


Voluntary Organizations in the New Rural Economy: Options and Choices

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- Acknowledgements:
- The Arkleton Centre for Rural Development Research
- The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation

Voluntary Associations make important contributions to rural life

- Provide support
- Train the potential labour force
- Provide employment
- Inform, communicate, and discuss
- Build social capacity to organize and act
- Mediate between groups
- Entertain

History of the 3rd Sector

- 1910: Frontier: primary local social support
- 1930s: government takes on education, health, welfare (welfare state)
- 1960s: voluntary associations as centres of cultural diversity
- 1980s: state retreat from social support (downloading)
- Today: 3rd sector integration with private and state

Voluntary associations

Results: the Challenges

- Membership (63%)
 - Maintaining members
 - Recruiting new members
 - Avoiding burnout
- Funding (49%)
 - Finding support
 - Avoiding exhaustion

What are the major problems faced by voluntary associations?

Membership

- Loss by moving away, health problems, or dying (esp. in Ferintosh)
- Burnout a problem where limited number of volunteers and much work to do (eg. Health care)

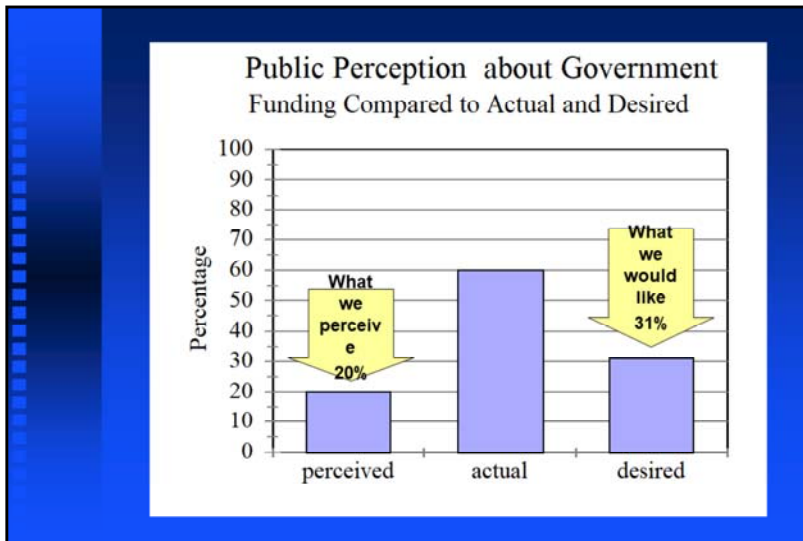
Funding

- Access to information (small communities often out of the loop)
- Criteria unclear
- Project time frame unreasonable for group
- Require too much work (diversion from group goals)

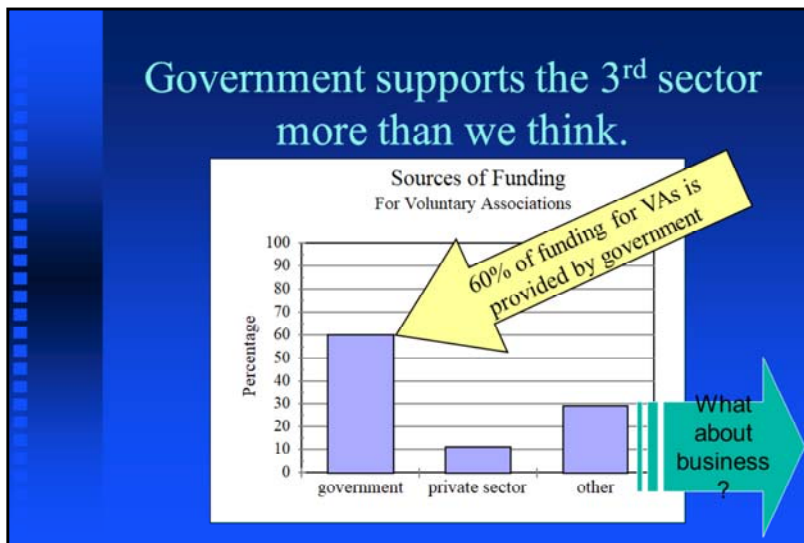
Awareness

- Where are the supports for voluntary associations?
- How do these supports work?
- What do supporters want from voluntary associations?





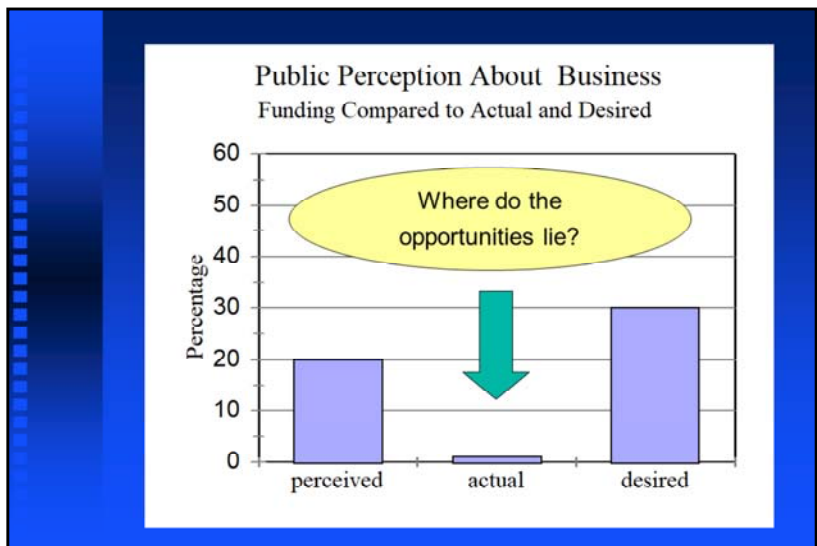
Data for this graph is based on statistics offered in “Imagine”, an advertising supplements to the *Globe and Mail*, 1998. Cited in Wall and Gordon (1999:5).

