

Age-Friendly Advocacy in Two Canadian Cities: Measuring Capacity for Success



Maggie MacNeil, School of Public Health and Health Systems, Applied Health Sciences,
University of Waterloo, Waterloo ON
Email: Margaret.macneil@uwaterloo.ca

Background

- The age-friendly communities (AFC) movement arose in response to simultaneous trends of population aging and increasing urbanization.
- The World Health Organization's age-friendly communities movement has had extensive uptake in Canada, with over 800 cities implementing age-friendly principles that alter physical and social aspects of cities.

Objective

- The objective of this research was to evaluate which characteristics of age-friendly advocacy groups will be the most important for influencing policy change

Methods

- Municipal advocacy of two Canadian cities (Calgary & Ottawa) was compared using the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF; Weible, et al., 2011).
- This comparison helps to understand how coalitions use resources to perform at organizational and system levels.
- Analysis focused on whether the group with more capacity for success contained more top-down or bottom-up characteristics.
- Available reports and documentation was structured using checklists of: success indicators, as well as "top-down" and "bottom-up" factors.

Policy Analytical Capacity Framework: How do resources affect advocacy?



Results

Measure	Calgary Elder Friendly Communities	Council on Aging Ottawa: Age-Friendly Ottawa
Implementation	2000-2007	2012-2014
Size	58	34
Resources	\$180 000/year	\$500 000/year
Local government endorsement	✗	✓
Local government support	✗	✓
Start-up grant	✓	✓
Local media coverage	✗	✓
Provincial support	✗	✓
Partnerships	3	5
Seniors' involvement	✓	✓
Seniors' integrated	✗	✗
Community champion	✗	✓
Small projects first	✓	✓
In-kind provincial support	✗	✗
Profit: non-profit ratio	0 : 18	1: 13
Non-Profit partnerships	✓	✓
Seniors' integrated	✓	✗
Partnerships	3	5

Light orange box = Top-Down Characteristics

Dark orange box = Bottom-up Characteristics

Discussion

- The ideal combination of characteristics is a mix of top down and bottom up characteristics. This research measures how these two cities may diverge from the ideal.
- Findings suggest top-down resources of an advocacy group have a stronger influence on capacity for success than bottom-up resources.
- For age-friendly communities to achieve the desired policy result, advocacy efforts will require institutional support from the provincial government.
- This model offers insight on how other cities can implement age-friendly initiatives, providing prescriptive information as opposed to descriptive information about AFC outcomes in a location.

Implications

- This study outlines the strengths and weaknesses of each initiative and offers suggestions on how to improve the capacity of each organization to achieve age-friendly outcomes.
- Institutional support contributed to Ottawa's age-friendly success, but depending too heavily on government funding could be a detriment to sustainability.
- This research suggests that the role of the federal government (through the New Horizons for Seniors Program) was a contributing factor achieving success in Ottawa.
- Further empirical investigation is recommended on the contributors to, and impacts of, age-friendly communities



References

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