ROLE OF BOARDS OF DIRECTORS IN PUBLIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND POLICY INFLUENCING

MAXIMIZING GOVERNANCE IN FOR PUBLIC BENEFIT ORGANIZATIONS PROJECT

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Land Acknowledgement

The land we are standing on today is the traditional territory of many nations including but not limited to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, the Anishinaabe, the Chippewa, the Huron Wendat, the Seneca, and the Haudenosaunee. It is now home to many diverse First Nations, Indigenous, Inuit and Métis people. It is part of Dish with One Spoon Territory, Treaty 13 territory, and the Williams Treaty.

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Workshop Outline

1. Introductions
2. Warm up activity
3. The policy context
4. Role and capacity of boards to develop and influence public policy
5. Steps for developing and influencing policy
6. Tools and resources

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Learning Objectives

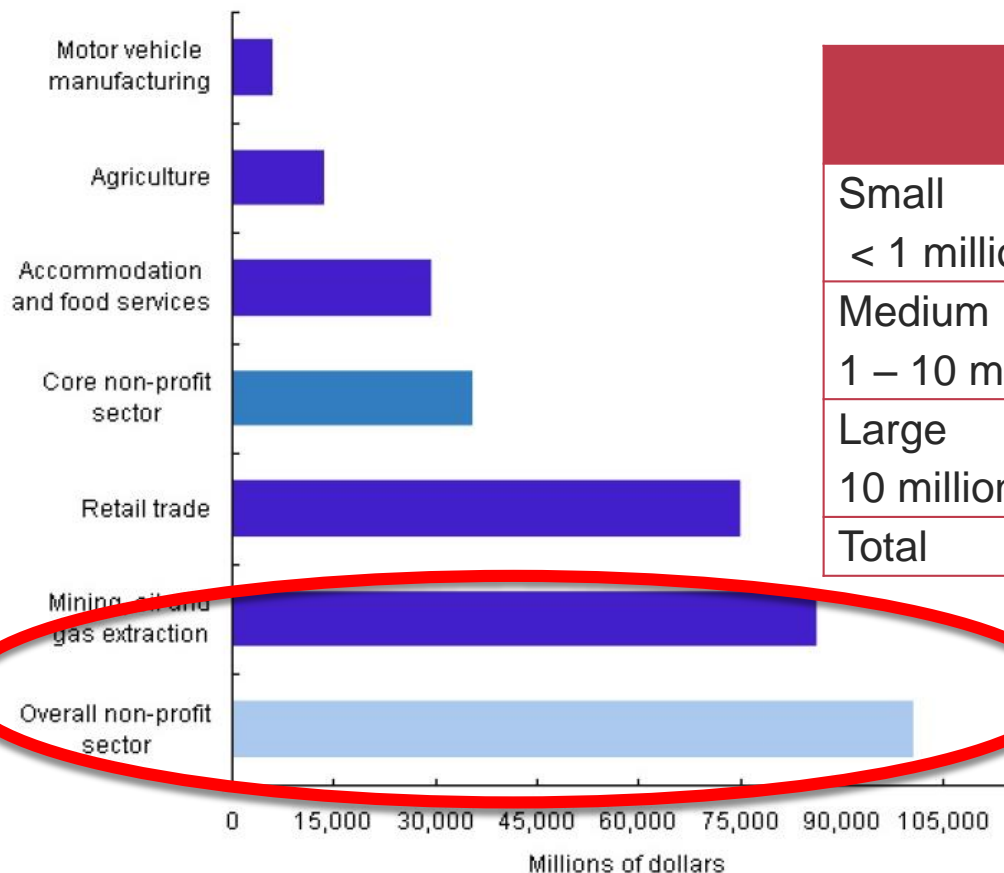After this session, hopefully you will have gained…

- A clearer sense of priorities facing organizations and communities we serve
- A clearer sense of things boards can do to influence policy
- A head start on a policy/advocacy prioritization and policy advocacy work for your organization

Establishing Context

- How big is the non-profit sector?

- How big are the issues facing our communities?

