field, such as lawyers, being commissioned to speak up on behalf of an individual service user or group. They may or may not receive payment for acting as an advocate

Example: Barnardos' Beacon- Guardian Ad Litem Service (www.barnardos.ie/beacon/index.htm)

> "Barnardos' Beacon- Guardian ad Litem (Guardian at Law) Service provides children involved in family law proceeding with an independent voice in court. A Guardian Ad Litem is an experienced and qualified person, with expertise in working with children". This falls into the category of professional advocacy.

VI. Collective Advocacy

This is where a group of people, sometimes from very different backgrounds, campaign on behalf of themselves or others to try and change things. This could be a national organisation or a local one focusing on either national or local issues

Example: Barnardos (www.barnardos.ie)

> Barnardos and all the work the organization does is a perfect example of Collective Advocacy.

Models of advocacy

While there are many different types of advocacy, the following section will focus on the advocacy models of professional and collective advocacy. Case studies of international children's' advocacy groups will be used in order to illustrate these different models.

Barnardos has in the past and in the present used many of these presented models of advocacy. The 2000-2001 Barnardos Chief executive's review states, "It is the specific role, and in the nature of voluntary organizations to be an independent, restless and, at times uncomfortable voice for change, and to highlight inadequately met or emerging needs which require attention. Advocacy and lobbying will continue to feature as critical elements of Barnardos' efforts to make Ireland a better place for children" (Barnardos' Annual Review, 2000-2001). The following information will give insight into what advocacy is and all the different ways in which it can be used.

I. Media Advocacy

The media is probably the most influential advocacy vehicle that we have. It can be a critical partner in advocating for children and families (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg.33). "Media attention not only raises awareness and educates the community, it can also help influence decision makers, funders and potential supporters" (Advocacy Toolkit, www.childrens-week.org/toolkit.htm). Media advocacy can include such things as; newspaper and magazine features, radio and television coverage, advertising campaigns, community partnerships, and reader-friendly publications. As one journalist has observed, "If you don't exist in the media, for all practical purposes, you don't exist" (RPM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 33).

The following are all types of advocacy that can fit into the very broad category of media advocacy.

1. Radio and television

A) PSA (public service announcements)

In some countries, broadcasters air what are known as 'access programs'. For example, in the UK, charities can promote an issue or cause in a 3 minute piece to camera known as a Public Service Announcement (PSA) or Community Service Announcement (CSA), broadcast in primetime on regional television after the news. Contact your local TV station to see if they broadcast access programs. Also, in some countries TV and radio programs are assigned a duty editor who logs calls from the public about specific programs. Comments passed on to the producer of the program are taken seriously. Mobilize your supporters when a program on children's issues is scheduled to call and reiterate their views (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 39).

Due to increasing competition and limited space, it can be difficult to place a public service announcement. It is important to get the information to the right person at each station and to explain why your cause is important to the community. In some cases, stations may partner with an organization and produce a spot at no charge.

Radio PSAs are usually read from scripts provided by a non-profit organization. Local radio stations appreciate having public service messages available for broadcast. They seem to especially like announcer-ready copy that on-air talent can read. Sometimes, local professionals or celebrities will tape the announcements in advance at the radio station.

In countries such as The U.S. a television PSA is anywhere from 10 to 15, or even 30, seconds long and is broadcast at no cost to the organization involved. According to a 1997 survey of public affairs directors, 47% of television PSAs were affiliated with non-profit organizations. In addition, public affairs directors were more likely to consider children's issues than any other cause (Advocacy Institute, www.advocacy.org).

In Ireland PSA's are not normally used, so this would be a deterant to using this type of advocacy.

B) Radiothons and Telethons

Raidothons and telethons are a good way not only to raise awareness, but also to help raise funds to help in advocating your cause. Often celebrities will volunteer to help out with participation with these which will draw even more attention to the event.

