

## Getting you started... Campaigning in Collaboration

*"We had much more of an impact working with the Smokefree Action Coalition than we would have had on our own, but you have to persuade all members that you have a common interest."* Ian Willmore, Smokefree Action Coalition

### Why campaign in collaboration?

Working with useful allies can increase the impact of your campaigning and advocacy work. Collaborative working can strengthen campaigns by:

- Sharing skills and experiences of campaigners
- Sharing workloads and pooling resources of organisations
- Gaining widespread public support, some people who might not sign up to a specific organisation are willing to sign up to a cause or movement
- Reaching a greater number of campaign targets and apply pressure at various levels of decision making

Demonstrating the strength of numbers, especially a unified voice, can be very powerful and can add legitimacy and political clout to your campaign making your targets sit up and listen.

### How to.....

First of all look at whether collaboration will help you achieve your aim, then identify who you want to work with and how.

Organisations can campaign together in a range of different ways from loose networks to more formal structured coalitions and alliances or a mixture. Often collaborative working evolves over time in order to respond to external factors.



## Seek out unusual alliances

Many successful campaigns have developed strong positions through reaching agreement with a wide range of supporting organisations, including those outside the sector. Demonstrating that support on an issue is cross cutting attracts attention making it harder for decision makers to ignore your campaign objectives.

## Example

Oxfam GB, Refugee Council and Transport and General Workers Union campaigned together successfully in 2000 for the scrapping of a new Asylum vouchers scheme. Each organisation brought particular expertise, working with a union brought access to influencing routes directly within government.

## Agree on your shared aims and objectives

Identify what you want to change and why. Campaigning with others may involve compromises. Be clear about the boundaries beyond which you are not prepared to go.

## Present a united front

Fragmented or contradictory campaign messages can detract from your overall campaign. *"Decision-makers don't want individual organisations all talking at the same time. They want to know what the line is on an issue."* Brian Lamb, Special Education Consortium.

## Overcoming challenges

- Consider carefully what all partners are aiming to achieve, be clear about what partners are bringing and what you want from each other.
- Define the exact nature of your joint working. It is helpful to draw up written agreements to set out the purpose of your alliance and roles and responsibilities that are being committed. See joint working agreements - Collaborative Working team.
- Open and honest communication is also vital particularly at the early stages when trust is developing.

*"Challenges were resolved through negotiation and because the lead individual in each organisation was trusted to have the best interests of the campaign at heart."* Jonathan Ellis, Asylum Voucher Campaign

## Where to go next

For case studies, Campaigning in Collaboration (paid for publication) and to download the free executive summary visit <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/Campaigningincollaboration>

For more information on collaborative working visit <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/collaborativeworking/>