How big is the sector?

Gross domestic product: non-profit sector and selected industries, 2006

	# Non-profits	$ Revenue
Small < 1 million/year	95%	15%
Medium 1 – 10 million/year	5%	25%
Large 10 million +/year	< 1%	60%
Total	161,000	112 billion

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How big are the issues?

Income

- Most income inequality AND most expensive city in the country
- 2nd highest child poverty rate
- No growth in income for racialized, newcomer, young people

Housing

- Housing costs growing 4x faster than income
- Sheltered homeless population increased 69% in 5 years

How big are the issues?

Work

- Unemployment is dropping but precarious work is on the rise

- Disproportionate representation of immigrants, newcomers, racialized populations in precarious jobs

Health & Wellbeing

- Strong physical health but worsening mental health

- Health crises including youth mental health, opioid crisis

- Poor health outcomes strongly determined by income and race

Warm Up Activity

- Working in groups of 2-3
    - Identify one or two systemic issues faced by the communities your organizations work with
    - Discuss the impact of these issues

- Participants get up and write these on flip charts (one for systemic issues, one for impacts)

- Come back for discussion in the larger group

What is public policy?

- "Public policy" refers to "a strategic action led by a public authority in order to limit or increase the presence of certain phenomena within the population" (National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy [NCCHPP], 2012).

- Policy making is influenced by numerous groups and organizations with an interest in the outcome (Milio, 2001).

What is advocacy?

- Advocacy is any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others. It includes public education, regulatory work, litigation, and work before administrative bodies, lobbying, nonpartisan voter registration, nonpartisan voter education, and more. (Alliance for Justice, n.d.)

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The Board's Public Policy Influence

- Influencing public policy – that is public policy work or advocacy - is at the heart of non-profit Boards

- Ambassadors and champions for your organization's mission and priorities

- Access to decision makers and influencers

Boards and Public Policy Leadership

Strong board leadership is not just about checks and balances; it is about creating the circumstances that will allow our missions to be achieved. That ensures progress can be made. That enables each of us to translate our shared beliefs into action.

Our missions will be fully realized when our community leaders hear our voices, understand our arguments, and see our causes as worthy of their best efforts. When we stand for what we believe in and insist on the best for our missions and those we serve

www.standforyourmission.org.

Limiting Factors

What limits a board's policy or advocacy work?

- Resources – human or financial

- Capacity

- Reputation

- Commitment and tenacity

- Philosophy

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History of Non-Profit Advocacy

- 1917-2017 Income Tax Act (ITA) rules governed advocacy or "political activities" that limited non profits ability to engage in advocacy

- 2018 - more progressive Budget Implementation Act, no2 introduced

- Registered charities now have more freedom to engage in public advocacy, which for many is critical to carrying out their charitable mandates

- **"Public policy dialogue and development activities (PPDAs)"replaced advocacy and permitted as a charitable activity**

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CRA Guidelines

Charities CAN engage in advocacy pursued in support of an otherwise charitable purpose

- Providing information
- Research
- Disseminating opinions
- Advocacy
- Mobilizing others
- Representations
- Providing forums
- Convening discussions
- Communicating on social media

CRA Guidelines

Charities CANNOT engage in direct or indirect support or opposition to a political party/candidate/

Direct Support or Opposition

- When a charity's external materials communicate a message that supports or opposes a political party or candidate to the public
- When a charity transfers any of its resources) to a political party or candidate
- When a charity allows a political party to use its resources without compensation

Indirect Support or Opposition

- Where a charity's records explicitly reveal that it carried on an activity to support or oppose a political party or candidate
- Where a charity transfers any of its resources to a third party to be used to support or oppose a political party or candidate

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CRA Guidelines

Individual Directors:

- Must *not* use the charity's resources to support their personal political involvement

- Must *not* use events or functions organized by the charity as a platform to voice their own political views

- Are encouraged to indicate that their comments are personal rather than the view of the charity

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Why do advocacy/public policy work?