These events take a great deal of planning and require a large amount of cooperation from the radio and television stations. It also may be difficult to find a large group of celebrities or performers willing to be the entertainment to the show.

C) Talk Shows

Radio or television phone-ins, discussion and talk shows are a good way to put a point across live and unedited. Talk show producers are always in search of new guests who can talk with authority on issues that concern their viewers and listeners. It is a good idea to research programs and make contact suggesting yourself, your director or even a whole panel of speakers with different perspectives on children's issues.

Contact phone-in programs to establish when related issues are scheduled. When you call a phone-in, strict first-come, first-served rotation applies, so hang on and you will be answered. Never read your question as it will sound stilted and people will stop listening. Aim to make 2 or 3 points succinctly and remember to mention your organization (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 39).

Talk radio is becoming increasingly popular and can provide a good way to get your message across to the community. Talk radio is just that - talk. It's not a lecture and it's not news. Audiences tune in, researchers have found, because they value the intimacy, immediacy and anonymity of talk radio; they are looking for personal information and often respond to advice and on-air counselling. Both listeners and callers tend to personalize their relationship with the host, as if they were a friend or co-worker.

In many communities, the top-rated television program is the locally produced talk show. In most cases, the talk show hosts book their own guests and are eager for new stories to interest their viewers. Your organization could have the angle they want (Advocacy Institute, www,advocacy.org).

Talk shows are a great opportunity, but it is very important to listen to the show or watch it a good deal before you appear on it. The host may be someone who disagrees with what you stand for and therefore may attempt to make what you are advocating look bad.

D) Commercials

Airing commercials on the radio or television is a good way to raise awareness to the issue you are advocating, but this can be expensive.

E) Product Placements

A way that your organization can be widely recognized is through product placement. Sometimes popular television programs of feature films will allow billboards or posters from your organization in the background of the actors, but in view of those watching the show or movie.

2. Media Interviews

When an organization publicizes a story, it needs to have a number of spokespeople available for interview who are familiar with both their material and the basic rules of interviewing. It is very important for them to prepare. They should know about the show, program or publication and become familiar with it. Profile the audience and have in mind a typical viewer/ listener/ reader. In the case of TV or radio, find out who else is appearing , ask whether the show is live or pre-recorded, and if the audience will be calling in to ask questions. Anticipate the questions you may be asked and prepare a questions and answers sheet (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 38).

3. Photo Opportunities

Television news and magazines need good pictures or visuals in order to report on a story. When you plan a media strategy, think about what images you need and how will supply these.

You may want to pay for a photographer to take pictures and then distribute them to selected publications. You may also want to prepare a video news release (VNR) for broadcasters to use. Or, arrange a "photo opportunity" for photographers and television news people to take pictures themselves.

To announce the photo opportunity, send an advisory that gives the "Who, What, When and Where" of the event to the media (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 38).

4. News (press) Releases

Journalists receive hundreds of news releases each day. To get your release noticed, the headline and first paragraph must catch their attention. You should spend as much time getting these just right as you do preparing the rest of the news release. You can either issue a release in advance of and embargoes until, the date of publication, or you can issue it on the day of a news event/ conference. An embargo is a stipulation about when the release can be published and is used to secure coverage on a particular day (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 33).

5. Press (news) Conferences

A news conference can be a very effective way to announce a news story – a major new strategy or initiative in you organisation – to journalists. Speakers take the platform in a venue and make presentations after which journalists can ask questions. This is a tried and tested formula which, if you follow the rules, can make life easy for journalists and for yourself.

Be sure that your story warrants holding one, as news conferences can take a lot of time to organize and it can be disheartening if few people attend. In some cases, you may find you can achieve the same results by handling the story from your office. For this you need to send journalists your news release and briefing materials under embargo until the date of publication, highlighting who is available for the interview (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 37).

6. Announcements or Advisories

Advisories are used – along with phone calls – to alert journalists to a media event or news conference. An advisory should give all of the basic information on the purpose, date, time, location, and speakers at an event. A good advisory should also build some anticipation concerning he news that will be announced. A strong headline helps.

