



EFFECTIVE ADVOCACY & THE FUTURE OF NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

**Presentation to QCOSS
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Three Fundamental Q's

Given the dramatic changes in the political-economic & policy environments:

- To what extent can the non-profit sector replace the public sector in service provision?
- To what extent will the non-profit sector retain its historical mission & character?
- What will be the impact on social work?

Old Assumptions/ New Realities

1. Assumptions about the mission of non-profit organizations.
2. Assumptions about the state's role in social provision.
3. Assumptions about the relationship between non-profits and the state.
4. Assumptions about the interests of clients and non-profit organizations.
5. Assumptions re client/worker roles.

Past Experiences with Reform

1. Even non-punitive reforms have negative consequences for clients & organizations
2. Wide variations in policy implementation are exacerbated by new instabilities
3. Reforms have indirect effects on other related systems/institutions
4. Changes in political-economic environment generate new patterns of organizational & inter-organizational behavior

Impact of Welfare Reform on Non-Profits

- Agency Structure & Staffing
- Client Composition
- Programs Goals, Structure, Outcomes
- Funding Sources/Budgets
- Inter-organizational Relationships
- Conducted in Philadelphia and Detroit

Major Findings

1. Welfare reform altered the balance of the relationship between gov't & non-profits
2. Increased demand for services, esp. those provided at grassroots level. This challenged the capacity of non-profits, particularly small organizations, with considerable internal consequences. "Nonprofits were under pressure to alter their traditional character."
3. Findings similar in NY, Boston, Cleveland.

Major Findings II

- Reform had varied impact across service domains, organizational size, and location.
- Increased difficulties working with clients.
- Greater emphasis on narrowly-focused outcomes, determined by policy rules.
- Significant changes in client populations.
- Agencies responded pragmatically & need a range of technical assistance support.

Policy Recommendations

- Involve non-profits more pro-actively and consistently in policy formation and implementation
- Promote greater policy coordination and cooperation across sectors
- Provide more timely & coherent info
- Commit to more stable longer-term funding arrangements

Policy Recommendations

- Clarify outcome expectations for services
- Develop contingency plans to assist non-profits deal with effects of funding cuts, policy restrictions, and changing worker-client relationships. These include aid in evaluating programs, developing flexible outcome measures and training.

Recommendations to Non-Profits

- Develop realistic & measurable outcome objectives and tools to assess agency and staff performance – consistent with the established missions of the organization and clients' needs.
- Enhance skills in creative program development that builds upon past successes & ongoing linkages to clients and communities.

Recommendations to Non-Profits II

- Improve access to data re clients, policy regulations and alternative funding sources – especially in smaller agencies.
- Develop skills in GIS and MIS, proposal writing, marketing, and fundraising.
- Improve strategic planning and board recruitment & development.
- Assist staff in working with clients who have multiple & more complex needs.

Recommendations to Non-Profits III

- Enhance skills in inter-organizational collaboration and coalition building, especially with non-traditional providers, cultural groups, churches, & atypical allies.
- Large organizations should help sustain smaller, non-traditional agencies because of their unique & critical role.
- Involve clients & communities more in shaping programs/improve communication

Recommendations for Non-Profits IV

- Move outside traditional service domains & become involved in economic development, cooperative program planning and advocacy.
- Enhance service coordination, especially with non-traditional agencies.

Purposes of Inter-Organizational Collaboration

1. Distinguish compulsory & voluntary
2. Joint Advocacy: Recognize that the state is an arena for struggle and change.
3. Training & Technical Assistance
4. Information & Resource Sharing
5. Prevent increased competition
6. Improve service coordination (e.g., referrals)

Final Recommendations

- Advocacy & participatory planning needed to balance changing role of government
- Pick your battles carefully
- Don't Romanticize non-profits' role
- Employ functional non-capitulation
- Prepare for increase in worker-client tensions and new ethical dilemmas
- Create ongoing regional dialogues

Final Recommendations

- Be consistent in advocacy message & focus on a few compelling themes
- Don't limit advocacy to traditional targets. Involve new constituencies & new actors
- Expand nature of public policy debate beyond need for increased funding.