- Public policy impacts us tremendously
- Public policy changes through pressure and advocacy
- Policy advocacy provides an opportunity to build community capacity and empower communities
- Policy advocacy helps us meet our missions

ONN: Engaging, advocating, and leading with – and for – nonprofits working for the public benefit in Ontario
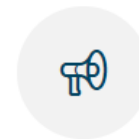
ENGAGING
in policy research
- READ MORE

ADVOCATING
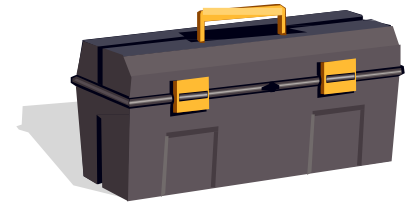for decent work
- READ MORE

LEADING
on a sector-wide pension
- READ MORE

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Enabling the Board's public policy role

- **What enables Boards to develop and influence public policy?**
  - Governance framework – embed advocacy in structures, committees and policies
  - Skills – undertake strategic Board recruitment and invest in Board development (training and education)
  - Mandate – organizational commitment to advocacy
  - Strategic Plan - identify critical priorities
  - Common understanding – become familiar with key concepts (e.g. collective impact, advocacy, lobbying, etc.) and establish shared expectations

Tools

Social Action Committee

Draft Terms of Reference

Purpose

The purpose of the SAC Committee is to enhance the capacity of Access Alliance to provide effective, coordinated and evidence-informed social action and advocacy on issues affecting the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve. The SAC's core responsibilities include responsibility for:
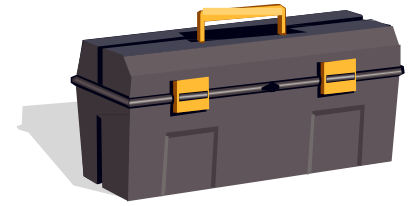
1. Knowledge mobilization and coordination of advocacy and social action initiatives across the organization
2. Share information on best and promising practices
3. Reviving and updating policies and tools
4. Approval of key advocacy initiatives

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Policy Work in Action

According to Volunteer Canada, there are 7 steps that Boards can use to participate effectively in public policy or advocacy work

- Identify
- Analyze
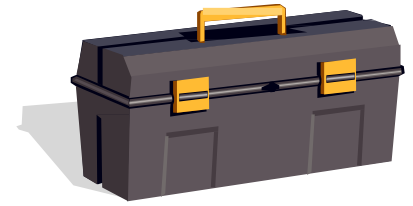- Strategize
- Mobilize
- Organize
- Educate
- Evaluate

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Tools

Prioritization Matrix

- Can be used to help prioritize public policy issues

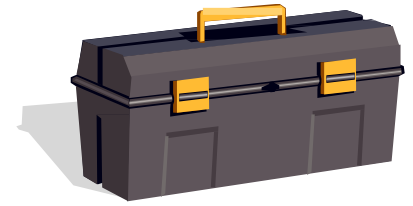| Positive Factors	Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative	Negative Factors
Issue is important to our agency's clients / communities	x					Issue is not important to agency's clients / communities
Strategy is likely to benefit the health / wellness of clients / communities	x					Strategy is not likely to benefit the health / wellness of clients / communities

Tools

PEEST Analysis

- PEEST is an analytical tool for identifying and categorizing basic trends and information, which could influence the future.

    - Political (P)

    - Economic (E)

    - Environmental (E)

    - Social/Cultural (S)

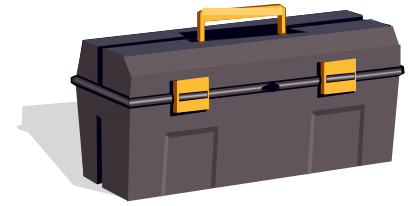   - Technological/Scientific (T)

Tools

SWOT Analysis

- A SWOT analysis can help you to fully understand the environment surrounding your policy issue
    - Strengths (S)
    - Weaknesses (W)
    - Opportunities (O)
    - Threats (T)