Once you have sent an advisory or news release it is imperative to call journalists to make sure that the right journalist has received it. Often you will need to re-send the release. Sometimes it will be to another journalist or bureau.

When you call a busy journalist in a large city, you may have only 30 seconds to gain his or her interest in a story. To be successful, you need to get quickly to the point concerning the importance of your story or event. Keep it simple and do not overwhelm them with too much information. Try to avoid calling when journalists are facing deadlines. It will also be useful to know something about the publication or program that you are calling. An editor can sense immediately if you have never read their publication or watched their program and may not see you as a credible source of news (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 34).

7. Press Briefings

If journalists – who cover hundreds of stories and may know next to nothing about your issues – are to produce informative accurate stories they need to be properly briefed. Consider organizing an informal press briefing that also serves to build good relations with journalists

For example invite half a dozen selected journalist s to attend a briefing at your offices in advance of a large event. Brief them on key development and issues relating to children and your organizations relevant work and policy. You may want to conduct this as a breakfast meeting and provide refreshments. It is a good idea to have clear briefing material, such as advocacy publications or fact sheets to distribute. If you attend an important national or international conference, you may wish to brief journalists in your community about important developments upon your return (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 37).

8. Newspaper forums (names of forums will vary from paper to paper)

-as presented by the Advocacy Institute (www.advocacy.org)

A) Events Calendars

Events Calendars cover recreation and entertainment events, art shows museum exhibits, organization and government meetings, classes, seminars, self-help and support groups, and professional development opportunities.

B) Applause (good for you) Forums

These forums announce personal and/ or organizational accomplishments and can be accompanied by a photograph. Sometimes they appear in the business section or local news.

C) Good Deeds Forums

These recognize local service projects and benevolent gifts. They are often accompanied by a photograph.

D) Caring Connection Forum

These forums announce fundraising events for charitable causes.

9. Letters to the Editor

More people read letters to the editor than almost any other section in the newspaper, especially in smaller communities. They are a great way to spread the word about important issues (Advocacy Institute, www.advocacy.org).

Newspapers and magazines have a "letters page" that gives readers the opportunity to express their views or correct previously published information they feel to be inaccurate or misleading. Letters are widely read and provide a good opportunity to promote a cause and/ or organization.

Letters should be short and concise. Letters of no more than 100 words can be very effective. A letter should aim to make one main point and to end on a challenging note, with a call to action.

Make sure you refer to your organization. Letters can also be signed by a number of signatories, representing various organizations or interests, which may increase their impact. If a letter is responding to an article carried in a daily newspaper, it is important to fax or deliver it to the paper as soon as possible, preferably within 2 days (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 36).

10. Feature Stories

Feature Stories are usually longer than news stories. They go into greater depth on how an issue affects people – providing what is known as "human interest". In magazines, they can span several pages and be accompanied by pictures. On television, they can become hour-long programs.

The best way to get a feature published is to describe your idea in a two or three-page story proposal. You need to do a substantial amount of research yourself before handing the story over to the journalist to follow up. Your proposal should provide an outline of the story and list interesting people who could be interviewed. The newer, more unusual, significant or dramatic the story, the better (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg.35).

11. Guest Editorials

(Op-ed pieces) are printed on the editorial page and represent the views of an individual or organization, usually someone who is considered an expert on the topic or issue they are addressing (Advocacy Institute, www.advocacy.org).

Most newspapers print opinion-editorials (op-eds) or guest columns. An op-ed is an expression of opinion rather than a statement of news/fact. Although style varies according to different countries, an op-ed tends to be lively, provocative and sometimes controversial. It is very effective way to register concern about children's issues to policy makers and to inform communities why they should care about such issues.

Op-eds are usually around 1,000 words. It is best to call the newspaper first and request their guidelines for submitting an op-ed. If possible, speak to the appropriate editor to convince her or him of the importance of the issue (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 36).