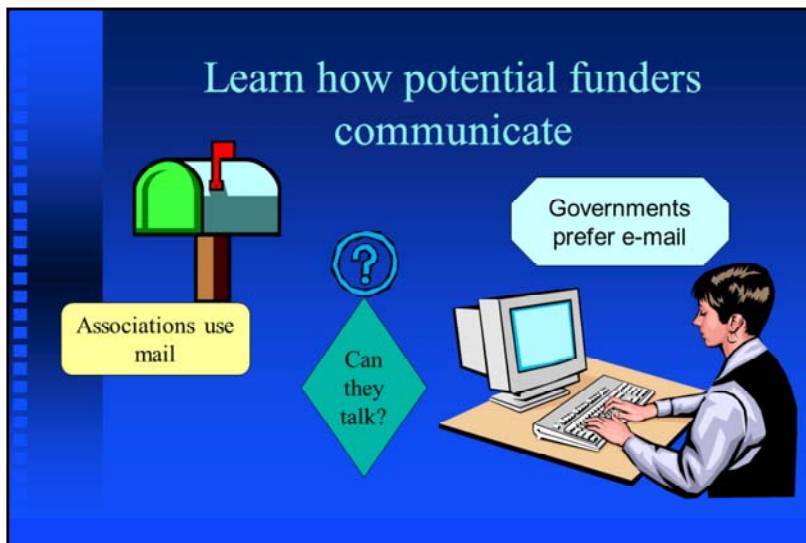


Evans, B. and J. Shields, *Reinventing the Third Sector: Alternative Service Delivery and the New Public Administration of the Canadian Post-Welfare State*. Working Paper Series #9, Centre for Voluntary Sector Studies, Faculty of Business, Ryerson Polytechnic University, Toronto, Canada, 1998.

Data for voluntary organizations in Canada, 1996

Cited in Wall, Ellen and Todd Gordon, *Voluntary Organizations and Government Funding: An Education Strategy*, Report prepared for the Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation, June, 1999.
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- Approach corporate sponsors for help with computer expertise.
- ▲Take advantage of government sponsored training in the field of computer technology and Internet communications such as Volnet and Community Access Programs.
- ▲Consider using volunteers from the pool of rural youth who have computer skills and are anxious to use them.
- ▲Join with other voluntary associations in the rural community to work together and gain access to any and all of the above.

Learn what potential funders want


- What are the current political issues?
- Can they be included in the mission statement of the voluntary association?
- Meet with potential funders to identify their interests
- Look for mutual benefits



- Have goal and mission statements that are flexible enough to be adapted to current social issues.
- ▲ Have regular meetings with government representatives for your community
- ▲ Do not wait for these representatives to tell you about programs, be pro-active and ask them for details.
- ▲ Keep abreast of current and potential social problems

Use and Develop Skills

- Computer skills
- A strategy for seeking funding
- Capacity for writing proposals
 - Self-awareness
 - Critical and creative thinking
 - Seek assistance
 - Understand budgets



- Develop a strategy for seeking funding that is part of an overall strategic planning process.
- ▲ Increase self-awareness about the organization.
- ▲ Adopt critical and creative thinking skills.
- ▲ Get help when you need it.
- ▲ Develop reasonable and well thought through budgets.
- ▲ build up proposal writing skills through contacts with other community groups that have been successful.



- Identify (and prioritize) the corporations and businesses that could have an interest your voluntary organization and learn something about them;
- Identify how an affiliation with your organization will be a positive step for them;
- Approach them through the person designated as the “donations officer” or corporate foundation director”;
- Be aware of when the business makes its decisions regarding donations and voluntary association support;
- Know about your own association; how and why would a corporation want to sponsor it;
- Be aware of your organization’s image in the community;
- Make sure all members of the organization support the attempt to gain corporate partners;
- If possible get a personal contact with some of the employees in the business and ask them to promote your association within the business;
- Consider ways that a business might be able to help beyond just giving financial donations.
- Evaluate you past attempts and develop strategy on what did and did not work.
- get to know the other voluntary sector organizations in the community and region;
- see if there are areas where working together and developing common goals is possible;
- focus on organizations that have volunteers with the type of qualities your group needs;
- remember that many volunteers want to can gain experience for future employment; try to provide them with opportunities to develop useful skills.

Building Global Partnerships



Understanding the New Rural Economy: Options and Choices

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