Strategize

- Articulate short, medium and long-term goals and ways to achieve them

- Define your ASK

  - Board Policy/Position Statement
  - Business Case

Tools

Board Policy/Position Statement

Our Position:

As a community health centre, our work is guided by the ideal of health promotion conceived of in the Ottawa Charter on Health Promotion. The charter defines the prerequisites for achieving health as peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable economic system, social justice and equity. Healthy development requires a secure foundation in these basic prerequisites. As such we will work to ensure access to education for all children.
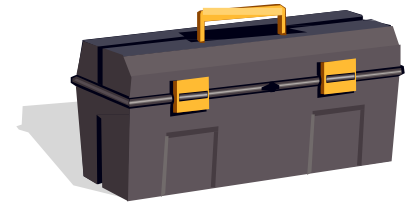
Some of the ways this will be done include:

- Taking a lead role in advocating on behalf of our clients with individual schools who have denied children access.
- Educating clients around their legal rights.
- Collaborating and participating in community initiatives that focus on eliminating barriers to access to education for all children in Canada

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POSITION STATEMENT ON ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR ALL CHILDREN (2003)

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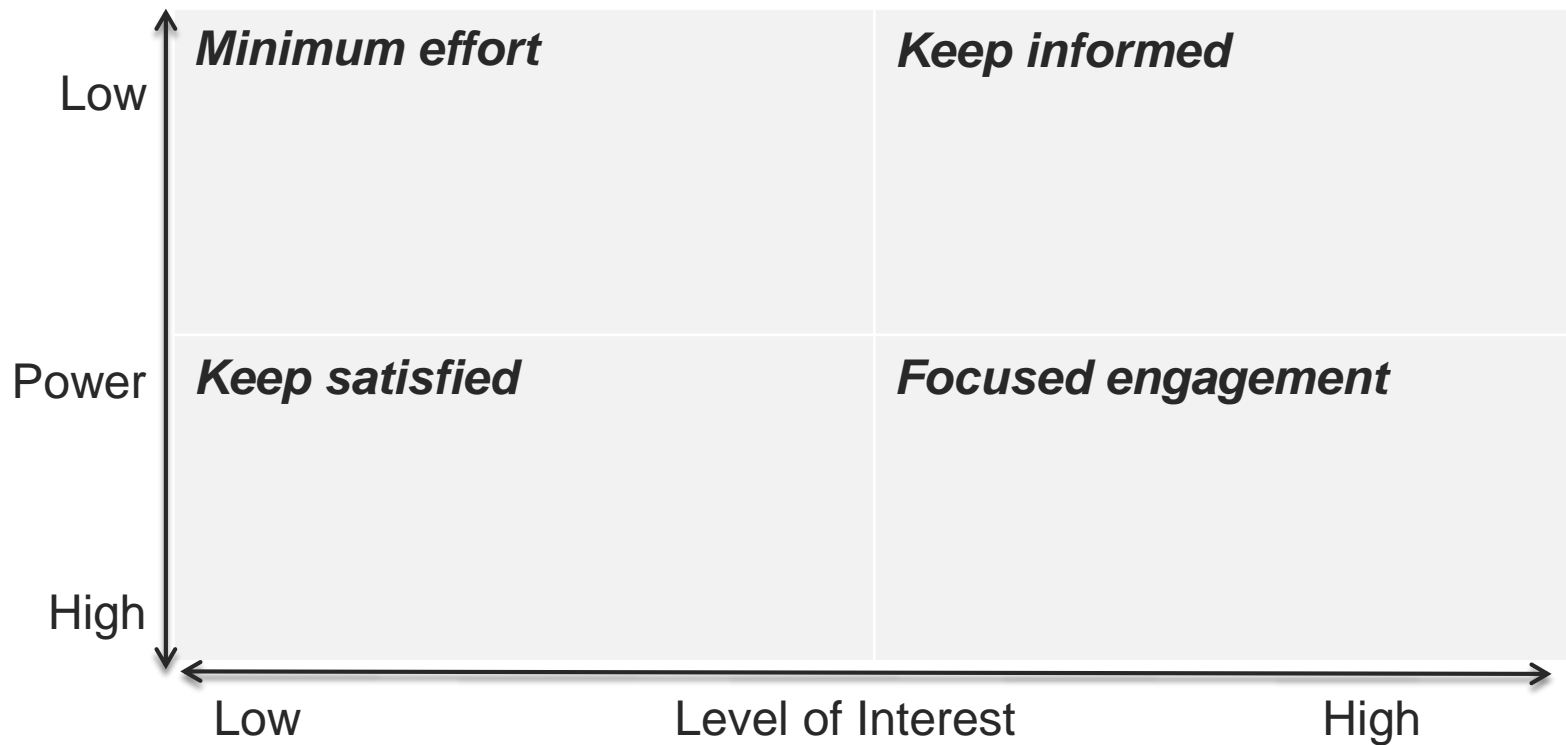Multicultural Health and Community Services