12. Meeting with Editorial Boards

Readers of newspaper editorial pages are often decision-makers and opinion leaders so this is a great way to reach and influence a powerful audience. Most newspapers take editorial positions on important local and national issues, although small newspapers frequently focus on local issues or how larger issues affect the local community. It can be a great boon to your organization or cause to have a positive editorial position taken by your local newspaper (Advocacy Institute, www.advocacy.org).

In some countries newspapers may invite you, as a policy expert to give an "editorial briefing" at their offices. These provide an excellent opportunity to gain the editorial support of a newspaper which, in turn , can be very influential in shaping political decisions.

Profile the kinds of editorials/ columns that appear in the paper and the position they tend to take, particularly in relation to health care issues. Arrive armed with facts and figures that are relevant to the newspaper's audience. Make a persuasive argument to the editor that readers should be concerned about children's issues. Be ready to answer any questions the editor might have.

After the meeting, research and provide the information requested by the editor (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 37).

13. Speak directly with reporters who cover children's issues

Most newspapers, television and radio stations have numerous opportunities for organizations to post advance notice on events at no charge (Advocacy Institute, www.advocacy.org).

14. Public Forums or Events

Special events can be a great way for you and your organisation to grab the attention of elected leaders, the media and the public. Public forums and rallies also present an opportunity to identify new supporters and focus attention on your issue. The most critical component is proper planning and organisation. You want to make sure your organization is portrayed in the best possible light. And always remember to invite the press because it will broaden your audience. Only a few people may come to your forum, but thousands more may read the news article of see the story on television (Advocacy Institute, www.advocacy.org).

Awareness-raising and infotainment events (information + entertainment).

Parades, competitions, street events, create media attention and get a message out to many people in an interesting, entertaining and stimulating way. This is a good means to reach people who might not be reached through more traditional events such as seminars or meetings.

Organize media events to make news. Events such as press conferences with politicians and leaders or the opening of new facilities catch the attention of the media. Through the media, news and information about children is spread widely and partners are mobilized for action.

Involve celebrities as spokespeople, choose individuals who are well-known and respected within the country or community and who can bring positive attention to the fight against malaria. Choose popular health, sports and entertainment personalities or politicians. Aim high, go for the president, prime minister, or their spouses (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 28).

Case Study:

The National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC)
(www.nca-hsv.org)

The National Children's Advocacy Center , or NCAC, is an example of an organization that uses special events in its advocacy work. The NCAC is an organization that was started in Huntsville, Alabama USA in the 1980's. This organization advocates against child abuse, as well as providing services for abused children. Each year, the Children's Center in Huntsville hosts the National Symposium on Child Sexual Abuse. The symposium draws nearly 2,000 participants from a variety of disciplines for a three-day conference. An outstanding faculty, many of them international experts in the field, conduct training and share the latest knowledge and skills in child sexual abuse prevention and intervention. This effect draws media attention and also raises awareness about the issues.

Barnardos

Barnardos uses media advocacy as a very large part of its advocacy work. The following are all examples of how it has played a role in the organization.

-Community partnerships in which Barnardos has worked with other organizations and charities to advocate.

-Reader-Friendly publications have been produced, such as Making a Difference.

-Telethons have been use for by applying for grants, such as the People in Need telethon.

-Special Events are largely used for media attention including; the launch of Making a Difference, Operation feet, and the unveiling of a sculpture by the President of Ireland in Christ Church Square.

-Barnardos speaks directly with reporters who cover children's issue in order to build their confidence in Barnardos, to establish a positive relation, and so Barnardos is able to

-Press briefings are used more then press conferences. Press conferences are done time to time however.

-Guest editorials have been done several times. Often these are on the launching of new services or campaigns.

-Meetings with editorial boards happen often

-Special events contact and meet with them regularly.

