

Coalition Building: A More Effective Method for Addressing Needs

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Presentation outline

Outline- Definition, Framework, Practical Components, some examples (The Gift of NY, CVMHMRA) leading to two contemporary case studies.

Webster: "A temporary alliance of distinct parties, persons, or states for joint action."

Cherie Brown AJC, 1984: "an organization of diverse interest groups that combines their human and material interests to affect a specific change the members are unable to bring about independently."

Rosenthal and Mizrahi' research found "they are a complex organizational form that provide a unique way for distinct and separate organizations to work together while reserving allegiance to their own."

Cohen, Baer and Satterwhite " a union of people and organizations working to influence outcomes on a specific problem...useful for accomplishing a broad range of goals that reach beyond the capacity of any individual member organization.

Interesting note: Defies notion of authority and responsibility going together. Coalitions operate with no authority and mutual responsibility being the driving force.

Is it new?

Why of sudden interest in Jewish life? God Story

Coalitions most often build within context of advocacy although they have been seen in areas on direct service as well.

What do Coalitions offer?

- *strength and power in numbers, leading to broader reach;
- *Added creditability with coordinated plan, aligned united front and consistent message;
- *public perception of tangible, broad community support;
- *media and public profile for organizations which may not otherwise receive such;
- *increased access to policy makers;
- *information sharing
- * fostering cooperation among widely different organizations;
- *networking and partnership opportunities as Coalition members get to know one another;
- *conservation of resources;
- *economies of scale and cost efficiencies;
- *division of labor and reduced duplication;
- *sense of synergy; greater credibility than member organizations.

Know when not to form a Coalition
Resources required
"Tom Sawyer" approach
Lack of consensus on problem issue

Challenges in Coalition Building

Time and resource pressures
Lack of trust in achieving objective
Desire to lead away from goal to less demanding outcome

Conceptual Framework

Coalition building is one of the tools of community development: an approach at creating competent communities. While, historically, people thought of communities in geographic terms, today we see beyond the geographic to "non territorial associational networks.

Professional's role in creating or facilitation coalitions is "network weaving;" pulling together disparate elements into efforts with focus, alignment and intensity---as with all other professional work.

Roles of Coalitions in Competition, cooperation and collaboration
Definition of cooptation

Simple impact of monthly meetings---Coalitions are not catalytic in that their components do individually change as group proceeds.

Principles of Coalition Building

Well defined and enumerated Mission and Goals are critical to Coalition building. A shared mission must be endorsed by members so that they can set aside parochial differences and power disparities in order to join together in common purpose.

Memberships in coalitions tend to be inclusive, allowing all members of a community who endorse the Coalition's mission to join the Coalition's efforts.

Organizational competence, including:

- Leadership
- Democratic decision making with broad input into decisions
- Experienced staff
- System of planning
- Systems of internal and external communications
- Effective use of internal and external resources
- Taking actions—either as a whole or by members
- Creation of hope and celebration
- Long range view---time and persistence
- Monitoring and Assessment

Steps in Coalition Building

Determine specific need to develop and refine group's mission and objectives. Create a common vision.

Recruit the right people in the right order

Adopt more detailed activities tied to Group's needs, strengths, interests and diversity.

Ensure reciprocity.

Convene membership with "early success" milestones identified

Develop a theory of change and action

Create a sense of common expectations

Devise and spell out structure

Develop the communications strategy

Develop revenue and expense plan tied to operating plan

Don't compete with members for funds

Plan for vitality; i.e., new member growth. Make "room" for new members

Evaluate and refine programs accordingly

Unique Barriers in Jewish Life

Kovod complex: (GM story-Hi, Max and Norm) eg JAFI website

Perceived competition for funds---zero sum game?

Definition of consensus

Tailhook example---Are we family or are we in organizational roles

Importance of case studies to provide texture to the conceptual models