LOBBYING AND FUNDRAISING STRATEGIES FOR LIBRARIES IN KENYA

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With budget for public services becoming tighter, libraries are being asked to develop new skills in marketing, fundraising and lobbying in addition to the traditional skills required for information management. It is therefore important that Libraries come up with well thought of strategies for fundraising and lobbying if they have to survive in this era of great competition and information explosion. For them to be able to offer the services they are mandated to of ensuring access of information to all, then, they have to lobby to have the support of all the sectors that matter.

WHY IS THERE NEED TO LOBBY AND FUNDRAISE FOR LIBRARIES?

This is important because libraries are faced with a lot of challenges in their Endeavour to provide their services. These challenges are:

- Poor or inadequate funding
- Poor infrastructure i.e. in terms of buildings, electricity, ICT and other resources.
- Poor reading culture
- Inadequate and unqualified staff
- Low level capacity building
- Lack of political will for library development
- Absence of an overall coordinating body
- No accurate and current data base
- Limited access to policy makers
- Poor awareness of values of libraries
- Competition in attracting funding
- Lack of strong lobby groups
- Obsolete and non-existing legal frameworks

WHAT IS TO LOBBY?

Lobbying means the attempt to influence those who make policies, the legislators. In our case here therefore, it means seeking to influence of public officials e.g. the legislators towards supporting the endeavors of libraries by for example supporting or formulating policies that have positive effect on libraries. In other words, it means soliciting support of influential persons for libraries, development.

WHY LOBBY?

- You can make a difference through lobbying
- People working together can make a difference
- Lobbying is a democratic tradition- the act of telling our policy makers how to write and change our laws is at the very heart of our democratic system. Its is a better alternative of tyranny or revolution
Lobbying helps make real solution- people thinking creatively and asking their elected officials for support can generate innovative solutions that overcome the root cause of a problem.

Policy makers need your expertise- you know your problems first hand and what work and what doesn’t and thus can make problems real to your policy maker.

Lobbying helps people- every thing that goes into lobbying e.g., the research, the strategy, planning, the phone calls and visits- will help fulfill your goal.

The views of non-profit are important- most decisions are made locally and thus, your lobbying can have an immediate concrete impact on libraries.

Lobbying advances your cause and builds public trust. Building public trust is essential and lobbying helps you gain it by increasing your organization visibility.

By lobbying, you create awareness of values of libraries

STRATEGIES (METHODS) OF LOBBYING

- Through writing letter to the legislators expressing your views of the support required from them towards the libraries.
- Sending E-mails
- Telephoning
- Sending delegates

Other ways of lobbying without contacting your legislators directly are:
- writing letters to the Editors of various media houses
- talking with Editors and reporter about the issue you want addressed
- participating in radio-call-in shows
- distributing action flyers- ie, distributing reform issues in public meetings and other strategic points
- reach out to other organizations to enlist their support in grassroots lobbying campaign-legislators are more likely to listen to the voices of many more than for one organization.

STEPS FOR LOBBYING

- Identify specific goals- what is it that you want your legislators to support.
- Identify the appropriate target- who are the people you intend to lobby
- Decide on the method to employ when lobbying
- Decide on who take what action in the organization. There is a theory about persuasion, ‘people like listening to people who are more like them. Therefore, if it is approaching the legislators, people of influence in the organization should be used,
PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE LOBBYING

- Be accurate
- Be brief
- Be clear
- Know your opinion
- Show them how they win (benefit from changes to be made
- See it their way
- Follow-up
- Send a thank you note
- Recognize and appreciate any effort made

FUNDRAISING FOR LIBRARIES

Fundraising for libraries is necessitated by the desire to build better libraries and to improve service delivery to the customers.

To succeed in fundraising, there must be a fundraising strategy which is a plan to set out the following:
- What libraries are set up to do and what their main areas of work are
- What your fundraising needs and priorities are
- Costing of the above
- How you intend to raise the money
- The way forward.

It is important that, you set your mission, followed by strategic aim. You must therefore
- Show that your plans are realistic
- Show that you are capable of managing the money raised
- Show how you will monitor and evaluate your work
- Show your business plan.

THE STRATEGY OF FUNDRAISING

- Develop a comprehensive long-term programme, but break it into smaller chunks sized bits to seek funding for each part from the same or different sources
- Develop a more diversified range of donors who can provide different amount at different points of the programme or project’s implementation
- Seek both local and international donors

When fundraising, it is important to note the following:
- There are many conditions imposed on funds provided by most donors that may restrict its use
- It’s important to understand the needs for them by looking at the it from their perspective
- Ensure you have communicated your needs clearly— the who, how, why, and when
- Try to find a middle ground in negotiating with donors
- Satisfy their needs without sacrificing your own,
- Misdeed and fraud taint a sector as a whole, creating mistrust and misunderstanding. Its therefore important to develop clear professionalism among the staff members
- Fund raising activities need skills and knowledge to be effective and successful
- It is easier to get money for one event than for sustaining long-term programmes— thus, there is need to come up with new and unique programme that you want to raise funds for.

You should also try to put yourself in the shoes of donors by being able to answer the following questions.
- Why should she/he give you the money
- Do you have the funds you require
- do you have a good programme that is unique, different and creative
- Have you leveraged local resources to supplement and enhance the funds you seek
- Do you have good staff members and volunteer expertise to implement the programme you are sourcing for
- Is your target community well identified and defined
- What gap are you filling
- Why do you want to work with them

NB It is important that when sourcing for donors you go for those that support programmes similar to yours.

**METHODS OF FUNDRAISING**
- Direct mails
- On-line system
- Personal solicitation
- Writing proposals
- Holding fundraising events like a fund raiser (Harambee), auction, dinner
- Introducing money making activities in the organization secretarial services, photocopying services, hiring of equipments and buildings, introducing a small fee for services deliveries

**SOURCES OF FUNDS**
- Foundations
- Corporate giving
- Individual gifts
- Special events
- Government funding
CONCLUSION

It is my belief that if the above stated strategies for lobbying and fundraising are used, libraries in Kenya would be more improved and they would be able to offer better services to their customers as well as ensure free access to all, an aspect that would help in promoting democracy.