-Newspaper forums are sometimes used. Information about Barnardos has been printed in the Monday Health Panel of the Irish Times, to announce seminar, and the appointment pages are used for important new employees.

II. Internet advocacy

With millions of people surfing the World Wide Web each day and the numbers of online users growing steadily each year, the Internet has become a powerful tool for sharing information and getting things done. More and more people are turning to the Internet as a key source for news, shopping, entertainment, travel and communication.

Businesses and non-profit organizations alike are discovering the advantages of doing business online. Particularly after the Sept. 11 tragedy, online giving to charitable organizations has exceeded most expectations. And, in the wake of the attacks, many Americans turned more frequently to the Web for the latest news and information than any other medium.

No primer on advocacy would be complete without a discussion of the Internet and its uses. The Internet can be a valuable tool for advocates to spread the word, mobilize support, network with other advocates and even raise money. Unfortunately, there is often as much misinformation and misunderstanding about the Internet as anything else. One of the most important things any organization should remember about the Internet is that it is simply another tool for getting things done and sharing information (Advocacy Institute, www.advocacy.org).

Internet advocacy adapts advocacy to cyberspace. The internet can be used to disseminate information and to stimulate action on behalf of children. Information that can be included on a website, a great way for the public to find information, are publications, poll results, policy papers, press materials, action updates legislation, and links to other web sites devoted to children's issues. Live web casts and emails are another two successful ways in which the internet can be used by advocacy.

Case Study:

Children Now
(www.childrennow.org)

Children Now is an organization that extensively uses the internet in its advocacy work. This is some of the things it has done recently to improve and develop its internet advocacy.

The expanding Children Now family of Web sites including Talking with Kids about Tough Issues, attracted an increasing number of viewers and subscribers - nearly one million visitors in 2000. Additionally, Children Now was honored with eight new Web site awards for providing high-quality content for parents, youth, educators and advocates.

1. A complete redesign of the Children Now Web site upgraded its appearance, improved site navigation and expanded content offerings, including the first edition of the new Children & the Media electronic update.

2. The first Youth Voices online survey was conducted among six California high schools and one youth center. Two hundred sixteen ethnically and economically diverse high school aged students voiced their opinions on March primary election issues.

3. Talking with Kids about Tough Issues content was syndicated on numerous commercial and portal Web sites including those providing news, education, family and health related content.

4. The 100% Campaign Web site was successfully moved to a new server so that all Children Now Web sites and listservers are hosted in the same location. The 100% Campaign Web site is dedicated to ensuring that all of California's children obtain the health coverage they need.

The Children Now Web Site received the following awards for its internet advocacy.

-HerPlanet Network Globe of Excellence Award –May 2002
-Australia's Netweek Magazine Editor's Choice Award
-Featured as one of the incredible sites in the book "300 Incredible Things for Women on the Internet" by Robyn Freedman Spizman and Ken Leebow
-Premier Women's Site Award in August 2000 from Moms Network Exchange
-included in Healthlinks.net directory in August 2000
-featured on HomeworkSpot.com in September 2000
-Pacific Bell Blue Web Award in February 2000
-reviewed and awarded in July 2000 by ABC's of Parenting Directory
-highly rated in July 2000 by Schoolzone.co.uk panel of UK teachers
-StudyWeb Excellence Award in September 1999
-August 19999 selected as a hot site by NetTalkLive.com
-selected as a hot site in the August 20, 19999 edition of USAToday.com
-Yofee's Web site Merit Award in August of 1999
-StudyWeb Excellence Award July 1999
-Outstanding Website Award from The Disability Network in July 1999

-Young Politicians of America "bookmark it" award in February 1999
-Times Pick at the Los Angeles Times Web site
-1999 Hardin MD "clean Bill of Health Award"
-Links2Go Key Resource Award in July 1998
-HealthyWay Best of the Web Award February 1998
-Family Track Award Spring 1997
-Editor's Choice award from 4anything.com on October 1999

Barnardos

Barnardos bases its internet advocacy on its web site. The current advocacy campaign, Every Child Matters, is linked to this web site. The public can email responses to a postcard campaign and see the results of the post card poll online. In addition there are links to the different services as well as the annual review.

