

6. Positive Donor Publicity

Foreign aid agencies have their own advocacy challenges within the larger government bureaucracy. Policymakers frequently perceive foreign aid issues to be less relevant than domestic issues among voters. For example, it can be a more difficult task to justify increased spending to address the global TB epidemic when a donor country's own public health system is under-funded. As a result, in many political and other institutions that initially seem reluctant, one can usually find pockets of individuals who will hugely welcome the advocacy support.

On a number of occasions, the ACTION project has embraced this dynamic as an opportunity to leverage further funding for TB. For example, working closely with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), RESULTS Canada provided the agency with an opportunity to showcase the value of its TB programs through the media. In a news conference on World TB Day, March 24, 2005, organized by RESULTS Canada in collaboration with CIDA, Stop TB Canada and STP, Aileen Carroll, the Minister of International Cooperation, was provided a platform to announce an additional CDN \$38 million to fight the global TB epidemic.

For the media event, RESULTS Canada helped facilitate the attendance of a senior official from STP and further commended CIDA for its efforts in fighting TB. The speakers emphasized how CIDA's spending on TB was highly cost effective in terms of dollars per lives saved and how controlling TB overseas was relevant to efforts to control the disease in Canada.

A similar media event was organized for the launch of the *Global Plan to Stop TB: 2006-2015* in January 2006. By first securing the participation of Stephen Lewis, then UN Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa, and then approaching CIDA with an attitude of positive reinforcement, RESULTS Canada was able to secure the participation of CIDA's President, Robert Greenhill, in the media event.

Later in 2006, when CIDA's funding for TB came under threat during proposed budget cuts, RESULTS Canada was able to strategically mobilize a Canadian coalition of advocates and respond to prevent the planned cuts.

Tips & Suggestions

1. Always assume that there are people just as passionate about your issue as you are within apparently unresponsive government agencies, constrained by their position and unable to be vocal about their concerns.
2. Build credibility among donor agencies by going out of your way to give them credit in the media when credit is due.
3. Positive reinforcement should not take away from pressure to increase support to a specific issue. Careful nuancing is required to make sure that the final message encourages maintaining or increasing this support.
4. Care should be taken not to over-emphasize the generosity of any government on a specific issue, which can undermine harsher criticism required to prod the government on other fronts.



Press conference in which CIDA announced an additional CDN \$38 million to fight the global TB epidemic, March 24, 2005.