Mobilize

- Secure resources – internal and external
- Build coalitions - made up of likely and unlikely allies
  - Strengthen or amplify voices
  - Maximize resources
- Define persons of influence (decision makers)

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Tools

Stakeholder Analysis Matrix

- Can be used to identify strategies for engaging with diverse actors – , elected officials, community leaders, policy influencers, etc.

	Low	High
Low	*Minimum effort*	*Keep informed*
Power	*Keep satisfied*	*Focused engagement*
High		
	Low	High
		Level of Interest

Organize

- Influence from the Inside
    - Understand government and the policy development process
    - Get to know your elected officials and what really matters to them
    - Identify and meet with other influential actors
    - Communicate your **ASK!**
        - Share your Business Case

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Public Policy Process

Most charities engage here – often after public policy decisions have been made!

- Evaluation
- Implementation
- Passage of policy instruments
- Policy formulation and design
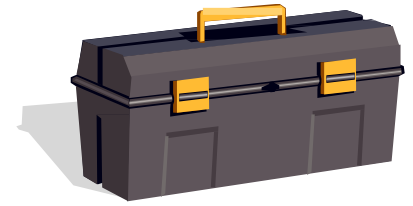- Priority-setting
- Problem identification

Public Participation
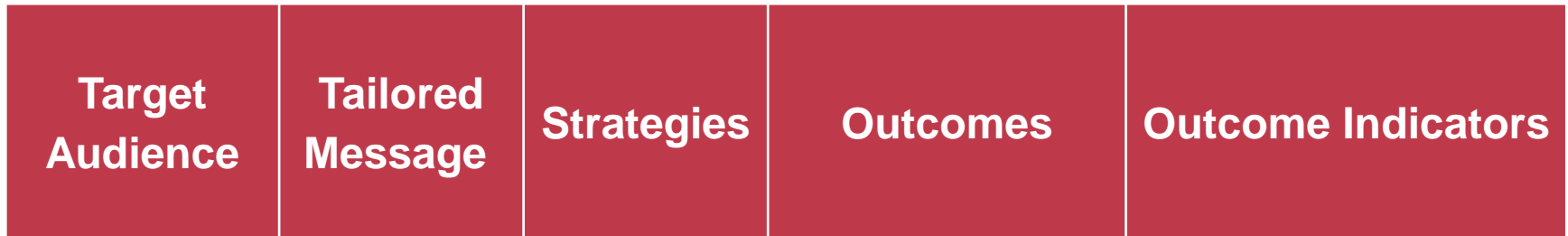
Organize and Educate

- Influence from the Outside
  - Education (i.e., voter education)
  - Work together with residents and community members on shared issues
  - Host community meetings and events
  - Use social media and digital platforms

Tools

Knowledge Translation Plan

- Can be used to develop and organize your plan

Target Audience	Tailored Message	Strategies	Outcomes	Outcome Indicators

Resources/Tools

- Sample of social action committee terms of reference

- Sample of Board position statement

- Prioritization tool

- PEEST analysis

- SWOT analysis

- Stakeholder Analysis

- KM framework (adapted for policy development use)

Resources and References

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Questions/ Comments

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