III. Legislative Advocacy

Legislative Advocacy, which is seeking the advice and support of policymakers and elected officials, is an important part of advocating for children. The best way to do this is establishing relationships, a cornerstone for effective advocacy. Petitions, letter writing, demonstrations, telephone and the internet can be used as a means to achieve this (Advocacy Institute, www.advocacy.org).

Barnardos:

Legislative advocacy is largely used at Barnardos. The organization was particularly active during the past election campaign. Barnardos met with spokespeople form the different political parties and received written commitment from them before the election on how they would deal with certain issues and policies.

IV. Campaigns

-as presented in the web site of the Advocacy Institute (www.advocacy.org)

1. Collective letter-writing

At every meeting of your member, board or allies, distribute a sample letter, paper and pens and ask folks to write their members of congress. Collect them (and money for postage) and you've got a bundle

2. Door-to-door canvassing

Get a group of volunteers together on a Saturday and canvass a low-income neighbourhood threatened by cuts. Have them write—or at least sign – a letter on the spot

3. Phone and fax trees

Ask your members to make a commitment to respond to a specific number of calls-to-action in a year. Fax or call them when the need arises, and then ask them to call five friends. Even a relatively small number of people can generate a large number of calls

4. Setting up tables and distributing flyers

Supermarkets, public housing developments, clinics and other gathering places in low-income neighbourhoods are good places to reach the people affected by your campaign

Case Study:

Children Now
(www.childrennow.org)

In addition to its other advocacy methods, Children Now currently uses an advocacy campaign to raise awareness on the issues they advocate. This campaign is know us Talking with Kids about tough issues. This is a national campaign encouraging parents and other caring adults to start early with conversations which may be difficult, but which can change the course of a child's life. Children now identified this critical opportunity to support parents and protect kids. This campaign reached out to the public using radio, TV, print, the Internet, and public relations. It initiated a public service advertising campaign that distributed over 100,000 free parent guide booklets. This was done in collaborating with the Kaiser Family foundation and the Advertising Council to develop the campaign. Children now also enlisted the Boys and Girls Clubs of America as community partners to localize the campaign. This large campaign was able to then attract celebrity endorsements, national partners, and national television coverage. Polling was also used in order to assess the campaign's impact.

Barnardos:

The current advocacy campaign at Barnardos (Every Child Matters) "aims to highlight the realities of children and among young people's lives in Ireland today and to challenge us all to make Ireland among the best places in the world to be a child or a young person" (Barnardos, www.barnardos.ie).

V. Actions and demonstrations

Public forums, rallies or other special events are an opportunity to rally supporters and bring media attention to your efforts. It is important however whith large groups of people to make sure that the crowd will be controlled and that no problems will arise in response to the demonstration.

VI. Coalitions and Campaigns

Successful advocates recognise the importance of forming alliances and coalitions with other organizations and individuals to amplify their message. The more people who deliver the same message, the more difficult it will be for policy-makers to ignore. It is much more difficult to dismiss a request when community organizations, religious leaders, and other government officials are also making it. There is strength in diversity , as well as strength in numbers. The most powerful coalitions often contain members who do not appear to have a personal vested interest in the issue.

New partners need to know how they can help advocate more effectively and to increase funding. The budgets of government agencies rarely change unless external political conditions require them to do so .

Advocates employ several ways to attempt to increase their capacity to address such neglect. Sometimes they use "insider" strategies that discreetly approach people and build relationships behind the scenes. At other times it is more effective to use "outsider" strategies – the media public meeting – to encourage community leaders to take the necessary action (RBM Advocacy Guide 2000, pg. 45).

Case Study:

Children Now
(www.childrennow.org)

Children Now's Working Families Program enters into the public debate over government's responsibility to help struggling families. To reach the larger goal of moving families form public assistance into the workforce , the program promotes an essential support network of quality child care, health care, child support, and fair tax policies for all working families. Highlights of this program include: coalition leadership engaging new voices to work together on long-term goals, policy development offering new models of family support, and public education keeping citizens informed about family issues and opportunities for action. In addition this program encourages others to Advocate for children by: joining the children are watching now online action team, endorsing California Agenda for Working Families, and by being a voice for children. This advocacy plan documents California's poor child support collection record and produces a report on it that is distributed. They amplify this message with media coverage which has stimulated federal and state government responses.

Barnardos:

Barnardos has worked in coalition with other organization on a variety of projects. One such project is the *Pennies from Heaven* project that collect old European coins after the change to the Euro. Another is Barnardos membership in the Children's rights alliance, along with 69 other members. This group campaigns for children's rights and used a campaign call *Open Your Eyes to Poverty* recently.

Outside Involvement

To be successful in advocating for a cause, not only does the organization have to work towards achieving the goal, but it is important to get the public involved in advocating as well. In the quest to advocate for children's rights it is especially important to involve young people in the advocating process. Below are ways that the public can get involved in advocating, as suggested by the Children Now organization, as well as case studies of two successful advocacy groups composed of young persons. If a member of the public participates in even one of the following suggestions or a young person gets involved on even a minimal level in an advocacy group, it would still be a large help in the advocacy movement for children's rights.

Ways the public can become involved

1. Commit to writing a letter to your local government representative once a month
2. Pass along monthly updates from the organization to your friends, family, co-workers and civic organizations with which you are affiliated and encourage them to take action
3. Organize an event at your home, with your friends, family or community group to write a letter.
4. Incorporate an action alert into your organization's newsletter or mailing and urge your membership to take a stand for children. Designate one day a month to write letters with your co-workers during lunch or as an afternoon break.
5. Make an appointment to visit your local or national representative during the legislative recess and discuss his/her position on issues that impact children including health care, child care, violence against children, education and economic issues.
6. Write an editorial to your local newspaper advocating for local, and national measures that will improve the lives of children in your community.
7. Be a voice for children at meetings in your community, including school board meetings, city council meetings and local park and recreation meetings. Ask local leaders, "Is that measure good for kids?"
8. Ask candidates running for elective offices their position on measures that affect the lives of children and their families, including health care, child care, violence against children, education and economic issues.
9. Designate a day with your friends, family and colleagues to call your local and national representatives to tell them you support measures that are good for kids, such as expanding access to quality health care and child care.
10. Invite elected officials to meet with your community group or place of worship to discuss strategies to improve the lives of children.

Youth Advocacy Groups for Children's issues

Article 12

(www,article12.org)

Article 12 is based in Scotland and is a network of young people between the ages of 12 and 18, who work together to promote youth rights as laid out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. They call themselves 'Article 12' after a section of the United Nations Convention on the Right s of the Child. The 'Article 12' section says: "Children and young people have a right to express an opinion and to have that opinion taken into account, in any matter affecting them". Anyone involved in 'Article 12' believes in expressing their views at every opportunity, on anything they care about. But most importantly, they believe in creating the opportunities since it is often hard to have adults truly listen to what children want.

Article 12 has several locations throughout Scotland including in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and several are starting in North Angus/South Aberdeenshire, Irvine and Ardnamurchan. There is a national management committee that meets six times a year at different venues each time, to let them see the work that each local group is doing and find out a bit more about their communities.

Article 12 uses its web site to communicate with young people interested in their rights from anywhere in cyberspace. They ask for young people to get in touch with them to express views about any of the issues featured in the site.

An example of one advocacy project these young people featured on their website and distributed around the Scottish youth centers was a survey that could give them more information to use in their advocacy and also to raise awareness of the issue among young people.

Article 12 Survey – Life on the Streets, Curfews and Crime

A total of 94 people responded to the survey. These included 6 twelve year olds, 15 thirteen y ear olds, 10 fourteen year olds, 19 fifteen year olds, 20 sixteen year olds, 8 seventeen year olds, 5 eighteen year olds, 8 nineteen year olds, and 2 twenty year olds. All the results were recorded by age and by area, so each are could know what their local young people think and also a bigger Scottish view could be seen. Also it could be determined which age groups do what at night, and what issues they think are important.

Article 12 then took the information from this survey to determine what was the experience of young people on the streets, such as how many had been moved on by police, been in trouble, arrested, victims of crimes, and other such incidents. Article 12 then was able to give their suggestions about what they think the cause of this problem was. In this case they believed it was caused by boredom and having nothing to do and no where to go. Then suggestions were give to help solve the problem was to give young people more creative and interesting ways to spend their evenings.

Through surveys such as this Article 12 is able to advocate for children by seeing what the problems of young people are and speaking out on behalf of them. Also because Article 12 is run by young people it is helping young people see, that they themselves can help to solve problems, and not just have to depend on adults to help them.

Case Study:

CYPG

(Tovinson, pgs. 143-153)

CYPG, or the Chailey Young People's Group, is another such organization in which young people work to advocate children's issues. This British organization is an open group in which all young people are welcome to attend meetings of. These young people are given advice and support by an adult advocate, whom currently is Sue Virgo. This is a group of young disabled children who advocate for themselves and for all the disabled. Because these young people are so dependent on carers, families, teachers, and other professionals , an independent advocate is valued by them. Many young people feel that sometimes it is easier to talk to a stranger. These young people feel that it is important that personal preferences are conveyed because they contribute to the quality.

CYPG has advocated for many things. An example of one advocacy campaign was toward the rail companies. CYPG was dissatisfied with the British Rail's treatment of the disabled. They wanted British Rail to acknowledge its responsibility for the accommodation of disabled passengers. They said they had to be lifted on to the train because there were no ramps. They had to "sit in the guard's van like a bit of luggage – not a human, just as a suitcase is shoved in the guard's van." CYPG used advocacy to work against this problem. Members of the group designed posters that were hung up. Members wrote letters to British Rail addressing the problem. They also wrote personal

accounts in prose and poetry, for publication and circulation to groups, agencies and schools to educate others.

This is just one of the examples of the many things that can be done by young person advocates.

Conclusion

As seen, advocacy is a wide subject that covers many different issues and areas. In the field of children's advocacy there are many different models which can be used in order to get across the message you wish to advocate. In looking at the above research and data, it can be concluded that all of the different models can be used successfully. In this day however, there are two factors that are extremely important; the media and the internet.

There are a limitless number of ways that the media can be used to advocate. Using the media is probably the best way to ensure that your message is reaching the public, whether it be through television, radio, or print. It is very important to maintain good relations with the media in order to ensure they portray your organization positively and in the way you wish. There is a great deal of competition for press coverage so it is also very important to keep the media interested with different events, campaigns, and other such attention grabbers.

In the past few years the use of the internet has been growing at an enormous rate. We depend on it in our everyday lives as a means to communicate, find information, and for entertainment. Having an interesting an easy to navigate web site will greatly help in advocacy. By having things such as interactive polls it is also a great way to gain statistics from surveys of the public. In addition email is an easy and efficient way for the public to contact your organization.

All of the above models of advocacy can be extremely useful in your organization's role as an advocate. Although Media and Internet are currently two of the most poplar and successful models, all models need to be used together in order to achieve the most effective advocacy. An organization can not depend on one model alone, a healthy balance must be maintained, although certain models can be used on a larger extent then others.

In order to protect the rights and well-being of children advocacy must be used. Although this is done using different methods internationally, there is always one goal: to successfully advocate for children and to give them a happy and healthy life.

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